

# SNODLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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[www.snodlandhistory.org.uk](http://www.snodlandhistory.org.uk)

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## Correspondence

Correspondence and 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; e-mail: [aa0060962@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:aa0060962@blueyonder.co.uk)), or to the Secretary, Mr. Neil Miners, 13 Gorham Close, Snodland, Kent ME6 5EZ.

## Subscriptions

Subscriptions for the new season, due on 1st September 2001, should be paid by 1 February 2002, otherwise membership will be deemed to have ceased. Rates remain as in previous years: £5 individuals (£2.50 aged 14-17); £7.50 joint adult membership; £10 family; £50 corporate. Cheques (payable to Snodland Historical Society) should be sent to the Treasurer, Mr Brian Tansley, 11 Godden Road, Snodland, Kent ME6 5HF, or given to him at a Society meeting.

## Meetings

At the Devonshire Rooms, Waghorn Road, Snodland, Wednesdays, at 8 p.m. Visitors are welcome at £1 entry per meeting.

**5 December 2001.** A further look at 'Old Snodland' in slides. Refreshments will again be served. Our thanks to the ladies who have organized this.

**30 January 2002.** Mr Robert Ratcliffe of the City of Rochester Society, and a popular lecturer, will give an illustrated talk on 'The City of Rochester'. 'A general tour of the city beloved by Dickens, but with far more to it than that.'

**6 March 2002.** We are very pleased to welcome Philip Lawrence again. He will give an illustrated talk entitled 'Mysteries of St. Michael's. Some unexplained oddities of this lonely church at East Peckham.'

**3 April 2002.** Mark Turner, Archaeologist for the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, will give an illustrated talk: 'Archaeology and the CTRL'. He will pay particular attention to the findings near the Medway.

## Ham Hill

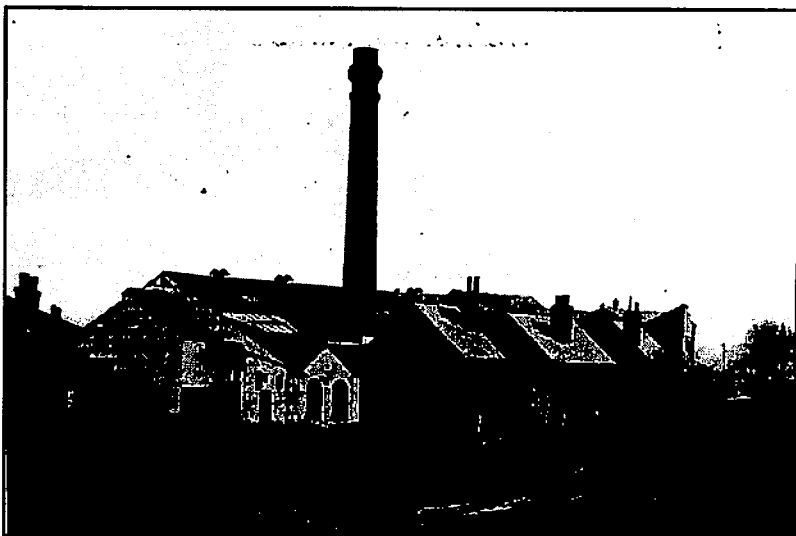
It is only in the last ten years or so that Ham Hill has become part of Snodland, being formerly in the parish of Birling. Consequently those of us researching Snodland have hitherto done little to explore its history. But now Neil Miners has begun research into the area and we are trying to collect information about it. In her book 'Birling, A Backward Glance', Margaret Collins has given a lead, with names from the tithe schedule and 1841 census. Andrew Ashbee has copied the 1861 and 1891 censuses and currently about two-thirds of the 1871 census. We also have the 1881 census printed from the CD-set produced by the Mormons. At the moment we have old 25" Ordnance Survey maps showing the Brook Lane part, but only 6 inch maps showing the Sandhole Lane area. We have not seen any commercial photographs of Ham Hill by Hambrook or anyone else, so all pictures gathered so far are by private individuals. We will be glad to receive any further information or material (which can be copied if necessary).

## Library and Archive

We have bought an 1840 coloured map of the Overland Route to India (£40) and a small book entitled 'Our Untitled Nobility' (cost only £3 because it lacks one of its covers). The latter, published in 1864, includes a chapter on Waghorn. Mrs P. Ayto has donated some splendid scrapbooks of Snodland guides (1970s-1990s). Miss E. Piper has donated photographs and newspaper cuttings of the local WRVS. Smurfitt Townsend Hook has placed on loan a collection of archives from the mill. These have been catalogued. Pride of the collection is a large ledger book of the 1870s detailing financial transactions of the Hook family. This includes a section copied from an earlier book of the late 1860s. Of particular interest are entries relating to the building of various houses (including 'Veles') in the High Street, Brook Street and East Street. Here are the first of them.

The house on the site prior to 'Veles' being built ('Acacia Cottage' in the 1851 census) had been owned for many years by the Rector, Rev. Henry Dampier Phelps. He died in 1865 and the ledger shows that in the following year C.T.Hook paid £409. 12s. 6d. for the property to 'Mr Phelps & Costs'. (This Mr Phelps was presumably one of the nephews who administered the Rector's estate.) At the same time he also acquired land from 'Selby' (£400), 'Goodhugh' (£350), 'Austen' (£100) and five lots of 'School Field' (£724), spending a further £2750. 12s. 9d. on 'Alterations till 1868', presumably for rebuilding the main house and developing the land. 'Coachman's House & Stables' (on the opposite side of the street) cost £570. 2s. 3d. and the 'Gardeners House' (probably one of two properties adjacent to 'Veles' in Brook Street) for £292. 9s. 8d. £865. 19s. was spent making the road and drains of May Street.

Joseph Privett, carpenter and builder, was one of the founder members of the New Church in Snodland and came with the Hook family. He was employed to build four houses in Brook Street (£503. 3s. 3d.), seven houses in East Street (£791. 6s. 5d.) and '4 Houses and workshop on



*These are probably the 'four houses and workshop' built by Joseph Privett on the Brook. The workshop was initially the silk factory, but this failed and the premises subsequently became the paper-bag factory run by Nichols. When were these houses (on the East side of Brook Street) demolished? They were certainly there in 1932.*

Snodland Brook (£700) with a further £20 for raising the ground. He was paid for the work in October 1868.

Burgess and Langridge were building at the same time: '6 Houses, adjoining the above 7 Houses in East Street (£775. 19s. 6d. - November 1869) and '2 Houses opposite the above 13 Houses in East Street' (£230. 4s. 7d. with £50 of land 'deducted from school', September 1870). The latter were known as 'Vine Cottages'. All were let to tenants at weekly rentals.

As these roads and buildings were put in place, land by the river was acquired for the expanding mill. The coal wharf was bought from Thomas Weekes and Robert J. Clark for £1128. 18s. 6d. and a portion valued at £400 was added to the 'Paper Works'. The remaining wharf was let to Thomas William Peters (Snodland's coal-man) at £60 p.a. from 25 March 1871. Nine cottages and gardens next to the wharf were purchased from Mrs Broad and partly demolished. In their place was 'land added to the Mill/New Machine House &c (£800), 'New Beer House' (£200) and 'supposed value of 5 Cottages, Storekeeper's House & Mess Room still standing (£844. 14s. 4d.). The beer house ('The Wheatsheaf') was leased to F. Leney & Son of Watlington for 21

years from 24 June 1868. £328. 2s. 1d. was paid to Joseph Privett on 24 June 1868 for building work on the site. The following week he received a further £780. 17s. 9d. for building May Villas in the High Street.

### Museum

Recent donations to the Museum include (1) a pound note of 1825, over stamped because the Maidstone Bank which issued it had gone bankrupt (donor: Mrs P. Ayto); (2) a cricket bat with a small silver plaque on the back, showing that it was presented to Eustace Hook by the members of Snodland Cricket Club (donor: Smurfitt Townsend Hook, through the good offices of John Soane); (3) A small metal cup once used for paying wages at the paper mill. Having received the wages the recipient tossed it into a sack ready for the next payment. Each cup was numbered - ours is '96'; (4) a hand-drawn invitation to the opening of the New Jerusalem church on 27 June 1882 (donated by Margaret Lawrence of East Peckham). Some changes to the displays have been made: maps and photographs of Ham Hill are on show in the front room, while the middle room currently features copies of many nineteenth century illustrations of windows and brasses in All Saints by Charles Winston, Thomas Fisher and others.

### Memorabilia of Servicemen

#### 1914-1918 and 1939-1945

Our member Tony Grant is researching the war service, life and family of those commemorated on the War Memorial in Snodland Cemetery. In due course he hopes to produce a CD-ROM of his findings and we will also work to produce a booklet or booklets in our pamphlet series as an alternative. Experience has shown that many local families have naturally retained material about these servicemen and, if they are willing, it would be good to collect as much information as possible from them to supplement what can be gleaned from official sources. Any information and/or photographs could be sent to him (A. J. Grant, 56, Freeland Road ME6 5RG, or e-mail:

tony@freelands.fsnet.co.uk), or Andrew Ashbee, 214, Malling Road, ME6 5EQ (e-mail: aa0060962@blueyonder.co.uk), or brought to the Museum, where we can make computer copies. The Society is also keen to collect information about the war service of those who returned safely after the conflict. We have copies of the 'Roll of Honour' compiled in Parish Magazines of 1914-1915 and some other relevant material for both World Wars.

*Mr E. Hucks kindly donated to the Museum the medals, plaque and associated papers for his ancestor William Hucks, killed in 1914. These are on display.*



### 1901 Census

On 2 January 2002 the Public Record Office is releasing the 1901 census. Since it is a costly venture a charge is being made to searchers for copies of entries. The Committee has agreed that we should attempt to buy the Census returns for Snodland and Lower Birling. Although a system has been set up for individuals to search for family members, it seems the PRO has not yet finalised one for societies such as ourselves who will wish to acquire complete parish records rather than a few family names. At 75p a page this is a substantial outlay (in our case we estimate at least £125) and I believe they are looking at some kind of package to help. We will continue to monitor the situation and will hope to

add copies of the original pages to the other censuses already held at the Museum as soon as possible. Information from it will also be added to our persons database.

### The new Co-operative Store

The opening of the new Co-operative Store



*The Co-operative Stores in Holborough Road,  
photographed in the year the shop opened:  
1904-1905*

incorporating the Post Office on 12 December is but the latest move for one of Snodland's oldest shops. As early as 30 November 1867 the Kent Messenger reported a meeting chaired by Charles Townsend Hook 'for the purpose of forming a Co-operative Stores'. Rules were drawn up and adopted, using those of Sheerness Co-operative Society as a model, except that 'shares should be 5s. instead of £1, as at Sheerness, to give the

working classes greater facilities of joining. A great number then gave in their names as members, who remained after the public proceedings were over, to elect their Committee of management and Officers, and selected Mr Henry Brown [cashier at the Paper Mill] as their Secretary.' Presumably this enterprise prospered, but nothing has been found to show its existence.

Meanwhile the Rochester and District Co-operative Society was formed in 1884, gradually opening branches in the locality. On 24 September 1904 they proudly opened their large new shop on the Holborough Road in Snodland, the latest shown in a splendid booklet of 1905 commemorating the 21st anniversary of the Society, recently kindly loaned to us by Mrs Mary Smith of Tonbridge. The photograph is shown here.

Can anyone help with the date the shop transferred to Malling Road - 1970s? The building was then transformed into the Working Mens' Club, which moved across the road from its original home, the Institute, soon to be demolished.

The shop's new home was on the site of Brook House, the home of Joseph Evan(s) Smith (1814-1907) from the 1880s. Smith, a physician, was born in Horsley, Gloucestershire, and seems to have been a member of the New Church. Perhaps he became acquainted with the Hooks during their time in that county. In its final years Brook House became the home and shop of Mr Batchelor, the builder.

### Paper Mill books

Smurfitt Townsend Hook has passed to the Society a number of copies of the first edition of Kenneth Funnell's book on the paper mill. The firm is happy for us to donate copies to members, so they will be available at Society meetings. We can supply by post too, but postage will be £1.