

Wiltshire Family History Society, Swindon Branch, June 2024

MEETINGS REMINDER – see below for further details

Thursday 13 June 2024 via Zoom – ‘A Grand Day Out’

Saturday 15 June at The Central Community Centre – Family History Open Day

Thursday 27 June 2024 Swindon Branch Members’ outing to REME



There is no word, poetical or otherwise, capable of expressing the rich gurgling noise of water flowing over an uneven bed and dividing against the smooth, mossy stones;

it is neither a prattling nor a murmuring, a sound not of laughter nor of tears, but midway between the two, wonderfully rich, and thrilling, and suggestive;

it is the language of eternity.

Alfred Williams: ‘A Wiltshire Village’

JOHN’S JUNE MESSAGE

My wife, Lis, was 70 in January, but she has always thought that month was a bit naff for a birthday party, so she decided to celebrate it in April. As she liked to dress up she decided she wanted a “Victorian tea party.” I was the only male invited, not to participate in the tea, but to be a butler.....

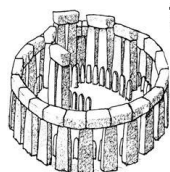
A suitable venue was needed, she settled on the Bakers Arms which happens to be one of the venues for the Family History Open Day on the 15th of June. The cakes the volunteers provided that day were really delicious. Cakes will be available there on the open day, so that alone should be an incentive. Please support us that day, plenty to see.

Talking of cakes. Our summer outing is to the REME museum in Lyneham on the June 27th in the afternoon (details from Margaret or Yvonne) a fascinating museum with an excellent café. Unfortunately, I won’t be there as I will be on holiday in Devon. So, whilst those who can make it enjoy the excellent cakes here I will be deciding is it jam or cream which goes first onto my scone. **JOHN MILLS**

WHAT’S COMING UP

Thursday 13 June 2024: ‘A Grand Day Out’ – some country houses and their stories by Jackie Depelle. Do you have country house connections? Maybe more of us do than might initially come to mind. It is certainly worth thinking about as we look at some historic houses and their stories. Along the way we will consider why we visit and whose footsteps we are following.

Thursday 27 June 2024: Swindon members are invited on a trip to the REME museum on the former RAF Lyneham site. We will have a guided tour of the museum followed by a visit to the excellent cafe for tea and cake. **MARGARET NEAVES**



Wiltshire Family History Society

Family History Day

Saturday 15 June 2024 10am- 4pm

Community Centre,
Emlyn Square
Swindon SN1 5BP

free to enter

Learn more about your ancestors

Your chance to talk to the experts from

Wiltshire ❖ Oxfordshire ❖ Berkshire

Gloucestershire ❖ Bristol & Avon

Romany & Travellers

family history societies

This Way Books for books, maps and more!

❖ **Family History Help Desk** ❖

Parking at Bristol Street Car Park SN1 5EQ
(2 mins walk away) £1.10 for 5 hrs (2023 rates)

Bus route 55 from Chippenham (Emlyn Sq./ Steam Museum stop)

Swindon Bus 1,5, 22

Bus Station 10 mins walk ♦ Railway Station 7 mins walk

Enquiries to swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk quoting Swindon show

Wiltshire Family History Society www.wiltshirefhs.co.uk registered charity no 290284

AND THERE'S MORE . . .

The Cricketers' in the Railway Village, which is undergoing extensive refurbishment, will be open to the public.

The Bakers' café (always a delight) will also be open.

The Mechanics Institution Trust, The Swindon Society and Swindon Branch WFHS, will be exhibiting.

The Railway Village Museum Cottage will be open for you to take a step back in time to see how the village occupants lived in the early 1900s the theme will be 'A Victorian Wash Day'. There will be organised walks around the area.

DO COME AND JOIN WITH US.

REPORTS

THURSDAY 9 MAY via Zoom – ‘Apprenticeship Records: history and sources with case studies – Richard Holt

Richard showed us how apprenticeship records can help our family history research. From them we can get a snapshot of apprentices', lives and particularly where they may be found.

The apprentice system originated in London in the 12th century, known as the 'Custom of London'. It was later adopted more widely and by 1596 had become the national model, until 1814 when the Parish Overseers took over as a result of the Poor Law Acts. In 1709 a tax on apprenticeships was levied.

Pauper Apprentice Accounts: parishes had to keep registers. Some early ones are available for London. The system was then transferred to the Guardians of the Poor Law Unions. The 1851 Act required better conditions, registers to be kept and reports, which sometimes are available for the family historian

There were three main types of Apprenticeship:

Private – organised between parents/guardians and the master.

Charity – for the 'deserving poor' and for which parents would still have a say in the matter.

Pauper (of the Parish) – arranged by the Overseer and to which the parents (if living) had no say. This could mean that children may be sent miles away from home.

There are various types of records but not all easily found:

Indentures – legal documents, Borough/City registers, Parish Registers, Stamp Duty Records, Poll Books, Charity Records, Quarter Sessions and Court Records, Newspapers, Poor Law Registers, Guild Records, Registers of Freemen, Settlement Examinations.

Richard then took us through the various apprenticeship forms and what the family history researcher may expect to find. A good example is the Indenture, often on a pre-printed form. It would be in two parts, one for the apprentice and one for the master to keep, and would be cut with a wavy line as proof that the two parts fit together. Great information on these documents if they can be found, even notes on the back. However many just got lost. Often the period for an apprenticeship was 7 years but some, especially pauper apprenticeships, for much longer. Conditions were very strict.

The successful end of the apprenticeship term resulted in becoming a Freeman of the Borough and eligible to vote. There are Freemen Registers which can give valuable information. (Note that there were other ways of becoming a Freeman ie bought or donated, perhaps for example by the Mayor.)

THURSDAY 23 MAY at The Central Community Centre

Our meeting begin with a short AGM. For the time being our committee remains the same but there was a request for additional committee helpers. Other areas where help is required are:

Help at events etc: Writing up meeting reports; Typing up census reports for Railway Village; Library look-ups; Research as and when required.

Please do get in touch if you can help. swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk

The meeting was then opened up for those who had brought photos of an ancestor. Some really interesting stories emerged and, hopefully, some of them may be followed up for future newsletters.

FROM LAST TIME

Phil Reilly, ex Swindonian now living near Blackpool, rang to say that he remembers Jock Walker's fish and chip shop being one in from the corner of Manchester Road by the Corporation Street cross-roads – possibly 149/150 Manchester Road - and that there is a Motor Bike Shop or Barbers there now. He also remembers that the meat shop next door sold fresh horse meat for pet food. Amusingly, he added that the meat shop did not sell pies!!"

Since Phil's 'phone call, more has emerged about Jack (Jock) Walker.

Please see below for when he was a prominent Swindon Town FC player.

It has also come to light that, at one time, his son John played Tenor Sax in the local Johnny Stiles Band.

He is pictured here – the one standing in the middle.



REX WARNEFORD – awarded the Victoria Cross

(with thanks to Local Studies for much of this information)

The London Gazette: Admiralty, 10th June 1915

The King has been graciously pleased to approve of the grant of the Victoria Cross to Flight Sub-Lieutenant Reginald Alexander John Warneford, Royal Naval Air Service, for the conspicuous act of bravery specified below:-

“For most conspicuous bravery on the 7th June 1915, when he attacked and, single-handed, completely destroyed a Zeppelin in mid-air. This brilliant achievement was accomplished after chasing the Zeppelin from the coast of Flanders to Ghent, where he succeeded in dropping his bombs on to it from a height of only one or two hundred feet. One of these bombs caused a terrific explosion which set the Zeppelin on fire from end to end, but at the same time overturned his Aeroplane and stopped the engine. In spite of this he succeeded in landing safely in hostile country, and after 15 minutes started his engine and returned to his base without damage!”

A further report of the event says that on that day in 1915, while flying at a great height between Bruges and Ghent, Reginald (Rex) Alexander John Warneford encountered a Zeppelin. Quickly rising above it, he chased the airship from the coast near Ostend and, despite its defensive machine-gun fire, succeeded in dropping his 7 20-pound Hale bombs on it, the last of which set the airship on fire. A loud explosion followed, and the Zeppelin caught fire and fell to earth.

The explosion overturned Warneford's aircraft and stopped its engine, causing him to land behind enemy lines. 35 minutes later he managed to restart the engine just as the Germans realised what was going on and, after yelling “Give my regards to the Kaiser!” he was able to lift off and return to base.



R A J Warneford was born 15 October 1891 at Darjeeling, India and brought to England as a small boy. Eventually he became a Royal Navy Flight Sub-Lieutenant in the Air Service. He was awarded the Legion d'Honneur, Crois de Guerre and the Victoria Cross.

Sadly he died when he was thrown out of a Henri Farman F27 at 700 ft during a test flight at Versailles France on 17 June 1915. He is buried at Brompton Cemetery CWGC, W London.

Rex Warneford's name does get connected to Highworth, although that connection is rather tenuous as it appears that he only visited Warneford Place once. It was reported that he was "briefly entertained by the new owner's wife, Lady Banbury, and shown round the gardens. After lunch he crossed the Market Square to the Church of St Michael and All Angels to see the Warneford Family Chapel."

Highworth is the ancestral home of the Warneford family with a connection stretching back over 700 years. Unfortunately Warneford Place is now demolished but was the ancestral seat until 1902 when it was sold.

On 23 August 1917 at the Church of St Michael and All Angels, Rex's aunt Maude Nightingale, unveiled a plaque to his memory.

Highworth's secondary school was named after him and his family had connections to Sevenhampton. Can anyone throw any light on this connection please – swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk Thank you.

QUEEN VICTORIA'S GOLDEN JUBILEE – as celebrated at South Marston

Queen Victoria's reigned from 20 June 1837 with her Golden Jubilee celebrated on 20 and 21 June 1887. The occasion was celebrated widely and Alfred Williams recorded the event in his small village of South Marston. He was a lad of about 10 at the time and recalls the escapades of him and his friends that night.

The church's square tower roof was flat, 'crowned with pinnacles and battlements' and, by climbing up the walls inside, the boys were able to reach it through a little square aperture.

Unnoticed, they were there at midnight viewing the bonfires on the surrounding hills.

Their whereabouts were discovered, however, because in groping their way up the pitch-dark stairs they accidentally came into contact with the 'ting tang'.



Photo courtesy of Local Studies,
Swindon Central Library

The 'old Sexton' who was 80 (described as having a Roman nose nearly touching his chin, grey-headed with bushy grey brows) guessed where they were "What you bwoys at up there?" Come down I tell ee" he demanded, to which the lads 'one and all unceremoniously replied', "All right Gramp" and proceeded to mount higher and higher.

Eventually because of 'sheer concern' for the Sexton they went back down the steps but, on the way, giving the bell rope 'a vicious tug or two', making the bell ring loudly. By the time the Sexton had descended and reached the open air, the boys were already far away and out of sight.

Note: The Sexton referred to may have been William Stone who, in 1891, was shown as being a 75 year old widower, born South Marston, and who was the Parish Clerk and Sexton, living in the Church grounds. Angus Macdonald, 39 born West Alvington, Devon, was the 'Clerk in Holy Orders, Vicar of South Marston'. The next dwelling was Robert Little in Elm Cottage.

There was a William Stone (Parish Clerk to 14 September 1894) buried at South Marston on 18 September. He was 80 and the vicar was Angus Macdonald.

It is interesting to note that William Stone's mother was the great aunt of Ellen Kempster, who is mentioned in the article about Mark Titcombe in our April Newsletter.

THE NORMANDY LANDINGS – 80th ANNIVERSARY

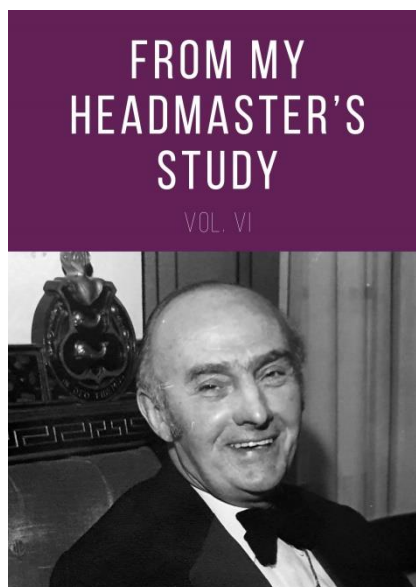
Tuesday 6 June 1944, shortly after midnight, the operation started – the largest seaborne invasion in history.

This year we remember the occasion on the 80th anniversary of the event. The TV and newspapers relate stories and memories of this event but can anyone share their own personal family history connections with us?

Please write in and let us know – swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk or ring 01793 822310. We look forward to hearing from you.

AND NOW THERE'S MORE FROM MATTHEW CAMMISH

We have mentioned him quite a few times in our newsletters and some may remember him as the well-loved Headmaster of Sanford Street School.



He was also a Methodist lay preacher in and around the Swindon area with a unique and easy-style of writing his short sermons, full of historical stories which brings the Holy Land to life and putting a different slant to Biblical texts.

His sermons are interesting to those with a religious leaning as well as to anyone interested in human psychology and historical facts.

A sixth edition of some of his sermons has now been released and a free copy can be obtained from Martin Robins on martinrobins@btinternet.com

Happy reading.

JOHN WALKER – played for Swindon Town FC - What a hero!

(Thanks to Phil Reeves, John's great grandson for most of this information)

We have mentioned a few STFC players in our newsletters and here is another. **JOHN (JOCK) COCHRANE WALKER** born 24 November 1883 at Beith, Ayresshire, to Robert and Margaret (nee Cochrane) Walker.

He grew up in Crummock Street, Beith, and the 1901 census shows him as being an upholsterer. John married Helen Paton Gray on 29 June 1908 at Camlachie, Lanarkshire. He was described as being an upholster of 171 Hatchfield Street and Helen a biscuit factory worker of 189 Belfield Street.



John Walker was 5ft 8ins tall and his career as a footballer started with Eastern Burnside, Cambuslang Rangers, Burnbank Athletic, Raith Rovers, Beith FC and Rangers 1905-06.

At the start of the 1907/8 season, 'Jock' joined Swindon from Glasgow Rangers, having been tempted by Johnny Kidd to come down to Swindon for higher wages.

Sam Allen, Swindon Town secretary/manager agreed the transfer.

The previous season had seen Swindon finish in 17th place but progressed to 5th place, with 'Jock' always in the line-up, described as being a 'tough-tackling, uncompromising but skilful left back who gave everything for the cause'. Also described as being 'consistent with clean clearances, and quick thinking in resuming his position and intercepting passes'

In fact, during an FA Cup match at Sheffield in 1908, Harold Fleming wrote that full-back Jock Walker had left the match through injury. Sheffield United took the lead until Swindon's Billy Tout scored a fluke goal. Spurred on by the news of the goal, 'Jock' had his trainer rub some whisky into the injured area and after some excruciating pummelling from the trainer, Jock trotted back out onto the field, in extreme pain, for the start of extra time. Swindon won the match.

Jock played left-back for five more seasons.

In 1910 he helped Swindon reach the semi-final of the FA cup when Town were defeated by Newcastle.



Following that defeat, Swindon were invited to compete for the Dubonnet Cup with Barnsley – the club that Newcastle beat in the final.

With the exception of Town forward, Freddy Wheatcroft, the match was played in Paris with a full-strength squad.

Sealing a win for Swindon, the legendary Harold Fleming scored two goals, and team captain, Charlie Bannister, collected the trophy, which had been guarded by two soldiers with riffles and fixed bayonets during the game.

The team afterwards celebrated at a theatre performance and Town director, Mr H W Thomas, sang 'Sally in our Alley'.



Three survivors pose with cup

This picture was taken in 1966. It shows the three surviving players from the squad that went to Paris: Jock Walker, Rob Jefferson and Tommy Bolland. And, of course, the prized Dubonnet Cup. Jock was staying with Tommy Bolland in 1911.

In 1910/11 Swindon won the Southern League championship.

Jock Walker also played a right-back role for Scotland, including once against Harold Fleming on the opposite team. He won nine Scottish International caps while at Swindon and made 214 Southern League appearances.



This photo was taken from one of Jock's international appearances.

He is third from right, back row.

1912, when son John was born, their address was York Street, Swindon and John snr was a 'Professional Footballer'. His second son, James (Jim), was born in Middlesbrough.

1912/13 saw him transfer to Middlesbrough, for a record fee, but still played for Swindon Town in some friendly matches during WW1. He then signed for Reading and ended his football career in 1921. He opened a fish-and-chip shop in Manchester Road.

Photo: John Walker's shop in Manchester Road – possibly wife Ellen (Nellie) and their two sons John and James (Jim).



The 1921 census shows him as a 38 year old Fish Merchant own account (no address given) and then, at the time of the 1939 Register at 148-9 Manchester Road when he was listed as being a Market Gardener. Next door was Ernest Coran's butcher shop. The area was known as 'Walker's Corner.

John/Jock died 16 December 1968 Swindon aged 85.

A SAD STORY – sometime in 1904

With thanks to Margaret Alexander for discovering this story

John Lomas was born in Derbyshire and, like so many others, had found his way to Swindon and became a labourer in the GWR Works, where he seems to have been rather a loner, keeping largely to himself. He gave the impression to those he came in contact with that he had seen better days, his education being above the average of a man in his station of life.

It was reported that he had been resident in Swindon some 12 or 13 years and was a man of very reserved temperament. Very little of his background was known, although it appeared that he had a wife who was a headmistress in Wolverton, and a daughter, a schoolmistress in London.

These speculations were supported by the 1881 census when a John Lomas, 26 year old drawing master, was living with brother-in-law Thomas Hicks at Palmer Street, South Petherton, Somerset. He was shown as born Bukell, Derbyshire. Thomas Hicks was a 35 year old school master born Scarborough and his wife was a professor of music.

He was lodging at 46 Farnsby Street by the time of the 1891 census and listed as a 36 year old butcher born Ashford, Derbyshire. Head of household was the widow Elizabeth Taylor, 36 born Chippenham, and three additional lodgers besides John Lomas.

The 1901 census finds him boarding at 38 Chester Street with Samuel G Cavill and his family. Shown then as being married and a 47 year old Coach Trimmer's Labourer born Ashford-in-the-Water, Derbyshire. Samuel Cavill was 47, born Spaxton, Somerset, and a railway wagon painter.

It was also thought that, at one time, he had lodged with a man named Harris in Carr Street.

One other snippet of information about John Lomas was that quite recently he had been in the University College Hospital, London for three weeks where he underwent an operation for lameness.

He was friendly with Alfred Stevens of King John Street and it was reported that on Thursday (date unknown) he had called there and was 'supplied by Mrs Stevens with a cup of tea and some toast'. He had seemed to be ill and she advised him to see a doctor and go to the

infirmity. On Friday, when Lomas called there again, he appeared to be considerably worse. He went out about half-past five, taking with him a bottle of gin, and Mrs Stevens saw him no more.

Man Dies at the Police Station. Locked up being drunk. Said to belong to Manchester.

Report probably by the Swindon Advertiser: "A sensational affair was reported in Swindon this morning. It appears that between 11 and 12 o'clock last night a man was found in Victoria Road in an apparently helpless state of intoxication.

PC Pearce, who was on duty in the neighbourhood at the time, found the man unable to walk and, with the assistance of Mr Hemmins jnr and three other civilians, he conveyed him to the police station, where the man exhibited signs of illness and it was deemed advisable to send for a doctor. Dr Birch, assistant to Dr J C Maclean, was accordingly sent for and arrived about midnight. He saw the man, whose name is John Lomas, in the cell and advised his removal to the hospital. However, he gradually grew worse and died about 2.15 am.

This morning the body was conveyed to the mortuary at the cemetery."

Coroner Browne arranged to hold an inquest at the Frome Hotel on Monday.

Further investigation by a representative of the Advertiser revealed his name and believed him to be about 50 years of age and to hail from Manchester. He was described as being a very tall man. When first discovered, it was understood that the man had evidently fallen upon some railings and had sustained a bruise on the head.

He had been arrested by PC Pearce at about 11.15 pm as being drunk and incapable in Victoria Road, Swindon. It took four civilians and the constable to take him to the police station, where he was found to be helplessly drunk and unable to stand. Several policemen remained with Lomas for over an hour and gave him an emetic, but it took no effect. He slept for a while and then became worse.

It was also reported that 'latterly he had shown signs of acute depression which, from casual remarks he let fall occasionally, pointed to the conclusion that some family dispute preyed upon his mind.

Note: At the time of the 1901 census Alfred and Ann Stevens were living at 2 King John Street with their four children – Henry, Emily, Decima and Edward. Alfred was a 42 year old bus (?) driver born Cirencester. Son Henry was a chemist's porter.

If any of the names mentioned ring bells with you, then do write in and let us know – swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk

SOME JUNE DATES REMEMBERED

15.06.1215 King John of England put his seal to the Magna Carta.

11.06.1509 Henry VIII married his sister-in-law, Spanish princess Catherine of Aragon, the first of his six wives.

18.06.1583 The first life insurance policy was sold in London on the life of William Gibbons. William died before the year ended but the insurers refused to pay out by re-defining a year as 12 months of four weeks, thus only 336 days long – which William had exceeded.

20.06.1837 William IV (the Sailor King) died at Windsor, and his niece Alexandrine Victoria, aged 18, came to the throne. When she was handed documents at her first Privy Council Meeting, she instructed officials to delete Alexandrine and name her Queen Victoria.

06.04.1896 The opening ceremony of the first modern Olympic Games was held in Athens.

26.05.1917 King George V dropped the German titles from the royal family, and Saxe-Coburg-Gotha because Windsor. The name Battenberg was changed to Mountbatten.

18.06.1940 Swindon: the Victoria Hospital made a plea for 5,000 volunteers to give blood for the Army Blood Transfusion Service.

07.06.1946 Television resumed after the war, and announcer Leslie Mitchell said 'As I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted ...'

June 1976 Britain roasted that summer but it was also the month of a spectacular fire at the old gas works in Gypsy Lane – believed to have been started by sparks from demolition equipment. It was feared that that gasometers and other containers at the site could have exploded if the flames had spread. The gasworks had been used to produce coal gas, and had been rendered obsolete when the country switched to natural gas.



Lovely old cottages

Lovely old photo ...

BUT

can anyone shed light on where this old photo may have been taken please?

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. 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)