

July 2008



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

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

Ufton Court.

A house of secrets.

by Jane Burrell,
Curator of West Berks Museum

(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.00)

TADS September outing, Saturday 20th.

The outing will be to Blenheim Palace followed by a short visit to see Sir Winston Churchill's grave, which is nearby. The transport cost is £10, which can be paid on Wednesday evening. Entry to the palace is £16.50 for adults or £13.50 for pensioners. Park & Gardens only (2000 acres) is £9.50 / £7.30.

David Day. Tel: 0118 9700909 or Richard (below) as an alternative.

*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 September 17th 2008:

Experiences in WW II

By Alan Freeman,

(a Captain in the Royal Engineers).

Last month's meeting (18/6/08)

'Diving into History': Nautical Archaeology By Ian Barefoot, Project Officer of the Nautical Archaeology Society, Portsmouth.

'Hey, ho, me hearties!' you could almost see Ian as a pirate captain with an eye patch, parrot and pirates' paraphernalia about his person. He of the twinkling eyes and jocular turn of phrase was actually 'On our side' and despises Treasure Seekers who seek silver salvors, golden doubloons, and unrivalled glittery riches from the sea. Realistically you're likely to find gnarled ships' timbers and cannons & artefacts caked with mud or barnacles as you fill forms and struggle with site plans ...

Ian Barefoot had about 55 TADS' members nearly on the edge of their seats and about to don SCUBA (self-contained underwater breathing apparatus) stuff and fins to help save our marine archaeology for us. We don't want to see it go abroad to the richest bidder, as happened on a dive-find 170 miles off Land's End. The hoard of silver has gone to USA and should have remained in the UK.

There are 25,000 sports divers in the U.K; one million shipwrecks sadly submerged under our seas and only 100 nautical archaeologists to seek and sort them.

From the sky to the land and then the sea: Ian was a paratrooper, then a detective and now a marine archaeologist who'd love to get a finger in the pies of those one million wrecks. And 'the bit twixt land and sea' - the Cinderella grey area of high and low water marks.

That's excluding canals, port developments like the South Wales Newport Ship (2002); the Dover Boat (Dover High Street 1988); not to mention Henry 8th's flagship, the Mary Rose (raised 1974); and HMS Victory, possibly completed in 1758, and still going reasonably strong as

the World's oldest commissioned ship, but having survived a chequered career.

Gaining a Southampton University degree in Marine and Terrestrial Archaeology in 2005, Ian, as a former detective, now wants to know when? why? and where? His tutor, Dr Jon Adams' philosophy was to know the story behind the wreck and artefact and that's Ian's too. We can learn so much more than merely admiring that golden doubloon! People have lived on, near or beside water from prehistoric times: travelling and trading; warring and exploring.

The Dover Boat was discovered during developments and road works in Dover High Street. The company was loath to outlay too much cash on the nuisance of having a find on their 'Brown Field' site so that's why only half a boat showed up! This boat was a 4,000 year old Bronze Age vessel, constructed from a tree split and carved using flint tools. People have marvelled at the very accurate and intricate wooden joints on the boat, which are hard to replicate in the 21st century. This boat would have held 12 seafarers with a view to going to France, leaving behind their counterpart farming community on dry land. Ian said 'detective work' showed the community was well organised at a time when Britain's population was about 20,000.

Ian has archaeological interests all over the UK: the interesting stilted loch dwellings in Scotland where people saved valuable land for growing rye and oats, fished the lochs and lived in them on stilts. Were there many dwellings on Scotland's thousands of lochs?

He has been on the Isle of Purbeck (Swanage area) where they quarried Purbeck limestone, 30 ton loads at a time, loading the rock onto ships beached on purpose which would then float (mostly!) on the high tide. Archaeologists had found strange cut marks on the cliffs from a by-gone era. Then there's the River Medway area, NE of Chatham's ex-Naval Base, in Kent, where in 1992 marine archaeologists Gus Milne and Colin McEwan were aware of 125 different vessels in a state of distress! These ranged from minesweepers to wooden ships needing to be saved from the mud and road improvements. 70+ vessels were saved. What about the others? It was discovered that many of the wooden ships had been constructed by shipwrights not using a plan. From the information gleaned, Damian Goodburn wrote the Marine archaeologists' 'bible'.

You can get 'wet ones' or 'dry ones'. Sites that is. There's Tidgrove Warren site, south of Kingsclere (see TADS lecture, July 2006)

where a tiny cube of Samian ware the size of a button, caused consternation. It was deduced that the local Atrebates tribe, who kept in with their Roman rulers when Britain was 'The Bread Basket of Europe', had been trading imported Samian ceramics for wheat.

H.M.S. Victory (Portsmouth) has only 2% of its original timbers remaining, Ian said. Victory's construction may have begun as early as 1658, finished in 1758, by which time the 4,000 oaks would have seasoned. These oaks came from the Forests of England, denuding the SE so much it became the Garden of England. In 1758 wars with France were on-off but Victory is most famous for the 1805 Battle of Trafalgar and Admiral Nelson. Apparently the French made better ships than we did, but we sailed them better because the French spent less time at sea!!

There are unusual human stories about HMS Victory, one of them being she had a girl powder monkey among her 800 personnel. Sue Beattie's husband was the Ship's Surgeon, so she was promoted to Assistant Surgeon AND later their 2 sons joined the Royal Navy!

Poor Victory, so famous and so vulnerable. In 1815 she became redundant and before she began to rot, was a prison ship and a coaling hulk. Suddenly money was found to SAVE her, not burn her and the rest is history

There are countless shipwrecks and sites that need constant TLC and lots of money: The little ships of 1940; the D-Day sites 1944; the Matthew in Bristol; an old I.o.W. ferry connected to Uffa Fox, found in Forton Lake, Gosport; a navy barge filled with pots of paint but thought to be bombs at first! - and lots more.

Who owns all this? We do. If we don't save our heritage our children and children's children won't know.

Once lost, it's gone forever.

Thanks, Ian, for your fabulous fact packed lecture.

Rosemary Bond

Website : nas@nasportsmouthsociety.org.uk

TADS website

Increasingly people are using the 'world wide web' to access news and information.

In the past TADS has depended on the printed medium (newsletters) and announcements at meetings to distribute news and information. This is still true today, but the Society does have a website (www.tadshistory.com/) which needs to be maintained and developed.

At the moment the site basically contains re-hashed information, with reprints from newsletters etc. The Society has a 'webmaster', whose role is to try and keep the site in a professional order. He does not however, write material for the site.

To be a successful site and an asset to the Society, members need to become more involved in running it - making suggestions, checking the accuracy of information and providing new and fresh material. Without such involvement the website will continue to be a slightly out of date collection of information.

If there is anyone out there with a burning desire to help develop the site please contact Ian Burn (i.j.burn@reading.ac.uk).

Project Group & projectnews

As the new book is now in print we will be resuming the production of projectnews. As some of the existing Project group wish to stand down it would be nice to have a few new volunteers to help produce this publication. Everyone tells us how much they enjoy reading it, but it takes quite a lot of time and effort to produce. Meetings are usually on Saturday morning (when Ian is awake !), accompanied by coffee and cake. We have already had a volunteer to help with proof reading but the more help all round the better.

Please let Carol know (0118 9701578 / aspect_ceilings@btconnect.com) if you would be interested in helping.

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

Hampshire Record Office

On-Going Exhibitions at the HRO

Digging through the Archives: A botanical journey round the county

Access Hampshire Heritage exhibition: How to make a start on local history research

The Record Office are now holding lunchtime lectures every Thursday from 1.15-1.45pm. For Information see www3.hants.gov.uk/whatson-hro or ring 01962846154.

Milestones Museum -

17 Aug - The annual **Thornycroft Society** road run for commercial vehicles. Starting from Milestones Museum at 8.30am, vehicles return to museum field at 1.30 and are on display on the field until 4.30. Free viewing.

For information on events Tel: 0845 603 5635 or see the museum website.

Willis Museum

On-going event. **Tooth and Claw** - A photographic exhibition focussing on Britain's predators

The Museum is running events throughout the summer holidays aimed at children. For details ring 0845 6035635 or see their website.

Friends of the Willis Museum

Thursday, 18 Sept - **Evacuees at the Vyne**. An illustrated talk by Nigel Beazley.

Silchester Dig - The official open days are the Saturdays 12th & 26th July, but visitors are welcome on any day except Fridays.

Heritage Open Days are September 11th to 14th. **Ride & Stride** will be on the 13th Sept.

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