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Happy Christmas

On behalf of the FONA committee, I'd like to wish all Friends of Nottinghamshire Archives a very Happy Christmas and best wishes for a more hopeful New Year.



When I wrote the introduction to the last Newsletter, in August, I commented on how so much had changed due to coronavirus. Sadly, this time I have to comment that very little has changed in the last few months as Tier 3/Lockdown 2 meant that we have not been able to organise any talks or visits and Nottinghamshire Archives had to close down again for a short while. Fortunately, it has been able to re-open for pre-booked appointments. There's information about how to book your appointments on the INSPIRE website <https://www.inspireculture.org.uk/heritage/archives/>.

Despite the problems though,

FONA hasn't been entirely inactive.

The COVID-19 Diary Writing project I described in the last Newsletter has moved on. In October, just before the county went into Tier 3, I deposited thirteen diaries with Nottinghamshire Archives. They have been accessioned and will form part of the Lockdown Life collection. What's more, twelve contributors agreed to extracts from their diaries being compiled into a book which we plan to publish in Spring next year. I'll say more about this next time.

We've also added more videos in the FONABytes Series, and there are more on the way. The easiest way to find these videos is to go to the FONA website <https://fona.org.uk/> and click on the big, red, YouTube button on the right hand side. And we're hoping to add

BREAKING NEWS! The first FONA talk for 2021 will be from Chris Weir, 16 January 2021, 11am, via ZOOM. Chris hasn't revealed yet what he's going to be talking about but it's sure to be captivating!

some podcasts in the new year. Watch this space.

The Savile project, which is cataloguing and researching previously uncatalogued documents, is unfortunately still 'on hold'. In October, the research group was hoping to get together and pick up from where we left off in March. Tier 3 restrictions meant that we had to abandon these plans. But that doesn't mean we're abandoning the project – far from it. As soon as we're able to get

back into the Archives as a group and for a sustained period, then we'll be back at work. Based on our research we're expecting to have an exhibition, a 'conference' of some kind and probably some field trips. When? – well that's in the lap of the gods!

Looking forward to 2021. The Annual General Meeting will take place on 20 March 2021. What form this will take isn't clear yet as it will depend on we are allowed to do and not to do.

Our first FONA talk will be on 16 January 2021. And the Programme Sub-committee has a whole range of events planned, but at the moment these are only provisional until we know what the government restrictions are at the time. Details will be sent out as soon as we can.

In the meantime, let's look forward to an optimistic 2021.

Judith Mills
Chair and Newsletter editor

Nottinghamshire Archives (and Records Management) 2020

It's been a funny old year at the archives. Only five customers allowed in the archive, four closed months, three buildings, two lockdowns, and if only we had a pear tree.



Images from the last Newsletter reminding us of some of the working practices adopted at the Archives.



This hasn't stopped us though. Far from it. In addition to more than 63 new collections which have been added to our holdings, our "Lockdown Life" project has resulted in more than 200 photographs being added to the Inspire Picture Archive. These photos of silent streets, closed play areas and socially distanced tea parties will help to tell the story of the pandemic. An archive isn't only about the past, it records the present for the future.

There is something for everyone in this year's group of deposits. A box of research papers on urban woods, the usual Church of England parish records, a history of the Sherwood Dales by our much-missed friend Howard Parker, and memories of the Noel Street Baths all make an appearance.

Our wonderful remote volunteers have continued their valuable work transcribing our oldest paper

catalogues. The information was created so long ago that it was either handwritten or created on a typewriter. In November alone 8849 entries were added to our online catalogue, bringing the total to a neat 333,000.

Inspire's Records Management Service worked hard delivering files to council officers throughout the year. There was no lockdown for this dedicated team. They play a crucial role in ensuring council records are transferred to the archives to form part of local government corporate memory.

We look forward to welcoming all of our FONA friends back to Nottinghamshire Archives. Hopefully we will not have long to wait.

Ruth Imeson
Inspire Heritage Services Manager

www.inspirepicturearchive.org.uk

Nottingham City's First Women Magistrates



Nottingham Evening Post, 20 July 1920.

After the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act was passed on 23rd December 1919 women were at last able to access all aspects of the law as jury members, Magistrates and as legal professionals. Initially, seven women magistrates were appointed nationally in January 1920 and they were charged by the Lord Chancellor with coming up with further candidates. The criteria broadly seem to have been belonging to the women's movement; being over 30; and being politically and socially active.

Nominations were sought from various organisations and in 1920 the Nottingham Women Service Association, and the Nottingham Council of Women (earlier known as the Nottingham Union of Women Workers) wrote to the Lord Chancellor with various suggestions. The Lord Chancellor's Women's Committee came up with a list of 172 names to be appointed across the country including three women

who were appointed on 20th July 1920 to sit at the Guildhall in Nottingham City. These were Helena Dowson, Caroline Harper and Mary Ball. All three met the criteria being socially and politically active in the City.

Caroline Margaret Harper (née Lennox) 1863–1937

Caroline was the daughter of a clergyman, she married a surgeon Dr Henry Harper and they lived at 5 Regent Street in the City. She was active in the Local Government Association from 1890's campaigning for the political representation of women on civic bodies. In 1910 she became a Poor Law Guardian, in 1918 the vice chair and then in 1925 she became the first woman Chair of the Board of Guardians. In 1916 she was appointed along with Helena Dowson and Mary Ball onto the Anti-Profitteering committee. She also was a member of the Statutory Committee for Mental Deficiency, and Chair of the Ex-Service Women and



Nottingham Guardian, 02 February 1937.

War Workers Association. In July 1920 she became the first woman Conservative City Councillor, elected unopposed for Market ward serving from 1920-1937. She was also president of the ward's Women's Conservative Association, a position she held until her death. In July 1920 she was also appointed a Magistrate for the City. In 1931 she was appointed the first woman Sheriff of Nottingham. She had a personal interest and commitment to the Midwives Association, to mental health and to education – she chaired the Education Committee. Caroline was also a keen sportswoman captaining local cricket and golf clubs and at various times she chaired the Nottingham Ladies swimming club. She was described as displaying inexhaustible energy, showing sympathy and understanding and that her work was characterised by earnestness and efficiency. She died from a heart attack at 1 Lucknow Avenue in Mapperley Park aged 74.

Helena Dowson (née Brownsword)

1866–1964

Helena, or Nellie as she preferred, was the only daughter of Anderson and Jane Brownsword. Both parents were active in charity and social works and Helena followed in their footsteps. In 1894 she married William Enfield Dowson – Will- the first son of Benjamin and Alice Dowson and they lived firstly



Photo courtesy of University of Nottingham Manuscripts & Special Collections UMPI/4/1.

at 10 Mapperley Road and from 1906 in the Park. Helena worked with Alice and her sisters-in-law on various issues, but in particular on women's suffrage. She took over the secretary role of the Nottingham Women's Suffrage Society - the key organising role – from Alice in 1896 and was tireless in campaigning for women to get the vote. She organised and attended meetings, represented Nottingham on the London NUWSS meetings, went to London for demonstrations and marches, spoke at events, organised fundraising events and worked in Nottingham's suffrage shop in Regent's Passage – now gone. In 1911 Nellie and Maud, her sister in law joined the Great Suffrage Pilgrimage as it passed through Nottingham, on route to London. Helena's work was commended with an illuminated address once the vote was won, by fellow suffragists in Nottingham. During the 1914-1918 war she organised various fundraising and support for women; she was the Honorary Secretary of the Queen's Work for Women, a member of the Anti-Profiteering committee, set up two 'Baby Welcomes' and a day nursery at the request of the Ministry of Health.

“ NOTTINGHAM SUFFRAGE LEADER HONOURED.

To mark their appreciation of her services to the cause, the object of which has now been secured, friends of the women's suffrage movement in the city and county yesterday [18th July 1918] presented Mrs. W. E. Dowson, of Nottingham, with two large volumes of Japanese painters, with an illuminated address suitably inscribed, and a bronze statuette entitled 'Sorrow'. The ceremony took place at the residence of Mrs. W. R. Hamilton, Eastdene Alexandra Park, Nottingham, was witnessed by a considerable gathering. ”

Nottingham Evening Post, 19 July 1918.

She became a JP in July 1920 and at a conference in Westminster Hall in October 1920 which established the Magistrates Association she was elected to the provisional committee which set the initial objectives and working focus of the MA. Back in Nottingham in 1921 she was appointed Visiting Magistrate to Nottingham Prison monitoring conditions there and established a League of Honour to help with prisoners' mental health and well-being. She also inaugurated women's police court work – being secretary and then Chair. In 1919 she stood unsuccessfully as a Liberal

candidate and then became the first woman Liberal Councillor in 1920-24 representing the Meadows Ward, campaigning for improved housing and sanitation and the extension of the vote to women over 21 on an equal footing to men and for their representation on civic bodies. She lived at Felixstowe in The Park but from 1930 they bought land and built a house in the Lake District on the edge of Lake Windermere and particularly after her husband's death in 1934 she lived there.

Her death was reported in *The Magistrate* annual report as follows:

“ *Mrs H B Dowson, the first lady Magistrate to be appointed to the City Bench, died on 25th September 1964, at the great age of 98 years. In acknowledging the Chairman's letter of condolence, Miss R Dowson, a close relative and herself a Justice on the Bingham bench wrote: She really was a wonderfully active person, and her vitality of mind lasted her 98 years. Her going was quite sudden and unexpected. Many of you will remember the toast proposed by the Chairman to Mrs Dowson as the doyenne of the Bench when she attended the annual dinner of the Justices three years ago. In her earlier days Mrs Dowson had been an active Liberal and keen suffragist.* ”

Mary Ball (née Brookes) 1866–1946

Mary was born in Radford, Nottingham, the daughter of Edward Brookes, a lace-maker and his wife Mary Ann Leeson, originally from Mansfield. She had ten brothers and sisters, and the older children were brought up by the grandfather, William Leeson in Mansfield. Mary lived with her parents and siblings, according to the 1881 census, at 15 Oliver Terrace,



Oliver Street in Radford. Mary is described as a machinist. The 1901 census has her still living with her parents, but Mary is now described as a lace-maker. After her father died in 1904 Mary continues to live with her mother and a brother Richard. She is now described as the head of household and an over-looker lace-maker. Her mother died in 1915 at the age of 88. A year later, at the age of 50, Mary married the widower, Samuel Ball, also a lace-maker and she moved to live with him at 18 Wordsworth Road. Witnesses at the wedding are Thomas Brookes, one of her brothers and Edith Anne Hind, her niece. Mary became the stepmother to adult children – 4 daughters and 2 sons.

Mary became the Secretary of the Female Society of Lace-makers in the early 1900s, a post she held until about 1919. She was also a member of the Advisory Committee of Nottingham Labour Exchange and sat on the Housing Committee as well as being a member of the National Kitchen's Committee. In 1916 she was appointed to the Anti-profiteering Committee working with Caroline Harper and Helena Dowson. In July 1920 she was appointed a Magistrate and the Nottingham Evening Post (see above) reported that: 'Mrs Ball has been an indefatigable worker in the interests of the women lace workers of the city and her appointment to the bench comes as a well-deserved honour.' She often sat in the Juvenile courts and 'gave invaluable advice to delinquents'.

Mary died in 1946 but I do not know any details about this or where she is buried.

Unfortunately, I have not been able to find any image of Mary, but if anyone has a photograph please do get in touch as we would love to see it.

Miriam Jackson JP

Nottingham Women's History Group.



Both the Nottingham Guildhall (left) and the Shire Hall (now the National Justice Museum) served as Magistrates Courts.

Tales from the Sherwood Dales

We're delighted to be able to publish the second instalment of Howard Parker's history of the Sherwood Dales Estate which this time looks at some notable buildings.

Trent Building Company

Most of the houses on the estate were built by the Trent Building Company. They had offices and a builder's yard on Ribblesdale Road between the Roxy Cinema and Daybrook House.

The business was ran by Mr. T. E. Caunt and his brother. They both had their own properties on the estate. After the war when Ridsdale was extended to Arndale, one of the brothers lived in the corner house with the very large bay window. They had a son Philip but I don't think he was ever involved in running the business. Philip married a girl called Jill and they went to live in Redhill. (In the early days I used to see them both in the Vale pub).

In January 1930 the Company held a demonstration evening for the public to view their new houses.

Over the years many of the properties changed hands, some several times. Many also had kitchen extensions or loft extensions built. The company had its own cast iron inspection chamber covers. Some people thought their work was a bit shoddy, so we nick-named them 'Gerry Builders'.



A typical kitchen and loft extension.

The Roxy Cinema



The Roxy Cinema was situated on Ribblesdale Road, just round the corner from Mansfield Road.

It opened on 15th February 1937. The film starred Gary Cooper in 'Mr. Deeds goes to town'. It was the fourth cinema to be designed by the Nottingham based S. Graham Circuit by architect Reginald W. G. Cooper. The façade of the building had a slender tower feature on the left hand side. Seating was provided in stalls and circle levels. It was equipped

with a British Thomson-Houston (BTH) sound system.

The Roxy Cinema was equipped with CinemaScope in 1955. The cinema was closed on 2nd November 1960, but then re-opened as a Bingo Hall on 9th November 1960. This operated for many years, but had closed by mid 1995, when the building was demolished. A block of flats named Valley Court now stands on the site.

Covedale Road

I would like to mention this road which was partly built before the war. At number 3 was the house with the glass porch which is still there today. This was where Harry and Stella Soar and their daughter Davina lived. Harry was a bank manager for Westminster Bank. The bank usually provided accommodation for their managers which means when they were moved to another branch they would move accommodation. I therefore think they only lived at Covedale for a few years - late 1940s/early 1950s. Now the point of mentioning this is that they were life long friends of my parents and I believe Stella was my godmother. When Harry retired they went to live in Portscatho, Cornwall. Sadly they are all passed away now.

116 Bedale Road

A long standing former resident of 116 Bedale Road, Dorothy Swingler, died on 22nd May 2020 aged 101 years. Dorothy had moved into a Care Home a couple of years ago when just 100. Her husband Ken who had served in the army during the Second World War died many years ago. Their house was one of the first on Bedale Road to be originally built with a flat roof after the war (referred to on page 16 under 'New Roads').

Daybrook House



Daybrook House was situated on Ribblesdale Road where the Brookdale Close retirement homes are now situated.

In the early 1800s Daybrook House was occupied by three brothers, Robert, Mark and Edward Davidson. They were cotton spinners and manufacturers, but

they decided that rather than import cotton from the USA and then sell the cloth back to us, they would open mills in the USA. Edward was sent to the USA to open these factories. They are still going today. Mark and Robert remained in England to run the Nottingham mills. Robert's son died leaving no heir as Mark was not married. Then Robert died leaving Mark, who was now getting on in years, to run the business. He could not stand the responsibility so shot himself, thus ending the English side of the business.

The house seems to have changed hands several times. Records show that in 1818 the house was owned by Robert Denison who advertised it 'To Let Unfurnished'. His mother Mrs. Denison had died in 1811 aged 90 years. In 1827 it was put on the market for sale after Robert Denison had died.

The house included 25 acres with adjoining gardens, plantations, green and arable fields.

In May 1860 a sale took place of live and dead stock and house contents of the late Samuel Hollins.

The Nottingham Annual Register 1889, refers to Mark Dennison at Daybrook House. (Presumably not the same family as above due to different spelling of surname).

In 1934 Daybrook House became a Masonic Hall. There was also a members' club with two billiard tables. In the grounds were tennis courts, although these were later taken up to extend the car park. In the picture above, on the left hand side a large ballroom was built and used for private functions. The New Year's Eve dinner dances were always very popular. The Masonic Temple was upstairs on the first floor.

The hall had some difficulty in covering the running costs. It was owned by two of the Masons who decided to sell it. Unfortunately the Masonic Lodges could not raise enough capital to buy it, so it was sold to George Akins, the bookmaker. He kept it open for a while but eventually it was demolished.

Play Time

As young boys in the late 1940s there was plenty of space for play time. From the top of Bedale Road up to Edwards Lane, and from the Railway line down to Ribblesdale Road, was all one large field. A rough single track road went down the valley and up the other side to Edwards Lane. (This was very useful for

catching the No.18 bus to school on Edwards Lane).

At the bottom of the valley were the foundations of Daybrook Vale Farm, which had been pulled down a few years earlier. We used to rampage through the rubble to see if we could find any treasures. All we ever found were empty Gold Leaf and Player's Weights cigarette packets!

The railway line was an attraction. We used to stand on the top of the embankment and throw stones across the line at the children from the Council Estate on the other side. Fortunately no one ever got hurt. We nick-named the Council Estate 'Spike Island'.

Then we would creep down the embankment and place half-pennies on the railway line and hope that when the train went over them, they would enlarge into pennies. It never worked!

The track running down the valley was excellent for sledging, particularly in the winter of 1947 when there was a lot of snow that lasted many weeks. There was plenty of space to build our bonfire for Guy Faulks night on November 5th, and to let off our fireworks.

We would walk down the field to Ribblesdale Road, then cross over and walk through the long grass to reach Daybrook Vale House. (I remember the grass came up to my knees). By now the old house had become derelict. We would go into the large room on the left where there was a black wrought iron fireplace with decorative tiles round the sides. Sadly some of the tiles had been vandalised and the broken pieces lay on the floor. The stairs were more or less complete but a lot of the floorboards upstairs were missing. We used to go up and walk across the joists - very dangerous, (our mothers would kill us if they knew!)

The Valley Road recreation ground was another popular play area. On one occasion, with my pal Jimmy Hoskins, (whom I have already referred to on page 6), we walked up to the top of the bank that overlooked the Day Brook.

There was an inspection chamber with a round cast iron cover, and being inquisitive, we lifted it off. Jimmy decided to drop it back but left his little finger overlapping the edge. It chopped the end of his little finger off and I remember running home with him, carrying the piece of finger in my hand. In those days it could not be re-attached, so he spent all his life with the end of his little finger missing.

The War Years

The building of houses ceased when the Second World War broke out in September 1939. This left many roads half finished, for example, the last house to be built on Bedale Road was No. 114, the last on Ridsdale Road, a bungalow, No. 28. Those houses that still had the open field at the bottom of their garden, were allowed to dig an allotment on the field for growing vegetables. It was also useful, as you could gain access to your house without having to go round by the road.

Most residents on the estate had bunkers or air raid shelters built for protection in the event of an enemy attack. The 'Anderson' air raid shelter was constructed of corrugated iron and usually buried in the ground at the bottom of the garden. Houses that had deep foundations had a Bunker which was entered by a trap door from the hall or sitting room. Steps led down to the bunker which had a reinforced ceiling. There was an emergency exit into the garden. Many bunkers had electricity and were fitted out with bunk beds. When the air raid siren sounded from Daybrook Fire Station, people went into their bunker or shelter.

One year during the war, part of the large field at the top of Bedale was fenced off and cattle were put in it. Another year, wheat was grown in the field. I remember after the wheat had been harvested, I saw a field mouse in the stubble and thought I would pick it up. I soon dropped it - don't mice have sharp teeth!

As mentioned on the previous page, 'Daybrook Vale House' had become a ruin. The grounds were used by the Civil Defence for training purposes and a temporary roof had been fitted to some of the outbuildings at the rear of the house. I assume these buildings were used for the storage of their training equipment. The door was securely locked and the notice on the door read: HM Civil Defence - Keep Out.

The Lodge on Edwards Lane at the start of the drive to the house had been vacated and was boarded up. There was also an entrance to the house via a single track off Ribblesdale Road. The same notice as above was attached to the gate

The Dales Estate suffered damage from air raids on several occasions. In March 1941 a bomb landed in the middle of the road at the junction of Bedale with Ennerdale. It cut off the water supply and we all had to queue with kettles and buckets to get our water.



Repairing the burst water main on Ennerdale Road.

On another occasion a shell landed on the railway embankment behind one of the houses at the top of Bedale Road. Those residents living near, including myself, all had to evacuate for several days. The shell was never found!

The most serious damage was the house on Ribblesdale Road which took a direct hit from a bomb that was dropped during the Nottingham blitz on 7th March 1941. The lady who lived there was sheltering under the stairs and killed instantly.



The bombed house on Ribblesdale Road.

After The War

The Civil Defence

After the war, the Civil Defence wanted to establish a training school at Daybrook Vale. The property was to be bought for £5,400 and included 6½ acres of land.

I believe the remaining building land was owned by the Trent Building Company.

People living in the vicinity of Daybrook Vale were strongly against the proposal and agreed to meet the Civil Defence sub-committee of the Corporation for

a meeting on 22nd February 1950 to express their objection.

Mr. T. E. Caunt of the Trent Building Company, whose building land adjoins Daybrook Vale, had also held a meeting with 30 local residents and had the support of 50 more who had returned a circular expressing their support for the opposition to the proposed scheme. A letter of protest had also been sent to the Town Clerk, Mr. J. E. Richards, expressing their serious concern at the potential affect of such a development in a residential area, including the loss of amenities generally, and "a deterioration of the character and value of the district".

It was eventually agreed the proposed scheme would not go ahead and the land would be used for house building.

New Roads

When building restarted, many existing residents thought that Bedale Road would continue up to Edwards Lane, but this was not the case! Instead Arndale Road was built to meet Ribblesdale Road. The first few houses to be built on Bedale after the war were semi-detached and had flat roofs. This was due to shortage of wood during the war. Most houses have since had their roofs replaced with sloping roofs. Other new roads such as Cragdale, Mossdale and Rydale were also built or completed.

Haywood Secondary Modern School was built on the land between the top of Bedale Road and Edwards Lane. The school catered for children 11 to 16 years and had approximately 850 pupils. The school closed on 31st August 2009 and was subsequently demolished.



Haywood Secondary Modern School.

On the site now is a new private housing complex, Spinning Drive and Weaving Gardens. However this is not considered to be part of the Dales Estate.

One point of interest, when the building of Ridsdale Road continued, it was found not to run parallel with Bedale Road and so at the bottom of the gardens was a 'No man's land'. It was decided to give an extra piece of land free of charge to the residents on Bedale Road. This started at number 85 and the extra land became wider as it continued to the top of the road.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Bob Massey of the Arnold Local

History Society for the historical information he kindly provided which is much appreciated.

I also thank my cousin John Cooper for modifying some of the illustrations, and his wife Frances for proofreading.

Finally I apologise in advance for any errors, particularly any Bedale Road house numbers that may not be correct.

Chris Weir on TV

Many regular, long-standing users of Nottinghamshire Archives will know Chris Weir who retired a few years ago. Of course, he's a frequent speaker on a whole range of topics and always engaging. But now he's on NOTTS TV talking about how he became an archivist and some of the work he's been involved with, as part of its 'NG30' series.

The programme first appeared on 7 November but is available on the Notts TV website <https://nottstv.com>. Search for 'NG30' and you'll find a link to Chris's video.



Annual subscriptions

By the time you get this Newsletter, you should have received a reminder from David, our Treasurer, that the subscriptions for 2021 are now due.

I know this has been a difficult time, but we do hope that you will renew your membership of FONA as we find our way through the 'new normal'.



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

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