



November 2014

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

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

‘Dickens at Christmas’

By Vera Hughes & David Weller

(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.50)

Committee news

The TADS AGM is next month. Although the existing Committee members are willing to continue, with the departure of Dave Bowman we desperately need at least one new Committee member. We are down to five members, the minimum allowed by the Constitution. Please consider if you could be that person.

Annual Subscriptions - please see notes on page 5.

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

TADS Meeting 17th November 2014
‘Annual General Meeting
and social evening’

TADS last meeting - 15th October:

The History of the English Pub.

By Phil Wood.

Phil looked a jolly, solid guy, a musician and bon vivant who has obviously researched his subject well.

The public house is an institution unique to England and there's nothing more English. It's copied by the rest of Britain, but cannot be replicated in any OTHER country. The English pub is special: Karl Marx and Lenin had the same favourite 'local' in London; 'Rule Britannia' was written in a pub; the Shakesperian theatre began in one. A pub can be a thatched cottage or a Victorian gin palace or an unassuming 'local'. Most survive as a study of a unique and social phenomenon.

The pub is not a darkened American bar with ice cold beer; or a Bavarian beer hall full of swaying and noise. It's quintessentially English, whether in Newbury or Nuneaton.

A pub was once a house where mine host and hostess invited paying guests to drink with them. Its success depended on the landlord/landlady's popularity. Still does.

‘Ye Olde Fighting Cocks’ of St. Albans claims to be the oldest English pub: so does Nottingham's ‘Trip to Jerusalem’ (1189).

19th Century Basingstoke had 54 pubs, inns and taverns which caused fights between the temperance Salvation Army and the Brewery Trade!

In the 21st century, not so many pubs remain. Popley's Popinjay and the Oakridge Nine Saxons catered for the 1960's London overspill. The Nine Saxons is now demolished.

In 1762 the extremely rural Newbury had 42 pubs. Well, the water was unsafe to drink! In 1800, there were 140 pubs but the 21st century sees the 35,000 population making do with just 20.

Many people have sought solace in drinking alcohol. In 959 AD Saxon England used a certain system of measuring the volume of alcohol you drink. In 997 a breach of the peace gained a 6 1/2 'marks' fine. A death elicited 12 'marks'! By 1188, the popularity of alcohol gave Henry II the excuse to tax beer. He needed cash to pay for the Crusades. Alcohol is still a tax cash-cow! As many of the population were illiterate, by 1375 you advertised your pub with a pub sign or a pub pole. But it mustn't obstruct the highway by being over 7 feet (2.1/2 metres) wide.....

The Romans had carved 'pub' signs in wood, showing a man and vines. The Vyne (National Trust) in Sherborne St. John is reputedly where they first began growing vines in England. The Romans played the game of chequers: hence several pubs use this name.

Midway between Roman Silchester and Winchester is a recently-discovered watering hole near North Waltham. Scole, Norfolk, boasts a very elaborate pub sign: an enormous White Hart.

Phil said C.A.M.R.A'S campaign for Real Ale is actually for BEER, which contains hops as a preservative. Ale is actually pre-hop, and weak. Hops revolutionised the beer trade. Barclays of banking fame were brewers first and foremost....

In 1552, Edward VI made licensing mandatory. J.Ps had work to do then....

In 1643 Newbury pubs stated 'no evil was to be done'; and not too much gambling. One Anne Coale had her ale house licence suppressed because of 'great disorder'.

A pub generally was open to those desirous of beer in the day and evening; an inn you could stay overnight; a tavern also sold wine. To tipple is to consume alcohol regularly but in small amounts (type 15th C English).

Back in 1480's Newbury, the Tiger pub was bought by Winchester College so travellers between New College, Oxford and the other city, could board there: often 39 people in 6 bedrooms! Hawkers, traders, drovers and soldiers also stayed there. In 1650 Samuel Pepys stayed at the Globe inn in Newbury after a 6 week sojourn in the West Country.

The roads must have been terrible because he then got lost on the 20 mile route to Reading!

In the early 19th Century, pre-Napoleonic Wars, the army didn't have billets. Therefore soldiers and horses often slept in inns and stables. One Newbury inn put up 111 soldiers and 239 horses....

1836 saw George Pitthouse of The Pheasant, Newbury, fined £3 for refusing to put up soldiers and their horses.... likewise in 1878, Samuel Hurst of Hurst's Bar was fined £2 for refusal.

Stage coaches used inns and Post Coaches (before the Royal Mail) blew their posthorns so the turnpike keepers would have the gate wide open and the horses didn't have to stop. The London Ritz Hotel, now Swiss owned, was formerly a Piccadilly Coaching Inn. In our area, Posting Houses were where post boys changed their exhausted horses: Reading, Newbury, Marlborough, etc. en- route from London to Bristol.

In 1875, London's Oxford Arms, (demolished 1876) put on a burlesque (17th C French show) in the inn yard. People paid to watch and thus began Music Halls. William Morris, Pre-Raphaelite painter, man of action and all-round aesthete, objected when it was demolished, as it was his 'local'.

The mid 1800s had seen the demise of the coaching inns because of the railways – then came the era of the Railway Hotel.

Between 1832-1862ish businesses using pubs sprang up, they dealt with bankruptcy, animal and property sales by auction, toll companies, travelling dentists and suicides - sometimes the body was laid out in the bar! The 21st C still sees pub businesses, doubling-up as post offices and shops etc., as at Ashford Hill and Brimpton.

In the 20th C Thrift and 'Slate' Clubs enabled the public to save for Christmas or for a rainy day – as Social Welfare.

Animal auctions in pubs were delivered a death sentence when Newbury Council built a Cattle Market near the New Inn, BUT mainly the chaps went to the pub after Market Day.

Pub closing hours were defined in 1874 causing the local constabulary laughable consternation after the call of “Time Gentleman please”!

Going, going, gone were the days of cock fighting and you don't see so many dominoes, blackjack or bar billiards, though darts teams, karaoke, quizzes and live Music Nights thrive.

Breweries and Trust Houses bought up pubs in the 1930s and used salaried managers and not Mine Hosts. In the bars vulgar plastic devices sprouted alongside tall dignified ebony and brass beer-pulls. Also bar snacks and chicken Kiev in a plastic basket with thin French fries.

When the alcohol Breathalyser Test was introduced for drivers, people began to drink at home: and the 2008 Smoking Ban was a double-edged sword.

Thank you, Phil, for your social history of the idiosyncrasies of the English Pub, where the publican must have the tenacity of a pitbull terrier and the demeanour of a dowager duchess.

Rosemary Bond.

Annual Subscriptions

The Committee has decided that the Annual Subscription can remain at £12 per person. The Treasurer, Peter McNulty, is keen to collect them as soon as possible and would like to start at the November meeting.

Please put your cheque or cash in an envelope bearing your name (envelopes provided at the meeting) . This will help the Treasurer recognise who has paid and get the receipts prepared.

New members please add your details, including Phone No. and email address.

Yet more things you might not know about World War 1

The legendary cricketer Dr W G Grace was a casualty of the war. He died of a heart attack aged 67, allegedly caused when a German bomb fell in his garden.

The British training system killed more RFC pilots than the Germans. - Five months before the end of the First World War, the Secretary of State was asked to explain the extraordinarily high death rate of fighter pilots in training before being sent to their Royal Flying Corps squadrons in France. The figures showed that 8,000 out of a total of 14,166 pilot deaths had occurred before those pilots ever flew against the enemy.

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*

Now on - **'The Soldier's Tale'**. A WW1 family experience.

Father Christmas will be paying a flying visit to Milestones Museum on 13, 14, 20 & 21 December, so that children aged 0 - 15 years can enjoy a visit to speak to Father Christmas in his traditional grotto located in our Victorian Railway station waiting room. Please telephone to pre-book your children's Grotto tickets and entrance tickets, your time slot will be allocated to you on booking. Time slots begin from 11.10am and finish at 4.30pm. Father Christmas Grotto ticket costs £3.50 per child plus entrance tickets to the museum.

Willis Museum - The museum is running an ever changing series of special exhibitions in the Sainsbury Gallery. *For information tel 0845 603 5635 or see <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/willis-museum.htm>*

There are a series of hands-on events in the run-up to Christmas with either a Christmas or Lego theme!

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

November 20: Photographs by Terry Hunt from the 1920s and early 1930s, by David Rymill, Hampshire Record Office

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

11th December - Christmas Party

The Society is working hard to prevent the council disposing of open space at the Old Common to Basingstoke Town Football Club for a peppercorn rent for 150 years so that the club can build a new stadium. The land was presented to the town by Thomas Burberry

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