



July 2016

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

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

‘Children’s Experiences of the Second World War in Oxford’

By Liz Woolley

Committee Notes:

We would welcome additional people to join the Project Team, which is down to about 4 in number at the present time. There is no obligation to participate in all the ongoing projects, just the work that is of interest to you. Currently we are looking at publishing a book about Tadley and the two World Wars based on the last 2 to 3 years research and exhibition material.

*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 21st September 2016
‘The London Underground’
By Tony King

This talk is a change from the advertised programme

TADS Meeting 15th June 2016

**Birth of the English Parish Church – from Romans to
Normans.**
By Dr. Frances Hurd.

A joyfully enthusiastic and knowledgeable lady was Frances. Some of us tend to forget our ancient churches haven't been around FOR EVER.

Apparently our ancestors had terrifying problems to deal with – as depicted on stone carvings and paintings – fire, death, uncertainty etc. So they needed the hope of a supernatural being. Water helped. Behind St. Faith's Church, Havant, Hants, sprang a well – Home Well – springing originally from rain water percolating through the chalky South Downs. This wonderful well became a focal point for Early Christians worshipping outdoors, (Pagans worshipped in temples).

In Britain, Christianity is evident in Romano-British culture, as at Silchester, Hants, where St. Mary's was built inside the Roman Calleva Atrebatum wall. Both remain.

Christian monks went to the extreme corners of England to work, study, and pray, but they didn't have parishes and they didn't really preach.

In 595 AD, Roman Pope Gregory despatched Christian missionaries to convert the king of an area e.g. Kent. Convert the king and you've got the lot! In Northern England St. Wilfrid frequented Whitby, N. Yorks.: the Synod of Whitby. Frances said you didn't mess with Wilfrid..... he then travelled south to Selsey, West Sussex, and fixed us Southerners.....

In 695 AD, in Wessex, parents were fined if their children were not baptised. However, the Isle of Wight people were tardy and the last to conform. St. Thomas a Becket Church, Warblington, Havant, Hants, right by the sea, is next to fairly-recently discovered Roman ruins. (NB There are 2 anti-body-

snatcher huts in the churchyard to deter would-be 17th Century surgeons!)

There's also a brick-built castle within shouting distance....

When early churches were built for shelter – probably because of our unpredictable weather – they were not always recorded or documented. The 9th Century Saxon church near Petersfield, Hants, wasn't recorded till 1308.... Surprisingly, early churches didn't always face East, although it was known that Jerusalem was East.

Wooden churches were a bad build. They either burnt or rotted away: as at Greenshead, Chipping Ongar, Essex, so flint was incorporated. The churches had tiny slit windows, no pews, were barely lit, no heat and earthen floors. They were easy to defend, though.

The idea of tallow, animal fat candles was bad news: smelly and inefficient. Many priests weren't educated, they learnt stuff by rote. If his voice rose you crossed yourself!

Church walls were always painted and some murals, brownish-yellow vegetable dye creations, remain in whole or part (Silchester). As the murals often needed touching-up, layer upon layer can be detected. The Saxon murals at St. John the Baptist Church, Clayton, E. Sussex, are very well preserved, Frances said.

Early Christians had need of a saint or two, e.g. Elizabeth, mother of Mary, who was made of wood and carried around, often to trouble spots. St. Swithin (Bishop of Winchester) and St. Faith, (Homewell, Havant) were two more. Sadly the real St. Faith was martyred by the Romans because she wouldn't relinquish Christianity..... Female water spirits were often worshipped and then elevated to the sainthood.

New era. New broom. The invading Normans swept aside the large Saxon churches as waves on the seashore. Churches became influential on matters of birth, marriage and death – with a fee payable, of course. The South Door was the door of life; the North, of death.

At some stage burials were under the church floor. Latterly churchyards were used, with lots of ritual and processing. In Little Somborne, Hants, the deceased was wrapped in a re-usable shroud.

Ancient Christians had a thing about 'stillbirth'. These babies should have been buried on the 'bad' side away from the church and yard, but families often dealt with the matter secretly, at night, Frances said. She made sure still-born babies' bones were re-interred reverently when she was doing archaeological work in Cornwall. And no more was said..... Witches' bones were also a problem!

The Normans (1066 and all that) were ecclesiastically well-organised and they built some churches of clunch: a mixture of church rubble and flint.

In Idmiston, Wiltshire, the resident knight wanted the village and church incorporated, so he could extend his property portfolio...

Some churches were reduced to being cowsheds e.g. Eldon, Wilts, there being a big Viking presence in Northern England, the church carvings depicted this but it was very rare in the South.

Male or female hermits lived in cells built round them and attached to the church to assist their contemplative ascetic lifestyle. There's a very rare hermit cell attached to the 12th Century Little Somborne church and evidence that he/she was walled-in with food and drink supplied, plus a 'facilities' bucket..... And hermits died walled-in....

Churches, being used for all kinds of activities, needed frequent cleaning, - then as now.

A 'squint' meant passers-by could squint from the road, and say a prayer. Frances said 'field-walking' is the only reliable way to date a church because the trained eye can date shards of pottery, coins etc. She does it.

What an amazing practical historian Frances is. She showed us how churches have evolved.

Thank you so much, Frances.

Rosemary Bond.

Wartime Tadley

Do you, or someone you know, have any memories or photographs of what life was like in Tadley during World War II?

If so, TADS would be interested in hearing from you.

Tel: 0118 970 1578 or 0118 970 0100

✉: tadshistory@gmail.com

St Paul's Church Jubilee fete - on the Green, Tadley. Saturday 23rd July.

The fete is in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the church.

TADS will be exhibiting a new display about the churches of Tadley.

The Point, Tadley's new youth centre behind the Community Centre in New Church is now finished. The official opening will be in September.

Insula III Dig at Silchester.

Professor Mike Fulford is conducting a small dig on Insula III in the centre of the Roman town from 15th August to 2nd September, excluding Sundays 21st and 28th. As always visitors are very welcome.

He is looking for volunteers to help with the 'finds washing'. Ideally he would like volunteers to commit to a week (either all day or half days on site). For more information contact Emma Durham by email at:

emma.durham@reading.ac.uk

Mike is willing to give TADS a tour of the site if there is sufficient interest - Names to Carol at the TADS meeting on the 20th July or by other means

Ian Martin

Some of you may remember Ian who was a member of TADS for many years. We are sorry to report that he died recently after illness. Our sympathies to Pat and his family.

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>

19th July to 30th Oct. 'The Mystery of the Vanishing Queen'
This brand new, interactive experience is perfect for curious kids aged 7yrs+.

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 01256 465902 or see*
<http://hampshireculturaltrust.org.uk/venue-events/52>

Until 27th Aug. 'Capability Brown - Master of the Landscape'

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

21st July - 'Accident or Assassination - the mysterious death of King Rufus' by Gordon Lewis

Basingstoke Archaeological & History Society (7.30 at Church Cottage)

August - No meeting

The Mary Rose revealed

After six months of work, and weeks of testing all of the environmental systems, the Mary Rose Trust have announced that the Mary Rose Museum will be reopening on 20th July 2016.

***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***