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# 2019 - A year of change and opportunity



As many of you will have seen from the programme card and What's On brochure for December 2018 - March 2019, I am standing down as Chairman of FONA and editor of the newsletter at the AGM in March, after seven years in these roles. I have been delighted to be involved in establishing the organisation from its initial conception to the position it enjoys today. However, it is the right time for me, both personally and professionally, to stand down, having completed three full two-year terms of office (as well as a year in the role of prospective chairman before the organisation was officially constituted).

This change in leadership provides FONA with an opportunity to take stock of where it currently stands, whether it is fulfilling all the functions it can (or should) do and planning towards a sustainable, workable future as a support, a resource, and a celebration of our wonderful Archives service in Nottinghamshire. The organisation is currently taking stock of its current strengths, considering ways in which it can (with independent, external support) build the organisation and - where appropriate - seeking funding support to enable it to initiate new initiatives. So my departure - R-EXIT (to coin a phrase) - need not mean the end of the organisation, but the start of its next phase. Please be part of that process of renewal and offer the organisation whatever help and support you can - not only as members (though we prize that nevertheless) but also as potential committee members or in willingly responding to requests for opinions, ideas and information on what the organisation might do in the future.

## Debts of Honour

I'll be speaking at the AGM about my time in the role of Chairman and how I have seen the organisation develop and grow. But it is right for me to take this opportunity of extending a sincere thank you to all those - past and present - members of the committee, members of the organisation, heads of the archives service in Nottinghamshire, and others, who have helped, encouraged and supported the organisation during these years. Particular thanks are due to the committee members, without whom the organisation could not function. Mention should here be made of **Howard Parker** and **Christine Drew**, both of whom have given valuable time and commitment to FONA. Unfortunately, for personal reasons, both of them have had to resign from the committee, ahead of the AGM.

I would also like to thank all those non-committee friends who have willingly undertaken additional, essential work, helping the organisation and making it the friendly and supportive environment which it represents. Particular thanks are due to Sheila Leeds and Pauline Chettle for continuing to provide refreshments at FONA events, to the Archives staff for supporting with practical arrangements (including room layout, booking events and technical support), and to Bob Stoakes, without whom our design and promotional materials would have looked distinctly below par. Later in the newsletter, there is a montage of some of the newsletter front covers which have been created since Bob came on board. I remain indebted to him for all he has done to make the newsletter what it is today.

## Signed and sealed

As we move forward, we need to try new ventures and reach out to different sorts of partners. An obvious partnership is with the **Friends of the National Archives**. We have arranged a joint event, in February, at which two speakers (including our own Ruth Imeson) will speak on the topic of 'Signed and Sealed'. In order to cost this effectively and cover the necessary travel and other arrangements, we have, on this occasion, had to make this an openly bookable event, at a higher than usual charge, without reserved tickets for members. Details are available later in the newsletter. We would ask you to book via the Eventbrite link we have advertised to a site run by the Friends of the National Archives. We have had to pass on a booking fee on this occasion. However, for £11.67, we are providing two excellent speakers, refreshments,

a chaired discussion of the topic and a chance to meet with others of like-minded views. Please do support the event and book as soon as possible. The viability of the event depends upon us being able to break-even with advanced bookings. Please also let other organisations and contacts know about this event which is open to anyone who has booked ahead of the day.

## Au Revoir not Goodbye

As we move into 2019, we may all be feeling a sense of uncertainty about the state of the world in which we live. However, within our own organisation, we have every reason for optimism. I look forward to seeing FONA grow and prosper in the future, in the knowledge that it has strong foundations and a supportive membership to sustain it.

Richard A. Gaunt

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## Subscription Renewal

Members should have received their renewal notices for subscriptions before Christmas. As a new initiative, we have also included a programme card, so that you know about all our events for the year ahead. Please refer to the card for full details on dates, timing and booking events.



# FONA's News Review





# A very special event



## Signed and Sealed

**A joint event** hosted by Nottinghamshire Archives, the Friends of Nottinghamshire Archives and the Friends of The National Archives. The event will examine local and nationally held records to reveal the roles of signatures and seals in identifying the ownership of documents.

**Ruth Imeson**, Heritage Services Manager for Nottinghamshire will explore the signatures held in Nottinghamshire Archives, the reasons for their existence, and the different styles of signature used by some of the county's most and least famous residents.

**Dr Paul Dryburgh**, Principal Record Specialist at The National Archives will explore the practices and rituals of sealing, the materials used, their iconography and heraldry, the different types of seal used by institutions and individuals and how sealing changed over time.

The talks will be followed by a chaired discussion and accompanied by a display of original documents/artefacts. Light refreshments will be available.

The event takes place at **Nottinghamshire Archives** on **Saturday 23 February 2019, 1.30 - 5.30pm.**

**General admission £11.67** (including £1.67 fee).

Tickets available from <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/signed-and-sealed-tickets-52443888081>.



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# The Journals of Anne Cooke

Karen Winyard takes us on a fascinating voyage of discovery through the Archives.

I discovered Anne Cooke quite by chance when researching Assistant Poor Law Commissioner Edward Gulson at Nottinghamshire Archives.<sup>1</sup> Cross-referenced with Gulson's name was the Journal of a Nottinghamshire Lady 1835 – 1839 in two volumes.<sup>2</sup> I had low expectations, anticipating a dull catalogue of descriptions of the weather and occasions when the vicar called for tea. What I found was a vivid account of life in and around Southwell that might have been written by Jane Austen.



*St. Peter and St. Paul Church, Upton.*

Anne Cooke is an example of how an ordinary life is often quite extraordinary. To begin with she is not, in fact, a Nottinghamshire lady. She was born in Macclesfield on 30 January 1777, the eldest daughter of Joseph Cooke, a prosperous attorney, and his second wife Anne Swanwick. The Cooke's were a tightly knit, affectionate family, prominent in Macclesfield society. Anne and her siblings were all well educated and, although Anne never marries, two of her sisters make advantageous matches. Elizabeth marries John Reynolds of Smethwick near Birmingham and Mary weds Samuel Hole of Cauntton. A third sister, Helen, is not as fortunate in her choice of the less affluent William Heywood. Sadly Helen dies in 1819, survived by three daughters who play a large part in Anne's life. One of them marries Edward Gulson, another lives with John and Elizabeth Reynolds whilst the youngest, Mary, is living with Anne herself at Upton,

Nottinghamshire, when the Journal begins.

I have not discovered when Anne moved to Upton. Nottinghamshire Archives purchased the two volumes of her Journal in 1977 from a London antiquarian bookshop. Clearly part of a longer series, their provenance remains a mystery. Researching Anne's history I found that, after her father's death, she and her mother returned to her mother's hometown, Market Drayton, and lived there until her mother's death in 1825. The connection with Nottinghamshire began with Mary Cooke's marriage to Samuel Hole who was living and working in Manchester at the time, but returned to Cauntton following his father's death in 1818. Around this time, Anne's brother, Joseph, left the law and began a career in the church and as a teacher. In 1829, Joseph Cooke left his position at the Macclesfield free grammar

school to become Head Master at the Magnus Grammar School in Newark. It is probable Anne moved to the area to join her sister and brother soon afterwards. The first Journal entry dated 16 August 1835, suggests she has been there some years as she has received a silk hood and gloves as a memorial of Mrs Ann Longstaff whose funeral took place 3 days earlier.

Anne's niece, Mary Heywood, marries the second master at Newark Grammar School, Thomas Massey, and in 1836 they move to Hawton, where Thomas has been appointed curate. Anne joins them when her lease at Upton ends and remains part of their household for the duration of the Journal. The family move again a year later when Thomas Massey is appointed a Vicar Choral at Southwell

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Gulson was responsible for creating the Poor Law Unions in Nottinghamshire in 1836.

<sup>2</sup> Nottinghamshire Archives, DD/689/1- 2.



Minster and Head Master of the Southwell Grammar School. Through her family connections, Anne is perfectly placed to comment on the social life of the upper middle classes at a time when they are beginning to gain in power and influence following

of illnesses needing medical assistance from broken legs to weaning an infant. It would seem dentists were as expensive then as now: '22 April 1839: I went to Nottm to the Dentist, his charge and my expenses cost me nearly 35/-'.

was scrutinising its practises and administration as part of a national Inquiry; and there was a growing movement in support of a more evangelical style of ministry among the middle classes.<sup>3</sup> Anne's interest in Thomas Massey's career provides valuable insights into the clerical community.



*Southwell Minster and below, Southwell Grammar School, now offices.*



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the 1832 Reform Act. They provide a uniquely domestic and feminine perspective on people and events.

Many of the entries concern family and friends, giving fascinating details of fashion, food, (Anne is partial to a barrel of oysters), travel and health. Anne is often afflicted with bilious attacks, possibly the oysters were to blame; and she also records a number of instances

Anne paints thumbnail portraits of many of her friends and acquaintances and the Journals are full of local gossip and intimate domestic details. But she also provides a wealth of information on the wider aspects of life in Southwell. The Collegiate Church of Southwell dominated the town but was under pressure from two sides. The Ecclesiastical Duties and Revenues Commission

She also reveals the extent to which Southwell was impacted by the slave trade and ownership of slave plantations in the West Indies. This was one of the greatest surprises the Journals held for me. I assumed the Becher family's involvement in the slave trade was an isolated connection,<sup>4</sup> but in fact slavery was a matter of great and real debate in Nottinghamshire with many prominent local families owning estates in the West Indies. When Gladstone's opponents used his father's ownership of such an estate against him when he stood for Parliament in Newark in 1832, they were not being opportunistic.

Anne Cooke has taken me on a wonderful journey across Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire; but she has also sent me burrowing in many different directions within Nottinghamshire Archives as well. I have discovered supporting documents, deeds and wills that relate to so many of the people and events Anne records, adding immeasurably to the overall picture of life in the area. I had no idea how rich and varied our county archives are, we are fortunate to have such a valuable asset.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Austin's *A Time of Unhappy Commotion* (Merton Priory Press, 2010), gives a good account of the history of the Southwell Collegiate church at this period. Correspondence held at Nottinghamshire Archives between Tallents and Gladstone, DD/TS/1/2/147, and between Tallents and the Duke of Newcastle, DD/TL/1/1/400 - 407, detail the internal unrest within the church.

<sup>4</sup> For details of the Becher family's involvement, see R. E. Hardstaff's *Human Cargo. The Southwell Connection* (Southwell & District Local History Society, 2004).

# Remembering the West Bridgford UDC buses

A review of Peter Hammond's talk to the FONA meeting of 15th September 2018.

September 2018 saw the 50th anniversary of the takeover of the West Bridgford Urban District Council's bus undertaking by Nottingham City Transport. Being a keen bus enthusiast (and still a part-time driver of old buses) Peter was keen to commemorate this anniversary by giving this talk.



*Peter proudly wears his authentic WBUDC jacket, and below left, with his brother, revealing an early enthusiasm for public transport.*



He has fond memories of riding on the once familiar maroon (officially crimson lake) and deep cream buses to and from junior school



*One of the early buses in 1914*

- in fact he was often late home from school because he would let the city transport buses go by and wait for one of his favourite West Bridgford UDC buses to come along! Their smart appearance, along with the friendly and helpful crews, gave the bus undertaking an excellent reputation, and it was a very sad day when the takeover took place on 28th September 1968.

In fact West Bridgford was the first urban district council in the country to establish its own bus service, which was launched on 28th January 1914. The initial services were soon withdrawn however due to the chassis of the first new Dennis buses being requisitioned by the War Department. Five replacement

buses had to be quickly obtained from Alldays and Onions, on which the original bodies were re-mounted.

During the 1920s, with the increasing growth of West Bridgford, many new buses were purchased, including the first of a long line of chassis built by AEC



from 1926. In the early years of the undertaking passengers had to change at Trent Bridge onto Nottingham Corporation trams,



but this system was sensibly rectified in 1928 when a joint through motorbus service was agreed with the Corporation into the city centre.

The very first double-deckers were open-topped, and when it rained it was a common sight to see the women move downstairs and the men remain to be saturated on top! Some of the low bridges, particularly that on Bridgford Road (prior to it being rebuilt in the 1930s) posed problems, and one conductress was known to shout out to those on top "Keep your seats and mind your nuts!"

The author Clifford Dymont, who spent some of his childhood in West Bridgford, gave a very fitting description of these early buses in his autobiography entitled 'The Railway Game' (1962), when he said:

**“** *We travelled to Trent Bridge in one of the West Bridgford Urban District Council buses. These buses of the twenties weren't as dignified as mahogany sideboards, like modern buses, not shock-absorbed, streamlined, silenced, insulated, air-conditioned; they shook and rumbled and rattled in the way that really co-operative machinery should. When you set your foot on one of those vehicles and felt your body vibrate as the bus's body vibrated, you knew that you had entered into a partnership of power, and that knowledge gave you pleasure.* **”**

By the 1930s most of the long-standing routes in West Bridgford had become well-established, namely the 11 (Melton Road/Valley Road), 12 (Trent Boulevard), 14 (Eltham Road and Gamston Bridge), 15 (Loughborough Road and later to Eton Road and Rugby Road), 21 (Gordon Road and later to Glenmore Road, Alford Road, and Wellin Lane), and the 24 (top of Musters Road). Relatively short-lived were routes 13



(Ella Road) and the 21A (Davies Road). Another route was the no.1 (Seymour Road through to Kingston Road) which was operated by single-deckers.

Later housing developments served by the West Bridgford buses were the Clifton estate from the 1950s (joint services with Nottingham City Transport and South Notts Bus Company) and then in the 1960s the Wolds Estate, for which route 15A was introduced. The buses to Clifton had to be of the low-bridge type because of the low railway bridge along Wilford Lane, and thus WBUDC, along with the other operators, had to either convert or specially purchase low-height buses. Perhaps some readers can remember such buses, which had long seats upstairs with a sunken side gangway - and if you were sitting on the offside downstairs you had to be careful not to bang your head when you got up!

There were many characters amongst the bus crews. There is also the well-known story of a young clippie who asked a local alderman for his fare. This gentleman was rather indignant, and claiming that he had the right to travel free, he exclaimed: "Madam, I never pay my fare, my face is my ticket," to which she replied, "That's a pity - the Council has instructed me to punch all tickets!"

By the 1960s increased subsidies from the rates were becoming a serious issue, and this culminated in 1968 with the bus undertaking being disposed of. Bids were put in both by Barton's and Nottingham City Transport, but as the latter promised to employ all of the staff (including mechanics) it was their offer that was accepted. The writing was certainly on the wall when the *Nottingham Guardian* of 27th July 1968 commented - in a cutting that Peter had saved at the time: '*The familiar sight of those dark maroon, almost prune-coloured, buses debouching their passengers on South Parade may soon become a memory.*'

This prediction proved correct, for the final day of West Bridgford's own buses soon followed on 28th September. *The Guardian Journal* reported two days later:

**“** *A streamer be-decked brown and cream 21 bus left Nottingham's market square at the ringing signal of a young passenger at 11.05 p.m. on Saturday, to end an era begun 54 years ago... Enthusiasts gave the last West Bridgford UDC bus a lively farewell on its trip to the Alford*





One of Peter's favourite WBUDC buses on his route, the 21.

*Road terminus. Flash cameras lit up South Parade as driver Edward Squires [actually Frank Squires] of Crosby Road, West Bridgford, pulled away. Streamers hung by passengers fluttered from the windows. One passenger stuck a sign reading 'The End' on the rear window of the bus. And police gave the vehicle an escort part of the way.*

*The West Bridgford buses will gradually be repainted in corporation green and cream and the crews will get City Transport uniforms. Later, schedules will be reorganised along with those for the city ... when the new one-man buses are introduced on selected routes in Nottingham.* ”

A detailed feature appeared in the *West Bridgford and Clifton Standard* on 5th October, which included the following interested statistics: 'It began on 28th of the month. It ended on the 28th, and it will be the number 28 that will be remembered in West Bridgford as a lucky one and finally an unlucky one. Ironically, as well, West Bridgford's fleet consisted of 28 buses.' The latter newspaper also reported a special social held for the staff and named those who received awards.

True to their word the newer West Bridgford buses were soon repainted green and cream - and very smart they looked. However, the older vehicles, some of which were already over 20 years old, ran without being repainted until being scrapped. The final former West Bridgford vehicles were withdrawn from service in 1976. Fortunately, one original WBUDC bus has been preserved, and occasionally makes an appearance, such as in 2014 when the centenary

celebrations of the former bus undertaking were celebrated. Nottingham City Transport even repainted one of its own modern buses in the old West Bridgford colours that same year in tribute.



Many of the original WBUDC records are now held at Nottinghamshire Archives, and these include many letters and papers concerning the bus undertaking, such as original orders for chassis and bodywork for buses, some of which Peter illustrated in his talk. There is also an extensive photograph collection of the buses. One of the illustrations Peter showed in his talk was taken in October 1964 and shows one of the West Bridgford buses travelling along Arkwright Street on his route, the 21. By pure coincidence sitting on the front seat downstairs is Peter - when aged 5 - and his Dad. So you never know who you can find on old photos...



1914 - 1968





March 16th  
2019

## Save the date!

Papers for the Annual General Meeting, including details of any committee vacancies, will be distributed in mid-February, under the terms of the constitution.

Please support the organisation with your presence.



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

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