



April 2007

**Tadley and District History Society
(TADS) - www.tadshistory.com**

**Next meeting - Wednesday 18th April
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30 pm**

'The Gurkhas'

Major Davies,

Curator of the Gurkha Museum

(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 Meeting 16th May 2007:

‘100 years of animal care - The Blue Cross’

Craig Burchell, Communications Manager

Last month’s meeting (21/3/07)

‘Basingstoke Heritage Society’

by Debbie Reavell, its Secretary

Basingstoke doughnut city? Put that wicked mid-20th century notion, spurred on by the media, out of your mind. Think instead culture, heritage, history, royalty, green spaces, vigour, a fun market town with only the merest spicing of medieval mischief, skulduggery and intrigue!

Our lecturer, Debbie, provoked a few gasps when she admitted she liked the modern ‘Kremlin’ or Great Wall of Basingstoke: The 1960s phase ‘CASTLE’ red brick wall encompassing the shopping centre (as seen from the Anvil Theatre).

The Basingstoke Heritage Society represents the unparished areas of Basingstoke and Deane and any fringe area likely to impact on the town. It is dedicated to making Basingstoke a better and more interesting place. The B.H.S. campaigns to save threatened buildings, support tree wardens, maintain street furniture and milestones, and review planning applications, etc. Members have teeth - they often say no to inappropriate changes. 16 historical plaques have been unveiled and there are some amazingly interesting plaques of people who have been born, lived, loved, fought, slept, invented or worked (or all!) in Basingstoke.

Take poor insensible Mrs. Blunden (1674) who may have drunk poppy waters (Opium) and was reputedly buried alive in South View Cemetery. Basingstoke was fined a then-massive £200 for this misdemeanour. The Holy Ghost Chapel, now ruins, seems to have interested Kings from John (1208) to Henry VIII (1509) to his son, Edward VI (1547).

Queen Mary’s School was there, now known as Q.M.C. (College) and sited elsewhere. Right near the 1608 Sir James Deane Almshouses ‘for 8 poore impotent old men’ you have the 1992 Triumphal Gates, cast by the

famous Morris Singer Foundry. The Feathers Pub, known as such since 1800, was once a coaching inn. The Haymarket Theatre (1864) was built to re-house the Cornmarket. Wallis and Steevens built cast iron products especially for the Haymarket in Oat, Mote, now Wote Street. Now there is also the Anvil Theatre, opened 1994.

John Arlott famous son of Basingstoke (1914-91) cricketer, commentator with the fruity Hampshire brogue, was born in the Gate House of South View Cemetery. There is a blue plaque to commemorate this. Richard Aldworth (1646) willed money to found a Blue Coat School. Now a Community School bears his name. Even Selborne's Gilbert White (1720-93) was educated in the town and played in the Holy Ghost Churchyard.

Debbie lamented the stealthily-quiet passing of the old town centre's Hackwood Road Hospital (1960s). There is a plaque on Barclay's Bank opposite the Willis Museum (George Willis, 1878-1970, watch maker, archaeologist, etc.) noting the site where Jane Austen (1775-1817) may, or may not, have danced. Roundhead Oliver Cromwell slept in the town during the final days of the Siege of Basing House, (1645), as did poor Catherine of Aragon in 1501.

The United Reform Church plaque notes that Minister John Curwen refined music's tonic sol-fa between 1838 and 1841.

Then there's the famous Burberry cloth waterproofed by the sharp-eyed Thomas (1888) because he noticed the local Basingstoke shepherds were warm and dry in sheepy lanolin-absorbed cloth!

So many, many people seem to have made Basingstoke the centre of their universe. To check it all out, read the excellent and free B.H.S. 'Town Trail' booklet or go to www.bas-herit-soc.org.uk

Debbie, thank you for your talk. You certainly have opened our eyes to what went on – and goes on – in Basingstoke.

Rosemary Bond

TADS News

Donation to Naomi House - TADS has made a donation of £200 to Naomi House the Children's Hospice which is Sutton Scotney, Nr Winchester. The money came from the sale of the 2007 TADS calendar.

Grant - The Society is to receive a conditional grant of £3000 from B & D Council to fund the publication of a new enhanced edition of Florence Davidson's 1913 History of Tadley.

What's On? Events which may be of interest.

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

26 April - Norman Goodland, Hampshire radio personality: personal reminiscences and selections from his programmes by Jim Goodland and David Lee.

B'stoke Archaeological & Historical Society (*7.30pm in Church Cottage*)

10th May -The County's Archaeological Collection: behind the scenes.
Kay Ainsworth - Hampshire County Museum Service

Willis Museum exhibition 1st March to 21st April - Fountains of Light, the science and history of fireworks.

Friends of the Willis Museum (*7.30 pm in the Museum*)

Thursday May 17 - 'Frank Hornby, the man who made Meccano' by John Hollands.

Local History & Conservation Fair

Saturday 28th April at the Willis Museum 11.00 - 3.00pm. See enclosed/ or emailed flyer for details. TADS will be represented. Please support this event if you can.

Milestones Museum - Model Engineering Show

Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 April 2007, 10am - 5pm

There will be plenty for enthusiasts and non-modellers alike, with a range of small-scale and life-size models, a live steam miniature railway, steam and radio controlled vehicles and a model boating lake.

Entry included in usual admission price.

Face of Britain. 14th April at 8pm.. Channel 4 are broadcasting a 3 part series on the genetic inheritance of the people in this country, partly based on the initial results of the DNA study - People of the British Isles - which I highlighted in the February Newsletter.

NB. TADS still requires a new Programme Organiser..

*TADS annual membership is £10 per person.
Correspondence to Tadley and District History Society,
PO Box 7264, Tadley. RG26 3FA*