



**June 2015**

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

**Next meeting - Wednesday 17th June 2015  
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30pm**

**‘Stories in Symbols - the  
Secret Language of  
Heraldry’**

*By David Nash-Ford*

*(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.50)*

*Comments, queries and suggestions to Richard Brown (0118) 9700100,  
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**[www.tadshistory.com](http://www.tadshistory.com)**

## **TADS Meeting 15th July 2015**

### **‘Eccentric London - Part 2’**

By Alan Copeland

## **TADS Meeting 20th May 2015**

### **The Battle of Waterloo**

**by Rupert Matthews**

Communicator extraordinaire, author, T.V. Presenter and lively good egg!

This year is the bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo. It's one of Britain's most famous battles, maybe because it tidied-up countless years of skirmishing and shenanigans on the European mainland, involving the French, Prussians, Austrians, some Italian Kingdoms and the Russians.

It put paid to little, self-promoted, Napoleon Bonaparte. Apparently many tyrants have been under 5 feet 4 inches in height (162 cms).....

Anyway, the Battle of Waterloo was sorted by the Duke of Wellington in just a few weeks: April till June, 1815. Sadly 50,000 plus men died in the process. Waterloo is actually in Belgium, and its battle changed the social, economic, industrial and agricultural mess which epitomised much of Europe in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Waterloo was also the last conflict before the invention of photography, so war artists would have provided details of the myriad of uniforms, weapons, types of cavalry, artillery etc.

Wellington and his allies won because his army was well-organised, efficient and highly trained. He rode on his famous war horse, Copenhagen (which is buried on the Duke's English estate). His men could fire a musket three times more quickly, accurately, and further, than the French. Also the English cavalry and artillerymen were well-paid, well-billeted and under control.

Wellington was a very strict general and his men respected him but didn't love him. (In 1805 Admiral Lord Nelson's sailors had respected and loved him. Mind you, the private lives of both men left lots to be desired.....)

Our first war with Napoleon had been in 1805 and we'd beaten him, but not conclusively, Rupert said. When captured in 1814 and sent to the French Mediterranean island of Elba, Napoleon stole a fishing boat and escaped back

to France. Because of the chaos back home, the French people welcomed him with open arms. The French King's 40,000 strong army upped sticks and deserted to the 'Little General's' side.

However, at Waterloo in 1815, Napoleon's elite French Imperial Guard, a crack unit of top class soldiers, undefeated, became confused and dejected in the ensuing chaos of rain and mud. There was black smoke everywhere: from smoke screens, fires and gun smoke from the English and Prussian cavalry and heavy artillery. The 1,000 strong regiment of Scots Greys had cannonballs lobbed at them over the salient, by Napoleon's men. It was to no avail.

Wellington's wily tactics bothered the French, among a confusing melee of multi-coloured soldiers' uniforms. Not even French grape-shot could panic Wellington's men, who formed into an outward-facing square.

By 3 p.m. on 18<sup>th</sup> June, at the Gates of Hougomont, the French burst through but were all killed bar their lone 12 year old drummer boy. He was captured and put in a shed till next morning and released unharmed.

By 7 p.m. the French Imperial Guard, who'd been badly shot-up, panicked and fled. Seeing this the whole French army fled.

So, by 9 p.m. the English helped by the Prussians were victorious. Wellington went off to Paris, Napoleon abdicated, intending to go to North America, but he was taken to the remote Atlantic island of St. Helena, where he languished for 7 years – before dying somewhat mysteriously.....

Wellington returned to England, the all-conquering hero. He was given the celebrated but smallish 200 year-old Stratfield Saye House and estate on the Hampshire-Berkshire borders about 5 miles east of Tadley. A grateful nation offered to enlarge the house for him, but he declined. The Ninth Duke, still lives there. The Iron Duke also owned No. 1 London – Apsley House – now run by English Heritage.

Rupert, thanks for your talk, delivered with the speed, accuracy and efficiency of which the Iron Duke would have approved.

Rosemary Bond.

*N.B. (Daily Telegraph 22.5.2015). '5,000 Actors, 300 horses, 100 cannon, will re-enact the Battle of Waterloo on 15.6.2015. A distant relation, Charles Prince Napoleon will attend on the 14<sup>th</sup> June'. His countrymen are rather reticent.....*

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

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

13 June - 27 Sept Dino Hunter at Milestones - Discover some of the earliest dinosaur hunters, and marvel at some of the creatures living in our seas 190 million years ago before encountering 5 life-size animatronic dinosaurs.

**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>*

Like Milestones the Willis has several dinosaur themed events during the summer, all to do with DinoFest 2015. Details from the museum.

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

June 18th - Researching the Fallen of Basingstoke. 233 men who died in the Great War are named on the Basingstoke War Memorial. David Stewart.

July 16th - The Victorian Defences Portsmouth and the Great Portsdown Forts, explaining the construction, purpose and history of the forts, a new viewpoint for visitors to Portsmouth by *Michael Forrest*

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

No meeting in July.

**Horace Walpole and Strawberry Hill** - Saturday June 20th 2015

Come and join the WEA Basingstoke branch for this fascinating lecture on the history and personalities of this famous house.

10:00 – 15:00 at United Reformed Church, London Street, Basingstoke

Course Tutor: Glenis Kerr Elliott Fee: £20

To book a place on this course or for more information, please visit [www.southern.wea.org.uk/basingstoke](http://www.southern.wea.org.uk/basingstoke) , call 07437 543473 or mail us at [Basingstoke@wea.org.uk](mailto:Basingstoke@wea.org.uk)

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