

History Group

A short account on **the Castles of Nottinghamshire** based on the presentation given by **James Wright** on Tuesday 17th November 2020 to the Warsop U3A History Group.

James first produced today's presentation in the mid-2000's after a period employed by Nottinghamshire County Council Archaeological Department assisting in the mapping and recording of the then known sites of castle in Nottinghamshire. He particularly worked on and helped determine the existence of the Fortified Manor of the de Strelley family at Strelley Hall.

James began by asking "what is a castle"? There are between 12 and 21 medieval castles in Nottinghamshire and possibly as many as 30 depending on definition and evidence considerations. The definition of a castle was suggested by Reginald Allen Brown in the 1950's as "the private fortress and residence of a lord".

The definition considers three vital points:-

- A castle must be a militarily defensible structure.
- A castle must have a private residential function.
- This residence must belong to an aristocrat.

If a building does not fulfil these criteria, then it cannot be a castle.

It is generally accepted that castles were first built in the county after the Norman Conquest. These first castles were campaign castles, built to defend against attack from the Saxon populace and to impose Norman rule on the conquered. These early castles were mostly motte and baileys or ringworks. The advantage of these types of castle are that that can be built quickly. The great royal castle at Nottingham was first built shortly after the Saxon revolt of 1067, and is strategically important, situated midway between the north and the south of England, and guarding the crossing of the Trent. Newark Castle also dates from this time and was originally a motte and bailey. Newark and Nottingham are the only two Nottinghamshire castles built to play a part on the national scale and over time were transformed into great medieval palaces and strongly defended fortresses. They are castles in the traditional sense, most Nottinghamshire castles are hard to understand or visualise, and are entirely representative of the majority of castles in England. What they show us is what was occurring all over medieval England, lords were attempting to demonstrate their status through the architecture of their dwellings to the best of their abilities and wealth. Hence a variety of dwellings were created to suit the requirements and resources of their owners.

The 21 Castles of Nottinghamshire are;

Palaces The Kings House at Kings Clipstone. (King Johns Palace)

Castles

Nottingham & Newark

Motte & Bailey

Worksop, Cuckney, Bothamsall, Haughton, Laxton, Egmonton, Annesley, East Bridgford & Aslockton

Fortified Site Clipstone Peel, Kingshough & Lowdham

Fortified Manor House Kirkby -in-Ashfield, Greasley & Strelley

Ringworks Jordan's Castle at Wellow
Lost Castles Blyth & Perlethorpe

If anyone is interested in further reading James has written a book entitled "Castles of Nottinghamshire" published by Nottinghamshire County Council in 2008, ISBN: 978-0-902751-58-3

The History Group will be holding a Quiz via zoom on Tuesday 15th December 2020 at 10:00am (our usual meeting time) the quiz is just for fun. The questions have been set by various members of the group, so don't blame me! Invitations will be issued to all Warsop U3A members nearer the date and everyone is welcome to join us. Please allow yourselves at least 1½ hours for the duration of the meeting.

January's talk and presentation will be by History Group member Mel Mitchell and will be entitled "My Dad's War" and promises to be very interesting. To give you a flavour of the contents, Mel's Dad was a POW and spent some time at Auschwitz. Again, invitations to join the meeting will be sent out nearer the time.

Thank you from the History Group and have a good Christmas and New Year as the circumstances we are in allow. Stay safe and hope to see you all soon.