



# Snodland Historical Society Newsletter

Volume 13, Issue 1

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

December 2009

## Contacts

Dr Andrew Ashbee (Chairman), 214, Malling Road, Snodland, Kent ME6 5EQ

[e-mail: aa0060962@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:aa0060962@blueyonder.co.uk)

Ms Pamela Doolin (Secretary), 9 Hegarty Court, Snodland, Kent ME6 5BW

[e-mail: pdoolin@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:pdoolin@tiscali.co.uk)

## Subscriptions

Subscriptions for the new season were due on 1 September 2009 and should be paid before February 2010, otherwise membership will lapse. They should be sent to Mrs Brenda Ashbee, 214, Malling Road, Snodland, Kent ME6 5EQ or paid at one of the meetings. Members will remember that at the last AGM it was agreed that single subscriptions would be increased to £6 and joint subscriptions to £8.50 a year. All other rates remain unchanged.

## Society Meetings 2009-10

These will be at the Devonshire Rooms, Waghorn Road, Snodland, on Wednesdays at 8 p.m. Free to members; visitors £1 per meeting.

**3 February 2010.** We welcome again Dr. Mark Hows, who delighted us with his talk on hill figures last year. This time his subject is 'Weird and Wacky Railways' - cliff funiculars and the like.

**3 March 2010.** I'm pleased that Dr. Ann Kneif has accepted an invitation to speak to us again—on Lola Montez (1821-1861), an adventuress and dancer, who had a very colourful life!

**7 April 2010.** Another highlight: Monty Parkin will be with us again, with 'Women in Print': how the way women have been por-

trayed in paintings, prints and adverts has reflected attitudes to them.

**5 May 2010.** Gordon Bentley will speak on The History of Pub Signs. Our member Jeff Tucker warmly recommended this and I'm delighted that Gordon has accepted. We too heard him in Maidstone a year or so ago and made a mental note then that he should be invited to speak to us.

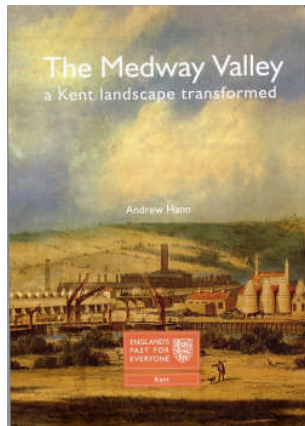
## The Aveling & Porter building at Strood

The latest news is not encouraging. SAVE Britain's Heritage has decided against listing the building, although recognising it has strong local interest. Their grounds are that it did not contribute to the most important developments made by Aveling & Porter, which occurred in earlier years. Unfortunately there is no acknowledgement that the firm had an international reputation in the development of traction engines, steam rollers, industrial railway engines and the like, and that it was at one time the principal employer in the area. Having just listed the metal workers in the Strood/Frindsbury 1901 censuses for EPE, I can vouch that more than 700 men were employed there at that time.

## England's Past for Everyone

Andrew Hann's book: *The Medway Valley a Kent landscape transformed* was published in October and is a masterly survey of all the changes in the eight parishes studied between 1750 and 1914. The paddle steamer *Kingswear Castle* was chosen for the launch on 22 October. After Andrew had spoken of the project and thanked the volunteers John Bennett, Director of the Victoria County History, presented copies of the book to representatives of five supporting groups: Kent County Council; the Kent Archaeological

Society; The Medway Archives; the City of Rochester Society, and our own Snodland Millennium Museum. It costs £14.99 in the shops, but I can sell it to members for £11. The ISBN number is 978-1-86077-600-7



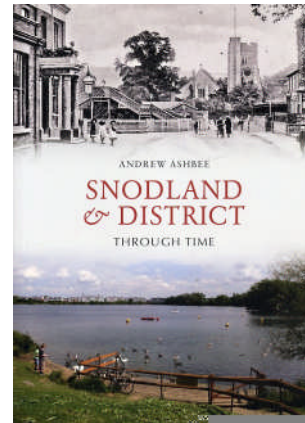
Although the book has been published, work continues in providing associated material on the web-site:

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

(At the moment this is largely left to your chairman, so Snodland is prominent!) Click on 'Kent' which will give a further list and go to 'Explore Kent's Past'. Then the 'Medway Valley' (on the right) and click on 'show all the items ...' to bring up an alphabetical list. At the moment I am putting many of the local censuses on-line: 1841, 1861, 1881, 1901 for Aylesford, Burham, Cuxton, Halling, and Wouldham; for Frindsbury and Strood 1841, 1861 and 1881 only, with selected occupations shown in combined lists for both parishes: army and navy; brick-makers and builders; cement workers; metal workers; watermen; oil and cake mills; railway. Snodland will have all censuses from 1841 to 1901, but Ham Hill has yet to be added.

### **Snodland and District Through Time**

The Amberley Press picture book was published in the same week as Andrew Hann's book and is selling well. Again the shop price is £12.99, but I can sell it to members and visitors to the museum for £10. The ISBN number is 978-1-84868-658-8



### **Valley of Visions**

The Valley of Visions programme is now about half-way through its allotted three-year life and I attended a meeting on 26th November which aired fruitful discussions on how to ensure that the valuable work which the scheme is putting in place would be maintained in the future. It has been decided that each parish should appoint a Heritage Warden 'who will identify, record and monitor heritage assets in their area.' A particular duty would be to liaise with the Kent office of the Historic Environment Record (HER) and ensure that new finds are entered on the HER database (formerly known as 'Sites and Monuments'). I have asked Denis Anstey to undertake this, since he is already in touch with them and has contributed information in the past. Many of the 'additional projects' named in the Heritage Warden's brief have already been completed or started by us anyway, so those can be continued through me as and when necessary.

I am including with this newsletter details of some splendid courses (free!) which VoV are running or linking with. As you can see several of them will be in Snodland. The contact is Tay Arnold, The Cedars, Holborough Road, Snodland, Kent ME6 5PW, or places can be booked via the web-site: [www.valleyofvisions.org.uk](http://www.valleyofvisions.org.uk) or via [training@vov.kentdowns.org.uk](mailto:training@vov.kentdowns.org.uk) . There will be a 'Heritage Conference in the spring of 2010, but not now on the originally-planned date of 30 January 2010.

## Museum

The museum will close at 5 pm on Sunday 13th December and will reopen on Sunday 10th January 2010.

The current exhibition of Medway Valley cement works will be replaced by one of aerial views of Snodland and Halling. In addition to the wonderful aerial photos commissioned and donated by *Town Talk* there will be a few from earlier times for comparison.

Mrs Winnie Warnett has kindly donated Tony's fine collection of hop-tokens and I hope to put at least some of them on display

soon. We now need to find a book to enable us to catalogue them properly.

The Town Council has recently re-discovered and placed on loan to the museum the instructions sent out to parishes in 1942 in case of invasion, together with some forms which parishioners were supposed to complete. The only ones (left?) are from the inhabitants of Church Fields and Mill Street and very few of these were completed beyond a name and address. That is useful in itself, but George Stevens, the ferryman, was one who filled in the form as shown. Within a small group many were doing their bit: 'warden and first

a i d helper' (two); 'food distributor for this section'; 'helping at the "Rest Centre" at the Central School'; 'member of the Home Guard, 24th Battalion (Birling)'; 'Home Guard'; 'A.R.P. Sector Warden on duty at Devonshire Rooms'. One sadly entered 'We have been bombed out [and] have nothing to lend.' One listed a pick for loan in an emergency, but unfortunately it had 'no shaft'.

It is intended to put this material on our web-site in some suitable form as it is a vivid reminder of those anxious

TO THE PARISHIONERS OF SNODLAND.

Your Duty in Invasion

When invasion comes you may not be able to carry on your present work. Every able bodied man and woman will then be obliged to help. Last minute preparations have always led to disaster in other countries. Decide now what you will do. Arrangements will be made for the care of your children.

The Snodland Triumvirate, (B. H. Norman, Parish Council. D. R. Gower, Police, Major Jackson, Military Commander,) require the following details, for the Organisation and Defence of the Village.

Women will you help your men?  
Each woman that helps, releases one more man to fight.

Name ..*Geo. Stevens*..... Address: *Ferry House Snodland*

No. of children under 15 *Two*.. No. of children over 15 ..*None*....

Put a cross against the work you select, and also against the other means of help you can provide.

DUTIES

Trench digging & filling sandbags	Messenger Service (Boys & Girls between 16 and 20)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Water Squads to distribute water in emergency	Cooks	Laundry
Milking Cows (Women only)	First Aid & Stretcher Bearers	
Can you Billet evacuees? (if so, how many)	Can you take in casualties and First Aid equipment	
Looking after Aged & Children (only for those unfit for other work)		
Telephonists (Women only)		

Say how many of the following items you could loan in an emergency.

Have you a fixed bath *NO* Picks *2* Shovels *2* Bicycles *1*

Motor cycles ~~1~~ Handcarts ~~1~~ Water Carts ~~1~~ Crockery ~~1~~

Cooking Stoves (Oil, etc.) ~~1~~ Cooking Utensils ~~1~~ Candles

Shot Guns *4/10* Sheets & Blankets ~~1~~ Old Linen for Bandages ~~1~~

Mattresses ~~1~~ Splints or wood for same

Containers for storing water *20 tank* Shovels or Spades ~~1~~

Containers for storing paraffin *40 tank* Forks ~~1~~

Wheelbarrows. *1*

Have you a week's supply of food in hand *yes*

times.

### National (Brook Street) School admission registers

Mrs Hobson, headmistress of Roberts Road School, telephoned me recently to say that the Governors have decided that the Log Books kept at the school should now be transferred to the Centre for Kentish Studies at Maidstone. Since I had previously photocopied the Log-Books from 1863 to 1930, we will still have a record of those volumes in Snodland. I enquired about any surviving early admission registers and she kindly allowed me to borrow those which seem to be the oldest remaining and to photocopy them. So in addition to the girls' register previously copied, we now have the following at the museum:

Infants: 1909-1938

Boys: 1904-1930

These are very useful for providing dates of birth, father's name, a street address, and any previous school attended. Some entries also record date of leaving and subsequent employment.

### Parish Council Minutes

Following my appeal at the AGM for volunteers to type copies of the early Snodland Parish Council minutes, I'm delighted to say that Ernest Pennington, Gina Turner and Rosemary Crouch have all begun the work. We have established a consistent format and it is planned that the minutes will be added to the Society's web-site and will be searchable by name, topic, or any word. This will make searching much more reliable than using just the rough indexes which are given in some volumes. Meetings were generally held fortnightly and the current plan is to group the material into annual files. But because the inaugural meeting was held at the end of 1884 the first file will run to December 1885. If anyone else would like to help in this task please let me know—it is a big project.

### Cemetery

A list of the burials at the cemetery from 1896 to 1952 was made available some years ago as No. 3 in our series of registers. We are

working on two further lists and the first is now published: *Memorials and Burials in Snodland Cemetery (North-East Sector)* (2009; £3). The primary aim has been to record the memorials, some of which are now very decayed, but by including the unmarked plots a secondary advantage is that it will be easy to locate all the burials in the sector. Work is now in hand on the south-east sector. We are taking photographs of all the memorials which will be kept on CD-ROMs at the museum. I attach two pictures commemorating casualties from the first World War—on family stones rather than the CWGC official ones.



JAMES JOHNSON / who died / March 28th 1916 / aged 56 years / And his wife / SOPHIA EMILY / who died November 16th 1931 aged 69 years // *Thy will be done* / Also his sons JAMES WILLIAM JOHNSON / who died / October 1st 1912 / aged 25 years / Signaller BERTIE [JAMES] JOHNSON / R.G.A. / who was killed / in France / November 28th / 1917 / aged 35 years.

