



Programme for spring 2010

As usual we will hold no meeting in January.

24 February - a talk by Simon Wilshire, Chair of Monkton School Governors, on the 'Monkton School in Combe Down.'

17 March following the AGM, Simon Burrows will give a talk on '157 Church Road', the first of a series of talks entitled *My House*.

Both talks are at Combe Down Primary School, Summer Lane. Refreshments are available at 7.00pm - meetings start at 7.30 sharp. Admission: members free, non-members £1

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 Chairman or Secretary.

The Society has been invited by Stuart Burroughs, Director of the Museum of Bath at Work, to put on an exhibition of Combe Down's history. This will open in April, details will follow in our next Newsletter.

Remembering village shops



It's here at last - the book you have all been waiting for is ready as promised, in time for that last minute Christmas present. *Remembering Village Shops* is the must-have in your stocking – the collected memories of Combe Downers from the days when the village was completely

self-sufficient and fully supplied with both the necessities and luxuries of life by the local

shopkeepers. Edited by Richard Read, and with a foreword from Stuart Burroughs, Director of the Museum of Bath at Work, the real stars of the show are *you*, all the members and other residents of Combe Down past and present who have contributed your fascinating memories of the old shops, where they were, who worked in them and what they sold. Some tremendous characters emerge from the stories, which are backed up by information from old Post Office Directories, maps and the adverts from Parish Magazines. A lot of the current traders in the village have supported the project too, and they have helped to cover the costs by taking new adverts in it to go alongside the old ones.

This fantastic project started with the original idea from Ruth Sutcliffe, and the workshop she organised in May 2006. Then the hard work put in by the project team of Richard, plus Jane Briggs, Phyllis Brown and Olive Webb resulted in an interim report to members 18 months ago that really stirred the memory juices and brought out many more stories together with wonderful photographs and other documents to further enhance the pictures that were emerging. We now know of over 60 locations in the village where a shop has been at some point, and although our knowledge on some is still rather hazy, on others we have up to four pages of really interesting information.

So very many thanks to everyone who has contributed, and don't delay, get your copy now. If you ordered one at the last meeting then we should be in touch, but take the initiative and come and get it by all means. The cover price is £15, expensive but it is a large book and it's worth it! However, we have reduced the price for CDHS Members to £12 to ensure that it is well subscribed to, particularly by those who are featured inside.

Order your copy now from Rosemary Simmons
12 Greendown Place, Combe Down, Bath BA2 5DD
tel 833301 rosyprint@care4free.net

The village pageant

The Grand Celebration of the stabilisation of Combe Down on 26 September was held on a sunny day on Firs Field. Members of the Society were involved in different ways. We had two chalets (those used for the Christmas Fair) in which we showed the Story of Combe Down exhibition. On a nearby table the specially made Oolite Ale was briskly sold by the bottle and the dozen. The profit of these sales is going into a special fund to help set up the Combe Down Trust to run the soon-to-be-constructed Heritage Interpretation Centre at Ralph Allen Yard.

We collected enough money that day to buy the reproduction of the portrait of Harry Patch which will feature at the new Centre. Thank you to all donors.



Various members sang in the choir, read their poetry, made music, provided costumes and props and helped to dress the children in the many costume changes for the Village Pageant.

Members of the Society made six awards in the form of recycled stone cores which were presented on the stage to Don Foster MP, David Keeton, HCA,

Mary Stacey, of B&NES, Brian McConnell of Hydrock, David Dunkerley and David Morris of CDSMCA to thank them for their part in the stabilisation of the village.

Pictures
below: the event was well attended from the start
left: a member tasting his Oolite Ale
above: the Society's chalets
right: Don Foster with his award



Recent meetings

Visit to Highgrove

Twenty five society members enjoyed a visit to the gardens at Highgrove in October. Though late in the year there was much to see of both formal and informal planting interspersed with permanent follies. These were 18th century in spirit and varied from a pair of bark classical temples to a tree house and an hermitage. The 19th century was re-created through an extensive stumpery and a wall of gifts. Near the house formal gardens reflected its architecture and the Prince's enthusiasm for Islamic design was realised in a walled Turkish garden. Our knowledgeable guide led us through the varied gardens to the inevitable shop in aid of the Prince's charities.

Stone Masonry

James Ayres, FSA, gave a fascinating talk in September about aspects of stone masonry accompanied by many unusual slides showing historical examples of masonry practice.

Fullers earth

Neil Macmillen talked about fullers earth in October re-creating the local industry which once dominated Tucking Mill, South Stoke and Combe Hay. His new, comprehensive book on the subject was on sale.

1479 Plates

The first showing of artist Chris Tipping's monumental array of ceramic plates was held at The Octagon, Milsom Street, in October to which Combe Down residents were invited. The six metre tall and five metre wide display of all the plates hung together was breath-taking. The design, which used the latest technology in its realisation, showed the miner's roadways underground surrounded by symbolic animals, plants and artefacts. Eventually every house stabilised will be given a plate corresponding to what was beneath it underground.

Open week

We took part in this annual B&NES event for half-term in October again this year. The Open Day at Bath's Jewish Burial Ground at Greendown Place was again a success thanks to the many volunteers who helped subdue the vegetation beforehand. There was again an exhibition of the cemetery's history and a Tombstone Trail which gave details of the lives of many of those interred. The following Sunday we did our Guided Walk around



Clearing the Jewish Cemetery -note the state of the roof. Right: the roof now restored.

Combe Down. Numbers were down on the previous year due to bad weather.



Combe Down pub token on eBay



Great excitement in October when a pub token from the Foresters' Arms, Combe Down appeared on

Ebay with an opening price of £7.50 and only two days to go.

In the centre it says Bodman, and we know that Thomas James Bodman ran the Foresters' from about 1870 to 1900, so we have a good date on it. On the reverse it says 1½, presumably the Pennies of that time, but still quite a lot of money. Such tokens were produced from the end of the 18th century when there was a genuine shortage of small change. This resulted in employers striking and paying workers with tokens to be used in local (company) shops and pubs, and we know that they were in use by the Combe Down quarrymasters for this purpose. The practice was outlawed for some industries by the Truck Act of 1831, and for all workers by subsequent acts up to 1887.

We thought it would be good to have it for the Society collection, and decided that we would bid near the end if it remained under the limit we had set ourselves, always important in an auction! Unfortunately it attracted a lot of interest, and two buyers fought tooth and nail, the token eventually going for £54.11, well above what we had been prepared to pay, but an indication of the value of Combe Down Heritage.

Society website

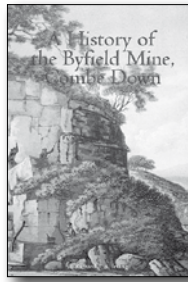
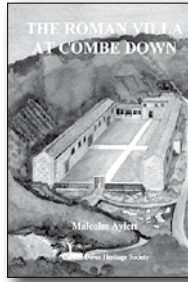
The website has had a major overhaul – do visit it again at www.combedownheritage.org.uk



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

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

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 2011 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 (if family membership)
Standard £3 <input type="checkbox"/> Student £1 <input type="checkbox"/> Family £7 <input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="text"/>	
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, Bath BA2 7EU.

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.