



May 2010

**Tadley and District History Society  
(TADS) - [www.tadshistory.com](http://www.tadshistory.com)**

**Next meeting - Wednesday 19th May  
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30 pm**

# **'Dentaid', Dentistry in the Third World**

**By Dr Philip Postance**

*(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.00)*

## **CANCELLED**

The visit to the **Royal Berks Medical Museum** arranged for Sunday 23rd May has been cancelled because the museum volunteers are not able to staff the museum on that date. The museum is normally open on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month from 14.00 to 16.30. It will also be open during the Heritage Days, 11th & 12th September.

*Comments, queries and suggestions to Richard Brown (0118) 9700100,  
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**[www.tadshistory.com](http://www.tadshistory.com)**

## **TADS Meeting 16th June 2010:**

### **The past in stone and metal**

By Malcolm Langford

## **A TADS President and Vice-President**

At the last meeting (April) Bob Brown and Derek Ward were made President and Vice-President of TADS in recognition of all that they had done for the Society since it was founded more than 25 years ago. They were presented with commemorative paper knives.

## **Last Month's Talk 21/4/10**

### **Life on the Edge of an Antarctic Ice Shelf: Halley 5 by David Stevenson of AWE**

What incredibly exciting lives some of the 21st century's young people lead. Antarctica is still off-limits for most of us, but scientist and some-time meteorologist David's Antarctica aerial photo looked like a crazily cracked white iced wedding cake with wild winds whipping up icy blasts of pre-laid snow and swirling it around, so the fit hand-roped men working in twos or threes were bent down like rag dolls.

Incidentally, Antarctica is about the size of the Western Europe, and it's the coldest continent in the world; the highest with a layer of ice 3 km thick; and as an ice-desert, the driest.

The dangers still facing Antarctic scientists equate with space travel today and world circumnavigation about 500 years ago. David assured us the apparently thin orange suits worn, were of scientifically designed micro-fibre.

Probably the only things our very own TADS Vice-President, Derek Ward, who also worked there as a meteorologist but between 1956-58, could emphasise with, were the Southern Hemisphere's winter conditions (June 2008) temperature of  $-49$  C, North wind direction, 6.2 knots of wind speed and 988.2 mb air pressure -- plus the loneliness.

Although in close proximity with other colleagues 24:7, there is the possible intermittent boredom, the paradox of thrill and sense of adventure and excitement and the need of NOT making mistakes so far from the safety of hospitals and home! Derek and David would empathise with this.

Antarctica's summer conditions are pretty fraught too ..... but you can camp (carefully) in double lined canvas tents, avoiding crevasses, etc, etc. Remember, Halley 5 is on an ice shelf .....

Halley (of comet fame) 5 is now superseded by Halley 6. The 1950s British Antarctic Base was much more basic than the 21st century ones. While not detracting from David's achievements, one has to remember that Derek Ward was part of the International Geophysical Year expedition of pioneers, kitted out in ex-Army stuff during the first expedition there since Shackleton's 1914 WWI visit (and where he died, becalmed, in 1920). Derek Ward proudly received the Polar Medal from the Queen in 1961.

There were up to 114 male computer and data scientists, electronic experts, electricians, plumbers, mechanics, and base support workers, including a posh chef living on the base. There was also a lady doctor and 'Kiwi' lady Base Commander. Everyone is keeping up British pressure, appearances and camaraderie among the transient Antarctic community, including liaison with the Russians, etc. The nerve centre for all this is the HQ in Cambridge.

David said the 24 hour, 6 week winter dark starting 1st May is mentally, emotionally, and physically challenging. The 8 weeks of 24 hour summer sun is much better.

Camp Halley 5's steel buildings resemble squat Lego constructions on lots of stilted 10 ft hydraulic legs, which can be raised skywards annually, thus avoiding the encroaching 6 ft depth of 're-cycled' ice

and snow whipping towards them. The buildings can be moved sideways if necessary.

Daily, snow must be melted for water, which involves much shovelling. No long showers then! Inside the Camp Base it's quite luxurious, and equipped with the gym, music room, TV, cinema, a bar, band (with a captive audience!) ---- well you must keep the workers happy so far from home and UNABLE to be airlifted off easily, even in emergencies.

Luckily in David's experience, a broken thumb was the only baddie ..... Derek said in his day you did photography and made ice lollies ..... Halley 5's scientific buildings are clean-air areas for radiosondes and meteorology. Weather balloons are still used. Solar and wind power contribute, but aviation type fuel is flown in to provide most of the power.

The ice water chutes and tunnels are now 30 metres below the ice, and will eventually crack and disintegrate. They must make new ones. All Halley personnel are multi-taskers and paramedically trained at 'Doc School' and 'Fire and Rescue school'. Clothes must be a fire retardant. Equipment is low temperature tolerant and batteries solar-powered, non-leaking and BIG. What goes in must come out. All waste products are removed from Antarctica to Stanley, Falkland Islands. Derek said in his day it was all cast of the wind .....

Advancing technology means that's one man can now do what six did in the 20th century.

David obviously was fascinated by Antarctica and would like to return. You see Emperor penguins, Weddell seals, the Aurora Australis, countless stars in the clear sometimes silent skies, you can make ice caves, play the fool, and see nunataks (Norwegian) which are the tips of mountains sticking out of 2 ½ km deep ice --- 'hidden iceberg style', with about 30% showing ..... There are no political boundaries, you take considered risks and bear in mind global-warming .....

Here's to your 2015 talk David, and thanks for a wonderful evening.

Rosemary Bond

NB David Stephenson's blog is 'The Antarctic Monkey'



Emperor Penguins (Photo from polarconservation.org)

## **London Walk**

The guided walk of the Fleet Street area of London has been arranged for Sunday 19th September. The list is still open if you want to go. Full details of where to meet, how to get there, etc. will be published later in the year.

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## **History in the Making**

I am sorry to report the passing of former TADS Member John McGivern on 6th May after a couple of year's of failing health. John came to AWRE from Liverpool many, many years ago and stayed on after retirement. Our sympathy goes to Helen, his wife, also a regular at TADS.

Pamber Heath and Tadley lost one of its best known residents when Fred James, 'Fred the Log' died on 4th May after a short illness. Fred came from the wood business families of the area and was a familiar sight in his blue truck. St Paul's church was overflowing at his funeral.

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

### **Hampshire Record Office**

*For Information see [www3.hants.gov.uk/whatson-hro](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/whatson-hro) or ring 01962846154.*

### **Milestones Museum - Father's Day at Milestones Museum**

11:00am Sunday 20 Jun 2010 Treat your Dad to a well earned day out at Milestones Museum on Father's Day. Dad enters the museum for free when one child ticket (aged 5-15yrs) is purchased. Your Dad is also given a 10% off voucher for the gift shop on selected items.

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

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

20th May - Updating the Victoria County History - Dr Jean Morrin, University of Winchester.

June 17th The work of the Wessex Film and Sound Archive - David Lee, manager of the Wessex Film and Sound Archive at the Hampshire Record Office. The talk will include examples of archive film on North Hampshire.

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

10th June - AGM followed by members contributions.

**The Mikron Theatre** will be at the Rowbarge, Woolhampton at 8pm on 29th June performing 'Pedal Power' and 1st July performing 'Striking the balance'.

**Ufton Court** is open 15th/16th May from 10am - 4pm. For a weekend of Medieval Mayhem, including jousting, feasting, medieval crafts, and exploring the house. Adults £6.50, Concessions £5.50 and Children Free. This historic house is in Green Lane, Ufton Nervet.

*TADS annual membership is £10 per person.  
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