



April 2014

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

**Next meeting - Wednesday 16th April 2014
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30pm**

'The Ladies of the Tower of London'

By Tony Strafford

(Everybody welcome - visitors £2.50)

Bank of England Visit.

Carol has identified 4 possible dates: Friday 5th September; Monday 8th Sept; Tuesday 9th Sept; and Tuesday 16th Sept. She will ask for preferences at next week's meeting, so those who are interested please consult your diaries.

*Comments, queries and suggestions to Richard Brown (0118) 9700100,
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www.tadshistory.com

TADS Meeting 21st May 2014
‘The Ladies of the Tower of London’
By Tony Strafford

TADS last meeting - 19th March:

The 1914 Mobilisation

by Dan Allen, member of the Victorian Military Society

Speeding, speeding into what turned out to be a horrible war – WW1. Then as now, hurrying was the essence of winning a battle, and mobilisation was a short period of time from when war was declared and within 10 days the whole show could be on the road. Dan said nowadays it takes 3 years to muster the number of soldiers! 'Mobilisation' is a method of moving and arming them.

A regiment in the British Army means a number of battalions, which are the fighting units.

A peacetime Hampshire battalion comprised 22 officers and 750 men. In wartime: 30 officers and 992 men. In 1914 we had a small British Army (whereas the Italians had masses of men).

The Hampshire Regiments' soldiers wore a fleur-de-lys badge, the motif being then 'stolen' by Baden-Powell for the Boy Scout Movement.....

In 1914 the Hampshire Regiment's 1st Battalion was at Colchester. The 2nd Battalion in Mhow, India – a very hot place with large, low single-storey barracks and verandahs to keep the soldiers as cool as possible. The 3rd Battalion were Special Reservists, a training group not intended to fight. Then there were 5 Battalions of Territorials, all in Winchester. The 8th Battalion was

from the Isle of Wight and the 9th Battalion was the cyclists. There weren't many cars, the roads were bad, aeroplanes were in their infancy and the cyclists were intended as a scouting regiment.

All the Hampshire regiments had different cap and uniform badges historically selected according to where they were stationed e.g. the New Forest had Dog Gate badge (because big dogs had to be put down!) The cyclists had a bike wheel badge, They signed up for 12 years, no less, and after 7 years became Reservists – but done for desertion if they didn't reappear....

However, the Jersey Channel Island soldier didn't know where to go or what to do. A Middlesex Regiment officer didn't have any transport for his men, so he turfed off the passengers from a horse-drawn bus and commandeered that. The bayonets were taken separately by taxi to a Hatton Garden (London) jeweller to be sharpened!

Dan didn't mention the Royal Navy because their ships were already deployed. 'The Iron Duke' was on exercises. Winston Churchill was 1st Lord of the Admiralty and the First Sea Lord was Prince Louis of Battenburg (1854-1921), Lord Louis Mountbatten (1900-1979) was his son. Ships sailed from Scapa Flow located between Orkney and the Scottish mainland. The Royal Flying Corps (air force) was in its infancy then.

Edwardian era military accommodation was sometimes very limited and men slept on the floor if necessary. Instructions and threats were communicated by telegram.....

Transport was rather hit and miss, a Robertson's Golden Shred lorry was requisitioned, still in its original livery, and not green or khaki.

2 million Irish horses were requisitioned for officers only, in 1909. 25% of them were suitable as war horses and the owners were paid £4 per horse per year, which was deemed to be a good deal.

Some Hampshire regiments were sent to the notorious Gallipoli campaign in The Dardanelles area of Turkey.

The Territorials went to war 'for a few months' - but stayed for the duration 1914-1918. They had trained as and when, and had annual summer camps. That's how my maternal grandparents met when the girls ogled the boys from

the neighbouring villages. As a baker my grandfather had a reserved occupation so wasn't called up. They didn't have a BADGE, but a service **brooch**.

The Special Reservists had 6 months military training, then 2 weeks every year top-up, and they HAD to go anywhere in the then-British Empire.

In 1911, the Government had set up a War Book in readiness for any calamity to ensure essential facilities were guarded: docks and barracks and similar. Notices were posted in Post Offices telling men where to report in the case of war – Hampshire soldiers were sent to Winchester and mobilised within 10 days. Quicker than in this digital age, Dan said.

Once in Winchester they had a medical, and if fit were kitted out in uniform and boots and sent to Colchester. Unfit men were sent home.

By-the-way, swords were for ceremonial use only in WW1 and used by officers.

The Cyclists' Battalion was for **keen** cyclists. Their weapons were 303 rifles strapped to the bicycle crossbars and they worked on Salisbury Plain, moving quickly and cheaply over tracks and difficult terrain. In 1916 surprisingly they were sent to India and even on to Russian Siberia.

Sadly there aren't many photographs of the Hampshire regiments from WW1 Hampshire had 15 battalions in 1914 but 33 by 1918.

31 Men from Tadley, known to have been killed are recognised on the war memorial.

Those regular soldiers who survived were awarded three medals - the 1914 Mons Star, the 1914-15 Star and the British Defence Medal for 1915 onwards.

Dan, your lecture was absolutely packed with facts and fascinating anecdotes, making some sense of the awful WW1 in its centenary. Thank you.

Rosemary Bond.

Dan Allen is Publicity Officer and Newsletter Editor of the Newbury V.M..S. newsletter.editor@victorianmilitarysociety.org.uk

The Victorian Military Society is a registered charity formed to promote military history from 1830 - 31st December, 1914.

What's on? Events which may be of interest

Hampshire Record Office *For information ring 01962846154 or see
www3.hants.gov.uk/whatson-hro*

Milestones Museum. For coming events: Tel. 01256 477766 or see:
www3.hants.gov.uk/milestones/whatson

A special exhibition - LEGO ® Lost World Zoo to 27 Apr.

Willis Museum - The museum is running an ever changing series of special exhibitions in the Sainsbury Gallery., including:

Paul Kidby Discworld and Beyond, Saturday 05 Apr to Saturday 28 Jun. Paul is best known as the illustrator for Terry Pratchett s Discworld books. He is also holding Adult Master classes and family workshops in Illustration during April and June. For details contact the museum on 08456035635.

Friends of the Willis Museum (7.30pm at the museum)

April 17: Winning World War I: the story of the Hejaz Railway and Lawrence of Arabia, by Richard Tanner

May 15: 'Confessions' Of a Professional Genealogist, by Ken Smallbone of the Hampshire Genealogical Society .

Basingstoke Archaeological & History Society (7.30 at Church Cottage)

8th May - 'Archaeology and Folklore' by Alex Godden,
Archaeology Officer – West Berks

Tadley WEA - Their next course is **Venice** from 9.45am – 11.45am

Friday May 9th – Friday June 13th with tutor Glenis Kerr Elliott
at the Ambrose Allen Centre, Tadley. Course fee: £39.50

For further details please contact: Jan Smith 0118 983 2251
jancsmith@btopenworld.com

A big vote of thanks to Vicky Ward.

Vicky has for several years typed up Rosemary's Meeting Reports so that I can edit them into the Newsletter. She is having to give up because of problems with her hands.

We are very fortunate that Ann Broad is going to take on the task. Ann is a very good typist and she can read Rosemary's writing.

World War I Project.

The Project Group is making good progress with researching the 31 men named on the Tadley War Memorial which is located in front of St. Paul's Church on the Green.

We have had serious problems trying to identify exactly who some of them were, particularly where the available records have two or more men of the same surname and initial. In some cases it has also taken a long time to establish a connection with Tadley.

What we would like to know is how the memorial was funded and how the names to go on it were selected. We have found several men who would have a good claim to be named yet aren't. If you have any useful information please let us know.

Another thing you might not know about World War 1.

The usual perception is that our soldiers on the Western Front spent all their time in the mud and squalor of the trenches. It is not generally true.

From 1915 there was an increasing rotation of the men at the front so that they spent a few days in the trenches, time in rear supporting positions, time in reserve, time travelling, and time on leave including return to home. But there were exceptions. One West Yorkshire Battalion spent 70 days in the Loos sector of the Front Line in 1915.

For more information read 'Tommy' by Richard Holmes.

***TADS annual membership is £12 per person.
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