

INVENTOR & MAKER OF THE WEEK

Joseph Swan

INVENTOR OF THE INCANDESCENT LIGHT BULB



Joseph Swan was born on 31st October 1828 in Sunderland, England. As a boy, he loved science and carrying out experiments at home.

In the 1800s, people mostly used candles, oil lamps, or gas lamps to light their homes. These could be smoky, dangerous, and not very bright. Inventors across the world were racing to find a safer and more reliable kind of light.

Joseph worked for years on the idea of an electric lamp. In 1878, he demonstrated his new invention to the public – a working electric light bulb. His bulb used a thin thread, called a filament, inside a glass bulb with all the air removed.

In 1880 Joseph was given a patent for his invention and he started fitting light bulbs in buildings in England. In fact his was the first house in the world to have electric lighting.

Around the same time, Thomas Edison in America was also developing a light bulb. For a while there was a big debate over who had invented it first! In the end, they decided to work together and created a company to make electric light bulbs. All our bulbs today still use Joseph's idea.

