Encouraging independent thinking

A taste of history
Find out what happened when 30 sixth-form students visited the department

The business of slavery
International experts gather for groundbreaking conference

Research funding
Over 400 studentships announced for postgraduate study
Welcome to the Department of History

Thank you for your interest in studying history at Nottingham. Our international reputation for innovation in teaching, the breadth and variety of our research, and our close links with colleagues at our international campuses in China and Malaysia combine to make Nottingham an incredibly exciting place in which to study, research and teach history.

We’re committed to developing students’ abilities to ask their own questions of the past, and to understand how historians have shaped and influenced the way societies view their history in different parts of the world and under different political systems. Our emphasis on student-centred learning makes our graduates among the most employable in the country. They go into a wide range of careers as academic historians, accountants, archivists, army officers, bankers, barristers, civil servants, museum curators, school teachers and solicitors, to name just a few.

We’d love to welcome you to Nottingham at one of our open days so you can find out more. In the meantime, we hope you enjoy our newsletter.

Professor Maiken Umbach
Head of the Department of History

Cover image: Exploring the history of the British overseas.

Introducing new staff

Anna Greenwood
For the past four years, I have worked as Associate Professor in Colonial History on Nottingham’s China Campus. Before China, I taught at the universities of Exeter, Strathclyde and Edinburgh. I work on the medical history of the British Empire, particularly in British East Africa.

I’m pleased to offer teaching on medical history on the UK campus and this, combined with my interest in colonialism, will form the basis of my special subject: Disease and Domination: The History of Medicine in the Colonial Encounter. In this module, we’ll explore medicine’s essential role in securing colonial dominance.

David Gehring
After completing my PhD in history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I taught elsewhere in Wisconsin and California and spent time as a research fellow in the USA, UK and Germany. I now come to Nottingham from Durham and am particularly excited by the University’s large size and international outlook.

My research focuses on early modern British and European history, especially the 16th century, and I have just published a book entitled Anglo-German Relations and the Protestant Cause. My work is all about the vital roles played by German and Danish Lutherans in English religio-politics. This year I’m offering my own special subject: Overseas Exploration, European Diplomacy, and the Rise of Tudor England.

Onni Gust
My research looks at questions of belonging, nationhood and gender identity in the British Empire between 1760 and 1860. I am currently writing a book on ideas of home and exile in the letters, diaries and published novels of early 19th-century British imperial writers.

I wrote my PhD at University College London and have taught history and gender studies at the London School of Economics, Smith College, Amherst College and at the University of Illinois, offering modules such as Queering the History of the Body in Empire and Gender, Race and Power. At Nottingham, I will be teaching a new special subject on Imperial Eyes: Race, Gender and Empire in Enlightenment Thought.

Graduate profile

“I completed my PhD in history in June 2013. My research examined the trade between Liverpool and New York and the networks of merchants who facilitated this from the late 18th to early 19th century.

In the academic year following my PhD, I was successful in obtaining an associate lecturer position in early modern British History at the University of Derby, as well as a part-time teaching role in American history in the School of Comparative American Studies at the University of Warwick. During my PhD, the Department of History gave me ample opportunity to gain teaching experience and the short courses on small group teaching allowed me to develop my teaching philosophy and to properly articulate this in interviews.

I am now working as a research assistant at Newcastle University Business School.

Name: Emily Buchnea
Course: PhD in history
Graduated: 2013
Now: Research assistant

Wartime tea research

Research on the status of tea was selected as the winner of the 2014 Prize for Best Undergraduate Dissertation in Economic and Business History.

Nick Dutton was awarded the prize for his dissertation titled: Becoming a Necessity: The Status of Tea in First World War Britain. Nicholas was recognised and praised for an excellent piece of work which brought together aspects of economic, business, social and cultural history.

Judges from The University of Nottingham’s Centre for Economic and Business History said: “The piece is well contextualised and makes a truly original contribution to the field by challenging the present historiography through the extensive use of a wide range of primary sources.”

Congratulations to Nick and his supervisor in the Department of History, Dr Karen Adler.

A taste of history

The department welcomed over 30 sixth-form students from schools and colleges across the East Midlands for its second annual History Taster Day in June.

Participants were given the chance to experience life as a history student at Nottingham, attending two interactive academic sessions on the European ‘Scramble for Africa’ in the late 19th century and Anglo-Saxon society and culture. They visited the Hallward Library, met staff from the department and were also taken on a campus tour led by current undergraduate students, who were happy to share their own personal insights and memories.

Organiser Dr Joe Merton said: “The event was a great success and is evidence of our desire to recruit high quality students from local schools and colleges and non-traditional academic backgrounds. We wanted to illustrate the exciting variety of options open to students who study history, both during and after the degree.”

One student who attended said: “It was a really useful day. It gave me a great insight into where history can take you and really changed my mind.”

The Department of History also welcomed students from individual schools and colleges for taster sessions on various topics, including Black Power, 20th-century Russia and the origins of the First World War.

Teachers interested in similar opportunities for 2014-15, including the summer 2015 taster day, should contact Joe Merton at joe.merton@nottingham.ac.uk
Highlights of my week – networking in Munich
Professor Liz Harvey

Sunday 22 June
I arrived in Munich on a sweltering afternoon to meet up with my PhD student and prepare for the following day’s meeting in the Institute of Contemporary History (Institut für Zeitgeschichte) Munich-Berlin. Her research forms a collaborative project entitled Private Life under National Socialism based at the institute and involving The University of Nottingham and the German Historical Institute in Warsaw.

The wider project asks new questions about life under Nazi rule: how far were individuals and groups able to shield themselves from the Nazi regime’s attempts to control and undermine private life? How far did the regime tolerate and foster private interests and a sphere of legitimate privacy, if only for Germans who conformed to Nazi norms?

Monday 23 June
Our meeting takes place in the institute. Founded in 1949, it was the first research institute in post-war West Germany dedicated to investigating the history of the Nazi dictatorship. For historians of 20th-century Germany like myself, the institute is an inspiring place to meet dozens of specialist colleagues and explore its library and archive. Latest projects include the setting up of a Centre for Holocaust Studies and the production of a critical edition of Hitler’s Mein Kampf.

Our meeting offers the project team, comprising two PhD students and two postdocs based in Munich as well as the Nottingham PhD student, the chance to present their work and get feedback from all colleagues. Everyone pitches in with ideas of archives to visit, articles to read, different questions to ask, other people to talk to. The meeting ends with planning a workshop in Łódź (Poland) February 2015 – reflecting the fact that two of the five projects focus on Nazi-occupied Poland – and the visit of two of the Munich project team to Nottingham in November 2014.

The business of slavery
Experts and delegates from as far afield as South Africa, Israel and Brazil visited the University’s Jubilee Campus in September 2014 for a conference entitled The Business of Slavery.

Organised by the Centre for Economic and Business History and the Institute for the Study of Slavery, the conference invited speakers to discuss and assess the important contributions of enslaved people to the economy, through different eras and societies.

There are a number of research centres that sit within the department. Staff members have also recently developed the Medieval Heresy and Dissent Research Network, an institutional focus for heresy studies, providing a forum for staff and students.

Find out more about the department’s research centres and networks: www.nottingham.ac.uk/go/history-research

History hero
Congratulations to Dr Nick Thomas who was nominated as a University hero as part of centenary celebrations organised by the University’s Students’ Union.

The event culminated in a 100 Heroes exhibition which allowed students and staff to come forward and identify groups and individuals who’ve made an impact on life at Nottingham over the past hundred years.

Those who nominated Nick highlighted the popularity of his history modules which include The Second World War and Social Change in Britain, and The Vietnam War: A Social History, 1954-1975. Credit was also given for the way Nick generously makes time for anyone who needs assistance.

Find out more: www.100-heroes.co.uk/the-centenary

Funding for research
The School of Humanities is delighted to be part of a successful bid to the Arts and Humanities Research Council of £14.6m to support doctoral research training.

The Midlands3Cities doctoral training partnership will be offering 410 studentships over a five-year period from 2014-19 at six universities in Nottingham, Birmingham and Leicester.

If you require this publication in an alternative format, please contact us:
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e: alternativeformats@nottingham.ac.uk

The University of Nottingham has made every effort to ensure that the information in this newsletter was accurate when published. Please note, however, that the nature of the content means that it is subject to change from time to time and you should therefore consider the information to be guiding rather than definitive.

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