



**September 2015**

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

**Next meeting - Wednesday 16th September 2015  
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30pm**

**‘The Abbey and the Castle -  
Reading in the Middle Ages’**

*By Mike Cooper*

*(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.50)*

*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 21st October 2015**  
**‘Major Ralph Henry Sneyd of Heckfield’**  
By Keith Haines

**TADS Meeting 15th July 2015**

**Eccentric London – Part 2**

By Alan Copeland.

With his keen eye and a nose for eccentricities which might be hidden away, Alan took us on a tour of magnificence, mystery and the mundane around the outer reaches of London and suburbia.

First we visited the stunning, exotic, glittering white marble Swaminarayan Hindu Temple in Neasden with amazing carvings made in India and shipped here over a period of 2 years. It is possible to look over the temple but, unfortunately, not on Alan's visit.

In what is now the Crystal Palace Park are the remains of the huge, Crystal Palace built in the 1840s for the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park. It was burnt down in 1936 (my parents watched the fire from the end of their road in Streatham Hill). The remains consist of the main staircase with a large Egyptian Sphinx on pillars either side of the first steps. Also in the Crystal Palace Park, hidden amongst flowers, bushes, trees and water are enormous model dinosaurs created in the 1840s from someone's imagination but surprisingly accurate.

In Mortlake Alan came across a totally eccentric concrete 'tent', the tomb of Sir Richard Burton, explorer of Africa, complete with a eulogy on the front. Walking round to the back of the tent, Alan spied a metal ladder up to a window; climbing this it was possible to see inside the tomb and view the coffins of Sir Richard and his wife, together with artefacts from his travels. Next, to a brick and stone obelisk in Putney, a monument to David Hartley Esq., inventor of fire plates, which lined buildings to prevent fire spreading. King George III was most impressed.

In Postman's Park there are cloisters attached to the side of a modern building. These are called Heroes Cloister as plaques attached to the wall commemorate

people of all ages, from the end of the 19th Century to 2007, who made heroic self sacrifices, giving their lives for others.

The Post Office Tower, still an outstanding feature, with its revolving restaurant, was closed to the public in the 1970s due to IRA problems.

The beautiful Art Nouveau Carreras Cigarette Factory in Camden was built in 1901, now called Greater London House it still features black cat faces on the frontage and two black cats on plinths either side of the main steps, a reminder of the Black Cat cigarettes once made there.

The High Street, Camden Town really needs to be seen to be believed and is difficult to describe. Shop fronts and large hanging signs announce their wares – a Chinese dragon across the shop, a large Scorpion trainer, tattoos and unusual smells emanating from some doorways. Definitely, Alan felt, a place for the 'younger set'.

Hampstead and the tomb of John Harrison, clockmaker of Red Lion Square, London who died 1770 aged 83. He, with difficulty and over a number of years, claimed the prize of £20,000 for inventing a marine chronometer which could be used on ships to determine the longitude.

The interior of the Victorian Crossness Pumping Station in Thamesmead is a cathedral of ironwork. Now restored, its wrought iron and scrollwork are colourful with its four separate pumps also restored and painted red. An amazing place which pumped raw sewage from one side of London to the other before being flushed into the sea!

Docklands provides the traffic light tree sculpture with its 24 sets of lights and the Millennium Dome, now known as the O<sup>2</sup> Arena, a grand venue for large scale events.

In Blackheath the cul-de-sac called Friendly Place sports a sign stating 'No Parking'!....

One particular 'house' in Regency Leinster Gardens, Bayswater, is not all it seems. In the 1850s/60s it was necessary to demolish No. 22 to enable a tunnel to be built for the underground Metropolitan Line. This caused a great outcry so the company cheated and replaced the house with a frontage complete with porticos and painted windows. Around the back it is possible to see the roof covering the underground railway in the space where the house once stood.

Along the frontage of the Hilton Hotel, Kensington, Alan admired the larger-than-life size watering can, lawnmower and wheelbarrow each containing a profusion of flowering plants.

St. Pancras provides the amazing Victorian St. Pancras Station/Hotel so much admired by John Betjeman. Outside St. Pancras Station a rather tatty building complete with graffiti, sports a lighthouse-type building on top.

At Shooters Hill there stands a milestone stating it is 130 miles to Ypres – it is also a memorial to soldiers killed, missing and wounded in WW1.

John Gladden's curious house in Norbury with its spitfire on the roof, a marlin on the wall and a Centurion tank in the garden, does not gladden the hearts of his neighbours! A story too long for this report.

Inside the courtyard of the Prudential Assurance offices in High Holborn Alan found a statue of Prudence, a skylight dome and a war memorial to those Prudential men who fell in the Great War 1914-1919 (the legal date).

James Smith & Sons' Umbrella Shop in New Oxford Street est. 1830, is a monument to the past, still selling Malacca canes, etc. but not dagger canes or swordsticks which are now illegal. Inside it is like returning to Victorian times with animal horns as decoration and a filing system of pull-out drawers.

The Chelsea Embankment protects Joseph Bazalgette's Victorian sewers and is lit by ornate lamps.

At each end of the Albert Bridge, a suspension bridge, is a notice to soldiers about to cross the bridge that they should break step before marching over the bridge.

Alan's enquiring eye gave us a real eye-opener of a talk – surely the majority of the audience, who were kept enraptured and amused, learnt more about these curiosities than they had known before. Perhaps some will venture forth in search of one or two.

Thank you Alan for a highlight evening.

Ann Broad.

Pictures from this talk can be seen at [www.curiosities.co.uk](http://www.curiosities.co.uk)

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## **Genealogy**

Sarah West is looking for information on the parents of four West brothers Aaron, Moses, Samuel and David from the period 1745 to about 1799. All of Tadley or nearby.

Sarah says that a descendent, Dr Charles West, was the founder of Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children.

More information will be found on the Genealogy page of our TADS Website.

## ***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. The Museum also hold workshops on assorted topics. *For information tel 0845 603 5635 or see <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/willis-museum.htm>*

One current exhibitions is 'Wildlife Photographer of the Year'. Ends 31 Oct.

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

September 17th - The Battle of Britain over Basingstoke by Dr John Smith, Archaeologist and Historian

October 15th - AGM & Down the Memory Line - Picture postcards of railway subjects, *John Hollands, Archivist and Historian, Friends of the Willis Museum*

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

8th October - 'From Waterloo to WW1 – The life of the common soldier'  
by Ian Williams – BAHS member

### **Hampshire Geneological Fair**

Sunday 11 October, 10am to 4pm at Everest Community Academy, Oxford Way, Basingstoke, RG24 9FP.

Family History societies, free talks, commercial stalls and much more. For more information see: <http://www.hgs-familyhistory.com/hampshire-family-history-open-day-2015/>

### **Silchester Summer Archaeological Excavations**

Professor Mike Fulford has been leading digs on Insula III and the iron age fort by the lake at Pond Farm. These are open to visitors 10-4.30 Monday to Friday with an Open Day on 13th Sept. to finish the season.

## **Heritage Open Days**

These are from Friday 11th to Sunday 13th September. The Silchester Parish Church of St Mary will be open on all three days . 10 to 3pm on Friday, 10 to 1pm on Saturday and 12 to 5pm on Sunday.

## **Bombs & Riots Basingstoke Walk**

Friday 2 October the Basingstoke Discovery Centre at 10am. £5 per person  
A wander around old Basingstoke looking at the effects of war and disturbance on the town. Meet at the Information Desk and please dress for the weather.  
To book a place, you can order online from <https://www.hants.gov.uk/shop/home.php> ,or visit Basingstoke Discovery Centre in Festival Place, or call 01256 478670. Advance booking is strongly recommended.

## **Tadley WEA Courses**

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October. A 7-week course begins on The City of London Livery Companies with tutor Val Pretlove.

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January. A 7-week course on the Age of Turmoil in the history of art. Tutor Glenis Kerr Elliott. The venue for both courses is The Ambrose Allen Centre, Franklin Avenue, Tadley, Hampshire, RG26 4ER Time: 9.45 – 11.45 am. Fee £56 70 (each course)

Bookings may be made either via the WEA website at [www.wea.org.uk/southern](http://www.wea.org.uk/southern) or by telephone on Freephone 0800 328 1060. For more information contact Jan Smith at [janesmith@btopenworld.com](mailto:janesmith@btopenworld.com) (Tel: 01189832251) or Mary Covers at [MaryCovers@aol.com](mailto:MaryCovers@aol.com) (Tel: 01189832995).

Information on the Basingstoke WEA courses can be found on the above website.

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## **AWE Digital Storybook**

The first volume of the digital story book can be seen on the website  
[www.awe.co.uk/storybook](http://www.awe.co.uk/storybook)

This is based on the stories which they received in response to the appeal earlier this year.

***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](mailto:tadshistory@googlemail.com)***