



July 2011

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

Next meeting - Wednesday 20th July 2011
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30pm

***'William Sandys, builder of
the Vyne, Lord Chamberlain
to Henry VIII'***

By John Jenkins

(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.50)

President's Project 2011 - The PCC are replacing the wooden floor in St. Paul's Hall and appealed for help with funding from hall users and others, including TADS. The Committee decide to support the appeal and raised the matter for discussion at the May meeting. President Bob suggested a generous £1000. This was accepted by the floor. The money will be taken from the Project Fund and be the President's Project this year.

*Comments, queries and suggestions to Richard Brown (0118) 9700100,
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www.tadshistory.com

TADS Meeting 21st September 2011:

‘Frost, Freezes & Fairs’

By Ian Currie

Last Meeting 15th June:

The History of the Royal Berkshire Hospital and Battle Hospital
by Marshall Barr, *Founding Chairman & Hon. Librarian of the Berkshire Medical Heritage Centre (and Consultant Anaesthetist at the hospital for over 20 years).*

1840 - A tale of 2 hospitals, one town, loads of pre-Florence Nightingale nursing history, lots of leeches at 2,950 for £27 in 1840; swillings of beer at £91 for 2,000 gallons, and safer than water at the price.

Oh, the fees for the REST of the staff (Royal Berks)? Secretary, Apothecary, Chaplain, 1 House Surgeon, 4 day and 2 night nurses and the porter: £295 per annum ... so beer featured big and the leeches cost more than the night nurses (£8) and porter (£15) together!

The 50-bed Royal Berks Hospital (RBH) came first and was founded in 1837 in William IV's reign and was opened after his death in 1839, by Queen Victoria. The coat-of-arms is William's and he gave it the 'Royal' title.

The other hospital, Battle Hospital in the Oxford Road, came in the 1870s and has historical connections to Battle in East Sussex of William the Conqueror fame (1066) and nothing to do with fights in Reading ... but there was a Battle Inn on this Battle Estate once.

Battle, on the flood plain of the River Thames, tended towards the Oxford Road Union Workhouse side of things, and had an infirmary plus vagrants. If you were a non-swearing vagrant the Labour Master (1890) gave you rocks to smash into big pieces. If you were a swearer, etc, you had to work extra hard and smash the rocks much smaller. Unfortunately the Labour Master's wooden classifying grid is now lost or destroyed.....

The RBH was too small by 1874, so it was expanded sideways and they added Private Nurses trained along Florence Nightingale lines, for the great, good and monied. The 1880s saw an Out Patients' area and Nurses' Wing and a Laundry with an impressive chimney. The ex-Laundry is now the museum.

Victorian additions for the RBH were a Chapel, and in 1882 the Secretary received £225 per annum, the Chaplain £156, the House Surgeon £90, and the

Superintendent (Matron) £100. Doctors and nurses obviously weren't valued highly in those days but in 1890 the efficient and formidable-looking Matron, Miss Baster, surely changed the nursing emphasis. 1911 and a new Casualty and Children's Ward were named The Edward VII Ward in the late King's honour. In 1911 Battle was also expanded, adding a block for the Aged and Infirm and an operating theatre.

WWI saw hospitals throughout Britain change radically. Battle's patients were tipped out and it became a Military Hospital. Soldiers were brought from the French trenches by railway and ambulance. More medical officers were added and Captain (later Major) Leonard Joyce was Registrar Trauma Surgeon. (His son later became a Berkshire Surgeon.) After the Great War, Battle's patients and papers returned.

In 1931 the RBH and Battle were in competition with each other. Battle had a big laundry department staffed by 'fallen women' in the 1920s - therefore adding a paediatric unit for their unexpected offspring!

Meanwhile, the RBH bought a nearby mansion, *Greenlands*, and made it into a Private Nursing Home where Douglas Bader was operated on for his double amputation after his crash at Woodley Aerodrome in 1931. Major Leonard Joyce was his Surgeon and a grateful Bader returned later to present the Nurses' Prizes.

1937 had been the centenary of the RBH and it gained a coat-of-arms with scallops, stags, a red cross and the motto 'In Service We Hold Our Faith'.

Oxford being reasonably near, (approx 40 miles) the shy, modest and very nice Lord Nuffield, of car fame, came to the RBH to donate the Nuffield Block in 1938, specifically for women and children. By 1947 the RBH had 413 beds, 20,000 outpatients, massive expenses and was nearly bust!

Along came the 1948 NHS and saved the day and the Nation's health

Until the 1990s the 2 hospitals were still vying to better each other. One had to go. The RBH was upgraded after a failed green field site bid, and Battle was demolished. It is now green fields again with a Tesco thrown in for good measure!

Our current Basingstoke & Deane Tadley Mayor, David Leeks had polio operations at the RBH in the 50s and David remembers the Senior Physio, one Olive Clark, who is now 90 years old. Amanda, our Mayoress is a midwife there now, so the commitments and efficacy over a century at the RBH are alive and living. AND they still use leeches!

Over 50 of us TADS members together with the Mayor and Mayoress thanked Mr Marshall Barr for his talk.

Rosemary Bond

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

16th & 30th July & 13th August the museum will have its C Class Steam Roller in steam in front of the museum from 12 - 4pm.

21st Aug. The Thornycroft Society meet will be outside the Museum.

Tel. 01256 477766 or see: www3.hants.gov.uk/milestones/whatson

Willis Museum

The museum is running an ever changing series special exhibitions in the Sainsbury Gallery and holding a series of special events for children.

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

21st July: 'That magnificent man... Samuel Franklin Cody', the first man to fly in Britain! by Peter Reese.

Basingstoke Archaeological & History Society will visit Calleva Insula IX Dig on Sunday afternoon, 7th August, commencing at 2p.m. (suggest arrive Wall Lane car-park by 1.30pm). Interested TADS members would be welcome- a visitors' fee (non-BAHS members) of £2 is suggested - *Ralph Atton*.

The Festival of British Archaeology takes place from 16th to 31st July.

A list events can be found at www.archaeologyfestival.org.uk/whatson

Medieval Tadley

More than 30 people attended the special meeting at the hall on 29th June. The discussions, lead by Dr Andrew Hutt, resulted in a long list of potential actions to progress the search for the missing village.

TADS annual membership is £12 per person.
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