

Network

School of Social Sciences Supplement
Nottingham Trent University Alumni Association

Summer 2010

Welcome



Welcome to this special *Network* supplement for all former students of NTU's School of Social Sciences. Like the University itself, the

School of Social Sciences has changed a great deal in recent years. We are now one of nine Schools that constitute NTU and our courses and research span a wide range of disciplines from Neuroscience to Child Welfare and many points in between including Sociology, Politics, Criminology, Psychology, Youth Justice and Youth Studies, Career Guidance, Counselling, Social Work and Public Health. We offer courses at undergraduate, postgraduate and professional levels as well as consultancy and bespoke training.

The School, which is located in the recently refurbished Chaucer building, currently has around 160 academic staff and 2,500 students. All of this makes for a vibrant learning and working environment. Our aim is to become a leading centre for the integrated study of and research into the key social questions of the day. Our work is relevant and engaging. We hope that you will consider renewing and maintaining your links with the School to help us realise our aims and to celebrate our achievements.

Professor Christopher Pole PhD
Dean of the School of Social Sciences

Fighting fire with fire

A research team within the School of Social Sciences has undertaken award-winning research into the psychological problems faced by emergency service workers.

Research by the Emergency Services Research Unit (ESRU) found that firefighters often encounter a shocking range of verbal and physical abuse whilst on duty.

The study unearthed disturbing accounts of stone-throwing, air rifle shots and even stabbings at the scenes of emergencies. It also highlighted how incidents of violence have become so regular that they often go unreported and are treated as part of everyday life in the fire and rescue service.

Firefighters often viewed the incidents as simply "an attack on the uniform" or as symptoms of economic deprivation and poor parenting.

The investigation is one of several projects bringing international acclaim to the ESRU: a dynamic team with three NTU alumni at its core. Head of ESRU Viv Brunsden, was in the first cohort of Psychology graduates in 1998; Rowena Hill received her MSc in Research Methods in 2004; and Jeff Goatcher is a Social Sciences graduate who gained his PhD from the University in 2004.

The study into violence against firefighters was the first of its kind, earning lead researcher Viv the GORE/FIRE Virtual Research Institute Award. She said: "In other professions, being sworn at and verbally harassed - let alone being spat at or stoned - would never be acceptable. However, for firefighters these attacks can seem trivial in comparison with some aspects of their occupation, such as walking into a fire."



Rowena's research focuses on a more positive aspect of the emergency services. She is exploring the experiences of the families of fire and rescue personnel and investigating the benefits they provide to FRS personnel. However these benefits can come at a cost to the family. She said: "The effects on relatives can be profound and wide ranging - and the firefighters themselves are often unaware of them."

Meanwhile, Jeff's research is focused more on topics of disaster than the Fire and Rescue Service. Currently he is using visual methods to explore a series of research questions based around the Chernobyl reactor disaster.

Also included in the research team was professional artist Joe Robinson (BA (Hons) 3D Design (Theatre) 1988) who created an exhibition of sculptures, paintings and interactive art based around the findings and the firefighters' experiences.

Our centres of research

The School of Social Sciences is home to a number of specialist units conducting high quality research and disseminating knowledge as widely as possible. Our full portfolio of research centres include:



Nottingham Crime Research Unit

The primary objective of this team is to conduct high quality applied criminological and criminal justice research and disseminate knowledge as widely as possible.



The International Gaming Research Unit (IGRU)

Primary research focuses on the psychological factors related to various forms of gambling, gaming and cyberpsychology.



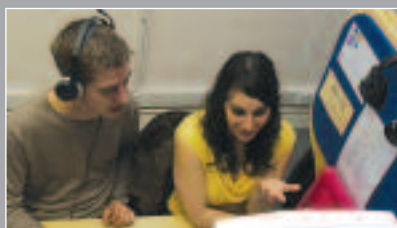
Communication for Inclusion Research Unit (CIRU)

Members of this research group, which is run in partnership with Nottingham City Children's Services, share an interest in communication impairment and educational and social inclusion. They aim to support and develop the use of collaborative, inclusive action research to promote social change in the broad field of communication disabilities and inclusion.



Work and Organisational Psychology Research Unit

This area's research focuses on work-related health and well-being, organisational behaviour, and the protection and promotion of the quality of working life.



Specific Language Impairment Research Unit (SLIRU)

The SLIRU examines the underlying causes of specific language impairment (SLI) and works with parties dealing with intervention and / or training for children with SLI.



Emergency Services Research Unit (ESRU)

This research unit is concerned with psychosocial aspects of emergencies and disasters, the emergency services and emergency planning. ESRU carries out award-winning research, teaching, training and consultancy and has been commissioned by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and a number of regional fire and rescue services. See the front page for more information.



Nottingham Centre for Study and Reduction of Hate Crimes, Bias and Prejudice

This research unit aims to bind together and facilitate the research of a group of staff conducting academic work that is recognised both nationally and internationally as excellent in terms of developing knowledge in the areas of hate crimes, bias and prejudice.



Sexual Offences, Crime and Misconduct Research Unit (SOCAMRU)

The unit's primary aim is to conduct and facilitate applied forensic research in the area of sex offending and sexual crime.

For further information please visit www.ntu.ac.uk/s3research

Viv's memories

One person who has experienced Psychology at NTU from both sides is Senior Lecturer Viv Brunsden, who was also amongst the first ever cohort of BSc (Hons) Psychology graduates back in 1998.

Viv still has warm memories of her student days. "All of our teaching was based in York House which was a very different environment from the facilities today's students have in Chaucer. Back then we thought our labs were very sophisticated but they were nothing compared to the fantastic facilities that today's Psychology students have."

Following graduation Viv originally worked within Psychology as both a part-time sessional lecturer and as a research assistant working on a project into

traumatic and occupational stress, which was commissioned by the Fire Brigades Union. Working on that project shaped her research interests forever – within Psychology she is now Head of the Emergency Services Research Unit where she specialises in the psychology of the Fire and Rescue Service.

During her time at NTU Viv has seen the division grow dramatically, both in terms of student and staff numbers. "When I was a student there were around 30 of us in my year. Now we have four BPS-recognised

undergraduate degrees and take around 400 students across these every year. We also now have a whole suite of Masters degrees."

In her teaching Viv is particularly involved with those modules that have an applied focus and that provide students with a set of skills they can take with them beyond their studies and into their future employment. She concludes: "The real joy is seeing our graduates go on to success in their further studies and future employment".

Major study into work-related health

A research team in the School of Social Sciences is examining the factors that can affect work-related health and well-being.

It is hoped this £320,000 project will have a crucial impact on what we know about work-related health and how organisations can successfully manage the issue - estimated to have affected almost half a million people last year, accounting for 13.5 million lost working days.

Unlike many previous studies in this area, the investigation – funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) – examines how the work environment, the nature of organisations, their cultures, and work systems can affect people's working lives and well-being. During the project, which began in 2009, the research team will examine more than 40 small, medium and large-scale enterprises.

The study followed the release of Health and Safety Executive (HSE) figures showing that work-related stress, depression and anxiety account for more than a third of all new incidences of ill-health, and that each case leads to an average loss of 30.6 working days.

Lead Researcher and Psychology Lecturer, Dr Maria Karanika-Murray said: "Previous studies into work-related health

and well-being have often been inconsistent, as they have tended to focus only on individual variables, such as job demands and job variety, relationships, support at work and work-life balance. Our research, however, also considers the affects of higher-level organisational characteristics such as policies, culture and organisational change. Experts and organisations will be able to apply such knowledge to the management of work-related health in a successful and sustainable way.

She added: "The results of the project will hopefully have a longer term impact on tackling work-related health and well-being. This could potentially lead to greater employee commitment, staff performance, satisfaction and productivity."

In addition to Nottingham Trent University, the study includes experts from the Health and Safety Laboratory, Leicester University, Loughborough University, and Tilburg University in the Netherlands.





Since the 1970s the School has evolved into a nationally and internationally recognised centre for the study of engaged social sciences and has played host to a number of key milestones.

The School was based in York House before moving to the Chaucer building. Whenever staff are asked about their memories of the early days, and in particular being based in York House, the typical response is “did you hear about the fire?”. If you were based in the building during this time then this day has probably stuck in your memory too. On a happier note, during this era, the School was given the right to award PhDs by the old CNAAs under its standard national degree regulation. Research assistants and demonstrators followed - these are what we refer to today as PhD bursaries.

Over the years the School has seen the development of its undergraduate portfolio. In the early to mid 70s it offered an Applied Social Studies degree - a four year programme which involved social science and social work elements to produce qualified social workers. This course broke off into separate degrees and today the School offers 13 degree programmes.

In the 1980s, research activities continued to develop and in 1989 Professor Nick Tilley and Professor Mick Gregson set up the interdisciplinary Crime Reduction Research Unit which, with funding from the Nottingham Safer Cities project and a range of other relevant agencies over the next decade, carried out research and consultancy on issues of community safety. Today the School has eight such Research Centres, see page 2.

In 2004, the School of Social Sciences was developed; this era saw further research projects and training evolve. Dr Belinda Winder (Head of the Sexual Offences, Crime and Misconduct Research Unit) won funding to work on research projects with Whatton Prison. Furthermore, lecturers delivered the training to prepare regional Connexions partnership staff with the necessary skills to work as personal advisers. The course portfolio continued to expand and the postgraduate provision introduced four new Psychology Masters.

Today, the School of Social Sciences is based in the Chaucer building. The facilities are somewhat different to the early years, in particular the Psychology laboratories. Take a tour of them at www.ntu.ac.uk/psychologylabs

This summer we have said goodbye to York House and welcomed the fantastic campus regeneration. Two of the buildings central to the City site – Newton and Arkwright – have undergone an extensive transformation into a brand new state-of-the-art complex. It includes a range of lecture halls, teaching areas, space for activities and exhibitions as well as social and study zones. The upgraded facilities will deliver a truly inspirational learning environment for generations of students to come.

My how we've grown

Since the 1970s the School of Social Sciences has seen thousands of undergraduate, postgraduate and professional students graduate from its dynamic portfolio of courses.



Clockwise from top left: York House, the Psychology labs, the redeveloped Newton building, and its fabulous new learning environment.

Penny and Nick's ice-dream



NTU students Penny Coomes and Nick Buckland were the first ice dancing pair from Nottingham to take part in the winter Olympics since Torvill and Dean famously won gold more than 25 years ago.

Penny and Nick have been skating together for four years after a chance meeting at Nottingham's National Ice Centre in 2005. Their skating partnership has always promised success but it hasn't been without its difficulties!

In 2008, Penny broke her foot during a warm-up session for the Junior British Figure Skating Championships. Despite her discomfort, the pair went on to win gold, while the true extent of Penny's injury went undetected for a further three months. Reconstructive surgery and an intensive course of physiotherapy for Penny put their competition schedule on hold for the remainder of that season, as well as their first season in the senior GB squad. Despite the setback,

the couple have remained patient and committed to their plans of continuing to compete together.

In the 2009/2010 season they won the silver medal at the 2010 British Figure Skating Championships and bronze at the 2009 Golden Spin of Zagreb.

The pair finished 20th at this year's Winter Olympics.

Second year Psychology student Penny said: "I'm really pleased that we've made it to where we are now. Competing at the Olympics was amazing. We'll keep doing the best that we can and hope that a pair of figure skaters can make Nottingham and Great Britain proud all over again!"

Postgraduate and professional courses

The School of Social Sciences offers a range of courses for recent graduates and professionals alike.

If you're considering advancing your qualification or topping up your skills, we have a wide variety of courses for you to choose from.

New courses

If you're a Psychology graduate you may be interested to know that we have recently made additions to our Postgraduate Psychology portfolio, offering Masters in Applied Child Psychology, Psychological Well-being and Mental Health, Forensic Psychology and Forensic Mental Health. That's not to say you will need a Psychology degree for all these courses, so if you have an interest in this area please pop along to one of our drop-in sessions to find out more.

In addition to the above we offer a range of courses covering the Health and Safety discipline and have recently added a distance-learning course to the portfolio – PG Certificate in Corporate Responsibility. We are currently in the process of launching a suite of professional courses in Risk Management*, visit www.ntu.ac.uk/riskmanagement for further information.

Our courses are flexible, with part-time routes allowing you to combine work and personal commitment with studying for a professional / postgraduate qualification. For example, if working in the guidance or counselling profession is of interest, you can study for your qualification alongside your everyday commitments.

To find out about the full portfolio of postgraduate and professional courses please visit www.ntu.ac.uk/s3postgraduate

Book on to the next event

The School of Social Sciences drop-in events are a great opportunity to find out more about our courses by chatting to the course leader and having a look at our new facilities. To find out when the next session is taking place please visit www.ntu.ac.uk/s3events

*Subject to validation

A taste for entrepreneurship

Since graduating with BA (Hons) Criminology in 2007, Adam Roberts has set up his own online restaurant comparison site and booking system – www.godine.co.uk

GoDine allows users to compare a range of restaurants in the local area (Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Northamptonshire) and view pictures and read customer reviews. You can even book a table! It's a free service and an excellent resource when pondering over where to dine.

Adam said: "Developing GoDine from within the University's Hive business innovation unit was hugely beneficial and a major reason why we managed to roll out the concept across the East Midlands".

Visit Adam's website at www.godine.co.uk



For more information on The Hive visit www.ntu.ac.uk/hive

Start2Learn with Julianne

Julianne Catkin (BA Hons Youth Studies 2009) has developed a home learning programme – Start2Learn – for children with autism who have speech and communication delays.



Start2Learn was funded by Nottingham Trent University's Speed Programme and was initially developed for Julianne's son who was diagnosed with autism. It worked so well that she wanted to share it with other parents.

Julianne and her husband, Selim, made a pact to do everything they could to give their son the best possible chance of reaching his full potential. Together they came up with DVDs and flash cards for him and his academic learning is now far better than that of an average child.

Julianne said: "My son's speech, communication and comprehension were delayed. My husband began to produce DVD lessons to teach him the names of fruits. Once he got used to the DVD we made flash cards with the same images. These were so successful that - my son learned them all and enjoyed it too!"

Since then the DVD and flash cards have been developed to teach their son about food, numbers and potty time. She said: "We can't keep up with his learning! In just one year he made massive progress. He can now request things and ask where things are and we believe he will advance a lot further".

Start2Learn offers a structured home learning programme specially designed for children with autism, ADD, ADHD, PDD, Down's syndrome and learning delay. It has been developed using professional knowledge provided by psychologists, speech therapists and research. Julianne has also brought together a focus group of parents to trial the products. She said: "As a parent you want to do the best for your children and I know how difficult that can be with the demands of everyday life. You have to invest time into your child's development and this home learning programme makes it really easy."

Julianne, was awarded the Vice-Chancellor's prize at her graduation last year in recognition of outstanding personal achievements, commitment and enthusiasm. This accolade, given to only one student in the School of Social Sciences, was awarded for her work in autism and her demonstration of academic excellence. Currently, Julianne is undertaking a Masters degree in Research Methods and hopes to complete an original piece of research in autism and gain a PhD at Nottingham Trent University.

For more information on Start2Learn visit www.start2learn.co.uk

To find out more about how Nottingham Trent University can help with your business venture visit The Hive at www.ntu.ac.uk/hive



Inspiring new students

Since 2006, NTU has held a special event for new students to mark the beginning of the University's Welcome Week. This year alumnus and *Panorama* reporter Paul Kenyon (BA Hons Social Sciences 1987) will be on hand to tell them that they will get out of University life what they put in.

After University Paul knew he wanted to be a journalist. He worked his way through some of the UK's local radio stations before landing his own investigative series on BBC1 called *Kenyon Confronts*. He said: "There was a lot of secret filming and confronting violent criminals. It was tough and I was beaten up a few times. I even had to have security devices and CCTV fitted around my house at one point."

His first experience with *Panorama* was in 1999 when he was asked if he could do a report about how mobile phone companies dealt with the issue of radiation from their handsets.

Since then Paul's had some extraordinary and life-threatening experiences – being shot at in a military helicopter while investigating drug cartels in Colombia; exposing child labour in garment factories in Cambodia; he's even faked his own death and funeral in Haiti to expose a gang of fraudsters. Paul also got detained in Iran after secretly filming their nuclear bases. He said: "It was really scary. Luckily they let me call the British Embassy who told me not to let them take me out of the airport or they might never find me."

Another of his investigations was about the most dangerous migration route in the world from sub-Saharan Africa into Europe -

a route that claims the lives of one in four of those who attempt it. He even wrote a book about it called *I am Justice*.

Paul works long hours in tough conditions and every day is different, but that's why he loves it: "It makes the blood fizz! It can be dangerous, but it's never boring. It's great to arrive in a place I've never been before wondering what adventures lie ahead."

Paul is looking forward to returning to his University to talk to new students. He said: "I'm going to encourage them to get involved right from the start. If I had my time again, I'd get involved in the student newspaper or radio station – just sacrificing a few evenings in the bar can give you such an edge when you're starting out."

He adds: "Of course they need to have fun too. I remember seeing punk bands in the Union, sneaking into my girlfriend's room at night, dressing as a vampish woman for a party, but in the end studying was still at the heart of it all. I read more than I've ever read since and got a thirst for knowledge and a curiosity about the world which has stayed with me ever since."



Keep in touch



Have you joined our online community yet? Over 11,000 members now use it to access a range of benefits and services, join discussion forums and view the nostalgia photo galleries.

You can also update your contact details through the online community too so that we can continue to keep you up-to-date with news from your University and your fellow alumni.

Through the Online Community you can search for your 'old' university friends – either by name or class. You can also choose to display your own contact information so that fellow alumni can get in touch with you directly – or you can use our message-forwarding service.

We'd appreciate it if you could take some time to look through our directory of 'lost' alumni and let us know who you are still in touch with. If you think you can help us find some of your friends then email alumni@ntu.ac.uk

New members can join at www.ntualumni.org.uk – just select 'Log in / Register', click on 'Register as a new user' and complete the form.

Remember you can also join us on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter too!

Benefits for you!

As a valued member of Nottingham Trent University's 90,000-strong alumni community, don't forget to check out the exciting range of exclusive benefits on offer to you.

They include discounts on everything from great days out to online legal services, weekend hotel deals to flowers and chocolates.

Among latest additions to the ever-expanding list are:

- Special discounts at leading tourist attractions throughout the UK – ranging from Alton Towers to Madame Tussards;
- Discounted membership of The Gourmet Society, the fastest growing restaurant scheme in the UK;
- Savings on hotel stays and holiday cottages across Europe;

Meanwhile, discounts on some of Nottinghamshire's favourite attractions, including Go Ape! Sherwood Forest and the Galleries of Justice, can be

obtained by presenting your venture card. These cards are available to alumni on request – just email us at alumni@ntu.ac.uk

And, for a full run-down of the many exciting benefits and services you can enjoy, including those on offer through your venture card, just visit www.ntualumni.org.uk



Enjoy discounts at Go Ape! with your Venture card

Support your University

There are many ways you can get involved in supporting your University: volunteering to be an online careers mentor, offering to take current students on work placements at your company, helping out at NTU Open Days, or making a donation to one of our priority projects.

The continued support of our alumni and friends is valued and ensures that we provide the best opportunities for our current and future students, to give them the knowledge, skills and experience to shape lives and society.

However you would like to become involved we would love to hear from you. Please contact the Development and Alumni Relations Team on alumni@ntu.ac.uk or call +44 (0)115 848 8777 to discuss how you can support your University.

