

May 2008



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

**Next meeting - Wednesday 21st May
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30 pm**

***An attractive impediment -
the life of Patrick Campbell***

*by
Nick Thomas*

(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.00)

The new book - *The new enhanced version of Florence Davidson's 1913 'History of Tadley' was launched on 3rd of May by the Mayor of B&D Council. A big thank you to all the TADS members who were present and made it such a good occasion.*

Copies of the book are now on sale at £6.00 each from Tadley Library or Profile Print & Copy at Bishopswood Road shops. TADS members may collect their free copy at the next meeting..

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

www.tadshistory.com

TADS Meeting 18th June 2008:
Nautical Archaeology
By Ian Barefoot

(Portsmouth Nautical Archaeology Soc.)

Last month's meeting (16/4/08)

'The Creation of 'Memories'

A book about life in Aldermaston Village from the 1950s
to the present day.

By the editor, **Sally-Anne Martin**

Sally-Anne exuded confidence and bonhomie from every pore of her efficient being as she told about 60 of us the poignant intimacies of villagers' memories of the last 50-ish years in Aldermaston. That's the Village, not the Site.

So near to us and yet so far, Aldermaston seems to be in a beautiful time-warp, peacefully undisturbed by the modernity of the 21st Century except for the frantically busy A340 striking a metal dagger through its very heart. It also thwarted the threat of gravel extraction in the 1970s and in 2003.

Sally-Anne had the power (with her extended support group) to facilitate thinking, remembering, and communicating, so the Aldermaston story is woven along like a washing line (now rather rare itself!) of photographs, anecdotes and memories, into this vibrant book.

What a good job people, mostly women we're told, hoard photos and newspaper cuttings as well. Apparently upper class children related more to their nannies and servants, rather than their parents. Lower class kids were more down-to-earth. Posh children were not allowed to play in Aldermaston streets with lower class kids. One rich grandmamma scooped up into her chauffeur driven limousine, her grandchild who was playing in The Street with poor kids. She then sent the child off to boarding school! Luckily the child matured into a lady with a mind of her own...

The adjoining village of Wasing and the influential Mount family are inextricably linked with Aldermaston. Sally-Anne says Aldermaston has a good relationship with AWE Aldermaston and with the now-owners of the Manor House. A ghost may live at the Vicarage: Sally-Anne

encountered her vibes ... One Maria Hale, possible herbalist, may, or may not, have morphed into a hare.... The wonderfully named Maria Whitty, along with Effie Arlott, worked tirelessly to keep the Parish Hall going, knowing it was the heart and focal point of the village. Memories of V.E. Day and the Queen's Golden Jubilee were catalysts for the book.

The Keyser sisters from the Big House sat at their gates and distributed fruit to the poor...and a chilly drunk wrapped in newspaper fatally set fire to himself in the village lock-up. Back in the 1920s Mr Ford wanted a petrol pump by his house but Mr Keyser said it had to be behind a wall and recessed. He also disallowed kerbs and paving stones down The Street.

Aldermaston Court – once the global HQ of Blue Circle Cement, now the Manor House – has falcons on its gates but they are known as the Eagle Gates. The rich and famous, artistic and sporty, visited Aldermaston. One vicar, the Rev. Stanley Young, was particularly eccentric in dress and manner. He often cycled up to Tadley. AWRE Ban the Bomb marchers, including Michael Foot, came down from London in the 50s and 60s.

The Street includes the famous triangle of grass: The Loosey. The gentle thud of 1950s cows going by to be milked evoked memories of a less pressured pace of life there then.

Sadly Alan Caiger-Smith's noted family pottery closed in 1993, but the famous Adult York Nativity Play in the Parish Church has celebrated its half centenary recently.

The Old Mill by the River Kennet and the Arlott family who live there feature along with the World War II influence of frozen hamburgers and American servicemen: doled-out coal costing 5 shillings (50p); cricket and Graham Gooch; steam rollers and the school. Ben Arlott's army homecoming after V.E. Day took 18 months from N Africa. It encompassed a mutiny, a Greek shipwreck, 2 military arrests for looking disorderly in uniform and culminated in a free bus ride home from Reading before Ben saw his family again at the Old Mill.

Since 1815, every third February has seen a Candle Auction concerning field rental of Church Acre. A horseshoe nail is put into a tallow candle, watched by Church Wardens. The candle is lit and whoever is bidding when the nail falls out gets the field for 3 years. Hence the expression 'you can hear a pin drop...'

Sally-Anne and her team sweated blood and spilled tears to produce Aldermaston's (and Wasing's) book. But it's been worth it. Thank you also to Bill Martin and archivist, Peter Aldridge, for this comprehensive and joyous presentation.

Rosemary Bond

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

Hampshire Record Office

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.

Milestones Museum

24-26 May (Bank Holiday) 10am to 5pm **Steam and Vintage Show**
See Milestones engines in steam on the field along with visiting engines, cars, stallholders. Special £1 admission to show ground

History in the making

Tadley, April 2008. Death of Mary Smith, known to many in Tadley as Nurse Smith. Mary was born more than 90 years ago in Pewsey, Wiltshire to parents who worked on a farm. After training in London, she came to Tadley in 1957 as a District Nurse/Midwife. At one time almost everybody around Tadley seemed to have heard of Nurse Smith. Perhaps because Nurse Mary Smith was not only the District Nurse, but Midwife as well. By her own reckoning, she had helped in the delivery of over 1500 babies. She took early retirement in 1973 due to arthritis in her hands and continued to live in Tadley.

Aldermaston Village

Further to last month's talk, I found it extraordinary to learn that the whole village was in private hands until 1939, when it was sold in lots at auction. This must explain why photographs and paintings show almost no change over many, many years. - Ed.

*TADS annual membership is £10 per person.
Correspondence to Tadley and District History Society,
PO Box 7264, Tadley. RG26 3FA*