



December 2016

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

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

***'Annual General
Meeting and social
evening'***

For more information please see Page 5.

Catering at the Social.

As usual drinks will be provided and members are asked to bring a contribution to the food, both savoury and sweet.

Assistance with clearing up and cleaning crockery, etc. will be much appreciated

*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 18th January 2017

‘Gilbert White, the Gardener’

By David Standing

TADS Meeting 16th November 2016

The Death of King Rufus by Gordon Lewis.

Killing, clubbing (the stick sort!), culling and coveting..... It was all the rage in the 11th Century and William II, Rufus ('red'), the third son of William the Conqueror was probably guilty of all the above, plus bawdy, drunken behaviour and merrymaking.

To the monks who chronicled the time, he was lecherous, un-Godly, blasphemous, didn't appoint new bishops and abbots so he could use Church funds for his own use. And, he may have been gay: there was no legitimate heir, anyway.

Rufus was infamously shot through the chest or the back by an arrow, as he and his entourage hunted in the New Forest.

Who dunnit?

Nothing has ever been proved, but there were at least five suspects, New Forest dweller, Gordon said.

In 1066 England had THREE kings in quick succession: Edward the Confessor, a good compassionate you've-never-had-it-so-good peaceful king. When he died, weak, unpopular Harold Godwin, of arrow-in-the-eye fame reigned. Harold, having travelled up North to drive away invading Vikings, the Normans ('North Men' i.e. more Vikings) invaded in the Hastings – Battle area of East Sussex in the South. So Harold wearily went South again, and the rest is the 1066-And-All-That history date which almost everyone has heard of. On King Harold's death the third king of the year, William Duke of Normandy became William I of Bayeux-Tapestry fame.



He made quite an impact on our country trying to organise us, especially with the 1086 Domesday Book: which was the first survey of England's who? what? why? and the value of our goods and chattels.....

William the Conqueror wanted hunting lands near to the South Coast with easy access back to France if necessary.

He died unexpectedly in 1087 and wasn't buried quickly enough, became bloated, exploded and was 'poured' into his tomb, Gordon said, with quiet delight!

It's said William II (Rufus) despatched his 2 older brothers: with bribery (Robert, 1054-1134) or death (Richard, 1055-1081).

There are fanciful and superstitious theories surrounding William Rufus' death in the 13th year of reign, on a fateful August day.

There were several fletcher businesses (arrowsmiths) in the New Forest and one finely-made arrow knocked Rufus from his horse. He was abandoned where he fell..... A New Forest charcoal burner named Purkis, from Cadnam, happened by and discovered a body, still bleeding badly. Conscious? In a coma? NOT dead!

Purkis noticed the body was wearing a coronet, so he dragged the King onto his cart and made off to Romsey Abbey leaving a trail of blood. Royalty could be buried in an abbey or a cathedral. The Abbess Christina didn't like Rufus because he'd tried to court her niece, Matilda, so she shooed Purkis away and on to Winchester!

When Purkis plus cart arrived, Rufus was buried under the central tower. One year later the tower collapsed: a punishment by God for allowing the ungodly Rufus to be buried there, it was said.

No account was taken of the fact that the cathedral is built on the soggy, boggy bits of land by the River Itchen!

So who dunnit? Who loosed the fatal arrow at William Rufus? Was it a Norman lord, Sir Walter Tirel who was an excellent shot and who then fled back to France? Was it William de Breteuil? Was it Robert Fitzhamon, Prince of Wales, who lived in Cardiff Castle? He'd had a dream about these events but had told no one.

Was it Rufus' 4th brother, Henry Beauclerk? He immediately claimed the English throne and was crowned on 5th August 1100. This was only 3 days after the mysterious death of Rufus..... Henry became Henry I and reigned from 1100-1135. Incidentally, there are still lots of Purkises in the New Forest, Gordon said.....

William Rufus is remembered because of the Rufus Stone near Cadnam, where he fell. It's not a stone anymore because souvenir hunters pinched bits – it's now a cast iron memorial.

There's a Sir Walter Trel pub nearby, and King Rufus pub at Eling, Hampshire.

The late Lord Montagu of Beaulieu tried to claim Rufus was killed on his estate – good for business!

However, William Rufus is remembered as he built Westminster Hall in London, which is still used today for ceremonial occasions. Quite sinisterly, it's said that each 2nd August, at dusk, a trail of blood trickles from the Rufus Stone area towards Winchester Cathedral.... So said Gordon, in his very well researched and tantalisingly delivered tale of poor old Rufus. Gripping stuff.

Thank you Gordon, for your yarn and you also mentioned that your erudite, historian son said you are the 26th great, great, etc. grandson of Henry I.... But then, so may WE also be his descendants!

Rosemary Bond.

P.S. It's alleged that Henry's remains were interred somewhere near the River Kennet at Reading. If the Readingensians find them, they may try for the 'Richard III status' of Leicester.

(They are actively looking him in the remains of Reading Abbey – Ed)



The Rufus Stone - both pictures by Derek Heath

AGM Agenda

- 1.00 Apologies
- 2.00 Minutes of 2014 Annual General Meeting
- 3.00 Matters arising
- 4.00 Chairman's report
- 5.00 Treasurer's report
- 6.00 TADS constitution
- 7.00 Project Group report
- 8.00 Programme 2017
- 9.00 Election of officers
- 10.00 Any other business
- 11.00 Date of next meeting

*(That looks enough to put anyone off but we do need a **quorum** of 30% of the paid up members, which this year equates to **17 people**).*

The papers for the AGM will be emailed separately from this newsletter. They are: Agenda; Income and expenditure account; Minutes of last meeting.

Annual Subscriptions of **£17 per person** are now due. If you are paying at the Annual General Meeting will you please put your cheque or cash in an envelope bearing your name (envelopes provided at the meeting) . This will help the Treasurer recognise who has paid and get the receipts prepared. New members please give details, including Phone No. and email address. Subs may also be sent via Carol (See bottom of Page 6 for address.)

2017 Programme cards will be available at the AGM. I think Jim West has done a very good job with lots of potentially interesting talks. He is willing to do the 2018 programme and will be interested if you have ideas for talks.

I have been asked to record the passing of Angela Johns, also known as Angela Humphries who was for several years a member of TADS. She died in October.

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>

There will be a traditional Father Christmas Grotto each weekend in December.

On Sun 18 Dec. 12 noon, 2pm and 3pm. Weds 21 Dec 11.30am, 2pm and 3pm

Tues 27 Dec 11.30am, 2pm and 3pm Sat 31 Dec 12noon, 2pm & 3pm

Scroggit - Milestones version of 'A Christmas Carol' (with apologies to Mr Charles Dickens) - Admission included in normal ticket.

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 14th Jan. **Alice in Wonderland** - A touring exhibition from the British Library, Alice in Wonderland draws together an astonishing array of material from the original manuscript to computer games. However, the undoubted star of the show is a very special object - Alice's real-life looking glass.

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

15th Dec Members Party and AGM.

No Meeting in January

Basingstoke Archaeological & History Society (7.30 at Church Cottage)

12th Jan. 'Hampshire; PAS Recent Finds' Katie Hinds – Finds Liaison Officer for Hampshire.

*The Committee send you our Best Wishes for
Christmas and the New Year.*

**TADS annual membership is £17 per person.
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