

## *In this issue*

### **Nottinghamshire in the time of Jane Austen**

*A report on the recent  
talk by Chris Weir.*

*pages 1 - 2*

**My 'other' Favourite  
Archive** *Members  
recount their experiences  
of both public and  
private archives .*

*pages 2 - 3*

### **Coming up!**

*A look forward to the  
next FONA event.*

*page 4*

### **The Stapleford Cemetery Gravestone Memorial Project**

*The story behind a local  
initiative to record a  
unique collection of  
gravestone inscriptions.*

*pages 5 - 7*

### **The Thomas Forman Preservation Society**

*News from one of our  
Institutional Members.*

*page 8*

# Nottinghamshire in the time of Jane Austen



*Chris Weir with one of the illustrations from his talk .*

Quadrilles, tea and dancing at the assembly rooms. These were just part of the polite accomplishments which Georgians would have engaged in, had they lived in Nottinghamshire during the time of Jane Austen (1775-1817). Chris Weir offered FONA members a lively survey of social habits and pastimes, innovations and new ideas, held (perhaps appropriately) on the morning of the royal wedding between the newly titled Duke and Duchess of Sussex. But Nottinghamshire in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century was not just about polish and politeness. Luddite frame

breakers and Pentrich rebels showed the dark underside to the seemingly well-controlled and well-mannered customs of the English during the early decades of the Industrial Revolution. Chris was able to draw on many years of privileged access to the holdings of the archives, as a long-serving member of staff, to illustrate some of the ways in which contemporaries wrote, illustrated and talked about the times through which they were living. His talk was peppered with interesting and quirky accounts and illustrated with newspaper advertisements and contemporary

broadsheets. The talk thus provided a useful contrast with our preceding FONA meeting, which discussed the rebellious undercurrent of life in the county

during the later stages of the Napoleonic Wars. Our thanks go to Chris for another lively and engaging talk, much appreciated by the committed group of FONA

members who turned out to hear it.

**Richard A. Gaunt**

## OTHER 'My Favourite Archive'



Despite - or maybe because of - July's heat, thirteen members of FONA gathered on 21st July 2018 to talk about their 'other' favourite archive - 'archive' being interpreted in the widest possible sense.

**Sheila Leeds** began the meeting by talking about her experiences in two, very contrasting, archives. The Doncaster Archive is housed in an old school, so the building is in a very poor state, but the staff could not have been more helpful and accommodating. In contrast, Kent Archives are housed in a new building as part of a library centre. On the day she visited, it was hard to find an archivist on duty and the building, while being modern, is unwelcoming.

Sheila was followed by **Rob Smith** whose 'favourite' archive was the Articles of Agreement signed by 167 Nottingham people who were part of a planned emigration to South Africa in 1820. Rob outlined the economic and social background to the emigration as well as the political situation and cultural challenges that faced the emigrants when they reached their

destination. Rob had brought with him several books together with photographs of the settlement area that he had taken when he visited a couple of years ago.

Stepping back 300 years to the 16th century, **Judith Mills** talked about late medieval tax lists held at both Nottinghamshire Archives and The National Archives. These lists are organised by streets, so it is possible to visualise who lived where. She also explained how tax lists can be used to estimate population, wealth, social status and, when linked with other

information, plot where different types of trade were concentrated within an urban environment. Judith is now using tax lists to identify land ownership in her home village and showed a photograph of a list of 12 tax payers dating to 1327 which, judging from the whiteness of the parchment and the blackness of the ink, has possibly only been unrolled a handful of times in 700 years.

Jumping forward in time, **Howard Parker** showed two books celebrating the centenary

*Howard Parker gives his presentation.*



of Thomas Forman and Sons. Howard remembered attending the celebrations at their offices on Hucknall Road as a boy of 14. There were games and entertainments, a miniature railway and a tea party. The star act was a comedy duo, Bennett and Williams, and, in the evening, there was a Ball, though Howard was too young to attend. The books are facsimiles as the originals are deposited at Nottinghamshire Archives. One is a history of printing, including examples of all the items printed by Forman's in their first 100 years. The second is a souvenir album comprising photographs of the celebrations, press cuttings and a history of the company.

There was something of a show-biz element in **Elizabeth Robinson's** talk about her family papers, the Gandy Archive, which she has deposited at Nottinghamshire Archives. This collection includes records of her grandmother being measured for Sandow's Patent Health & Perfect Figure Corset. These were manufactured and marketed by Eugene Sandow who was a wrestler, circus performer, strongman and international celebrity and is now regarded as the father of bodybuilding.

The entertainment theme was continued by **Maddy Scott** who talked about the first time she visited the Theatre Royal, to see the pantomime Aladdin starring Lupino Lane and Pat Kirkwood in 1940. Maddy has recently given a book about ballet to the Theatre Royal archive. During her visit she saw some of the WWII archive material and the Archivist made a copy of the poster advertising the same production of Aladdin that she so vividly remembered.



*Members examine some of the items discussed by the contributors.*

**Jim and Pauline Chettle** rounded the meeting off with their adventures in Family History. Jim's great, great grandfather, who was the head park keeper at Rufford, was originally from Scotland. He had a daughter who was, apparently, called Benjamin born in Kirkoswald in Cumbria. Some time ago, Jim took advantage of being in Glasgow and went to Kirkoswald to consult the parish register which confirmed she was definitely Benjamin! Pauline's story brought us back to the beginning of our meeting as she described visiting archives from Ayrshire to Exeter, with the occasional detour to Guernsey, Canada and Gibraltar. However, most work has been done in either Buckinghamshire

or Bedfordshire as both hold records for Bodsworth/Bosworth (depending on which county you are in). This work has revealed that in the 15th century one of her ancestors was connected to Bushmead Priory.

After all the talks, there was time to look more closely at the materials brought by the contributors, as well a chat with each other. Thanks must go to Sheila Leeds and Pauline Chettle for providing refreshments and to staff at the Archives for photographing some of the original documents and turning them into a PowerPoint.

**Judith Mills**



# Coming up!

Ruth Imeson:

## Captain Albert Ball, WW1 Flying Ace

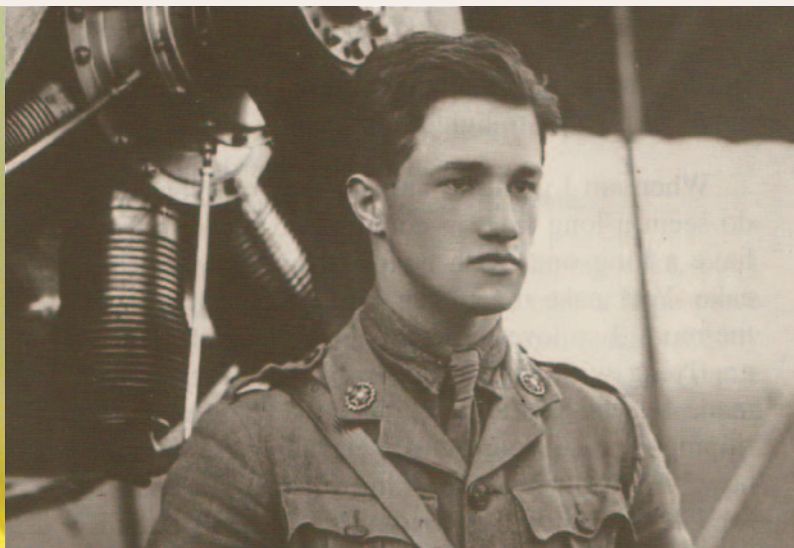
Fighter pilot, celebrity, brother, comrade, son: An exploration of the loves, aerial exploits, business deals, and identities of Nottingham's very own World War 1 hero.

Nottinghamshire Archives at 11am

**Saturday 17 November 2018**

Free to members and booking is not required. Admission to non-FONA members £4.00 including refreshments. Places may be booked at the Archives with payment by non-members on the day.

*Albert Ball's WW1 Medals in the Sherwood Foresters Museum, Nottingham Castle, 2011.  
Author: TenthEaglesteve bowen*



*A squadron of S.E.5a (Scout Experimental 5a) aeroplanes, as flown by Albert Ball, lined up for take-off.*





# The Stapleford Cemetery Gravestone Memorial Project



Let me start by introducing myself. I am Sharon Bosworth and I am the Stapleford & District U3A (University of the Third Age) Family History Group coordinator. I came to this position about three and a half years ago when I saw a notice in our local library for an open meeting for the U3A. They were looking at setting up a group in the Stapleford area and along with a couple of friends I went along to see what it was all about. Having been researching my own family history for over 20 years I came away having been volunteered to lead a Family History Group, and for my sins, this is what I've been doing ever since, and I will add, have thoroughly enjoyed.

The Stapleford Cemetery Gravestone Memorial Project started around March 2017 when 2 members of the Family History Group came to me and

suggested that we might go to the Stapleford Cemetery and record the gravestone memorials. The cemetery was first opened in 1881 and is in a beautiful position on a hillside and with many trees and



has a very natural feel to it. This idea was put to the group and was welcomed and supported, not only by the Family History Group, but the Stapleford & District U3A group as a whole.

We first approached the Cemetery Office for Broxtowe Borough Council but sadly they were of little help having sold their records to an online pay-per-view website. This left us with no option but to go it alone, and sadly, we could only record what we could see. There are many spaces without memorials, which, if we had access to the records, we could have at least put a name to.

Janet Cross & Cheryl Cooper, the two members who suggested the idea, spent many hours mapping and plotting the cemetery before a group of 10 - 15 volunteers started the transcribing.



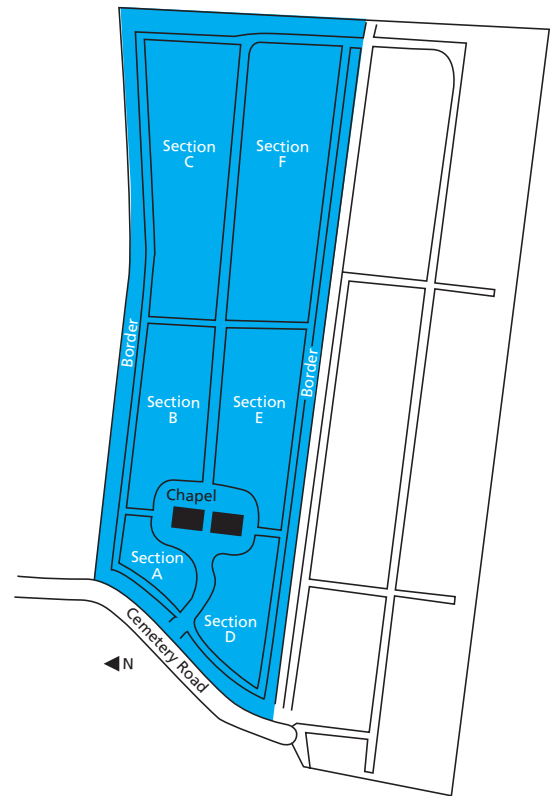
So far, thanks to our wonderful volunteers, we have spent approximately 400 hours at the cemetery and transcribed nearly 2,000 memorials. While without a doubt the transcribing is a very important part it is in fact just the beginning.



*Some of the volunteers at work transcribing the memorials.*



*An impression of the scale and challenges of the project.*



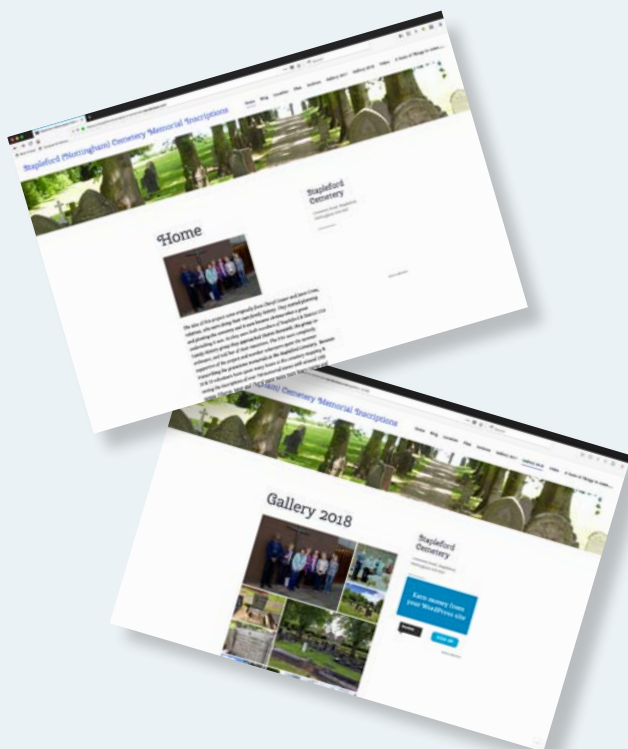
So far only the oldest part of the cemetery, where the first burial took place in 1881, has been transcribed and published (blue area). It is proposed to continue with this project over the next 2 years to completely transcribe the whole of Stapleford Cemetery.

Many, many hours were then spent typing up the notes, checking possible mistakes, revisiting the cemetery, correcting and filling in gaps spotted while typing etc.

Next came preparing the work into a format suitable for printing and we also created a web page where as well as the transcriptions you will find a number







of photos and a blog tracing and keeping you up to date with our progress. We were able to get 10 spiral bound books printed thanks to funding given to us by Stapleford Town Council. These books can be found at the Stapleford Council Offices, in Local Studies sections at Stapleford, Beeston, Sandiacre and Nottingham Central Libraries, the Manuscripts and Special Collections at Nottingham University and of course, Nottinghamshire Archives. Thanks also to Mr David Ackrel, Senior Conservator at Nottinghamshire Archives, for producing a hard



back copy of the book for us.

Gravestone memorials are not always easy to read, especially the older ones. This has led to some interesting transcriptions by our volunteers, who are not all family historians, plus there is always human error to take into consideration. One transcription came to me stating that this person was born in 1820, and died in 1960, making her 140 years old. It was clear we had to check this one.

Another one: 'In loving memory of Arthur, the dearly loved husband of Ruth Reynolds born April 7th 1864. Fell asleep February 14th 1942. Always faithful loving and kind a beautiful left behind. Also Ruth his dearly loved wife born May 9th 1868, fell asleep November 23rd 1962. Reunited.' As it turns out it was a 'beautiful memory left behind'. Well, we all make mistakes don't we?

As I'm sure is true of most old cemeteries, we found many names which local people will recognize, and which have been immortalised in street names or businesses that can still be found locally. A few of these in Stapleford are: Bardill, Gregory, Peatfield, Plowman and Attenborough and many more.

This project is still ongoing with many more hours at the keyboard ahead. If you would like to find out more and maybe find a relative in the Stapleford Cemetery, in addition to the printed books previously mentioned, you can also find us at <https://staplefordcemeterymemorials.wordpress.com/> We also have a page on FaceBook, just search for *Stapleford Cemetery Gravestone Memorials*.

If you would like to know more about the U3A <https://www.u3a.org.uk/> or Stapleford & District U3A <https://u3asites.org.uk/stapleford/home>

Our thanks to Sharon for contributing this article and to her U3A colleagues in producing such a valuable research tool for family historians.



## Forman Family History



*Thomas Forman.*

Thos. Forman Preservation Society, who are institutional members of FONA, are in the process of completing an article relating to the Forman family history together with a family tree. It describes how the Forman family grew and prospered, and contains many interesting facts. The article will be published in due course.

## Forman Archive Material

Following the closure of Forman's and several subsequent company take-overs, a considerable amount of archive material is currently held by the Paragon Group in Sunderland. They have agreed to release this material and arrangements are now being made for it to be returned to Nottingham and placed in the Archives. Included in this material are a number of large 'guard' books which contain sample calendar prints from Forman's early years.

As a matter of interest we frequently receive emails from people all over the world, who have discovered a framed Forman print in the loft following the death of a family member. Unfortunately there are no records available to enable us to identify the illustrations, but we suspect that many were originally used as calendar illustrations.

## Annual Reunion

The Society's Annual Reunion took place in April at the Westminster Hotel, Carrington, and was attended by over 50 guests. This was the seventeenth reunion since the Society was formed in 2001 following the closure of the Company. Guests had the opportunity to renew acquaintances with former employees who had worked at Thos. Forman's and to share happy memories. There was also a display of memorabilia, some of which is shown in the picture below.

The reunion next year will be held on Friday 12th April 2019 at Federation House, Claremont Road, Carrington.



**Back Row L/R:** Peter Dexter, Linda Dexter, Doug Osborne, Janet Barker, Geoff Barker. **Front Row L/R:** Howard Parker (Secretary), Noel Marshall (Senior Trustee), Tom Bailey.



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

[chairman@fona.org.uk](mailto:chairman@fona.org.uk)