



October 2018



## Welcome to the October Castle Transformation Newsletter

This month, we feature:

- **Project update** - HLF, interpretation, cave exploration
- **Jade's Column** - Spooky Stories
- **Scott's Column** - Archaeology update
- **Peel Street** - More tour dates
- **Media day** - BBC and Notts TV visit the site
- **Hoodwinked** - Sheriff Robin back for good
- **Object of the Month** - Reward notice



## Project update – October 2018

Welcome to our project news for October

**HLF Visit** - We were very proud to welcome Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive of HLF, to the Castle earlier this month. Just days before the commencement of works on site, this was perfect timing for the visit as the Ducal Palace stood empty in anticipation of extensive planned improvements.

Officers from the city council welcomed Ros and her colleagues from HLF with presentations in the bastion, followed by a site tour, pointing out the key aspects of the development. ([Image courtesy of HLF and](#)

[credit Jeff Gilbert](#))

**Interpretation work continues** - Alongside their hard work on the Castle decant, members of the content development team are also busy refining details for the gallery interpretation, alongside exhibition designers Casson Mann. This month the Principal Curator and Curator of Fine and Decorative Arts took a visit to the Church of St Mary Magdalene in Newark-on-Trent to view the medieval window in the Holy Spirit Chapel. This window contains beautiful 14 and 15 century glass, which we now have permission to photograph and use to set the scene for some of the alabaster sculptures in the new Castle displays. ([Stained glass image courtesy of Deborah Dean](#))

**Cave exploration** - Members of the project team have been lucky enough to explore what could be the 'real Mortimer's Hole' during October. Not accessible to the public this little known tunnel is thought originally to have emerged somewhere in the vicinity of the late medieval royal apartments. It was tough going, with some areas only accessible by crawling!, but the secrets this passage could hold made it all worthwhile. We hope that future exploration can reveal more information on the history of this fascinating feature.



## Peel Street Tours

Have you had a chance to check out this amazing space yet? There is limited availability for Scott's incredibly popular Peel Street tours in November with bookings now open up to January

[Book Peel Street tours and check availability](#)

[Back to top](#)



## Jadezilla's Column – A spooky tale

This month, Jade is getting into the spooky spirit and has a ghostly tale to tell... those of a nervous disposition, move on now!

"In 1209 Geoffrey of Norwich, an Archdeacon and Baron of the Exchequer to King John was tortured to death at our very own Nottingham Castle.

It was 1208, England was a Catholic country ruled by a frustrated King John who was in the middle of a bitter disagreement with the Pope about the selection of the next Archbishop of Canterbury. In an attempt to bring John into line, the Pope imposed an interdict on England which caused the closure of churches and prevented bodies being buried in churchyards. The argument was still unresolved by 1209, so the Pope piled on the pressure by excommunicating John from the church.

Geoffrey of Norwich then left his seat on the Exchequer Bench and warned the other members not to stay in the service of an excommunicated king.

His actions did not go ignored by an enraged King John who decided on a very gruesome punishment for Geoffrey.

One cold gloomy night, in the dungeons of the Castle, he was made to wear a lead cope (a long, loose cloak worn by priests and bishops on ceremonial occasions), fitting for his religious status as an Archdeacon. The lead was so unbearably heavy the only thing he could move was his head. As Geoffrey also wasn't fed he was left to slowly starve and be crushed to death.

If you listen carefully at the Castle on a dark, moonlit night you might just hear a muffled clanking sound – it could just be poor old Geoffrey desperately trying to shift position under his heavy leaden cope!!!

[Back to top](#)



## Scott's Column

This month, City Archaeologist Scott Lomax summarises archaeological work at the Castle, with work in the Service Courtyard now completed.

"The excavation here has revealed more stone walls interpreted as parts of a ramp shown on John Smythson's 1617 plan of the castle. Later (18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century) walls, brick drains, a mortar floor surface and remnants of paved surfaces have also been exposed.

A small amount of the edge of the rock-cut ditch, first created in 1068 and later modified, has also been revealed. I have been working with the project team, the structural engineer and Inspector of Ancient Monuments at Historic England to ensure these important remains are protected within the foundations of the new Robin Hood Gallery.

Further archaeological work will be needed in this area of the site when the construction work

begins.

Archaeological excavation close to the Gatehouse and curtain wall, in advance of the Visitor Centre's construction, is also now underway.

This will involve excavation of a small area to a depth of up to 5m below ground level. Earlier investigations have suggested that the remains of medieval stone buildings could be present at depths of between 3.8m and 4.8m below the current ground surface.

Watch this space for further updates over the coming months."

[Back to top](#)



*Service Courtyard (Image Courtesy of Trent and Peak Archaeology)*

## Media day

We were pleased to welcome local press on to site recently. BBC East Midlands Today, [Andy Whittaker and Sarah Julian from Radio Nottingham](#) as well as Notts TV all came to have a look at the Service Courtyard excavations. They interviewed Programme Manager Cal Warren as well as Gareth Davies from Trent and Peak Archaeology, and they were showed the finds and progress from the site so far.



Last Friday, we welcomed East Midlands Today back and took them up on the roof to explain the considerable repairs happening there as well as the works in what will become the Rebellion gallery. Keep an eye out for more news and reports as the works on site really start to ramp up.

[Back to top](#)





## Object of the Month

### What is it?

Our selected object this month is a reward notice bearing the name of Lord Melbourne, Home Secretary, dated October 1831. It offers a Royal pardon and a £500 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the perpetrators of the fire at Nottingham Castle during the Reform Bill Riot of 10 October 1831.

### Why is it significant?

The fire happened as a furious response to the castle's owner, the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Newcastle, voting in the House of Lords against the passing of the Reform Bill. The bill ultimately failed and feelings were running high in Nottingham where support for the improved parliamentary representation it would have given to working people here was strong.

### Tell me more

Despite the best efforts of the authorities, the £500 reward was never claimed and nobody was convicted of any crime relating to the Nottingham Castle fire. The Reform Bill was finally passed in 1832 and in August that year a special jury at Leicester awarded £21,000 in damages to the Duke of Newcastle.

This object will feature in the new Rebellion Gallery currently being designed by exhibition designers Casson Mann.

[Read more about the Reform Bill in Nottingham](#)  
[More information from the University of Nottingham website](#)



## Sheriff raises Hoodwinked hospice funds

Our Sheriff Robin (pictured right) took the last stage of his Hoodwinked journey this month at the final auction where all of the robins were put up for sale.

We are proud to announce that the Sheriff was extremely popular and the winning bid was for £4,600.

We are doubly pleased to announce that the winning bidder was Nottingham Castle Trust and this means that visitors to our transformed site in 2020 will be able to meet up with our robin again!

[Back to top](#)