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'Forman of Nottingham: A Printing Legend'

Re-open for business!



Advertising for the 'Opening Fun Day, 02 May 2015'.

Nottinghamshire Archives re-opened to the public on 28 April 2015, following a £2.5m investment to refurbish and extend the existing building, thereby helping to preserve the county's rich archival heritage for future generations.

The new look archives building now includes additional space to accommodate new archives, including specialist storage for photographs and digital media, a computerised building management system, an additional meeting room (which can be used as a learning space) and an improved computer suite for accessing digital heritage, with free public wi-fi throughout the building.

The archives have new opening times - Tuesdays (9am-7pm), Wednesdays-Fridays (9am-5pm) and Saturdays (9am-1pm). Manuscript items for use in the search room are now ordered on a 'call-up' basis, rather than through the old system of timed collections per hour.



Peter Gaw, Head of Libraries, Archives and Information, Nottinghamshire County Council, Ruth Imeson, Team Manager Archives and staff members ready to welcome visitors to the opening fun day event.

The Archives launched itself at a very well-supported Open Day on 2 May. This provided an opportunity for families to explore the archives (many, for the very first time), go on behind-the-scenes tours, and enjoy a piece of celebration cake prepared for the occasion!

Regional press and television reporters were in attendance, leading to good local coverage in the Nottingham Post (see the edition of 4 May 2015, p.5) and on Notts TV news (2 May). Following an official opening ceremony at 10.30, the day went on to showcase a series of family activities (seal making, design your own coat of arms, dressing up in historical costumes) and, at 1pm, a talk about historical fiction by writer Judith Allnatt.

Since the Fun Day, the Archives has re-launched itself with a

range of activities, including talks, behind-the-scenes tours and participation in events such as the Nottinghamshire Local History Fair. Going forward, they are offering the use of their meeting rooms, which can be hired by groups (contact archives@nottsc.gov.uk or 0115 958 1634). They are also offering to host group visits and tours (at rates between £40-£45 for a 60-90 minute tour). The latest programme of events is accessible at www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/whatson

FONA is looking forward to playing a central role in the new archives building.

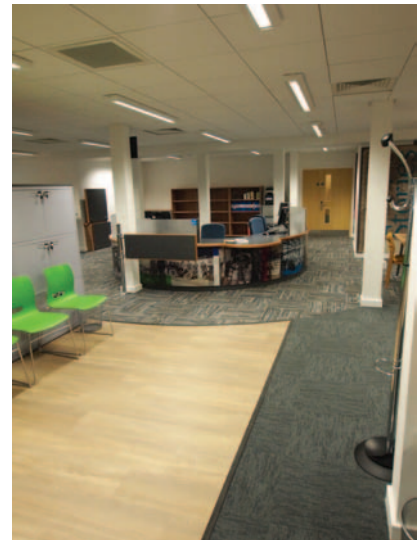


A specially-designed wall, encouraging awareness and membership of the organisation, will be installed close to the reception, and the committee are in the course of revising their publicity materials and membership leaflets to reflect the new surroundings.

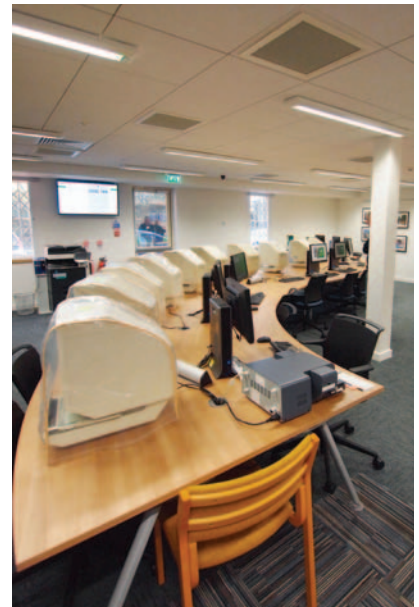
For anyone who hasn't yet experienced the new building with its many striking improvements, FONA member Bob Stoakes has provided a gallery of photographs, showcasing some of its distinctive features.

Richard Gaunt

The public view



View towards reception.



View across the search room showing fiche readers and increased provision of computer work stations.



The new meeting room is equipped with state-of-the-art lighting, projection facility and self-contained kitchen area. Here it is in use by Archives volunteers working on a conservation project.



New storage facility for microfiche and card indexes.



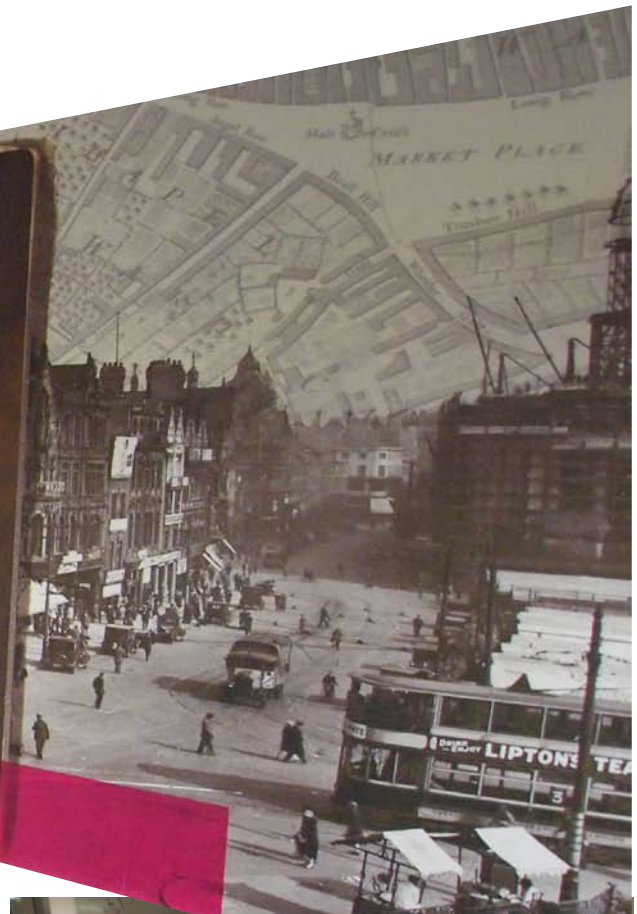
Wall graphics, using imagery from the Archive collections, are a feature throughout the new building.



The new library.



View across the reading room.

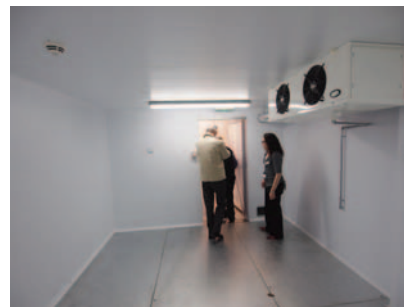


Even the lockers tell a story!

Behind the scenes



The Archives building now provides additional space to accommodate new archives for decades to come.



The controlled environment of the cool room provides specialist storage for photographs and digital media.

Members' Events & Visits

'Cook it till it is a nuff' – researching recipes in Grandmother Gell's kitchen

FONA held its Annual General Meeting at the University of Nottingham on 28 March 2015. Following the business meeting, including the election of officers, Carol Barstow, Librarian at Bromley House, spoke to those present about her research into historic cookery books.

Carol, who came in a hand-stitched costume, has always loved cooking and there are many cooks in her family. Her talk related to work undertaken in relation to an MA course at the University of Nottingham. This led her to start investigating household accounts and probate inventories listing property at the time of death. She developed a fascination with historic recipes, tracing some back as far as the 1600s.

From the records of one particular family, Thomas Gell, who was



Judith Mills (newly elected as Treasurer and Membership Secretary) with guest speaker Carol Barstow (Librarian, Bromley House Library)

a surgeon, Carol also found documentation of what and how food was cooked. Her book "In Grandmother Gell's Kitchen" was borne out of this information and was published 10 years ago by Nottinghamshire Archives.

The Gell family information was in good handwriting (which is not always the case) and contained hundreds of recipes, including ones for perfumes and pomanders, medicine and veterinary recipes; an index was also included. For her book, Carol undertook a good deal of practical research by testing the recipes.

Early recipes included oysters as a common ingredient; pies were both sweet and savoury and their appearance was considered important, some recipes calling for a coffin shaped pie. Different pastry was used for different purposes. Puddings played a large part in recipe books – savoury, sweet, baked, boiled and were cooked using pudding cloths. Chafing dishes were used with hot coals to give a gentle heat to make a cream sauce.

The largest group of recipes from the period were recipes for cakes, bread and biscuits. These foods were eaten with ale at breakfast, supper, at funerals and made for harvest workers. Cake recipes contained huge weights of ingredients, whilst bread was dry and tended to be dunked, often being served with pottage.

Most of the time, Carol had to guess about the ingredients. There was no self-raising flour in this period, no maid or daughter to help and no Kenwood Chef! For one recipe, Carol had to spend two hours whisking one of the ingredients!

There seemed to be a lot of guess work for recipes in the period, including directions to add sugar 'to taste' and reference to unquantified 'small' eggs. Butter was very important in recipes. Carol also had to guess about spoon sizes during her experiments. Cooking times were also very unclear – hence the title of Carol's talk, 'Cook it till it is a nuff'! Some of the weighing of the ingredients also caused Carol some concern, including a recipe requiring two gallons of flour and liquids stated by weight.

Unlike today, a 'banquet' was a dessert course. Fruit was candied with large quantities of sugar. In the Gell household, with Mr Gell being a surgeon, they were quite affluent, so sugar was readily available and would be purchased as sugar loaves. Sugar became cheaper towards the 18th century. Hedgerow fruits were used, such as elder and broom. Fruits were also made into pickles and ketchups, but these recipes are very salty. Fruits were also used to make wine, including cowslip, raisin and elderberry. Honey was added to make mead.



Ruth Imeson from Nottinghamshire Archives presents a thank-you gift to outgoing Treasurer and Membership Secretary, Graham Crisp.

Carol loved all the experimentation on her family, but it seemed that the puddings tested at Sunday lunches were the most successful. FONA members echoed this by trying some of the samples that Carol had generously brought along with her!

Carol's talk was thoroughly enjoyed and, by way of thanks, she was given a year's membership of FONA.

Cherry Knight

Cherry Knight (re-elected as Secretary), Richard Gaunt (re-elected as Chairman) and Elizabeth Robinson (newly elected as Vice-Chairman) at the AGM.



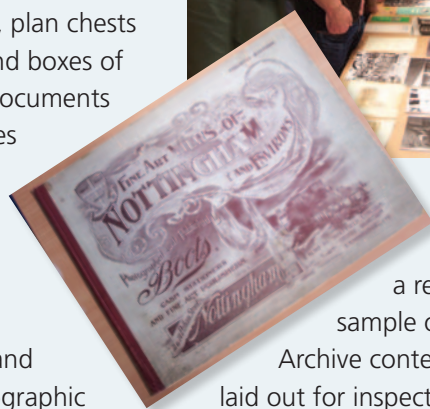
A visit to the Boots Archive

4 June 2015

Having found our way through the labyrinthine roadways which cross the Boots site (thanks to the excellent directions provided by Sheila Leeds), twelve FONA members gathered in the building that has been the home of the Boots Archive since 1997. After a tea or coffee and a chance to chat and informally browse through collections of Boots newsletters (e.g. *The Bee*, 1922 and *Boots News*, 1970), books (e.g. *Comrades in Khaki*, which commemorated male Boots employees who served on the Front in 1915), photocopies of catalogues and similar material, we were taken through to the Archive store. This temperature controlled store, like most if not all archive stores, contains long rows of roller-racking, shelving, plan chests and of course boxes and boxes of papers. The range of documents is immense and includes papers relating to the foundation of the company, its present holdings, financial and estate records, market material both historic and contemporary, a photographic collection from the mid-1880s to the present day together with film and video made for advertising and staff training to name just a couple of uses, and 'recipe' books containing the formulae for products created by Boots. The Archive, however, is not just a static repository as its contents are often consulted on a day to day basis, and one of the roles of the Archivist is to spot opportunities for promoting the history of the Company. The Stores also hold a collection of artefacts that had at

one time been on display in the Company Museum, which has, unfortunately, had to be closed. All the items in the Archive are catalogued using a rather old piece of computer software originally designed for libraries. However, thanks to a grant from The Wellcome Trust, this catalogue is being migrated to new software which will make it easier to use and, potentially, accessible by the public.

Moving from the Store we then went into a meeting room where

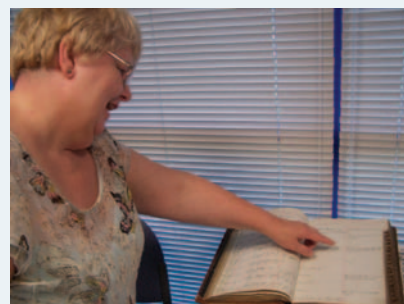


a representative sample of the Archive contents had been laid out for inspection.

First we were treated to a showing of the Company's first advertising film made in 1935, as part of the Boots Winter Health campaign. Drawn by one of the artists who worked on the early Mickey Mouse cartoons, with a narrative which at times could have been read by Vincent Price (though wasn't), it warned viewers of the perils to their health posed by germs and more importantly the dangers of not taking suitable precautions against them – the downfall of

the film's chief protagonist, John Careless, whose disregard for good advice laid him low with a fever. The tone of the film is very warlike; the germs are organised into a threatening army while the medicines belong to the Good Health brigade which dispense medicine as bombs. The action is accompanied by a song which is alternately threatening ('watch-out or they will get you') or cheerfully reassuring. The purpose of the film was, of course, to sell Boots products, so the song concludes that, to deploy the Good Health Army, you can 'always rely on Boots'.

This introduction set the tone for examining the material that had been set out for us. There were photographs from over the last 100 years, including some of Highfields, the lido and Nottingham University, oral histories taken recently as part of an on-going project, and documents relating to Boots business.



Judith looking at the employees' register.

One of the most interesting (to me at least) was the staff book, which dated to the end of the 19th/early 20th century. A large, indexed volume, it gave the name of each employee, their age when first employed, their (weekly)

salary, increments awarded, place employed, and reason for leaving. One lady who worked as a cashier at Cheltenham joined Boots in 1904 on 7/- a week rising to 10/6 three years later. However, she was asked to leave as she was too short to see over the counter. Another lady left as she was to be married, while a gentleman was released because there was not enough for him to do and he was too talkative. And, inevitably, one or two were dismissed for dishonesty.

A number of artefacts were also on show and we were challenged to identify them; the glass baby's bottle was fairly easy and we were nearly right about the press used to make suppositories (we

identified it as a pill press), while BBC's Bargain Hunt came in useful for identifying a 'scarifier' used to take blood.

The most decorative item, though, was the gilded and enamelled casket presented to Jesse Boot when he was given the freedom of the City (pictured below).

Overall, it was a most enjoyable and informative evening; Boots clearly has a rich resource of information relevant not just to business and science but also to social, economic and local history. Our thanks go to Archivists Judith and Sophie who were our hosts

that evening and to Charlotte who was responsible for making all the arrangements. Their time was given freely but, at their request, some of the event fee was donated to Macmillan Cancer Support, and the balance added to FONA funds.

Judith Mills

Examining the Boots goodie-bags on sale (£5 a throw)!



Our next event

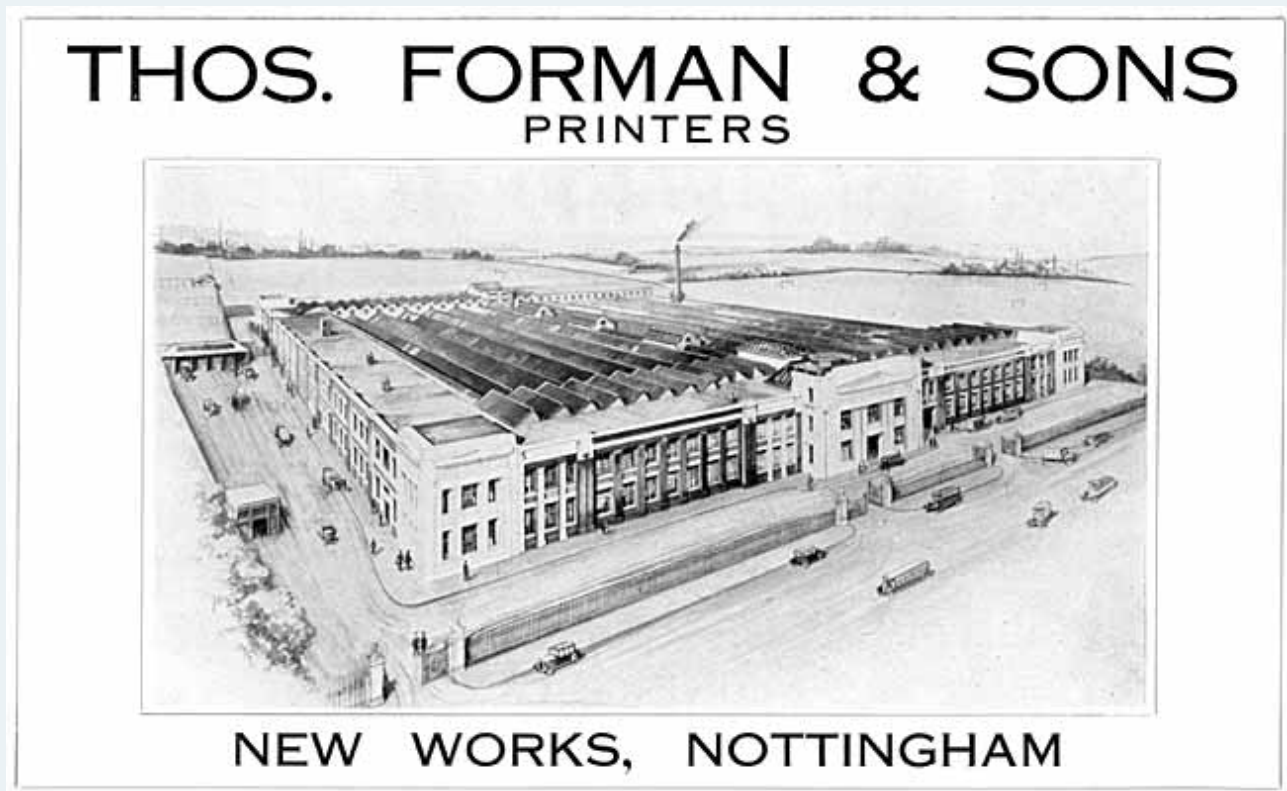


Image courtesy of Nottshistory website. For more information visit www.nottshistory.org.uk

Saturday 26 September at Nottinghamshire Archives, 11am.

Howard Parker assisted by Val Astill 'Forman of Nottingham: A Printing Legend'

Further details and booking will be circulated nearer the time.

Sheila Leeds



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

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