

Good Evening

Thank you to Andy Binks for his talk on "An Album of Camp Photographs". I wasn't sure by the title what the talk would be about and didn't imagine it would be about the connection between Swindon Schools and Marlborough College. As I didn't realise there was one. However I found Andy's presentation as always interesting and informative.

Tonight we have our AGM and an Evening of Views from the Archives.

Please see page 5 regarding the move to Goddard Park School. Next month is normally an evening visit but with the move your Committee have decided to hold the next meeting there so you can become acquainted with the building and car parks in the daylight.

Bob Townsend is getting the 2014-15 programme prepared and there are still some spaces for speakers. If anybody has a programme subject they would like to hear about or know a speaker who could give a talk please contact Bob.

Look forward to seeing you all again next month.

Nicola Shackell May 2014

Deadline for the next newsletter 23rd May 2014

Many thanks to The Property Shop, for their sponsorship of the printing of the Newsletter.

Meeting Wednesday 9th April 2014

We had a lovely spring day, sunny, but the wind was chilly and it was dry.

Kevin welcomed us all, pointed out the fire exits and told us what to do in the event of a fire. We now have two Fire Marshalls – Perry Barrett and Tony Shackell.

Kevin also reminded us that the May meeting is our AGM, we are still one member short on the Committee and welcome nominations for the post, forms are available at the entrance.

Andy told us that Joyce Mugatroyd is doing quite well and carers visit twice daily. I rang her to see if she wanted to come tonight but she didn't feel quite ready yet, but hopes to see us all again soon.

An Album of Camp Photographs – Andy Binks

Once again Andy kept details of his presentation something of a mystery, so the history of Marlborough and Swindon Camp Club was about an organisation many of the audience would have been unaware of. I knew of the existence of it as I worked in the same office with one of the members who still played Table Tennis for them, and his friends often contacted him there, but was unaware of when it began or why, until Andy's talk began to unfold, then I became aware of how it played a large part in founding the Youth Centres of my generation. Where are they now?

The show opened with a field of poppies so setting the scene of World War 1, of which this year is the centenary and we will always have memories of the horrors of the trenches to see in the next few months. It is always hard to find something good to come from such devastation, but that is where the idea was born. Mr Flecker a master at Marlborough College served in France and witnessed men and boys from all walks of life living, fighting and dying shoulder by shoulder, side by side, sons of the nobility, college boys, errand boys, farm labourers, there in battle all men equal. He thought long and hard about this, if they had to be together in war why couldn't they enjoy leisure together and discover sports, the countryside and different ways of life? He shared his thoughts with Sir Cyril Norwood who was the Head of Marlborough College who was very encouraging and supportive and gave it his blessing. When the war ended in 1918 there was so much unrest among returning servicemen and so many lives had been lost. Sir Cyril wrote to the Swindon Education Committee and Mr A F Bullock who was then head of Jennings Street School was approached to consider this new social venture.

The first camp took place in 1922 when 50 boys from Swindon Elementary Schools were selected. A list of items to take which included pyjamas or a nightshirt and signed consent from parents was required. The boys were given a canvas sack or paillasse which they filled with straw to sleep on, but the staff had proper beds with pillow cases and sheets. The boys were divided into 'houses' consisting of Swindon and Marlborough boys. Rueben George, the Mayor of Swindon, opened the camp which also included George Brunger who established the Youth Hostels Association in Swindon. Inter house sports featured in the camp events and teams from the Camp Club competed in local leagues in the 1940s and 50s. In 1923 a smallpox outbreak in Swindon caused the camp to be cancelled, but it grew in strength until 90 local boys were attending the camp each year.

Club meetings were held at Toc H in Charlotte Mews Old Town, later moving to the Station House near Old Town Station and sports were held on a field in Marlborough Lane. We saw a picture of Mr Flecker with a megaphone at one of the sports days in 1929. Concerts by the boys and leaders were held and we saw the boys outside Bowns Mineral Water Works in Lagos Street enjoying bottles of pop. The Camp was again cancelled from 1939 until 1946 due to World War II. By 1950 Youth Centres were established and the Marlborough-Swindon Camp Club was disbanded in 1960. Some of the Camp Club leaders were involved in running the Youth Centres, James (Jammy) Davies was one and Ralph Smith led a boys club at Jennings Street School on Friday nights. I belonged to a girls club there on Thursdays run by Miss Sprittles. Sadly one Friday night Ralph Smith collapsed and died there and the boys amalgamated with the girls on Thursdays, we were about 15 then and found this a very acceptable arrangement!

Jean Allan April 2014

THE EARLY DAY OF CYCLING

Friday 11 April found Bob Townsend giving a presentation to “The Great Western Society” at Lawn Community Centre.

Wheels that changed the world

It liberated women, spread promiscuity and even changed the course of human evolution. Yes it’s the Humble bicycle, which in a radio poll taken in 2005 was voted the greatest technical adventure of the past two centuries.

The subject of women cyclists wearing “Rational Dress” ie bloomers was covered. Then the journey took us through from the “Hobby Horse” (the first bicycle of 1817), the McMillan Bicycle, Boneshaker, Penny Farthing to the Modern (Safety) Bicycle of today and the uses were covered – racing, Youth Hostelling, family outings, pleasure, visits by the Midwife, Post Office deliveries, their uses in warfare and much more!

Hobby Horse “schools” were set up to teach people how to ride. Only the Fops/Dandies could afford these machines as they cost the princely sum of 10 guineas. Many cartoons appeared of the “Dandies” in their finery including Royalty with their lady friends!!

Lively group participation was in evidence throughout the evening.

GODDARD PARK SCHOOL

The Swindon Society has gone from strength to strength in recent years, so much so that we have outgrown The Broadgreen Centre and no longer consider it a viable meeting place. It certainly served its purpose and was a popular venue. In order for the Society to continue to grow the need to identify a venue with greater capacity at a reasonable cost has been a major concern for your Committee. Consequently, we have investigated many alternative venues in and around Swindon. There have been many stumbling blocks along the way, but we now firmly believe that we have found a venue that provides all the amenities we require, including ample car parking, excellent technical equipment and kitchen facilities that meet our needs.

Your Committee have worked very hard during the past couple of years to find an alternative venue for the Society’s monthly meetings and now that we have secured a long term agreement for the use of the main hall with the School, we shall start using the new venue permanently with effect from the September 2014 meeting. In order to familiarise everyone with the new venue we shall not be having our usual outing in June this year but wish to invite you all to come and view the facilities on offer at Goddard Park School. You can have a look around the site and ask any questions on issues that may concern you. We shall also have an on screen presentation by Dave Bedford. There will also be no cost to our members for the evening.

I understand that not everyone likes a change and perhaps some people will not be too happy about the move, but we have to move forward. In the past our membership dipped

slightly when we moved from Drove School to St Aldhems in Edgware Road and then again when we left there to go to the Broadgreen Centre. It is very likely that some members will not rejoin the Society for 2014/15 and beyond but, please be assured that we have not taken the decision lightly. Many of you have expressed your concern at the car parking facilities at Broadgreen and the surrounding area, as have some of our visitors. Indeed, we are aware of some visitors and potential new members coming along only to find that they have been unable to park close by and have consequently returned home rather disappointed at not being able to attend a talk that they were specifically interested in!

As a result of securing the new venue, we shall be able to retain our membership fees at the same rates they have been for many years now. If we had stayed at Broadgreen, the fees would most certainly have had to go up for 2014/15, as Swindon Borough Council increased the hire rates quite substantially. They later changed the times of hire. On both occasions we were not even consulted, simply being told of them after we had made our bookings. Please be aware that at Goddard Park School there are three car parks to use, "A", "B" and "C".

"A" is solely to be used by those members who have, and display, a blue badge disabled permit and the guest speaker due to the very limited number of spaces there. This car park is situated directly outside the main school entrance. Please make your Committee aware of your qualification for this concession.

"B" is located just to the left of the main entrance as you face it and has capacity for about 20 cars.

"C" is by far the largest car park and is located off Buckland Close which in turn is located off Lyndhurst Crescent.

Please see the map enclosed.

Welcombe Avenue is on the main number 17 bus route from Swindon Town Centre. You get off and then back on at the bus stop just past the school. We have also provided the bus times for your convenience. (see page 8).

Despite all this now might be an ideal time to consider car sharing. I am happy to compile and coordinate a list of those drivers willing to pick up and drop off members who live close to them.

We sincerely hope that you will move with us enabling The Swindon Society to continue to be a popular source of information, to retain its reputation as a friendly organisation, to maintain its associations with many other groups in the Town and to continue to offer you, our members, excellent value for money for many years to come.

Therefore we look forward to welcoming you all to Goddard Park School on 11th June, but if you cannot attend then, we very much hope to see you there in September.

Kevin Bizley, Chairman May 2014

SAM ALLEN SWINDON TOWN'S SECRETARY MANAGER

Further to the report in last month's newsletter regarding the restoration of Swindon Town's longest serving manager's grave, it has been reported in the Swindon Advertiser recently that a cheque for £1,400 has been presented to Dick Mattick by Royal Wootton Bassett Funeral Directors, Johnson & Daltrey. This has bought the fund up to £2,500 and the restoration works can now begin in earnest with the aim for an August rededication service.

RADNOR STREET CEMETERY

Frances Bevan has advised the Society that the following events will be taking place at the cemetery

- 22nd May Evening walk at 6.30 pm
21st Jun Swindon in the Great War display and Walks at 11.00 am and 2.00 pm
17th Aug Swindon in the Great War Exhibition from Local Societies and Walks at 11.00 am and 2.00 pm

To book places on the walks please contact Frances on 875416.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

May

- 8th **Historical Society of Royal Wootton Bassett – 7.30 pm**
God for Harry, England and St George – Martin Way
- 8th **Wiltshire Family History Society – 7.30 pm**
Finding a Missing Person – Records of Adoption – Claire Skinner
- 15th **Fairford History Society – 7.30 pm**
Swinedown to Swindon: a town on a hill – Robert Townsend
- 15th **Purton Historical Society – 7.30 pm**
Lights for Learning – Roger Mugridge
- 16th **Friends of Steam Railway Museum – 7.15 pm**
The Harry R Roberts Memorial Lecture
- 17th **The Full English Archive Day 2.00 pm to 4.30 pm**
Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, Chippenham
See below for further details
- 21st **Central Library – 1.00 pm to 4.00 pm**
Drop in session by Wiltshire Family History Society
- 21st **Chiseldon Local History Group – 7.30 pm**
Avebury between the monuments – Dr Nick Smashall
- 22nd **Wiltshire Family History Society – 7.30 pm**
PLEASE NOTE THIS IS AT GORSE HILL BAPTIST CHURCH
The Fair Sex – Women and the GWR
- 28th **Rodbourne History Group – 7.00 pm**
Industrial Archaeology in your Garage, Shed or Attic – Bill King

June

12th Historical Society of Royal Wootton Bassett – 7.30 pm

To mark the centenary of the outbreak of war in Europe this is a two speaker session -
“The Uniform of the Tommy” – Tony Crump and “The Cradle of Military Aviation” –
Bob Clarke

12th Wiltshire Family History Society – 7.30 pm

Potted Highworth – The History of a Wiltshire Town – Jo Clark

18th Chiseldon Local History Group – 7.30 pm

A D-Day story from Royal Wootton Bassett – Malcolm Holland

25th Rodbourne History Group – 7.00 pm

Trafalgar, The Men, The Battle – Martin Collisson

26th Wiltshire Family History Society – 7.30 pm

Highworth Walkabout

LOCAL EVENTS – if you fancy getting out and about

9th May 2014 – Old Woods, New Woods – 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm

Discover and explore two of Swindon’s lesser known woods. This two mile evening stroll will take you around an ancient bluebell wood and then as a comparison one in its infancy. Please wear stout footwear. Meet at Croft Sports Centre car park. Book in advance on 01793 490150 or swindonrangers@swindon.gov.uk.

11th May 2014 – Up on the Hill – 11.30 am to 3.00 pm

A look around the many parks clustered around the hill in Old Town, history and beauty, all linked with green routes which connect them. Return to the Town Gardens in time to catch the Big Brunch Band to end the day with some music. Please wear stout footwear, bring a drink and a snack. Meet at Old Town Gardens Bandstand. Book in advance on 01793 490150 or swindonrangers@swindon.gov.uk.

17th May 2014 – The Full English Archive Day 2.00 pm to 4.30 pm

Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, Cocklebury Road, Chippenham

This is a rare opportunity to access some of the Alfred Williams manuscripts that are held at the centre. There will be illustrated talks about folk music collecting, as well as the Full English project and its development by author and folklorist Steve Roud and English Folk Dance and Song Society Library Director Malcolm Taylor OBE.

The event is free but places are limited. They can be reserved at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-full-english-archive-day-tickets-10550397523>.

Programme 2013 -2014

2014

May 14th AGM plus an Evening of Views from the Archives

June 11th Visit to Goddard Park School

All meetings begin at 7.30 on the second Wednesday of the month from September through to May. We meet at Broadgreen Centre, Salisbury Street, Swindon.

No 17 Bus Times from Penhill to Goddard Park School

Penhill	1817	1832
Gorse Hill	1827	1842
Fleming Way [R]	1840	1855
Goddard Park	1856	1911

Return bus leaves at 2040 and 2110.

Remember you get on bus at stop you got off at.