



**April 2012**

**Tadley and District History Society  
(TADS) - [www.tadshistory.com](http://www.tadshistory.com)**

**Next meeting - Wednesday 18th April 2012  
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30pm**

## ***'Berkshire Lady Fliers'***

***by Geoff Beckett***

*(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.50)*

### **The Tadley Tracks, Tadley Facts Book.**

The book will be launched at Tadley Library on the morning of the 18th April. You will be able to purchase it at the April meeting at a price of £5.00, compared with the normal price of £8.00. There will be no restriction on the number of copies you may buy at the discounted price. *(Also see page 5).*

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**[www.tadshistory.com](http://www.tadshistory.com)**

## **TADS Meeting 16th May 2012:**

### **‘The banknote makers - the history of Portals’**

by Dave Stone

Last meeting - 21st March

### **The Secret Thames**

By Duncan Mackay,

Author and former Director of the South East Region, Countryside Agency.

At times silvery, slinky, sensuous, sumptuous, snaky, secretive, smooth, shimmering, scenic, stony, sparkling, swimmable (David Walliams swam it, 2011), stinking (1858 by the Houses of Parliament - 'The Great Stink'). Maybe the river's murky, mucky, meandering, blue, green, brown and more .... a river of myths, tales and legends. It's cherished (Goring and Streatley), has a working water mill, (Mapledurham, 1588), it's often filmed e.g. 'The Eagle Has Landed' (also Mapledurham).

Old Father Thames is one of the world's best known rivers and England's most famous. The river rises from a pre-Celtic artesian spring in the Coates, Cotswold area (near Kemble) at a place formerly marked by a plaque of 'an exciting new material' of 1851: concrete! The mature and majestic tidal river exits England to the North Sea via London and the Thames Barrier as part of our 'liquid history'....

Sometimes the river is bold, seedy, rowdy, cruel, flooding, flowing, doodling, bumbling

and loud (Lyd Well, Ewer, AD 931, Anglo-Saxon for 'loud') because of the water bubbling through the limestone and Fuller's Earth strata. No wonder it was a sheep and woollens area.

At the Cotswold Water Park near Cricklade, sand and gravel have been extracted: hence an expanse of sporting water. Another up-side are 7 million Snake's Head Fritillary flowers in Spring.

Pre-Raphaelite and freedom-lover, William Morris (1834-96), he of multi interests including poetry and Icelandic, had a house 'Kelmescot' at Kelmescott.

His talented and laudanum-loaded friend, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, came to paint Morris' wife, Janey, and upset the local anglers (1874) with his wild ways. Inglesham is where the Thames and Severn Canal joins helping to make a short cut from England to Wales. William Morris made this a conservation area - the oldest in England (Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, 1877).

The snaky Thames at Lechlade (= R.'Leach' and 'fade= load) is the gateway where the Roman salt mines trade flourished. Australian Robert Campbell colours brandy with beetroot to make it go further! Poet Percy Shelley, Thomas Peacock and Mary Godwin rowed upstream from London to Lechlade. Hard work!

The re-sited Old Father Thames concrete plaque (1851) is now at Lechlade. Port Meadow, Oxford and area, where the river has another name - Isis, and very secret places e.g. Parsons' Pleasure! Godstow Nunnery was where Henry II's ubiquitous mistress, Fair Rosamund died (1176). The river was forded here by oxen, and the Reverend Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll), of 'Alice in Wonderland' fame, rowed here for story-telling inspiration on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1862. Wolvercote's Trout Inn had now lost some of its magic ambience, Duncan said. Folly Bridge, Oxford, is the up-stream limit for Thames cruisers because the bridge is too low and narrow.

Posh Goring and Streatley, where the chalk-corsetted river punches through the Chiltern Hills and the pre-historic Ridgeway path crosses it, happily has No electricity pylons because of Lord Marshall of Goring's NIMBY-ism. Jethro Tull, a farming pioneer of horse-hoeing, was born in Basildon; and Pangbourne is as far as the '3 Men in a Boat' went.

Mapledurham has the working water mill mentioned earlier and Sonning, a theatre powered by Hydro-electricity. Its bridge was saved by pre-Raphaelite 'Light of the World' artist, Holman Hunt. Oh, Uri Geller (spoon bending) and MP Theresa May (of shoes fame!) live here.

Wargrave was 'Weir-Grave', and our worthy Duncan, who probably has Thames water in his veins instead of blood, had his boat washed up on Raymond Baxter's lawn at Marsh Lock.

Henley-on Thames is world famous for its Regatta (1839). Sir Stanley Spencer, Sandham Memorial artist lived at Cookham, and Kenneth Grahame, 'Wind in the Willows' author likened Marlow's commuters to the hated stoats and weasels of his story.

Stately Cliveden had the first performance of Rule Britannia (1740), and the embarrassing Profumo Affair of the 1960s.

At Windsor the first U.F.O. was sighted in 1783, and of course the town is a mecca for Queen-seeking tourists and more pleasure craft than you could squeal at a Queen's swan with!

Dorney has the Thames island of Bumble Bee, and Penton Hook and Hampton Court had the addresses of actress Beryl Reid and Susan George. Also, the cheeky Italian lothario, Verrio, who painted Henry VIII's ceilings with portraits of chambermaids he'd slept with during the lengthy artistic work! Isleworth is really 'Thistleworth' where the river has allotments on the fertile alluvial soil.

Magical Kew Gardens is an area of relative calm amid the storm of the M4/A4 and flyovers.

The Houses of Parliament, built 1840-52 with Big Ben ringing first on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1859, took 14 bomb hits during WWII. Sir Joseph Bazalgette cleverly diverted the 'stink of the river' by using sewers after 1858. Effluent was dispatched by ship to Newcastle and used for tanning and cloth dyeing.

The Monument at 222ft. (74m) high, commemorates the site of the Great Fire of London (1666), and Duncan's aerial shots, from his Thames filming by barrage balloon with camera cradle, are stunning. The Monument is still the world's tallest unsupported stone column, built by Wren in 1671-77.

Nearing the end of the Thames' 180 mile journey is the Thames Barrier set up 1976-82 at a cost of £535million to prevent a recurrence of flooding by the terrible East Coast storms of 1952, when 300 people drowned. Is it man enough for the job in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

Thank you Duncan, you of great personality and passion for your river and her myths, tales, legends and history, and for your wonderful aerial journey.

Rosemary Bond

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## **Calleva Atrebatum Dig**

This summer's excavations on Insula IX will be from the 2nd to the 12th July.

## Around Tadley in Anagrams

1	Roll Muld Fish	Mulfords Hill
2	Hen Egret	The Green
3	Crush Pert Chest	St Peters Church
4	Once Tommy Lad	Tadley Common
5	Neer Climate	Treacle Mine
6	Totally Druce	Tadley Court
7	As Plane Mutton	Mount Pleasant
8	Winnen	New Inn
9	Nod Funds Hoax	Fox and Hounds
10	Come Denby Jam Bel	Joyce Lambden MBE
11	Brush One Camp	Burnham Copse
12	Can Golf Tea	Falcon Gate
13	Woo Posh Bids	Bishops Wood
14	Brown Books Mot	Bowmonts Brook
15	Sea Angler Lag	Allens Garage
16	Clutch Asp Rush	St Pauls Church
17	Aran Thrush	Arthur Nash
18	Calm Brasso Daub	Ambassador Club
19	Releant One Scramble	Ambrose Allen Centre
20	Watch Drole Menthol Hoe	Holmwood Health Centre

*These anagrams were set as a competition at last year's AGM and as people found them a stiff challenge, I promised to publish the answers when space permitted.*

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### Tadley Tracks, Tadley Facts

First published in 1982 and now updated with an additional walk exploring the Tadley Conservation Area. The book contains nine walks of between 3 and 12 kilometres (2 to 7.5 miles) in length, all with detailed coloured maps, clear route directions and descriptions and photographs highlighting the historical background. It is spiral bound and pocket size for easy use. Price £8.00

After the initial launch period at the library (18 - 21 April) it will then be on sale at Profile Print and Copy (50 Bishopswood Road) as well as the Library.

## ***What's on? Events which may be of interest***

**Hampshire Record Office** *For information ring 01962846154 or see [www3.hants.gov.uk/whatson-hro](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/whatson-hro)*

**Milestones Museum.** For coming events: Tel. 01256 477766 or see: [www3.hants.gov.uk/milestones/whatson](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/milestones/whatson)

11:00am Saturday and Sunday 19/20 May - The Southern AEC Centenary Gathering. There will be a number of AEC lorries and other classic vehicles on display on the grass area outside Milestones Museum.

### **Willis Museum**

The museum has a series of on-going exhibitions in the display area at the front of the museum.

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

19th April - 'What the Butler Saw' by John Pitman. More insight and stories of what went on in the 'Big House' Houses...

17th May - 'Spring Wood, Hackwood' by Brian Spicer

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

10th May - 'Writing the North Hampshire Pevsner: from Abbots Ann to Yateley' by Michael Bullen

### **Silchester Roman Town**

19th April, 7.30p.m. for 8p.m. Silchester Village Hall. A talk by Professor Michael Fulford, University of Reading, about last year's dig of Silchester Roman Town (Calleva Atrebatum) and the plans for 2012. £3 at the door.

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

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