



September 2006

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

Next meeting - Wednesday 20th September
St. Paul's Church Hall 8.00 to 9.30 pm

“Felons and fingerprints”

by Michael Carrigan,
ex-Metropolitan Police forensic expert.
“Sometimes just getting the prints is dangerous”

(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.00)

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www.tadshistory.com

TADS Meeting 18th October

“Researching the History of Local Villages “

By Gordon Timmins, independent historian

Last month’s meeting (19/7/06):

Tidgrove Warren Farm Excavations, near Kingsclere (Romano-British and Medieval)

A talk by Peter Goff, Keith Whiteman and Peter Woodman

So, Kingsclere could have been England’s capital city! It has royal and ‘rabbity’ connections that have been rather undercover between Romano-British and Medieval times, until around the Victorian era.

Now all is being revealed.

With the help of Raleigh Place (landowner extraordinaire), Wessex Archaeology, Your Heritage, Basingstoke and Dean Borough Council, enthusiastic schoolchildren from the Kingsclere area, plus Kriss Strutt and his students from Southampton University et al, this area is being excavated.

That’s not to mention 1926 Kingsclere amateur archaeologist schoolmaster, Mr Bull and the 1980s vicar, Rev. Legg, who was also into Crop Circles

No doubt many others have had a hand, a foot, a trowel or a ploughshare in the Tidgrove Warren Farm area, about one mile south of Kingsclere and only about 6 miles from Tadley. We are talking about 190 acres of downland, some now farmland.

In the 21st century modern archaeology encompasses not only trowels, pick-axes and brushes, but aerial photography, radio-carbon dating, geophysical surveying, site excavations, metal detecting, magnetometry, resistance meter surveying etc. This all costs cartloads of money.

Mind you, the plough turns up a lot and the area is also a Nature Reserve, with rare stone curlews which need frequently turned-over soil. They are ground-nesting birds, so there’s also a closed-season for archaeological activity in the Spring.

First the royals.

King Henry II (ruled 1154-1189) was actually a bit of a lad. He had a

complicated lifestyle but travelled light and in simple clothing, keeping happy the Fair Rosamund and his older wife, Queen Eleanor. He frequented the roads around Kingsclere and had a Royal Lodge or hunting lodge in the Tidgrove area. The King's house may have cost £31.9s.7d according to the Sheriff of Hampshire's expenditure accounts of 1172. He abandoned the lodge in sorrow when Rosamund died (about 1176) changing the name of part of the area to Freemantle (Fridgidum Mantellum = cold mantle or cloak) for the coldness of his heart at his sad loss.

Then there was King John who ruled England 1199 -1216 (brother of Richard the Lionheart of Crusades' fame). John had wild and careless ways with people and the Crown Jewels. His golden bed bug weathervane on Kingsclere Church remains as a reminder to the locals that he was bitten in a bed nearby!

Apparently King John travelled in rich attire and in style, with an alleged entourage of over 80 wagons: a sort of Royal Progress, which included visits to his Royal house or lodge in the Tidgrove area.

Where do you look or dig at a site? As stated earlier, ploughs and people must have turned up lots. The artefacts found so far are arrow heads, pottery, brooches, buckles, metal goods, gold and other coins, stone, tile, post holes and plaster and mortar bits from the royal buildings. Sadly, at least 10 still-born babies' and twins' skeletons have been found outside the settlement boundaries at Tidgrove. These are from the Romano-British period nearly 2000 years ago. These poor mites were considered non-human and were therefore ostracised.

And the rabbits (or conies)? The site of approximately 190 acres is mentioned in the Domesday Book as 'Titegrove' and around 1241 Augustinian Priors farmed rabbits here until the 15th century. Others produced rabbits here until the 19th century.

So the Hampshire Downs around Cottington's Hill – near the enormous 20th century TV booster aerial – have been homes to Royals and rabbits, and have prehistoric Neolithic long, and usually Bronze Age, round barrows. Indeed an interesting area.

Let's hope the Tidgrove Warren Farm archaeological area is honoured and nurtured by us all.

Thank you, you three gentlemen from the Kingsclere Heritage Association, for enlightening so admirably the 40 TADS members.

We must go, visit! (But not in the stone curlew breeding season)

Website: www.kingsclere.org.uk

Rosemary Bond

TADS Coach Outing on Saturday 23rd September.

There are still a few places left on the outing to the Weald & Downland open air Museum and the Tangmere Military Aviation Museum.

Departure at 9.00 am from St Paul's Church. £21 per person.

Contact David Day, 33 Pelican Road, Pamber Heath. Tel 01189 700909

TADS Archivist - We are pleased to report that Peter McNulty has volunteered to take over the post from Alan Cooke.

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

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

Thurs 28 Sep - What the Victorians did for archives by Jane Harris

Basingstoke Archaeological & Historical Society (*7.30pm in Church Cottage, Basingstoke*)

13th Oct. - The Tichbourne Claimant by Gill Arnott of Hampshire Museums Service

Milestones Museum - "Proud to Serve". Until 30 October
An exhibition charting the history of firefighting in Hampshire.

Willis Museum - Burberry 150th Anniversary Exhibition
until Sat 7 October

Find out about Thomas Burberry, founder, inventor, business man, strict teetotaler, practising Christian and benefactor.

History in the making

Tadley, 20th August 2006.

It was with shock that we learned that Albert West's little cottage and broom yard outbuildings in West Street had been demolished and the plot cleared.



*TADS annual membership is £10 per person.
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