

March 2026

TADS Newsletter

Website - www.tadshistory.com

**Next Meeting - Monday 9th March 2026 at 8 pm, at
Baughurst and Heath End Village Hall, Heath End Road,
Baughurst RG26 5LU.**

‘The real Wolf Hall: what Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn and Thomas Cromwell were really like.’

By Ian Porter

The talk starts with an overview of Henry’s life – Ian puts forward two reasons for why he behaved so badly in his later years. Then a brief outline of both Thomas Cromwell and Anne Boleyn’s lives and the plot against Anne, finishing with a few notes on Jane Seymour and Anne of Cleves.

(Everybody welcome - visitors £4.00)

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 13th April 2026 in Baughurst and Heath End Village Hall

Newbury Roman Cemetery

By David Peacock

TADS Last Meeting, 9th February 2026

The life of Edwina Mountbatten and her husband Lord Louis Mountbatten

by Richard Anderson

What a couple, it was enough to frighten the horses. Each lived their lives on their own terms. "We have spent all our lives getting in and out of other people's beds". - Lord Louis Mountbatten. And he was a Great Uncle and close advisor to our King!

But back to the beginning and Richard's talk was really about Edwin Mountbatten. She was born Edwina Ashley in 1901 and was allegedly distantly related to Pocahontas, the famous Native American. Her mother Amalia, died when she was 10 years old. She did not get on with her step-mother and in later life she was brought up in London by her maternal Grandfather Sir Ernest Cassel, a German born banker and one of the wealthiest men of his day. (As a great friend of King Edward VII he was nicknamed "Windsor Cassel"). Edwina was very bright and clever young girl, very able with languages and a lover of both travel books and animals.

Lord Louis 'Dickie' Mountbatten (Battenberg) was born in Frogmore House, Windsor in 1900, a great grandson of Queen Victoria. His Mother was Princess Victoria and his father Prince Louis of Battenberg. (The surname Battenberg was changed to Mountbatten during WWI as it was less Germanic). His family were not well off.

At her Grandfather's house in London, Brook House, Edwina became the organiser of the best parties in London and was pursued by many men, but was not interested in marriage. Dickie went to Dartmouth Naval College and on to Christ's College, Oxford in company with the Prince of Wales (later briefly King Edward VIII). Dickie had many girlfriends (and more than a few boys). Edwina tired of London life and fulfilled her interest in travel by exploring all round the world. She really roughed it at times, said Richard. But while not roughing it she met Dickie on a cruise with the Vanderbilts, of the extremely wealthy American family. It was almost love at first sight and their 1924 wedding was described as the wedding of the year but not a financial match. She had inherited £10,000,000 from her Grandfather, while he had his naval salary of £310 per year. As a wedding present she gave him a Rolls Royce car and he gave her a telescope and a hot water bottle!

Not to worry, she had also inherited Brook House and her money enabled them to pull it down and build an ultra new house with all the latest mod cons.

While Dickie was at sea with HMS Daring based at Malta, Edwina, who was known as the most sexually voracious woman in London society, was caught with a young black man and they had to be taken to hospital to be sexually separated. The Sunday People newspaper named the man as the singer Paul Robeson, but it was in fact Leslie Hutchinson a popular singer and pianist known as "Hutch". A libel case ensued which added to the publicity. Edwina's two daughters, Patricia and Pamela, always referred to her many lovers as 'uncles'.

The Second World War brought great change in Edwina's life from socialite to social worker, said Richard. She did not suffer fools and hated pomposity which created a few enemies. She got involved with the ARP – Air Raid Precautions and realised there was no vision of what was needed in the shelters. She soon sorted the problems. She went on a tour to the USA on a 28 state tour raising money for war charities and then a similar tour in Canada. Meanwhile Dickie served as captain of HMS Kelly, a naval destroyer which was regarded as an unlucky ship. It spent more time under repair than at sea and was finally sunk off Crete in May 1941. In 1942, Edwina was appointed Superintendent-in-Chief of the St John Ambulance Brigade, which gave her a lot of clout. As the war ended she moved to SE Asia and did amazing work saving lives, especially in the repatriation of prisoners of war. Just after the war she inherited Broadlands house and estate which is near Romsey, Hants.

In February 1947 Louis Mountbatten was appointed the last Viceroy of India with Edwina as the Vicereine. They served during the final months of the British Raj and the first months of the post-Partition period when Louis was Governor General of India until June 1948. This was a time of a massive number of deaths in India and

the new state of Pakistan. During this time Edwina became extremely close to Jawaharlal Nehru who became the first Prime Minister of India after the Partition.

Edwina continued her good works with the St John Ambulance Brigade. She died in her sleep aged 58 of unknown causes in February 1960 in Kota Kinabalu, Indonesia while on an inspection tour for the Brigade. In accordance with her wishes, she was buried at sea off the coast of Portsmouth from HMS Wakeful on 25 February 1960; the Archbishop of Canturbury officiated. On learning of the news, Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother observed, "Dear Edwina, she always liked to make a splash." Richard showed a moving video of the burial.

Thank you Richard for you enlightening and very entertaining talk. She was quite a gal.

Richard Brown



Edwina Ashley in her wedding dress, 1924.

Portrait by Philip de László (1869–1937)

Membership

Membership subscriptions are now due. Please note that individual membership is now £25.00 as voted for at the AGM. Subscriptions may be paid in person at a TADS Meeting or by other methods as given on the TADS Website. Please complete a Membership/GDPR Form at the time of rejoining.

Help at Meetings

The preparation for meetings takes effort. Thank you to those who stepped in at the February meeting to help put out the chairs.

Historic Tadley leaflet

There are only a very small number of printed leaflets left. However it is published on the TADS website and can be printed from there in A4 format. The link is on the Website Home page below the Newsletter link.

Tadley Band 150th Anniversary Concert

The concert will be in Pamber Heath Memorial Hall at 2.30pm on Sunday 15th March. Full details are given in the poster produced on the next page.

TADS (Carol) will be doing a presentation on the band's history during the event.



150 YEARS

We warmly invite you to Tadley Band's

150th Anniversary Concert

Celebrating a century and a half of local music making!

Sunday 15th March, 2:30pm

Pamber Heath Memorial Hall, Tadley RG26 3TQ

FREE Entry on the door

Retiring Collection | Refreshments & Raffle

Calling all past members!

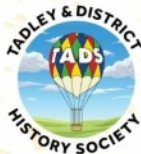
Play in our massed band finale -
to participate, contact us via
contact@tadleyband.org or
07730 160216

0000-1075-2025-0000

Scan to reserve seats
online, or just turn
up on the day!



Featuring a special presentation by
Tadley and District Historical Society



The great Pamber Heath sewage problem

Since June Thames Water have been pumping large quantities sewage from the rear garden of house in a local close, due to the collapse of a sewage pipe. The occupier has now been moved out. As repair work is finally starting they are now also pumping sewage from a manhole in the main road through the village with temporary traffic lights in place





Sewage problem (part 2)

The collapsed sewer is about 5 metres (16ft) underground. To reach it Thames Water need to use a series of special diggers in another back garden. To get the diggers in place they have bring massive mobile cranes into the close to lift the diggers over one of the houses.



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 27 Mar. Weekday afternoon tickets for **£10** returns.

The Willis Museum and Sainsbury Gallery

14 Mar – 28 Jun: **Bees!** Hampshire's Hive of History & Nature a new exhibition in the Sainsbury Gallery.

Until 5 Apr: **TRACES** - An exhibition by ten + women artists from Basingstoke, Newbury and surrounding areas who work in varied media in the Basingstoke Community Gallery (first floor).

Hosted by the Museum Management (*Archaeology Gallery, second floor*)
29 March at 2 pm: Sunday afternoon talk: **Around the World in Fifty Birds** by Keith Betton. £7 including tea, coffee and cake. If able, please book online at <https://www.hampshireculture.org.uk/event/sunday-tea-talk-around-world-50-birds> - or drop into the museum.

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

19 Mar The **Life of Edwina Mountbatten** by Richard Anderson

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

13th Apr -Access and Amplification: **Basingstoke's Past on Film.** Film show and talk from Wessex Film and Sound Archive by Ryan Reid – Community Archives Officer at Wessex Film and Sound Archive

***TADS annual membership is £25 per person.
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