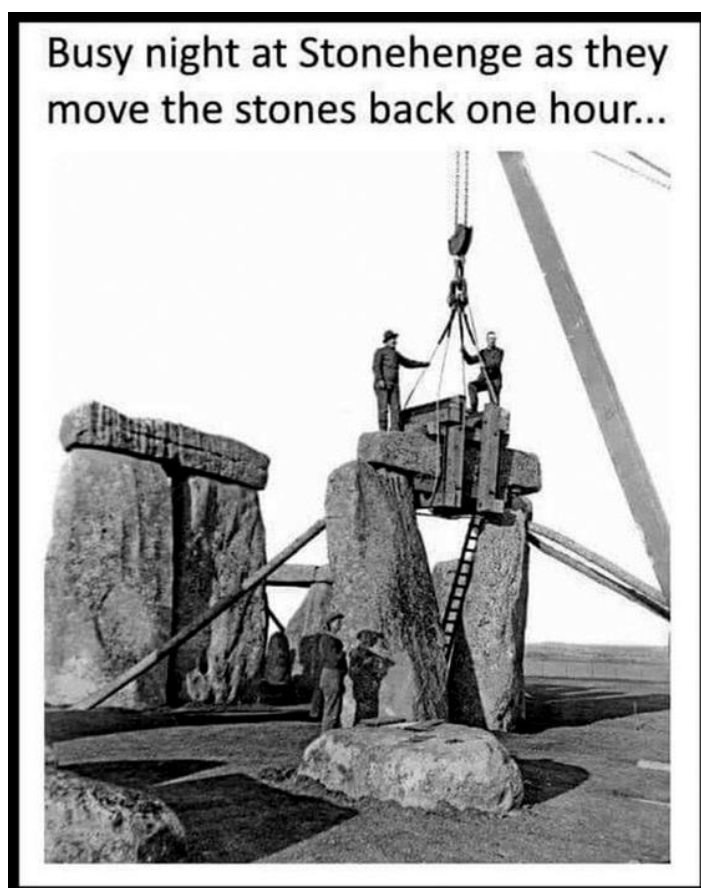


Wiltshire Family History Society, Swindon Branch, October 2023

MEETINGS REMINDER – see below for further details

Thursday 12 October 2023 via Zoom – The Golden Age of Travel 1836 – 1936

Thursday 26 October at The Central Community Centre, Emlyn Square
Open Evening – Looking at Wills



Picture courtesy of Ken Mumford

2.00 am on Sunday 29 October 2023 is when the clocks 'fall back' an hour, so ending Daylight Saving Time.

First proposed in a letter written in Paris in 1784 by inventor, philosopher and American political heavyweight Benjamin Franklin who joked 'Parisians should be roused from their slumbers an hour earlier by ringing church bells and firing cannons in the street.'

The idea re-surfaced in 1895 in New Zealand when George Vernon Hudson proposed to his government that the clocks should go forward by two hours every summer. He wasn't successful!

Then William Willett had a go. Annoyed because his golfing would be interrupted by the sun going down, he wanted to change the law so that there would be more light in the evening. He died unsuccessful in 1915.

However, the following year in the spring of 1916 and during WW1, the German army turned the clocks forward as a way of conserving energy. Many (but not all) European governments followed suit shortly afterwards, including the UK.

FROM CHAIRMAN JOHN

Managed to miss both our scheduled talks for September. I just couldn't log on to zoom for the first one and on holiday in the Peak District for the second. I did manage the local studies workshop though.

Stacey Dooley is back on BBC 2 with her DNA Family Secrets. Also on the BBC, but this time on the radio, Michael Palin has been reading his latest book about his Great Uncle Harry who died on the Somme. His research has brought back memories of Lis and my research into two of her Great Uncles one of which died in France another at sea. You will note again that Lis's family has the more interesting, although tragic, stories.

Mike Palin's book is a reminder to share our family history stories as a large number of you do already, in this newsletter. I look forward to reading "Great Uncle Harry" when it comes out in paperback or more likely when it is on sale in the Prospect Bookshop! **JOHN MILLS**

WHAT'S COMING UP

Thursday 12 October 2023 - The Golden Age of Travel 1836 to 1936 via Zoom by Ian Porter

The coming of the railways, great ocean liners, the Orient Express, Thomas Cook, discovering Egypt, European spas, Zeppelins and the arrival of the aeroplane.

Thursday 26th October 2023 - Open evening - Looking at Wills with Julia Hunt

Julia will guide us through the ways in which we can access the wills of our ancestors and the information which we can get from them. You are invited to bring copies of wills which you may have of your own ancestors to share with the group.

Upcoming talk 'Margaret Beauchamp, Baroness and 15th Century Matriarch'

To be held at Lydiard Park Hotel & Conference Centre at 2:30pm on Sunday 15th October 2023

Margaret, Baroness Beauchamp (c1409–1482) gifted Lydiard to her second son Oliver St. John, and through her second marriage to John Beaufort 1st Duke of Somerset, provided the St. Johns with a blood link to the royal Tudor dynasty.

Margaret is celebrated in the extraordinary St. John family polyptych in St. Mary's Church, Lydiard Tregoze; her portrait is awarded pride of place, befitting the Grandmother of King Henry VII.

Historian Sonia St. John traces Margaret's remarkable vocation and achievements, not least her ensuring that all her children were well placed to survive and prosper during the War of the Roses.

Sonia's talk, which will include a surprise 'unveiling', will be followed by a delicious afternoon tea.

FOLLOW THIS LINK TO BOOK TICKETS:

<https://www.friendsoflydiardpark.org.uk/events/margaret-beauchamp-baroness-and-15th-century-matriarch/>

REPORTS

14 September 2023 Zoom: FAMILY, HOUSE AND LOCAL HISTORY BEFORE 1837 – Jackie Depelle

Jackie gave us lots of ideas on what early records are available, some online, some from The National Archives, local records offices, Gibson Guides etc. She described the sources as stepping stones in the family history jigsaw.

Parish records commenced in 1538 although not all records survive.

Bishops Transcripts may contain additional information but again patchy.

The 1754 Hardwicke's Marriage Act - all marriages, with the exception of Quakers and Jews, had to be in the parish church to be legal. Take note of witnesses names, although not always family members. Original signatures are interesting – also found on house deeds. Marriage Bonds & Allegations may give useful information.

The 1812 Roses Act required keeping separate baptisms and burials. Family 'job lots' often found.

Parish maps, various years, show boundary changes.

Difficult Handwriting – a tip: breakdown letter shapes

Information may sometimes be obtained from:

Constable accounts

Settlement orders

Growth of non-conformity

Transportation

Education records

Probate records

Wills

Manorial records

DNA

Civil War petitions

Rates assessments

Court Rolls

Trade directories

Land Registry deeds

Cause papers

Poll books

Window tax records

Militia records

Protestation returns

Helpful Websites:

Genuki

Ancestry

Find my Past

Old Bailey online

British Newspapers online

English Immigrants online

The Gazette

OPEN FAMILY HISTORY SESSION AT LOCAL STUDIES

At Local Studies, Swindon Central Library, for a couple of hours on Monday 18 September, four of us from Swindon Branch welcomed anyone wishing to discover more, or needing a little help, with their family history to come along and meet us. We had about ten visitors. It was a very enjoyable afternoon and, hopefully, we've helped a little.

Local Studies has a wealth of books, brochures, minutes, newsletters etc etc to help a family historian and it is well-worth a visit. Allow a little time – you will no doubt discover lots to interest you.

Our next Open Session will be on Monday 20 November 2.00 – 4.00 at Local Studies.

'RUNNING OUT OF STEAM' with Phil Garrahan – 28 September 2023

Phil 'chatted' to us about two of Swindon's unsung artist celebrities. We have such a rich history in Swindon - buildings, people, events, which can rival other places which receive far more acclaim than our own town. Why then do we not hear more about our local personalities?

Hubert Cook (1901 – 1966) and Leslie Cole (1920 – 1976)

Self-portraits of the two artists have similarities – both head and shoulders, similar dress etc. Could they both have been directed to produce these studies in such a way?

In their work, these two artists give a sense of how it was to work in the GWR in the 20s and 30s, thus providing us with a visual insight into the GWR history. They both became very effective artists depicting everyday life and how they were ruled by the GWR - the discipline, everyday activities, the dangers, even bureaucracy/code of practice (eg the type of headgear various categories of workers were expected to wear). Besides of historical value, their images are so dynamic and atmospheric capturing the energy, team work (particularly referring to working with hot metals), physical and mental attitudes, dangers (the many accidents and sometimes fatalities) etc. Powerful images indeed.

Phil compared their images to the written account of Alfred Williams in his book 'Life in a Railway Factory'.

We were also shown some of their other work such as a blind grandmother, so poignant with a light shining directly over her left shoulder which she would not have been able to see. Leslie Cole became a war artist portraying scenes as he saw them, some quite horrific.

Phil told us of the Swindon School of Art of which Harold Dearden (1888 – 1962) was head for 30 years. There will have been very many more artists who have never been acknowledged and recorded.

The GWR ran Arts and Crafts Exhibitions. Hubert Cook and Leslie Cole were named in the catalogues. BUT there were also many more names that appeared under the various painting categories in the inter-war years. Phil asked what of them and their work? Who were they?

This is perhaps where YOU come in – do you recognise any of these names?

H C Attwood

G A Bailey

J E C Brown

Hilda Carvell

Samuel Harwood

Maurice Howlett

J E Lockyer

E Lowe

G A Reason (1901-1984)

Rachel Roberts

Winifred Woodley

Are you able to help Phil – please do get in touch. swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk

CAN ANYONE HELP WITH THIS ONE PLEASE?

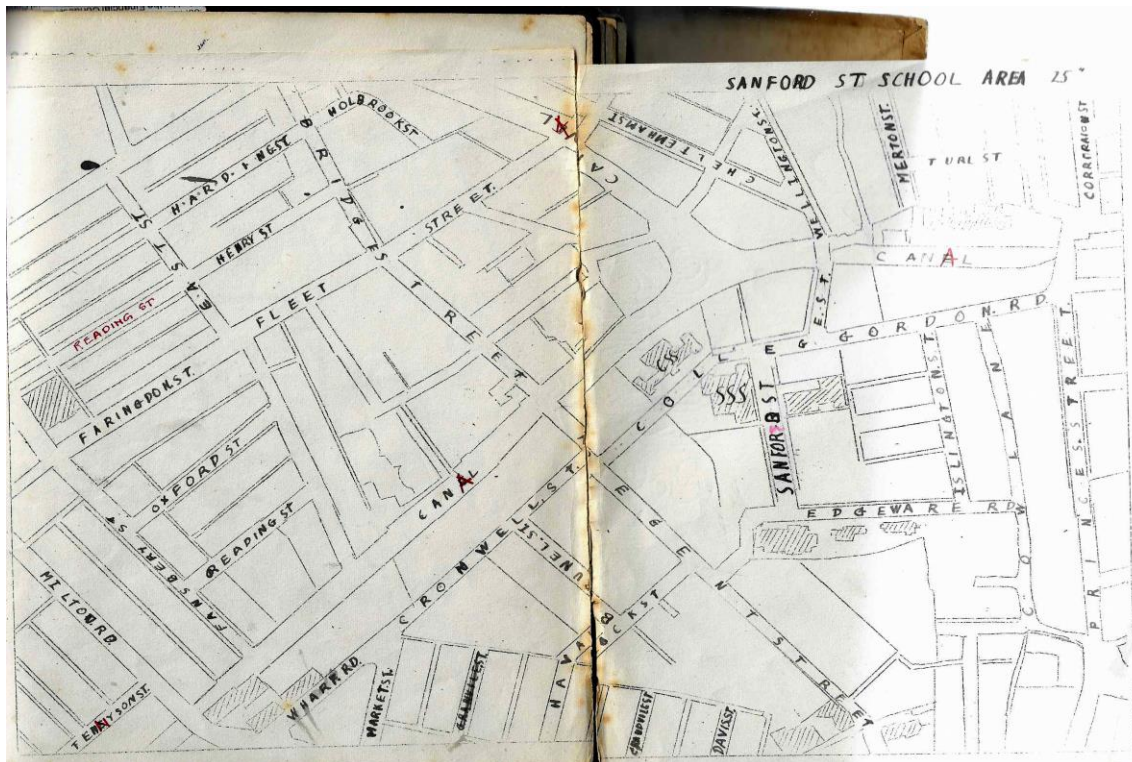
Jack came to see us at the Heritage Open Days event recently and told us of a family story – but it remains a mystery. Here is Jack's story which relates to the above report and hot metals.

“My Great-grandfather, **James Geoffrey Peart** born 22nd January 1898, worked in the GWR and was injured while working in the Works. He lost his eye while working in the Brass Foundry when moulton brass went into his left eye. A family story is that the Cheltenham Flyer was stopped to take him to hospital, possibly Oxford although that is not definite.

We believe that the injury happened after 1939 as we have found him on the 1939 register working still in the Brass Foundry. The family story has it that he was awarded compensation for the injury and given a job for life in the pattern shop as a Labourer.“

So ... Jack is asking for help – can anyone throw any light on this mystery? Please contact swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk Many thanks.

FROM LAST TIME



Following on from Martin Robins' article about Sanford Street School in our last Newsletter, you may be interested in this hand-drawn map – possibly by a Sanford Street schoolboy. (Apologies that the two sections do not match quite accurately.)

D L Green is the lad concerned and it seems to have been drawn around 1939 as a school project. The school workbook it is in also features the GWR, Swindon and surrounding areas. Perhaps a history/geography project. It's interesting to see how different central Swindon is now and is changing all the time.

Does anyone know D L Green? Possibly Derek Leslie Green born 19 December 1928. His grandparents seem to have lived in Crombey Street and a couple of the old postcards contain that address.

BRETT'S v HINDERS !!!

At the end of our last newsletter, the question was posed 'does anyone remember Brett's the pet shop in Commercial Road'. Well that comment opened up a little debate – was it Brett's or was it Hinders?

Paul Cole was the first to query this and went investigating.

Comparing an old Swindon Advertiser picture of Brett's, he discovered this is what's there today.



There was a further picture – of Hinders. The skyline and windows, however, were different and that seems to have been further up towards the Town Hall and Paul points out that this block, between Temple Street and Morley Street, has been completely rebuilt so there is nothing left to compare.

It has since come to light that Brett's was at 34-35 Commercial Road. And there is a further revelation in Mark Child's 'The Swindon Book' (thanks to Mandy Ball via Paul Cole for this) that Swindon's earliest mural was a business advertisement painted in the 1950s on the wall of Hinder's pet store on the corner of Temple Street. The artist was Charles Edward Gaze

This seems to prove therefore that Brett's was on one side of the road (slightly towards the old market end) and Hinders at the other end and on the other side of the road.

The latest update from Paul who went investigating again – this time looking at old telephone directories and yearbooks - was that he discovered that Hinders was at 116 Commercial Road from somewhere between 1938 – 1947 until 1971.

There was a Brett's in Cromwell Street at one time. There was a Hinders at 25 Havelock Street from 1973 to 1979/80 and also one in Ermin Street, Stratton St Margaret.

Next came an email from Alison Wagstaff:

"Your mention of Bretts the pet shop in the recent WFHS newsletter took me back to the 1970s when I was a member of Swindon Young Musicians. My friend Sara and I were both in the Training Orchestra, which met at Euclid Street School on a Tuesday evening. We both played the violin and our violin teacher, the lovely Charles Chase, led the orchestra. Sara's father used to pick us up after orchestra practice and would often take us to buy chips in town. It must've been a chippy on Commercial Road, because we often ate our chips while looking in Bretts window. I particularly remember there being chicks in the window in springtime, but it was also the place to go for pet guinea pigs! Simple pleasures!"

When the name of Brett's was queried with Alison, it then made her doubt also and she wrote again:

"Ooo, you're making me doubt myself now because I lived in Upper Stratton and there was a newsagents/sweet shop called Bretts at the Crossroads shops, opposite the Moonrakers pub. It was the only shop open on a Sunday in the 1970s so my brother and I would often do a family sweet run, getting 2oz of our favourites."

Then came a message from Julian White:

"I'm showing my age again! Your article about Melinda Messenger recently opening a pet shop reminded me of my youth as well. I can remember going to Commercial Road as a child with my mum and there were two pet shops there. One was on the left hand side of the road and one on the right. I can remember going to Hinders Pet shop and Bretts Pet Shop. From memory, Bretts may have been on the left hand side coming up from the Old Market and Hinders on the right, but I may well be wrong."

Strange isn't it how a small thought about a pet shop can become quite a conundrum! Thanks to all who have contributed.

NOW ONE FOR ALL YOU CRICKET FANS

(And who better to give the details than Andy Binks!)

Here are a few snippets about how Wilfred Gilbert Grace – he of the imposing facial hair - was humiliated by the humble Swindon railway worker (a foundry man) John Thomas Laverick. Bowled out for a duck on 7 May 1870 at Greenway Bush Lane, Bristol.

Andy wrote that John Laverick, born Bedlington, Northumberland in about 1846 arrived in Swindon not long after the Works opened. He was lodging in Havelock Street at the time of the 1871 census but by 1881 was married and living in Queen Street. Later, with his family, he lived at Carr Street and then Farnsby Street. He was no mean sportsman.

In 1860 the GWR purchased a plot in Faringdon Road from local landowner Colonel Vilett.

It became known as the cricket ground and was surrounded by a hedge and wooden railings.

The ground was used by the GWR cricket team, formed in 1847, for which Laverick would become a leading member.



On that fateful day, in the first innings, W G Grace was caught and bowled by Laverick for no score. In the second innings WG was also dismissed by our local hero for a duck. In cricketing records of the next 40 years you would be hard pushed to find this occurrence again.

John Thomas Laverick is buried in Radnor Street cemetery along with his family. Unfortunately his grave has not survived too well, the weather having got under the face of the stonework and lifted it off. Sadly when this happens you lose the names and wording of those buried within.

THE GWR LADIES



In her recent talk, reported in our last Newsletter, Judy Rouse touched on the subject of women working in the GWR.

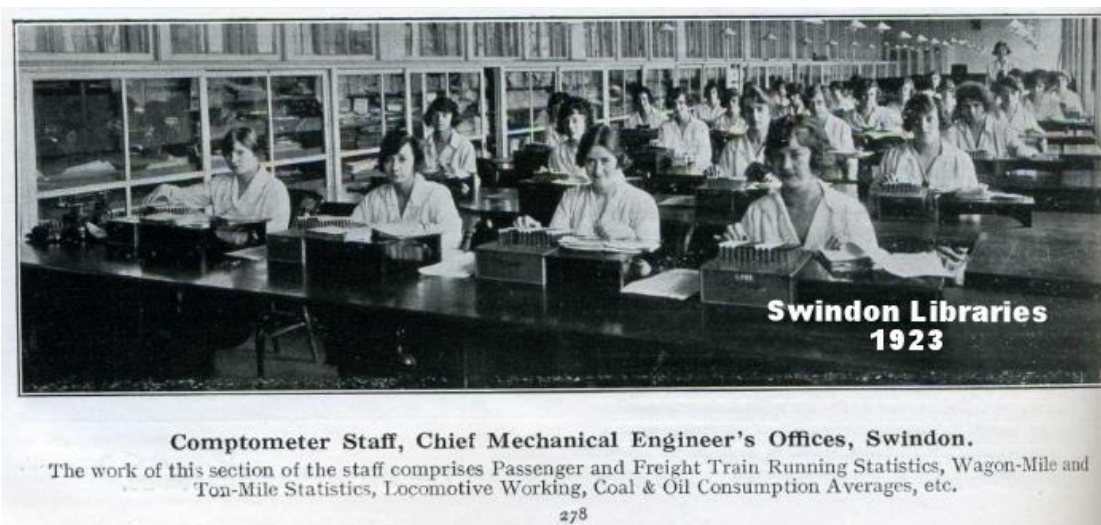
Previously we had included the fascinating memories of Lorna Dawes during her years in The Works.

Frances Bevan wrote about Celia Morkot in her blogs and reproduced below with her permission – the first woman employed in the Works. She wrote:

'By the 1870s the railway factory had been in operation for some 30 years but the GWR were finding it difficult to recruit skilled men. The problem was the shortage of jobs in Swindon for young women, the railwaymen's daughters. The men wouldn't move their families to Swindon if there was no work for their daughters.

Joseph Armstrong, the Locomotive, Carriage and Wagon Superintendent, the top man, addressed the problem by extending the Carriage Works on London Street and creating a separate upholstery department for the employment of girls only. By the end of 1874 five women were employed in the new trimming department.

Celia Folland was born in Tredegar, Monmouthshire in 1857, the daughter of Richard Folland, a rail sawer, and his wife Margaret. By 1871 the family had moved to Swindon and were living at 1 Reading Street in the railway village. Celia married George Morkot at St Mark's Church, Swindon on July 19, 1883.'



Thanks to
Local Studies,
Swindon
Central Library,
for providing
this photo.

The Rev Frederick Fuller wrote that a few ladies had been recruited in 1913 to work the new accounting machines – new work which had not been done by men. Women took the place of male clerks during WW1 and there was a strict dress code. The ladies stayed on after the war and were recruited for peace-time office work.

The GWR ladies had their own choir which gave concerts or assisted with others.

Rev. Fuller listed some of the early GWR female employees of St Mark's parish, including:

Ethel Panting MBE
Nesta Ford
Dorothy Venn
Mary Spurway
Elmira Curnow
Lily Cavell
Ethel Winslow
Marjorie Cuff

Ada Goudge
Kathleen Goudge
Iris Edwards
Vera Bishop
Jean Wheeler
Velda Bartlett
Edna Cork
Lynda Bishop

Can anyone relate to these ladies and/or any GWR female employees? Please contact swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk

EMLYN SQUARE RESIDENTS 1939

We (Swindon Branch, Wiltshire Family History Society) hold our meetings monthly at The Central Community Centre, which originally was the GWR hospital, the address for which is Emlyn Square. So another list of names for you to browse through to see if you can recognise any, or perhaps know personally from your own family tree.

Attached is the list of residents at the time of the 1939 register. Please contact us on swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk if you have something to share. We'd love to hear from you.

THANK YOU

REMEMBER CARREFOUR?

'The biggest, most exciting thing ever to arrive on Swindon's shopping scene – a death threat to smaller shops?' so ran the news in the **autumn** of 1981. Well Carrefour, which opened 27 October that year, may have disappeared but it's the 'norm' today that we shop at large supermarkets.

ALL MOD COMS

Ninety years ago, in 1933, the General Electricity Company and several local contractors conceived and fitted out a Swindon house 'designed on modern labour-saving lines, tastefully decorated and furnished, and fitted with 'all the latest electrical appliances'. It was officially opened by the Mayor W R Robins. Here are some of the features:

- Simplicity of control is the keynote. Everything from the most modern cooker to a tiny bed warmer being worked by a switch.
- An electric chiming clock and original lighting effects in the dining room. Decorated in warm creams and red, dark oak furniture, 'Majik' dining tables, low book case and elastic spring upholstered chairs.
- An electric sewing machine, modern electric fires and lighting arrangements.
- The bathroom, in soft greens and white, boasted a special electrical hot water system, electric towel rack and various novelty gadgets eg electric hair curler, steam-resistant shaving mirror, electric massage stimulator, sunray lamp and electrical vibrator (as seen on Carry On films).
- Vacuum cleaner, immersion heater and even electric saucepans graced the kitchen.
- An electric car heater in the garage prevented the engine of the family saloon from freezing.

It was reported that 'anybody with misgivings over the cost of running the gadgets was reassured that electricity would only become cheaper as more of it was used'.

AND ANOTHER ... Swindon Advertiser October 1956: Picture of bungalow: **LAWN ESTATE** (off Marlborough Road) SWINDON. Glevum Estates limited were advertising property as follows:

10% deposit subject to status.

2-bed semi-detached bungalows:	£2025
3-bed semi-detached bungalows:	£2300
3-bed detached houses:	£2595
2-bed semi-detached chalets:	£2040

WHAT A DAY – 21 October

- 21.10.1805** the British defeated the Franco-Spanish fleet at the Battle of Trafalgar.
- 21.10.1858** The can-can dance was performed for the first time, in Paris.

- 21.10.1879** Thomas Edison successfully demonstrated the first durable and commercially practical electric light bulb.
- 21.10.1915** The first transatlantic radio telephone message was sent from Arlington, Virginia, to Paris.
- 21.10.1960** Britain launched its first nuclear submarine, HMS Dreadnought.
- 21.10.1994** Excavations for an underground rail link caused a landslip at Heathrow airport.
- 21.10.1998** Midwives marched on Downing Street to demand better wages.
- 23.10.1961** A freak hailstorm hit Cricklade, peppering the town with hailstones said to be the size of marbles. Parts of the town were covered to a depth of an inch. The storm lasted for about five minutes and was followed by rain, but the large hailstones remained for half an hour before melting. There had been several days of heavy rain in Swindon, with firefighters being called to the sewage works at Rodbourne to help clear floodwater from the pump house.
- October 1970** It was reported that a bulldozer driver discovered an old well while working at Skurreys in Newport Street – the site now occupied by the Co-op. The shaft was lined with Cotswold stone and covered with a large slate slab. Although some wells found in the area may date from Roman times, it was suspected that this one may have been for the stabling yard, previously on the site. Possibly dug to supply water for the horses.

THE END OF AN ERA - SOME NEWS FROM JUST 'UP THE ROAD' IN ASHBURY

Production ceased in September this year at Bunce (Ashbury) Ltd. Although having been taken over by Marcel Boschung AG in 2015 following the retirement of the Bunce family, the marketing and servicing of the Boschung range of sweepers, multi-purpose vehicles and airport runway clearing equipment will continue.

William John Bunce purchased the Ashbury blacksmith's business in 1896 for £15 10s. 0d. On his penny-farthing he would cycle from Aldbourne to Ashbury before eventually moving to Ashbury to live. The going rate for shoeing horses was 2/8d per set and he would have to walk with his tools, sometimes several miles, to shoe working farm horses before they left their stables between 4.00 – 5.00 am.

Soon he started to repair farm machinery also and could afford to buy a pony and trap. He then turned to inventing various pieces of equipment and by 1926 was well-established. His children - Albert and the Misses Bunce - also joined the business. He designed and patented the Ashbury Gritting Machine in 1927 which was used by the County Council. In 1929 William patented the Bunce snow plough and an order for 666 came from the Air Ministry in 1941. Business continued to boom.

William Bunce retired in 1949 aged 78. The Misses Bunce retired in 1961 and Albert was head of the firm until he died in 1966.

The founder's grandson, David, took over the business and orders came in from all over the world.

Upon David Bunce's retirement in 1987, his sons Philip, Stephen and Andrew were joint Managing Directors and continued to find new markets until their retirement in July 2015.

The Bunce name is quite well-known locally. Does anyone have a connection or memory? Please contact swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk We'd love to hear your stories.

... AND AN ICONIC CAR

From time to time we've mentioned cars and motoring in this newsletter. This time – the Morgan - and a Swindon link.



The Swindon Advertiser reported 'An apprentice at Swindon's railway works was the man behind the creation of the iconic Morgan car.'

Henry Frederick Stanley Morgan had attended Marlborough School for a while, and eventually became a GWR apprentice.

During this time he survived a brake failure while driving a hired 3 ½ hp Benz on a 1 in 6 gradient between Bromyard and Hereford. His father received a £28 repair bill! He owned his first car in 1902 – a Star.

He left the GWR and Swindon in 1904.

SUCH A SAD ENDING – AND A LESSON TO US ALL

As family historians, we all love our family trees and would be devastated if something happened and we lost all our information.

This comes to mind with the news that the 'Sycamore Gap' tree has been unlawfully and brutally felled.

There has been much outpouring of real grief for the 300 year old, world-famous, tree at Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland.



It had set the scene for probably thousands of photos over the years depicting all seasons and times of day.

Many have come to just contemplate the scene but it had also been the place for marriage proposals and photos, and the scattering of loved-ones ashes.

Surely this gives us food for thought – that we should all try to write down and pass on our own family histories and stories. John's message this month reiterates the importance of this.

So ... let's get writing!

ASKING IN PLENTY OF TIME FOR CHRISTMAS

Would you like to share a family Christmas memory with us or perhaps a winter/Christmas photo? Send to swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk

Also next month, November, we celebrate Armistice Day. Do you have a story or memory to share please?

ONE TO THINK ABOUT ...

(via Ken Mumford and originally from www.mikeysFunnies.com)

The biggest joke on mankind is that computers have begun asking humans to prove they aren't a robot.

... and a 'Silly' from Ken Mumford to end with: **Absolutely perfect!**

His wife left a note for him to prepare dinner that evening:

"Shepherds Pie needs to be taken out of the fridge and

placed in the oven at 140 degrees".



**October gave a party: The leaves by hundreds came -
the chestnuts, oaks and maples and leaves of every name.**

**Sunshine spread a carpet and everything was grand.
Miss Weather led the dancing and Professor Wind the band.
George Cooper**

(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)

