



December 2017

❄️ **We would like to wish all our readers a very Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year! Thank you for your support** ❄️



Welcome to the December Castle Transformation Newsletter

This month, we feature:

- Yvonne wins Volunteer Award
 - Object of the Month - Anthonie Palamedes 'Merry Company'
 - Advent Calendar - still a few days left
 - Jade's Column – Lottery Free Entry
 - New Year's Eve at the Castle
 - Scott's Column - Nottingham Pre-Castle
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Project update – December 2017

Caves Festival - Plans are now underway for an exciting citywide Caves Festival in 2018. As newsletter readers will know, a new caves offer was trialled back in October in the form of the 'Visited Folk' tours conducted by Scott Lomax. These were highly successful with excellent take-up, proving the appetite for activities of this nature. We hope this event will build year on year, becoming a celebrated annual event in the City. We'll keep you updated as we approach the festival date, scheduled for May 2018.



**YOUTH
CAN
DO IT**

Working with the Prince's Trust - The project team enjoyed a meeting with the [Prince's Trust](#) earlier in the month to discuss possibilities for joint up working as part of the project Activity Plan. The aims of the plan are to engage with all sectors of the community as the project develops, in particular our target group of young people. The meeting was very positive with some potential projects identified in the construction stage of the project. We are excited to see how this partnership develops and very much look forward to working with the Prince's Trust.



Scanning project with Nottingham Trent University - This month, we were delighted to hear that our partners at the NTU School of the Built Environment had been awarded a grant to support their scanning project at the Castle. Every year as part of our Activity Plan, NTU send groups of students to scan sections of the Castle site, including Brewhouse Yard and the Waterworks Building. This has provided the project with invaluable data and has given the students an active project and site of historic interest on which to work. This additional award will enable the senior staff from the department to spend more time on this project and also conduct research into the historical architecture of the Castle. We look forward to working with them over the next few years!

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Congratulations to award winning Yvonne!

Thanks again to the Nottingham City Museums and Galleries (NCMG) Learning and Engagement Team for putting on another fantastic Volunteer Christmas Party and Annual Volunteer Awards. This event was held on 4 December at the Canal House in Nottingham, and this year it was even more special for the Project Team as our very own volunteer **Yvonne Armitage** won an award!

We were delighted that Yvonne won the Spotlight Award, to recognise and reward the hard work and achievements of volunteers behind the scenes. Yvonne works with us every Thursday, conducting research, helping out with events, working with schools, and even writing articles for this

newsletter! As well as working on the Castle project Yvonne also works with Ann Inscker (Curator of Archaeology and Industry) researching the Castle's history, and also volunteers for the National Trust and the Citizen's Advice Bureau. She is a thoroughly deserved winner. Congratulations also to the other winners and nominees on the night, the Museums Service is lucky to have you.

(Yvonne (left) is pictured with Louise Button-Lowth - Interim Learning and Engagement Manager for NCMG)

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Object of the Month

What is it?

Our Christmas choice from our collections is an oil painting by Dutch artist Anthonie Palamedes (1601-1673). It is called Merry Company (Interior with Cavaliers and Ladies).

Why is it significant?

Although not immediately obvious, the Christmas connection is the swan pie centrepiece on the dining table. The meat for this delicacy came from cygnets

fed on barley until their feathers began to turn white at Christmas, so swan pie became a traditional treat enjoyed from Tudor times until the nineteenth century.

Tell me more

Historical recipes show how elaborate swan pies were, but by Victorian times the only swans being eaten were moulded from butter and ice cream. There are even accounts of bits of iron and magnets being hidden in butter swans and pieces of bread so that the bread could be used to make the swan appear to swim across a wet plate for dramatic effect!

In our opinion

'This type of elegant interior with well-dressed men and women engaged in lively conversation was popular in the prosperous Holland of the 17th century, known as the Dutch Golden Age. There are several such 'merry company' paintings in Nottingham's collection. The artist has arranged the figures across the picture space as if they're on a stage. It certainly is a display of wealth and comfortable living, full of sumptuous fabrics and fine, handmade lace. We'll be including it in a group of paintings and objects that explore people's leisure time through the art of different times.'

Deborah Dean, Visual Arts Collections and Exhibitions Manager

Merry Company (Interior with Cavaliers and Ladies) will feature in the new Art as Inspiration Gallery currently being designed by exhibition designers Casson Mann.

[Read more on food history](#)

[Countryfile - The Evolution of the Country Christmas Dinner](#)

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Don't forget to check the Advent Calendar

We hope you're enjoying our fun advent calendar and congratulations to our lucky prize winners Ben Mannerings, Su Higgins, and Glynis Crooks who entered our competitions behind the doors.

Don't forget to keep checking the calendar right up to the big day. There are still lots of fun facts and pictures to uncover.

[Visit the advent calendar](#)





Jade's Column

National Lottery 'Thanks To You' week

The National Lottery 'Thanks To You' week from 11 – 15 December, offered free entry to Nottingham Castle to National Lottery Players as we said "Thank you" to them for supporting the project, along with many others across the country.



We created a giant 'Thank you!' banner and took it up to the Castle when we met up with Reiss and Katie from Heritage Lottery Fund East Midlands to take lots of fun pictures for social media.

If you came to the Castle with your National Lottery ticket or scratch card then "Thank you", we hope you had a great day!

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New Year's Eve at the Castle

Nottingham will welcome in the New Year with a bang, as the Purico New Year's Eve Fireworks, supported by Nottingham Care Village, return to Nottingham Castle on Sunday 31 December.

There will be two shows, ensuring as many people as possible can enjoy the celebrations.

The party atmosphere will start from 8pm, with a programme of live music and entertainment from the bandstand.

The children's fireworks display will start at 9.15pm and is designed for a younger audience within the Castle grounds.

Then, as the bells ring out at midnight, the main fireworks display will light up, accompanied by a music soundtrack, and be visible from across the city.

Entry to the event is free. As the Castle grounds have a limited capacity of 2,500, visitors will be admitted via the Gatehouse on a first-come, first-served basis and then on a one-in, one-out basis once at full capacity.

For those not able to access the Castle grounds, Friar Lane and Castle Road will be closed to vehicles from 7.30pm, allowing for additional viewing space from outside.

(Image is from the 2014 display)



Scott's Column

As we enter the 950th anniversary of the Castle's construction, Scott is using this month's column to outline what Nottingham was like before the Castle was built...

"It was on Christmas Day 1066 that William the Conqueror was crowned King of England but it was not until 1068, when riding northwards through his Kingdom, that William instructed for a castle to be built in Nottingham. It may only have been at this time that William first saw Nottingham, or Snottingham as it was then known.

950 years ago Nottingham was a large settlement by medieval standards but only occupied the area we know today as the Lace Market. The Lace Market, positioned on raised land, offered a strategic vantage point of the Trent Valley and so appealed to the founders of Nottingham in the same way as the castle rock appealed to William the Conqueror."

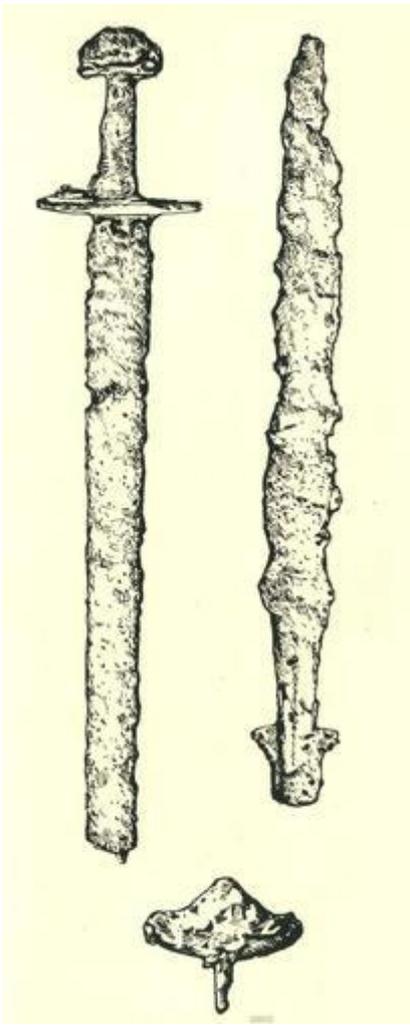


The pre Norman Conquest ditch as excavated at Drury Hill in 1970

"We cannot be sure exactly when Nottingham was first established but certainly by 868 the Viking army spent the winter somewhere in the vicinity of the Lace Market and may have occupied the entirety of that part of the city centre. Five years later a Viking settlement was recorded and between 877 and 918 Nottingham was one of the Five Boroughs of the Danelaw, along with Derby, Leicester, Lincoln and Stamford. Two Viking graves were found close to the Victoria Leisure Centre in the 19th century, each grave containing weapons. Edward the Elder captured Nottingham in 918 and apart from a brief Viking occupation, in the late 930s until 942, Nottingham was controlled by the 'Saxons'.

The Borough of Nottingham was defended by a wide, deep ditch and rampart which extended around the west, north and east, with the cliff line visible today at Cliff Road forming a natural southern defence. Parts of this ditch have been revealed in modern times. For example, in 1969 and 1970 during excavations by Nottingham City Museums at Drury Hill (see above) before the construction of the Broadmarsh Shopping Centre. The ditch was first created in the second half of the 9th century, probably by the Vikings, and was enlarged in 918 on the order of Edward the Elder.

The street pattern of the Lace Market generally follows the same pattern as shown in Nottingham's earliest known map (which dates to 1609). Some of the streets, for example Warser Gate, Fletcher Gate and Woolpack Lane are known to have existed before 1068. Stoney Street is believed to have been the main north-south street through the borough leading to the main route to York. There is strong reason to believe that King Harold marched through these streets on his journey from this successful battle at Stamford Bridge, on towards his defeat at the Battle of Hastings."



"There were certainly some caves in Nottingham by 1068. In fact by 893 Nottingham was described as Tigguo cobrauc (meaning a 'place of caves') by the Welsh monk Asser who chronicled the life of Alfred the Great. How many caves there were in 893, or 175 years later, is unknown.

There was a single church at this time in Nottingham and this was almost certainly St Mary's Church, although the original church would have been much smaller.

Excavations (undertaken by Nottingham City Museums) near St Mary's Church between 1978 and 1980 revealed remains of some of the buildings which existed during the Viking occupation of Nottingham and may have revealed remains of buildings that were standing when William the Conqueror passed through.

It was through these buildings, and this borough, as well as the wider landscape, that William sought to instil his dominance through the building of Nottingham Castle."

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The image to the left shows weapons found in a Viking grave near the site of the Victoria Leisure Centre in the 19th century.



with family, friends and colleagues

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