



March 2015

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

**Next meeting - Wednesday 18th March 2015
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30pm**

'Place Names of West Berkshire'

By David Peacock

(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.50)

Membership Subscriptions: There are a number of people who have not yet paid their subscriptions for the current year. The Treasurer would like to have them as soon as practicable, either at the next meeting or by post to Carol's address (foot of last page).

Please also see the item at the foot of page 3.

*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 15th April 2015
‘The Bare Necessities - The History of Underwear’
By Ruth King

TADS Meeting 19th February 2014

Living Heritage: 300 years of bells, ringing and bell ringers.

By John Harrison.

Quite a company of campanologists from all over North Hampshire were at the TADS' meeting, so they will be familiar with Rounds, Queens and Tittums. Also with Triples, Caters and Sextuples, etc. etc.....

John appears to have been hooked on bells for 50 years, 40 of these in Wokingham about 17 miles away and in Berkshire. He also has interests ranging from fell walking to historic brickwork to ergonomics, etc.....

Some of us probably thought England and the English had heard bell ringing for ever. Not so. Bells had been used in English church towers for hundreds of years, but for secular purposes: signalling local events, victories, coronations, and general rejoicing. But as bell towers acquired more bells the peculiarly English act of Change Ringing evolved. Continental church bells don't sound like ours, but John said the Dutch and Swiss are enthusiastic.... Continentals make more use of carillon bells.

In 1643 the Puritan Government wanted bells BANNED, along with sport, and dancing, as sinful pleasures.....

English Change Ringing began in about 1700. There had been many bell foundries about – now there are only 2: Loughborough and London's Whitechapel, which is England's oldest bell foundry. Wokingham's own bell foundry had closed in 1622 after casting bells for 370 years. Archaeological evidence of this has been found in the Peach Street area.

John said English Change Ringing is also called 'full circle ringing'. This has been the butt of corny campanology jokes and adverts on TV with monks being swung heavenwards on the ends of bell ropes! The bell and wheel are both mounted on a wooden headstock which is free to rotate. A bell is 'mouth

down' at rest but when ringing it swings through 360 degrees in alternate directions, from mouth-up to mouth-up and then back again..... Quite complicated for the non-ringer to comprehend. The heavier the bell the deeper the tone (tenor) to the smaller higher-pitched (treble) bells.

Training to be a bell ringer is a lengthy process: handling, safety, controlling the bell's speed then learning to synchronise your bell with others in the tower. It's like cycling in formation, we heard, and it is learned by word-of-mouth and lots of practice. Then you must memorise it all, bearing in mind there are over 40,000 ways to ring the changes! And, you need twice as many bell ringers as bells.

John's tower in All Saints, Wokingham has the dubious distinction of being the last tower in England from which bells heralded bear baiting. This was a major civic event and gentry, aldermen and burgesses turned out in their best kit to see this gory sport.

John said you don't need much brute force to ring a bell although, for example, Liverpool Cathedral's big bell is 4.1/2 tons. John compared this to the weight of a car! (*4 small cars -Ed.*)

Until about 1923 there weren't many female bellringers. Naturally bells can't be rung during wars, but when peace comes, they peal joyfully. Maybe WW1 emancipation helped the women.

Bells need re-tuning and replacing now and then. The shiny bits on a bell are where the bell clapper hits the metal.

Tadley's Ralph Bennett has written about local bell ringing, we were told.

Some years ago a Basingstoke Church had tape recorded bell sounds emitting from its tower. Quite a tinny sound and without warmth and atmosphere.....

So, long live the live bells and the skilful and dedicated bell ringers who live and breathe bells.

Thank you, John, for your in-depth knowledge and enthusiasm.

Rosemary Bond.

Society Membership: TADS membership has been in steady decline for the last few years. It is a concern that if it drops much more the Society will not be viable, as good speakers and other costs are getting more expensive set against a declining income. Please see if you can increase the membership by getting your neighbours and friends to come and join.

The Committee

Kenneth James Wilfred ‘Jim’ Coles 1937 – 2015

Jim came from a small village in West Sussex. Although his roots were “in the soil” he became an Oxford undergraduate at Keble College, where he studied Physics. On leaving university he taught A- Level physics in various locations around the country.

Jim and I had known each other for 61 years, since I was aged 13. My dad was the auctioneer at Steyning market (north of Worthing) where he sold Jim's grandfather's farm animals. Jim and I were engaged for the first time over 50 years ago but unfortunately that went “bang”! Luckily he came back to me 17years ago, after I had become a widow, and we lived very happily in Tadley enjoying such diverse interests together as metal detecting, photography and music.

Jim was also treasurer for TADS until the onset of his illness.

I am very glad that we re-met and had time together again.

Rosey Bond

St Mary’s Church, Silchester - Bell Restoration Project

It is now around 100 years since the bells in Silchester Church had a major overhaul. They now need to be removed from the tower to enable new bearings to be fitted and other essential parts to be replaced. (*If you were at the February talk you should now understand this*). The cost is estimated to be in the region of £30,000.

If you would like to help with this fascinating historical project , please contact Martin Budd on 01256 850239 or email him: mgb@vinebudds.co.uk

A BBC Film Project: Charles Colville of the BBC wrote to TADS ‘I am developing a programme for BBC science looking at the extraordinary work by British scientists in the field of atomic physics during the last century. One area which I want to look at is the research at AWE Aldermaston during the 1940s. Against strikes, weather and lack of supplies the scientists and technicians at Aldermaston managed to make huge strides in pushing forward our knowledge of nuclear physics. I am trying to find eye witnesses who worked at AWE in the 1940s and 1950s.’ His email is:

charles.colville@bbc.co.uk

AWE is looking for your stories - Victoria Edwards who is leading the project spoke after the talk at the last meeting.



60 YEARS, COUNTLESS STORIES

Do you have a memory to share?

With your help, AWE is creating a digital community storybook to celebrate the rich history of AWE through the eyes of current and former staff and the local community.

Since the 1950s, AWE has played a key role in the local community and we'd love to hear your stories and memories.

**Whatever the story,
we want to hear from you!**



Submit your photos, videos, audio or written stories by email to stories@awecommunity.co.uk or by post to AWE Stories, PO Box 66792, London WC1A 9JZ (please include a return address)

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

Until Sun 26 Apr - Bricks in Motion @ Milestones Museum - The History of Transport in LEGO ® Bricks.

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>

A special exhibition is 'Made in China: an imperial Ming' - Discover how and why the iconic blue-and-white porcelain Ming vase on display from the British Museum represents a crucial period in China's history.

On until Saturday 04 Apr 2015

Friends of the Willis Museum (7.30pm at the museum - booking essential for non-members. Book through the museum telephone number above)

March 19th. 'The heraldry of Hampshire. "Knight and Austen Heraldry in Chawton House, and coats of arms found in St Michael's Basingstoke and St Mary's Old Basing" by Edward Hepper, Alton historian & author

Basingstoke Archaeological & History Society (7.30 at Church Cottage)

9th April. '1215 and all that: the real story of Magna Carta' by Dr Nick Barratt of the National Archives

Basingstoke Discovery Centre (01256) 470666

Tuesday 28th April at 2pm. 'A history of Brewing in Hampshire' by David Williams of the Brewing History Society. £3 per person, booking may be advisable.

***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***