

Walk No 19: The Park Estate

This walk is about 12km and goes through The Meadows and then through part of The Park Estate before returning through The Meadows. A short route (4.5km) can be done by bus to Nottingham Station or by car, parking at Station or Broadmarsh car parks. There are brief notes (numbered) about some of the places along the route at the end of the description.



Go along Musters Road and Melton Road, over Loughborough Road into Welbeck Road and across the Wilford Suspension Bridge. Turn right, past the War Memorial (1) and then, at the end of the memorial gardens, turn left into the path through to Fraser Road and along to Bunbury Street. Turn left past the NCT bus depot (originally a tram depot in the early 1900's – see Walk No 9) and continue over Bathley Street and then over Muskham Street where, on your left is the old Plumtre Arms PH (2) and on the right is Portland Baths (3).

Continue to the end of Bathley Street and take the path on the right, behind the Portland Baths building, and turn left into Orange Gardens, curve left into Kirkby Gardens and then right along the footpath through to Willersley Drive and on to Kirke White Walk, opposite the Bridgeway Methodist Hall, and go left and then right into Arkwright Walk and through to Meadows Way.

Cross Meadows Way and the NET tram route and go up Arkwright Street North, over Queens Road, pass Nottingham Station and along Carrington Street as far as the path on the left down to the canal and the Magistrate Court.

If you have come into Nottingham by bus or car you join the walk route here.



From Carrington Street go down to the Nottingham Canal, past the Magistrate Court on your left, and Castle Wharf on the opposite bank. Information about this location is included in **Walk No 18. R Trent, R Leen & Beeston-Nottingham Canal.**

Cross the bright blue bridge and then go left, behind the British Waterways building along Castle Wharf and then right, out onto Canal Street.

Turn left and cross Wilford Street into Castle Boulevard. After a few yards you pass, on the left side of the road, New Castle House (4) and.....

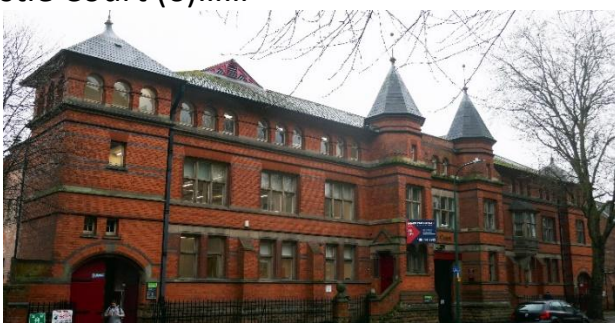
....on the right side of the road, on the corner of Castle Road, is what was the Nottingham Waterworks Company (5), with Nottingham Castle ducal palace behind.



The next building after New Castle House is Castle Court (6).....



....and opposite, at the junction with Peveril Drive, is Castle Point (7).



Cross over Castle Boulevard between these four buildings and look through the fencing to Brewhouse Yard with the museum buildings, caves and castle wall. For information about this important Nottingham site go to:

<https://www.nottinghamcastle.org.uk/brewhouse-yard/>

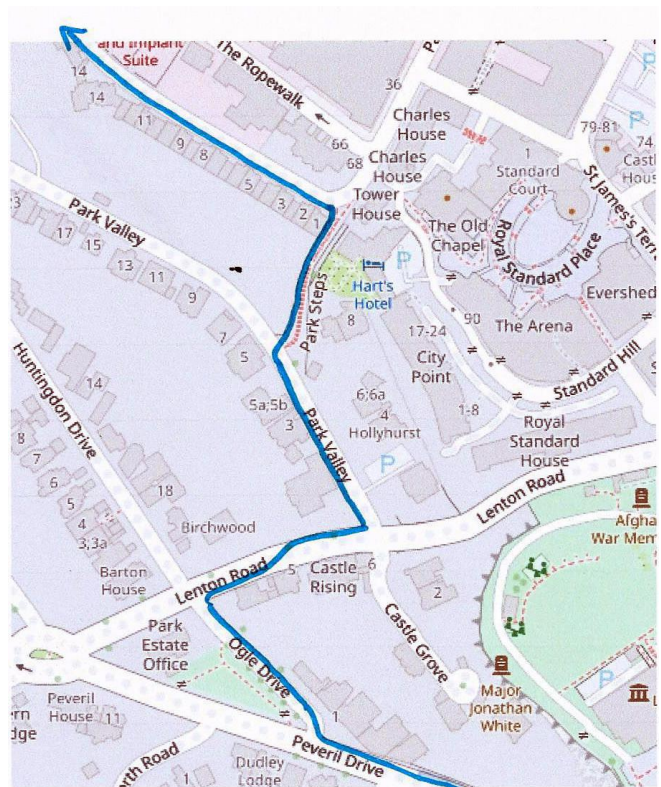


Turn into Peveril Drive and through the gateway – this is the Park Estate (8); vehicle access is restricted with only one road (Lenton Road) that has a public right of access.



Continue to the junction of Ogle Drive (9) and pause to look at properties on the right.

Turn right onto Lenton Road (10) where there are some fine houses: No.7 (Fothergill House) was designed by Watson Fothergill in 1872 and he also did Nos.5 and 5A in 1873 (Castle Bank). No3 (Castle Rising) and those on Castle Grove were by TC Hine in 1850s. All are Grade II listed.



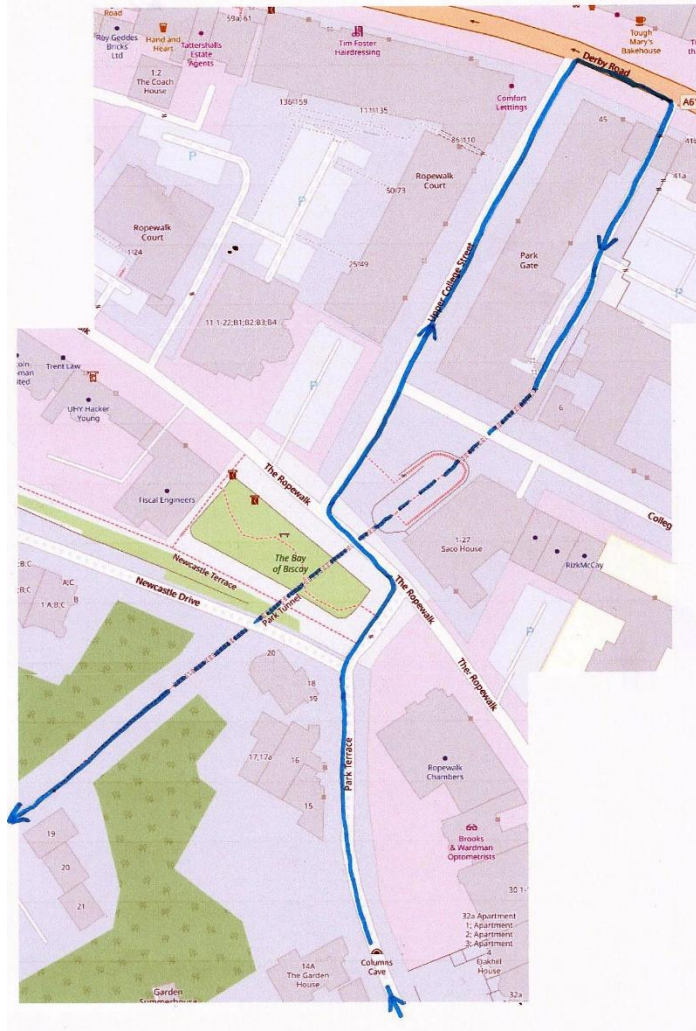
No.7 Lenton Road

Turn left onto Park Valley, where there are more TC Hine designed houses, and then turn right up the Park Steps (11) – over 100 of them!

At the top, go left along Park Terrace, lined with Grade II listed houses – Nos.1-17 (except No.14) built in 1827-33 by Peter Frederick Robinson and Nos.18-20 by TC Hine.



Actor Hugh Grant lodged in Park Terrace for a year (1986) when he was working at the Nottingham Playhouse to obtain his Equity card.



Further along Park Terrace is house No. 14A. Accessed from this property but situated under the road is an excavation in the rock known as Columns Cave (12).

Bear right past, on your left, a green space – Ropewalk Rest Garden, also known as Bay of Biscay – I have been unable to discover why it has this name; presumably from the area of the Atlantic off SW France.

Go through the Park gates and turn left on The Ropewalk, then right, down Upper College Street and right at Derby Road. After a few metres turn right into the access to the block of flats (the gap at the left of this photo).

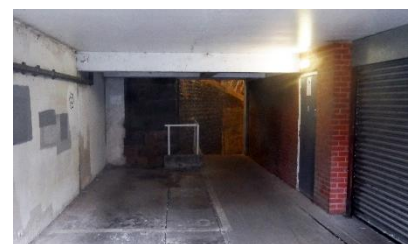


Continue straight ahead - on the right is the Parkgate apartment block and on the left is an older building – the Convent (13), another apartment block – and beyond it is St Barnabus Cathedral (another visit perhaps).

We continue ahead and into what looks like the entrance to an underground car park (bottom centre of photo, below white lintle).....



....and through to the steps at the end....



....and into the Park Tunnel (14).

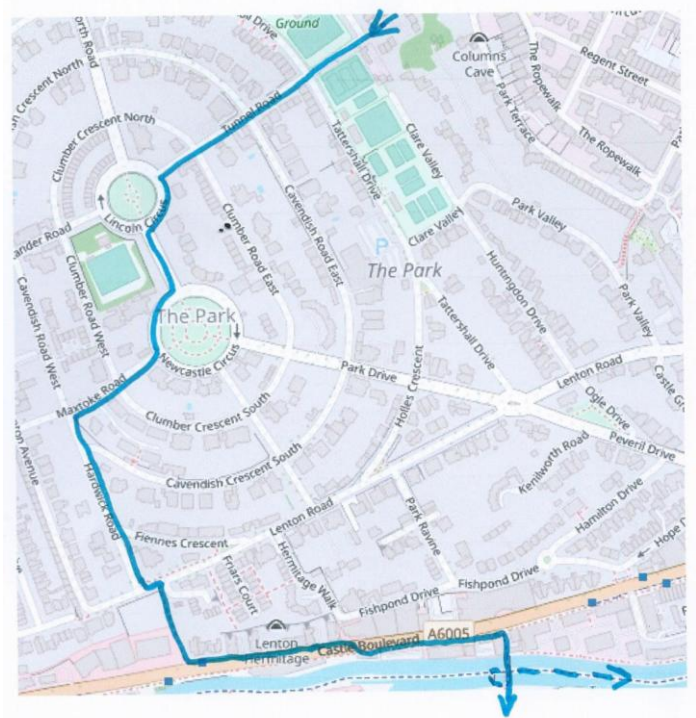


Go through the tunnel and out onto Tennis Mews and continue ahead on Tunnel Road which passes between tennis courts – the Nottingham Castle Lawn Tennis Club.

On the right-hand side fence of Tunnel Road, just before the junction with Tattershall Drive is a circular memorial to William Gladstone, UK Prime Minister in the 19th century (15)

Continue up Tunnel Road to Lincoln Circus – the first house on the left is named Gladstone House (15).

Go down Duke William Mount to Newcastle Circus – one of the larger houses here is Newcastle Court (designed by TC Hine).



Go right on Maxtoke Road and left, down Hardwick Road, cross Lenton Road and then go through the alleyway down to Castle Boulevard. Turn left, towards the city centre.

When Castle Boulevard was originally opened in 1884 it was called Lenton Boulevard. It was given its present name in about 1908/9.

This section of Castle Boulevard has modern apartment blocks on both sides. Those on the left are named Park Rock One, Park Rock Two, etc.

Behind Park Rock Three are entrances to caves known as Lenton Hermitage (16)

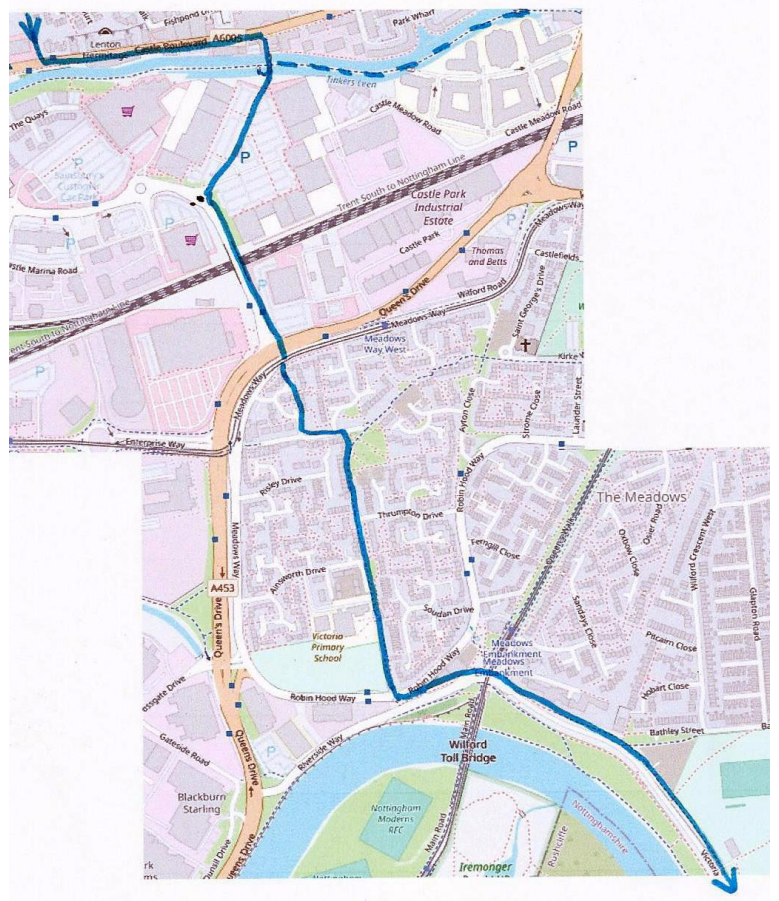


Continue along Castle Boulevard and turn right into an alleyway immediately after this clock tower building.

This takes you to a bridge over the canal. If you are following the short walk, swing round under the bridge and follow the towpath back to Carrington Street.



If you are walking back to West Bridgford, go through the car park of Castle Marina Retail Park and go left on Castle Bridge Road, over the railway and then cross Queens Drive and Meadows Way and through the gap into the housing estate, along Saffron Gardens and, at the grass area, go right (south) on Bosworth Walk.



At the end of Bosworth Walk, cross Robin Hood Way to Riverside Way and go left to Victoria Embankment and then cross over Wilford Suspension Bridge and complete the walk via Melton Road and Musters Road.

Notes for Walk No 19: The Park Estate

1. Memorial Garden Gateway

In 1920 Jesse Boot bought an area of land from the Clifton Estate on the Nottingham side of the Trent. He said:
"I had often observed the great enjoyment of the large crowds frequenting the river banks on Saturday afternoons and Sundays and I was keenly desirous that the river bank should be kept as open as possible. Therefore I purchased this land and presented it to the city of Nottingham to be preserved forever as an open space for the benefit of the citizens".

In the summer of 1920 the memorial gardens and this imposing war memorial gateway were built with the aid of funds from Jessie Boot.



2. Plumtre Arms

The 1970s brought massive change to The Meadows as much of the area was condemned. Large areas of housing were demolished and a significant number of pubs that served the community were lost. The Plumtre Arms was in the part of The Meadows that escaped the slum clearances but has since closed and been converted into flats.



3. Portland Baths

The Portland Baths and Washhouse was opened in 1931. In the days before washing machines in the home and bathrooms, Meadows residents used the public laundry on the corner of Bunbury and Muskham Streets to do their weekly wash and the public bathing facilities at the Portland Baths to wash themselves.

The Our Nottinghamshire community history website includes some comments from residents:

"I was born on Bunbury Street. The washhouse on the corner of Bunbury and Muskham was used by my mother once a week. You could wash there and dry your clothes. We used to go to Portland Swimming Baths because there was no bathroom in our house and they had baths there".

"I lived on Muskham St next door to the pub on the corner of Bunbury St, I remember going into the laundry for the first time - it seemed huge and the noise and steam was overwhelming to me at 5 years old - I remember there was a row of big white sinks along one wall. I was too scared to ever go in again".



4. New Castle House

This art deco style building was originally called Viyella House. Designed by Nottingham architect Frank Broadhead, it was built in the early 1930s as offices for William Hollins & Co. The name Viyella is based on the unusually-named valley road, Via Gellia (the A5012) near Matlock, where in 1890 Hollins & Co acquired a mill used for the early production of Viyella, originally a soft, light, flannel-like fabric made of a blend of lamb's wool and fine cotton.

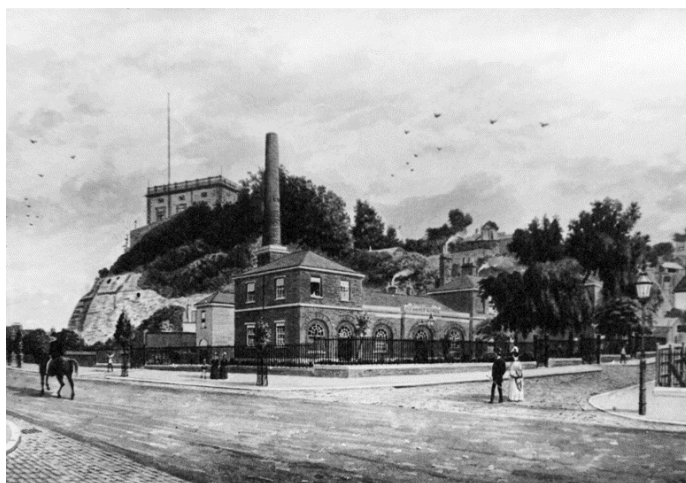
The clock on the front of the building has a set of chimes that play a different tune each day of the week – one of these can be heard on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eNd6RPUOT9Q>

5. Nottingham Waterworks Company building

As noted in Walk No 18, the River Leen once flowed along the route of Castle Boulevard, thus providing the town of Nottingham with a more plentiful supply of water. As early as 1696 water was taken from the River Leen and pumped into a small open reservoir on Park Row (just north of the Castle), from where it flowed by gravity to most parts of the town.

However, by the early C18th, the stretch of the Leen through Nottingham had become badly polluted by dyes and other industrial refuse. So in 1826, **Nottingham Waterworks Company** built a more powerful pumping station on part of the Brewhouse Yard site to pump gravity fed water more than four miles from the River Leen, well upstream near Basford, to the Park Row reservoir, to provide a source of clean water for the town.

The photo shows the pumping station in the 1870s – it was later enlarged and is now used as offices/storage for the Brewhouse Yard and Castle Museums.



There had been water mills at Brewhouse Yard since medieval times, providing water for the castle and also ale was brewed for the castle garrison. Long before Castle Boulevard was built in 1880, a fledgling community grew up at Brewhouse Yard with 120 people living in 20 houses built on the site in the shadow of Castle Rock. A range of tradesmen including framework knitters, coopers and dyers, plied their trade from tiny workshops and after a long day's labour quenched their thirst at nearby pubs. Among them was Nottingham's richest man, the 18th century textile magnate William Elliott. His vast wealth stemmed from a secret recipe he and his nephews devised for black dye in the 1750s when men clamoured for black stockings to show off their legs.

6. Castle Court

This re-furbished Watson Fothergill designed building, partly occupied by Department for Work and Pensions, Jobcentre Plus, was built as Burton-Alton's (paper merchants) warehouse in 1894 and was later used by Baker and Plumb as their furniture store.

7. Castle Point

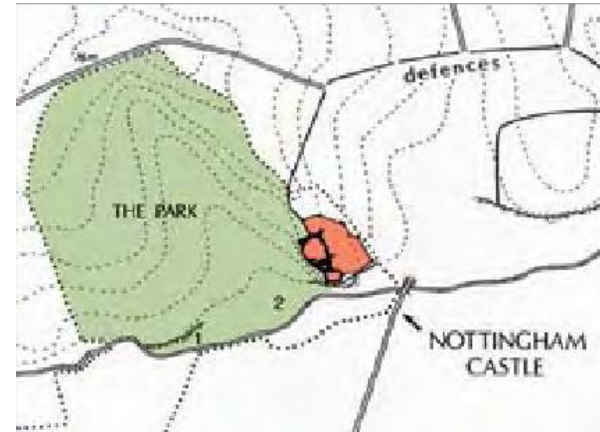
Built in 1896, this curved fronted building used to be the regional headquarters of Rediffusion TV, a business that distributed radio and TV signals through wired relay networks. The business gave rise to the first ITV (commercial television) franchisee to go on air in the UK. The building was also once a NatWest Bank. In 2013 it was converted into 'luxury' apartments.

8. The Park Estate

The Park Estate derives its name and origin from a royal park attached to Nottingham Castle.

In 1067 William the Conqueror ordered the building of a Royal Castle on the then barren outcrop of the rock. The Park was created soon afterwards and was regularly stocked with deer brought from Sherwood Forest and later also by rabbits brought here from France.

For four centuries the Castle was to be the Kings' principal residence in the Midlands. Whilst in residence the King would have hunted here, using the Lenton Hermitage cave (see below) as a hunting lodge.



At various times the kings also created smaller enclosed gardens within The Park and there was also a substantial fishpond – so, much like the many other stately homes and parks around the country. But, by the reign of Elizabeth 1 the Castle was effectively abandoned and it and The Park fell into decay.

Following the restoration of the monarchy after the Civil War, the ruins were purchased by William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Newcastle, and between 1674-79 he erected his new ducal palace in the Italianate Classical style, though still named 'Nottingham Castle'.

By the 1760s the 'Castle' and The Park had been abandoned again, the then Duke preferring to stay in London or his country seat at Clumber Park. The local population effectively took over The Park as common land, for walking and other recreational activities and to graze their cattle.

Later it was decided that the land should be sold for development. A new access road, called The Park Passage (now the eastern end of Lenton Road), was cut through the old outer moat of the Castle, near the Gatehouse, into The Park.

In 1827 a 'Plan for Nottingham Park' was prepared, influenced by John Nash's fashionable London terraces, and some building work soon started on the Ropewalk followed shortly afterwards by the first houses on Park Terrace (north of the Castle). By 1832 40-50 houses had been built in The Park.

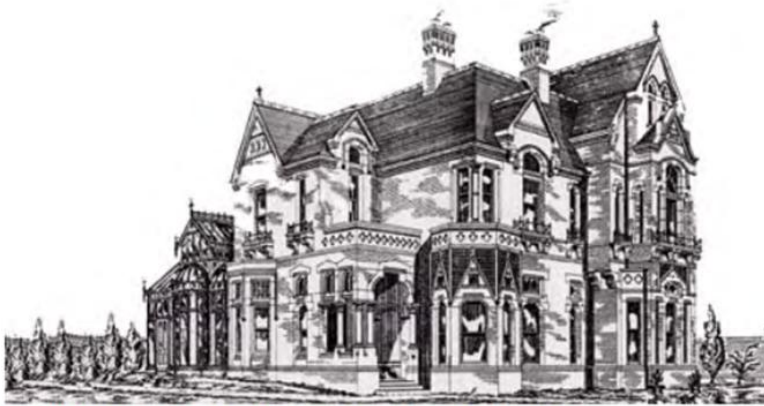


View across The Park by Greenwood 1850

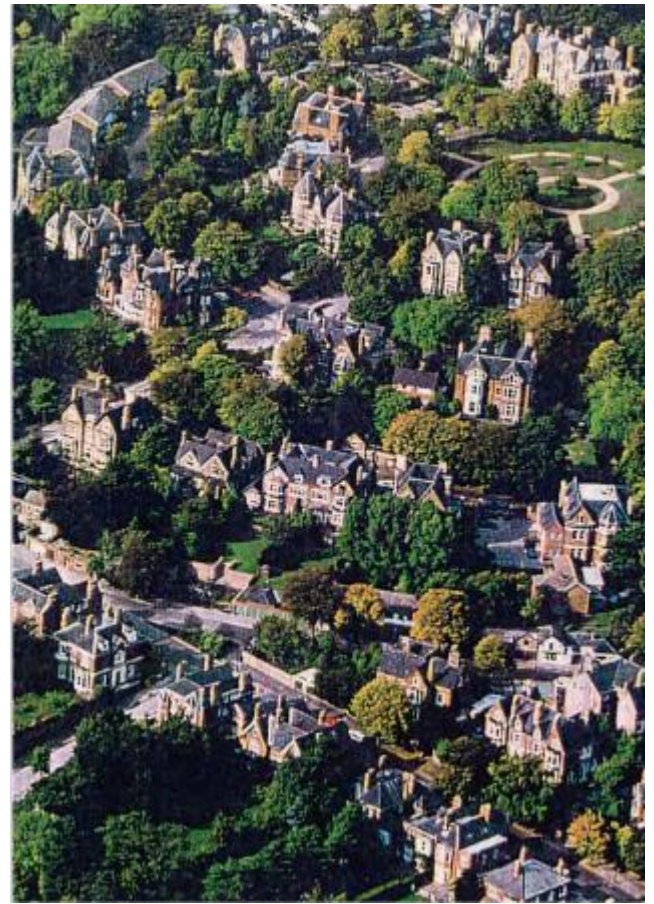
Work stalled for various reasons, including the riots in protest against the Duke of Newcastle's opposition to the Reform Act 1832 (allowing more people to vote), which resulted in the burning down of the Castle, but by the late 1840s, house building work restarted including some early houses by the prominent local architect Thomas Chambers Hine (also known for the Adams Building on Stoney Street in the Lace Market and the Great Northern Railway Station (now Virgin Active health club) on London Road).

Work continued particularly in the 1870s which benefited from improved economic conditions with a revival of the cotton trade and the prosperity of emerging lace and hosiery industries. The fire damaged Castle was converted by Hine into a Museum of Fine Art and house building work in The Park increased rapidly. Many of the large and imposing 'villas' were built for wealthy industrialists, including John Player (Player's Tobacco Company), Jesse Boot (Chemist Boots Pharmaceuticals) and Sir Frank Bowden (founder of Raleigh Cycle Company).

The houses, many shown here in a photo from above, were designed by a number of architects including prominent local practitioners T C Hine, Robert Evans (*also known for* the building at South Parade/Wheeler Gate corner of Old Market Square), Watson Fothergill (*akf* the Express Building on Parliament St) and S. Dutton Walker who designed the building below, typical of The Park style (*akf* Heathcote Buildings, Heathcote St/ Goose Gate).



House on Park Drive. Architect S. Dutton Walker F.S.A (Illustration from 'The Building News' October 1877)



By 1918 the Estate as planned by T.C. Hine, was effectively completed. It comprised 355 houses, tree lined roads, crescents and circles, a bowling green on Duke William Mount and sport and recreation grounds on Tattershall Drive to compensate the local population for the loss of 'their' park.

After the First World War the fluctuations of trade and fashion brought a decline in affluence in Nottingham, especially in textiles. The advent of the motor car provided the opportunity for the wealthy to live further afield. Less people could afford the increasing cost of using and maintaining the large houses – the value of the properties slumped.

In 1938 the Estate was sold to the Nuffield Trust, then to Oxford University Chest.

The whole area began to fall into decline, worsened by the Second World War when many houses were abandoned by their elderly inhabitants or were taken over by the Army. After the War the future of The Park looked grim.

During this time a number of demolitions, insensitive conversions and new builds were undertaken with no respect for the character of the original planned villa estate.

The Park was designated a conservation area in 1969 in recognition of its national architectural and planning significance and 93 of its buildings and other features have so far been 'listed'.

In 1986 Oxford University passed its rights in the area to the newly formed Nottingham Park Estate Limited, a company run by the residents.

Now, nearly 2000 people live here in approximately 450 houses and 700 flats. And it retains many of the key elements of the planned 19th century villa estate. Relatively recent residents of the Park Estate include Dame Laura Knight, Sir Jonathan Miller, Sir Paul Smith and Justin Fashanu.

More detail can be found at: <https://nottinghamparkestate.co.uk/the-park-conservation-plan/>

9. Ogle Drive

The November 2017 edition of Channel 4's Ugly House to Lovely House with George Clarke featured this property. The owner thought her 80s built red brick eyesore "stuck out like a sore thumb".



George Clark's team redesigned it.



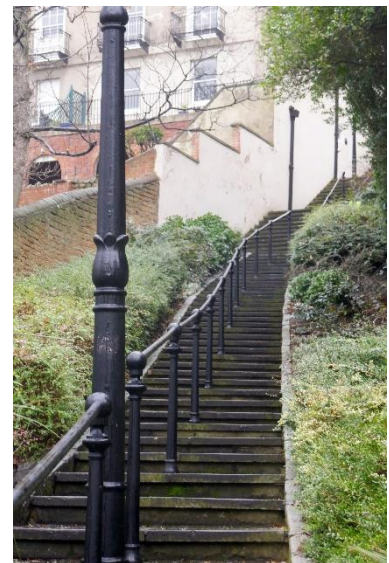
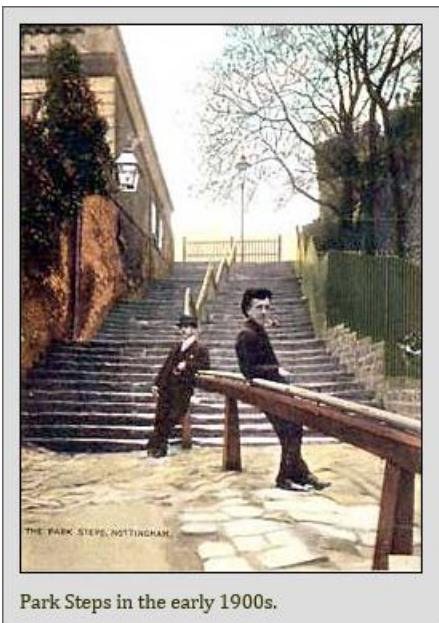
10. Lenton Road and 11. Park Steps

Lenton Road is part of what was the oldest road in the area, originally a footpath or bridle road running between Nottingham and Beeston. It is the only road through the Park Estate that is a public right of way for motor vehicles.

The Park Steps, an early entrance to The Park, were enlarged in 1829.

From: <http://www.nottshistory.org.uk> – Holland Walker, An itinerary of Nottingham: Nottingham Park, Transactions of the Thoroton Society, 32 (1928)

The Park Steps excite admiration by their picturesque-ness, but their history is even more interesting than their appearance. The oldest road in this neighbourhood, whose age it is impossible to speak of in terms of years, was the track from east to west on the high land above the jungle of the Trent Valley. This road, after passing by, or through, the ancient enclosure of Nottingham, proceeded by Pepper Street [off Bridlesmith Gate behind M&S], Houndsgate, Lenton Road and Cut Through Lane [goes through Nottingham University campus] to the west. When the castle enclosure was constructed this thoroughfare was pushed northward and followed up Standard Hill, Postern Street, Park Row and finally struggled down the precipice in what is now known as Park Steps, at the foot of which it turned to the south along Park Valley and re-joined its ancient line at the junction of Castle Grove with Lenton Road.



12. Park Terrace and Columns Cave

One of the most spectacular caves in the area is a relatively modern creation, the "Columns Cave", accessed from The Garden House, No 14A Park Terrace.

This was created between 1850 and 1876 by Alderman Thomas Herbert, who carved a number of caves in the gardens below his house containing full-sized statues of gods, druidical figures and a Christ.



A 'fly through' of the cave can be found at:

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwi20Za0zor8AhWNd8AKHdO9BcwQtwJ6BAgTEAI&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3Df3KcYnuPrPk&usg=AOvVaw14ZdH1sQ8CLwBO_JnmtOk0



13. The Convent

This used to be The Convent of Our Lady of Mercy. It is a Grade II listed building and was designed by the renowned gothic revival architect Augustus Pugin from 1846. The Sisters of Mercy arrived in Nottingham in 1844 and moved into the Convent on College Street in 1846. They ran St Mary's Primary School (closed in 1986) and St Catherine's Grammar School for Girls until 1962. In the 1980's and 1990's the Sisters ran a Care Home for the Elderly and a Repository. By the end of the 1990's the number of the sisters had declined and in 2000 the decision was taken to close the Convent (the remaining sisters moved into a smaller house nearby). The building was restored and refurbished to create apartments in 2003.



The Convent was linked to the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. Barnabus, just a little further down Derby Road. The Cathedral was also built by Pugin in 1841-4

14. Park Tunnel

In 1839 a tunnel to form a north eastern entrance to The Park, linked with Derby Road, was being considered. Although by 1844 work on the tunnel had started and more than half the route had been excavated, tunnelling suddenly stopped and the project was temporarily abandoned. However, by 1855-56 Hine had restarted and completed the tunnel project.

The tunnel was intended to allow access to and from the park by horse-drawn carriages, and the original requirement was for a tunnel with a maximum gradient of 1 in 14 and the ability for coaches to pass each other within the tunnel. As built, the tunnel actually had a gradient of 1 in 12, which was considered too great for horse-drawn carriages, and as easier accesses were constructed elsewhere in The Park Estate, it never fulfilled its original purpose and was just used by pedestrians.

The tunnel is still in use, providing pedestrian access from Derby Road, Upper College Street and The Ropewalk to the Park.



15. Gladstone memorial and Gladstone House



This memorial ring near the tennis court states "Felled by The Right Hon W.E. Gladstone May 11 1875". It marks the spot where 65-year old Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone (1809-1898) felled a tree with an axe, apparently one of his favourite pastimes. The previous day he had met the Mayor of Nottingham, the Vicar of St Mary's and the architect TC Hine to discuss the restoration of Nottingham Castle. According to contemporary reports, the tree had a circumference of five-and-a-half-feet and was felled within 50 minutes.

Some on-line articles say Gladstone lived in the Park – I am not sure this is correct.



The house on Lincoln Circus which is named Gladstone House is now split into 2 flats. By chance, one of the current residents drove up as I was passing and I asked him if he knew the origin of the house name. He said he had been told that the Duke of Newcastle had it built for Gladstone to use as a summer house when he was MP for Newark but that Gladstone had never actually lived here.

According to the Park Conservation Trust, Gladstone House was built in 1876/7 by architect Edwin Lorseed for himself and, as Gladstone resigned his Newark seat in 1846, thirty years before the house was built, the story of it being Gladstone's summer house seems unlikely.

Gladstone was Prime Minister of Britain and Ireland four times between 1868 and 1894. In later life he was popularly known as the 'Grand Old Man'. He did have longstanding Nottinghamshire associations.

Under the patronage of the 4th Duke of Newcastle, Gladstone was elected Tory MP for Newark (which was effectively in the gift of the Duke) in 1832, aged 23, with ultra-conservative views – opposed to the abolition of slavery, because his family used slaves (over 2500) on their West Indian plantation, and to democratic electoral reforms (1832 Great Reform Act which gave the vote to middle class men).

He had ministerial roles in Sir Robert Peel's government and was re-elected MP in Newark in 1835, 1837 and 1841 but retired his seat in 1846. Subsequently, returned as MP for the University of Oxford (1847), then South Lancashire (1865), Greenwich (1868) and Midlothian (1880). By the 1850's he was revising his Tory views and by the mid-1860s had become a Liberal, known for his reformist policies, and becoming Prime Minister four times (1868-74, 1880-5, 1886 and

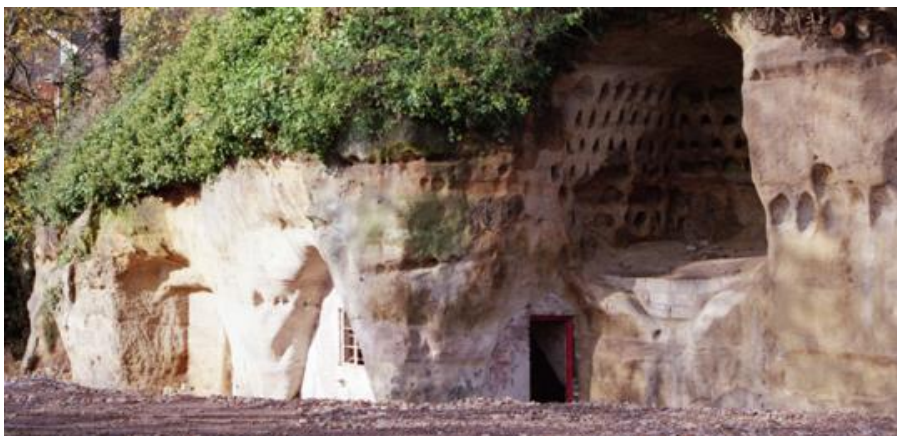
1892-4). Towards the end of his life he observed: "I was brought up to distrust and dislike liberty; I learned to believe in it".

Gladstone's close association with the Dukes of Newcastle, of Clumber and their neighbours continued after Gladstone retired from his Newark seat. As a trustee of the Newcastle Estate he played a role in the development of Nottingham Castle and the Park estate.

16. Lenton Hermitage

As we all know well, Nottingham is a city with many caves; indeed, around the year 868, the Welsh monk Asser, chronicler to King Alfred, referred to it, perhaps in a somewhat disparaging way, as 'Tigguacobauc'. This word, in Asser's native tongue, is generally translated as 'cavy house' or 'place of caves'. The man-made caves, originally with people living and working in them, are to be found in groups in various locations throughout the City.

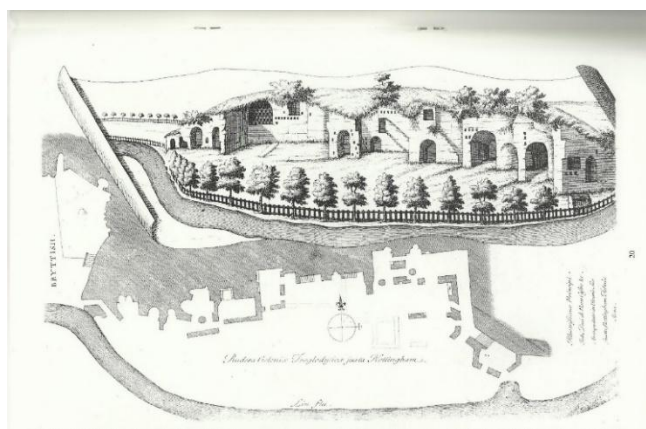
The ones here are known as 'the Papish Holes' or 'Lenton Hermitage'. For many years they were clearly visible, abandoned and much neglected. In the last few years new apartments have been built on the land to the front and the caves have been restored. They are open to the public by request or on Heritage Days.



The Lenton Hermitage caves include a small chapel and a dovecote. The chapel is known as St. Mary De Roche and it is believed that it was created by Carmelite Friars sometime in the reign of Edward I. Along with the Chapel; the friars built for themselves, or converted existing caves into a comfortable residence. There is evidence to suggest that the Chapel may have been a 'shrine' – a repository for a holy relic.

By the 13th century the chapel had passed into the hands of Lenton Priory and the friars were replaced by monks. St. Mary De Roche became an important 'satellite' chapel or hermitage to the Priory. In 1447, the Chapel was given to the King in exchange for yet more land holdings. Part of the agreement was that the monks continued to say prayers at the Chapel, for the '....good estate of the King and his family'.

The Chapel was abandoned by the Priory shortly before the Dissolution. During periods of persecution Nottingham's Catholics used the Chapel for clandestine mass's and it is this association that has led to the name Papish or Popish Holes for the site. The site may also have become a private residence. In the Civil War the site suffered much damage by Parliamentary soldiers from the Castle due to its association with the Catholic faith. The antiquarian William Stukeley visited the Chapel and published his account along with the first ever known illustration of the site (which shows the then alignment of the River Leam) in 1724.



Learn more at the 'Our Nottinghamshire' website:
<http://www.ournottinghamshire.org.uk>