

November 2011



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

**Next meeting - Wednesday 16th November 2011
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30pm**

'The Story of Thorneycroft'

By Christopher Tree

Of the Thorneycroft Society

(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.50)

**TADS AGM & Social will be on Wednesday 14th December
(not 21st) to be followed by a social.**

Ian Burn has left the committee as he has moved to Reading. Therefore at least one new committee member is needed.

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

Last Meeting 19th October:

Basingstoke & its Contribution to World Culture

by Rupert Willoughby, author

Let's bash Basingstoke. Nearly everyone does. Nationally and internationally. The erudite Mr Willoughby looked at the negatives first, which go back centuries... Give a Dog a Bad Name – Basingstoke, Basingjoke, Basingrad, it's derided as dull, shabby, an uninspiring eyesore, a 'Chavvy' place (chav - aggressive, illiterate, a shameless person?!): Doughnut City (roundabouts), has a Great Wall of Basingstoke (1960s retaining wall for shopping centre). Costa del Basingstoke (no gently lapping waves but a sea of cars); TV's 1980s Trotter family of the yellow Reliant Robin van, alleged Rodney went to Basingstoke Art College and was expelled for drug abuse!

And so it goes on.

Even in 1669 the Grand Duke of Tuscany went through 'wretched Basingstoke' at a gallop, rudely pushing aside the invitation to visit St Michael's Church.

In 1908, someone said Basingstoke was a town to be hurried through....

Gilbert White 1720-1793 (later of Selborne) was apparently a bit of a lad at school in Basingstoke. He plotted with his mates to blow-up the ruins in South View Cemetery - with some success.

Gilbert & Sullivan's 19th century operetta *Rudigore* made sly references to the town.

George Formby, the 20th century entertainer, made a war propaganda film in 1944, *She Snoops to Conquer* about a fictitious place 'Tangleton'. Many progressive-thinking people hoped the Basingstoke-made film would hasten the end of WWII and bring down class barriers. George Orwell (1903-50) thought so, too.

After WWII, Sir Patrick Abercrombie, inventor of the 'Green Belt' had the idea of shifting 1 million Londoners away from our Capital city. How to do this? Build new towns: overspill. Harlow, Stevenage, Milton Keynes, Bracknell, Andover and Basingstoke were just some. Basingstoke was only about 50 miles south west of London and so Abercrombie and 'nightmare' town planner Graham Shankland set about this rape and pillage of our countryside. Apparently many architects then had Communist leanings and they wanted everyone equal. Basingstoke was promised as a Showcase Town for the South of England. Some people say she was betrayed!

In 1965 beautiful Basingstoke was just about taken apart - 'a giant hand scooped out the heart and soul and the centre of the town and left a shell of horror....' the historic and picturesque town was sacrificed. Some atheist Communist planners destroyed churches and gravestones on purpose because they were 'hell bent on getting rid of the old order'....

Hey! Hey! What about Basingstoke and it's contribution to World Culture?

In 1214 King John ordered the Market to open on Wednesdays. It still does.

In the 16th century Catherine of Aragon stayed at the Maidenhead Inn in Jacob's Alley, *en route* to meet her future husband, Prince Arthur. He died within a year. So she married his brother and became the first wife of Henry VIII in 1509.

In 1739, John and Charles Wesley's friend, George Whitefield, preached Protestantism in Joice's Yard, which in 1880 became a carriage repairers. John Curwen, who devised the international music teaching method of tonic sol-fa, lived in the town from 1838-1841. The Rev Gilbert White (1720-1793) famous naturalist mentioned earlier, became the author of *The Natural History of Selborne* in 1789.

Jane Austen (1775-1817) attended dances in the Basingstoke Assembly Rooms, now the site of Barclay's Bank. Her books are some of the most-read in the world.

Thomas Burberry's still exclusive and world-famous clothing, especially rainwear, was developed in the town. In 1856 he noticed that shepherd boys were warm, dry and waterproof, summer and winter, because of the lanolin from sheep wool. He patented his cloth, gabardine, in 1888. This cloth has been used for WWI Army uniforms; tents for Norwegian Antarctic explorer, Amundsen; and King Edward VII referred to his trenchcoat as 'my Burberry'. Burberry has connections to Tadley's Major Roller, also, and many Tadley girls worked for Burberry, which was the town's biggest employer at the time. Internationally famous sculptress, Dame Elizabeth Fink made 'The Head of Christ' in bronze in 1987. This is now at All Saints' Church.

Somewhat notoriously now, the Morris Singer Foundry, who manufactured the Pankinson/Quinnell Triumphal Gates at the old town entrance in 1992, also made an arch for Saddam Hussein in Baghdad. He never did pay them! Basingstoke boy John Arlott (1914-91) was born at the Victorian Cemetery Lodge on Chapel Hill, where his dad was the keeper. John was a cricket commentator with a very distinctive Hampshire brogue. He was also a poet and broadcaster.

Basingstoke has theatres and cinemas. The Haymarket (old) and the Anvil (1990s) where you can experience everything from boogie to bellydancing, opera to pantomime. That's at international level. On 2nd November 2011, the Bulgarian State Radio and TV Female Choir performs at the Anvil. Once unheard of here.

There were mutterings that Basingstoke born and bred international actress, Elizabeth Hurley, adorned the streets as a teenager. But this is only hearsay!

BBC art critic, historian and TV presenter, Waldemar Januszczak is proudly Basingstoke born, of Polish parentage.

So, many people love Basingstoke and are proud to be associated with our near-neighbour which HAS contributed in many ways to World beauty, interest and culture.

Thank you, Mr Willoughby, for your elegant talk to about 40 TADS members.

Rosemary Bond

The Hurst TADS History Prize

The winner this year is Sarah Fewell. Carol attended the prizegiving on Thursday 3rd November and spoke to Nick Stoten, Head of History, about Sarah and the local history projects Year 9 pupils produce. The TADS website and publications are now used extensively to create a locally related piece of work. (Nick is confident that Sarah will accept TADS invitation, to come to the December social evening, and bring her project to show members). Sarah was also awarded the Year 9 Tadley Town Council prize.

Tadley Library

There is a consultation paper available from the library which has proposals to change the library opening hours as a cost saving measure. The main change is that the library will be closed all day on Tuesday, and Friday late opening to be ended. Views on the proposals have to be submitted by 28th December.

History in the making

Tadley October 2011

As many of you will have seen, there is a new Tadley town clock on Mulford's Hill outside Sainsbury's. It has already been nicknamed 'Little Ben' and seems to be a huge success. The Town Council are delighted with the many positive comments that are being made about it.

The clock was provided courtesy of Sainsbury's, as the final part of last year's redevelopment of the store. The clock was chosen in favour of other ideas, following discussions with the Town Council. You will notice that the TADS balloon logo has been incorporated in the base. We were asked for ideas to reflect the history of Tadley; what is more appropriate than the "Tadley! God help us."



A New Cinema

December 3rd will see the return of a cinema to Tadley! The Community Centre will be showing the film "Made in Dagenham" (recommended by Carol). This is a new project for the benefit of the Community.

What's on? Events which may be of interest

Hampshire Record Office *For information ring 01962846154 or see www3.hants.gov.uk/whatson-hro*

Milestones Museum. For coming events: Tel. 01256 477766 or see: www3.hants.gov.uk/milestones/whatson

11 am Saturday 10 Dec - **Milestones Victorian Christmas event** - Experience the magical glow of Milestones Victorian Christmas and visit the craft and gift stalls, carol singers, see our costumed interpreters performing historical presentations such as a Victorian school. Look out for Queen Victoria greeting visitors in the museum. Make & take activities for children.

The same evening there will be a **Victorian Christmas Gala** from 6.30pm.

Willis Museum

The museum is running an ever changing series of special exhibitions in the Sainsbury Gallery.

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

Dec 16th Members' Christmas Party

Basingstoke Archaeological & History Society

No lecture in December

TADS Subs will be due Dec/January. The exact fee will be decided at the AGM.

***TADS annual membership is £12 per person.
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