



# Snodland Historical Society Newsletter

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[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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## Subscriptions

Members are invited to renew their subscriptions for 2006-7. 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. Membership will cease if a subscription is unpaid by February 2007.

## Meetings

**31 January 2007.** We are delighted that Sarah Palmer, Professor of Maritime History at the University of Greenwich and Director of the Greenwich Maritime Institute will give an illustrated talk: 'The Old Life and New Life of the River Thames.'

**7 March 2007.** Dr Ann Kneif, a guide at Leeds Castle, will give a presentation taking us on a tour of the rooms in the castle with some historical facts and anecdotes.

**4 April 2007.** Mr. Geoff Harvey, a helper at Fort Amherst, will give an illustrated talk on 'The Defence of the Medway and Chatham Dockyard.'

**2 May 2007.** Dr. Andrew Hann, Director of the 'England's Past for Everyone' project, will speak

on 'Agriculture and Industry in the lower Medway valley, 1750-1914'

## Other Events

Saturday, February 24th, 4 p.m. Philip Lawrence will give a talk 'Halling's Long Past' (from pre-historic times to 1600) in aid of Halling Church at the church. £5 entrance will include buffet refreshments.

As part of the Snodland Festival next July, Andrew Ashbee will lead two 'Historical Walks' round the parish. On Sunday 8th July at 2 p.m. the west side of the parish (to Paddlesworth); on Sunday 15th July at 2 p.m. the east side of the parish (to All Saints and the river). Both events are free. Meet at the Rocfort Road car-park.

Another Local and Family History Open Day for Medway will be held at the Civic Suite on Saturday, 15th September. We have been invited to participate and have accepted.

## Snodland House Survey

Very many thanks to all those who have helped with the survey of pre-1914 houses in Snodland. It has been a big task and the EPE team (and I too) have been very grateful for the time, care and dedication which has been put into the project. Information from the forms is now being put into a computer database. When that is done we will be able to feed in more information gleaned from documents and pictures we have at the museum, together with more on buildings which have been demolished. It is surprising how many of these there are. At some time it will be worth our while to extend coverage to Ham Hill and the Groves (all then in Birling parish) since these 'outposts' mostly served Snodland industry rather than local

agriculture.

### **The New Church archive**

I have been contacted by Rev. John Elliott, who writes: 'I was the visiting minister to the New Jerusalem Church 1965-70 and resident minister 1975-77 but also because I have served the Swedenborg Society for very many years as an editor and translator of Swedenborg's religious works. Recently I was appointed the President of the Society, which as you may know was established nearly 200 years ago.

I have already corresponded with various people, including members of the Dicks family. George was one of three brothers who belonged to a New-Jerusalem Church congregation in South London and who were lay-preachers, each of whom went from time to time to lead worship in Snodland. From what I've learned I would guess that the books were given to George Dicks by Miss Maud(e) Midsummer Hook towards the end of her life; or perhaps he acquired them on one of his visits soon after her death.

I'm sure that many people will be delighted to learn that the Hook Collection has returned to Snodland and can be 'seen on request'. My wife and I now live in North London, and I hope that sometime soon I can come and be allowed to examine them closely.'

Rev. Elliott is trying to ascertain whether the archive which Philip Stroud catalogued in 1976 is now at Swedenborg headquarters in Bloomsbury. He doesn't remember seeing it and suspects that Rev. Whittacker (now deceased) may have deposited it in the strong-room there before he left. Bryan Brown, who removed the registers after the church was closed, didn't see it either.

An EPE colleague has kindly photocopied the 61-page diatribe by Rev. Marsden against the Rector which he had printed in 1868. (He took exception to the Rector's jibe that he 'bribed' the children to attend his Sunday School with a 'treat' on Good Friday.) She also has photocopied sermons by Arthur Faraday for Lent and Harvest 1895 (also printed). All are from the British

Library.

### **Commercial publications**

We have been approached by two journals hoping to increase their sales. (a) **Bygone Kent** has been taken on by an independent editor following the collapse of Meresborough Books. He needs new subscriptions to guarantee the journal's survival and is offering £15 for a year instead of £20 if taken up by December 22nd. (b) **Family History Monthly** would provide the museum with copies and we would receive 30% of any sold. I have advised them that we are small and unlikely to be able to help in this, but if members would like to buy copies (99p monthly) I will pursue the matter further.

### **Roman find**

The astonishing find of a hoard of Roman coins on the Townsend Hook sports ground is very exciting. One wonders if more Roman material went undiscovered when the railway was built in the 1850s. Albert Daniels of the Maidstone Area Archaeological Group kept a watching brief when the houses were built in the former goods yard, but nothing came to light. Nevertheless the presence of the coins indicates that the villa site extends further to the west than previous excavations have shown. There has never been any building on the sports ground, so the possibility of finding further Roman remains there is high. When we first heard that houses were to be built on the site a letter was sent to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council pointing out that the Roman villa was nearby and asking that a look-out be kept. The usual standard reply was received, but no indication that any such action would be taken. So many thanks to the workmen who unearthed the find and who have ensured that the site will now receive proper archaeological searches.

**A short Newsletter this time because work on the EPE project has had to take priority.**