

# SNODLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, Issue 1

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## SOCIETY NEWS

Enquiries about the Society (including applications for membership) should be addressed to Dr Andrew Ashbee, 214, Malling Road, Snodland, Kent ME6 5EQ (tel. 01634-243001).

### Subscriptions

Members renewing their subscriptions are reminded that under the terms of the Constitution subscriptions are due on 1st September each year. A reminder will be sent in December (in the form of a red cross added to this Newsletter) to any person whose subscription remains unpaid. Any person who has not paid by the 1st February will automatically cease to be a member of the Society. Subscriptions should be sent to the Treasurer, Mr Brian Tansley, 11, Godden Road, Snodland, Kent ME6 5HF.

### Membership Cards

Membership cards for the new season will be available in December.

### Committee

At the AGM the following were voted as members of the Committee for 1998-9: Andrew Ashbee (Chairman); Roy Searing (Vice-Chairman); Neil Miners (Secretary); Brian Tansley (Treasurer); Denis Anstey (Technology Officer); Brenda Ashbee; Valerie Fiddes; Christopher Howick; Jerry Hayes; Derek Saxby.

Thanks were also expressed to Julia Howe and John Hamilton who had served on the Committee in 1997-8 and to Jerry Hayes for his work as

Treasurer.

### Meetings: 1998-9

2 December 1998: Devonshire Rooms, 8 p.m. An informal evening of slides of Old Snodland at which it is hoped members will be prompted to divulge some memories. Information gleaned will be added to the Society's archives. Wine and mince pies will be served.

27 January 1999: Devonshire Rooms, 8 p.m. Michael Fuller will give an illustrated talk on 'Local Watermills'. Michael has devoted many years to studying the mills in this area and has produced some delightful books and illustrations. The Society's pamphlet No. 9 (see below) is his work.

March 1999: Devonshire Rooms, 8 p.m. Paul Oldham will speak on 'The Rise of Maidstone'. Mr Oldham is President of the Kent Archaeological Society and a former Mayor of Maidstone.

April 1999: Devonshire Rooms, 8 p.m. To be arranged.

### Pamphlets

In addition to Nos. 7 and 8 noted in the September Newsletter, we have now published No. 9: Michael J. Fuller, *Snodland and Holborough Watermills*. This is A4 size (rather than the A5 used for earlier pamphlets) and comprises 70 pages. (Price: £5). The text is revised and up-dated from the two relevant chapters in Michael's large study *Watermills of the Leybourne and Holborough Streams* (1990), only six copies of which were produced. It is

beautifully illustrated with line drawings and maps and gives references for all sources.

Christopher Howick's *A Stroll Around Old Snodland* (£1.50) is selling very well and can be bought at Snodland Newsagency and the Town Council Offices, as well as at the Society's meetings.

We have had some difficulty in obtaining correct size bindings for some of the registers series, but hope this will be resolved shortly.

### New Church Registers

Through the good offices of Mr Patrick Johnson, a member of the Library and Documents Committee of the General Conference of the New Church, photocopies of all the New Church registers have been obtained for the Society. These comprise baptisms (1912-1988, with brief notices of some from the 1860s) and marriages (1883-1987). The photocopies will be added to the Society's archives, but I hope to make transcripts which will be published in the Society's registers series.

Mr Johnson is the son of a former minister of the New Church here (1938-1951), so knows Snodland well. He has given me his amusing account of the Sunday service on the day war



*Interior of the New Church, a photograph published in March 1900. Note the elaborate gas lamps with seven branches at the top. There were seven of these lamps. The brass lectern is now in America.*

broke out, which was published in the *New Church Magazine*. He also located an interesting article on the Snodland church, published in March 1900, which adds a few details to what I have written in pamphlet No. 8. The article also includes two photographs, one external and one internal (the latter shown here).

The photograph also shows a brass lectern, perhaps the one given by the employees at the Paper Mill (noted in the *Kent Messenger* of 11 February 1882). This was not in the church when the contents were 'listed' at its closure and is now in a church in Greenboro, USA.

### A visit to Snodland in 1829

The British Library holds a copy of a small booklet (18 pages and four illustrations) by a Mr D. A. Briton, entitled *Summer Wanderings in the Neighbourhood of Maidstone, Kent*, published at Camberwell in 1829. Since this has not been examined before, the text relating to Snodland and Paddlesworth is here printed in full, with added commentary within square brackets [ ].

Went on shore at *Snodland* brook, and over the marshes to the Church. Explored its interior, and amongst other 'remarkables' noted the following:

#### In the South Aisle

An outline figure of our Saviour extended on the cross, apparently of great antiquity, engraven on one of the pillars, a substitute probably for the 'Rood', a carved group, consisting usually of a Crucifix, with the Virgin Mary on one side and St John on the other, which, previous to the Reformation, was found in most of our churches. [That this was visible in 1829 makes surprising Rev. Carey's report of 15 November 1870 that 'A stone etching of the crucifixion was revealed on the second pillar of the south aisle fronting west. We coloured it.']

#### In the middle Aisle and Chancel

Brasses to the memory of William Tilghman the elder, ob. 27 Aug. 1541, and his wives Isabel and Joane [now in the south aisle], 'Johannes filius Lancastor Herald Regis Amor' ob. 1441

[chancel], of Roger Perot, (17 Sep. 1486) [south aisle] with this prayer on a label issuing from his mouth, 'Jesu mercy, Jesu mercy, mercy Jesu'. The effigy of a man standing between his two wives, the inscription gone [chancel], and a large slab of reddish stone with a cross flory carved upon it. [This last was the memorial to Thomas Dalby, rector 1453-1469, now gone, but pictures have survived both of the inscription and of the other designs]

#### In the window over the Altar

are some remains of painted glass, amongst which I could distinguish a Castle triple-towered, *Or*: a Gryphen rampant *sable*, and *Gules*, 3 lions passant gardant *or*. [Parts of these are extant, now in other windows. They were originally the arms of England - Edward I and Eleanor of Castille - in a design replaced in 1340.]

#### In the Vestry

At the western extremity of this aisle which was till within these few years the entrance porch I observed, partly covered by the benches placed on its south side, a stone commemorating one of the former pastors of this Church and managed, with some difficulty, to decypher such part of the inscription (in Lombardic characters) as is visible - GONNE, IADIS P.RSONE DE CESTE EGL.... [Again a picture survives of the memorial, probably that of John de Denynton, rector, who died here in 1341. Clearly the porch under the tower was used as the vestry in 1829.]

#### In the North Aisle

A Brass to the memory of Bishopts. 1487. [Bishoptre.] In the north-east window the mutilated figure of an ecclesiastic in stained glass surrounded with a border of fleur-de-lys and roses. In one of the upper lights a bull's head and part of a scroll with these letters S[anctus Luc]as. In the next window to the westward, the remains of a figure holding a crosier: and in the upper light, an angel with a scroll thus inscribed, Sci. Matheu.

Weever records an inscription formerly existing in this Church which is much too good to be omitted. [John Weever, *Funeral Monuments*, 1631]

Here lyeth ... Palmer of Otford Esqr.

Palmers al ovr faders were,  
I. a Palmer, livyd here  
And travvld still, till worne wyth age.  
I ended this worlds pylgramage  
On the blyst Assention day  
In the cherful month of May;  
A thowsand wyth foure hundryd seven,  
And took my jorney hense to Heven.

The Church-yard falls rather abruptly towards the river which runs close under it. The marshes hereabout abound with plovers, a cloud of which I noticed frequently making a circuit towards us from the opposite shore, and wheeling off again to the lowlands about Burham, whose grey Church, screened by a fine group of trees, forms a conspicuous feature in the view.

Through the village to Paddlesworth, (vulg. Paulsford,) where I understood considerable remains of a Chapel or Chantry were to be seen. The exterior offers nothing worthy of



*Paddlesworth around 1800 (from Hone's 'Every-Day Book'). The image - and even the owl - matches Briton's description perfectly.*

observation, but internally it bears considerable evidence of antiquity. On entering it, a large white owl, scared by our presence, slid out by an old loop-hole in one of its walls, and swam silently away thro' the garish light, to seek some other congenial resort. "There yet remains the mitred archway very fair and large, of wrought stone, which separated the Chancel from the body of the Church," [Thorpe, *Custumale Roffensis*, 1788] apparently of more recent workmanship than the rest of the building. One of the gable ends having suffered considerable injury, the roof in many places stands off from it, and the light therein admitted strikes so vividly on the eye, as to produce a painful effect. When Hasted saw it, there was a breach made in the north side, wide enough for cattle to go in for shelter, and to receive ploughs, harrows, and other implements of husbandry: it is now repaired. There are fragments of another building on the hill beyond. [=Dode?]

### **Millennium Tapestry**

The idea of the Millennium Tapestry pre-dated the formation of our Society and it was recently suggested that we might like to participate. The committee has agreed and, time being short, Mrs Brenda Ashbee has submitted a design based on the Bischoptre brass in All Saints church. We hope this will be approved both by members and by the company preparing the materials.

### **The Museum**

It is hoped that building work at the Old Fire Station in Waghorn Road will be completed by the end of 1998. The Society expects to work with the Town Council in 1999 to mount a permanent exhibition of Snodland's history there.

We shall be glad to hear from anyone who can offer particular skills (carpentry, art-work, design, etc.) in setting up the displays.

Preliminary discussions by our Committee have led to the view that the enterprise will work best if there is a mixture of a core of permanent exhibits, with others on particular subjects rotating regularly (to encourage return visits). It is also hoped to store the Society's library and

archive there, with facilities provided in the rear room for those who wish to consult the material. Apart from those living in the town, we get a steady stream of visitors (especially from America and Canada) tracing their family histories. It would be useful for them to have such a resource.

I have a card index of parishioners, built up over many years, which usually has provided some information for these visitors. I am currently putting all the nineteenth-century names I have (from censuses, registers, etc.), on to a computer database. As time and energy permits, this can be extended to include earlier and later names. Comparisons between the various sources often show up discrepancies, which only family knowledge can resolve satisfactorily. We shall be pleased in time to have notice of additions and corrections. In the meantime, we have relatively few pictures of former parishioners and will be glad to copy more, especially if the names are known.

### **Defence of Britain**

Denis Anstey is collecting material relating to this project and will be setting up a group to research and describe the sites and their use. Please contact him if you have information or would like to be involved.



*A snapshot from the late Gerald Edgeler's collection, labelled 'Peace Day': 19 July 1919. The soldiers are approaching Malling Road from Bramley Road.*