



September 2016

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

**Next meeting - Wednesday 21st September 2016
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30pm**

'The London Underground'

By Tony King

(This talk is a change from the advertised programme)

Committee Notes:

We have been considering the question of the Annual Subscription. The current £12 has been unchanged for several years and is not providing enough income to cover the costs of running the meetings in the hall, which have steadily increased. The meetings are being subsidised from the money made from publications. Putting the fee up too much will discourage membership and make things worse. What is an acceptable increase? Your views would be welcome, please.

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

TADS Meeting 19th October 2016
‘Sanders of the River’
By Mike Hurst

TADS Meeting 20th July 2016

Children's Experiences
of the Second World War in Oxfordshire
By Liz Woolley

Shall we ever forget? Must we make an effort to never forget? All's fair in love and war. Not true. After the war to end all wars (WWI) conflict still snarls ominously on, and judging by the pictures we see of 21st Century traumas it's the children who suffer greatly.

Who STARTS wars, and in the name of what?

Liz talked to us and one could see many TADS' members empathising with what went on in WW2, and sadly, very much part of it, the conflict being in Britain (and elsewhere), 1939 -1945.

One can't say Oxfordshire was 'luckier' than the rest of Britain but it is said Hitler fancied the city of Oxford as his new capital because it wasn't bombed from here to hell and back as some of our other cities were. Maybe only 20 people were killed in Oxfordshire and 60 injured.

Many of the children of Oxfordshire were themselves evacuees from war-torn, blitzed and beaten-up London. The rural signposts were removed: it wouldn't work today because of Google maps etc. etc.

The fear and dubious excitement of a hoped-for short WW2 began on Sunday 3rd September, 1939, and soon people were pouring out of British cities into Oxfordshire and other counties.

Everyone helped with the war effort (or if they didn't, they kept quiet). Air raid shelters were built and new card games, etc. invented to amuse children while in them. Agricultural processes and manufacturing were improved and people and children repaired, recycled and cut waste.

As the war was IN Britain, children had to get used to amusing but smelly Mickey Mouse gas masks. (Adults, horses and dogs also had gas masks.)

Teachers in Oxford schools felt the disruption of air raids because children often over-slept the next morning. Who knows what the children thought about missing school.....?

Many of us can identify still with war noises: tanks trundling down roads, the uncertain drone of aircraft drizzling and moaning across once-peaceful skies: the uncertainty of being evacuated from your home and family to face unchecked foster parents – will they be kind, fair, tolerant, empathetic....? Will my Dad be safe as a POW (prisoner of war)? Mostly men fought and women and children were at home.

Shoring-up the war-effort, Liz reminded us that bombs and ammunition were often casually stored and stacked by roadsides. Couldn't do that now! Church bells were silenced; windows criss-crossed with sticky tape and blacked-out; iron railings turned into fighting machines; all fuel was short; sandbags were everywhere; concrete pill boxes sat like fat, white Christmas Puddings lined up along the River Thames – to hinder enemy progress if necessary. Some pill boxes remain now, as listed buildings..... lest we forget. Oxfordshire children took up gardening at home and school; helped farmers; went potato picking; collected wild rose hips for rose hip syrup rich in Vitamin C (now banned because too sweet!) Foxglove leaves were harvested for medical purposes (digitalis drug, etc.); playing fields were dug up to grow food; children picked-over crashed aircraft to recycle useful bits, sadly sometimes encountering gruesome sights, Liz said.

Sometimes children didn't see their parents for months on end. God parents were needed..... Air Raid Precaution wardens often delivered babies. Oxfordshire's children (and others) gave dancing displays for injured servicemen; they knitted balaclavas; saved paper; were police-runners on roller skates and did anything required of them.

Liz said there were 3 main waves of evacuees: September 1939; September 1940 and March 1944. Some Oxford Colleges put up evacuees, who were often terrified at being away from kith and kin and did all manner of anti-social things, from bed-wetting to stealing. As schools were crowded, two-tier teaching was introduced: am or pm.

Some children were sent abroad: Canada, Australia, New Zealand, S Africa, etc. and oh, what joy returned at the end of the war with colonial accents.

Liz also mentioned a charity she's involved with, in Woodstock: Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, and it has an exhibition and a permanent home for 2 regiments.

Her enthusiasm was palpable and she's obviously very knowledgeable.

Thanks, Liz for your story of Oxfordshire children.

Rosemary Bond.

Serjeant Leonard George Rampton - Official War Casualty?

When the TADS Project Group researched the history of the men named on the Tadley War Memorial, we did not find any record for Leonard Rampton on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) website. This was confirmed by them in answer to a specific enquiry.

From the information found, it was quite clear that Leonard Rampton had entered the regular Army as a fit young man in 1914?? and had been discharged as being 'no longer physically fit for war service' in December 1915 in the rank of Acting Serjeant. He died of ill health in February 1918 age 32 and it seemed clear that his Army service had destroyed his health.

He had been in the army during part of World War I and although all his service had been in the United Kingdom we still felt that there was a good case for him to be recorded as an official War Casualty.

Therefore we submitted a case to the CWGC supported by copies of documents we had found during our research, including his Medical Discharge Certificate and Death Certificate.

The CWGC staff submitted our case to the National Army Museum whose decision was:

'Despite the insight and conclusions offered by the Medical Board (1915) there is no reference to the condition that killed Corporal Rampton, tuberculosis of the kidney, anywhere within the report,' '--- thus limiting our ability to establish an authoritative link between his military service and his death. As a result, Corporal Rampton **does not qualify** for commemoration by the CWGC.'

So although not officially recognised as a war casualty, Leonard Rampton is recorded on at least two local war memorials.

Richard Brown

A **Local and Family History Day** is being held at the Basingstoke Discovery Centre (Library) on Saturday 1st October from 10am – 3pm. Entry is free.

Our own Peter McNulty is giving a talk on the 1939 Register at 11am. Dubbed 'The Wartime Domesday Book', the 1939 Register is the most comprehensive survey of the population of England and Wales ever taken.

A new book on bare-knuckle fighting in Berkshire

Mick Hill has written to us - 'I am about to have a new book published titled: Berkshire's Bareknuckle Battles 1777-1881. It contains about eighty local fights from this period, some in quite a bit of detail, some of just a few lines, with the fighters' previous ring records, birth year, birthplace and occupation and illustration of person (if known). It will be in paperback form in A5 with a content of approx.110 pages and priced at £6. It will be a limited local edition.'

If any one is interested in buying a copy we can put you in touch with Mick.

The Tull Family in the Tadley area in the 18th Century.

We have had a family history enquiry about the above family. The full details are on the TADS website along with other family history enquiries.

Tadley WEA Autumn Course

Paddington – the Village, the Station, the Basin, Little Venice, Regent's Canal - Course ID: C3740058

Tutor: Val Pretlove

Start: Friday, October 7th, 2016 for 7 weeks. Time : 9.45am – 11.45am

Fee: £57.40

Paddington was once a small village west of London. With the construction of the station, the basin and the Regent's Canal the area changed dramatically and we will explore the impact of these events. Our study of the canal will focus on the areas of London that it passes through between Paddington and Limehouse where it enters the Thames. Venue: The Ambrose Allen Centre Franklin Avenue, Tadley RG26 4ER

Contact: Jan Smith – jancsmith@btopenworld.com - 01189 832251
or Mary Covers – MaryCovers@aol.com – 01189 832995

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>

3rd Sept to 29th Oct. - 'Births, Battles and Beheadings'. This exhibition looks at the story of royalty as reflected in Hampshire, from the time of the Late Iron Age kings to the dark days of the English Civil War.

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

20th October - 'Reading's Abbey Quarter' – Its place in the making of a town by John Mullaney, local historian and writer.

Basingstoke Archaeological & History Society (7.30 at Church Cottage)

13th October - 'The Avebury Waterscape' by Steve Marshall – Independent archaeological researcher and writer.

Tadley Celebratories

I hesitate to use the word celebratory with all its current connotations, but the Project Group are writing short profiles of people who have Tadley connections and are publishing them in a new section on the TADS website. Some of them such as Ruth Ellis are well known but others will be a surprise e.g. Herbert Harlakenden Gilchrist, artist and author.

The Editor

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