

**OFFICIAL CATALOGUE OF
THE PICTURES AND
OBJECTS IN THE MIDLAND
COUNTIES ART MUSEUM**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649453221

Official Catalogue of the Pictures and Objects in the Midland Counties Art Museum by J. P. Briscoe

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Cover @ 2017

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J. P. BRISCOE

**OFFICIAL CATALOGUE OF
THE PICTURES AND
OBJECTS IN THE MIDLAND
COUNTIES ART MUSEUM**

Corporation of



Nottingham.

OFFICIAL
CATALOGUE
OF THE
PICTURES AND OBJECTS
IN THE
MIDLAND COUNTIES ART MUSEUM,
THE CASTLE, NOTTINGHAM.

IN CONNECTION WITH



SOUTH KENSINGTON.


COMPILED AND EDITED BY J. P. BRISCOE, F.R.H.S.,
CORPORATION LIBRARIAN.

SOLD AT THE MUSEUM.
1878.

Gough Add. Notts.
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NOTTINGHAM:
PRINTED BY T. FORMAN AND SONS, SHREWOOD STREET,

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE SKETCH
OF THE
MIDLAND COUNTIES ART MUSEUM

 IN the month of January, 1872, Sir Henry Cole, K.C.B., then of the South Kensington Museum, addressed a letter to Mr. Ward, the Mayor of Nottingham, on the subject of the establishment in Nottingham of a Museum in connection with the one at South Kensington.

This letter, which intimated that the marked success achieved by the students of the Nottingham School of Art had induced the Department to make overtures with a view to the establishment of a permanent Science and Art Museum in Nottingham, was laid before a meeting of the Town Council of Nottingham, in the following February, when it was unanimously resolved to accept the offer of the Education Department.

A Committee was appointed to act with the School of Art in furthering the arrangements, the responsibility of the Exhibition was accepted by the Town Council, and an annual grant of money voted for its maintenance.

An Exhibition, consisting of pictures and objects, loaned by the authorities at South Kensington, and a valuable collection of pictures and exhibits lent by local and other gentlemen, was opened by the Mayor in the Exchange Rooms, Nottingham, on the 20th May, 1872.

The success which attended the Exhibition is demonstrated by the reports of the Committee, from which it appears that the number of persons admitted to the Exhibition during the time it has been opened amounts to 763,806, or an average of 2,504 weekly.

This unprecedented prosperity (despite the want of space in the Exchange Rooms), and the great public interest taken therein by visitors from the country districts, determined the Council to appoint a Committee to take into consideration the desirability of providing a suitable site for the location of the Exhibition, with a view to its becoming a permanent institution.

This Committee met, when it was resolved that the Nottingham Castle and the adjoining grounds would afford a very eligible situation for the Exhibition, and the Town Clerk was instructed to make enquiries of the

Agent of the Duke of Newcastle's Trustees to ascertain if they were willing to grant a lease of the Castle and grounds for a long term of years at a reasonable rent. The practicability of adapting the existing buildings was fully discussed, as was also the probable costs of the necessary work, which were estimated at the minimum sum of £20,000.

The proposal of the Committee received the hearty concurrence of the Council, and it was also resolved that, in the Improvement Bill to be promoted during the then next Session of Parliament, clauses should be inserted enabling the scheme to be carried out. The Bill has been successfully promoted, and clauses have been inserted enabling the Corporation to take, and the Trustees of the Duke of Newcastle to grant, a lease of the Castle and grounds for a term of 500 years,—the Council to use and maintain the same as a public Museum and Exhibition. The Right Honorable W. E. Gladstone, M.P. (who has given personal attention to the whole scheme), and Lord de Tabley, as the Trustees of the Duke of Newcastle, and all other persons legally interested in the estate, assented.

The Town Council are now the owners of Nottingham Castle and the grounds immediately surrounding it for a term of five hundred years.

In designing the adaptations the Town Council have had the assistance of the best men of the day, and have been specially advised by Sir Henry Cole, K.C.B., R. A. Thompson, Esq., and Mr. George Wallis, F.S.A., and the staff of South Kensington Museum, and T. C. Hine, Esq., F.S.A., the Architect to the Duke's Trustees.

The walls of the Castle are of enormous thickness, and the internal arrangements are of special fire-proof construction, water having been laid on in all parts of the building. Indeed no expense has been spared to render the place perfectly safe from both fire and damp.

The building consists of a ground floor storey of 7 rooms, the largest of which is 54 feet by 26 feet, and the smallest is 25 feet by 21 feet. The next storey is approached by two spacious stone staircases. On this floor there are six galleries, the largest of which is 146 feet by 26 feet, and the smallest 25 feet by 21 feet.

The heating is by means of hot water; the lighting is from the roof, with an under sash; great care has also been bestowed on the ventilation.

The colouring of the galleries has been the subject of special consideration, and acknowledged masters of colour have been consulted thereon.

The Town Council have secured the services of Mr. George Harry Wallis, of the South Kensington Museum, as Director and Curator. He has had great experience, and is of known professional ability. He has been appointed to take the oversight of the Museum; and it is the

intention of the Council to carry out the system of administration and custody of objects of art lent to the Castle Museum which has been so successful as regards public exhibition, and so satisfactory to the owners, during the last twenty years at the South Kensington Museum. Mr. Wallis is assisted by Mr. Holbrook as Secretary, and a sufficient staff. The building is watched day and night by the Borough Police, under the charge of Major Poyntz, the Chief Constable.

It is generally admitted that the Castle as now restored forms the finest Art Galleries (considered in relation to situation, size, and proportion of rooms, lighting, and general suitability), to be found in the United Kingdom outside the metropolis.

It is believed that this is the first time that a Municipal Corporation has committed itself to a work of this character, and it is hoped that the movement will receive the hearty support of all who believe that it is by enterprises of this description that the national taste may be elevated and the social and moral tone of the people improved.

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