

2013 / 2014

Shaping Futures

The newsletter for supporters of Nottingham Trent University



Falcons and
fundraising

What is
bioinformatics?

Cycling the length
of the UK – twice!

Bigger and better –
runNTU returns!

NOTTINGHAM
TRENT UNIVERSITY



Thank you for your support

People often say “variety is the spice of life” and this is what jumped into our thoughts as we collated the stories within these pages.



A wide variety of charitable projects are featured, ranging from student scholarships and capital spending, through to supporting research such as the groundbreaking work at the John van Geest Cancer Research Centre. There are also a few projects which have been supported which are more unusual, such as our wonderful breeding falcons on webcam. In these pages we only have the space to scratch the surface of the many ways donations have helped.

The wonderful variety of the work you have supported over the past year speaks volumes about the scope of work here at Nottingham Trent. Whatever you care about there are people here who care about it as well – people who are devoting their lives to find ways to improve lives through their work and research.

Research and education help all of us by encouraging development in all areas of society.

By donating you have chosen to be a part of that, so thank you.

Tim Cobb (BA Hons Economics 1982)
Head of Development and Alumni Relations



Sky-high donations!



You may not know it, but for the last ten years the Newton building at Nottingham Trent University has been home to a breeding pair of peregrine falcons, who nest in a custom-built box on an outside ledge near the top of the building.

The nest site has been successfully used to raise 15 chicks over the past five years. Their position, high up above the streets, gives them an excellent view of the city and any potential prey. The birds are protected from human intrusion and can't be seen from inside the building or be disturbed by noise or light.

Staff from the University have set up a webcam to allow members of the public to watch the incredible story of the chicks, from hatching to first flight. This year the falcon page received just under half a million views, and was featured in the national press and on television.

We decided to work in partnership with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust to give the public the opportunity to donate to projects which will benefit birds of prey through this forum. These donations will support our cutting-edge research, which includes working in collaboration with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and Nottinghamshire Police to maintain a DNA database of birds of prey. We hope this will prove to be a valuable resource, enabling us to identify stolen eggs and birds in the future.

We would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has donated to this project, and we hope you will visit the webcam next spring!

**For more information please visit
www.ntu.ac.uk/falcons**

Going the distance



Cycling from Land's End to John O'Groats is a dream for many, but NTU staff member Jeremy Bateman made his dream a reality by cycling the 977 mile journey in aid of the John van Geest Cancer Research Centre.

Jeremy was joined by friend Andy Moon and the pair completed the course in ten days. Along the way they called into the Clifton campus (adding 130 miles to the shortest route of 840 miles), where many of Jeremy's colleagues from the finance team cheered the pair on as they rode through campus. Some even opted to join in for a few miles of the ride.

The intrepid pair have many fond memories of the trip. Jeremy said: "What started as a casual conversation over a beer turned into a real adventure. This was the bike ride of my dreams! We saw some wonderful scenery and met some fantastic people. The journey wasn't without incident but will stick in my mind for a very long time. Friends have created a DVD of our photos and video clips set to music – if I had my way it would receive a BAFTA award!"

The ride raised over £2,000 in support for the centre. If you would like to undertake your own epic challenge for the centre please email Alumni and Community Giving Officer Stephen Knott at stephen.knott@ntu.ac.uk or call him on **0115 848 8807**.

Jeremy says: "It seemed like a massive challenge at first, but the feeling of achievement was fantastic – both from completing the challenge and for the amount we raised for a great cause. I'd encourage anyone to have a go at something that they always wanted to do, have a great time doing it and raise money for this important cause along the way."





The needle in the haystack

Inside the John van Geest Cancer Research Centre, some of our scientists are involved in the hunt for biomarkers.

Short for biological markers, biomarkers are genes, molecules or other biological characteristics which can be measured. Biomarkers may be used to indicate the presence of cancer or predict how a patient with a particular type of cancer might react to a certain drug. Perhaps the most commonly known biomarker is PSA, which is currently used as part of the test to diagnose prostate cancer.

Graham Ball (BSc Hons Applied Biology 1992 and PhD 1996) is the centre's resident Professor of Bioinformatics. Using his high-powered computer, Graham uses powerful artificial intelligence techniques to analyse a mountain of data from patients – using a combination of data from tumour samples and the associated medical history to help him identify patterns which could influence research into new diagnostic tests and treatments.

Graham says: "Current biological experiments generate a massive volume of complex data. There is huge potential for making additional discoveries using this data, but due to the size and complexity of the dataset we need to utilise a variety of computational techniques. In this way we can make new and important discoveries more quickly. I often liken it to looking for the straw-coloured needle in the haystack – but once found, that needle can change lives for patients worldwide."

You can keep in touch with the latest news from the centre by following us on twitter –

@vanGeestCancer or visiting our website – www.ntu.ac.uk/vangeest



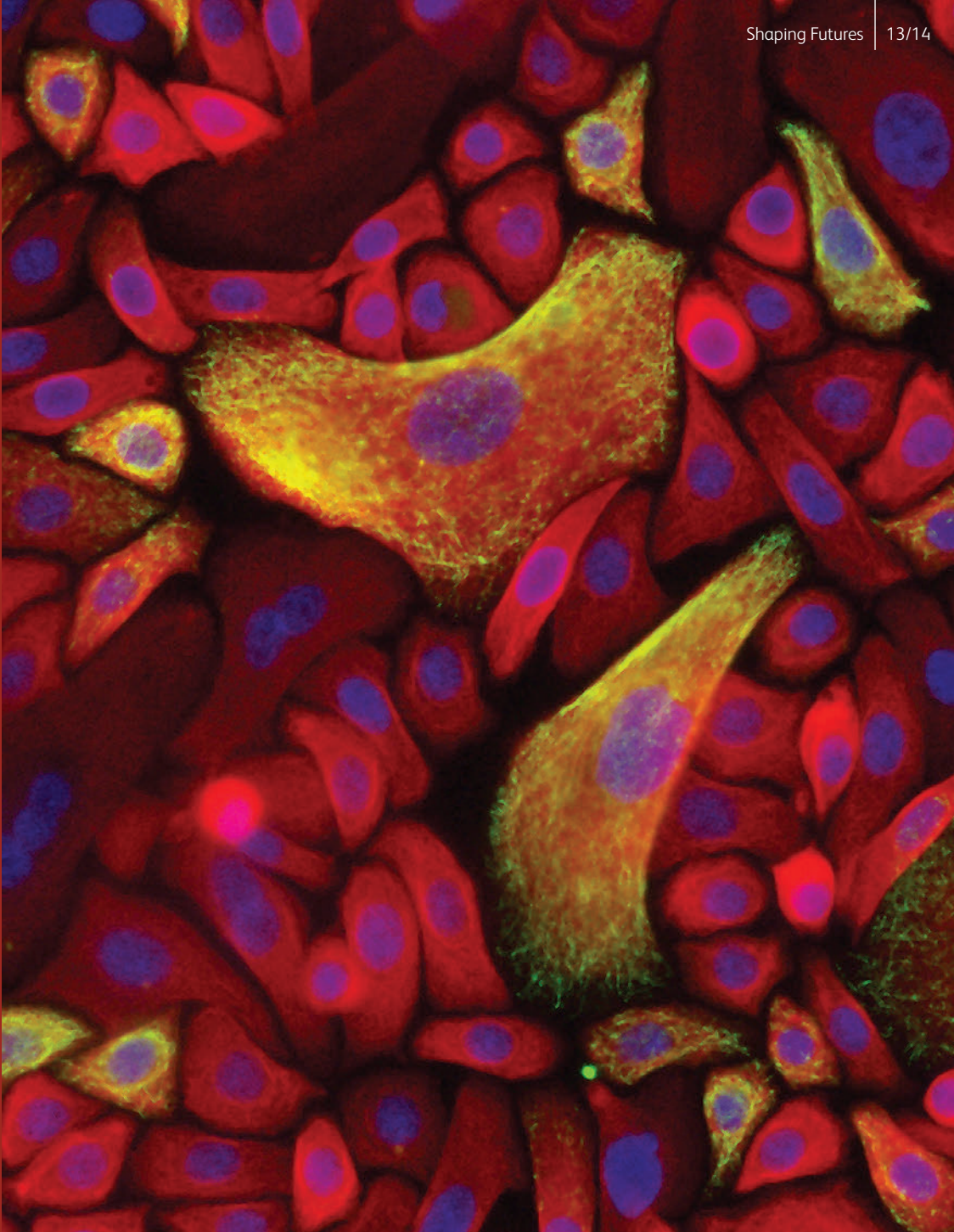


Image shows prostate cancer cells stained to show proteins of interest to our scientists

Fundraising fun on 1in3 day

The University designated Friday 1/3/13 to be 1in3 day. It was named not just because of the date, but in recognition of the research that predicts at least one in three of us are likely to be diagnosed with cancer at some point during our lifetime.

The day aimed to generate funds for the John van Geest Cancer Research Centre at the University, and raise awareness of the centre amongst our staff and students.

Staff from across the University volunteered to arrange a variety of fun activities. There were some rather strenuous activities – at 1 pm the Newton building was filled with the funky tones of Michael Jackson's *Beat It*, to which around 50 staff and students joined in an organised flashmob line dance, watched by a crowd of hundreds of their peers and colleagues. From 7.30 am staff worked their muscles in the Dryden Centre by cycling from Land's End to John

O'Groats on four exercise bikes, taking slots of 30 minutes each. They made their distance target by around 2.30 pm, but soldiered on until the end of the working day anyway.

It wasn't all hard work though – there were hundreds of cakes and baked treats on offer across all three campuses. Many of our cleaning staff and some staff from the finance department carried out their normal duties wearing pyjamas.

Over £2,000 was raised on the day to support the vital work of the centre. One fantastic achievement was from Janice Taylor, one of our reception officers, who was personally responsible for raising over £500 by setting up a sweet shop in the Bonington building that would even have impressed Willy Wonka.

We are all looking forward to a similar day in 2014!





Running for cancer support

In the last weekend of April around 200 staff, students and friends of Nottingham Trent University arrived at the Clifton campus for the second runNTU event.



The 5km course went around the Clifton campus before heading into the village and continuing along the banks of the River Trent. There was also a shorter family run of around 1.5km which even included babies in prams being pushed around. Overall, the day raised over £6,500 in support of important research at the John van Geest Cancer Research Centre. The money bought a key piece of equipment used in the preparation of DNA and proteins for analysis.

All kinds of fantastic fancy dress could be seen on the day, with everything from superhero costumes to some more questionable student outfits being worn. One staff member from Kerry's fruit and vegetable stand ran in a full body banana suit, and finished the race in style with an epic sprint battle against a Baywatch lifeguard.





Demelza was one of the many students who chose to volunteer to support the race. She ran a face-painting stall for children before making her way around the course in a bright yellow fleece onesie. Demelza said: "This is a great event for all ages and as part of my work as a caller for the Alumni Fund I have been able to tour the centre and know how amazing it is! The work they do is so important – my mum has had cancer and is still around to be able to walk the course with us, so we owe so much to research of this kind."



The event was generously supported by UPP limited, which meant every penny of the entry fee went to the great work at the centre. Many participants also chose to register on the Justgiving website to raise additional sponsorship. Plans for runNTU 2014 are well under way, and the event will be held on Saturday 26 April. For more information please visit www.runNTU.co.uk. Put the date in your diary now, and we hope to see you there for what promises to be an even bigger and better event.





Space: Reaching for the stars...

Did you know at Nottingham Trent University we have our own observatory, providing fantastic opportunities for schools and the local community to learn more about the science of astronomy?

Inside the dome-shaped building on our Clifton campus are three high-tech telescopes, each specially designed to perform different roles to help aspiring astronomers monitor and photograph events in outer space.

The observatory recently received a new spectrograph, thanks to the support of the Alumni Fund. Astronomy Development Outreach Officer Dr Daniel Brown (PG Cert 2009) said: "We have been approached by several students who want to carry out spectroscopic work. This piece of equipment will allow them to take on new, relevant and exciting projects, including the observation of spectroscopic signatures of life and the expansion of our universe."

The University regularly holds Open Dome events which aim to introduce and encourage the understanding of astronomy.

The gift of a good start

Thanks to your donations last year we were able to award 15 students with Alumni Fund scholarships and one student with a David Richmond Memorial Fund scholarship.

These scholarships, worth £1,000 for the first year of study, are designed to help students get the best start to their time at NTU. We caught up with two of the recipients to see how it had made a difference to them:

What do you enjoy most about being at NTU?

Farzana: My course is based on the City site, and I love that when you walk around you get the feeling that you're on a closed university campus, but it also feels like a community, our own little town.

Where do you want to be in five years?

Farzana: I'd like to be working towards becoming a chartered civil engineer and gaining some valuable experience – maybe working for a charitable / non-profit organisation and use my skills to take part in projects that could make a difference not only in civil engineering, but globally.

Emillie: I really hope to be employed in teaching, possibly abroad. I want to make a difference to children's education and hopefully be a strong role model for children in my classes.

How has the scholarship made a difference to your university life?

Emillie: It's helped by supporting my travel expenses to and from university and my school placements. The support has also paid for resources for my extracurricular subjects, as well as the many books I needed at the start of the year and all the children's books I needed throughout the year. It has also allowed me to pay for a compulsory field trip.

Thanks to the scholarship I've been able to get fully involved in university life and join the walking society – something I really enjoy!

What is your message for the donors that make these scholarships possible?

Farzana: A big thanks of course, but I would also like to say that this scholarship allows students to spend more time actually being students and take advantage of all the opportunities only available at this point in our lives. Your support has inspired me and I would definitely love to be able to offer my support in a similar manner in the future.

Emillie: I would say a big thank you! It has made such a difference and meant that I have not been held back in getting involved with university and all that it has to offer. It has made a significant difference to me and made this first year a lot less stressful. So thank you again for helping and for remembering what it was like to be a student starting out.



Farzana (BEng Civil Engineering)



Emillie (BA Hons Primary Education)

Alumni Fund hits the rapids with Leo

BSc (Hons) Sport and Exercise Science student, Leo Marshall, is balancing his studies with his passion for white water rafting thanks to the Alumni Fund.

Leo, now in his third year, has been kayaking and canoeing since he was 10 years old, and began competing in slalom canoeing at 15. He competed at international level as a junior. During his first year at University he started working as a raft guide at the National Water Sports Centre which turned his focus and he joined the British white water rafting squad in November 2012.

Most of Leo's training takes place at the National Water Sports Centre in Nottinghamshire and the Lee Valley White Water Centre in London. He said: "We train as a team once during the week and commit to one weekend per month where we do six sessions in two days. I also train individually four to six times per week in the gym or by running or cycling."

Fitting his studies around training can be difficult, but he usually manages to squeeze his training, and part-time job, around his timetable. It does mean some early mornings, but he says: "If I train early I actually get more done! If I go to the gym before a 9 am lecture, then I will spend the later parts of the day studying as I usually feel more motivated after an early morning workout."

Leo and his team competed in the GB team selections last December, securing first place, and this year will see him take part in his first Rafting International in the World Championships in Rotorua, New Zealand where he hopes the team grab a podium position.

He said: "I would like to thank you for your support. Without it my sport would be very difficult to sustain as there is very limited funding available to us."





Your University needs you!

The John van Geest Cancer Research Centre has launched a Justgiving page.

If you, your family or workmates fancy running, walking, kayaking, cycling, shaving, baking, singing, jumping, climbing, hang gliding, flying, swimming, spacehopping or anything else in aid of our vital cancer research please visit www.justgiving.com/jvgcrc or contact Alumni and Community Giving Officer Stephen Knott on **0115 848 8807** or email stephen.knott@ntu.ac.uk.



In January 2013, FdA Media Creative students competed in The Assignment – a competition similar to *The Apprentice*. The aim was to improve student employability, build confidence and help students prepare for working on placements with local creative industries.

Supported by the Alumni Fund, The Assignment started at Nottingham Contemporary where the students were given a brief to design a marketing campaign for Notts TV. They were split into two teams and given guidance and support in developing a marketing concept by The Hive, with design direction provided by tutors from Nottingham Trent University. Once the teams had a design concept, they entered the production phase, producing the designs and video for their campaign.

Alumna Janet Wootton (MA Fine Art 2012), who has a background in the television broadcast industry, kindly stepped in to assist the teams with designing a professional pitch to be delivered to an audience of local creative businesses, practitioners and students.

Both teams presented their work to a panel at Broadway Media Centre, using different design and video concepts to promote Notts TV. Both teams proposed using social media to market the station, but there could only be one winner and it was Team Two with their video portraying a modern-day Robin Hood visiting Nottingham nightlife and tourist attractions.

Judges were impressed with their unified and well-delivered presentation, along with their successful Twitter campaign. Prizes were given to all participants to recognise their hard work. Fahan Naushahi received the prize for best team member and Stephen Ross received a week's placement at Three Rooms Graphic Design and Web Design Agency.

The project, which helped motivate students and build their portfolio, also helped them get to know each other and experience working as a team.



Hitting all the right notes

The Alumni Fund is music to the ears of first year BA (Hons) Accounting and Finance student Joel Moore, who is this year's recipient of the Alumni Fund Award for Music and receives a euphonium for use during his time at Nottingham Trent University.

Joel has played brass instruments since he was seven, but has now decided to focus on the euphonium. He enjoys playing a mixture of contemporary original pieces and transcriptions and arrangements, although he mainly plays in bands.

He's the assistant principal euphonium of Cornerstone Brass Band in his home town of Sheffield. The band meets regularly, performing to a high standard in contests and concerts.

Joel said: "I'd like to say a huge thank you to the donors who have contributed to this award. I was still borrowing my old band's euphonium but I had to give it back earlier this year. This has given me the opportunity to continue to play and I hope I will improve as a musician."

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For more information on becoming a member of the Benefactors' Court, please contact Fiona Wall, Senior Development Officer, at fiona.wall@ntu.ac.uk or call +44 (0)115 848 8810.



Thank you!

On behalf of the students and staff at Nottingham Trent University, we would like to thank all of our donors for the 2012/2013 financial year.

With a growing number of people deciding to support the University, we no longer have the space within these pages to display the full donor list, but you can see it online at

www.ntualumni.org.uk/donors. Do visit and look for your name.

We would like to say a special thank you to the organisations who have supported us over the past year, and also those individuals who have given at a significant level to become eligible for membership of the Benefactors' Court giving clubs.

The giving clubs are named after four individuals known for their literary or scientific genius and

whose statues adorn the Arkwright building: Sir Isaac Newton, William Shakespeare, Sir Francis Bacon and John Milton.

Those who make a donation of £1,000 or more will become members of the Benefactors' Court and will be recognised appropriately. This may include a permanently named room, a plaque or invitations to VIP events. To date, we have placed named plaques in 20 teaching rooms in honour of those who have donated as part of this scheme.

For more information on becoming a member of the Benefactors' Court, please contact Fiona Wall, Senior Development Officer, at **fiona.wall@ntu.ac.uk** or call **0115 848 8810**.

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