



# Snodland Historical Society Newsletter

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

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## Contact

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## Subscriptions

Members are reminded that their subscriptions for this season are due on September 1st and should be paid before February 2009, otherwise membership will lapse. Rates are unchanged. These can be paid at meetings or sent to the Treasurer, Mrs Patricia Gest, 1, Vauxhall Crescent, Ham Hill, Snodland, Kent ME6 5JT.

## Society Meetings 2008-9

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

**1st October 2008.** AGM, followed by an illustrated talk by Frank Smith on 'Old Malling'.

**5th November 2008.** Dr Anne Kneif will follow her previous well-received talks with one on the 'Bevin Boys', which was the subject of her doctoral dissertation.

**3rd December 2008.** The usual slide show including recently acquired pictures of Snodland and district, followed by mince pies and wine.

**4th February 2009.** Dr. Mark Hows will speak on 'The Hill Figures of Kent', on which he has published a booklet.

**4th March 2009.** Dr. Martyn Barber, a specialist in aerial photography with English Heritage, will speak on 'Victorian and Ed-

wardian Britain from the Air'. He hopes to include some local views.

**1st April 2009.** We welcome Monty Parkin again to speak on the topic we all agreed at his last visit: 'Artists on the North Downs'.

**6th May 2009.** To be arranged.

## Other news

### Valley of Visions.

This three-year project includes many local activities, many concerning wild life, but also historical studies. Early publicity was poor, but this is now much improved and it is hoped that future talks, walks, demonstrations, etc. in the next two years will be well attended. We have brochures at the Museum, but look out for local advertisements of forthcoming events.

### England's Past for Everyone

Latest information suggests that the book written by Andrew Hann to accompany the first project: 'Life and Work in the Lower Medway Valley 1750-1900' will be published early in 2009 at around £15. The new project is a study of the Medway Towns 1550-1900, led by Dr. Sandra Dunster. Pam Doolin and the Chairman continue to be involved and are transcribing selected censuses.

The Kent part of the EPE web-site is slowly creaking into life and has the beginnings of what is intended to be an extensive set of data, pictures, documents, etc. It is worth a visit at [englandspastforeveryone.org.uk](http://englandspastforeveryone.org.uk), where there are some familiar pictures from our own collection amongst others.

### Roman Dig

Again very little notice was given, but on

24th June South-East Archaeology held an Open Day at the Roman dig in the former Hook's sports field. About 200 people attended during the day and were expertly guided by members of the team. We will have to wait for the full report, but it is clear that much was found. There were some pre-Roman finds. The most prominent remains of buildings were in the north-east corner and

diverse walls and it was interesting to note that their alignment matched some nearby field boundaries seen on nineteenth-century maps. The site of the coin hoard was pointed out (near the railway) and four skeletons were found in the same area (with perhaps more inaccessible and therefore undisturbed under a large tree. A pond was located near the buildings. On display were a number of small artifacts—coins, jewelry, and the like—which were brought back for the day. Several



*A general view of the dig (diagram on the exterior of a hut) gives some idea of the amount and arrangement of interesting features.*

clearly disappeared into the railway enclosure, so presumably were largely obliterated when the line was constructed in the 1850s. We were told these were of 1st and 2nd century date, much earlier than the villa by the river, and were apparently robbed to help build the latter. There were a number of exten-



very large stones, imported perhaps to support posts of buildings, were to be removed for further investigation. No clear purpose for the site has yet been determined, but Denis Anstey's view that it acted as some kind of distribution centre for the area seems the most likely.

### **Museum**

We have bought three upright display cabinets from IKEA (about a fifth of the price of any advertised elsewhere!) and Bob Coomber has very kindly put them together. They are ideal for some of the smaller exhibits. Among new acquisitions are fourteen cricket score-books (1950s-1970s) belonging to the late Jack Hammond donated by his daughter Linda, and scout uniform, badges and other equipment formerly belonging to John Appleton and donated by his widow Susan. John was the first Queen's Scout in Snodland. Mrs Joy Booth has given a coin collection which was her husband's and we have bought some coin trays to hold and display them in. It is planned soon to have an exhibition of the lo-

cal cement industry.

### Books

Tempus Publishing Ltd (now under the umbrella of The History Press) has reprinted *Around Snodland*. The retail price is reduced to £9.59.

Ron Martin of The Malling Society has continued his survey of local pubs and inns. His latest volume is *Trottscliffe, Addington, Ryarsh, Birling, Leybourne and Snodland: Inns, Beerhouses and their keepers—1753 to 1974*. Price is £6. We have bought a few for sale at the museum and Society meetings.

I am very grateful to Janet Beyer for looking up, copying and sending details of some of the accidents which will be recorded in our pamphlet no. 28.

### Times On-line

For some years there has been a digital and searchable copy of the *Times* newspaper, but it was only available at places such as the British Library, so there were limitations in being able to use it. An introductory free period on-line for all has transformed that situation and one can currently search all issues from 1785 at home. I have made many searches, both for Waghorn (whom the *Times* supported whole-heartedly during the 1830s and '40s) and also for Snodland. There are nearly 500 of each, extremely varied in content. I share a few of the entries here. Waghorn's fiery temper was legendary and a *contretemps* in Alexandria was reported on 9 October 1840:

'As Mr Waghorn was returning from taking a drive with his lady, he was informed that one of his domestics, a soldier of the redif (militia), had received the bastlaade, and was under arrest for having absented himself during seven days from parade. He immediately drove off to the residence of General Garbi Bey, and, leaving his lady in the carriage, jumped out, ran to the prison door, and used every effort to break it open. The disturbance attracting the General's attention, he sent out word to Mr. Waghorn, inviting him in, that he might learn what had occurred. To this

Mr. Waghorn, who was greatly exasperated, answered in English, and was therefore only intelligible by his gestures. Meanwhile Mrs. Waghorn drove off, and the General's clerk arrived, between whom and Mr. Waghorn a violent altercation arose, which ended in the clerk's receiving a blow from Mr. Waghorn. The storm increased, and the General was threatened. He had sent a message to acquaint the English Consulate of the affray, but no one returned. In these circumstances he directed his servants to remove Mr. Waghorn, at the same time strictly enjoining them to do him no injury, but to carry him off with all precaution. The first man who approached Mr. Waghorn received a blow from his fist; he was however got out of the room, on which he seized hold of a Moor by the hair of his head. Every effort was made to induce Mr. Waghorn to release the unfortunate captive, but in vain. At last a bystander drawing his sabre cut off the Moor's hair, and thus released him from Mr. Waghorn's iron grasp. Mr. Waghorn was then carried off in procession and conducted without the yard-gate, which, out of precaution, was closed behind him. When the Viceroy heard of this affray he seemed highly amused, saying, with a hearty laugh, 'Waghorn is my friend, and if he [the General] comes to me for satisfaction, he shall not have it.' When Garbi Bey applied to Mehemet Ali [the ruler] for satisfaction, he was put to silence. This affair, it seems, originated in the following facts:-'Mr. Waghorn's servant had married a young Arab, without the consent of her brother, an officer of the redif, who, applying to his colonel, prevailed on him to call his sister's husband before him, and urge him to divorce her, holding out as an inducement that he should keep the dowry, which he would otherwise have to give up in the case of a divorce. The young man refused to comply. It then occurred to them that he had been enlisted in the redif previously to the order obtained by Mr. Waghorn in favour of his domestics. Profiting by the fact that the subsequent order did not destroy the previous enrolment, they ordered his daily attendance on parade. He had been absent seven days when he was appre-

hended.”

Some of the most useful entries concern the sale of industrial premises, including the paper mill, which provide summary descriptions of buildings and machinery. One factory we have known nothing about was on the river-side immediately next to All Saints church. On 25 November 1880 it was offered for sale. ‘It consists of capital manufacturing premises and wharf, having a frontage of about 150ft., on the Medway, a warehouse about 60ft by 80ft, stabling, and a shaft about 80ft. high, most desirably situate, close to the railway station. The premises have been erected in the most substantial manner and are suitable for the manufacture of oil, grease, or soap, for which purpose they have



been recently used, or for many other business purposes. The proposed subway under the Medway, when completed, will render this property most available for business purposes.’ This was an unknown factory to me, which doesn’t seem to have been mentioned anywhere.

The trade directories provide a few clues. In 1903 was ‘Broomfield & Co., manufacturers of ‘Albens’ vegetable fat’, but no address is shown. In 1905 came ‘Dick, W. B. & Co. Limited, oil refiners &c. (works); offices London’, modified in 1913 to show ‘works, Church Fields’. By 1915 this had become ‘British Lianosoff White Oil Co. Ltd., oil refiners, Church Fields’, and in 1922 ‘Pure Russian Liquid Paraffin Co. Ltd. Church fields’, but no further directories seem to mention the works. On 6 November 1926 ‘The British White Russian Oil Refineries

Ltd.’ put the works up for sale by auction: ‘Lot One will comprise a Freehold Waterside Property on the Medway, known as “Meadow Wharf” (almost adjoining Snodland Station) having a river frontage of about 200 feet and an area of about 4,600 sq. yards, with ground floor factory buildings thereon.’ Remaining lots were ‘the Modern Oil Refining Plant, including a 100-ton Oil Storage Tank, 12 1,000-gall. Stills and Tanks (four fitted copper coils): Vertical Mixer: five 1,600-gall. Neutralizers: eight Measuring and Filling Tanks up to 785 galls. capacity: 85 50-gall, Oil Drums: 3,000-gall. Steel Acid Coppers: Vats, Tanks and Receivers, various: Johnsons’ 36-Chamber Filter Press: Worthington, Tangye, Pulsometer and other Pumps: Clayton Air Compressor: three Steam Engines: Lancashire Boiler 21ft. by 6ft. 6in. (100lb. w.p.): Feed Water Heater: Piping, Valves and Cocks: a two-ton standard gauge Loco Crane: two Weighing Machines: 185 volt Generator, Laboratory and Office Equipment, and other effects.’ Views of 1932 still show the works. Can anyone throw any more light on this site?

The railway mania of the 1840s included two proposals neither of which were fulfilled. The ‘Brighton, Lewes, Tunbridge-Wells, Gravesend and Eastern Counties Railway’ was to begin at Harlow, cross the Thames by a ‘steam floating bridge’ between Tilbury and Gravesend; ‘passing by Cobham, Snodland, Malling and Hadlow to Tonbridge’ on its way to Brighton. ‘The Direct London, Portsmouth, Chichester and Direct Portsmouth and Chatham Railway’ had as its object the linking of the two great military and naval bases at Portsmouth and Chatham, reducing the time between them ‘from two days to about two hours.’ It was rather vague about our part of the route ‘passing through or near to ... Town Malling, Wrotham, Offham, Snodland, Lower Halling and Wouldham.’