

# Fact finding in the USA



The headteacher of Holmesdale Technology College, Ian Hobson, was in a party of more than 100 Kent school headteachers, which attended a controversial

fact-finding tour in the United States.

Kent County Councillor, Sarah Hohler, said there was a lot of criticism in the press about the trip to America, but the cost of it will be returned by the IT information gained.

And MP, Jonathan Shaw, told Mr Hobson: "It's quite right you went to America."

In an interview with *Town Talk*, Mr Hobson explained: "We went to four different locations in

New York, Boston, San Francisco and Seattle. For the second part of the week we all went to Seattle for a conference at Microsoft.

"I went to San Francisco and visited four schools. There were many ideas I saw to bring back here to help in raising standards."

He continued that project-based learning and the advising system were two projects he would like to instigate, although they were not suitable for every pupil.

Some students spent two days a week on work experience, which helped to develop them as citizens in the work place.

Mr Hobson did not agree with everything he saw in America, such as, one school did not have any books in its library but had computers in every room.

"Kent is seen throughout the world as having a very successful education system," he said. "I will pick out the best of what we have seen in America."

## .....and a Microsoft secret!!

**Mr Hobson's trip to America cost Holmesdale £1500.**

"When we visited Microsoft we had to sign a declaration that we did not say too much about certain developments," he said.

"I cannot make any comment at this stage, but there will be a device in 2006 which will save Kent schools much more than the cost of the trip."

The college, which has just been confirmed as a "Teaching School" for

people new to the profession and existing teachers, has a budget to send staff abroad.

One teacher has been to Sacramento, California, on a science trip. Spanish lessons have now been added to the curriculum, as well as French, and a teacher has been to South America to make links with Spanish speaking schools.

Six additional staff have been taken on due to the increase in the number of pupils.

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## Andrew returns to winning ways

10k cup lands back in Snodland

Andrew Keeley has won the Snodland 10K Challenge for the fifth time in six years.

success but he was disappointed with the low number of runners.



John Phillips presents Andrew with the cup

Twenty one runners took part and Andrew's winning time was 37 minutes 20 seconds, 11 seconds slower than last year when he finished second to José Schmitt from Snodland's twin town, Moyeuvre-Grande in France.

"I would like to have seen a few more local people taking part," he said. "It was unfortunate the French could not attend this year to defend the trophy they won last year."

Second was Steve Cable in 39 mins 26 secs and Neil Miners clinched third place in 43 mins 11 secs. The first woman to complete the course was Elizabeth Batty in 44 mins 19 secs.

The veterans award went to Dennis Rowlands (62 mins).

The race started and finished at Potyns Field and an indoor market at the community centre raised over £140 for the United Church in the High Street. John Phillips, a preacher at the church, presented the awards.

Race director, David Keeley, said the race was a



One of the youngest runners, Matt Prebble, aged 16, who crossed the line in 50mins 7secs

# HALLING NEWS....



## Money, money, money....we've got it and we want to spend it.

Don't miss out. The Halling Association has put aside funding for small projects up to £250. If you're a local group and want money for a special trip, new play equipment etc, please contact us and we'll try to help. We've helped ten groups so far and are always looking for more village projects to assist. The Halling school PTA and Halling Gardening Club have been the latest groups to successfully approach the Halling Association for grants.

So get in touch with your ideas or suggestions... There's no confusing paperwork involved, just a simple two-page application form and we're happy to help groups fill it in. For further details, please

contact Richard Cottee on telephone 01634 331143.

## Project update

### Forge Green

We have been working on the arrangements for the Forge Green project, finding out the best CCTV option for the site, and seeking materials for the landscaping works. Plans showing what the finished project will look like will be available in the parish council office and Halling Newsagents before Christmas. You can also contact Catherine Smith on telephone 01634 331358 for more information. We welcome your comments.

## Holiday activities in Halling

One of the main ideas coming out of the residents survey carried out in Halling this Spring was to have more for

children and young people to do locally during the summer holidays. We are working on plans for next year, to see what activities, such as games and art sessions, could be put on for young people in Halling. If you would be interested in helping to develop this project, please get in touch.

## For more information:

If you would like to know any more about the above

issues, or the Halling Association in general, please contact:

Catherine Smith at Medway Council on telephone 01634 331358 or email: [catherine.smith@medway.gov.uk](mailto:catherine.smith@medway.gov.uk)

Bill Swan at Halling Parish Council on telephone 01634 241551 or email: [w.swan@btconnect.com](mailto:w.swan@btconnect.com)

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# The Changing F

For the sixth part of our series, Andrew Ashbee turns the spotlight on Ham Hill and looks at the changes that have occurred to the area over the years

**Ham Hill, or Ham Mill, was part of Birling Parish until as recently as 1988.**

For most of its history it consisted of a few houses in Brook Lane together with the farmhouse on the main road opposite the 'Freemasons Arms'. These are actually quite difficult to sort out because early documents often referred to them by the name of residents - which changed quite frequently.

In the early nineteenth century much of this part of Birling was owned by Walter Coulson, including Sandhole Farm, Austen's Farm and Rookery Farm together with their associated cottages and land. (Coulson, who died in 1860, had his will lodged in the Cornwall Record Office, although the family came from Yorkshire!) He bequeathed his property in this area to two nephews, one of whom was Rev. Thomas Borlase Coulson.



*Ham Mill Cottage*

Ham Mill farm (now 'The Firs') belonged to father and son Thomas Stephens, farmers at Paddlesworth. Brook Gate and Brook House are named in the nineteenth century, and Ham Mill cottage is nearby.

It has been suggested that Ham Mill was a paper mill, but evidence is so sparse that it must remain doubtful - there are streams, but would they have had enough flow to turn a mill wheel? And was there a mill pond?

Other properties included Gowar's Cottages, owned by various members of the Gowar family from

Richard Gowar, who died in 1861, onwards. Nearer the main road, on the south side of Brook Lane, was Dyke's Cottages.

The lovely row of old houses, still remaining on the north side, were part of the Coulson empire.

Bell' in the 18th century. Two events led to a substantial growth of Ham Hill at the end of the nineteenth century. One was the abolition of tolls on the Toll Road in 1878, making it a prime target for new housing. The other was the continual growth of the




*The four old cottages behind the Freemasons Arms, Miss Apps lived in the end one*

Most of Brook Lane was re-developed and few of the old houses remain - and we have very few pictures to remind us of what it was like. The 'Freemasons Arms' is old too, but was called 'The

paper and cement industries and their insatiable demand for houses for their workers.

Most of the new houses aligned the Malling Road: Hilda Terrace, which



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# Face of Snodland



A postcard of Ham Hill in 1909

included two shops, on the west side and Clifton Terrace on the east. Annie Road is a name which also dates from this time, but, apparently, there was little building on it, just a shop.

Further down, also on the west side, were Fairview Cottages, Roslyn Cottages, Sunnyside and Rose Cottage.

The 'farmhouse' is now

home to Britannia Windows with Crayford/Corona Terrace set back from the road.

The growth of the hamlet led to a small school being founded but this closed in 1930. School Lane once ran beside the former Kent's shop, and this is now a house adjacent to the Shell Service Station.



Kent's shop



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# Ricky hauls in a big'un

A local fisherman has caught a 29lb 4oz carp in the same lake 15-year-old Matt Pearson, featured in the last issue of *Town Talk*, landed his 19.5 pounder.

Ricky Turner aged 43, a self-employed pinner and piler from Townsend Road, Snodland made his giant catch at Kingfisher Lake, Paddlesworth. His partner, Claire, was on hand to take the photograph.

Ricky has been fishing for 25 years and has been a member of the Kingfisher Angling Society for six years.

"I fish every weekend," he said. "Obviously this is my best, so I hope the next one will be more than 30lbs.



Ricky with the 29lb 4oz carp



Ricky Turner fishing in the same spot he caught his giant carp

"When you start fishing you hope for 10lb, 18lb or 20lbs. If you start off with 35lbs you have got nothing to achieve. "I just love the sport," he added.

If you are interested in taking up fishing, it can be expensive. Ricky reckons he has spent about £3500 on equipment since he started!

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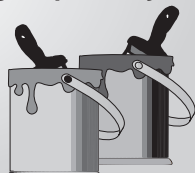
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## Smurfits honour long-serving employees

Six employees of Smurfit Townsend Hook have received awards for 25 years service with the company.

McKenna, Graham Peters, Mick Payne, Roy Skinner, Pat Faulkin and Martin Goodright.

And, at a celebration at Leeds Castle, five other employees whose services exceeded 25 years, were also acknowledged.

Fred Temple, Fred Welfare, Sandra Damms, Colin Damms and Dave Henley whose service has exceeded 25 years each but who missed previous celebrations were also invited.

Chief Executive, Laurent Sellier, presented commemorative clocks or watches and a copy of a newspaper for the day each employee started at the mill to Roger

Carol McCarthy, who has also completed 25 years with the company, was unable to attend and was presented with her award at a departmental buffet.



# Christmas Message



## The Information Age to come

A friend who understands computers has recently built a new website for the Parish of Cuxton and Halling. So, now we have two - the old elementary one with basic information, and the new sophisticated one which carries information about our present set up, notices of planned events, histories of Halling and Cuxton Churches and some Christian teaching. It might carry even more information if I ever discover how to set up links with pdf files.

The point is to make ourselves known: who we are, what we stand for; what we do and what we have on offer. The website is a waste of effort unless we tell people that we have got it and unless people are sufficiently interested to log on, supposing they have internet access in the first place. I have given below the addresses of the two sites and invite those without internet access to contact me for paper copies of the parish magazine, church histories and/or bible reading notes.

Christmas is God's way of Making Himself known: Who He is; what He stands for; what He is doing and what He offers. All you have to do in order to log on to God is to approach Him in faith

Roger Knight, Rector of Cuxton & Halling

### Christmas Services at St. Michael & All Angels Cuxton and St. John the Baptist Halling

Sunday 18th December (Advent 4): 3.00pm Carol Service, Crib Service and Christingle at St. John's, 6.30pm Nine Lessons & Carols at St. Michael's

Christmas Eve: 5.00pm Crib Service and Christingle at St. Michael's, 11.00pm Midnight Mass at St. Michael's

Christmas Day 8.00am Holy Communion at St. John's, 9.30am Holy Communion at St. Michael's

#### Contact me at:

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“Holmesdale tends to be out there in the front of things”

# Library Access Point Opens

A Library Access Point – only the second in Kent and the first in a school – has been opened in Holmesdale Technology College by MP, Jonathan Shaw, and county councillor, Sarah Hohler.

Members of the public can now order a book, using their home personal computer, which can be collected and returned to the school.

The Access Point is open during term time from 9.30am – 4pm, Monday-Wednesday and 9.30am-3.15pm on Thursdays and Fridays. During the school holidays it will be open from 9am-12noon Monday-Friday.

Caroline Roche, the school’s Learning Resources Manager, told *Town Talk* that anyone with access to the internet can have books, cds or DVDs reserved. The library entrance is next to the reception area.

Headteacher, Ian Hobson, said: “It is part of our serving the community. We want to encourage people to use the facility.

“They can look at the whole of the Kent catalogue, order a book on line to be delivered to the school for them to collect.

“It is just like going to the library at Maidstone, but on your doorstep.”

Opening the Access Point, Sarah Hohler said she had served for two sessions as a governor at the school and was “thrilled” to be associated with its success.

“Kent has 106 libraries,” she went on. “They are a place where people like to go, to sit down and to be comfortable. They are wonderful places to take children and are very important for the community.”

Praising all those involved with setting up the Access Point, she hoped it would be the first of many and added: “Holmesdale tends



Sarah Hohler and Jonathan Shaw

to be out there in the front of things.”

Jonathan Shaw talked about the “huge change” there had been at Holmesdale since he became an MP.

“Eight years ago we would not have talked about Holmesdale being at the cutting edge,” he said. “I opened the original

library here and now we are opening it again.

“We are going to have a world-class building here for the students and young people of Snodland. This is another good day for Holmesdale. Well done to everyone involved.”

**The telephone number for the college is 01634 240416.**



Jonathan Shaw (left) and headteacher, Ian Hobson



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