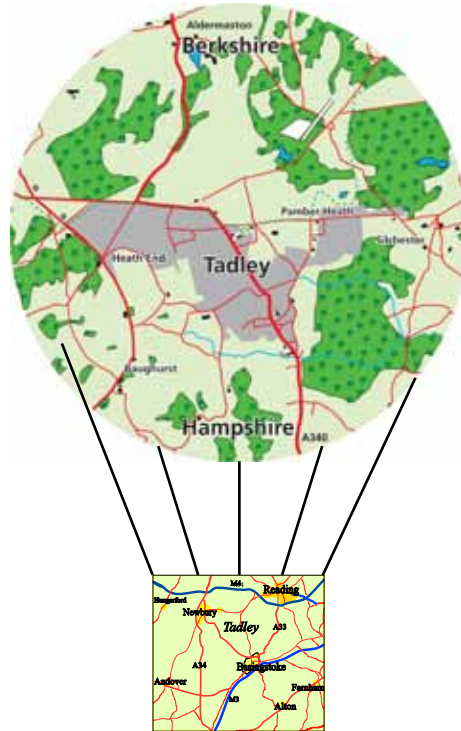


# Tadley's CV

'Betwixt & betwigged'



## Name

Tadley (also 'Tadley, God Help Us!')

## Age

Probably well over 900 years old. First mentioned in the 13th century as Taddele or Tadeleye – the Saxons 'frog clearing', or perhaps 'Tada's clearing', that had emerged out of a misty forest. Tadley's church, however, probably figures in Domesday Book (1086) – one of two in the entry for Overton, to which Tadley's church and manor were long attached.

## Location



Hampshire, United Kingdom. Situated at the north end of the county; 51° 21' N, 1° 8' W, south of the Thames Valley. At the centre of a triangle formed by three major towns – Basingstoke (6 miles away), Newbury and Reading (10 miles each); also midway between the M3 and M4 motorways, and within easy reach

of three railway stations – Aldermaston (4 miles), Bramley (5 miles) and Basingstoke (6 miles).

## Population

11,651 (2001 census), a rise from barely 500 in the early 1800s.

## Overarching statement

'Tadley retains an individualistic character in bosky surroundings. Despite its enviable communications, it is still marked by a sense of its former wooded remoteness (hence, 'Betwixt & betwigged'), when outsiders approached it with trepidation. It is an expanding modern town, yet remains an historical oddity. The quirkiness of its past is the great pride and strength of the community.'

## The Town and its People

Tadley folk were long regarded as wild, untamed woodlanders. The families of many current residents have been settled here for generations. In some cases they are of well-attested gypsy origin, the independent way of life here being well suited to the gypsy character. Quick to exploit every business opportunity, 'Tadleyites' have turned the presence on their doorstep of the Atomic Weapons Establishment to their considerable advantage. Since the 1950s, thousands of newcomers have been welcomed here. The modern town is not noted for its architectural delights, yet contains many hidden treasures. The Tadley and District History Society (TADS), founded in 1984, does much to further the study of, and maintain interest in, Tadley's historical and natural heritage.

# Tadley's CV

## Tadley Headlines

- Subject of the world's first Local CV\*, in the form of the present document.



Besom broom

Supplier, since 2004, of the witches' brooms used in the Harry Potter movies; they were hand-made by Arthur Nash of 46 Mulford's Hill, the last surviving firm of 'broom squires' (besom broom-makers) in Tadley. Arthur Nash also supplied brooms to the royal palaces, receiving a Royal Warrant in 1999.

- Retains some of the finest heathland in Europe, and is adjacent to rich forests – notably the historic, 478-acre Pamber Forest of the Benyon family, currently managed by the Hampshire Wildlife Trust.
- Services, and accommodates workers for, the Atomic Weapons Establishment, or 'Bomb Factory', on the former Aldermaston Airfield (arguably helping to avert World War III). AWE employees resident in Tadley have included Sir William (later Lord) Penney, 'father' of the British Atomic Bomb.
- Has consistently (since 1958) been beset by anti-nuclear demonstrations, notably the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament's 'Ban the Bomb' marches 1958-64, which assembled on Tadley turf.
- Included within its boundaries the famous, and once very prominent 'Hangar 5' of Aldermaston Airfield, one of two sites used by Vickers Supermarine for the final assembly of the legendary Spitfire fighter planes, 1943-45.
- Housed wartime American soldiers in a vast encampment adjoining Aldermaston Airfield, from which airborne troops were conveyed in Sept 1944 to Holland as participants in Operation Market Garden (famously venturing to capture 'a bridge too far').
- Witnessed the launch of the initial wave of the 'D-Day' invasion from the same airfield on 6 June 1944, after which an eerie calm descended over the village.
- Made two further contributions to the development of aviation, for it was around here that Henry Coxwell landed his hydrogen-filled balloon in 1853, a terrified local informing him that he was in 'Tadley, God help us!'; also provided an early casualty to flight, William Brereton Evans, a famous cricketer and resident of Fairlawn House, being the luckless passenger in Samuel Franklin Cody's 'Floatplane', which crashed at Farnborough in 1913.
- Sacrificed the lives of thirty of its sons in the Great War, their names being remembered on the Tadley War Memorial on the Green; a heavy toll in a small community (World War II accounted for a further seven).
- Provided the dependable labour force that excavated the buried Roman city of Calleva Atrebatum (in the adjoining parish of Silchester) for the Society of Antiquaries, 1890-1909.
- Made a small but significant contribution to the economy in the 19th century, supplying many thousands of besom brooms to the iron foundries of the North (they were perfect for removing the scale from hot metal).
- Also supported, until the mid-19th century, a thriving white hoop-making industry – the circular bands that held the wooden staves of wash-tubs and casks together. The casks of brandy lugged about by 18th century smugglers, even the barrels of gunpowder planted under Parliament by Guy Fawkes, may well have been bound by Tadley hoops.
- Maintains a tradition of brass bands that is probably unequalled outside the North of England, the Tadley Silver Band (founded in 1875) formerly ranking in the Premier Grade at the National Brass Band Contest.
- Produced an Olympic (1980, 1984) and Commonwealth (1978-86) medallist in the person of the sprinter Kathryn 'Kathy' Smallwood-Cook MBE (born 1960), who attended Burnham Copse Primary School and the Hurst Secondary School.



Pamber Forest

# Tadley's CV

## Employment

### The Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE)

since 1950 – Tadley's main employer – which has transformed it from an isolated rural community into a modern town. Thousands of houses have been built for its workers: they were recruited from all over the country but many were London 'overspill'. Schools and churches have been built, and new shops opened, to cater for their needs.

**Besom broom-making**, the firm of Arthur Nash being the last practitioners of an ancient Tadley craft, in which (until the mid-20th century) much of the population was formerly engaged, either in their own cottages or in industrial yards. Since time immemorial the people of Tadley have been sustained by a variety of woodland activities – **white-hoop making**, **hurdle-making** and **charcoal-burning** among others – and by the provision of seasonal labour, especially for the annual coppicing of the surrounding forests and (until the 1960s) for the annual **hop-picking** in September (during which almost the entire population, in a heightened state of excitement, would migrate south to the Alton area, leaving Tadley a virtual 'ghost town').



Burrell's Farm

## Businesses with longevity

**Allen's Garage** (1920s), founded by a former blacksmith who had branched into the repair of motor vehicles; **Barclay's Bank** (1952), **Lloyd's Bank** (1956) and **HSBC**, formerly **Midland** (1964) – earlier generations were known to have buried their riches in the garden; **D Brant Reclamation Ltd** (1956), a café till 1984, from which Brant launched his wood dealing, haulage, demolition and garden and estate contracting business; **Sainsbury's Supermarket**, the direct descendant of Albert Blake's General Stores which operated pre-Great War from the front parlour of his cottage on the same site; **Wheelgame** (1960s), specialists in exhausts and tyres, formerly

a petrol station and car dealership; **John Stacey & Sons** (1964), specialists in haulage, demolition and plant hire, descendants of a long line of Tadley wood dealers, farmers, brick- and broom-makers since the 18th century.



St Peter's Church

## Notable Buildings

**Tadley Court** (now the Tadley Horizon School), c1890 – former home of Boer War hero, steeplechaser and artist Major George Roller and his famous horse, Gabardine: the neighbouring **Wilderness End** is headquarters of The National CV Group, pioneers of the world's first CV of a nation ([www.thenationalcv.org.uk](http://www.thenationalcv.org.uk)); **Wyeford**, Tadley's former manor-house – the Jacobean seat of the Ludlow family (to mid-1600s), surrounded by an ancient moat and fishponds; current home of Hugo Vickers, the distinguished biographer and commentator on royal matters; **Tadley Place**, remnant of a larger Tudor manor-house, another Ludlow possession; a number of English Heritage listed thatched cottages including **Burrell's Farm**, **Hatch Cottage**, **Highbury Cottage**, **Cons Cottage**, **Rose Cottage** and **Chine Cottage**.

## Religion

**St Peter's Church**, part 13th-century building but apparently documented since 1086, in the 'abandoned' former heart of the village; **St Paul's Church** (1966), its substitute (itself replacing **St Saviour's Church**, 1888-1966), nearer the modern town centre; **Little St Mary's** (1874-1977) and **Great St Mary's Church** (1960), both also 'mission' churches in outlying areas; **St Michael's Roman Catholic Church** (1959). **The Old Meeting** (1719), the **Methodist Church** (1931, replacing a chapel of 1859), **Tadley Common Methodist Church** (1960) and the **Salvation Army Hall** (1909, replacing hall of c.1900) cater for the Nonconformists, who historically were very numerous.

# Tadley's CV

## Education

**Tadley Community Primary School** (1877) and the **Priory Primary School** (1850), both rated 'outstanding' in their most recent OFSTED reports; earlier 19th century schooling in a Dame School or at Sunday School; previous generations mostly unschooled and illiterate, though a British School existed at the Old Meeting circa 1842. **Burnham Copse Primary School** (1956) and **Bishopswood Infant and Junior Schools** (1972) were provided for AWE workers' children. Many Tadley children receive their secondary education (from 11 to 16) at **The Hurst Community College** in Baughurst (1957), a 'specialist science' school.



The Old Meeting

## Amenities

The **Tadley and District Community Centre** (1994), a 'focal point for the local area' (the only hall for hire 100 years ago was the rickety 'Iron Room' next to St Saviour's Church – both demolished in 1966); the **Tadley Swimming Pool** (1997), a wonderfully light and airy facility with a 25-metre heated pool and adjacent 'health spa'; the **Tadley Library** (1994), pleasant, spacious and purpose-built, replacing a 'prefab' of 1971 and even earlier wartime hut; the **Ambrose Allen Centre** (1993), a day centre for 'the elderly and needy folk' of Tadley; the **Morland Surgery** (1989) and **Holmwood Health Centre** (1973), both branches of the Woodland Practice; the

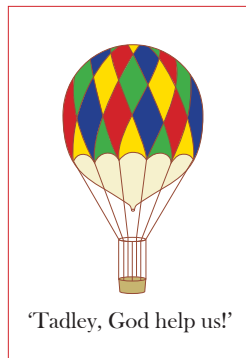
**Fire Station** (1974) in Franklin Avenue, a 'retained station' providing 24-hour cover.

## Leisure and Entertainment

Theatres, concert halls and 'multiplex' cinemas are within reach at Reading, Basingstoke and Newbury; luxurious appliances for 'home entertainment' can be purchased at the **Reading Warehouse** or at Sainsbury's; the **Toucan Travel Agency** offers enticing package holidays abroad. Previous generations had to content themselves with the following: the **May Day** celebrations (19th to early 20th centuries); the **Tadley Revel** (18th and early-19th centuries), a tradition that has been revived in the annual **Tadley Treacle Fair** organised by the Loddon Valley Lions Club; the **Tadley Carnival** (intermittently in 20th century); **shin-kicking** outside the Fighting Cocks (to mid-19th century); watching the butcher at work; also the annual killing of the family pig (to early 1900s); a ride on **Williams's Gallopers** (late 19th to early 20th centuries), courtesy of a family of showmen periodically resident in the village; games of darts in one of Tadley's many pubs; **annual trips to the seaside** (1920s to 1930s), laborious journeys in one of Kent's charabancs; **a trip to the 'Royal'** (1953-91), Tadley's 270-seat cinema housed in an old wartime building – an advance on the earlier **Magic Lantern** shows in the 'Iron Room', organised by the Church, so invariably of an 'improving nature'.

## Sport

**Football** Tadley Calleva Football Club – 'the Tadders' – since 1989; earlier Tadley FC massively supported from early 1900s; **rugby** Tadley Rugby Football Club since 1986; **cricket** Tadley Cricket Club 1880-1979, but still played in neighbouring villages.



\* Tadley's CV is a history of Tadley told as if Tadley were a person. 'CV' stands for Curriculum Vitae, Latin for *course of life*. A CV is someone's personal history in brief. A CV is written in reverse order, with the most recent information at the top. Tadley CV's originating author: Rupert Willoughby, The

National CV Group. This document is supported by an online database, Tadley's CVpedia:

[www.tadshistory.com/CV/tadleycvpedia.pdf](http://www.tadshistory.com/CV/tadleycvpedia.pdf)

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