



AMBITION

I was pregnant at 15

Discover the remarkable story of determined young mum and scholarship recipient, Rachel Wiffen

Page 14

Founding futures

Journey back to the roaring '20s, when the university's foundations were first laid

Page 4

How your generous support is helping our students to build brighter futures.



Contents

Founding futures	04
Building brighter futures	06
A guiding light on the path to university	08
Women in business	12
I was pregnant at 15, but with your help, I've turned it around	14
Mental health matters	18
A pass to the next generation	20
Great egg-spectations	24
Goosey's games	26

Contributors

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Editor's note

Welcome to Ambition - the magazine that celebrates the incredible difference you make by supporting our students.

It's been a delight to put this magazine together for you and we have some powerful stories to share. In this issue of Ambition, we explore how your generous support is helping to build brighter futures for our students, as they navigate the complex challenges of less certain world.

We begin by taking you back to the roaring '20s, a time when the university's foundations were first laid (page 4). We then leap to present-day South Africa, where we explore how students are transforming local communities through sustainable architecture, thanks to your support (page 6). Next, we head home to Nottingham to catch up with Rachel Wiffen, an inspirational young mother who overcame all the odds to study biochemistry and then medicine at Nottingham (page 14). Take a deep breath with MedSoc Support, who are championing wellbeing and mental health support in the wake of the pandemic (page 18), and get to know our friendly flock of hens at Sutton Bonington (page 24). Then touch down with James Cherry, one of our rising rugby stars (page 20). We end our magazine with a story of Nottingham, where we invite you to crack Goosey's crossword clues (page 26).

I hope you enjoy reading this magazine as much as the team and I enjoyed creating it. We would love to hear your thoughts and feedback about this edition, so please do get in touch.



Giselle Kennedy
(English and American Studies, 2013)
Editor

AUSPICIOUS FOUNDATION-STONE-LAYING OF NEW EAST MIDLANDS UNIVERSITY

AMUSING NOTTINGHAM SCENES AS LORD HALDANE "RAGGED" BY STUDENTS

ANONYMOUS DONOR'S £100,000

14 JUNE 1922

Words: Alex Kuster

14 June 2022 marks 100 years since our Trent Building foundation stone was laid. For a century, we've built the foundations for a world of possibilities. This June we're marking the occasion by holding our first Nottingham Ambition Giving Day and would love for you to join.



That day in 1922 was certainly one to remember. Newspapers reported that "shrieks of laughter shook the walls of the university" as the students gave a "wild reception" to Lord Haldane when he arrived to lay the Trent Building foundation stone. He was hauled through the streets of Nottingham on an antiquated fire engine after being supplied with a pewter pot of beer which he "drained with evident enjoyment!"

Later, at a more formal ceremony, Lord Haldane announced an anonymous £100,000 donation. At the time, these funds were intended to aid students in climbing "every rung of the educational ladder."

These values still very much stand with us today, as we celebrate those who built their foundations at Nottingham and look towards helping others in building theirs.



Celebrate like it's 1922

On 14-15 June 2022, we will be holding our inaugural Nottingham Ambition Giving Day. Together we can build something extraordinary for future generations.

Find out more and join us as an ambassador at: bit.ly/ambitionambassador

Building brighter futures

The University of Nottingham is constantly looking to the future and asking questions around what we can do differently to reduce our impact on the planet and how we can work together to make concrete changes. One such project is *design+build*, which takes place within our Department of Architecture and Built Environment. Thanks to your donations to Cascade, University of Nottingham students are experiencing a global view of education and making a difference to others along the way.

Words: Alex Kuster

The *design+build* (DB) studio is a network of teachers, makers, designers and students who work together to learn, question, and create. The DB studio works alongside long time partners The Thušanang Trust, Education Africa, and Studio 8Fold.

For over a decade now, students from the university have been building crèches in South Africa, empowering communities, and delivering improved facilities for early childhood education centres. 2020's build was on hold for a few years, and this year it's back.

The 2022 build is called Malahlela. It's taking place in Limpopo, South Africa. The plan is to construct three rooms for 30 school children. The crèche will include a kitchen, an administrative space, two classrooms and an outdoor teaching space. The design will incorporate inexpensive, locally available materials.

This project is a big responsibility for students to undergo. Architecture is a notoriously demanding course, and this project requires a huge amount of extra work as well as sacrificing their own time during the holidays. In their feedback, the consensus was that students who participated in the *design+build* project said it was "an experience of a lifetime" and the "best thing I did at university."

University staff are just as committed, for them it's not just a matter of overseeing a project. Some of them have been working with The Thušanang Trust for years to ensure that the buildings are constructed and maintained responsibly. They also work with communities to deliver the crèches.

Sustainable approaches to architecture are at the heart of the build process. The team utilises local materials to keep the carbon footprint low and the timber is grown, milled, processed, and finally installed within 50 kilometres of the site. What really makes a difference, though, is that the project delivers access to education and reduces inequality.

Pete Russell, who is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Architecture and Built Environment and has worked on crèche builds since 2017, says "We've got to make sure that our students recognise their privilege and their

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We've got to make sure that our students recognise their privilege and their place in the world. And this project does that better than any other school of architecture.”

place in the world. And this project does that better than any other school of architecture.”

Thanks to your generous donations to Cascade, these projects have empowered students to push themselves and have enabled thousands of children to receive an education.



Rethuseng Crèche (2017), 2 classrooms and 57 children.



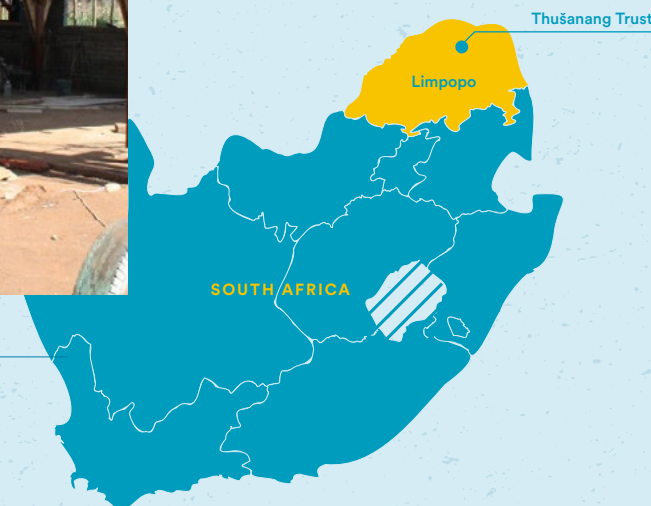
University of Nottingham students celebrate their hard work on the build.



Khomotso Crèche phase 2 (2013), 4 classrooms and 124 children.



The crèche foundations being laid.



A guiding light on the path to university

Words: Tom Hills

Dolapo Olanubi,
second year Psychology
and Neurosciences student.

Moving from Nigeria aged 11 and gaining residency status here in the UK, Dolapo Olanubi had dreamt of attending university. But after discovering that she was classed as an international student and would face significantly higher tuition fees than expected, that dream was left in the balance.

Thanks to William Henry Revis' generous legacy gift to Nottingham in his Will, Dolapo was able start her university journey last year with the support of a scholarship.

The University of Nottingham was built upon the foundations laid by generous donors nearly 100 years ago. After a successful career in the lace industry W.H. Revis passed away in 1923 leaving £48,000 in his Will to the university. A fund was established and the impact of his decision to remember the university in his Will continues to this day, supporting both part-time postgraduate students in financial hardship as well as access to higher education for applicants seeking asylum in the UK through a scholarship.

This scholarship provides full funding for tuition fees and £500 each year to help with living costs. One student is awarded this scholarship each year. In 2021 that student was Dolapo Olanubi.

"As dramatic as it might sound, when I found out that I was classed as an international student it was one of the worst moments of my life. I had been granted residency status a year before I applied and I thought that was the only barrier for me to get into university. When I found out that I was still classed as an international student I was devastated."



“

I don't know exactly what I want to do in the future but I know I want to help people. Anything that could help people.”

Students like Dolapo who are seeking asylum in the UK may not be eligible for home funding and therefore face a significant barrier to obtaining a university education. Without the support of the scholarship, Dolapo would have had to wait another three years before she would be classed as a home student.

“My form tutor at college found the scholarship at Nottingham. When I saw that it only went to one person each year I wasn't sure I would get it, but she really encouraged me. I had watched videos showing the campus and I thought it just looked beautiful. When I saw the email saying I got it, I was so emotional, I was crying. That moment will stay with me forever.

“I was already looking to start a baking business in case I couldn't go to university. My mom has always encouraged me to learn lots of skills - I can do hair, bake and I can cook as well - so I was going to use those skills to make money and just try to keep myself busy until I could be classed as a home student. When I found out my application for the scholarship had been successful we were very, very happy.

“£500 doesn't seem like a lot but it has made such a big impact on my life. Coming to live in Nottingham was really hard on my parents as they had just lost their jobs during lockdown and they also needed to pay their rent. I found work at Superdrug where I did the night shift for the last two months before university so we could pay my rent when I came here.

“If you have the power to help someone like W.H. Revis did, it will change someone's life like it has for me. It will be with me for the rest of my life. I will always have this experience in my heart. I know this scholarship did not just change my life but has changed others. I know it has also given hope to many other young people in my position. Thank you so much for giving me the first step to success.”

Dolapo is enjoying the challenge of studying psychology and neuroscience and wants to work in the field in the future.

“I don't know exactly what I want to do in the future, but I know I want to do something that will help people.”

Be a
**Guiding
Light**

Become a Guiding Light

You too can give students like Dolapo the opportunity to follow their dreams. Please consider leaving a gift in your Will and becoming a Guiding Light to others. Find out more at bit.ly/uonguidinglight or complete the enclosed form.





Women in business: challenges, aspirations, successes

Words: Alex Kuster

The Ingenuity Lab, situated in the Haydn Green Institute, is a place where students and alumni of the University of Nottingham can explore their business ideas and start their own enterprises. It was established in 2013 thanks to a generous donation from the Haydn Green Foundation.

The Lab offers a friendly and uplifting environment to help students and alumni to make their dreams of entrepreneurial success a reality. As well as business advice, student and alumni entrepreneurs can receive mentoring, desk hire and networking opportunities, giving them the business tools they need to thrive.

Terri Holloway, who manages the Lab, says:
“Now more than ever before, it’s imperative that female entrepreneurs are acknowledged for their overwhelming contribution to women in business.”

The Ingenuity Lab is integral in providing support to launch women’s businesses, which puts career choices back into the hands of women, allowing them to realise their true aspirations. We strive to create more opportunities for women to thrive in business.”

We hear from two inspirational women in business who share the University of Nottingham as their founding place.



Above: The Ingenuity Lab at the Haydn Green Institute.



Claire Mann
ChangeXtra
(PhD Philosophy, 2013)

ChangeXtra is a business where women with lived experience support conversations about menopause. I participated in the Ingenuity Impact scheme in 2020. Throughout my year as a student, I was on the Ingenuity training pathway to develop my business plan with the support of some inspirational resources and speakers. ChangeXtra aims to break down the stigma around menopause. Our goal is to educate, empathise and evaluate to build more understanding and awareness of menopause. If you think you have a good idea that you want to grow, the Ingenuity Lab is a wonderful supportive environment that gives you access to all the expertise and support anyone could need to start in business. Women need support to manage through the menopause and thanks to donations towards the Ingenuity Lab and the volunteer business mentors, I can help women during this time. Without supporters like you, the Haydn Green Institute and the Ingenuity Lab, ChangeXtra would not exist. Thank you for helping to change my life and for enabling me to help others and change their lives for the better too!



Jessica Langton
Dairy Farmer
(Animal Science, 2022)

I live on my family’s dairy farm in Derbyshire and milk the pedigree herd of Locklan Holsteins. The National Farmers Union have set a target for all British farmers to be carbon net zero by 2040. We decided to adopt a regenerative approach to help reach this sooner. We use a strip-grazing system for our cows to reduce waste on our farm and better utilise our resources. Our sustainable efforts resulted in me winning the Countryfile Young Countryside Champion Award in 2021. Agriculture used to be a male-dominated industry, but there is becoming more and more of a female presence. Pitching to the Ingenuity Lab is an opportunity to secure funding for your business or just to get experience of talking in front of a group of people. I’d like to say thank you to the donors that helped me. I’ve gained so many different skills and met so many innovative and talented individuals. I’ve broadened my knowledge and achieved many things I didn’t believe I could. Thank you for your support!

These incredible ideas have been made possible thanks to your donations. Thank you.



You can read more about the Lab’s women in business online at:
bit.ly/womeninthelab

If you’d like to volunteer your time by becoming a mentor or a guest speaker, please get in touch via the enclosed form.



I was pregnant at 15 – *but with your help, I've turned it around*

After falling pregnant at 15, Rachel felt like her dreams of going to university and becoming a doctor were lost. But thanks to her determination and support from a Nottingham Potential scholarship, she's been able to say yes to her place at Nottingham, not just once, but twice. This is her story.



Words: Rachel Wiffen

I looked down at the pregnancy test and I couldn't believe it. It was positive. As a 15-year-old teenager who hadn't even taken her GCSEs yet, I knew that my life was about to change and I was scared.

Before I got pregnant, I had my life planned out. I've always been a high achiever and I wanted to be a doctor, but my hopes for the future felt like they were fading away.

When my son Callum was born, we didn't have much support and due to difficulties at home we were placed in foster care together. By the time I was 16, I'd had my daughter Lilly, and all three of us had moved into a mother and baby hostel. I was able to rent a council house a year later, which gave us some much-needed stability.

It wasn't easy being a mother at a young age. You're stigmatised for having a child in a pram and people judge you. But I never lost hope. I felt it was extremely important to carry on with my education, even more so because of my children, and I was determined that my circumstances would not hold me back.

I worked day and night to finish my GCSEs and put everything I had into my A Levels, studying into the early hours while my children were asleep. I got AAB grades in my A Levels and I couldn't believe it when I was accepted to study for an integrated MSci in Biochemistry at the University of Nottingham. My dream of a university education was almost within my grasp. But there was one problem. I had no money.

Words can't describe how relieved I was when I opened the letter telling me that I had been awarded a Nottingham Potential scholarship. I am so grateful that there are people out there who recognise that I deserve an education and wanted to give me a chance. You can't study science without a computer these days, so I bought a much-needed laptop with my scholarship.

I'll never forget my first day at university. I packed my bag and made my way onto campus for my very first lecture. I loved it from the start but I realised that trying to

do a degree whilst bringing up two children and having no support was going to be a challenge. I never lost sight of my dream though and continued to study hard, balancing motherhood with my education.

After four years of extremely hard work, I graduated with First Class Honours and several academic prizes, including the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences undergraduate academic excellence award and the Biochemistry MSci course prize. My perseverance had paid off! It was such a wonderful feeling to know that my potential had been recognised!

Going to university opened up a world of possibilities to me and I now had the foundation I needed to do medicine. I applied to study Graduate Entry Medicine at Nottingham and was ecstatic when I was accepted! But how on earth would I pay for the first year? I had a fantastic degree, but I had no money and even Student Finance loans wouldn't cover the cost.

Finding out that I would be eligible for a Nottingham Potential scholarship for a second time was a huge relief. Without this financial help, I wouldn't have been able to take up my place, which would have been truly devastating.

Thanks to you, I'm now in my second year studying to be a doctor and I'm just about to start my clinical practice. I love my course, but Covid-19 has taken its toll on everyone, including me. Sadly, my Mum died of cancer during the pandemic. She was always very supportive and I miss her. Somehow, I found the courage to carry on and I am determined to be the best doctor I can possibly be.

They say if you educate a mother, you educate a family. I am proof of that, but I couldn't have done it without you. Thank you so much for believing in me. You have helped me to excel and achieve my full potential and I will forever be grateful for the opportunity you have given me.

“By the time I was 16, all three of us had moved into a mother and baby hostel.”



Mental Health Matters

Words: Alex Kuster

There is no denying that the pandemic has been a turbulent time for medical students, with pressures of longer hours, higher expectations and heightened risk of contracting Covid-19. It's only natural that there will be times when students feel deflated. We spoke to MedSoc Support's Ellie Reid and Jahnavi Kavala to find out how, thanks to funding from Cascade, they supported one another during the Covid-19 pandemic.

MedSoc Support is a student run, confidential and non-judgemental listening support service for medical students. Thanks to funding from Cascade, these students have worked together to put protective measures in place for their peers' mental health.

They run an active social media account offering tips and advice to students, talks on relevant topics, a Support Sundays podcast and arrange in-person events to benefit their medical community. Commenting on the service, Coordinator and sixth year Medical student Ellie said, "We host 'tea & chat' mornings and afternoons online to give early year students the chance to speak to older years and ask any questions they might have." The main goal they all share is improving the mental health and wellbeing of students from every year group.

Ellie continues to explain that their future goals include expanding on the work they've already been doing, "We will continue to target stressful periods in each year-group, as we have found this to be the most useful. We will make use of our supporter's networks to deliver talks to earlier years regarding placement and dissection. We want to expand our 'tea & chats' to make them a regular event, as well as putting a specific emphasis on first years. We are also starting to plan how we are going to support our peers during exam season, as sitting your first in-person exam can be daunting."

Medical students are often at a higher risk of mental health concerns than their non-medical peers. However, they are much less likely to seek support. MedSoc Support is challenging stigmas surrounding mental health to try and ensure that mental unwellness is regarded as equal to a physical condition.

There are all sorts of things that this group of students are doing to protect both themselves and their peers which include hot chocolate mornings, welfare talks, yoga sessions, workshops and a night-time helpline. All led by diligent volunteers.

Jahnavi continues: "No one should have to struggle alone - medicine's hard enough as it is. But when you're struggling it's sometimes



"Students often believe they are expected to be emotionally and physically bulletproof."

Far left, right: Illustrations by fourth year medical students Nhi Dang and Jessie Meyer.



difficult to know who to talk to. That's why we're here. We can't guarantee we'll be able to help everyone but if we can't, we'll point you in the direction to someone who can."

Donations to Cascade have been crucial to the development of MedSoc Support. Both Jahnavi and Ellie expressed how appreciative the students are of the Cascade grant, which has greatly expanded what is possible through MedSoc. Thank you to everyone who has helped our medical students to support each other through this initiative.

Instagram: @medsocsupport
Facebook: Nottingham MedSoc Support

A PASS TO *THE NEXT* GENERATION

Like many of our gifted sports stars, history student and University of Nottingham men's rugby player, James Cherry, has boundless energy and talent. But it's thanks to support from generous donors like you that he's been able to take the game of rugby to the next level, both on and off the field. We caught up with James to find out how your donations towards sport are helping him to go the extra mile.





Words: James Cherry

Left: James Cherry at the First XV's BUCS opener vs Leeds.

Right: James going for gold at BUCS.

The kick off

I came to Nottingham from Norfolk. It's a big city compared to what I'm used to, but with rugby, you instantly have a group of friends. I made my way into the men's first team a few weeks into starting at university, and it's been amazing every step of the way.

Throughout my three years on the team, my best moment was towards the end of last year. After eight months of Covid-19 misery and lockdowns, we beat Nottingham Trent for the first time in seven or eight years. It felt incredible!

Going for goals

2020 was a particularly special year because it marked 100 years of the men's Rugby Union Club at Nottingham, and 35 years of the women's club. I was lucky enough to be invited to the centenary dinner last September. It was a brilliant event and it was awesome to meet Brian Moore, a former member of the University of Nottingham rugby club and a British and Irish Lions legend.

I also got to meet loads of amazing former Nottingham rugby players. People like that inspire me so much. They make me put more effort in and work harder.

In terms of the next 100 years, my dream is to leave the university with the First XV going into BUCS Super Rugby for the first time in history. As first team Vice-Captain, General Secretary for the men's rugby club and a player who has been part of every game this year, it would be a such a proud moment for me. We're currently top of the league so it really could be in sight.

Tackling issues head on

Off the field, I am General Secretary of Rugby Minds. It's a student-run initiative that was set up by third year economics student and women's rugby player, Rei Crookes. It's supported by donations made to the university and our aim is to create positive changes in the rugby clubs.

Rei is our rugby ambassador and she's done a brilliant job bringing together members of the men's and women's clubs and intramural sport to address important issues. There can be a negative side to lad culture that can spill over into the wrong type of behaviour. As rugby players, we want to tackle that and move towards a more progressive, inclusive and friendly culture.

Propping up players

Donors to the university really do make a huge difference, not just by giving towards student run initiatives, but also by helping people through scholarships and bursaries. I was lucky enough to get a Martin Wynne-Jones bursary, which was given to me on the premise of exemplary commitment and application to club.

It comes with some money so I got a new pair of boots, which I really needed. They're a really nice pair rather than the bog standard ones I normally buy. I hope that donors know that they are changing people's lives. It's so appreciated and it really takes the pressure off me as student.

I HOPE THAT THE PEOPLE WHO DONATE KNOW THAT THEY ARE CHANGING PEOPLE'S LIVES.



Into the future

I've been lucky enough to play quite well this year and I've received some amazing offers to play semi-professional/professional rugby when I graduate. If I'm able to stay in Nottingham, I'm hoping to put the bursary towards some coaching qualifications. I'd like to come back and coach our first XV. I'd also love to help the lower teams. There's a lot of talent there too.

When you're in the rugby club, you pick up a torch and carry it with pride. When you graduate, you pass it on to the next generation. By donating, alumni are providing resource to keep the flame going. I really hope that they know what a brilliant thing they are doing and what a positive impact they're making. People who give back are just amazing and it's something that I'd love to do when I'm older."

James is one of hundreds of students who benefit from Nottingham's fantastic sports facilities and financial support available at Nottingham. It has all been made possible by generous sports donors, like you. Thank you for everything you do to help our rising sports stars and students who are just discovering the benefits that sport at Nottingham can bring.

If you've been inspired by James' incredible commitment to rugby and you would like to make a donation, please complete the enclosed form.



Great eggs-pectations

Words: Giselle Kennedy

When Dr Cormac O’Shea and colleagues from the university’s School of Biosciences applied for grants from Cascade and the Sutton Bonington Development Fund to buy and house a flock of hens, nobody quite eggs-pected what a fantastic impact it would have. The hen coop, also known as the i-Hen project, soon became the talk of the Sutton Bonington campus.



The hens were initially used to support teaching and learning across a variety of animal science and agriculture modules, but it soon became clear that staff and students were visiting the friendly free-rangers for their wellbeing.

The hens were also involved in a student-led egg laying competition which was so successful it was recognised with a Lord Dearing Award, which recognises outstanding contributions to the development of teaching and student learning.

Commenting on the project, Dr O’Shea said, “Having the hens here is really invaluable in giving students experience of handling and looking after commercial free-range hens. They have also proved to be very popular with staff who want to pick their own eggs or help out with looking after them. This gave us the idea to maximise their appeal and turn the flock into a sustainable enterprise project that students could take ownership of that would widen their impact and boost egg sales.”

The next generation of i-Hens flew in this March. They will have a busy calendar, as they prepare for student modules, meet local school children in a citizen science project, continue egg-laying for the fortnightly farmer’s market and become the hot topic of alumni guest lecturers.

Sutton Bonington staff and students are also hoping to link with allotment groups and food to fork teams to use waste foods as feed for the hens and co-design wellbeing walks around campus.

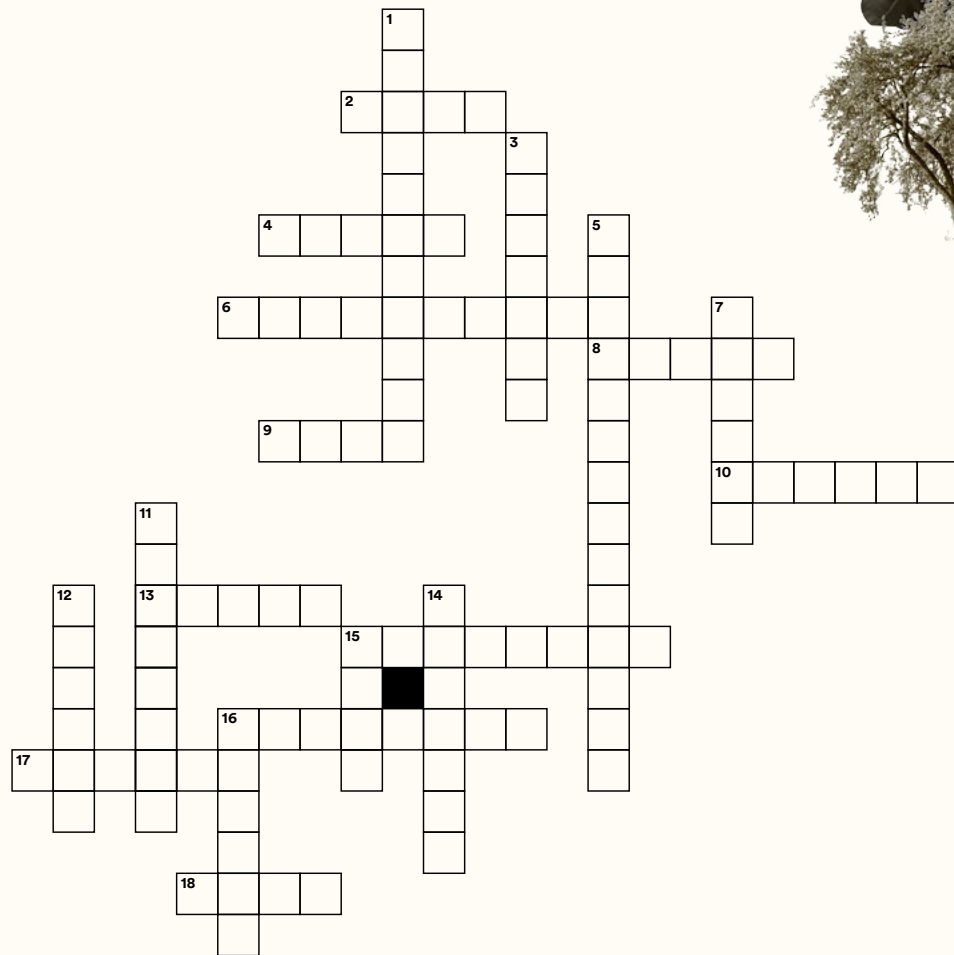
Our feathered friends have only been able to join us on campus and make a huge difference to the wellbeing of our students, staff and local community, thanks to generous support towards Cascade and the Sutton Bonington Development Fund. Thank you so much for your contributions.

Above Left:
Dr Cormac O’Shea with students and i-Hen.

Goosey's games

The story of Nottingham

From the romantic poems of Lord Byron to the gritty realism of Alan Sillitoe, Nottinghamshire is world renowned for producing some of the finest, and sometimes controversial, writers. In 2015, our local literary heroes helped to put Nottingham on the map, securing its place as a UNESCO City of Literature. To celebrate Nottingham's literary heritage, have a go at solving Goosey's 'Story of Nottingham' crossword.



Across

- 2. Rhyming composition (4)
- 4. Byron's monastic home, Newstead ____ (5)
- 6. Child Harold's _____ (10)
- 8. Local lad, known for his hood (5)
- 9. Byron's hero, Don ____ (4)
- 10. Sons and _____ (5)
- 13. Lady Chatterley's who? (5)
- 15. Page dwelling invertebrate (8)
- 16. Controversial Nottingham writer, D.H (8)
- 17. Peter Pan's creator (6)
- 18. ____ Byron (4)

Down

- 1. Famous mathematician, campus library (6,5)
- 3. Place to store books (7)
- 5. Leafy home to a band of merry men (8,6)
- 7. Nottingham's council house bell, _____ John (6)
- 11. Home to literature, behind Portland (8)
- 12. Famous maiden sidekick (6)
- 14. Saturday night and Sunday _____ (7)
- 15. Medieval storyteller (4)
- 16. Sillitoe's neighbourhood, student suburb (6)

Discover the answers online: bit.ly/gooseysgames

Thank you

Your belief and backing
turns aspirations into
reality at Nottingham.

