



May 2007

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

**Next meeting - Wednesday 16th May
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30 pm**

**'The Blue Cross - 100 Years
of Animal Care'**

**Craig Burchell,
Communications Manager**

(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.00)

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www.tadshistory.com

TADS Meeting 20th June 2007:
‘The Madding Crowd - Country Stories and Music
from the Thomas Hardy Era’

Mike Bailey, Musical Director of ‘The Madding Crowd’

Last month’s meeting (18/4/07)

Nepal and the Gurkhas

by Major Davies, Curator of the Gurkha Museum, Winchester.

About 60 TADS members met tonight armed with smiles, some family memories and memorabilia, even sponsorship. The odd Gurkha cap and kukri (knife) were shyly produced!

Stubborn, indomitable, proud, happy, gallant, tenacious, warm-hearted, uncomplaining, friendly, humorous, always smiling, family-orientated, disciplined, full of stamina and BRAVE are adjectives for the Gurkha soldiers.

The Gurkha motto is "It is better to die than be a coward".

In the 18th century we Brits were forced to turn our colonial attentions from the Occident to the Orient. Why fight against these gallant mountain Buddhists or Hindus from Nepal? If you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em!

So instead in 1815 the Nepalese Gorkhas (Gurkhas) became our allies, our oldest Asian allies, united against the French and Russians who were eyeing up India at the time.

Nepal is one of the ten poorest countries in the world. It is land-locked between India and China in the Himalayas. It suffers earthquakes, landslides and there’s little industry and not many roads. It has a Royal Family with only a tenuous link and now some young Nepalese ‘Let’s change everything’ Maoist rebels. Nepal’s only natural resource is scenery. It’s only significant export: fighting men - and, from 2008, fighting women. The men have won 15 Victoria Crosses in 200 years and served in most of Britain’s areas of conflict. Of the 24,000 men who annually apply to join the Brigade of Gurkhas, only 230 are accepted.

In Britain there has been some disquiet because the Gurkhas remain Nepalese Citizens always, and therefore not able to claim pensions and rights, even though they have fought bravely. Sometimes they were dismissed just before they could qualify for their 15 years' service. Major Davies said many of the wrongs have been put right, but any government is always looking to cost-cut. So, everyone must be vigilant for Gurkha pensions as well as our own Veterans.

In 2006 Gurkhas became eligible to work in Britain. On 18th April '07, the Basingstoke Gazette announced that 2 ex-Gurkha soldiers are working for the Southern Electricity Board - and doing brilliantly.

Major Davies, as a proud ex-Army Gurkha officer, empathises with his family of Gurkhas and is very protective towards them. He has their welfare close to his heart. Many of us were moved by his talk and the Gurkhas' unbelievable bravery.

Thank you to everyone.

Rosemary Bond.

Information on the Gurkha Museum can be found at:

www.thegurkhamuseum.co.uk

TADS News

8 members had a very enjoyable outing to Sir Winston Churchill's home at Chartwell, Kent in David Day's own mini-bus. After Chartwell they went on to visit Quebec House at Westerham, the birthplace of General Wolfe. The journey home was a bit slow due to a big traffic jam on the M25.

Derek Ward says thank you to everyone who helped with the TADS display at last Saturday's fair at the Willis Museum, and to those members who supported the event by attending.

History in the Making

The Committee were sorry to learn of the recent death of Ray Lambden of the Green, Tadley. He was a long time member of the local British Legion and a D-Day veteran. Although not a member of TADS he had been very active in local affairs. Our condolences go to his family.

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

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

Thursday 31 May - **William Gilpin**: Artist and Man of His Age
by Christine Clearkin

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

14th June - AGM followed by an informal lecture

Willis Museum exhibitions

5 May to 23 June - **With Scott to the Pole** displays 30 photographs of Scott's ill-fated expedition to Antarctica 1910–1913.

19 May to 9 June - **Basingstoke's Hall of Fame**. Learn more about the town's famous sons and daughters, including sections on James Lancaster, John Arlott, The Wartons and Charles Spier, Basingstoke's Amazing Pedestrian.

11 to 30 June - **Mystery History**. Hidden treasures from the Willis' Photograph Collection. Help us identify people, places and events!

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

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

Milestones Museum

2 May - 30 May - **Anne Frank and Family** Photographs by Otto Frank

19 May, 7pm to 10pm - **The Museum at Night**. Spend the evening at Milestones, with live music and spooky stories in the streets of the museum. Book ahead for special price tickets.

26, 27 & 28 May 10am - 5pm. **Steam & Vintage Show**

Popular annual indoor and outdoor show, with steam engines and vintage vehicles from across the country.

N.B. TADS still requires a new Programme Organiser.

*TADS annual membership is £10 per person.
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