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FONA support for new acquisitions

One of the principal objectives of FONA is to gather sufficient funds, through membership subscriptions and revenue-raising events, to support the Archives in augmenting its existing holdings of documents and illustrative material. In the past few months, we've made our first major advances in this aspect of our work, through direct purchase and donations. During the summer, FONA had the opportunity to purchase some documentary material relating to Nottinghamshire and, after consulting the Archives, have deposited the items, which we hope to showcase to Friends at a future event. The material falls into two categories.

The first is a collection of three loose-leaf folders, probably compiled during the 1950s, dealing with the antiquities and archaeology of individual Nottinghamshire parishes. The folders contain numerous descriptions, plates and newspaper cuttings, offering a mine of information about the county.

The second are two volumes of minutes of Nottingham's Works



and Ways Committee running from September 1904 - January 1925. Until this purchase, the Archives only held comparable material for Carlton Urban District Council from 1903-38 (DC/C/1/3/12). The Nottingham material runs to 434 and 358 pages respectively, with a copious index to each volume. They include a great deal of interesting material about prospective, and realised, plans within the City and also

highlight the impact of the First World War. We hope these items will repay further study.

FONA also assisted the Archives in purchasing a large collection of postcards relating to the City. This is a particularly diverse and interesting collection and one we were pleased to support. We can only achieve this sort of outcome with your continued support through subscriptions, signing up for Gift Aid and attending pay-for events. Please continue to support our activities in whatever way you can. **Richard Gaunt.**



A selection from the postcards FONA has helped to acquire.



Remembering the Somme - 100 years on

On 16 July, FONA commemorated the centenary of the Battle of the Somme with a special showing of the remarkable contemporary film created at the time of the battle. This was followed by a fascinating talk from Professor Chris Wrigley, Emeritus Professor of Modern British History at the University of Nottingham, who explained the influences behind the making of the film and highlighted some of the key elements within it.

Chris explained how filming took place on the battlefield between 30 June and 10 July. It was then edited, cleared for publication by the military censors in France and premiered on 7 August with nationwide release a fortnight later.

The key individuals behind the film were Geoffrey H. Malins (who always insisted that his name was pronounced May-lins), who filmed in the northern part of the British lines near Ypres, and John Benjamin McDowell. Both men demonstrated extreme bravery in carrying their equipment - some 70lbs in weight - and in winding the film by hand (which meant raising their hands above the parapet). Both men were paid £1 a day and their lives insured for £1000.

Much of our understanding of the creation of the film comes from Malins' subsequent account in *How I Filmed the War* (1920), written whilst Malins was in France. This is a highly readable and exciting 'Boys Own' history, comparable with the best military journalism of Winston Churchill and John Buchan.

It is designed to be a gripping read but this has its consequences in terms of accuracy. As Chris commented, Malins was 'very brave but not modest'. He was a self-publicist who annoyed some senior officers by burnishing his popular reputation as 'Malins of No Man's Land'. Unlike McDowell, he received the rank of Lieutenant for his travels on the Western Front but both men received the OBE 'for courage and devotion to duty...in circumstances of great difficulty and danger'.

Much subsequent criticism was levelled at Malins - and the film - for including scenes filmed at a mortar training camp behind the lines which showed men going 'over the top'. This is the footage which broadcasters invariably show today but, although it is 'fake' footage, it constitutes only a very small part of the film and was included because of his appreciation of the need for film of this nature.

By contrast, commentators rarely focus on the close shots of British guns firing. This was highly dangerous to film. The gun crews took shelter as they fired, in case a faulty shell exploded or the Germans responded in kind. Malins himself was hit by shrapnel on more than one occasion and his camera tripod was damaged twice.

Two of Malins' shots in the early morning of 1 July are among the most famous. The first, of anxious soldiers in a sunken road in No Man's Land, is unforgettable because of the haunted look in one man's face. These were possibly the nearest British troops to the German lines and many were to die in the next hour or so. The second, taken half an hour later, was of the explosion



Professor Chris Wrigley with FONA Chairman Richard Gaunt.

of the biggest British mine at the Hawthorn Ridge Redoubt. Malins filmed from thirty seconds before the blast, which had taken seven months to prepare and used twenty tons of explosive. In cinemas, screenings of the film were accompanied by an orchestra playing music: when it reached this part of the film, everyone other than the drummer stopped playing, so that a drum roll preceded the explosion. Another memorable scene was the rescue of an injured soldier from No Man's Land under heavy German fire. The caption informs viewers that the man died twenty minutes later.

Chris went on to evaluate the film's value as propaganda. Whereas earlier films from the Western Front had been cut in to eight minute features, the footage from the Somme was too good and powerful to be treated in this way. 'The Battle of the Somme' was unusual for its length, although it followed in the wake of an earlier feature-length film, 'Britain Prepared', which

impressed Britain's wartime allies, as well as the neutral powers. The film had an international impact, with the Imperial Family watching it in Russia and mass screenings to audiences across America and Europe, reaching as far as China and Peru. The film was also vital for its home audience. In Britain, some 20 million people (out of an estimated population of 42 million) saw the film. Within two months of its release, it had taken a remarkable £30,000 in receipts. However, though it was followed by two sequels covering later parts of the battle, Malins felt that the footage had become repetitive and monotonous, rather than fresh and thrilling.

Although the best propaganda is usually deemed that which does not appear to be propaganda, 'The Battle of the Somme' was filmed with an awareness of home audiences in mind. McDowell staged one scene, telling those marching by the camera to give him a cheery smile. The men, no doubt rightly thinking that there was a chance their loved ones would see such footage, happily complied. The film was also vital in stressing the importance of munitions output to men on the Front. This is explicit in captions and implicit in shots of munitions stock and British artillery firing. The film, in reinforcing in a dramatic manner, the troops' crucial need for munitions, thereby helped to bolster the war effort at home. As Chris concluded, the film remains a powerful record of one of the world's biggest and grimmest battles and a pioneering record in cinematic history.

To read more on this subject, the best place to start is Geoffrey Malins, *How I Filmed the War* (1920). The Imperial War

Museum's 1993 reissue has a good introduction by Nicholas Hiley. Also see Nicholas Reeves, *Official British Film Propaganda during the First World War* (1986) and his article, 'The Real Thing at Last: the film "The Battle of the Somme"' in *The Historian*, Autumn 1996, pp.4-8. A recent reappraisal is Taylor Dowling, 'Battle of the

Somme: the making of the 1916 propaganda film' in *The Historian*, Spring 2016, pp.6-11. For TV treatments, there is E. Hanna, *The Great War on the Small Screen* (2009).

FONA is extremely grateful to Chris for giving us an insight into the film and for providing us with his

notes for this article. Following the event, several members of the audience contributed towards a FONA donation to 'Help for Heroes', which was boosted through Gift Aid by 25%.

Richard Gaunt

The Horticultural Advertiser



It was on 23rd April 1883 when Thomas Forman & Sons Ltd. printed the first issue of *The Horticultural Advertiser*, then a very small advertising leaflet published by J. R. Pearson & Sons, of Chilwell, Nottinghamshire, and it was launched by nurseryman Mr. Charles Pearson and his brother Alfred. The leaflet was intended to serve the horticultural trade and offered nurserymen, seedsmen, horticultural equipment manufacturers and service providers a place to advertise to a specialist market and included editorial features tailored to their business.

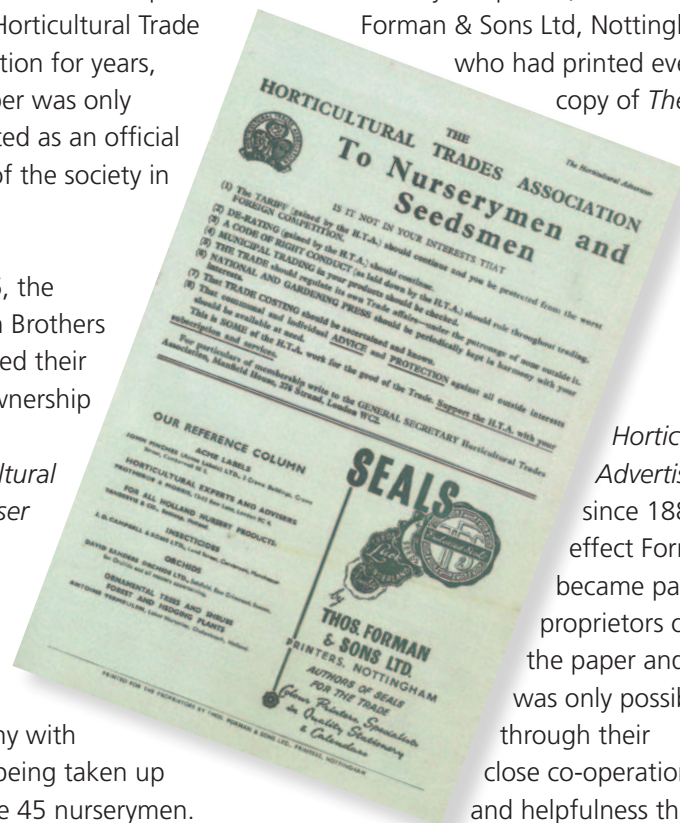
From the date of its inception the management of *The Horticultural Advertiser* was conducted from Chilwell but in 1900 the Pearson firm moved to Lowdham, Nottinghamshire. Although it had been the mouthpiece of the Horticultural Trade Association for years, the paper was only appointed as an official organ of the society in 1920.

In 1926, the Pearson Brothers converted their joint ownership of *The Horticultural Advertiser* into a limited

company with shares being taken up by some 45 nurserymen.

The first Editor was Charles Pearson, with assistance from his brother Alfred. Following the death of Charles Pearson, a new company was formed in 1930 taking the name 'The Horticultural Advertiser (1930) Ltd'. Mr C. G.

L. Du Cann, the General Secretary of the Horticultural Trades Association, took over the editorial role of the paper and moved it to Sentinel House, London. The advertising function was taken over by the printer, Thomas Forman & Sons Ltd, Nottingham, who had printed every copy of *The*



Horticultural Advertiser since 1883. In effect Formans became part proprietors of the paper and it was only possible through their close co-operation and helpfulness that the paper ran with a

permanent staff, which at no time numbered more than three or four.

During the second world war paper was in very short supply. The growing of ornamental nursery stock was restricted and

foreign advertisers were cut off. It therefore became necessary to make drastic economies and Mr Du Cann handed over the editorship and general management of the paper to Mr C. H. Benson. Thus the editorial and advertising functions were reunited in Nottingham.

The Horticultural Advertiser went into voluntary liquidation in 1960 when the printers, who had subsidised the printing costs for some preceding years, gave notice of bringing their costs up to market level from 1st January 1960. The last issue of *The Horticultural Advertiser* was 6th January 1960.

The paper, which was published every Tuesday, was seldom late and during the whole of the 76 years of its publication only two issues were missed. Both of those were by government decree when,

in common with all other similar publications, production was suspended for a fortnight during the national fuel shortage in February 1947.

In common with many similar journals *The Horticultural Advertiser* had its ups and downs and after surviving two world wars it met very strong competition from several other trade papers in the same fields. It was only by the close connection with Formans that the paper weathered the storms it encountered.

Seventy-six years was quite a spell in the life of any journal and, quite naturally, many changes were made in production methods. This is especially so in regard to type-setting when in the early days of the paper every line, much of it in 6 point, was set by hand. The handling of copy also changed from the days when everything

came from Lowdham and Mr Charles Pearson used to come to Forman Street, sometimes cycling over, on Monday morning to read proofs and see the paper to bed.

Just as *The Horticultural Advertiser* had been a customer of Thomas Forman & Sons Ltd. for over three-quarters of a century, many firms who supported the paper in its first issue remained on the books as subscribers and/or advertisers until the last issue published on 6th January 1960. Many nursery and seed firms came and went during this time, but it is interesting to note that some of the advertisers in the very first issue continued their support right up to the closure.

Howard Parker

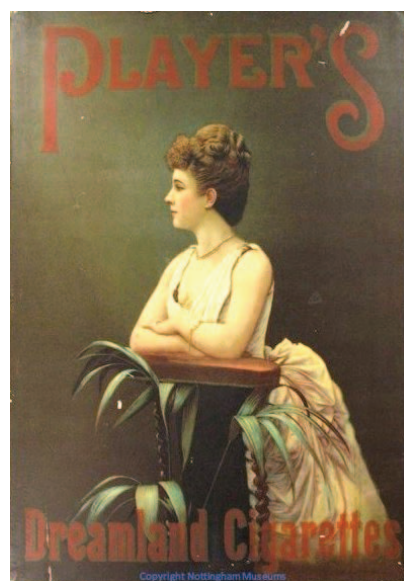
Photographs courtesy of the University of Nottingham Manuscripts and Special Collections.

Player's Please!

The John Player & Sons Collections

On 21 June, Judith Mills gave a colourful illustrated talk about the John Player and Sons archive collections items from the Company's advertising and marketing department.

This large collection of advertising materials was put into the care of Nottingham City Museums and Galleries. It comprises 'show cards', (about 3ft high, floor standing, used at commercial shows and other events), dummy packaging for window displays, a plaster bust of the Player's 'Sailor', ash trays, presentation boxes and similar promotional materials, a large collection of photographs and some original art work. Judith used the large collection of 'counter cards' which either hung in shop windows or stood on shop counters, to show how the advertising of Players' products was adapted over time, encompassing new and diverse audiences.



The earliest surviving advertisement for Player's tobacco, c.1880. Courtesy of Nottingham City Museums and Galleries.

The other part of the collection, comprising the Company's business papers including property leases, financial documents, sales ledgers, staff records, charitable giving and photographs were deposited with Nottinghamshire Archives. Judith included a range of these records in her talk. The early 20th century staff ledgers, for example, record which members of staff failed to return from the First World War; while apprenticeship certificates reveal not just how much (or little) a 14-year-old was paid (4d for every 100 cigars rolled), as well as being prohibited from gambling and 'haunting' taverns and playhouses.

She also showed examples of letters from grateful soldiers whose lives had been 'saved' by tobacco tins, and albums displaying registered trademarks and a selection of photographs of the factory floor. Nottinghamshire Archives also holds a considerable volume of correspondence about the Company's charitable giving to a wide range of organisations from schools and hospitals to service organisations for retired servicemen and sea cadets. This brief survey revealed the richness of the John Player and Sons archive collections.



Some examples of images registered as John Player and Sons trademarks. Nottinghamshire Archives, DD PL 6/21/1-3.

Treasures to be discovered at Southwell Minster Library

Visitors to Southwell Minster making their way to the famous leaf carvings in the Chapter House might be forgiven for walking straight past a heavy wooden door set into the north quire aisle.

Those who do give the door a second glance might wonder

where it leads. Open it with the ancient iron key, and a steep, rather gloomy stairway presents itself, the stone stairs worn concave by centuries of tramping feet. Ascend those stairs and you emerge into a bright high-ceilinged room, a hidden space, once the cathedral's treasury, built above the north transept chapel. The

room no longer holds any silver or gold. Instead a line of lofty bookshelves greets the visitor, filled with treasures of a different kind: Books, from the tiniest handheld prayer books to the weightiest volume as thick as a hand.

The interested visitor might seek out some particular treasures: a

rare volume of Aristotle's works printed in 1502, the earliest printed book in the Historic Chapter Library; an atlas from the 16th century illustrated with imaginary creatures and people from faraway lands and with Australia not yet discovered; Walter Raleigh's *History of the World* written while he languished in the Tower of London; and a first edition of Doctor Johnson's dictionary which (fans of Black Adder will be amused to note) forgets to include the word 'sausage'! Science, literature and religion are all represented in the collection. The library holds Newton's *Principia Mathematica*, printed during his lifetime, and a complete set of the Bridgewater *Treatises*, a work of natural theology commissioned by Francis Henry Egerton, Earl of Bridgewater, and containing beautiful illustrations of fossils. Visitors can view a 1550 edition of Chaucer's works and many early printed Bibles and religious works, including the *Decretals* (letters forming ecclesiastical law) of Pope Gregory IX (1519) in its original oak boards, and the great Polyglot Bible of 1657, a masterpiece of the printer's craft.

The Historic Chapter Library of Southwell Minster contains all of these volumes in a collection which includes not only Bibles, sermons, writings of the Church Fathers and theologians, as might be expected, but also history, geography, law, science, classics, music, literature and local history. The library holds books dating from the 14th century onwards, but the present collection was not begun until about 1690. Any books which Southwell Minster had owned in mediaeval times had been lost by the 17th century. At the



Minster Library Shelves.



Decretals of Pope Gregory IX (1519).

end of that century, Chapter, the governing body, decided to create a new library. Donations from local gentlemen formed the core of this new library, Edward Lee of Norwell contributing especially fine volumes. The collection was augmented over the years by gifts from canons, vicars and others. The library was housed in various places in the Minster until the 19th century when it was moved into the old treasury.

Because the library displays the very varied interests of the clergy of the eighteenth century, it is now possible to find a book to interest almost everyone today. For the scientist, there are the *Transactions of the Royal Society*, 1780-1808. For the student of literature, there is a first folio edition of Beaumont and Fletcher plays. If you would like to try to read Norman French, you might look at the 1543 book of *Law Reports* of Henry VII and Henry VIII, sections of which are unknown elsewhere. Biblical scholars can examine a first edition of the King James Bible, and theologians read the sermons of Archbishop Sandys, Bishop Wordsworth and many others. An architect might open Vitruvius's *De Architectura* of 1586. And if you like to look at pictures, a lavishly illustrated 1517 edition of the works of Virgil will delight you as also a colourful hand-illustrated manuscript of the *Articles of Religion* made by the Vicar of Calverton in the 19th century. Musicians can enjoy Arnold's edition of Handel's works. Poetry lovers can read not only Milton, but also Provost Hugh Heywood's verses *On a Golden Thread*. For local historians, Thoroton, Dimock, Dickinson, Shilton and more recent descriptions are available.



Virgil Works (1517).

The library catalogue can be searched on-line via the Minster's website. Go to 'historic library'. A 'search library' button will open and enable you to search from a drop-down menu of archives/books/plans/manuscripts/choir music. Note that most of the archives are now kept at Nottinghamshire Archives in more suitable conditions.

The Historic Library is open by appointment. If you would like to visit, you are very welcome to phone or email to make an arrangement. Telephone the

librarian, Christine Whitehouse, on 0115 966 3469 or email library@southwellminster.org.uk

A selection of books from the library, changing each month, is on display in the chapter house passage, and the library is usually open on bank holidays for the public to see a small themed exhibition of books of interest.

**Christine Whitehouse and
Marion Oswald**



Forthcoming Event

Identifying and dating Victorian and Edwardian photographs



An illustrated talk by David Ackrel,
Senior Conservator at Nottinghamshire Archives,
using images from private collections and
the Archives. We advise you to book in advance.

11.00am, Saturday 17th September 2016

at the Nottinghamshire Archives.

Admission to non-FONA members £4.00 payable on entrance.

News from Inspire

Vote now for your Community Board members!

We've reached a very exciting time for Inspire – as an Inspire member you have the opportunity to elect four Community Directors to join our Board.

We had a fantastic response to our call for nominations and twenty five members are standing. Elected Board members will be a vital and valued part of Inspire, helping lead and guide the culture, learning and libraries provision in Nottinghamshire for the next three years.

You can vote for FOUR candidates who you think can fulfil the Community Director role and will be best for Inspire. You can read candidate manifestos, vote

online or in person at any Nottinghamshire Library and Nottinghamshire Archives where voting slips are available.

Voting closes at **midnight on Monday 19 September**. The Community Directors will officially be voted onto the board at our Annual General meeting on 12 October at Mansfield Central Library.

Visit the website at <https://www.inspireculture.org.uk/> to become a member of Inspire and to cast your vote.

Please note that FONA Chairman Richard Gaunt is standing for election and would appreciate one of your four votes.

An appeal from the Treasurer

Earlier this year, HMRC agreed that FONA could claim Gift Aid relief on subscriptions. This boosts our income by 25p for every £1 paid. If you haven't already completed a Gift Aid form, please contact Judith Mills treasurer@fona.org.uk for a form. Many thanks!



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If you would like to contribute articles to the FONA Newsletter please contact Richard Gaunt, Chairman.

chairman@fona.org.uk