



June 2011

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

Next meeting - Wednesday 15th June 2011
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30pm

***'The History of the Royal
Berkshire and Battle
Hospitals'***

By Marshall Barr

(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.50)

Wednesday June 29th. - There will be a special
meeting on the quest for Medieval Tadley at
St Paul's Hall. See page 4 for details.

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www.tadshistory.com

TADS Meeting 20th July 2011:

‘William Sandys, builder of the Vyne, Lord Chamberlain to Henry VIII’

By John Jenkins

Last meeting 18th May:

The Duke Of Wellington's House at Stratfield Saye

By Brigadier Michael Aris C.B.E., D.L.

Copenhagen! The Iron Duke! Immediately most of us identify with one of our greatest soldiers.

Arthur (1769-1852) the Anglo-Irish First Duke of Wellington had a grand, aristocratic and impressive pedigree, with a mixture of Wellesley, Cecil, Pakenham-Longford and Mornington blood, etc. The Iron Duke was clever but professionally aloof and called his soldiers 'The scum of the earth...!' Meanwhile his compatriot, Admiral Lord Nelson, 10 years older, inspired 'adoration' from his men.

Wellington sounds like a nice chap, a family man, who eventually made Stratfield Saye House a comfortable home for his children and grandchildren with his horses, farms and hunting grounds. And only 40 miles and 4 hours' travelling by horse from London.

The Great Duke distinguished himself as a Commander in India and the Peninsular War (1808-14 in Spain & Portugal) but it's for the Battle of Waterloo (1815) that he's lionised. He was also a Tory Prime Minister (1828-30) and a friend, but reluctant HOST to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. She persisted in staying, but he wasn't really bothered, preferring the quiet life. And we've all heard about his beloved charger, Copenhagen, who was actually prone to kicking. When the horse died he was buried at Stratfield Saye with full military honours (1836). Our speaker, the erudite Brigadier Aris was ably supported by his knowledgeable colleague, Neville; and we noticed the local - and - famous Royal etiquette and genealogy expert, Mr Hugo Vickers, in our audience of nearly 60 people.

Wellington's family had the usual sprinkling of illegitimacy and intrigue, with Arthur wanting to marry the delectable Irish girl, Kitty, in 1793. Her Dad objected, saying Arthur was unworthy and comparatively penniless, but after

fame and fortune found him, Arthur proposed again in 1805 and was accepted. In the intervening years Kitty had 'gone into decline, she's become ugly, she's changed ' he declared.

But he married her nonetheless in 1806, and the poor First Duchess remained terrified and estranged from him for her remaining days (1831). Kitty had one suite of rooms at Stratfield Saye House and the Duke another 100 yards away, but luckily (*amazingly – Ed.*) they produced an heir and spares....

Much of Arthur's time was spent at his Apsley House property Number One, London, and it is said he had a soft spot for his American sister-in-law Marian Cator. Apsley House also contains exquisite treasures.

The current Stratfield Saye House was built around 1630 by Sir William Pitt and became Wellington's home because of a grateful nation's reward of £600,000 (£15,000,000 today) for saving us from the dreaded Napoleon Bonaparte.

Napoleon and his army were greatly feared. (It is said that the mega-rich British branch of the Rothschild family became even richer because they sent one of their family with homing pigeons to Brussels near Waterloo. With our Stock Market flat, when we beat the French, the pigeons were released with the good news and the Rothschilds made a killing by snapping up the cheap shares before anyone could realise what was happening!)

Stratfield Saye House was surprisingly small and domestic for a hero, but is still one of Hampshire's largest houses and reflects the personality of the Iron Duke who disliked grandeur and unnecessary expense. However, he felt the cold and the central heating (1833), plumbing (1841) and double glazing he installed are still in use today.

There's been a house at Stratfield Saye since Saxon times and after William the Conqueror doled out the area to three Norman knights: Turgis, Mortimer and de Saye, eventually the Stratfield Saye House and 5,000 acres as we know it today evolved, absorbing styles and fashions through the ages, plus some spoils of war - with permission! Joseph Bonaparte had ransacked the Spanish Royal Palace and removed 250 paintings which came into the Duke's hands. Not realising their value, he had his pack horses covered with them as rain protection... the Duke was no connoisseur of art - he picked what he fancied. Stratfield Saye House has a potpourri of varied and valuable contents reflecting the Great Duke's life; Sevres and Meissen porcelain, though he preferred to use simple white china; ceremonial clothing, 3 Roman mosaic pavements from Silchester (then part of the Estate, and now a World Heritage Site); gilded ceilings; intimate portraits, some on ivory; some of the Duchess' many paintings and her piano; a print-lined gallery; silk wall coverings; French

Bouffe furniture; part of Napoleon's library; Napoleon's uncle's malachite table; all of Jane Austen's first Edition books; Chippendale furniture; gold leaf; bronze busts; carpets; French clocks; flags, banners, French tricolours: as we saw from the Brigadier's pictures, an endless cornucopia of goodies for this richly beautiful country gentleman's house.

The Duke of Wellington is buried in the crypt of St Paul's (as is Nelson). The Duke's funeral carriage is an amazing 18 tonne construction, built of bronze cannon captured at Waterloo. It's 17 feet (6m) high and needs 12 horses to pull it. It can be seen at Stratfield Saye.

The current nonagenarian 8th Duke has carefully up-dated the house, while preserving the unique atmosphere created by his great-great grandfather. You do have to wonder how horrified the aristocratic First Duke, and other aristocrats who guarded their privacy so carefully, would feel to see the common man, 'the scum of the earth' poring over their possessions and property in the 21st Century!

Thank you, Brigadier, for your comprehensive talk.

Rosemary Bond

If the above has whetted your appetite, **Stratfield Saye House** will be open from Thursday 14th July to Monday 8th August inclusive. Weekdays the gates are open 11.30am to 3.30pm. and weekends 10.30am to 3.30pm. The grounds close at 5pm. Access to the house is by guided tour only - the first tour is 30 mins. after the gates open. Admission is cheaper on weekdays.

Tadley Medieval Village - Everyone is welcome to St. Paul's hall on Wednesday 29th June at 7:30 pm to hear what two local archaeologists, Andrew Hutt and Ginny Pringle, have to say about the evidence we have accumulated so far, including the aerial photographs taken last year. This is an informal evening with coffee/tea.

Basingstoke and Deane Mayor - Congratulations to David Leeks on becoming the new Borough Mayor. David has long been a member/supporter of TADS. May he have a successful and enjoyable year as Mayor.

King James Bible - 400th anniversary.

Winchester College will be holding an exhibition of bibles and related material to mark this anniversary and the involvement of John Harmer of the College (and other Wykehamists) in the preparation of the bible. Free admission by timed tickets at 10.30am and then every hour until 3.30pm.

In addition to the Exhibition at College, the Cathedral also has a "hands on" display for Children in the North Transept (left side past Jane Austen`s tomb / plaque) see website www.winchester-cathedral.org.uk

Paices Wood Country Park - Carol attended the opening event for the new access road and took the display: 'How Tadley was affected by WWII' and had a very successful day. The event well attended and the display attracted a lot of interest. She sold a number of TADS books and it may even result in some new members.

The 87 acre park is very pleasant place to walk, especially with children, and to take a picnic.

Opening Times are :

Summer 7:30 am - 8pm; late Spring / early Autumn 7:30am - 6pm;
Winter 7:30am - 4pm.

Website: www.paiceswood.net

Photos of Tadley - Peter Ellis (member and the 'railway' speaker of last November) has kindly given the Society a set of 21 colour slides taken in 1972-4 showing the building of the Holmwood Medical Centre from a greenfield site. We hope to get them on the photographs website in due course.

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

2nd, 16th & 30th July the museum will have its C Class Steam Roller in steam in front of the museum. Tel. 01256 477766 for further details or see:
www3.hants.gov.uk/milestones/whatson

Willis Museum

The museum is running an ever changing series special exhibitions in the Sainsbury Gallery.

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

16th June: Living on the Breadline, by Rosemary Rawcliffe.
Rosemary will be using the records of Farnborough Workhouse to show how the workhouse system functioned from the point of view of the Gilbert Unions

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

No information available from their website.

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