



June 2017

Welcome to the latest Castle Transformation Newsletter

Our June 2017 issue features:

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Project update - June

Here is the project news for June

Text workshop - Members of the Content Development Team were lucky enough to attend a Text Workshop this month led by award-winning writer and journalist [Dea Birkett](#), and museum interpretation specialist [Rebecca Mileham](#). It was an incredibly fun and useful day full of tips and practical advice, which will act as a catalyst for our Text Strategy due to be developed during RIBA Stage 4. Check out pictures and thoughts on the workshop on the [@textworkshop](#) Twitter feed.

Cave tour at Volunteer event - Ann Inscker, Curator of Archaeology and Industry and our Content Lead for Explore, became a tour guide with a



difference at June's Nottingham City Museums and Galleries (NCMG) volunteer conference. Dressed as the eccentric Miss Kirkby (a former resident of the Castle), Ann conducted two groups of volunteers on a tour of Mortimer's Hole caves. This was a pilot tour in order to test draft scripts currently under development. The feedback from the volunteers was very useful and will guide further work on this aspect of the project.

Teacher's event - Programme Manager Cal Warren met with primary and secondary school teachers at NCMG's Teacher's Open House Event earlier this month. Cal presented the interpretation plans for the Castle and gave the teachers a tour of the proposed education spaces. It was great to be able to share this information and also get feedback from this key audience group.

Visitor Economy Summit - Members of the Project Team attended the Nottinghamshire Visitor Economy Summit, hosted by Visit Nottinghamshire on 15 June. An exciting line up of speakers explored topics such as national strategy and industry trends, as well as developments in sector digital technologies. This was timely for our project and very much enjoyed by those who attended.



Lord Mayor's Parade and the inaugural Tricycle Joust

The Lord Mayor's Parade took place on 24 June with thousands watching the swearing in of the new Lord Mayor and Sheriff of Nottingham and the City being blessed.

Thanks to those of you that came to visit the Castle Transformation Team on the Castle Green. We really enjoyed our first Tricycle Jousting event and can report there are lots of talented knights in waiting in the City! There are a few shots of the action below.

Watch out for the team at more events over the coming months. We'll let you know what we have planned.

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Scott's findings

Welcome to column sixteen from City Archaeologist, Scott Lomax. This month, he explores the Water Cave...

"There is a cave at the foot of the Castle Rock, which despite being next to Mortimer's Hole, is relatively little known. The cave is known today as the Water Cave. At the time of its discovery in 1936 it was named the South Cave.

The cave was discovered in circumstances that attracted great interest. George Campion, who was Director of the Thoroton Society Excavation Section, had been undertaking excavations at and around the castle for a number of years. That same year he had led investigations at the Western Passage and the Northwestern Passage.

In February 1937, when excavation had been completed, Campion told The Nottingham Journal that on three successive occasions, he had what he described as a vivid dream in which he saw a cave at the foot of the Castle Rock. The dreams encouraged him to excavate at a specific location and upon digging into the ground he revealed a cavity in the rock.

Campion was keen to point out that his dream was not some sort of psychic experience, but instead that he had always suspected there might be a cave at that location and having spent so much time thinking about the Castle and its caves he inevitably dreamt about it.

Campion and his fellow amateur archaeologists were assisted in excavating the cave by staff from Nottingham Castle. Upon full excavation, a chamber was found to measure approximately 12m in length, 5m in width and 7m in height. Holes in the sides of the chamber provided evidence of a timber platform. Passages were found on either side of the chamber, running in the directions of Mortimer's Hole and the Western Passage."



(Top) Photo taken in 1936 during the course of the excavation, showing two of the excavators (identities unknown). (Bottom) Reconstruction produced by George Campion in 1937.

"Unfortunately this cave, which is of medieval date, is now largely inaccessible. When discovered it was remarked that the cave floor was approximately 2m below the River Leen (Castle Boulevard largely follows the course of the Leen). Being below the water table the cave is flooded. It was because the area was prone to flooding that the land at the base of the Castle Rock was substantially raised, thereby hiding all trace of the cave. Medieval pottery in the lower fill of the cave seemed to suggest the cave was partially filled during that period.

The cave appears to have been accessible, at least in part, during the 17th century. Lucy Hutchinson, wife of Colonel John Hutchinson (Parliamentarian

Governor of the town of Nottingham during the Civil War) wrote in her memoirs of her husband that there was a spring, which was known as Mortimer's Well, near to Mortimer's Hole. This must have been the cave we know today as the Water Cave.

Campion believed the cave was a boathouse, whereby boats would travel along the River Leen and sail into the cave where goods they were carrying could be unloaded. If Campion was correct then there must have been a significant diversion of the River Leen at the foot of the Castle Rock, or a manmade channel leading from the river to the cave. Certainly there was a channel excavated to divert water from the Leen in order to power the mills that once stood in the Brewhouse Yard area but due to limited archaeological work in this area it is not known whether boats could get close to the Castle Rock, let alone enter into a cave.

Unfortunately we cannot know whether Campion was right, although future archaeological work in this area, should any excavation be undertaken, could shed some light on the function of this cave and its undoubted important role in the servicing of the medieval castle."

Meet Jade!

The project team has recently appointed a new member. Welcome to **Jade Everatt!**

Business admin apprentice, Jade is loving her new role, and even over a few short weeks, has watched the project really moving along.

As she understands the project better and as we really get into the development, she can't wait to become more involved. Jade has already taken part in the Futures event and Tricycle Jousting and is currently making suggestions on future social media platforms and content as well as providing pieces for the newsletter.



Futures – give yourself the edge event'

The Castle Transformation Project Team recently attended a careers event - 'Give Yourself the Edge' which was put on by Futures (A partnership of the City and County Councils) for year 7 students at Harvey Hadden Sports Village. New apprentice, Jade was at the event and tells the story of the day...

"The idea of the day was to offer the students a wider idea of career opportunities in the heritage sector and to give them a bit of a taste as to what the working world is like.

Programme Manager, Cal Warren spoke about the transformation project and asked pupils to think about what jobs they thought would be available within the Castle and what jobs will be available by 2020 when the project is finished, urging them to think outside the box to job roles such as cleaners and gardeners rather than the obvious answers such as gallery assistants. Had they considered actors and storytellers? Our very own Friar Tuck was on hand to tell them all about that kind of role."

Cal then explained the team's job roles, along with other roles they have had in the past, following this up by asking what jobs students think they would like to do, linking it back to their favourite subjects at school or what they think they might take for their GCSE's."

We had some great responses, especially as some were interested in jobs which could link to the project for example artist's, actors, and architects. We hope we managed to inspire them and offer a new insight into the working world of history and museums."



Object of the month

What is it?

Our selection this month is Ben Nicholson's still life oil painting "Bistre II" which dates from circa 1932.

Why is it significant?

A son of Newark-born painter Sir William Nicholson and Mabel Pryde (also an artist), Ben Nicholson was a pioneer of British abstract art. Inspired by both

post-impressionism and cubism, he is known for the way he experimented with colour and form in his works.

Tell me more

Bistre II references real objects with the profile head and names of the oil paint tubes from which it takes its name. However Nicholson also plays with shadows and overlapping shapes which are traditional indicators of depth in paintings. In addition, his use of colour confuses the viewer's understanding of background and foreground. These devices combine to produce a kind of floating space where colours and shapes continually rearrange themselves in relation to each other.

In our opinion

Bistre II is such an intriguing painting – it has the appearance of a collage, with overlapping shapes painted on to the surface of an old piece of scratched and marked wood. The lettering (which refers to the colours of some of the paints he used) is a reminder that we are looking at a flat surface and even the profile of his second wife, the sculptor Barbara Hepworth, has become part of the pattern. We will be displaying Bistre II alongside other 20th century paintings and ceramics that explore similar ideas about colour and form.

Bistre II will feature in the new Art as Inspiration Gallery currently being designed by exhibition designers Casson Mann.

Deborah Dean, Visual Arts Collections and Exhibitions Manager

For more information, please visit these websites on: [Sir William Nicholson](#), [post-impressionism](#), and [cubism](#)

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On display at Nottingham Castle

Symposium - 'Saving treasures - Felix Joseph's gifts to Nottingham'

Saturday 15 July 11am – 3.45pm

Tickets: £12.00 and include entry to the Castle, teas/coffees and a sandwich lunch. To book visit the [Nottingham Castle website](#)

Art collector Felix Joseph was one of the first individuals to give generously to Nottingham's museum and art gallery at the Castle when it first opened in 1878.

He firstly loaned and then donate his substantial collection of Wedgwood pottery and eighteen-century drawings and prints.

In honour of his generosity, the Castle Museum Committee commissioned a portrait of him by Charles Knighton Warren, and this portrait will be moved from its usual place in the Long Gallery and will form part of an 'in focus' exhibition which highlights some of the many works on paper and Wedgwood pottery that Felix Joseph donated. Eighteenth century artists Samuel Wale, Paul Sandby, Angelica Kauffman, Henry Fuseli, Thomas Stothard and John Flaxman are all represented in this small exhibition.

This symposium will draw together Curators of Fine and Decorative Art Louise Dunning (who curated the exhibition) and Pamela Wood, an authority on Wedgwood, to discuss the collection on show in the exhibition and Felix Joseph's relationship with Nottingham Castle Museum & Art Gallery.

Guest speaker Dr Isabelle Baudino, who is Senior Lecturer at the ENS in Lyons and has been a Visiting Fellow at Magdalene College, Cambridge, extensively researching the artist Samuel Wale, will be giving a talk entitled *'Samuel Wale's drawings at Nottingham Castle Museum: designing illustrations for every taste.'*



We Dig the Castle 17 July to 18 August

Local residents can be part of the story of Nottingham Castle this summer, uncovering its history as archaeology trainees with **We Dig the Castle**

We Dig the Castle is looking for members of the community who would like to be trained in hands-on-archaeology while being part of Nottingham Castle's annual excavation.

The dig runs on weekdays between 17 July and 18 August and is carefully designed to increase our knowledge of the history of this area of the Castle site. With a new programme of training sessions, tutorials and workshops, we're offering more ways than ever for participants to experience different areas of archaeology and to try out a range of skills. Due to popular demand the project is offering a first Saturday training session, running on 5 August.

The [@wedigthecastle](#) training excavation is now fully booked. [You can still join the waiting list](#)

For more information, to see the calendar of activities, or to book please visit the [Trent and Peak website](#)