



**December 2018**

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

**Next meeting - Wednesday 12th December 2018  
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30pm**

# **‘Annual General Meeting & Social’**

**Please see note on 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.

**Membership fee** - The committee have decided that the membership fee will remain at £18 per person. The Treasurer will take cheques or cash.

**2019 Programme** - Jim West has arranged another very interesting programme for the coming year. Programme cards will be available at the AGM as usual.

*Comments, queries and suggestions to Richard Brown (0118) 9700100,  
e-mail: [richard@ilexind.plus.com](mailto:richard@ilexind.plus.com) or Carol Stevens (0118) 9701578*

**[www.tadshistory.com](http://www.tadshistory.com)**

**TADS Meeting 16th January 2019**

**‘Top of the Greasy Pole -  
British Prime Ministers’**

By Mike Brook

**TADS Meeting 21<sup>st</sup> November 2018**

**Daily Life in Ancient Egypt  
and the Tomb of Kha and his wife Merit.**

By John Billman,  
Chairman, Thames Valley Ancient Egypt Society.

John has Egyptian sand (or maybe River Nile water) in his blood. How on earth can one know so much of life countless millennia ago. (NB. Hieroglyphs were deciphered in 1822, assisted by the famous Rosetta Stone). Not content with knowing so much about his subject he digs in Luxor annually. Remember 'Egypt is the Nile and the Nile is Egypt...' Egypt's been unified for 3,500 years to Britain's pitiful 1,000 years approximately. Daily life in the 1,400 BC 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and until the time of the infamous Cleopatra, is surprisingly well documented. Weddings were out but divorce was in. Having NO children was a massive problem.... The more progeny the better. Most chaps had one wife at a time, but pharaohs could dally with several. Your eldest son was the light of your life, and did lots for you in this life and prepared you for the afterlife. The Egyptians even knew about the link between urine testing and pregnancy.... wheat sprouting for a boy, barley sprouting for a girl. No sprouting, NO baby. Childbirth was difficult. You lived or died, and most women died in their thirties with men living longer. Women had birthing stools; family heirloom birthing 'tusks' shaped like boomerangs; and confinement rooms. The medical hieroglyphs confirmed child bearing was risky, but John said blue hair gave 'divine protection' to mother and baby. Kha's and Merit's tomb revealed much – Kha had designed it differently from usual to deter would-be-grave robbers. Children had toys and a 6.5 cm toy

horse is now in the British Museum – it's probably of Roman origin. Also, a mud-made hippo and wooden toys. Literacy was the exception at 1% and schools and temples were for pharaohs' families only. The wheel was around but was somewhat impractical in sandy, irrigated Egypt.... Water transport was used instead.

John gave us an indication of the many trades in this civilised society: scribes; smiths; adze-wielding carpenters; 'mobile' street-to-street barbers; reed cutters plagued by mosquitoes; potters also grubbed like pigs to obtain clay; busy, busy gardeners, also in charge of irrigation channels; wailing, complaining farmers; miserable, whining weavers; couriers who delivered your stuff but adhered to the superstition that you MUST stay and live and die in the deserts of Egypt; the miserable washerwomen who had to watch out for crocodiles..... Many of these 'trades images' were seen in the fresco-painted walls, especially in the township of Deir el-Medina and its 'state-owned housing' on the West Bank of the River Nile near Thebes.

The parts of Deir el-Medina constructed of mud haven't survived well, but it's known that the houses had small, multi-rooms, and of course the Arabs slept on the open roof spaces. The daytime summer temperature can be 47 degrees C and even 32 degrees C at night. There are 3 meteorological seasons: flood, growing and harvest. John says when he goes a-digging he has air-conditioned accommodation!

Deir el-Medina's strong walls were white-washed with added frescoes but some walls sported hangings. The frescoes revealed deity-tattooed scantily-clad dancers. Some of these houses had built-in tombs ready for the after-life. The big, bold pyramids said rob-me-here-and-now (which happened!) but Kha's and Merit's sarcophagi and funerary gear were safe. Their tomb was discovered in 1905 by an Italian, Scaparelli, who treated it reverently. Merit may have died before her husband (possibly in childbirth). Their tomb contained pictures of dancers and musicians, boxes of clothes, food, drink, nuts and reed matting etc. walking sticks, a loo seat, decorated chests containing bronze vessels for cooking storage and wine, tools, writing and games boards to 'release the spirit', human hair wigs for 'official duties' plus wig boxes, a cosmetic box, kohl to reduce the sun's glare, combs, sandals, a loin cloth and a DIY Book of the Dead! The black coffins screamed out divinity, wealth – and we know all this because of x-rays.

Ordinary workmen would have been interred in the desert sand. Age wasn't important and it wasn't recorded.

Are there any more undiscovered tombs there? John believes there are. That's why he returns to Luxor annually.

Thank you so much, John, for your seriously erudite illustrated lecture. It was amazing.

Rosemary Bond

For information on the Thames Valley Ancient Egypt Society see  
[www.tvaes.org.uk](http://www.tvaes.org.uk)

N.B. In mid-November 2018 the finding of another undisturbed 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty tomb in Luxor was announced.

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## More Egyptology

As John Billman mentioned at the end of his talk, he will be running a one day course for Basingstoke WEA on Saturday, 26 January 2019 at the Willis Museum & Sainsbury Gallery, Market Place, Basingstoke from 10:15 - 15:30 with a short lunch break.

The title is: **A Virtual Tour of Egypt** - the Valley of the Kings and other iconic Egyptian sites.

The cost is £35. Book by email [basinstoke@wea.org.uk](mailto:basinstoke@wea.org.uk) or telephone the Booking line: 0800 328 1060. I would think places are limited.

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## Book

TADS new book **'In Grateful Remembrance -Tadley War Memorial'** has been very well received and we have sold about 150 copies. It will be on sale at the TADS AGM, price £10.

It is also available from Carol or Richard (see foot of page 1) and from Profile Print and Copy in Bishopswood shops.

## **The future of TADS**

In the last newsletter, I said that all the existing Committee members were willing to stand for another year. But it may be no more than for a year. The majority of us have been on the committee for many years and we are all now in our very late 60s or 70s. In addition, Jim West who has been organising the talks programmes is shortly moving away from the Tadley area. In the past we have had repeated problems in finding someone to take on that role.

Unless there are some new younger people willing to take over, it looks like the end is nigh.

It is a subject which will have to be discussed at the AGM. - RB

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**THE COMMITTEE WISH YOU ALL A VERY HAPPY  
CHRISTMAS AND A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR**



## **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>

*Most of the Christmas events are nearly over, but the museum is always interesting and warm.*

**Willis Museum** - The museum is running an ever changing series of special exhibitions in the Sainsbury Gallery. The Museum also holds workshops on assorted topics. *For information tel. 01256 465902 or see*  
<http://hampshireculturaltrust.org.uk/venue-events/52>

6 Oct - 18 Dec '**Marvellous Mechanicals**' An exhibition for all ages, which features modern automata, or mechanical sculptures, with clever mechanisms and often humorous ideas.

From 15 Dec. **Happy, Sneezzy, Grumpy?** Inspired by this year's Anvil Arts Pantomime; Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, drop-in and make a hat inspired by the seven dwarfs. No need to book, just drop-in, but children must be accompanied by an adult. Cost: £2 per kit.

**Friends of the Willis Museum** (7.30 pm at the museum - Non-members £2, booking essential through the museum telephone number 01256 465902)

The next meeting is their AGM - members only

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

13 Dec. '**On the Ocean**' Prof. Sir Barry Cunliffe – Emeritus Professor, University of Oxford.

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***TADS annual membership is £18 per person.  
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