December 2025

TADS Newsletter

Website - www.tadshistory.com

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

'TADS AGM and Social'

Members are invited to attend the AGM. We do need sufficient attendance to meet the quorum requirements to make the AGM valid.
A package of documents will be emailed to members before the meeting. If any of you are willing to join the committee you will be extremely welcome as we are all getting old and need help. Committee meetings are by Zoom and very friendly.

The formal meeting will be followed by an opportunity to get together with other members. If you have any artefacts, pictures or documents you think will be of interest to other members, please bring them along for display. As usual drinks will be provided and members are asked to bring a contribution to the food, both savoury and sweet. Assistance with clearing up and cleaning crockery, etc. will be much appreciated

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 January 2026 in Baughurst and Heath End Village Hall

A short history of Aldermaston and the nuclear weapons programme.

by Garry George

TADS Last Meeting 10th November 2025

The British Redcoat of the mid-Eighteenth Century

By Alan Turton

We were very grateful to Alan for stepping into the breach once again at fairly short notice to give this talk when the programmed speaker had to pull out.

Britain did not have a standing Army even in Tudor times (although there was a Royal Navy), and it was not until 1645 and the Civil War that Thomas Fairfax created the New Model Army. That was not to say that the country was defenceless, there were militias and armies had been recruited from the general population when necessary. Although the Model Army was well organised there was no official uniform and the troops wore anything that was available in any colour.

With the restoration of a monarch, Charles II, in1660, it was decided that a standing army was not really necessary. The short uprising in London in January 1661 led by Thomas Venner rapidly changed that idea. The earliest British regiment was the Coldstream Guards, which had formed in 1650 during the Commonwealth and adopted the name in 1670. The Coldstreams helped restore order after the uprising. After King James II fled the country in 1688, the army grew under the next king, William of Orange who came to the throne in the 'Glorious Revolution'. War was never far away and from 1704 to 1711 the army really established itself in the battles in the Low Countries against the armies of French King Louis XIV. The British were skillfuly led by the First Duke of

Marlborough. A little later the army was once again run down in peacetime under King George 1. For example, there were no guards for the Scottish border to keep out the troublesome clans.

Again it was not peaceful for long. The Battle of Dettingen was fought in southern Germany in June 1743, during the War of the Austrian Succession. Dettingen saw British forces stand in alliance with those of Hanover and Austria against the French. It was the last time a reigning British monarch, George II, personally led his troops in battle. His horse was shot from under him.

The British Redcoat Army was further established by the third son of King George II, Prince William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland. Following the Battle of Culloden and his harsh suppression of the Scottish Jacobite Rebellion in 1745 he was also known by the nickname 'Butcher Cumberland'. It may seem surprising that in the army of that time officer commisions were always bought and only the extremely wealthy could reach the highest ranks. Hopefully those with money also had some talent for soldiering.

Alan then went on to describe the organisation and equipment of the Redcoats with photographic illustrations.

In 1742 the colour of the jacket facings were established for each regiment. I also remember being taught as a schoolboy that for each guards regiment the grouping of the buttons on the front of their jackets is different . The standard armament was the 'Brown Bess' musket which had a flintlock firing mechanism. Soldiers needed teeth as they had to bite of the end of the musket cartridges (Gunpowder containers). Alan passed round an original , period bayonet, a fearsome object at close quarters. The Grenadiers were so named because they threw grenades, small bombs.

Recruitment - The Navy could impress men (kidnap them off the streets), but the Army could not. Their men had to sign up voluntarily and if it was in peacetime it was for life. Alan showed an image of a typical attestment paper. Also a list of clothing, which included animal skin bags and knapsacks for carrying food and ammunition. The troops were paid, but there was a lot of

corruption. William Cobbett of Farnham and 'Rural Rides' carried out an investigation into the corruption.

The British regiments put a lot of effort into daily exercise and drill movements which enabled a higher rate of fire, which was used in Platoon fire and Company fire. James Wolfe exploited this to good effect in defeating the French in Canada.

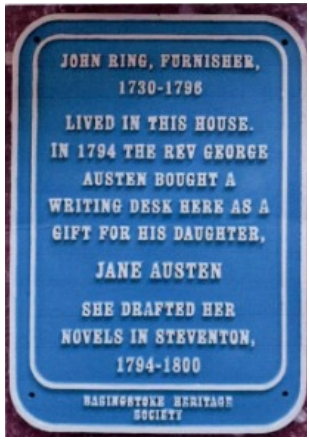
There were not many barracks for the soldiers due to insufficient money. The normality was for soldiers to be billetted in pubs and this was a requirement written into the licence of a pub. Away from towns accommodation was in tents. Normally six men would be allocated to a tent with four using it while two were on guard duty.

The army continued to wear red though most of the 19th Century until the enemy acquired high powered rifles and red made a wonderful aiming point. Khaki camouflage was quickly adopted.

Thank you Alan for your very interesting and detailed talk. You said you had not given it for many years but it didn't show.

Richard Brown

A new Blue Plaque in Basingstoke



This Friday, 5th December, the Basingstoke Heritage Society will unveil their latest blue plaque. (Their 25th). It will go onto 83 Lower Church Street which was the home of John Ring, who sold household goods to the great and middling sort in the 18th Century. It was on the 5th December that the Reverend George Austen purchased a writing desk for his daughter Jane from John Ring. Jane Austen wrote about her writing desk which was a treasured possession and would have been made in Ring's workshop. The desk is today displayed in Jane Austen's house at Chawton, nr. Alton.

True Poverty.

The following letter was published in a national newspaper last month in response to the debate about lifting the two child benefit cap and modern poverty. I have shortened it a bit so it now just describes post-war poverty, conditions with which many local Tadley families would heve been familiar. It may seem a long time ago but it was within my own lifetime. - The Ed.

Growing up in London in the late 1930s, then living through the war and the harsh years that followed, my family, like many others, witnessed poverty on a scale not seen today. There were no state benefits then, and food was rationed until 1954. Clothes rationing ended in 1949.

Every day, breakfast in our house was the same – a thick slice of bread soaked in warm milk. If the milk had curdled (no fridges then) it was just bread dipped in warm water from the kettle. Lunches were nearly always stews, made mainly from vegetables from the garden or the allotment. Our tea was either bread and dripping or bread and jam. Occaisionally, as a treat, we would have beetroot or tomato sandwiches.

We cleaned our teeth with pieces of old cloth, using either tooth powder or soot. I had no toothbrush until I started work at 15, when I proudly bought one with my first pay packet. And don't get me started on our sanitary products, which were pieces cut from old nappies.
We had an outside toilet that was lit by a little paraffin lamp, and toilet paper was pieces of old newspaper tied to a nail on the wall. We had no bathroom and no hot water, only a single cold tap in the kitchen. There was just one fireplace in the living room, around which my mother dried our school dresses overnight ready for the morning.

That was how many families lived and dealt with life back then. It was a time when there were no benefits whatsoever, no free school meals, no modern comforts, and no health service until 1948. Along with countless others, we experienced real poverty. If our families managed to feed and clothe us through the worst of times with no state help, please tell me why families today are still unable to feed their children.

Mrs Lesley Snape, Sheffield

Jacksons of Reading

As mentioned in the last issue, a new exhibit remembering the famous store is displayed in the Welcome Gallery at Reading Museum until 28th March 2026. The exhibit features stunning scale models of Jacksons' famous Reading stores and it was shown on BBC South Today on the evening of 2nd December. If you remember the eccentric Jacksons Corner department store the models will bring back many memories.

BBC photo

The editor and TADS Committee wish everybody a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

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/

6 -7 Dec. - Milestones **Christmas Market.**

22-23 Dec. - **Meet the Reindeer.**

The Willis Museum and Sainsbury Gallery

12 Nov 25 - 22 Feb 26. - **Beyond the Bonnets**: Working Women in Jane Austen's Novels, a new exhibition.
15 Nov - 11 Jan. - **Inspired by Jane**, a Basingstoke Art club exhibition.

There is no Sunday talk this month.

Friends of the Willis Museum *(7.30pm at the museum, non-members £5.00 and please book by telephone on* 01256 465902)

15 Jan 2026 **The Man behind 'Q'** A talk by Guy Caplin

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

5th Jan 2026 **Myth, History, and Afterlife of the Cretan Labyrinth**
By Dr Katy Soar – University of Winchester

TADS annual membership is £ per person.
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