

# Network

Brackenhurst Supplement

Nottingham Trent University Alumni Association

|

Summer 2007

## Welcome



Ceris Crow and Clare Oswin

Welcome to this special *Network* supplement especially for Brackenhurst graduates.

Thanks to you keeping us up-to-date with news, we are delighted to be able to fill this supplement with news specifically from Brackenhurst and the School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences.

All former students remain valued members of the University community and we hope the photographs on page 4 bring back some happy memories of your time at Brackenhurst.

We hope you enjoy reading this special supplement. Please keep your news, stories and photographs coming in.

### Alumni Office

Tel: +44 (0)115 848 8777

Email: [alumni@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@ntu.ac.uk)

### IN THIS ISSUE:

#### 02 New developments at Brackenhurst:

All the latest news and developments from the Brackenhurst campus.

#### 03 Alumni Fund news: Find out how the Alumni Fund has benefited Brackenhurst.

#### 04 BOSA news: Alumni reunions and photographs

## Looking forward

The School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences at Brackenhurst campus is gearing up for an ambitious future, to continue its reputation for excellence in Animal, Equine, Horticulture, Food, Environmental and Countryside Management courses.

Since taking on the post of Dean last October, Jenny Saint has drawn up plans for an aspirational five-year strategy for the School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences. This aims to develop rural and community links, overseas developments and course provision, including taught postgraduate and research opportunities. The School plans to engage with employers, businesses and agencies in the sector and their needs will shape and influence the curriculum.

Jenny, whose long working relationship with NTU began when she took on a lectureship in rural home economics at Brackenhurst College in the late 1970s, is keen to help rural businesses.

She said: "Local connections are very important and the School aspires to be the first port of call in the region for rural businesses seeking advice. Farmers and other businesses operating in the rural sector face many challenges; some farmers have diversified into farm shops, farmers' markets and rural tourism, for example, to stay in business.

"These enterprises require different knowledge and skills from traditional farming. Helping rural businesses diversify and getting new businesses off the ground through The Hive business start-up schemes will strengthen the local economy as well as create lasting partnerships for the School. In addition, those who have been established for a while may wish to grow-on their business and need advice and support to develop new ideas."

Of course, providing an excellent student experience remains at the heart of the School's philosophy.

"We have students ranging in age from 16 to 65!" Jenny explained. "Our subject areas are relatively small and specialised so we get to know our students really well and we have an excellent, deserved reputation for student support."

For more information on developments at Brackenhurst please turn to page 2.



Jenny Saint at Brackenhurst

# New developments at Brackenhurst

The School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences at Brackenhurst is always seeking to improve its provision and facilities. There have been a number of exciting developments in recent months.

## Rural Knowledge and Enterprise Centre (RKEC)

Providing support to the rural community and its businesses has always been at the heart of the mission of Brackenhurst. Now, plans are being developed that will make a fundamental contribution towards ensuring that the School and its staff can continue to deliver education and advice that is relevant and appropriate in building a sustainable rural economy for future generations of people in land-based industries.

The Rural Knowledge and Enterprise Centre (RKEC) will provide a variety of services, facilities and support. It aims to offer high tech physical and virtual learning and research facilities accessible to students, the community and rural-based businesses. It will also include a new library, additional learning space and business and conferencing facilities.

Professor Jenny Saint, Dean of the School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences at Brackenhurst, said: "Our vision is based on Brackenhurst's heritage as a provider of land-based education and training. We want it to be the main location in the region for all matters in relation to land-based, food and ancillary businesses on the basis of a one-stop-shop."

Other features of the RKEC will include:

- Access to education and training;
- Continuing Professional Development, from further to higher education, including postgraduate study;
- A focus on lifelong learning, including the VetNet Lifelong Learning Network (LLN);
- Knowledge Transfer to support business innovation and growth, which includes the New Technology Initiative (NTI) Food and Drink activity;
- Support for business incubation and start-up, through The Hive;
- A one-stop-shop facility for advice, research and consultancy services, bringing together partners and stakeholders;
- Learning and knowledge resources, which are accessible to the rural community, businesses and agencies involved in rural affairs.

## VetNet Network

The VetNet Network is a Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) funded initiative for the development of lifelong learning in veterinary medicine and related disciplines.

VetNet will open up access and opportunities for veterinary and allied education, both at entry level to educational training and continuous development for those already employed in the veterinary professions.

"Through VetNet, we will be offering the 'allied' aspects of veterinary nursing and animal and equine provision, as well as a unique dimension with our experience of Further Education (FE) provision," Jenny said.



VetNet links 30 centres across the UK. NTU at Brackenhurst is home to one of six rural hubs; the others are located in the universities of Bristol, Cambridge, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Liverpool and the lead institution: The Royal Veterinary College (RVC) in London.

## Veterinary Nursing begins

This year the School will welcome its first cohort of students on the new three-year flagship Veterinary Nursing course. This is an exciting development for Brackenhurst and the course has achieved full accreditation by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.

The new Veterinary Nursing course covers all elements of veterinary nursing including providing skilled supportive care for sick animals, undertaking theatre work, laboratory diagnostic tests and radiography, assisting in consulting rooms, and ordering medication.

Students will be taught in the brand new, purpose-built state-of-the-art Veterinary Nursing Centre and Animal Unit. The School has ambitious ideas to further extend these facilities, and build on its developing research activity with plans to establish a Centre for Animal Welfare and Rehabilitation. This will complete the regeneration of this area of the campus and provide excellent learning, teaching research and commercial opportunities.



The new veterinary nursing building

# Alumni Fund

We would like to say a huge thank you to those who have made a gift to the Alumni Fund over the years. Thanks to your generosity, the Fund has helped to create a range of new resources and learning opportunities for students at Brackenhurst.



Showjumper Tim Stockdale visited the new seating area to give a lecture

The Alumni Fund was established to add value to the learning experience of NTU students. The Fund helps to ensure that our courses are relevant to tomorrow's society and professional world, and giving students the additional resources and opportunities they need to fulfil their potential.

Over the coming months we will support more projects around the University with the help of your generous donations. Some of the projects the Alumni Fund has supported at Brackenhurst over the years include the following:

- In 2003, £1,500 was awarded to the Department of Land-based Studies to expand the collection of willow specimens at Brackenhurst. This gave students the opportunity to develop practical skills and enabled them to study biodiversity, botany, natural history and regional rural history. It provided a sustainable crop that could be used as a resource for conservation and horticulture management and crafts.
- £1,500 was given to Animal Sciences in 2003 to facilitate the purchase of livestock and equipment for the reptile house and Koi pond. It helped to enhance the experiential learning and research in the areas of water management, reptile nutrition and behaviour as well as the management of fish. A Siberian sturgeon was purchased to support FE and HE teaching on managing aquatics; the fish in particular makes it more interesting for students. It has also paid dividends, not only in supporting teaching but also becoming quite an attraction at open day events.
- The Alumni Fund enabled the School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences to purchase a wireless public address system (£1,500) in 2005. This is used for equine events organised by students. The fund has also made a contribution towards a seating gallery (£1,500) for the indoor riding school. Students can now sit in the seating area and gain extra knowledge by listening to instructors and watching lessons. The new PA system also provides dedicated support for a student who has hearing difficulties, and the seating area has hosted a number of guest lectures.
- In 2006, donations to the Alumni Fund helped the equine students further by purchasing a Balimo chair (£300). This special chair will allow students to improve their balance and co-ordination, enhancing their horse-riding ability, and will enable some practical lessons to proceed without the need for a horse.

## Making a donation

For information on how to make a contribution to the Alumni Fund, including how to give shares and make provision for the University in your will, please contact the Development Office on 0115 848 8775 or email [alumni@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@ntu.ac.uk)

Remember, you can make even more of a difference if you Gift Aid it.

If you are a UK tax-payer and you agree to Gift Aid your donation, it will be worth almost 30% extra to the University.



A successful phone campaign raised funds



The Alumni Fund has helped reptiles too

# Brackenhurst Old Students Association (BOSA) News

## Annual Lunch

Every year BOSA organises a reunion lunch and every year more and more people attend to catch up with their old friends. This year's BOSA Annual Lunch was no exception. A total of 321 people gathered at the Cedric Ford Pavilion, Newark Showground, including former staff, old students (graduating from Brackenhurst as far back as 1949) and their partners.

BOSA Secretary Jill Lewis (Rural Economy 1954) said: "This is an important date in the BOSA calendar and we look forward to it every year. Plans are already in place for next year's BOSA lunch and we welcome any former Brackenhurst students to this event."

For more information on next year's BOSA lunch, to be held on Sunday 16 March 2008, please contact Jill Lewis via the Alumni Office on +44 (0)115 848 8777 or at [alumni@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@ntu.ac.uk)

## Class of 1976/77 reunion

The Brackenhurst class of 1976/77 celebrated their 30th anniversary by having a reunion. Their get-together took place on Saturday 16 June 2007 and the group enjoyed a tour of Brackenhurst Farm and the School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences before heading to the Admiral Rodney in Southwell for a buffet supper.

Organiser, Jill Asher (Agriculture 1977), said: "It was great to be together again after all these years. However, we were unable to trace a few of our classmates so I would like to urge all former Brackenhurst students to check their address books and share information so that we can regain contact for future events."

If you know the whereabouts of any Brackenhurst graduates from 1976/77, please contact Jill Asher via the Alumni Office on +44 (0)115 848 8777 or at [alumni@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@ntu.ac.uk)

## Help us find your friends

We are keen to try and regain contact with more Brackenhurst graduates so that we can reintroduce them to the Brackenhurst Old Students Association (BOSA) and the University's Alumni Association. We can also help former students get back in touch with one another.

NTU's Alumni Office is currently making a great effort to find your Brackenhurst friends and fill in the gaps in the database. Staff have been trawling through old class lists and cuttings from *The Newark Advertiser* dating back to the opening of Brackenhurst Farm Institute in 1949.

Can you help us re-establish contact with some of your friends, so that we can begin to share University and Brackenhurst news with them too? Perhaps you have an old awards booklet from your year which we could borrow? Please contact us on +44 (0)115 848 8777 or at [alumni@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@ntu.ac.uk) with any updates or news.

## Every picture tells a story! Please tell us yours.

Do these photographs bring back memories of great times at Brackenhurst? We would love to hear your stories and see photographs from your time here. Please send them into us using the pre-paid envelope provided. We promise to return all photographs and booklets.



1. Brackenhurst football champs 1949/50



2. Taking the bull by the horns (1950)



3. Brackenhurst Common Room 1950:  
It's not all work, work, work...



4. Brackenhurst buddies 1962 (left to right):  
Dave Barber, Michael Halliday, Roger Beach  
and Dick Bower



5. Agricultural Engineering students strike a  
pose (circa 1989)



6. Brackenhurst Hall, the focal point of the  
campus

Photographs 1, 2 and 3 kindly provided by Dr Clifford Williams, son of the late Frank Henry Williams (Rural Economy 1950).

# Going for gold

Nottingham Trent University were delighted to win the gold medal for best non-commercial trade stand at this year's Newark and Nottinghamshire County Show.

NTU's marquee proved to be a great success with a wide range of things to do for all the family, including a section where former Brackenhurst students could browse at old class lists and photographs.

The University has a longstanding association with the Show, principally through Brackenhurst's links with the rural community. There are also links through the student, staff and alumni volunteers who continue to play a vital role in contributing their time and expertise to ensure the show's success.

This year, NTU's Vice-Chancellor Professor

Neil Gorman took on the role as the President of Newark and Nottinghamshire Agricultural Society.

He said: "It is an honour to be the society president and I am delighted that, despite the weather, the show proved to be a huge success."

The Alumni Office would like to thank all those who visited the NTU stand.

Alumni Officer, Clare Oswin, said: "It's always nice to meet former students and we love to hear their stories. We are grateful to those who took the time to come and visit us."

## Southwell Ploughing Match

The annual Southwell Ploughing Match and Show will be held in Kirklington on Saturday 29 September this year and NTU's Alumni Office will again be present to share class lists and photographs with former Brackenhurst students.



Magnificent horses perform at the ploughing event

Considered to be the foremost competition of its kind in Nottinghamshire, the 2007 event will include a number of classes in the ploughing fields, the show rings, and a domestic and horticultural produce section.

Show secretary, Angela Hardstaff, said: "I always look forward to the Southwell

Ploughing Match and it's great to see how the show has developed over the years. I hope our Brackenhurst friends can join us at this year's event."

For more information and a list of schedules, visit: [www.southwellploughingmatch.co.uk](http://www.southwellploughingmatch.co.uk)

## Triumph for NTU at BUSA Championships



Dressage at the Championships

Nottingham Trent University's student equestrian team is riding high after winning the British Universities Sports Association (BUSA) Equestrian Championships. Some 72 teams, from institutions across the UK, competed for one of the six places in the national three-day competition, which is one of the key events on the student equestrian calendar. NTU took first place after winning both Dressage and Show Jumping Team Finals.

NTU's Academic Team Leader for Equine Science, Heather Owen, said: "This is the first time the University has won the Overall Championship, and the team did incredibly well against some very stiff competition. We are very lucky to have some fantastic equestrian facilities here at Brackenhurst where the team trains. The team worked really hard for the event and their success is testament to their dedication and is very much deserved."



Jumping for gold

# New courses at Brackenhurst

The School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences continues to offer innovative, inspiring courses to students from a broad range of backgrounds.

## Getting exotic

There are exciting new opportunities afoot at Brackenhurst this year with the new BSc (Hons) Animal Science (Exotic) course. This is the UK's first animal science degree to look specifically at exotic animals and it provides students with a sound knowledge and understanding of exotic animal biology. More importantly, it will also help place graduates into vital careers, working with animals in the wild and in captivity.

The scope of the degree has appealed to exotic animal experts and newcomers alike, with Bob Lawrence, Head Warden at West Midland Safari Park, among the students on this brand new course.

He said: "I think this course is extremely important. I'm finding it very enlightening and learning more and more each day."

Modules studied on the course focus on the major scientific principles of anatomy, physiology, behaviour, ecology and nutrition of exotic animals as well as their application to welfare, breeding, conservation and management.

Programme Leader, Sarah Bottom, said: "This course is an exciting development of our animal courses at NTU. There is a need for

specialists in zoo biology to effectively manage and conserve both captive and wild endangered species."

The University is proud to be helping to supply this need for the future of animal conservation.

## Budding conservationists at work

Anyone looking to work in ranger services, rural tourism and recreation can benefit from a new FE Countryside Management (Rural Tourism) course being launched at NTU. The qualification will be delivered with a strong emphasis on practical activities.

Senior Lecturer in Countryside and Agriculture, Andrew Alder, said: "The use of the countryside for recreation has grown vastly over the years and there are now more rural tourism jobs than ever before. It's vital that people are equipped with the necessary skills needed to conserve national parks."

Modules on offer for the new course will include archaeology and landscape history, business management, countryside policies and recreation, countryside tourism, land use, sustainable development, and practical training.

Following completion of the course, students can progress to a degree in Conservation and

Countryside Management, which opens up a world of opportunities. And our 200 hectare estate at Brackenhurst provides outstanding facilities which give our students the perfect start to their future careers.

For more information on any of the courses offered at Brackenhurst, visit the School's website at [www.ntu.ac.uk/ares](http://www.ntu.ac.uk/ares)



Bob Lawrence at work

# Shrew study

Talented Brackenhurst-based PhD student Anna Champneys is investigating the conservation of water shrews.

Having completed her BSc Wildlife Conservation in 2005, Anna Champneys was keen to continue her studies at Nottingham Trent's School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences. She is now embarking on a three-year project at Brackenhurst and locations across the region to better understand the habitat and survival needs of the water shrew. She has been awarded a grant from the Peoples' Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) to use to further her project and the results of the study could help with the future conservation of the UK's least-studied mammal.

As part of her PhD, supervised by Dr Louise Gentle, Anna will be looking in detail at the specific features of each watery habitat. This will involve studying water quality, analysing droppings to identify what the water shrews are eating, and recording which other animals

inhabit the area. Another aspect of her project will be laying friendly traps. In this way, she will be able to record the water shrew population in each area before establishing their habitat and water quality preferences.

This will be the second major study Anna has undertaken at the University. Two years ago she was one of just five students nationwide to be awarded a six-month internship from the Mammals Trust UK (MTUK). During the internship, she investigated the types of hedgerows small mammals such as mice, shrews and voles prefer to inhabit.

Anna said: "Findings from this new research will help provide guidelines for effective management and conservation of this much understudied species, safeguarding the future of the water shrew."



Anna out in the field