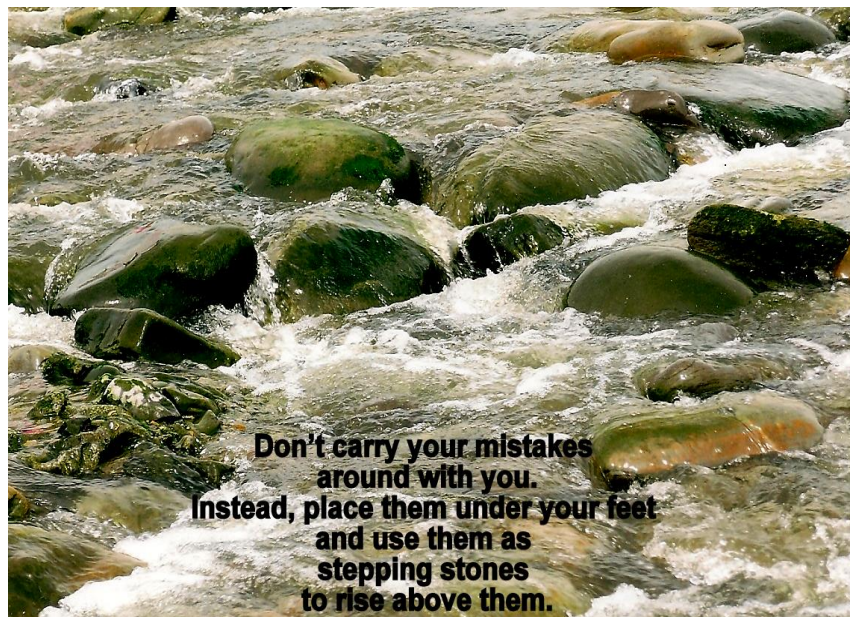


Wiltshire Family History Society, Swindon Branch, January 2024

MEETINGS REMINDER – see below for further details

Thursday 11 January 2024 – Getting the most from the new Family History website

Thursday 25 January – Love, tragedy and two World Wars



**Don't carry your mistakes
around with you.
Instead, place them under your feet
and use them as
stepping stones
to rise above them.**

Maybe something that family history researchers should take note of?

A NEW YEAR – TIME TO LOOK AGAIN AT OUR FAMILY TREES?

It's cold outside
We're warm inside
Cosy and warm with a cuppa in hand.
What better time
To relax and research
OUR FAMILY

The stories we may unravel.
New relations that we may find.
What were they like and
What did they do
Close-by or far-away
OUR FAMILY

A THOUGHT FOR THE NEW YEAR

The journalist Frank Gardner who was shot in the back by terrorists and paralysed said he was told:

“Don't waste your emotional energy on the things you used to be able to do. You've done all those things. Concentrate on the things that you still can do and still want to do, and that is liberating to the spirit”. Thanks to Judy Rouse for sending this in.

JOHN'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE

Blimey 2024, what happened to 2023 or the 2020s, in fact this century. Time seems to go so quickly. So, I mustn't waste mine or yours.

Some things I must do this year is to tidy up my family tree and the paperwork that goes with it. Write those little stories about members of the family. Sort out those photos in numerous files and get that damned laptop/notebook I have been threatening to do for years.

Happy New Year to you all and don't forget to share your family/local history stories.

JOHN MILLS

WHAT'S COMING UP

Thursday 11 January via Zoom – Getting the most from the new Family Search website - John Hanson

Thursday 25 January at The Central Community Centre, Emlyn Square - Love, Tragedy and Two World Wars - Gordon Shaw and David Lewis

This is a story of a young Swindonian girl born in the eighteen hundreds in Stratton who lives through the first world war, a tragedy, the depression of the 1920/30s and being a mother. The story covers her life in Swindon and London and how Bombay has a big impact on her life. Also talks about the Great Western and Indian railways. Through a series of Powerpoint slides you will be guided through happiness, sadness and a journey to India. **MARGARET NEAVES**



Free Family History Drop-In Session

Monday 15th January - 2pm-3:30pm

Local Studies - Central Library

Want to look into family history but don't know where to start, or perhaps you need help with research you've already started?

Volunteers from the Wiltshire Family History Society will be on hand to help with researching your family history - locally and elsewhere

We have online facilities we can use at Local Studies including Find my Past, Ancestry and the British Newspaper Archive.



For those researching locally, you can also discover the physical... directories, poll books, electoral rolls & more.

Learn what online resources are available, how to interpret certificates and how to draw up your own family tree.



For further information:

swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk or ring 01793 822310.

REPORTS

SWINDON AS IT NEVER WAS – or What Swindon Didn't Do!

Thursday 24 November at The Central Community Centre – Jon Ratcliffe

We welcomed Jon Ratcliffe back for another great, informative and fun talk. This time he covered some of Swindon's failed plans. Unrecognisable almost – beautiful artist impressions/drawings, plans and models to show how it was envisaged Swindon should be and look. Pie in the sky, or perhaps walkways in the sky – overhead walkways anyway. For example:

- 1980s - re-development of the Railway Works with piazza and planned complex. The arches along Rodbourne Road shown as being knocked through and interior opened up from there.

- The Wyvern Theatre, opened by the Queen in 1971, was to be part of a Civic Hall complex. The site would have covered an area from Temple Street through to Queen's Park with flyovers and subways. It never happened.
- 1990s – suggestion for a business park in the Coate Water area. Dismissed
- To the right of Day House Lane by Coate Water – a championship golf course.



The Brunel Centre entrance at the end of Havelock Street. Picture courtesy of Jon Ratcliffe.

1990s - initial plans were somewhat different from today's Brunel Centre.

Brunel's statue would have been inside a planned arcade atrium, theme pub, children's experience centre, castle and even a ship!

There would have been a large open space at the bottom of Havelock Street.

- 2006 – top of Regent Street comprising the exterior of the Baptist Tabernacle, a new art gallery and museum and more. It was to be a massive (almost unbelievable) new complex with underground units and car-parking, roof top gardens and overhead walkways connecting up to the Brunel Centre.
- A new library for Swindon – possibly on the site of the Savoy Cinema or Sanford House.

The model of the Chinese Experience at Peatmoor Lagoon in West Swindon. Picture courtesy of Jon Ratcliffe.

Swindon's Chinese Experience – the largest Chinese building outside China in the world.



- The David Murray John Building. He was inspirational in getting new industry into Swindon. Some of these industries, in turn, promoted the benefits of Swindon in their advertisements.

Thank you Jon for another great talk.

NOTE: 13 February 2008 – Plans to transform the Old Town Locarno building were approved by councillors. Some residents had objected to the height of the development and said the proposal to build 129 flats on the site would add to existing pressure on car parking in the area. But Swindon Council's planning committee gave the project the green light. ???????

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION (CWGC) – WFHS Virtual Talk, Tuesday 28 November 2023 – Graham Grist

23,000 locations around the world

1.7 million Service Men and Women commemorated

Youngest 14. Oldest 68.

Founded by 6 nations – UK largest contributor

Relevant dates: 04.08.1914 – 31.08.1921 and 03.09.1939 – 31.12.1947

Started with Sir Fabian War, and by Royal Charter

The UK decided not to repatriate and those who died are buried in the country where they fell. Some, for example those who were wounded, brought home and then died, are buried as close as possible to home. They are commemorated by name (where possible) on a headstone with no distinction of rank or status. The cemeteries are cared for by the CWGC often with a small plot of 'garden' for each headstone. What that is like depends on the country of burial.

Headstones are now made of Portland Stone and machine-made, although originally hand carved. Inscriptions (again where possible) contain the Regimental Badge, death date and age if known, religious emblem eg cross or star-of-David and a personal inscription wherever possible. Many names are unknown and described as 'known unto God'.

Some cemeteries may contain a 'Cross of Sacrifice' or 'Stone of Remembrance' and are for all faiths or none. There are numerous war memorials.

The work of the CWGC is on-going, continuing to discover, re-bury and re-dedicate with full military honours. Occasionally DNA can assist in discovering names. In order to preserve memorials, these days no chemicals are used and wreaths are biodegradable.

The CWGC has an archive which continues to be updated with information, photos etc. Under the heading of 'For Evermore', it encourages families to share stories of their lost ones.

FUN, FOOD AND FROLICS – well a quiz actually!!

Thanks to Margaret Neaves, our programme secretary, for arranging a lovely Christmas get-together for us on Thursday 14 December. Lots of laughter at the quiz questions, lots of lovely food – bring-and-share, and a Christmassy raffle organised by Stella Sheppard, our treasurer.

FROM LAST TIME – KINGSDOWN HOUSE

The following was written by Eileen Griffin in 1935 (possibly not quite word-for-word) but gives a little more detail about Kingsdown House before it was demolished to make way for the crematorium. The last paragraph is so significant. Does anyone know who Eileen Griffin was?

"It is approached through a fine park and stands in its own grounds.

It has 12 chimneys of the usual Tudor design and mullioned windows. The outside is grey and mellowed with age. Round the house is a small moat which is now covered with grass. The

ceilings are very high and some of the older floors have been replaced by modern ones. The door is of stout oak studded with nails. Just inside the front door there is a large hall and on each wall there are huge candle sticks which are used as ornaments. There is a room where they play table-tennis and opposite there is a room where they hold parties.

This manor will still be standing when other more recent structures have crumbled away. “
Written by Eileen Griffin 1935.

Within about two hours of circulating our last newsletter, Nigel Chalk, Online Parish Clerk for Stratton St Margaret, wrote with lots more family history information about Kingsdown House. Below is a list of servants who lived there with David and Hannah Archer and then Hugh and Patricia Chomeley. PLEASE TAKE A LOOK AND SEE IF ANY OF YOUR RELATIVES ARE THERE. Let us know on swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk

1841 census

Sarah Bowman
Mary Pipkin
William Hiscock
Joseph Bean

1851 census

Elias Smith, house servant
Mary Ann Pipkin, cook
William Hiscock, groom
Jane Fowler, housemaid

1861-1895

Jesse Smith
George Archer
W H Bailey
Mary Ann Pipkin
Elizabeth Oakley
Catherine L Edmonds

(Sir Charles Wombwell and wife were visiting.)

1871 census servants

Eliza Rice, cook
John Loveday, butler
Sarah Chapman, housemaid
James Tuckwell, indoor servant
George Archer, Coachman

1881 census

Eliza Dodd, cook
Eliza Rice, housemaid
William Tuckwell, coachman

1891 census

Elizabeth Bowles
Sarah Ann Payne
William Tuckwell

1901 census (David had died by this time)

Edith Penson, companion
Mary Poole, parlourmaid
Martha Stephens, cook
William Tuckwell, coachman

1911 census with Hugh & Patricia Chomeley (retired tea planter)

Alice Jonasmure, cook
Betha Rust, parlourmaid
Edith Rust, housemaid
Edith Maslin, housemaid
Henrietta Neumeyer, maid

CAN ANYONE HELP WITH THE FOLLOWING?

Again, with thanks to Nigel Chalk for much of this information

Known residents of Kingsdown House:

1810 David Archer, JP, demolished the Elizabethan House and built another on the site.

Did Richard Biggs who died in 1822, live in Kingsdown House when first built and then David Archer himself from at least 1841 – until Hannah's death in 1903?

Lt. Col. David Archer and his wife Hannah. David died 1895. Hannah Archer died 1903.

Contents sold by auction in January 1904 and Hugh S Chomeley (retired tea planter) lived there 1904 – 1915.

The 1922 Kelly's directory shows that Major Llewellyn Heywood Jones owned the house. He moved to Lynch Farm, Wanborough in 1927.

1930s and 40s Lt Col Bevil Langton Birley DSO owned the house.

1948 Kingsdown House put up for auction. The 1948 Street Directory shows a J M Bailey living there.

1951 and 1959 Street directory – CSJ Titcombe there. Daughter Diana says they lived in the servants quarters (not sure if they bought it – she had been born in Hyde Road). She thinks that a Capt Hart/Haart/Heart lived in the actual house.

1954 Mr & Mrs T C Brian lived there – served with compulsory purchase order. Could this be Terence Charles Cyril Brian who died 1872 and shown as being of Abbey Gardens, Blunsdon?

1961 Street Directory. Frederick Theobald at Kingsdown house.

1966 Kingsdown crematorium opened.

SO THE BIG QUESTION IS ... Can anyone throw further light on who these owners/occupiers could be?

AND YET ANOTHER QUESTION ...

In previous newsletters we've looked at cafes long gone, at cycle shops and the Pork Butchers in Fleet Street. Jan ... asked if anyone could remember Trent's Toy Shop.

But what of other shops and businesses? Does anyone remember the Gas Showrooms at Temple Street corner with Bridge/Regent Street? Please contact us on swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk

BACK TO BASICS with our Family Histories



DO YOU HAVE A STORY YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE?

Please contact swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk

- How did you get interested in researching your family in the first place?
- What made you start and how did you start?

Whether you've been researching for many years or just starting out, we'd like to hear from you.

... AND A THOUGHT FOR THOSE WHO MAY BE STRUGGLING WITH THEIR RESEARCHES AND FACING BRICK WALLS

Somebody said that it couldn't be done,
But he with a chuckle replied
That 'maybe it couldn't but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

Somebody scoffed: 'Oh, you'll never do that;
At least no one ever has done it',
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat,
And the first thing we knew he'd begun it.
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,
There are thousands to prophesy failure;
There are thousands to point out to you, one by one,
The dangers that wait to assail you.
But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,
Just take off your coat and go to it,
Just start to sing as you tackle the thing
That 'cannot be done' and you'll do it.

Written by Edgar Guest. Sent in by Ken Mumford.

RESEARCHING YOUR MOONRAKER PAST

If you are lucky to live in Swindon or Wiltshire and find you *do* have family from the county, then you ought to check out the Wiltshire Family History Resource Centre in Devizes. Here, at the Society's HQ, there is a veritable treasure trove of material for you to search for your ancestors. As well as all our publications – in print and on CD, the Resource Centre (let's call it the RC) has a range of reference materials: for instance, all the volumes of Victoria County



Society, books on the armed forces, the church and clergy, non-conformism, gazetteers, Wiltshire directories – in fact all the resource material that our librarian, Mike Langtree, has been able to gather together or which has been donated to us over the years.

We also hold books and pamphlets on towns and villages in Wiltshire, including histories of the areas and who knows, it might include your family members!

If you turn around from where David Weaver is standing in the picture above, you would find family histories that we hold: some of them books published about local families, but also research notes donated by other family historians.

So, how do you access this wonderful treasure? We hold Open Saturdays once a month when you are welcome to come and browse through all the material I have mentioned. In addition, you can use our computer resources – website such as Ancestry, Find My Past and The Genealogist. We also have a Surnames Index covering many of our publications, so you can see if the name you want is there – and then look at the relevant transcription to discover more.

The next Open Saturday will be January 13 2024. That and others in 2024 are advertised on the Events page of our website www.wiltshirefhs.co.uk/about-us/society-events There is a link there which will take you to our Research page, which gives further details.

If you want to come to research – or just pop in to see what is there - we do ask you to contact us beforehand, so we can make sure we have enough volunteers on hand to help you if you need it and/ or computer terminals: either email research@wiltshirefhs.co.uk or text/phone +44 (0)7907 951855.

Want some research done, but need some help? We also offer a research service, at a modest fee – contact us as above for Open Saturdays.

Look forward to seeing you sometime! **JENNY POPE**

LOCAL STUDIES AT SWINDON CENTRAL LIBRARY may also be able to help

Darryl, Jenny and Sara welcome you to come and browse the many resources available at Local Studies. Whether you have been looking into your family history for years or are just starting out, we have many documents which may be of interest.

- We offer extensive genealogical resources, such as the GRO index of all births, marriages and deaths in England and Wales (1837-1999), the GRO Overseas Index, the International Genealogical Index (LDS) and local census records with surname & street indexes where available.
- All local parish registers and Bishops Transcripts (from 1538).
- Street, trade & telephone directories (including Kelly's 1848-1939, plus every phone book, Yellow Pages and Thomson's Directory for the Swindon area).
- Electoral rolls for Swindon/Thamesdown from 1945 onwards, and poll books from 1705.
- Complete run of all local newspapers, notably the Swindon Evening Advertiser (from 1854), Football Pink (1929-1978), and the North Wilts Herald (from 1861).
- Extensive collection of local periodicals like parish magazines, and journals. This includes staff newsletters for local firms like Austin Rover, British Rail, Garrard, Great Western Railway, Pressed Steel, Will's Tobacco, and Vickers.
- We have complete bound runs of Link Magazine, Stratton Outlook and many more.

We also offer free on-site access to Ancestry, Find My Past and The British Newspaper Archive. Our opening times are 10am-4pm Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 10am-1pm Saturdays, and Mondays by appointment. You can also email any queries to localstudies@swindon.gov.uk.

WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT IT ??? !!!

(What might YOU find?)

We often speak of amazing coincidences when researching our family histories. Stella Sheppard, our Swindon Branch Treasurer, found this exciting connection.

When I first started researching the SHEPPARD family in Chiseldon, although I found all the siblings in each generation, I didn't research the individual sibling's lives. A few years ago I decided to do this research.

What I found was that both my husband, David and Andrew Lloyd Webber share the same 5x great grandparents who were David Sheppard b 1737 and Elizabeth Panting b. 1743 (m. 12 Feb 1764)

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| | David Sheppard 1737 -1821 | Elizabeth Panting 1743-1807 | |
| | David Sheppard 1766-1839 b. Chiseldon | Sarah Jefferies 1767-1844 b. Chiseldon | |
| Thomas Sheppard 1793-1851 b. Chiseldon | Jane King 1785-1840 b. Chiseldon | John Sheppard 1798-1866 b. Chiseldon | Mary Bizley 1792-1880 b. Chiseldon |
| Charles Sheppard 1815-1883 b. Chiseldon | Jane Norris 1815-1891 b. Chiseldon | William Sheppard 1821-1895 b. Chiseldon | Mary Farrow 1821-1910 b. Reading BRK |
| John James King Sheppard 1859-1933 b. Chiseldon | Sarah Ann Dafter Smith 1863-1938 b. Cricklade | Edwin Gittins 1860-1909 b. West Derby LAN | Winifred Sheppard 1857-1932 b. Devizes |
| Clayton James Smith Sheppard 1882-1960 b. Cricklade | Rhoda Kate Harper 1881-1965 b. Wootton Bassett | William Charles Henry Webber 1886-1962 b. Battersea | Mary Winifred Gittins 1888-1946 b. Paddington |
| | Hilda Irene Sheppard 1919-2014 b. Swindon | William Southcombe Lloyd Webber 1914-1982 b. Chelsea | Jean H Johnstone 1921-1933 b. Eastbourne SSX |
| David John Sheppard 1944- | | Andrew Lloyd Webber 1948- | |

David Sheppard = Elizabeth Panting on 12 Feb 1764 in Chiseldon WIL
 David Sheppard = Sarah Jefferies on 22 May 1791 in Chiseldon WIL
 Thomas Sheppard = Jane King on 8 Dec 1814 in Chiseldon WIL
 Charles Sheppard = Jane Norris on 5 Sep 1833 in Chiseldon WIL
 John James King Sheppard = Sarah Ann Dafter Smith on 5 Jan 1882 in Cricklade WIL
 Clayton James Smith Sheppard – Rhoda Kate Harper on 4 Mar 1914 in Swindon WIL
 John Sheppard = Mary Bizley on 31 Aug 1833 in Chiseldon WIL
 William Sheppard = Mary Farrow on 30 November 1845 in Reading BRK
 Edwin Gittins = Winifred Sheppard on Jan 1888 in St George Hanover Square London
 William Charles Henry Webber = Mary Winifred Gittins on Jul 1913 in Chelsea
 William Southcombe Lloyd Webber = Jean H Johnstone on Oct 1942 in Marylebone MDX

I would like to thank Naomi Webb for her help when I originally started my research.

STELLA SHEPPARD

A PICTURE PUZZLER

Ken Mumford has been out and about with his camera again and sent in this picture.

It was taken in Swindon on 15 December but do you know where?

No need to send in answers – just a little teaser for you!



JANUARY 1905 - Accident at the Midland & South Western Junction Railway Station, Swindon

COLLAPSE OF A WALL AT SWINDON – Five Men Injured

Taken from the Trowbridge Chronicle 07 January 1905

(This same article appeared in the Devizes & North Wilts Advertiser 05 January 1905. The same article again appeared in the Newbury Weekly and General Advertiser 12 January 1901 – the only difference was that the last sentence had been deleted and in its place 'The latter died on Friday afternoon'.)

An alarming accident took place at the Midland and South Western Junction Railway Station at Swindon on Wednesday, when a high wall collapsed and five men were buried under it.

The men were employed in the construction of a new goods siding, and the excavations carried out in weakening the foundations of the wall. Without warning a portion, about 20 yards in length, and roughly estimated to weigh 50 tons, fell outward with a loud crash and of the men at work just under, five were buried in the debris, but the others managed to get clear.



Thanks to Local Studies, Swindon Central Library, for the photo

Immediately the workmen realised what had happened they entered on the work of rescue with the greatest energy and in a short time succeeded in getting their unfortunate comrades out from under the mass of bricks and stones. First aid was rendered, and the sufferers taken to the Victoria Hospital, where four of them lie in a critical condition, Edward Smart of Newport, married, has both legs broken; John Kirby, Swindon, married, has sustained a broken arm and other injuries, while John Gibbs, Gorse Hill, married, Fred White, Swindon, single, and W Cheswick, Swindon married, have received serious scalp injuries. Considering the great weight of the fallen mass it is remarkable that none of the men were killed.

Information on **John Gibbs** and **Fred White** not found – does anyone know these names?

Could **John Kirby** be **William John Kirby** who was married to Sarah (nee Major) and whose children were Leonard, Manfred and Beatrice? 1901 saw him at 9 Britannia Place – a 36 year old Stone Mason born Swindon.

By 1911 he was a widower and Bricklayer, shown as born Stratton St Margaret, living at 103 Eastcott Hill with daughter Beatrice Alexandra Kirby aged 13. (William John's father and grandfather were also Williams and from Stratton St Margaret.

There was a William J Kirby died aged 70 during the March quarter 1935.

There was a **William James Chiswick** died aged 41 during the March quarter 1905 in the Swindon district. He was living at 12 Little London in 1901, aged 37, born Glastonbury and a 'Carter at Brickyard'. He was married to Mary, nee Difford, and it looks as though two of their children died young. A further son, William James Chiswick was born 1902 and married Mabel Rose Ford. In 1939 William, Mabel and their family lived at 64 Albion Street.

That William James, of 31 Dover Street, died in 1961 and wife Mabel Rose died 1989.

NOTE: Mabel Rose Ford is my Great Aunt – Yvonne

SOME JANUARY DATES

1 January 1973 Britain joined the European Economic Community – also Ireland and Denmark, bringing number of states to 9. At midnight the Union Jack flag was raised at the EEC's HQ in Brussels. PM Edward Heath was optimistic that Britain's membership would bring prosperity to the country.

8 January 1935 Elvis Presley was born in Tupelo, Mississippi, the survivor of twin boys.

8 January 1952 The BBC announced that the Vickers Armstrong Engineering Works had been chosen as a venue for a recording of popular radio programme Workers' Playtime. The show involved popular singers of the day visiting workplace canteens across the country and performing for staff. The stars scheduled to appear at Vickers Armstrong included Peter Cavanagh and Tommy Reilly and the Keynotes.

22 January 2021 The first ever Swindon Day - just few tweets and history facts shared on social media. It marked the day Queen Victoria signed a charter in 1900 to bring the old town and new town (established around the railway 59 years earlier) together to create a single Swindon.

29 January 1952 A recent spell of cold weather was blamed for a shortage of shillings. The equivalent of 5p pieces in decimal currency, they were used to feed the gas meters vital to

heating millions of British homes. The Adver reported rumours of a black market in the coins, with profiteers charging half-a-crown – the equivalent of 2½ shillings – for two.

Remember this – the three-day week in 1974?: the result of fears over power shortages as a miner's strike was announced in December 1973. The three-day week was a state of emergency imposed by Conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath, which came into force on 1 January 1974, meaning that commercial users of electricity were limited to three specific consecutive days' consumption of electricity, and forbidden to work longer hours on those days, although services deemed essential were exempted from these regulations. Electricity blackouts across the country were widespread.

**Don't give up though the pace seems slow
you may succeed with another blow.
Success is failure turned inside out,
the silver tint of the cloud of doubt
and you never can tell how close you are.
It may be near when it seems so far.**

Taken from poem 'Don't Quite, author unknown.

**DO YOU HAVE A PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT
FAMILY HISTORY BRICK WALL YOU'VE HIT
YOUR HEAD AGAINST**

- Did you manage to overcome it?
- Do you want to share to see if anyone can help?

Please email swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk



(You are receiving this email from Yvonne Neal, Secretary of the Swindon Branch of Wiltshire Family History Society, as a member, or interested party, living in or near Swindon. Your email details are held securely and not divulged to any other persons or organisations. Please let me know if you want to be removed from the list by emailing swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk)