



June 2013

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

**Next meeting - Wednesday 19th June 2013
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30pm**

**‘The Willis Archives’
by John Holland**

(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.50)

Committee News - Peter Elliott has been putting up the posters around Tadley for the last year. We want someone who can take over from him, starting September. There are 10 posters at present and it needs doing in the week before the meeting, 10 times a year only. I will deliver the posters to you. Offers or further details from Richard. See below.

*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 17th July 2013:
‘Women in Tudor and Stuart Berkshire’
by Joan Dils

A Cockney Childhood of the 1960s
by Maggie Filkins

Wow! London of the 1960s. Walworth, even. A Cockney borough because it's within the sound of Bow Bells.

The 1960s isn't all that long ago and yet Maggie's Walworth was worlds away and Maggie is fun, funny, nippy, savvy, saucy, street-wise, cheeky, brave, trendy, lively, erudite, caring with an innate sense of justice.

We screamed with laughter throughout as one pearl after another dropped from the Pearly Princess's lips in a Cockney accent which allegedly came from 17th century COCKENEY, a misshapen egg and later, a contemptuous name for a town-dweller. By the way, Maggie sewed the black Pearly jacket's white 'pearl' buttons on herself.

Maggie didn't dwell on Cockney rhyming slang which everyone seems to expect from a Londoner e.g. apples and pears (stairs), brown bread (dead), etc. etc.

Sir Charlie Chaplin 1889-1977, and Maggie both came from East Street, Walworth. Her Mum, a widow of 21 years with 3 kids, re-married to a 41 year-old and soon there were 8 kids, in a small flat, no mod cons, a rented-for-a-tanner a week (6d/2^{1/2} p) black and white TV, and Maggie's great joy: a portable record player, which nurtured her innate feeling for dance, drama, and a magnificent imagination.

The kids were head-to-toe in a double bed which could double-up as a tepee or a raft, etc aided by a broom handle! Uncut toenails were a big problem in a top-to-tail situation....

Overcrowded always, but ever open-hearted and open-housed. Some visitor came for 3 days but stayed for 3 years. That's how it was, then.

Sometimes the air was blue in Walworth because 'effing and blinding' was deemed to stress emphasis and was habit-forming. But people never swore in front of ladies. Kids swore in the playground as they smoked - all part of

were shared around and you ate your food when the teeth passed your way if you needed them!

The hops were hand-picked for the brewery trade. The young kids played in the Kentish fruit orchards and the older ones picked hops into 3'x3' (1 metre) wicker baskets holding a bushel. A bushel of hops earned you 2/- (10p) and you aimed to pick 18 bushels per day, thus getting 36 shillings (£1.80) per day. Maggie's family often had no wages because they'd had the money on tick. Many families were in this boat..

School medicals were a headache and you visited the School Doctor and Nitty Norah (nurse) in the school make-shift medical room wearing a vest and baggy drawers. A brown envelope handed to you indicated NITS and not the special medal Maggie imagined. She became adept at re-directing her envelopes to her mate's Mum...

Flattened Council building sites awaiting development were playgrounds *par excellence* for kids as there were no toys in the flat. She had a precious doll from a neighbour, but her brother wrecked it with scissors after 2 days. Boys played football, rounders, and cricket, and made soap-box carts, and the gals did housekeeping among the rubble, and skipping with washing lines.

Everyone felt safe and looked out for each other. It seems to have been a safer world then!

If you were bad and got your ear clipped, your Mum clouted the other ear. Kids had idyllic days with freedom, drama, music and imagination, fun, fighting and swearing.

Someone asked Maggie how she broke the mould.

Leaving school at 14 because her family had been evicted and sadly split up, Maggie stuck with her big sister, Rosie. She got a job and then married her first husband at 16 years old and moved to Kent. Happily, the family is still in touch. Well, Maggie wanted to be a singer, a dancer, a famous writer and speaker or a nun (because she liked nuns' habits).

Thanks, Maggie for your tremendous, touching talk and sing-song. We think you have achieved three of your above ambitions!

Rosemary Bond

growing up, Maggie said. Her first 'ciggie' was literally a red-hot throat burner, during which she screamed blue murder. Her Dad rolled his own and the kids later gleaned the dog-ends (stubs). Even a DOCTOR in the 60s endorsed Camel cigarettes.... How things move on.

Maggie's clothes were held together with safety pins, sometimes with embarrassingly disastrous consequences - remember, if you remove the elastic from your P.E. navy bloomers, you could bare all. And she did.

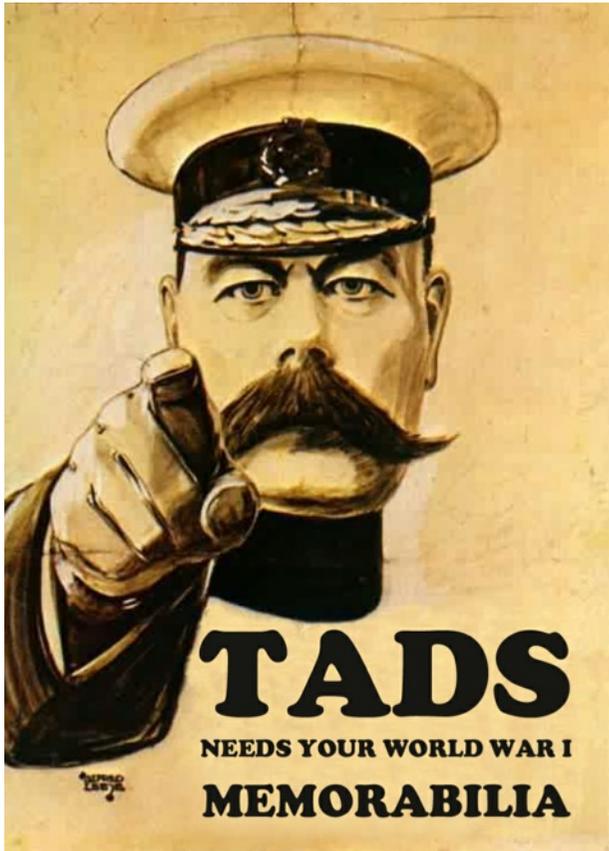
The 60s saw the advent of 'the pill' and questionable sexual freedom. Some wit wrote a serious manual for young married women, advising them to prepare for bed with NO hair rollers, NO face cream, to agree with everything the husband said and to make appropriate sounds whether or not necessary....

Any lad who made the wrong move towards the Cockney girl could get beaten-up by her. One of Maggie's sister's rejected suitors retaliated by putting a boxed grass snake down her neck. Babies weren't found under gooseberry bushes, but under market stalls! 11-year old Maggie's first kiss was likened to a rubber sink plunger plonka. Afterwards she practised kissing the mirror, the floor and her little brother!

Being poor and knicker-less one day, Maggie borrowed sister Rosie's roll-on (a mid 20th century constricting corset device) and went a-walking with one teenager, Martin. She couldn't actually walk or breathe and when said Martin tried to take liberties she whacked him one and he said she was like an unopened tin can, as he ran off disappointed!

The average Cockney family's 'holiday' was a 6-week August-September stint in the Kentish hop fields. You travelled in an open-backed lorry (seatbelts unknown then) with your clothes, bedding, cooking utensils, etc. in paper bags (plastic bags also unknown then). If your family, led by your Mum, arrived early, you got the pick of the brick huts, 8' (2¹/₂m) square with no windows, electricity or water and a wooden door. The mattress could be a bale of hay with a sheet. There were communal showers and wooden loos with peep-holes emphasised by the lads from picking at the knot holes! No hops were picked at weekends and tiny, tinny trannie radios 4"x 3" (7cm x 5cm) provided 'muzak' and atmosphere. And your Dad rolled down for the weekend, spending considerable time at local hostelries, often finding the walk home to the hop camp challenging Maggie's Dad 'fell into a bleeding swamp....' and didn't come up smelling of roses...

Ingenious methods were employed for making money. Maggie's Dad found some false teeth and sold them on for half a crown (17¹/₂ p). Also, false teeth



Thank you for the responses to the email asking for information on relatives who served in WW1. We have had some very interesting replies. The request form will be included with the printed copy of the newsletters for those of you not on email. Keep the information coming.

History in the making

St Paul's Church, Tadley - Burglars broke into the church on the night of 5th May, drilled open the safe and stole the communion plate as well as money and a digital projector. Among the items was a 1664 paten, and a chalice and paten of 1780. The latter are shown on page 30 of the 2008 edition of Florence Davidson's History of Tadley.

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

2nd Jul. to 1st Sept. Teddy Time at Milestones - a series of Teddy Bear themed events all summer.

Willis Museum (Tel: 08456035635) - The museum is running an ever changing series of special exhibitions in the Sainsbury Gallery. Forthcoming exhibits include contemporary and local artists. There are also activities aimed at young people with special events during the summer holidays.

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

June 20th: The Portsmouth to London Road, by Jennifer Goldsmith.

Basingstoke Archaeological & History Society *(7.30 at Church Cottage)*

No information.

Tadley WEA

11th Jul. A day with the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust from Newbury, including a boat trip. £12. Details from Jan Smith, Tel: 0118 983 2251
E-mail: jancsmith@btopenworld.com

Walking Tour of Hidden Basingstoke

2:00pm Thursday 4 Jul and 11:00am Tuesday 13 Aug from Basingstoke Discovery Centre. Think you know Basingstoke? A walking tour of the town that reveals the stories behind Basingstoke's hidden history. A must for anyone who enjoys local history and Basingstoke. The tour lasts approximately one hour. Advance booking highly recommended as these tours usually sell out.

Cost: £3 Telephone: 01256 478670 to book

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