



June 2016



Welcome to June news Nottingham Castle Transformation newsletter

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Here's what the project team has been up to in the past month:

Project Team update

Richard III Society Visit - Earlier this month the project team hosted a visit from representatives of the Richard III Society. Both parties were keen to explore possible partnership opportunities for the life of the development project and beyond. King Richard III resided at Nottingham Castle for part of his reign, departing from there in 1485 for Bosworth, where he became the last English King to die in battle. We look forward to working with the Richard III Society in the future to ensure that this element of the Castle's history is celebrated.



Nottingham Caves Festival - An initial meeting has been held to discuss Nottingham Caves Festival, due to launch in October 2016. This event will be held annually, and from 2017 onwards will feature in the Nottingham Castle Activity Plan. Key partners in the Caves Festival will include Nottingham Civic Society, The Malt Cross, Galleries of Justice and Experience Nottinghamshire. The aim of the festival will be to encourage increased public access to our fascinating caves across the city, including our famous caves and tunnels at the Castle. Keep your eyes peeled for further updates in the coming months.



HLF submission preparations - This month has seen all members of the project and professional team hard at work finalising documents and plans ready for the Round 2 HLF submission deadline looming in July. This is a really exciting time for the project as we see the plans coming to life, and we can really appreciate the amount of work that has gone into the development process over the last 18 months.





FREE family fun day at Nottingham Castle!

Lord Mayor's Parade - Saturday 2 July

Enjoy a great free day out this weekend at this celebration of Nottingham.

11am - Head to the Old Market

Square to watch the horse and carriage parade, which will set off to the Castle at 11am

10am - 5pm - Nottingham Castle and grounds are open completely FREE, with the chance to meet Robin Hood, enjoy live music in the bandstand, have a go at archery, see falconry displays and more!

The Castle Transformation Team will be at the Castle, in the South Bastion all day to talk to people about the transformation plans. Please come and see us.

Find out more at about the event at [Nottingham City Council's What's On page](#)



Object feature - alabaster

Welcome to our new regular feature highlighting star objects from our museum collections. All of the **'objects of the month'** will take pride of place in our new gallery displays, currently being designed by Exhibition Designers Casson Mann.

What is it?

Our first selection is "The Flawford Virgin & Child". This beautiful carving dating from circa 1380 is one of the earliest in our internationally significant collection of alabasters.

Why is it significant?

Alabaster is rarely found in England now, but was mostly quarried in the East Midlands making Nottingham an important medieval centre for carving. Pieces from the thriving export trade still survive in other countries.

Tell me more

Alabaster carvings were common in English churches, but most carved and painted religious images were destroyed during the English Reformation in the 16th Century.

Our carving is one of three, discovered in 1779 under the chancel floor of the demolished Church of St Peter in the medieval village of [Flawford](#), between Ruddington & Edwalton.

All three carvings came into the museum collection in 1908.

In our opinion

"This object was selected as a true survivor and because of the beauty of the carving. There is a slight sway to the Virgin's pose and many little details are evident, such as the crimped edge of her veil, which she holds delicately in her left hand - and the way the fabric is gathered over the crook of her left arm. You really get the sense of the sculptor thinking about how the fabric moves with the human form." – **Deborah Dean, Visual Arts Collections & Exhibitions Manager**

You can currently find "The Flawford Virgin & Child" on display at the Castle within the History of Nottingham displays.

Dye garden - Gardening volunteer project at Brewhouse Yard

There is a tradition of textile production and dyeing at Brewhouse Yard. Innovations in dyeing took place here and made William Elliott one of the richest men in Nottingham – he invented black dye.

For this reason, gardening volunteers have been busy working on a dyeing garden down at Brewhouse Yard. Work got underway in late April. At present the dye garden has been planted and there has been a workshop on dyeing using plants. Nottingham City Council's Volunteer Programme Coordinator, **Karen Lushey** explains...

"The dye garden is in one of the front cottage beds. It was been kept very small to be more easily managed. A freelancer came in and explained how to dye using plants etc. (this is actually a much longer process than you may think).

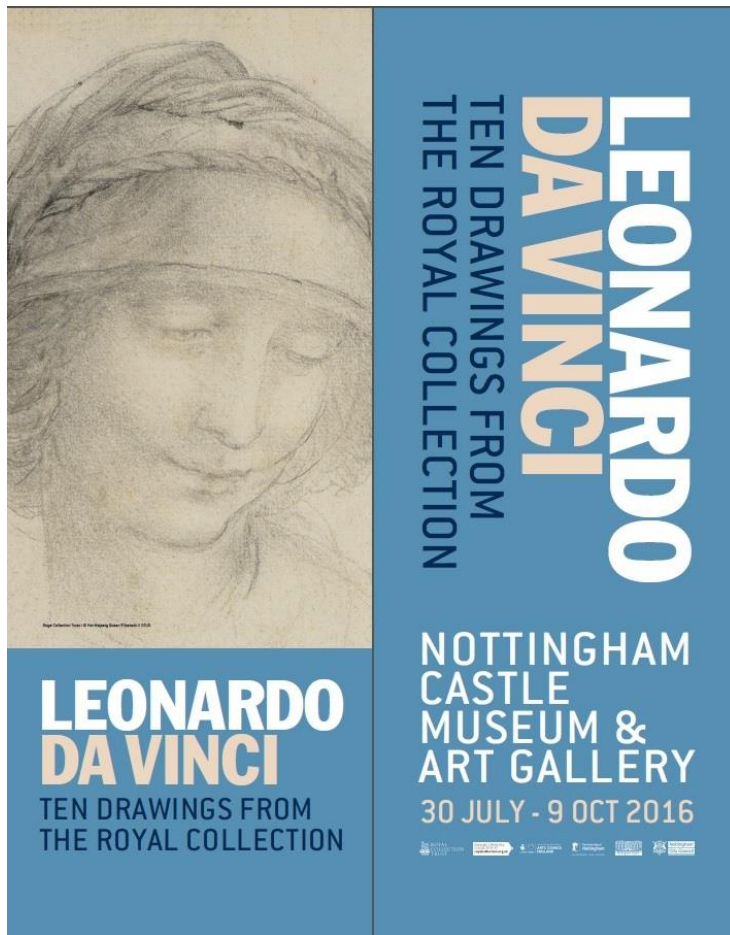
There is another workshop in September at Woodthorpe Grange's Grow Your Own event where the team will pilot a short dye session with visitors. If this works out well we are hoping to do this as a regular offer at Brewhouse Yard.

Funding for this work has come from several pots. Some Arts Council England budget for the gardens and some contribution from the Nottingham Castle development budgets.

Going forward, there are plans for a garden cart project (sort of like the art carts in the galleries) that is going to be part funded from award money from the Marsh Trust as well as Arts Council England funds."

The project is always looking for more people to help in gardens! [Please get in touch](#)





Leonardo is coming to Nottingham Castle!

Don't miss this rare opportunity to see drawings by one of the world's greatest artists, when they visit Nottingham Castle this summer.

Leonardo attempted to record and understand the world around him through drawing. The exhibition shows the incredible range of his interests, from painting and sculpture to engineering, zoology, botany, map making and anatomy. It also demonstrates his mastery of different drawing materials.

An exciting programme of events, talks and activities for all ages will accompany the exhibition - please [visit the exhibition website](#) for more details.

Why not take advantage of the new Nottingham Castle £7 annual visitor pass and return as many times as you like for a year?



Scott's facts and findings

Welcome to Scott's sixth column. In this edition, he is going to update on the archaeological excavation at the Castle which took place at the beginning of the month...

"Many readers will be aware that in the 1970s and early 1980s there were several excavations at the castle which have shaped our current knowledge of the castle and its development from the time of William the

Conqueror, through to its eventual destruction in 1651 and the construction of the current Ducal Palace in the 1670s.

One of these excavations, in 1978, found the upper part of a human skeleton (from the chest upwards) but the skeleton was not fully exposed at the time. The exposed bones (fragments of skull, a lower jaw, ribs, parts of the spine, shoulders and upper arms) were removed and carefully stored in a museum store. And that was the end of the story... until a few weeks ago."

"On 1 June an excavation began on the Castle Green. A trench measuring approximately 7m by 6m was dug to locate the 1978 trench and importantly the rest of the skeleton.

Before any excavation could take place permission was required from the Secretary of State for the Department of Media, Culture and Sport, which made a decision based upon advice from Historic England. This permission was needed because the site is a Scheduled Monument, protected by law due to its national importance. In order to remove human remains from the ground, a license was needed from the Ministry of Justice.

The excavation had to be partially shielded from public view, so that the remains could be excavated

with due care and decency.

The excavation was undertaken largely by mechanical digger, with an archaeologist from Trent & Peak Archaeology supervising, before a small area was excavated by hand once bones had become visible.

The rest of the skeleton was cleaned and recorded before being taken away for further examination. Following the excavation, I was lucky enough to do a small amount of digging to try and find any dating evidence beneath the grave.

The skeleton will now be studied by an osteologist from Trent & Peak to try and estimate the person's height and stature and to identify any signs of illness or trauma that the individual suffered in life. The remains found in 1978 suggested the individual was between 20 and 25 at death. During the excavation in June it was quickly apparent the person was male.

Shortly before the excavation began, I took a sample of the bones found in 1978 to Oxford University where radiocarbon dating will take place. It is hoped to establish whether the man was a Parliamentary captain who we know was killed at the castle in September 1643.

Results for the dating are expected any day now. Later this year we may have further tests carried out to work out details of the individual's diet and establish their place of birth."



Mercian Regiment gallery reopens

The Museum of Mercian Regiment (WFR Collection), formerly known as the Sherwood Foresters Gallery, will be officially reopened on 2nd July to coincide with the centenary of the Battle of the Somme.

Why not come and visit this popular gallery in its new home on the mezzanine floor at the Castle?