



July 2006

**Tadley and District History Society
(TADS)**

Next meeting - Wednesday 19th July

St. Paul's Church Hall 8.00 to 9.30 pm

“ Tidgrove Warren excavations”

by Peter Goff of Kingsclere Heritage
Association

(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.00)

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*Comments, queries and suggestions to Bob Brown, Tadley (0118) 981 6109,
or Richard Brown (0118) 9700100, e-mail: richard@ilexind.plus.com*

www.tadshistory.com

TADS Coach Outing on Saturday 23rd September.

The outing will be to the Weald & Downland open air Museum and the Tangmere Military Aviation Museum. Both have cafes. Departure will be at 8.45 am from St Paul's Church. The cost £25-26 per person.

Book now - £10 deposit to David Day, 33 Pelican Road, Pamber Heath.
Tel 01189 700909

TADS Meeting 20th September

“Felons and fingerprints”

by Michael Carrigan, ex Metropolitan Police forensic expert

Last month's meeting (21/6/06):

Filming ‘Pride and Prejudice’ at Basildon House, Lower Basildon, Berkshire By Neil Shaw, House Steward (extraordinaire)

How do you make a Stately Home unstately? Allow in a film crew. Think an eclectic group of actors (including Keira Knightly, Brenda Blethyn, Donald Sutherland, Judi Dench, Rosamund Pike, Paul Macfadyen etc.); 250 extras; 90 film crew; a BAFTA-seeking production team with some quite professionally scary females; miles of cables; bundles of bubble wrap; countless packing crates; dozens of dust sheets; spiders webs of scaffolding; a collection of classy cameras costing £750,000 each and heavy with it; 200 candles; lighting systems likely to overheat; propped-up ceilings; fragile mirrors, boxed-in with aircraft fuselage ‘aerolam’; foam, polythene, polystyrene, plywood....; banisters bandaged with protective products; ‘Tyvec’ plastic-like paper protecting your delicate Regency wall covering; faux rain (provided by Reading Fire Brigade); faux marble; ten tons of extra crunchy driveway gravel; carpenters and set-builders everywhere; material and tissue paper wraps for your precious Octagon Room carpet rolled pile-outwards and heaved out of a window to be scissor-lifted to a room below; contact lenses all round (where applicable!); canteens; continuity girls; make-up ladies in flashily fashionable clothes

Work them all from 6am into the night for 8 weeks,
and what have you got?

‘Pride and Prejudice’
Films cost a lot,
Why not BUILD a set?
Too expensive!
Why let a film crew in? Think mega-bucks!
So said our lecturer, Neil Shaw.

Thus was the National Trust property of Basildon Park (House) interestingly transformed and transfixed in the late summer of 2004.

Basildon Park House is a beautiful 18th century Palladian Mansion built between 1776 & 1783 by John Carr for wealthy Francis Sykes. It’s set in extensive parklands on the Berkshire Downs and near the River Thames. The house interior is notable for its original delicate plasterwork, elegant staircases and Octagon Room. The house fell on hard times in the early part of the twentieth century but was rescued, restored and filled with pictures and furniture by the Iliffe family in the 1950s. The family still lives in part of the house.

Florist-turned-HouseSteward, Neil had about 60 TADS’ members spell-bound with his knowledge, authority, anecdotes and AURA!

Jane Austen, Hampshire’s middle-class Regency novelist, 1775-1817, wrote ‘Pride and Prejudice’ in 1813. The film was premièred in London and ‘Basildon-ites’ were thrilled to be invited, fêted, recognised and thanked. So all’s well that ends well. Visitor numbers have gone from 45,000 per annum to 65,000 and rising. Just as well, it costs £350,000 to run the house each year.

What about the human cost to Neil and his workers’ nervous systems, after they stashed away the VICTORIAN and MODERN furniture, paintings, chandeliers etc. and lived out the 8 weeks’ filming on tenter-hooks?

Good news again. Nothing broken, nothing missing, no discovery of dry or wet rot, conservation techniques honed and the film crew evaporated like mist, leaving happy hoteliers and shop keepers in that part of Berkshire.

This house is certainly living. And lived-in: the Wartime requisition plus P.O.W.s; Harwell scientists; a sprinkling of aristocrats; and now since 1978, the National Trust, which has restored it all to its 18th century Regency splendour once more.

Thank you, Neil, for your careful, cautious energy and attention to detail.

Rosemary Bond

What's On? Local events which may be of interest.

Hampshire Record Office (*'Last Thursday' Lectures 1.15-1.45pm*)

Thursday 27 July - 'Their Past Your Future': a selection of films about the Home Front 1939-45. Presentation by David Lee

Thursday 31 Aug - 'Was your ancestor a soldier?' An introduction to the records of army ancestry by Heather Needham

Milestones Museum and the Willis Museum both have a series of events during the next few weeks intended for families.

The **Normandy Veterans Association** have a 5 day trip to Arnhem leaving on 14th Sept. Cost is £465. There are 2 places left. Details from Bob Brown 01189 816109

Museum of English Rural Life, Reading University.

Until 27th August the museum has an exhibition 'Action women: the real story of the Women's Institutes'. Tel 0118 378 8660 or www.merl.org.uk

2006 Silchester Dig. The dig is in progress. There is a public open day on Sat 5th August. TADS have not arranged a visit this year but you are invited to join the Basingstoke Historical Society on their visit at 6.30pm on Thursday 10th of August. Meet at the dig site. A collection will be made.

Wanted - An Archivist

Alan Cooke the current TADS archivist is leaving the country later this year and we need a replacement for him. The job is not difficult or too time consuming, but does involve some computer work using the Excel spreadsheet.

Details from Alan on 0118 981 4006

*TADS annual membership is £10 per person.
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