

40th Anniversary year
1984-2024.

December 2024

TADS Newsletter

Website - www.tadshistory.com

**Next Meeting - Monday 9th December 2024 at 8 pm, at
Baughurst and Heath End Village Hall, Heath End Road,
Baughurst RG26 5LU.**

‘TADS AGM and social’

Members are invited to attend the AGM. We do need sufficient attendance to meet the quorum requirements to make the AGM valid. A package of documents will be emailed to members before the meeting. If any of you are willing to join the committee you will be extremely welcome.

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. As usual drinks will be provided and members are asked to bring a contribution to the food, both savoury and sweet. Assistance with clearing up and cleaning crockery, etc. will be much appreciated

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:

Monday 13th January 2025 in Baughurst & Heath End Village Hall:

The Invisible Corps

By Roy Larkin (TADS Project Group)

TADS Last Meeting 11th November 2024

TADS 40th Anniversary - This meeting marked the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Tadley and District History Society. Before the start of the talk we celebrated with an excellent birthday cake.



Major Roller; Burberry and Gabardine

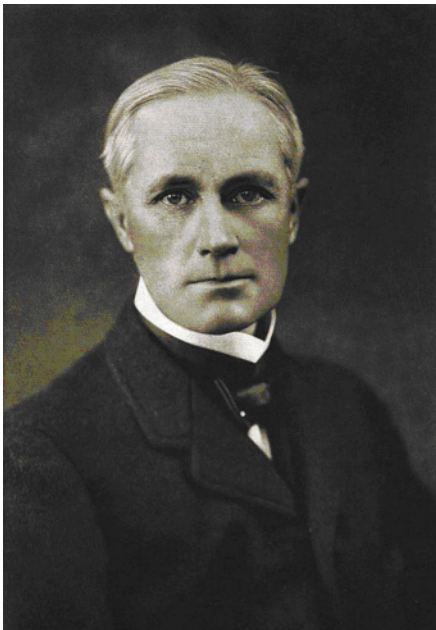
By Ian Burn (TADS Project Group)

Burberrys of Basingstoke made very specialised clothing material in the late 1800s which they called 'Gabardine'. The material was used for polar expeditions, etc.

Sadly at some point in 1905 the Basingstoke building was destroyed by fire. Luckily it was rebuilt in time to manufacture WWI's special clothing from gabardine. This material was strong, waterproof and made into trench coats, etc. for the military. The factory was opened in Basingstoke to manufacture this material and also in London's Haymarket for wartime use.

Ian said the name 'gabardine' had an aura about it, projecting modernity and reliability.

Major George Conrad Roller (1856-1941) was of German extraction. He studied at Lambeth Art School and became a lifelong friend of John Singer Sargent. He became known for his ability to restore portraits, in particular those damaged by the Suffragettes. He was also interested in military matters and had an active military career. Thomas Burberry and Roller initially became friends through their like of horses. Roller was eventually to become Burberry's illustrator for their advertising material, a job he did for 40 years.



George Roller DCM.

He was awarded a Distinguished Conduct Medal for action during the South African Boer War 1899 - 1902

Roller named one of his horses after the Burberry material. This mount, Gabardine (1881-1905), went with him to South Africa where Roller served in the Boer War. When the horse died, aged 25 years, he was buried in Roller's back garden at The Wilderness, Tadley Common, now called Tadley Court. The house was apparently once occupied by John Phillips a Royal gynaecologist. Several of the large houses in Tadley were 'occupied by famous people'. So Tadley's not quite so much of a back-of-beyond place after all.

Thank you Ian for your well-researched and interesting talk.

Rosemary Bond.



Cyclists near Tadley by George Roller circa 1910.
*This oil on board painting is almost monochrome and shows
Roller's ability to depict clothing and materials.*

A Spitfire crash at Aldermaston

Little bits of local history sometimes appear almost by magic. TADS colleague Roy Larkin was researching in the National Archives at Kew when he found a file marked Aldermaston Spitfire. He did not read it as it is outside his area of interest, WWI and more (TADS January 2025 talk), but copied it and later emailed it to me knowing of my interest in aviation, Spitfires and their Tadley/Aldermaston connections (TADS February talk).

The file actually dates to near the start of WWII and contains the official reports of the loss of an RAF Spitfire in the Aldermaston area. (It predates the opening of Aldermaston Airfield by nearly 2^{1/2} years). A map reference is given for the crash site but it is not in a format for which we have a map.

Exactly 85 years ago on the morning of 5th December 1939, 20 year old Pilot Officer John B H Nicholas of 65 squadron was on exercise flying in Spitfire Mk 1 Reg. K 9917 from RAF Northolt in West London. At 1400 ft altitude he flew into rain. He descended to 800 ft and then 300 ft looking for an improvement but the rain turned to snow and the controls started to ice up. While looking for an emergency landing site he lost all flying controls and flew into some trees at 140 mph. When he came to, he was upside down with the cockpit closed and in a tree. He opened the cockpit hood and released himself, falling clear as the aircraft caught fire. It was completely destroyed. The wings and engine had already broken off. A civilian found Nicholas and took him to the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading by car. He was treated for severe cuts and slight shock. A lucky young man to get off so lightly.

The aircraft was the 132nd Spitfire to be produced and first flew on 28th March 1939.

RGB



Spitfire K 9912 a
companion aircraft to
K 9917

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

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

Milestones Christmas events are in full swing - see their website.

The Willis Museum and Sainsbury Gallery

16 Nov. – 23 Feb. 2025: **Basingstoke's My Home**: Local Stories with Global Roots. This community curated exhibition celebrates different cultures and the diversity that makes Basingstoke such a special place to live.

15 Dec. 2 pm Sunday afternoon talk – **God Bless Us, Everyone** by Terri Reid. (followed by tea or coffee and cake) £7.00 and must be booked. To book go on-line at www.hampshireculture.org.uk/willis-museum, or call in, or phone 01256 465902.

Friends of the Willis Museum

No meeting this month.

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

9 Dec - Launch of their latest book 'The Early Story of Old Basing' followed by a talk - Sun Lane, New Alresford, excavations of a Bronze Age Funerary Site and Saxon Cemetery by Paul McCulloch.

NB. We understand that the BAHS meetings will be moving to another evening in the New year and will no longer clash with our own meetings.

***The Committee wish everyone a happy Christmas
and peaceful New Year.***

***TADS annual membership is £20 per person.
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