

Caves and ale

Many of the historic pubs in the centre of Nottingham have rock-cut cellars where they store their beer, and some pubs have caves where customers can eat and drink, such as the famous Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem. Some of Nottingham's finest town houses have rock-cut cellars which were used as entertaining spaces for guests, such as the circular chambers beneath Willoughby House on Lower Pavement.

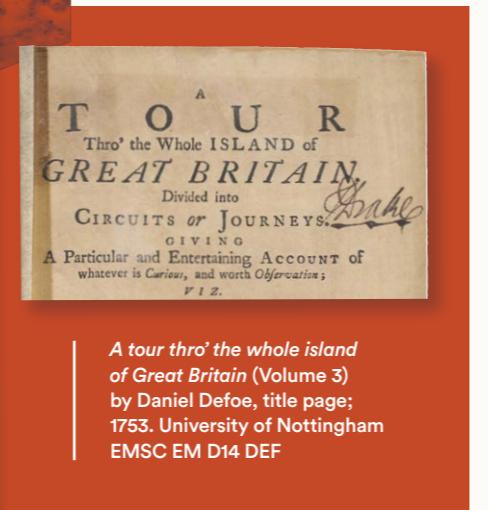


There are extensive caves under the Salutation Inn, one of Nottingham's oldest pubs. 'Salutation Inn and Rock Holes' from *Album of view-postcards, chiefly of Nottingham*; undated. University of Nottingham Oversize Not 1.D14 ALB

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Tales from the Caves

Exploring Nottingham's underground stories



A tour thro' the whole island of Great Britain (Volume 3) by Daniel Defoe, title page; 1753. University of Nottingham EMSC EM D14 DEF

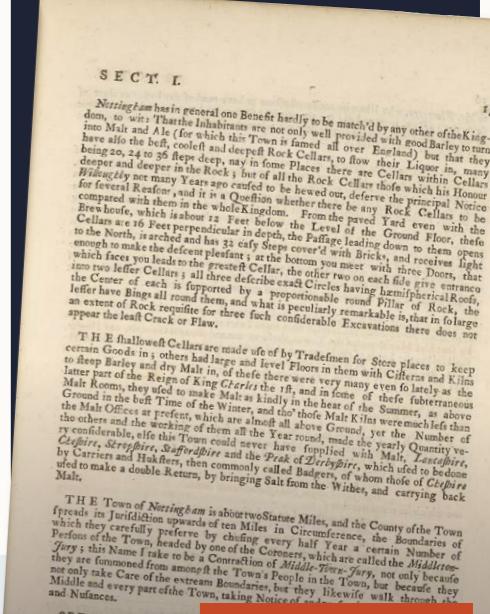
to germinate, and then roasted over a fire to stop the germination and release the sugars which are essential for the brewing process. Nottingham's distinctive malting caves have large circular rock-cut kilns with an associated water supply and germinating chamber. In *Nottinghamia Vetus et Nova*, which chronicles the history of the city, Charles Deering (c.1695–1749) records that these underground maltings were in use up to the 1640s. They provided a consistent temperature which meant malting could happen all year round, laying the foundations for brewing as one of Nottingham's most famous industries.

The association between caves and ale or beer goes back a long way in Nottingham. In 1727 the famous writer Daniel Defoe visited Nottingham on his *Tour thro' the whole island of Great Britain*. He described it as a beautiful and prosperous town and made a special point of mentioning the way in which the citizens carved the soft sandstone rock into vaults and cellars, and furthermore that they kept these cellars "well stock'd with excellent ale" which was liberally sampled – "to a degree not fit to be made matter of history".

As well as storing ale, Nottingham is remarkable for having between 30 and 40 surviving underground malting complexes dating from the medieval period to the seventeenth century.

To produce malt, barley had to be steeped in water and allowed

Local antiquarian Charles Deering wrote about the use of caves in the malting process in his history of the town, *Nottinghamia vetus et nova : or, An historical account of the ancient and present state of the town of Nottingham*, p.15; 1751. University of Nottingham EMSC Not 3.D14 DEE



Plan by Frank Lewis, city architect, of the rock cellars under the Castle Rock, Nottingham; 1903. University of Nottingham NPE P 4/13/1



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