

Tadley and District Youth Action Council was created in 2025 for young people to get involved in making Tadley better for them. It also gave a chance for young people to make friends and decisions together. We decided to design the mural to celebrate Tadley and all the people who live here. It has been so much fun painting that mural and seeing the community join in by adding their painting to the wall. We hope you've enjoyed painting these past few days and thank you for contributing to the mural, which we hope will be here for many years.

Youth Councillor Cody Strutt August 2026

In early records, Tadley is also referred to as Tederlei, Titherley or Tuderley.

T

Did you know that ancient Romans once marched through the Tadley area? An old road called The Portway connected the settlement of Calleva Atrebatum (or Silchester, as we know it today) with Old Sarum, the Roman base at Salisbury. Running through Tadley, it would have been painstakingly dug out by labourers, before being levelled and laid with flat slabs. The Impstone, which survives today, can be found on the road to Silchester. It is believed to have once served as a Roman milestone; a reminder of Tadley's Roman history. Another legacy of the Romans is our hornless sheep, which were bred by them and introduced to England along with pheasants.

St Peter's Church, once the social and religious heart of Tadley, dates back to the early medieval period. It was significantly altered in 1877 but still retains some 17th century features inside. The church is unusual in that it sits well outside of Tadley today, but there is evidence that it was the site of the first settlement.

A

Tadley Place, an old estate in the area, was first owned by the Benham family, but was inherited by the Ludlow family through marriage. Sir Henry Ludlow became very unpopular, as he raised rents and tore down 12 houses, throwing the residents out, which devastated the old village. The Ludlows were already an important local and national family, with Henry's father Edmund being knighted by Elizabeth I in Basing in 1601. Edmund's grandson, also named Edmund, later signed Charles I's death warrant in 1649. Sir Henry Ludlow continued the family's influence as a Member of Parliament in the 17th century.

Tadley has national recognition for the making of the traditional besom brooms. (Besom - a bunch of twigs for sweeping.) Long associated with the Nash family, their brooms have appeared in movies such as 'Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire', and are currently supplied to the Royal household. The brooms also appear on various emblems and logos around Tadley, including Tadley Town Council's coat of arms, with two crossed brooms placed at the base of the central shield. The coat of arms can be seen on the town clock sited on Mulfords Hill.



Tadley's War Memorial commemorates those who lost their lives in the 1st and 2nd World Wars. The town was a very busy centre during WWII, manufacturing Spitfires between 1943 and 1946. The area was home to the 'Eagles'. Here, they underwent training for various Allied missions in Europe, including the D-Day operation in France, which used military gliders towed by the C47 aircraft. When AWRE (now known as AWE) expanded after the war, many workers moved into the area. Whilst houses were being built, many families lived in caravans and some in converted double decker buses. Many buses were also seen in the area transporting workers from their accommodation to the site. Two local roads were named after important leaders during WWII; Franklin Avenue - after President Roosevelt, and Winston Avenue - after Churchill. From the 1950s, because of its close proximity to AWRE, Tadley became a focus for 'Ban the Bomb' demonstrations, which continued into the following decades. The BBC reported in 1960 that over 60,000 protestors marched from AWRE to Trafalgar Square in London to campaign for disarmament.



Many of our older residents recall a number of local shops from their early years in Tadley, including a fish shop and a Post Office run by Mrs Evans. 'Hutchins' - a small grocer, which also repaired bicycles and ran a taxi between 1910 and 1939, eventually closing in 1988, and E D Eyles - a greengrocer which opened in 1958 and served the community for thirty years. But their most shared memory is that of J S Whatmore & Sons - the town's general store. With the expansion of the town in the 1950s, Whatmore's began to sell toys, stationary and even opened a chemist's section. It was redesigned as a self-service shop in 1961 before eventually being taken over by Budgens.

Dennis Brant and his mother opened Peg's Café in 1956. Although Dennis eventually went on to form his haulage and demolition company, many of his employees enjoyed their breakfast in the café before starting work.

The town also boasted an independent cinema. The Cinema Royal was opened in 1953, showing films until 1991 when it became a Bingo hall for two years, after which point films were screened again until the venue finally closed in 1995. Houses were eventually built on the site in 2012.

E

Tadley has a number of SSSI areas (Site of Special Scientific Interest) including Ron Ward's Meadow, part of Tadley Pastures, where three species of orchid along with rarities such as Common Tadley Common, Pamber Forest and Silchester Common are also rich in fauna and flora including roe deer and reptiles, as well as brimstone, peacock, white admiral and the small heath butterflies.

Alongside these nationally recognised sites, Wigmore Heath, a local nature reserve, is a small but very important area of rare lowland heath, as it supports special heathland plants such as the petty whin, dwarf gorse and heather. Sightings of water voles have been recorded in Honey Mill Brook. Our herd of Dexter cattle do their bit as four-legged conservation helpers too, by keeping the gorse under control and helping to maintain the open heathland. We are lucky to have playgrounds throughout the town with the skate park, zip wire and MUGA - Multi-Use Games Area - on Tadley Common being firm favourites.

Since the 1990s a lot of facilities have opened or been improved in the town, including:

1994 The Community Centre (the original 1958 community building was a conversion of the US Air Force gymnasium until a new building was built in 1994.

1994 Tadley Library

1998 Tadley Pool with the gym being added in 2019

2007 Barlows Park Football Ground

2016 The Point, part of the Community Centre, was purpose built for the benefit of the youth of Tadley

Brass bands have a long history in the town, with the Tadley Gospel Temperance Band being established in 1875. Tadley Concert Brass Band played at the unveiling of the mural. The Treacle Fair is a popular charity event organised by the Loddon Valley Lions in Tadley each May. But there is some debate as to where it got its name. One legend suggests that Tadley was known for its thick, sticky, clay- like soil, leading to some reports that the ground contained treacle. As you drive past the AWE site you will see the Orion Building, which houses a high-power laser. Being the biggest experimental facility for high-energy density physics in the UK, here experts explore the physics behind materials. At temperatures more than 10 million degrees, Orion can both replicate the conditions found at the centre of the Sun – and simulate supernovas in the laboratory.

Y

Community Squares- what can you spot?

- Kathy Smallwood-Cook is a local former Olympic sprinter who won three bronze medals in her career- can you find her running shoes?
- Now can you find out which organisation was celebrating 100 years when the mural was painted?
- Which organisation was Chartered in 1975?
- Which group was inaugurated in 1955?
- What insect can you find at Green Health Tadley?
- Can you find some logos?

Citizen Advice- there has been an office here since 1985.

Greenham Trust - an important organisation that helps to find grants to support local charities and projects such as this mural.

Tadley Medical Partnership- do you know which bird is part of their logo?

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