



**February 2019**

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

**Next meeting - Wednesday 20th February 2019  
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30pm**

**'Coaches & Coachhorns:  
Their story from the Golden  
Age to the Present Day'**

**By Colin Pawson**

*(Everybody welcome - visitors £3.00)*

***N.B. This is a change from the advertised programme***

**Membership fees** - These are now due. The fee remains at £18 per person. The Treasurer will take cheques or cash at the coming meeting or payment may be sent via Carol Stevens at 5 Church Road, Pamber Heath, RG26 3DP.

*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 20th March 2019

### ‘The Mysteries of Stonehenge’

By Graham Loxton-Best

## TADS Meeting 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019

### Top of the Greasy Pole.

Anecdotes about those odd men (and women) who have, over the centuries, served as Prime Minister.

By **Mike Brook.**

*NB. The (date) denotes when a Prime Minister was elected.*

Mike: actor, raconteur, history graduate and wit, regaled us with tit-bits of our maybe – erudite Prime Ministers..... Benjamin Disraeli (1868 and 1874) coined the title phrase because it's a tricky job. However, perhaps the UK's slippery pole is not as slippery as some really UNSTABLE countries!

January, 2019's TADS meeting was quite horrendously topical considering the current Brexit shenanigans in Parliament. And it's still on-going.....

Wot ho! So Prime Ministers are human if not divine. Fancy, Prime Ministers have only been with us nearly 300 years. In April 1721 our Hanoverian King George I didn't understand WHAT was going on because he couldn't speak English – hence the appointment of Sir Robert Walpole (1721) who was bilingual German – English, and sensible. Walpole was a Norfolk man and had a thing about Norfolk apples. He took them everywhere.

Maybe foreigners see us with a stiff upper lip, but some of our PMs have certainly had some quirky ideas and/or have been cerebrally challenged.

George III's reign saw 10 Prime Ministers. The unpopular Earl of Bute (1762) being just one of them, disguising himself frequently AND having 'an ugly wife and daughter'. He remarked that there were a lot of ugly ladies around, according to Prime Minister Lord North, (1770).

The Duke of Wellington was a Prime Minister twice, (1828) and (1834) but was more skilled at soldiering, even his Mum thought he 'wasn't a smart man'.

Apparently he occasionally shot at all and sundry. Accidentally, that is. Being a bit light fingered and forgetting a lady's birthday present he stole one of her ornaments to give her. But she noticed!

Possibly our greatest 20<sup>th</sup> Century PM was Sir Winston Churchill who was in the army and politics a very long time (PM 1940 and 1951). Some 20<sup>th</sup> Century teenagers apparently think 'bulldog' Churchill is a DOG in a TV Commercial! However at the end of WW2 he was at an American/English reception at Buckingham Palace when a Yank visitor stole a gold spoon as a souvenir. What to do if all the Yanks stole just one gold spoon? On being alerted to the problem, Churchill put one spoon in his breast pocket, said to the miscreant "We've been rumbled, better put the two spoons back". So, Churchill could be diplomatic, although he's said to have had a very high opinion of himself, but thankfully his wife, Clementine, often tweaked his speeches for him.... Winston was not kind, gentle, could be outrageous and muddled and King George VI didn't like him at first. Luckily it all ended well with the two men.

Mike said Margaret Thatcher (1979) our first woman P.M. was 'too busy.' She didn't size up the situation. Tony Blair (1997) 'hit the ground running' and he also should have been more thoughtful. You need to be up-to-date and 'streetwise' but not to adopt the whims of too many showbiz people.... Harold Wilson (1964 and 1974) was very technologically bright and clever and liked to be seen to have the 'common touch'. Sir Alec Douglas-Home (1963) loved his grouse moor. Poor Parliamentarian, George Brown, always the bridesmaid never the bride, resented Harold Wilson, saying he was 'too big for his boots'. Brown then hit the bottle, badly. Harold Wilson was allegedly a very bad driver so he had to have a chauffeur. Ted Heath (1970) also had a police panda car escort, who one day 'protected' singer Englebert Humperdinck instead of Prime Minister Heath. David Lloyd-George (1916) when his car broke down one day, decided to walk and mistakenly ended up in a lunatic asylum – temporarily.

Writer and wit, P.G. Wodehouse knew that Churchill's opponent Clement Attlee (1945) was shy, and unkindly noted there was 'less to him than meets the eye....' unless the subject was cricket or bishops. It's said Attlee (quietly) invented pub quizzes which may have been published by Harold Macmillan's (1957) publishing company.

Perhaps alcohol soothed/inspired/relaxed Prime Ministers. Mrs. Thatcher (1979) liked whisky; Churchill, all alcohol and lots of it; and when PM John Major (1990) took Russian vodka-swilling Boris Yeltsin to a pub out-of-hours, the landlady said "If you're the Prime Minister I'm the Queen of England".....

Mike said many politicians have 'normalised' themselves by marrying quickly if single: Gordon Brown, (2007), William Haig, Dr. Liam Fox, etc.

When you acknowledge our political history and compare it with some volatile countries, it's been relatively trouble free. So far, only one PM has been assassinated: Spencer Percival (1812). The slippery pole of politics can certainly change the course of history.

So, thank you, Mike, for laughingly reminding us how relatively relaxed our PMs are as they negotiate the slippery pole of power.

Rosemary Bond.

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***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>

16th Feb - 28th April '**Brickropolis** and the Attack of the Mighty Monsters'  
Another Lego event for children. *Extra fees may apply.*

**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>

Until 20 Mar '**The Sunday Times Watercolour Competition**' Exhibition.

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

21<sup>st</sup> Feb. '**The refurbishment of Whitchurch Silk Mill**' By Derek Cooper

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

14 Mar '**A History of Alresford**' by Don Bryan of the Hampshire Field Club

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