



September 2016

## Welcome to September news

### Nottingham Castle Transformation newsletter



This month, we feature:

- MP visit to the Castle
- Object of the month - lace dress
- Scott on archaeology after planning decisions
- Caves Festival

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

**Planning decision** - We are very pleased to announce that at the Planning Committee on 21 September, the decision was made to grant planning permission for all of the elements of the Nottingham Castle Project.

This includes the re-design and refurbishment of existing facilities including a free standing visitor centre, an extension to cover the kitchen courtyard and a play area in the Castle ditch. This is great news for the project and for the future of the Castle.

**Open weekend** - The project team was at the Heritage Open Weekend this month, talking to members of the public about plans for the Castle. It was great to meet so many people and also to be on site during the Mela, which was held at the Castle on 11 September. We were so impressed with this event, it was great to see the whole site used in such interesting and diverse ways.

**Virtual reality** - Members of the project team and Castle site staff were lucky enough to get a sneak preview of the Virtual Reality Caves experience, currently being developed by Nottingham City Museums and Galleries in partnership with Hot Knife Digital Media.

This was a fantastic experience, and we were struck by the quality of the imagery, which has been produced with the aid of 3D scans of the cave systems which were conducted by Trent & Peak Archaeology. There will be a chance to have a go yourself when this experience features as part of the Nottingham Caves Festival. There are more details below...

## Caves festival

Monday 17 - Sunday 30 October 2016

Come and join in Nottingham's heritage at the city's first Festival of Caves. The Festival will be held between 17 and 30 October and will help promote the the 700+ manmade caves in the city.

The event is being organised by the City Council, in association with many cave owners across the city. A marquee in the Old Market Square will be the venue for talks, information stands, finds handling, a mock archaeological excavation for children and a virtual reality cave tour using the latest technology.



There will be tours of caves across the city with a number of special tours and events.

At the Castle, there will be storytelling in the caves, talks in the Cosmic Ray cave on 22 and 23 October, and special costume led tours in the Ducal Wine Cellar, as well as tours of Mortimer's Hole.

Over the past few months, 22 new caves have been identified thanks to research and public appeals. If you know of any caves and you think the City Council might not be aware of them, please email: [scott.lomax@nottinghamcity.gov.uk](mailto:scott.lomax@nottinghamcity.gov.uk)

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### Cave Festival Facts - Did you know?

The Caves Festival coincides with two anniversaries with a connection to the caves at Nottingham Castle.

**On 19 October 1330**, King Edward III led a small band of Knights along a secret cavernous passage through the castle rock, enabling him to capture Roger Mortimer.

**On 17 October 1346** King David II of Scotland was captured by the English following his defeat at Neville Cross. It is said he was for a time held in one of the caves beneath the castle, perhaps that which has become known as King David's Dungeon.

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*Programme Manager Cal Warren shows Lillian Greenwood MP around the site*

## MP Visit

We were proud to host MP Lillian Greenwood for a recent tour of the Castle and site. We were able to explain our plans for the site in the future and the processes and timeline that we are currently working through with the Heritage Lottery Fund.

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## Object of the month

### What is it?

Our selection this month is a “Lace Crystallography Dress” made by the Nottingham lace manufacturing firm A.C. Gill & Co in 1951.

### Why is it significant?

The long ivory dress is made of machine embroidered Schiffli lace and was created for display at The Festival of Britain held in London in 1951. The festival was of international significance with Trowell in Nottinghamshire being selected as the “Festival Village”.

### Tell me more

The festival aimed to capture a spirit of recovery & optimism after the Second World War, whilst promoting British science, technology, industrial design, architecture and the arts. Our dress was part of the Festival Pattern Group exhibition of textiles, wallpapers & domestic objects featuring patterns based on x-ray images of the crystal structures of natural materials. The pattern within the lace of our dress is based on the crystal structure of the mineral Beryl.

## In our opinion

“We have selected this “Witchcraft Lace” dress because it shows how the Nottingham Lace industry developed new approaches and products after the war. The Festival Pattern Group Project demonstrated the potential for art, nature, science & industry to come together to inspire new designs for fashion & interiors. It’s great to see that this innovation applied to lace too.” - Deborah Dean, Visual Arts Collections & Exhibitions Manager

**The dress will feature in the new Story of Nottingham Lace gallery currently being designed by exhibition designers Casson Mann.**



## Scott's facts and findings

Welcome to Scott's ninth column. In this edition, he discusses the recent planning permissions obtained for the site and what that means for archaeology...

"Although planning permission has been granted for the development plans at the Castle, further excavations will have to take place if funding is granted and the go ahead is given to start work.

The largest excavation will take place in the Outer Bailey, extending from near the Gatehouse towards the bandstand. Others will take place in the Inner Ditch and the Service Courtyard. There will also be archaeological monitoring, minor groundworks and maintenance.

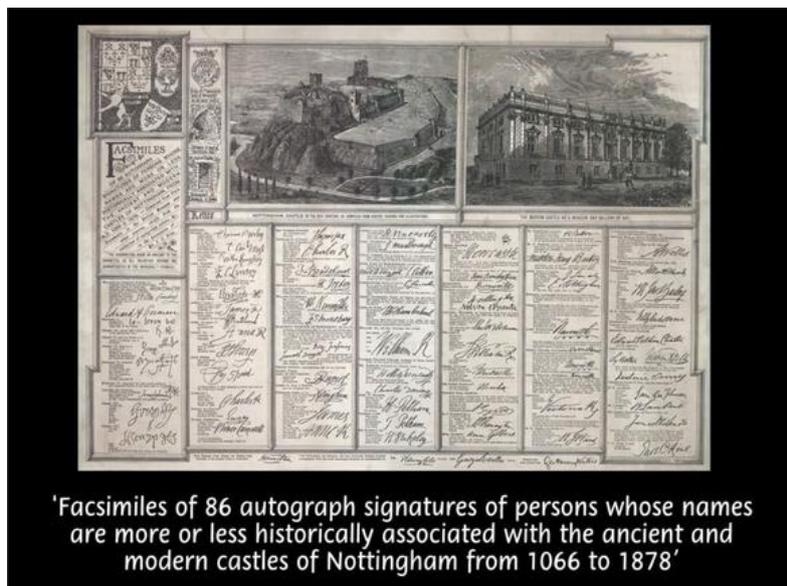
### What may be discovered?

Small excavations have already revealed parts of the ditch that helped defend the **Upper Bailey** of the Castle from the time of the Castle's construction shortly after the Norman Conquest, through to the Civil War. This ditch will be further investigated.

In the Outer Bailey, evidence of medieval and post-medieval occupation will be investigated in detail.

An excavation on this scale will provide a vast amount of new knowledge of the development of the Castle from the medieval period, showing what was happening during the height of the Castle's power, through to when the site went into decline in the 16th and early 17th centuries, as well as during the Civil War.

The use of the Outer Bailey as gardens during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries will also be revealed more fully.



## Iron Age

The site's occupation from the construction of the Castle in 1067 or 1068 is widely known but the Castle Rock was also occupied at a much earlier date, more than 2000 years ago, during that period we call the Late Iron Age.

Excavations have found pieces of Iron Age pottery mixed with more recent material, along with prehistoric worked flints. An excavation approximately 100m north of the Castle, on the site of the former General Hospital, revealed surviving remains of an Iron Age ditch.

### Why this spot?

It is understandable that prehistoric settlers would choose to live on such a prominent position which overlooked the Trent Valley and the surrounding landscape. It was exactly for this reason that William the Conqueror later sited his castle here.

The nature of this early occupation is unknown, but it almost certainly existed within the site of the Castle. Remains of ditches have not been found at the Castle but that is because they are either too deep beneath the ground (buried by later landscaping) or they were destroyed during the Castle's development. Yet remains might possibly be encountered during future archaeological work.

**At the moment, there is no timeline for archaeological work to take place but we will keep you posted**