



December 2022

TADS Newsletter

Website - www.tadshistory.com

**Next Meeting - Wednesday 14th December at 8 pm, at
St. Paul's Church, The Green, Tadley.**

‘TADS Annual General Meeting’

A package of documents will be emailed to you before the meeting. If any of you are willing to join the committee you will be extremely welcome. In any case we need as many of you as can come to the meeting to ensure that we have a quorum.

The formal meeting will be followed by an opportunity to get together with other members. If you have any artefacts, pictures or documents you think will be of interest to other members, please bring them along for display.

This year, simple refreshments will be provided by the Society.

If you wish to stop receiving the Newsletter please email Richard Brown or notify Carol Stevens or a Committee member.

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

www.tadshistory.com

Future TADS events:

At a new venue!

**Monday 9th January 2023 in Baughurst & Heath End Village Hall -
'The Last Man Standing, the Local Defence Volunteers'**

by Dale Johnson

TADS Meeting 16th November 2022

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission

by Andy Day

It was very enlightening to have a talk about a subject some of us may consider only at November Remembrance time.

Many wars ago, before WWI, soldiers killed in battle may have been buried where they fell, or chucked in a ditch, Andy said. They were not repatriated unless from wealthy families, who bore the cost.

Something must have stirred in the 1853-6 Crimean War because warriors were buried in an unofficial cemetery there.

Sir Fabian Ware, aged 48 in 1914 was the 'Father of the War Graves Commission' and he decided to use his contacts in the Red Cross to rectify the matter. Ware had been horrified to find that the military had not been recording where soldiers were buried: a farmer's field? A roadside?..... Thus cemeteries were created solely for the war dead.

1916 saw 350,000 casualties; 1917 still many more, and so the Imperial War Graves Commission was founded and Fabian Ware was the Vice President. By the time the WWI killing ceased, over a million were dead.

Sir Edwin Lutyens was the leading architect of the War Cemeteries. Originally wooden crosses commemorated each soldier – wood rots. White Portland stone, black slate or Orkney granite was used, uniformly with no distinction between rank or status. Different religions lay side by side, with added pebbles

by Jewish headstones. Obviously and sadly some soldiers are STILL missing and are 'Known unto God'. Apparently 30 casualties are newly discovered each year and are given a full military funeral. DNA Analysis now helps greatly with identification.

Grave headstones are curved so rain runs off; and they usually have a Latin cross. Wealthy people have paid for personalised messages but they must be 'appropriate', Andy said.

WWI cemeteries were constructed first in Gallipoli (Turkey), Britain, France, Belgium, Holland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, U.S.A. and Canada – well, in every continent bar Antarctica. Brookwood Cemetery in Surrey has a War Graves area (but it was also supplied by the funeral train in the 19th C and early 20th C as a London 'overspill').

Andy said the War Graves Commission is funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, or similar, for each of the countries involved. There are 23,000 sites worldwide: 1.7 million people commemorated, the youngest being 14 years and the oldest 68 years. There are 5,000 British employees: with 850 gardeners (Andy once being one of them); 160 craftsmen and women. Andy said the British plant brightly coloured flowers, whereas German War cemeteries are shaded by big oak trees. India has the most dead. All personnel connected with a war are eligible: Red Cross, St. John's Ambulance, Naafi employees, Merchant Navy, Navy, Air Force etc. etc.

Group visits to War Graves are common, especially to France and Belgium, particularly the Menin Gate, Ypres (Belgium) and Thiepval (France). The Menin Gate has 55,000 names and at 8 p.m. daily the Last Post is sounded.

World War II saw 500 new cemeteries created; and many British churchyards have random headstones of those who died in the UK. Still their names can go on official War Memorials.

Earthquake zones, like Gallipoli, have special headstones which won't be rocked and ruined.

Gardeners need to be aware of what flowers they use – not only bright, but as resistant as possible to animals etc. chewing them; therefore Kew and Wisley gardeners give advice.

Andy, your talk was very interesting and it made one think.

Thank you so much.

Rosemary Bond

NB. It should also be noted that TADS' 2018, 151-page book 'In Grateful Remembrance' by our Project Team (Richard Brown, Ian Burn, Neil Forde, Peter McNulty and Carol Stevens) is extremely comprehensive and gives details of Tadley war dead of WWI and II. The book is considered to be a major work and is very readable.



Tyne Cot Cemetery - a First World War Commonwealth cemetery in Belgium and, in terms of burials, it is the largest Commonwealth war cemetery in the world. The photo shows the immaculate way the CWG cemeteries are kept. *(Photo from History Hit).*

TADLEY AND DISTRICT HISTORY SOCIETY 2023 CALENDAR

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‘Carol will be delighted to sell you a calendar or more.’

Membership Subscriptions.

'TADS is no longer able to support online membership subscriptions or renewals (the technology defeated us!). Because of this, the committee has agreed to revert to its old annual subscription system. To help members and the Treasurer, we have introduced a membership form which combines a member's information and agreement on the use of member's data (often referred to as the GDPR requirement).

A copy of the form will be included with the AGM papers. Copies will also be available at TADS meetings and can be download from the TADS website.

We ask members to complete the form and return it, signed and dated, to TADS Treasurer, Christine Poile. The form includes a number of payment options, please follow the instructions for your chosen option.

Alternatively, you can renew your membership subscription when attending one of our forthcoming meetings in December 2022 or January 2023.

Many thanks. Christine Poile, TADS Treasurer.

Newsletters from other local history groups

We rare now regularly receiving newsletters and similar from other local groups such as the Basingstoke Heritage Society and the Basingstoke Archaeological and Historical Society. They do have some very interesting articles and photographs in them.

As they are now sent to us as pdf files, we can send them out to any of you who are interested at no cost. I will start a special email list of those who want to see them.

Please let me know if you want to be on this list. Mailings may be a bit random and it will be all or nothing. Of course you can opt out at any time just by sending me an email.

Richard

What's on? Events which may be of interest.

Milestones Museum is open. The website to buy admission tickets can be found at: <https://www.milestonesmuseum.org.uk/>

Their next special events - Christmas at Milestones until 23 Dec and Meet the Reindeer on 23 Dec.

The Willis Museum and Sainsbury Gallery

<https://www.hampshireculture.org.uk/willis-museum-and-sainsbury-gallery>:

Until 22 Jan. **Trinity Buoy Wharf Drawing Prize 2022**. An exhibition of the shortlist and winning drawings.

Friends of the Willis Museum (7.30pm at the Museum - Non-members £3, and book through the Museum on 01256 465902)

19 Jan 2023 - **The History of Kingsclere** by Richard Croft

Basingstoke Archaeological and Historical Society (7.30 at Church Cottage, Basingstoke)

12 Jan - Buildings of the Neolithic, Bronze Age and Anglo Saxons – recent works at **Butser Ancient Farm** by Trevor Creighton.

*The Committee wish everyone a Happy
Christmas and with best wishes for the
New Year.*

**TADS annual membership is £20 per person.
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