

Back Then...

**Marlborough
Road and
Broome
Manor Lane
1927**



**Bumper
Summer
Edition**

The Swindon Society

Newsletter - Summer 2025



**And now...
More
Recently
May 2025**





Welcome to the Summer Newsletter

We hope you have had a lovely summer break, we have certainly had lots of lovely sunshine!

It's hard to believe that we will soon be starting a new season again, kicking off with David Bedford, in his usual September slot in our programme. David always puts on a great show of Swindon images - whatever the theme.

For the first time in a few years we have a full complement of committee members, and this is already making a huge difference to the organisation that goes on behind the scenes. So, thank you once again to Debra and Peter Melsom for volunteering.

As you may already know, our meetings continue to take place at Goddard Park School, but we have been asked to move into a different hall, for logistical reasons. Hopefully, you will all have received information detailing how to access the new hall, which is accessible from the rear of the building. We can still use the car parks at the front and back, but we are asking if the more able-bodied members could please use the front car park if possible, leaving the rear car park for our less mobile members that may find it a challenge to walk around the building.

Here we go then, it's a new chapter for our Swindon Society and we can't wait to see you all back again in September!

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The Tour by Andy Binks & Diane Everett

14th May 2025

After the formalities of the AGM were dealt with in the usual whirlwind fashion, May's meeting swiftly moved on to the good bit - our evening's presentation.

This month, in a slight change to the programme,

Andy and Diane were re-visiting a previous talk by

Bob Townsend, which was old photos of New Swindon in a photographic tour of the area. Diane and Andy zipped through these (obviously on a roll from the AGM), so there may be one or two details I missed...



It began with a photo of a decorated Swindon Corporation Tram and was followed up by the Co-op Bakery in Station Road and then one of it in the midst of being demolished. Next, it was on to the Queen's Tap for the 1934 Trip and a Swindon Trip

holiday photo in 1906. We moved on to the Railway Mission in Wellington Street in the 1960s, then round to Cheltenham Street (according to my notes) where we saw a photo of A.E. Tunley who had an art shop and was a picture framing specialist. Except a quick search online to verify a date (which I often do as I'm writing so quickly I'm not always convinced what I have written is accurate) has thoroughly

confused the issue - our esteemed colleagues in Local Studies have the shop located on the corner of Fleet Street and Gloucester Street, whereas our equally esteemed local history colleagues of the Radnor Street Cemetery have the shop located on the corner of Cheltenham Street and Milford Street which later expanded into Gloucester Street and then moved to Fleet Street. Knowing the area has undergone an awful lot of redevelopment since the photo we saw was taken, I will hedge my bets and say that it was definitely located somewhere in one or more of those streets! Please do email our newsletter editor if you are able to confirm the location for me.



We then saw a photo of Duck, Son & Pinker in 1982, which was also in that area but most definitely on Milford Street (several sources have confirmed!), prior to its demolition. Beale's Café was also nearby, on the corner of Milford Street and Cheltenham Street and the photo we saw was from c1968. Staying in this locale, we then had a photo of Cheltenham Street from around 1890. Then it was on

to the Incognito club, pictured in 2010, which was originally the YMCA on Fleet Street (and this is where I'm glad I double check my notes, as I'd actually written down Milford Street!). Then it was an image from the 1860s of the Baptist Church on Fleet Street followed by a later image of Duck, Son & Pinker in their Fleet Street premises.



Editors note: The photo of Beale's Café on the corner of Milford Street and Cheltenham Street (above right) clearly shows the building opposite has the initials AET in stone on the corner.

However, the photo of A E Tunley's (above left) has no initials and looks different, so presumably this is the corner of Milford Street and Gloucester Street?... I'm still confused!

We then moved around the corner to Bridge Street and a photo of the Albion Sports & Social Club in 2011, at the rear of which was the Baptist School building, previously adjoining the Fleet Street church we saw earlier until it was demolished. Moving further on a little, we were then shown an image of Bridge Street to Regent Street flooded in the 1950s.

Our sojourn around New Swindon was briefly interrupted by a lovely Beaney photo of Bob Townsend and his brother John. Then it was back to business with a photo of the opening day of Swindon Corporation Tramways on 22nd September 1904. We then saw Weaver to Wearer and Keogh Brothers at 44 and 45 Bridge Street and the Lipton shop at 35 Bridge Street. Remaining on Bridge Street, a more modern photo of Suite Superstore was the next shop we saw at no. 54, pictured in 2010. This was followed by a move further up to



Regent Street 1960s

Regent Street - however the photo we were shown was a row of terraced houses in the 1860s; not recognisably Regent Street at all. More familiar was the next image of Burtons at 92 Regent Street and the much-missed Marks & Spencer at 85-87 Regent Street. We then saw the 2009 refresh of Golden Lion Bridge mural by Ken White, which is on the gable-end of a house in Medgbury

Road. (Incidentally, this has just had a third refresh by local artist Tim Carroll in the last few weeks.) This photo was followed up by the demolition of the actual Golden Lion Bridge in 1918 and a photo of the lion sculpture that now stands in the location of where the bridge was at the junction of Bridge Street and Canal Walk. The sculptor was Harry Carleton Attwood, who also created the Harold Fleming statue



George V Coronation 1911

at the County Ground. We then saw the canal as it was in 1906 and the King George V coronation decorations in Regent Street in 1911. And that was where it ended – at least for those of us who were serving up the drinks and biscuits. I think there may have been some sneaky extra photos whilst we were preparing the refreshments, but I didn't quite catch them I'm afraid. It was wonderful to revisit an old presentation by our late member Bob Townsend, I'm only sorry that I didn't quite catch all the glorious details.

Kelly Blake - May 2025

A Sad Piece of Wartime History

Foreword: *We had an enquiry via our Facebook page recently which was emailed to all of our members in the hope that someone could help.*

One of our members, Jon Long, took up the query and contacted Zoe Fennell, who is the Bereavement Services Officer for Swindon Borough Council, based at Kingsdown Crematorium. Zoe was able to provide the following information:

On 10th November 1945, a working party of twenty-two Italian POWs was en route from their camp at Kingsdown, Swindon, to their work location. Unfortunately, there was an accident. The lorry transporting them came off the road and slammed into a house in Swindon Road, Stratton and turned over. Four of the Italian POWs died at the scene. A fifth died on the way to hospital and a sixth died overnight at Stratton hospital.

Over the years, multiple enquiries have been made about those involved in this sad incident but as there were no names given so it was literally impossible to search the records.

However it rang a bell in Zoe's head and she trawled through her emails. She finally found the information below which has been passed to those who were making enquiries.

It was known that five of the POW's died on 10th November 1945 and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission online database concurs with this, listing them as:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| • SERGIO ARSUFFI | • LUIGI MALAGRINO |
| • BRUNO BIANCHI | • PIETRO MARCHETTI |
| • NICOLA DI PAOLO | |

The sixth, GIACOMO GIOIELLI, died on the 11th November 1945.

The Italian POW victims, were originally interred at Whitworth Road Cemetery in Swindon but they were exhumed on 2nd August 1957 and reinterred at Brookwood, Surrey.

As they were exhumed there is no longer anything recorded at Whitworth Road Cemetery.



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www.wiltshirefhs.co.uk

Yvonne Neal 01793 822310

- Highworth Historical Society

www.highworthhistoricalsociety.co.uk

Mrs Chris Suter 01793 764811

- Chiseldon Local History Group

www.chiseldonlhg.org.uk

Elaine Jones 01793 740784

- Rodbourne Community History Group

www.rodbournehistory.org

Secretary@rodbournehistory.org

- Shrivenham Heritage Society

info@shrivenhamheritagesociety.co.uk

www.shrivenhamheritagesociety.co.uk

- Local Studies (Central Library)

localstudies@swindon.gov.uk

www.swindon.gov.uk/localstudies

- Mechanics' Institution Trust

helen@mechanics-trust.org.uk

www.mechanics-trust.org.uk

Helen George

- Uffington Museum

uffingtonmuseum@gmail.com

www.uffingtonmuseum.co.uk

Programme 2025 - 2026

September 10th	A Dip In The Collection	David Bedford
October 8th	William Hooper - And Still More Turn Up!	Paul Williams
November 12th	Princes Street - Revisited	Gina Deyager
December 10th	Members' Christmas Party	Everyone
January 14th	Health Hydro: The Past - The Future	Guest Presenter
February 11th	The Life & Death of Charles Collett	Graham Carter
March 11th	Iron, Stone & Steam: Brunel's Railway Kingdom	Tim Bryan
April 8th	South Swindon Parish Council Green Trail	John Farrow
May 13th	Queenstown (Not Kimmerfields) Preceded by the AGM	John Stooke & Kevin Leakey
June 11th	Summer Outing (TBA)	Everyone

*We meet at 7.30pm on the second Wednesday of the month
at Goddard Park School, Welcombe Avenue, Swindon SN3 2QN
(except for June, July and August).*



**The Swindon Society - recording
the changing face of Swindon**

2.2K likes • 2.7K followers



[Sign Up](#)

[Liked](#)

[Message](#)

FACEBOOK



Have you seen our Facebook page recently?

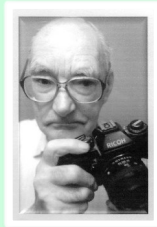
Kevin does a fantastic job and we now have well over two and a half thousand followers!

Don't forget to like and follow our Facebook page.

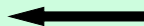
BEANEY CORNER

Welcome back to Beaney Corner where each month Diane Everett selects a few photographs from the vast Beaney collection to share in the newsletter.

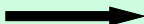
Here's another great selection. Just look at Beech Avenue... no humps in the road, just horses! Let us know if you recognise anybody. More next month!



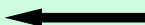
Beech Avenue



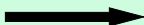
Bibury
Road



Cunningham
Road



Brooklands
Avenue



A Lovely Little Piece of Beaney Background

***Foreword:** We love it when people get in touch, and we recently received a lovely email that we thought was worth sharing, so here it is:*

I was reminded of the work of Albert Beaney recently - probably on one of the Swindon group 'platforms' on Facebook - and realised that I had two family photos that had never been sent in to add to the collection of his work. I have attached them here.

They were taken in about 1947. We lived at 25 Bristol Street, from 1940-1950 and often played around the GWR Park area. I remember being lifted up to sit on St. Mark's church wall to have my photo taken. I'm sure it wouldn't be approved of these days!

I am the older child in the gymslip (born Christmas 1938) and the other is my sister, Carole (born December 1942). Our surname was Davies. Carole is now Carole Brooks and we are both on Facebook.



We have both lived in many parts of the world but have both been in Australia for about the last fifty years. I live in Brisbane, Queensland, and my sister is near Adelaide, South Australia.

I progressed to Commonweal Grammar School from College Street School and then taught at Penhill Primary School for a year before I married and set off on my travels. My sister went to Pinehurst secondary modern.

I have never lost interest in Swindon and particularly follow any news of the Railway Village.

Dianne Lloyd - July 2025

Here's a little quiz for you.

How many of you know where this sign post is situated? Come on, don't be shy, please contact me with your guesses and I will happily give you a namecheck in next month's newsletter. Contact me at:

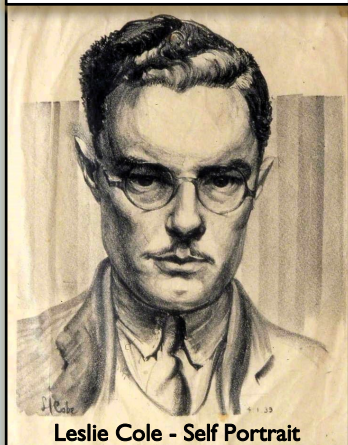
angie.phillips@ntlworld.com



Leslie Cole: Recording Conflict Exhibition

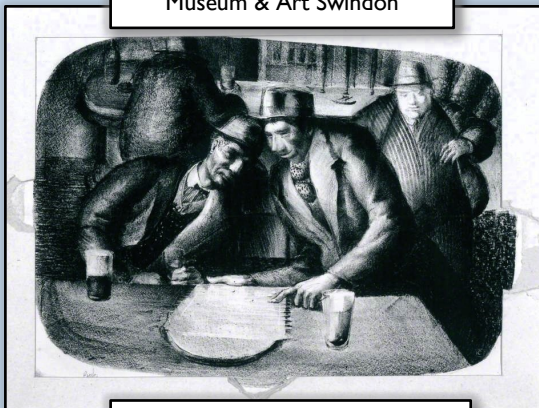
Following on from our talk by Philip Garraghan back in February 2024, it may be of interest to members that Museum & Art Swindon are holding an exhibition on the work of renowned local artist and Official War Artist Leslie Cole, from 2nd August 2025 to 3rd January 2026.

Photo credit:
Museum & Art Swindon



Leslie Cole - Self Portrait

Photo credit:
Museum & Art Swindon



Shove-Halfpenny - Leslie Cole

The exhibition coincides with the 80th anniversary of the end of World War Two, but explores Cole's work before, during and after his time as an Official War Artist.

As was discussed in the presentation we saw, Cole travelled across Europe recording different elements of the conflict. His work and name deserve to be well-known, so please do take this opportunity to take a further look at his work, some of which is on loan to Museum & Art Swindon from the Imperial War Museum. And if you've not yet had the opportunity, take a look at everything else the museum and gallery has on offer - the gharial is back and looking better than ever after its restoration, and Swindon's history is told from pre-history to pandemic. Museum & Art Swindon is open Tuesdays to Saturdays between 10.30am-4.30pm and is FREE to visit.

Kelly Blake - August 2025



Central Library, Regent Circus
Swindon SN1 1QG

Tel: (01793) 463238
Email: localstudies@swindon.gov.uk
Website: www.swindon.gov.uk/localstudies
Gallery: www.flickr.com/swindonlocal

Opening Hours

Mon: By appointment only
Tues: 10am to 4.00pm
Wed: 10am to 4.00pm
Sat: 10am to 1.00pm



The Swindon Society Summer Outing 11th June 2025



How lucky were we? - Our annual summer outing took place at Town Gardens this year on the evening of 11th June 2025 - and the weather was beautiful!

The evening was very well attended, and we were split into two groups. Each group had a guide from the South Swindon Parish Council who gave us a tour of the gardens, with a potted history of some of its features. The two groups were taken around the same route, but they set off in opposite directions so as not to trip over each other.

About half way into the tour, both groups arrived at The Bowl at the same time. It was fortuitous though because this meant that we could capture a group photo of everyone together, either on or in front of the stage, before setting off again to finish the tour.

We all ended up where we started, near to the café, which had stayed open especially for us. Tea, coffee, Ray's ice cream and lots more was available to choose from, and it was a tough decision! But that's not all... As an added bonus, while we were enjoying our refreshments, we had the enormous pleasure of listening to a very talented young lady called Emily who sang a variety of lovely songs that really finished the evening off nicely.

On behalf of us all - many thanks to John Stooke for organising such a lovely summer outing this year.



What's Occurring In My Head?

When I'm out and about, I'm often found snapping pictures here and there - well, it's easy to do nowadays with a good camera on your mobile phone. The thing is, I'm not sure others would share my opinion of what is interesting. So, I have decided to test this out by airing my musings. As a result, here's a ramble through my "interesting" pictures of late (not in any chronological order):

First up, an incident that I found pretty upsetting and annoying - the fire that destroyed the historical old house on the Sainsbury's roundabout. I used to work in Shrivenham for four years, and every day that I passed this house, I took a good look at it, wondering how it became so abandoned. It was like the world had carried on around it and it had been left behind. I particularly loved the little barn beside it with the chimney. I had taken photos a few years ago, and now I'm glad I did because now it's just ruins.



Observation number two... I was delivering to the upper floors in Cromer Court, in Liden when I looked out of the landing window and I was amazed. As far as the eye could see it was all green! From the ground, it seems like your surroundings are completely urban, but we actually have a lot of trees all around us, I think we just don't notice them!

Sitting in my favourite solitary spot - on the steps between the gateposts of Lawn Woods, overlooking the school - I looked over at the WH Smiths building, as I have done many times. It seems to have been part of this scene forever, but one day it will be gone, so I took photos, like I do every single time I visit! Also, these days you can't miss the massive Amazon building either, which





I think you must be able to see from outer-space it is so big!

Next, again while I was out on delivery, just round the corner from my house, I looked up and noticed a house with no roof at all. Now I've obviously seen roofs

being replaced before, but this roof had been completely removed and only the beams were left! It looked so odd because you could see some belongings that were stored in the loft - I had just to take a picture!

This next one was pointed out to me by my daughter Kelly. At number 44 Prospect Place, where the Baguette Bar used to be (along the



road from the old Workman's shop), the building was being renovated. The old shop sign had been removed, revealing the Old Town Off Licence sign that was underneath. Wow! A little piece of history being unearthed - how lovely!

A little wander around Queen's Park and I shamefully realised that I had never noticed the tribute to the 75th anniversary of WWII in the rose garden. I was quite moved by it and will take another visit to Queen's Park soon and have another look.



This next one amused me - a house so entirely covered in greenery that the shapes of the windows and doors have been cut out of it. This house is in Dores Road and the picture was taken in January 2023.



This photo also makes me a little sad. The Crumpled Horn in Eldene - left to deteriorate. I know it's only a pub but it is so

quirky and for me, it reminds me of my youth; having a drink in there with an older boyfriend... I'll say no more!

I rarely visit the town centre these days, but I happened to walk through The Parade recently and was surprised. The block paving has been-replaced by paving slabs and now there are flower beds!



We've gone full circle; remember the raised flower beds that used to be all along The Parade years ago, with benches to sit on? Let's hope these new beds are well kept for years to come... or at least until the plans change again!



Finally, I sometimes get the opportunity to take pictures from an unusual perspective, and here are a couple I snapped from the tall flats at Cavendish Square. One looking towards Lawn

Manor School and Christ Church; the other towards the new development along Queens Drive, and in the distance, top centre, you can see what looks to be like either Sandringham Road or Buckingham Road.



Don't forget, send me your own memories or thoughts and I would be delighted to put them into our newsletter too.

Angie Phillips - August 2025

The Swindon Society

Open Day
20th September 2025



Lawn Community Centre
Guildford Avenue
Swindon
SN3 1JL

Last year's open day was such a success, we're doing it again!

We are inviting one and all to take a nostalgia trip to see your Swindon as it was in the past. It's an chance to meet and chat with like-minded people; we're a very friendly bunch... promise!

There will be plenty to see and talk about, including:

- ▶ Peruse our big display of Swindon images taken from our vast picture archive.
- ▶ Check out our dedicated Beaney stand.
- ▶ Browse through the Beaney albums, (catalogued by area) and see if you recognise anyone - let us know if you do! We can even try to help you with your enquiries.
- ▶ Sit and watch a rolling slideshow as you rest a while and take the weight off your feet.
- ▶ Enjoy additional displays from other selected Swindon groups.

And don't forget, the café will be open serving teas, coffees and bacon rolls so you can fill up and stay that little bit longer!

**Save
The
Date!**

**HOPE TO
SEE YOU
THERE!**



Williams Fish Supper Bar at 2 Market Street - Date Unknown



Coates Shop Commercial Road - 1900

