

Tadley and District History Society projectnews

FREE

issue
11

Hospital Sunday, May 1922 – outside *The Fox and Hounds* public house, Mulford's Hill, Tadley

Issue eleven

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Comments and/or articles for possible inclusion in future issues of projectnews are welcome – please contact Carol Stevens; telephone: 0118 970 1578; email: DGWard@bigfoot.com.

Copy date for the next issue of projectnews is 18 April 2007.

About TADS

Tadley and District History Society (TADS) was founded in 1984 for people with an interest in local social history, and in the broader scope of history and natural history. Monthly evening talks are held on the third Wednesday of each month, except August, at 8.00pm in St Paul's Church Hall, Tadley. These meetings are open to visitors.

TADS is a member of Hampshire Archives Trust and The British Association for Local History.

Early in November the TADS website was not accessible for a while. We apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused, but are confident the problem has been solved. If you enjoy the feature article in this issue you can read more on the 'Tadley memories' page of the web site. We are also gradually transferring the highly popular '100 Years Ago' listing from *projectnews* onto the site; we have started with 1902. Without the restriction of having only one page in *projectnews* we have been able to include far more entries. When all the listings have been transferred it will form a significant picture of life in the local area all those years ago.

The decision to put the 'unknown' local house on the cover of the TADS 2007 calendar has proved interesting. We are now almost certain that it is not 'Hill House/Farm' (also recorded as Tadley Hill Farm in the 1891 census), The Green, which was suggested by several people. The comment 'It looks familiar' has, however, still not proved fruitful. Any additional information welcome.

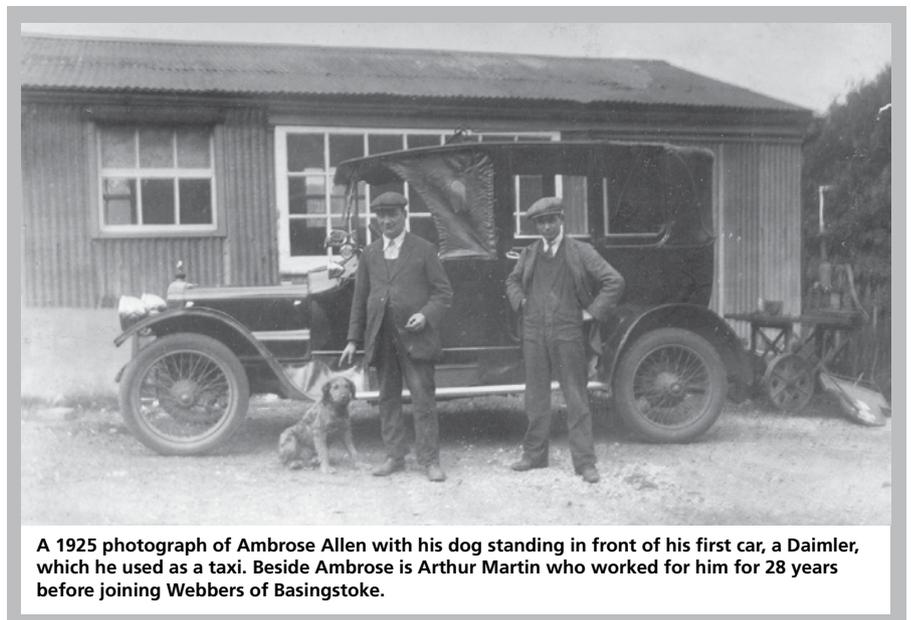
Memories of 1940s Tadley schooldays

Brian Gooch was a pupil at Tadley School between the age of 8 and 14, from 1940/1 to 1948. On leaving school he worked as a farm labourer for a while before becoming an apprentice with Marks Butchers. A butcher for 32 years, when he retired his shop in New Road became the Morland Surgery.

Tadley Village

In the 1940s Tadley village looked very different from what it does today. The main road through the village was tarmacked but many of the side roads were merely gravel tracks – eg Franklin Avenue, Mount Pleasant etc.

'Allen's Garage' (on the site of the present 'Allens Car Sales'), was owned by Ambrose Allen, a local character. A corrugated iron building with a wooden floor and inspection pit, it was a general garage servicing vehicles and repairing bikes. During the war it was one of the few local garages in the area that had access to petrol, which was strictly rationed. Next door to the garage, just along Fairlawn Road, there was the Thames Valley Bus Company's depot. Buses from Reading would wait there before making the return journey back to town.



A 1925 photograph of Ambrose Allen with his dog standing in front of his first car, a Daimler, which he used as a taxi. Beside Ambrose is Arthur Martin who worked for him for 28 years before joining Webbers of Basingstoke.

On the opposite side of the main road was the Post Office, run by Tom Stacey and his sister Mrs Evans. As well as being the Post Office it was also a greengrocers and fish shop. Tom used to fry fish and chips there on a Saturday evening. Further along on the same side of the road, on the corner of The Green and Tadley Hill, was 'Thicks Bakery' where home baked bread was sold.

On the left-hand side, going up Mulford's Hill, Ted Hutchins ran a small general store and bike repair business (now 'Tadley Instruments'). He also charged accumulators (6d a charge, equivalent to about 3p today). Many houses did not have electricity and used paraffin for lamps. An accumulator was used to power the wireless (radio). Similar to a car battery, one charge would power a wireless for about two weeks. Brian remembers being at home in Baughurst one evening listening to the wireless when 'Lord Haw Haw' (William Joyce – executed as a traitor in 1946) came on and said, 'We know you have an airfield at Aldermaston'.

The area around The Green was also very different. Next to the school was the corrugated iron mission hall of St Saviours where the children went from school for medical checks. Beyond the hall was the farm of Mr Stacey and further along Mr Ward's bungalow and coal depot. Gravelly Close was a field, as was much of the rest of the land around the Green. Brian walked home from school across the fields now occupied by the New Road development.

This was also the time of the black-out. If you went out at night you needed a torch – there was no street-lighting and many road signs were removed for wartime security purposes.

Tadley School

There were about 200 children at Tadley School divided into 5 or 6 classes of

at least 40 pupils each. The school at the time only consisted of the original 1876 buildings. Children attended from 5 through until 14 years of age. The majority would leave and go straight into work, either locally or in Basingstoke, but a few continued their education beyond 14, going to either Queen Mary's or Fairfields School in Basingstoke.

The Staff

The Headmaster at the school when Brian first went there was Mr Miller – 'Wally' to the children. He was very strict. Always well dressed, he wore a three piece suit with pocket watch, black shoes and spats: rather Poirot-like in appearance. His wife Mrs Miller taught in the infants. During Brian's time at the school Mr Miller retired and Mr Wilmot took over as headmaster.

Other members of staff at the school during this time included: Mr Freddie Case, who taught Standards 6 and 7; Mr Ivermee, who carried the Olympic torch for one stage at the 1948 Olympic Games; Mr Elliott, a Welshman, who said he had sparred with Jack Peterson, the Welsh heavy-weight boxer; Miss Baker, a little woman who taught music, and Miss Creith.

School Day

The school day was from 9.00 am to 3.45 pm in winter and 4.00 pm in summer. Children walked, biked or caught the bus to school. Bikes were expensive, and petrol was scarce during the war, so the buses were always crowded. Brian lived in Baughurst and usually travelled to school by bus. Children were segregated at school with the girls' entrance being the present front door and the boys coming in another door around the back. The day would start with Assembly followed by an RE lesson. Assembly took place in the large room now occupied by Miss Wheaton and Miss Abraham. After

Assembly a screen was drawn across the room creating two classrooms. School work centred on the teaching of the three 'R's. Most of the morning would be spent doing Arithmetic, with English and Geography in the afternoon.

There were morning and afternoon breaks. Children would get their free daily third of a pint glass bottle of milk supplied by Mr and Mrs Brocks who kept cows in Fairlawn Road. Afterwards they had a break in the play-ground. Situated at the back of the school, this was divided by a four foot wall into the boys' half and the girls' half. During Mr Miller's time ball games were not allowed; in Mr Wilmot's time this restriction was eased and the boys were allowed to dribble a tennis ball. The girls were encouraged to skip. Lunch-times were spent playing games on The Green, if possible, though it sometimes meant muddy shoes coming back into the school in the afternoon.

Towards the end of Brian's time at Tadley School, Woodwork was introduced as a lesson. Also during his time, there were Gardening lessons. The school ran an allotment opposite 'The New Inn'. Classes from Standard 6 and 7 would walk down there with their teacher, Freddie Case, to grow seed potatoes etc. The aim was to introduce the children to the idea of gardening, rather than to make the school self-sufficient in vegetables.

As children progressed up the school they were given more and more responsibility: eg issuing the milk and banking-up the stoves. The school was heated by coal/coke stoves, one in each classroom. Senior children from Standard 6 and 7 would go around the classrooms at about 3.40 pm each day to bank-up the stoves for the night. In the morning they would go round again and put the coal on for the day. In Standard 7 some children would have the chance of becoming a prefect, helping the teacher by doing small jobs.



A rear view of Tadley School (c1909) showing the divided playground, segregating boys from girls. The bell turret was deemed dangerous in 1921 and subsequently demolished.



Mr Ivermee's class of 1948 Brian Gooch stands, six from the left. The class of 40 pupils includes many well known Tadley names: Ted Englefield is standing two from the left.

Discipline and Punishment

Discipline at Tadley School was strict and the punishment for any misdemeanour severe. Talking was not allowed in class; Brian remembers being sent to the headmaster for 'six of the best' for talking in class – punishment which was carried out in full view of the whole class. Fighting on school premises was forbidden, the penalty for being caught, once again, was 'six of the best'.

Examinations

Every year, towards the end of the summer term, the children took examinations – covering all the main subjects taught: Maths, English, Geography, Gardening etc. Children who did well moved up a class, while those who did badly stayed in the same one. If the teachers were fed up with you being in the same class for too long, they moved you up regardless of your exam results! When children returned in the autumn to find out which class they were in, those who did not do too well and didn't go up breathed a sigh of relief – work got harder as you went up the school.

School Meals

Most children had their lunch at school; this cost 2/0d a week rising to 2/6d in later years. While Mr Miller was headmaster the meals were large, piled high on the plates. It was all good traditional fare: mince, potatoes, carrots, vegetables, haricot beans, corned beef hash, puddings of semolina and jam, sponge pudding and custard and jam tarts. During the war sweets were severely rationed and were a rare treat. Opposite 'Allen's Garage' lived Mr and Mrs Saunders. They sold scrubbed carrots to the children after school for half a penny each. Mr Miller told the children that they were far better for them than sweets.

Games

Mr Wilmot had a more positive approach to games than Mr Miller; the war was over by now and school-life was a little easier. On Fridays there were organised games sessions with fixtures against other local schools. The girls played netball and the boys football and cricket. Fixtures were arranged against Queen Mary's, Fairfields, and other local Hampshire schools. Home matches were played on The Green. To get to away matches the children either had to find their own way on buses or, unofficially, they went in the back of Johnny Stacey's ex-army lorry. This had a canvas hood over the back and the children all piled in keeping their heads down for fear of being seen.

Cricket was played on the main road with an oil can for the wicket. The roads

were very quiet in those days; rationing reduced the small car population even more and the bus made so much noise as it approached that there was ample time to take the oil can away until it passed. Footballs were worth their weight in gold. Rationing during and after the war restricted the availability of rubber for balls and it was a sad day when a ball's rubber bladder was beyond repair. Another item of every boy's equipment was the catapult, but again ingenuity was needed as traditional square rubber catapult elastic was unobtainable. The children would go to a garage and ask for a used tyre inner tube to use as a dinghy to swim with. If a tube was obtained, it was swiftly cut up to make catapult elastic.

The War

Childhood memories of this time are filled with the war. Although Tadley was a small country village it was closely involved because of Aldermaston Airfield. War intruded into school life in a variety of ways. Mr Miller, the Headmaster, read out at Assembly letters from ex-pupils serving in the Armed Forces. A regular part of school life was the air-raid practice. There were about five or six air-raid shelters at the back of the school. Practices were held about twice a week, with all the children spending about 20 minutes in the shelters – a great excuse for fun, away from the classroom and lessons.

Brian remembers German planes flying over Tadley strafing buildings along the Baughurst Road by the Venture Garage – maybe they were returning from bombing missions in the Midlands. He also remembers a doodle-bug passing over the Newbury Road.

Evacuees

There were two main types of evacuees: relatives of local people sent to get away from dangerous areas, and families who had been bombed out of their homes and who were billeted in the village. Evacuees stayed in the village for varying periods. Families would be billeted in households with very little notice. Some would move on within a few days to more permanent homes; others remained for some time. For the local children, many of whom rarely travelled farther than Basingstoke or Reading, these newcomers might as well have come from another planet. Quite a few attended Tadley School. At any one time there were about 50 out of the school roll of 200.

Aldermaston Airfield

The other major influence on the everyday life of children was the airfield. The American Army Air Force flew glider-towing Dakotas from Aldermaston

Airfield. Much of the north end of the village was 'out of bounds'. Initially the present AWE perimeter fence marked the edge of the airfield and the American servicemen would show the children over their planes. As the war dragged on security tightened and the airfield grew, encroaching more and more into the village. There was a sentry box at the top of Mulford's Hill, and another one at the Calleva Industrial Estate roundabout. American personnel were housed in a large hutted camp in the area now roughly bounded by Franklin Avenue, Bishopswood Road, Wigmore and Huntsmoor Roads (after the Americans left these huts were taken over by locals, such as the shortage of housing).

At the peak of activity, during preparations for D Day on 6 June 1944, movement around Tadley was severely restricted. If you wanted to get to Aldermaston village it was necessary to go to 'The Pineapple', then through Wasing and into Aldermaston past 'The Hind's Head'. People living inside the restricted zone – eg Franklin Avenue – were issued with passes; anyone wishing to call on them, or deliver anything, had to go to the sentry box and wait for a Military Policeman to escort them in.

An area of interest to small boys was the American's dump. This was on the land opposite the present Community Centre in Newchurch Road. Children always seem to be attracted to rubbish tips and dumps. Brian remembers some of them finding a mortar shell, taking it back to Baughurst and planting it in the woods by the Baughurst Road before going and telling the local policeman that they had found an unexploded bomb.

The Americans

Aldermaston Airfield was an American service base. Apart from a searchlight battery sited behind 'The Wellington Arms' in Baughurst, all the servicemen locally were American. They were regularly asked whether you had an older sister! The American servicemen always seemed to have 'candy' or gum to give to the children; items which were strictly rationed for British children. Pupils from the top (north) of the village were at a distinct advantage in this respect as they were in more regular contact with the Americans and always seemed to have sweets and comics in the school playground. The Americans organised parties for the children in village halls with unheard of things like ice cream and coca cola.

Postscript

The original version of this article first appeared in *A Taste of TADs* 2 (1993), together with other articles of local interest.

100 years ago – Hants and Berks Gazette, July – Dec 1906

Date Page Village Topic

7.7.1906	5	Silchester	Death of Ellen Knight (23) daughter of Mr & Mrs George Knight, after lingering illness [C].
7.7.1906	6	Baughurst	Cyclists of K Co (Basingstoke), 1st Battalion Hants Regiment attended Church Parade [C].
14.7.1906	7	Tadley	Hospital Sunday Parade was held on 24 June, accompanied by many local bands [C].
21.7.1906	6	Baughurst	Choir outing to Portsmouth – 14 members attended.
4.8.1906	6	Baughurst	'Sacred Concert', with Reading Temperance Band, held in the garden lent by Mr D James of 'Causeway Farm' – well attended.
4.8.1906	8	Silchester	Recent Hospital Parade raised £20.4s.2d.
11.8.1906	5	Baughurst	Baughurst and Tadley Garden Society exhibition and sports held in a meadow at Butlers Farm by permission of Mr F Kent.
25.8.1906	5	Mortimer West End	Presentation to Miss Letitia Young and Miss Fisher, mistresses of the local schools for many years, was held in the schoolroom [C].
8.9.1906	6	Aldermaston	'Coming of age' festivities of Charles N Keyser, son of C E Keyser of Aldermaston Manor [C].
8.9.1906	8	Pamber Heath	Inquest held at the Old Basing Union Infirmary on the body of Peter Long, aged 70 years [C].
15.9.1906	6	Pamber Heath	Death of Mr C W Froome (33) of Pamber Heath. Funeral and Burial held at Tadley Congregational Chapel [C].
22.9.1906	6	Baughurst	'Wind-up' cricket match of the season between married and single members [C].
6.10.1906	6	Tadley	Final cricket match of the season for the Tadley Sycamore CC (versus Haughurst Hill).
13.10.1906	6	Tadley	Harvest Thanksgiving at Congregational Church on Sunday followed by tea on Monday [C].
13.10.1906	6	Baughurst	Primitive Methodists held their Harvest Thanksgiving Service. Funds to Chapel renovations and Sunday School [C].
13.10.1906	6	Little London	Little London Cricket Club held their 'wind-up' supper at 'The Plough Inn'. Thirty members enjoyed a capital spread [C].
27.10.1906	6	Silchester	Wedding at St Mary's Church of Edith Goddard of Silchester and Robert J F Payne [C].
27.10.1906	6	Pamber Heath	Harvest Festival held at the Pamber Heath Mission Room; 'scene of cheerfulness' reported.
24.11.1906	7	Baughurst	Lecture by Rev Sweetapple (of Monk Sherborne) in the schoolroom on 'Church History'.
24.11.1906	7	Little London	Cricket Club Concert given in the Priory School by the committee of Little London CC.
1.12.1906	7	Tadley	Waif Saturday Collection in aid of Dr Barnardo's Homes. £1.3s.0d collected by John Hawkins, Colin Saunders, George Neate, Kate Smith and Percy Butler.
15.12.1906	6	Baughurst	Bell ringers rang in earnest and could be heard several evenings in the week.
15.12.1906	6	Tadley	'Bird and Tree Festival' in connection with Royal Society for Protection of Birds was held in the Council School [C].

100 years ago – national and international, July – Dec 1906

Date Topic

1.7.1906	American boat train left the rails at Salisbury due to excessive speed; 28 people died.
9.7.1906	King and Queen opened the new high level railway bridge at Newcastle.
18.7.1906	The House of Lords Committee report on Juvenile Smoking was issued and urged drastic action.
1.8.1906	The first successful kidney transplants performed, but on cats and dogs!
17.8.1906	In Chile a terrible earthquake was experienced, reducing Valparaiso to ashes and greatly damaging Santiago.
31.8.1906	Hottest day of year, temperature in London 93 degrees in maximum shade.
3.10.1906	In Berlin a Wireless Telegraphy Conference agrees to adopt SOS as international disaster signal.
20.10.1906	In Vladivostock harbour the Russian Steamer Variag struck a torpedo and sank drowning over 200 passengers.
27.10.1906	New building opened at University College, Reading.
13.11.1906	King of Norway invested with the Order of the Garter.
Among those who died at this time: John Lawrence Toole, comedian (30.7.1906), Mrs Craigie, novelist [known as John Oliver Hobbs] (13.8.1906), Lady Campbell-Bannerman, wife of the Prime Minister (30.8.1906) and Paul Cezanne, artist (22.10.1906).	

Articles marked [C] have been copied and archived by TADS for reference.