

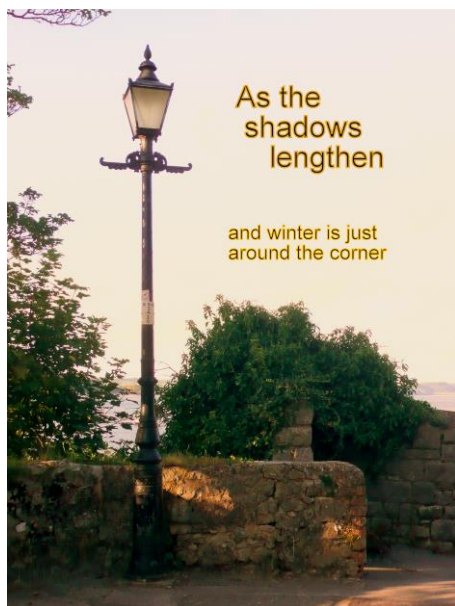
Wiltshire Family History Society, Swindon Branch, November 2022

JUST TO REMIND YOU:

Zoom Meeting Thursday 10 November

Meeting at Central Community Centre Thursday 24 November

DEADLINE .. 4 NOVEMBER - please sign the online survey to re-route buses from Swindon's historic Railway Village. See below.



The Lamplighter

Professionals were hired who used to light the lamps and wander around the streets. This profession was practiced before electric lamps were introduced, and they used to carry light lamps in their hand standing on a ladder or holding the lamp on a long pole.

In some countries, the lamplighter was also known as the town's watchman.

Their demand used to increase when there was a special project going on in the city.

JOHN'S NOVEMBER NOTES

During the past week I have done a couple of things I haven't done since Covid started. I used my bus pass again, firstly into town then Lis and I caught the 49 to Devizes, not to visit HQ but to see the Thomas Hardy exhibition in Devizes Museum, (now closed).

I also booked myself into Local Studies in the Central Library and met the new staff who are very enthusiastic. I had set myself a number of tasks to achieve whilst I was there, but I get easily distracted. One of these tasks was to check the Evening Advertiser to see if my Uncle Harry's death was reported. He was knocked off his bike riding to work and died at the scene. Scrolling through November 1950 I was distracted by a large advert celebrating the 50th anniversary of Swindon Borough Council that month.

It highlighted the visit of Princess Elizabeth on the 15th, to open the garden of remembrance and the Moredon Playing Fields and Pavilion plus, in small print, "an inspection of the Railway Works". Later that evening a celebration Ball at the town hall with Johnny Stiles and his Orchestra, I don't think Princess Elizabeth went to that.

Also, during that week there was a talk on Richard Jefferies, the Swindon Music Festival, a performance of Elijah, The Swindon Schools Association putting on Patience by Gilbert & Sullivan. A film festival and other events. The one that stuck out for me was The Local Government Exhibition at the Town hall from the 4th to the 11th (with opportunity to see "the presents for Prince Charles and Princess Anne made by Swindon school children.") opened by the Minister of Health The Rt Hon Aneurin Bevan.

Of course, Bevan was famous in setting up the NHS, a “a role model” for which was the GWR medical fund set up in Swindon. So, I wonder if Bevan visited the “Medical Fund Hospital” on that trip. The hospital of course is now the Central Community Centre where we now meet. A good excuse to go back to Local Studies and follow it up and maybe the chance to be distracted and do those tasks I should have done.

In memory of Henry (Harry) George Mills 23 October 1915 to 2 November 1950. He was in collision with a taxi on Oxford Road, he died due to a fractured skull. **JOHN MILLS**

COMING UP

ZOOM MEETING on Thursday, 10 November 2022 - Sons of the soil: researching our British agricultural labouring ancestors - Janet Few

Janet is an experienced family, social and community historian who lectures regularly on these subjects. Every family has ancestors who worked on the land. Janet will tell us how we can find out more about them, the farms where they worked and the lives they led.

Those already registered with Glenys Bettley for our Zoom meetings will be contacted direct but for anyone wishing to join in for the first time, please contact her on glenys.bettley@ntlworld.com

Thursday 24 November at the Central Community Centre – 7.30 pm

We are looking at ways of storing our research and other sources of information.

We would particularly welcome anyone who is new to family history research as we will be able to guide you through the various sources of information in an informal way. For the more experienced, however, there is always more to be learned and tips we can pass on to each other.

Everyone welcome – come a few minutes early for a cuppa and biscuit.

MORE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY ...

Wednesday 9 November SWINDON HERITAGE at the Central Community Centre, Emlyn Square, Railway Village. 7.30 – 8.30 pm

Dr Michael Smith, author & enthusiast, Former GWR apprentice, teacher & lecturer and consultant to Railtrack/Network Rail, will be giving a talk 1841 – 1861 Minard Christian REA, Isambard Kingdom BRUNEL, Daniel GOOCH and the Box Tunnel.

This is the first of three talks: Also 21 January 2023 on the subject of New Swindon, Mechanics’ Institute, Lord Methuen and the Freemasons.

Plus 11 March 2023: the 1900s, G J Churchward and the creation of the borough and Swindon’s first Mayor.

Members: £6 or £15 for all three events.) includes light
Non-members: £8 each or £20 for all 3 events.) refreshments

Please contact dan@mechanics-trust.org.uk for further information.

Saturday 26 November 11.00 – 3.00

WINTER FAYRE at the Central Community Centre

Music Charity Stalls Santa's Grotto Food and Drink Craft Stalls Games

Swindon Branch, Wiltshire Family History Society will be there with some stories etc about the Railway Village. Please come and see us

SWINDON'S HISTORIC RAILWAY COTTAGES

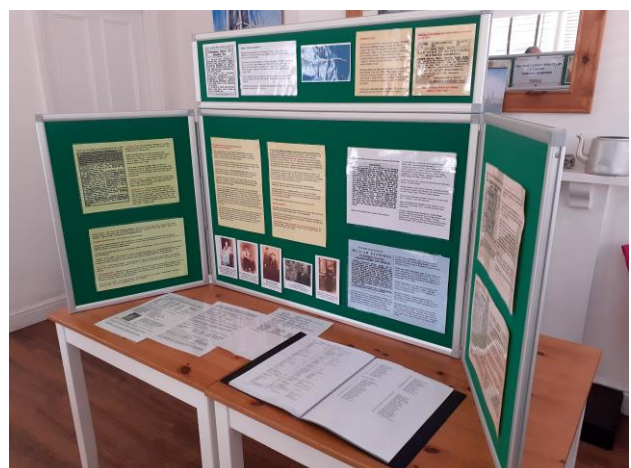
On Saturday 8 October at The Baker's Café, in the heart of Swindon's Railway Village, we held an Open Day inviting everyone interested in our local heritage to drop in and share their memories and stories. It was a lovely day in all ways and there was lots of interest – including some very interesting conversations. Our thanks must go to those who helped organise and supported our efforts – so much appreciated.



Mike and Pam Stubbs, local historians and volunteers at the Museum House, and Andrea of the Health Hydro (friendsofhealthhydro@gmail.com) were some who supported the event.



Local interest



Some of the stories and information already uncovered about the Railway cottages

The information is on-going and being collated for posterity, shared with those who are aiming to keep alive the histories and families who have lived in the cottages since the 1840s – and also bits and pieces will be included into our own newsletters – for example please see attachment.

PLEASE HELP by spreading the word or sharing your own stories with us – nealy1@virginmedia.com or swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk or ring 01793 822310
THANK YOU

IT'S STILL NOT TOO LATE

Have you ever walked through Swindon's Railway Village and wondered why buses very frequently come trundling through the narrow historic streets? There is now a survey on this subject which could help stop this – at least to a certain degree. Please see the letter below from Andrea of the Health Hydro which explains the situation. **PLEASE NOTE THAT THE SURVEY NEEDS TO BE COMPLETED BY 4 NOVEMBER.**

“Most of you will have more than a passing interest in the future of the Railway Village and many of us hope that one day Emlyn Square will be the thriving heart of the area that it once was. Removing the buses from Emlyn Square will mark the beginning of the process; it will breathe new life into the area and vitally it will help to save our historic railway buildings from the continual vibration and pollution damage that they have had to endure for many years.

The Heritage Action Zone/SBC have launched a survey proposing to re-route the outbound buses from Emlyn Square to Faringdon Rd. We hope you will support the re-routing of the buses and take a few minutes to complete this very quick survey. Here is the direct link to the survey https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20019/consultations_engagement_and_surveys/1276/railway_village_bus_routes_online_survey

We are also keen to see a 20mph speed limit throughout the Railway Village and Faringdon Rd, as well as a pedestrian crossing directly from the Hydro to the RV, but we'll leave those issues for another day!” **ANDREA** friendsofhealthhydro@gmail.com

FOLLOWING ON FROM LAST TIME ... is the Magic Roundabout (ours I mean!) really 50?

Paul Cole is doubtful: Despite what the Swindon Advertiser and others are saying, I don't believe the Magic Roundabout is 50 years old this year. I can remember when it was trialed with tyres as the roundabouts and a work colleague went to see it and reported that it was mayhem. I was working at Hanimex in Dorcan at the time, and I didn't start there until 1974, so it couldn't have opened in 1972. **PAUL COLE**

BLACKSMITHS have featured in our recent Newsletters and, this time, Marcia Dancer sent in her memories of Garretts a Blacksmith's in Carfax Street which was the main office, and also in Carlton Street, where the bus station is now.

Marcia said that Carlton Street was small (13 houses listed in 1947) and her grandfather, Sidney George Hulbert lived at No. 4, opposite the small, olde worlde Blacksmith's property She said 'Gramp used to go out with a bucket and shovel to pick up the horse droppings, to use in a tiny yard for his plants'. Her Uncle helped out with the shoeing of the horses.

Just for the record, Marcia's grandparents were Sidney George Hulbert (born 1881 Figheldean and died 1957 Swindon) and Sarah Evans Cook (1875 Quarley – 1962 Swindon).

Their children were: Clarence Sydney Hulbert 1902 – 1987
Ernest George Valentin Hulbert 1904 - 1973
Cyril Henry Hulbert 1906 – 1986

Marcia's father was Clarence Sydney and the Uncle who helped shoe horses was Ernest George.

As for the Blacksmiths, there was a P G Garrett, shoeing smith and coach builder at 1 Carfax Street in 1947. Born in 1882, Percy George, son of Richard Henry Garrett and Susannah, nee Walters, married Lucy Gibbs at St Mark's Church in 1905.

Richard Henry, a Coach Builder, and Susannah lived at 1 Carfax Street in 1901 and had numerous children.

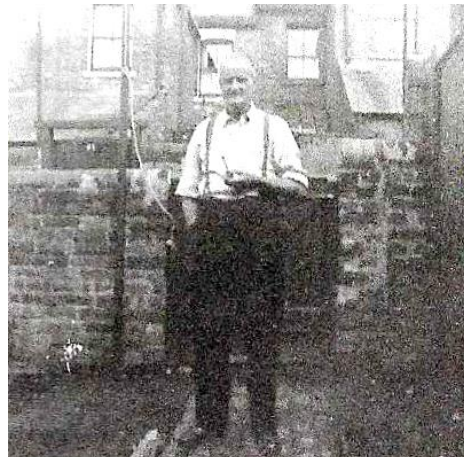
At the time of the 1911 census Percy George and Lucy Garrett were living at 13 Carlton Street. R Gray lived there in 1947.

Percy George Garrett of 1 Carfax Street (so he must have taken over his father's premises) died just after Christmas in 1949.

In response to our request for stories/memories of **Swindon's Historic Railway Cottages**, Marcia mentioned a Mrs Joan Maslen who had lived in Bristol Street and the possibility that Joan's sister also lived in the Railway Village. Nothing positive discovered about them living in the area, but perhaps someone can help?



The 3 Ealey sisters. Kath, Joan, Vera



William Henry Ealey – taken in the 1950s

Joan Ealey, the daughter of William Henry Ealey* and Josephine Lillian, nee Carter, married Herbert Ronald Maslen in 1939. It was Joan's sister Kathleen, married to Thomas G Herbert who Marcia thought may also have lived in the Railway Village.

*Marcia believes that William Henry Ealey was somehow related to Mrs Hinder of the Hinder's Pet Shop. She started in a small way in Manchester Road. Does anyone know of a connection?

Sister Vera Gladys's married surname was Tapscott and they lived at 110 Shrivenham Road.

Sister Lilian Irene's married Ernest Robert John Roberts and they lived at 33 Hughes Street. It was their son Ashley Roberts, 1925 – 2013, who was a councillor and **Mayor of Swindon** 1963 – 1979. He was a very traditional Labour councillor and railway man – he had been a Railway Guard.

BRICK WALL – ANY SUGGESTIONS PLEASE?

Does anyone know of William Gilbert Farmer, wife Florence L Peedell who lived In Exeter street in the mid-1900s? Listed at No. 28 in 1947 and also in 1965.

Also ... William J Gale who lived at 50 Exeter Street in 1947 and 1965?
Please contact nealy1@virginmedia.com or swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk

On the subject of Brick Walls, the WFHS virtual meeting on Monday 24 October was on this subject. We were split into 'rooms' – our group was for the Swindon area – and it was very productive. We will keep you posted on future virtual meetings, which are being held quarterly.

REMEMBER, REMEMBER THE FIFTH OF NOVEMBER

It was midnight on 4 November 1605. Westminster magistrate Sir Thomas Knyvett, together with a band of heavily-armed men, was inspecting the cellar beneath the House of Lords. He was surprised to encounter an intruder. An intruder possessing matches and a primitive fuse. Well you know what happened next and can guess who that intruder was – Guy Fawkes. Knyvett had foiled the most audacious, treasonable plot of all time!

It seems that the brains behind the plot was Robert Catesby, one time gentleman, who together with other conspirators, had hatched the plot over many months. By 7 November Catesby had fled to Staffordshire and was there blown up when a spark ignited their supply of gunpowder. Cruel irony or poetic justice? Severely burnt, he was unable to flee from the Sheriff's men who invaded the house and, in the ensuing fight, Catesby was killed.

Meanwhile, over in Spain, Sir Charles Cornwallis, the English Ambassador in Spain, considered how to celebrate the providential preservation of his sovereign and government.

He staged a spectacular and rather daring event

A FIREWORK DISPLAY



LEST WE FORGET ... As always at this time of year we think of those who fought for our country and never returned. Also those who suffered physically and mentally – the scars of war always in their minds. Particularly poignant this year with the atrocities taking place in Ukraine.

WW1- boys as young as 13 lied about their age so they could go fight for King and Country – and some died. The Daily Mail suggests that as many as 400,000 recruits lied about their age. They probably had visions of a great adventure ahead but many sadly died in the trenches. It had been believed that the conflict would be over in a matter of months but instead lasted over 4 years. Have you discovered such stories within your own family? Please share with us by emailing nealy1@virginmedia.com or swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk

HELPING TO WIN THE WAR

(Words from a song by Arthur Askey/Gracie Fields)

There's a little lady, I want you all to meet
She's working on munitions
and she lives just down the street.
She can't pretend to be
a great celebrity.
But still she's most important in her way,
The job she has to do
may not seem like much to you

But all the same, I'm very proud to say
She's the girl that makes the thing
that drills the hole
that holds the spring
that drives the rod
that turns the knob
that works the thing-ummy-bob
that makes the engines roar.

She's the girl that makes the thing
that holds the oil
that oils the ring
that takes the shank
that moves the crank
that works the thing-ummy-bob
that's going to win the war

It's a ticklish sort of job
making a thing for a thing-ummy-bob
Especially when you don't know what it's for

She's not what you would call, a heroine, at all
I don't suppose you'll even know her name
And though she'll never boast, of her important post
She strikes a blow for Britain just the same



BEFORE ARMISTICE - THE MYSTERY OF THE DISAPPEARING GATES AND RAILINGS

Sounds rather like an Enid Blyton book doesn't it ... and it's still a mystery today.

Do any of you remember, or have heard tell, that private house railings and gates had been removed 'for the war effort'? This was a decree from the Ministry of Works & Buildings and on Wednesday 1 April 1942 such removals started in Swindon.

I always remember wooden fencing around my Gran's lovely little front garden – always painted green.

However earlier photos of the house confirm that there had been metal railings, and the story is told that they had been taken for recycling into weapons and aircraft.



Okay, everyone needed to 'do their bit' but the way in which such confiscations happened, left households unhappy and somewhat startled. Sometimes, without warning, iron railings would be ripped from walls but 'bricks, mortar and sections of wall went with them'. So reported the Evening Advertiser.

This undertaking turned out to be a unifying effort for the country, of great propaganda value, and a morale booster. The government did not want to reveal that these sacrifices were in vain so continued, but was then faced with an over-supply. So what happened to all that excess ironwork? It seems to have been stockpiled away from public view. Was it quietly disposed of? In London it may have been towed down the Thames Estuary and dumped. There were other theories also..... Yvonne

NOVEMBER – some memorable events

- 24.11.1815** Grace Darling, heroine of the wreck of The Forfarshire, was born.
- 23.11.1852** 170 years ago Britain's first pillar box was erected in St Helier, Jersey.
- 10.11.1871** (Another source states October) supposedly the day when journalist Henry Morton Stanley uttered those immortal words 'Dr Livingstone, I presume' near Lake Tanganyika.
- 07.11.1872** The Marie Celeste, the ill-fated brigantine, sailed from New York – and was found mysteriously abandoned near the Azores some time later.
- 20.11.1879** Swindon Fire Brigade was formed. Volunteers were based at the fire engine house in Newport Street, which eventually moved to The Sands (Bath Road) and then to Lansdown Road. By the turn of the century it had settled in Cromwell Street until the Drove Road Station opened in 1959.

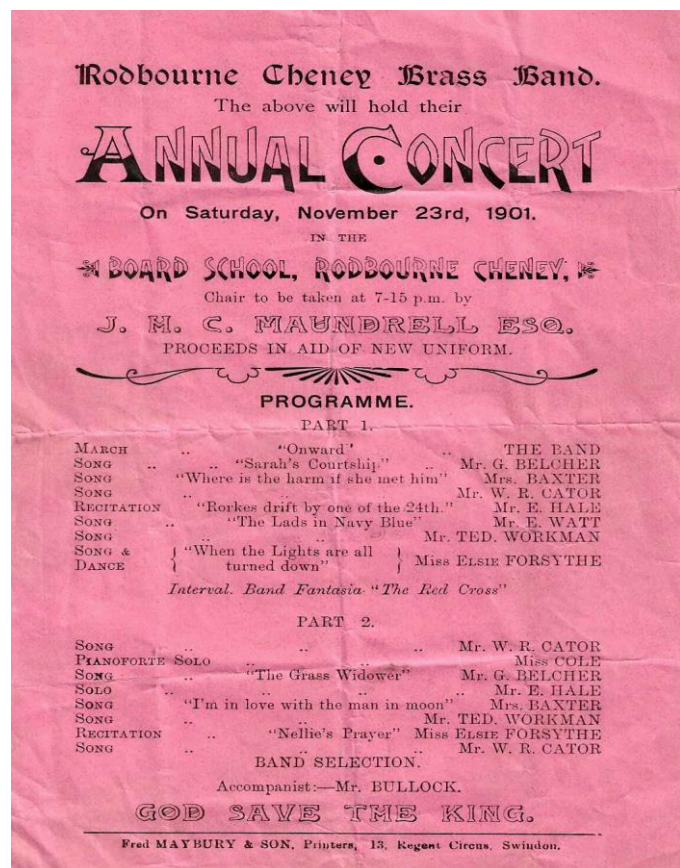
- 23.11.1910** Dr Hawley Harvey Crippen, who poisoned his wife to seek a new life with his lover, Ethel Le Neve, was hanged at Pentonville prison.
- 27.11.1914** Britain's first policewoman went on duty in Grantham, Lincolnshire.
- 22.11.1939** There was a last minute rush for rations as housewives and others in Swindon were told it was their last day to register with tradesmen for bacon, butter and sugar.
- 22.11.1963** John F Kennedy, 35th American president, was assassinated in Dallas, Texas.
- 23.11.1963** The first episode of the BBC TV serial Doctor Who was screened in Britain. The Doctor was played by William Hartnell.

WHO REMEMBERS ... DIXON OF DOCK GREEN?

Looking back at old footage now, it does seem very fuzzy and perhaps rather boring when compared with today's fast-moving programmes. The Advertiser, back on 23 January 1967 reported:

"Next time Sgt Dixon (lead character in a popular police drama, Dixon of Dock Green) comes on your television set and says "Evening all", remember that there is a link between Dock Green and Swindon. The new landlord of the Railway Hotel in Newport Street, Swindon, Mr Edward Sandell, has taken over after retiring from the Metropolitan Police after 30 years service. For part of that time he was an inspector at Paddington Green station, the place on which the film 'The Blue Lamp' and the Dixon of Dock Green series was based."

MORE RODBOURNE CHENEY NOSTALGIA



This time from Saturday 23 November 1901 and the Rodbourne Cheney Brass Band.

Does anyone know of this band and who was in it?

The event took place at the Board School in Rodbourne Cheney – does anyone know where that was?

The Chairman was J H C Maundrell, Esq.

Do let us know if you recognise any names – nealy1@virginmedia.com or swindon@wiltshirefhs.co.uk

In the 1920s, there was also a Swindon Orchestra. Has anyone ever heard of this?

AND A LITTLE PIECE OF HISTORY ABOUT OLD TOWN FROM MERVYN HEWLETT

In the Horsell family in the 19th & 20th centuries were prominent members of my family and its history. Reuben Horsell, whose son William, he was my father's maternal Grandfather, he took out a lease on a piece of ground in Devizes Rd. in 1848, then known by the name of Short Hedge, for 99 years at £6-10s a year. (In the 1979 book "Roadways a short history of Swindon's Street Names" The Victoria Road end of Devizes Rd. was called Short Hedge until 1853 the reason it had that name was because horses due to be sold at market were tethered, their rear ends out into the road, they fed on the Hawthorn hedges that lined either side of the road.

My research has shown William was always looking for some way of making some extra money; decided to raise a mortgage on the land. The original document is stored in the Swindon & Wiltshire archive centre. It records that in 1853 he raised £100, from Charles Witton Crowdy of Brixton Surrey, it's a good possibility that the land, was the same as the plot that was to become Crowdy's garage/motor works that a lot of Swindon used and knew about. I have some copies of the original .It cannot be photocopied but you can get a permit to take daylight photos.

MERVYN HEWLETT

AND A LITTLE PIECE OF SWINDON' HISTORY ON 9 NOVEMBER 1900

Swindon unified – Old Swindon and New Swindon were incorporated as the Municipal Borough of Swindon – ‘after years of constant bickering and lack of co-operation between the local boards’. The New Swindon Local Board had erected a substantial building at Regent Circus (approximately mid-way between the two towns) which became the Town Hall and civic centre for the amalgamated boards. Road links between the Old and New Swindon had improved by that time.

AND BEFORE THAT ...

7 November 1851 was when Christ Church opened for Divine worship. William Morris observed ‘the services at this new Church are conducted on precisely the same lines as were the services in the old Parish Church for generations’. The Rev. H G Baily had come to Swindon in 1843 to find that the Old Church had become too small to accommodate Swindon's increasing population. ‘With perseverance and unceasing labour’ Rev. Baily succeeded in getting the new Church built – Christ Church – The Old Lady on the Hill. It took 30 years to complete payment for the building.



Ring any bells?

Thanks to Barbara O'Neill who took these photos.



MORE SWINDON CASES

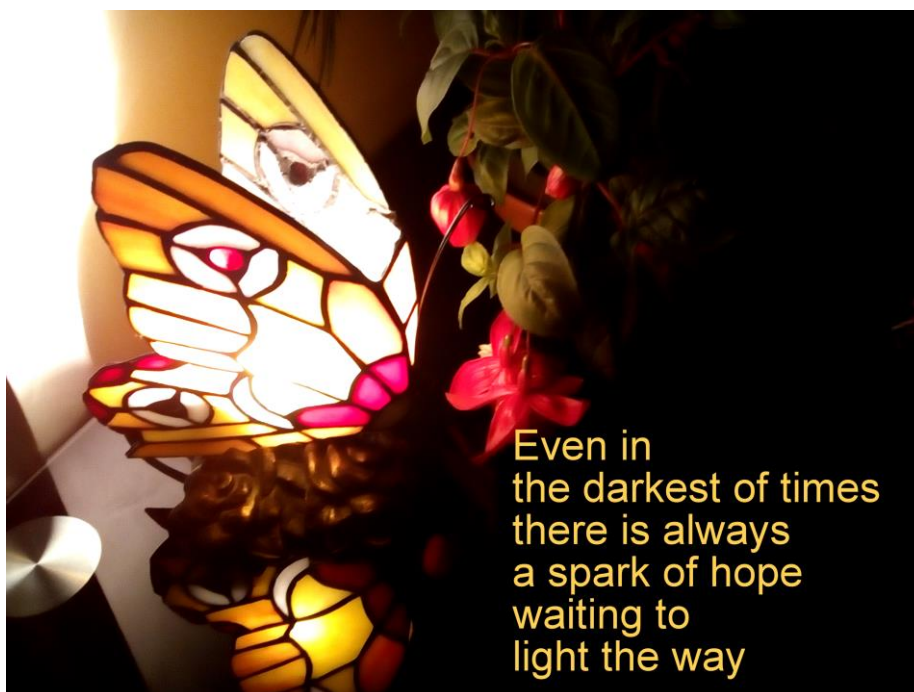
(Veno's to the rescue???)

Mrs Alice Wilson 26 Taunton Street, Swindon, Wilts, says:- "I have pleasure in writing to inform you that I have found great benefit from taking Veno's Seaweed Tonic. I suffered terribly from indigestion, accompanied with severe headaches, and until I visited Swindon, at Boots in Bridge Street, I had tried various so-called remedies without any success. This testimonial I freely forward for your use should you require it."

VENO'S SEAWEED TONIC is prepared from natural seaweed, combined with vegetable extracts, forming a high-class pharmaceutical preparation of the highest medicinal activity. It cures deep-seated complaints of the stomach, liver, kidneys and blood, possessing all the healing, strengthening and curative powers possible. It is especially good for 'habitual constipation'. Price 1s 1½ d and 2s 9d.

B Hodgson 10 Dixon Street, New Swindon writes: "I purchased a small bottle of Veno's Lightning Cough Cure at Boots, Cash Chemists, and I am glad to say I felt relieved after taking the first dose. It is very good for hoarseness and chronic cough."

VENO'S LIGHTNING COUGH CURE is a scientific remedy composed of ingredients never before used in Great Britain for the speedy cure of all chest, throat and lung afflictions. It cuts the phlegm, brings it away easily, stops a cough naturally, strengthens the lungs and gives perfect ease in breathing. The first few doses will convince you of its vast superiority over ordinary cough mixtures or any of the emulsions. Price 1s 1½d and 2s 9d per bottle.



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