



BELVOIR CASTLE

by Lucy Williams

Sat high above the Vale of Belvoir, originating from the Norman French for 'beautiful view', Belvoir Castle is one of Grantham's, and extendedly England's, most striking country estates. It's situated six miles west of Grantham and lies just across the county boundary in Leicestershire.

Since its initial build 1,000 years ago, immediately following the Norman Conquest of 1066, Belvoir Castle has been through numerous reconstructions and rebuilds, each therefore echoing its respective architectural times and history. Due to the home being a royalist stronghold during the English Civil War, dating from 1642 to 1651, the original medieval structure suffered severe damage by Parliamentary forces; this, of course, left little of its original Norman fortress intact. A second castle was later constructed in the early 17th century, but this too met an unfortunate fate. In 1816, a devastating fire reduced much of the building to ruins and destroyed the project of romantic Gothic Revival architecture.

The castle was rebuilt for a third and final time in 1832 by architect Sir James Thornton. He rebuilt the stately home with largely similar designs to the previously attempted Gothic Revival, with parts still resembling its medieval past, such as the central tower.

The house has now been the ancestral home of the Manners family since the 9th Earl was created Duke of Rutland in 1703, and as such is privately owned by the Duke and Duchess.

Fortunately, the home is completely open to guests via booked tickets on its website, providing guided tours throughout the rooms of the castle, as well as rooms for hire and events that can shape a visit to the grounds. The castle offers numerous unique events and opportunities throughout the year for visitors to be able

to truly visit and get a feel for the grounds, with guided historical tours throughout the house, gardens and even vineyards.

Belvoir Castle's dramatic setting has also made it a popular filming location for television and film productions, providing a location for one of its most notable appearances in the Netflix series *The Crown*; an exciting appearance that demonstrates the need and respect the country still holds for stately, family-run homes such as Belvoir.

As such, Belvoir Castle stands as a unique contributor to the plethora of historical homes across Lincolnshire; an experience that can combine both entertainment, preservation and history, as well as a true echo of care for precious pieces of history.