



## THE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Newsletter No7 August 2006

### HAVE YOU PAID YOUR SUBSCRIPTION THIS YEAR? IF NOT, THIS IS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER

#### NEXT EVENT

*Wednesday 27 September* Combe Down Junior School, Summer Lane 7.00 for 7.30pm, free to members. The main topic will be *The History of the Prior Park Estate*, a talk by Mike Chapman. This will be preceded by a brief but essential **Special General Meeting** to seek members approval of some minor changes to our constitution required by the Charity Commissioners. The revised paragraphs are on page 4 below. A full version will be available at the meeting.

#### DIARY DATES

These two dates in October are in conjunction with B&NES Open Week:

*Sunday 22 October* Free guided walk round Combe Down. Open to all. Start 2.00pm at The Hadley Arms, North Road. Ends 3.30pm approx.

*Sunday 29 October* Open Day at Bath

Jewish Burial Ground,  
11.00am to 4.00pm. Free.

Meet at the corner of  
Greendown Place and  
Bradford Road, opposite  
The Forester's Arms.

*Wednesday 15 November*

Combe Down Junior  
School, Summer Lane  
7.00 for 7.30pm

"Goodridge the  
Architect", a talk by Amy Frost (Bath  
Preservation Trust).



Holy Trinity - a  
Goodridge church

#### REPORTS

**Guided walk** for members of *The History of Bath Research Group*, 10 May 2006. Three members of the Society (Phyllis Brown, Malcolm Aylett and Rosemary Simmons) took a small group of very experienced historians around Combe Down village. Unfortunately the heavens opened and our carefully planned route was abandoned in favour of animated discussion under the roof of The King William IV pub.

#### **Shops Workshop**, 17 May 2006

This successful meeting, led by Ruth Sutcliffe, certainly got people talking; the noise of people chatting about the shops they used to know was *remarkable*. Individual tables were given to a particular road and its shops. People clustered round and moved from table to table thinking about just where each shop was, what they were called, who ran them and what goods did they specialise in. Memories came flooding back as people recalled the past.



Pleased with the meeting!

The Society intends to edit these recollections into a small, illustrated, booklet in the near future. A number of members volunteered to have their memories, not only of the shops but also of life in general in Combe Down, recorded by the Society's Oral History Group.

#### **Guided walk** for members of the *Environmental Geotechnics Conference*, 30 June 2006.

The Society's Chair, Rosemary Simmons, took three groups of visitors to the Stone Mines on a brief tour of Combe Down to

show them surface features associated with Ralph Allen and later stone quarrying.

**Widcombe Rising** On a sunny Sunday afternoon in June four members of the Society ran a successful street stall at this local event which attracted a steady flow of interested visitors. Nine new members were recruited, one Byfield book was sold, a bundle of Friends of the Jewish Burial Ground brochures flew off the table and several interesting conversations with visitors were held. For instance, one Bath resident told us of 'Old Jack' who ran several antique shops in Walcot St in the 1970's and said that he was the last Jew left in Bath! Residents living near the 'Hanging Bridge' in Popes Lane reported that they had a water main installed recently and the contractor's trench went into a six foot void. If the cavity was indeed a mine void, this is of considerable interest since we have never believed that underground mines existed so far north of the village.

### **WILLIAM SMITH – “Father of English Geology”**

The Society has been asked to lead an investigation into the historical evidence for the site of William Smith's Kingham Field Quarry. This may evolve into a full-scale project to clear the quarry of debris and undergrowth, to expose the quarry face, erect an information board and develop a William Smith Trail to commemorate the 250 anniversary of his birth in 2009. This initial



Fig. 11. Tucking Mill House – the real Tucking Mill. The right-hand side was a later addition.

project will be led by Richard Irving, the Society's President.

### **ARCHEOLOGY**

The Society has been notified that a trial of sand infill will be conducted before

Christmas 2006. This will be evaluated in the New Year together with the complete plan for mitigation of the loss of archeology in the mines stabilisation programme as required by the Planning Conditions 40, 41 and 42. The Society will comment on the 'revised design model' by 28 February 2007 (current timescale target).

### **Crucial decisions will be taken!**

Will Combe Down be left with any archeology?

Will the important years of our stone mining history, 1730-1830, be obliterated without a trace in Combe Down?

What will be left for future generations?

The Society says that the best solution is a Community Heritage Centre to house the whole village history IN Combe Down. We also want the engineers to design a clever, imaginative solution to provide some small public access to part of the mines so that people may experience the sensory illusion of being underground in the dark, silent, cold, damp mine; understand how stone was cut, hauled and shaped for the country's most admired Georgian buildings in Bath and beyond.

We believe that a Community Heritage Centre would serve the village well by offering space for activities ( the village desperately needs small to medium meeting venues) that could be run by largely volunteer effort and also house the interpretation of mines history required by the above conditions.

### **Your support is vital.**

Do you know any important archeologists, historians, geologists, teachers and politicians who could be encouraged to write to the Project Team in support of the Society's aims?

Send letters to Mary Stacey, Project Leader, Combe Down Stone Mines Stabilisation Project, 10 Palace Yard Mews, BA1 2NH, email: [mary\\_stacey@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:mary_stacey@bathnes.gov.uk)

### **FIRS FIELD**

The Friends of Firs Field was started last October to safeguard the future of Combe Down's village green. Those who joined were asked for suggestions for how Firs Field might be improved once the stabilisation work was concluded and the field reinstated.

A number of ideas have been put forward. The Friends will hold a meeting to discuss these and any other ideas on Saturday 18 November 2006 at The Scout Hut, The Avenue, 9.00am to 3.30pm. All residents are urged to have their say (membership of The Friends is free).

The Society will be proposing to restore the circle of stones which marks the former air shaft below the chestnut tree, conserve and erect the crane (offered by Combe Grove Manor Hotel), and erect an information board to Combe Down's mining heritage



Rebuild the wall round the shaft head

### JEWISH BURIAL GROUND

The Society, is a partner in The Friends of Bath Jewish Burial Ground and will be involved in preparing a bid for funds to restore the rare example of a Prayer House, conserve the grave stones, repair the boundary wall and develop interpretation of the site. (See October events).

We work with the B&NES Archaeologist (incidentally a Hebrew scholar) and Ecologist to conserve and restore to the highest standards.



The bluebells in May this year

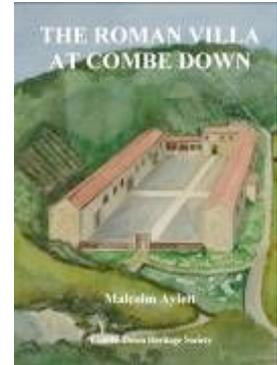
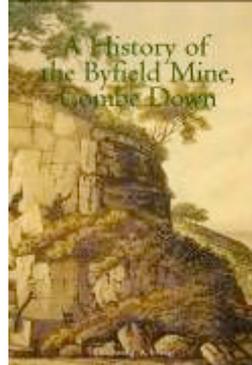
Membership of the Friends is open to anyone who might want to support the

project (subscription £3 + any donation to Malcolm Aylett, 13 Williamstowe)

### SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

*A History of the Byfield Mine* by Dick Irving, £9.95.

*The Roman Villa at Combe Down* by Dr Malcolm Aylett, £4.95.



Heritage Trail Leaflets £0.50.

*Combe Down Past and Present*. A CD of pictures from old postcards and recent photos taken from the same spot.

All publications are available at Society meetings or from the Secretary.

### OTHER ORGANISATIONS

*Bristol Industrial Archaeology Society*

Secretary Gill Sheppard, 10 Teewell Hill, Staple Hill Bristol BS16 5PA.

gsandg.sheppard@btoopenworld.com

*Widcombe and Lyncombe History Study Group* welcomes non-members to its meetings at 7.30pm usually on Thursdays.

For further information and to join the Group, contact Margaret Burrows on 480749 or Fay Briddon on 310127.

*Bathwick Local History Society* has meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month and welcomes non-members.

Contact Sheila Edwards on 463902.

*South Stoke Local History Group* welcomes new members. Contact Sylvia Williams on 832921.

*Weston Local History Society* welcomes visitors and charge £1 for non-members at their monthly lectures. Membership is £5 or £8.50 a couple. For further information contact Prue Brice on 315342, 6 Westwood Gardens, Weston BA1 4EJ.

*The Bath & Cammerton Archaeological Society* is active in many areas around Bath. Contact Ceri Lambdin on 761026.

*Bathwick Local History Society*. Enquiries 01225 463902 or 460389. Programme - Mon 18<sup>th</sup> Sept, 'William Hulonce and his fellow quarrymasters at Combe Down' by Richard Irving.

Mon 9<sup>th</sup> Oct, 'The Clay Pipe Makers of Bathwick & Somerset' by Marek Lewcun.

Mon 13<sup>th</sup> Nov, 'Brunel & the Building of the Railway Through Bathwick' by Andrew Swift.

*Bath Family History Group* – Mon 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct, a talk by Rosemary Simmons

### CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

As many of you know, we have been applying to turn the Society into a Registered Charity. We are now very close, but the Charities Commission require us to make a small change to our Constitution before they will approve our charitable status. They wish us to change the "Objects" in the Constitution to an exclusively charitable format to reflect our new status. The new Objects, now agreed with the Charity Commission, will be:

"2.1 To advance the education of the public in the heritage of Combe Down 2.2 To record, protect and preserve heritage within Combe Down"

The current "Objects", really statements of what we do, will be renamed "Activities".

These changes need to be approved by an Special General Meeting of the Society, so we are formally giving notice that it will be held at the start of our regular meeting on Wednesday 27th September (see notice in this Newsletter)

Your Committee has also decided to propose one or two other small changes to the Constitution, mainly to better reflect the way we now operate. Copies of the proposed new constitution will be available at the meeting and will be discussed before we vote.

### LOOKING FURTHER AHEAD

Geraldine Simmonds has attractive **hand made** Xmas cards for sale (840953)

## OVERDUE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members don't need to fill in a new form, but pay immediately to the Membership Secretary, Jane Briggs (address below)



### COMBE DOWN HERITAGE SOCIETY NEW MEMBER FORM

I apply to become a member of the Combe Down Heritage Society until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007. I agree to my details being held on computer for the duration of my membership.

<i>First name:</i>	<i>Surname:</i>
<i>Address:</i>	<i>Phone Number:</i>
<i>Post Code</i>	<i>Email address:</i>
<i>Ages of children</i>	
<b>Subscriptions for the year to 31/3/07</b>	
Regular: £3.00, Student: £1.00, Family: £7.00	£.....
Optional donation to the Society's funds	£.....
<b>Total amount paid</b>	<b>£.....</b>
<b>If you pay Income Tax (or PAYE) on any earnings, pension or investments, please sign here so that the Society can claim back your tax.</b>	
<i>Signature .....</i>	<i>Date.....</i>
Please note any relevant interests or skills. Applications (cheque or cash) may be left at the Stone Mines Information Centre or sent to the Membership Secretary, Jane Briggs, Longridge, Summer Lane, Combe Down. BA2 7EU	