



February 2013

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

**Next meeting - Wednesday 20th February 2013
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30pm**

'The Basingstoke Riots'

By Bob Clarke

(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.50)

Annual Subscriptions of £12 per person are now due. If you are paying at the February meeting will you please put your cheque or cash in an envelope bearing your address (a second hand envelope will do). This will help the Treasurer recognise who has paid and get the receipts prepared. New members please give details, including Phone No. and email address. Subs may also be sent via Carol (See bottom of Page 4.)

*Comments, queries and suggestions to Richard Brown (0118) 9700100,
e-mail: richard@ilexind.plus.com or Carol Stevens (0118) 9701578*

www.tadshistory.com

**TADS Meeting 20th February 2013:
'Signposts and Village Signs'
By Bob Locock**

**Submarine History and The Submarine Museum,
Gosport, Hants**

By David Ottley, ex-submariner & Friend of the Sub. Museum,
Gosport

So, submarines past and present are boys' toys, until political correctness deems that girls can join (or have their gals'-only submarine).

David said the Royal Navy looks down on subs, literally and metaphorically.

Sadly, subs were once small, insignificant and unimportant. They had numbers and letters, no names, until Winston Churchill suggested in 1945 that it was all wrong. A sub is a BOAT, not a ship....

Imagine being in the confines of a submarine before buckets were replaced by the ONE toilet! Apparently the odour of the unflushed and great unwashed was overwhelming. Although submerged IN seawater, subs allowed each submariner one gallon (4 litres) of fresh water per day for absolutely everything!

Subs had been both in man's mind and the sea, for ages. In 1579, one William Bourne designed and made a prototype submarine which could go 'up and down' aided by a goatskin seal to seal off the buoyancy holds. He understood the principle of submarines.

In 1620 Cornelius van Drevel managed to fumble around in/on the River Thames while ostensibly there to improve Britain's stock of gunpowder.

1774 saw Suffolk carpenter, John Day obtain a 50-ton ketch to practice water in/out with 20 tons of rock for ballast. He experimented in 120 feet (40 metres) of water off Plymouth Sound when sadly the thing imploded and killed him. John was the first submarine fatality. Sadly it's now 65,000 plus.

American Ezra Lee made a 'Turtle' sub out of a big barrel which he used against us in the 1776 American War of Independence. British sailors spotted his air pipes

and wooze-making CO2 bubbles, but his gunpowder-filled Turtle went bang and killed him.

As with many British experiments, our Government was somewhat tardy in supporting the idea of the submarine: Lord St Vincent called William Pitt 'the greatest fool who existed' as we Brits thought subs were unethical. So the Americans went on experimenting successfully.

Alexander Volta's production of the first battery was useful, along with Robert Whitehead's torpedoes (1866), etc. So the rest of the world went ahead. And we did not, still questioning the ethics of it all.

The Reverend Bill Garrow from Liverpool suggested the Cammel Laird shipyard build a steam-driven sub - it sank off Rhyl, North Wales and is still there.

Irishman Philip Holland (born 1841) – (*of the Fenian Society, founded in 1857 to thwart the English in Ireland*) - built the 'Fenian Rain' in 1881. It was 19 tons and 31 ft. (9½ metres) long, but the British spies scrutinised this Irish-American invention and scuppered it.

By 1901, we Brits had seen the light and paid \$36,000 for submarine building rights. Now we had the forerunner of the BAe Company. 'Holland' became a famous name in the submarine world....

It took an American wheeler-dealer businessman called Rice to gee things up and in 1900, the submarine 'Nautilus' emerged. Holland Class subs, with petrol engine were made in Barrow-in-Furness from 1901, and now Holland 5 is in the nearly-revamped Gosport Submarine Museum. There's a hole in her belly so you can picture the claustrophobia and smell the fear!

Sub A1 had a rudimentary 'conning tower' but only one hatch. During trials in the Solent she was hit by a passenger ship and all hands were lost. Now subs always have TWO hatches to help protect the crew.

A Class subs had ghastly accidents, carbon monoxide leakages, primitive pressure hulls and they kept going bang! That's why subs were always moored well away from Royal Navy ships in Pompey (Portsmouth) Dockyard. The spiritual home of the subs was H.M.S Dolphin at Gosport from where they could move out to sea quickly and quietly. That was until 1988 when the HQ moved to Faslane in Scotland.

Class B subs had hydroplanes fore and aft. Class C subs, weighing 200 tons were piggy-backed to Hong Kong in 1911 and in WWI they stalked the seas from Archangel, Russia to the Baltic Sea.

Class D subs were developed in 1910 and used in WWII. They had double hulls and diesel engines, twin screws (propellers), were roomier and had a wireless which received signals but couldn't send them, had a 500-

mile operating range, 2 deck guns, 1 bucket but NO toilet.

Class E subs were formidable fighting machines, weighing 819 tons (without ballast), could dive 200 feet (70 metres), operated in all weathers and had safety compartments.

Interestingly, subs have flown the Jolly Roger pirate flag since 1901 - sort of inverted snobbery! At the time, Lt. Mark Talbin was mindful that they were underwater, underhand and with crews like pirates ... Early subs were painted black because they surfaced only at night for air.

Only 3 F Class subs were built. Class G had 21" bore torpedo tubes and 3" guns on the foredeck. G7 was the last boat sunk in WWI, off Northern Ireland. Subs of Classes H, J, K, L, M, O, S, T and U were developed from 1914 onwards amid trials, tribulations and disasters. In 1918 several K Class subs were involved in the May Island Tragedy in the River Forth estuary in Scotland. They travelled as a no-lights convoy, wary of German shipping. Poor visibility caused multiple crashes and the loss of possibly 270 submariners.

Sub M1 had a small aircraft on board, but sank off Plymouth in 1926. M2 sank to oblivion off Portland, Dorset in 1932. M3 became a minelayer.

There was a moveable Mother Depot ship to service the subs which had workshops, spares, food, water, crew bedding, etc. etc.

S Class subs, 1931-45, were 735 tons (930 submerged) with a crew of 48.

They had 6 torpedo tubes that were strongly WELDED, not rivetted, and therefore could dive deeply and safely. U Classes worked in the Mediterranean during WWII and could dive to 300 feet (100 metres). They protected the Malta convoys. Submarine 'Upholder' was the most famous, with 22 German kills. Subs working in the tropical Far East in WWII soon necessitated the need for air conditioning and proper toileting facilities.

Over the years subs have become faster and quieter - they were used for surveillance during the Cold War. They use sonar etc, etc, now.

Our very own 'TAD' Warwick Lovegrove (recently Mayor of Basingstoke) served in the sub 'Alliance' which is the star of the Gosport Museum.

Warwick remembers ladies often hesitating before going below because of the sheer drop. The Queen went below without hesitation he said. When other ladies heard this they did too!

Another 'TAD' visitor, David, served in 'Sceptre' and 'Tireless'. He served in subs for 10 years and said 'I loved the experience'. He said the submariners 'chestnut' story told on the 'Alliance' is known to all sub mariners - when a Captain asked his steward how he'd managed to scramble all over the boat with his coffee cup yet never spilt any, the steward replied that he's tell him at the end of his deployment... the steward secreted the coffee in his mouth and spat it back later

before the unsuspecting Captain realised what happened, several times daily!

Thank you 'Alliance fund raiser David for your detailed history and anecdotes of the dangerous., murky, brave old world under the sea.

As David said, any submarine history post-1945 is yet another story.

Rosemary Bond

History in the Making

Eileen Wood - We are very sorry to report the death of Eileen on 1st February .

She was in her early 80s and had been a long time member of TADS. She had had Parkinson's disease for some years and had been in a residential home in Bramley for about a year. She was once a teacher at Tadley Primary School.

The funeral is on Monday 18th Feb at 11am at Basingstoke Crematorium.

Maurice Bound who was the first Head of the Hurst School was 100 years old last month.

The new **Tadley Scout Hut** on the playing field at Southdown Road was opened on 2nd February by Dame Mary Fagan, Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire. The new building had been planned for many years (Carol remembers fund raising for it when her 39 year old son was in the scouts!). The new brick building was finally made possible by money from the developer, Bellway Homes, who are building houses on the site of the old den behind Barclays Bank.



What's on? Events which may be of interest

Hampshire Record Office For information ring 01962846154 or see www3.hants.gov.uk/whatson-hro

Milestones Museum. For coming events: Tel. 01256 477766 or see: www3.hants.gov.uk/milestones/whatson

LEGO ® Mania 2013 at Milestones Museum. Between 26 February and 14 April Milestones goes LEGO® crazy! There are LEGO® events every weekend.

Willis Museum - The museum is also running an ever changing series of special exhibitions in the Sainsbury Gallery. Forthcoming exhibits include the paintings of local artist Vivienne Ballsom.

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

21st Feb - The Classical Myths with a little sex and some violence. In 8 AD the Roman poet Ovid produced his 'Metamorphoses', an epic account of the Greek and Roman myths – violent, subtle, erotic, elegant, tender, terrifying. In this dramatic reading (mainly of Ted Hughes's translation) Chris Amery will bring these wonderful stories to life.

Basingstoke Archaeological & History Society (7.30 at Church Cottage)

14th March - The origin of our species, by Prof. Chris Stringer, of the Natural History Museum

Broadband connection.

We understand that super-fast broadband using fibre optic cables will be available in Tadley very soon. Contact your ISP to see if you can benefit.

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