



April 2025

TADS Newsletter

Website - www.tadshistory.com

**Next Meeting - Monday 14th April 2025 at 8 pm, at
Baughurst and Heath End Village Hall, Heath End Road,
Baughurst RG26 5LU.**

‘Donnington Castle, Newbury’

by David Peacock

Medieval Knights, Chaucer, a Queen of France and a Civil War siege all feature in the story of Donnington Castle just outside Newbury. It is a small castle on a hilltop with commanding views. Today, only the gatehouse and an outline of the walls survive. Local historian David Peacock will talk about the castle and its occupants.

(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 events:

Monday 12th May 2025 in Baughurst & Heath End Village Hall:

**‘The Battle of Hastings: regime change 11th
Century style.’**

By Mike Cooper

TADS Last Meeting 10th March 2025

It's not all beer and skittles

by Sue Ellis

Sue came from Thatcham to give us a light hearted talk about beer, pubs and brewing with lots of local interest. She is the Secretary and Treasurer of the Thatcham History Society and has a qualification in architectural history. As one might expect the history of brewing goes back a long way and has Assyrian origins dating from possibly 3100 BC and certainly depicted on a Sumerian tablet of 2050 BC. It was certainly well established by Roman times with evidence of brewing found at Boxford, north of Newbury. The Roman Tabernae served wine, beers and meals. (Not much change in 1600 years). In time things got a bit out of hand and in 970 AD King Edgar tried to restrict drinking.

So how far back do Britain's pubs date. Well as you might expect things are not clear cut and there are many contenders. The well known Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem in Nottingham claims to date from 1189, possibly. Ye Old fighting Cocks in St. Albans from about 700, but the possible winner is the Old Ferry Boat Inn at Holywell, Cambridgeshire which claims an origin of AD 560.

Pubs have colourful names which were required by Royal Decree. The simple signs were easily recognised by the illiterate majority of people. The Red Lion is the most common and relates to James 1. Many other signs have similar attributions. Some inns like the Tabard in Southwark, London (Chaucer's Canturbury Tales) offered accommodation as well as food and drink.

In the reign of Edward VI ale houses were first required to have licences, beer stalls at fairs did not.

Beer was popular for the obvious reasons but as it had been boiled it was a much safer drink than water. Small beer was very low alcohol so could be drunk in quantity with little effect. Gin, although cheap, was much stronger and could lead to depraved scenes like those depicted in William Hogarth's drawings. To try and get things under control the 1830 Beer House Act controlled opening hours and banned adulteration of the beer by adding water or anything else. The licensee also had to have their name on a board showing at the entrance to the premises.

Besides their normal activities pubs were also used for official events, sales and auctions. Locally, Sue said that Coroner's inquests were held at The Pelican in Pamber Heath in 1867 (Samuel Tull age 27) and the Hatchet, Pamber Heath in 1879 (Frederick Bowman, son of the landlord found dead on the Ufton Road). Those on main roads were used as stops for Mail Coaches, for example the Angel in Woolhampton.

Sue referenced a good number of our local pubs. The Hinds Head in Aldermaston is in a very good location on a main road and is linked to the Congreve family as was the now demolished Falcon in Tadley. A falcon was a part of the Congreve's family crest. The Pelican Inn in Pamber Heath is an unusual name for a pub, but a Pelican has royal and historic connections as with Drake's ship. The building has undergone a lot of changes during its existence and at one time had a rowdy reputation. For a while it was run by the aptly named Beer family. The Hatchet, a beer house (not licenced to sell wines or spirits) also in Pamber Heath was also know as a rowdy place and for out of hours drinking. The house was demolished in 1975. The Plough in Little London is another building that has undergone many changes and Sue recommended it as a good example of a surviving local pub. The Plough is the fourth most popular pub name in the UK.

The Fighting Cocks in Tadley has survived but only as a block of flats. The original thatched pub was destroyed by a fire in 1903 and rebuilt with a tiled roof. Not far away is the Old Malthouse which was a pub and brewery at one time. A short walk further north is the New Inn (one of many New Inns) in Rowan Road which was originally just a beer house and may date back to the 1760s, said Sue. And she spoke of many more. Although the Tadley area has lost several pubs in recent years, it still has quite few and their distinctive signs still make very good navigation markers.

Thank you Sue for your lively and interesting talk about buildings which were and still are an essential feature of British villages and towns.

Richard Brown

The following are some of my own photographs of local pubs, many of them mentioned in Sue's talk. *Not all the pictures are current.*





The Old
Malthouse



TADS Archives

We have successfully transferred the archives to the Barn Store and at last can now get at them at any time. If anyone has any suggestions of alternative, cheaper storage we can investigate please contact Carol or myself. Contact details are at the foot of page one.

VE Day (Victory in Europe 8th May 1945)

There will be a commemoration service at St Mary's Church, Newchurch Road, Tadley at 10.30 on Sunday 11th May.

Natural History Corner



Frogs spawning in our garden pond on 10th March.

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 22 Apr. **The missing Bunny Brigade.** Help us collect all the clues to reunite the Bunny Brigade and save Easter! A childrens' treasure hunt

The Willis Museum and Sainsbury Gallery

March: 26 – June 29: The Comedy **Wildlife Photography** Awards 2024 exhibition

27 Apr. 2 – 3.15 pm, Sunday afternoon talk – **Trees in British Art History** by Tim Craven (Followed by tea or coffee and cake) £7.00 and must be booked. To book go on-line at www.hampshireculture.org.uk/willis-museum, or call in, or phone 01256 465902.

Friends of the Willis Museum (7.30pm at the museum, non-members £3.00 and please book by telephone on 01256 465902)

17 Apr. **The History of Cadbury's** by David Wickens. *Yes, the Chocolate company.*

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

12 May - **The Civil War in Hampshire** by Alan Turton – Historian.

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