



February 2022

## TADS Newsletter

Website - [www.tadshistory.com](http://www.tadshistory.com)

**Back to the church.**

**Next Meeting - Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> February at 8 pm,  
at St. Paul's Church, The Green, Tadley.**

### **'The Wren Churches of London'**

**By Lance Whitehouse**

When London was re-built after the 1666 Great Fire of London, Christopher Wren was instructed to design and rebuild 51 churches in the city. He was later knighted and would become the architect who, more than any other, left his mark on the city in a way that has survived more than three centuries. Wren's most celebrated work of course is St Paul's Cathedral, but even within a half mile of this world famous building you can discover many of Wren's masterpieces. You won't find 51 churches anymore, as some were demolished when the population of the city declined in the 19th century, while many were damaged or destroyed during the Blitz of WWII.

If you wish to stop receiving the Newsletter please email Richard Brown or notify Carol Stevens or a Committee member.

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

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

## **Future TADS talks:**

**16<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

**‘Animals in the lives of famous people’.**

**By Susan Howe**

### **TADS Talks.**

For the February talk we are back to St Paul’s Church and hope that face to face talks will be the norm from now on. We are still considering new venues as the church acoustics are not great, and we have completely lost our slot in St. Paul’s Hall.

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**TADS Meeting 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022 (on Zoom)**

### **Over and Under – Railway Bridges and Tunnels on postcards**

**by John Holland (Associate of the Willis Museum)**

*One of the reasons we reverted to this talk being done on Zoom, was that John was recently home from a hospital operation and grateful to give the talk from home. There were a few technical problems as it was his first talk using Zoom.*

John, apart from his Basingstoke history interests, is a railway and post card enthusiast which is a very good way of bringing the two interests together.

The 12 years before the First World War was the 'Golden Age of Postcards' and many would argue that it was also the Golden age of the Railways. At that time about 900 million postcards, plain and picture, were sent each year. They were a very good and cheap way of sending a short message for same day delivery and in some towns you could even get a reply back the same day. (Today we use mobiles or email, etc). Now we mainly use picture postcards to tell people we are on holiday and are not completely surprised when we get

home before the cards. The foreign posted ones often seem to never arrive at all.

Railway postcards were produced by specialist printers, (the Locomotive Publishing Company), companies specialising in postcards (Frederick Hartmann, Valentines, Salmon), local printers, and the railway companies themselves. John showed that the complete history of railway development in Britain and elsewhere can be found on postcards. Obviously some of the very early scenes were reproduced at a later date, the earliest from paintings and drawings. As John showed a great number of pictures I will have to pick out some highlights from my three pages of notes. (*John's own script ran to 19 pages*).

The first question was what is the oldest railway bridge or tunnel? It was not on the Canterbury and Whitstable line of 1830 or the famous Stockton and Darlington railway of 1825 (still in use), but it is the Causey Arch of 1726 on the gravity down/horse up, Tanfield, coal wagonway in County Durham. The oldest tunnel is on the Canterbury and Whitstable dating from when it was a rope hauled railway.

The early days of the railways were before photography began, but by the mid 1800s, with photography established, the Victorian engineers were building some very fine bridges and viaducts, among them Robert Stephenson's High level Bridge at Newcastle and his Royal Border Bridge of 1850 at Berwick on Tweed which has 26 arches and stands 126 ft above the river. The 1849 Bramhope tunnel (2 miles 242yds) on the Leeds to Harrogate Railway has a portal that looks like a castle. Just imagine travelling through the tunnel behind a filthy steam engine in an unlit carriage. This advice was offered to passengers in '*The Railway Traveller's Handy Book*' of 1862:

*Caution in passing through tunnels: Male passengers have sometimes been assaulted and robbed, and females insulted, in passing through tunnels. And this has been most frequently the case when there have been only two occupants in the carriage. In going through a tunnel, therefore, it is always as well to have the hands and arms ready disposed for defence so that in the event of an attack, the assailant may be instantly beaten back or restrained.*

And you might have thought the days of highway robbery were long gone!

This was not the only hazard of tunnels. Digging them cost lives and at Otley Church there is a fine memorial to the 23 men who died while creating the Bramhope Tunnel. Lives were also lost when the first Tay Bridge in Scotland failed in a storm with a train and all 75 passengers and crew plunging

into the river in 1879. Thomas Bouch, the engineer, had been very successful on earlier projects but pushed the available materials too far and the structure was badly built. The disaster broke him and he died within a year. The story was told in verse by William McGonagall, popularly known as the world's worst poet, and, yes, you guessed it, John read his poem 'The Tay Bridge Disaster'. The replacement Tay Bridge (1887) was the longest railway bridge in the world until the 1930s. The Forth Railway Bridge opened in 1890, was in contrast a triumph, and is recognised throughout the world. It is the subject of many postcards, usually with a handsome steam locomotive crossing it.

So we travelled the country. For local interest we had the splendid brick skew bridge at Worting to the west of Basingstoke built in 1840 for the London and South Western Railway. A mile further south west is the Battledown Flyover, where one line passes over another as the Andover and Salisbury trains divert from the Southampton route.

John finished with some postcards showing the development of the London Underground (the first in the world) and some of the vast wooden trestle bridges in North America and big spiral tunnel in the Canadian Rocky Mountains on the approach to Kicking Horse Pass.

Thank you John for your very detailed talk about railway infrastructure and using the humble postcard to demonstrate the vision and ingenuity of past engineers, architects and builders, not forgetting the navvies without whose toil it would never have happened.

Richard Brown



The Causey Arch of 1726 - the oldest railway bridge of all.

## Peggy Anscombe

We are sorry to report the death of Peggy Anscombe, on 29<sup>th</sup> January. Peggy would have been 90 in April.

She was a long-time member of TADS and involved herself in many of the Society's projects, in particular the production of the publication, Around Tadley Fact & Fable and the Time Capsule in The Link

Peggy died in Basingstoke Hospital to where she had been transferred from the Cherry Blossom Care Home in Bramley where she and husband Jim were staying for respite care after Christmas.

Peggy had a very active life in the local community, particularly in the social life of AWRE where she worked in the drawing office.

A traditional funeral will take place on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> February at 11 a.m at the West Berkshire Crematorium and afterwards at The Old Mill, Aldermaston. If you wish to attend at the Old Mill her daughter Kim would be grateful to know numbers. Please let Carol know ( 0118 9701578 or [tadshistory@gmail.com](mailto:tadshistory@gmail.com) ) and she will pass the information on.



Peggy (centre) at the launch TADS version of Florence Davidson's book 'The History of Tadley' in May 2008

## Annual Subscriptions

If your subscription is now due it can be paid through the website. This is the preferable option. If this is not possible, then please pay by Cash or Cheque posted to Carol's address given at the foot of the last page of the newsletter.

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**A PROGRAMME SECRETARY IS REQUIRED** – This is an opportunity for you to choose topics for 2023 that you may have a particular personal interest in – Regular attendance at committee meetings is not essential for this position. There are only 10 talks to arrange each year.

**Please contact Carol or Richard if you can help with this position.**

It will ease the pressure on the remaining members of the committee if we can fill this post.

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## Website Problems

Recently there were some problems affecting access to TADS Website. They mainly applied to our own administrators and were caused by an upgrade done by the hosting Service Provider.

If you have any problems with accessing the website or have comments on its content or structure, please contact Steve Davidson by email or phone.

steve@tilliebean.com 0118 9701762

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## Berkshire Archaeological Society Day School

The Society will be running a day school 'Archaeology of Roman Berkshire 2022' on Saturday 2nd April 2022 from 10am to 4:15pm in St Nicolas Church Hall, Newbury RG14 5HG.

I have booking details and can email you a flyer.

Richard Brown

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## ***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/>

19-27 Feb. **Play Days: Games at the Musuem.** From the fairground to the penny arcade and hopscotch to skittles, join us for fun and games at the museum this February half term! No extra charge.

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

Until 2 May. **BRICK BY BRICK** presents an exciting display of artwork by international artists, designers and photographers who use LEGO® bricks as their medium or inspiration.

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

17 Feb. **A fifth dip into the Willis Museum archives** by John Hollands

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

10 Mar. **The Boxford Mosaic** – a Marvellous Mythical Myhttery! By Lindsey Bedford, The Berkshire Archaeology Research Group

*If you are intending to attend, please email enquiries@bahsoc.org.uk to confirm the meeting is in Church Cottage or check website.*

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***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***