



May 2019

**Tadley and District History Society
(TADS) - www.tadshistory.com**

**Next meeting - Wednesday 15th May 2019
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30pm**

**‘A Place Apart: The Story of
Park Prewett hospital’**

By Malcolm Isted

(Everybody welcome - visitors £3.00)

Important - Notice of Extraordinary General Meeting.
(Members only)

An EGM will be held on Wednesday 31st July at 7.30pm in St. Paul's Hall to advise members of the proposals for the closure of TADS. This is because we have had no suitable offers to run the Society.

The Committee

*Comments, queries and suggestions to Richard Brown (0118) 9700100,
e-mail: richard@ilexind.plus.com or Carol Stevens (0118) 9701578*

www.tadshistory.com

TADS Meeting 19th June 2019

‘The History of Blood Letting’

By Tim Smith

TADS Meeting 17th April 2019

Major George Roller (1856 – 1941)

a Tadley Hero

by TADS' own lecturer, Ian Burn.

Ian indicated that Major Roller was a real good egg as well as a hero. George Carl Roller, of German (paternal) and Welsh blood, was something out of the ordinary, rich but unassuming. Did he push for the Victoria Cross recommended during The Boer War? No, he realised his bravery hadn't been WITNESSED by another officer.

The locals liked him. One, Edgar Grundy of Baughurst, plus his friend, remembered watching Roller on Tadley Common. He was talking to his beloved horse, Gabardine, he'd say 'Enemy advance!' whereupon Gabardine would lie down and Roller hid behind him and pretended to fire his gun..... Gabardine followed him everywhere, like a dog, and it's rumoured that the horse is buried in his garden at The Wilderness (now Tadley Court) or The Cottage garden (now Rollers). Roller himself is buried in Tadley St. Peter's churchyard. Roller also had a property in London but he liked his Tadley home because it's big window panes helped his Artwork.

He was a multi-talented enigma, born in the time of limited business bickering and back-stabbing. He and his male siblings had been educated at Westminster School, and he'd gone on to Lambeth and Paris Art Schools. His Dad had made loadsamoney importing the bark of the South American chinchona tree for medicinal quinine.

Hardworking George was in with the St. Ives, Cornwall, Art Set and best friends with the American artist John Singer Sargent (1856 – 1925). During his working life George exhibited at many galleries between 1884 and 1906. His Boer War battle scene is in Reading Museum. George was also a brave soldier in Peru, Argentina and Australia as well as in the Boer War and WW1: he was a

steeplechaser, huntsman, London magistrate, governor of the London and the Royal Berks Hospitals. He was President of the Tadley branch of the (Royal) British Legion.

But his forte was as a world-renowned Royal Academy picture restorer – particularly restoring the havoc wreaked by our Suffragettes (1914) and the slashed painting by Singer-Sargent (1914).

Roller was also a bosom-buddy of Thomas Burberry, an ardent Basingstoke Baptist and teetotaler.

Burberry had a shop and workrooms in Winchester Street, Basingstoke. He had noticed that shepherds' clothes from sheep country south of Basingstoke, were accidentally waterproofed' by the sheep's wool lanolin. He developed and marketed Gabardine, this still-famous cool, comfortable, waterproof cloth for country sports wear, explorers and army trench coats, etc. etc. Roller did Burberry's advertising artwork: hence he was gifted the small, tough, brave mare, Gabardine (1881 – 1905). He said Gabardine saved his life many a time. Ian said it was niggling that Roller's then-Territorial 34th Company of Middlesex Yeomanry, was sneered at by the soldiers of the regular army! He was a marvellously talented and interesting man.

Thank you, Ian, for your detailed talk: even at the meeting some members of the public were able to shed a little more light on the man who lived in The Wilderness on the edge of Tadley Common...

Rosemary Bond

A Guided Walk round Hampstead Norreys, 3rd August.

The walk has been arranged for the Saturday afternoon of 3rd August, assembling at 1.15 pm for a 1.30 pm start from the gate by the church. (There is ample car parking in the area and a toilet at hand).

It is a circular walk of about 2 miles, mostly flat, although there are one set of steps (which can be missed out). There are also stopping places. The minimum number of participants is 12. The list is still open and friends are welcome

Cost £9.00. Please pay at the coming TADS meeting or in June. Payment by cheque payable to TADS - please give to Peter (treasurer).

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>

15-16 June. **Father's Day Weekend** at Milestones.

22-23 June. **Milestones Summer Fete.**

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 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*)

20 June **'Tales of the Unexpected - Part 1'** by Alan Copeland

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

14 June **'Excavations at Datchett'** by Gareth Chaffey of Wessex Archaeology

***TADS annual membership is £18 per person.
Correspondence to Tadley and District History Society,
c/o 5 Church Road Pamber Heath Tadley. RG26 3DP
Email: tadshistory@goolemail.com***