

January 2009



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

**Next meeting - Wednesday 21st January
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30 pm**

The G.W.R. comes to the Thames Valley.

By John Chapman

(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.00)

Membership subscriptions of £10 per person are now due.

If paying at the coming meeting, will you please put your money (cheque or cash) in a sealed envelope with your name and address and the amount written on the outside, and hand it to the Treasurer.

(A secondhand envelope will save writing the address).

Lighting - following an accident, the lighting to the Church Hall has been improved. Please report any further difficulties to Bob.

*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 18th February 2009:

‘The story of Southwark.’

By Sally Botwright, London Guide.

November meeting (19/11/08)

Basingclog Morris

A history, demonstration and audience participation (!) of rural dance.

Roger, Basingclog’s President, likened their Morris dancing to surfing down a tsunami. Powerful stuff. I think our 40-ish TADs members soon realised that the dancing we were to be involved in was quite physical, charmingly noisy and rumbustious – generating lots of bonhomie.

Basingclog is basically Cotswold Morris with Northern overtures and no flapping white hankies. The chaps and gals were kitted out in wood and leather clogs with bells, black breeches or skirts, colourful beads, bowler hats with silk flowers for the men and the ladies had red stockings, frilly white pantaloons and aprons. Their white and red striped sticks had little bells on too. Expensive stuff – bells are 50p each and always flying into the audience. In the 15th century, bells at Abingdon in Oxfordshire cost the parish one shilling (5p) and the whole show cost 28 shillings and nine pence (1477). That’s nearly £1.50 in today’s money. *(But a colossal amount in value then – Ed)*

Where did Morris dancing come from? Some think it’s prehistoric, but it’s more likely to have been brought over from Moorish Southern Spain in the 15th century by Spanish and French mercenaries employed by us to fight THE WELSH! So ‘La Morrisque’, with its swords, sticks and pretty paraphernalia, its fools, clowns, whistle blowing foreman and caller may have religious connotations from Moorish and Christian clashes way back.

As many people were illiterate in the Middle Ages, dancing techniques were passed on by demonstration and by word of mouth. Churches often owned the Morris dancing kit and they loaned it to the

dancers – hoping it would keep them on the straight and narrow, even after the busy physical work of those days.

The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths in London recorded Morris dancing in 1448. Betley (Staffs) church had a beautiful stained glass window depicting dancers in 1550. Now they have a replica while the original window is in the British Museum in London.

Shakespeare mentions Morris men in his play Henry V. After Charles II's execution, Oliver Cromwell discouraged dancing. Queen Anne's coronation included a Morris dance team.

In World War I the death knell was sounded when many men were killed. That's why women were let in – Suffragette Mary Neil had a girls-only team. She worked with the famous song and dance men of the day, especially the musician Cecil Sharp, renowned collector of English folk songs and dances in the early 20th century and founder of folklore revival in England, moving about on a bike all over the country.

Basingclog Morris was formed in 1985. Their dedication to keeping England's traditions alive and thriving is tremendous. Thank you Roger and team – maybe you'll be at the opening of London's 2012 Olympics!

Rosemary Bond

TADS AGM had a lower attendance than usual.

Finance was dealt with in some detail to explain the 3 accounts. Subs have been held at £10 by utilising the interest from the Project account.

Chairman Bob's report included the news that the winner of the 2008 TADS History prize at the Hurst School was Emily Percy.

In Project Group report Carol Stevens expressed her particular thanks to Pat Galvin for all the time and effort she has put in over the past 10 years, now that Pat has decided to hang up her pen (or computer).

The Committee were re-elected with the exception of David Day. (*See over*).

Blowing a Trumpet

The Summer 2008 issue of 'Local History News', the magazine of the British Association for Local History, had a review of the TADS new version of Florence Davidson's History of Tadley. The review was very favourable and concluded 'Any group considering a similar project would do well to see what Tadley have achieved.' Well done the Project Group.

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

Hampshire Record Office

There is a Family History for Beginners event every Wednesday. The Record Office holds lunchtime lectures every Thursday from 1.15-1.45pm

For Information see www3.hants.gov.uk/whatson-hro or ring 01962846154.

Milestones Museum The current special exhibition is about the **Titanic** liner.

Willis Museum - *The Museum has reopened and will be running a series of exhibitions over the coming months.*

Friends of the Willis Museum (7.30pm at the Museum)

19th Feb Conservation of old vehicles at Milestones - Graham Smith

B'stoke Arch' & History Soc. (19:30 at Church Cottage, Church Square,)

12th Feb. Drawing on the Future to Map the Past by Simon Crutchley of English Heritage.

Silchester Dig -Professor Michael Fulford will give a talk about the 2008 Silchester Roman Town excavations and plans for 2009 on either Friday 6 or 13 Feb. at 7.30p.m. in Silchester Village Hall. There is an entrance fee of £3. Contact Ali Lee on 0118 970 0702 or email secretary@silchester.org

Silchester Parish Church Guide Book (St Mary the Virgin)

The guidebook was substantially revised in 2008. An inspection copy can usually be seen at TADS meetings. Copies cost £2-50, plus 50p p&p and are available from Ralph Atton, 11 Romans Gate, Pamber Heath, Tadley. RG26 3EH. Tel . 0118 970 0825, email: ralph.atton@btoopenworld.com

Vacancy - with the resignation of David Day for business reasons, TADS require a new visit/outings organiser. Offers to Chairman Bob please.

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