



February 2016

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

**Next meeting - Wednesday 17th February 2016
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30pm**

‘The Plague’

By Dr Tim Mason

(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.50)

Committee Notes

Annual Subscriptions of £12 per person are now due. If you are paying at the meeting will you please put your cheque or cash in an envelope bearing your name (envelopes will be provided at the meeting) . This will help the Treasurer recognise who has paid and get the receipts prepared for collection from the Treasurer's desk at the next meeting. Subs may also be sent to the address at the foot of page 6.

*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 16th March 2016
‘Flora Thompson - Beyond Candleford’
By John Owen-Smith

TADS Meeting 20th January 2016

The Mary Rose
by Alan Turton.

As always Alan kept the TADS audience spellbound with his talk about the history, past and present, of Henry VIII's flagship, the Mary Rose. When asked, there was but one person who had not yet visited the Mary Rose Museum in Portsmouth where the ship now resides on almost the exact spot where she was built in 1509.

Alan began giving talks about the Mary Rose in 1981 and is an Official Presenter for the Mary Rose Trust – one of a diminishing group he said. The Mary Rose was not on her maiden voyage when she sank, as many people believe, but was 35 years old and had been refurbished some years earlier. The now famous and only contemporary picture of the Mary Rose comes from the Anthony Roll, a list of the King's ships completed in 1546. It was Samuel Pepys who saved the Roll when it was about to be thrown away 150 years later. The picture gives a good idea of what the ship looked like, bristling with guns poking out through little 'windows' which were able to be introduced into ship design when ships were built with smooth planks placed edge-to-edge rather than overlapping clinker planks.

On becoming king, Henry VIII did not have many ships but he did have a healthy Treasury and, wishing to become a Renaissance Prince, he began building ships and the Mary Rose was one of the first. She was an incredibly successful ship, regarded rather like HMS Hood in early WW2, and serving in all of Henry's campaigns.

In 1545 Henry decided to have one last 'go' at the French and it was in the Battle of the Solent/Portsmouth on 19th July that the Mary Rose sank in a matter of minutes while Henry watched from Southsea Castle. The shouts of drowning sailors could be heard – sailors did not learn to swim! The soldiers on board could possibly swim but were weighed down by heavy equipment.

In one of a series of pictures showing Henry's battles, this battle is shown in detail and with great accuracy – all that can be seen of the Mary Rose is her masts. Many men on board were also hampered in their efforts to leave the ship by being unable to get over the netting which ran along the side of the ship. 700 Men were lost. The battle gradually petered out, the French deciding they were not going to win.

As the wreck was in only 40 ft. of water, William Paulet was put in charge of bringing up the Mary Rose. He brought in Venetians – the best divers then known – cables were attached to points of the ship – two ships would lift her out. They tried time after time but the Mary Rose was jammed in the London Clay mud and she was eventually given up for lost. She gradually disintegrated due to tides, ships' anchors and other items banging her until she became just part of history.

In the 1830s two brothers, John and Charles Deane invented breathing apparatus to use for entering burning buildings. By 1836 it had become the diving suit and metal helmet we recognise and had been used in marine salvage. The Deanes went down and found great fingers of timber and many other items. These were sold at auction, some to the Tower of London. This was so successful that the Navy decided to clear the Solent of wrecks. The Mary Rose was to be blown up but for some reason this was not done.

In the 1960s, Alexander McKee, who had been a diver in the Navy during WW2, asked a group of amateur divers from Southsea to join him on 'Project Solent Ships' to look for several known historic wrecks in the Solent. It was during this search that they found Tudor artefacts and were able to pinpoint the Mary Rose which they realised was worth excavating.

At first the clearing was done with a suction pump and hands but the water was very murky: more items appeared and they realised a lot of the ship was still there.

In 1979, The Mary Rose Trust was formed and the salvage ship Sleipner became the base from where diving operations were launched. Artefacts found were given a good wash on board the Sleipner. There were lots of wooden objects, a pepper mill still containing peppers from the officers' quarters but most important were the longbows as none survived anywhere else. Most have a pull of 120 lb. But one had a 180 lb. pull (probably used by feet). Robert Hardy, the actor, an expert on longbows, helped with the experiments. Seachests complete with contents were also found.

Timber out of the water shrinks, the smaller items could be taken out and placed in tanks where the seawater was replaced with a waxy substance. The

Mary Rose herself when raised had to be sprayed with the waxy substance for many years.

Alan showed a picture of a human flea recovered from the remains of one of the 160 different individuals found on the ship. One skeleton was chosen to be the 'unknown sailor' now buried in St. Paul's Cathedral.

To enable the Mary Rose to be raised, professional divers were employed to dig a tunnel underneath the ship. The ship's bell was found in the process but had no clapper – reason unknown.

The ship was lifted to the surface in 1982 after 437 years on the bottom by the massive crane barge Tog Mor and transferred to dry dock after several problems were overcome in the process. Once in dry dock she was sprayed with fresh water & polyethylene glycol to preserve her.

Artefacts:

Iron shot with H for Henry stamped on them.

Lead shot which were later found to be rusting – lead does not rust so they were x-rayed and were found to have a cube of iron inside (iron cheaper than lead perhaps?)

Clothes – imprint of archer's ribs found on the back of a 'jacket'.

Outer clothes had greasy handprints on the inside showing they had been worn inside out at times.

Sea chest with navigators pocket sundial, accurate to within about 10 minutes.

A brass navigational compass with a sliding lid like an old-fashioned pencil box and the earliest in the world.

Pewter chamber pot.

A plate from another ship, the Great Henry – but how and why Alan wondered.

Wood plates and a large tankard with a picture of a gun on it.

Backgammon board – dice (one dodgy – seems human nature hasn't changed).

Books.

Oldest string instrument with bow. A sharm or dulcimer – the only one left in the world.

A drum and pipes, shoes, boots and a knitted material called Skoggin.

A piece of red and yellow gingham cloth proving that gingham was made earlier than previously thought.

Barber surgeon's bowl, notched to fit under the chin.

A pot of alabaster complete with a thumb print.

Rolled bandages soaked in lanolin and now solid.
Large syringes used for flushing out wounds rather than injecting!
2,000 arrows for use with long bows but made of cheaper black poplar wood which breaks so arrows cannot be pulled out and reused against you.
Skeletons including one of a terrier type dog but no females or children.
From the skeleton of an archer it was found that his shoulder bones are different from ordinary men, having been trained as an archer from the age of 6 years.

There are many items still on the sea bed which is monitored as a protected wreck site.

The Mary Rose Museum closed in November 2015 to make it even more amazing by replacing the present viewing windows and 'wall' with glass and a walkway level with the decks to make viewing the ship an even more fantastic experience. It will re-open for the summer but Alan suggested it might be better to wait until autumn when the crowds will have, hopefully, lessened.

Thank you Alan for your interesting and fact-filled update on the Mary Rose.

Ann Broad

Programme Secretary / Secretaries

Regrettably the Society is once again in need of a Programme Secretary. The Society **will not function** in 2017 without a programme of talks.

If necessary the Committee considers that the job can be split in to 3 areas of responsibility:

1. Contact and book potential speakers for 2017 by telephone/email.
2. Prior to each monthly talk confirm with speaker that they are still able to fulfil engagement/ check equipment needs and report this to the committee
3. In the week following each talk write and thank the speaker.
(Filled)

If you are able to help please contact Carol or Richard.

What's on? Events which may be of interest

Milestones Museum. For coming events: Tel. 01256 477766 or see:
<http://hampshireculturaltrust.org.uk/milestones-museum>

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://hampshireculturaltrust.org.uk/venue-events/52>

Currently there are Jane Austen themed events.

In the next month there are several events themed on British Modern Art.

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

18th Feb. **The search for Alfred the Great** - Dr Katie Tucker

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

11th Feb. **The Battle of Agincourt** by Prof. Anne Curry of Southampton University

St Paul's Church was consecrated by the Bishop of Winchester on 2 April 1966 and will be celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. (TADS) is researching the history of the Church and will be presenting an exhibition display at this summer's St Paul's Fete on Saturday 23 July 2016.

TADS is looking for photographs and memories from the past 50 years. If you have any, please contact Carol, email: tadshistory.com; tel: 0118 970 1578

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