



April 2023

## TADS Newsletter

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

**Next Meeting - Due to the Easter Bank Holiday there is no meeting this month.**

**And due to the Coronation Bank Holiday in May our next meeting at Heath End Village Hall will not be until June 12<sup>th</sup> 2023.**

**We are currently setting out the 2024 speaker programme and are pleased to say that there are no losses of meetings due to Bank Holidays.**

**If there is any historical subject on which you would like to hear a talk please let us know and we will see who we can find as a speaker. (Contacts as below).**

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@iilexind.plus.com](mailto:richard@iilexind.plus.com) or Carol Stevens (0118) 9701578*

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

# **TADS last meeting, 13<sup>th</sup> March - A Photographic Walk through Tadley - Dix Hill in the south to the Falcon in the north.**

by the TADS Project Group. (Carol, Ian, Richard, Neil F, Christine and Peter in this case)



For those of us who have lived in Tadley for many, many years (or even Tad-born-and-bred) this stretch of the A340 road photographed through the ages can seem unknown and alien.

History and changes happen inexplicably- one's unaware until they have actually happened. An old photo of the Dix Hill area (1900 perhaps) was compared with a modern one. Some images can be dated by the cars (if any), the clothes, hairstyles of the people. Many images were attributed to James Thatcher of Tadley.

The Fighting Cocks pub on Dix Hill was thatched. It burned down in the days when a fire engine would travel the 9-ish miles from Basingstoke. That time the fire engine didn't arrive in time. The firemen would have

needed to rustle up the horses and when arriving at their destination relying on the building sporting a fire insurance disc. No disc – go burn. (*That scheme was discontinued about 100 years earlier – Ed*).

The Fighting Cocks pub where Tadley youths would stand, armed with pitchforks to deter youths from other villages --- is now part of a small area of amorphous housing. Carol said in 1981 a few lanes of 'Old Tadley' bisected by the A340 became the Tadley Conservation Area: Manse Lane; Back Lane (Winston Avenue), Knapp Lane; Malthouse Lane on the east side and Burrell's Farm on the west side. There are certain 'Chocolate box' buildings which are very, very old. One of 1498, perhaps, although they have not been dated by dendrochronology which is expensive.

Going Northwards on the A340 on main Road was Stacey's Post Office and fish and chips shop. Tadley Old Meeting Chapel on the left doubled up as a school in 1718 - the first school in Tadley. (Ambrose) Allen's Garage was also an overnight bus garage and at one time there was a smithy nearby to cater for horse transport, etc.

The St. Paul's Church area on the Green was the site of the earlier St. Saviour's Church. It had a "wriggly tin and pine roof" Carol said. St Paul's was built to replace St. Saviours which in itself was built because old St. Peter's Church in Church Road is a long way from the later village. Romantic thought has it that Tadley's population 'migrated' North and East due to the odd plague and an obnoxious landowner who lived in the magnificent Tudor Tadley Place house (which is full of ghosts, ghoulies and tunnels which allegedly go to a big house near Allen's Garage).

Quite near to the twenty year old Tadley Swimming Pool was a pond (lots of horses), a farm and a village pound (to temporarily house lost animals).

New Road (actually it is old) was later re-configured and the World War I Memorial erected in 1929 had to be moved. Once, New Road only had 2 houses, now there are hundreds. Christie Court is so named because the Christies gave the land.

The Salvation Army reached Tadley in 1898 next to Briar Way and the adjoining part of Tadley Common. Two lady Salvationists came down from London with a TENT which they erected on the said common. Eventually the brick building was completed (1909) and today it is opposite the Esso Garage.

'Chapman' is a well-known Tadley name and some Chapmans lived by the Esso Garage site. Albert Chapman's name is on the Tadley WWI war memorial. Mr Savage, a besom broom maker, lived and worked nearby. Sadly his cottage caught fire one day.

There was a photo taken in the middle of the A340, quite near Gorselands housing development – three boys are playing and loitering in the 1920s sunshine.

You wouldn't DARE do that now, the heavy lorries add to the 200+ vehicles thundering through hourly.

Eli, Daniel and George West made besom brooms near Gorselands, which they sold in London to the Royal Parks, and some say they also went to the Midlands. It is rumoured that the sellers didn't always hurry back to Tadley, partaking of much liquid refreshment en route home .....

Now, the late Arthur Nash's house, opposite the Fox and Hounds pub sports Arthur's Royal Warrant for making besom brooms. His family had been making brooms for 300 years and he didn't want to break the tradition. The brooms are made out of birch twigs with hazel handles. The family continue the business and have made brooms for the Harry Potter films and exported brooms to Japan.

When the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment (AWRE) was built in Tadley/Aldermaston in the 1950s, parades of shops appeared to cater for the workers and their families. Blakes the builders did their construction whereas Chivers built AWRE. There is not a Town Centre as such in Tadley, just parades of shops here and there. The busy Wheelgame Garage nestles beside the now Sainsbury's – once Budgens – formerly Watmores shop. Fox the chemist was also here. Carol said the Mobilgas establishment was run by Bernard Judd. In modern times there's now a pizza outlet and a charity shop, etc. The Police Station appears to be shut.....

When you're on the A340 and reach the traffic lights at the east end of Franklin Avenue that mark the Hampshire/Berkshire border, Carol said the 30 mph limits were put in place because of the AWRE traffic. At the east end of Franklin Avenue (and down Mulfords Hill a bit) was the late Jimmy Williams fairground establishment. There's a long metal shed which once contained his wonderful gallopers, which he re-painted and gilded every winter. The fair once travelled around the Hants/Berks borders and further west in the summer season. Jimmy told me (Rosey B) that his father's traction engine driver enjoyed beer and was often the worse for wear. To stop him, Jimmy's Dad substituted urine for beer .... End of problem!

Newtown is part way down Franklin Avenue and has been well established of old with 'old' Tadley families there. Ruth Ellis, once of Newtown, was the last British woman to be hanged. (Modern justice would have deemed her innocent).

The A340 once had 5 banks along it. They have all gone now.....

There was a patch of Turbary land just off the main road where in times past one could extract gravel and pick up firewood. The cul-de-sac nearby is naturally named Turbary Gardens.

Where a 21<sup>st</sup> C development is now on the A340 former Boundary Hall site, was once a rest room for WWII pilots from Aldermaston Airfield. Boundary Hall was built to house AWRE personnel – there were 11 blocks of flats. There was also a cinema, the Royal, known as the Fleapit and a Den used by cubs, scouts, etc. Over the road was a cafe: Peg's Cafe run by the late Dennis Brant and his sister Peg. It catered for construction workers from AWRE and the local Tadley and Baughurst housing estates.

Before the A340 disappears west then north down to Aldermaston Village is Furzebush Corner and the Falcon Garage. (The Falcon Pub was suddenly demolished one Saturday in 2011). The Falcon was originally owned by the Congreve family who resided at Aldermaston Court. Some of this area was requisitioned by the Government in 1941 for the wartime airfield. From 1958 the AWRE area roads were famous worldwide because of the 'Ban the Bomb' Aldermaston marches. The early marches went from London to Aldermaston, thereafter from Aldermston to London.... Some of us would get on our bikes and marvel at the famous people on the marches which PACKED the roads!

Ah, those were the days; the older A340, the cars, the shops, the people, the buildings..... they can never be replicated.

Thank you so much Carol, and the Project Team, who have researched so carefully, for stirring our memories.

Rosemary Bond

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***Follow up.***

*In view of the success of this talk (50 people were present) we are going to make it into a display which will go in the library for 2 or 3 weeks, hopefully about the end of May.*

*We are also going to produce a leaflet with some of the old photographs and indicating where they were taken.*

*And guess what will be the subject of next year's TADS calendar!*

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## **King Charles III Coronation celebrations.**

I am aware of several celebration parties being planned, some of them very, very local. There is said to be a large event planned for Tadley on Sunday May 7<sup>th</sup> which is being masterminded by the churches. At the moment I cannot find any details, but if you live in Tadley keep a look out.

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## **The 1921 Census**

Hampshire Libraries have advertised that they are now offering free access to the 1921 Census. If you want to know what your family were doing at that time the Census can yield a lot of information.

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## **Display Boards**

TADS have had a grant through local councillors to purchase some new vertical standing display boards. These are a lot lighter and easier to handle than the existing ones. The coming display in the Library will be their first outing.

### **Design underfoot.**

A Celtic inspired design on a manhole cover, seen in Cahir, Southern Ireland last week. It shows that with a bit of imagination, mundane items can be interesting.



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

**Milestones Museum** The website to buy admission tickets can be found at: <https://www.milestonesmuseum.org.uk/>

Until 16 April - Bun and Ted's Eggcellent Adventure! **Easter egg hunt.**

6-8 May - **Coronation Weekend.** Enjoy our 1950s themed activities - the era of King Charles III's childhood.

### **The Willis Museum and Sainsbury Gallery**

<https://www.hampshireculture.org.uk/willis-museum-and-sainsbury-gallery>:

Until 1 May. **Shoes: Inside out** - a free exhibition featuring footwear from 11 AD to the present, with X-rays of many of the exhibits.

Also **Cinderella trail** (to 16 April) & **Spring Explosion** (to 1 May).

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

27 April - **Special operations in WW2** and the training of secret agents at Beaulieu, by *Nick Saunders*

30 April. 2.00pm Sunday afternoon talk - Heroes and villains of the **Basingstoke Canal**, by *Roger Cansdale*

*£6 inc. Refreshments. Book at [www.hampshireculture.org.uk/willis-museum-and-sainsbury-gallery](http://www.hampshireculture.org.uk/willis-museum-and-sainsbury-gallery)*

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

13 Apr - **Towards the Neolithic?** Two sites in southeast Turkey by David Whiter

11th May - The **Mammoths Graveyard** at Cerney Wick by Professor Keith Wilkinson, University of Winchester.

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