



March 2011

**Tadley and District History Society
(TADS) - www.tadshistory.com**

**Next meeting - Wednesday 16th March 2011
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30pm**

**'Computers and Tea'
Lyons Electronic Office**

By Quintin Gee

Lecturer in computing

(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.50)

Membership Subscriptions. Thank you to all the 66 or so people who have renewed their membership. Please collect your receipts at the meeting.

If any of the other past members are intending to renew at next week's meeting please put your cheque or cash in a self-addressed envelope and hand it to the Treasurer. Subs may also be sent to our PO Box (See page 4)

*Comments, queries and suggestions to Richard Brown (0118) 9700100,
e-mail: richard@ilexind.plus.com or Carol Stevens (0118) 9701578*

www.tadshistory.com

TADS Meeting 20th April 2011:

‘A History of Hampshire Maps’ by Gill Arnott

FOR CRYING OUT LOUD

**The Story of the Town Crier,
by Newbury's Town Crier, Brian Sylvester**

Bells and yells.....a blast from the past OYEZ! OYEZ! ('Hear me!') Bellowing stentorously, like a sumptuously suited ceremonial bull, Brian burst in on about 60 of us TADS members. We were transfixed by his stunning scarlet coat and gold, black and white apparel, with the decorated tricorne hat (sponsored by Newbury's Camp Hopson!), waistcoat (handmade for £20 in a day, in Thailand), breeches, white stockings with shiny black-buckled shoes, his bell and the be-crowned mace.

(As you know, Stentor was the Greek herald in the Trojan War, whose voice was as loud as 50 men...).

You have to be quite a forceful extrovert, able to supervise, improvise and compromise to be a Town Crier. Brian often accompanies the Newbury mayor to make stentorian proclamations and add colour to an event, advertise sales, races, etc and he often stands on the Northbrook Street canal bridge to proclaim. He happened on Newbury's 1999 lack of a Crier and thought he could fit the bill, which had been going on and off (mostly ON) from the Queen-given Town Charter of 28th May 1596.

Town Crying began maybe 3 millennia ago, as noted in the Holy Bible's Genesis and Exodus. Continental Europe had mayors in the 5th century, but not here until the 12th or 13th century.

The Town Crier (or 'Bellman' as Hungerford's Town Crier is known to this day) had quite a powerful influence on our population's habits, laws, curfews, removal of stray dogs from churches, or as prisoner escorts, the whipping of miscreants with a cat-o'-nine tails, etc. etc. and all for 5 shillings (25p) a week for a 16-hour day. He worked with the mayor (mayor: magnus - great one) and they were both symbols of

authority and social cohesion. Still are; Alcester, Warwickshire, uses some of the traditions to this day.

What's new? In Victorian Newbury the jobs would try and overturn the Watchman in his box. A modern police force had been formed in Newbury in 1835 (William IV's reign). Before the 20th century, mayoralty was restricted, but now it is open to all creeds, colours and both sexes....

The mace was once a defensive truncheon but now it is much longer and is carried crown-up, unless the monarch is present with authority, when the mace is then turned upside down.

In medieval times wars couldn't start without the Town Crier's say-so; but in the 21st century thoroughly tuned-in Brian decided to develop and train his voice to out-decibel St. Nicolas' Church bells in Newbury.

Thank you for entertaining us so colourfully and loudly, Brian.

Rosemary Bond

2012 Programme of Talks

If any of you have subjects for talks which you would like addressed, Dave Bowman is starting to look at the programme for next year and would be pleased to consider your ideas. Please contact him in writing via the PO Box or email him at TADS Googlemail.

100 Years Ago - Although the publication of Project News has ceased for the time being, the compilation of 100 years ago based on the then current newspaper articles is continuing. It is now being compiled by Ann Broad and will be placed on the TADS Website. We are also going to print a few paper copies which will be available at the meetings in the hall.

TADS Website contains a wealth of information including all the Project News; Newsletters; photos; and general information. It also has a link to the Photos of Tadley website with over 600 local pictures.

What's on? Events which may be of interest

Hampshire Record Office

For information see www3.hants.gov.uk/whatson-hro or ring 01962846154

Milestones Museum

11am Sat 12 March. National Science and Engineering - The theme this year is communication. Visitors can have a go at communicating using Morse Code, semaphore, tincan telephones and phonetic alphabet. See notices for times of activities on arrival.

Willis Museum

The museum is running several special exhibitions at the moment.

Friends of the Willis Museum *(7.30pm at the museum)*

17th March - Fab finds: Treasure in Hampshire, by Robert Webley, Hampshire Finds Liaison Officer.

Basingstoke Archaeological & History Society *(7.30 at Church Cottage)*

14th April - A traitors's death? The mystery of the hanged, drawn and quartered man from Hulton Abbey, Staffordshire by Mary Lewis, University of Reading.

Newbury and District Motor Services Story - Paul Lacey who spoke to us last July has just published a book of the above title and will sell it direct to members for a discounted price of £20 inc P & P. He is also offering several other of his books at heavily discounted prices if they are ordered with the new book. Richard the Editor has full details.

***TADS annual membership is £12 per person.
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