



**NOTTINGHAM ROOSEVELT MEMORIAL TRAVELLING SCHOLARSHIP
NEWSLETTER APRIL 2021**

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AN UPDATE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN, MICK BURROWS

Dear alumni and friends,

I hope you and yours are all well, once again my thoughts to any alumni who have been directly affected by the Covid pandemic. Hopefully 2021 and beyond will prove to be a more fruitful and productive time as we look to how we might restart, further develop and support our scholarship.

As international travel will remain restricted for the immediate future we are considering how virtual connections may be initiated in advance of a full scholarship taking place. We hope to restart our full scholarships as soon as travel to the US can commence again. We will keep you updated as our ideas progress.

You may recall that we planned to initiate a strategic review last June to ensure the scholarship was better aligned for the future. Our intended focus was the interface with local businesses, how we better engage alumni, market, fundraise and address the impact of Covid.

Recognising face to face contact was a long way away, between November and January we ran a series of virtual workshops with a number of trustees and colleagues from our management team, the review was very ably and kindly facilitated by Richard Donovan, Global Head of Social Innovation & UK&I Head of Corporate Responsibility at Experian.

Following a number of very dynamic and challenging virtual workshops and much work by colleagues, we have now developed a plan of activities which focuses on the following themes: developing our profile; engaging our alumni; building inclusivity; opportunities for transatlantic innovations; and ensuring a sustainable financial future. We will provide more detail on each theme as we finalise the action plans accompanying each theme.

One of the most positive outcomes for me was the engagement, commitment, enthusiasm and challenge that Richard gave to the scholarship and his personal dedication to us. I am delighted to confirm that Richard has agreed to become a Trustee; this was approved at last week's AGM along with approval for Councillor Merlita Bryan to stay with us for a further three years, which is great.

As ever my appreciation goes to all the Trustees and management team colleagues who, despite the challenge of time and work pressures, continue to generously support the scholarship.

Finally, my sincere thanks to those alumni who have so generously provided a financial contribution to ensure the scholarship continues into the future.

Best wishes,

Mick



GIVING THANKS FOR OUR THANKSGIVING EVENT

Elisia Denton, 2015 Scholar and NRMTS Events Co-ordinator

The Nottingham Roosevelt Scholarship held its first virtual Thanksgiving event back in November and it was a great success. For over an hour nearly 100 people from all over the UK, plus guests from the US, France and Norway, joined with leading Nottinghamshire figures to hear alumni speak.

Highlights of the event were talks from previous scholars [Nick Beighton](#), CEO of ASOS, and [Chris Aylett](#), Chief Executive of the Motorsport Industry Association, who spoke about their scholarship experiences, what they had learnt from their trips and how it impacted their careers. For those of you who didn't have the opportunity to watch live, please do contact us at rooseveltscholarship@googlemail.com if you would like the link to the recording.

This event was our second Thanksgiving event and I can assure you there will be many more to come. We have learnt over the past 12 months that virtual events provide an opportunity for our friends from farther afield to stay engaged with what we are doing and we have enjoyed welcoming them back. It would be great to understand what supporters of the scholarship would like to see more of so please do get in touch with any feedback.

As we work through our strategic vision, events - both in person and virtual - will be at the core of our engagement strategy. We are working hard to identify what people would like to see more of and will keep you posted with any developments.



Thanks to everyone who attended our virtual Thanksgiving event!

JOIN OUR NEW SUSTAINABILITY SUBGROUP FOR THEIR INAUGURAL EVENT!

Our 2019 scholars, [Henry](#) (who has recently joined a local innovative battery storage startup, [Cheesecake Energy](#)) and [Sam](#) (who is now a civil servant working on UK net zero public engagement), have set up a sustainability subgroup to bring together Roosevelt alumni with an interest in the topic.

The idea came about after Herbert, a 1972 scholar who is aiming to make his village net zero, got in touch with Sam following our stunning Thanksgiving event in November. After a fantastic kick-off meeting with around a dozen interested alumni, the subgroup decided to run quarterly talks open to the public with different sustainability themes (ideas included climate and space, climate and heritage etc). The USP is that each talk will have both a UK and a US speaker.

It was agreed that the first event should be an introduction to sustainability to make the topic and group accessible to all, and also to celebrate the momentous time in history for climate on various levels, with Nottingham's leading 2028 goal, the UK set to host the UN's COP 26 Climate Change Conference and the US' \$2 trillion climate plan.

The event will be held on Zoom and has been scheduled for **Wednesday 21st April at 7pm**. We're very excited to announce that Lilian Greenwood, MP for South Nottingham, will be our UK speaker, whilst insights on the Biden Administration's climate plans will be provided by an American speaker (TBC).

All alumni and members of the public are very welcome to attend. To register for the event please use the following link: <http://bit.ly/NRMTSclimate>.



THE FUTURE OF NRMTS: STRATEGIC PLANNING

Richard Donovan, Global Head of Social Innovation & UK&I Head of Corporate Responsibility at Experian

Between November and January we ran a series of workshops with our trustees and management team, facilitated by Richard Donovan from Experian. The overriding objective was to engage the Scholarship's leaders by collaborating on the future vision and strategy.

Over the course of three sessions we considered the opportunities and risks facing us, developed vision, values and priorities for the future, and built momentum through a plan of activities, which were focused on the themes of:

- Developing our profile
- Engaging our alumni
- Building inclusivity
- Opportunities for transatlantic innovations; and
- Ensuring a sustainable financial future

Engaging the trustees and management team in this way led to really creative thinking and no small degree of commitment and we'd like to thank all involved for giving up their evenings for the workshops and working so hard in between to help in the development of the plan.

Below, a few of our working group members provide an overview of current efforts and planned next steps for advancing the scholarship through their theme.

Mick Burrows – “Engaging Alumni” Theme Lead

“Our objective is to improve our connectivity with past scholars with the overall aim of securing greater interest and ongoing relationships.

As part of our thinking we want to explore how many past scholars would be willing to share their skills and experiences with a view to securing their assistance on an ad hoc, and where relevant, ongoing basis regarding specific scholarship initiatives and priorities.

We are keen that the scholarship remains useful and relevant to alumni long after they returning from the US, and are therefore looking to engage with the NRMTS community in a way that is mutually beneficial to both scholarship and scholars.”

Russ Blenkinsop – “Sustainable Financial Future” Theme Lead

“As we look to secure a sustainable financial future for the scholarship, we face the joint challenges of improving accessibility by increasing the grant amount for each scholar, alongside seeking a greater impact by sending more scholars each year. All this is against a backdrop of a tough financial climate and withdrawal of financial support from the County and City Councils. Nevertheless, in trying to meet these challenges, we passionately believe that the scholarship provides a unique and life-changing opportunity both for individuals and the county.

We are looking to establish a sustainable plan to make NRMTS the premier, inclusive scholarship in Nottinghamshire. This means investigating many forms of income, including grants, themed scholarships, and working with partners and those who benefit from the scholarship. In broad terms we are looking to send five scholars per year, to increase the grant amount to £5,000 per scholar and to provide support on the scholar's return. This means raising over £150,000 to cover each five year period.”

SCHOLAR UPDATE: ALL CHANGE, ALL ROUND

There must be something in the water at NRMTS, because most of our management team have seen exciting developments in their professional lives in the past few months. Below, Tom, Elisia, Sheridan and Sam write about how the scholarship has helped them to reach new heights in their careers...

Tom Cable, 2020 Mayflower Scholar

It's been a whole year since my scholarship to Massachusetts. Prior to my visit, I was mainly working in primary schools, bringing history to life as various characters from the national curriculum.

Since returning, my focus has mainly been on exploring and commemorating local heritage through digital technology. This has included supporting the Pilgrims Gallery in Retford by producing a video series about local churches linked to the Mayflower voyage.

The scholarship allowed me to get a foot in the door with many of these organisations and pushed me to become more confident in telling stories through digital technology - which is now a huge part of my life and professional career. It has given me opportunities to fly drones through castles and explore the potential of telling the stories of Robin Hood through augmented and virtual reality.

In March, a public exhibition launched in the grounds of Newark Castle featuring a lot of digital content I have produced over the past few months, including an interview with our very own Russ and Liz Blenkinsop about their flood action group in Lowdham.



Elisia Denton, 2015 Scholar

The scholarship has created many opportunities for me, such as securing my first job in tech as a business analyst.

The story of how I got it was very serendipitous. I had applied for a PA job with a director at a corporate tech company but after spending a large amount of time in my interview drawing on experiences I had had during my scholarship, he put me forward for what he felt was a better suited opportunity.

Fast forward three and a half years, and the experiences of the scholarship still provide great opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and competencies during interviews and was definitely something I drew upon to secure my latest role, as a Digital Product Manager, which I started in January.

In a crowded job market where lots of people have high calibre skills, this scholarship can be a distinguishing factor between you and the people you are competing against. I am forever grateful for the doors this scholarship has opened for me and it is part of the reason I am committed to being an active part of the management team.

Sheridan Chilvers, 2011 Scholar

I started a new job in January as Account Manager at the Nottingham City Growth Hub.

The Growth Hub aims to be a one-stop-shop for business support across the D2N2 LEP area. My role involves working with local businesses to understand their needs and challenges, and then connect them to appropriate support programmes.

My connections through the scholarship are already proving fruitful in this new role, as I am now supporting both 2019 scholar Henry Franklin's employer, Cheesecake Energy, and Tech Silver, established by 2017 scholar Miles Waghorn.

Sam Lux, 2019 Scholar

In January, I started working for the Civil Service as a policy advisor in the relatively new Net Zero Public Engagement team.

I am working on a national small business mass mobilisation campaign which aims to support businesses to commit to Net Zero by 2050 ahead of the 2021 UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), which will be hosted by Glasgow in November. As part of my role, I am setting up a UK-US transatlantic working group, building on the raft of contacts I established during my Roosevelt scholarship in 2019.

Excitingly, I was recently featured in a profile piece published by edie as part of their 30 under 30 Sustainability Leaders series. I used the opportunity to highlight the scholarship as a pivotal moment in my career history to date. You can read the article here: <http://bit.ly/SL30u30>.



SCHOLAR Q&A: SARAH EDWARDS

As every NRMTS scholar knows, upon your return you face a barrage of questions from friends and family eager to hear every detail of your trip. But after such an adventure, it takes some time to realise the real value and key takeaways of the scholarship experience. Below, 2012 scholar Sarah Edwards reflects on her time in the US and what it has meant for her since...



Sarah with one of her SERVAS host families whilst on her scholarship in 2012

Q: What was your project?

A: At the time of my trip I worked for the Driving Standards Agency (DSA, now known as Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency-DVSA), so my project was to explore the approach to driver training throughout 13 states. What I found most interesting was the variances between the different states, in particular the rules around graduated licensing. This was something being considered by DSA at the time so I found talking to various driver training organisations throughout the states I visited fascinating and useful.

Q: What was the biggest lesson you learnt?

A: Don't put too much pressure on yourself-before, during and after the trip. It's such a huge opportunity and you're determined to make the most of it, but it's important to give yourself a break and take time to enjoy your surroundings. If I could do it again I would probably cut down the number of places I visited and spend a bit more time in each one. Travel light! I wouldn't take half the luggage I did if I were to do my trip again!!

Q: How has the scholarship helped you progress and develop in the years since your trip?

A: I think it took me a few years to fully realise how this helped develop my confidence-it occurred to me what a huge thing I'd achieved and how far I'd come, both personally and professionally about 5 years after! I've moved up two grades in my job and completed a professional qualification, both of which I'm quite sure I wouldn't have had the confidence or even motivation to do before the scholarship.

Q: What would you do differently if you could do the scholarship again?

A: Travel light!! Take more time to adjust when I got back-it's a long time to be away from home and work and I think it's important to take time to stop and reflect before you fully immerse yourself back in to everyday life when you get home.

Share your scholarship stories with us!

We're always eager to hear from fellow alumni about their own American adventures on the Roosevelt Scholarship. Please do get in touch, via email (rooseveltscholarship@googlemail.com) or phone (07767-797-335) with remembrances from your trip. We'd love to know about your highs, lows and "pinch me, I'm dreaming" moments!

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT: HOW YOU CAN HELP

As we noted above, the NRMTS management team and trustees are currently working to update and restructure the scholarship to keep it relevant and to ensure its ongoing financial viability.

As part of this effort, we're investigating the idea of aligning the scholarship along a number of themes. We hope this will allow potential partners in industry to recognise how the scholarship might be relevant to them, as well as providing clear avenues for alumni to re-engage with the scholarship according to their interests.

At this stage, **we would really appreciate your input** regarding whether/how a themed approach might encourage you to actively engage with the scholarship as a valued alumnus. We would therefore be very grateful if you could **take five minutes to fill out a brief online questionnaire**, which will assist us as we continue to explore what the future of the scholarship might look like.

The questionnaire can be accessed here: <http://bit.ly/AlumniThemes>.

Many thanks in advance for your help!

CHOOSE TO SUPPORT OUR FUTURE SCHOLARS TODAY!

The scholarship is run completely by a voluntary committee and is funded by the donations of alumni, friends and supportive organisations.

One of our remarkable scholars who has recently chosen to give back to the scholarship is Miles Waghorn, CEO of TechSilver, an organisation founded by Miles and supercharged by connections and learning that he made on his 2017 Roosevelt Scholarship. TechSilver is a business providing technology to help older people live independently and we're so proud to see Miles's business going from strength-to-strength.

Miles announced that he would donate £2,000 to the scholarship at our virtual Thanksgiving event in December. Along with match-funding, this generous gift will support two new scholars to journey across the United States and grow personally and professionally. Huge thanks to Miles and everyone else who has contributed in the last year.

If you would like to support new scholars and the scholarship then please consider giving your time, sharing your skills or making a financial contribution. To talk about this please get in touch with Russ on 07767-797-335.

This unique opportunity relies on the generosity of other so please do consider helping in any ways you are able. Donations can be giving using the form below or on the scholarship website, www.rooseveltscholarship.org

Thank you.

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