



University of
Nottingham

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Community Newsletter

Summer 2022



**Celebrating
graduation**

**JVT returns to
Nottingham**

**Student Living
Strategy**

Welcome

to the Summer 2022 edition of the University of Nottingham's Community Newsletter, our opportunity to share with you the many ways in which the University and our students are positively engaging with our neighbours and supporting communities across the city.



As we approach the end of another academic year, this term has given us some welcome opportunities for celebration. It has been a delight to see students and their families back on campus for in-person graduation after two years of disruption. This summer, what is always a momentous occasion, has also been a monumental achievement by our graduation team, as we confer degrees on not one but three cohorts of students – those who completed their studies this year, as well as those that missed their ceremonies due to the pandemic in 2020 and 2021. We send our heartfelt congratulations to all of them.

As a regular on our TV screens during the Covid-19 Downing Street press briefings, Professor Jonathan Van-Tam simultaneously became a household name and a national treasure while in his role as Deputy Chief Medical Officer. After stepping down from his DCMO role and receiving a knighthood in the Queen's New Year Honours, he has joined the University of Nottingham as its new Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. This latest appointment continues JVT's long association with the university, which began when he graduated from the School of Medicine in the 80s and has seen him working in a number of research roles focussed on the epidemiology of infectious diseases. We are excited to see where his inspirational leadership will take the faculty next.

The university's position as a leading UK research institute was underscored by the recent announcement of the Research Excellence Framework (REF), which assessed the quality and societal benefits of university research paid for from the public purse through the UK's higher education funding bodies. In the REF2021 assessment period (2014-21), the lives of more than 100 million people have been positively changed by our research. We saved the NHS £2 billion, thanks to research including influencing vaccine policies, evidencing the value of community pharmacies and helping GPs reduce prescription errors. Legislation informed by our discoveries touches the lives of every UK citizen, from improving road safety, to safeguarding children online to protecting consumers.

It's pleasing to finish the academic year on such a positive note and long may it continue. In the meantime, I wish you and your loved ones a very enjoyable summer.

Dr Paul Greatrix
Registrar
University of Nottingham



Celebrating graduation

More than 5,500 students celebrated with family and friends as in-person graduation ceremonies made a welcome return to Nottingham.

After two years where ceremonies could not be held due to restrictions for the Covid-19 pandemic, the university held its first in-person ceremonies since 2019 with an extraordinary celebration of achievements.

The East Midlands Conference Centre welcomed the classes of 2020 and 2021 back for 22 ceremonies that took place between Saturday 7 and Friday 13 May.

Tuesday saw a historic first for the university, as Associate Professor Gabrielle Neher took up the enigmatic role of Esquire Bedell – the traditionally male mace holder at graduation ceremonies.

The Esquire Bedell forms part of the academic procession for graduations and is easily recognised as the officer who carries the university's mace to the stage and back.

Although not the first female Esquire Bedell in the country (that honour falls to Dr Nicola Hardy of the University of Cambridge) Gaby became the first woman to hold the role in the university's 141-year history and was honoured to have taken part.

She said: "I feel enormously privileged to have been selected to become the first female holder of this role at Nottingham. Representation matters and placing women in key ceremonial roles that are highly visible at graduation reflects our community at the university better.

"UoN after all built its first Hall, Florence Boot Hall, to accommodate female scholars, so has a long history of making education accessible to all."

History was again made the following day as Jaqueline Andrews, of the Business School, became the university's first female Marshal.

The Marshal carries a baton and leads the platform party in the procession. When the graduands approach the stage to receive the awards, the Marshal leads them to the stage and then checks graduands' names before the name reader calls them out.

JVT returns to Nottingham

Professor Sir Jonathan Van-Tam, who became one of the most recognisable faces of the Covid-19 pandemic as Deputy Chief Medical Officer, has returned to his alma mater to take up the role of Pro-Vice-Chancellor, leading the university's Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences.

As DCMO during Covid-19, he gained cult status for his regular appearances at the Downing Street press conferences, where he became synonymous for his use of creative, often sport-related, analogies – dubbed by the media as Van-Tamisms – to explain complex issues around the virus, its transmission and the measures needed to control it in plain, easy to understand language.

In addition, JVT, as he is affectionately nicknamed, featured on the nation's TV screens hosting the 2021 Royal Institution Christmas Lectures - Going Viral: How Covid Changed Science Forever, a deep dive into the science of viruses. And after receiving a knighthood in the Queen's New Year Honours 2022 for services to public health, Chief Medical Officer for England Professor Sir Chris Witty described Professor Van-Tam's communication of public health advice and science as 'remarkable'.

The Nottingham alum, who has worked in a number of research roles for Nottingham since he graduated from the School of Medicine in 1987, took up the position of Pro-Vice-Chancellor at the beginning of May, which will see him playing a key role in shaping the future of healthcare education at the university.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Shearer West said: "All of us at the University are incredibly proud of Professor Sir Jonathan Van-Tam's work as Deputy Chief Medical Officer, in which he has played a major role in steering the nation through the Covid-19 pandemic.

"His academic and leadership expertise is second to none, and the integrity that he has demonstrated in his government role is fully aligned to our values. I know that he will take our university's reputation for excellence in medicine and health sciences to new heights."



Student Living Strategy

Students are an important part of our vibrant city, but we recognise the equal importance of ensuring they play a positive role in the communities of which they are a part.

Over the past year, representatives from the University of Nottingham, Nottingham Trent University and the City Council have been working together to develop a strategy to ensure that we can maximise the economic, social and cultural benefits of the city's diverse student population, whilst taking into account the demand on its communities, businesses and services.

This Student Living Strategy will help us improve the choice, quality and location of student accommodation; work together to encourage neighbourliness and respect; promote clean, safe, attractive and sustainable environments; and create strong and balanced communities, where students continue to add to the civic life of the city and value Nottingham as their home.

The strategy will outline our shared priorities and the joint actions we will take to achieve them, alongside the data which will be used to assess and measure our outcomes and impact. You can find out more details on the Nottingham City Council webpages: nottinghamcity.gov.uk/studentlivingstrategy

Partners in the strategy have already held focus groups to listen to representatives of Nottingham's communities, resident associations, businesses, service sectors and accommodation providers to inform actions to address the priorities of the strategy. Later this year, we will be inviting people across the city to give us their views when we publish the draft strategy for public consultation.

In the meantime, if you have any questions or thoughts to contribute to the strategy, please contact Jamie Dickinson, Off Campus Affairs Manager, University of Nottingham at offcampus@nottingham.ac.uk

Have your say on our new outdoor teaching space

Covid-19 helped us all to realise the importance of our outdoor spaces, and the benefits of time spent in nature, in our green spaces and in our gardens. In the wake of the pandemic and what we are learning from this, the School of Education is hoping to develop an outdoor learning and community space on Jubilee Campus.

The space that we are hoping to turn into a low-cost, peaceful, low-maintenance, environmentally friendly and sustainable outdoor learning and community area is opposite the Dearing Building, behind the lake, in a small area of woodland. This will primarily be used for teaching activity as part of our courses, but we hope to be able to invite the wider community to enjoy this exciting new area too. Potentially, this would be a space for engaging with our local communities and we would be interested in your ideas for a community growing space such as an allotment on Jubilee campus for local residents as well as students.

We welcome any comments in relation to this project. Please email jenny.elliott@nottingham.ac.uk with your thoughts. Please note that prior to any formal development of this space a consultation with those locally that may be interested will take place. Residents will be written to with further details in due course.



Spreading the word on the health benefits of wild swimming

With the warmer weather coming, the water becomes more inviting. And with the lakes at Colwick and Spring Lakes in Long Eaton, there are plenty of places to experience the health benefits and fun factor of wild swimming.

Wild swimming has had a surge in popularity in the UK, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic, and numerous studies have shown this type of swimming in cold water in a natural environment can boost not only fitness, but greatly improve mood, reduce tension, negativity, and depression.

Now a new project to encourage more people to reap the benefits of 'wild swimming' has been launched by a group of researchers at the University of Nottingham.

The research team at Nottingham consists of linguistics and placed-based literature experts, with health policy and freshwater ecosystem specialists. They are working with a number of partners, including Cardiff University, Swim England and the Black Swimming Association, to pull together a comprehensive overview and toolkit on the mental and physical health benefits of wild swimming as well as guidance on the risks related to water quality and safety of specific swimming spots in the UK.

A new online survey aimed at existing wild swimming groups and prospective swimmers will test attitudes to and knowledge of the benefits of this activity. The team will also investigate the history of some of the specific wild swimming locations mentioned in the survey. They will also develop text, graphics and video content to show how swimmers can make informed decisions about the safety of water conditions and possible toxicity or contamination of open water locations.

The research will explore the barriers, as well as the best ways to develop content that truly appeals to everyone, and in turn creates a happier, healthier and more successful nation through swimming.

SB Fest

More than 1,000 students and local residents flocked to the SB Fest on Sunday 8 May, an annual family-friendly event encompassing music, food, science, beer and art organised by the students of Sutton Bonington Campus.

The largest community outreach event of the Sutton Bonington calendar, the event featured a falconry display, dog show, a Discovery Zone, beer festival and farmers market, all accompanied by live music from staff, student and local bands, creating a fantastic atmosphere throughout the day.

The event was supported by student volunteers in collaboration with the Students' Union and many local businesses including craftspeople and food stalls.

Money is still being collected, but the takings of the event are estimated to be around £6000, which will be donated to the event's two chosen charities this year, LOROS and the Stroke Association.



Student society leads community vet initiative

The university's Shelter Medicine Society ran its first neuter clinic in conjunction with RSPCA Bolton recently.

A grant from the SU Community Officer to undertake fundraising or volunteering activities, allowed the society to take eight of its members to Bolton and assist the community by neutering eight cats. This not only gave the society members an opportunity to practice skills essential to a veterinary career that they may have missed during the COVID pandemic, but also to reduce the number of unwanted animals by neutering cats that may not otherwise have been neutered due to owner money constraints.

As a result of this, the society will now be working with the RSPCA to put on more of these events and work together to assist the animals in the wider community.





British American Football star Oyelola pauses law career for NFL glory

Rising UK American Football star Ayo Oyelola has switched the court room for the world's biggest sports stadiums, winning a professional contract within the National Football League (NFL).

The 23-year-old Nottingham law graduate has been announced to the Jacksonville Jaguars NFL roster after only taking up the sport five years ago during his time at the university.

Oyelola is among four players to have been allocated to NFL teams as part of the league's International Pathway programme and follows in the footsteps of super stars such as Washington Commander's Efe Obada.

Finding success following a trial for the University American Football squad, he was initially contracted to play professionally in Germany after he graduated in 2020, but the opportunity fell through with the onset of the pandemic.

Undeterred, he stayed in Nottingham studying for his law finals and training hard. His commitment paid off as he was spotted by NFL International and signed up to their International Player Pathway Program (IPP), which led to him being drafted to the Winnipeg Blue Bombers in the Canadian Football League – the world's second professional league.

This turned out to be a fortuitous move – the side won the Grey Cup – the CFL title – with Oyelola a key defensive figure throughout the season.

Returning to London, he re-joined the IPP and then flew out to train in New Jersey where he received the news recently that he'd been signed to the Jaguars NFL roster.

He said: "This has been my dream for a long time – I'm enjoying this moment, but also already focussing on the next thing I need to do. My personal goal is to be a NFL starter and then win a pro bowl and I'll continue to do all I can to get there.

"I'm right at the beginning of my playing career, so for now, that's my focus. However, I knew I wanted to study law from a really young age and I know I'll use what I learnt at the University of Nottingham when I've finished playing – perhaps supporting fellow players as a sports agent."

Experts help sushi producer to launch UK-wide delivery

A new Nottingham business, Uramaki, which began producing authentic handmade sushi for local delivery during lockdown has now gone nationwide, with support from The Food Innovation Centre at the University of Nottingham.

Food innovation technologist Jack Wallman helped Uramaki to research and source the ideal cases to keep the sushi looking great and in tip top condition during transportation and delivery.

Rachel Thacker, who runs Uramaki with chef husband Paul, said: "Support from the Food Innovation Centre has been really helpful for us. We were a new business in lockdown and if you haven't got the skill base to solve particular challenges or don't know how to get the information that you need, it's really helpful to be able to speak to someone like Jack. It's someone believing in your vision and helping you to reach the next step."

The West Bridgford-based business began with a local delivery service within 15 miles of Nottingham, before introducing pick-up points at various farm shops in the area. But this latest move allows the company to deliver across the UK – opening up a significant market for their sushi.

The Food Innovation Centre, which is based at the Bioenergy and Brewing Science building at the university's Sutton Bonington campus offers free support to eligible small and medium-sized food and drink manufacturers in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire under the Driving Research and Innovation project – a three-year project that runs until the end of December 2022.

Part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) via the D2N2 LEP, the project is run in conjunction with the Chemistry Innovation Laboratory in the university's School of Chemistry and Institute for Advanced Manufacturing and in association with the Midlands Engine. It is a unique collaboration project that provides free specialist innovation support to small and medium-sized food and drink businesses.





End of term clear out

Save the planet.
Fund research.
Beat heartbreak.

#packforgood



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How to donate in 3 easy steps:

1. Please donate your unwanted clothing, shoes, bags, accessories, books, computer games, CDs, DVDs, electrical items, crockery, cookware and homeware. Please note we do not accept food, knives, hangers or dirty and damaged items. **NO DUVETS or PILLOWS.**
2. Place your unwanted items into the bag provided or any other clean bag. To ensure items are not damaged or get dirty, please tie each bag so that the contents do not fall out.
3. Take it to one of the local BHF branded donation points at:

1. Ilkeston Road - Garden Street
2. Radford Recreation Ground
3. Nottingham Two - Ilkeston Road
4. Derby Road
5. The Lenton Centre
6. Park Road Tesco
7. Lenton Boulevard
8. Lenton Recreation Ground
9. Derby Road - Gatehouse Lodge
10. Dunkirk Community Centre
11. Lace Street - Montpelier Road
12. Woodside Shops

Your donations help to save lives and diverts waste from landfill through reselling, reuse and recycling.
nottingham.ac.uk/go/EndOfTerm





My favourite cycling routes – Sebastian Garry

Has the warmer weather tempted you to get back on your bike? Cycling is a great way to explore where you live, get some fresh air and get active – all at the same time.

Not sure where to head out to? University of Nottingham cyclist and sports scholar Sebastian Garry has put together some of his favourite routes around the region for everyone to try.

Seb is currently studying towards a MSc in Finance and Accounting at the university while competing for our cycling club. Part of the Track Cycling team who were named British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) Team of the Year 2020, he took home two individual golds from the BUCS Championships as well as helping his team to the Team Pursuit and Overall Team titles.

Aside from the competition circuit, Seb loves cycling as it's a chance to escape from the normal day to day of work and studying – you can just jump on your bike and enjoy an adventure outdoors!

Shorter routes

We're spoilt for choice in Nottingham for shorter cycle routes – ideal if you're tight on time or don't want to overdo it when first starting out. I'd really recommend Wollaton Park (4 mile route) which is on our doorstep at University Park Campus or the purpose built cycle track at Harvey Hadden.

17 mile route

This short ride heads out to Keyworth and then back into the city via West Bridgford where there are plenty of good coffee shops offering takeaway. My personal favourite is Okende if you do stop off!

23 mile route

This is a great chance to head out towards our Sutton Bonington campus (or equally start the loop there). Leaving the city by the west, you'll pass Nottingham Trent University's Clifton Campus en route to Sutton Bonington before looping back.

36 mile route

This ride heads out towards Loughborough first and then back to Nottingham city via several quaint Nottinghamshire villages.

64 mile route

This is a challenging ride that traverses from Loughborough to the beautiful Belvoir Castle. It is mostly flat with a few small hills. If you want to stop for a snack, then I highly recommend Bottesford Village Hall – they even do full roasts!

To find out more about the routes highlighted, visit: blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/sport/2021/02/19/my-favourite-cycling-routes-sebastian-garry

Sports scholar in focus: Simran Kaur

Simran Kaur is a gold medal-winning chemist with a passion for sustainability. As a para-athlete and sports scholar at the university, she balances her studies with her training on the track and at the David Ross Sports Village on University Park campus.

She recently represented the university in the BUCS national athletics competition, bringing home gold in the 60m sprint. BUCS (British Universities and College Sport), is a big moment in the sports calendar for Nottingham students and for Simran it was the first chance she had to take part in a big competition, after Covid disrupted previous chances.

And Simran has big dreams for the future.

She said: "I want to keep up with and improve the level I'm at in my athletics and make another international team. Unfortunately, I can't go to the Commonwealths as they don't run my discipline. I'm just hoping to make some more teams and hopefully make a para-Olympic team in the future. Whether it's Paris or LA – that is something to aim for.

"In my academic studies, I want to really focus on sustainable chemistry. The world around us needs us to look after it, so I want to look at how we can help in ways such as converting from petrol vehicles to electric. I've always loved chemistry but with the world in the condition that it is in, something needs to change I want to be a part of that change."

Whether it's her sport or her studies, Simran hasn't let her disability hold her back in life, after childhood cancer led to her having her arm amputated at the age of 4. She attributes this to her support network, both her family, who have always encouraged her in her sport and have visited her on campus, and now the community she's a part of in Nottingham.

"I think coming to university is a daunting thing, and when you add in trying to do sport like athletics too, it can be quite scary going from what you know to a bigger group of older people, but I would say just bite the bullet and go for it!"

If Simran's story has inspired the athlete in you, find out more about the David Ross Sports Village, its gym memberships and facilities online at nottingham.ac.uk/Sport/Sport-Facilities/David-Ross-Sports-Village/David-Ross-Sports-Village.aspx



Ofsted rates University of Nottingham teacher training courses as 'Outstanding'

The university's teacher training courses have retained their 'outstanding' rating following a recent Ofsted inspection

The news comes after reports that 40 per cent of institutions inspected so far under the new Ofsted framework have been downgraded – to date, in this round of inspections, the University of Nottingham is the only university to receive an 'Outstanding' rating.

Every year the university welcomes more than 200 prospective teachers to Nottingham, with the vast majority of those graduating going on to be employed in East Midlands' schools.

Professor Volker Wedekind, Head of the School of Education, said: "We are extremely proud to have been recognised at the highest level for our 'exceptional curriculum taught by experts' as well as for our passion for teaching and support for students. Most of our qualified teachers go on to teach in schools in the East Midlands and this should provide parents, carers, school children and head teachers with the knowledge that the university provides high quality teachers locally. It's vitally important that we retain this talent in the East Midlands to help contribute to the region's bright future."

The university's School of Education offers three ITE courses aimed at prospective teachers: Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) Primary, PGCE Secondary and PGCE School Direct.

More information is available online at nottingham.ac.uk/education

Clean marine: £5.5m research effort to fuel ships on green ammonia

Researchers at the university are leading a new project to investigate the potential of ammonia to fuel and decarbonise the long-haul shipping industry.

With 80 per cent of goods being transported by sea, shipping produces more carbon emissions than most countries, and pollutes oceans, with around 80 per cent of shipping's greenhouse gases coming from merchant vessels, including tankers, cargo ships and passenger liners.

Using the seas to move materials, goods and people is far cheaper than road transport, but comes at an environmental cost. So, it's critical to push the marine sector towards net zero.

Professor Alasdair Cairns, principal investigator on the project and director of Nottingham University's Powertrain Research Centre, said: "There's currently significant interest in green ammonia as a fuel for decarbonised commercial shipping. Green ammonia is a gas easily converted into a liquid in a process that is 100 per cent renewable and carbon-free, such as using hydrogen from water electrolysis and nitrogen separated from the air.

"One of the challenges with international shipping is the sheer size and range of the vessels producing the majority of the greenhouse gas emissions and issues with energy density for competing solutions such as electric and fuel cell.

"The problem is, when you look at competing energy vectors like batteries or fuel cells, they just don't have the energy density. Ammonia could have diesel-like efficiency and energy density and is cheap and easy to store as a liquid fuel.

The five-year project at the University of Nottingham which includes partners such as Cummins, Rolls-Royce, MAHLE Powertrain and the Department of Transport Maritime and Coastguard Agency, will also aim to tackle the issue of updating existing vessels by exploring retrofit engine technology solutions that can address issues around engine efficiency, with minimised end energy use and reduced pollution.



UK's anti-slavery commissioner appointed as Professor of Practice

Dame Sara Thornton DBE QPM, the UK's Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, has joined the university's Rights Lab group of researchers as Professor of Practice in Modern Slavery Policy.

Dame Sara completed a three-year term as the Anti-Slavery Commissioner in April 2022, spearheading the UK's fight against human trafficking and modern slavery.

The university's Rights Lab is home to the world's largest and leading group of modern slavery researchers. As a professor, Dame Sara will collaborate on research focused on prevention, business responses, supply chains, and the role of the financial sector in tackling modern slavery. Her focus in this new part-time role will also involve a focus on policy-relevant modern slavery research and achieving impact from research evidence in national and international contexts.

The work of the Rights Lab is just one strand of the university's work on tackling human trafficking. Its Procurement team has also been instrumental in practical work to make its campus 'slavery free', which means examining all the supply and production chains for evidence of slave labour.

Thanks to this work, the procurement team has been nominated to receive two awards in this year's UK Government Organisation Excellence in Public Procurement Awards, which showcase organisations that lead the way in public procurement best practice across all UK nations.



Dates for the diary

The Friends of University Park

Medicinal plants walk, Saturday 25 June, 10am-12.30pm - Discover common plants used as medicine on a stroll with Charles Powell, an experienced medical herbalist. £4 per person. Booking required.

Picnic in the Park Sunday 3 July, 12 noon to 3pm, Millennium Garden, University Park. Free event. No booking required. Free parking available at the Millennium Garden.

Summer spectacular – National Garden Scheme (NGS), Sunday 21 August, 12 noon to 4pm. Free bus, plant sales, mini walking tours and refreshments. Dogs are welcome but must be on a lead. £5 charity donation to the NGS, children go free. Tickets can be purchased in advance at ngs.org.uk or bought on the day at the Millennium Garden.

More information at nottingham.ac.uk/sustainability/grounds/friendsofuniversitypark.aspx To book, please email BW-FOUP-Events@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk

Lakeside Arts

Lakeside will be running three summer schools exploring sound art, arts and nature, and theatre for ages 8-12 and 9-14, spanning several weeks of the summer holidays, and has announced that Architects of Air will be returning to Lakeside/Highfields Park with their luminarium Dodecalis from 6-14 August, an experience not to be missed.

More information on these and other family-friendly activities are available at lakesidearts.org.uk



Luminarium



Soundscape



Summer School

Stay in touch

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University of Nottingham has made every effort to ensure that the information in this newsletter was accurate when published. Please note, however, that the nature of the content means that it is subject to change from time to time, and you should therefore consider the information to be guiding rather than definitive.

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