



Registered Charity Reg No. 1116550

THE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

www.combedownheritage.org.uk

Newsletter No 8, November 2006

THE DECEMBER MEETING

ASK THE EXPERTS'. On Weds 6th December at 7.30. there will be a light-hearted social evening at the Hadley Arms. Will it be *Animal Vegetable & mineral* or will it be an *Antiques Roadshow*?! Bring anything of interest, local or not, - any of your photos, pictures, antiques, memorabilia, tools or artefacts of any kind and let our experts give their opinion. The panel will consist of local experts.

Members free, non-members £1. **CASH BAR & NIBBLES**

Bring something for the panel & a friend



DIARY DATES FOR 2007

Weds 28th Feb - Kirsten Elliott will tell us about "Local Pubs, past and present".

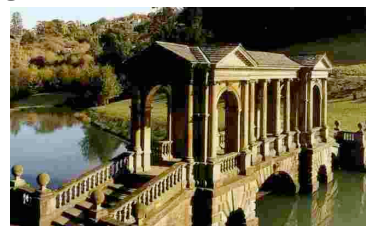
Weds 21st Mar - Paul De'Ath "Combe Down in Camera", some of his Old Post Cards of Bath.

Weds 25th Apr - Roger Ransome, bat expert for the mines project, on "The Bats of Combe Down".

We plan an outing to the Claverton Pump in the Spring. **Please suggest some other outside activities**

REPORTS ON PREVIOUS EVENTS

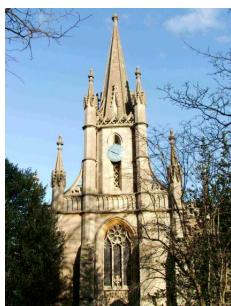
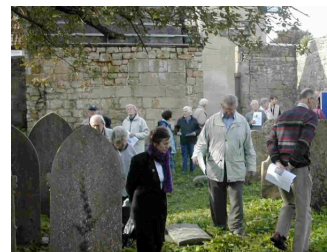
The talk by Mike Chapman gave a fascinating account of the history of the Ralph Allen Estate. Mike is one of Bath's leading historians and edits the publications of the Bristol Industrial Archaeological Society. His illustrations of the estate lands both before Ralph Allen's time and later gave us a wealth of facts on the wide extent of his domains.



Our Guided walk in October this year took a group of OVER 50 (a record) around Combe Down village led by five members of the Society. The heavens unfortunately opened and our carefully planned route had to be reduced, but the faithful crowd stayed with us for an hour and a half.

The picture shows 'Colworth, a handsome Victorian Villa in the Avenue

The Jewish Burial Ground Open Day, part of Bath Open Week, had 250 visitors. Bath's only Jewish Cemetery, it closed at least 60 years ago. The event was organised by the 'Friends', a collaboration between our Society and the Jewish Community. There was a exhibition of its history and our plans Consider joining the 'Friends' for updates on the news - See 'Contacts'



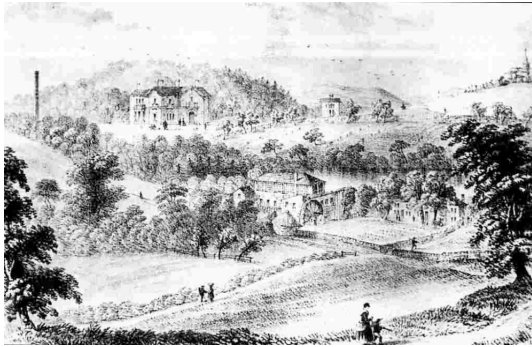
We were fortunate to have an erudite and beautifully illustrated talk by Amy Frost on the architecture of Holy Trinity Church and other Bath buildings designed by Henry Edmund Goodridge. Amy is on the staff of the Bath Preservation Trust and curator of Beckford's Tower. She is preparing a PhD thesis on Goodridge.

NEWS ON CURRENT PROJECTS

WILLIAM SMITH & THE KINGHAM QUARRY

Dick Irving, the President, has continued work on this project with further research into Smith's archive at Oxford. He has revealed exciting and hitherto unknown details of deals with Charles Connoly of Midford Castle and the development of the Tucking Mill site. Dick is already working with a local geologist and engineers and is laying the foundations for a publication and a substantial funding grant.

The picture shows Tucking Mill House, the home of William Smith.



DE MONTALT MILL

The TV programme makers of *Grand Designs* have consulted Rosemary on the history of DeMontalt Mill where they are following the progress of the restoration of the Apprentices' House. Their programme is to be shown in the Spring.

The picture shows the building complex in the early 19th Century with its water-wheel 70 feet in diameter.

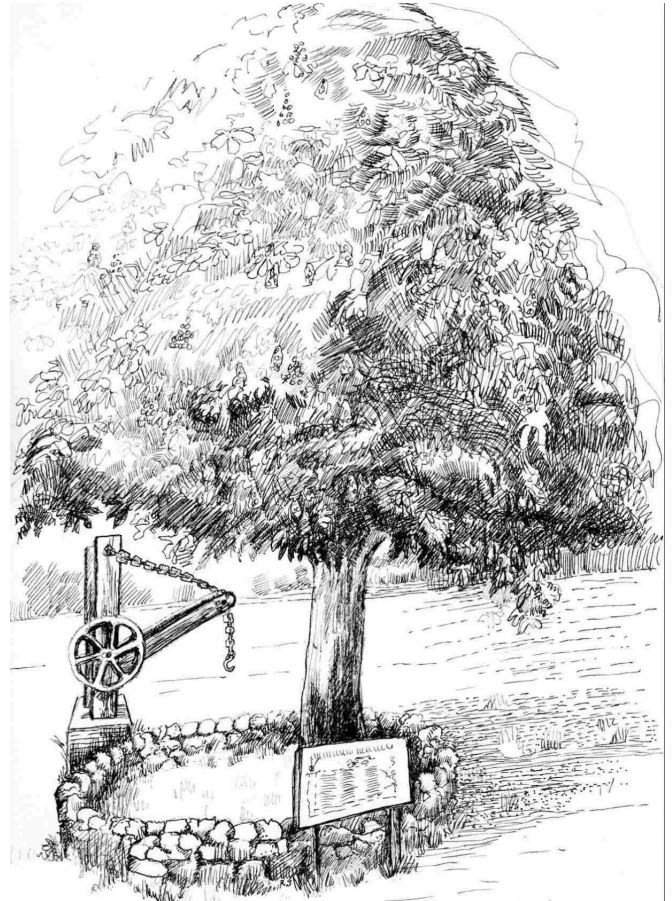
FIRS FIELD

Members have contributed to the Friends of Firs Field programme by going to their meetings and making suggestions. Your officers have met with representatives of the Project, the Council, the Community Association and the Friends of Firs Field on the forthcoming revised Planning Conditions for the Field. We proposed:

1. A Stone Mining Heritage display to include
 - the restored shaft head wall,
 - the restored stone crane,
 - an interpretative board.
2. A quiet corner with seats and shrubs.

- We think that the wall was between three and four feet high and its base might contain important information on its use and date. Before restoration there would be an archaeological excavation of the base. The Society has already been given the option on a crane which would need expert restoration.
- We stressed that the natural flora should be protected and we support any proposals for a few more trees, perhaps a 'Ralph Allen Pine', with a small interpretative board on flora.
- We confirmed the status of 'Site of Natural Conservation Importance' (because of its limestone flora), to protect the field from any non-recreational use.

We believe that recreational use by the young is to be encouraged but that any intrusive sports hardware should not be permitted.



This is an artists impression of what our Mining Heritage display might be like.

A HERITAGE CENTRE & FUTURE PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE MINES

We have made our views widely known on the preservation of mines archaeology. The trial of sand infill mentioned in our last newsletter has run into problems and the Planning Conditions for the mines Archaeology expected in the February may be delayed. We will continue to press for our demands during this period.

We are also told that 'Locum Destination' will be called in again, presumably to reconsider a Centre and possible mine access. These are the consultants who concluded early this year that a Centre with the features of a full-time museum would not be viable. We hope that this time they will be more realistic and take note of our views.

Your support is vital and we repeat our request that all of us should seek support. 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?

Letters should be sent to Mary Stacey, Project Leader, Combe Down Stone Mines Stabilisation Project, 10 Palace Yard Mews, BA1 2NH email: mary_stacey@bathnes.gov.uk

Danny Boy by Olive Webb

When we bought our house in Combe Down a casual remark by the vendor set me on what seemed then to be a wild goose chase. The remark was to the effect that a previous occupant of the house had written one of the well known Victorian hymns whilst inspired by the view from the dining room window. And there the matter languished. Nowhere could I find the name of the hymn or its author.

After some considerable time I was lucky to meet the sister of a previous occupant of the house and she knew much more about one Fred Weatherley who had indeed written Holy City and much more besides. The surprise was that he had written Danny Boy the supposedly Irish 'anthem'.

Now I had something to go on and bit by bit more information trickled my way much of it contradictory. The one constant seemed to be that this supposedly Irish song Danny Boy was written in Combe Down.

Various versions exist as to how the song came to be written.

Frederick Edward Weatherley, Barrister and Circuit Judge had indeed lived in my house then called Grosvenor Lodge and had written Holy City whilst there. He wrote over a thousand songs, Up from Somerset and Roses of Picardy to name but two. He also wrote Danny Boy probably whilst living at a previous address in Weston and revised it whilst living in Combe Down.

One version is that Danny Boy was a lament written after his only son and his father had died within a short space of time. Who Danny Boy is is debateable, it is not the name of either son or father. Some have it that it is a mother saying goodbye to a son off to war, even that it is an Irish boy leaving Ireland during the potato famine. In his autobiography 'Piano and Gown' written some years after the words to Danny Boy, Fred Weatherly is vague on the gender or the relationship of the singer to Danny. By the time of his autobiography the song had been adapted as an Irish anthem and he expressed the hope that the song would not be seen as political and could be sung by Sinn Feiners and Ulstermen alike.

The vagueness about the gender of the singer may have been purely economic. Victorian songwriters made money from the sale of printed song sheets and if Danny Boy could be sung by either a man or woman then the potential sales would be greater.

He had offered the song to his publisher who had turned it down. It had languished unsung until Margaret one of his sisters in law, (and with seven brothers he had many), who was living in America sent him the tune Londonderry Air. She supposedly had heard miners who had gone to America during the Gold Rush playing the tune.

After minor alterations to the words it was set to the Londonderry Air and accepted by his publisher.

The history of the tune Londonderry Air is even more complex littered with blind harpists, fairy voices, and Scottish connections! A story for another time.

Sources are many and various; thanks to Society member Alistair Drury for showing me a recent article in The Survey of Old Bath.

Congratulations to Richard Read, our Treasurer, for securing Charitable Status for the Society. He has been working on this for a year, answering many questions and adjusting our Constitution.

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

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, 50p

CD of Buildings Past & Present - a donation

Hand made Xmas cards. Geraldine Simmonds has attractive cards for sale (01225 840953).

OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Bristol Industrial Archaeology Soc: Gill Sheppard, 10 Teewell Hill, Staple Hill BS16 5PA <gsandg.sheppard@btopenworld.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, contact Margaret Burrows on 480749 or Fay Briddon on 310127.
Bathwick Local History Society has meetings on the 2nd Monday of each month and welcomes non-members.
Contact Sheila Edwards on 463902 or 460389.

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. 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.

OUR CONTACTS: Chair: Rosemary Simmons 833301, <rosyprint@care4free.net>

Secretary (& to the Friends of the Jewish Burial Ground) Malcolm Aylett 833681, <m.aylett@homecall.co.uk>
www.combedownheritage.org.uk



ANY MEMBERS RENEWING MEMBERSHIP DON'T NEED TO FILL IN A NEW FORM.

Pay direct to the Membership Secretary, Jane Briggs, Longridge, Summer Lane, Combe Down, BA2 7EU

COMBE DOWN HERITAGE SOCIETY NEW MEMBER FORM

I apply to become a member of the Combe Down Heritage Society until 31st 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>	
<i>Subscriptions for the year to 31/3/07</i>	
Regular: £3.00, Student: £1.00, Family: £7.00	£.....
Optional donation to the Society's funds	£.....
Total amount paid	£.....
<i>If you pay Income Tax (or PAYE), please sign here so that the Society can claim back your tax.</i>	
<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date.....</i>
Applications (cheque or cash) may be left at the Stone Mines Information Centre or to the Membership Secretary, Jane Briggs, Longridge, Summer Lane, Combe Down.	