



The University of
Nottingham

THE
NewsLetter

Published fortnightly during
term time by the
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University of Nottingham
NG7 2RD

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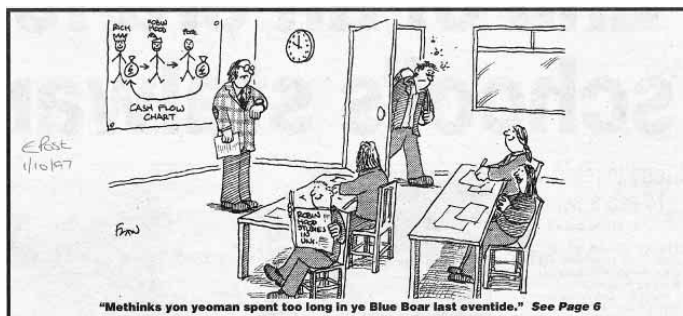
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items are welcomed and
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NewsLetter, to the Editor.

Produced by the
Public Affairs Office

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Printed by
The Sherwood Press
(Nottingham) Limited

International stage for Robin



(... continued from page one)

"Part of what I am doing is to suggest solutions to some hitherto unidentified or uncertain local references, including some in Rutland and Cumbria, in ballads from the 15th- to 17th-centuries. But the paper is not concerned with the sort of literal hunt to track down a real historical Robin Hood — we can't know if there was a real person behind the legend.

"The legend and its almost infinite capacity for transformation is the subject of the conference. My particular research is concerned more with the role of names and places in the ballads."

She added that, on one hand, geography is essential to the Robin Hood legend: a terrain of three elements — the forest, the highway and the (dangerous) town — is central to it, yet this terrain of the plot is not essentially localised. Not even to Nottingham and Sherwood.

Other regions appropriate the Robin Hood myth. She highlighted two in particular: Staffordshire — Needwood Forest and Tutbury; and Cumbria — Inglewood Forest, a location also for King Arthur in some medieval romances. There was even a Scottish Robin Hood.

"My paper asks why, when the adventures can happen anywhere that has the elements of the essential geography, placenames turn out to be so important in the Robin Hood ballads and what significance they have," she said.

There are already plans for a second international conference at the University in two years' time. The Department of English Studies has already a strong research interest in regionality in literary, linguistic and drama studies. It also contains the English Place Name Survey. There is increasing interest in cultural studies in the department, especially in relation to language studies, and Robin Hood ballads already figure in the undergraduate English studies course.

Other Nottingham speakers who attended the international conference at the University of Rochester in New York were Frank Abbott of Nottingham Trent University, who talked about the transference of the legend to a new medium in the city centre-based *Tales of Robin Hood*, and Michael Eaton, who talked about his award-winning film *Fellow Traveller* and his short film *Moving Pictures* on the history of Robin Hood on film.

Some of the ballads set Robin in Yorkshire — he goes fishing at Scarborough in one — and sometimes the claims of other regions have seemed to threaten Nottingham's own pre-eminence as Robin Hood country.

There have been two pieces in the Nottingham Evening Post (see cartoon, left) about the conference and the research on the legend and the point was made that there is perennial interest from tourists and visitors in the Robin Hood legend here in Nottingham.

I am glad to say that my paper points out that some of the apparently Yorkshire references may not be to Yorkshire but bring him back nearer home to the Rutland countryside. There are also other references that tend to reinforce the specific East Midlands and Nottingham settings of some of the ballads, which may be a comfort to anyone who fears that academics will spoil the traditional links with Nottingham.

Sometimes the ballad detail shows specific knowledge of Nottingham geography — and the sheriff, his castle and prison are clearly Nottingham.

This conference showed just how big the myth is and has been through the centuries. There is no fixed, original Robin Hood tale which is the 'real' story. Robin Hood can be everywhere and nowhere, but he is also often located somewhere in particular and, over the centuries, Nottingham and Sherwood have been the most important places.

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Research Committee events

University soirée and presentation planned

● New Lecturers' Research Soirée

The Research Committee and Training and Staff Development Unit are holding a research soirée for new lecturers on Tuesday November 4 from 4–5.30pm in the Delta Suite at the University Staff Club

The aim of this soirée is to bring together the different departments and people who have an interest in newer research initiatives. Each participant will be invited to submit on one side of A4 a résumé of their research interests, to be displayed at the soirée, to facilitate communication between researchers relatively new to this University.

These summaries of research interests will be published on the Virtual Research Office page following the event.

The soirée will be chaired by Professor David Wood (Psychology) and chairman of the Research Committee's Humanities Strategy Group. Dr Richard Aldrich (Politics) and Ian Campbell (Manufacturing Engineering and Operations Management) will be giving their first-hand experiences, as previous recipients of awards when they were new lecturers to the University, of obtaining and benefiting from these awards from the Research Committee.

The objectives for this soirée

are to bring together relatively new lecturers from all faculties: to identify research 'hot-spots' to form the basis of pan-Nottingham applications for new project support; to appreciate strategic issues determining the policies of funding bodies; to allow researchers to exchange summaries about their work and plans and to influence future initiatives aimed at supporting new researchers.

If you wish to attend the soirée you should contact Sue Renshaw either by phone on ext 15741 or by e-mail to: Susan.Renshaw@nottingham.

● Presentation by Professor Ron Amann, chief executive of the Economic and Social Science Research Council

Professor Amann, chief

executive of the ESRC, is visiting the University on Friday November 7. He will give a presentation about the ESRC's role, its methods for supporting research and the latest thinking that will determine how research funds are allocated in the future.

The presentation will take place in the Senate Chamber, Trent Building, at 2 pm. All those who have an interest in the ESRC, whether considering applying for a project grant or being part of a team that is applying for multidisciplinary programme grants or a student in receipt of an ESRC grant, should attend this presentation. There will be opportunities to question and discuss with the ESRC chief executive current priorities and future funding opportunities.

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**ZURICH
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EMCC cooks up tasty partnership

Staff at the East Midlands Conference Centre have cooked up a tasty partnership with the prestigious Hilton Park Lane.

In a bid to give the EMCC service extra sparkle, the conference and banqueting team has invited leading industry specialists to take part in its latest quality review.

Hilton Park Lane director of banqueting David Irving spent a day shadowing EMCC front of house manager Michael Wilcockson in a 'no secrets' review and plans are now in the pipeline for EMCC chefs to visit London and to work in the Hilton kitchens.

"Regular quality reviews provide us with an opportunity to make improvements and changes which we feel will offer added value to our customers," said conference manager Malcolm Youngson.

"We were delighted when the Hilton Park Lane agreed to share their expertise



● **Malcolm Youngson, Conference Manager at the EMCC**

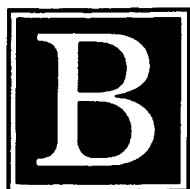
with us by providing an outsider's opinion on our conference and banqueting

Top London hotel shares tricks of the trade

operations. The feedback received so far has proved extremely useful."

He said that as Investors in People, the EMCC was committed to developing its staff in line with the objectives of the business and the Hilton Park Lane partnership provided everyone with an opportunity to review both their operation and ways of working.

"In an extremely competitive business it is vital that we do everything we can to ensure total customer satisfaction," he added.



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Courtyard update

An end is in sight to the extensive work being carried out on the Trent Building. Estates staff have promised.

It has been a long hot summer of noise, dirt and scaffolding for staff who work in the building, but the courtyard and refurbished main entrance will re-open to through-traffic on Monday November 3.

The programme of refurbishment has included cleaning the stone facade of the listed building, relaying and replanting the courtyard and improving disabled access.

However, the project ran into problems part-way through when the stone supplier hit a bad seam and could no longer guarantee the consistency of the stone. Another supplier had to be found quickly and work phased to coincide with supply.

"We can only apologise to those who have been affected by work both inside and outside the Trent

Building — we have done our best to bring the project back on track as quickly as possible," said Director of Estate Management Chris Jagger.

"It has been a particularly sensitive project because Trent is a listed building and we had to ensure that all work was carried out sympathetically. However, we have researched what the original 1920s layout of the courtyard would have been and the new planting and turfing scheme brings us closer to those plans — I'm confident that the result will be worth the wait."

The service road at the rear of the building will be closed for two or three weeks from November 17 to allow workmen to complete cleaning of the final elevation, but diversions and traffic flow arrangements will be made (see next **NewsLetter**).

Any other remaining work will involve only short periods of closure outside normal working hours.

All public and inaugural lectures will in future be advertised on the back page of **NewsLetter** in the "What's On" section.

The aim is to promote the lectures to a wider circulation, therefore the customary public and inaugural lecture card will no longer be published.



Martin Reed, Professor Trevor Benson, Professor Peter Kendall and Dr Philip Sewell of the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering have been awarded the JJ Thomson Premium by the Institution of Electrical Engineers for their paper *Anti-reflection coated angled facet design*, which was published in the IEE Proceedings — Optoelectronics. This is the second time that Professor Benson has won an IEE Premium award. In 1995 he received the Electronics Letters Premium with Vladica Trenkic and Professor Christos Christopoulos for the development of a new symmetrical super-condensed node for the transmission line modelling (TLM) method.

One in three people in the UK will have cancer at some time in their lives ... one in four will die from it. The Imperial Cancer Research Fund is looking for young and enthusiastic people to help to achieve their vision for the future. ICRF employs 1,000 doctors and scientists who are working towards a better understanding, prevention and cure of all kinds of cancers — they believe that if current trends continue they will be able to cut the number of cancer deaths by one-third by the year 2020. The charity would like to set up a vision team in Nottingham, a very different type of fundraising group and one of the first of its kind, with the challenge of raising £5,000 over the next 12 months. The vision team will not only offer the opportunity to contribute to the lifesaving work of the ICRF but also to meet new people, make friends and have some fun.

The University of Aberdeen's Department of Forestry is seeking volunteers to help with its 1997 Internet survey research project. Researchers are investigating public preferences with respect to a wide range of landscapes and 'alternative' forest management systems. The survey is also being used to compare data obtained by conventional door-to-door surveys with that obtained from the Net. The team is looking for more than 500 volunteers nationwide. The survey is open to anyone with a computer and Internet access — it is easy to complete, self-contained and simply involves assessing images viewed on the computer screen. The URL for the survey is: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/~for275>



Is anyb

Ghoulies and ghosties and long-legged beasties have been a part of our folklore for thousands of years. **Lyn Heath-Harvey** looks at how modern science is turning the cold spotlight of fact onto the paranormal.

It's hard to describe, but if you've ever felt it, you will know exactly what I mean. A sharp intake of breath, a prickle down the neck and a distinct impression ... that you are not alone.

Thousands of people every year claim to experience events they feel they cannot explain away by conventional means — apparitions, poltergeists, ESP and things that go bump in the night.

Some would say there are those who have a sixth sense which allows us to detect a supernatural presence or tune-in to someone's thoughts; others would snort with derision and claim the 'happenings' are merely the product of an over-active imagination or too much cheese for supper.

Whatever your standpoint — and, for the record, I am firmly in the believers' camp — the scientific research done over many years in this field by Dr Alan Gauld of the University's Department of Psychology is gripping stuff.

He is far from the Hollywood view of a 'ghostbuster' — his work in the field of parapsychology is much-respected and thoroughly scientific.

Dr Gauld's aim is to apply scientific methods to reports of strange happenings in an attempt to explain them in a rational way. He is open-minded about the subject but says he can explain away the majority of reports of strange events as belonging to an earthly rather than a spiritual dimension. That said, he can also tell a tale spooky enough to give you goosebumps.

Dr Gauld tries to keep out of the media limelight nowadays — he is understandably wary of how his work could be sensationalised or attacked by those who are hostile for whatever reason. But his eyes have a tell-tale sparkle when he talks about the excitement of a potential paranormal encounter.

"I was seven or eight when I embarked on my first supernatural adventure. There was an old building where strange things were supposed to have happened and I wanted to investigate, but I hit my head falling off a plank and that was an abrupt end to it," laughed Dr Gauld.

"Undeterred I retained my interest and joined the university's psychic research society

when I got to Cambridge. One of the first places we went to investigate in the early 1950s was a very old house called Abbas Hall near Sudbury, which was then isolated in the middle of a field. We had heard that the woman who lived there claimed to have seen the ghost of a nun crossing her room on many occasions.

"It was wonderfully atmospheric because there was no electricity, just oil lamps and suits of armour everywhere and the flames flickered, creating large shadows. It only served to add to our anticipation when we stopped off for milk at a local shop on the way and a girl heard us talking. You're not going *THERE* are you?' she said wide-eyed.

"During the night, members of the group saw lights they could not account for and there was a curious column of cold which you could put your hand into as it moved around. There was also a great noise at the window, as if someone had run their hand down the leaded panes, but I looked out and there was no one around. The highlight of the evening was when one member of the group sitting on the sofa suddenly yelled out that he had seen the nun beside him. I remember he was very upset and breathing heavily."

Another occasion, which Dr Gauld says still plays on his mind as one of the more curious of his many investigations, was at another very old hall about five miles from Wisbech. It was occupied by the then local Labour candidate for Wisbech, who later became an MP and now sits in the House of Lords, plus his wife, two children and mother-in-law.

"The family kept hearing funny noises from upstairs — raps and bangs and even a shaking bed. We were genuinely not expecting anything much to happen, but arrived late one foggy night and assembled the family together downstairs to hear their stories.

"We started them off on a ouija board, mainly as a device to ensure we knew where they — and their hands — were positioned to eliminate them as culprits if anything happened. I went upstairs to stand on the first-floor gallery. The temperature suddenly dropped around 10 degrees in a very short space of time and I heard footsteps coming up



Artist-in-residence workshops



● Banner-making workshop with Heather Connelly, artist-in-residence at the Djanogly Art Gallery.

The Christmas lights are already being hung around Nottingham, but before you start to panic about the festive season, why not book onto a workshop designed to help you make your own cards, wrapping paper and printed fabrics, in the helpful (?) company of your own family.

Creatively

The special family workshop takes place on Saturday December 6, when adults and children will work creatively together, have some fun and print their own custom-made materials in plenty of time for Christmas. The workshop is led by Heather

Connelly, artist-in-residence at the Djanogly Art Gallery, and is suitable for children over five, with a maximum of three children per adult. The fee for the workshop is £15 (£10 concessions) for one adult and one child, with £5 per extra adult or child.

Heather Connelly will also be revealing the secrets of printing and hand painting onto fabric in a creative workshop for adults on Saturday November 29. Some places for this session are still available and the fee is £12 (£9 concessions).

For further information, or to book your place on one of these practical and creative days, please contact Exhibitions Secretary Tracey Isgar on ext 13189.

Sounds of revolution

University Philharmonia, conducted by the Sir Charles Mackerras conducting fellow, Jonathan Tilbrook, take to the stage in the Trent Building's Great Hall once again on Sunday November 16, with a concert featuring Shostakovich's *Symphony no.12* 'The Year of 1917'.

Completed in 1961 and dedicated to the memory of Lenin, the symphony is a dramatic portrayal of the Russian Revolution. Each movement has a subtitle — the third is named *Aurora* after the cruiser which gave the signal to begin the October Revolution by firing a shot through the windows of the Winter Palace.

Exhilarating

The 12th symphony has been described as Shostakovich's most directly 'public' music. The mood of the music varies from quiet contemplation to exhilarating brazen power, but the atmosphere throughout the work clearly demonstrates that the composer has something important to say.

University Philharmonia will also play Nielsen *Pan and Syrinx* and Sibelius *Karelia Suite*. The concert begins at 7.30pm and tickets are priced £6 (£4 concessions). Tickets may be booked by contacting Concerts Secretary Joyce Ençer (ext 14764), the Angear Visitors Centre (ext 15791) or Classical CD in the Lace Hall, High Pavement, Nottingham, tel (0115) 948 3832.



Jonathan Tilbrook

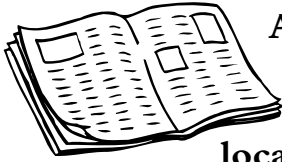
The University Choir's performance of *Carmina Burana* will now take place in the Trent Building's Great Hall, rather than the Albert Hall in Nottingham. The concert date remains unchanged, as Sunday December 7, and tickets will now all be sold at the cheaper price of £7 (£5 concessions). Tickets already purchased will be valid for the new venue. If you have bought tickets at the higher price of £10 (£7 concessions), please contact Joyce Ençer on ext 14764.

Tickets for concerts in the Djanogly Recital Hall have been on sale at Classical CD in the Lace Hall for some time now, but this season sees the launch of an exciting new development in the recital hall's relationship with Nottingham's leading classical music retailer.

DUET at the Djanogly Recital Hall and Classical CD is a special promotion which combines tickets for recital hall concerts with recordings which feature music or artists included in the season. These recordings are all on sale at Classical CD and, if you purchase tickets for any Djanogly Recital Hall concert at the same time as your CDs, you will receive a discount of 10% on the price of the recordings.

Contact Liz O'Neill (ext 15797) or Classical CD in the Lace Hall, tel (0115) 948 3832.

~ What the Papers Say ~



A fortnightly selection of just some of the stories from across campus that are making the news in national and local press. Full copies of the articles can be obtained from the Public Affairs Office in the Trent Building on extension 15798.

New Scientist 4/10: Dr Jack Rieley (Life Science) is among scientists who say that fires that have raged across Indonesia, which are having a significant impact on global warming by releasing carbon dioxide into the atmosphere from the underlying peat, are a result of the Indonesian government's land clearance policy. (Also New Scientist 18/10 and The Scotsman 16/10)

Derby Evening Telegraph 7/10: The University has appointed Professor Richard Donnelly to investigate diseases of the arteries at a new centre of excellence at Derbyshire Royal Infirmary (pic).

The Engineer 9/10: A study by the University's Centre for Management Buy-Out Research shows that a record number and value of MBOs and MBIs in the UK were concluded in 1996.



Nottingham Evening Post 9/10: Review of rush-hour concert performed by Peter Hill at the Djanogly Recital Hall.

Nottingham Evening Post 10/10: URN wants to be able to go on air permanently — it has just started its annual month-long FM broadcast to the whole of the city.

Farmers Guardian 10/10: Professor Eric Lamming (Physiology and Environmental Science) says that genetic selection for fertility should be included in selection criteria for future breeding of sires.

Financial Times (Euro Section) 10/10: Various articles making reference to findings made by the University's Centre for Management Buy-Out Research.

Sheffield Telegraph 10/10: The Meningitis Research Foundation has launched a research project at the University to find out why so many 15 to 24-year-olds carry the meningitis bacteria.

Nottingham Evening Post 11/10: University chef Melvyn Keeling has been jailed for five years for knocking down and killing Ronald Platt while over the legal drink-drive limit.

Nottingham Evening Post 13/10: Review of concert by the Youth Chamber Orchestra at the Djanogly Recital Hall.

Nottingham Evening Post 14/10: Beeston police are to mount special patrols and use the University's new surveillance cameras to view the campus grounds in a bid to cut down bicycle theft.

Nottingham Evening Post 14/10: Professor John Pearce (Child and Adolescent Psychiatry) says that despite the number of children in Nottingham being prescribed a drug called Ritalin to treat hyperactive behaviour doubling over the past two or three years, he believes it is not being over-subscribed but should only be used as a last resort.

The Guardian 14/10: The University hopes to set up a D H Lawrence Pavilion to house his notes and papers.

The Times 15/10: Professor Roger Murphy (Education) is leading the University's involvement in a study called *Hearing Men's Voices* to uncover whether the changing role of men has had an impact on their spiritual beliefs.

The Independent 16/10: In a feature on university funding and the introduction of the £1,000 tuition fee, Vice-chancellor Professor Sir Colin Campbell argues the case of letting universities charge students what they need on the lines of American universities.



Sunday Times 19/10: Article on how a Government-backed research project on birds of prey at the University has led to the development a new DNA profiling method using a single feather to help trap bird thieves.

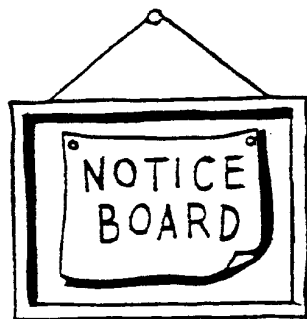
Nottingham Evening Post 21/10: Dr Jon Van Tam (Public Health Medicine and Epidemiology) has advised the national campaign for flu immunisation on the need for at-risk people to get vaccinated.

Nottingham Evening Post 23/10: Review of concert performed by the University Sinfonietta at the Djanogly Recital Hall.

Daily Telegraph 24/10: Dr Keith Neal (Public Health Medicine and Epidemiology) has carried out a study which shows that university students are more likely to develop meningitis than the general population, with students living in halls of residence being most at risk.



~ Noticeboard ~



● **Resident tutor, Derby Hall of Residence** — there is a vacancy for a resident tutor in Derby Hall of Residence, a mixed hall, starting in January 1998. Academic members of staff and postgraduates are eligible to apply. Accommodation available with this post is a one-bedroomed self-contained flat. Candidates should send a brief letter and CV to Mrs M Withnall, Warden's Secretary, Derby Hall. Closing date: November 24.

● **The University of Nottingham Hillsborough Trust Memorial Bursaries** — applications are invited from undergraduate students for these

bursaries. Applicants should have resided within the County of Nottinghamshire normally for a period of not less than two years immediately preceding entry to the University. The bursaries, which are of a value from £250 to £1,000 per annum, are intended to provide financial support for students who would otherwise experience difficulty in taking up their places or remaining at the University. The full conditions for award of the bursaries and application forms are available from: Registrar's Department, University Office, Trent Building, where they must be returned by Friday November 28 1997.

● **Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS)** — this notice is to advise members of the scheme that the annual report and accounts for the year ended March 31 1997 are available for inspection in the Superannuation Office. If you wish to view the report, please telephone extension 15643 to make an appointment.

● **The Royal Society,**

Quantum Computation: Theory and Experiment — discussion meeting on November 5–6. The synthesis of quantum theory and computer science leads to remarkable and extremely efficient new modes of computation and novel methods of communication. This meeting will provide a comprehensive survey covering fundamental theoretical aspects, experimental perspectives, possible relevance to biological systems and the hi-tech industry. The meeting will take place at 6 Carlton House Terrace, London. Call 0171 451 2574/5 for details.

● **Leverhulme Trust Emeritus Fellowships** — the trustees offer annually around 30 emeritus fellowships. Applicants should hold or have recently held a teaching and/or research post in a university or other institution of comparable status in the UK, and have retired during the last three years, being aged 59 or above. Applications will be considered in all subject areas. Maximum value is £15,965. The awards are tenable for between three

and 24 months and are not thereafter renewable. Closing date for applications is November 13. Contact: The Secretary, Research Awards Advisory Committee, The Leverhulme Trust, 1 Pemberton Row, London EC4A 3EX

● **Leverhulme Trust Fellowships and Grants** — the trustees, through their Research Awards Advisory Committee, offer annually around 75 fellowships and grants to individuals in aid of original research. Applicants should be experienced researchers pursuing investigations and normally over 30 on June 1 next year. Applications will be considered in all subject areas. The awards, maximum value £15,965, are tenable for between three and 24 months. Closing date for applications November 13. Contact: The Secretary, Research Awards Advisory Committee, The Leverhulme Trust, 1 Pemberton Row, London EC4A 3EX

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