



May 2022

TADS Newsletter

Website - www.tadshistory.com

**Next Meeting - Wednesday 18th May at 8 pm, at
St. Paul's Church, The Green, Tadley.**

‘Memsahibs and their Servants ’

By Jenny Mallin

Join us to discover how the very first memsahibs set foot into India in 1617 and how a fair amount of hoodwinking by these ladies enabled them to travel out to the East Indies at a time when the East India Company expressly forbade women to do this. Learn of the ‘fishing fleet’ ladies, English young women of marriageable age who found themselves faced with the social stigma of spinsterhood and were looked upon as objects of pity, as fate had dealt them an unlucky hand. Their only way to gain a hand in marriage was to go in search of a husband, and quickly... Learn of the challenges that lay ahead for them in running a household and the considerations they would need to bear in mind when hiring their servants.

(Everybody welcome - visitors £3.00)

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 or Carol Stevens (0118) 9701578*

www.tadshistory.com

Future TADS talks: 15th June 2022

**‘From Belgium to Basingstoke - World War 1
Medical Services’**

By TADS Project Group

TADS Meeting 20th April 2022

The Vulcan Bomber – a Personal Perspective

by Squadron Leader Joe Marsden accompanied by his wife.

Joe Marsden, a tall and imposing figure, said he was 'at one with his Vulcan bomber' as its pilot. It was a great job that he was, particularly in the Cold War years from the 50s to the late 1970s

Unlike driving a bus, a multi-million pound aircraft with more dials, pipes, tubes and knobs you could shake a lightning conductor at was the guardian of our skies. And the MEN-ONLY crew flying it must have had nerves of toughened titanium. That's the pilot who flew it and co-pilot who looked after the purse and the victuals and importantly, balanced the fuel and its consumption from various spaces in the plane. Two 'back office' crew sat behind, controlling the navigation, radar and other electronics.

The 1962 Vulcan was fat-arrow-shaped and white, whereas by 1969 it was khaki-blotched and thus better camouflaged as it now had a low-level role. Joe flew Vulcans all over the world as a pilot, becoming an Instructor (1980-85) then a Fighter Controller (1985-2000). He did 3 tours of the Falkland Islands in the 1980s; and then designed software and repaired AWACS (Airborne Early Warning & Control Systems) in Italy.

I thought you donned your flying kit and flew your plane, but no, there is a ritual to be observed: your clothing is multi-layered and air-conditioned by you personally. Your suit is sealed round the neck, waist, ankles and feet. Hypoxia (lack of oxygen in the blood) is to be avoided: if you do not have oxygenated blood at 15,000' – 40,000' and beyond, you'll end up a dribbling,

scribbling, out-of-control idiot, Joe said.

Oxygen is pumped into your lungs with a pressure jerkin which then forces stale air out. The soft-lined hard flying helmet weighs 10lbs. (4.5kg) and your strange but specially-shaped Dinghy knife can cut you free if required, without puncturing your suit. Joe said your very personal lavatory-system is like a balloon with metal bits attached to your no-flies but zippered trousers. Many of us had been pondering how one 'accessed the facilities' via multi layered clothing in this plane!

The Vulcan has aviation fuel stored all over it which it 'drank' at 10,000lbs per hour. There are 4 tanks storing 3,000 gallons each and altogether the fuel weighs 74,080lbs (33,602 kg).

The Vulcan was used for maritime reconnaissance: to see where the enemy is/was and report back to H.Q; to do air sampling – any radio-activity about?; and for bombing. Some of the weapons were built at AWRE (AWE from 1987 onwards) – the Blue Danube; Yellow Sun hydrogen bomb; Red Beard, a smaller bomb; the Blue Steel missile which you fired-and-ran-for-home; the W.E.177 bomb and the Shrike which was used in the Falklands War against Argentinian radars (April-June 1982). We didn't get the Skybolt weapon because the U.S.A. said we had to pay for developing it!

When Joe mentioned these weapons many in the audience were smiling proudly or wryly as if they identified with the construction of the warheads. They probably did! (*Guilty as charged – Ed*).

Maybe the next time we fly we'll think of the dangers the Vulcan crews and other RAF fliers faced. They were never able to relax BUT didn't have to queue for the loo..... And they were like a key to a locked house – guarding us from a nuclear confrontation.

Thank you Joe, for the technical wizardry which you and your crew wrought for us in yesteryear and for making us aware in the 21st C of your sacrifice for Queen and country during and after the 20th C Cold war.

Rosemary Bond.



Vulcan B2, XL426 at Southend Airport in July 2015. Joe Marsden is one of the pilots who enjoy doing ‘taxi runs’ in this preserved aircraft. (The photo was taken from a train on the line which skirts the airfield).

Bryan Lock was a member of TADS for several years. We are sorry to report that he died in late April after a period of ill health. The funeral was on the 3rd May.

Basingstoke Archaeological and Historical Society are celebrating their 50th Anniversary on 2nd July with a conference ‘From Nero to Cromwell, and Beyond’. Bookings for the event are closing shortly. Full details are on Page 7 of our March Newsletter.

NB All previous newsletters may be found on the TADS Website

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/>

28 May - 5 June - **Milestones 1940s Week**. A celebration of all things 1940s!

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

Until 17 July - **Crafted**, an exhibition by the Guild of Hampshire and Berkshire Craftsmen.

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

20 May - The **Mysterious Death of William Rufus** by Andy Skinner

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

9 June - Hard stone, hard labour? Post-medieval sarsen stone quarrying in Southern England by Kathy Whitaker of Historic England.

***TADS annual membership is £20 per person.
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