

March 2008



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

**Next meeting - Wednesday 19th March
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30 pm**

Death & Disease in Medieval London by John Lloyd

(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.00)

Book Launch - *The TADS Project Group will launch their new book at 2.30pm on Saturday 3rd of May at the Emmanuel Hall (adjacent to the United Reformed Church on Main Road).*

The book is an enhanced version of Florence Davidson's 1913 'History of Tadley'. The project has been supported by a grant from B & D Council and Mr Warwick Lovegrove, the Mayor, will be at the launch.

Comments, queries and suggestions to Bob Brown, Tadley (0118) 981 6109, or Richard Brown (0118) 9700100, e-mail: richard@ilexind.plus.com

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TADS Meeting 16th April 2008:
The creation of ‘Memories’
(The history of Aldermaston Village)
By Sally-Anne Martin

Last month’s meeting (19/2/08)

‘Down Memory Lane’
a film show by Geoff Wheeler

By his own admission Basingstoke bred and born, Geoff is a film buff. He probably has ‘celluloid blood’ and definitely has his own cinema. Tadley now claims him, his expertise, experience and enthusiasm for her own.

As a lad, Geoff’s professional film projectionist ambitions were thwarted by near-sighted bureaucracy. Instead, he joined the RN Barracks, HMS Pembroke at Chatham, then HMS Duchess, became a Leading Electrical Mechanic, did the film thing and ship’s photography as a hobby and then founded Wheeler’s Electrics in Basingstoke.

Obviously Geoff knows his way round 16mm, 9.5mm, 35mm and no doubt many other mm of film, with circles of spools, reels and a forest of wires, cables and other electrical and electronic paraphernalia. He knows his Eastman Colour (goes pink with age) from his Technicolor (superior) and has many film friends, including (the late) Bob Danvers-Walker, a very influential Newsreel commentator.

Geoff showed us 5 films, some in black and white, some sepia and some with the ‘new’ colour and it was horribly ageing to many of us, as what we saw in our somewhat TV –free youth is now film HISTORY!

The G.B. Newsreel, ‘The First 50 years, 1900 –1950’ (8 minutes), showed historical figures, silent and jerky, with spoken and musical accompaniment. There were momentous events from Edward 7th (1901) jerkily making his way by carriage through a crowd-packed London when King and Empire counted; Kaiser Wilhelm, the suffragettes, the Roaring Twenties, the Can-Can, and ladies getting arrested on our beaches for wearing so-called scanty bathing suits; WW II’s finalé and Princess Elizabeth’s wedding to Philip (1947) when it all still counted lots to us

Brits but many of us didn't have 'tellies' so we went weekly to the 'pictures'...

Peak Films: 'The Film Star Party' 1948 (9mins) was a black and white mêlée of British and American film stars' garden-partying, whipping up mass-hysteria and adoration from a glamour-hungry post-war public. Everyone seemed to be very slim and fit in those days (obviously with some exceptions!) but most stars smoked and the attendant smoke fug round them was commonplace. Sophie Tucker, Jack Warner and (Lord) Dickie Attenborough were there, and Kathleen Harrison of 'The Huggetts' not to mention the Jeans, Simmons and Kent.

Kodak's 100 years of Film (1899-1999) - 'Pieces of Silver' packed a potpourri of action into 7 minutes of super-swift filming where your senses could scarcely register the delights of action and close-ups. Splendid, even so, showing everyone who was anyone, from cowboys to Charlie Chaplin, JFK to Marilyn Monroe, Martin Luther-King, stuntmen and pitiful war shots, and a single red rose. Still there was the attendant cigarette smokescreen!

Bow Bells: London post-Blitz (14 minutes) made in 1954 by Anthony Simmons. Were these really the good old days? Ripped-apart London in sepia colour was quite depressing but the oft heard of camaraderie of the age definitely shone through the fog, fag smoke, smog, littered streets and clouds. You could almost smell Billingsgate Fish Market, cuddle the street market puppies, race with the greyhounds, bet with the bookies and tick-tack men and sing along with the traditional nursery rhymes.

The British Travel Association's 'Tonight in Britain' (21 minutes) showed our determination in 1953 to woo tourists to us by land, sea or air. Especially Americans! Shown in Geoff's favourite glorious Technicolor we wowed them with our Crazy Gang, Shakespeare and ballet, Stratford-on-Avon and Edinburgh, a young Max Bygraves (now living in Australia), late-lamented actresses Tessie O'Shea and Hattie Jacques and many more. A nocturnal lone policeman wandered around London in 1953's safety, obviously a reassuring presence even in those street-safe days.

Ah, those WERE the days!

Thank you, Geoff, for letting us see what we had, what we've lost and what we just could try to strive and regain. Indeed about 60 of us had a nostalgic night.

Rosemary Bond

What's On? Events which may be of interest.

Alfred the Great, Warfare, Wealth & Wisdom - a major exhibition at the Winchester Discovery Centre, Jewry Street. Until 27th April. For timed tickets Tel. 01962 840440

Hampshire Record Office

Exhibition - **Quills to keyboards:** the changing face of record keeping from Alfred the Great to the present day

The Record Office are now holding lunchtime lectures every Thursday from 1.15-1.45pm). For Information see www3.hants.gov.uk/whatson-hro or ring 01962846154.

Willis Museum exhibitions

Until 1st April **Cutting Edge - a History of Human Hair.** What is hair made from? What lives in it? What would you look like with a beard?

Milestones Museum

Until 20th April - **Eating Creepy Crawlies.** A special exhibition which delves into entomophagy, the consumption of bugs and mini-beasts. Discover some of the nutritional benefits and flavours of this alternative food source. (On loan from the Natural History Museum).

B'stoke Archaeological & Historical Society (7.30pm in Church Cottage)

10th April - Basingstoke and other NE Hampshire towns; winners and losers, by Derek Spruce.

Friends of the Willis Museum

20th March - **Nepal & the Gurkas** by Major Gerald Davies

19th April - **Its a Monk's Life** by Brother John Hodges

Public Rights of Way Map - Hampshire County Council have published a new definitive map showing the all the public paths and tracks in the county. The map can be seen at Basingstoke Library or online at <http://whereilive.hants.gov.uk/rightsofway/webform1.aspx>

*TADS annual membership is £10 per person.
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