



April 2016

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

**Next meeting - Wednesday 20th April 2016
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30pm**

'The Great Exhibition of 1851'

By Rosina Brandham

(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.50)

Committee Notes

Programme Secretary - We are very pleased that Jim West has volunteered to take on the role of organising the Programme. So TADS will continue.

Membership - it is still cheaper to become a member than pay as a visitor at each meeting.

*Comments, queries and suggestions to Richard Brown (0118) 9700100,
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www.tadshistory.com

TADS Meeting 18th May 2016
‘The Benedictine Way of Life’
By Reg Fletcher

TADS Meeting 16th March 2016

Flora Thompson – beyond Candleford
by John Owen-Smith

Scintillating speaker and author, John talked to us, with the spark and energy of a lively terrier, of sometime postal assistant, then postmistress and author, Flora Thompson (1878-1947). Flora was something of an enigma during her life. Still is.

Maybe at the turn of the 20th Century, life for a woman was more difficult and often subsumed by a picky publisher or a strict husband. Or both.

Possibly Flora's book 'Larkrise to Candleford' appeals to the gals because of the frock-fest and vulnerable children and the guys because of the bucolic, clay ruralness of the NE Oxfordshire/Northhamptonshire and Buckinghamshire borders. Candleford may be modelled on the Buckingham of the day.

Flora wasn't a particularly famous or prolific writer, only taking up writing in her sixties. John has wrenched out every detail and more through his tireless research of Flora. He's written a biography of her too.

The public has become more aware of Flora since 'Lark Rise to Candleford' was adapted for television, although the book was published in 1945.

It offered an interesting glimpse of this NE Oxfordshire area, with its mostly idyllic cereal farming, good country squire, village shop, post office and smithy, requited love, unrequited love and strange family ties, etc. This was where Flora's roots were, in sunshine, rain or snow, where neighbour helped neighbour amid rural poverty.

In her life and writing, Flora changed lots of personal details: names of villages, her siblings, even her own children – Winifred, born 1903; Henry born 1909 and Peter, born 1918.

A sign of the times, Flora (nee Timms), one of 12 children (sadly only 6 surviving) left school at between 12-14 years, with a basic education but a

good memory and flair for numbers and semi-autobiographical writing in later life.

Flora lived in Hampshire for over 30 years, longer than in Oxfordshire. So she's one of our own! She found the sand of the Surrey – Hampshire – W Sussex borders different from the clays of Oxfordshire. It was heathery heathland. She wrote her book 'Heatherley' because of this, finding this countryside and its '*dim, distant South Downs like sweet wine.....*'

John said Flora also wrote 'Still Glides the Stream' and 'Peverel Papers' while in Hampshire. In 1901 the family moved to Bournemouth (then still in Hampshire) and later to Yateley. Her 3 children were born when living in Liphook near Grayshott.

She worked for a trigger-happy post master who murdered his wife – he knifed her. Flora also knew sadness when her brother 'Edmund' died in WW1.

In 1927 the family ended up in Dartmouth, Devon, because of her husband's promotion.

O.U.P. (Oxford University Press) didn't know how to classify 'Lark Rise to Candleford' – fact or fiction. A bit of both they thought! Therefore the book is BOTH. So, energetic researcher that he is, John is also helping to promote

Flora Thompson and her works in the 21st Century, giving us an alternative to the literature of murder, mayhem and mass destruction.

Thank you John for an exhilarating and knowledgeable talk on a quiet lady.

Rosemary Bond.

Lolly Lambden - After a short illness Joyce 'Lolly' Lambden MBE, sadly passed away on 4th April. A wonderful lady who was well known and respected in Tadley and it's neighbouring communities. She will be fondly remembered as the Lollypop lady.

A Red Sports-car - Does anyone remember a red Austin 7 Grasshopper two seater car which was based in Franklin Avenue in 1957? In particular, do you know who owned it? We have had an enquiry from someone researching the history of these cars.

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 24th 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 events themed on Modern Art.

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

21st April 'The Secret Gardens of Hampshire' - Patrica Elkington of the Hampshire National Gardens (Yellowbook) Scheme.

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

14th April - 'Grub St. To Fleet Street, a history of English Newspapers to 1899'
By Bob Clarke (*This is a change to the published programme*).

12th May 'Rebuilding the past' - Luke Winter – Centre for Ancient Technology, Cranbourne.

Basingstoke Heritage Society

19th April - AGM followed by a 1974 Canadian film about the re-development of Basingstoke. 7.30pm at Church Cottage. Guests £2.

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