

Wiltshire Family History Society, Swindon Branch, June 2022



Spring at Coate Water.

A well-loved local favourite with Swindonians which celebrates its 200th anniversary this year.

Please see below for more pictures and information.

CHAIRMAN JOHN'S JUNE MESSAGE

A big thank you for everyone who attended, sent apologies and responded to the questionnaire for the AGM. Some of your concerns and ideas have certainly given the committee "food for thought" and we will be discussing some of the issues raised at our next meeting.

Talking about AGMs, at the recent Swindon Society meeting, the committee were asked to submit favourite photos and talk about them. It dawned on me that I don't have that many photographs. I have one photo of me as a toddler, but that was taken in Roath Park, Cardiff. Thinking back, I don't think we had a camera until my early teens, and any photos of myself prior to that, were taken by other extended family members. So, I struggled to put together a small selection. (Just as well Andy missed my email and didn't add my photos to the presentation.)

Most of the photos I have of my forebears came from Great Aunt Rose (Wheeler nee Mills 1891-1977) but like many others she did not write on the back who the photos were of. So, I probably have a photo of my great great grandfather Simeon Mills (1820-1887), but I may never know. I never saw the photo before she died, so I couldn't ask her and I don't think there is anybody else to ask. Moral in there somewhere!

Plenty of photos in this month's newsletter though, thanks to the excellent work of Yvonne. Enjoy. **JOHN MILLS**

WHAT'S COMING UP

Thursday 9th June 2022 - Zoom Meeting

Bridging the Gap - Tracing Forwards from 1921 - Jackie Depelle

We welcome back Jackie who is an experienced family history tutor, and who has been guiding and motivating family history research for the past twenty years. Before the 1921 census there are plenty of records to cross-reference and roll back family research, but Jackie will talk about what material can be used to take us back to 1921?

Thursday 23rd June 2022 at 2.00pm

A visit to the Chippenham Archives

For our summer trip out this year we have the opportunity to visit the archives in Chippenham. Places are limited so please let Margaret know if you are interested in joining us either at the May AGM or by giving her a call.

MARGARET NEAVES

QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE FRIDAY 3 JUNE

The whole country will be celebrating with our Queen Elizabeth II who has served us gracefully and unstintingly over the past seventy years. So we join with everyone to say 'THANK YOU MAM'.

To celebrate Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee, the Central Community Centre in Swindon (the original GWR Hospital) is holding an open day 11.00 – 3.00. We have been invited to have a table at this event. Please come along and join the celebrations, to include a steam traction engine, bouncy castle, singing and dancing, and don't forget to come and say 'hello' to us at The Bakers Arms.

Unfortunately it's a little late now to ask for 'Royalty and Jubilee' memorabilia for our table, but we could include, into future newsletters, your memories and photos if you'd like to share them with us.

15 November 1950 Princess Elizabeth visited Swindon on the 50th anniversary of the Borough of Swindon. She had been met at Swindon Station by the Mayor, Councillor James Bond, David Murray John (Town Clerk) and others, and they walked to the Memorial Gardens, Groundwell Road, preceded by Macebearer Fred Titcombe. Would this have been Frederick James Titcombe born 1905, son of James and Harriet?

The office of Mace Bearer has a long history. The Mace is carried on the right shoulder during possessions before the Mayor. Interestingly the Mace Bearer never removes his hat on ceremonial occasions while he carries the Mace. This includes the playing of the National Anthem and Remembrance Day.

Tour included lunch at the Town Hall and a cuppa with Mr & Mrs Clifford Wilmot, their son and daughter, the new tenants at 22 Akers Way. Princess Elizabeth went back to London late afternoon but in the evening there was a Ball in the Town Hall with Johnnie Stiles music.

Swindon Advertiser 28 March 1953: Corporal Jim Titcombe of Leicester Street, Swindon, an electrician in the REME, was flown home from Canal Zone where he was stationed, for his wedding in London. Corporal Titcombe was the son of Fred Titcombe, the well-known mace bearer to Swindon Town Council. Corporal Titcombe 22, served in Cyprus before being posted to Egypt.

12 November 1952 : Swindon shopkeepers decided to spend £1,875 on decorating the town's main shopping streets for the Coronation. Introducing the scheme to members of Swindon Chamber of Commerce, chairman Mr H E Lane said the sub-committee which investigated the question felt pleased with what they had to offer. Bunting was to be hung from one side of shopping streets to the other, with motifs featuring the Royal Coat of Arms and the national flag.

REPORT - Thursday 28th April 2022 at Central Community Centre 'Commonwealth War Graves Commission – Who We Are': by Michael Sheil

Michael was assigned by the CWGC to take the photographs for their WW1 centenary book "For the Fallen" for which he undertook a 20,000 mile journey visiting over 400 cemeteries.

Mike shared poignant, sometimes quite ethereal, photos of graves and their surroundings that he had taken world-wide during his visits to Commonwealth War Graves, known as Imperial

War Graves before 1960. He pointed out that a gravestone can often reveal useful information for a family historian, a starting point for further research. They bear silent witness.

Commonwealth War Graves are for those who died between 04.08.1914 – 31.08.1923 and again between 03.09.1939 – 31.12.1947. This did include many who, to the joy of their families, came home but sadly then succumbed to Spanish 'Flu. The graves are funded by the Ministry of Defence and cover the sixty-three countries involved in these conflicts. Each country pays an annual fee for the constant maintenance required for the many war grave cemetery sites, some massive, others small or even solitary stones in the remotest of places. Some indicate mass graves, others have individual headstones. When the fallen were known to have a faith, a cross was included onto the headstone. For the Jewish, it would be the Star of David. In Muslim areas, the headstones are raised but flat. Those who died, irrespective of rank, status, nationality or religion, lay side by side and are cared for and adopted by the country in which they rest. Many headstones are nameless, the thousands of unknowns, but described after WWI as 'a Soldier of the Great War – known unto God.'

Most cemeteries have a surrounding wall to prevent damage by animals and from farm machinery. Headstones are often laid side-by-side on a level concrete base in sites often close to where they fell. Huge memorials have been raised in some cemeteries, often a cross of sacrifice and thousands of headstones in rows, each one lovingly tended and maintained perhaps with flower beds and grass dividing the rows. Mike indicated that global warming could become problematic for watering such areas.

Many ancient battles only lasted for about one day, allowing for relatively easy and formal burial. Prolonged conflicts, and particularly when trenches were involved, necessitated other requirements, partly for hygiene reasons. A registration system was devised and servicemen were provided with dog tags. One was found to be insufficient as it could be taken away for identification purposes but then someone else would come to bury the fallen and not know their identity. Hence two tags were eventually carried.

It should be noted that soldiers who perished are still being found and still being re-interred. If there is any possibility of discovering the identity from an artefact or even DNA then, despite the expense, families are traced wherever possible.

Visitors and school party visits to these sites help to educate and remind us of the implications of war. Each individual grave reminds us of the suffering of those families who lost loved ones

**If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England.**

Rupert Brook

Mike reminded us that, as an island nation, many were lost at sea and that there are Naval memorials to those with no grave.

Mike's talk was really brilliant but it was so disappointing that there were only 12 of us there to hear him. That's the lowest number of attendees since we began face-to-face meetings again at the end of lockdown. The question to our previous attendees, and possible new ones, therefore is ... WHY? We sent round an urgent questionnaire and had some excellent (if very diverse) thoughts. So thanks to all those who took the time and trouble to respond. Below is a shortened version of what we asked...and an extra about publicity.

- Do you find the venue not convenient perhaps? It is certainly more central and on good bus routes.
- Do you have suggestions for speakers and subjects you would like covered? Are you able to come along and talk to us yourself?
- Do you have any suggestions/are you able to help to publicise our meetings. Until now it has not been possible to plan ahead, but hopefully that will change now that restrictions are being lifted. One thing perhaps we should stress is that, although we are WILTSHIRE Family History Society, research and talks are NOT RESTRICTED to Wiltshire matters. In fact, many of our Swindon Branch people do not even have Wiltshire connections.
- Any suggestions would be most welcome.

LATE NEWS A brief look at the responses we had to our questionnaire seems to indicate that our present venue meets with most people's approval, and we are very grateful to the Central Community Centre for all the help they've given us. We had various suggestions as to preferred days and timings. Three thought that a reminder for face-to-face meetings would be helpful – this we will try to do. As a norm however, it's easy to remember: Zoom on 2nd Thursdays, face-to-face on 4th Thursdays, although this can change in the summer months and at Christmas. Just make sure you read our newsletters for updates and also see Swindon Branch on our WFHS website.

The possibility of car parking problems was raised by some, although so far that hasn't been an issue and the room we use is accessed directly from the car park. There is the Bristol Street car park about 3-4 minutes walk away and, for safety reasons, we have said that someone could accompany back afterwards if required. We would suggest you come and try for yourselves – you may be pleasantly surprised.

Margaret Neaves, our Programme Secretary, is looking at the various suggestions you've made on subject matter for meetings, and is already planning for September onwards. Please keep your suggestions coming. It is hoped that a small working party can look further into the questionnaire answers so, if you feel you can help in this respect, please let us know.

On a happier note, we had 19 attend our AGM and 'Natter Night' on Thursday 26 May. More on that in the next Newsletter.

It would be almost unthinkable that our Swindon Branch should cease to hold meetings in person. It's fun ... there are refreshments ... what else would you like? Please do let us know by contacting nealy1@virginmedia.com or swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk

The first meeting of Swindon Branch took place on 26 May 1975 in the Bath Road Methodist Church Hall with Colin Chapman, Chairman of Bristol & Avon Family History Society, together with Emlyn Jones, Society Secretary, and Richard Moore, Assistant Secretary for Wiltshire. The speaker was Mrs Pauline Snow talking about her ancestry of the 'Tiffs of Wiltshire'. Does anyone remember this or have memories of the early days of Swindon Branch?

REPORT – ‘BRITISH WIDOWS OF WW1: The Forgotten Legion’ Zoom talk by Andrea Hetherington – Thursday 12 May 2022

Andrea Hetherington is a writer and author with an interest in the social history of the First World War.

Her talk took us behind the scenes of many thousands of wives and families left to cope when their husbands and fathers died in WW1.

A rather unusual aspect which highlighted the attitudes and injustices at the time. In 1914 there was a Liberal Government that instigated the War Widows Pension, and so men enlisting into the armed forces were reassured that their wives and families would be looked after should the worst happen.



To qualify for War Widows Pension, death had to be entirely due to serving in the armed forces. Other reasons for death resulted in no pension. It could be claimed within 7 years of death but this pension, although non-contributory, was not automatic and widows had to apply for it and not all were eligible. Claiming was not easy when literacy was still a problem, and marriage and birth certificates required as proof. These were often not readily, or easily, available, and forms required a signature by magistrate/police officer. Moreover such pensions were kept deliberately lower than wages and widows were expected to down-size (almost impossible when in just a two-room property), get help from charities, encouraged to send their children out to work (thus numbers in education declined) or re-marry. No Welfare State at that time.

Some widows were left for weeks or months without receiving pensions, although a Separation Allowance could be claimed initially. The estimated number of war widows claiming pension was grossly under-estimated and the War Office was unable to cope with processing pensions and allowances. Widows received a small payment for their children until the age of sixteen.

British widows received the lowest payments of all the allied forces countries, and nowhere close to what was required. If the husband had been a big earner before enlistment, a widow could apply for an Alternative Pension which could make quite a difference. There were charities that provided help, namely the Soldiers & Sailors Family Association, the Salvation Army (support and guidance), the Poor Law Guardians (a last resort) and, from 1921, the British Legion.

War Widows Pension was not an absolute entitlement and could be removed for various reasons: deemed not worthy, drunkenness, living in sin, having illegitimate children, and also 'bad attitude'. Sometimes vindictive neighbours divulged indiscretions to the authorities.

Forty percent of war widows did re-marry, at which time their weekly payments ceased as their new husband were expected to keep them, but they were given a lump sum. This wasn't always successful and there were instances of a new husband absconding with the money, leaving a destitute wife and family with nothing.

Within the coal industry in North East England and with exports heavily and crucially declining, a number of collieries closed or workers put on short-time. Thus thousands of coal workers signed up to the armed forces. Eventually, however, some miners were brought back, even temporarily, because coal was needed.

Andrea's book: 'British Widows of the First World War: The Forgotten Legion' covers this subject in much more detail.

RODBOURNE COMMUNITY HISTORY GROUP

29 June in the Playgroup Room of the Even Swindon Community Centre, Jennings Street:
'The Life and Times of G W Sims MBE' – Martin Robins.

You will remember that following this talk to Swindon Branch WFHS, there was so much interest raised in this subject – probably the most interest we've ever had in any particular subject - and there were spin-offs.

So ... if you missed our Swindon Branch talk, then this is your chance. The Rodbourne Community History Group will be very pleased to see you. Their contact is Gordon Shaw on secretary@rodbournehistory.org

RODBOURNE DROWNING – AMANDA RICHARDSON BURIED 5 JUNE 1883

She was only six. Born during the December quarter 1876, and lived at 14 Stanley Terrace (Rodbourne Road?) at the time of the 1881 census with parents George Richardson, 30 year old Engine Fitter, Mary 27, and siblings Caroline 10, John 7, and Fanny 2. George and Mary were originally from Chippenham but the children were born in Swindon.

By 1891 the family had moved to 23 Jennings Street, Rodbourne, by which time Lizzy, Lillie and William had joined the family.

The tragic accident at the canal bridge in Rodbourne Road happened because Amanda, her sister and a friend had been picking flowers. Amanda was attempting to join the others by walking across the lock to the iron gate of the canal bridge, when she fell in.

Nelson Russell, 15 and who lived at King John Street, Old Swindon, could not swim so shouted to nearby Joseph Henry Matthews, who lived at 1 Oxford Buildings, Even Swindon, for help. Joseph quickly grabbed a rake and ladder but Amanda was dead when he got her out.

A verdict of accidental death was recorded at the inquest held at The Dolphin Inn, Rodbourne Road.

How is it that children were allowed to wander that way? Was it a once-off or did they regularly cross the lock? Does anyone know what the area would have been like in those days?

AN EXCITING PROJECT – ARE YOU ABLE TO HELP?



If you have Swindon ancestors, there is a possibility that someone may have lived in the Railway Village at some time.

So ... if you have some information you can share please, such as names, dates, road, occupations, photos and family history if you have it, please email nealy1@virginmedia.com and let's see what we can discover about previous occupiers of this historical district.

ROBINSONS RECALLED: MORE MEMORIES ABOUT SWINDON STORES – from Marcia Dancer

We've been privileged to hear some of Marcia's memories before and this time our recent article about Drapers Stores and Robinsons has triggered thoughts of when her first baby was born in 1959. Here are her memories:

"I shopped at Robinsons, Curtis Street, for all the baby dresses. I have a photo of my daughter at five months wearing one of the dresses.

Also I shopped with Mrs Gore who had her shop in Granville Street. Her drapery shop held many items and I was able to buy for the baby and household. When I moved into my first house in 1961, I was able to buy all my curtains from her. Mr Charles Gore was, at that time, the Curator at the Museum. There was Winslow Drapers in Commercial Road, where I had many items, including furniture. All very good quality. Peacocks in Regent Street was where I spent my £25 baby allowance.

It was one morning when a photographer/traveller for Morses, Regent Street, called and asked if I would have a photograph taken of the baby for £1.00. From then until they closed, I always shopped with them.

There were so many shops we had for all we needed, that we were spoilt for choice." **MARCIA DANCER**

A COUPLE MORE TO JOG YOUR MEMORY

GETTING INTO HOT WATER. We invite you to visit our showrooms. We'll show you how to have constant hot water in your home and no TROUBLE. For further advice apply to: The Swindon United Gas Co., 43 Regent Street. Phone 40 – Evening Advertiser Wednesday 26 August 1931.

PETIT POINT FURNITURE which combines the best in contemporary design with a distinctive decorative feature – exquisitely stitched petit point handles. Against a background of limed oak they make a delightful contrast to style and colour. Pictured are four units plus bed – the suite as illustrated £96-8-6. Just picture this bedroom in your own home. The style illustrated can be had in lustrous oak or walnut finishes. Only 5% (1/- in the £) is charged for 12 months credit. The initial payment is left to you. Terms can be spread over 24 months. MILLS & MERRICKS, 16-17 Bridge Street, Swindon. Evening Advertiser Friday 14 November 1958.

MARRIAGE LINES

No more running off to Gretna Green (or anywhere else), where one party lives in England or Wales, in order to marry before reaching the age of 18.

The minimum age has been raised from 16 for marriages and civil partnerships irrespective of parental or judicial consent. Adults facilitating such events could face up to seven years in jail and a fine.



OLD OCCUPATIONS

RAG AND BONE MAN – the original recycler?

Does anyone remember hearing the rag-and-bone man shouting out in the streets? The term possibly brings back memories of the TV series 'Steptoe and Son', loved by so many in its day.

A very old occupation when men would travel on foot, usually carrying a large bag over their shoulder, to scavenge old rags, cloth, bones etc to sell on for a few pennies. Old rags were used for papermaking. Animal bones used to manufacture glue and fertiliser, and could be used for knife-handles, toys, ornaments and buttons. In 'olden days' it seems that a stick was often carried to poke around in piles of discarded heaps in the hope of finding something of value. An early start would be an advantage to be first on the scene of the prior day's throw-away rubbish.

Some may have been lucky enough to have a handcart – still quite heavy to pull if successful and, presumably, would need to be well balanced.

A rag-and-bone man with a horse and cart, would surely be the top-of-the-ladder in that particular occupation as he drove around collecting old junk.

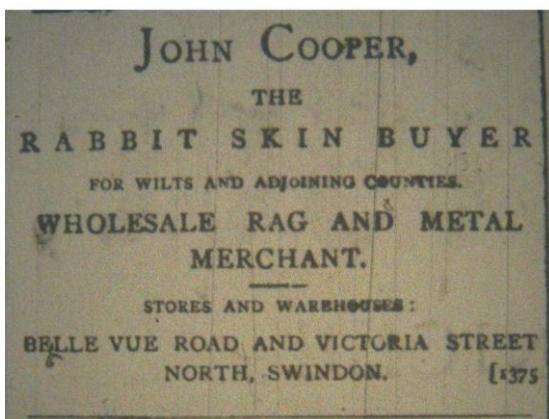


A find of brass, copper or pewter would be most welcome of course – perhaps an old metal bed frame thrown out.

It's all a bit different these days – the price of scrap metal has soared and a modern-day rag-and-bone man would have a van. And .. what about skip-hire companies, the local recycling tip and car-boot sales?

A SWINDON SUCCESS STORY

Swindon Advertiser - 28 November 1881



Coopers is a well-known scrap-metal merchant at Gypsy Lane in Swindon, and although still known as Coopers by many, was sold to EMR Metal Recycling.

John Cooper set up his Marine Store business in Old Town in 1869 – Gladstone was PM and the year before Charles Dickens died in June 1870. He moved from London to Swindon and started a Marine Store Business in Old Swindon trading in rags, iron, non-ferrous metals, skins and bones

In June 1889 the Swindon Advertiser reported complaints that a huge heap of putrid bones, accumulated at the rear of the Bellevue premises, produced 'a most horrible stench'. When requested officially to move them, John Cooper said he should do nothing of the kind; he didn't

care for the Board, but could fight them out. Evidently the GWR Company would not take less than four tons and, when that was achieved, the heap would be sent away.

Meat and by-product processing began in 1895. For 100 years a high proportion of cattle died as a result of poor husbandry and minimal veterinary knowledge. There was also a large number of working horses throughout the country, thus a need for a slaughterhouse. In 1895 John Collins Cooper (son of John) extended the business by opening a small rendering works at Marshgate. He died prematurely in 1926 and son Alfred Cooper built a small abattoir. Premises at Marshgate, Stratton St Margaret, adjoining the Marshgate Meat Company.

The Cooper's advertisement in the 1930 Directory and Year Book read:

Est. 1871 John C Cooper (Alfred Cooper). Licenced horse slaughterer. Bone crusher & manure manufacturer. Meat & Bone feeding meals. Bone fertiliser & Mangold manures. Cart grease. Pure blood for vines always in stock. Address: Marshgate Works, SSM. Phone 412. Offices Cricklade Street. Phone 110.

This Swindon rag-and-bone man developed his enterprise into a millionaire pound business. More next time about Coopers Scrap Metal, Alfred Cooper and John Cooper and his Korean War Memories.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY AUNTIE BEEB

The United Kingdom's first radio broadcast took place in June 1920 at the Marconi factory, and from there, radio became so prolific a communication tool that the General Post Office had to step in as the licensing official to control the growth of the medium. By 1922, the GPO had more than 100 requests for licenses from manufacturers and other organizations, and so to ensure a measured development of radio broadcasts, the GPO recommended issuing only one license to a consortium of manufacturers (including Marconi) under the title of the British Broadcasting Company, Ltd. The company formed officially on 18 October 1922, and made its first broadcast on channel 2LO from the seventh floor of Marconi House on 14 November that year.

ANOTHER BIRTHDAY - 200 YEARS OLD and still going strong!

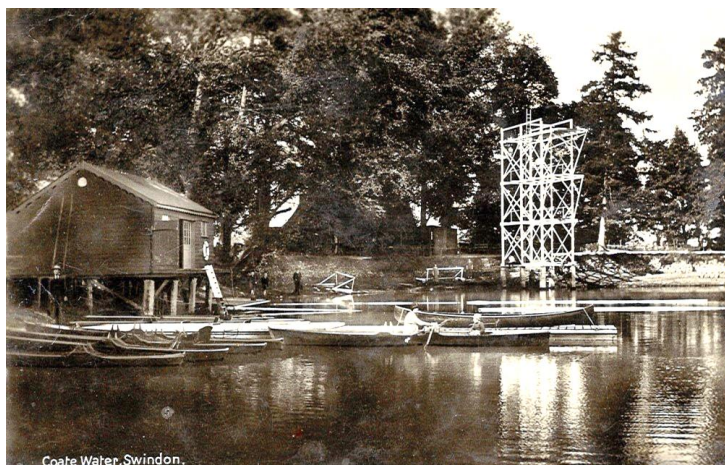
Photos courtesy of Local Studies, Swindon Central Library



Before the age of the railway train and when canals were the modern mode of transporting goods from one place to another, a 70 acre lake was built near Swindon by diverting the River Cole. Three dams were constructed to flood adjacent farmland.

Why? To form a reservoir that would provide water for the Wilts & Berks Canal.

That was in 1822 and, although the canal was abandoned in 1914, it was bought by Swindon Corporation, and Coate Water not only survived but became the much-loved and appreciated Coate Water Country Park. With the rising popularity of the railways, canals fell into decline and were considered out-dated and so the canal through Swindon became derelict.



Coate Water however became a pleasure park for walking, boating, swimming and fishing, and a wooden diving platform provided an added attraction to swimming in the lake.

In 1936 a 33 ft high concrete Art Deco diving platform replaced the old wooden one. It is still in situ and now a Grade II Heritage Building, but used by the local bird population rather than humans.

Wonder who the people in the boat were?

Swimming, and associated water sports, was prohibited in the lake from 1958 due to a national polio scare.

Ice skating was permitted during very cold winters – hard to believe now!

Such a shame this picture is torn.

Imagine the fun and excitement that Whit Monday – 27 May 1912.

Could be that some of OUR ancestors were there?



John Parsloe remembers jumping (not actually diving) off the diving board and swimming in the lake. His wife Joan lived in nearby Day House Lane and Coate Water was a favourite haunt during their courting days. This Lane is also of historical interest because of five partly-buried stones, dating from late Neolithic /early Bronze Age times, and considered to be part of a larger stone circle. Writer Richard Jefferies lived at Coate, his family having bought a 17th century thatched cottage there in 1800 and he wrote about those ancient stones.

The park has continued to change over the years – see the display in the old Water Bailiff's cottage, now a public information point and office for the Ranger Team. The main car park now covers the site that surrounded the cottage. Does anyone remember the lovely little paddling pool, later to become a playpark sand pit? Also, there was a large swimming pool with ornate fountain. Now the park boasts a children's splash park, play area, mini golf, miniature railway, café, toilets and nature reserve with walks around the whole of the lake. This nature reserve is a haven for birds, insects and many species of trees and wild flowers. More changes to come again as, besides other things, the diving board is due for a spruce-up.

What memories! Our Swindon ancestors would probably have lots to tell. Do tell us of yours – nealy1@virginmedia.com or swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk

A MEMORY-FLASH of trying to be a PHOTOGRAPH DETECTIVE!

In our May Newsletter we reported on our Zoom talk 'Understanding and Dating your old Photographs'. In the middle of the night (yes literally) I awoke to a memory-flash.



A few years ago I had been intrigued by two postcard photos owned by local historian Paul Williams, and decided to play detective – or at least to have a go.



(Thanks to Paul for allowing me to print those photos here and for information.)

The postcards were taken by William Hooper depicting the Regent Street end of Havelock Street. You can just see the shops: F Leek of 20 Regent Street and the Singer Sewing Machine Shop. One was posted on 31 October 1913 from William IV, living at 35 Morley Street and addressed to 'Granny' at Pibley Mill, Blakeney, Newham, Gloucestershire. The Salvation Army band were obviously in attendance but possibly not a Salvationist funeral as the coffin seems to be quite ornate and the service would presumably have been held in the Salvation Army Hall. **BUT WHOSE FUNERAL WAS IT?** Why was an open-air service held in Havelock Street? So had some prominent member of society, or a member of one of the Salvation Army churches in Swindon, recently died? If so, the funeral doesn't seem to have been covered by the local press.

I eventually discovered that the funeral of Levi Laper Morse, 24 March 1853 – 10 September 1913, was quite an event and found various Swindon Advertiser articles giving much detail of his life as well as his funeral. Could it possibly have been HIS funeral, the service having been held in the Primitive Methodiest Chapel in Regent Street, where he had attended? As there was no mention of such an open-air service in the local newspapers, possibly not. (Levi Lapper Morse was the son of Charles Morse of Stratton St Margaret and owner of Morse's Department Store in Regent Street, Swindon. He was also a Justice of the Peace, an Alderman, Swindon's 2nd Mayor and MP for Wiltshire for 6 years.)

Are there any detectives out there who have thoughts, ideas or suggestions on this please – perhaps you know whose funeral it could have been? 35 Morley Street seems not to exist now – possibly part of a car park?

As is often the case, one thing leads to another and, still thinking about playing detective and on the subject of old postcards, I remember the fascinating Zoom talk via our Westbury Branch WFHS on the subject of old postcard messages, mainly from the early 20th century – trying to discover who had written them and about the families involved. See our July 2021 newsletter for more. So this is really just a reminder what fascinating discoveries can be made in this way – if you're lucky. Yvonne

As always, we'd love to hear what you have discovered from old photos and postcards, so please do share with us: nealy1@virginmedia.com or swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk

ANOTHER PHOTO PUZZLE – can you help solve please

In our previous newsletter, four photos were included at the end asking if anyone could help to identify anyone. Unfortunately there was no response which is rather a shame as there is a lovely old black-bound album (made in Germany) containing intriguing photos but no clue as to who and what family.

So, trying again with a different request – can anyone throw any light on the photo below, believed to have been taken in Drove Road (wasn't it quiet!) in about 1911.



The babe in arms at the very front is Leslie Frankis, held by mother Charlotte, nee Gibbs, who was born c. 1875.

Leslie's father was Edward Frankis.

Some of you may know of Leslie as he ran the shop in St. Mary' Grove.

At the time of the 1911 census Edward and Charlotte Frankis had been married for 15 years and had had six children, three of which had died. They were living at 11 Lagos Street:

Edward	Head	38	c. 1872	Engine Painter, GWR Loco Works
Charlotte	Wife	34	c. 1876	
William E	Son	15	c. 1895	Messenger/part time student
Albert H	Son	13	c. 1897	Technical College
Leslie S	Son	4 m	1911	
Charles Walker	B'dr	59	c. 1851	GWR Gas Worker (widower) b. Wanborough

The Frankis family all born Swindon.

If you can help in any way, please email nealy1@virginmedia.com or swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk

BRICK WALL – can you help please?

There was an Albert Edward Baxter married Elsie Farmer during the March quarter 1928 in the Swindon district. Elsie was born 16 November 1909 (if that is correct!) but who was she and where did she come from?

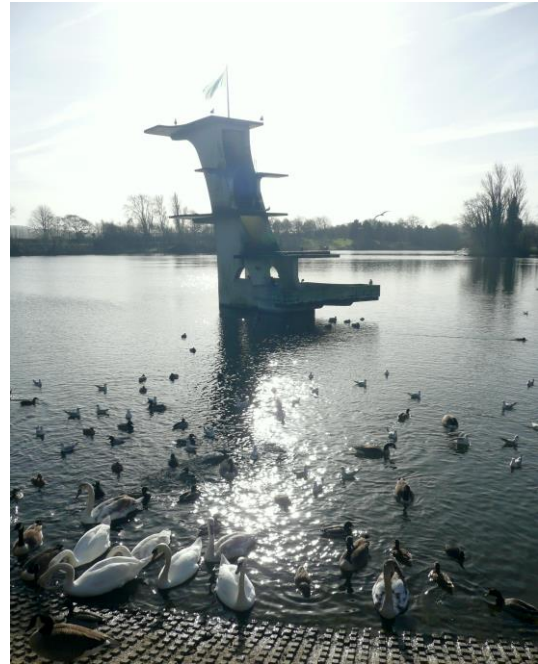
MORE LATE NEWS

Jenny Pope, our Branch Executive Representative, has sent this: "Wondered if anyone might be interested in this? Looks as though GRO is trialling birth and death certificates at £2.50 instead of £7!!"

The information is on the attachment so can be printed separately if you are interest.

... AND FINALLY

Whatever you are doing over the Jubilee Bank Holiday – have a good time and enjoy yourselves.



(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 nealy1@virginmedia.com)