

# Nottingham's Monuments of the Near Future

## Post Works<sup>\*</sup>

A journey through the city of Nottingham that inhabits a space between the city's past, present and near future.

As I am travelling now cross the island, and begin at the mouth of Trent, the first town of note that I meet with is Nottingham, the capital of that shire, and is the most considerable in all that part of England. The county is small, but, like the Peak, 'tis full of wonders; and indeed there are an abundance of remarkables in it. . .

Nottingham is one of the most pleasant and beautiful towns in England. The situation makes it so, tho' the additions to it were not to be nam'd. It is seated on the side of a hill overlooking a fine range of meadows about a mile broad, a little rivulet running on the north side of the meadows, almost close to the town; and the noble River Trent parallel with both on the

\* Post-Works is a collaboration between Melissa Appleton and Matthew Butcher. Their work combines built structures and installations, with performances and film. Recent projects include *No Stop Statue Machine* screened at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London and *Stage City* exhibited at the Prague Quadrenniel 2011 and the Royal Academy of Arts, London. Upcoming projects include "2 Emma Toc: Writtle Calling" a temporary radio station to be sited in Essex during Summer 2012 (<http://www.writtlecalling.co.uk>). Melissa Appleton is an artist living and working in London. With a background in architecture, Melissa's work takes the form of built structures, at both 1:1 and 'model' scale, which become the starting points for video works and performances. Melissa teaches at the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art, Oxford and Chelsea College of Art and Design, London and is regularly a critic at other UK and European universities. Matthew Butcher is an architect working across the fields of architecture, art and performance. He is also a co-founder, and editor, of the architectural newspaper *P.E.A.R.: Paper For Emerging Architectural Research*. Matthew also lectures in architecture, with positions held at the Bartlett School of Architecture, U.C.L. and Greenwich University, London.

further or south side of the meadows: Over the Trent there is a stately stone-bridge of nineteen arches, and the river being there join'd into one united stream, is very large and deep . . .

The town . . . is situated upon the steep ascent of a sandy rock; which is consequently remarkable, for that it is so soft that they easily work into it for making vaults and cellars, and yet so firm as to support the roofs of those cellars two or three under one another; the stairs into which, are all cut out of the solid, tho' crumbling rock; and we must not fail to have it be remember'd that the bountiful inhabitants generally keep these cellars well stock'd with excellent ALE; nor are they uncommunicative in bestowing it among their friends, as some in our company experienc'd to a degree not fit to be made matter of history.

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Eight miles to the south-west the cooling towers of Radcliffe-on-Soar steam in the distance. The eight cooling towers of the coal-fired power station heat the water in the Trent River to 30 degrees, creating an environment suitable for cultivating warm-water fish and new aquatic species. Despite being one of the most land-locked cities in the UK, Nottingham's artificially warmed river Trent becomes the breeding ground of the tilapia fish, originally from the shores of Asia and the Caribbean. The surface of the Trent River glistens with

shoals of fish. Tilapia, the 'fish of the future' is a fast growing fish, rapidly becoming the nations favourite replacement for dwindling cod and haddock resources. E.ON Energy sponsors the fish-farming programme as the tilapia help to purify the water polluted by the power station, by consuming vegetation and detritus, greatly reducing purification costs. Tilapia serve as a natural, biological control for most aquatic plant problems consuming floating aquatic plants, such as duckweed watermeal, most "undesirable" submerged plants, and most forms of algae.

*Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station is a coal-fired power station operated by E.ON UK at Ratcliffe-on-Soar in Nottinghamshire, England. Commissioned in 1968 by the then Central Electricity Generating Board, the station has a capacity of 2000 MW. A number of environmental protests have been associated with the plant. The coal power station occupies a prominent position close to junction 24 of the M1, the River Trent and the Midland Main Line and dominates the skyline for many miles around with its eight cooling towers and 300 m (980 ft) tall chimney. It has four coal-fired boilers made by Babcock and Wilcox, each of which drive a 500 megawatt (MW) Parsons generator set. This gives the station a total generating capacity of 2,000 MW, which is enough electricity to meet the needs of approximately 2 million people. On 11<sup>th</sup> February 2009, Unit 1 became the first UK 500MW coal fired unit to run for 250,000 hours. The plant emits some 8–10 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually making it the 18<sup>th</sup> most polluting power station in Europe. Some 48 million cubic meters of Cooling water is taken from the nearby River Trent. Evaporative losses through the eight cooling towers account for some 11 million cubic metres of that water.*

Nearing the city we follow the course of the Trent to the mouth of the River Leen, just south of Trent Bridge.

*Leen is a corruption through various renderings of the Celtic word llyn, "lake" or "pool" and Anglo Saxon hyllna, meaning streamlet. From Lenton onwards the course of the Leen has been quite radically altered on a number of occasions, notable culverted by the Borough Engineer, Marriott Ogle Tarbotton, but the river's present course is believed to follow much the same route as it did originally.*

The concrete skeleton of the Maid Marion Way, now redirected around the periphery of the city, is broken up to provide reclaimed

land around the marshlands of the River Leen. The river floods the low-lying lands at the base of Nottingham Castle and a wetlands develops fuelled by the raised temperatures of the river Trent and the use of its waters for cooling the power station. The ruin of the Inland Revenue stands like Diocletian's baths in the watery valley, its concrete and steel arches stripped back to house a series of thermal rooms and pools. Stratified banks of paper form from the left over governmental forms, receipts and letters, left by the tax office and the waste paper is used to damn pools and rivulets within the watery landscape.

*The Inland Revenue was, until April 2005, a department of the British Government responsible for the collection of direct taxation, including income tax, national insurance contributions, capital gains tax, inheritance tax, corporation tax, petroleum revenue tax and stamp duty. More recently, the Inland Revenue also administered the Tax Credits schemes, whereby monies, such as Working Tax Credit (WTC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC), are paid by the Government into a recipient's bank account or as part of their wages. The Inland Revenue was also responsible for the payment of child benefit.*

*The Inland Revenue was merged with HM Customs and Excise to form a new department, HM Revenue and Customs, with effect from 18 April 2005. The former Inland Revenue is thus now part of HM Revenue and Customs, but it is still the name by which the tax gathering department of government is commonly known by British people and is often referred to as 'the Tax Man.'*

The River Leen becomes a thriving point of arrival and departure at the edge of the city. Ships and barges are built in the marshlands around the low-lying Leen, the timber harvested from the new artificial city lung of Sherwood Forest, a little further along our journey. When loaded, they sail up the Trent and out to the North sea via Hull, carrying Nottingham's exports of medicines, art and religious sculpture. Luxury imports arrive daily from neighbouring cities and far-away towns, overseen by customs and exiles located in the new one-stop-shop in Nottingham Castle.

As trade imports of food into the city are regulated, the glass and steel structure of the Broadmarsh Shopping Centre is reappropriated as the city's greenhouses, growing enough fruit, vegetables



and crops to feed half of the population of central Nottingham. The shopping centre sits on the former site of the Broadmarsh slums, which previously, in the eighteenth century, had been the heart of the 'garden city' of Nottingham with a large number of formal gardens, notably Tallard's garden, orchards and tree-lined streets. The

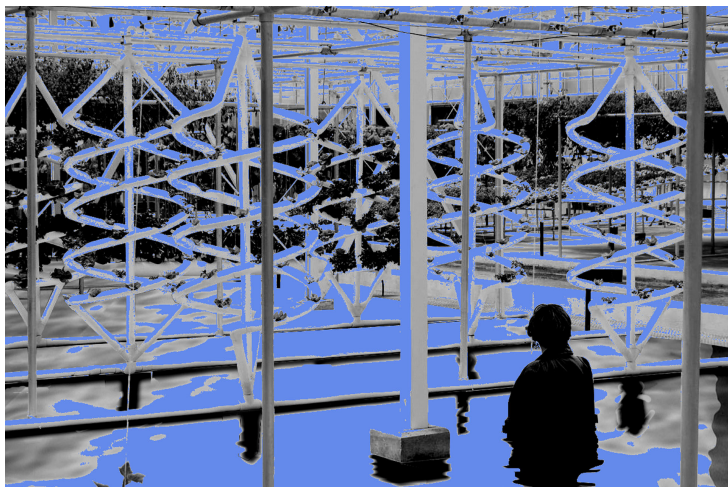


structure of the Broadmarsh centre is stripped back to allow maximum light to penetrate into the space and a landscape of rainwater collection tanks occupy the roof of the building.

*Westfield Broadmarsh (formerly known as the Broadmarsh shopping centre) is the southern end shopping centre in Nottingham, England, owned by the Australian company, the Westfield Group. The centre has 86 stores and a total retail floor space of 45,000 m<sup>3</sup>. The main retailers*



are Argos, BHS, Boots, H&M and TK Max. Several market-style stalls are located on the ground floor. The Broadmarsh Shopping Centre, which opened to the public in 1972, was originally intended to be an Arndale Centre, and the associated parking structure — once voted the “ugliest building in Nottingham” — is still known as the Arndale Car Park. Furthermore, the main mall section of the development lacks distinction architecturally. The centre improved with a major cosmetic refurbishment in 1988.



Across the road, the alchemical garden of Boots the Chemist is seen hanging above the Broadmarsh Car park. Boots, in collaboration with Player's cigarettes and Bio City, (the developer of anti-cancer super broccoli) take over the now redundant swathes of horizontal carpark spaces in the centre of the city, made defunct by the rerouting of Maid Marion Way around the city's edge. The concrete plates of the Broadmarsh car park become a botanical garden, laboratory and health spa where the company produces and promotes the use of natural remedies and holistic medical cures. An agricultural labourer by trade, John Boot was much influenced by the ideas of popular medicine then current among nonconformists, particularly those of the disciples of the American Samuel Thompson, whose remedies, based on medical botany, were then enjoying considerable success in Britain. After John Boot's health broke down, he opened a small shop in 1849 in Goosegate, Nottingham, selling his own herbal and botanical medicines. The garden hangs above the city as a temple

to well-being and health; an ever-present reminder of the presence of Boots in the city. Radishes, lemons and honey, natural cures for anti-smoking, are grown hydroponically amongst the white grid of the laboratory and shallow pools allow well-wishers to relax in the alchemical garden. The temperature is regulated by the city's district heating system owned by operator Enviroenergy, Alliance Boots and the Queens Medical Centre.

*Broadmarsh bus station serves the city of Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, England. The bus station is situated in Nottingham City Centre adjacent to the Westfield Broadmarsh shopping centre underneath the Broadmarsh multi-storey car park. It is bordered by Canal Street (A6008 road) and can be accessed from the shopping centre. The station is 250 metres away from Nottingham rail and tram station. The bus station has 12 stands (known as bays) and its main operator is Trent Barton. Services from the Broadmarsh go as far afield as Bingham, Oakham, Leicester, Long Eaton, Derby and Manchester. National Express coach services also operate from here. Nottingham City Transport services that serve the Broadmarsh shopping centre go from bus stands on Collin Street.*

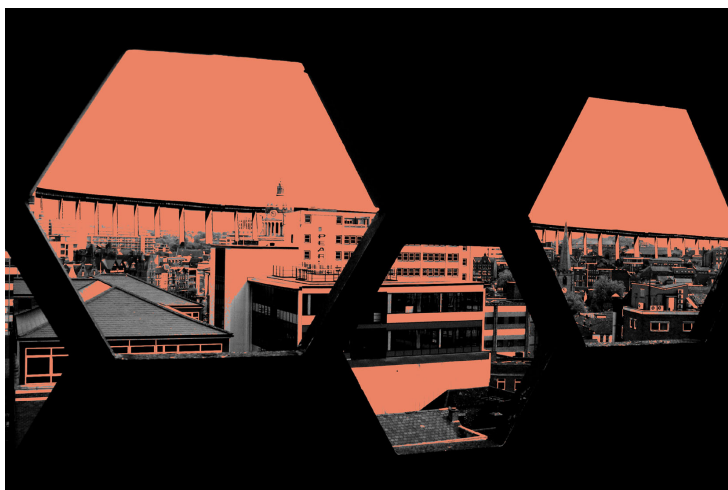


In the vast gaping artery left by the diversion of Maid Marion Way, a swath of Sherwood Forest is planted throughout the city and varieties of tree are grown for short-rotational coppicing and the production of energy for the tourist trade. The fledgling Robin Hood experience



of Maid Marion Way is revitalised by its proximity to the new lung of Sherwood Forest. Actors and actresses dressed as Robin Hood and Maid Marion run wild amongst the trees of Sherwood Forest. The “Major Oak” is moved to the city centre for the real Robin Hood experience.

*The name ‘Sherwood’ was first recorded in 958AD when it was called Sciryuda, meaning ‘the woodland belonging to the shire’. It became a Royal hunting forest after the Norman invasion of 1066, and was popular with many Norman kings, particularly King John and Edward I. The ruins of King John’s hunting lodge can still be seen near the Nottinghamshire village of Kings Clipstone. ‘Forest’ was a legal term, and meant an area subject to special Royal laws designed to protect the valuable resources of timber and game (Vert and Venison) within its boundaries. These laws were strictly and severely imposed by agisters, foresters, verderers (wardens) and rangers, who were all were employed by the Crown.*



From the upper floors of the abandoned NCP car park we see the elevated Maid Marion Way, diverted around the edge of the city to increase connectivity between Nottingham and its neighbouring cities. Markets and trading posts inhabit the arches underneath the concrete artery. At this permeable, uncontrolled edge of the city, black market and suitcase trading happens unregulated by customs and exiles.



A short walk from the Robin Hood Experience, the other main tourist attraction of the city, the Castle of Nottingham, emerges from the mound of sandy rock beneath it. The castle becomes the fortified political heart of Nottingham once more. Local government return to Nottingham Castle. From here they can have a vantage point as far as the next city and can keep an eye on imports and exports that

arrive and leave via the River Leen. Sumptuous council chambers and a debating hall are carved from the castle rock; the inspired setting promotes inspired decision-making. Fine wines and ale are hoisted into the council chambers from the city's brewery below, the cool environment of the caves providing optimal environments for brewing. After years of complaints by disappointed tourists, the Genovese palazzo above is modified to replicate the original Motte and Bailey castle of Robin Hood's time.

*After the restoration of Charles II in 1660, the present 'Ducal Mansion' was built by Henry Cavendish, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Newcastle between 1674 and 1679 on the foundations of the previous structure. Despite the destruction of the keep and fortifications of the upper bailey, some rock cut cellars and medieval pointed arches survive beneath the mansion, together with a long passage to the bottom of the rock, commonly known as Mortimer's Hole. The mason for the Mansion was Samuel Marsh of Lincoln, who also worked for the Duke at Bolsover Castle. His designs are generally thought to have been strongly influenced by Rubens's published engravings of the Palazzi di Genova. The Duke's mansion is a rare surviving example in England of Artisan Mannerist architecture. However, it lost its appeal to the later Dukes with the coming of the Industrial Revolution, which left Nottingham with the reputation of having the worst slums in the British Empire outside India. When residents of these slums rioted in 1831, in protest against the Duke of Newcastle's opposition to the Reform Act 1832 they burned down the mansion. The original exterior stairs on the eastern facade of the mansion were subsequently demolished to create a parade ground for the Robin Hood Rifles.*

Onwards to the city's playhouse, due north-west of the Castle. En route we catch a glimpse of the deer grazing in the Park Estate, their dung keeps the lights of the villas burning.

At the Playhouse, in order to keep the city's arts and theatre programme running amongst the unpredictable energy reserves, the city reapropriates its art collection for energy production. The Sky Mirror is dismantled and re-assembled on the roof of the Playhouse. Anish Kapoor keeps the lights on. The mirror is angled and rotated to focus the sun's rays from which the intense heat produced, is used to generate enough energy for roughly two hours a day.



Scripts are edited to bring them within the two-hour time limit for performances.

*The current Modern movement theatre was opened in 1963. The architect was Peter Moro who had worked on the interior design of the Royal Festival Hall in London. It was initially controversial as it faces the*

*gothic revival Roman Catholic cathedral designed by Augustus Pugin. The buildings received a Civic Trust Award in 1966. Despite the modern external appearance and the circular auditorium walls, the theatre has a conventional proscenium layout, seating an audience of 770. During the 1980's, when the concrete interiors were out of fashion, the Playhouse suffered from insensitive "refurbishment" that sought to hide its character. Since 1996, it has been a Grade II\* listed building and in 2004, the theatre was sympathetically restored and refurbished with a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The sculpture Sky Mirror by Anish Kapoor was installed between the theatre and the adjacent green space of Wellington Circus in 2001. It is one of the main features of the 160 seat patio area of CAST Restaurant and in autumn 2007 won the Nottingham Pride of Place in a public vote to determine the City's favourite landmark.*

From the Playhouse it is a short walk to the Pitcher and Piano, the last stop on our journey and spiritual home of Nottingham Contemporary.

The Pitcher and Piano returns to a place of worship, here the former occupants of Nottingham Contemporary worship art in a sumptuous setting. Nottingham's alabaster trade is revitalised by the production of art editions to order. Alongside pharmaceuticals and herbal medicines, art is now one of Nottingham's most thriving exports. The cool car-park architecture of the recently built gallery becomes the somber and reflective space of worship.

*High Pavement Chapel is a building on High Pavement in Nottingham. It is now the Pitcher and Piano public house and is Grade II listed. The current building was opened in 1876, built to a design of the architect Stuart Colman of Bristol. It was used as a place of worship for Unitarian Presbyterians in Nottingham until 1982. It was then converted into the Nottingham Lace Museum, but this venture proved financially unviable. The building was then converted to its current use, as a Pitcher and Piano public house.*

*Nottingham Contemporary (formerly known as the Centre for Contemporary Art Nottingham (CCAN)) is a contemporary art centre in the Lace Market area of Nottingham. To celebrate the area's history of lace manufacture, the cladding of the building is embossed with a traditional Nottingham lace pattern. A revolutionary concrete casting*



*technique, carried out in Nottingham, has embossed a lace design into the building's panels, some up to 11 metres high. Caruso St John is an architectural firm established in 1990 by Adam Caruso and Peter St John. In 1996 they won an open competition to design the New Art Gallery, Walsall, which opened in 2000. The gallery was short-listed for the 2000 Stirling Prize. Nottingham Contemporary is on the oldest*



*site in Nottingham, Garners Hill. The site once housed cave dwellings, a Saxon fort and a medieval town hall before the Victorians swept all aside for a railway line. It is in the historic Lace Market, a showcase for a world famous fabric when technical innovation gave lace a mass market.*

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I might enter into a long description of all the modern buildings erected lately in Nottingham, which are considerable, and of some just now going forward. But I have a large building in the whole to overlook; and I must not dwell too long upon the threshold.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Defoe, *A tour thro' the whole island of Great Britain, divided into circuits or journies*, (1724–27).

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