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FONA under lockdown



Hasn't a lot changed since the last FONA newsletter in February 2020? At that time, I for one was not aware of coronavirus or COVID 19 (though in retrospect, maybe I should have been). But what an affect these have had on all of us? They are now part of our way of life and integral to our everyday language, as are 'virtual meetings', 'social distancing', 'facemasks' and 'PPE', to name but a few.

The first casualty for FONA was the AGM which had to be postponed because of lockdown – another word that we probably use a lot more often than we used to. Another victim was our talks programme; personally, I was really

looking forward to hearing about History and the Art of Storytelling, but hopefully that will be back on the programme for whenever we can meet again.

But just because there have been restrictions on what we have been able to do, I hope you agree with me that FONA has not been inactive. First of all, we have had a 'virtual' AGM. As the new Chair of FONA, as well as Newsletter Editor, I want to thank all FONA members for taking part in this and give special thanks to David Anderson for his excellent organisation of the on-line voting.

It has been an odd time to start my time as Chair, but also an interesting one and I'm very much looking forward to a time when we can meet together properly, perhaps at the next AGM? Following the AGM, we appointed a Programme Sub-committee which is working on ideas for FONA events during lockdown as well as trying to plan for future talks and activities.

One initiative during lockdown is that FONA has started to produce short videos on our



Images from the FONA videos available on our youtube channel.

own YouTube video channel. We purposely decided to make these short – 10-15 minutes only – rather than longer replacements for talks because it gives us the opportunity to highlight those interesting snippets that are not big enough to form a full-blown talk in their own right. More are in the pipeline, so look out for announcements and don't forget to tell your friends about them. (Go to www.youtube.com then search for Friends of Nottinghamshire Archives.)

Another COVID 19 off-shoot is the diary writing project that some FONA members and friends of members have been contributing to. Compiled together, these will make a very substantial document which FONA will deposit with Nottinghamshire Archives. As a follow-on project, it's hoped to publish excerpts of these diaries as a FONA book – but more

information on that in the future. In the last Newsletter, we reported on the Savile project which is a collaboration with Nottinghamshire Archives. A FONA team has been researching previously uncatalogued documents that are part of the extensive Savile Collection, and producing a catalogue so that they will eventually become publicly available. Plans were in place for an exhibition and some kind of event (or even events) around the work which have had to be put on hold. Unfortunately, the team has not been able to meet since the middle of March and it is unclear at the moment when it will be able to meet again. However, it is keen to pick up from where it left off as soon as it can, and I hope to have more news about the work in the next newsletter.

Apart from the group activities, some of our FONA members have

been working hard on their own projects and have kindly sent in articles about their work. I've enjoyed reading them and I hope you do too.

Finally, a plea to all FONA members. If you have ideas for a video, newsletter items or, when we are allowed to meet, talks and visits, or anything else you think FONA might like to get involved with, then do let me know. In these lockdown days, we have to innovate and help with that is much appreciated by the Committee – the more brains the better. And don't forget to check out the FONA Facebook page (Friends of Nottinghamshire Archives – FONA) and contribute as well.

Judith Mills, FONA Chair

AGM Results and New Committee

Voting papers were sent out to 60 members. Responses were received from 27 members. Joint members were counted as 2 votes.

Motion 1: Minutes of the 2019 AGM?

Yes: 27 No: 0 Abstain: 4 Result: Motion carried.

Motion 2: Constitution proposed by the Chair?

Yes: 31 No: 0 Abstain: 1 Result: Motion carried

Motion 3: Financial accounts proposed by the Treasurer?

Yes: 32 No: 0 Abstain: 0 Result: Motion carried

Motion 4: Nominated Committee Members and Officers for election?

Yes: 32 No: 0 Abstain: 0 Result: Motion carried

Motion 5: Concerning Donations to Nottinghamshire Archives:

Agree: 2 Disagree: 29 Abstain: 1 Result: Motion defeated

The new Committee

Chair and Newsletter Editor: and for all enquiries

Judith Mills

chair@fona.org.uk

Minuting Secretary:

Cherry Knight

Treasurer and Membership Secretary and Web Master

David Anderson

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Programme sub-committee

Peter Hammond

June Cobley

Karen Winyard

peter.hammond@fona.org.uk

june.cobley@fona.org.uk

karen.winyard@fona.org.uk

Committee Members

Miriam Jackson and Sian Trafford

Ex Officio

Ruth Imeson, Heritage Services Manager, Inspire: Culture, Learning and Libraries



Thanks for the pillows

On behalf of Nottinghamshire Archives and Inspire I'd like to thank all of our friends at FONA for donating five new book pillows and five pairs of snake weights for use in our searchroom. We now have enough of each to be able to quarantine them between customers. This is helping us to keep you, our staff and our customers safe.

We are now open with reduced opening times by appointment only. Further information here:

<https://www.inspireculture.org.uk/heritage/archives/visiting-archives/>

Thank you.
Ruth.



Here they are with someone you may recognise!

Nottinghamshire Archives We're back!

On Friday 20th March Nottinghamshire Archives closed its doors to the public. We did not reopen until Saturday 11th July; the longest closure period in the office's history. You all know why we closed, but what happened next?

Whilst the majority of staff worked from home unable to access the

collections, two of us visited the building on a regular basis. We checked the temperatures and humidity in the strongrooms to ensure the five million documents we look after on your behalf were safe and well. Regular fire and security tests were carried out. The office was almost deserted, and the streets of Nottingham were almost empty.

If you were to ask me what I missed most from being away from the archive I'd say the smell of the strongrooms first thing in the morning.

Online

Staff were busy working on our online presence.

The Inspire Picture Archive was visited by 8543 users, with over 37,000 page views. Over 200 images were added as part of our VE Day and Lockdown Life projects.

20,000 additional entries were made to our online catalogue.

The Road to Reopening

None of us could have been prepared for reopening under

lockdown conditions. A small team of three worked to make the building “socially distanced ready”. Tables and computers were moved, perspex screens installed, hazard tape and posters applied, and we spent a day wandering around with 2-metre-long poles.

Five people can be safely seated in our secure archive viewing area. As we were one of the first services to re-open in the entire country (we even beat The National Archives to it) we were very much in the vanguard of the new approach. I made the decision to permit five people to view pre-ordered documents only. I appreciate this was not what some of our regular friends would have preferred. The wider sector has not found a solution to the use of microfiche and we are working on how to reopen those areas of the service.

Our remote reprographics and research services are busier than ever with orders almost double pre-lockdown figures. Many of these orders will be part of the backlog when we were unable to access the collections, although many customers are not confident to visit in the current circumstances.

What will you see if you Visit?

The first thing you will notice is that our front door is no longer the front door. Access is via the fire exit in



the meeting room. This helps us to keep people safe whilst allowing staff to work in the meeting room.

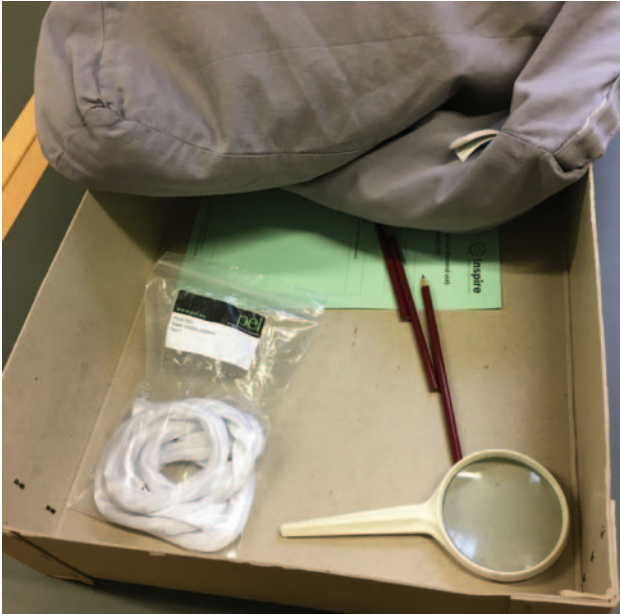


Visitors are asked to wash their hands at this point. We have a queuing system with markers at two metre intervals.

Archives are now delivered to people via an intermediary table allowing staff to place the documents before stepping back. I stole this idea from a local takeaway!



Each table has an equipment box with a cushion, magnifying glass, weights, three FONAs pencils, and a photography order form. Thank you for the donation of cushions and weights which are helping us to keep people safe.



One of the individual equipment boxes.

All chairs and equipment are quarantined for 72 hours after use and the tables are disinfected between customers. All documents are quarantined for 72 hours between uses. This was one of the hardest challenges.

I am reviewing the offer all the time and hope to be able to welcome you back to the archives in the near future. Thank you for your continued support as I know many of you have been busy with your Lockdown Diaries.

Ruth Imeson

Heritage Services Manager at Nottinghamshire Archives

Photography courtesy of Ruth Imeson.

Lockdown Reunited me with Witches, Demons and Nottingham's Exorcist, John Darrell.

Karen Winyard.

I've used my time in lockdown to pick up a novel I began writing several years ago, inspired by the trial of the Belvoir witches at Lincoln Castle in 1619. As a result, I've revisited my interest in the English witch hunts, in particular those that appear to be sparked by cases of possession. One of these fascinating side-tracks led me to a Nottinghamshire incident that I hope to explore in Nottinghamshire Archives in the future, once the Coronavirus situation permits.

The Puritan exorcist, John Darrell, nearly succeeded in plunging Nottingham into the turmoil of a full-blown witch hunt following his dispossession of William Somers in 1597. The situation was only defused by the intervention of the ecclesiastical authorities. Darrell was summoned to appear before the High Commission in 1599 and his work was discredited. The authorities sought to expose him as a fraud who taught young men and women to feign possession;

an affliction Darrell would then heal, bringing him financial reward. That is an easy interpretation for us to accept. We don't believe in demonic possession and we live in a culture of scams and 'get rich quick' schemes. Surprisingly, it was just as acceptable for the 16th century Christian community, where possession cases were often discredited and deemed to be fraudulent.

For me, the question of whether or not John Darrell was a charlatan is not the most interesting one to pursue. I am more puzzled by why possession and exorcism were associated with witchcraft. Bewitching a person by causing them to become possessed was only one strand in a complex system of beliefs about witchcraft. Witches were believed to cause harm through magic in many other ways, often in the context of neighbour disputes and village tensions. Equally, people believed that demonic possession

could occur without human intermediaries. Yet, by the end of the 16th century, a clear pattern or template for possession cases connected to witchcraft had emerged and were a significant social arena for exploring the Puritan message.

Dispossessions, as exorcisms were often called, were public enactments of the battle between good and evil; the body of the demoniac providing the battleground. The exorcist engaged in combat with the devil to save the demoniac's soul and to glorify God; a test or trial of faith. In contrast to the Catholic ritual of exorcism, the Puritans believed that the demon could only be expelled through God's will by prayer and fasting. In the cases involving John Darrell this process of dispossession was always successful. Expelling the demon was only half the process, however, and in each case someone was identified as responsible for inflicting the possession by witchcraft. This aspect of the exorcism process is the one that often caused trouble. In Nottingham it led to John Darrell's downfall.

It is clear that John Darrell was not operating alone as an exorcist. He worked within the Puritan community in the Midlands and followed the template for possession cases meticulously. In fact, he could be described as the Puritan poster boy in the fight against demonic possession. We know of four cases led by Darrell:

1. The dispossession of Katherine Wright 1586
2. The dispossession of Thomas Darling 1596
3. The dispossession of seven of the household of Nicholas Starkie 1596 – 7
4. The dispossession of William Somers 1597

In each case the sequence of events followed the same pattern. Once conventional medicine failed to improve the sufferer's symptoms and possession was suspected, members of the local godly community began to work with the demoniac. They approached Darrell and asked for his intervention. John Darrell was always careful to obtain the permission of senior members of the group of godly men and clergy concerned with dispossessions before he accepted an invitation to lead an exorcism.

It is worth noting that Darrell was not the sole, nor necessarily the leading, participant in these dispossessions. To begin with, the process fell within the realm of the sacred or spiritual. As the cause of possession was investigated and, once the bewitcher was identified, the process of dispossession was no

longer a purely spiritual concern. Witchcraft had been a felony since the Witchcraft Act 1542, and any action against an alleged witch necessarily involved a criminal trial. Thus, the dispossession moved into the secular, judicial sphere. The judicial prosecution of the witch and the spiritual dispossession of the demoniac progressed side by side, but were only loosely connected.

After the demon was expelled the sufferer remained vulnerable to attempts at re-possession. When this occurred a second, and final, dispossession was carried out.

Katherine Wright identified a woman named Margaret Roper as her bewitcher. John Darrell bought her before the magistrate, Godfrey Foljambe, from whom he probably expected a sympathetic hearing because Godfrey's wife, Isobel, was pre-eminent in the local godly community and closely concerned with Katherine Wright's case. Foljambe, however, refused to commit Margaret Roper for trial; and according to one witness, threatened to send Darrell to gaol if he persisted.



This image by unknown author is licensed under CC BY-SA.

Thomas Darling identified Alice Gooderidge as the witch who'd afflicted him. This preceded Darrell's involvement and it was other members of Thomas's family who succeeded in bringing Alice before the magistrates. Alice and her mother, Elizabeth Wright, already had a reputation as witches. Alice was tried for witchcraft at the Derby Assizes and found guilty in 1596. Similarly, the cunning man Edmund Hartley was tried and convicted before John Darrell became involved in the exorcism of the Starkie household.

In all three cases the success of the dispossessions was not contingent upon the successful prosecution of the accused witches. Nor does it appear that the Puritan cause was advanced by a successful prosecution. The case was the same in Nottingham.

John Darrell claimed William Somers's possession was a punishment for the whole town's sins. Somers exposed the failings of the townsfolk of Nottingham by acting out their sins in a rather bizarre form of mime that was interpreted by his audience, led by Darrell. These sins ranged from the excessive vanity of men over the dressing of their hair to whoredom; the latter Somers acted out by attempting to sodomise a dog. No record survives that identifies the individuals targeted by Somers's strange dumbshow, but it is unlikely the pantomime was directed at the community as a whole.

The Puritan interpretation was that God was using Somers to exhort the town to mend its ways. Darrell effected his dispossession within 2 days, was rewarded for his work with a preaching position at St Mary's church and considerably improved the social standing of Nottingham's Puritan community. Somers's dispossession was an unqualified success and the godly should have left well alone.



As far as we can tell, there was no mention of witches or witchcraft in the course of Somers's afflictions and dispossession. The question of whether someone had bewitched Somers only arose during his re-possession about a fortnight later. This time his sister also appeared to be under attack and there is evidence that both young people had already overheard conversations speculating that witches were the cause of their illness. Unsurprisingly they started to name witches, with the result that at least six people were

accused and indicted, including a close relative of one of Nottingham's most influential aldermen, William Freeman.

Darrell was playing a dangerous game. The Nottingham Corporation was conservative in religion and tended to see the godly community as setting itself in opposition to authority. There was considerable tension in the city at the time between the Corporation and the commonalty; and Darrell's witch hunt might have caused an explosive rift between the two.

His pursuit of the alleged witches galvanised local opposition to Darrell from the Corporation in Nottingham and those who disliked the Puritan faction leading to the accusation that William Somers was counterfeiting possession. The story of the subsequent downfall of William Somers and John Darrell is a dramatic one full of unexpected twists and turns. It includes a hearing before an investigative commission where Nottingham's mayor concocted a plan to have Somers fake a fit in front of the commissioners only to stop in mid convulsions when called upon by the mayor to demonstrate his ability to fake possession.

Unfortunately, Somers was so convincing that the mayor lost his courage and did not call the charade to a halt, with the outcome that the Commission concluded Somers was a genuine demoniac and John Darrell was vindicated. The reprieve was short lived, and the town's aldermen enlisted the help of the Lord Chief Justice, Edmund Anderson who intervened and brought the affair to a conclusion that resulted in Darrell's trial before the High Commission at Lambeth.

The question remains: why was the element of witchcraft introduced in Nottingham? Nobody sought to challenge the validity of William Somers's first possession and exorcism, after which the godly star was very much in the ascendant in Nottingham. There was nothing to gain and everything to lose by moving from the sacred realm of exorcism to the secular judicial arena. It is a conundrum why the element of witchcraft played such an important role in the pattern for possession cases.

If you are interested in reading more about the history of witchcraft and witch trials in England, I recommend James Sharpe: *Instruments of Darkness*, 1996. A good source of information about John Darrell is Marion Gibson: *Possession, Puritanism and Print*, 2006.

Tales from the Sherwood Dales

Many members will know Howard Parker who sadly passed away on 6 August 2020 in Hayward House Hospice, after a long battle with cancer. Our thoughts are with his family. Howard was a great supporter of both Nottinghamshire Archives and FONA, including sitting on the FONA Committee and gave talks about various aspects of the work of Thomas Forman & Sons, Printers (see FONA website <https://fona.org.uk/thomas-forman-of-nottingham-a-printing-legend/> for a summary of one of these). He also made excellent mince pies. Recently he wrote a short history of the Sherwood Dales Estate and kindly gave FONA permission to publish it. This is the first instalment which includes a detailed list of residents; two more will follow – one on notable buildings and one on World War II and Post-War development.

Introduction

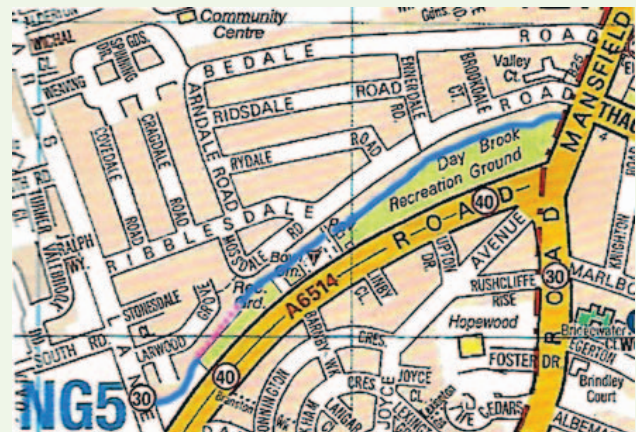
The building of 'The Sherwood Dales' commenced in the 1920s and continued up to the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939. After the War building restarted and the estate was completed in the 1950s. It was called 'The Sherwood Dales' as many of the roads are named after places in the Yorkshire Dales. However the original name was 'Daybrook Vale' as the southern boundary is flanked by the Day Brook. (Perhaps this is why the public house on Mansfield Road was named 'The Vale').

The 'Sherwood Dales Estate' is situated some 3 miles north from Nottingham City centre. It is bounded in the east by Mansfield Road (A60) and in the west by Edwards Lane. In the south it is bounded by Valley Road (A6514) and in the north by the route of the dismantled Northern Line Railway which ran at the rear of the houses on Bedale Road.

Having lived in the area for over 85 years, much of the information is based upon my personal knowledge and experiences together with research of history from the earlier years.

I hope you will find the article interesting and enjoy reading it.

Howard F Parker
May 2020



The Sherwood Dales Estate. Note: The full postal address of the estate is 'Sherwood, Nottingham NG5'. Some people still regard it as 'Daybrook' which was of course the original name and strictly speaking the estate is nearer to Daybrook than it is to Sherwood.

History

The main residence was 'Daybrook Vale', a large country house situated in its own grounds between Edwards Lane and Ribblesdale Road. There was a Lodge House on Edwards Lane (just above where Larwood Grove is now) and a driveway which led up to the house.

In 1830 the house was occupied by Thomas Elliott who had six daughters and several sons. All the daughters were eventually married. The youngest son George died on 9th December 1866 aged 15. Thomas Elliott died on 18th March 1879.

Daybrook Vale House



Map dated 1899.



Map showing Daybrook Vale Farm and Daybrook Vale House (before Valley Road was constructed).

The main business was market gardening, producing apples and other soft fruit. They exhibited produce at the Notts. Horticultural Society events and won several prizes.

There was a well stocked fishing lake which was fed by the Day Brook. There was also a Boat House. In 1886 the pond became polluted and silted up due to sewerage coming downstream from Arnold and as a result all the fish died. In the picture above is a garden pond in front of the house - this is not the lake which is much further away from the house (See Map).

By 1895 Charles J. Mee had

occupied 'Daybrook Vale' and became a successful Nurseryman and member of the Notts. Horticultural Society. Bertie Mee, who I assume was his son, died on 20th Oct 1914 during the First World War.

Rumour had it that Mrs. Mee who lived in the house, drowned herself in the lake. The lake was subsequently filled in (before my time) and the Day Brook was converted into a culvert. Flood prevention work is currently taking place further downstream but it makes me wonder if nature had been left alone and the lake remained, we might not have had the flooding which occurred earlier this year.

Daybrook Vale Farm

The farm was located in the valley between Edwards Lane and what is now the top of Bedale Road. It comprised 78 acres, part market garden, strawberries, arable and grass. Following a meeting of creditors in June 1904 it was put on the market to let.

The defendant was Walter Perkins who had commenced business as an innkeeper in Arnold about 13 years ago without any capital and shortly afterwards he took over Daybrook Vale Farm from his father, whose liabilities he

undertook. He discontinued business as an innkeeper about 3 years later when he went to reside and take charge of the farm himself. Unfortunately he could not make the business pay.

The farm was eventually pulled down and after the Second World War, Haywood School was built on the site.

Valley Road

At a meeting of the Council held in November 1920, the Town Clerk stated the Ministry of Transport had agreed to contribute 50% towards the cost of £128,000 for the building of Valley Road and Perry Road. An advance would be given for the remainder of the

cost to be paid back in five annual instalments. This would reduce the amount the Corporation will have to borrow.

The Duke of Newcastle agreed to give the full 80 feet width of the road passing through his land.

Work on building Valley Road started almost immediately in November 1920. At the same time Edwards Lane and Perry Road were also built together with part of Hucknall Road. At the start 200 workers were employed but eventually this increased to almost 500.

Early Residents

Bedale Road (even numbers)

Bedale Road was probably one of the first roads in the estate to be built and I can remember some of the first occupants. I will start at the bottom of the road with the even numbers.

No. 6 - Mr. Salter lived at No.6, he was a school teacher at Claremont Secondary School which incidentally I attended for a short while.

No. 20 - Hedley Radnell and his family lived here. He was a bus conductor for the City Corporation. Sometimes if I got on his bus he would forget to take my fare and so I got a free ride. They both attended Daybrook St. Paul's Church and assisted with fund raising.

No. 34 - Mr. Polkey lived here, he was a Church Warden at Daybrook St. Paul's Church.

No. 36 - If I have got the number correct, Derek Wing lived here who had a motor bike business at the corner of Salop Street and

Mansfield Road in Daybrook.

I now move up to the junction with Ennerdale where there are three or four bungalows. In one of these lived Mrs. Parkes who was a widow.

Moving up the road to No. 100. This was where Mrs. Perkins lived for many years.

At No.102 was the Tunnicliffe family. They moved into the house after it was built and lived there most of their life. I am not sure who lived at Nos. 104 and 106 in the early days. There was a Mrs. Rosen, who was a widow, living in one of the nearby houses but I am not sure of the number.

At No. 108 lived Mrs. Benton (or was it Bentley?). She had a school age son, Michael, who was about the same age as myself. Sadly she was knocked off her bicycle at the bottom of the road and died. After that the next family to occupy No.108 were the Elstons. They had two sons, Cyril and Eric. I believe Cyril worked in the Accounts Department at John Players. When he retired they moved to Mawnan Smith in Cornwall.

No.110 - Living here were the Foxtons, Mr & Mrs Foxton and their daughter Mary. Mr. Foxton was a partner in an engineering business at Redhill. He came home most lunchtimes for his dinner. I used to say to my mother "Has Mr. Foxton had his nanna cuted?" (I thought everyone had banana custard for pudding because we had it so many times). The family moved to a larger house at the top of Ribblesdale Road.

In the early days No.112 changed hands several times, I think at one stage a Mr. North, who was

a school headmaster, lived there. The present occupant is Tony Bird, a widower, who has lived at 112 for over 50 years.

No.114 was the Dutch house. It was built in a Dutch style and was at an angle to the road whereas most houses were parallel to the road. A retired hospital Matron, Miss Beard, lived here for many years. This was the last house to be built on this side of the road before the Second World War.

Bedale Road (odd numbers)

I now return to the bottom of the road to give details of some of the occupants who lived on this side of the road.

No.1 - Living here was the Ward family. The father and two sons, John and David, ran the motorcar garage just round the corner on Mansfield Road. When their father retired the sons carried on with the business for a while until David set up his own business with a garage on Hucknall Road, near the junction with Haydn Road. The garage on Mansfield Road was taken over by Colin Gregory Motorcycles, and later by KwikFit. The upstairs workshop was retained by Colin Gregory and then used by Chesterfield Motorcycles until 2019.

No.3 - Keith Freeman who is about my age, lived here with his parents and we were both members of St. Paul's Daybrook Scouts. Keith was friendly with John Clewer, whose father had a hardware shop on Mansfield Road at the side of the garage and I think the Clewers lived in the flat above the shop. Keith who now lives in the Canary Isles, has kept contact with John all his life, and he comes over to the UK a couple of times a year. The last time I met Keith

was many years ago when he was superintendent at Lambley Water Works.

Now this is where the story gets interesting! The shop which is still at the side of KwikFit was until recently a Barbers but is now part of the Tattoo business. If you look up at the first floor bay window, you will see that below the window ledge are two wooden carved figureheads. One is Little John, the other Friar Tuck.



Little John.

Friar Tuck.

Originally there were also figureheads of Robin Hood and Maid Marian. Regrettably these were removed some years ago when new shop signs were fitted.

Bedale Road (odd numbers continued)

I did not know anyone else at the lower end of Bedale, so I will continue just above the junction with Ennerdale.

No. 61 - Living here was Peter Cave who was also in Daybrook St. Paul's Scouts with me.

No. 67- Mr. Newbold lived here.

No.69 - Mr & Mrs Locker. They had a small white Scottie dog and

I remember seeing Mrs. Locker walking it up the road. Ernest Locker was in Daybrook St. Paul's Church Choir, and was a very good bass singer. I was also in the choir and one Good Friday we sung Stainer's Crucifixion. Ernest sang the bass solos and I sang the tenor.

No.71 - This was the Hoskins family. They had one son, Jimmy and I think two daughters, Valerie and Jill. I believe Mr. Hoskins worked with a Mr. Hobson doing

small building work. Jimmy was my main play friend and was also in Daybrook Scouts. The Scouts arranged a cycle ride to Newark and Jimmy went all the way there and back on a fairy cycle (about 15 miles each way). How he did it I will never know. Jimmy went on to work for an Accountants in Arnold (Sheltons I think), but he never took any qualifications. He died quite young some years ago.

At number 75 lives Muriel Brown whose husband Dennis died in October 2011. At number 79 is Don Stirland who lost his wife recently. He has two sons, one of them, Simon runs a very successful printing business.

No. 83 - The Brown family lived

here for many years. They had a son named Philip and two daughters. Their father Dennis worked for a carton printing firm, I think in Derby. Mrs. Brown, Edna, moved to live with one of her daughters and only died a couple of years ago.

No. 85 - The first resident was Mr & Mrs. Revill and their son David who is about my age. Mrs. Revill died quite young. Her husband Stanley was a teacher at Henry Mellish School. He was a keen historian and archaeologist. David became a House Master at a private school in Exeter where they now live in retirement.

No 87 - That's me, so I am not saying anything!

No. 89 - The first residents here were Mr. & Mrs. Levis who were of Jewish origin. They had a son Derick who I think worked for Raleigh. Mr. Levis had a vintage Morris Eight Car. Every time he went out, when he came back, he would re-polish it before putting it back in the garage.

No. 91- The Parker family lived at 91 (not related to me in any way). They had a daughter named June.

No.93 - Mr. & Mrs. Leeming lived at 93. They had a son Michael who was about my age. This was the last house to be built on this side of the road before the outbreak of the Second World War.

Good . . . it's Mason's!

by Peter Hammond

Among my collection of old Victorian and Edwardian bottles I have an example of a Nottingham-made 'Mason's Extract of Herbs.' Not only does it still bear its original label but it is also still full! Indeed, my example is just like the one shown in the original advert for this product below.



Advert taken from Draper's Nottingham Illustrated Almanack, 1892, Nottingham Local Studies Library

So, who made it, and what exactly was Mason's 'Extract of Herbs'?

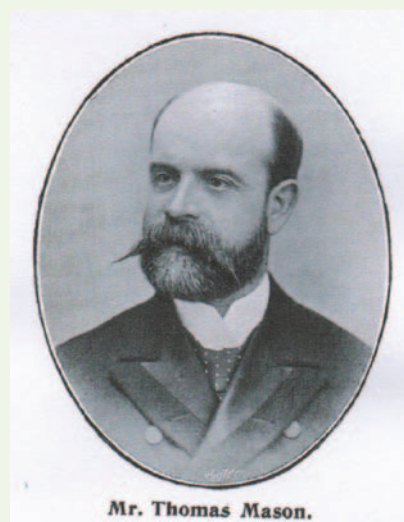
I recently discovered an article in a 'Handbook to Nottingham' (pages 189 – 193), which though undated must be from c.1906. The original is held within Nottingham Local Studies Library. Unfortunately, it cannot be photocopied as it is within an original bound volume so I took copies of each page with my phone and then transcribed it to produce a more readable version. As a preamble I have

carried out some preliminary research on the history of the firm, partly to check out the facts stated in the article, and also to provide some extra background.

Thomas Mason was born in Macclesfield in Cheshire on 3 December 1843. At the age of 15 he was apprenticed to Thomas Ayres Newball, a chemist of Derby Road, Nottingham, and went to live with the family. The 1871 census still lists him in their household in Derby Road, when he was described as a 27-year-old chemist. Among Thomas Newball's daughters at the time was 21-year old Betsy Jane. She and Thomas Mason clearly fell in love for they married at Nottingham All Saints on 15 April 1873. It was soon after this that the firm became known as Newball & Mason, and by the time of the 1881 census Thomas and Betsy Jane were living at 15 Park Row. Coincidentally their neighbour at 17 Park Row was a draper named Zebedee Jessop – the founder of the famous Nottingham firm of the same name, and next door the other way at 13 Park Row was the Nottingham Botanic Institute. Is this just coincidence bearing in mind Thomas Mason's involvement at that same period when he was developing his botanical beer? During 1890 Thomas Mason moved his residence to 6 Pelham Road in Sherwood Rise, though by 1898 he had moved again to a larger detached mansion named 'Enderleigh' within Alexandra Park. And living next door at that time just happened to be leather

manufacturer Leonard Turney of the famous firm of Turney Brothers of Trent Bridge.

Meanwhile back in 1881 a Benjamin Deaville – who is also referred to in the article below – was listed as an assistant in Newball & Mason's shop in Derby Road. Born in Nottingham on 25 July 1861 he later became a partner in the firm, and at the time of the 1901 census was living in Sherwood Rise – next door as it happens to the Nottingham wine merchant John Willatt. Soon afterwards Benjamin actually went to live in the very same house formerly occupied by Thomas Mason at 6 Pelham Road at which address he is listed in the 1911 census. The following pictures of both Thomas Mason and Benjamin Deaville were published in 1901 within a book entitled 'Contemporary Biographies'.



Thomas Mason (photograph published 1901).

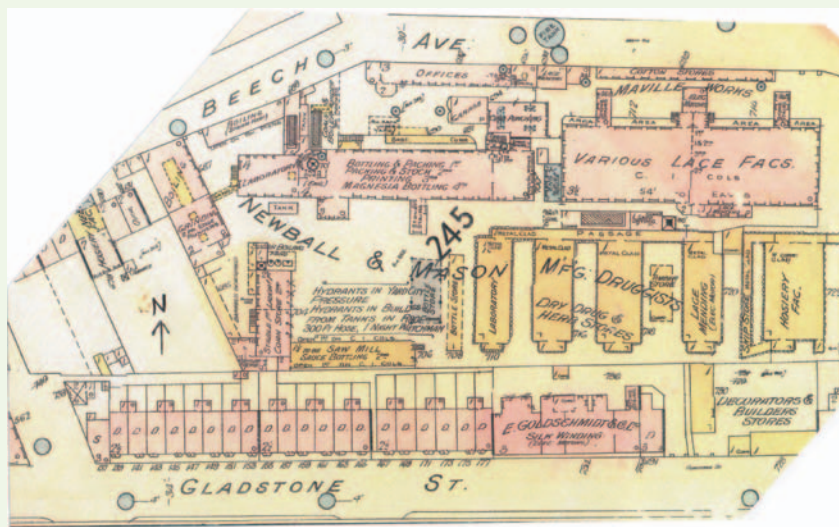


Mr. Benjamin Deaville.

Benjamin Deaville (photograph published 1901).

As a postscript Betsy Jane Mason died at their house in Alexandra Park on 6 November 1902, aged 53 years, and Thomas soon re-married, his second wife, Sarah Jane, being 26 years younger! As it happens at the time of the 1911 census, held that year on 2 April, they were staying in a boarding house in Penzance. Just a few weeks later, on 1 June, while they were staying at the Victoria Hotel in Newquay, Thomas Mason himself died. He was aged 67 years. Benjamin Deaville thereafter took over the running of the chemist business and continued in the same role until his own death in 1938, while Sarah Jane Mason survived until her own death in 1949 aged 85 years.

So, here is the article, written no doubt to celebrate the firm's move to larger premises in Beech Avenue, Sherwood Rise, which took place in 1903. Apparently this was known as the 'Maville works' – thus combining the names Mason and Deaville. The copy of Goad's Insurance Plan (Nottinghamshire Archives) is shown overleaf to illustrate how extensive the premises were.



Goad's Plan of the Newball & Mason factory in Sherwood Rise, dated 1922 (plan no. 245), Nottinghamshire Archives.

“Good! It's Mason's” is almost proverbial now, and whether uttered by the sturdy reaper or the jolly farmer, it speaks of the home-brewed herb-beer made from Mason's Extract of Herbs. This article proposes to tell the history of the preparation and of the business which has been built up on it, necessitating the removal of Messrs. Newball & Mason from Hyson Green Works, Nottingham, to much larger buildings on Sherwood Rise, some three hundred yards away from the factory they have occupied since the latter part of 1890. They were in Park Row before that, and still earlier Mr. Mason's pharmacy in Nottingham served to start Extract of Herbs on the world, and to edge him away from the drug-counter.

We may say at the outset, that the future of the industry will depend largely upon Mr. Benjamin Deaville, the junior partner of the firm – for Mr. Mason has well earned his leisure. Mr. Thomas Mason, the register of chemists and druggists tells us, passed the qualifying examination on February 10th 1871. A year later he brought from his master, Mr. Newball, the retail pharmacy which he carried

on successfully. He proposed to trade as “Mason, late Newball,” so as to keep up the kudos; but this horrified Mr. Newball, and the style became Newball & Mason. In 1873 Mr. Mason married Miss Newball, whose interest in his work helped him on and never abated until her death a short time ago. The early days of Extract of Herbs were all hard work. When the Extract was perfected into a marketable article, its originator did the manufacturing, with limited appliances and resources, far into the small hours of the morning. There was little romance in the discovery; and less prospect of the fortune which has come to Mr. Mason from it. One day an old country lady, who came regularly to his shop for a supply of certain



Image of the old lady who is said to have inspired Mason's Extract of Herbs taken from the article.

herbs for beer, said to him, "Can't you make all these things into a liquid for me, to save the trouble of boiling?" The question was put more than once before Mr. Mason found time to help his customer, and when he commenced to give her the liquid he had to keep up the supply; then, in 1875, it became a regular stock-article with him, put up exactly as it is now. By the time that Mr. Deaville went to Mr. Mason as an apprentice, the business in the Extract was getting to be of greater importance than the retail connection. Advertising in a quiet way had helped him to make the Extract known, and before the end of three years Mr. Deaville had decided not to follow up pharmacy but to go in for the manufacturing side if Mr. Mason would let him. They were agreed upon that point, and have worked together like father and son, until there is no part of the British Empire where "Good! It's Mason's" is unknown. More than the Extract now goes, of course, to make up the business, as will presently be seen.

When Newball & Mason removed from Park Row to Hyson Green Works in 1890 they did not dream that their business would outgrow the accommodation there. A few years later they had the opportunity of purchasing several acres of ground on Sherwood Rise, whereon stood a large lace-factory. They bought it in view of eventualities which were reached in 1903.

The firm moved into the new place during the early months of that year. The premises consist of an administrative building in Beech Avenue, a four-storey factory standing in the spacious yard behind the administrative building, and a series of smaller buildings

beside and behind the main factory. The general office is a spacious apartment on the ground floor; from this a comfortable pitch-pine staircase ascends to the upper floor, the west end of which is Mr. Deaville's room, with a deep bay window that will give him a view of all that is going on outside; and if he wishes, he can step out by a door-window to a lead-covered verandah. The rest of this floor is devoted to advertising control.

The manufactory is a substantial brick building 150 feet long by thirty feet wide. We commenced the inspection at the top, and first we came to a room equipped with the latest machinery for compressing tablets; next, to a magnificent apartment, the whole width of the building and half its length, which is used for making granular preparations and effervescing and other powders. Some time ago the firm acquired the formula and rights of W. H. Atkinson's granular effervescent citrate of magnesia, so that their granulating process is very efficient. They have made good provision for it too, a dozen granulating trays of large area affording them the means of turning out 1 ½ ton of citrate per day. Beyond this department is a packing-room, where the workers were busy getting ready an order for one hundred gross of health saline in the tins that have become so popular. Other things were in the packing process here, and it was noticed that the workers wore white overalls and caps – "which go to the wash every week," Mr. Deaville explained. We also noticed here a series of small, almost portable, drying ovens, which are useful for ensuring that bottles are really dry. There are larger ovens in the bottle-washing house, where

all bottles are dried, but should any show a trace of moisture when they reach the packers, in they go into the small ovens. The next section of the factory is given over to the disciples of Caxton. The firm do all the press-work that can in the production of labels, handbills, showcards, and cartons, and give out orders of millions of this or that to be done by lithography. We counted seven printing-machines driven by an electric motor, and a dozen or more compositors' frames.

Descending to the first floor, one finds that it is wholly given up to stock; a magnificently lighted apartment it is, whence come by one end the various products from the laboratories, and they gradually pass along through the packers' hands to the perfect state ready for distribution to the firm's customers. This method is general. Thus, into the west gate of the premises, all raw products and materials are received, and goods when completed to order are dispatched by the north gate. But everything that can be made on the premises is made – even wood boxes, for which there are saw mills and box-making machines.

The ground floor is, saving for an export department, devoted to bottling of Extract of Herbs and essence of Coffee, and certain stages of their production. Here are a steam laboratory and a still-room (which includes an original spirit-recovery apparatus designed by Mr. Deaville). The largest stills brought from Hyson Green Works are too big to get into the building, and they have been erected outside, where they receive many a hundred-weight of hops and other ingredients of the Extract of Herbs, or assist in making the firm's Wine

Essences. This does not exhaust the manufacturing section. One goes into what is called the "extract-room" – it is really part of another building – and here finds vacuum evaporating-pans and a vacuum still, besides several mammoth evaporating-pans, the largest having a capacity of 1,500 gals., and the next 1,200 gals. – a tremendous leap from the evaporating dish that Mr. Mason used in the early seventies. The rest of this building has two floors, which are exclusively used for grinding; and here is a gas-engine for the machinery, which is to make electric light as well.

From this building we passed on a brief visit to another, where Mr. H. P. Cooper, F.C.S., the firm's

chemist, has a well-equipped and large analytical and experimental laboratory, over which is an apartment devoted exclusively to bottling essences and other fine products.

After the tour of inspection we returned to the principals' temporary office and discussed many things, but we will give only one point from Mr. Mason's store of information regarding the brewing of herb-beer. It is as to the use of German yeast. Few know how to use it. This is what Mr. Mason says: "Take a piece the size of a walnut and crush it gently in a bowl with lukewarm water – half a cupful of so. Add two teaspoons of brown sugar, and let it rest for a quarter of an hour. Then you'll find

that it has risen up to fill the bowl, and it is ready to put into your brew." To which a gentle voice added, "If you use our Extract, you will have a Sherwood Rise, and you'll say, 'Good! It's Mason's.' ”

I am very tempted to open my surviving bottle – but then I had better not!