



**December 2013**

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

**Next meeting - Wednesday 18th December 2013  
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30pm**

## **‘TADS Annual General Meeting & Social’**

**Minutes of the last AGM  
Annual reports  
Treasurer's report and annual accounts  
2014 Programme  
Election of Committee  
Any other business**

We need a Quorum of 24 people minimum, so please come if you can.  
Subscriptions are being recommended to remain at £12.00. They can be paid on the evening by cash or cheque in an addressed envelope, please. (Envelopes will be available).

*Members are invited to display items of local or personal interest. There will be a report on the WW1 commemoration project.  
Drinks will be served but the Committee would welcome donations of food and help with the domestic work..*

*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 15th January 2014:**

### **‘Winchester - Bishops, Buildings and Bones ’**

By Andrew Negus

#### **Last Meeting 20th November:**

#### **The history of the Didcot, Newbury & Southampton Railway by Rex Hora,**

Chairman of the Reading Railway Association

Full house at TADS! Trains are popular with all ages.

We all know that ‘demon’ Dr Beeching radically shrank our railway system in the 1960s for supposed economic reasons. Actually, he had a mate, Mr Ernest Marples, who was into the-building-of-the-first-of-the-motorways business at that time, when our M 1 was a new concrete strip striding South to North in England. So it was roads not railways .....

Anyway, our area encompassing the D.N.S.&R. was covered in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century with spiders' webs of criss-crossing railway lines of two different track gauges: either 7' (2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> metres) or 4' 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" (1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> m approx.) and not at all compatible!

The D.N.S.&R. railway was a long time in the planning: 1846 until the first train ran in 1882. The reasons for this are the same as they are in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: landowners' objections unless it improves THEIR status. Lord Portal, the banknote paper manufacturer in the Overton area of the River Test, wanted a 700 yard (700 metres) tunnel so that he didn't see trains. Lord Carnarvon didn't want railways near him..... The Government wanted £30,000 planning fees!

Alas, the quarrelling, un-cooperative companies were very protective of their own areas and ALWAYS objected to everything.

The carrot dangled in front of them was economic growth, freight transfer, and some passenger movement.

To us locals, the idea of a railway tunnel under Greenham Common (once of USAAF base and Greenham Common Women's Camp fame in the Cold War days of the 1960s through to the 1990s) is incomprehensible. As is the desecration of the North Wessex and Berkshire Downs. Some called it 'an unmitigated nuisance with mulish behaviour abounding....'

Eventually the D.N.S.&R. was finished at a cost of £397,484.00.

But it didn't get to Southampton, stopping at Chesil (Cheese Hill) station in Winchester. Another railway company later linked the Line to Southampton.

Rex showed us pictures of the ruined railway with its crumbling stations and railway furniture...

In 1923 all the railway companies re-grouped from many to just four: GWR, LMS, Southern, and LNER. During WWII the railways were used mainly for freight, and in 1948 they were nationalised.

In the 1930s, the grandfather of our Tadley David Leeks (recently Mayor of Basingstoke) was the Station Master at Litchfield near Whitchurch, Hants. Apparently Mr & Mrs Leeks were quite lively stalwarts of the D.N.S.&R. in those days.

Poor, sad D.N.S.&R.! Didcot Junction has been extensively built over. Hermitage, Highclere, Burghclere, Compton and Litchfield stations are unrecognisable, some are flattened - Upton and Blewbury station is now 'Beeching Close'. Newbury East Junction, photographed in the Shaw and Turnpike area in 1920, is now houses. Winchester Chesil station is a road. (*And a multi-storey car park – Ed.*)

Rex and his mates would like to re-open the now-defunct railway which closed just pre-Beeching, in 1962-64. It will be difficult, as it's all returned to nature or concrete! He would like to turn ROADS back to railways, which would be steam linking up with the main line diesel trains. Rex doesn't like the idea of the controversial north-south high Speed 2 (HS2) railway puncturing new pastures; and would use its millions to rebuild HIS beloved railway system for freight, passengers and as a heritage railway, while recognising some deviations would be necessary to avoid buildings and motorways....

Thank you Rex, for your unforgettable talk.

Rosemary Bond

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

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

**Milestones Museum.** For coming events: Tel. 01256 477766 or see:  
[www3.hants.gov.uk/milestones/whatson](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/milestones/whatson)

Among their events is a Traditional Father Christmas Grotto at Milestones on the two Saturdays and Sundays before Christmas.

**Willis Museum** ( Tel: 08456035635) - The museum is running an ever changing series of special exhibitions in the Sainsbury Gallery.

These include several events to do with Lego!

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

No Information.

**Basingstoke Arch. & Historical Soc.** (7.30pm at Church Cottage)

9th January - The 'end' of Hadrians Wall by Tony Willmott of English Heritage

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*The Committee wish everyone a  
Happy Christmas and a prosperous  
New Year*

**TADS annual membership is £12 per person.  
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