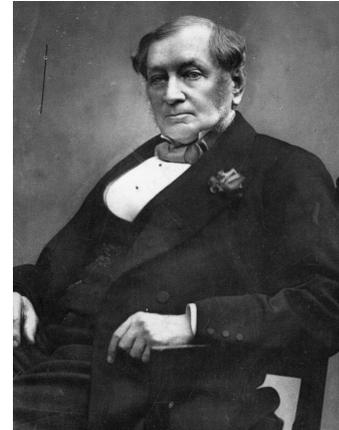


# SWINDON

## God's Wonderful Railway, Wiltshire's wannabe city

A tour led by **Tim Mars**  
Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2015

Despite the Brunel Mall and endless other appropriations of his name, Brunel had very little to do with Swindon. It was Daniel Gooch (right)—aged 20 when recruited as Superintendent of Locomotive Engines by the 33-year-old Brunel—who recommended a site near Swindon as the location for the GWR works because of the existence of Wilts and Berks Canal and therefore the potential plentiful supply of coal from the Somerset coalfields. It was also at the junction with the Cheltenham branch and about half way between London and Bristol, where a change of locomotives would be necessary.



Gooch remained in Swindon, designed the highly successful locomotives that replaced the disastrous ones manufactured to Brunel's specifications, and was responsible for the GWR Medical Fund Society and many other enlightened and philanthropic projects.

And it was David Murray John (below left), Clerk of Swindon Borough Council from 1937-1974, who was the architect of the town's post-war expansion and growth. He promoted diversification so that



the town would not rely solely on the railway to provide employment. In the period 1951–1981, Swindon's population grew by 70 per cent—some 58 per cent higher than the national average over the same period. In the 1980s Swindon became the fastest growing town in Europe.

He died in 1974 and did not see the completion of the David Murray John Tower which he commissioned—one of his last acts as town clerk—and which was named in his honour.

Because it rises from the Brunel Mall shopping centre, it is known to most people as the Brunel Tower.

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### **B O O K I N G F O R M** *limited places, book early to avoid disappointment*

**Cheques** (payable to Stroud Civic Society) should be sent to  
Juliet Shipman, Rose Cottage, The Street, Eastcombe, Gloucestershire GL6 7DN  
julietshipman@hotmail.com 01452 770 263

*Please provide an email address or enclose SAE for detailed final itinerary, background papers etc.*

**Name** .....

**Address** .....

.....

**Email**..... **Telephone**.....

**No of tickets:** member (£25).....non-member (£30) .....