

November 2012



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

**Next meeting - Wednesday 21st November 2012
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30pm**

***'The reconstruction of
Cody's plane'***

by David Wilson

***Project Leader, Farnborough Air Sciences
Trust (FAST)***

(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.50)

Committee news:

The **Tadley Tracks**, **Tadley Facts** book will be on sale at the meeting for £5.00, a discount of £3.00. *Christmas presents?*

We have re-scheduled the **AGM and Social to 12th December**, at it was felt the 19th was too close to Christmas.

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

www.tadshistory.com

TADS Meeting 12th December.

TADS AGM & Social

Usual arrangements apply.

Tads Meeting 17th October.

The Basingstoke Canal - The Last 6 Miles

by **Roger Cansdale**, 'Restoration Saviour'.

Unusually, we're talking about the LOST, oft-forgotten, wrecked, or built-on last 6 westward miles of the Basingstoke Canal, from the Greywell Tunnel to a concrete jungle with odd grassy bits: Basingstoke.

The Basingstoke Canal: a white elephant or an unfinished symphony?

Should it have had an extension from the River Whitewater via TADLEY to Midgham, thus making a 'daisy chain ' link up with the Kennet & Avon Canal and the Wey and Arun Canal, enabling the barges to travel more easily?

The Basingstoke Canal was an isolated 40-mile link to the River Thames, River Wey and Weybridge area from Basingstoke.

The Canal helped the forthcoming railway era by carrying coal, iron, wood, etc which ironically served to replace water transport. (London to Basingstoke Railway 1839).

Roger said the Canal cost £86,000 and was made by Tom Pinkerton and navvies blood, sweat, tears, picks and shovels between 1788 and 1794. It had 29 locks and countless bridges. Travelling by loaded barge from London to Basingstoke cost 12/6d (about 65p). Agricultural produce went on the return journey.

From the word go, the Canal teetered near bankruptcy, being saved by a gynaecologist (1796) and then by loads of shady bankers, lawyers and a gin baron during its lifetime!

In 1914 the last barge to make the complete journey from Aldershot through to the now weed-clogged western end, reached Basingstoke after a trip which took 3 months! For more than a century Basingstoke had its own route to London Docks: 71 miles and 3-4 days' journey away....

Greywell Tunnel is the beginning of the end it's 1,230 yards of gated bat sanctuary now, with stalactite and stalagmite type formations inside, plus a roof-fall of clay 1,000 yards in. Then there's Up Nately, Mapledurwell, Hatch, Old Basing and the Eastrop Park area. These places have some unsafe old canal bridges and swing bridges and Basing House ruins with the canal bed photographed in 1864. Frog Lane has a house built where the canal was, plus the M3 runs on a half mile section of it. The canal also went under the A30. Poor Canal! It wasn't commercially viable for very long, the restored bit is great for nature, narrow boats and tourism, but the 'last 6 miles' aren't really restorable. Even in the 18th Century landowners had NIMBYed (Not in my backyard) it and complained of foul smells and public nuisance. As ever, Canal characters evolved: one Mark Hicks, 1884 - 1966 worked on the Canal until he was 92 years old. Alec Harmsworth made a fortune building and then hiring out boats - he bought the Canal in 1923. One hippie, Mrs Marshall, also bought the Canal in 1949 and worked it with her barge horse, Kitty. Anyway, the Canal 'terminus' became Basingstoke Bus Station, (pre 1960s new town), in 1936. In its time, the Canal has inspired loyalty, tenacity, thuggery, and risk-taking but it's probably R.I.P. time for its last 6 miles.

Thanks, Roger, for your amazing Canal tale.

Rosemary Bond

History in the making

Ron Needham - We are sorry to report the death of Ron on 4th October at the age of 78. He was a member of TADS from the early days and for many, many years he looked after the distribution of the Newsletter, including the days when they were no emailed copies. A much bigger job than today.

Margaret Weston - Margaret, who died on 23rd October at the age of 84, was not a member of TADS but she was notable for being the first lady Mayor of Basingstoke and Deane (1998 - 90). To some she was know as 'Mrs Tadley' and represented Tadley on the Borough council for 27 years, chairing the Planning Committee from 1978 to 1989. She helped start the scheme which resulted in our splendid swimming pool. She was also a fund raiser for St Michael's Hospice.

What's on? Events which may be of interest

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

Milestones Museum. For full information on coming events:

Tel. 01256 477766 or see: www3.hants.gov.uk/milestones/whatson

If you want to learn the magic of card tricks there are masterclasses at the museum every weekend until early January

Willis Museum - Telephone: 01256 465902 for information.

There are a series of ongoing exhibitions at the museum.

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

20th Dec. - Christmas party and talk on "Seasonal Customs from Hampshire archives" given by Sarah Lewin.

Tadley WEA have a new course starting on Friday the 11th January:

An Introduction to Ancient Egypt, Tutor – John Billman

The course will be 8 sessions on Friday mornings from 10.00am – 12.15pm at the Ambrose Allen Centre, Franklin Avenue, Tadley. Course Fee £71.10.

This course will trace the emergence of dynastic Egypt, look at the development of the iconic Giza pyramids and who built them, journey through the cultural peak of the Middle Kingdom and on to the Egypt of Tutankhamun and Ramesses the Great in the New Kingdom.

WEA Secretary is Jan Smith, Tel. 01189 832251 or email:

jansmith@btopenworld.com

Bookings to Sheila Smith, Tel. 01189 812516 or email: wands@talktalk.net

***TADS annual membership is £12 per person.
Correspondence to Tadley and District History Society,
c/o 5 Church Road, Pamber Heath, Tadley. RG26 3DP
Email: tadshistory@googlemail.com***