



March 2010

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

**Next meeting - Wednesday 17th March
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30 pm**

***RITUALS, SOCIETY & POWER
IN AND AROUND IRON AGE
BERKSHIRE***

BY ANDREW HUTT

**Subscriptions for 2010 are now due if you have not yet paid.
Still £10 per person.**

Committee - The new committee is getting into its stride, but we still need a volunteer to organise next year's talks. The task is not difficult and Derek Heath is willing to give instruction. The ability to use email is desirable.

*Comments, queries and suggestions to Richard Brown (0118) 9700100,
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www.tadshistory.com

**TADS Meeting 21st April 2010:
'Life on Halley 5, an Antarctic research station'
By David Stephenson of AWE.**

Last Month's Talk 17/2/10

The Story of Fleet Street
by Val Pretlove, London Blue Badge Guide.

World famous Fleet Street isn't really very long but it was very important: for lawyers, newspapers, publishing, printing, and pubs. It's still important. However, the papers have moved out – too intrusive in a small area; the lawyers and history remain in this busy, peopled, gossipy thoroughfare which is the historical barrier/boundary between the fiercely-festooned dragons of the City of London coat-of-arms and the City of Westminster.

Historically, the Monarch must ask permission to enter the City of London and be escorted by the Lord Mayor with his pearl sword for protection. Unusually, in English pomp and circumstance, the one-way road system was altered and four enormous mirrors installed at Ludgate Circus quite recently. The Queen's horses saw their mirrored images, went berserk and bolted! H. M. remained very calm, as ever.....

Anyone exploring Fleet Street had best do it on a Sunday. Slightly less traffic, Val said. Val's photos showed the 60 plus TADS' members that Fleet Street's off-road area is a free microcosm of Olde England: exquisite litter and music-free gardens, fountains, fish ponds, alleyways, etc many of them unexpectedly open to Joe Public. Run the gauntlet: go there and pic-nic, Val said.

The barristers' area, King's Walk, has NO TV aerials, dishes or telegraph poles. They're all piped underground, which is an historical film maker's dream venue. What with fires, wars, the mauling of architectural fashions (especially in Victorian times), ancient London has always been bashed, bombed and changed. World War II resulted in horrific damage and therefore much of the Fleet Street area has been faithfully reconstructed, brick by brick, stone by stone, paint flake by paint brush. Luckily some of the stained glass windows had been safely stashed away before the war. Surprisingly also, this area was the warlike headquarters of the Knights Templars up until the 12th century. They had been given the land south of Fleet Street, free, because it was marshy. They built a mini Jerusalem

In 1312 this Order became the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem and this middle-Eastern influence reflects in the architecture. The Hospitallers leased

buildings to lawyers: the Inner and Middle Temples developed into the Inns of Court, with the oldest building being the round and castellated Temple Church (one of only 4 surviving in England).

Plantagenet King Henry III, 1216 –1272, had wanted to be buried here. Then he up-graded himself to Westminster Abbey! The beautiful altar at Temple Church has much written information, done in an age of illiteracy. It had been assumed the lawyers COULD read The Victorians tried to destroy this altar but it was saved and sent up North. After WW II the generous Northerners voluntarily restored it to London! Incidentally, lawyers must sit in Temple Church according to whether they're from the Inner or Middle Temple. Ne'er the twain shall meet.....

The Victorians disliked some of Sir Christopher Wren's architecture and his Temple Bar Arch was deemed to be in the way of horse-drawn traffic. In 1872 it was demolished and bought as a wedding gift by brewers, Meux, and re-erected in Hertford. The Victorians then built another monument where the Arch had been, thus still impeding the traffic!

Fleet Street's Old Bank of England is now a pub. Hoare's Bank was here until recently. An old café which lawyers shunned because it was alcohol-free is now the beautiful Royal Doulton-tiled Lloyds Bank: obviously shut at weekends.

The newspapermen, writers and publishers' octagonal St.Dunstan-in-the-West Church, E.C.4, was founded in the 13th Century but rebuilt in 1828-30. It has a lantern tower and a monument to the mythical King Lud. Angler Izaak Walton 1593-1683, is commemorated in the NW window and Fleet Street published his book 'The Compleat Angler' which took 40 years to write. There are carvings of John Donne, 1573-1631 who went adventuring with Francis Drake and was Dean of St. Paul's, and also William Tyndale c.1495-1536, who translated the bible into English. Their carved heads adorn the ogee (S-shaped) arch. There was no room for a churchyard.... they had a printing press instead!

Fleet Street has a rare statue of Elizabeth I's bitter rival, Mary Queen of Scots; Prince Henry's Room has its original jettying and Samuel Pepys' memorabilia; Dr.Johnson wrote his dictionary in longhand here; there were pubs galore(100!); big lorries carrying printers' ink and paper thrust through Fleet Street to the newspaper barons' plush buildings, e.g. Daily Express,1933, and nearly every national and provincial paper and periodical had an office there. The Telegraph building is now Goldman Sachs Investment Bank.

In WW II, Wren's 'Wedding Cake Church', St.Brides, was bombed and the bomb damage revealed crypt burials and skeletons. Its tower is now the famous Remenham, Oxon., Obelisk. Edgar Wallace, 1876-1932, began his life as a reporter here and ended up in Hollywood as a thriller writer.

Thanks, Val., you revealed Fleet Street to be unexpectedly exciting in every way.

Rosemary Bond

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

Hampshire Record Office

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

Milestones Museum - There is a current exhibition on the science of cleaning - how detergents, etc. work.

Enjoy a Victorian Easter Weekend, learn about Hampshire's Easter traditions in the Victorian school presentation by our costumed interpreters.

Willis Museum - *The Museum is using the new gallery to stage a series of special exhibitions and events during the coming months.*

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

March 18th. 'Living with Jane Austen' by Richard Tanner

April 15th. 'Sign Posts, Milestones and Village Signs' - Brian Locock

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

April 8th. 'Leaves from a Family Album: the 1890s & 1900s through the eyes of the camera' - Rupert Willoughby

Basingstoke Library will be closed from Monday 26th April for approx. 6 months during its conversion to a Discovery Centre.

West Berkshire Museum in Newbury is closed until 31st March.

History in the Making

Tadley 8th Feb. 2010 - A single-decker bus overturned on Tadley Hill as the result of a collision. The driver had to be cut free, but only suffered minor injuries. No passengers were hurt. The A340 road was closed for several hours with considerable effect on local and through traffic.

*TADS annual membership is £10 per person.
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