



September 2010

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

**Next meeting - Wednesday 15th September  
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30 pm**

## **People who made the Salvation Army what it is!**

*Major Stephen Grinstead*

*Director - Salvation Army Heritage Centre*

*(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.00)*

### **Hampshire County Council Grassroots grant**

The Society have been awarded £3000 under the Grassroots scheme to be spent on a digital projector, and installing a hearing loop and sound system in St Paul's Hall. The projector has been purchased and it is hoped to get the loop and speakers installed within a couple of months.

*Comments, queries and suggestions to Richard Brown (0118) 9700100,  
e-mail: [richard@ilexind.plus.com](mailto:richard@ilexind.plus.com) or Carol Stevens (0118) 9701578,*

**[www.tadshistory.com](http://www.tadshistory.com)**

**TADS Meeting 20th October 2010:**  
**60 years of AWE**  
By Kate Pyne, AWE Technical Historian

**Last Month's Talk 21/7/10**

**Transport in and around the Thames Valley 1920-1950**  
**By Paul Lacey**

If you want to know about the history of buses in this area, (but not Reading Corporation buses), then Paul is your man. Nor does he do trains, but then he did say the title was fairly flexible. His interest started with bus journeys to school and he is now a researcher and author with three very impressive books to his name.

The fore-runner of the Thames Valley Company was started in 1915 by the British Auto Traction Co. using just the name British on the buses. The middle of the First World War was not a good time to start due to the shortage of able-bodied men, but they survived and even ran their buses on coal gas. They filled them up from adapted gas street lamps in Reading! Amazingly, one of the first five buses used in Reading has survived and today lives in Barnsley, Yorkshire.

After the war the services expanded to use over 100 buses, mainly built from ex-War Department Thornycroft lorry chassis. They were so high off the ground they had 'cowcatchers' along the sides to prevent people getting in front of the rear wheels.

The Thames Valley Traction Company was formed in 1920 and the buses were green until the familiar red livery was introduced in 1924.

Locally, buses were stored in a shed next to the Pelican in Pamber Heath. When the shed blew down, they were moved to a shed next to what is now Allen's Garage. Jack Lambden was a regular driver on the Tadley route and he moved to the town in 1925. In those days the drivers pretty much ran the routes as they saw fit and the late night buses from Reading often made unscheduled 'comfort' stops.

In 1933 the first double-decker bus, a Leyland Titan, reached Tadley after the trees overhanging the route from Mortimer were cut back.

The Thames Valley was not always the first company to serve a town and the local bus companies often provided a better service. Locally there were three companies run by members of the Kent family, operating from Baughurst, Kingsclere, and a short lived one in Charter Alley. Newbury had Newbury & District Motor Services, which remained independent until taken over by the Red & White Co. of Chepstow late in WWII. Venture buses of Basingstoke had early connections to the Kent family.

WWII saw buses requisitioned by the military, as they had been in WWI. The Army particularly liked coaches with sliding roofs, because it was very easy to mount a Bren light machine gun on top!

WWII also brought dramatic changes in the centres of population, much of it from the establishment of airfields and other military bases. Consequently, the bus services had to change as well.

The really big changes came in 1949 with the nationalisation of the buses under the umbrella of the British Transport Commission and local companies and services were passed around under new groupings. Some of these changes seemed to defy logic, e.g. Venture of Basingstoke being put under Wilts and Dorset.

The flood of information stopped with a bang – literally – when Paul's projector exploded, but fortunately with only one more picture to show.

Thank you Paul for a very interesting and informative talk. (If you didn't go or just want to learn more, then buy his books).

Richard Brown

---

## **London Walk on Sunday 19th September.**

We will meet at or near St. Clement Danes Church, The Strand, just before the start of Fleet Street at 10.30 am. The walk will last 1-2 hours, depending on weather, etc. The cost will be about £3.50 per person.

For those going by car, the Congestion Charge does not apply on Sundays and parking is easier than in the week. If you have any space in your car please tell Carol. Tel: 9701578

**The London Open House** event is that weekend. For information see the Website: <http://www.openhouselondon.org.uk/>

## 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** - The museum will be open on the last Thursday evening of each month and there will be a talk.

30th Sept. Behind the scenes: The Natural History collection.

### Willis Museum

Evening lecture at 7:00pm Thursday 14 Oct. - An Introduction to the Mary Rose.

Tickets £5 or book all three Mary Rose lectures for £10. Other lectures in series held 4 and 25 November.

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

September 16th Home Truths? A closer look at domestic technology by Stephen Hoadley of Milestones Museum.

### Basingstoke Archeaoligical & History Society (7.30 at Church Cottage)

14th October Anglo-Saxon Northumbria by Prof. Barbara Yorke, University of Winchester

**Heritage Open Days 11th & 12th September.** For more information see: [www.heritageopendays.org.uk](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk) or local press. Locally, Silchester Church has a full programme including opening on the Friday.

---

## History in the Making

The 'Wigwam' Schools have been dismantled and the site is now clear. HCC said the majority of the materials will be recycled. *They would have been better recycled by finding an alternative use for the buildings.*

*TADS annual membership is £10 per person.  
Correspondence to Tadley and District History Society,  
PO Box 7264, Tadley. RG26 3FA  
Email: [tadshistory@googlemail.com](mailto:tadshistory@googlemail.com)*