

Network

Brackenhurst Supplement

Nottingham Trent University Alumni Association

Welcome



Welcome to this special *Network* supplement, uniquely for Brackenhurst's former students.

You'll find it full of news from the campus and the School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences, including stories celebrating the success of our students past and present.

We have hosted many inspiring visitors this year, including six-time Olympian Mary King, and her daughter Emily. We are also increasing our work with communities near and far; inside we share our work with local charity Southwell Care Project, collaborations in Mauritius and exciting opportunities we have had to work with the food industry.

Thanks to your ongoing support, we're looking forward to the continuing success of Brackenhurst as it goes from strength to strength with Nottingham Trent University. I urge you to stay in touch with us via the Alumni Association so we can keep you up to date with the latest news; we really enjoy hearing from you and you are most welcome to visit us at Brackenhurst!

Professor Eunice Simmons
Dean of the School of Animal, Rural
and Environmental Sciences

Contact your Alumni Association on
Tel: +44 (0)115 848 8777
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www.ntualumni.org.uk

Olympian Mary King opens indoor arena

London 2012 silver medal winner Mary King visited Brackenhurst campus recently to open the newly refurbished indoor arena.



In May of this year we welcomed Mary King and her daughter Emily to open the newly refurbished arena at the Brackenhurst Equestrian Centre.

Not only did Mary and her daughter carry out an impressive lecture demonstration to over 400 guests, but it also gave Brackenhurst the chance to show off some of the fantastic research it has been doing recently. This includes visual behaviour of horse and rider and how it affects performance and management, and the behavioural assessment of ridden horses using physiology measures.

Heather Owen, Head of Animal and Equine Science, said: "We have a strong equine team at Brackenhurst, carrying out research geared around both the health and welfare of horses. As well as British Horse Society qualified instructors, examiners and competitors, up to international level, we also have staff with postgraduate science degrees, who conduct research."

Using horses from the King stable, Mary and Emily demonstrated the techniques required to train the event horse – starting with novice through to advanced level. They brought along two of Mary's top horses: Imperial Cavalier and King's Temptress, and Emily's Mr Hiho.

Mary's glittering career has spanned over 30 years and in that time she has won six team World and European Championship gold medals and a record of four British Open titles. She was also part of the GB eventing team who won silver at London 2012.

After the event Mary said: "It's wonderful. People are being so enthusiastic and very welcoming here in this beautiful arena, which they have named after me, the Mary King Arena!"

To watch a video of the event and find out more about the fantastic facilities at Brackenhurst campus visit www.ntu.ac.uk/horse.

Work on new 'green' library gets underway

Contemporary, eco-friendly library is now underway at Brackenhurst campus.

The 1,000m² building, due to be completed in 2013, will feature large open spaces and smaller study areas to allow for a dynamic social and flexible environment which will cater for both group and quiet study. The one-storey building will also have the latest advancements in audio-visual, Wi-Fi and PC capabilities.

Its design will reflect the courses delivered within the School, with artists' impressions of trees, wildlife and flora and fauna on the glass, walls and doors. There will also be a projection wall with rotating images of rural scenes.

The library will be awarded the second highest BREEAM rating – the world's foremost environmental assessment method for buildings – and the highest possible Energy Performance Certificate, which measures energy efficiency. All materials for the building will be from environmentally ethical suppliers and its carbon footprint during and after construction will be kept to a minimum.

The building, which will have a very modern look and feel, will be heated by a biomass boiler – using agricultural waste for fuel – while ecology has been at the forefront of the scheme. Extensive surveys have been undertaken to minimise any impact on nesting birds, bats, badgers and great crested newts.

Dean of the School, Professor Eunice Simmons, said: "We are very excited about this development, which will provide a stimulating and flexible study environment for our students. It will be an outstanding and iconic building at the heart of the campus and will be a focal point for students and future generations to enjoy."



Dressage champion appointed visiting fellow

Richard Davison will work with and inspire equine students within the School.

The role will see Richard – one of the most highly respected dressage riders and trainers in the UK – bring his knowledge, skills and expertise to Brackenhurst campus.

Richard competed for Team GB at the London 2012 Olympic Games, with his top horse, the Countess of Derby's Hiscox Artemis.

Originally from Nottingham, he is internationally recognised for his contribution to the sport of dressage and has competed in two World Equestrian Games and four European Championships. He is also British Dressage's World Class Performance Manager and a former British Dressage team captain.

Richard – who is committed to advancing scientifically based and sound horse management and training principles – was awarded the Fellowship of the International Dressage Trainer Club in 2010.

In his role as visiting fellow it is hoped that Richard will help the University to develop stronger links with

the dressage industry as well as facilitating research with elite riders and horses.

Cassie White, a senior lecturer in equestrian psychology and sports science, said: "We are delighted that Richard has accepted the appointment of visiting fellow and feel that he has the expertise that will complement our curriculum delivery. His outstanding professional skills and associations will provide additional opportunities for collaboration and research within the equestrian world."



Food for thought

Fusion was created to raise awareness of the School's services and facilities within the UK food industry.



Collaborations between the School and industry are absolutely vital, always exciting, and crucially, beneficial to everybody.

Fi Thompson, Business Development Officer, said: "We've been working within the food industry for many years. We want to share the work we do with food businesses, and together contribute to a thriving and innovative industry that we can all be proud of. Training for the food industry has been delivered from Brackenhurst since the 1960s and we have a very strong heritage in food services."

As you know Brackenhurst is the ideal location as we offer excellent facilities, professional training and qualifications, expertise and more. Our services are flexible and we are here to listen and deliver solutions to the needs of the industry.



Fi added: "Our food team are all ex-industry professionals and are really switched on to the needs of the industry, which is why we have such truly relevant products and services. Over the last few years we have developed a range of training which is directly relevant to industry either in its unique course content or mode of delivery."

Work in the food industry? Why not visit the website and pop your business on the fusion map or join in with discussions on the forum? Visit www.ntufusion.co.uk.

Chocolate and ice cream problem solvers

Food scientists from Brackenhurst campus are supporting chocolatiers and ice cream manufacturers in the East Midlands.

The project, which is in association with the Food and Drink iNet, has brought together academics and engineers to reach a workable process to help manufacturers.

Chocolatiers face a problem in which each morning they would have to wait for an hour for the chocolate to reach a workable temperature. Academics and engineers developed cost-effective equipment to create a solution to this problem so work can be started quicker.

The Food and Drink iNet Director, Richard Worrall, said: "Small chocolatiers, working with relatively small chocolate tempering equipment, find that they spend at least the first hour of each day waiting for that day's chocolate to reach the correct conditions for working. This is related to melting and subsequently carefully cooling the chocolate to keep it in perfect condition.

The project also aims to help ice cream

manufacturers to increase profit margins by using raw materials instead of ready-mixed ingredients. This reformulation of quality ice cream products could have real positive effects.

This project aims to help ice cream makers increase profits by reformulating their products with locally sourced ingredients, instead of using ready-mixed ingredients imported from overseas. This could save thousands of pounds every year on the cost of raw materials.

Richard Worrall said: "Several ice cream producers have requested support in finding alternatives that, ideally, are available locally, are cheaper and enable production of similar or better quality ice cream. We are very pleased to be able to launch a project which will help this sector of the food industry in the East Midlands to become more profitable and more sustainable."

If your business has a similar issue and you would like advice, visit www.ntufusion.co.uk to get more information on how we can help.





Dive Against Debris

Recently a group of divers from Nottingham Trent University teamed up with a local dive centre and non-governmental organisation in Blue Bay, Mauritius to organise a series of Dive Against Debris events and reef surveys.

A diving team led by Dr Nicholas Ray with the help of Coral Diving Centre staff, surveyed the lagoon and outer reef surrounding the south east corner of Mauritius.

The project aims to quantify abundance and diversity of fish and coral species but also to protect the marine environment from biodiversity degradation in coastal marine ecosystems and coral reefs (linked mainly to human activities, eg overfishing and pollution inputs).

Over two weeks, the team collected several plastic bottles, a discarded lobster pot engulfing the coral, fishing nets and tackle, sunglasses, bin liners and clothes from various dive sites in and around the lagoon and outer reef.

Taking a back seat from the marine research for the second week, Graham Shelbourne, course leader for FdSc Animal Science, led a team of eight student volunteers doing several Dive Against Debris surveys and beach clean-ups along the beaches of Blue Bay, and offshore islands of Ile aux Aigrettes, Ile De La Passe and Ile aux Fouquets.

In just three hours a total of ten bags filled to the brim with mainly plastic debris and various lengths of wood and metal were recovered from the bottom of the Bay generating a great deal of interest from the locals.

Blue Bay Marine Park was declared a National Park in October 1997 and subsequently declared a Marine Protected Area and designated as a Marine Park in June 2000. The park occupies a marine zone of 352 hectares and hosts a large diversity of corals associated with rich and varied fauna and flora (mangroves, algae, sea weeds, fish and other marine organisms). September 2008 saw Blue Bay Marine Park officially classified as a Ramsar site in Mauritius.

Visit www.ntu.ac.uk/ares to watch a short video created to inspire people to study environmental science by displaying fascinating, yet unnerving, facts about our planet and what we are doing to it.



Stage and screen actress and wildlife campaigner, Virginia McKenna OBE, has received an honorary degree from NTU in recognition of her dedication to animal conservation.

Virginia McKenna received a BAFTA Award for Best Actress for the film *A Town Like Alice* in 1956 and was nominated again two years later for *Carve Her Name With Pride*. She was then nominated for a Golden Globe Award for Best Actress for her performance in *Born Free*. In the film she portrayed the wife of a Kenyan game warden, George Adamson, famous for returning the orphan lioness, Elsa, to the wild, and who actively supported the protection of wild animals.

It was as a result of that role which led to her and her late husband – actor Bill Travers, who played her on-screen husband George Adamson in the film – founding Zoo Check in 1984. This later became the Born Free Foundation. The foundation is an international charity which aims to promote the protection of animals in the wild and their welfare in zoos.

Virginia also won the Olivier Award for Best Actress in a British musical in 1979 for her London Palladium performance opposite Yul Brynner in *The King and I* and was awarded an OBE in 2004.

While occasionally appearing in film and television roles and taking part in poetry readings, most of Virginia's time in recent years has been dedicated to book-writing, talks, fund-raising events and conservation and animal welfare work with the Born Free Foundation, of which she is a trustee.

For more on the Born Free Foundation visit www.bornfree.org.uk.



Roaring success

The Map Man

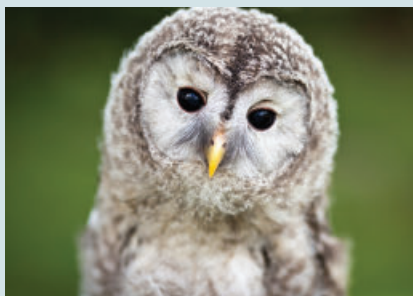
Geographer, writer and broadcaster Nicholas Crane, also received an honorary degree from NTU this year.

As a geographer, Nicholas Crane is a prolific communicator and an important contributor to public knowledge on environment and sustainable development. He is a tireless explorer, walker, cyclist and mountaineer, and also a journalist, award-winning author and seasoned broadcaster.

He has presented such programmes as *Map Man*, *Coast*, *Great British Journeys* and the four-part *Town*, which explored Scarborough, Ludlow, Perth and Totnes. He has also walked 10,000km across the mountains of Europe from the Atlantic to the Black Sea.



Our Bsc (Hons) Geography is fast becoming one of Brackenhurst's most popular subjects. Find out more at www.ntu.ac.uk/ares.



Early bird

A tawny owl chick found in a nest box at Brackenhurst campus in March was thought to be the first to be recorded and ringed in Britain this year – and one of the earliest recorded in the last 40 years. The mild spring weather could be the reason for the early arrival and may have been responsible for causing the adults to nest early.

Staff found the chick, along with its mother, in a nest box made by wildlife conservation students. One former student, who also works for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) ringed the chick under the supervision of Jim Lennon from the South Notts Ringing Group, which is part of the British Trust for Ornithology.

Brackenhurst campus is thought to be home to several pairs of adult tawny owls, which are non-migratory and so remain there all year round.

Dr Louise Gentle, Wildlife Conservation course leader, said: "The new arrival caused quite a stir on campus. We created the nest box because there is a lack of natural breeding sites and were absolutely thrilled that the idea paid off. We hope it is a sign of things to come and that we'll be able to welcome more tawny owl chicks in the coming years."

Falcons' Nest

Meanwhile, at our City site, the Newton building has been home to a breeding pair of peregrine falcons for the last ten years. The nest site, near the top of the building, has been successfully used to raise 16 chicks over the past five years. A special webcam was set up to follow the progress of the eggs and chicks. Visit

www.ntu.ac.uk/ecoweb/biodiversity/falcons



Support your University

With your help the Alumni Fund can continue to support future generations of students at Brackenhurst.

You know how great life at Brackenhurst campus can be, and we hope that this special issue of *Network* has given you a glimpse of what is happening on campus today.

Did you know that some projects here have been funded by the generosity of our alumni – former students who are thankful for their own experiences and who wish to invest in growing the potential of others who choose to study here?

This autumn, a team of current students will be contacting some of you to ask if you would consider joining the growing number of alumni who are choosing to get involved and support their University. Donations made to the Alumni Fund have supported a wide variety of projects at Brackenhurst over the years, including:

- instructor transmitter / student receiver units for use in the new Mary King Arena;

- the set-up of the Alumni Fund Histology Suite which allows the preparation of tissue on site for microscopic examination;
- the creation of two soil observatories; and
- the purchase of outdoor video surveillance and radio telemetry tracking equipment to observe animal behaviour and movement.

The Alumni Fund can continue to support activities at Brackenhurst with your help, so please get involved and help us make an impact on students today and preserve the wonderful heritage that is Brackenhurst for future generations.

If you have any questions about the Alumni Fund and how your donations make a difference please contact Stephen Knott, Alumni Fund Officer, on **+44 (0)115 848 8807** or email stephen.knott@ntu.ac.uk.

Leaving a legacy



Perhaps you are considering, or have already decided, to make provision in your will for a legacy to benefit future generations at Brackenhurst?

The ethos of a great student experience enjoyed in an outstanding rural environment is one that we wish to remain in perpetuity. With the help of alumni and friends we can ensure this happens.

We would be delighted if you chose to be part of Brackenhurst's future by leaving a gift in your will.

For an informal and confidential discussion about your wishes, or simply to find out a little more about life at Brackenhurst today, please contact Fiona Fowkes (pictured left) on **+44 (0)115 848 8775** or email fiona.fowkes@ntu.ac.uk.

Floral inspiration

A new cut flower business, Flower Pod, has been launched as part of an innovative social enterprise by the Southwell Care Project (SCP) – a charity which supports adults with learning disabilities.

Flower Pod will be run from Brackenhurst campus and will see SCP service-users, or clients, growing cut flower species which they will sell as single stems, bunches and bouquets to the general public and local businesses.

The University has leased SCP a piece of land and a new eco-friendly straw bale building – complete with classroom and workshop – is being created. In addition a commercial size poly tunnel will be used to cultivate various species of flowers.

SCP has been able to build two-thirds of the infrastructure following a grant from



the Social Enterprise Investment Fund (SEIF) and trading is expected to be underway by early summer 2013.

The Flower Pod project will be overseen by a project manager employed by SCP, alongside volunteers and support workers, with NTU students also volunteering. Proceeds from the business will go to SCP to help fund the charity's day sessions for their clients, which include activities such as pottery, cookery, dancing, drama, photography and arts and crafts in Southwell, Newark and Mansfield.

Flower Pod has come about following the successful Growing Together partnership between the University and SCP. This has seen SCP clients working with lecturers to learn more about the rural environment, basic horticultural and agricultural practices and animal and wildlife care.

Anna Joyce, the Social Enterprise

Manager at SCP, said: "This is a fantastic project for everyone involved. It has an environmentally friendly focus at its core, right from the ecologically responsible building materials, through to the landscape design which incorporates reed beds and water harvesting systems. Our clients and volunteers will have the opportunity to be part of an uplifting business in a wonderful setting growing locally grown produce for the local market."

Dean, Professor Eunice Simmons, said: "We are delighted to be able to support Southwell Care Project in this way. The Flower Pod initiative is closely aligned to a number of our core values including our proud environmental credentials and strong community links."

For more information about Flower Pod and Southwell Care Project visit www.southwellcare.org.

Walk around beautiful Brackenhurst



The open air classroom used by more than 1,000 students studying Land and Animal based courses can now be enjoyed by a wider audience.

Brackenhurst Walks are designed to open up the estate to the public and encourage visitors to share its special features. In addition to the working farm, livestock and arable fields, the 200 hectare estate contains ancient trackways, woodland and plentiful wildlife.

A number of suggested routes have been identified and a total of 27 information boards have been placed at key points around the estate giving details about the

wildlife that populates the campus and countryside management techniques employed in maintaining the estate.

Academic Team Leader, Vic Hird, said: "We are so fortunate to be based in such picturesque and impressive surroundings. We think of our estate as a natural, outdoor classroom for our students. We are delighted to be able to share it with others."

The walks are open to the public every day, so please come and enjoy our fabulous estate.

For more information call +44 (0)115 848 5294 or download a leaflet at www.ntualumni.org.uk/netcommunity/brackenhurstwalks.



Tree planted in memory of Bill

Following this year's Rogation Sunday service on Sunday 6 May, a tree was planted in Brackenhurst's grounds in memory of former staff member Bill Thickett.

In front of Bill's friends and family, Bill Handbury (Agriculture 1967) from Brackenhurst Old Students' Association paid tribute to him. He said: "We remember with gratitude the work of Bill Thickett here at Brackenhurst; first as a lecturer in Agricultural Science and then in his role as Vice Principal. He is remembered as a kind, considerate man who used his time wisely to help others in their studies and their work."

Bill Thickett's daughters, Rachel and Melanie (pictured below), attended the service. Melanie said: "The planting of the tree was a lovely idea and will be a lasting tribute to our father who I know was very influential during Brackenhurst's early days. Being back on campus brought back so many happy memories for me and my sister. We were particularly interested to see all the wonderful work being done at Brackenhurst and I'm sure our father would have loved to have seen how things have progressed."



Keep in touch!

Whether you left Brackenhurst many years ago, or just this year, we really want to keep in touch with you.

Updating us is easy! Simply complete and return the update form you received with this issue of *Network*, email us at alumni@ntu.ac.uk or log into the Online Community at www.ntualumni.org.uk.

By staying in contact with us we can keep you informed of news from your University and your fellow alumni, as well as let you know about special alumni events and reunions.

For example, each year more and more former students come together at the Brackenhurst Old Students' Association (BOSA) annual lunch.

This year nearly 200 people were at the event to reunite with old friends. Organiser Jill Lewis (Rural Economy 1954) said: "The annual lunch is a very important and special date in BOSA's calendar. It's great to be able to meet up with friends and share fond memories of time spent at Brackenhurst."

Next year's lunch will take place on Sunday 17 March 2013 at the Cedric Ford Pavilion, Newark Showground, Winthorpe. To find out more, contact Jill Lewis via the Alumni Association.

Help us find your friends

We are still missing details for some former students – which means they're missing out on NTU and Brackenhurst news! If you think you can help us re-establish contact with some of your friends, please get in touch.

Contact your Alumni Association on **+44 (0)115 848 8777** or email alumni@ntu.ac.uk. You can also join our growing networks on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. Search for "**Nottingham Trent University Alumni Association**".