

# Snodland Historical Society Newsletter

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web-site: [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

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

## Subscriptions

Any unpaid subscriptions may be sent to Mrs Brenda Ashbee at 214, Malling Road, Snodland, Kent ME6 5EQ, or given to her at Society meetings. Membership will lapse if a subscription remains unpaid at February 1st 2006.

## Forthcoming Society Meetings

25 January 2006. Tony Farnham, Chairman of the Society for Sailing Barge Research, will talk about barges in their heyday, particularly on the Medway and Swale.

1 March 2006. David Carder, a lecturer for the WEA, will give an illustrated talk on timber-framed buildings.

5 April 2006. To be arranged.

3 May 2006. To be arranged.

## Kent Place-Names

We are delighted that the Kent Place-Names group have accepted our invitation to hold their annual meeting in Snodland. This will be on Saturday, July 15th, 2006 at the United Church, morning and afternoon. We hope the opportunity

will be taken to study and explain some of our local names. Distinguished and expert speakers will participate and some of our members may wish to attend what promises to be an interesting day.

## England's Past for Everyone

Dr Andrew Hann spoke to us briefly about the above project in October. He has sent me the following for inclusion in our Newsletter. "The Victoria County History's 'England's Past For Everyone' (EPE) is an exciting new venture, intended to help widen access to the VCH's existing red volumes of parish-by-parish local histories, and involve the wider community in researching and writing new local history materials. The aim is to produce publications that are both engaging and authoritative, drawing on local knowledge and expertise as well as the work of professional historians. The research will be made available both online, via the VCH website, and in paperback as part of a new VCH Studies series of accessible local histories. EPE is a national programme, with projects underway in ten counties spread across the country from Durham to Cornwall, and is supported by a £3.4m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This is matched by contributions from local sponsors, who in Kent include Kent County Council, the University of Greenwich, Kent Archaeological Society, Kent History Federation and the City of Rochester Society.

Andrew will be based in the Medway area, and will initially focus his research on a group of eight parishes in the lower Medway valley (Aylesford, Burham, Snodland, Wouldham, Halling, Cuxton, Strood and Frindsbury), looking

specifically at processes of industrialisation during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and their impact on the local environment, economy and culture. Special attention will be paid to the emergence of new industries such as cement, brick making, papermaking and engineering, and their relationship with older activities such as ship and barge building, lime burning and, of course, agriculture. The links between these communities and the Medway towns, other parts of Kent, and London will also be considered. This material will be published as a paperback volume entitled 'People and Work in the Lower Medway Valley, 1750-1900'. In the longer term it is hoped to broaden the chronological and geographical scope of the research, one possibility being a study of early-modern Rochester and its hinterland.

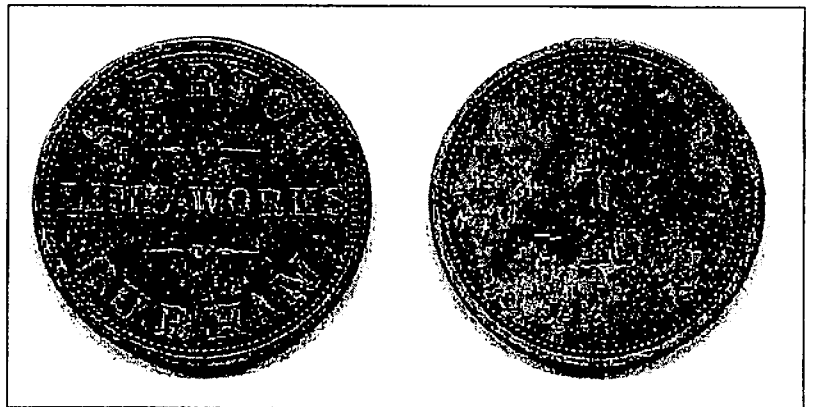
The participation of local people in the production of new local history resources is a central aim of the EPE programme, so there will be plenty of opportunities to get involved in the research. A team of volunteers is currently being recruited, and will meet for the first time in early December. Volunteers are needed to assist with all aspects of the project including archival research, building surveys, photography, website maintenance, and the writing of short articles for the paperback volume. Andrew will be pleased to hear from anyone who is interested in the project and would like to know more. He can be contacted on 01634 202724, or mobile 07776183310, or by email at [ha81@gre.ac.uk](mailto:ha81@gre.ac.uk)."

That was written some weeks ago. I have been in regular touch with Dr. Hann since then, as his plans are formulated, and have recently received a more detailed scheme (which can be seen at the Museum). I have offered the use of the Museum as a base for any suitable part of the project. Negotiations are currently in hand with BCI/Lafarge to gain access to their archive (which has been transferred to Snodland) and this may be one area which can be researched here. We have already completed a good deal of research and have the information to hand for several other areas which the project will cover, although some of these will need converting to compatible

format. Any members wishing to be involved should let me know and I can provide further details.

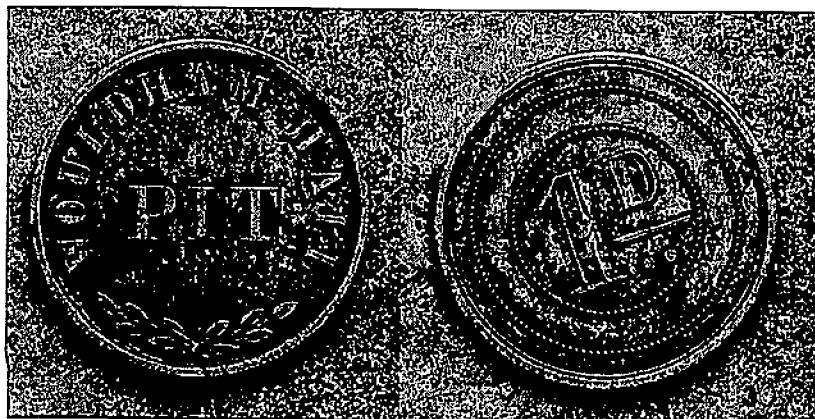
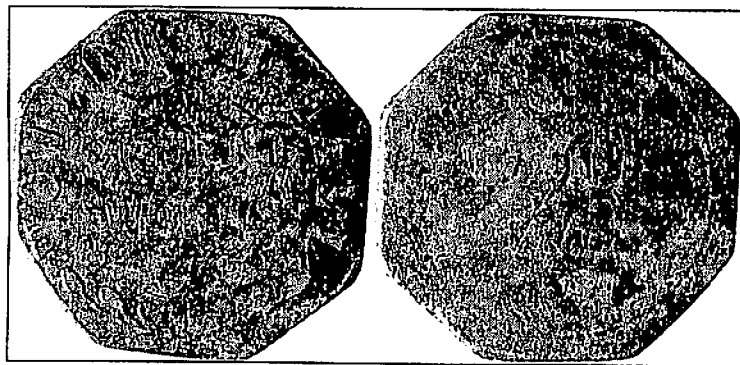
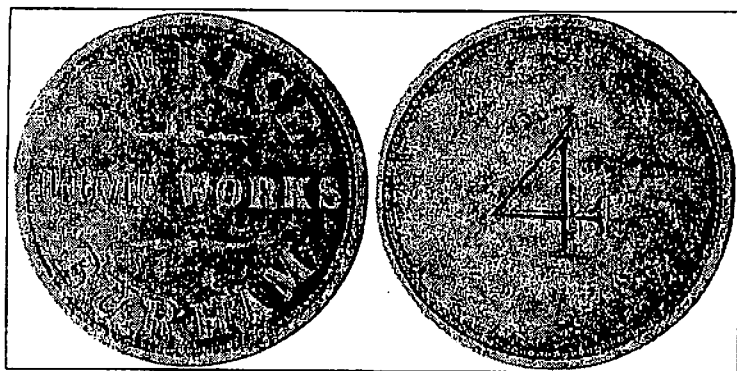
### Mystery tokens

Earlier this year I was contacted by Mark Smith of the National Mining Memorabilia Association concerning some tokens which they had acquired, but about which they knew nothing. Although Mark lives in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, he was able to visit our area in November while working in Essex and took the opportunity to come to the Museum, where he spent a fruitful couple of hours sifting through our records and pictures. If you are able, do visit their web-site at [www.mining-memorabilia.co.uk](http://www.mining-memorabilia.co.uk), which has some fascinating items on display. Under 'Mystery Items' you will find a token of 'S. Brice Lime Works Burham' with a '1' on reverse:



A Solomon Brice is known to us from the 1841 census, where he is the farmer at Ladd's farm with his wife Mary and six children, including another Solomon, born. c.1833. They had gone by 1851, but a succession of Solomon Brices (beginning with the son) became established as extractors of clay from the Medway. They had an office in Rochester and dug the clay at Hoo on the Medway and at Rainham, where they lived. Mark believes that Solomon Brice was also involved with Woulham Hall cement works (before Peters), but we have found nothing to confirm this at present. However, the clay was used in the cement-making process, so a link is quite feasible. The firm of Solomon John Brice had around forty barges and employed a hundred

'muddies' to dig the clay straight into the barges. They were very skilful at this, but it was one of the toughest of all jobs. It was well paid, and 'muddies' were a closed community, seldom letting an outsider into their circle. They worked in all weathers and had a reputation for patronising the local pubs and also had special huts at work to which they could retire for warmth and refreshment. Mark believes the token dates from around 1880, but what was it for? Using comparisons with others of the kind, he thinks it was probably issued by the firm and helped the holder pay for a drink in a local pub. Another possibility he considered during his visit is that it was part-payment for a ferry trip. Given the conditions of work noted above, this seems less likely. Here are other tokens acquired since the first one:



There is also a Brice 3d. one. The Wouldham Hall tokens show that they were used in the lime/cement works too. I've asked at the Medway Archives and Local Study Centre, but they have never seen anything of the kind. Can any member throw any light on the subject?

#### Possible outings

At the recent History and Archaeology Show at Maidstone Museum, we received an invitation from Cranbrook Museum to visit them one summer evening. This would be a special opening for us and they would provide a guide. The Museum has twelve rooms (in a former house). I have a brochure which can be viewed at our Museum and I will bring it to meetings. Probably the best idea is to plan for a visit on a Wednesday evening (say the first of the month in June). Cost of entry is £2, with transport to be added. I will provide a list at the next two meetings for anyone that it interested to sign, and we will work from there.

Also, following the illustrations of the windows of All Saints at our AGM, it has been suggested that some members might like to visit the church for a guided tour. It is easier to see where everything is 'on the ground'. I will be happy to do this, so again suggest (provisionally) the first Wednesday in July. No list required for this.

#### Museum Closures

The Museum is closed between 5th December 2005 and 7th January 2006. As mentioned at the AGM, we will open on Wednesdays and Sundays only from 8th January 2006 for a trial period, since Saturday attendances have been the lowest of the three days.

#### Pamphlet: Registers 5b

Work is nearing completion of the baptism register of Christ Church from 1912 to 1922 and I hope it will be ready in time for the January meeting. Most of the entries show the date of birth as well as of baptism. Next to be tackled will be the baptisms at All Saints 1902-1911.

### Tithe map

Neil has now completed the Paddlesworth tithe maps with sections two and three (inserted with this Newsletter). Our warmest thanks to him for completing this project. He points out that Thomas Stephens, farmer at Paddlesworth, was also recorded as owning the fields around Dode church. We surmise that these were part of the original church land and from 1366 when the two churches were united, the parson (and after Henry VIII the Paddlesworth farmer as lay parson - Stephens is named as such in one of Phelps's notebooks) had ownership of them. We hope to display larger copies of these maps in the Museum in the New Year.

### Postcards

We have been able to scan a good number of Snodland and Hambrook postcards in recent weeks and have also acquired the following originals, mostly from the 'Kent Series':

Hambrook postcard: Meopham Green (coloured)

Hambrook postcard: Seal Chart Church (coloured)

Hambrook postcard: Cooling Castle (coloured)

Hambrook postcard: Christ Church for Museum (sepia; like the 1911 card, but without the picture of Rev. A.P. Williams in the top right corner.)

Hambrook postcard: Hop-picking: 'picking into bins' (coloured)

photograph of unknown group of hop-pickers, with stamp 'W. D. Clarke, Snodland' on reverse

Hambrook postcard: Parson's Corner (sepia; a new variant of the card first issued in colour in the Kent Series)

Hambrook postcard: Offham (showing the quintain); sepia, with wide margins like the '1908' issue.

*Thanks to John Soane for allowing scans of the first two pictures here. Note the cement works on the river bank behind Bart's Hospital. This was the first Portland cement works at Frindsbury, opened in 1851. In 1900 it employed 800 men and had an output of c.4000 tons a week. This is a Hambrook Bros. photo, the others are from A. N. Hambrook's 'Kent Series'.*

