

# NOTTINGHAM



**5TH SEMESTER 2017-18**

NOTTINGHAM  
TRENT UNIVERSITY

Name: Malene Graves Lauridsen

Private e-mail: malenegraves@icloud.com

NTU-contact: Nik Walker

E-mail: ADBinternational1@ntu.ac.uk

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## 5TH SEMESTER 2017-18

I always knew I wanted to study abroad at some point. An opportunity to live and study in another country; you do not get that chance later in life when you have your degree, living an adult life with an adult job.

I did not really have any preferences as to where I was going, I just wanted to go!

I have been in the same study group since 1<sup>st</sup> semester and already back then, we talked about going on exchange together. So when time came, we had conversations with the exchange coordinator about places. All four of us wanted to go away, but not too far away, and we wanted to go somewhere where they embrace the English language (not like the stubborn French or Spanish). When all came to all, one of the guys had different academic priorities and applied for a university in Ireland. The rest of us settled on the UK and applied for Nottingham Trent as the 1<sup>st</sup> priority (Coventry and Preston as 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>) and we got accepted at NTU. A guy from 3<sup>rd</sup> semester also got accepted so the 4 of us were moving to Nottingham!

This trip was going to make me more confident in my business with new ways to learn and new things to learn, in another country. I was going to be more confident in meeting new people and that way expand my network across countries. Last, but not least, I was going to improve my English, both socially and professionally, because it will help me no matter what I do.

### BEFORE LEAVING

I had to get all the practical things done:

- The blue EU health insurance card
- Learning agreement
  - That was pretty easy, because the course at NTU is like KEAs when it comes to modules, they're pre-set so there are no choices
- Erasmus grant agreement
- Travel insurance
  - My own insurance covers me the first 2 months of travel, for the rest of my exchange I went with Dr. Walter's ProTrip World insurance
- Applications for other grants
  - I do not know how many grants I have applied for, but until now I have only received one

## MALENE GRAVES LAURIDSEN

26 years old

5<sup>th</sup> semester abroad:  
September 2017 –  
January 2018

Course at KEA:  
BA Architectural Technology and Construction Management  
(Danish line)

Course at NTU:  
BSc (Hons) Architectural Technology

- Accommodation
  - I used the website [www.student.com](http://www.student.com), which is a marketplace for student housing all over the world (the Erasmus grant came in real handy because I had to pay the entire rent before I moved)
- Telephone
  - I chose to go with my Danish subscription (3LikeHome), it is cheap and it was way easier than figuring out which English one to go with

## THE FIRST FEW WEEKS

We took a flight from Copenhagen to London Gatwick, a train to London St Pancras and then a train to Nottingham. We arrived in the afternoon so the first thing was to buy essentials; bedding, towels, toilet paper etc. and then we walked around the neighbourhood just to get an impression as to what kind of place we were going to call home for the next five months. It was kind of slum, but the accommodation was fine and cheap (£123/week) and it was one of the only places we could find where we could rent for one semester only (other places it's an academic year).

The next few days went with getting our student id's at the university and getting to know the city a little, and finding bars we liked!

NTU has these fresher's weeks that has a crazy programme. It is filled with tours of the city and the campuses, loads of trips to different attractions, all kinds of events, fairs where you can experience all the different societies and sports clubs, taster sessions for said societies and sports club, and parties every single night!



WOLLATON HALL (WAYNE MANOR IN THE DARK KNIGHT-TRILOGY).

I joined the university gym, which is conveniently situated at the Student's Union (a building made for the students to hang out and what not, with cafés and venues for events) in the middle of the City Campus. It is a good quality gym with everything you need and it is cheap (£50 for the 5 months). I also wanted to join a sports club, but due to a bad knee I couldn't dance or do gymnastics, so I joined the archery club. I paid £25 (for the 5 months) to join the NTU Sports Club, which means you can join every sports club you would like (e.g. the guys did both table tennis and handball).

## THE UNIVERSITY

Nottingham Trent University has more than 25.000 students divided at three campuses in the city: Brackenhurst (never been), Clifton (where I did archery) and City. The City Campus is around 15 adjacent buildings, literally in the middle of the city. Some of the buildings are really beautiful and most of them are really well kept, which is one part where you can see the British pay for their education. Other parts are the Students Union (SU) which is open every day of the week with cheap food and drinks and where they have different weekly events like quiz Sunday and Quids in Thursday (cheap bar),



THE ARKWRIGHT BUILDING, NTU.

and the 24-hour library only accessible for NTU students (where I have been after midnight more than once).

## ARCHITECTURAL TECHNOLOGY

Though I was technically in my third year, I had classes with the second years because on this course they either go on placement for the full third year (making it a four-year course) or they have their final year (three-year course). The structure of the modules were a lecture first and then seminar/studio in our classroom, which means we had a lecture on a subject and then a studio session where we used this new information to work on assignments or projects.

I had three modules (technically four):

- Construction Technology 2 – Understanding technical, practical and environmental principles of architectural design. Solutions to enable you to meet the technical and human demands of architectural projects. Critical understanding of environmental impacts of design decisions.<sup>1</sup>
  - In this module we had weekly submissions of smaller assignments like drawing details or sketches of structures. Most of this was in hand which indeed was a challenge, but it was a nice counterpart of all the Revit at KEA.
- Technology and Design Study 2 – Exploring technical aspects with building environments and performance requirements. Identification of quality control mechanisms. Distinguishing between options when selecting building materials, construction methods and environmental services.<sup>1</sup>
  - In this module we had 2 different projects: Development of a visitor centre in a park and a refurbishment of a building. They have a different structure in the building industry than we do, so I learned to do site analyses and design and access statements, but otherwise we worked on the projects as we work on semester projects at KEA.
- Planning, Development and Surveying – What ways the built environment is planned, surveyed and developed and its constraints on the creation and management of buildings, spaces and places. Understanding of cultures and communities, town planning policies and processes.<sup>1</sup>
  - In this module we did land surveying of a park in the city (much like the surveying week on 1<sup>st</sup> semester at KEA) and did a report on the techniques and our findings. We also had lectures on building defects and did a registration site visit to inform a condition report on a building on said site.
- (Integrated Design Communication 2 – Understanding of BIM and CAD software.<sup>1</sup>
  - This module is teaching the basic elements of Revit, because on this course they are taught AutoCad in year 1 and Revit in year 2. The four of us were “exempted” from the classes because we have had Revit from day 1, but we got marked on the Revit part of our last project as the rest of the class do on the module project.)



VISITOR CENTRE IN THE NOTTINGHAM ARBORETUM (PROJECT IN TDS2).

<sup>1</sup> Description of modules from the NTU course website, *What you'll study*: [www.goo.gl/cmtvXw](http://www.goo.gl/cmtvXw)

The rest of the class had one more module, Contract Administration, but it did not make sense for us to take that because it is contracts, finance and a lot of law specific for the UK, where we have our own regulations in Denmark.

## THE CITY

Nottingham is a quite big city (inhabitant-wise the size of Aarhus) but the City Centre is rather small, it only takes about 30 minutes to walk from one end to the other. The City Centre is colourful and always full of people and at the Old Market Square there is always something happening.

## MY FAVOURITE PLACES

Nottingham Castle and the surrounding grounds is situated on a big cliff/rock in the middle of the city. There is the most beautiful view of the entire city and in the castle there is a café, an art gallery and different displays with the history of the castle, the city and the legend of Robin Hood.



PANORAMIC VIEW OF THE CITY FROM THE NOTTINGHAM CASTLE GROUND.

Wollaton Hall and Deer Park is a Victorian manor on the top of a huge park, a little outside the city. There is a big lake, golf courses and just beautiful nature all around. Deer are walking freely around the grounds and if you are lucky there are a lot of them, and they don't care about people so you can get really close to these majestic creatures.

Ye Old Trip to Jerusalem is the oldest pub in England. It is built into the rock beneath the castle and it has a great history, which gives it a special atmosphere. They serve traditional pub food and lovely locally brewed cask ales.



WOLLATON HALL AND DEER PARK



YE OLD TRIP TO JERUSALEM

There are many great restaurants in the city: Jamie's Italian, Red Dog Saloon, Bistrot Pierre and Delilah to name a few. The UK is very multi-cultural so there is something for everyone. Along with lovely restaurants, there are tons of great bars too: Six Barrel, Boilermaker, Bunk and The Organ Grinder to name a few. There are some "secret" bars too, so if you see a guy just standing and looking a bit suspicious, it probably means there's a bar in the back building behind one of the non-spectacular doors.

## GOING HOME

Did it meet my expectations? No. Do I regret going? Hell no!

I don't really like the place where I live; it isn't really the best rooms or kitchens, it is in the middle of a slum and it isn't really a very social place. However, I did get one friend from my flat, who I definitely will keep in touch with.

The university is spectacular and I am going to miss the environment and the teaching ways with lectures and seminars. But the course was more architecture than it was technology, focusing way more on design than we do at KEA and that is not my focus. I like the technology more, and this experience just confirmed that, eliminating any doubts about what I was going to do with my degree. I had to apply for placement (on 6<sup>th</sup> semester) while I was abroad and I actually ended up applying for architectural practices rather than engineering firms, which was my initial thought.

From other exchange students you hear a lot about Erasmus events and/or interactions with other international students rather than the national. They don't really have that in Nottingham, and I just kept comfortable and did a lot of stuff with the guys. It feels safer to just go to a bar with them, than going to bingo-night at the SU alone. I do recommend going abroad with other Danish students, but be a bit more adventurous on the social front than I was; go to the uni events, join clubs and go to their socials.

Though I did not get the huge network of friends, I dreamed of, I have become much more confident in meeting new people. I have improved my English significantly and it will make networking both personally and professionally easier for me in the future.

I did not achieve all the things I expected, but it has given me so many other things. This experience has indeed made me more confident in every aspect of life.

Don't think twice. Just go!

Love from Notts,

Malene

