



November 2017

## Welcome to the November Castle Transformation Newsletter

As we move towards Christmas, it's time to have a look back on the month past...



### Welcome to the November Castle Transformation Newsletter

This month, we feature:

- Project update
- Object of the Month - The Arrest by LS Lowry
- Our December gift to you - The Transformation Advent Calendar
- Lottery open days - visit the Castle for free
- Christmas events at the Castle
- Play park consultation
- Jade's Column - The evolution of lace
- Scott's Findings - More on the 'Visited Folk' discovery

### Project update – November 2017

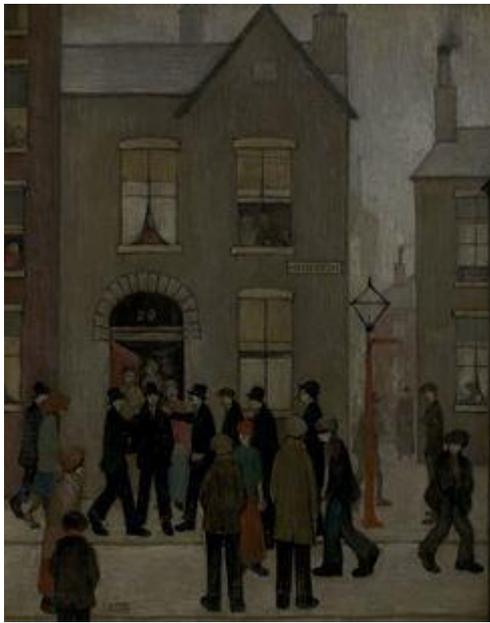
**Website developments** - We are

excited to announce that a new look project website will be coming your way soon. Initial meetings with appointed web designer Framework have taken place and we are confident that our finished site will provide the perfect home for all of our project material – be it construction information, activity plan updates or just to find out what's happening. We hope to launch this early in the new year.

**Inspire meeting** - We were delighted to welcome the Inspire News Group to the Castle during November. They had asked to interview us for an article in their newsletter and we were more than happy to have a chat with them over a cup of tea. It was great to meet such an interested and enthusiastic group, and we look forward to working with them again in the future.

**Killers meet Robin** - We were beyond excited to see that The Killers had visited the Castle this month! They took a break from their UK tour to pop down and see Robin Hood before playing at the Motorpoint Arena in Nottingham.

If any of you have Robin Hood selfies you would like to share please [send them in to the project team](#).



## Object of the Month

**What is it?** The object we have selected this month is an oil painting by L. S. Lowry titled 'The Arrest'

**Why is it significant?** Laurence Stephen Lowry is an internationally significant British artist famous for his paintings of industrial towns in the North-west of England. He is well-known for his iconic 'matchstick' figures and use of a palette of only five paint colours.

**Tell me more** Painted in 1927 'The Arrest' shows a man being arrested at his own front door by two plain clothed policemen. It featured in the "L S Lowry and the Painting of Modern Life" exhibition at Tate Britain in 2013. Clark and Wagner, the exhibition curators, point out that life in the industrial towns of Britain was lived more publicly than in the suburbs so "anyone's business became everyone's business", hence the onlookers viewing the spectacle from the street and nearby windows.

'The Arrest' will feature in the new Art as Inspiration Gallery currently being designed by exhibition designers Casson Mann.

[Read more about LS Lowry](#)

[Read John Barrell's review of the Tate Britain exhibition](#)

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## Our December gift to you - Advent Calendar

As a little thank you for supporting us over the past year, we have created a new Castle Transformation advent calendar. There's a sneak preview on the right.

Check back each day for fun facts and pictures, as well as the chance to win some great prizes on selected days!

[Visit the advent calendar](#)

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## Lottery open days - visit the Castle for Free

From 11 to 15 December 2017, the Castle will open its doors for free to National Lottery players

The Castle is one of 350 participating National Lottery funded visitor attractions across the UK saying 'thanks' to people who have raised money for good causes by

buying a lottery ticket.

The Nottingham Castle Transformation Project has received **£13.9m** from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The money will be used to deliver a major project of improvements to increase tourism, and our economy as well as to showcase this source of pride for the people of Nottingham.

**How do I take part?** Use the [National Lottery interactive map](#) featuring all 350+ participating visitor destinations. You can visit any of these, check the venue for terms and conditions.

If you choose to visit the Castle, just bring your lottery ticket to show at the gate. [Please check the website for terms and conditions](#)



## Christmas events at the Castle

Festive trails, beautiful gifts and fun packed family-friendly events. Santa will also be in the Bastion on selected days. Why not come for a Christmas visit? [Read more, and book events](#)

### The Ghosts of Christmas Past (7.30–9.30pm) - 16 December

O come all ye fearful...hear spooky tales of Christmas past. Festive spirits guaranteed.

Tickets £18 per person. [Book tickets](#)

### Christmas Choir Concert (6pm) - 9 December

In Accord Chamber Choir present an evening of Christmas music, readings and carols in Nottingham Castle's impressive Long Gallery. Join us for a truly magical evening guaranteed to get you in the festive spirit. Ticket includes a glass of wine and a mince pie. £15 per person including glass of wine and a mince pie. [Book tickets](#)

### Lantern-Lit Christmas Cave Tours (7.30–9pm) 3 & 10 December

As night falls, collect your lantern at the gate and hear the Castle's intriguing history as you wander the grounds and descend into the caves by candlelight. Tickets £15 per person including festive refreshments.

[Book for Dec 3](#)  
[Book for Dec 10](#)

**Market stall** - Don't forget to visit the Nottingham Castle market stall at Winter Wonderland in Old Market Square for a great range of Robin Hood and Castle-themed gifts – particularly good to send if you have relatives outside the city.

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## Play park consultation

Zoe Sussmeyer, Community Programmes Officer for Nottingham City Museums and Galleries talks about an exciting piece of work to potentially feature on the new site...

"As part of the Castle redevelopments, we are exploring the possibility of a new play space in the grounds. As part of this we invited local families to come to the Castle and have a hands on session exploring ways we could develop the area.

We began by discussing some of the issues that needed considering with any new development i.e. the stipulations we work under as historical site and the need for any new structures to be natural and sensitive to the environment. That done, we got stuck in to the fun bits - exploring and working out new ideas!

It was amazing how confident everyone felt sharing and using every inch of the space to stimulate great ideas. The families had one or more children with varying levels of visual or learning access needs and it was incredible watching them explore, each feeling strongly about taking risks and having areas exclusively for children. Our sibling groups, whatever their ability, wanted the same - independence. Adults agreed, and the group consensus was that a viewing platform with a seating area would be the right measure for children that wanted their own space.

We considered the importance of extending themes or stories from the Castle to the play area - the group was split. Some thought it crucial, including interactive sounds and imagery, whilst others wanted timeout from historical narratives to run, roll and be free. Everyone agreed that making the most of 'what's beneath your feet' to up high in the trees should be incorporated.

Our group wanted to move away from the swings and roundabouts of conventional parks and kept coming back to the need to explore. Being able to do that during our exploratory morning enabled them to think big, with ideas that covered consideration for the bugs and animals that inhabit the space to wheel chair accessible tree swings. The entire session felt like an adventure.

Thanks to everyone that got involved, we can't wait to present your ideas."

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*The image above is an artist's impression of the proposed gallery design by Casson Mann*

## **Jade's Column**

This month, our apprentice Jade is exploring lace - an area that is close to her family...

"Lace is something I have always found myself interested in. I find it unique, beautiful and delicate.

My prom dress was made out of a gorgeous coral lace and many women on my mum's side of the family were involved in the Nottingham lace industry, having it delivered to their home to work with. My great aunt suffered from back problems after being hunched over pulling lace for a long period of time.

Since joining the project team my interest in the lace gallery has really developed. I spoke to Deborah Dean:Content lead for Power of Art and Making..."

"Why is it so important that we have a Lace gallery as part of the Castle transformation?"

"Well not everyone realises how relevant and important the Lace industry is and was to Nottingham. We can thank Nottingham men for founding machinery to make lace, before this it was all handmade and extremely labour intensive.

When the Castle museum first opened it had a lace gallery so I suppose we're trying to take it back to that in a way.

The Lace industry very much shaped the city centre, Areas such as the Lace Market (St Mary's Gate, High Pavement and Stoney Street) housed many people and families involved in the Lace industry, and the factories of course.

In fact the NTU Art and Design building was built as a result of the Lace and Textiles industry, as it made for a growing need for design skills to keep these industries going.

Another now popular Nottingham educational space which was once occupied by the Lace industry is the NCN Adams building."

"What interests you most about Lace?"

" My background is in Art and Design so for me the patterns, designs and how Lace is used in fashion is what I find most interesting."

Which piece in the collection is your favourite?

"We have an amazing collection, we're very lucky that our machine made lace collection is recognised as a designated collection by Arts Council England so I find this question difficult to answer.

There is a lovely 1920's dress with a geometric pattern and I think I'd have to say that is my favourite piece in the collection."

"What is your favourite or most interesting fact or story about lace? "

"The Jacquard Card is quite interesting because this was a new piece added on to Lace machines which made it quicker and easier to create patterns with lace, it was basically a card with lots of holes punched in to it which the lace would be woven through to create quite intricate patterns. It later went on to also be used in computer programming."

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## Scott's Column

This month, Scott gives us an update on his research. Many of you will have heard about the project on his October 'Visited Folk' tours.

"Nottingham's approximately 800 known manmade caves have had many uses over the centuries. Some uses are well known (for example their use as cellars, malt kiln complexes, tanneries, sand mines, air raid shelters). Others are less well known (for example their use for cosmic ray experiments, the growing of mushrooms and experiments on tadpoles to assess the effect of deprivation of light on their rate of development). In this month's column, I will discuss another little known use of caves, specifically those at the castle and Brewhouse Yard: isolation of people suffering from plague.

The Records of the Borough of Nottingham (contemporary records dating from 1155 to 1900) show that in 1610, for a period of 13 weeks, collections were made in the town for the 'visited' who were confined to cabins at Mapperley Plains and at 'the Brewhouse and under the Castle'. The term visited referred to people believed to be suffering from plague. The reference to victims at the 'Brewhouse and under the castle' indicates that caves cut into the Castle Rock were used to isolate the visited.

Although the cottages which form the Museum of Nottingham Life date to the later 17th century, parts of the caves at the rear of those cottages are older. John Speede's map of 1610 shows caves cut into the rock roughly where the museum stands today.

It was those caves, at the brewhouse, which were used to isolate people suffering from an infectious disease, from the rest of the population. Caves beneath the castle also appear to have been used to isolate victims of the disease. Given that the castle had fallen out of use and was largely derelict by this time, it would have been an ideal location for isolation.

Nottingham suffered a succession of plagues between 1349 and 1667 and this is the focus of an ongoing research project I am undertaking. Understanding epidemics like plague is important because they had tremendous impact on communities, leading to widespread fear, significant loss of life and desertion of previously built-up areas.

Those who attended my October talks will have heard some of the exciting results of my research, including details of a medieval plague burial site in the city which has been investigated through techniques including ancient DNA analysis (see image), and I hope to publish the results of this project in the near future. Watch this space."

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with family, friends and colleagues

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