



Welcome to January's Nottingham Castle Transformation newsletter

Here's what the project team has been up to this month:



Exploring our lace exhibits - Exhibition designers Casson Mann took the opportunity to explore our designated lace collection this month. Housed at Newstead Abbey, the extensive collection includes over 100,000 pieces of lace, from early samples to more modern examples of Nottingham machine-made lace.

The content team has been hard at work over the past few months, selecting star objects from this immense collection, with which to tell the story of Nottingham lace at Nottingham Castle. Casson Mann was delighted to see these objects in person and we now look forward to some stunning gallery designs from them in the weeks to come.

Scanning project with NTU - Over the past few months, the Project Team has been working closely with the School of Architecture, Design and the Built Environment at Nottingham Trent University. We are now delighted that students from their Building Surveying course will be working with us to digitally scan areas of the Castle site and the Museum of Nottingham Life at Brewhouse Yard.



These scans will prove invaluable throughout the project, allowing us to plan spatially, also providing a digital platform for interpretation design. The project will form a key part of the students' course, enabling them to gain 'live' project experience.

Our trip to Parliament - On 21 January, project representatives were invited to the Houses of Parliament, to attend an event for the gifting of the Parliament in the Making banners (please see story below). We were able to meet other banner recipients, as well as our banner artist Paula Stevens-Hoare.

Later in the evening we were given a tour of the Houses of Parliament and then attended an evening finale event celebrating the success of the year long Parliament in the Making programme. This was a fantastic opportunity to meet other organisations from around the country, many of whom have similar stories of protest and rebellion to share.

Rebellion banner presented from Westminster

As part of Parliament's 2015 anniversaries programme - [Parliament in the Making](#) which marked the 800 year anniversary of the Magna Carta, nine artists were commissioned to create 18 large-scale banners for an exhibition charting the development of rights and representation in the UK.

As the exhibition came to a close, charitable, political and cultural organisations could bid for a banner so the public could continue to enjoy these works of art.

Our project was granted the **1832 'Great' Reform Act** by **Paula Stevens-Hoare** - pictured to the right. [Watch a film of the artist talking about the commission](#)

We were successful because of the link to the riots of October 1831 when a crowd of Nottingham citizens surged towards the Castle, furious with the residing Duke of Newcastle who had just openly declared his opposition to the Reform Act. This banner is a representation of the democracy the Nottingham rioters were protesting for.

The people of Nottingham burnt down castles for the right to vote. What a talking point for the electorate of the city today!

It is hoped this banner will be a fantastic addition to our proposed Rebellion gallery, where (amongst other stories of power and protest) the story of the 1831 riots will be told.



A chance to see the Lacock Cup for free

The Lacock Cup will be on display at Nottingham Castle until 10 April 2016.

This dual-use feasting cup/chalice is on loan from the British Museum. It has a fascinating history and is on display alongside other medieval objects from the Nottingham collection.

Elegantly decorated, formed of hammered sheet silver, and edged with gothic motifs; the cup has twisted rope work which has been gilded. The sweeping lid and trumpet shaped foot would have drawn the attention of the viewer, as it does today.

[Read more about this fascinating medieval cup and its history](#)

Pop in to the Castle for [Light Night](#) on 5 February from 6pm) for your chance to see the cup with FREE entry as well as lots of other entertainment in the Castle area.



Meet the team - Scott Lomax

Scott Lomax is a professional archaeologist who has worked on several major research projects in the city since 2008. He specialises in the medieval period and has been assisting in research of the history and archaeology of Nottingham Castle and particularly its caves.

He is going to share his fascinating facts and findings from around the Castle and site each month.

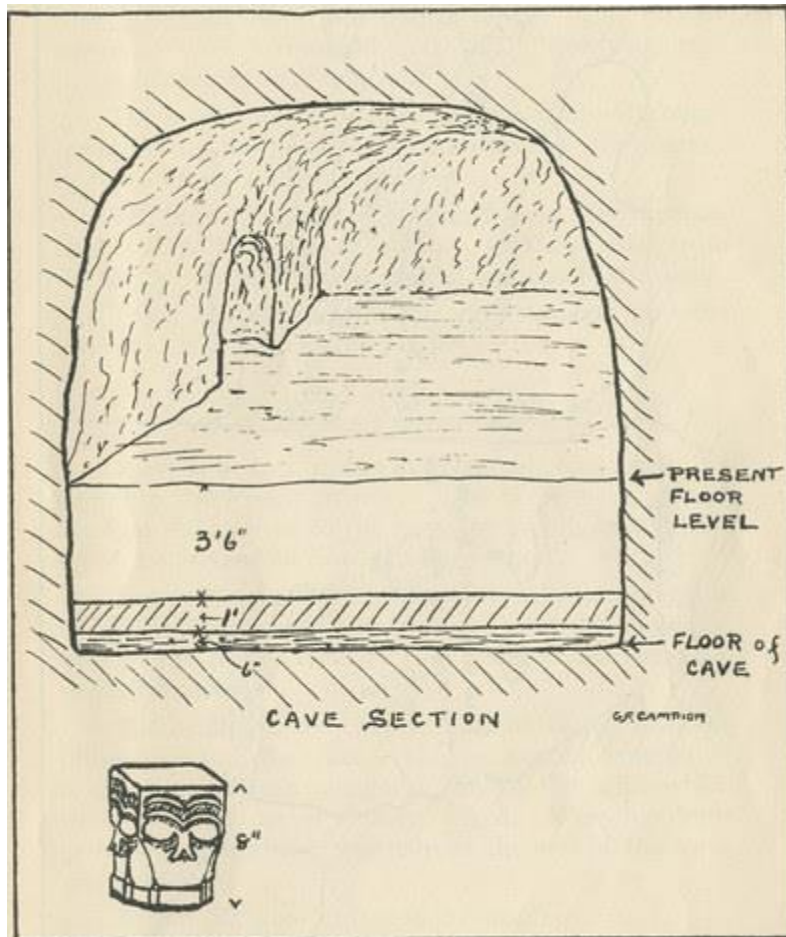


PLATE VI. CASTLE ROAD NO. 3 CAVE, SHOWING SECTION OF FLOOR FILLING.

The sketch is of one of the Castle Road caves, drawn during Campion's excavation of the Castle Road caves in the 1930s

Scott's facts and findings:

Life before rules - Paving the way for today's archaeologists

"I thought I'd start with giving a bit of background into the underground world the project intends to further explore, and introducing one of the key figures in the early exploration of the caves - George Campion..."

Today, archaeologists work in line with professional standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. We are also governed by Health and Safety legislation, especially with caves, because partly filled caves are often very confined spaces. These restrictions often mean we cannot investigate as much archaeology as we would like.

Archaeology enthusiasts working at the castle between 1936 into the 1950s had no such restrictions.

In 1936 George Campion; aided by a long rope, investigated the Castle Rock and discovered a small hole opening up into a chamber. Although brief notes were made, little could be established about the discovery. To this day the nature of this cave is unknown.

Campion was willing to take risks in pursuit of his hobby. In fact he once excavated a deep pit at Milton Street, at the bottom of which were human bones. Following the excavation, Campion claimed to have lost his senses of smell and taste.

Campion's son-in-law, Herbert Houldsworth, continued Campion's work in the 1950s, concentrating on the Castle caves. There, Houldsworth and fellow enthusiasts dug narrow exploratory tunnels, sometimes barely large enough for someone to squeeze their way through, as well as carrying out fuller excavations.

These early investigators were fortunate not to experience any serious injuries but the work they carried out allowed the caves, in the main, to be cleared so they can be enjoyed by visitors today."



Excavating the Western Passage



Celebrate our libraries on National Libraries Day!

Visit one of our brilliant libraries on Saturday 6 February and help us celebrate National Libraries Day. Libraries are a vital, loved resource, and this is your chance to show your support.

Use the hashtag **#librariesday** if you post about your visit on Twitter or Instagram.