



May 2018



## Welcome to the May Castle Transformation Newsletter

This month, we feature:

- Project update
- Closure news
- Jade's Column - Caves Festival
- Scott's Column - Excavations news
- Object of the Month - Art Nouveau brooch
- Hoodwinked - A Twist in the Tale



## Project update – May 2018

Welcome to our May project news...

**Caves Festival** - May was all about caves for the Nottingham Castle Project (we will stop talking about them soon, honestly!) Our first ever Cave City Festival took place across the city from 11 – 13 May, with 21 different events across 18 venues. With the majority of events selling out and positive feedback flooding in, we are really happy with how it all turned out. Thanks to all our partners, staff and volunteers who helped out over the weekend – we couldn't have done it without you! Read on for further festival highlights from Jade.

**Hoodwinked** - This month, we were happy to attend the sponsors launch event for the Hoodwinked trail, scheduled to hit Nottingham's Street this July. It was great to learn more about the project and its benefits to local schools and community groups, as well as the project charity Nottinghamshire Hospice. All sorts of businesses and partners across the city are sponsoring these wonderful sculptures – keep reading each month to find out how we're going to be involved...and to see what ours might look like!

**Nottingham showcased in Australia** - If by any chance you have friends or relations in Australia they may have caught a glimpse of the Castle and surrounding areas on Australian TV's Channel 9 recently. A crew from the channel was touring England in the run up to the Royal Wedding and decided to do a substantial feature on the history of

Nottingham, including Nottingham Castle and Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem. The Project Team were happy to get involved and even managed to source knights on horseback (thanks to Knights of Nottingham) to add a bit of extra atmosphere! (pics courtesy of Marketing NG)

## Castle site closure confirmed

It has now been confirmed that Nottingham Castle will close for transformation at the end of trading on **Sunday 1 July**.

There will be some great activities and events planned in the run up to closing and our subscribers will be the first to hear about them.

More news on events as they are confirmed...

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## Jade's Column - Caves Festival

"The weekend of Friday 11 – Sunday 13 May saw Nottingham celebrate its sandstone cave system in style with Nottingham Cave City Underground Festival.

As part of the event, the project team hosted an underground cinema in the Cosmic Ray Cave at Brewhouse Yard which was an immense success and we would like to thank everyone who came. We kicked off on the Friday evening with a screening of 'The Descent,' a horror set in a cave which was so perfect and atmospheric. We all found it terrifying, everyone was jumping out of their seats with fear which was hilarious to watch.

On Saturday we showed School of Rock and Napoleon Dynamite, followed by Robin Hood and Pan's Labyrinth on Sunday - all but one showing completely sold out!

It was an incredible weekend from which we have received some lovely feedback, one person tweeted 'Watching Disney's Robin Hood In a cave under Nottingham Castle. What's not to like!' – We couldn't agree more!

Despite a quick intermission when there was a scratch on the disc during School of Rock, and an issue with some people being unable to see the subtitles during Pan's Labyrinth - sorry about that, we're pretty pleased with how well it went for a first time underground cinema in Nottingham! It was lovely to see so many smiles on people's faces during and after the showings and hearing how much everyone enjoyed it as they left. We also introduced a few people to the Museum at Brewhouse Yard too!

Whether you came to one of the showings or volunteered to help out, thank you all so much for coming!

It was such a great success and we hope you all had a great time. We certainly did!"

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## Scott's Column

**This month, City Archaeologist Scott Lomax talks about the excavations happening soon on site.**

Archaeologists will very soon be carrying out excavation at the Castle, revealing its inner defensive ditch and other evidence of this historic site.

This work will be taking place in the Service Courtyard in advance of the construction of the new Robin Hood Gallery. Test pits excavated in this part of the site in 2016 revealed the edge of the ditch, first created in 1068 and extensively modified in the centuries which followed, as well as the remains of stone structures.

The ditch, which fell out of use in the 17th century, was deliberately filled when the Ducal Palace was built. A series of possible 18th and 19th century paved surfaces were also revealed, although these had largely been damaged by later resurfacing.

The work will be undertaken by Trent and Peak Archaeology and is expected to begin in early June. Initially tarmac and approximately 30cm of rubble will be removed, at which point the ditch will start to become visible.

There will be regular updates on what is found and there will be opportunities to see some of the work taking place. The requirement for archaeological work has been set out by Historic England and myself to ensure that historic remains are fully recorded and that significant remains are protected. The excavation is expected to be completed in September.



## Object of the Month

**What is it?** - A brooch in the Art Nouveau style is our selection this month (NCMG 2017-82). It was made in c.1902 by Edgar Simpson.

**Why is it significant?** - Edgar Gilstrap Simpson (1867-1945) was a Nottingham born designer and craftsman in the Arts and Crafts tradition, working from 1896 to 1910.

Simpson was the son of a lace manufacturer, beginning his working life in the lace trade but going on to establish a silversmith workshop in Nottingham. He worked in Nottingham until 1903.

**Tell me more** - Edgar Simpson exhibited metal work and jewellery at Nottingham Castle from 1898 to 1901 and designed jewellery for Charles Horner of Halifax and other firms. Simpson exhibited at the Vienna Secessionists 15th Exhibition in 1902, having been recommended by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, who was unable to fulfil a request for work himself. This brought Simpson to an international audience.

Progressing to become chief designer at The Artificers Guild, Simpson was known for his curved wirework with enamel & for the depiction of dolphins and marine creatures. Examples of his work are held by Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery & an album of his jewellery designs survives in the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art.

**In our opinion** - *"Edgar Simpson was a jeweller, silversmith, sculptor and photographer, but he became prominent nationally and internationally in his time as a jewellery maker. This brooch is a beautiful example of Simpson's work, made of silver, set with a turquoise, and marked 'ES' on the back."* **Pamela Wood, Curator of Fine and Decorative Art**

The brooch was purchased with a 50% grant from The ACE/V&A Purchase Grant Fund. It will feature in the new Art as Inspiration Gallery currently being designed by exhibition designers Casson Mann.

[Read about other Gilstrap Simpson designs](#)

[The career of Edgar Gilstrap Simpson](#)

[The V&A Museum history of jewellery](#)