

## **Precis of articles included in the Autumn issue of Swindon Heritage magazine 2016**

The main theme is the railway town's car industry.

### **1 Press for Action.**

The transformation of the old railway town has been into one where the car was king. From the mid 1950s the Pressed Steel Fisher Company was the first new industry in Swindon after World War 11, overtaking the railways as the chief industry of the town.

### **2 Mr Motors**

A Swindon man is Head of Collections at the British Motor Museum at Beaulieu. His passion for railways drove him to work in the town's railway museum. He switched to motoring heritage after he oversaw the opening of STEAM in 2004. He still lives in Swindon and says that the social history of the railways and motor cars is more important to him than the vehicles themselves.

### **3 Swindon's gift to 1960s "cool".**

The iconic Sunbeam Alpine was, unusually, designed by a Swindon railway engineer, Kenneth Howe and not by a team. Working in London, New York and Detroit he saw the wisdom of following the American trend of style for sports cars and became the "golden boy" designer for Rootes on his return to England.

### **4 Wheels within wheels**

Swindon is a town of wheels. Read about the stories concerning Swindon railway wheels, car wheels, aeroplane wheels and then the roundabouts.

### **5 Invitations to a steamy reunion.**

A STEAM event brings together a fleet of traction engines with Swindon connections from 1841- 2016 at the Railway Festival at the weekend of September 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>.

### **6 Inside Swindon's "private museum". An avid collector fills his house and sheds with curious, old and unusual items.**

### **7 Meet the man with the plan.**

Hadrian Ellory-van Dekker, who gave up his position as Chief Curator and Head of Collections in the London Science Museum in order to establish a new Museum and Art gallery in Swindon, talks of his hopes.

8 The Speedway Stadiums that never were.

Immediately after World War 11 plans were submitted for an 8,000 capacity stadium close to the White Hart pub at Stratton. A little later the already existing greyhound track at South Marston was proposed to be moved to Stratton. Neither Highworth Rural District Council nor Wiltshire County Council approved these plans which were later dropped in favour of the stadium at Blunsdon.

9 The Kettle's on, so why not join us?

The Swindon Women's Exhibition and Craft Sale on November 12<sup>th</sup> is also to raise awareness of the work and achievements of Swindon's suffragette Edith New who was imprisoned for throwing stones in London.

10 A Somme Tribute. 5040 thanks for our hero, Ernest.

A full peal from St Mark's Church was rung to commemorate the death of Ernest Boulton in France 1916. Ernest was a bellringer at St Mark's and had rung 3 full peals of 5040 changes, the first in 1906 and the second and third in 1908.

11 Our little treasure

The 18<sup>th</sup> century reredos at St Mary's Church, Lydiard Park, was restored this Summer. Fundraising continues for the conservation of extensive mediaeval wall paintings which have been identified by the Church of England as one of the 100 Treasures in Church artworks currently most in need of conservation. In addition to this the dynastic and heraldic glories of the priceless polyptych at St Mary's have been captured in "Curiously Painted" by Brian Carne, rector for 8 years. He calls it "an anthem in wood, canvas and paint".

12 What the family were not told about hero Frank

Frank Norris's family understood that he had died in combat over the English Channel at the age of 20. Noel Ponting researched the history of his ancestor which reveals a different account.

13 Don't forget this local gem

One of the largest surviving examples of a Roman amphitheatre in Britain can be seen on the hillside near Cirencester Hospital.

14 Grandpa, the man who saved the Medical Fund.

The GWR Medical Fund, formed in 1847, was a blueprint for the NHS. 100 years ago, with many Swindon men away on active service, the Fund ran into financial problems and closure was seriously considered. George Brunger, a fitter and an official for the Amalgamated Engineering Union, a founder of the Labour Party in Swindon and a member of the Town Council, became Chairman of the ailing Medical Fund. He was committed to saving the Medical Fund and his ideas, not without

conflict, were usually accepted. He retired in 1947 knowing that plans were being set to introduce the NHS the following year.

15 On the case of the Morley Street murders

The story of the railwayman who strangled his wife and then his 16 year old step-daughter, before calmly fetching the police to confess.

16 Small wonder

The Coate Water Railway now links the historic reservoir and park with the Richard Jefferies Museum. A new halt was opened on 31 July this year after 4 years' planning and the track and network has now doubled to nearly a mile long.

17 Learning lessons about school life

John Clements looks back to see how education was conducted between the Wars. He concentrates on schooling mainly in Shrivenham during the 1930s and has been helped in this by the memories of residents who were at the school then. Segregation of the pupils and a harsh discipline are only two of the differences between schooling of youngsters then and now.

18 Set your satnav for Memory Lane

A day out within easy reach is the British Motor Museum at Gaydon, halfway between Warwick and Banbury. Here are solely British motorcars such as the Austin Allegro, Hillman Imp and the Mini Traveller among its 300 exhibits.

19 Old Plans for New Swindon

Courtyards and cloisters have always been a feature of buildings throughout the years. The original plan for the GWR workshops was based this ancient plan on a courtyard plan 175 years ago.

20 The oldest pub in the new town

In 1841 a licence was granted to Joseph Rigby of the construction company that built the station and the hotel for a pub which is still known as the Queen's Tap. The pub opened the following year and still survives.