

SNODLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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SOCIETY NEWS

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), or to the Secretary, Mr. Neil Miners, 13 Gorham Close, Snodland, Kent ME6 5EZ.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions for the new season are due on 1st September 1999. They remain at the same rates as last year: £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 2000.

Meetings

The following meetings have been arranged. All will be held on Wednesdays at 8 p.m. at the Devonshire Rooms. Visitors will be admitted to any meeting at £1 entry.

6 October 1999. Annual General Meeting. After the business is completed Andrew Ashbee will give a talk: 'In search of Thomas Waghorn'.

3 November 1999. Kenneth Whitehorn: 'The Anglo Saxon Kingdom of Kent'.

8 December 1999. As in previous years this will

be an informal gathering at which it is hoped to show slides of some of the new pictures of Snodland which have been gathered in the last year or so. Wine and mince-pies will be served.

26 January 2000. Philip Lawrence: 'Ladies' fashion 1300-1650, as seen on monumental brasses.'

1 March 2000. Jim Preston: 'Industry on the Medway below Rochester'.

April-May. To be notified.

Reports of Summer Activities

2 June 1999. The meeting for those interested in the 'Defence of Britain' project, although sparsely attended, proved very useful. In particular the Society was loaned an ARP log-book (which has been copied in its entirety) giving details of all air raid warnings at Snodland 1939-45, all bombs and other incidents recorded in the area, and timetables for some ARP personnel.

4 July 1999. A group of about twelve met at All Saints at 2 o'clock. After a brief examination of the churchyard (and viewing the new memorial which Nigel Nicolson has had placed on the river bank opposite), the party walked along Churchfields to the marshes. Skirting the Nature Reserve, various war-time defences, industrial and Roman sites were noted and discussed. From the river bank opposite Peters' works the group turned west for a brief look at Holborough before returning to the Clock Tower via the fields behind Holborough Road.

Visitors. As usual we have had visits from

several people who have called in at Snodland because previous members of their family have lived here. We have tried to help them with their enquiries. Among them were Mr and Mrs D. Eveling from Lincolnshire. Mr Eveling's great-grandfather Walter Eveling was a long-time owner and resident of 'Ivymeath', we think from 1906 when the house was sold. He was also an alderman of Rochester and a member of the family firm Eveling and Co., noted as 'linen and woollen-drapers, 158, High Street', Rochester in the 1838 directory. Mr. Eveling has a fine portrait of Walter in his alderman's robes and was told that a similar picture once hung in one of the Medway civic halls, at Rochester or Chatham. His aunt, now aged 93, visited 'Ivymeath' as a child and remembers the military exercises of the Volunteers which took place in the Rectory Drive during the First World War (and which are recorded in the Parish Magazine; the Rector was commandant of the Volunteers at the time!).



Miss Edith Mary Eveling at 'Ivymeath', about 1915.

Walter Eveling was also chief officer of the volunteer fire brigade, which explains why there is a photograph of the brigade taken in front of the conservatory at 'Ivymeath' (the one published in Society pamphlet No. 10). It is assumed that Walter Eveling is in the photograph, but it has not

proved possible to identify him there.

THE MUSEUM

The Town Council has continued work on the Museum and it is anticipated that all will be sufficiently ready for a grand opening on Saturday, 2nd October. The Council has agreed that a **preview evening for Snodland Historical Society members can be held on Wednesday, September 29th between 7.45 and 9.15 p.m.**

It will take a little while to discover how often and when the Museum should be open, (Wednesday and weekend afternoons as a trial?) but to some extent this will depend on how many persons are prepared to volunteer as supervisors. Please let the chairman know if you are willing to help. Apart from keeping an eye on visitors, it is anticipated that the main duties of the supervisor will be to sell publications and to issue and collect library/archive items for those wishing to read them. Instructions on procedures will be provided.

It has been the chairman who has decided upon and arranged the initial displays—since most of the material (other than that belonging to the Town Council) has been in his care. Most is now moved to the Museum, so a small committee will take responsibility for future arrangements and will oversee both the displays and administration. There is not space to display every topic at once, and it is probably sensible to have wider coverage of a few subjects (which can be changed every six months or so) rather than very limited displays of everything. Time will tell!

We are very grateful to Maidstone Area Archaeological Group, who have kindly agreed to loan the finds they made at the Roman Villa; these will be put on display. Permissions are being sought from a variety of sources to display other items and pictures.

Initially, then, the bulk of the material in the entrance hall is concerned with Snodland's ancient history. In the front room at present one wall contains a display about Holborough and the other is concerned with some former parishioners and one or two events.

The middle room can be set aside for particular exhibitions and, since the site for the Museum was originally granted to the Parish Council by Maude Midsummer Hook, it seemed appropriate that the first one should show something of the Hook family's many gifts to Snodland.

The room at the rear will show some of the large photographs which the late Gerald Edgeler had made, particularly those of groups of people. It is planned to have a small bookcase of material on open access here, such as the photograph catalogue, censuses, First World War casualties, the Society's pamphlets, etc. Hopefully, too, there will be a computer holding the current database of Snodland parishioners (mostly 19th century), to which we plan to add other lists in time (e.g. of houses, 18th century and earlier parishioners). A catalogue of the Society's library/archive will show what is available for consultation.

Publications

A number of publications are being planned.

(1) Christopher Howick is working on a pamphlet about Snodland people.

(2) Peter Wootton and Andrew Ashbee: 'The Snodland Clock Tower' is nearing completion and should be available shortly.

(3) Various requests for the history of Holmesdale School by Christopher Howick have been received both by Christopher and myself. The school has agreed that the Society can publish a new and updated edition for the millennium.

(4) The year 2000 sees the 200th anniversary of the birth of Thomas Waghorn (and the 150th of his death). Andrew Ashbee has been researching Waghorn's life and work in preparation for an exhibition for the Museum (Easter - September 2000) and will write an accompanying pamphlet about him.

Affiliation to other Societies

The committee has considered the merits of the affiliation of Snodland Historical Society to other organisations. Now that we are well established and with the Museum providing a base for research materials, it has been decided to join

(a) Kent Family History Society

The advantages will be two-way: KFHS members will be kept informed of our work on Snodland parishioners and our relevant publications, the computer database, etc.; we will have access to local KFHS meetings, receive the KFMS journal, and, should we wish, purchase some of the KFHS material or borrow items from the library. Our membership number is 7536.

(b) Kent History Federation

is a central forum for many societies such as ours. In particular we can publicise our activities, while learning of current work on Kentish history. Information about possible lecturers will be invaluable. Again we can purchase the journal and a representative can attend the four quarterly meetings. (The chairman has already attended one on 3 September.) Subject to further investigation by our committee, the insurance scheme which the Federation operates on behalf of its members might save us a great deal of money.

Family photographs

We are very grateful to Mrs J. Briggs of West Malling and Mrs M. Stockford of Halling for the loan of family and other photographs, some of which we have copied. Mrs Briggs's collection is of her forebears, the Bateman family (who ran the Post Office in 1906-9), while Mrs Stockford is the daughter of Frederick Hinds, blacksmith. The



photograph shows her grandfather, Charles Hinds, with members of the XVth Middlesex

regiment who were stationed in Snodland between Christmas 1914 and Easter 1915.

Newspaper Scrapbook

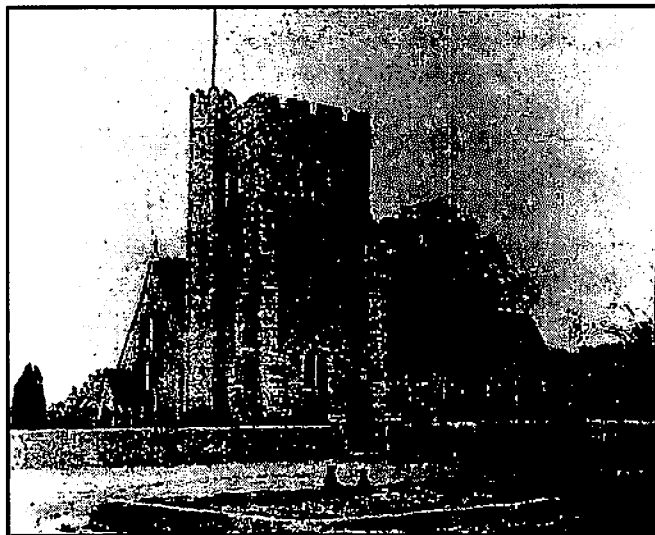
Is there anyone who takes the *Kent Messenger* regularly who would be willing to make a scrapbook of all items relating to Snodland week by week? There is a great fascination in reading even the most mundane items of 'old' news, but in time the scrapbooks would also make an important historical record. Even better would be two projects: one to paste in items chronologically week by week, and another to sort and index a duplicate collection according to topic.

All Saints Church

The history of All Saints church is well documented, but new information continues to emerge. Recently the Rector discovered a brass which at some time must have been attached to the wall. It reads: 'The West Wall and Window have been re-decorated as a special Thank-offering to Almighty God Whitsuntide 1890 E[velina] A[ugusta] H[ook].

Quite by chance a note of further repairs at that time was found in a *Kent Messenger* of December 1890: 'A well-attended meeting was held at the Workmen's Institute ... to deal with matters contained in the following circular, which had been sent to all the inhabitants of Snodland:—"It is absolutely necessary that the roof and tower of our parish church should be at once repaired, and it is also necessary that other and better seats should be provided in the nave of our church. My attention has been specially and officially called to these matters by Canon Phelps, our rural dean. Specifications of the work to be done, and the probable costs, will be laid before the meeting, and I trust will be thoroughly discussed. A subscription list will be opened. Colonel Roberts, S. Lee Smith, Esq., M. B. Parrington, Esq., and other gentlemen have promised to help—I am, yours faithfully, M. J. Minchington, your lay representative of the Diocesan Conference." After the subject had been well discussed the meeting passed a resolution in favour of the improvements mentioned above being carried out. The

sum of £130 was, without any appeal, guaranteed by gentlemen in the room, and the meeting was regarded as eminently satisfactory.'



In his book *Snodland and its History*, Rev. C de Rocfort Wall writes: '1905. September to December, enlargement of Organ chamber.' Just what that cryptic entry meant is shown on a photograph of the church which was taken before the 'enlargement'. (The picture also appeared on baptism cards early this century.) The vestry is now double the size that it was.

A re-discovered document

During recent reorganisation of the Town Council archive an old (and currently very dirty) parchment roll was rediscovered. When Edward Godden established his charity for apprenticeships in Snodland and Birling in 1662 he decreed that the money should come from rents of land in Ivychurch, which he bequeathed to Brett Netter. It appears that Netter did not pay up as he should have done, so in April 1667 an 'inquisition' into this was held at West Malling by local magistrates. They found that he owed £80 to the churchwardens and overseers of Snodland and Birling (for the four years since the charity was established) and ordered that Netter should immediately pay all arrears and be fined 10s a month additionally if further arrears accrued. This is the document recording their verdict and setting out the terms. It will be displayed in the Museum.