



**March 2017**

**Tadley and District History Society  
(TADS) - [www.tadshistory.com](http://www.tadshistory.com)**

**Next meeting - Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2017  
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30pm**

# ***'History minus the boring bits'***

***By Susan Howe***

*(Everybody welcome - Visitors £3.00)*

## **Archaeology in Pamber Forest**

A series of six or more previously unknown prehistoric monuments have been discovered in part of Pamber Forest following a Lidar aerial survey. Reading University who initiated the survey are hoping to start an archaeological investigation in the near future. The work is part of the university's Silchester Environs project, which is looking to examine the landscape around the Late Iron Age and Roman town of Calleva Atrebatum in Silchester.

*Comments, queries and suggestions to Richard Brown (0118) 9700100,  
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**[www.tadshistory.com](http://www.tadshistory.com)**

**TADS Meeting 19<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

**‘ Englishness - a look at traditions  
and how they started’**

*by Chris Hutchinson*

**TADS Meeting 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

**Tree rings – a time and a place**

**by Dr. Andy Moir**

“What is dendrochronology?” asked Andy as a start to his enthusiastic talk,

Dendro = tree  
chrono = time  
ology = the study of

Andy runs a service for the dating of old timbers using dendrochronology. The dating of trees by counting the rings of growth was something pioneered in the 1920s, and is now used for the dating of old buildings. (Radio carbon dating arrived in the 1960s, although not many people were aware of it, and can be used to confirm results, but is not as accurate).

It is not just a matter of counting the number of rings, events and weather affect the tree’s growth and hence the width of the rings. Thus for any period of time a specific pattern of tree growth will occur and charts of recorded ring widths can be matched one against another. If an overlap of 50 years can be found it is possible to get further and further back in time. There are now reliable tree ring charts dating timber to 3,000 BC compiled from using samples found in the Somerset Levels and bog oaks.

To get an exact date for the felling of a tree, the presence of the bark on the outer edge is critical. For approximately 1 inch on the outer edge of the tree, inside the bark, is the sapwood. It will make dating more difficult if this has come away. Precise felling dates are only possible if this is recovered.

In this country the wood of two main trees, oak and pine are found in buildings. Not all old buildings were made of oak but others woods such as

elm and willow would not have survived as well. Oak was primarily used until 1700 when it became necessary to import pine.

There are many problems in dating buildings and the number of rings and the species of tree are more important than the size of the timbers which must have 50+ rings. Dating should never be taken on only one piece of evidence. Oak makes it easiest. Sampling is done by coring. Coring is the 'keyhole surgery' of dating.

English oaks can live for 400 years if left alone but trees like management said Andy. Yew trees can live for over 1,000 years but after 300 years they become hollow so cannot be dated. The real champions are the Bristlecone pine trees in the U.S.A. which can live for 7,000 years, if not chopped down.

Tree ring dating can give the date the tree was felled. Oak timber is easy to work when it is green so the date of a piece of timber in an old building would probably mean the building was built a year or two later.

Andy informed us that 400 buildings per year were now being tree ring dated and put onto a database. In 2009, 191 buildings in Hampshire had been done but elsewhere there were very few dated buildings. By 2014 England had 2,449 buildings dated and Hampshire is one of the leading counties for the number done. Dating should be encouraged but it costs from about £680 to have a cottage done.

It is also possible to accurately date timber-framed buildings by looking at the stylistic features and at the end of his talk Andy gave us a chart showing features and dates.\* He 'tested' us on a few buildings he showed on the screen. The answers from the audience proved that some of us were very successful in dating the buildings.

*In answer to a question, Andy stated definitively that old ships timbers were never used in buildings, although it may be that some timbers which were going to be used in ships and were not needed, may have found their way into buildings near the coast/dockyards.*

We would like to thank Andy Moir for his fascinating talk which apart from being informative and interesting, was very technical.

Ann Broad  
(assisted by the Editor)

All buildings dated by Andy along with stylistic features can be found at [www.buildingarcheology.com](http://www.buildingarcheology.com)

*\*Carol has some spare copies of the 'Stylistic features' chart if you did not get one.*

## ***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>

7 Feb – 23 April ‘**Around the World Brick Adventure**’ - Stop the plot to steal the Crown Jewels in our live action LEGO® challenge

**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>

1st to 22nd April - ‘**Home and Away**’, an exhibition of the paintings of Vivienne Taylor Ballson

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

20th April - **The Archaeology of Warfare** by Dave Allen the Hampshire Cultural Trust’s Curator of Hampshire Archaeology.

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

13th April ‘**Almanacs, astrology and popular medicine in early modern England**’ by Professor Louise Curth – Winchester University.

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### **Jim Saunders**

Jim who lived on Mulford’s Hill just below the Salvation Army Hall, died in early March, at the age of 90. He was Tadley born and bred.

***TADS annual membership is £17 per person.  
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