

Amicis

The Magazine of the
Friends of Nottinghamshire Archives
No. 37 March 2025

Newark's Young Lifesaver



Keeping it in The Family
Straying onto the Dark
Side of Nottingham
Farewell from the Chair



Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of AMICIS for 2025 and a belated Happy New Year to you all. I can't believe how quickly time is flowing and that we are already in March, with FONA's AGM fast approaching. As spring is the time for March Hares, it is perhaps appropriate that we offer you a number of interesting 'rabbit holes' to explore. Luke Danes has written a bitter sweet account of a young man's heroism in nineteenth century Newark; a story he discovered by following the trail of one single document from Nottinghamshire Archives. Chris Weir also finds a trail leading to the historian, John Holland Walker, not in a document but a church. Then, for good measure, Chris Weir's talk to FONA in January provided us with many glimpses of tales about our county's more sinister history, any one of which would be fascinating to explore further. Should any of these stories prompt you to further research in Nottinghamshire Archives, do be sure to write up the results and send them to AMICIS.

Information about the AGM and our upcoming talks can be found towards the end of this issue. My thanks as always to Bob Stoakes for designing another great magazine.

Karen Winyard (Editor)

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Courtesy of Chris Weir.

Farewell from the Chair
Courtesy of Bob Stoakes.

Letter from the Chair



Dear Friends

I'm writing to you as Friends, not just because you are a member of FONA but because over the last 10 years or so, I have come to know many of you and do regard you as friends. I hope you feel the same.

This is the last time I will be writing to you as Chairwoman, though I do hope to contribute to AMICIS in the future as an 'ordinary' member. And, of course, attend as many future meetings as I can.

FONA was three years' old when I joined and almost immediately was co-opted onto the Committee as 'Treasurer and Membership Secretary Designate', taking over from Graham Crisp at the 2015 AGM. I was then Secretary for a while, becoming Chairwoman in 2020, just as COVID hit us.

In that time, I've seen FONA expand its activities, beginning in February 2019 with the Signed and Sealed conference and its associated 'coffee-table' book *Identity* organised by Richard Gaunt and Ruth Imeson. Just over 12 months' later, the COVID restrictions forced us to innovate, first with some short videos and a podcast on YouTube and in due course, talks given over Zoom. We also began a diary-writing project to record our experiences in the early days of lockdown. The complete diaries have been deposited at Nottinghamshire Archives while extracts from ten of these diaries were compiled and published as *Lockdown 2020: the first 100 days*.

Shortly before COVID struck, a project group of FONA members began work on what was later called the Saville Project. COVID restrictions meant that this had to be put on hold, but in October 2021 a slightly smaller group reconvened to catalogue and then research a large collection of estate documents that had been deposited at Nottinghamshire Archives. The project, sometimes to the surprise and delight of the project group, culminated in some short talks given in 2022 and the publication of a book in 2023, thanks to the support of Miner2Major: the Real Sherwood Forest project. I'm delighted to say that the book is almost sold out (down to the last ten copies) but Karen Winyard continues to give talks based on her research if you would like to hear more. Thanks have to go to the project team and to all the staff at Nottinghamshire Archives.

In 2022 FONA organised a joint celebration to mark its 10th birthday and the 125th Anniversary of the founding of the Thoroton Society. With the support of Nottinghamshire Archives, we were able to organise a series of talks over seven days, and an exhibition of documents either owned by or relevant to the work of both the Thoroton Society and FONA.

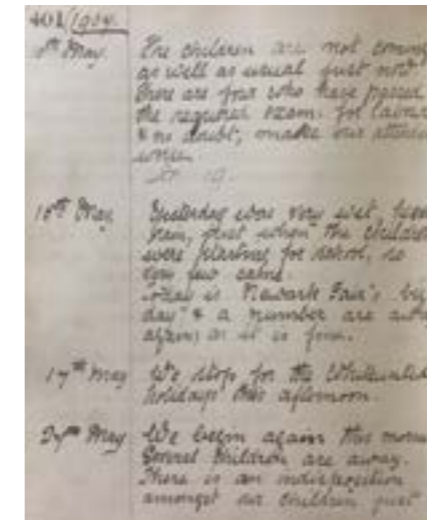


Judith Mills, Ruth Imeson and Richard Gaunt at the launch of the 2022 Heritage Together event.

Of course, FONA does more than just organise a talks programme and one-off events. Beginning under the chairmanship of Richard Gaunt, FONA has purchased practical items to support the work of the Archives; ranging from a stock of pencils to conservation equipment, cushions and a laminator. Also dating to Richard's period as chair, FONA has acquired and deposited a collection of documents relating to the City and County. It is an eclectic mix: minute books, marriage agreements, property leases, school log books and a diary to name just a few. Bought on the open market, these are now accessible to anyone who would like to research them.

The most recent innovation is the decision to move from a relatively

Examples of acquisitions donated by FONA.



A page from the school log book for Winkburn covering the years 1877 to 1912.



A page from a 1660 Terrier of Woodborough.

simple newsletter to a more modern magazine. With a much bigger circulation we hope to publicise the work of FONA and its individual members as well as spread the word about the range of resources available at Nottinghamshire Archives more effectively.

I am immensely proud of what FONA has achieved and I am going to miss

being integral to those achievements. However, I feel I leave FONA in a robust position, with a slow but gradual growth in membership when so many other groups are struggling, and a very strong programme for the coming year. But there comes a time when you have to step away and let someone else, with fresh ideas, take the lead and for me, that time is now. I wish my successor well.

Finally, my personal thanks to all past and present Committee members, the editorial/graphics team for AMICIS and everyone who has taken part in a FONA project or event. It's the members of FONA that make it strong, and I want to wish all my Friends well for the future.



Judith Mills

Newark's Young Lifesaver

One of the most interesting and diverse collections of documents looked after by Nottinghamshire Archives is that of Newark Museum (collection reference DD/NM), the Millgate-based precursor to the National Civil War Centre. The many individual and unrelated accessions within this collection shed light on the people and events of Newark-on-Trent between the turn of the seventeenth century and the second half of the twentieth century. One such document, catalogued under the 'Societies' section of the collection - a bravery award dating from 1868 (DD/NM/24/7/1/1-2) - provides us with a unique glimpse of life in the town during the mid-Victorian period.



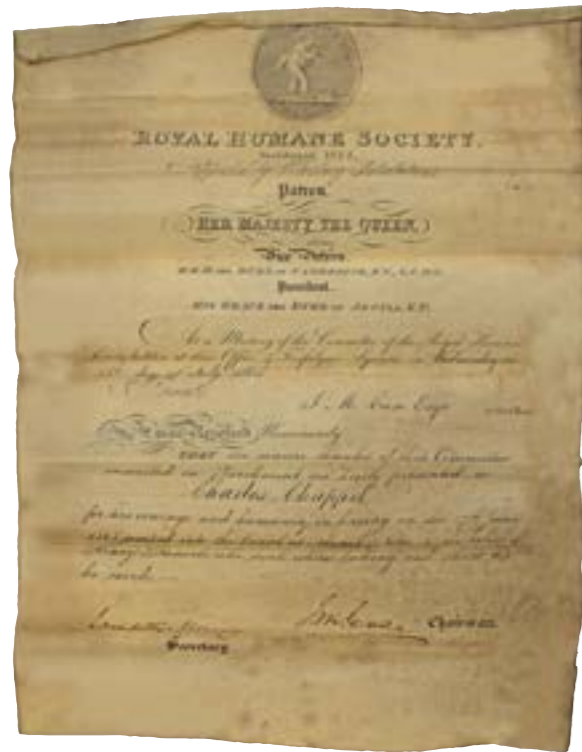
The complete 1836 depiction of the Haling Bridge showing its relationship to the Castle. Courtesy of Inspire Picture Archive.

On the morning of Saturday 27 June 1868, a group of young boys were bathing in the River Trent near the wooden 'haling' bridge which formerly stood in the shadow of Newark Castle. At around noon, two of the boys got into difficulty and were struggling to stay above the water which was six or seven feet deep. Seventeen-year-old Charles Chappell (also spelt Chappel, Chapel, Chappill) (1850 - 1919?), of 21 George Street, happened to be nearby and spotted that one boy, eleven-year-old Henry Daniel (also spelt Daniels), was in distress. Without hesitation, Chappell 'Stripped[,] jumped into the Canal & brought the boy on shore'. Daniel was then taken back to his home and was 'Stripped & [had] dry clothes Put on' (Royal Humane Society case book, July 1864 - December 1870, London Metropolitan Archives, City of London, LMA/4517/B/01/01/009, entry 18,161). Tragically, Chappell had not realised that the second boy, nine-year-old Charles Smith, was also in trouble, and he was unable to be saved. His body was recovered by another passer-by and an inquest held two days later confirmed that he had drowned.



Detail of the Ordnance Survey map of Newark, sheet XXXV.NE (surveyed 1883 - 1884, published 1884). The boys were bathing in the vicinity of the footbridge or 'haling' bridge to the southwest of Newark Castle, probably the stretch of river between the haling bridge and the next bridge to the West, both circled in red. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

Word of Daniel's rescue, however, quickly reached Commander Charles Parker (1794 - 1876), a retired Royal Navy lieutenant who lived on nearby Millgate. As a young master's mate, Commander Parker's own heroic deeds onboard the Queen Charlotte during the Bombardment of Algiers on 27 August 1816 had been recognised with a commission, and he swiftly wrote to the Royal Humane Society recommending that Chappell's actions also be suitably rewarded. The Royal Humane Society had begun life in 1774 as the Society for the Recovery of Persons Apparently Drowned and aimed 'To Collect and Circulate



Royal Humane Society testimonial on parchment awarded to Charles Chappell in August 1868 (DD/NM/24/7/1/1-2). Courtesy of Inspire Nottinghamshire Archives.

the Most Approved and Effectual Methods for Recovering Persons Apparently Drowned or Dead' and 'To Bestow Rewards for the Preservation and Restoration of Life' (DD/865/32/4). The Society's committee met on 15 July 1868 to consider Chappell's case and agreed to award him a prestigious testimonial on parchment to reflect the danger that he had put himself in whilst effecting the rescue.

The Royal Humane Society had asked for the testimonial to be presented to Chappell in front of as large an audience as possible, and the Mayor of Newark had suggested using the Town Hall balcony for the occasion. However, Commander Parker declined the use of the balcony, and at 12:45 on Thursday 13 August 1868, he presented Chappell with his certificate in a ceremony in the centre of Newark marketplace. It was reported that



the presentation 'was witnessed with much interest by a goodly number of spectators', with Commander Parker telling them that 'it was not every man, even though he could swim, that would readily risk his life by springing into the water to save a fellow creature' (*The Newark Advertiser*, 19 August 1868).

It has not been easy to identify the three youths in this story with absolute certainty, due in part to the commonness of their names. Charles Chappell was undoubtedly born on 12 December 1850, the eldest child of labourer Henry Chappell and his wife Avis Chappell née Hand. He was baptised at St Mary Magdalene, Newark, on 28 December 1850. Charles was most likely the same Charles Chappell who married Emily Reckless Walker (1867 - 1933), who was sixteen years his junior, at Christ Church, Newark, on 16 January 1887. By 1911, the couple appeared to be living apart and five of their nine children had died in infancy. This same Charles Chappell died from pneumonia at Newark isolation hospital on 20 March 1919.

Henry Daniel was most likely the illegitimate son of Sarah Ann Daniel and was born in Newark in June 1857. His full name appears to have been Charles Henry Daniel. Charles Smith was born in Newark in 1859, the son of railway signalman William Smith and his wife Ann Smith née Bradwell. Fittingly, the final resting places of Charles Chappell, Henry Daniel, Charles Smith and Commander Parker are all close to each other in the peaceful setting of Newark Cemetery.

I would like to thank Sally Bevan, senior archivist at London Metropolitan Archives, for permission to quote from the records of the Royal Humane Society.

Luke Danes

Editor's note: Two images of the haling bridge can be found on the Inspire Picture Archive:
https://www.inspirepicturearchive.org.uk/image/9491/Newark_Castle_and_wooden_Haling_bridge_River_Trent_Newark_1836

https://www.inspirepicturearchive.org.uk/image/8180/The_wooden_Haling_bridge_over_the_River_Trent_at_Newark

An Institution & a Legend

Discovering John Holland Walker

A few weeks ago, I was passing St Peter's Church in the middle of Nottingham and I thought of the many times I had passed the church but rarely been inside. I had a bit of time to spare so I went up the steps and found the door was open and a welcoming church member invited me to look round. The sun was shining and I was immediately drawn to the stained-glass windows so beautifully illuminated by the sun. After a while one of the windows caught my eye in particular; there was a coat of arms and at the bottom of the 'light' was inscribed the name John Holland Walker 1874-1960. Now how did I know that name?! Gradually it came back to me; this was the name of a local historian I had come across at Nottinghamshire Archives.

I decided to visit the Archives and in the reference library there I found an article (obituary) by A. C. Wood in the Thoroton Society Transactions Vol. LXIV, 1960, which summarised Walker's lifetime journey and his achievements in the world of Nottinghamshire history. One of his principal contributions was to be honorary secretary of the Thoroton Society from the 1920s up to 1956. He held the post jointly for some years with an Alfred Parker. The obituary states that 'under his inspiration and guidance' the Society achieved 'unprecedented levels of success'. Membership grew to numbers never known before and the outings, mostly organised by Walker, were a notable attraction. Under him numbers eventually had to be limited to avoid 'swamping' local catering and other facilities!



St. Peter's Church. Image: Andrewrabbott, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.



Stained glass window commemorating John Holland Walker in St Peter's Church. Photo: Chris Weir.

Walker was born in Yorkshire in 1874 but moved to Nottinghamshire in early years. For most of his working life he was employed at Wm Dixon & Parker, a wholesale clothier in Nottingham; but I suspect his foremost love was local history. He wrote many articles about the history of the city and county. Above all he produced a fine series of Itineraries of Nottingham for the Transactions of the Thoroton Society during the 1920s. These included pieces on Trent Baths and Narrow Marsh. Sometimes his pen took him further afield. In a 1924 Itinerary in the Transactions, he described Oakham Castle and Oakham Church. In 1928 the *Nottingham Evening News* published his *Links with Old Nottingham*. This is a volume of articles and illustrations that reflect his local history interests and wanderings. The Archives reference library has the reprint of this volume that appeared in 1935. In a foreword Edmund Huntsman, Mayor of Nottingham, extolled Walker's talents and referred to 'loitering pleasantly with him' in his historical writings.

John Holland Walker died in 1960 but he is not forgotten. Professor Wood's Thoroton obituary recalls Walker's enthusiasm and dedication, remarking that 'his personality seemed to pervade' everything he did and Wood concluded that he was both 'an institution and a legend'. He is also remembered in that stained glass window in St Peter's Church. Sometimes you never know when history will visit you and take you on a journey!

Chris Weir

Keeping it in The Family

Once a year FONA members have the opportunity to share something about their own interests, usually prompted by a theme. Our 'members only' meeting last year took place on the 30th November with the theme of The Family. We enjoyed mince pies, chocolates and a fun quiz as well as some fascinating contributions. As the proposer of the theme, Elizabeth Robinson spoke first.



The Benn family of Bottesford by Elizabeth Robinson

Elizabeth talked about her great grandparents, William and Mary Benn. William was born in 1838 and Mary in 1841. Stories about the couple have been passed down through the family. William was a platelayer on the railway who later ended up as an Inspector of the Permanent Way (i.e., the railway tracks and lineside equipment). Mary started her working life as a servant, later becoming a lace embroiderer. Mary was the sort of person neighbours sent for in times of trouble. She often acted as a nurse which was reflected in the next generation. Elizabeth described how the work family members did changed, from agricultural labourer and domestic service to coal mining as that industry expanded and agricultural work declined. The education that was available evolved so that daughters became mental health nurses and a son, an attendant. Elizabeth is continuing to write more stories of the Benn family.

Post meeting note: David Stewart, who spoke later, knew about the Benn family at Saxondale and has put Elizabeth in touch with someone else who is researching them. So, a good outcome all round.

Dad - my role model by Judith Mills

Judith declared that she does not do any 'family history' (leaving that to her sister, Ruth). But she wanted to give a short account of her father, George Sharratt (1923 - 2003) who was a very important influence on her life. She began with a rather degraded picture of George aged 12 still in short trousers with his grocery delivery bicycle. Another photograph of George in a suit (*top left*) probably coincided with him leaving school, aged 14. Refusing to go down a coalmine (where all his male relatives were employed), he went to work on the railways, so he still shovelled coal for a while at least. Starting as an engine-cleaner, then driver - he drove Intercity 125s from Birmingham to London in the 1970s - he eventually became 'movements controller' (not the correct job title but the best Judith could remember) at Liverpool Lime Street Station. Always a man of great principle, through

his work for his Trade Union, his church and other interests he was invited to become a Magistrate in Birmingham (both adult and juvenile benches) and, after retirement, he served as a Magistrate in Southport, Lancashire. George was gregarious and gathered friends and acquaintances, so it became a family joke that wherever he went he would meet someone he knew. On a Union visit to Romania in the mid-1960s when it was still a very closed country, he just happened to 'bump into an old mate'. He was also modest, so it was often just in passing that his family learnt about the Peers (usually life, not hereditary), MPs, local dignitaries, museum curators or interesting people he numbered amongst his 'old mates'. His quiet dedication to serving his community, and his family, was a role model for both his children.

Bottom left: George Sharratt talking to school children about the dangers of playing on the railway. Inset photos courtesy of Judith Mills.

A letter from the Trenches by Kevin Powell

Kevin shared a letter found in a house due to be renovated. It was written in 1915 by Private Henry Bird from the trenches in France and was found with a helmet and soldier's poncho. The letter was to Henry's friend Fred Hallam who was recovering from wounds in a military hospital and described what was happening in Fred's absence. It gives a glimpse of life at the front. Kevin also read a poem based on 'My Little Home in the West' with words altered by the troops to describe life in the trenches. It was renamed 'My Little Wet Home in the Trench'. Later, it was discovered that Fred Hallam was in Carrington Military hospital after being shot. He was subsequently deemed unfit for further military service.

The Nottingham History of Nursing Project by David Stewart

<https://nottinghamnursinghistory.wordpress.com/>

David gave an update on the Nursing project that he has been involved with from its beginnings. It was originally set up to ensure the history of nursing in Nottinghamshire was preserved. David described the work they do and

plans for the future. One interesting question he raised was:

Did you know ...There were Nottingham Nightingales? Ten of the students in Florence Nightingale's nursing school were from Nottinghamshire. When it was formed, the Nursing School was very difficult to enter.

Developing Family History Research
by Ruth Strong

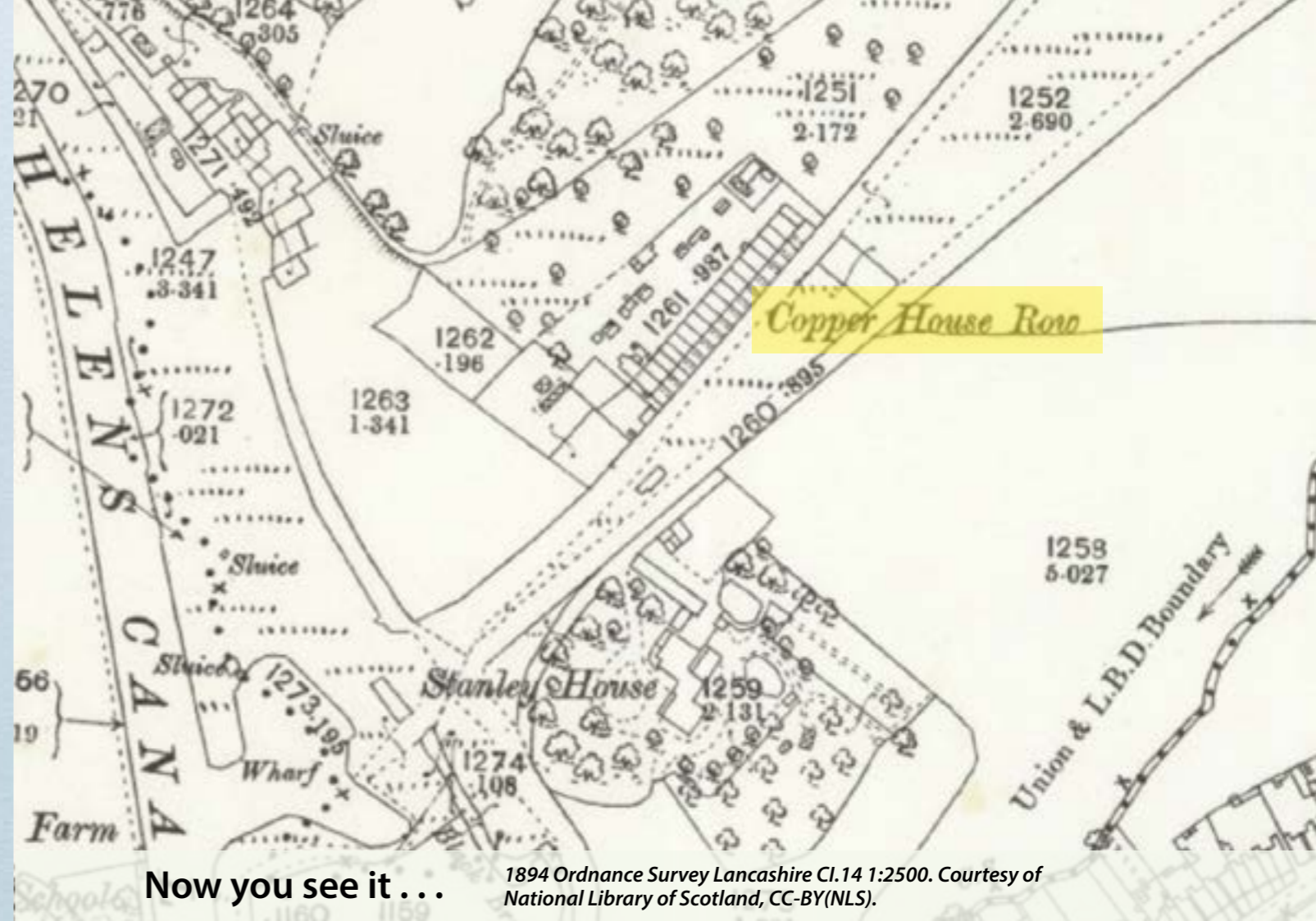
Ruth provided an illustration of one of the hitches that can come with pursuing ancestors, especially in an ordinary family with no criminal or aristocratic links (so far). Her research is not confined to the basic lines of descent. Instead, Ruth wants to know where her ancestors lived, what their work was like and what was going on in the world at the time. A first foray into the unknown was tackling where they lived.

An entry in the family 'Brown Bible' (an affordable bible favoured by working people) prompted digging into the early industrial history of the area. Ruth's great-grandfather, James Unsworth, had written his name and address in the Bible, followed by the dates of his marriage and the births - and deaths - of his children. The address, Copper House Row, was intriguing.

Initially tricky to find because it had vanished completely, eventually the address was discovered clearly drawn on an OS map of 1894. It was a terrace of houses in the middle of a field with a railway line running in front of it. The row of houses was built in the 18th century for workers at the Stanley Copper Smelting Works. This nugget of information led to more digging into the history of copper smelting and ironworks in the area, one of the pioneering enterprises of the industrial revolution. Reports from community archaeology and rescue archaeology in advance of a new road being built revealed evidence that some of the railway lines which eventually became part of the railway system in the area had been laid down as wooden rails in the 18th century when the Copper Smelting works was built. The Copper Houses were demolished around 1909. No trace remains and the site is now part of the Sankey Valley Country Park near St Helens.

The story illustrates how easy it is to lose recent history; history that we think we know about fades from the memory and so becomes ancient history waiting to be rediscovered.

Ruth Strong and Judith Mills



Now you see it . . .

1894 Ordnance Survey Lancashire Cl.14 1:2500. Courtesy of National Library of Scotland, CC-BY(NLS).

. . . Now you don't

Current view of the site of Copper House Row, now part of the Sankey Valley country Park. Image: Map Data ©2025 Google.



Page from the Brown Bible showing James Unsworth's address. Photo: courtesy of Ruth Strong.



Straying onto the Dark Side of Nottingham

with Chris Weir

I have a T shirt bearing the logo: Come to the Dark Side. We have cookies! I ought to have worn it to FONAs meeting on January 18th when Chris Weir delighted us with a miscellany of stories from the more sinister underbelly of Nottinghamshire's history.

Our county boasts a wealth of independent-minded and often radical citizens from all walks of life and many of them are celebrated in local history talks and publications. Chris Weir's talk, Nottingham's Dark Side, conjured up some less familiar tales of murder, mystery and magical mayhem.

Where better to start an esoteric tour of Nottingham than with its demons and witches. Chris had been delving into the records of the Nottinghamshire Assizes and Quarter Sessions where he had discovered a number of 17th century cases that dealt with accusations of witchcraft. Amongst those arraigned was Johanna Clark of Sutton in the Clay accused of witchcraft and felony in 1609. Similarly, Elizabeth and Susan Hudson of North Muskham were suspected of using incantations against Anna Strey in 1616. All the cases mentioned by Chris involved women and, generally, accusations of witchcraft were aimed at women. There were exceptions and it would be interesting to discover whether any records survive of Nottinghamshire men arraigned on this charge. Also, whether there are any records of witchcraft accusations or trials outside of the seventeenth century. As Chris gleefully pointed out, there's more research to be done.

If Nottingham was plagued with witches in the past, it also had people able to combat the forces of darkness. Enter the exorcist John Darrell, who was born in Mansfield in

1562. Darrell was educated at Queen's College, Cambridge and seemed set to pursue a career in the law, but returned to Nottinghamshire instead to become a puritan preacher. As such he became involved in a series of exorcisms. The first was the dispossession of a young woman, Katherine Wright, that took place in Mansfield in 1586. This was followed by the case of Thomas Darling at Burton on Trent in 1596. A year later Darrell was invited to attend a troubled youth in Nottingham, by the name of William Somers, a case that caused his downfall when several people were accused of witchcraft by Somers, including a relative of one of the town's aldermen. This galvanised the town's Corporation against Darrell, resulting in his being declared a fraud.

Nottinghamshire has seen its fair share of grisly deaths and murders. From pit deaths at Skegby to the sad demise of many young 'apprentices' at Cuckney Mill our history is filled with examples of hardship and fatalities. Amongst the sad stories Chris related, none was more moving than that of Ann Castledine who was hanged on 17 March 1784 for the murder of her newborn illegitimate baby. Her body was afterwards sent to County Hall for public dissection by the surgeons and there followed an odd twist to her tale, as the *Nottingham Date Book* relates:

'After the bodies had been submitted to the surgeons, and then exposed to public curiosity for two days extended on boards in the open street in front of the Hall, (an exhibition attended by great demoralisation and disgusting language,) the remains of the young woman [Ann] were given to Mr Fox, surgeon, Derby. While they lay in a barn near his residence a strange gentleman came on horseback to view them. He took up the heart, kissed it, squeezed a drop of blood from it upon his handkerchief, and rode away. This gentleman was doubtless the seducer, who had come many miles to take a last look at the once beautiful object of his cruelty and lust.' (Nottingham Date Book 850 - 1800, Volume One.)



St. Mary's Church, High Pavement, Nottingham, where John Darrell was employed as a preacher. Photograph: Roy Hughes / St Mary's Church Nottingham / CC BY-SA 2.0.



“To perpetuate the recollection of this tragedy, Mr. Anthony Buckles and other gentlemen of Mansfield erected a stone on the site of its occurrence. It has a neat appearance, having four sides worked in panels, with an ornament on the top, and standing on a pedestal. It bore the subjoined inscription “The stone was erected in memory of Elizabeth Shepherd (sic), of Pappplewick, who was murdered by Charles Rotherham, near this place, on the 7th of July, 1817, aged 17 years”.

Extract from an account of the murder of Elizabeth Sheppard published in the Nottingham Evening Post, February 2, 1952.

Equally poignant was Chris’s account of the murder of Elizabeth (Bessie) Sheppard in July 1817. The story of the seventeen-year-old from Papplewick meeting her death at the hands of ex-soldier and knife grinder, Charles Rotherham as she walked home from Mansfield is well-known. Perhaps less familiar is the potential for doubt surrounding Rotherham’s guilt despite the fact that he was convicted of the crime and executed a mere three weeks later. There is also an element of mystery surrounding the stone that was erected in Elizabeth’s memory at the side of the A60. It appears unusual to commemorate this particular death amidst so many similar crimes. We do not know what prompted Anthony Buckles to put up the carved stone that survives today. Bessie Sheppard must have had some special significance to him and the other ‘gentlemen of Mansfield’. A significance that has lingered down the generations as someone still places flowers there in poor Bessie’s memory.

Tragic deaths are often accompanied by restless spirits and people do claim to have seen Bessie Sheppard’s ghost beside the A60. Chris also recalled another ghost who is reportedly seen regularly, the White Lady of Newstead Abbey. Sophia Hyatt, an impoverished deaf woman, lived for several years on the Newstead Abbey estate. She was an ardent fan of the poet, Lord Byron, and roamed the Abbey’s grounds, usually dressed in white. As a result, she was nicknamed The Little White Lady by the Abbey servants during her lifetime. Sophia died in 1825 when she left Newstead to seek a new home. She was struck down by a horse and carriage on Long Row in Nottingham; being deaf Sophia had not heard the vehicle’s approach or the driver’s warning cries. Perhaps the spirit of Lord Byron was reluctant to let Sophia go. The Abbey’s owner, Colonel Wildman, ensured that Sophia was buried at St Mary’s Church in Hucknall, close to Byron’s grave. But she does not appear to be at rest there. Her ghost reputedly haunts the grounds of Newstead Abbey to this day.

These are only a small selection of the fascinating tales Chris Weir told us and which we all savoured with a slight shiver as we enjoyed our tea, coffee and biscuits on that January morning. Because, of course, we had cookies!

Karen Winyard

Editor’s note: Sophia’s story is famously recounted by Washington Irving in *Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey*, published in 1835, which is available on the internet archive: <https://archive.org/details/abbotsfordandne00irvigoog/page/n6/mode/2up>



Bletchley Park Mansion. DeFacto, CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

Summer Outing



THE THOROTON SOCIETY
Nottinghamshire’s History and Archaeology Society



We are joining with Thoroton Society members on an Excursion to Bletchley Park on Saturday 14th June. This English Country house became famous for being the centre for Allied Intelligence during WWII after it was purchased by the head of the Intelligence Service, Sir Hugh Sinclair, in 1938.

Today Bletchley Park is a fascinating Museum housing a variety of exhibitions illustrating the incredible achievement of codebreakers such as Alan Turing and the Ultra organisation. Their genius succeeded in breaking the Enigma codes, a feat that probably ended hostilities two years earlier than expected. A new temporary exhibition this year, *The Age of AI* is included in the price where we can discover how artificial intelligence is a part of our lives today and how AI could affect our future. Souvenir guidebooks can be pre-ordered for £6.50, collection on entry.

The cost will be £45 for coach travel and entry. For a booking form and more details about pick-up points and payment please email ruthstrong4@gmail.com. Booking must be made by 28th May 2025. **Please note this event is only open to FONA and Thoroton Society members and their guests.**

Friends of Nottinghamshire Archives Annual General Meeting 2025

Because of other events happening during the Spring this year, FONA's AGM will be held slightly later than usual on Saturday 5th April 2025 and will begin at 10.45am (coffee served from 10.15am). Hopefully the AGM will not take too long - the 2024 AGM took 20 minutes - and the earlier start allows plenty of time for the talk that follows.

Papers for the meeting will be distributed in mid-March and will include a report on FONA's activities during 2024, a financial statement and the election of Committee members and officers.

Sadly, I have to report that - at the time of writing - no one has come forward to replace me as chair, despite advertising the role widely. All of the existing committee are actively involved in other organisations so understandably are not free to pick up the role. I'm not sure what it means for the future of FONA beyond 2025, if no one comes forward in the next few months.

I urge everyone to consider whether they - or someone they know - might like to take on the exciting opportunity of continuing FONA's work in supporting Nottinghamshire Archives and promoting research into the County's history.

The AGM will be followed by our speaker Jason Mordan, Chairman of the Nottinghamshire Gardens Trust with his talk *Gardens of Delight: a glimpse into the variety of historic parks, gardens and designed landscapes in Nottinghamshire*

Judith Mills



Dates for your Diary

29 March 2025

Nottinghamshire Local History Association's Spring Forum

Ravenshead Village Hall, 10am – 4pm

Tickets: NLHA members £9; others £10 from

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/nottinghamshire-local-history-associations-spring-forum-tickets-1225081294129?aff=oddtcreator>

5 April 2025

FONA Annual General Meeting Followed by: *Gardens of Delight: a glimpse into the variety of historic parks, gardens and designed landscapes in Nottinghamshire* by Jason Mordan, Chairman the Nottinghamshire Gardens Trust.

17 May 2025

Hands on Heritage Day

Mansfield Central Library, 10am to 2pm.

14 June 2025

Summer Outing: joint visit to Bletchley Park with the Thoroton Society. FONA members only.

21 June 2025

Some Women Artists by Sian Trafford, Nottingham Women's History Group.

20 September 2025

Women in Medieval Nottingham by Dr Richard Goddard, University of Nottingham.

End Nov/early Dec 2025

Annual members meeting.

Unless otherwise stated, all meetings are at Nottinghamshire Archives and start at 10.30 for tea/coffee with the talk starting at 11am. Meetings are free to all Members. Visitors are asked to make a donation of £3 towards costs. There may be an additional charge for excursions or workshop events.

Later this year Inspire will be hosting the British Library Living Knowledge Network touring exhibition and also organising events throughout Heritage Open Days in September. Keep your eye on <https://www.inspireculture.org.uk> for details.



Friends of Nottinghamshire Archives

The Friends of Nottinghamshire Archives (FONA) supports Nottinghamshire Archives by

- purchasing manuscripts, books or other items which come onto the open market and depositing them at Nottinghamshire Archives so that they are protected and publicly accessible.
- Purchasing equipment for use by the Conservation team, archivists and visitors.
- Organising joint events.
- One-off projects, for example in 2022-3 a group catalogued and researched a collection of uncatalogued documents and then published a book about their work.

Membership

If you would like to join FONA please visit our website where you can download a membership application form.

For its Members, FONA organises a series of talks and other events on a broad range of topics. AMICIS is published three times each year.

Contact

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<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVXJ1DIsCNOOrTxJcFHViyNQ>



Find us on
Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/Friends-of-Nottinghamshire-Archives-FONA-2558655500820773/>

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Nottinghamshire Archives

Visit

Nottinghamshire Archives, Castle Meadow Road
Nottingham NG2 1AG
tel: 0115 9581634
email: archives@inspireculture.org.uk
web: www.inspireculture.org.uk/heritage/archives

Explore the Archives catalogue

The Archives are the record office for the county of Nottinghamshire and the diocese of Southwell and Nottingham. Our archives date back to the 12th century and cover over 800 years of the county's history. We hold over 4 million archives, so there really is something for everyone!

Research Service

Our experienced researchers can look up information in online sources and archival documents.

Enquiries

Archive enquiries can be made by letter, email or via our online form.

Reprographic Services

Order digital photographs or scans of most archive documents. There is also a wealth of images to explore in the picture archive, where you can also add your own photographs to our pictorial heritage at inspirepicturearchive.org.uk.

National Accreditation

Nottinghamshire Archives has National Accreditation status in the management and delivery of the services it provides.