

December 2021

TADS Newsletter

Website - www.tadshistory.com

Back online!

Wednesday 15th December at 8 pm via Zoom

‘TADS Annual General Meeting’

For a variety of reasons including; the recent change in Covid-19 requirements following the discovery of the Omicron variant, and Chairman Carol needing to self-isolate on that day for unassociated medical reasons, it has been decided to hold the AGM online for the second year running. The necessary papers and Zoom connection codes will be sent out at the same time as this Newsletter.

*The Committee wish everyone a happy
Christmas and a Covid free New Year.*

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

www.tadshistory.com

Future TADS talks:

19th January 2022

Over and Under - Railway Bridges and Tunnels

By John Holland

(Venue to be advised)

TADS Meeting 17th November 2021.

**Kings, Boxes and Dots – The history of the Royal
Mail and the Post Office.**

**(from the early days to the contemporary situation and
towards the future)**

by John Rogers.

An unusual title for a busy, speedy and confident lecturer....

Mr. Rogers said he was never in the postal service – but it seems several TADS' members were. He is now a self-employed Social Historian.

In the days of yesteryear (circa 1660) the postal service lumbered items out in a mail coach and pick-up points were organised: eg. Reading, Newbury and Basingstoke in our area. C1877 Baughurst had 1 post office; and Tadley eventually had 3. Still has. In 1995 Tadley had its own postal frank. Now every place in our area is blanketed under 'Swindon', which also incorporates Oxfordshire, Reading and North Hampshire.

Mr. Rogers said 'people cost', 'machines cost', AND the amount of mail is lessening – because of e-mails, texts. etc. However, parcels are increasing in the 21st C as more people shop online.

Pre-WW1 there were several postal deliveries daily; and some of us can recall two reliable daily deliveries..... and now the postal deliveries are somewhat casually sent out, but I'm sure if you get to know your 'Postie' compassion and altruism will triumph over inertia and apathy!

Not everything can be accomplished mechanically: Monday mornings' post in postboxes is often 'sticky' and must be separated after a weekend in a damp post box... Mr. Rogers said people post the most amazing things – they forget 35-40,000 items are mechanically sorted per hour and flimsy glass items in flimsy envelopes, break open....

They now use Optical Character Readers which can sort out 95% of the 'dot' bits of mail from the Post Code. Also, since the 1990s barcodes at the top and bottom of an envelope can track each letter's 'history', notably special and recorded deliveries. It's possible 2 Tadley men invented the ubiquitous bar coding: Ken Moss and his son Adrian.

Mr. Rogers showed us an historic picture of the Scottish Isle of Skye post office: one shed-sized shop, managed and deliveries done by one lady Post Mistress.

C1635-ish, apparently postal services were originally for royalty and some aristocrats – lots of us were illiterate in the day! Even some royals and aristocrats..... You paid on receipt of your post which was held together by a sealing wax monogrammed seal. The fee depending on the mileage it had come and the number of sheets of paper. Some couldn't afford to pay, from around 4d (2.1/2 pence) and so the letter could not be delivered. It cost about 4d to send a communication from Oxford to Cambridge.

(Sir) Rowland Hill, a Brit, invented the postage stamp: the penny post, a black pre-paid Penny Black with Queen Victoria's bun profile on it and now worth £15 to many millions, depending on condition and other factors. The mail routes became Britain's main roads, though not numbered till 1922. We're the only country which doesn't have country-of-origin on our stamps because of Sir Rowland's invention.

The postal service could be hit-and-miss sometimes: the remote Scottish island of St. Kilda received its post floating in a sheepskin.

London's Fleet Street had the first rather flimsy post box – so precious it was guarded 24/7.

Trains & especially night trains were eventually used for moving mail around the country eg. Paddington to Penzance. Accompanying postman were put up in a hotel after night duty, till around 2000. London's Underground system helped distribute the mail, with Wilsden the hub of operations.

19th C postmen had 'good conduct stripes' for efficiency; telegraph and telegram boys had to be available 24 hours a day, for wages of £65 per annum (1860).

1873 saw Britain as world leaders in parcel post, for such diverse items as caged birds, hat boxes and Scottish kippers down to London.

Red vans are still used by postmen and women. Women began to work in WW1 and WW2.

There's a melee of post box designs, mostly red with varying cyphers and sizes. Scottish post boxes have a Scots crown on them but no reference to the monarch. That's because Scots Nationalists once blew them up! Doom. Some are 'listed'. 1980 saw the Type K 1 tonne post boxes introduced and they are all over the U.K. Also, in 1981 the organisation split off British Telecoms leaving Royal Mail split into Post Office Counters, National Giro, Parcel delivery, and letter delivery.

Collection times have been cut to cut costs. Also we've lost 39% of Post Offices, and telephone boxes are often vandalised or removed but can be bought for £1 for your garden ornament or mini-library.

Mr. Rogers seemed rather despondent about the Postal Service but for me personally Posties Stefan and Sharon are very friendly, helpful and keep an eye out for us. And they keep on the right side of dogs with dog biscuits. (Officially frowned on, I know!) Thank you, Mr. Rogers for your lightning tour of our Kings, Boxes and Dots systems.

Rosemary Bond.

Some local Post Boxes



Nr. The Broomsquire



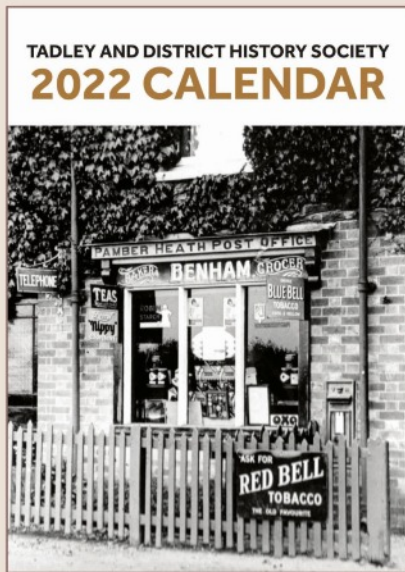
Pamber Heath stores



Bowmonts Road

TADLEY AND DISTRICT HISTORY SOCIETY 2022 CALENDAR

nostalgic views of local shops through the years



£7.00 EACH OBTAINABLE FROM

Profile Print & Copy (cash or cheque)
50 Bishopswood Rd, Tadley RG26 4HD;

5 Church Road, Pamber Heath RG26 3DP.



OR ONLINE FROM TADS WEBSITE [WWW.TADSHISTORY.COM].

This Calendar is on sale. Please buy one or more.

Annual Subscriptions

For many of us these are becoming due as the end of the year approaches. Subscriptions can be paid through the website, by Cash or Cheque posted to Carol's address given at the foot of the last page, or by Cash or Cheque at a meeting.

Display boards

TADS owns several large display boards which are used for exhibitions and are a very useful asset. Unfortunately they take up quite a bit of room and their current resting place is becoming unavailable so we need to find somewhere new.

Does any one have a dry place where they can be stored? If you think you can help please contact Carol.

More Local post boxes



The twin Ks at Mulfords Hill Post Office



A Christmas Eve special

TADS 2022 Programme

Wed. 19 Jan. **Over and Under, Railway Bridges and Tunnels** - *John Holland*

Wed. 16 Feb. **The Wren Churches of London** - *Lance Whitehouse*

Wed 16 March **Animals in the Lives of Famous People** - *Susan Howe*

Wed. 20 April **Flying the Vulcan Bomber – a Personal Perspective** -
Sqn. Ldr. Joe Marsden

Wed. 18 May **Memsahibs and their Servants** - *Jenny Mallin*

Wed. 15 June **From Belgium to Basingstoke – World War I Medical Services.** -*TADS Project group*

Wed. 20 July **Twyford Waterworks** - *Matthew Feldwick*

August No meeting

Wed. 21 Sept. **The Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst** - *Richard Anderson*

Wed. 19 Oct. **Whiteknights Park – from the Marquess of Blandford to the University of Reading.** - *Ian Burn*

Wed. 16 Nov. **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** - *Andy Day*

Wed. 14 December **Annual General Meeting and social evening.**

As well as the above list, Ian has prepared the traditional Programme card which will be sent as a pdf file - Ed

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

Milestones Museum is open. The website to buy admission tickets online and pre-book a day and time to visit can be found at:

<https://www.milestonesmuseum.org.uk/>

Milestones is going Christmassy festive from 4th December to 3rd January.

The Willis Museum and Sainsbury Gallery is open with a few restrictions. <https://www.hampshireculture.org.uk/willis-museum-and-sainsbury-gallery>

18 Dec to 2 Jan. **1950s Vintage Christmas activities for Children.** £3 just drop in.

On until 30 January 2022. **The Art of W. Heath Robinson**, a free exhibition. (*The man who drew crazy machines - Ed*).

Friends of the Willis Museum (7.30pm at the Museum - Non-members £3, and book through the Museum on 01256 465902)

No December meeting.

Basingstoke Archaeological and Historical Society (*Church Cottage at 7.30pm*)

9th Dec. **The Cup that Cheers:** tea before Victoria by Joy Pibworth – Historian and guide

13th Jan 2022. **Fallen Women, Riots and Arguments: stories of South View** by Debbie Reavell, Basingstoke Heritage Society

Covid 19 is still about - take care.

***TADS annual membership is £20 per person.
Correspondence to Tadley and District History Society,
c/o 5 Church Road Pamber Heath Tadley. RG26 3DP
Email: tadshistory@googlemail.com***