



## Programme for autumn 2009

**23 September** James Ayres, author of *Domestic Interiors, The British Tradition 1500-1850*, will give a talk on his experience with stone masonry.

**21 October** Neil Macmillen, expert on Fullers Earth, will share his knowledge of history with us. His much acclaimed new book will be on sale

**18 November** we hope to have a public meeting on the future of Ralph Allen Yard

All talks are at Combe Down Primary School, Summer Lane. Refreshments are available at 7pm - meetings start at 7.30 sharp. Admission: members free, non-members £1

We also plan to publish the results of the Shops Project in time for Xmas stockings. In December we may have a Xmas party. Next Spring we will put on an exhibition at the Bath at Work Museum

For all our meetings, do keep an eye on the notices in the village centre

All the Society's publications are on sale at the meetings. Further details from the Secretary.

## Other meetings

Two lunch time talks at the Building of Bath Collection, The Paragon, 1.10pm - 1.50pm:

'Findings from Combe Down Stone Mines' on Wednesday 9 September, by Neville Higgins from Oxford Archaeology.

'How Bath Stone Reached London and National Markets' by Richard Irving on Wednesday 16 September.

Admission £4 each, both meetings are part of the Stones of Bath exhibition. See [www.bptlearning.org.uk](http://www.bptlearning.org.uk).

Tel: 01225 333895 or email: [jhunter@bptrust.org.uk](mailto:jhunter@bptrust.org.uk) for tickets. Do support our president and our mines archaeologist by going to one or both of these.

## The village pageant

Plans for a village pageant to be held at the Grand Celebration on 26 September are taking shape. The history of Combe Down will be portrayed with many parts being played by pupils from the Primary and Ralph Allen Schools. The programme for the Grand Celebration of the stabilising of Combe Down Village from 2pm to 11pm on Firs Field along The Firs (times approximate) is:

**4.00 to 5.00pm** various local music groups will perform followed by readings of poetry by children and adults.

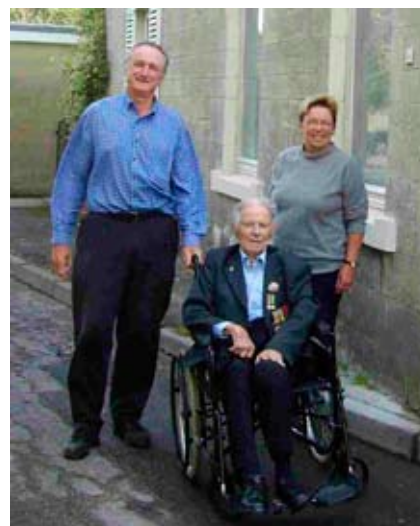
**5.30pm** a Welsh male voice choir will sing.

**6.00 to 7.00pm** 'The Village Pageant' written by Andy Croft and with music by Paul Englishby will be performed followed by Paul Englishby's specially composed Combe Down music.

**7.30pm** film projections onto several very large screens will be shown to the close of festivities.

The Darling Deli will have a stand with food and a special commemorative beer is being brewed for the occasion. The Bathampton Morris Side and the Natural Theatre Company will appear during the evening. Combe Down Heritage Society will have a heritage tent - we hope to see you there.

## Harry Patch 1898-2009



Born at Fonthill, Gladstone Road, Combe Down

Richard and Janet Read taking Harry Patch round Combe Down after recording a conversation with him for our oral history archive.



## Excursion to Gant's Mill

The first mention of a mill on the River Bru was in the Domesday Book, since then it has seen many changes of use but now, restored by the owner Brian Shingler, it is a flour mill with all the machinery intact. Brian gave us a guided tour and demonstration including the hydroelectric turbine installed in 2003 which contributes 12Kw continuously to the local grid. We then had tea and cake in the Tea Conservatory bedecked with Alison Shingler's prize begonias and fuchsias and sit in their beautifully made garden.

## Firs Field

As we go to press the future of Firs Field is still uncertain. A consultancy document from the Council has been sent to all residents. Do participate in this consultation and go to meetings of the Friends of Firs Field (see the village notice board by the Co-Op for dates and times).

## Ralph Allen Yard

We understand that a developer for the site has been appointed but as we go to press it is not yet announced to the public. Discussions about the formation of a trust to run the future Heritage Interpretation Centre are advanced but can not proceed until numerous facts about the development are made available. You will remember that plans for the development of the yard include an Interpretative Centre which will also be for community use. This remains in the hands of Homes and Community Association (HCA, previously English Partnerships) and we look forward to seeing the Planning Application soon. Meanwhile, an important development must be to set up a village Trust to take over ownership of the Centre. Though the Trust must be representative of the village as a whole, it is being initially taken forward by the Heritage Society, the Stone Mines Community Association and local Councillors.

## William Smith

Richard Irving's research paper on *William Smith and his venture into Stone Manufacture* is about to be published on our website: [www.combedownheritage.org.uk](http://www.combedownheritage.org.uk). We have printed a few copies for sale at the Stones of Bath exhibition at The Building of Bath Collection, The Paragon, open Saturdays, Sundays and Monday, 10.30am - 5.00pm until 1 November. It is also available from the Society, (ring 833301) and at meetings for £15.

The Society contributed to Ralph Allen Study Day on 17 July, run as part of the exhibition, by taking a party round Combe Down to see Ralph Allen's quarries and buildings. Each participant was given a folder of useful information about Combe Down stone.



William Smith's House

## Our website



The site is currently having a major overhaul and the main addition to this is the report of Dick Irving's research on William Smith and the

archaeological excavation in front of the quarry as described at our February meeting. Tim Pentreath manages the website, for which we are grateful, and the 'Events page' is managed by your Newsletter team and regularly updated - do keep an eye on this.

## Memories of school days – 1939



In the summer of 1939 Mother brought my sister Mary and me to Combe Down to stay with Grandma Page in the Avenue and she returned to London – a war was coming.

We attended the Holy Trinity Church and we were there on the Sunday that war was declared. During a hymn, the verger hurried to the vicar and spoke urgently to him. The vicar then gave the news to the congregation and said he was closing the service as we would all have ‘things to do’. I have never quite understood what he meant by that.

Mary (7) and I (10) attended Combe Down Junior School at Belmont Road. It was in the ‘Scholarship Class’ under Mrs Brewer. We made new friends in the village, some of them being other evacuees. Mr Jones was the head – he subsequently became head of Ralph Allen School.

When the frequent air-raid sirens were heard, Mrs Cruise hit a huge gong hanging over the stairs and every girl who could get home in five minutes did so, taking with her another girl who lived further away. So Mary and I, and Jacqueline Mannings ran

down the drung to the Avenue. It was all rather exciting. The boys headed for the cellars under the Old Vicarage and returned with tales of black beetles and spiders.

Grandma and her companion, Miss Blake, took all this in their stride – Grandma battling bravely with my inadequacy in Maths. I was competent in all kinds of English, also sewing and knitting, but Maths let me down and I failed the Scholarship Exam. Only one child, Joe Davis, passed – it must be realised that Bath was overrun with evacuees.

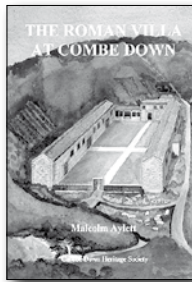
I made a cotton dress for myself at school that year as did all the girls, all by hand, run and fell seams with embroidered bands round the neck. We also did gardening on small plots reached through a gate in the drung.

Mary and I stayed on at Combe Down for one year. By that time Mother decided the responsibility for Grandma was too great and we returned to London where we spent the rest of the war. It was exciting for us, though not so much for our parents.

Phyllis Brown

## Publications

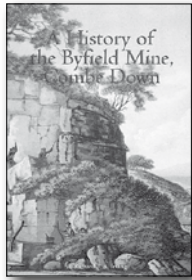
All publications are available at Society meetings and are available from the Chair or Secretary



I Remember Tucking Mill  
by Stanley Wicks, £6.

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 leaflet  
by Richard Irving and Rosemary Simmons, 50p

CD of Combe Down Past and Present - available to members only free, but a donation is expected.

## Contacts

**Chair** Rosemary Simmons ☎833301  
rosyprint@care4free.net

**Secretary** (and of the Friends of the Jewish Burial Ground) Malcolm Aylett ☎833681,  
13 Williamstowe BA2 5EJ m.aylett@homecall.co.uk

## Other organisations

We hold contact details for all the other groups working in heritage, history, archaeology and related disciplines. Contact the secretary at 13 Williamstowe or email m.aylett@homecall.co.uk

## The Data Protection Act

The Officers of the Society hold limited information for each member which is processed using personal computers. The Data Protection Act safeguards the protection against the misuse of such data.

Information held for each member comprises - Name and address, Telephone number, e-mail address where applicable, Subscriptions paid, Gift Aid status and Special interests. This information used to administer the membership list and to provide address labels for Newsletters and other notices.

The Membership List may also be used by Officers for managing the Society and for any other purpose as may be legally required of us. We will not pass our membership list on to any other organisation for any purposes.

Members have the right to request that some restrictions be placed on the use of the information held on them. Any members having such concerns should write to the Membership Secretary.

## Membership application for new members

If you are already a member, there is no need to fill this in - simply send your payment to Jane Briggs (see below)

First name _____		Surname _____	
I apply to become a member of the Combe Down Heritage Society until 31 March 2008 and I agree to my details being held on computer for the duration of my membership			
Address _____		Postcode _____	
		Phone _____	
		Email _____	
Please tick membership option required		Total amount enclosed	Ages of children
Standard £3 <input type="checkbox"/> Student £1 <input type="checkbox"/> Family £7 <input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="text"/>	(if family membership)
I am sending an additional £ <input type="text"/> as a donation to the society			
If you pay Income tax (PAYE) please sign here so we can reclaim the tax		Signed _____	Date _____

Payments (by cheque please, payable to 'Combe Down Heritage Society') should be sent to the Membership Secretary: Jane Briggs, Longridge, Summer Lane, Combe Down, BA2 7EU.

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