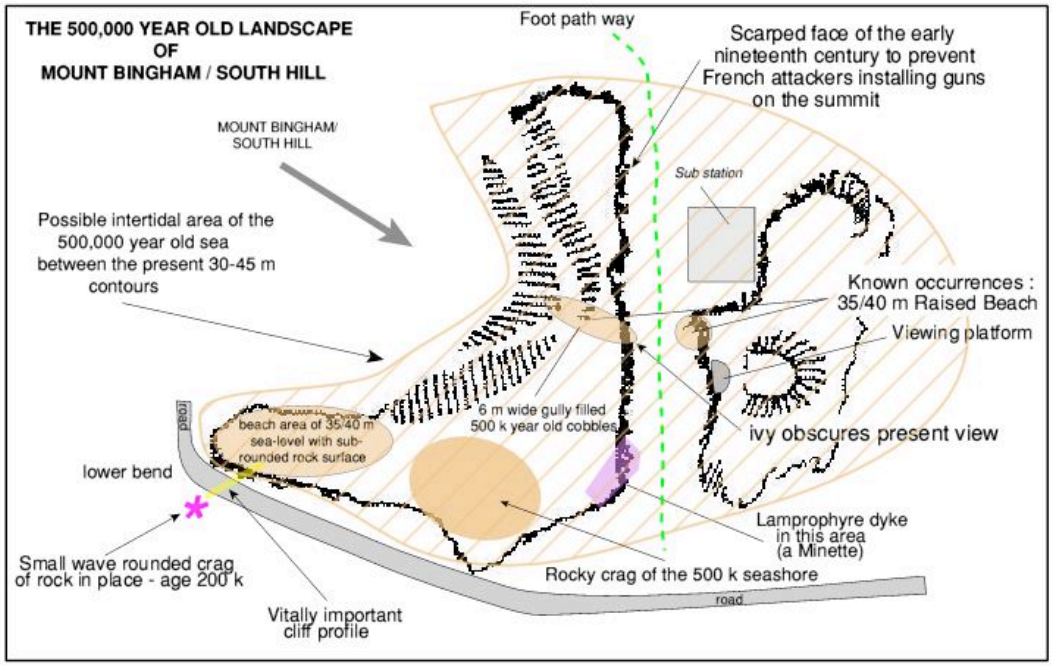
Skate Park issue with respect to South Hill - [redacted]

It is with alarm that I read of the proposal put forward to site a skate park on Mount Bingham/South Hill. If the preservation of Jersey's heritage means anything at all, this development must be resisted.

First of all the ravine from the JE substation down to the road over Mount Bingham is part and parcel of the history of Fort Regent. It was quarried out in the construction of the overall fortification of the Town Hill in the first decade of the nineteenth century. These works were designed to prevent an enemy from taking South Hill and establishing armaments there, armaments that would command the approaches to Fort Regent up the Glacis Field.



Secondly the whole of South Hill from east of the JE substation to the corner of the road descending to the harbour is a single landscape (geomorphological) entity of inestimable geological importance. The quarrying works of the early nineteenth century cut through three different geological elements. The principal one was Fort Regent Granite, though this by itself is of no great import. Secondly, a vertical, metre wide dyke of mica lamprophyre—known as minette—a particular and rather interesting rock type, was exposed in the extreme southwestern angle of the quarried wall. Thirdly, and the most important discovery of all, there was revealed the preserved remnants of a raised cobble and sandy beach (at a JD height of 40 m) continuous, at the time of its formation, between the highest point of South Hill, to the west of the quarried wall, and the opposite wall to the east, above and to the south of the substation. This raised beach is an SSI registered with the Planning Department and has an estimated age of c. 500 thousand years.

Outside the quarried ravine, the cliff face from its southern end to the corner of the road below—where recent securing of the face with rock bolts and netting was done—is a cliff of great antiquity. In combination with a little known and even less appreciated wave rounded rock outcrop, just to the seaward side of the road corner below, it provides an integrated cliff profile unique in the Channel Islands and adjacent areas. This enables geologists to understand a very important aspect of the origins of the steep coastal cliffs of the Channel Islands and adjacent Cotentin, namely how old these cliffs are and how they developed over the past 500 thousand years.

All this may seem remote from the modern world but not so. Jersey Heritage is seeking to create an internationally known Geopark of Jersey. This relates in no small way to the significant efforts of the past decade to put the Jersey on the map as the Ice Age Island linked closely to its connections to our relatives of the past, the Neandertals. The very origin of La Cotte de St Brelade is to be put in context with the Mount Bingham cliff profile to add understanding of the origin of La Cotte itself. But the likely 500 thousand year age of the cliffs at South Hill adds another and so far undescribed element of human evolution to Jersey's story : that of *Homo heidelbergensis* a slightly earlier *Homo* species than *H. neanderthalensis*. When the sea retreated from the high of the South Hill raised beach, the subsequent landscape would have been a possible land that *Homo heidelbergensis* visited just as the Neandertals were to do several hundred thousand years later.

This landscape also has an historical dimension finely displayed in the Ouless painting related to the visit of Queen Victoria to Jersey in 1846.

The attempt to create a skate park entirely within this ancient Jersey , quiet landscape will destroy its integrity by altering the ground plan of the area through the erection of raised ?concrete bankings and by the creation of an alien modern artificial structure. And this is not to mention the loss to St Helier of an important leisure environment, which is a natural area of scenic beauty and overall quiet, linking the town by foot to the land- and sea-scapes beyond.

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]