



February 2014

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

**Next meeting - Wednesday 19th February 2014
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30pm**

'Basingstoke Workhouse'

By Barbara Large

(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.50)

Annual Subscriptions of **£12 per person** are now due. If you are not one of the 53 who have paid and are paying at the February meeting will you please put your cheque or cash in an envelope bearing your name (envelopes provided at the meeting). This will help the Treasurer recognise who the money is from and get the receipts prepared. New members please give details, including Phone No. and email address. Subs may also be sent via Carol (See bottom of Page 4 for address.)

www.tadshistory.com

TADS Meeting 19th March 2014

'The 1914 Mobilisation'

By Dan Allen

TADS last meeting - 15th January:

Winchester: Bishops, Buildings and Bones

by

Andrew Negus

A timely title. The bones bit, anyway. What excitement! Alfred, our only king with 'Great' in his name whose bones were missing for centuries since the Reformation (1538) MAY eventually be afforded the same recognition as **the-King-in-the-Carpark**: Richard III who was discovered accidentally and luckily in a Leicester car park in 2012-2013.

More of Alfred later

Andrew obviously lives and breathes Winchester history, dating back to Celtic Wessex, 3,000 years ago. Winchester was pretty well placed with the clear chalk stream of the River Itchen, good farmland and St Catherine's Hill Fort for defence. It was named Caer Gwent and its centre was where the present Winchester Railway Station is now.

Centuries later, in rolled the Romans to conquer us in 50 AD and by 100 AD they had re-named the city Venta Belgarum. They even re-routed the River Itchen by 300-400 metres!

Their principal road through the town is still the High Street - and it is the oldest in our country. The thick city wall was constructed with flint and brick but only a tiny bit of it remains now: encased in a safety cage. As usual when the invading army left, the locals de-constructed the wall and carted off the stones for new buildings! It always happens....

600 AD saw the Saxons here. They re-named the city Winton Castor, and of course, they, as West Saxons, were in 'Wessex'. St Birinus built the Old

Minster in 650 AD beside the present-day Winchester Cathedral. The Minster had a 400 pipe organ pumped by 70 pumping people!

In 870 a good guy, St Swithun looked after the Winchester people's spiritual needs and also built a bridge spanning the River Itchen. A lady came to the city market, dropped her basket of eggs, and St Swithun made them whole again As well as miracles he also liked fresh air - and therefore didn't want a great indoor tomb, but grass and the open sky...

Back to Alfred the Great (849-899), King of Wessex whose magnificent statue is in the city. He was born in Wantage, now in Oxfordshire. He reigned for 28 of his 50 years and was a great man in every way - except when, preoccupied by problems of his kingdom, he burnt the Somerset peasant woman's cakes. She scolded him. Or maybe it's a myth, but a fun one anyway...

Alfred created a royal navy and an army to rid us of Danes and Vikings and scared them so much with his strength, that they went to the Midlands and the North to do their raping and pillaging. It was the Danish King Canute who tried to control the tide at Bosham in West Sussex. Alfred wanted Wessex to be great and secure. He built 48 burhs (enclosures, now 'boroughs') across his kingdom where people could feel safe from invaders. He minted real silver coins, inspired culture and places of learning. Pretty good, considering he was illiterate until his mother, the Queen, bribed him with a beautiful book. He later became a wonderful scholar and is remembered as much for his pen as his expertise with his sword. When he died in AD 899 he was buried inside the New Alfred Minster, but as we know, his remains were moved at least 4 times and became lost during the Reformation - until (possibly?!) 2013 ... when the remains of 5 people of both sexes were found near the Hyde Abbey site. Alfred, as a military, educational and social reformer laid the foundations for our England.

Trouble! Alfred's son Aethelred married a perky, **wily**, blonde aged 16 years: Emma. Their son was Edward the Confessor. Later Emma married King Canute and had another son. She also dallied with the Bishop of Winchester. The little minx was the only Queen to be Queen of England twice!

When the 'smelly and bad' French Normans arrived, Hyde Abbey was built. The Normans soon muscled in on being Bishops of Winchester. They were actually political animals with religion a possible sideline... the

pilgrims were the devout ones as sweaty palm marks can be seen on the stonework round the High Altar of the Cathedral even now.

But for over 900 years this very rich and magnificent Cathedral, built by the Normans, has been the focal point of Winchester.

St Swithun was buried IN Old Swithun Minster against his wishes for fields and fresh air. Therefore he put out a curse: rain for 40 days if it rains on St Swithun's Day in July.

Some Bishops who had been rather 'greedy and lazy' and had not been praying 8 times daily, didn't want to die and go to hell, so they embarked on a charm offensive, building wonderful houses, abbeys, minsters, etc. Bishop Henri de Blois, brother of King Stephen, created the medieval 5 book Winchester Bible in 1100. He also set up the St Cross Hospital with the Wayfarers' Dole - bread and beer for travellers who asked for it.

St Cross and the Dole still function in the 21st Century. Henri de Blois may have created a leper hospital where people were treated with respect.

Simon de Montfort was another bad lad - a sadist who killed monks and citizens and rigged political elections. He may have repented....

St Giles' Hill was the site of one of the great Market Fairs of England, where gold, silver, ribbons, food and all the fun of the fair happened. Also, the legal prostitution profits of 'Winchester Geese' girls went to the same source ... as did the income from 60-80 manors across the South of England. Winchester was an extremely wealthy place because of its wool trade. Its port, Southampton was, too, but by 1300 London was becoming important and became England's capital. So Winchester was 'retired' and also lost its Mint. Southampton's port also declined then for a time. In 1387 William of Wykeham founded Winchester College to replenish 'brains' after population losses due to the Black Death. The public school is 600 years old and very prestigious. William gave the Cathedral a massive make-over in 1400; enlarging it, replacing some windows and adding buttresses.

Hey ho! By 1500 Winchester was a lovely market town of culture and character and a good place to be. And it still is. As for the Alfred-bones: still a mystery needing more scientific tests.

Thank you Andrew for your tremendous talk. You left us gasping for more when you mentioned going beyond 1500!

Rosemary Bond

TADS World War I project

As part of the national commemoration to mark the centenary of the outbreak of war in 1914, TADS is researching the names on the local war memorials, in particular Tadley, Heath End and Pamber.

The project group is exploring their service history, personal details and connections with the local area so that it can build a wider picture of the men who lost their lives for an exhibition to be held in Tadley Community Centre on Saturday 27 September 2014 – remember to put the date in your diaries. Following the day at the Community Centre the exhibition will move to Tadley Library where it will be displayed in stages for a few weeks.

The group has held several meetings and been very busy carrying out research. Their internet research skills have developed by leaps and bounds and new bits of information keep being uncovered.

TADS members who would like to help, either with information, or would like to offer support, should contact one of the project team:

- Ian (vlsburia@me.com);
 - Peter (peter@sparshott.org.uk);
 - Richard (anything@ilexind.plus.com); and
 - Carol (aspect_ceilings@btconnect.com)
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A visit to the Bank of England

There is interest in this proposed visit and it is intended to arrange it, provided that we can get a minimum of 15 people. It could be either at the very end of March/ early April or it will have to be after Easter holidays - end of April. Make own way there - the visit is free - a presentation of 45/55 minutes + tour = possibly 2 hours . You will be free to spend the rest of the day in London.

If you are interested in going please let Carol or Richard know. We will also ask again at the coming meeting.

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

No current events, but coming up is yet another Lego one - LEGO ® Lost World Zoo at Milestones Museum from 26 Feb to 27 Apr.

Willis Museum - The museum is running an ever changing series of special exhibitions in the Sainsbury Gallery., including the intriguingly titled :

‘The Curious World of Becky Adams’ on until 22 March.

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

February 20th - ‘The false Messiah of Overton’, by Bob Clarke

Basingstoke Archaeological & History Society (7.30 at Church Cottage)

13th March - ‘Britain Begins’ by Prof. Sir Barry Cunliffe, Oxford University

‘Winchester: ‘Archaeology and Memory’ Conference

Saturday 26th and Sunday 27th April 2014 at the University of Winchester.

A major conference organised by Winchester Excavations Committee, Winchester College and the University of Winchester.

Further information from: admin@winchesterstudies.org.uk

Tadley WEA Day School: Herschel and the Golden Age of Observers

Saturday 29th March at the Ambrose Allen Centre, Tadley.

For further details please contact: Jan Smith 0118 983 2251
jancsmith@btopenworld.com

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