



NEWSLETTER

No.7

September 2014

FONA WEBSITE LAUNCHED

Friends of Nottinghamshire Archives (FONA)
Supporting Nottinghamshire's documentary heritage

HOME CONTACTS EVENTS LATEST NEWS USEFUL LINKS MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE

Home

Welcome...

The Friends of Nottinghamshire Archives (FONA) was established in 2012 to promote the work of Nottinghamshire Archives in supporting, sustaining and preserving the rich documentary heritage of the county. In doing so, it complements the work of the Nottinghamshire Archives Users' Group and Volunteers.

FONA has different categories of membership and is run by a small voluntary committee, for which nominations are invited in advance of the Annual General Meeting.

Membership of FONA provides opportunities to share the enjoyment of documents and archives through a range of activities and benefits:

- Meetings and events, including invited speakers discussing archives and archival research and opportunities for members to share their research activities;
- A newsletter three times a year reporting on the latest developments and acquisitions at the Archives;

Latest News

- Archive Programme of Events - May to September 2014
- Nottingham historian Richard Gaunt on new 'Notts TV'
- Extension and improvement works at Nottinghamshire Archives

UPCOMING EVENTS

Researching Local History Novels - Alan Dance
September 20 @ 11:00 am - 1:00 pm

A Visit to the Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections of

*The Friends are delighted to announce that its new website has been launched. If you haven't already done so, please explore what is available online. We'd be delighted to hear suggestions for news, articles or links to other relevant sites. Anyone with suggestions or comments is asked to contact **David Anderson**, FONA's webmaster, at web@fona.org.uk. The site is hosted by Nottinghamshire Local History Association, which FONA has now joined as a member. Our thanks to the NLHA and to David in particular for getting the site together on our behalf. Anyone concerned about future-proofing the site will be pleased to know that we have recently renewed ownership of the domain name fona.org.uk for the next nine years!*

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Graham Crisp, our Treasurer and Membership Secretary, is retiring from the FONA Committee at the next AGM in March 2015. Graham has been crucial in helping to establish the organisation on a strong foundation and we are extremely grateful to him for the immense amount of time and effort he has devoted to the role.

We are delighted to announce that *Judith Mills* has agreed to be put in nomination as Graham's successor. Judith will be co-opted to the committee in November 2014 and will help to ensure a smooth transition. Judith's nomination will be subject to the election of officers at the March 2015 AGM. We welcome Judith and look forward to working with her.

Gift Aid

One of the priorities in the next membership year (April 2015-March 2016) will be Gift Aid. We are intending to register for this so that everything is in place soon. We'll be sending out the relevant forms to Friends at that point.

Renewals

In terms of annual subscriptions for the 2014-2015 Membership Year, we need to remind anyone who hasn't yet renewed their subscription that they need to do so **by the end of September** if they wish to continue to support the Friends. Standing orders make the process much easier and forms for this purpose are available on request: please e-mail: treasurer@fona.org.uk.

HERITAGE OPEN DAY – 13 SEPTEMBER

Nottinghamshire County Council

Join us for the final tours of the building before we close later in the autumn for the completion of our exciting building project to:

- Extend the storage areas
- Re-design and modernise the public areas

Mark the centenary of the Great War at Nottinghamshire Archives

Saturday 13th September, 11am to 3pm, Free

- Sign up using original enlistment papers
- Explore censored letters
- Find out who survived the war
- Children's trail of war-time aeroplanes
- Costumed performances of original letters from the Front
- Display marking the Zeppelin raid on Nottingham
- Slideshow of wartime images
- Behind the scenes tours

Nottinghamshire Archives
County House
Castle Meadow Road
Nottingham, NG2 1AG
0115 958 1634
www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/archives

Nottinghamshire County Council

BUILDING THE FUTURE OF THE ARCHIVES – AN UPDATE

by *Ruth Imeson*

Works on the project to extend the storage block, construct an additional events room and refurbish the public areas is well underway and on schedule for completion at the end of March 2015. During the past few months the project team has encountered a

number of inevitable snags, although none have proven to be insurmountable.



[The new extension slowly takes shape]

The brickwork for the extended storage areas has almost reached the first floor. Morgan Sindall, our lead contractor, is performing the ground works necessary to establish the foundations for the events and plant room.

As part of the Heritage Open Day, on Saturday 13 September, we'll be saying a fond farewell to the building, prior to its closure to the public. Please note that usual Saturday opening hours will be suspended and no original documents will be produced on 13 September.



The service will be closed to the public from Saturday 18 October until the end of January 2015.

We will re-open with a newly refurbished search room incorporating greater computer access along with updated procedures. The archive consultation area will increase in size and be moved to the opposite side of the search room. New lighting and furnishings will create a more welcoming atmosphere.

THE WAKEFIELD PROJECT

On 31 May, *Sarah Cooley* spoke to the Friends about a major archival and outreach project which she had been co-ordinating since May 2013 through a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The project was to preserve and catalogue a unique collection of research notes about World War One memorials.

Sarah writes: 'The project has involved a number of young volunteers, from the local area, all of whom are home-educated, who have helped to number and re-wrap the collection so that it may be preserved for future generations. The volunteers, aged between 11 and 17, were chosen because they are a generation for whom WW1 is no longer in living memory.'

[Some of the student volunteers who worked on the project]





[Sarah Cooley, right, speaking with Friends]

The first part of the talk concerned the origins of the collection which was the result of many years of painstaking work by the late Patricia Wakefield of Bulwell, Nottingham, and is the result of her interest in members of the Sherwood Foresters who died in the First World War. She visited War cemeteries in France and Belgium and recorded details of graves she found and in addition she toured Nottinghamshire and surrounding counties photographing War memorials and recording information about the soldiers listed on them.



The collection covers different types of records; one series includes lists of soldiers'

names arranged chronologically and alphabetically. They include, where known, the surname and rank, place of birth, place of enlistment, service number, date died, where remembered or buried and any relevant comments. A second series relates to cemeteries in France and Belgium. These contain mainly lists of Sherwood Foresters but include some soldiers from other regiments. All of these are arranged roughly by geographical area. There are also series relating to memorials in Nottinghamshire and surrounding counties with a photograph of each memorial and then brief information about each of the soldiers listed.

In addition is a series of contemporary postcards including ones sent from France and some embroidered ones. Finally, during her trips to France and Belgium, Patricia Wakefield also kept a diary detailing where they had visited and what they had found. Extracts of the diary will be made available on the internet via a 'geo-mapping' project.

The volunteers came into the archives regularly to help with the preservation and rewrapping of the collection. Our work with the young volunteers wasn't just a one-way street because an important part of the project was to provide young people with learning opportunities to develop their knowledge of WW1. The volunteers had workshops and talks and also went on trips including to Crich Memorial, the site of the WW1 training camp in Sherwood Forest and to the Imperial War Museum North in Salford. The volunteers have also had the opportunity to record their own thoughts about the First World War and develop their own projects, which when finished will be deposited in the archives alongside the Wakefield Collection'.

Following Sarah's talk, FONA was invited to send a representative to the final presentation of projects by the student volunteers, which was held at the Archives on 2 July. *Christine Drew* reports:

Sarah began by introducing the visitors and explaining that the main purpose of the meeting was to give the students an opportunity to share their project work. A few students and their parents said a little bit about their projects. Some (7 or 8) had written-up their project in folder-form and these were placed around the room for others to read. Pat Wakefield's detailed diaries of her visits to War Graves Cemeteries in France were also on display.



The projects were very wide-ranging in subject, content and format. Several students had used their own experiences or their own locality as their starting point. One girl (Ayesha) had looked at the gravestones and memorials in her local churchyard and researched the lives of those who died in WW1. She was amazed to discover among the graves a female nurse who had served in France. This work in turn had inspired her to research the history of the church and the local community. Assisted by her mother, they had also involved the extended family and unearthed a detailed history of a great-uncle who had served in WW1.

Another girl had used photographs of recent festivals and events in Nottingham to explore themes of collective remembrance and celebration. Another volunteer, aged 12, was a Girl Guide at her village church, required to participate in the annual Remembrance Day parade and service. Previously she had no idea what this was all about. She used a detailed description of the event and the order and wording of the service to explore

what was being remembered, the symbolism, etc.

One project was in scrapbook format, charting the origins and course of WW1 chronologically, using photographs, press cuttings, illustrations, quotations, etc. Two boys (both called Seth) working together had used letters and photographs to compile a history of Albert Ball.



Two girls (Ruby & Anna) worked together to research *Women in the Great War*. Amongst other things, they had used oral history tapes, made in the 1980s, of very elderly women remembering WW1 experiences, and photographs and accounts of parades and other propaganda to encourage women to support the war effort. This project also included making a film.

Another volunteer (Barbara) and her father had produced a modern version of *The Wipers Times*. This project included looking at humour, cartoons and poetry during WW1. Several other students mentioned familiarity with war poets, including modern poetry written by soldiers in Afghanistan.

The final project was on *Conscientious Objectors in the Great War in Nottingham*. Willow, aged 15, outlined the issues and the religious and political views held by objectors. She identified all the objectors in Nottingham, their tribunal and court appearances, using press cuttings in the Local Studies Library, and added two detailed case studies compiled using census records and other sources.

What emerged from the presentations was that involvement in the Wakefield Project had stimulated students' interest in many other aspects of WW1. Students and families had used a wide range of primary and secondary sources for their research projects, making good use of their local studies libraries, online resources, and using everything from cartoons in old copies of *Punch*, to recent poems written by soldiers in Afghanistan, to their own participation in local events, as historical sources and inspiration. Most of the students seemed thrilled that they were able to find so much information and gain new insights, making good links between the past and present and between WW1 and their own experiences, families and communities. The project had stimulated interest in local and family history as well as WW1 history. Parent-educators expressed appreciation that the project had been so rich and inspiring and had captured the interest of even those youngsters not previously very engaged with history.

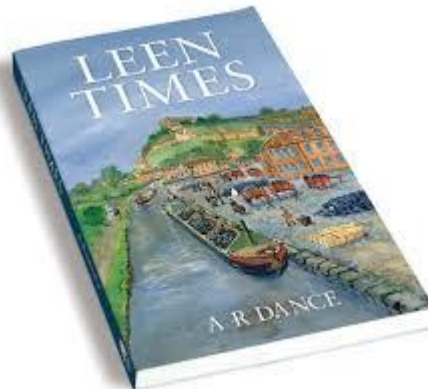
The student volunteers were presented with certificates at the Youth Heritage Conference at Wollaton Hall on 15 July, to acknowledge their contribution to the Wakefield Project. The project folders will be preserved in the Archives and, in a hundred years' time, on the bicentenary of WW1 in 2114, students will be able to look back at the folders to see what young people knew and thought about WW1 at its centenary in 2014.

FUTURE EVENTS - Saturday 20 September 11am at Nottinghamshire Archives

The next meeting is a talk by Alan Dance, author of a series of local historical novels. Alan will be talking about how he has used archive material in his research for the books, copies of which will be on sale. The cost is £5 and refreshments will be provided. Places are limited so early booking is advised.

Please be aware that the Archives car park is now closed because of the building works.

Bookings and further information is available from our Programme Secretary, *Sheila Leeds* sml Leeds@virginmedia.com or by telephone on 0115 914 9421 (evenings only, Wednesday-Sunday).



12 November 6-8pm at King's Meadow Campus, University of Nottingham

By kind permission of Mark Dorrington, Keeper of Manuscripts and Special Collections, a guided tour of the University's Manuscripts and Special Collections, including a trip to the store (formerly the sound-stage for Central/Carlton TV).

Meet at the Reception of King's Meadow Campus (free on-site parking).

Further information and booking details will be circulated nearer to the event.