



University of  
Nottingham

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ISSUE 08 2022

# CONNECT

The alumni magazine of the University of Nottingham



**Believe in you**

Sakshi Bansal on how values can  
guide your career path.



# ISSUE 08

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## Vice-Chancellor's Welcome



The University of Nottingham always aims to make a positive difference and this edition of Connect celebrates the contribution made by our researchers and alumni around the world. The university celebrated success in the 2021 Research Excellence Framework for the contribution made to society by its research and according to Times Higher Education is now placed 7th in the UK for its research power. I am especially proud of the positive impact that our research in healthcare, industry, business, culture and public policy has had on people's lives. To extend this contribution, we will continue to develop the Castle Meadow Campus site, providing a city centre home for our work to support jobs, investment and growth across the city, and provide a living laboratory for collaboration with local business, industry and SMEs. The new £40 million Power Electronics and Machines Centre will drive advances in powerful, clean electrification technology and pave the way towards a new generation of low-carbon, sustainable electric vehicles, power and propulsion, underpinning our standing as one of the top five institutions globally for the translation of zero carbon research. The building lies at the heart of our plans to develop research and innovation clusters over the next five years, a key pillar of the government's innovation strategy, which will generate significant regional economic benefit while addressing strategic challenges faced by the UK.

I do hope you enjoy the inspiring stories in this edition and take a little time to reflect positively on your own contribution to our world as part of our alumni community.

### Professor Shearer West

President and Vice-Chancellor

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## In Brief

### Award-winning success

We're delighted that Connect was recognised by industry leaders in the CASE Circle of Excellence Awards 2022. The 2021 edition was ranked within the top five of all CASE judges, earning it a prestigious Gold award!



### The power of research

Nottingham has been recognised as among the best universities in the UK for our research in the 2021 Research Excellence Framework and is now placed 7th in the UK for research power\*.

\*according to analysis by Times Higher Education.

### Connect your way

Alongside our printed edition, you can view a PDF version of this magazine online. Visit: [bit.ly/connectmagazine2022](http://bit.ly/connectmagazine2022)

You can also request this magazine in alternative formats. Email: [alumni-enquiries@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:alumni-enquiries@nottingham.ac.uk)

## Contributors

### Lily Fairless

Aspiring Bake Off winner and proud plant parent. Served with a side of tap dancing.

### Faye Haslam (History, 2012)

Curious creative inspired by film, music, history and culture. A traveller at heart, always planning the next big adventure.

### Chris Hickman

Studied at the other Nottingham university, but don't tell anyone. Loves to edit copy and hang out with his cats.

### Rob Burman

Former videogames journalist. Once met Shigeru Miyamoto – creator of Super Mario – in a queue for hot dogs.

### Sphere statement

The Sphere Programme is a key element of the university's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Delivery Plan, highlighting EDI activity across the university. The Campaign and Alumni Relations Office's Sphere Statement is: "Celebrate the diversity of our alumni population."

## Editor's note

This issue, we're embracing the power of positivity, as we explore how Nottingham alumni are making a difference around the world and embodying the values of our university community.

On page 14, Andy Cornish shares why shark and ray conservation is vital for our ocean ecosystems, while on page 17 we spend a day with Richard Munang at the United Nations Environment Programme. On page 18, we showcase how Peter Taylor is inspiring the next generation of Nottingham rowers, 60 years after he first set out on the River Trent. Meanwhile, Marie-Claire Peakman and Sakshi Bansal share advice to help you thrive in your career on pages 9 and 10, while on page 20 we celebrate your incredible support for our first ever Nottingham Ambition Giving Day. We hope you enjoy this edition of Connect, and share your thoughts and feedback.

### The Connect team

We're committed to ensuring our magazine is produced as sustainably as possible. Our magazine wrapper is 100% compostable and designed to break down naturally after use, so there's no need to recycle it. Either add it to your compost heap or use as a food waste liner after use.



Is there anything more quintessentially ‘Nottingham’ than Goose Fair? Dating back over 700 years, it’s one of the largest and most famous fairs in the country, with over half a million people visiting annually. To celebrate its return this year, we asked you for your memories of the iconic fair.

“

I remember having a good time, it was my first week in Nottingham and I especially remember the peas with mint. I didn’t think I would like them, but I really enjoyed them!

”

Rafael Vargas  
(Environmental Engineering, 2008)

“I went to the fair alone in my early days at Nottingham. I was in Hugh Stewart and there met a group of other Hugh Stewart students, which supplied a great occasion for both my introduction to Nottingham and to Hugh Stewart. A great evening!”

John Rogers  
(Philosophy, 1960)

“The Goose Fair was definitely THE way to start term. I loved the cake walk, not high tech but a crazy feeling along the weird double stairs you had to climb as they moved up and down.”

Lesley Fritton  
(Chemistry, 1976)

“I’d never been in such a packed crowd before – it was impossible to do anything except go with the flow of people!”

Graham Harris  
(Electrical Engineering, 1972)

“At the 1980 Goose Fair I won a goldfish, somehow got it back to Cavendish in one piece and named it Fothergill. One day it looked like it was on its way out so a friend decided to introduce some air into its water via his bike pump. Didn’t end well.”

Jackie Sinclair  
(Social Administration, 1983)

“During the summer before starting my course, I worked for someone who sold all the prizes to the fair stallholders. I would leave North London with a list of fairs and travel the country with a 7.5 ton van, known to the in crowd as ‘Curly’s mate’. At the end of the summer, Curly told me there was a very big fair in Nottingham at the end of the season and asked if I could help because he wanted to take two vans. I was going there anyway and this gave me a free ticket! I repeated the run to Goose Fair the following year. Happy days!”

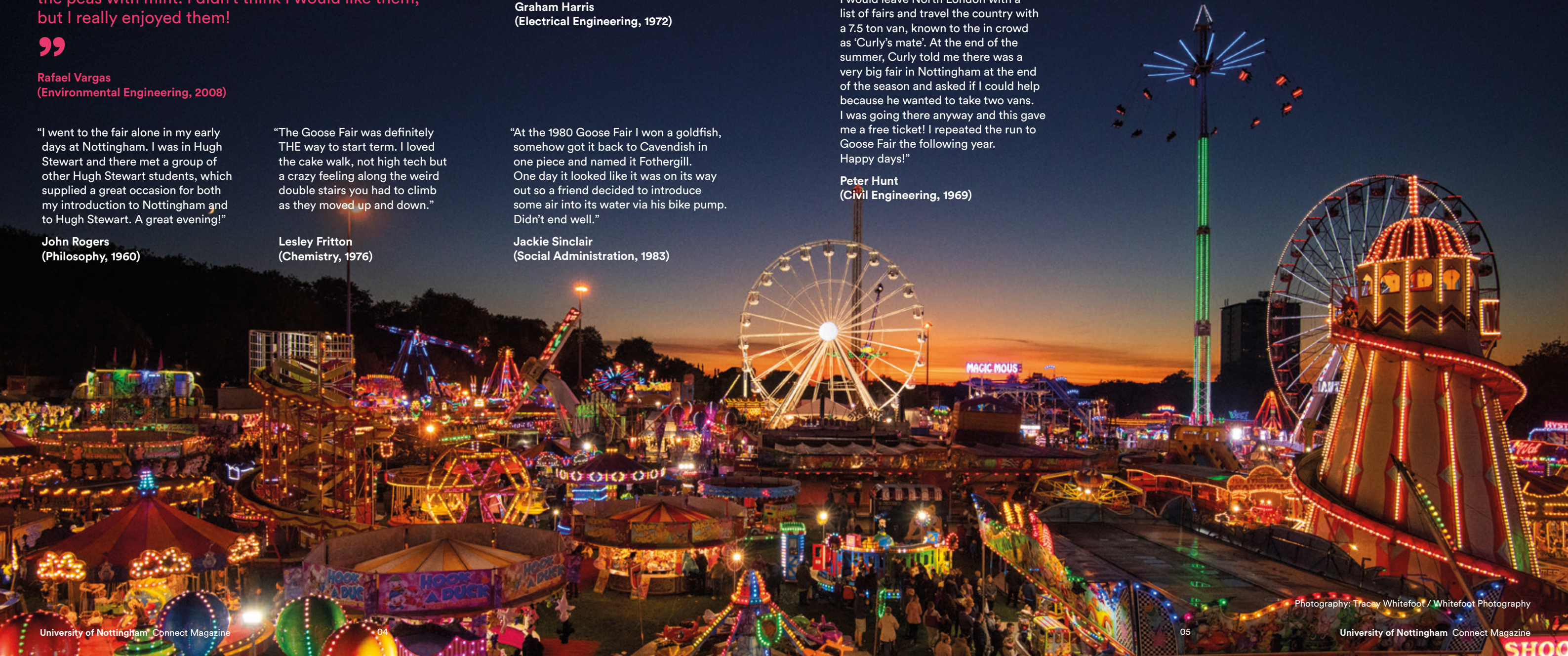
Peter Hunt  
(Civil Engineering, 1969)

# NOTTINGHAM

## GOOSE

EST. 1284

# FAIR



Photography: Tracey Whitefoot / Whitefoot Photography



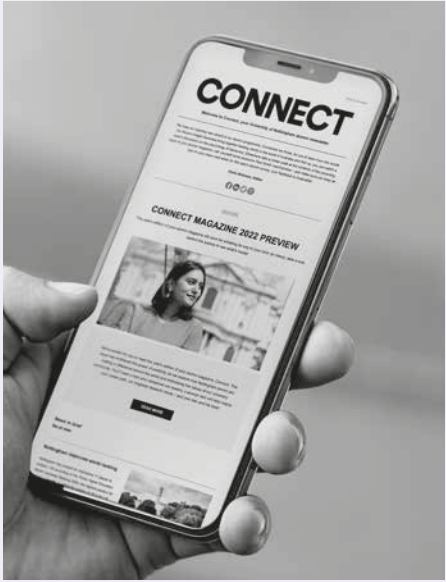
Our alumni programme is here to help you to grow and thrive professionally and personally. There's so much more to come – here are some of the highlights of our upcoming programme.



**Seminars: business insights**

We're excited to introduce the newest part of our programme, seminars. Our online bite-size seminars, taking place in the spring, summer and autumn, promote the latest in research and thinking from Nottingham University Business School. You can also hear from fellow alumni with skills and insights from a variety of industries, so that you can grow your business knowledge from wherever you are in the world. Our next seminar, with Dr Jeannie Holstein, will focus on how to revitalise your strategy making.

Find out more: [bit.ly/cwtseminars](https://bit.ly/cwtseminars)



**Get social with us: more ways to Connect**

The best way to keep up to date with the latest news and insight from your alumni and university community is in our monthly Connect alumni newsletter, or through our alumni social media profiles. It's also a great way to let us know what you've been up to and contribute to our activities!

Stay connected: [bit.ly/cwtsocial](https://bit.ly/cwtsocial)

- University of Nottingham alumni
- @nottinghamalumni
- @UniOfNottAlumni
- University of Nottingham alumni

**Nottingham recommends**

**Professor Sir Martyn Poliakoff** FREng FRS, Research Professor in the university's School of Chemistry and famed for his Periodic Table of Videos, shares his recommendations.



**One place to visit in...**

Uppingham, Rutland. It's a delightful small town with historic buildings, interesting small shops and an excellent restaurant. It's a salutary reminder than one doesn't need to travel across the world to find attractive places – it's only 45 minutes' drive from University Park!

**I've been watching...**

The only film I've seen recently is Operation Mincemeat, the story of the WW2 espionage hoax perpetrated by my mother's cousin Ewan Montagu. I listen to a lot of radio, I like This Cultural Life on Radio 4 which introduces listeners to cultural figures, most of whom I don't really know much about.

**My current bedtime reading...**

I'm re-reading Alan Bennett's The Uncommon Reader, an affectionate account of what might have happened when the Queen's corgis strayed into a mobile library. Recently, I finished Michel the Giant in which Tété-Michel Kpomassie describes how he managed to realise his ambition to become the first ever African to visit Greenland.

**One piece of advice...**

Believe in yourself, enjoy what you do and never feel too old to learn new things.

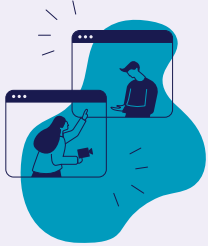
**Nottingham Recommends, with inspiration from across the university community, is featured each month in your alumni newsletter.**

# Connected we thrive

## Webinars: Grow to Progress

Our webinar programme continues with our Grow series. Our next session, with Sakshi Bansal, will focus on career values and impact-led purpose. You can read more of Sakshi's career advice on page 10. Next year our new series, Progress, launches with a range of new topics.

Find out more: [bit.ly/cwtwebinars](https://bit.ly/cwtwebinars)



## Alumni survey: shape your alumni experience

Thank you to everyone who has helped shape our programme so far by sharing your feedback. Continue to let us know what you think and help us to keep improving your alumni programme by responding to our alumni survey – it's open until 6 December.

Share your views: [bit.ly/uonalumnisurvey2022](https://bit.ly/uonalumnisurvey2022)



## Coming soon: new for 2023

We're working on some exciting new additions for our 2023 programme, including:

- Podcast** – hear inspiring alumni stories, with a unique Nottingham take.
- Masterclasses** – learn a new skill, hosted by alumni experts in their field.



YOUR  
NOTTINGHAM  
ALUMNI  
AWARDS

# PUTTING YOU IN THE SPOTLIGHT



INCLUSIVITY • AMBITION • FAIRNESS • RESPECT • OPENNESS

Nottingham is  
more than a place.

It shapes who we  
are and the people  
we become.

It's a way of thinking  
and of being.

**N**ow, we want to join together through our new alumni awards to celebrate you – our alumni community – and share the stories of how you carry Nottingham's values into the world.

No two paths or experiences are the same; that's what makes our community so special. Our awards are designed to reflect this rich diversity and the amazing contributions being made in so many different ways.

Our new look is embedded in everything that is Nottingham, but keeping you in the spotlight. We've drawn inspiration from things unique to us as a Nottingham community; the shape of our spotlight is designed from the buildings we call home on our iconic campuses.

We want to hear about alumni whose achievements inspire you; the people who make a positive difference to those around them; and who make you proud to be Nottingham.



**Nominations for the 2023 Your Nottingham Alumni Awards are now open!**

Fill in our online form and complete your entry by **Sunday 15 January 2023.**

Submit your nomination: [bit.ly/yournottinghamawards](https://bit.ly/yournottinghamawards)

# FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

Dr Marie-Claire Peakman (Pharmacy, 1990; PhD Physiology and Pharmacology, 1994) is Executive Director, Emerging Science and Innovation, and Principal at Pfizer Ventures in Groton, Connecticut. At the forefront of innovation and discovery throughout her career, she shares her approach to embracing new opportunities and developing an innovative mindset.



Skills focus

## What does innovation mean to you?

"To me, innovation is seeing a gap and being open minded about how to fill it. First, it requires the ability to assess the environment and recognise there is a challenge or improvement that can be made. Second, it requires an unbiased consideration of possible options to address the need. Continuous improvement of any process or task becomes second nature and a real spark of innovation comes when an improvement made in one area can be brought to bear in a new field.

"Innovation has been paramount throughout my career at Pfizer. Overcoming the challenges of designing and delivering novel medicines to patients that are safe and effective has required that we understand the reasons for our failures in the clinic and adjust to overcome them. We continually stay abreast of evolving science, applying new learnings and emerging techniques at the right place in the discovery and development pipeline to answer critical questions along the path."

## How do you stay motivated?

"The desire to make a difference has probably been the driving force in my life. My personal vision statement includes the phrase "I do what matters and it matters what I do." I always wanted to make a positive difference by showing up for the people and communities that matter to me. Sometimes I'm in danger of over-extending myself or not being as perfect at everything as I would like. I accept that maybe, in fact, all I can do at that moment is 'show up'. The aspiration to make a difference is always what keeps me going and what makes me get up after a failure to try again."

## How do you inspire others as a leader?

"I think you need to believe in what you are doing and you need to believe in the people that you are doing it with. Be a champion for your team members, individually and as a group, and for both their personal and professional growth. Communicate a vision that stands the test of time. Celebrate their successes (that means you have to understand when they have been successful, and sometimes you have to highlight successes that they don't see) and in tough times, help to remove obstacles from their path and encourage them to keep going."

## How would you encourage others to foster an innovative mindset?

"Be curious, speak your thoughts and listen to others. Talk about what you do and why, ask others about what they do and why. When I do that, I recognise where I don't really understand something, and it leads me to ask more questions. Over time the questions get better, more relevant and the perspectives from others help me to think differently, to be more open-minded about solutions. Other people's experiences also give me new options to consider in my own situations."

## How do you spot opportunities and pursue them?

"I love to dance, so this quote has always resonated with me: "Opportunity dances with those already on the floor". In my mind, this means that you need to be engaged with what's going on around you and communicating well with others. If you provide a sounding board for your colleagues, you'll hear about what's going well and what challenges they are facing. You'll be able to spot when successes in one area of the organisation can be applied to another and you can become a nexus bringing people together.

"If in return, you share your successes, your challenges and are open about your personal growth goals, leaders will be able to select you for new opportunities as they arise. If you create relationships built on trust, you desire to help others succeed and you build a reputation for delivery then people will want to work with you and will turn to you for help with new challenges and opportunities."

## What is the most valuable lesson you've learned during your career?

"Be true to yourself and be as authentic as you can. Take time to assess what truly motivates you and builds up your energy and, conversely, recognise what drains you and when you are trying to 'fake it'. Be honest about your strengths and weaknesses. Be willing to step outside your personal comfort zone and grow. Don't rely on a definition of success that comes from your organisation or the people around you. Work out what success in your life means to you."





## Career values

Edited:  
Faye Haslam

Sakshi Bansal (Work and Organisational Psychology, 2019) is a Senior Consultant at ARUP in London, the founder of Project LEAP and the world's first UNESCO Kindness Leader. She is a recipient of the Diana Award, a prestigious accolade which recognises young leaders for their social action and humanitarian work. She shares the values which guide her career.

### Study something new.

Once in a while, study something that has nothing to do with your profession or degree. It will open your mind to new ideas, perceptions, skills and conversations. Talk to people who have very different educational and professional backgrounds to yours – be open to listening to their perspectives, ideas and take on challenges. This is the best place to spark creativity and collaborative ideas.

### Learn what it means to self-reflect.

A lot of people tell us to reflect, pause, think and do some soul searching. Very few, however, tell us how to do that. My way of doing it is three-fold: 1. Make the time – the walk back home, bus journey alone, quiet time before bed are all excellent pockets of time to reflect. 2. Quiz myself – I ask myself a lot of questions during this reflection on why I liked or disliked something, what about it speaks to me, what I would do differently. 3. Act on it or let it go – don't fall into the trap of too much reflection and too little action or vice-versa.

### Stay naïve.

A lot of us are open to taking risks when we are younger – we have less to lose and a lot to explore. As we grow older, we become less and less open to risks. We no longer believe we have all the answers. Constantly push yourself to bring that element of childhood naivety. Make sure you are open to taking risks and believing in yourself.

### Know when to move on.

You might be truly passionate, curious and excited about some things in life. But midway in the journey your preferences change. You become curious about other things, want to explore different pastures. If you aren't truly curious about what you're doing anymore – move on. But make sure you move on with a plan. Maybe you handover what you created to the next leader and find yourself the next chapter. Or maybe you pack up shop and start fresh. Make a plan and stick to it.

### De-personalise feedback and personalise purpose.

When receiving feedback, remember that it is not feedback about you or your personality but simply feedback on how to achieve the goal in the best way possible. Your reasons to achieve that goal and to take on that journey, however, should be very personal. Don't just put a generalised vision or purpose statement on your profile or website – share a truly personal story on why it matters to you. This will make your brand and help you sustain in a very competitive world.

### Nurture your network.

To connect with a lot of people is a skill, but to nurture and grow your network is an investment. Bring value to your networks, connect people who you think will work brilliantly together and listen closely to what they say about your work and about their field. Then, bring this richness of information to your work and that is true worth.

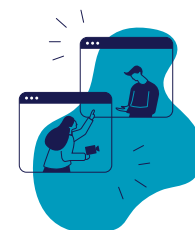
“Remember, just like happiness, being kind is a choice that must be made every day.”

### Depth v breadth.

You can either go deep into a field or topic and be an expert at it. Or you can get breadth across various fields and synthesise the information. Observe in yourself whether you are a depth or a breadth person, and offer your skills, time and energy accordingly.

### Be kind.

Make kinder choices. Remember, just like happiness, being kind is a choice that must be made every day. Before you act, think about the kinder alternative, and try to make as many kinder choices as you can in your day. An advanced step here would be to find out how you can use your education, expertise and experience to build something that creates a social impact.



Sakshi shares more advice to help you find inspiration in your career, along with fellow alumni speakers, in our Webinar series. Find out more: [bit.ly/cwtwebinars](https://bit.ly/cwtwebinars)



▼ **Teresa Baron**  
Faculty of Arts

**Sum up your research project in a paragraph:** My research project is centred around a foundational problem in the philosophy of parenthood and reproductive ethics: How do we acquire parental rights? What makes my child ‘mine’? With so many shifts in family-making practices in recent decades my aim is to figure out the morally and socially relevant distinctions at play here.

**Sum yourself up in three words:**  
Bad at summarising!

**What’s your researcher ‘superpower’?**  
Translating my scribbled down middle-of-the-night brainwaves into reasonably articulate philosophy.

**What one thing keeps you going on a tough day?** Little treats. Like a grumpy toddler, my brain responds pretty well to the promise of a coffee/chocolate/early lunch break ‘if we just manage one more hour of this.’

**Who or what inspired your career in research?** I’ve known I wanted to go into philosophy since I took philosophy A-level, but I don’t think I saw it as a career option at that point. It was only when I was doing a PhD that I realised I might be lucky enough to keep doing philosophy forever, and that actually this was the real world too.



^ **Sabina Lawreniuk**  
Faculty of Social Sciences

**Sum up your research project in a paragraph:** My Fellowship aims to challenge and redefine how we think about women’s health and safety at work, and lead to global change in the way we protect the wellbeing of millions of women around the world working in the garment and footwear manufacturing industries.

**Sum yourself up in three words:**  
Informed, engaged and passionate.

**What’s your researcher ‘superpower’?**  
Perseverance. You can have a lot of doors slammed in your face as a researcher – on fieldwork, sometimes literally – so you need to be ready to try new ideas when your best laid plans go awry.

**What one thing keeps you going on a tough day?** I know there are millions of people across the UK and worldwide who have unfairly landed a far tougher day than me – and I want to change that.

**Who or what inspired your career in research?** After my PhD, I was commissioned to do a short piece of research on women activists in Cambodia’s labour movement by a local NGO. Their unrelenting wit, grit and determination in the face of intersecting forms of violence and oppression blew me away. I had to get involved!

Words: Chris Hickman  
Photography: Marcus Holdsworth



^ **Helen Russell**  
(Physics and Astronomy, 2006)  
Faculty of Science

**Sum up your research project in a paragraph:** I am an observational astronomer studying the intricate structure of distant galaxies and vast clusters of galaxies. My research explores the impact of the most energetic events in the lives of these galaxies – powerful jetted outbursts from their central supermassive black hole and massive collisions between huge clusters of galaxies.

**Sum yourself up in three words:**  
Enthusiastic, meticulous, practical. Although my husband has just read this over my shoulder and suggested ‘obsessive’.

**What’s your researcher ‘superpower’?**  
Attention to detail. I spend much of my time extracting real signals from noise and artefacts in telescope detectors by carefully applying advanced optimisation and calibration routines. I find it incredibly exciting to watch the secrets of distant supermassive black holes, and the intricately coupled hot plasma that surrounds them, emerge as I work through each problem.

**What one thing keeps you going on a tough day?** Usually chocolate, but if I’ve run out, the addition of numerous exclamation marks to my lab book notes.

**Who or what inspired your career in research?** I was a Nottingham physics undergraduate student and inspired to pursue astronomy research by great mentors in the department, including Professor Meghan Gray, who also held an Anne McLaren Fellowship at the time.



^ **Jenny Ashworth**  
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences

**Sum up your research project in a paragraph:** I study how scar tissue is involved in diseases like cancer. By taking 3D pictures of the protein fibres in a scar, I can engineer miniature versions of them in the lab. This helps us study processes like cancer metastasis and organ failure and find new ways to treat them.

**Sum yourself up in three words:**  
Interdisciplinary creative perfectionist!

**What’s your researcher ‘superpower’?**  
Bringing together different research fields to make something new. My current work with scar tissue brings together research ideas from areas as far apart as dentistry, geology and food technology!

**What one thing keeps you going on a tough day?** My support network of mentors and colleagues. I know they will always be there to help me navigate the tricky moments, give me a boost when I need it, or just catch up and recharge over a coffee.

**Who or what inspired your career in research?** Learning about biological materials like spider silk and bone absolutely fascinated me, right from my first year as an undergraduate student. I eventually learned how these materials could be used to study diseases and help find new treatments for patients suffering from diseases like cancer. Knowing that my research now has real potential to make a positive impact on patients’ lives is a huge inspiration to me every day.

**A research powerhouse**

Results from the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF), the key barometer of university research, ranked Nottingham 7th in the UK out of 157 institutions for the strength of our research power. Published this year, they consider a combination of the quality of our research, its international impact, critical mass and sustainability.

Our REF submission recognised the contributions of 1,800 researchers, with over 135 case studies demonstrating the global impact of our research.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Shearer West said: “Nottingham has often been recognised for the breadth of its research: to achieve quality across the range of disciplines submitted reflects the talent, imagination, and dedication of colleagues across the institution.

“I am especially proud of the positive impact that our research has had on people in the UK and throughout the world, which is testament to the determination of our researchers to make a difference to people’s lives.”

Find out more: [bit.ly/refresearch](https://bit.ly/refresearch)

**7<sup>th</sup>**  
in the UK for  
Research Power\*

**1,800**  
contributions from  
researchers were  
submitted to the  
university’s return

\*according to analysis by Times Higher Education.





Discovering a passion for wildlife from long days spent exploring Hong Kong’s nature reserves and reservoirs as a child, Dr Andy Cornish (Zoology, 1992) has focused his recent career in international marine conservation to saving critically endangered populations of sharks worldwide. Today, Andy leads WWF’s Global Shark and Ray Conservation Programme, and is committed to protecting these ancient ocean species from extinction. His interest in conservation, and in particular sharks and rays, was first sparked on a post-Nottingham backpacking adventure.

# OCEAN LIFE



“  
Diving with large sharks and rays is one of the biggest thrills that any diver can have.  
”

37%  
of more than 1,100 shark and ray species are threatened with extinction



“After completing my degree, I went backpacking in Central America for three months with a friend,” recalls Andy. “We learned to scuba dive in the world-famous Bay Islands in Honduras, which is when I first saw and became fascinated with sharks. The qualification later made me eligible for a PhD at a university in Hong Kong, studying reef fishes. It was quickly evident that overfishing had removed all of the big fish – and that sharks were almost totally gone from the ecosystem – which was when my interest shifted to conservation.”

Despite popular misconceptions about their reputation – more people die every year from taking selfies than shark attacks, says Andy – sharks and rays are indispensable to ensuring the health of the ocean ecosystem. From coral reef lagoons to the depths of the high seas, the ecological roles sharks and rays play are diverse, from helping to buffer climate change and supporting marine food systems, to engineering micro-habitats for other marine creatures.

“Widespread overfishing resulting in the ongoing loss of sharks and rays is akin to playing a risky game of Jenga,” says Andy. “Future removals may trigger ecosystem collapses, with disastrous consequences. Sharks and rays are in crisis, around 37% of more than 1,100 species are threatened with extinction. We urgently need to reduce overfishing in the coming decade or a swathe of species will likely disappear forever, which would be a huge loss for our oceans and humankind.”

Through his work at WWF, Andy is playing a key role in advocating for change both regionally and internationally, and uniting a wide range of partners to work together to find solutions – something which his Nottingham degree helped inspire.

“My degree was undoubtedly the foundation that my career has been built on,” reflects Andy, “from the scientific underpinning to confirming my enthusiasm for working in the field. My role at WWF is multi-dimensional, requiring everything from representing my organisation when speaking with governments, business and the media, to fundraising, and providing scientific advice. The most important skills are probably strategic planning to advocate for better management of sharks and rays at national and international levels, and soft skills to encourage others within my large organisation to work more effectively together to conserve these ancient predators.”

While serious risks to sharks and rays persist, and the battle to conserve them is far from over, the solutions to save them do exist and there is hope that we can restore the balance.

“The shark conservation movement is definitely growing and there are an increasing number of successes,” says Andy. “The biggest programme that I’ve been working on in recent years is the Shark and Ray Recovery Initiative (SARRI), a collaborative effort between several organisations and some of the best experts in the business to scale-up efforts to recover some of the most threatened species, in some of their last remaining refuges. The good news is that most of the solutions are known and we now need to work together to get the solutions in place.”

Edited: Faye Haslam

## DAY IN THE LIFE OF: Richard Munang

Dr Richard Munang (PhD Environmental Change and Policy, 2008) is Deputy Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Africa Office in Nairobi. He shares what a typical day looks like for him.



Richard shares more advice on careers in the green sector, along with fellow alumni leaders, in our Questions for Leaders series.

Find out more:  
[bit.ly/cwtleaders](https://bit.ly/cwtleaders)

### 6.15am

Arrive in the office, review and respond to emails, update my calendar, send final reminders for the day’s activities, and compile notes on key issues that need to be discussed with my team for the day.

### 7.00am

Chair the first meeting of the day with my team. Discuss our strategy to provide technical support in getting investment and implementing Nationally Determined Contributions (plans to reduce emissions/build resilience) in pilot countries across Africa. If we share the lessons learned, it will catalyse the development of similar tools across the continent and beyond to unlock employment and wealth opportunities for young people!



### 7.30am

Head to the café for breakfast. Ideally, herbal tea with egg and a local pastry called ‘mandazi’.

### 7.40am

Get back to the office and push email responses, undertake online and face-to-face meetings with colleagues, state actors, corporates and UN partners across Africa and globally. Work until 2pm before breaking for a light lunch.



### 2.30pm

Field visits to engage ground actors, especially youth, that are taking up climate and environmental science in an enterprising way and generating empirical data on key success factors to inform policy prioritisation.

### 4.00pm

Back to the office, debrief with my team and review the day, and outstanding aspects to be prioritised. Of course, more emails, including responding to the UNEP representative for Africa asking me to foster partnerships with one of the largest telecoms companies in Africa for collaborations to lower their carbon footprint and invest in greening their supply chain. This calls for a clear demonstration of economic value and I’m glad they’re excited to work with us! Finish at 5.45pm.

### 6.15–9.00pm

Personal moments: play some basketball with my daughter, do some dancing, prepare supper, retire to bed.



Edited: Lily Fairless



# Oar inspiring

Time spent at university can create passions that last a lifetime. Peter Taylor (Chemistry, 1958) hopes to inspire today’s students with a generous – if somewhat unusual – gift.

When Peter had a conversation with his new digs-mate on arrival at Nottingham as a fresher in 1955, little did he know it would spark a passion that has lasted more than 60 years (he still rows three times a week on the Thames at Henley) and is now being shared by a new generation of students.

“Before I started at the university,” explains Peter, “I had in mind that I wanted to do some sport but wasn’t sure what I wanted to do. I hated running and didn’t fancy football or rugby.

“A digs-mate joined the rowing club and clearly enjoyed it, on and off the water, so I went along and thought it was a lot of fun. The rest, as they say, is history.”

Peter went on to join the Boat Club and rowed throughout his six years at Nottingham, only stopping for a few months before his final exams.

“I didn’t row from Christmas until after my final exam in June,” says Peter. “But the day after the last exam, I was out onto the river again.”

Now, more than 60 years on since Peter first rowed on the River Trent, he’s been able to leave a lasting legacy for the University of Nottingham Boat Club by generously donating his much-loved Stämpfli Pair/Double Racing Boat, ‘Loddon Lily’.

To commemorate this special occasion, Peter joined members of the current Nottingham senior squad during a practice outing and relived his fond memories of earlier times spent on the river. Despite the age difference – Peter is now 86 – he spent the afternoon rowing



with the squad and reminiscing about his university experience in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

“I have a lot of fond memories of my time with the Nottingham University Boat Club,” says Peter, “particularly when we entered the Thomas Cup at Henley Royal Regatta in 1958. It was the first time the University of Nottingham had entered a boat at Henley.”

Peter hopes his boat will play an important part in the future success of the Boat Club. “Of course, I would love to see the students today enter a race in ‘Loddon Lily’ and win, but if that’s not possible, I hope they will find it useful when training.”

Ethan Page-Mason, president of the Boat Club, is certainly anticipating that Peter’s boat will help train current and future members.



“When Peter approached us with his offer of donating his pair/double we were absolutely delighted,” explains Ethan. “The boat is being put to good use with our senior squad, allowing us a greater degree of training variety and improvement. The boat will be cherished for training and racing by the Boat Club for years to come.”

The squad also enjoyed spending time with Peter on the day and hearing about the university in the 1950s. “It was a real inspiration for our athletes to talk with Peter and hear his stories about rowing at the Boat Club in the 1950s, while training out of the very same boathouse we use today. Seeing Peter back in a university eight, fitting in perfectly with our senior men was a real treat and he left asking when he can come back!”

“  
**I would love to see the students today enter a race in my boat and win.**  
”



1000

YEARS AGO

A FOUNDATION  
STONE WAS LAID



# OUR FOUNDATIONS

100 years ago, a foundation stone was laid.

100 years ago, someone took a chance on you,

knew that there was a future far beyond them  
that would count.

Now, none of us have to settle for ordinary;

poets and carers, actors, engineers,

midwives, artists, teachers, analysts.

We're all here because someone gave.

That legacy lives on through every day you  
wake up and make change,

through every day you wake up and give.

What will you give today?

In 100 years from now, who will look back  
at your name?

Who will walk the path you lay?

Georgina is the first Nottingham UNESCO City of Literature Young Poet Laureate and was awarded a 30 under 30 award for her work in poetry. Her work focuses on social commentary and personal identities through a surrealist lens. She is the founder of publishing house Mud Press and has had her own work commissioned by the likes of The Royal Shakespeare Company, BBC Radio Nottingham, Nottingham City Council and more.

Her debut poetry collection, Hag Stone, was released earlier this year with Verve Poetry Press. She wrote this specially commissioned poem to celebrate our first ever Nottingham Ambition Giving Day.



Words:  
Georgina Wilding  
(Creative and Professional  
Writing, 2015)

THANK  
YOU  
FOR GIVING

On 14-15 June we held our first ever Nottingham Ambition Giving Day – marking exactly 100 years since the Trent Building foundation stone was laid.

Thanks to your amazing support we raised over £100,000 across 48 hours – which will change lives by boosting our life-saving research, fund 70 scholarships for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and grow our student-led Cascade projects.

See more about the Giving Day:  
[bit.ly/ambitiongivingday2022](https://bit.ly/ambitiongivingday2022)



2022 marks 100 years since the foundation stone of our iconic Trent Building was laid. The completed building opened in 1928 as the University College Building, becoming a focal point for the new campus at Highfields. It was renamed the Trent Building in the 1950s in honour of Lord Trent, the first Chancellor of the University of Nottingham.

# Building a legacy



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# A legacy of learning

It was Trevor (French and English, 1955) and Vera (French and German, 1955) Bottomley's shared love of the university where they met which led them to make an incredibly generous gesture to support its students – one with a very personal resonance.



The transition from school to university is one of the biggest steps into adulthood we take in our lives. For many it will be a potentially daunting experience already, but for anyone living with a disability it will seem only more so. Thanks to the university's wonderful Disability Support Services team, there is help immediately at hand.

The team aims to create an inclusive and equitable teaching and learning environment to the benefit of all students. Its specialist service provides student-led support to enable disabled students to flourish as independent learners. One of its services supports students with autism.

Charlotte Round, Disability Adviser, explains how the summer school offered by the team helps to make a real difference: "We aim to give students the tools and information they need to reach their potential, and hopefully to ease anxieties before they make the move to university. Autistic students are recognised as a group of students for whom the transition to university can be especially challenging.

"This event has been running for five years and has supported over 150 students so far. As student attendance at the event continues to rise, we hope to continue meeting the needs of our incoming autistic students and to continue growing and developing our transition programme."

And so, to Trevor and Vera Bottomley, whose connection to the university led them to make the incredible gesture of leaving a legacy to Nottingham in their Will. For Vera, who passed away in 2021, the idea of helping students with disabilities resonated incredibly strongly, as Trevor explains: "Our eldest son, Martin, who is now 61, was born with cerebral palsy and has spent his entire life in a wheelchair. He has full mental capacity, but his muscle control is such that he cannot articulate words clearly, so speech is a real problem.

"For two linguists this has not been easy, but we developed all kinds of ways to communicate with him. It seemed fitting to all of us, and I know to Vera, that her legacy will support the Autism Summer School, since communication and togetherness were very dear to her."

Words:  
Chris Hickman

## “Student voices”

Here's what some of the students who have benefited from the summer school had to say.

“I enjoyed it and found it very useful for helping me to learn more about the university, so thank you all!”

“Knowing that help is available is always reassuring and should be something every new student gets informed about.”

“Everyone was very nice, and I did find it helpful to settle some nerves!”

Be a  
**Guiding Light**

If your affection for Nottingham matches that of Trevor and Vera, please consider leaving a Gift in your Will and become a Guiding Light to others.

Find out more: [bit.ly/beaguidinglight](https://bit.ly/beaguidinglight)

# Obituaries



**Professor Sir Colin Campbell**  
1944–2022

A formidable leader and visionary, the university as it is today would likely not exist without the determination of former Vice-Chancellor Professor Sir Colin Campbell. His legacy to Nottingham includes Jubilee Campus, on which he has a building in his name, as well as the campuses in China and Malaysia – helping establish “Britain's first truly global university” according to The Times.

Colin Murray Campbell was born in Glasgow in 1944, the son of Donald and Isabel Campbell. The family moved to Aberdeen, where he was educated at Robert Gordon's College and then graduated from the University of Aberdeen with a first in law. In his youth he was a skilled football player, being scouted by Rangers.

It was at Queen's University Belfast that he found his predilection for university management, first becoming dean of the law faculty and then pro-vice-chancellor. In 1988 he became Vice-Chancellor at Nottingham – at the time the youngest in the country. He was knighted in 1994 and appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire in 1996.

We extend our condolences to the family and friends of those members of our university community who have died. We record the passing of alumni and staff on our website if you wish to inform us of a death or obituary: [bit.ly/rememberingalumni](https://bit.ly/rememberingalumni)



**Professor Yang Fujia**  
1936–2022

A renowned nuclear physicist, Professor Yang Fujia was instrumental in the establishment of the university's Ningbo campus which opened in 2004 – the first Sino-foreign campus in China. He had been installed as the university's sixth Chancellor in 2001, the first time a Chinese academic had become a chancellor of a UK university.

Born in Shanghai, Yang attended Fudan University where he graduated with a degree in physics in 1958, where he remained in a teaching role before becoming President in 1994. He established the state-of-the-art Accelerator-based Atomic and Nuclear Physics Laboratory and began China's first research into ion beam analysis. His academic career also took him on visiting professorships at universities in Denmark, the USA and Japan.

These global experiences helped shape and inform Yang's educational philosophy and understanding of a liberal arts education. This drove his desire to provide high-quality international education in China and cultivate high-end innovative and international talent for the country in the future.

**Derek Price 1930–2020**  
(Economics, 1954)

Growing up in Coventry during the Blitz and having to complete his early years in education travelling to Leicester only made Derek Price even more determined to attend university. Fittingly, the rest of his life was dedicated to education, seeing him spend 37 years as a well-loved secondary school teacher in Kenilworth. More recently his granddaughter Olivia followed in his footsteps by embarking on a degree in philosophy here at Nottingham in 2020.

**Colin Herridge 1940–2022**  
(Economics, 1962;  
Honorary Doctor of Law, 2016)

From his adolescence playing for Surbiton County Grammar School, to his twilight years as a member of the University Sports Board, rugby was a key fixture throughout the life of Colin Herridge. He was also a hugely successful businessman, which allowed him to pursue a range of charitable interests – including helping to establish the university's sports scholarship programme to support talented student athletes here at Nottingham.

**David Amstel 1970–2022**  
(Politics, 1991)

An avid radio listener, Cripps resident David joined University Radio Nottingham (URN) in his first year, presenting theatre reviews for the arts programme and ultimately having his own show. Representing Cripps on Union Council, he was subsequently elected Exec without Portfolio for the Students' Union, before winning a hotly contested cross-campus ballot to serve as Sabbatical General Secretary 1991/2. Following graduation, David continued his relationship with the university, serving on Convocation and supporting many alumni events, including reprising his URN show during the university's centenary.

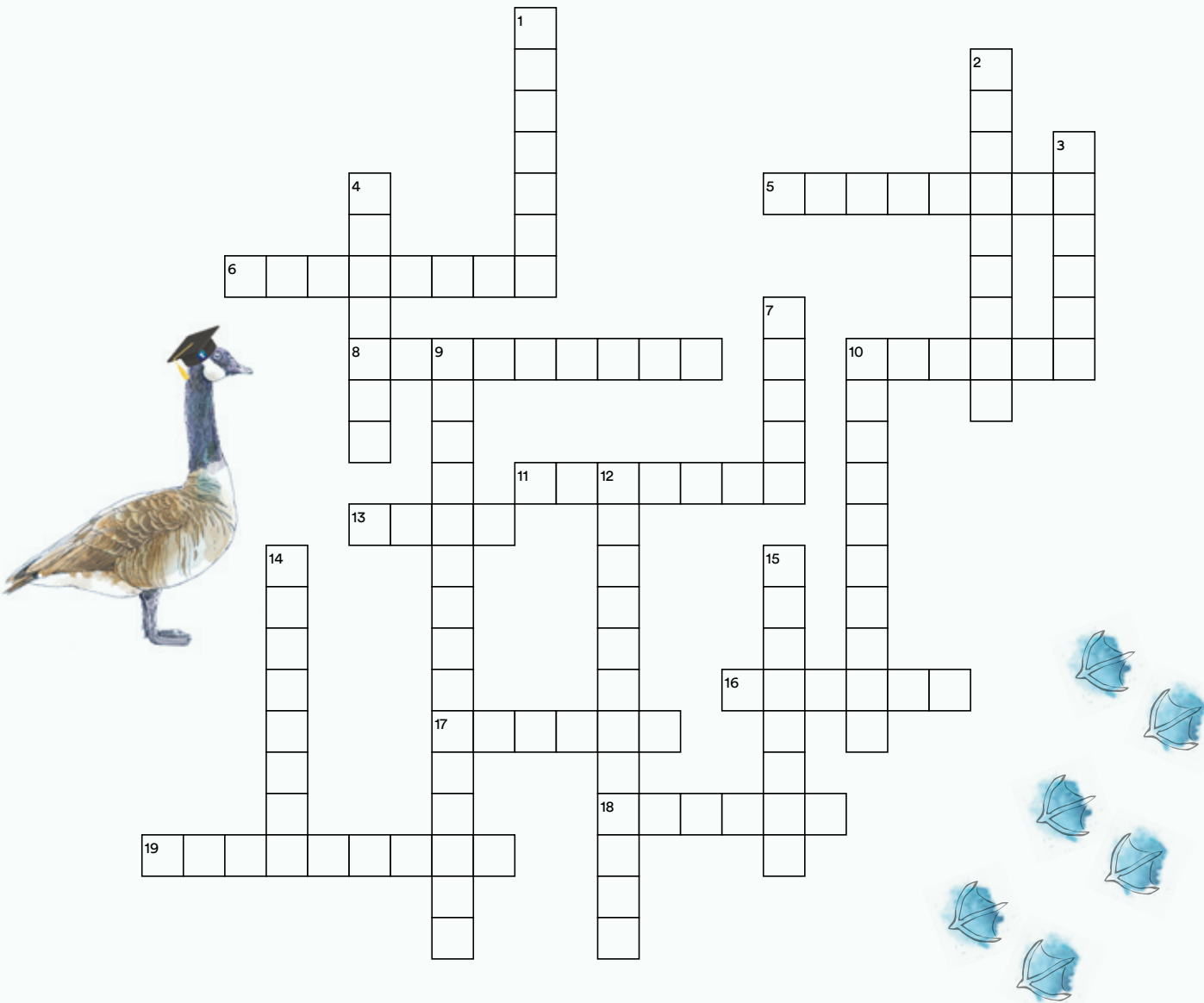
**Kate Robertson 1968–2022**

As Director of Development and Alumni Relations, Kate launched what became the university's most successful ever fundraising campaign in 2011. The final campaign total of £242 million was due in no small part to Kate's early leadership, infectious enthusiasm and fundraising skill. Kate left the UK with her family in 2013 to start a new life in Australia, firstly as Chief Engagement Officer for the University of Adelaide, before moving onto several other roles.



# Goosey's games

Grab yourself a cuppa and have a go at our crossword.  
This year we're taking a trip to the Goose Fair!  
Can you solve Goosey's clues?



- Across
5. Don't get stuck at the top! (3,5)

6. Not to be confused with the ballroom dance (8)

8. This stall's quackers (4,1,4)

10. This dream-inducing dairy product caused a riot at 1764's fair (6)

11. Don't be shy with this stall (7)

13. Take the...to the fair (4)

16. The fair's mascot, this page's mascot (6)

17. '...if you want to go faster' (6)

18. The doctor won't approve of this apple (6)

19. Best served with mint sauce (5,4)
- Down

1. Bumper cars (7)

2. Home to the fair, informally (6,3)

3. Caused the postponement of the fair in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (6)

4. The fair's patron saint – and of accountants (7)

7. The scary train (5)

9. The fair's pre-1928 home (3,6,6)

10. Gone before you know it! (10)

12. The fair's rudest treat (4,2,1,5)

14. Metallic and aquatic (8)

15. Also a Rodgers and Hammerstein musical (8)
- Discover the answers at [bit.ly/gooseyanswers](https://bit.ly/gooseyanswers)
- University of Nottingham Connect Magazine 26
- # Then & now
- Professor Sir Jonathan Van-Tam (Medicine, 1987) is the second of three generations to study at Nottingham, so there's always been a sense of belonging and of history in the making. Returning to the university this year as Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, following his secondment as Deputy Chief Medical Officer for England, Jonathan reflects on his time at Nottingham as a student and his role today.
- 
- “The emphasis on student welfare and wellbeing is much higher at Nottingham now.”
- 
- What are your recollections of your time at Nottingham as a student? What changes have you noticed since you've been back on campus?
- “The emphasis on student welfare and wellbeing is much higher at Nottingham now, which is a huge improvement. When I was a student, there was a personal tutoring system, but it was a bit more sink or swim.
- “The campuses still have the same feel. They've always been beautiful but are now more built up... parking is a nightmare!”, laughs Jonathan.
- “I always had an academic career in mind. I spoke to a senior lecturer in my third year about returning at some point to pursue a research career. I did my third-year research project in epidemiology and public health (there's a surprise!) and I managed to publish three scientific papers and attend two conferences and got an absolute buzz for research and publishing findings.
- “I was a student in Wortley Hall, which was fairly old and dilapidated by then. There were 12 or 13 blokes in an ex-military block, with communal bathrooms... it was a bit like being in the army. But it was fully catered, which was nice!
- “While at university, I started a couple of hobbies that I've maintained. The first is backpacking – trekking long distance in all weathers, finding a piece of grass at night, building a shelter, cooking something simple, packing it all up and moving on. Occasionally turning up in a village to buy gas, food and maybe a pint. Whenever I get the chance, I still get into the mountains. But it's been difficult for the last few years, let's face it. I also got into running at Nottingham because my hallmate organised a triathlon in 1983, which I thoroughly enjoyed. These days I run badly but that doesn't matter – I enjoy it. That's stayed with me forever.”
- You've spoken previously about the importance of reaching people on their own terms. How does this relate to your role at the university today?
- “I haven't studied communication formally, it's just important to me and it comes naturally. I like explaining why I've made a decision, even if it's an unpopular one and as a PVC, you have to make decisions that are strategically right for the university and they're not always popular. But what you can do is explain them really clearly. If you can't explain something rationally, it's probably not a good decision.”
- Words: Lily Fairless
- 27 University of Nottingham Connect Magazine





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University of Nottingham

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