



June 2022

TADS Newsletter

Website - www.tadshistory.com

Next Meeting - Wednesday 15th June at 8 pm, at
St. Paul's Church, The Green, Tadley.

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

By ***TADS Project Group***

In 2014 TADS presented an exhibition about the men whose names were inscribed on Tadley War Memorial. From the research for that exhibition TADS Project Group has produced this presentation on the background of medical procedures at the front and the long and often tortuous route back to Blighty for injured soldiers. The illustrated talk highlights medical services for the Army and locally after repatriation. Its a very interesting tale.

(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: 20th July 2022

‘Twyford Waterworks’

By Matthew Feldwick

TADS Meeting 18th May 2022

Memsahibs* and their Servants.

by Jenny Mallin.

**Memsahib – usually a European woman of high social standing living in India.*

Jenny has always been a dedicated domestic goddess, bonding with her mother in the wonderfully warm and intoxicating environment of her Indian kitchen, relishing and cherishing her five grandmothers' legacies of food and life.

Jenny said she has worked in past times as a PA, a Travel Buyer, and as an advisor for TV productions. Now she's a 10-titles story-teller and a cook, passing down her knowledge with a passion.

Since the times of British influence by the East India Company in the 18th Century women were subservient to men. They wanted independence..... to have a voice and a choice. While men could be administrators, doctors, teachers, military personnel and plantation owners, many women yearned to be useful as well as decorative, maybe in art or music, etc. But life could be hard. You built a lovely home but it was often isolated, lacked running water and in the intense Indian heat, it was difficult to preserve food. City life was 'better'. You had hordes of Indian servants who didn't have too many qualms at being subservient to the Brits.....

Marauding monkeys were also a problem and monkey traps didn't work brilliantly. Preserving hygiene was challenging – floors were thoroughly washed twice daily by your servants while you entertained or played parlour games in the drawing room.

Jenny said that in 1864 her family lived in a 'bungalow' - a Hindi word meaning a home of 'one or even two, storeys'. Bungalows would be surrounded by gardens and a Compound where the servants lived and the main cooking was done. Even in the 19th Century Mrs. Beeton's cookery book penetrated the depths of India, and also advised about hygiene, cleaning and child management (1861). In 1895 Jenny said a special calendar advised how to cope without a nearby doctor and not many medicines. Also in 1895, Henrietta Hervey wrote a Curry Book which also advised the Brits to be aware of the Caste System, the seniority and the beliefs and taboos of Hindu, Sikh or Moslem employees.

The Memsahibs were pretty much spoilt because they had on average 15-30 servants and the richer and more important Brits. had 30-60. However, the Memsahib was close and trusting with her servants. Her children especially were devoted to, and by, their Ayah (nursemaid). Children always remembered their Ayah because she did everything for them, even passing the child/children over to Mama and Papa at bedtime for the goodnight kiss! The Ayah and children often spoke in Hindi and many a child preferred Ayah to Mama..... The Ayah had TIME for children! Jenny said in Bangalore in 1898, Annie Cheyne was the family's Ayah.



Back in 1894 Grandma Wilhelmena wrote down recipes in English for the servants' benefit – and ours now, it seems. It was English food with Indian overtones. And Grandma's Christmas cake required 25 eggs..... Book keeping showed where the money was spent. If the assistant cook couldn't find the breakfast toast rack she would often stash the toast between her toes.

In the 19th Century also, a Brahmin was a messenger of high caste. He dressed regally but was the main source of gossip. He wore a turban, which some people thought helped oxygen penetrate through to the brain...

A Punkah Wallah fanned the family; while the Water Boy transported water in an animal skin; a cow came with the milkman who had to be watched to see no water was added. The Dhobi Wallah took care of the washing which he dried on large, sun-warmed stones; a visiting tailor lived on the verandah for several

weeks while he made up the family's clothes.

There was often a 'shortage' of women: 30 ladies to 100 men. Jenny told of 16 year-old Caroline who was happily married for 45 years to a man 29 years older than she. If there was a young widow it was etiquette to propose marriage to her at her late husband's funeral..... Incidentally, Caroline and John had 2 sons who went into the Indian Railway Company.

Jenny's Dad, a member of the Royal Indian Navy (1940) had a devoted boy servant who even wanted to go to the UK when the family returned (1954). This was not allowed.

The East India Company offered young, eligible ladies an allowance to travel to India in the 'Fishing Fleet' ships BUT they had to be married within the year. The Indian hill stations had many bachelor soldiers. If a gal couldn't find a fella within the year, she was shipped home again 'Returned Empty' to Britain.....

The Mallin family finally left India in 1954 after Indian Partition. They found it hard to settle here, particularly Jenny's Dad who was ashamed to have to do his own washing – he visited London laundrettes at the dead of night with a haversack of washing. This caused a curious policeman to wonder what he was doing with a bag of 'loot' at midnight....

Thank you so much, Jenny, for your somewhat unexpected but fascinating stories of life in India with its intriguing culture and customs and the legacy of your Five Grandmas.

Rosemary Bond.

If you want to know more about the young ladies looking for husbands in India 'The Fishing Fleet: Husband-Hunting in the Raj', written by Anne de Courcy was much praised on its publication. - Ed

Hook Norton Brewery, Oxfordshire - well worth a visit.



It looks extraordinary and is quite bonkers. Situated not far from Chipping Norton and about 60 miles from Tadley, it is a Victorian Brewery still in use with a few modern updates and one of only three in the country to still use shire horse drawn drays to deliver its beers to local pubs. The brewery tour is a lesson in brewing and industrial archaeology (and a fitness workout with lots of steps). They also produce very fine prize winning ales.

The reason we visited is that they also have their original Buxton & Thornley steam engine of approx. 1900. Jane's paternal Grandmother was a Thornley. The engine is still steamed on some Saturdays.

www.hooky.co.uk



The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Due to a self harming accident I was not able to get around local events and had to be content with watching the magnificent displays shown on television from London and around the country. Britain still does pageantry like no one else.

I did make it to our local street party in Pamber Heath where there was a magnificent spread and we raised a glass to Her Majesty.



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/>

18-19 June. **Father's Day weekend** - free beer for qualifying fathers!

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*)

16 June **The Basingstoke Canal - The Last 6 Miles** by Roger Cansdale

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

2 July **From Nero to Cromwell, and Beyond.** A conference celebrating the society and 50 years of discovery in North Hampshire. Booking required - *see last month's TADS Newsletter.*

***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***