

# SNODLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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

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## Correspondence

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## Subscriptions

Subscriptions for the present season became due on 1st September 2003. They remain at the same rates as before: £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. Membership will cease if a subscription remains unpaid by 1 February 2004.

## Meetings

Are held at the Devonshire Rooms, Waghorn Road, on Wednesdays at 8 p.m. Visitors are welcome at £1 per meeting.

**28 January 2004.** Bob Ratcliffe returns to give an illustrated talk, this time about 'The Railways of Rochester'.

**3 March 2004.** Philip Lawrence will give the first of two related talks on 'A Kentish parish in the 1870's - Cliffe at Hoo'. The second one will be included in next season's meetings.

**7 April 2004.** We are delighted that Helen Glass, Director of Archaeology for the Channel Tunnel Rail Link can come to up-date us on the latest finds and investigations. Please note that the order of our last two meetings is now reversed.

**5 May 2004.** Jeremy Ashbee will give an illustrated talk on Rochester Castle.

## Publications

The text of Pamphlet 18: *The Early Papermakers of Snodland* has been added to the papers published by the Kent Archaeological Society on their web-site: [www.kenthistory.ac.uk/papers](http://www.kenthistory.ac.uk/papers) and can be down-loaded from there.

Andrew Ashbee's account of 'The Murder of P.C. Israel May at Snodland, 24 August 1873' has been re-printed as pamphlet No. 20 [18 pages, £1]. This will be available from 5 January 2004.

Work will soon start on a re-vamped history of the Parish Church of All Saints, again based on Andrew Ashbee's previous publication of 1980. This will be pamphlet No. 21.

The First Edition of 'A Database of Snodland Parishioners to 1901' is complete and this will be available as a CD-ROM from the beginning of January. Cost to all purchasers will be £10 (including UK postage; add £1 for overseas). This is by far our largest project to date and is on-going, so further editions will appear in later years as required. Work began in the 1970s as a card index compiled by Andrew Ashbee. Further information has been added gradually from registers, censuses, and other sources, including help from family historians. We have put all the pre-1800 information onto our web-site, but since it is continually being revised there are no plans to add the main database for 1800-1901 there. However, in addition to the CD-ROM, it can be seen and consulted on the Snodland Millennium Museum computers. A sample page appears overleaf to show the scope of each entry, but of course some have minimal information, while others (like the one shown) are already quite comprehensive. Here is the text of part of the

Ref: MAY.095                      Surname: MAYATT  
 Forenames: Henry William                      Gender: M  
 Born when:                      Born where: Snodland  
 Baptized when: 30-09-1877                      Baptized where: Snodland AS  
 Married when: 16-08-1902                      Married where: Lewisham  
 Married whom: Annie Eliza Wright  
 2nd marr. when:                      2nd marr. where:  
 2nd marr. whom:  
 Died when: 06-07-1917                      Died where: France/Flanders  
 Died of: wounds  
 Buried when:                      Buried where: Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun. Pas de Calais, Grave IV.N.53  
 Burial age:  
 Father's name: Edward Phillips Mayatt  
 Mother's name: Ellen [...]

Address:

Career: Scholar (1881); Paper mill: cutter boy (1891); lab. in Lime works (1901)

Children:

Remarks: Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment, 1st Battalion; private G/903; enlisted Maidstone; brother in law to Alfred Wallis

Sources: 1881-1901 census, register, war memorial in cemetery

## Introduction to show what is included:

This database is an attempt to list all people known to have lived in Snodland between 1800 and the end of 1901. It will never be complete - and future editions will be produced at later times as more information is forthcoming - but this first version has as its base all persons listed as baptized, married or buried from parish and other available registers between those years and all persons listed in the Snodland censuses 1841-1901. Anything else (and there is plenty) is a bonus.

## The registers searched are:

1. The parish registers of All Saints, complete for the period, except that there appears to be a gap in the marriages between 6 August 1809 and 31 July 1814 (at a change of registers). (Also about half-a-dozen entries are illegible on the microfilm and have yet to be ascertained from the originals.)
2. Christ Church, Lower Birling: a chapel of ease to Birling parish church, opened in 1893 and serving the southern end of Snodland parish as well as the adjacent hamlet of Ham Hill (which only became part of Snodland in 1988). Baptisms and burials date from 1893, but no weddings took place here until 1911. Weddings before 1911 have still to be recorded from the parish registers of All Saints, Birling. The database currently incorporates baptisms 1893-1901, burials 29 November 1894 to 6 January 1966. [Snodland Historical Society Registers series No. 1 is the burials 1894-1966]
3. Congregational (formerly 'Independent') church. Baptisms 1836-1868 written in 'The Church Book of the Independents' and 'Certificates of Baptisms' 11 March 1883 to 24 January 1907 (both volumes now deposited at the Medway Archives and Study Centre) [All published as Snodland Historical Society

## Registers series No. 2]

4. The Church of St John the Evangelist (Swedenborgian), (also known as 'The New Jerusalem') established and built by the Hook family, papermaker masters of Snodland Paper Mill, in 1882; closed c.1988. Weddings: 7 July 1883 to December 1938. The Baptism registers begin at 2 February 1913 so are not included. Apparently there are some earlier baptisms recorded on a board inside the church, but access to see these has not been possible. [Snodland Historical Society has published the complete extant registers: Baptisms 1913-1988 and Weddings 1883-1988: Registers series, No. 4.]
5. Primitive Methodist Church, Malling Road. Opened in 1873. A single small register book is known (currently held at the United Church), from which all baptisms, weddings and burials recorded before 1938 are incorporated in the database.
6. Snodland Parish Cemetery. Opened in 1896, after which only selected burials were allowed at All Saints Churchyard. All denominations. The database includes all burials listed in the first register: 19 March 1896 to 17 April 1952, together with a few later entries gleaned from a manuscript book drawn up by the cemetery caretaker for receipts by clergy for burial fees, 1952-1977. The latter varies in detail according to the whims of the compilers, so at some stage will be checked against the official register. [Snodland Historical Society Registers series No. 3 is the first register]
7. No registers are known for the Baptist Church formerly in Church Fields.

Information from the extant (and some lost) memorials in All Saints churchyard has been included.

Entries from several Trade Directories have been noted: Samuel Bagshaw's directory, 1847; Kelly's directory, 1855; F. C. Melville's directory, 1858; Kelly's directories, 1859; 1867, 1874, 1882, 1887, 1891, 1895, 1899, 1905

This First Edition of the 1800-1901 database has more than 17,500 entries and must be one of the most comprehensive projects of its kind undertaken for a single parish. More than 2000 surnames and variants are found. The pages can be searched for any word or name, so it will also be a useful tool for studies of occupations, places of birth, places of residence, and so on.

Since there is plenty of space on the CD we have also included all our lists of Snodland parishioners from earliest times to 1800. (These too can be seen at the Museum.)

### Museum

Among the more significant material to have been deposited recently are three items:

(1) John Hamilton, who has recently moved to Whitstable, has kindly given several files of papers, including notes and other items dating from his time as Parish Clerk about twenty years ago.

(2) Mrs Rosemary Crouch has kindly given files of papers relating to the Snodland Stagers. These are in addition to the collection of photographs of Stagers productions which she gave us some time ago.

(3) A rent book was recently rescued from a skip at the Paper Mill and has been donated to the Museum. This records weekly rents for 68 properties owned by the mill/Hook family in Mill Street, May Street, East Street and Brook Street, for the years 1890 to 1919. I have written to the mill on several occasions asking that historic material of this kind should at least be offered to us before it is destroyed, but my pleas seem to fall on deaf ears. The book will enable us to trace the comings and goings of tenants in the properties. It also shows the group of houses in Mill Street which were destroyed in the 1906 fire.

**Closures: 2003-2004:** from 21 December 2003, re-open 7 January 2004; Easter Sunday; 5 June (Local History Societies - including ours - at

Maidstone Museum); Carnival Day (early July).

### Australian War Memorial

On 11 November the Australian War Memorial was unveiled at Hyde Park Corner. That evening TV news covered the event and sharp-eyed parishioners noticed 'Snodland' as the camera panned across the names on the memorial. The web-site about the memorial states that 'The 24,000 place names record the origins of Australian Servicemen and women, many of whom were born overseas.' We have ascertained that there is no 'Snodland' in Australia (which could have been founded by an emigrating parishioner in earlier times!), so this must be us. Presumably then someone born in Snodland emigrated to Australia and was killed in one of the two World Wars, perhaps the Second. Any information will be welcome.

### New booklet

Pam and Peter Wotton have written *The Kent Turret Clocks of Thomas Cooke of York*. This includes the Clock Tower in Snodland and has photographs of the mechanism as well as the familiar Hambrook postcard of the exterior. It is an attractive booklet in the style of the well-known Shire Publications: 48 pages, including many colour illustrations: ISBN 1 85072 311 7. Copies are on sale at the Museum at £5.

### Dressing up

A section in Fancy Dress is a familiar part of Carnival and other processions. We are accumulating quite a series of early photographs of Snodland groups in costume, but usually have no idea who the people are or what the occasion was. I showed two pictures of groups at the 'Prince of Wales' in Holborough Road at the December meeting and print one of those with a similar (third) picture overleaf. All probably date from around 1905-1910, since two are labelled as the work of 'Mason and Sons, Snodland and West Malling'. Masons seem to have been quite active in those years, but apparently did not issue commercial series of postcards like Hambrook (apart from the mill fire in 1906). They did photograph many events and groups.

