

## In this issue

### Happy New Year

FONA Secretary, Judith Mills, reviews events marking the start of 2020.

pages 1 - 2

### The Savile Collection Project

A progress report on FONA's very own research project.

pages 2 - 3

### FONA News

A gift, a cake and a warm welcome to new members.

page 3

### Nottingham Shops & Markets

Brian Howes reviews his fascinating talk on a selection of Nottingham's best - remembered businesses.

pages 4 - 5

### Mayhem and Murder on the Midland

Chris and Judy Rouse on some of the stories unearthed by their research into what was one of the country's largest railway networks.

pages 5 - 6

# Happy New Year

I know it's a little late, but this is my first opportunity to send all FONA members best wishes for 2020 from the FONA Committee.

We've already had our first meeting of the year - Mayhem and Murder on the Midland - and there's a short write-up of this meeting on p.5 in case you missed it. There's also a write-up of our previous talk by Brian Howes, on Nottingham's Shops & Markets, which was a fascinating review of change in the city.

Looking forward, there are two meetings planned.

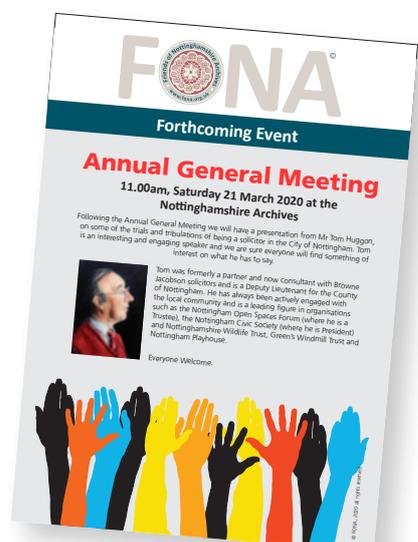
**21 March 2020, 11am,  
Nottinghamshire Archives,  
Annual General Meeting**  
followed by a talk by Tom Huggon.

You may remember that in September 2019, Alan Marshall agreed to become our Acting Chair. Alan, unfortunately for us,

has many other commitments and has decided to stand-down from the Committee. Elizabeth Robinson, one of our founder members and Vice-Chair for several years has also decided to step down. The Committee is extremely grateful for the support they have given FONA.

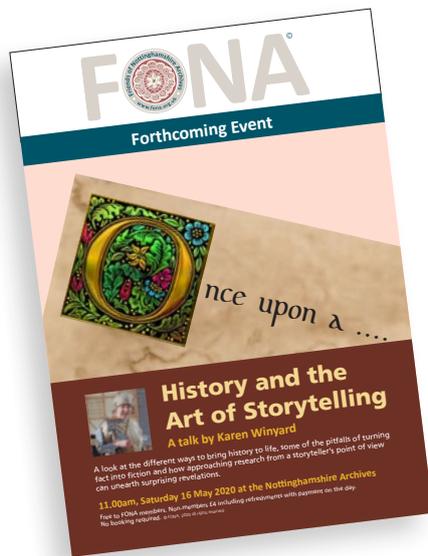
These resignations mean there are vacancies on the Committee so if you think you would like to take a role in helping FONA progress over the next few years, please consider being nominated - there will be more information about the nomination process in the AGM papers which will be sent to you at the end of February.

After the AGM, we will be treated to a talk by Tom Huggon on the trials and tribulations of being a City Solicitor.



**16 May 2020, 11am,  
Nottinghamshire Archives,  
History and the Art of  
Storytelling.** A talk by Karen  
Winyard.

Everyone is welcome to both meetings so invite your friends and family along. There will be a small charge for non-members at the May talk, but the AGM is free.



After the AGM we will be planning the talks and events for the rest of 2020 and into 2021. If you have any ideas on what you'd like to hear about, or where you'd like to visit, please let me know.

**Judith Mills**  
FONA Secretary  
secretary@fona.org.uk

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# The Savile Collection Project

Back in November 2019, I was delighted to announce a new FONA initiative - a research project for FONA members to investigate a previously uncatalogued section of the Savile Collection (DD SR).

The initial meeting was on 11 December when I was able to explain more about the project and how I thought it might work. As a result, 10 people have signed up to join the research group and we now meet every Wednesday morning in Nottinghamshire Archives.



One thing I'm delighted with is that the group is very mixed; there are some very experienced researchers (I'm sure you'll spot them in the photo) and some researchers who have no experience at all. We're able to work as a group and learn from each other and, between us, decide how the project is going to progress. It's unknown territory to a large extent, but also an exciting opportunity.

As I write, we've only had four meetings, so it's early days yet. Because the material is uncatalogued, we've started by doing a 'survey' to find out what the 200+ boxes in the collection actually contain and, as part of that, are recording basic cataloguing data that will allow the collection to be made publicly available - in due course. A double

win as far as I'm concerned. However, some themes and topics for more detailed research are already emerging; the stud farm; game; estate villages; farm workers; estate workers; family - but there's still more to come.

So, what do we expect to come out of this project? Well, if all goes well, we'll have a small exhibition in Nottinghamshire Archives in January 2021 together with a mini-conference. No details, as yet, of course, but I will try to keep you up to date with progress. Finally, I'd like to thank Ruth Imeson for allowing us access to the collection and Claire and Alexa for supporting us through these early weeks as we explore the documents.

**Judith Mills**  
Project co-ordinator



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## FONA News

### Purchase for The Archives



Since the last Newsletter, FONA has been able to buy a new laminator for the Archives, which was formally presented to Gabriella Stenson by our Acting Chair, Alan Marshall.

### Retirement Cake



Many of you may know that Dave Ackrel, the Archives' Senior Conservator, retired at the end of December. FONA was delighted to contribute a cake towards his retirement party. (Regular Archives users may have spotted Dave on Wednesday afternoons as he can't quite cut his ties and is working as a volunteer "to finish off one or two jobs"!)

### Welcome to New Members

Welcome to our new members: Ruth Strong, Emily Phillips, Martin Cobley and Nottingham Womens' History Group.

# Nottingham shops and markets

It was a great honour and a pleasure to be invited to present this talk to FONA on Saturday 16th November and I would like to thank-you all for making me so welcome.

Old Nottingham Shops and Markets was put together following extensive research over the past four years. It also reflects my hobby of the past forty years collecting old shop memorabilia and advertising material which now decorates the walls of my office/museum. It is a subject that I think might one day make a good local history book.



*40 years of collecting and Brian's office is akin to a museum of old shops.*



*Brian's collection began when he was a student at Trent Polytechnic in the 1970s. This picture was in the Nottingham Trader.*

The talk began with the sound of an original old corner shop doorbell which perfectly sets the scene. In the introduction I explained how I grew up in the Forest Fields and New Basford areas of Nottingham fascinated by all the old shops which had so much

charm and character. Many appeared to be unaltered by time. They had individual smells and interesting interiors with some equally interesting characters behind the tall counters.



*One of the finest of Nottingham's old shops was Smart & Brown's furniture store on Bridlesmith Gate designed by Gilbert Smith Doughy.*

One unforgettable character was Stanley Boswell, the owner of a splendid little fish and chip shop on Northgate, New Basford, until its sad demise in 1976. Stan's was a local institution - the best chip shop for miles around. Stan, however, only worked at one pace which seemed incredibly slow when you were cold and hungry on a chilly winter's night! I wrote a short story and a poem about Stan's chippy which was published in the Basford Bystander back in the 1980s.



*Stan Boswell's tiny fish and chip shop on Northgate, New Basford was a local institution. Wrapped in newspaper of course!*

This provided further inspiration to write more about other long-lost local shops.

Photographs from my own collection included in the talk showed how shop window dressing was once an art form requiring great skill by shopkeepers. This was supported by colourful and evocative advertising material presented to shopkeepers by suppliers of goods, much of which is now also regarded as an accepted and appreciated form of art. This became a key area of study during my years as a Graphic Design student in Nottingham in the late 1970s.

Sadly, it was the 1970s which saw the onset of an era in which many of Nottingham's fascinating old shops were demolished. St Ann's and The Meadows were two of the hardest hit areas, the latter including Arkwright Street. This fascinating collection of interesting old shops stretched all the way from Midland Station to Trent Bridge. In the swinging sixties I was sent errands to many of these shops by my aunt Phyllis, landlady of The Town Arms on Trent Bridge. Tom Sanderson's Tripe and Cow Heel establishment was one where I remember buying home-cooked meats which were used to fill the cobs Phyllis sold at the Town Arms.

Weekly shopping trips into Nottingham with my mother on the No.36 bus would see us visit Central Market and Sneinton Market, the latter being given the title of Nottingham's 'Petticoat Lane' where traders barked out their wares with great gusto, each trying to be heard above the stall next door. Another

sound seldom heard today. Sneinton market was full of great characters including Frances Lees, the famous pot lady who banged her mallet on a tea chest. Heading towards Hockley I described how we would call at a little Woolworth's at No.1 Goose Gate (est. 1927) and the magnificent branch of Boots on Pelham Street, with its fascinating pneumatic tube overhead cash system. We'd also visit a few more of those wonderful 'London Style' department stores for which Nottingham was famed before heading home with all the bags.

I described my first ever job working for Griffin & Spalding (Debenhams) where behind the scenes nothing much appeared to have changed since the war! The histories of Jessops, Griffin's, Pearson's, Burton's, Farmer's, Beecroft's, The Big Co-op, Redmayne & Todd and Sisson & Parker were all included in the talk.

I explained how the expansion of the electric tramway at the turn of the century and the creation of the impressive new Exchange and Market Place (aka: Slab Square) greatly changed peoples shopping habits in the late twenties. It took time for people to get used to the re-location of the market.

As my research develops and expands my intention is to split the talk into two parts. One will focus on Old Nottingham shops and the other will concentrate on Nottingham's fascinating markets.

**Brian Howes**

To book a talk please contact me on 0115 9615543.

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# Mayhem and Murder on the Midland

The Midland Railway Company came into being in 1844; by the end of the nineteenth-century its lines covered virtually the whole of Great Britain. Since 1999, Judy and Chris Rouse of Wyvern Railway Ancestry Research Advice have been compiling an index of people who had any connection with the Railway and they have widened the scope of the Index to offering advice on researching workers on all railways in England and Wales up to 1923.

The talk was based on three small snippets of information, initially gleaned whilst indexing Midland



*Chris and Judy Rouse.*



An Edwardian Midland Railway official postcard from Judy and Chris Rouse's personal collection.

Railway records at the National Archives and used as case studies to show how a range of archives and resources can be brought together to create a detailed social history of various aspects of 19th Century life.

From the briefest initial information, Judy and Chris showed how much more detail can be revealed by using commonly available records including

railway staff ledgers and minutes, local and national newspapers, assize records, military, census, BMD records, and on-line sources. They also stressed how important it is to do field research, and meet and correspond with other researchers rather than depending solely on on-line resources. The importance of 'serendipity' in finding information through personal contact was shown to have happened in all three case studies.

Judy and Chris highlighted how their work had uncovered railway occupations, wages, army, court and criminal records, addresses, physical descriptions, family relationships, religious persuasions and much more, helping to bring the past to life - something which other researchers can do in their own field of interest.

As an example of their work, the story of Lady Zetland's maid was used to highlight one mode of First Class travel for the very rich in the early days which prevented the need for mixing with other passengers, the importance of social status in fighting for justice, and the way in which women could be airbrushed from history either due to rank, as in the case of the maid, or not providing the necessary heir which was the fate of Lady Zetland.

The case studies were three very different incidents in date, location and social status of those involved, but they all demonstrated how we, as researchers, using just one small piece of information as a starting point, can amplify this to illustrate the social and economic lives of our nineteenth century ancestors.

For further information consult their website [www.wyvernrailwayancestors.com](http://www.wyvernrailwayancestors.com) .



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If you would like to contribute articles to the FONA Newsletter please contact Judith Mills, Secretary & Newsletter Editor.

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