



October 2017

As we move into November, here is the news from last month...

Welcome to the latest Castle Transformation Newsletter

Our October 2017 issue features:

- Project update
- Object of the Month - Arthur Spooner (1873 – 1962) The Goose Fair
- Jade's Column - NTU bloggers, Love Libraries Week local studies event
- Lace Unravelling Roadshow
- Nottingham Pageant cancelled and the Beer Festival
- The Visited Folk - a review of the new cave tour for October
- Scott's Findings - Civil War archaeology - part two



Project update

Welcome to the project update for October

Illuminate meeting - The project team was delighted to meet with Illuminate (Nottingham Museums Young Arts Collective) and update them on project progress during the launch of their Activity Plan project – Rebellious Retail. This project sounds fantastic and is an opportunity for the group to use their creativity to come up with gift shop products which reflect the rebellious nature of Nottingham's past. We can't wait to see what they come up with!

Website plans in development - We have been hard at work this month planning our brand new project website,

and it shouldn't be long before development begins in earnest. We are very excited at the prospect of having a shiny new home for all of our project information, including designs, activity plan updates, collections and research information, and FAQs. We'll keep you posted when we're ready to go live!

Talk on the project - Our Programme Manager was very pleased to be invited to speak at an event hosted by the Nottingham 41 Club earlier this month. Her talk entitled 'The Regeneration of Nottingham Castle' was very well received and an enjoyable evening had by all. The project team has also been out and about at lots of other exciting events this month – see our feature articles below for more information.



Object of the month

What is it? Following the annual Nottingham Goose Fair we have selected an oil painting by Nottingham artist Arthur Spooner (1873 – 1962) titled **The Goose Fair**.

Why is it significant? Spooner attended the Nottingham School of Art and later became Master of the School of Painting and President of the Nottingham Society of Artists. The Goose Fair is one of his most famous paintings and was purchased for the city in 2004.

Tell me more The Goose Fair was painted in 1926 from Spooner's rooftop studio overlooking Market Square and records the fair on its historic site before its relocation to its current home on The Forest Recreation Ground. In an interview in 1960 Spooner revealed that the clown in the foreground of the painting was in fact a self-portrait.

In our Opinion: "This painting has been hugely popular with our visitors since it was first hung in the Long Gallery in 2004, probably because it depicts such a lively, captivating local event. It is a large canvas (nearly 2 metres tall and over 2 metres wide) and is crowded with many interesting characters of various ages, mostly intent on enjoying Goose Fair.

These include the small boy drinking from a coconut that he has presumably just won, the clown selling party blowers, the balloon seller and the man tickling the lady on the neck with a goose feather. The whole painting is a riot of movement and colour and really captures the atmosphere and the bright, artificial lights of Goose Fair."

Louise Dunning, Curator of Fine and Decorative Arts

The Goose Fair will feature in the new 'Art as Inspiration' Gallery currently being designed by exhibition designers Casson Mann in the section looking at narrative paintings.

The Goose Fair is presently on long term loan to the Nottingham Castle gallery from the private collection of Sir Harry Djanogly © The Artists Estate.

[Dan Snow explores work of artist Arthur Spooner](#)

[Hidden Paintings of the East Midlands – BBC, Dan Snow](#)
[Nottingham Goose Fair in Pictures: Pictorial of over 100 Years](#)

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Nottingham Pageant and the Beer Festival

Beer Festival

The Beer Festival went ahead as planned, beating the storms although surviving a huge downpour on opening Wednesday.

There were 1,225 different ales on offer from 287 breweries and 284 ciders and perries from 129 producers. This was one of the three biggest such events outside London. The event will move to the Forest Recreation Ground as the work on the Castle Transformation will take precedence on the

site.

Robin Hood Pageant

The Pageant, was a victim to the weather.

The risks from Storm Brian combined with the Castle's elevated and exposed position, meant it is standard practice for parts of the grounds to be closed where high winds are predicted. Weather forecasts showed winds of up to 46 mph were expected that Saturday.

The Pageant has been rescheduled for the weekend of 10 / 11 March 2018 at Nottingham Castle. Tickets already purchased will still be valid for the rearranged event, however people who

are unable to make the revised dates can apply for a refund from the point of purchase. [Read more](#)

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Jade's Column

Love Libraries Week - On 12 October, the project team attended a Local studies event as part of Libraries week.

"The main point of the day was to collect local people's knowledge and possibly photographs of local demonstrations they may have witnessed or taken part in. We had a great time listening to people's stories and experiences of Nottingham.

We played a few short films to explain the transformation, gave a sneak peek of galleries such as lace and Robin Hood and showed off Nottingham's incredible cave system. It was lovely to see people so interested and engaged in all there is to look forward to in the future of Nottingham Castle, we hope to see everyone we met again at future events and once the transformation has taken place."

If you're reading this and you have stories or photographs of local demonstrations in Nottingham please send them



to:nottinghamcastleproject@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Blogging Society - "This month Nottingham has welcomed new students with open arms and the Castle is proving a popular place for students to want to visit. I met up with some of NTU's new blogging society who popped up to the Castle as part of their Fresher's tour around Nottingham, they had great fun taking photos with the Robin Hood statue!" (see top image)

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Halloween at the Castle - The Visited Folk

The Visited Folk

During 28-31 October Nottingham's Acting City Archaeologist Scott Lomax gave tours of caves at the Museum of Nottingham Life, followed by an illustrated talk about his research into a medieval burial site in Nottingham city centre.

Project volunteer **Yvonne Armitage** was lucky enough to go on a tour - here is what she discovered...



"In 1349 Nottingham suffered a devastating outbreak of plague which killed a significant proportion of the population. To discover more about this I went to one of 'The Visited Folk' events at Brewhouse Yard last weekend where Acting City Archaeologist Scott Lomax was leading plague themed tours of the Brewhouse Yard Caves.

Scott explained that plagues were a relatively frequent feature of life in Medieval Nottingham. They were considered to be the result of a visitation from God, so those who fell victim became known as 'the visited folk'. As there was nothing that could be done to treat them, they were placed in isolated locations outside of the immediate town boundaries to avoid the spread of infection. Records show that caves at Brewhouse Yard were used for this purpose."

The 1349 outbreak proved hugely expensive for the Nottingham burgesses who spent large sums of money on guarding the town against any plague victims trying to get in. Ironically only those people living in Narrow Marsh among the fires and stench of the tanning trade seem to have been immune to infection.

After an enlightening tour we had a rare chance to go into the Cosmic Ray Cave. Here we were lucky enough to have a look at the reconstructed head of a medieval Nottingham peasant thought to have died from plague. The skull which the reconstruction is based upon was excavated from a mass burial site in Nottingham City Centre during the 1960's. The work of scientists at a number of eminent universities combined with Scott's painstaking research has provided a truly fascinating glimpse into the life and death of a previous Nottingham resident."

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Do you know your *clawkers* from your *cams*, or your *jennying* from your *Jacquard*?

If the answer is *yes* and you worked, or are still working in the lace industry, we need you!

Nottingham City Museums **Lace Unravelling** project is holding a roadshow for you to bring along any items related to the lace industry for discussion or perhaps for donation. We'd also love it if you have any photographs or stories from the lace industry to share with us.

So why not come along and see items from the Nottingham Museums lace collection (recently designated a collection of national importance), have a chat and find out more about the Lace Unravelling project?

Ground floor, fully accessible, parking available.

Saturday 21st October 2017, 10am-4pm
Long Eaton Art Room
(Have you ever worked in this building?)
Lime Grove, Long Eaton, NG10 4LD

Nottingham City Museums
Lace Unravelling
Nottingham City Council

Lace Unravelling: A Roadshow for the Nottingham Museums Lace Collection

Project Assistant Tonya Outtram tells the story...

"As Storm Brian noisily heralded the start of Saturday 21 October, a small group from the Nottingham Museums Lace Unravelling Project prepared the Long Eaton Art Room for the day ahead. Their goal: to capture stories, objects and information/knowledge regarding the Nottingham Lace Industry and in so doing, fill gaps in the lace story told by the lace collection (designated a Collection of National Importance by the Arts Council).

Tables were filled with objects from the collection, including bobbins, carriages, a jenny and various lace panels. Pictures of mystery objects were laid out, photos and information displayed. Tea cups and biscuits were arranged and paper lace bunting was festooned. The scene was set. All that was needed now was some people...

They arrived in a steady stream, and by lunchtime there were various crowds around sections of the displays and Curator (Ann Inscker) and myself were kept very busy meeting and talking to lots of them.

Many had brought items to share or to generously donate, which were received with grateful thanks.

The Chair and the Treasurer of the Long Eaton Art Room also joined in with the activities, demonstrating a sock machine and providing information about the history of the buildings (the perfect venue for the event as they were originally lace factory buildings and also the HQ of Lace Productions Ltd - a key organisation in Nottingham lace history).

All in all, a successful first roadshow (yes, there is another in the pipeline!). Thank you to all our Lace Unravelling project mentors, the legends of the lace industry who turned out and made the day extra special (at one point it seemed to turn into a grand reunion for ex Guy Birkin staff!), and many thanks go to our small band of volunteers who welcomed everyone and generally helped out."

More information about the Arts Council England-funded Lace Unravelling project is available at: www.nottinghamcastle.org.uk/behindthescenes-blog

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Scott's findings

Congratulations to City Archaeologist, Scott Lomax on his twentieth column.

This month, having already covered The Occupation of Richard's Tower, St Nicholas's Church, and the town defences, he continues with the two-part series on archaeology of the Civil War in Nottingham with more examples of physical remains left by this conflict between the King and his Parliament.

John Spor Wod

In 1878 an inscribed stone was discovered at the castle, reused in the construction of the Ducal Palace, and is believed to date to the Civil War. Although parts of the Latin text (part of a Psalm) are illegible, due to wear, the name of the author of the inscription is visible. He appears to have been called John Spor Wod and research into this man is continuing.

Evidence of the Castle's Destruction

Following the Civil War the castle was largely destroyed so that it could not be used in any future conflict. Layers of demolition material from the 1651 destruction of the castle have been found in parts of the site including the Middle Bailey and Richard's Tower. Two pits were found in Richard's Tower, which had seemingly been formed in order to undermine the structure and cause it to collapse. Fragments of the medieval stonework of the castle have been found in parts of the site such as within the bridge approaching the gatehouse, at the entrance to the castle, where part of a stone window jamb was used in a late 17th century repair/partial rebuild of the bridge.

A Skeleton?

A skeleton first investigated in 1978 and further excavated in 2016 was long thought to be a casualty of the Civil War. However, radiocarbon dating has since proven this man most probably died during the 16th century.



The John Spor Wod tablet

Derry Mount

A hill, known as Derry Mount, once stood to the north of the castle on land which later became part of the General Hospital. In the 1780s, during the construction of the hospital, the hill was levelled and a number of human skeletons were found and it was believed that the individuals may have been executed or slain in battle. A dagger, coin and a token dated 1669 were found. The burials were thought to date to the Civil War, although records relating to the discovery of the remains are very vague. The 1669 token is later than the Civil War but the skeletons may have been poorly excavated, with later deposits becoming mixed during what would have been a hurried excavations by labourers. The circumstances of the burials, and their date, remain somewhat of a mystery.

Other Evidence at the Castle

There has been relatively little in terms of archaeology relating to the castle. This is probably due to any remains being deeply buried by landscaping associated with the building of the Ducal Palace in the 1670s and later landscaping in the 19th and 20th centuries.

However, archaeological excavations that will begin place next year offer the real prospect of discovering important remains associated with this period of the site's history. Excavations in the Service Courtyard and Outer Bailey in particular could find structural remains and evidence of Civil War defences. A small excavation which may take place in the Middle Bailey may also reveal evidence of the Great Chapel which was used as a prisoner for Royalist soldiers captured following the failed siege of 1643. It is highly likely that further evidence will be found of the castle's destruction following the Civil War, with demolition deposits and fragments of the medieval castle likely to be encountered. Evidence of the repair of parts of the castle, to strengthen it so that it could be used as a garrison for Colonel Hutchinson's men, may also be found.

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with family, friends and colleagues

Contact Nottingham Castle Project Office

Tel: 0115 876 5253

Email: nottinghamcastleproject@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

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