Amicis

The Magazine of the Friends of Nottinghamshire Archives
No. 39 Winter 2025

Raising the Dead of St. Mary's

Inspire Nottinghamshire Archives

Dr. Richard Goddard on Nottingham's Medieval Businesswomen

Mundella Grammar School

Welcome from the Editor

Welcome to the last issue of AMICIS for 2025 and our warmest Season's Greetings to you all. I hope everybody who attended enjoyed our seasonal 'Members Only' social event, where we shared stories on the theme of Christmas Stuff whilst tucking in to tea, coffee and mince pies. Just the ticket for putting us all into a festive mood. We'll be sharing some of those stories in our next issue. Before that, however, there is much for you to enjoy in AMICIS 39, including an update from FONA and a guide for the first-time visitor to Inspire Nottinghamshire Archives. Plus, there's a report on Dr. Richard Goddard's fascinating talk on medieval businesswomen, on page 14. You may remember FONA began 2025 with some tales from Nottingham's dark side as told by Chris Weir. As this is the traditional season for enjoying gothic stories, we are closing with another piece of Nottingham's darker history. You can find The Resurrection Men, part one of Raising the Dead of St. Mary's, on page 8. Look out for part two, The Gravedigger and part three, The Sexton, in future issues. My thanks to everyone who has contributed to AMICIS 39 and, as always, to Bob Stoakes for producing another great layout.

Karen Winyard
Editor

Submissions are always welcome at amicismagazine@gmail.com.

Cover photographs

Main images
Public Domain Mark. Two men placing the shrouded corpse which they have just disinterred into a sack while Death, as a nightwatchman holding a lantern, grabs one of the grave-robbers from behind. Coloured drawing by T. Rowlandson, 1775. Wellcome Collection. Source: Wellcome Collection.

Inspire Nottinghamshire Archives
Photograph by courtesy of Nick Clarke.

Nottingham's Medieval Businesswomen
Dr. Richard Goddard, Associate Professor, Nottingham University.

Mundella Grammar School
Detail of the bronze WW1 War Memorial in St. Mary's Church, Nottingham.

In this issue

Welcome to new FONA members

Sue & Dave Thomas and Matthew Moran

Letter from the Secretary

Another year of FONA's activity has almost gone and the programme for 2026 is in preparation. I would like to thank the Committee members for their support during this period with no Chair. The Committee has worked together including taking turns at chairing meetings. There have been very interesting talks this year, which are reported in AMICIS, so I will not comment further except to say thank you to all the speakers and welcome new members who joined up after coming as visitors, not forgetting the volunteer washers-up after each meeting.

The Committee has been delighted with the response to our magazine, AMICIS, over the course of this year, so thank you to everyone who has provided us with feedback. The AMICIS team of Karen Winyard and Bob Stoakes continue to work on sourcing interesting articles with an Inspire Nottinghamshire Archives basis. Please do contact Karen if you have a story you would like to contribute on amicismagazine@gmail.com. From 2026, however, we will only be producing AMICIS twice a year, so look out for the Spring and Autumn issues with FONA updates and lots more stories from Nottinghamshire's history.

Our long serving and dedicated Chair, Judith Mills, stepped down in April after ten years in post. FONA is still looking for a new Chair. I would appeal to members to consider whether they could take on this role, or if there is anyone they know. An interest in history is the main requirement. A job description and details are available on FONA's website www.fona.org.uk.

In addition to needing a new Chair, I would like to ask members if they would consider joining the Committee. The Committee is small at the moment, meeting 3 times a year, usually in person but occasionally by Zoom. Being such a small Committee risks our occasional meetings not being quorate so the addition of new members would be helpful. Please contact Secretary@fona.org.uk if you wish to know more or join in.

You will find the dates of FONA's meetings for 2026 on page 16. We look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

Ruth Strong

Can you solve this puzzle?

Many of you have said how much you enjoyed David Stewart's talk and subsequent article in the last issue of AMICIS on Nottingham's nurses, in particular the Trueman sisters. David was able to supply a wonderful image of Matron Ethel Gordon Manson and her 'Sisters' which formed a double spread on pages 8 and 9. This photograph contains a mystery. At least three of the nurses, including Eliza Trueman, wear crosses (circled in the photograph below) on their uniforms. This looks like the same cross that Eliza wears around her neck in her portrait photograph. Enquiries have failed to discover their significance. If you can help solve the mystery please do get in touch. amicismagazine@gmail.com.

Above: Portrait of Eliza Trueman and enlargement of the cross she is wearing.

Below: Ethel Gordon Manson, Matron of Barts' surrounded by her nurses, courtesy of Barts' Archives. Eliza is sitting directly in front of her.

Inspire Nottinghamshire Archives: what can it offer you?

The Friends of Nottinghamshire Archives (FONA) was formed to support and promote the work of the County Archive now Inspire Nottinghamshire Archives. We are so fortunate to have such an excellent resource in Nottinghamshire, one which is perhaps underrated.

But why should you make use of Nottinghamshire Archives and what is it like to visit for the first time?

The Archives hold a mind-boggling number of documents covering over 700 years of County history, including maps, contracts, letters, trade directories, photographs, parish registers and personal journals. There are Poor Law Records, Council Records, Probate Records, Collections deposited by solicitors, Court records, Parish Registers, Records of Sneinton Asylum, and access to Census Returns, to name but a few. Whether you need to research your family history, follow a person, place or subject of personal interest or find information for a school project, you will find something relevant at the Archives.

At heart though, it is a little like a public library, albeit reference only, but with pizzazz and oomph. The pizzazz and oomph are supplied by the teams of archivists and archive officers; together with the knowledge and skills of the document conservators and bookbinders, who keep or restore old documents - and some not so old - in good condition so that they will be available for study for many years to come.

For example, the King James bible owned by Southwell Minster was taken for repair and conservation before its return to the Minster in February 2025.

But what is it like to visit in person for the first time? Similar to many organisations, information for visitors is available on line. https://www.inspireculture.org.uk/heritage/archives/visiting-archives/

Even so, on my first visit many years ago I was a bit daunted, but soon found the help I needed. Here is my 'travel guide' for first time visitors.

The Archive building is conveniently placed. It is an easy ten-minute walk along the Nottingham Canal path from Nottingham station and tram stop and the bus stops

A receipt for hire of the Arboretum for a light show, Nottinghamshire Archives, TC10/70/1: 1880 Public Parks Committee, letters received. This image was used to illustrate an article by Sheila Leeds on the Victoria County History in Nottinghamshire, Issue 8 of the FONA Newsletter, January 2015.

Courtesy of Inspire Nottinghamshire Archives.

A section of the remarkable George Sanderson circular map of 20 miles around Mansfield, published in 1835. The map was the subject of a FONA talk by Adrian Henstock reported in Issue 12 of the FONA Newsletter, May 2016.

Courtesy of Inspire Nottinghamshire Archives.

Some examples of images registered as John Player & Sons trademarks. Nottinghamshire Archives, DD PL 6/21/1-3. The image illustrated an article by Judith Mills on the collection of John Player & Sons early marketing material in Issue 13 of the FONA Newsletter, September 2016.

Courtesy of Inspire Nottinghamshire Archives.

which are located along Carrington Street. There is a small car park. Parking places can be reserved by calling 0115 958 1634. Alternatively, the car park at Nottingham Station costs £5 for the day after 10am. A walk from the city centre via Maid Marion Way or through the new Nottingham Green Heart gardens takes around 15 minutes - unless time is spent sitting in the Green Heart and admiring the new statue, Standing in this Place.

Nottinghamshire Archives are open Tuesday - Saturday. Opening hours are 9.00am - 7.00pm on Tuesdays. 9.00am - 5.00pm, Wednesdays - Fridays; and 9.00am - 1.00pm on Saturdays.

Once through the doors of the Archives building a wide vista of knowledge opens. To the mystified, the first point of call is the reception desk where the visitor will be asked to sign in. If you do not already have an Inspire library card, staff on the desk will issue one on production of some form of ID with name, address and signature. A driving licence is ideal. First time visitors with an Inspire Library card will need to bring their ID to activate their card for Archives use. Lockers are available to store belongings. Only pencils, paper or laptops are allowed in parts of the study areas.

You are then all set and ready to use the facilities in the open area. There are computers where you can search family history records and

The reception area and lockers.

use Ancestry with their newspaper archive. You can also use the microfiche readers to look at a variety of sources including parish registers.

But what if you want to consult an original document? Well, then follows the 'Finding Of The Right File'. Do not panic!

View across the search room showing computers and fiche readers in the background.

All the records are catalogued so the first task is to consult the catalogue, which is also available on line and can be checked before a visit. But do remember that not all records are currently available online. If you cannot find what you are looking for online, there is a comprehensive physical card index system to the catalogue that you can search. The staff can assist with advice on what search terms to use.

The catalogue reference will direct you to the catalogue file with all the details of the document you are looking for. Once the document has been found in the catalogue, a yellow request slip has to be filled out with the catalogue reference, your name, the date and your library card number. This is then left with reception. Documents are brought from the strong room at timed intervals throughout the day at 10.00, 11.30, 14.00, and 15.30. There is an additional collection at 17.30 on Tuesdays, when the Archives remain open until 7.00pm. When the document has been brought up from storage, you hand your library card to the reception desk and you will be allowed in to the restricted reading area where you can work on your document. Cushions and weights are available to protect fragile documents.

The index area with the catalogue files. © Nick Clarke.

Advance orders of up to eight documents can be requested ahead of your visit via email with one calendar weeks' notice.

The restricted reading area. © Nick Clarke.

At last, the visitor is equipped with documents and ready to embark on a journey of discovery using the resources from across the whole county, whether it is to find when their house was built or what great-great grandad's peculiar sounding occupation meant or what the significance of a folk custom is.

From researching the big questions of the day -whatever they may be in the future - or what people got up to in the Lockdown of 2020 as the country ground to a halt, many answers if not all, are at the publics' fingertips in Inspire Nottinghamshire Archives. And first-time visitors are welcome.

Ruth Strong

Raising the Dead of St. Mary's

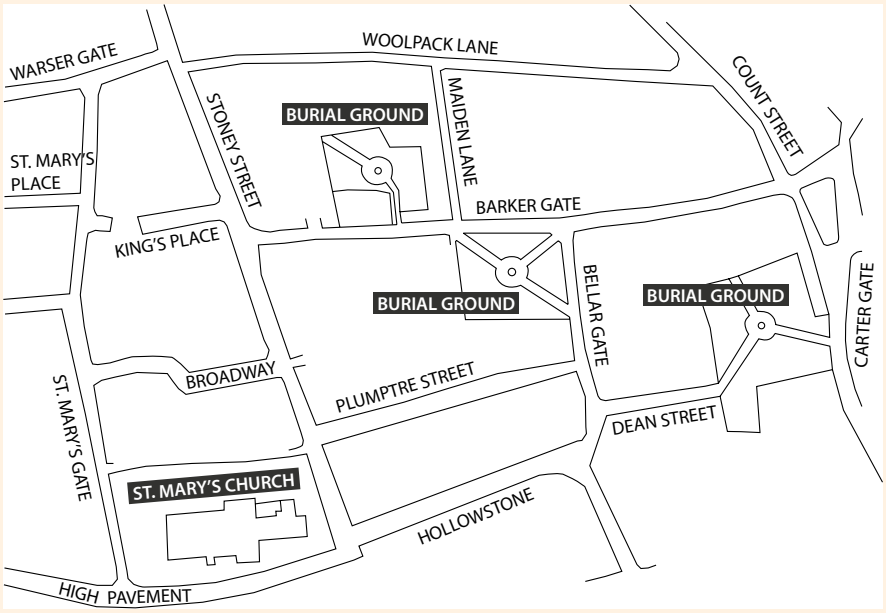
Part One: The Resurrection Men

One of the joys of researching in the Archives is discovering unexpected and unlooked for stories. I came across this grisly episode in Nottingham's history whilst exploring the diary of John Rainbow, Governor of the House of Correction (Nottinghamshire Archives DD 808/1).

"On the evening of Thursday the eighteenth of January one thousand eight hundred and twenty seven a hamper was taken to Messrs Pickfords Warehouse on the Flood Road near the Leen Bridge in the Town of Nottingham, and it being suspected to contain something improper the man was desired to open it but he refused saying he would fetch his Master. … The hamper when opened contained the bodies of an aged female and a boy about six years of age, both proved to have been taken from St. Mary's Burial Ground … On the report getting about in Nottingham the next day, a general search was made in the Burial ground and about forty empty coffins found, the bodies having been taken out …"

An adaptation of an original image of St. Mary's Church, Nottingham by Alan Murray-Rust. Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic license.

This was an irresistible research 'rabbit hole' to explore and I found detailed accounts in the Nottinghamshire newspapers. In summary, a Mr. and Mrs. Smith had taken lodgings on Maiden Lane in November 1826, conveniently placed near to two of the three burial grounds for St. Mary's church. Smith associated with two other men, William Giles and Mr. Vernon.



St. Mary's Church and its Burial Grounds.

These two did not lodge at Maiden Lane but stayed at various public houses in the town. They were known in the community and thought to be travelling hawkers dealing in contraband goods. It was Giles and Vernon who rented premises, including a stable, at the dyer, Mr. Bullivant's yard on Leen Side where they kept a horse and a cart bearing Giles' name.

The first coffin plundered bore the date of the 3rd November, indicating the gang commenced grave robbing early that month. They continued to operate in the area, unsuspected, until mid-January, targeting the three burial grounds of St. Mary's church. Their activities were brought to an end when they aroused the suspicions of Mr. White, the booking clerk at Pickford & Co., where Mr. Smith had brought a hamper for delivery to London. Mr. White, thought the package suspicious and refused to accept it for conveyance unless it was first opened for his inspection. This Smith refused to do without the owner's consent. Despite White's best efforts to detain both Smith and his 'master', both men made their escape although they were forced to abandon horse, cart and hamper. Smith, Giles and Vernon were not seen in Nottingham again and, shortly afterwards, Mrs. Smith quitted the house on Maiden Lane. When the hamper was opened, they found,

> 'the bodies of an aged woman and a little boy, about three and a half years old; they were packed in straw, were doubled up in the smallest compass possible, the mouth of the woman being stuffed with straw, and that of the child with wool.'

(*Nottingham Review,* 26 January 1827)

The subsequent scenes in Nottingham were heartrending as people flocked to the burial grounds, opening up recent graves, many finding only the empty coffin and the grave clothes. Upwards of thirty bodies were missing.

The three men were never traced by the Nottingham authorities, but if they had been caught and charged the result of the trial would have been disappointing. Stealing a body was not illegal until 1788

"Resurrection Men", an 18th-century cartoon by Thomas Rowlandson, public domain via Wikimedia Commons.

when the case of R. v. Lynn ruled it a misdemeanour. As such it attracted a comparatively light sentence; an injustice compared to the sentence of death for felonies such as minor theft that prevailed at the time. For this reason, the resurrectionists always left coffins and grave clothes behind. Stealing them was deemed theft, incurring a higher penalty.

By 1827 body snatching had become big business as the demand for bodies for dissection grew with the rise of schools of anatomy, particularly in London and Edinburgh. Organised gangs, like the Borough Gang in Southwark, negotiated contracts with leading surgeons like John Hunter and Sir Astley Cooper. As the gangs expanded their activities to towns and villages across the country to meet the ever-growing demand, the public were becoming increasingly aware of, and concerned by the extent of the problem, both through newspaper reports and cartoons.

The authorities in Nottingham faced two difficulties in tracing the gang of resurrectionists: they were not local people and some had used aliases.

A probable identification for two of them suggest they worked for Sir Astley Cooper. The man known as Smith was identified at the time as Bill Hollis from a letter that he left behind in the house on Maiden Lane.

> ‘and in the house a letter was found, of which the following is a copy:-
>
> “ *- Lincoln’s Inn Fields, January 15 1827*
>
> *Mr. ***** acquaints Mr. Hollis, that the hampers have been duly received, and that he will attend to the direction respecting payment. If the articles are good, some may be disposed of next week.*” ’

(*Nottingham Review, 2*6 January 1827)

Hollis, a member of the Borough Gang, often partnered another gang member, Tom Vaughan. Vaughan may have been the man known in Nottingham as Vernon. Although, I think it more probable that it was Vaughan and his wife who used the alias of Smith and rented the house in Maiden Lane and Hollis called himself Vernon. The letter to Hollis was not sent to the house on Maiden Lane, but to the Post Office in Nottingham, ‘To be left till called for’. (*Nottingham Review*, 26 January 1827).

Certainly, the methods used in Nottingham bear all the hallmarks of Hollis and Vaughan’s handiwork. Sir Astley Cooper’s nephew, Bransby Cooper, left

"The Anatomist Overtaken by the Watch", by William Austin (1773), showing a caricature of surgeon, John Hunter. Public Domain https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.phpcurid=23585613.

a description of both men in his biography, *The Life of Sir Astley Cooper, Bart.*, (1843). Hollis had previously been a Sexton who conspired with resurrectionists before becoming a full-time gang member. He later tried to earn a living as a hackney coachman, but was unsuccessful and 'died in a state of great wretchedness and poverty'.

Vaughan started out as a stone mason's labourer and was, according to Bransby Cooper, 'a fellow of bad character, without common prudence, and of dissolute and drunken habits'. He had operated in Manchester and Liverpool in the past, supplying bodies to the London surgeons, notably Sir Astley Cooper. Having escaped justice in Nottingham in 1827, he continued bodysnatching but was finally arrested in 1830 along with his wife, Louisa, and four others, charged with stealing two bodies at Great Yarmouth.[1] Vaughan and his wife were using the alias, Goslin. On this occasion they made the mistake of stealing the grave clothes as well. They were imprisoned for one week each for the misdemeanour and transported for seven years for the felony. (*North Devon Journal,* 16 December 1830).[1]

The third resurrectionist, William Giles, is less easy to identify. Nobody of that name appears in Cooper's biography. Perhaps he was the William Giles who was sentenced to one month in the House of Correction as a rogue and vagabond, having been apprehended in St. Ayliffe's burial ground at night, acting suspiciously at a newly-made grave. (*Morning Advertiser*, 16 December 1824). Seven months after the events in Nottingham, a William Giles, alias Turton, was committed for trial on the charge of counterfeiting. It was reported that,

> 'The prisoner Giles seems to be known as a man denominated a resurrectionist, who has been in the habit of furnishing the hospitals with subjects from the burial grounds in the metropolis and its vicinity. He is a remarkable looking man, thick set, and of determined resolution.'

(*Morning Herald,* 6 August 1827)

Giles' trial for high treason was heard at the Winter Assizes at Kingston. He was found guilty, although his female accomplice was acquitted.

> 'The learned Judge immediately passed upon him the awful sentence of death, without holding out to him the slightest hope of mercy.'

(*Weekly Times London,* 16 December 1827)

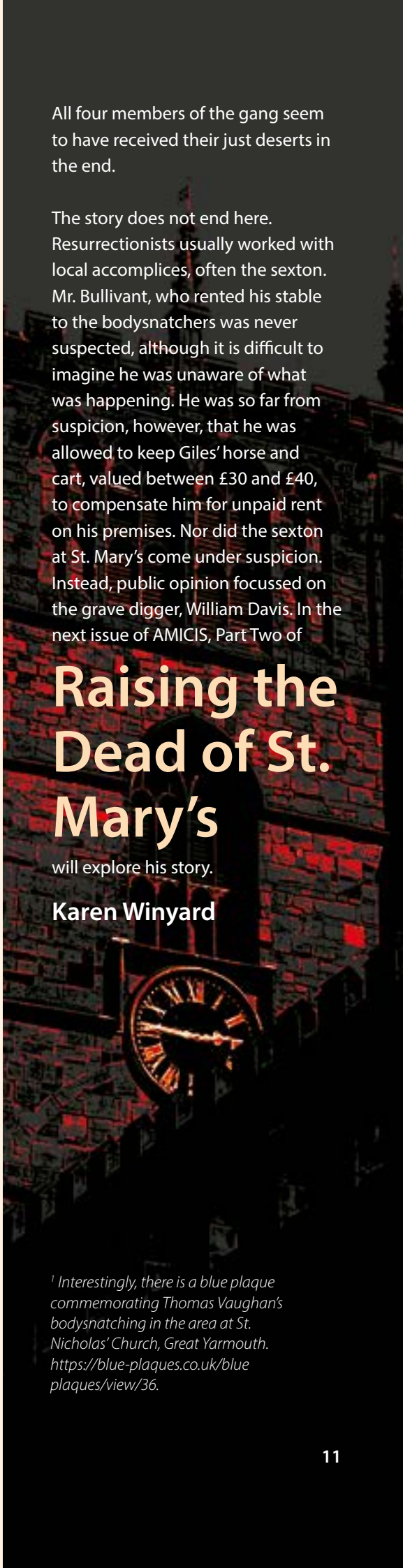
All four members of the gang seem to have received their just deserts in the end.

The story does not end here. Resurrectionists usually worked with local accomplices, often the sexton. Mr. Bullivant, who rented his stable to the bodysnatchers was never suspected, although it is difficult to imagine he was unaware of what was happening. He was so far from suspicion, however, that he was allowed to keep Giles' horse and cart, valued between £30 and £40, to compensate him for unpaid rent on his premises. Nor did the sexton at St. Mary's come under suspicion. Instead, public opinion focussed on the grave digger, William Davis. In the next issue of AMICIS, Part Two of

Raising the Dead of St. Mary's

will explore his story.

Karen Winyard



[1] *Interestingly, there is a blue plaque commemorating Thomas Vaughan's bodysnatching in the area at St. Nicholas' Church, Great Yarmouth. https://blue-plaques.co.uk/blue plaques/view/36.*

Bilborough and Mundella Grammar Schools

I have often wondered whether to submit some of my research into Mundella Grammar School to this magazine. Alas, as with other wonderful ideas I have, this has dropped to the bottom of the pile!

Mundella Grammar School. Photo by Janet Blanchard, no.6663, courtesy of https://www.mundella.org.uk/photo-galleries/category/12-school-buildings.

I was, therefore, jolted into reality by June Cobley's reminiscences of Bilborough Grammar School in Issue 38 of AMICIS.

In 1948 the Nottingham Development Plan came up with the idea of changing Mundella into a single-sex school, boys only. This met with much dismay and opposition, and in 1949 the Director of Education had the "last word" and said that the girls would henceforth attend a new school.

In September 1951 the provision of a new school was announced, for both boys and girls. The new building, at Bilborough, would incorporate the Mundella WW1 Memorial, and the contents of the school library! This did not go down very well because the new school would be granted many advantages that the old Mundella pupils had longed for.

In 1956 Mundella gained a reprieve. Apparently, the opposition of influential Old Scholars had helped to sway the final decisions about the City's Grammar School plans.

Mundella was sadly demolished in 1985, and the WW1 Memorial went missing. It was tracked down in the storeroom of Portland Primary School and, after a great deal of organisation, was rededicated at St. Mary's in the City. There is a moving description of this on the website.

The school in process of demolition. Photo courtesy of https://www.mundella.org.uk/photo-galleries/category/12-school-buildings.

Obviously, Nottinghamshire Archives holds details about the Old School. We ourselves have a tiny museum of items retained from the school closure, and bequeathed by friends, parents, grandparents, and great grandparents!

Our history is far too long for this publication. Please read all about us on the Mundella website, www.mundella.org.uk and remember, those Gone Before cannot speak for themselves, it is up to us to do it for them.

Margaret Astill (née Dexter)

The Southwell and Nottingham Church History Project

How many people, I wonder, are aware of the Southwell and Nottingham Church History Project and its really useful website.

The website, which was launched in 2000, was built on work already done by the late John Severn and continued by a team led by Dr. Chris Brooke (a member of the Diocesan Advisory Committee) and Professor John Beckett from the University of Nottingham. Working with a huge team of volunteer researchers historical and archaeological information about the churches in the diocese was collected and published on the website. Of course, a lot of the research was carried out at Nottinghamshire Archives, which is the official depository for diocesan records.

A Heritage Lottery fund grant in 2008 allowed the project to continue with the website developed as a resource for tourism and education. Although that phase of work ended in 2014, volunteers continue to contribute new information and the website is continually updated.

Currently the site holds details of 323 churches, many having full entries; some only partial information and a few just have an introduction. The 'page' for each church potentially has links to a vast range of information including:

- Collections of historical documents with on-line catalogues
- Stained glass
- Organs
- Bells
- Monuments and memorials
- Stonework
- Buildings
- Pictures
- Plans
- Maps
- Clergy
- Genealogy and registers
- Local History

There's a comprehensive index and lots of additional information – do have a look at it, it's a fascinating resource. https://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/_main/index.php .

You can also explore the Nottinghamshire Archives Catalogue yourself: http://nawcat.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/default.aspx

Judith Mills

Commerce Trumps Ideology:

Nottingham's Medieval Business Women

On 20 September 2025 we were delighted to welcome back Dr. Richard Goddard from the University of Nottingham, who members will recall gave a very enlightening talk previously on Nottingham's medieval caves. This year Dr. Goddard provided us with a fascinating account of Nottingham's medieval business women.

The main primary sources used were the fourteenth century Nottingham Borough Court Rolls together with the fifteenth century Mayor's and Court Books, all of which are held at Nottinghamshire Archives. The Borough Court was the venue for dispute resolution and keeping the peace within the community. Civil pleas or legal suits for breaches or wrongdoing were heard by a jury of senior men. They are an invaluable resource, providing insights into the lives of Nottingham's urban 'common' people.

The court maintained the smooth functioning of the 'market' or town's economy rather than society itself; and the cases it heard were a source of income. Parties found guilty were fined. If a plaintiff failed to make his case and the defendant was found innocent, the court could impose a fine for bringing the suit - a medieval 'win-win' for the court.

The concept of business women in this period strikes a discordant note with the general view of women in an essentially patriarchal society. Theoretically women were confined to the domestic sphere of the household and there was a clear gender demarcation of roles. This

was largely driven by the medieval church's thinking about women and sin. Women were believed to be vain and deceitful temptresses; the serpent in the Garden of Eden was often depicted with a woman's head. Women were driven by their emotions and greater sexual appetites. Accordingly, they were deemed less intelligent or capable than men.

The Temptation of Adam and Eve from Lutwin's 'Eva Und Adam', from a mid-fifteenth century manuscript from the National Library of Vienna, Codex Vindob. Lutwin (Lutwinus zu Mettlach?), Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

There was a further impediment to women engaging in commerce in the form of the common law doctrine of coverture. On marriage a woman's legal existence and identity was merged with that of her husband, so that they became one person in law. As 95% of women were married at this period, the majority of them were subject to coverture, which theoretically prevented them from owning property in their own right, entering into contracts, obtaining loans or otherwise contracting debts; a significant disability in the Middle Ages when traders extensively used credit. In medieval England a woman could not represent herself in court, even when the case concerned her.

Despite this, a minority of women did engage in trade, both nationally and internationally. They specialised in importing household goods, dealing in smaller quantities than their male counterparts.

Dr. Goddard provided examples of Nottinghamshire's business women, notably the case of Agnes Hallam (or Halum). Agnes appeared in Nottingham's Borough Court in 1376 when she was found innocent of the charge brought against her by William Cotyles of detaining some spurs and breaking two vessels. Cotyles was fined 6d for bringing the suit, (Nottinghamshire Archives reference CA/1279/17/).

In 1395 Henry of Plumtree sought to recover 9s 6d that Agnes owed to him for malt. Agnes admitted the debt and incurred a fine of 3d, with damages of 4d, (Nottinghamshire Archives reference CA/1294/8/).

In both instances Agnes represented herself in court which would suggest she was unmarried, possibly a widow. In fact, Agnes was the wife of a cloth merchant, John Halum and there were occasions when the couple appeared in litigation as partners. Agnes would have been well-known in Nottingham and to the court as she had a 'legal' career spanning twenty-seven years in connection with her commercial activities. Agnes was a brewster and ran an ale house from her home in her own right. In addition, she also worked as her husband's agent, bringing cases in the court on his behalf, as when she sued a man for damaging cloth that she had delivered to him for fulling on John Halum's behalf.

John and Agnes Halum had separate commercial interests and litigated separately within their areas, but also co-operated with each other. Dr. Goddard suggested they were an example of a 'family firm' or business partnership with husband and wife running two separate departments, both bringing in income. Agnes seems to have been commercially shrewd. She frequently admitted her debts in court, suggesting she used litigation as a means of lengthening the payback time for her purchases. The cost in pennies of a court fine and interest on the debt may have been worth the purchase of an extended payment time, particularly when credit would not have been easily obtained by a woman.

Nor was Agnes exceptional. The Nottingham Borough Court Rolls reveal many women appearing before them in commercial suits. In one year, ninety-two women litigated in Nottingham's court. Agnes herself sometimes sued other women, so that both plaintiff and defendant were female. Clearly not all the women appearing in Nottingham's court were merchant's widows carrying on their late husband's business once free of coverture. This poses the question, did business trump ideology? Did the court simply not 'see' gender, but only buyers and sellers to enable the jury to resolve commercial disputes and ensure the smooth, efficient functioning of the market? There was the theory of women's role in society during this period, but it can be seen from Dr. Goddard's talk how communities operated in practice.

Cherry Knight

Update on Geoffrey Bond and Thoroton Society Research Awards

The deadline for applications for the Geoffrey Bond and Thoroton Society Research Awards has been extended to 31 December 2025. They are open to individuals or groups undertaking research on the history and archaeology of Nottinghamshire. Awards can be used to support research including the acquisition of research resources or travel expenses. The conditions of the award and details of the application process can be found on the Thoroton Society website where there is also a list of previous successful awards. http://www.thorotonsociety.org.uk/bond-awards.htm

Enquiries or completed applications should be sent to me at markdorrington52@gmail.com.

Mark Dorrington
Research Awards Administrator

Dates for your Diary

FONA meetings 2026
Saturday 17 January
Saturday 21 March - AGM followed by Judith Mills, *'One Parish, Two Churches, Three Families: some snapshots of 1,000 years of village history'.*
Saturday 16 May
Saturday 18 July
Saturday 19 September
Saturday 28 November

Details of speakers to be announced.

All meetings are held at Inspire Nottinghamshire Archives and start at 11.00am with doors open at 10.30am, with tea, coffee and biscuits available. Free to FONA members. A donation of £3 is asked from non-members.

Interested in becoming a member of FONA? Membership application forms are available from Nottinghamshire Archives or from our website, www.fona.org.uk.

secretary@fona.org.uk
amicismagazine@gmail.com
https://www.fona.org.uk

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