



Snodland Historical Society Newsletter

Volume 20, Issue 3

www.snodlandhistory.org.uk

September 2017

Contacts

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Subscriptions.

Subscriptions for the new season are due from 1 September 2017 and should be paid before February 2018, 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. Single subscriptions are £7.50 and joint subscriptions £10.00 a year. (I guess it would be helpful if exact money can be tendered if possible!)

Society Meetings 2017-18

4 October 2017 AGM. Following the business part of the meeting Andrew Ashbee will give his talk 'Birling and Snodland and the bonds between them'

1 November 2017 Mary Smith, a former headmistress at Maidstone Grammar School for Girls, will talk on 'A Schoolgirls' War'. The material is gathered from diaries and reminiscences of those who were at the school during WWII, including Daphne Baker from Snodland, whose diary we have at the museum. The art mistress made many illustrations at the time, which will be shown. Mary has published a book on which the talk is based.

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7 February 2018. I am very pleased that David Carder has accepted our invitation to speak again—this year his topic is 'Historic Agricultural Buildings'.

7 March 2018. We are delighted to welcome Jeremy Clarke for the first time. He will speak on 'The Medway Prison Hulks'. I heard him give this talk a year or so ago and it is fascinating. Jeremy is the Education Officer based at the Guildhall Museum, Rochester.

4 April 2018. To be arranged.

2 May 2018. To be arranged.

Various news items

The new Medway Archives Centre finally opened on 3 July 2017 in what was the old Strood Library in Bryant Road, having moved from its former site behind the Shopping area. There is still some cataloguing and organising to be finished before things are back to normal, so at the moment it is wise to pre-book to order specific documents.

We have bought two more CDs for the Museum, made by Ron Martin of the Malling Society. The first contains the registers of St James, East Malling, 1570-1900. This is particularly useful in helping trace some of the papermakers who worked both at East Malling and Snodland. I was surprised to find that virtually all the children of George Gay (mentioned in the April 2017 Newsletter) were all baptised at East Malling (although many had been born in Hertfordshire): six on 30 November 1848 and one on 5 January 1850. As well as the Gay family others at both parishes included Robert Wagon/Waghorn, John Plowman (whose two daugh-

ters both became teachers; Sarah is among those at the National School, Snodland, in the 1879 photos), James Weeden and William Jordan.

The other CD records the births and baptisms 1870-1936 and deaths 1870-1914 at the Malling Union Workhouse. These add to names previously on our database, although most of the deaths are known because burials took place at the 'home' parish.

We have begun up-dating the Post-1800 database by adding the information from the National School (Brook Street) registers from



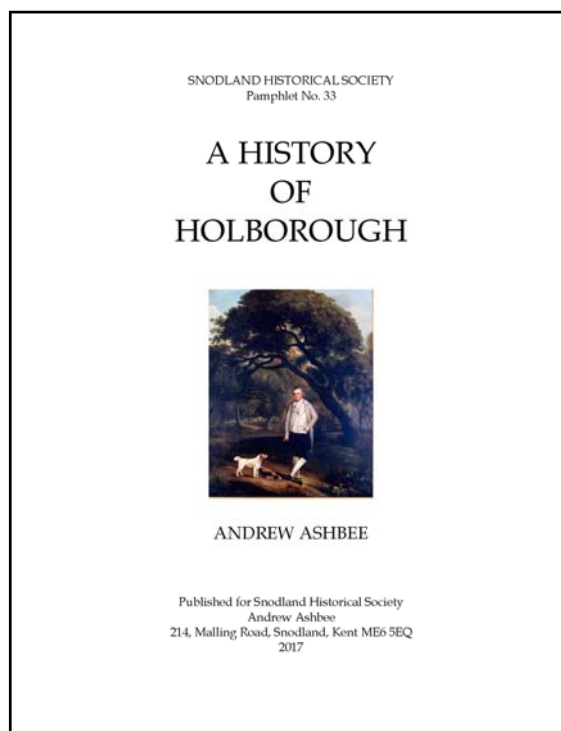
the infants, boys and girls admission registers. These often show where people came from, or went to: former schools are often mentioned and 'left the district', 'removed to Watringbury', and the like is useful to know. A surprising number of pupils came from the 'Cottage Homes' in Snodland, who looked after waifs and strays.

Charles Spackman Barker

In the December 2013 Newsletter I wrote about Charles Spackman Barker, who is buried in All Saints churchyard in an unmarked grave. He is an important figure in the development of organs: the 'Barker-lever' solved

the problem (which had become acute) of ever-larger instrument becoming increasingly difficult to play as the action became heavier. In April-May I corresponded with a Frenchman who is writing a full account of Barker and he suggested that it would be good to have a memorial to Barker at All Saints. Recently I have had further contact with two other organ builders and writers and this idea has taken root. I have spoken to the Rector and the matter has been discussed by your Committee and all are keen for a memorial to be created. The idea is for a brass plaque in the church which would include something like 'In Memory of Charles Spackman Barker 10 October 1804 — 26 November 1879, who is buried in this churchyard' followed by some short statement of his invention and its importance. We would also like to include an engraving of the organ he erected for the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, pictured, and which is now at the church in the very picturesque town of Vitré in Brittany. The organ-loving fraternity will be asked to support the venture and I will consult experts in the hope that someone can write a pamphlet on Barker which can be made available in the church and elsewhere.

A History of Holborough



With the Holborough Lakes development continuing to expand it seemed a good idea to write about Holborough and its long history. In many ways Holborough has as much claim to be the principal settlement of the parish as Snodland itself and indeed the earliest surviving evidence of habitation here is at Holborough with the round-house discovered before the first trenches were dug. Then there were the mid-twentieth century excavations of the two barrows formerly on 'The Knob', one Prehistoric and the other Roman. As part of the Bishop of Rochester's Manor of Halling Holborough is well documented, with the mill being a very important element. When the Tithe map was drawn up in 1842 Holborough then was as large as Snodland, with many old houses, whose occupants mostly served on the estate of Holloway Court. All changed with the coming of lime and cement manufacture in 1817 and that came to dominate the area. Most of the old houses disappeared during the nineteenth century and today just a few remain to show how pretty the hamlet once was. I have traced as much as I can of the early inhabitants: the Canons, the Ushers, the Taylors. and others, and have presented what we know of the history of the properties, many of which are no longer there. At the museum we have a typescript account of the early years of the Holborough Cement Works by a Mr Todd of Halling, and this forms the core of my account of the works and its use of the big house until the latter was demolished in 1932.

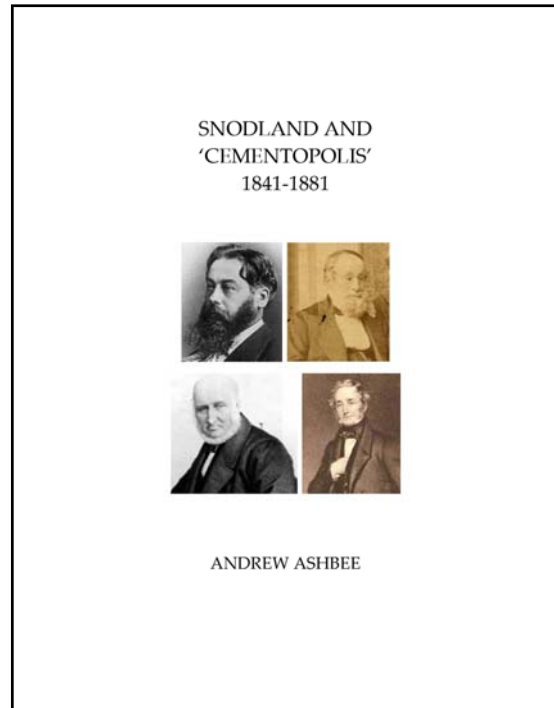
[A4 size, 24 pages, illustrated. £3]

**Snodland and 'Cementopolis'
1841-1881**

For some time I have worked on a study of the development of Snodland and district between 1841 and 1881 and I'm pleased to say that this is now freely available on the Kent Archaeology web-site www.kentarchaeology.ac in the e-books section. It comprises 204 A4 pages.

My introduction begins:

“'Cementopolis' is a word coined by Victorian newspaper writers to describe the group of industrial workings which had grown up on the banks of the Medway, especially in the four parishes of Burham, Halling, Snodland and



Wouldham. Some of the largest lime and cement factories in the country were developed here in what had hitherto been a predominantly rural area and their activities caused some amazement for visitors expecting the delights of the 'Garden of England'".

The book look at the impact on Snodland made by the growth of the cement and paper industries between 1841 and 1881, and also shows links with the neighbouring parishes of Halling, Burham, and Wouldham. Just the population increases between these dates for local parishes show stark differences:

Snodland: 465%
Wouldham: 346%
Burham: 256%
Halling: 195%

Elsewhere:

Aylesford: 102%
Birling: 73%
East Malling: 63%
Cuxton: 5%

Aylesford men often worked at Cubitt's brick and cement works in Burham; the growth of Ham Hill affected the Birling figure; East Malling had its own paper mills; Curiously Cuxton does not seem to

have been affected by the cement works at Whornes Place.

The title is perhaps misleading in that the book is not dominated by cement manufacture. It is rather set out as a series of five essays each focussing on particular aspects of the history: I The Village Grows; II Agriculture, Cement, Paper; III Road, Rail, River; IV Church and School; V The Community. A great deal of use is made of newspapers. Appendices provide statistics (a) from the registers of Snodland, Halling, Burham, Wouldham, Cuxton; (b) summaries of census occupations for the same parishes; (c) comparative population growth for them, and the parishes of Birling, Aylesford, and East Malling. Lists of Snodland cement workers and papermakers 1841-1881. I will keep a paper copy at the museum, where it can also be bought for £10 (+ £3 postage if necessary)

Looking ahead

Anne Moloney was a member of our society for many years and although her busy life prevented her from attending meetings, she often consulted on historical matters. She was keen, for instance, to use local names for new roads, many of which are found in the Holborough Lakes development.. Anne has very kindly bequeathed £1000 to the society. At the same time as we learned of this, a proposal was made for us to consider purchasing a monitor to use in place of the screen, which is cumbersome to erect each time, so the Committee has been investigating this possibility. You will be asked for your opinions on whether to proceed with this at the AGM..

Denis Anstey and I met Karen Sowton to discuss the proposal and Snodland Town Council has agreed that we could go ahead with it. The suggestion is for a 50-inch monitor to be fixed on the West wall of the room, with connections enabling laptops, etc. from visiting speakers to be plugged in. We have obtained an estimate from Holbrook's (at the New Jerusalem church), but find we can obtain the equipment at a lower rate than they offer. Nevertheless it makes sense for them to make the installation, which will have to

be done when the Play School is not in residence. Current figures for you to consider at the AGM are:

Monitor: £686.88 (including VAT)

Wall mounting: £47.52 (including VAT)

VGA and Audio leads: c.£30-£50?

Cable and installation: £24 + £280 (+ 20% VAT)

The equipment would be the property of SHS, but permission could be granted for other groups (e.g. the W.I.) to use it if requested.

Museum Volunteers. For many years Bob Coomber and I have manned the Museum, with occasional help from others. We both feel the time has come when we ought to find others who would be prepared to volunteer to help. The museum holds a growing collection of material and we need more people to know where it is all kept, so as to be able to help visitors with any specific enquiries. It can be a lonely occupation at times—there are some *months* when less than ten visitors come, but there are occasional *days* when we might receive more than a dozen. Around 350 people a year is normal. Many have seen material on our website and come hoping to find more. If you would like to help we would be very pleased to train you!

Pensioners Fair. We have been invited to have a stall at the Pensioners' Fair, to be held at Holmesdale on 27th October, which we will do.

Visitors to meetings. At the AGM I will propose that we increase the visitor's fee for admission to £2 from £1. The £1 fee has been in place since we began in 1997 and is certainly out-of date since we increased our membership fees.



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4 April 2018. Irina Fridman, who assists at the Medway archives, will visit us for the first time to give her talk: A Short and Com-

prehensive History of the Jewish Community in Medway from the 1600s to WWI’

2 May 2018. Anne Kneif will make a welcome return to speak on The Women’s Land Army.

Various news items

The Society had a stall at the Pensioners Advice and Information Fair held at Holmesdale on 27 October and organised by our MP Tracey Crouch. It was good to meet several Snodland people living elsewhere in the constituency, two of whom have since visited the museum.

Following agreement by members at the AGM, the Society has purchased a 50” monitor. It has been installed by Holbrook’s and was first used at the meeting in November with great success. Colours were very vibrant and there is no longer any need for trailing electrical leads across the room.

Year 3 from St Katherine’s School are hoping to visit the museum soon, the first time we have had a visit from this school.

Jane Colquhoun has very kindly donated £500 to be spent in some suitable way in memory of her parents Owen and Betty Lambert, who were both founder members of our society. I discussed this with her and we decided on a display cabinet for the museum. This has arrived and may well be installed by the time you read this newsletter. She and her husband Ian have also very kindly donated a Xerox Phaser 6125 colour laser printer for the Museum

Medway Archives is holding an Open Day on 13th December at the new premises in Bryant

Road, Strood. We will have a stall there in the morning.

An exciting find

At the end of October, as repairs at All Saints were nearing completion, the archi-



tect was examining the external wall at the East end of the North aisle. A crevice led into what was formerly a chimney (illustrated in a drawing of the 1840s) and, reaching in, she pulled out a crumpled piece of paper .

Initial thoughts were that it was from a printed book, but it soon became obvious that it was part of a manuscript of undetermined date. Comparisons with photographs of early manuscripts suggested to me that it might date from the 15th century and images of it were sent to English Heritage, where my son Jeremy and an expert, Dr. Michael Carter, agreed that my hunch seemed correct. Exactly what the page is cannot be verified until conservationists are able to unravel it, but they think it is part of

a service book of some kind. I am sure that once the whole surviving text can be read it will become clear what it is.

Why was it where it was and when did it get there? These are difficult questions to answer. It seems most likely that the book was put in the fire formerly under the East window in the aisle and that this page floated up before flames consumed it. But how old is the chimney? We have always assumed that the fireplace was installed for the benefit of the Lord of the Manor, whose pew was in that corner under the Rood screen, but that is only a presumption. In his notes Rev. Phelps suggested that the priest may have used the two spaces above the South and North rooms as his living room and bedroom, but to me this seems rather fanciful, especially when he could have lived more comfortably in the room in the tower. Nevertheless the fact that the East window is apparently distorted by heat from the fire indicates that the latter operated over a long period and was of considerable age.

To return to the page: it is in Latin and clearly would have been used in pre-Reformation times, but would become worthless after that. The upheavals of the Reformation are not well documented in our parish, but Eamon Duffy's wonderful book *The Voices of Morebath* brings the turbulence in parish worship vividly to life in rural Devonshire. Rural Kent was probably less rebellious than Devon, but the long-serving Bishop of Rochester, John Fisher, paid with his life in 1535 when he refused to bow to Henry VIII's decree that he, Henry, would be the supreme head of the Church of England in place of the Pope. However, Snodland's Rector, Robert Truslove, was among the clergy who renounced the Papal Authority in 1534, even though he had been a chaplain to Fisher. Not much is known about him. He was collated to the Free Chapel of St Laurence, Upper Halling, on 15 March 1530 and to Snodland two days later (17th), and was instituted to [High] Halstow on 30 September 1533. He had an M.A. degree, but is not listed in either the Oxford or Cambridge records. His Halstow appointment is something

of a mystery since he does not appear among clergy named there. A Robert Truslove became Rector of Elsworth in Cambridgeshire in 1536, but it is not certain this is the same man, although the name and date make it likely. His name appears as Trisselowe, Trusly, and Tenslowe, which complicates searches. He died at Elsworth in 1559 and is buried there. On 12 April 1547 he received the Prebend of Warthill in York Minster, but lost this and his living at the accession of Queen Elizabeth. This suggests that he had reinstated Catholic rites in his parish when Queen Mary reigned. So Truslove would have been the Snodland Rector when further decrees from Henry VIII were first promulgated. In 1536 many of the Holy Days were abolished on the grounds that they reduced the time people could work on the land, and the maintenance of images of saints and payment for lights to burn before them was prohibited. In 1538 further injunctions provided for Cranmer's 'Great Bible' in English to be put in all churches, for registers of births, marriages and burials to be kept, and for a chest for alms for the poor (with two locks). Duffy shows that in Devon at least parishes were often tardy in acquiring these items – often because they had no money to pay for them – but we do not know of Snodland's circumstances at the time.

The curate Richard Grene is documented in Snodland between at least 1523 and 1540, and indeed appears more often than Truslove in the various wills of the time. He was probably a more familiar figure to parishioners than Truslove, who had to look after Halstow too.

William Hall became Rector of Snodland in



1539 and Grene disappears at this time. In 1563 Hall very helpfully recorded that he had lived in Snodland for 24 years; was then aged 54, and was born in Kings Sutton, Northants. Where Truslove only witnessed one extant will of a Snodland parishioner, Hall witnessed eighteen, including most of the prominent people of the parish. Apparently he was unmarried and his will (1571) shows he led a frugal existence, with just a few pewter utensils and bedding bequeathed. These went to the Kember family, where he may have lodged and where William was his godson. Debts owing to him were probably for rents due from those working his glebe land. In 1547 the 1538 injunctions were tightened and clarified: just two lights were now permitted - on the high altar - and the poor man's box now had to have three locks and a hole in the top. This is the pattern of Snodland's chest and all the indications are that it was knocked up from planks similar to those of the two ancient benches from the priest's room in the tower. These in turn seem to have been made out of redundant doors. It would be good to get some dating from dendrochronology for all three items to ascertain the age of the wood. The first indication of Snodland's chest comes very early on, in the will of Joan Tilghman, dated 1 June 1548: 'I gyve and bequeyth to the pore mens boxe in the pari]she churche of Snodland xxd. [20 pence]' so it seems to have been in place by then. From this time there were no more bequests to maintaining the numerous lights formerly in the church.

Images of Saints were also required to be removed from windows. However, there seem to be questions about Snodland's compliance with all the regulations. Writing in the 1840s the Rector, Henry Phelps, makes some interesting comments. Regarding the windows he says:

About Forty years ago all the Windows of the Church & Chancel had their painted Glass entire: one whole length figure in every division, that is two

figures in each Window in the Church - the whole of which nearly were taken out by the order of a stupid, senseless & tasteless churchwarden & fill[ed] with common white Glass, under pretence of rendering the Church lighter. It was done in downright, honest stupidity, for he did not sell the painted Glass or make any advantage of it. It would be worth at the present day many hundred Pounds. The same hand took down the old screens & did all he could to ruin a most beautiful old church, which had come down thus far, in the same state as it was in at the Reformation.

Elsewhere he notes ‘The only Two Lights retaining Painted Glass I took out, repaired, & put in the East end of the North Aisle.’ Remarkably, much of the Rood Screen also remained in his time:

The remains of the Screen on the South side, which supported the Rooms above, similar to that still remaining on the North, are visible at the West End of the Pew, between the Two Pillars on the South Aisle. Another corresponding in height, existed between the Chancel & the Church, the Doors of which, I have had put up at the entrance into the Church from the Tower, after their having laid about neglected & broken & abused for many years, before I knew the Parish. At the same time, probably the Painted Glass, with which all the Windows were filled, was removed & plain Glass put in, & most likely paid for also, in their room. The only Two Lights retaining Painted Glass I took out, repaired, & put in the East end of the North Aisle.

If such elements of pre-Reformation fabric survived for so long without removal or destruction, what then might have happened to the old books? Did they too moulder in some corner for years until someone decided to burn them. We shall never know.

Charles Spackman Barker

The current volume of the *British Institute of Organ Studies Journal* contains the second (of three parts) of Phillipe d’Anchald’s account of Barker’s life and career, and also a separate study of the development of the

‘Barker lever’. I have copied both for the Museum archive. News of the plans for a memorial brass in his memory (with appeals for contributions towards the cost) are being circulated to various organ groups and journals, and the Kent County Organist’s Association is visiting All Saints in February, when I will speak to them about this as well as talking about the present instrument and the history of the church.

I repeat the request of volunteers which was included in the last Newsletter. Peter Rimmer kindly included it in *Downsmail* too, which has brought one encouraging response so far.

Museum Volunteers. For many years Bob Coomber and I have manned the Museum, with occasional help from others. We both feel the time has come when we ought to find others who would be prepared to volunteer to help. The museum holds a growing collection of material and we need more people to know where it is all kept, so as to be able to help visitors with any specific enquiries. It can be a lonely occupation at times—there are some *months* when less than ten visitors come, but there are occasional *days* when we might receive more than a dozen. Around 350 people a year is normal. Many have seen material on our website and come hoping to find more. If you would like to help we would be very pleased to train you!