



**April 2019**

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

**Next meeting - Wednesday 17th April 2019  
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30pm**

## **‘Major Roller - a Tadley Hero’**

**By Ian Burn**

*(Everybody welcome - visitors £3.00)*

**In her Chairman's report at last December's AGM, Carol asked for volunteers to join the committee, warning members that without 'new blood' the committee would have to start planning for the winding up of the society. Sadly, since December no volunteers have come forward. The committee will be organising a meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> July at which they will outline the timetable for winding up TADS, and the consequent decisions that will need to be taken.**

*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 15th May 2019**

**‘A place apart: the  
Story of Park Prewett Hospital’  
By Malcolm Isted**

**TADS Meeting 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

**The Mysteries of Stonehenge.  
By Graham Loxton-Best.**

Stonehenge, Wiltshire. Iconic. A fifteenth-in-the world, World Heritage Site about 33 miles west of Tadley, and a must-visit for Brits and foreigners alike. It's a cocktail of mysteries – a smidgeon of mystery is good, Graham said. Stonehenge is surrounded by pre-historic monuments, powerful guardians of the great communities of the Neolithic and Bronze Ages. Who built it? Irish giants? Mythical Merlin? The Locals? (The locals have it!)

Graham had his archaeology light-bulb moment aged 12 years in his Dad's pub, 'The Roman Urn' in St Albans, when the nearby supermarket was demolished to build 200 houses. On nosing around the site – as you could do in yesteryear – he saw that the Irish navvies who'd been demolishing said supermarket, paid for their beer in his Dad's pub with SILVER ROMAN COINS they'd picked up! The new-build was deferred for 5 weeks so the site could be properly surveyed....

TV archaeologist, Oliver Pearson, studied the area circumnavigating Stonehenge for 3 miles and wondered why ancient peoples would want to be on a windswept site with no trees, bushes, no nearby river for drinking water or transport (River Avon was a few miles away). Was Stonehenge used for worship, as a cemetery, or a guide to the 4 seasons? Or what?

Oliver considered the geology, archaeology and took aerial and ground photographs of Stonehenge. Where did the stones come from? How erected? What did the people eat, drink, what language(s) did they speak? Mysteries. Why was an East European amber bracelet found on a woman's skeleton plus jade and onyx jewellery?

Graham said there was evidence of fox, bear, Scottish pork, and frogs, nuts, berries, but NO vegetables.

It's reckoned these stones are older than the Great Pyramid of Egypt. But stone can't be dated by dendochronology.

Archaeologists love cesspits because they reveal so much: old animal bones, shards of pottery, old pine cones, 'antler' pickaxes etc. Other bones have been found but not children's bones, Graham said.

Of the 1,500 burial mounds in the area, only 600 have been studied.

Archaeologists realised that this part of Salisbury Plain had been inhabited 4,000 years BEFORE Stonehenge. By the way, the Amesbury Archer was buried 4,000 years ago with 24 flints round him and 4 flints IN him!

Archaeology is no longer amateurish, partly because of all the sophisticated aids of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries e.g. dendochronology, geophysics, metal detecting, aerial and ground photography and DNA,

Stonehenge was gifted to the nation exactly 100 years this coming November, by local landowners Cecil and Mary Chubb, who bought it for a few thousand pounds in 1919.

It's now managed by English Heritage (the stones and facilities) and the National Trust (the land) with free entry IF you're a member of either.

Some of the larger 'Sarsen' (silicified sandstone found on chalk downs) stones weigh 30 tonnes or more and probably came about 16 miles (25 kms) from the Marlborough Downs. There were 5 trilithons capped by horizontal lintels and the smaller Blue Stones (igneous rock) came 150 miles (240 kms) from the Preseli Hills in Pembrokeshire, S. Wales. The centre Altar Stone is sandstone while the enormous Heel Stone gets the first rays of the Summer Solstice sun (a.m. of 21<sup>st</sup> June, if not raining. Many times have I been solsticing in the rain!).

How all these stones were lugged from A to B is a mystery. Maybe they were sledged, rolled or heaved by countless workers over a long period of time.

Whatever the mysteries, Stonehenge, the enigma, pulls us to it, whether we are Druid, curious tourist, a local, an historian, or merely glimpsing it when passing on the A 303 road.

Thank you, Graham, for your revealing lecture.

Rosemary Bond

## **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>

Until 28th April '**Bricktropolis** and the Attack of the Mighty Monsters'  
Featuring 26 famous buildings from around the world made in Lego.

**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>*

29 Mar to 12 June '**Dame Elizabeth Blackadder: From the Artist's Studio**'.

13 April to 25 May '**Inspire**' a diverse exhibition by accredited WBNH Open Studio artists, showcasing contemporary art in North Hampshire.

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

16th May - '**The Life and Times of the Duke of Wellington**' by Diana White.  
This talk focuses on the local links with the first Duke of Wellington.

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

9 May '**Dating cave paintings**' Prof. Alistair Pike – University of Southampton

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**Membership fees** - There are a small number of members who have not rejoined. 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.

***TADS annual membership is £18 per person.  
Correspondence to Tadley and District History Society,  
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