



**July 2019**

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

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

## **'The Edwardians (1901-10)'**

**By Tony King**

*(Everybody welcome - visitors £3.00)*

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

An EGM will be held on **Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> July at 7.30pm** in St. Paul's Hall to advise members of the proposals for the closure of TADS.

*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)**

## **A Guided Walk round Hampstead Norreys, 3<sup>rd</sup> August.**

Saturday afternoon of 3<sup>rd</sup> August, assembling at 1.15 pm for a 1.30 pm start from the gate by the church. Post code RG18 0TD. (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 and tea afterwards.

**The list is still open and friends are welcome.**

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

**TADS Meeting 18th September 2019**

**‘My Antiques Roadshow - find  
out about your treasures’**

**By Simon Jones**

**TADS Meeting 19<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

## **The History of Blood Letting**

by Dr. Tim Smith,

Retired Consultant Anaesthetist; Curator, Royal Berkshire Medical  
Museum.

Leeches. Some shudder at the thought of them. The Amazonian ones grow to 3 feet (92 cms) in length. The smaller European medicinal leech – *Hirudo medicinalis* – has been used nearly to extinction for at least 3,000 years.

Feeding on blood, of course..... Good job Dr. Tim keeps some in the Medical Museum he helps to run. However, it's his wife who gives her blood every 2-3 years (or when required) to feed them!

Dr. Tim said the Greeks used leeches obsessively all those thousands of years ago. The slightly slimy creatures were very popular for letting blood until at least the 1850s.

Blood letting can be done 3 ways – cutting into a vein; cupping – causing a vacuum and bruising; and a bite from a leech.

Greek philosophers Hippocrates and Galen decided that the imbalance of the Four Humours caused illness: black and yellow bile, phlegm and out-of-sorts blood. The cure: blood letting. Dr. Tim said most people would have got well anyway without the blood letting!

On 18<sup>th</sup> June, 1815, Lt. Col. The Hon. Fred Cavandish-Ponsonby was severely wounded at the Battle of Waterloo. Surprisingly he lived in spite of 120 ounces (6 pints) of blood let in 2 days. You only have 8 pints in your body....

Conversely, American President George Washington died in 1799 because of blood letting.....

Why was blood letting so popular? It was unquestioned then; there were few alternatives; the placebo effect; people lived in spite of it....

Pierre Louis 1787-1822, questioned the blood thing and decided to use it just for fevers, especially pneumonia. Sir William Oster, 1849-1919, decided that horses should be bled for good condition, therefore in WW1 horses destined for the Western Front, were bled.

One very dangerous practice which could wreck tendons and arteries, was fleaming. You were hit with a blood stick at right angles to your vein. Very hit or miss!

Cupping is an ancient medieval blood letting practice for sciatica. Cups were made from horn, glass, bronze, pewter, or rubber and you CAREFULLY sucked out toxins, blood etc.... It's popular even now in the Far East and parts of Russia for enhancing energy levels, releasing tension, and increasing swimmers' speeds! Not proven, Tim said. Surprisingly Gwyneth Paltrow and Victoria Beckham have admitted experiencing this.

As for the poor old nearly-extinct hermaphrodite medicinal leech, it once sold for 1d. (2p), now it's £50 for medical purposes and £5 as fishing bait....

People living, working, holidaying in the Himalayas find leeches slither in to bite them everywhere.

Leeches don't anaesthetise you but they give you a sharp bite and can inject harmful bacteria into the wound.

In days of yore, barber-surgeons cut hair and administered leeches. Therefore barbers still advertise with the diagonally-striped red and white pole: originally a piece of blood-stained material which wrapped itself round the pole. Amazingly this rather blood curdling way of sorting out one's health with leeches now has a monetary benefit, Tim said. If you visit a car boot sale or root around your attic and find leech jars from circa 1850, they are now collectors' items worth £2,000-£3,000 each – especially the Essex type jar....

Leeches are now used to help in plastic surgery, as they clean up wounds.

If one wanted more information Tim recommends a visit to the Royal Berkshire Hospital Medical Museum, which still actively acquires items relating to

health care; or it will identify your puzzling objects. And they have live leeches!

Thank you, Tim, for your blood curdling tales of blood letting, which is still alive and writhing with us....

Rosemary Bond.

*1. We apologise for the sound system problems during the talk and will try to get the system serviced. - Ed*

*2. In last month's May meeting report, it was said of the Canadians at Park Prewett Hospital during WWI: 'no one much cared about whether they lived or died. In death their graves were anonymous.' This is not true. The graves of the 23 who died are listed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and are to be found in Basingstoke, Sherborne St John and Worting. - Ed*

## **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>

23 July - 8 Sept. **'We'll Meet Again...'** Experience life on the homefront in WWII from the Blitz through to VE day.

**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 including children's activities in the holidays. *For information tel. 01256 465902 or see <http://hampshireculturaltrust.org.uk/venue-events/52>*

22<sup>nd</sup> June to 14 Sept. **'I grew up 80s'** a 1980s themed exhibition.

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

18<sup>th</sup> July **'Commander Crabb - What really happened'** by Dr John Bevan

***TADS annual membership is £18 per person.  
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