

THE SWINDON SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER APRIL 2017



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Welcome to the April issue of the Swindon Society Newsletter.

We are now starting to see the days lengthen and feel the warmth of the Spring sun. Hope you are managing to get out and about and enjoy the lovely weather. It is not long until our Summer outing and tickets will only be available until the end of April. Please buy as soon as possible so as not to be disappointed and miss out on this trip.

This evening we welcome Graham Carter. Graham is giving the Society a presentation on Denis Bird's photographic collection. Denis was a founder member of the Society and also a keen photographer. He had a way of taking photographs in a completely different way. I am sure that the evening will be interesting and revealing of Denis' work.

With Easter fast approaching I hope that you have a lovely time with your friends and family. As it is so late this year it will be a good long and welcome break for a lot of people. The Christmas holidays seem so far away. Tony and myself will be spending a few days in Delft in Holland and are looking forward to some relaxation and no doubt we will see lots of brightly coloured tulips and windmills!

One piece of sad news I have to tell you is that this will be my penultimate newsletter. It has not been an easy decision to make. If anybody would like to take over the newsletter production, please can they let any member of the Committee know. Without the newsletter a communication link will be lost.

HAPPY EASTER TO YOU ALL

SWINDON SOCIETY SUMMER OUTING

WEDNESDAY 14 JUNE 2017

6.30 FOR 7.00 PM

Come and join your Committee and Friends for a trip on a steam train at the Swindon and Cricklade Railway, Blunsdon

Tickets will be £10.00 per person

Refreshments will be available

Easy access to the train

This outing is extended to your friends and family and not restricted to Society members

LAST CHANCE TO BUY TICKETS WILL BE 30 APRIL 2017

Tickets will be available at monthly meetings or by sending a sae with your cheque to Nicky Shackell, 7 Claremont Court, Whitworth Road, Swindon, SN25 3AS



LAWS GRIND THE POOR ...

Poverty and workhouses in Wiltshire

Saturday 6 May 2017

10 am – 4 pm Bromham Village Social Centre

<http://bromhamsocialcentre.co.uk>

Talks during the day on life under the 'old' (pre-1834) poor laws; resistance to the New Poor Law; Warminster Union, Highworth and Swindon Poor Law Union; Poor Law Union Correspondence at the National Archives.

Cost £7.00 (Tea, coffee and cake included – bring your own lunch)

Book via Claire.skinner@wiltshire.gov.uk 01249 705510

Wiltshire Local History Forum Spring 2017

OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

22 April Friends of Steam, Steam Museum 14:00
Andy Binks will be presenting his talk on 35/-

10 June Wiltshire Family History Society Open Day at Steam

SWINDON SOCIETY

PROGRAMME FOR 2016-2017

2017

12 Apr Denis Bird's Swindon Archive Graham Carter

10 May AGM followed by
 Swindon's Finest? Your Committee

14 Jun Summer Outing TBA

We meet at 19.30 on the second Wednesday of the month at Goddard Park School, Welcombe Avenue, Swindon, SN3 2QN (except June, July and August).

EVENTS APRIL TO JUNE 2017

Rodbourne Community History Group 7.00 pm

For details of meetings contact Gordon Shaw on 01793 616558 or email secretay@rodbourehistory.org

Chiseldon Local History Group – 7.30 pm

19 April *Lawrence of Arabia 'The Man behind the myth'* by John Winterburn

17 May *Salisbury Cathedral* the making and unmaking of a masterpiece by Christopher Rogers

21 Jun *The Story of the Iron Age in Wiltshire* by Bob Clarke

From 1 April 2017, Chiseldon Museum will be open every Saturday from 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm until October. Admission is free. Displays the year include The Ridgeway Theatre Co and details of the Chiseldon men who died in the Great War in 1917.

Highworth Historical Society – 7.30 pm

24 April *The Mat Factory in Highworth* by Dr Bryan Lawton

22 May *The Frome Hoard* by David Crisp

Wiltshire Family History Society – 7.15 pm

13 April *The Cravens and Ashdown House* by John Farrow

27 April AGM

11 May *Courtesans, Carrots and Culture* by Mark Collisson

25 May *One Place Studies* by Kirsty Gray

8 Jun *Was your ancestor a Gypsy? Researching Romany Ancestors*
By Beverley Walker

22 Jun *GWR Factory Trail* by Gordon Shaw

Radnor Street Cemetery Guided Walks – 1.45 pm

9th April, 14th May, 11th June, 9th July, 13th August, 10th September and 8th October

For more details, look on Facebook and Twitter/Phone 07968 246792

ON THIS DAY IN SWINDON AND DISTRICT

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|---------------|---|
| 2 April 1951 | First floodlit match at the County Ground. Swindon Town FC beat Bristol City 2-1. |
| 4 April 1989 | BBC Wiltshire Sound launched from studios at Prospect Place in Swindon |
| 6 April 2003 | David Hempleman-Adams became the first man to ski solo and unsupported to the Geomagnetic North Pole. |
| 9 April 1806 | Isambard Kingdom Brunel, engineer and builder of the Great Western Railway and Box Tunnel was born in Portsmouth. |
| 10 April 1930 | South Marston-born Alfred Williams, the "Hammerman Poet", died at Ranikhet, the house he built in South Marston. |
| 17 April 1960 | Eddie Cochran, who crashed on Rowden Hill in Chippenham, died at St Martin's Hospital in Bath. |
| 20 April 1206 | King John granted the charter to hold weekly market and annual fair in Highworth on Feast of St Michael (29 th September). |
| 25 April 1904 | <i>Checkmate</i> by Andrew Halliday was the first production by the GWR (Swindon) Mechanics' Institute Amateur Theatrical Society. |
| 27 April 1932 | Forty-six men on the Swindon Employment Exchange register were engaged to dig potatoes by the Jersey Farmers' Union, the first time in sixty years that non-French workers had been employed. |
| 30 April 1887 | Harold Fleming, one of Swindon Town FC's greatest players, was born in Downton. |

STROLLING AROUND SWINDON WITH DAVID BEDFORD

For our meeting on Wednesday 8th March, David Bedford invited us for a virtual Stroll Around the Town in Time. David was looking at Swindon in the early 1980s.

Our first port of call was to 66 Manchester Road. This shop had stopped in time in the late 1970s when Mr Brain died, his wife shut the shop and it never opened its doors again. The shop stayed exactly as it was, the window displays never changing, fruit tins corroding and exploding and dust gathering. Nothing was touched until Mrs Brain died at the age of 95 in 2003. The next person to enter the shop was the Estate Agent to value the premises for sale. Mrs Brain retired to the flat above and lived the life of a Spartan hermit with no hot water, telephone or heating with an outside toilet and no bathroom. How many people walked by and wondered why the shop was left as it was? It was as though the proprietor had just stepped out and was to return shortly. Sadly, other places in Swindon have not been left as they once were and are now unrecognisable to their original state.



66 Manchester Road

If you walk down Edgware Road via Sanford Street to College Street, you are walking behind the old Woolworths, back of Regent Street and then to Tesco's. However, if you go back in time it would be a completely different picture. You would then see St Paul's Church (relocated to Covingham), rows of houses (pulled down to make way for a car park), Sanford Street Congregational Church (demolished in the late 1970s) and the only original building standing is Sanford Street Boys' School which is now home to the Citizens' Bureau. What a difference the changes have made to these streets.



Sanford Street Congregational Church

So, the next time you take the shortcut from The Parade to Regent Street take time to think about the community which lived there. The hustle and bustle of daily life has been lost for ever with people living on the doorstep of the shops, schools and churches and the men not having far to walk to work in the Works.

Strolling in Swindon can be very thought provoking and make you wonder what was there before and the lost stories of what happened. If you wish to find out more visit the Local Studies section in Central Library and if you want photographic evidence the Swindon Society has an extensive collection.

Thank you, David, for another excellent presentation.

Nicky Shackell April 2017

PURTON & THE GREAT WAR

Purton Remount Depot commemorative sculpture

The sculpture commissioned by Purton & The Great War has been installed & will be available for public viewing from Saturday the 8th April from 1200 hours at the entrance to The Pear Tree hotel.

Between 12 & 2 pm on the 8th Bob Lloyd will on site with the 1917 Purton ceramic poppies to answer any questions you may have about either of these projects or indeed anything Great War, not just Purton specific.

Mrs Young & her family at the Pear Tree have kindly agreed for the sculpture to be placed there overlooking the fields that formed part of the Purton Depot. If you are going to pop along at any time please be considerate to the fact that Hotel guests will be coming & going, Mrs Young is more than happy for public access to the sculpture that is located to the left hand side of the entrance.

If walking please take care, there is no defined public footpath, if driving please be considerate to the hotel guests when parking.

Maybe combine your visit with a delicious cream tea, available daily (except Monday) between 3 & 5 pm. Contact The Pear Tree direct on 01793 772100 for details.



The Animals in War Memorial, Park Lane, London

The Swindon Society would like to extend a big thank you to The Property Shop for the printing of this newsletter and their continued help and support



A Man with a Pic

Ornate Ironwork used for what, and when



Written, Verbal, Text answers please to Andy on 07968246792 or email ambamwas@yahoo.com

Last month's answer



Drove Road School clock was stopped for years, restarted for a while about 4 years ago. Now stopped..... Forever?

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

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