



May 2017

## Welcome to the latest Castle Transformation Newsletter

Our May 2017 issue features:

- Project update
- What happened at Big Day Out
- Meet Laura the Storyteller
- Object of the month - Jacob Epstein Self Portrait
- New exhibition - Reportrait
- Scott's column - Dark discoveries at the Castle
- Coming soon - Lord Mayor's Parade



### Project update - May

Here is the project news for May

**Opening up works** - This month you may have seen works taking place within the Ducal Palace. These works are part of the final stages of RIBA 4 design, and involve the opening up of certain architectural features across the site to enable our structural engineer to assess the structure and make up of previous and original building work. This is a crucial part of the design process as it enables our architects Purcell and the extended design team to fully understand our wonderful building and ensure all planned interventions are carried out sensitively and in the most appropriate manner.



**Workshops** - Further interpretation workshops have taken place this month across all theme areas, including Explore, Robin Hood, Rebellion and the Power of Art and Making. The level of detail is now increasing as content leads finalise object selection, and work with exhibition designers Casson Mann to group objects, and work towards an agreed structure for text interpretation within the galleries. An Interpretation Strategy is also being developed which will work to clearly define the visitor journey through the site and fully explain the interpretation plans to stakeholders.



**Big Day Out** - The project team had a fantastic time looking through all of the drawings and photographs from the Big Day Out (details below). Our motive for the Robin Hood fun day (apart from being fun!) was to analyse visitor choices and opinions about Robin Hood. The data captured on the day was fantastic and really helps us to build a bigger picture of visitor expectations for our new Robin Hood gallery. This information has been passed on to the content team who will use it (alongside data captured from our online survey) as a basis for understanding common conceptions and expectations of our famous folk hero.



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## Big Day Out - All our Robin research

Thank you so much to everybody who popped in to see us at the Big Day out. We met hundreds of people who had a great time drawing their ideas about what Robin Hood and Maid Marian might have looked like, and hearing modern reworkings of the ballads of Robin Hood.

The most popular activity was dressing up. We had so many Robin Hoods and Maid Marians of all ages dying to get in front of the camera. There are a few pictures below. These pictures will help us to understand visitor preconceptions of Robin Hood and Maid Marian in terms of their physical appearance and clothing.

[Back to top](#)





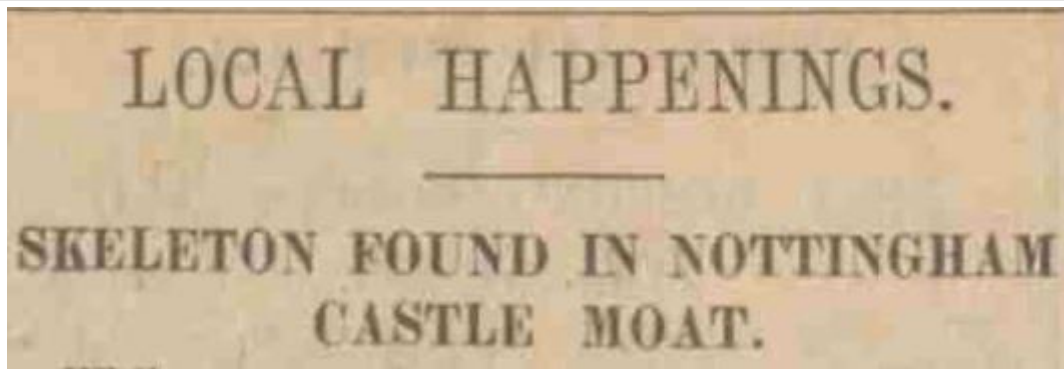
## Meet Laura Fryer

Laura is a PhD student from De Montfort University, funded by Midlands3Cities and the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Her research background is in literature, film, adaptation studies and screenwriting.

Her PhD examines the work of the screenwriter in novel-to-film adaptations, focusing on the work of Ruth Praver Jhabavala, novelist and screenwriter for Merchant Ivory Productions.

Laura was extremely popular at our event in the Project Lab during Big Day Out (see above). She delivered several storytelling sessions to a large audience. They were modern reworkings of the ballads of Robin Hood. The groups really enjoyed them and gave her some great feedback which will help us in the preparation of briefs for our project script writer.

[Back to top](#)



*Castle skull finding press clipping - 19 May 1927*

## Scott's findings

Welcome to the fifteenth column from City Archaeologist, Scott Lomax. This month, he explores a macabre discovery at the Castle...

"Ninety years ago this month there was great interest in Nottingham following the discovery of evidence of the Castle's deadly past."

### The discovery

"The discovery was made in May 1927 following the demolition of the Drill Hall, which once stood on Castle Road, next to the gatehouse bridge, where the Robin Hood statue can now be found.

It was during groundworks following the demolition that the ditch forming the outer defences of the castle was partially excavated by labourers. This dry ditch/moat, as I have written previously, once gave Castle Road the name 'Hollows' and was crossed only by the bridge leading to the gatehouse. The ditch was largely filled in during the 17th century but there was still a depression into the early 19th century.

Digging the fill of the ditch, at a depth of between approximately 6ft (1.8m) and 8ft (2.4m) the labourers were startled to find bones and, upon the discovery of a skull, they quickly realised that they had found a human skeleton. There was general surprise that the bones were well preserved, and it was remarked at the time that the teeth were in a 'perfect' state of preservation."



### **Analysis of the remains and interpretation**

Once the bones had been removed they were taken away for examination by a 'local professor'. Unfortunately we do not know the name of the local professor, who was probably a medical professor at the University of Nottingham, and we are unable to find any records of the examination or what happened to the remains. It is likely the skeleton was reburied at one of Nottingham's cemeteries.

We do know that the individual was a male, and was thought to be aged approximately 30 to 35 years old. When he died, we do not know. However, it would appear the ditch was partly filled when the individual's body was discarded into it suggesting the death took place late in the castle's history. It is possible he was a casualty during one of the many sieges on the castle during the medieval period and Civil War, or he could have been a prisoner who was executed. Sadly it is only possible to speculate.



The top photo shows the area of the Drill Hall post-demolition and pre-Robin Hood statue. The second image shows the Drill Hall.

### **Ongoing Research**

"I am continuing to research the 1927 discovery in the hope of finding out more about this individual. If anyone who has undertaken research into the city's past has found any reference to this burial, and can shed any further light on it, I would be very happy to hear from you. I can be contacted at [scott.lomax@nottinghamcity.gov.uk](mailto:scott.lomax@nottinghamcity.gov.uk)"

[Back to top](#)



## Now on display at Nottingham Castle

**REPORTRAIT**  
27 May to 10 September 2017

Nottingham Castle's latest exhibition – Reportrait – offers a new perspective on portraiture. This exclusive show will run from 27 May to 10 September and challenges viewers not to take work at 'face value'.

The portrait has continued to be one of the most recognised, revisited, and arguably the most celebrated art forms throughout history. Reportrait demonstrates how traditional figurative, often classical, portraiture continues to inspire contemporary artists, and remains a hot topic in art today.

[Read more about Reportrait](#)



## Lord Mayor's Parade

Saturday 24 June: 10am – 5pm (Last entry 4pm)

Watch the ceremonial parade from the Council House to Nottingham Castle followed by a day of FREE activities at the Castle including stalls, activities and live music.

The new Lord Mayor and Sheriff of Nottingham will be sworn in and the City blessed.

The parade leaves Old Market Square at 11am

The Castle Transformation team will also be at the Castle on this date. Why not pop down and see us? More information to follow.

[Back to top](#)