



March 2016

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

**Next meeting - Wednesday 16th March 2016
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30pm**

***'Flora Thompson -
beyond Candleford'***

By John Owen-Smith

(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.50)

Committee Notes

Annual Subscriptions - There are a number of people still to re-join. If you are one, please can you pay the treasurer at the next meeting or send your subscription of £12 per person to the address at the foot of page 6.

Programme Secretary - Please see item on 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 20th April 2016
‘The Great Exhibition of 1851’
By Rosina Brandham

TADS Meeting 17th February 2016

The Plague
By Dr Tim Mason

Microbiologist and lecturer in infectious disease, University of Portsmouth

Tim said there are three manifestations of the plague: Bubonic, Haemorrhagic; and Pneumonic. All are exceedingly nasty with high mortality, especially pneumonic which is 100% fatal.

Plagues have been around a long time. The bible records what was probably bubonic plague affecting the Philistines in 1050 BC, and there were repeated episodes of plague until modern times. The first pandemic (an epidemic with major spread) started in AD 541 and it lasted for about 160 years. The spread of disease requires large scale movement of goods and people. Contemporary descriptions are of bubonic plague and in Constantinople (Istanbul) it killed ‘several hundred thousand people’. The Venerable Bede records it ravaging Britain and Ireland.



Photo by Derek Heath

Next came the Great pestilence of 1330 which is believed to have started in Tibet on the Silk Road and spread to Europe in 1347-51. It reached England in 1348 where it is known as ‘the Black Death’ and spreading slowly killed at least 25% of the population. In some countries it was around 50%. There were no real remedies and once infected the mortality rate was 75%.

It returned again and again over the years – 1563-79; 1665 (the year before the Great Fire of London) and was last present in the United Kingdom in 1678. In 1665 the village of Eyam in Derbyshire was infected from cloth sent from London and to prevent further spread cut itself off from contact with the rest of the world.

Why did it go? Improved public health; improved housing; improved nutrition; colder weather; the Brown rat ousting the Black rat; all played a part,

but it hadn't actually gone. There was a Third Pandemic in 1855 which centred in China and India and over 50 years killed 12 million. Plague was recorded in Glasgow in 1900 but not with the terrible effect of earlier years. Alexandre Yersin and Kitasato Shibasaburo independently discovered the causal agent of the Third Pandemic, now called Yersinia pestis which is found in man and rats, but only the Black Rat carries the Oriental Rat flea which infests man when there is a shortage of rats. (The jury is still out on this being the only mechanism which spreads the plague). The plague is still with us in large parts of the Americas, Africa and Asia, but not in Europe. It can be found in wild animals. In 2007 an Arizona Park Ranger caught it from dissecting a dead cougar and died 3 days later. He was unfortunate as modern medicines can work if administered promptly, but there is still no one-shot vaccine against the plague. Tim also spoke about germ warfare which has a much longer history than you might expect. While it is theoretically banned by a 1972 Convention, terrorists and rogue states will not necessarily take much heed of that!

Thank you Tim for giving an audience of 50, a very interesting and enlightening talk in your very energetic manner.

Richard Brown

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>

Milestones once again has a Lego theme with 'Quest for the Brick Kingdom - LEGO® Challenge' on until 10th April.

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>

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*)

17th March. 'Corbett National Park in Northern India - Then and Now.' A film on the park which is home to one of the the largest tiger populations. Introduced by Bill Fergie

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

10th March. 'Silchester: Iron Age and Roman – 500 years of urban life'
Prof. Mike Fulford – University of Reading

14th April. 'Almanacs, astrology and popular medicine in early modern England'. Dr Louise Curth – Winchester University

St Paul's Church - TADS is still looking for photographs and memories from the past 50 years which may be of use for an exhibition display at this summer's St Paul's Fete on Saturday 23 July 2016.

If you have any, please contact Carol. Tel: 01189701578

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