

Dunelm

The Magazine for Alumni and
Friends of Durham University

**From out of This
World to Improving
Life on Earth**

*Celebrating the success
of Durham University in
Astronomy and Cosmology*

Ruth First in the North

The 40th anniversary

Visualising the Future

Student Art Prize

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ELT Telescope - Durham's researchers are involved in the development of the HARMONI instrument for the new European Extremely Large Telescope (ELT) *under construction in Chile* Credit: ESO-L. Calçada

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CUR/10/21/181

Tred – the UK's first and only green debit card, which helps users to spend more sustainably (see page 12)

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Vice-Chancellor's Welcome

Dear fellow alumni and friends,

I take this opportunity to share with you some of the news and stories from around our global Durham community with you.

Resilience and Care across our Community

The past year has been a challenging one for all of us. Despite the many challenges that we have faced, I am filled with great pride by the wonderful work that has continued at Durham and continues at pace.

We strive to ensure that our students have the best possible experience with us and that we build and engage on our research to help to change the world for the better.

I hope you can read this issue with a similar feeling of pride in your colleagues and your community in what you have achieved over the last year.

However, as an alumnus myself, I also realise that many of our community have suffered loss and difficulty. Many of you have reached out to us for support with you career, training, and introductions to members of our network who can help. This is an integral part of what we have at our fingertips as Durham alumni. I urge you to continue to ask for our support where you feel we can connect you to, or spotlight, opportunities on offer.



Professor Antony Long

News and Support

We have recently welcomed 8000 new students to the University through our wonderful tradition of Matriculation – as you will remember, the first formal rite of passage for students joining Durham.

As an alumnus myself, I certainly remember that day clearly, as I'm sure you will too – the nerves, the excitement and the sharing of such a special occasion with other members of my college who have since become life-long friends.

It has been an honour to celebrate the arrival of so many new minds into our community – a community that has grown with every generation for almost 200 years. Minds that are excited to explore new horizons, opportunities and experiences; as we support them to liberate their potential. I know you will join me in welcoming them all and encouraging them to work hard, think deeply and enjoy their time with us in this special and unique place. **Click here to watch my Matriculation 2021 speech.**

Our research has made headlines over the world from our practical applications of Astrology and Cosmology research (featured on pages 6-7) to continuing work with our Medical Detection Dogs sniffing out Covid-19.

Our wider student experience has made extraordinary advances this year and we were proud to celebrate the achievements of our Team Durham student and graduate athletes in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics (see pages 34-35).

In addition to thousands of hours spent volunteering within our colleges and departments, or supporting our alumni chapters around the world, our alumni and friends have donated record amounts.

Your support for the Chancellor's Covid-19 Appeal last year has quickly responded to students in urgent financial need and to help the Class of 2020 as they entered an extremely difficult jobs market. In total,

we have been able to help 400 students with hardship grants and a further 43 with Career Development awards.

In this extraordinarily difficult year, the impact of giving from alumni and supporters has been overwhelming. For example, this year we received a significant contribution to our Durham Inspired North East Scholarships fund, which will almost double the number of students from low-income backgrounds in the region supported by this award.

We also renewed our prestigious and generous agreement with the Wolfson Foundation in support of postgraduate scholars in the humanities, and welcomed vital and transformative funding from one of our alumni in support of new equipment for our sports teams. Furthermore, we have been honoured and humbled this year to receive some extraordinarily generous gifts in the wills of several of our alumni and friends. These legacy gifts will make an impact on our students, departments, and colleges for many years to come, and demonstrate the lifelong affection our donors feel for the University.

Finally, we look forward to welcoming Professor Karen O'Brien in January 2022 when she takes up her post as the new Vice-Chancellor and Warden. Until then, I look forward to working more closely with our alumni and benefactors around the world to keep building the kind of University we all want Durham to be. I also look forward to seeing many of you for Convocation in November.

Meanwhile, thank you again for your ongoing support of Durham and the community – we feel it every day here in the City and within our networks around the world.

Professor Antony Long
(Geography, Collingwood College, 1988-92)
Acting Vice-Chancellor and Warden

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Wind Turbines

Durham a World Top 100 University for Sustainability

We have been ranked 87th in the world for our overall contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Times Higher Education Global Impact Rankings 2021, which assessed over 1,000 universities from 94 countries to look at their progress towards the 17 SDGs.

Best-ever Rankings for Durham MBA

The Durham MBA (Full-time) has been recognised as one of the top programmes in the world by *The Economist* Which MBA? Ranking 2021: 2nd in the UK, 11th in Europe, and 38th in the world.

Unlocking the Mystery of the Moon’s Formation

We’re using supercomputer simulations to see how the moon might have formed following a huge collision involving the early Earth 4.5 billion years ago.

University News

[Click Headings Below to View Full Article](#)

Durham Appoints New Vice-Chancellor and Warden

Professor O’Brien will be our 25th Vice-Chancellor and will join us on 4 January 2022. She will succeed Professor Stuart Corbridge, who retired on 31 July 2021.

Currently Professor Antony Long is serving as Acting Vice-Chancellor and Warden.



Professor Karen O’Brien

Wallace and Gromit Producer Funds Theatre Scholarship

Alumnus David Sproxton (*Geography, Collingwood College, 1973-76*), co-founder of the Academy Award-winning Aardman Animations (the studios behind Wallace and Gromit), is sponsoring a new theatre scholarship.



Gromit

New College Heads

Following an extensive global search, we are delighted to welcome Professor Tammi Walker and Professor Tom Mole as incoming Heads of St Cuthbert’s Society and Van Mildert College, respectively. They both took up their posts in September 2021.



Professor Tammi Walker



Professor Tom Mole

Arts and Humanities Ranked 19th Globally

Our Faculty of Arts and Humanities has been named in the World Top 20 of a prestigious league table. The subject area was ranked 19th in the *Times Higher Education* (THE) World University Rankings by Subject 2021 – its highest-ever global ranking and a rise of eight places (from 27th last year). Overall, five of our subjects have been ranked in the top 100 globally, with two in the top 50, including Durham Law School at 35th.

Humanities Scholarships Programme Funding Passes £20 million

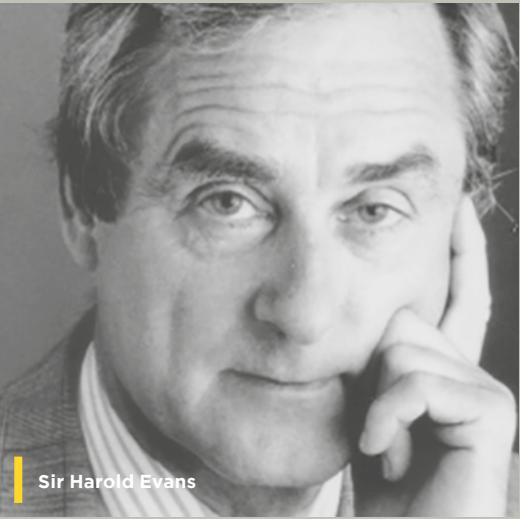
The Wolfson Postgraduate Scholarships in the Humanities programme has been renewed for the 2021-22 academic year. Over £20 million will have been awarded to some 300 scholars since it was launched in 2012.



Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Tributes to ‘Journalistic Pioneer’, Alumnus Sir Harold Evans

Paying tribute, Vice-Chancellor and Warden Professor Stuart Corbridge said: “Our community is devastated to learn of the loss of alumnus Sir Harold Evans – a journalistic pioneer whose exceptional career spanned decades and whose legacy will influence generations to come. ...”



Sir Harold Evans

We’ve Doubled our Number of Female Computer Science Students

Professor Sue Black OBE and our pioneering Computer Science team achieve immediate impact in an area where only 13% of students studying computing, gaming and related degrees in the UK are female; and where women account for only 17% of the tech workforce.

A Hedgehog-Friendly Campus

We have been awarded ‘Bronze Level Hedgehog Friendly Campus’ status for 2020-21 – an amazing achievement, especially under lockdown. Congratulations to the combined student and staff effort that has secured this accolade.



Hedgehog



Female Computer Science Students

‘Nobel Class’ Cosmology Researcher Honoured

As one of the Clarivate Highly Cited Researchers 2020 Laureates, our world-leading cosmologist Professor Carlos Frenk FRS (pictured right) has been recognised as being ‘Nobel Class’ for his work on the evolution of the universe.



FROM OUT OF THIS WORLD TO IMPROVING LIFE ON EARTH

This spring we celebrated the success of Durham University in Astronomy and Cosmology.

We're seventh in the world for our research in space science in the Clarivate Highly Cited Researchers 2020 list from the Web of Science Group. This listing also puts Durham joint first in the UK and joint third in Europe for the strength of our Space Science research.

From black holes to dark matter, planet formation to galaxy evolution and the Cosmic Web that binds the universe together, we're at the forefront of research that is furthering our understanding of the universe and the exploration of space.

We use supercomputer technology to simulate the universe as we seek to unravel its mysteries, and our researchers are helping to build some of the world's most powerful new telescopes to further our exploration of space.

Our Astronomy and Cosmology work is also supporting medical research on Earth, and we're working with businesses to improve products for customers and to enhance research and development in industry. All of this comes together in our outreach work, led by our amazing students and staff, which is inspiring the next generation of scientists.

ELT Telescope – Durham's researchers are involved in the development of the HARMONI instrument for the new European Extremely Large Telescope (ELT), *under construction in Chile* Credit: ESO



Baby Feet

Analysing Big Data to Help Tiny Babies

From trying to understand how the universe works, to trying to work out how the tiny body of a newborn baby works. How different can it be? Drawing on their experience of dealing with huge amounts of astronomical data, our researchers have been working with the UK's National Health Service to establish the standard for recognising vital signs in healthy newborn babies.

They looked at a wealth of information, to see what the normal parameters are for issues such as pulse rate and oxygen saturation. Their long-term aim is to devise a computer program that helps doctors to determine the need for specialist treatment in premature newborn babies.

The type of treatment that premature babies might receive in their first few hours of life can have important implications for the child – and knowing whether or not infants need this specialist care is a crucial part of doctors' decision-making.

Utilising Imaging Techniques to Spot Plant Diseases

We're also using an astronomical technique to spot the signs of coffee leaf rust in plants – it's a highly destructive fungal disease, with the potential to wipe out vast areas of crops and entire plantations.

As many hill farmers in developing countries who rely on coffee production for their livelihoods don't want to use fungicides for ecological reasons, or can't afford them, early detection of the disease is vitally important.

By employing imaging techniques normally used to study objects in space, we're able to detect infections in coffee plants, so that action can be taken to stop the disease spreading.

James Webb Space Telescope – We've helped build components for NASA's new James Webb Space Telescope Credit: NASA Goddard

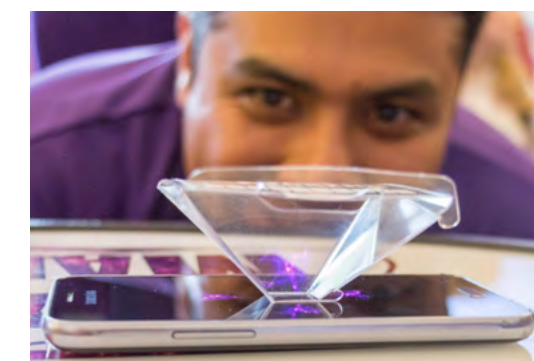
Limiting the Spread of Covid-19

Our particle physics and cosmology research students are also using their knowledge of maths and big data in the fight against Covid-19. They're part of a team of experts, including the United Nations and fellow academics, working to model the spread of the virus in different scenarios.

The team's computer-generated models can help to predict what the best public health interventions and measures could be, in order to limit the effects of the disease. They're applying their models to the Kutupalong-Batukhali Expansion Site region of the Cox's Bazar refugee operation in Bangladesh, home to 600,000 people.

The team is also designing a tool that will allow relief organisations, decision-makers and modellers to view multiple scenarios at the same time, to see what interventions could work best.

Cosmology outreach – Our students and staff are inspiring young people to get involved in science Credit: Josh Borrow



My Durham Story

Alumna Mia Flynn *(Criminology, St Aidan’s College, 2015-19)* tells *Dunelm* about her journey to Durham as a mature student.

As a prospective mature university student, Mia Flynn took an access course to pave the way to her degree course. Her original inspiration came from a colleague who was running a domestic abuse seminar in the centre where Mia was volunteering. The course leader said that she had studied criminology at university.

Mia had spent eight years struggling with drug and alcohol addiction. In recovery, volunteering at one of the centres that had helped her was a key step in her journey. “I had never wanted to go to university before that, but then I decided to look into it and, suddenly, I decided it was what I wanted to do.

“I came up for a visit and I spoke to Dr Ivan Hill [former Undergraduate Criminology Programme Director]. He showed us around the departments and talked about the degree some more, and inspired me to come to Durham.

“With my access course, I got, like, 12 merits and the rest were distinctions, and that was enough to get into Durham... The course is equivalent to two years of A levels in ten months; it was intense, but good.”

“I like to raise awareness of domestic abuse with my TikToks”



Mia Flynn

Going above and beyond

While at Durham as a mature student, Mia worked part-time, but still found time to join in University and Durham life, learning sign language and getting involved in the Durham criminal justice walk. She explains: “This involves a big walk around Durham, showing people where the old holding cells were, to transport prisoners to the river. Where the Dun Cow [pub] currently is, [that] is where the hangmen used to stay, as it was close to the court. You can still see the old hooks on the walls where they used to hang people.”

Mia was a student ambassador at many open days and on visits to local schools and colleges. She recalls: “Ivan [Dr Hill] played a huge part in my time at Durham. As a student ambassador, I went to Consett with Ivan and we did a talk for a college. I really enjoyed that. There were some other staff who went above and beyond in supporting me during my time at Durham, particularly Dr Alison Jobe, Dr Donna Brown, Dr Will Coyles and Dr Will Craigie.”

She also volunteered with the North Eastern Prison After Care Society (NEPACS) in Newcastle and Durham, by supporting prisoners’ families in the North-East, as well as volunteering at Barnardo’s and at Changing Lives.

Mia is now studying for her Master’s in Social Work at Durham, her final placement having been delayed because of the pandemic lockdowns. She is hoping to get her placement this summer to complete her course.

Raising awareness

Working to help people, particularly other women, is an important aspect of Mia’s mission. Her personal experiences growing up and her volunteering experience, combined with her work at Durham, have put her in a strong position for whatever she chooses to do in her career.

During lockdown, Mia has been harnessing TikTok to raise awareness of domestic abuse. “So many people think that if you have been physically hurt by somebody, that is the worst category to be in,” she says. “Whereas, when I have done the freedom programmes with the charity Harbour, many people say the mental and emotional side is a lot worse – and stays long after the bruises fade. The things that people cannot physically see can be a lot more damaging, so I like to raise awareness around that with my TikToks.”

TikTok: **Miaflynn30**
Instagram: **Miaflynn30**



Mia Flynn



Hannah Samano

Launching a Business in a Pandemic

E-commerce innovator Hannah Samano *(Modern Languages, College of St Hild & St Bede, 2011-15)* describes setting up the first marketplace for sustainable menstrual brands and menstrual wellbeing

I’m a linguist at heart and always have been. I was brought up in a bilingual household, and went to a large London state school, where I loved learning languages. Durham has a brilliant languages department and, unlike other universities, the course allows students to study three, so I chose Durham in order to study French, Spanish and Italian – and set myself up for great holidays for life.

I had a blast at university. I became very involved in student theatre, both through Hild Bede Theatre and Durham Student Theatre, and probably spent more time producing plays and performing than studying. But I loved my degree! My year abroad had a huge influence on me – I interned at a tech start-up in Paris, and from then on I knew that I wanted to build my own tech company one day.

On leaving Durham in 2015, I joined Unilever’s graduate scheme. It was a wild experience – they threw me in at the deep end and, aged 22, I found myself managing global technology projects and teams.

In 2018, I shifted gear and moved to Kenya, to help launch a tech start-up for women’s health, called Kasha. We built an e-commerce platform that allows women to buy menstrual care and family-planning products online.

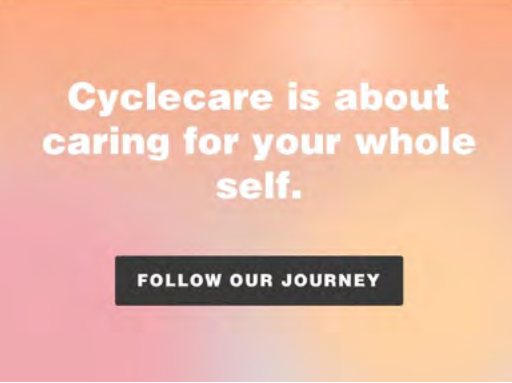
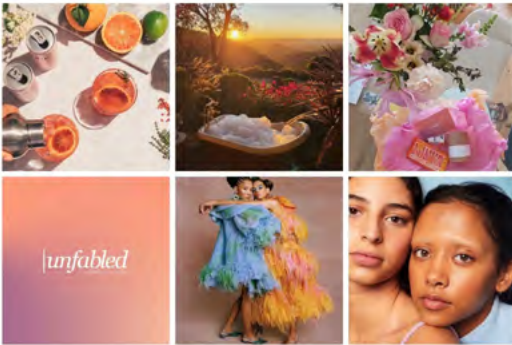
I realised that using technology to solve problems for women’s health and wellbeing was something I really wanted to focus on. In every country in the world, stigma around menstruation still exists – almost two-thirds of women are embarrassed by their period. The same stigma applies to perimenopause and menopause.

In addition to the stigma is a lack of support and education. As women, it seems that at every stage in our lives we arrive empty-handed. We’re not properly educated or equipped to understand or deal with our hormones and the various cycles in our lives.

As I began to learn more about menstrual health, I began to see some enormous problems from the consumer side of things too. There is no legal requirement to list the ingredients in menstrual products, and it’s not generally known that mainstream tampons are bleached. They contain dioxins and toxic chemicals, which can be absorbed into our bodies.

These products also have a terrible impact on the environment. The UK alone generates 200,000 tonnes of menstrual products each year, which end up in landfill or in the ocean. Typical menstrual pads contain up to 90% plastic – they can take one thousand years to decompose.

“As women, we’re not properly educated or equipped to understand or deal with our hormones and the various cycles in our lives”



I decided I wanted to make it easy to find non-toxic and sustainable products for menstrual care. But not just that – 90% of people with periods experience difficult symptoms during their menstrual cycle, such as cramping, mood swings, breakouts and bloating. I also wanted to support people by supplying information and products to help alleviate these symptoms.

A holistic approach to period care

In January 2021, I founded Unfabled. Unfabled.co is the first marketplace for menstrual wellness: we curate sustainable brands for menstrual care, menstrual symptoms, and for self-care at any time of the month.

Unfabled takes a holistic approach to period care: alongside organic and sustainable menstrual care products, our customers can buy candles, skincare, bath products, CBD products, and chocolate. We want to centre menstruation within how our community builds their wellness rituals, since our period health is an indicator of overall health but is too often overlooked.

Starting a business in a pandemic has been strange, but there have been silver linings. The winter lockdown gave me a lot of undistracted time to build the website. I launched Unfabled.co at the end of February, and within the first week we sold out of almost everything and had customers all over the UK. I think that people were spending a lot of time indoors on their phones, and it meant that the word got out about Unfabled very quickly.

Now that Unfabled has been born and we have a loyal and growing customer base, my next steps are to scale the business. I’m in the process of fundraising, so that I can

invest more into our technology, marketing and educational content.

We deserve to understand what’s happening in our bodies, and how our hormones affect both our physical and mental health throughout our lives. Hopefully, Unfabled can play a small part in empowering women, by providing the right information, products and community.

You can find **Hannah Samano** on LinkedIn
Website: **unfabled.co**
Instagram: **@unfabled.co**
Twitter: **@tech_han**





Take a Peek at One of Our Hidden Treasures

The doors may be closed right now, but there are other ways to experience Cosin's Library, a hidden gem in the heart of Durham City.

The Cosin's Library Project has launched a series of free online workshops, allowing people to learn more about one of the oldest public libraries in North-East England.

Run by Durham University's Archives and Special Collections, the Cosin's Library Project was awarded funding in 2019 by Arts Council England under its Designated Development Fund to share Cosin's Library – located on Palace Green and founded in 1669 by Bishop John Cosin – with the public.

Following conservation work, Cosin's Library is set to reopen in autumn 2021.

Find out more Visit the Cosin's Library website to learn more: sites.durham.ac.uk/cosinslibrary

Free online workshops

Due to Covid-19, the project has developed a programme of online events, hosted by a range of incredible artists, writers, musicians and actors.

Featuring everything from poetry and quilting, to Shakespeare and zine-making, these free and accessible sessions will enable you to experience the library's history and contents from your own home.

'All the World's a Stage'

The last workshop, 'All the World's a Stage', was hosted by local actor and theatremaker Alice Byrne. Inspired by the iconic Shakespeare First Folio, Alice introduced Shakespeare's most famous stories, characters and language through creative and drama-based exercises.



A New Home for Mathematical Sciences and Computer Science

We're celebrating the launch of the latest addition to our campus – a new, world-class hub for our Mathematical Sciences and Computer Science departments.

The new building provides state-of-the-art facilities for students and researchers alike, and offers a dedicated space for enterprise and entrepreneurship, so our talented students can bring their ideas to reality.

Integration and collaboration

The £42 million building provides cutting-edge learning, teaching and study spaces. It will enable both departments to more than double in size, welcoming more undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as researchers, academics and support staff.

It has been designed to bring students and staff even closer together, fostering further collaboration between the two departments, while also acting as a focal point for their engagement with industry.

Local tech consultancy Scott Logic is one such industry partner, whose collaborations have been recognised in the naming of the new Scott Logic Lecture Theatre in the new building.

Enterprise and entrepreneurship

The building is also home to the Hazan Venture Lab, a first-of-its-kind space at Durham, dedicated to supporting student enterprise. Managed by our Careers & Enterprise Centre, it will host everything from business advice sessions to events where students can pitch their business ideas.

It is named after Durham University graduate Jonathan Hazan, who donated £500,000 to support the development of the Venture Lab.

Virtual launch, tangible benefits

In line with Covid-19 restrictions, the launch was a virtual event, featuring a special guest talk from celebrated tech pioneer and philanthropist Dame Stephanie Shirley. Check out the virtual opening here: youtube.com/watch?v=I_9zGdIIQzY

We are looking forward to welcoming students, researchers and staff to this fantastic hub for teaching and innovation, which gives our students and researchers the ideal platform for success.

"It will enable both departments to more than double in size"



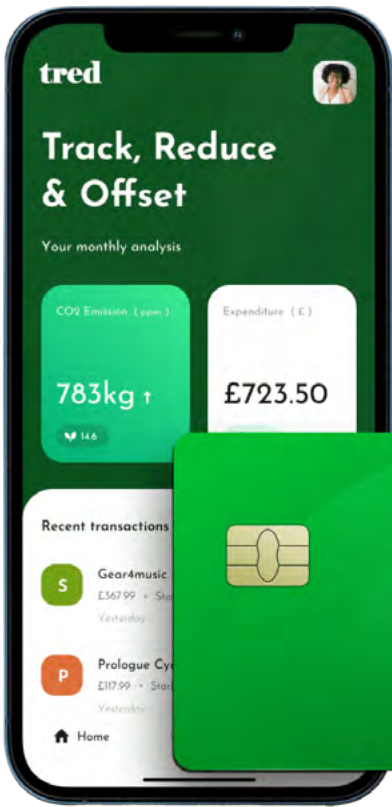
Changing the World

Durham entrepreneurs think big

At Durham, we work with our students and graduates with entrepreneurial ideas at any stage of development.

Our Careers & Enterprise Centre offers a comprehensive package of support to help you achieve your goals. No matter what your idea is, or how much progress you’ve made to date, we can help you launch a successful business or become self-employed.

Here are just two of the many world-changing entrepreneurial ventures being undertaken by our alumni.



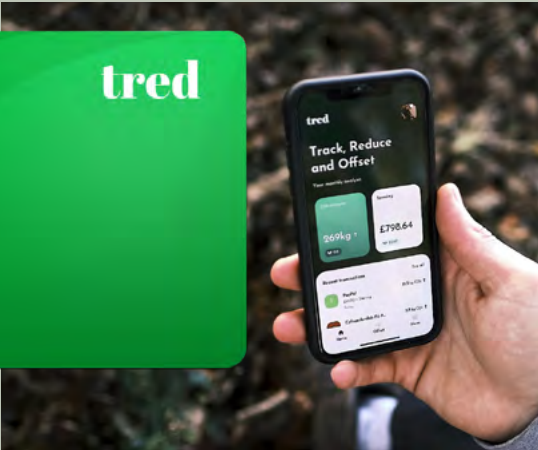
William Smith (Left) and Peter Kirby (Right)

Crowdfunding to Launch the UK’s First Green Debit Card

Graduates Peter Kirby (*Engineering, University College, 2011-15*) and William Smith (*Engineering, University College, 2011-15*) have been working with colleagues at Durham to launch Tred – the UK’s first and only green debit card, which helps users to spend more sustainably.

Tred tracks your carbon footprint, helps you reduce your impact, and gives you a simple way to offset the rest. And every time you spend, you will help Tred to plant trees – with its profits funding reforestation projects, not fossil fuels.

Everything we buy has an environmental cost, from a daily coffee to the weekly food shop.



One in two of us want to make more socially responsible decisions with their money, and as many people are searching ‘green bank’ in the UK as are searching ‘mobile bank’.

Peter and Will are crowdfunding to launch their green debit card to the public and, at the time of writing, have raised over £1 million – far surpassing their initial target of £400,000.

Will spoke to us about working with the Business School and with Marek Tokarski and his team in Careers & Enterprise: “We’ll always have a soft spot for Durham. Pete and I met nearly a decade ago during freshers’ week and we’ve been working together ever since.

“In our early days, we used Durham’s Business School to access grants and coaching to bring our idea to life.

“A lot of the people we’re now working with could be traced back to Marek and the Careers & Enterprise team. If you’ve got an idea and are a student or grad, get in touch with them.”



Tackling World Hunger with Ocean Agriculture

Graduates Luke Young (*Biological Sciences, Collingwood College, 2014-18*) and Rory Hornby (*Biological Sciences, St Mary’s College, 2014-18*) founded Agrisea in 2019, an ocean agriculture company that works towards alleviating world hunger, by designing and implementing a truly sustainable food system.

Their genetic design enhances the ability of crops such as rice to survive and thrive in our oceans, similar to hydroponics. They create floating ocean farms that can supply regions with a sustainable food source. Production is environmentally and economically sustainable, while protecting environmental resources required for a sustainable planet.

They were led by their passion for making the world a better place, Luke and Rory said: “We share a vision for the future where the world could be better than it is today. We couldn’t turn away from that possibility and deemed [it important] to at least try. Together, over time, we found a better way and built it into a company.”

Luke and Rory, who received the Highly Commended award for the Durham University Blueprint Start-up Challenge in 2019, combined the resources and support available at Durham with getting out into the world and exploring the wealth of opportunities on offer. “For a young biotech company, the primary barrier is funding. Seeking partnerships, incubator programmes or angel investors can help alleviate this. Just ask your mentors, Durham University Enterprise or local incubators for advice, and you will find your own way,” they advise.

“We share a vision for the future where the world could be better than it is today.”

Agrisea is now partnering with Grand Bahama Blue Action Lab for a Bahamian pilot (expected to launch in August 2021) and with Audacity for a Singaporean pilot (expected to launch in September 2021).



Luke Young



Got a Big Idea? We Can Help

The Hazan Venture Lab is Durham University’s first purpose-built space for entrepreneurship, where entrepreneurial students and graduates can connect, collaborate and form a community.

It will help to build on the success that Careers & Enterprise have already achieved in recent years: 2019-20 figures showed a 49% increase in the number of students engaged; an 80% increase in the number of start-ups; and three start-ups attracting investment of over £100,000.

Durham Venture School is our new flagship programme, bringing together talented individuals to launch high-potential start-ups. This is a unique opportunity to work alongside other exceptional Durham graduates to explore the significant problems facing industry and society. We will surround you with the tools, resources and connections to help you generate new ideas and launch ventures with the potential to achieve significant impact.

We want you to think big. Durham Venture School offers an unrivalled package of support to help you do this, providing an exclusive opportunity to explore your ideas within an ambitious community of like-minded individuals with the tools and drive to make a difference.

We are also looking for experienced entrepreneurs from our alumni community to support this pioneering programme – the first of its kind in the UK higher education sector.

The Vice-Chancellor’s Award for Outstanding Entrepreneurial Impact is our most prestigious award for graduate entrepreneurship. The award recognises the achievements of graduate entrepreneurs striving to make a positive impact on the world. It supports them through the difficult period of scaling a validated business model and/or developing innovative concepts that they aim to bring to market.

Applications for this award are welcomed from graduates of the past five years who are actively engaging with investors to raise investment (£100,000+) for the first time.

Get in touch with Careers & Enterprise at durham.ac.uk/careers/supportinggrads

Visualising the Future

Durham's Student Art Prize is now in its second year. Alumnus Richard Roberts (*Law & Politics, St John's College, 1976-79*), who collaborated with us to make the Prize a reality, explains why it is important to support students in their creative endeavours.

Our alumni know the value of being Durham inspired. Your successes are an inspiration to current and prospective Durham students, but your time and support, whether for your college or department, will help to inspire the great minds and leaders of tomorrow. Read how Richard turned his passion into a cherished part of student life at Durham.

"Like many good ideas, that for the Student Art Prize came out of a chance remark at a party."

"In conversation with Liz Waller, University Librarian, at the Vice-Chancellor's Summer Party in 2019, I was politely, but very firmly, commenting on Durham's emphasis on sport. While I heartily applaud all the sporting, and indeed musical and theatrical, achievements of our students, there was a glaring omission in respect of art. So I found myself volunteering to literally put my money where my mouth was and help organise a student art competition. I also agreed to fund it - for the first year at least - just to assess take-up.

"In creating the Student Art Prize, I wanted to pitch the prizes at a level that would encourage students to take part, and so the awards were set at £1,500 for first prize, £1,000 for second and £500 for third. For any student, the opportunity to use their talent and ability to win such an award seems to me to be extremely tempting. I was also keen to ensure that each year's winners are rewarded by having their artwork taken into the Western Art Collection at the University, and displayed somewhere where it can be enjoyed."

"Within a short time, and thanks to the considerable skills of Alix Collingwood-Swinburn, the University's Curator (Contemporary Art), the 2019/20 Student Art Prize had been organised, with a theme of 'Diversity'. I was so encouraged by the impressive number and standard of entries

that I then committed to fund the Prize for at least the next ten years.

"The theme for the Student Art Prize 2020/21 is 'Heroism' and the number and standard of entries is exceptionally high again. Considering Durham does not teach art as a formal subject, I am amazed and humbled at the level of proficiency shown by our student artists. Their interpretations of heroism have been many and varied."

Stop and look

"I was a student here from 1976 to 1979 and three years ago returned to Durham to live permanently. Very quickly, I noticed a number of changes in student life compared to 40 years ago. To me, the most striking was that students now seem to be under much greater stress and pressure. They face financial worries about affording to be at university and the pressure of wanting to achieve their very best so that they can attain good career goals.

"Student mental health is of real concern to me, as the experience of being at university for three years should be a time to enjoy both academic work and wider student experiences – be that sport, drama, music or just the environment of Durham and the wider North-East."

"I have no artistic talent at all, but my artist friends tell me how calming it can be to paint, draw or contemplate how to take that perfect photographic shot. Throughout my career as a lawyer, I have found great

Second Prize 2019/20
Anna Horwich
 'Wisdom of Age'
 Oil and gouache on canvas

solace in looking at art – be it paintings, photographs or sculpture. I buy art because it says something to me. Each day, I try to focus on one of the paintings I have and spend some time really looking at it, even if it's a painting I've owned for many years – that is very calming. Art can trigger memories, spark imagination, challenge beliefs and perceptions, but most of all make us stop and look.

"Over the years, I hope that the Student Art Prize can do much to encourage students to look at art in the same way as they would look at sport or drama or music – as a rewarding contrast from the slog of academic study. Whether you are the student artist or art viewer, there is much to be thankful for in an environment that celebrates art in all its forms."

"I am also pleased that following last year's competition a number of individual colleges have now embraced their own internal art competitions. I was particularly pleased to be invited to judge the St John's College

'Chronicling Covid' competition, which will be a permanent addition to the College archives. I am also very impressed with the 'Women of Castle' project as an example of how art will celebrate how a traditional male environment has, over the last 30 years, adapted to the presence of women.'

A creative outlet

"I have a vision that, over the coming years, we shall broaden the Student Art Prize to include separate classes for photography, sculpture, videos and creative writing. In the longer term, I hope that we can encourage a dialogue with other universities, so that we can create an inter-university art competition."

"There is so much scope in what can be achieved by raising the profile of art within the University. The abundance of wall space in both college and University buildings would be enhanced by art on the walls, while outdoor spaces can also benefit from art."

"Seeing Durham - the institution, the staff and the students - embrace the Student Art Prize as a new encouragement, outlet and platform for art, has been, and continues to be, hugely rewarding."

How can you help?

"As an alumnus, alumna or friend of Durham University reading this reflection, if you too are supportive of art, its creation and benefits, in any of its forms, may I encourage you to consider how you might help the Student Art Prize grow and flourish."

Get in touch to find out more at
alumni.office@durham.ac.uk.

'Hands of Acceptance'

by Alice Stubbings

Alice Stubbings (*Law, St Mary's College*), winner of the inaugural 2019/20 Student Art Prize on the theme of 'Diversity', explains what it means to her:

"I am really grateful that the Student Art Prize has been introduced within the University and that I was able to have the opportunity to participate. Having always been a lover of art, it has been really nice to be able to develop this passion alongside my degree."

"The competition offers an opportunity for students to showcase their work, providing a platform for the arts to be further promoted at Durham. Art can be used to encourage more positive mental health, which is vitally important in the context of continually declining student mental health. For me personally, I find completing artwork a massive aid in times of stress.

"When I entered the competition, I never thought that the outcome would be what it was. Winning the competition has given me so much more confidence in my ability and in myself, which is something I really struggled with previously. Because of the Prize, I have been presented with a multitude of opportunities that I wouldn't have otherwise experienced, for which I am incredibly grateful. My piece was featured on the Vice-Chancellor's Christmas card 2020 and in multiple exhibitions. I have also had the opportunity to write for the University blog. I am also massively honoured to have had my work included in the University Art Collection."

Liz Waller, Director of University Library and Collections, University Librarian, tells us how the introduction of the Prize contributes to the student experience here at Durham:

"We launched the Student Art Prize to offer some of the wonderfully talented student artists we have at Durham University further opportunities to develop their skills and have their work publicly exhibited and appreciated."

"We are extremely grateful to Richard for his enthusiasm and support of the Student Art Prize. His recent financial commitment to the Prize for the next ten years will enable a huge number of students at Durham to not only get involved in the Art Prize, but also to experience the positive health and wellbeing benefits art and creativity can have."

"Although we don't teach art at Durham, almost all of our colleges have their own art groups or societies, where students can take part in workshops, meet artists and develop their practice. The University is also home to an extensive art collection that informs our teaching and research, as well as being on show around the University and local area for us all to enjoy. We hope that the future development and expansion of the Student Art Prize ensures that creating art becomes very much a part of the essential Durham student experience."

**STUDENT
ART
PRIZE
2019/20
DIVERSITY**

First Prize 2019/20
Alice Stubbings
'Hands of Acceptance'
Ink and coloured pencil on paper



Right – Heloise Ruth First (4 May 1925 – 17 August 1982)
South African anti-apartheid activist and scholar

Ruth First in the North

The 40th anniversary of the assassination of Ruth First, the anti-apartheid activist and Durham University lecturer, will be marked in August 2022. A series of events is planned to celebrate the life of this remarkable woman and her relationship with Durham.

This exciting collaborative project aims to explore First's time in the City, a period that is not well documented, despite her spending five years lecturing and researching at Durham. She was still working for Durham University – on research leave in Maputo, Mozambique – when she was assassinated in 1982.

A significant figure in the South African Communist Party, First became a leading light in the campaign against the apartheid regime. In 1963, she was imprisoned without charge and exiled to London the following year. There, she became active in the UK anti-apartheid movement, publishing several books and research papers, and organising campaigns from her family home in Camden. She took up a lecturer post in the Department of Sociology and Social Administration at Durham in 1973.

First taught various modules, combining her interests in international development, Marxist theories and feminism. She also supervised PhD students, ran campaigns remotely, and was actively involved in the University's anti-apartheid movement. This involved solidarity with the Durham Miners' Union and divestment from organisations that supported the apartheid regime in South Africa.

In 1977, First went on research leave to Maputo, later becoming the Director of Research at the Centre for African Studies, where she conducted ground-breaking study into the lives of Mozambican goldmine workers. On 17 August 1982, she received a parcel bomb, which killed her instantly.

A lasting legacy

Her legacy at Durham includes the **Ruth First Educational Trust**, a partnership between the University and St Chad's College, which runs the **Ruth First Scholarship**, sponsoring a student from southern Africa to take up a taught Master's degree at Durham each year.

Her impact on the City can also be seen – notably the mural on the side of Ruth First House, on Providence Row. Durham colleague Gavin Williams noted: "She worked hard to bridge the gap between academics and political activists... She was a one-woman think-tank."

Political activism in Durham

The Ruth First in the North research group aims to discover more about First's relationship with the City of Durham, the University and its history of activism against oppressive regimes, and to learn more about how her research and teaching affected – and was affected by – her political activities.

The project will explore more deeply the knotty relationship between academics and activism – a topic that remains relevant today, in issues around decolonisation and academic freedom.

The research group, along with the Ruth First Educational Trust, is planning a number of events, including academic workshops and discussions, as well as a more general celebration of the life and work of Ruth First and her relationship with Durham University.

For more information, please contact Nancy Cartwright: nancy.cartwright@durham.ac.uk

If Ruth First taught you, we would love to hear from you. Please get in touch at alumni.office@durham.ac.uk.

Covid in The Classroom: A Teacher's Perspective

Niki Bell

Niki Bell (Geoscience, St John's College, 2003-07), a teacher and school manager in Manchester, reflects on her personal experience of teaching during the pandemic.

Lockdown 2020 was tough on teachers. At my school, we were given a three-week Easter to learn the new online teaching software and adapt our resources, then the students were back and we were off. I've got a toddler at home and, with no childcare in the first lockdown, we were working six-hour shifts doing work and parenting. It was hell. I was up at 6am working, then parenting until 6pm, dinner, bath and bedtime, then working the outstanding hour and a half, before collapsing into bed.

Weekends were no better. With our family housebound by the pandemic, there was nothing to do. With an only child who wants to play games, we were drained at the end of every weekend. Our shifts at work became respite from the weekends. After ten weeks, I was signed off work with stress, and life got a lot simpler for a while. Eventually, I was furloughed for the summer. In September, I was thrust back into online teaching, but this time I was three months behind the learning curve that my colleagues had been through. Times have been very tough indeed.

Online teaching has been awful for teaching and learning. Never in my 12 years of teaching have I been unable to look over the shoulders of students to see their work. Many of our students don't even turn on their cameras or microphones, so it's like teaching to an empty room. A significant amount of my assessment for learning information comes from the body language of my students. I've got so good at identifying their body language, that at the end of the year I usually entertain my class by doing an impression of each student when they get stuck – those silent cues I've been learning to recognise all year. This is very popular with the students and gets a great response. They can see how well



Online teaching

I know them, and they value being known so well. This year, I'd be hard pushed to pick my students out of a line-up.

I don't want to think about the welfare issues I've missed, or the mental health referrals I haven't made. Without the normal interaction between student and teacher, I haven't been able to use my professional judgement to identify such issues. Instead, I've been relying on long-term data trends to identify possible problems at home, which can incur a delay that may make the intervention worthless.

My standard of teaching has suffered too. Without visual and auditory information from students, I've been unable to tailor my teaching to their interests, or read the room

record videos, and give digital feedback to students. People who previously found email a stretch, have taught an entire year of classes online. I never imagined that they could achieve this, and I'm sure they have surprised themselves.

There has also been a huge increase in the variety of data yielded by online learning. In an attempt to obtain more information about students' study habits and to assess the impact of different activities, we've learnt to make more use of data captured by our virtual learning environment and other online activities. I hope this knowledge can be used to enhance teaching and learning going forward – but for this year, it's been a poor substitute.

“Times have been very tough indeed. Online teaching has been awful for teaching and learning”

and adjust my teaching on the fly. We often use humour to make a point, or dramatic tension to tell a poignant story, but this has been made almost impossible under conditions this year. I have an entire cohort of students I've not bonded with. It's been heart-breaking. I cannot help thinking about those students who live and study independently: this must have been a very lonely year.

One of the positive outcomes of online teaching has been the incredible learning curve we've been forced through. I've watched technophobic colleagues learn how to competently use the internet,

Despite these relatively small gains, there really is no argument to be made for long-term distance learning for our young people. There is no substitute for a teacher interacting with students in the classroom.

Next academic year, I'm looking forward to meeting my class. I'm excited to see them react to what happens in the classroom, to see them develop academic interests and to feed their enthusiasm. I'm ready to be a proper teacher again.



Proudly Supporting Durham's UK City of Culture Bid

News County Durham is a step closer to being crowned UK City of Culture 2025 has been met with joy and resolve by the partnership driving forward the bid.

Delight as County Durham reaches next stage of UK City of Culture 2025 competition.

As a university community, we take great pride in working with our partners in the city and across the county to drive innovation and share knowledge to help our regional communities thrive.

The bid aims to secure the title for Durham, meaning communities across the city and county would benefit from the national spotlight being turned on our region's vast and varied landscape, heritage and culture.

City of Culture status would provide a major boost for the whole of North East England, with significant potential to increase visitor numbers and investment, and to create new economic and employment opportunities.

Professor Antony Long, Acting Vice-Chancellor and Warden of the University, says: "Gaining City of Culture status would be a gamechanger for a region poised for renewal. It would be an outstanding vehicle to broaden, strengthen and energise the connections our University has to organisations, charities and grassroots communities across the county; it would allow us to do even more to share our knowledge and talent for the benefit of the whole county."

Gateway to the world

Durham University has been part of the heritage of Durham since 1832 and we provide a gateway to the world for the people of our county, through our global network of cultural and educational institutions and our world-class collections, museums and libraries.

Our Oriental Museum is the only museum in the north of the UK devoted solely to the art and archaeology of the great cultures of North Africa and Asia.

Durham Castle is not only home to hundreds of our students, but it also boasts some of the best-preserved Norman architecture in the country and houses over 5,000 objects ranging from 17th-century tapestries to 20th-century social history collections.

Located on the UNESCO World Heritage Site next to Durham Castle, Bishop John Cosin's Library, dating back to 1669, is one of the earliest public libraries in the north of England and recognised for its national significance.

Examples of our cultural collaborations include the Zurbaran Centre for Spanish and Latin American Art with the Prado in Madrid, plus the close partnership between our Oriental Museum and the Palace Museum in Beijing and the National Museum of Japanese History.

Regional contribution

Our student community, active in hundreds of sport, theatre, music and art societies as well in an extensive student volunteer programme, will be a powerful engine for the City of Culture.

Combined with the boundary-breaking research of our academic staff, which improves the lives across the world, we are excited to continue making a significant and worthwhile contribution to society, both on our doorstep and beyond.

As an example, our research is being used to transform coal mines into multi-million pound renewable energy systems, via our Durham Energy Institute, with the potential to make a significant difference to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. This could act as a springboard to inspire community innovation on climate change within our region.

Exciting events

County Durham already boasts a growing calendar of events, many of which we play an active part in, including Lumiere, Kynren, Durham Book Festival and Durham BRASS.

This offer will be boosted over the coming years, including a programme of events around the display of the Lindisfarne Gospels, the relaunch of the home of the Durham Miners' Association, Redhills, and the opening of a new dedicated history centre for the county.

The initial bid is being submitted by Durham County Council on behalf of Culture Durham, a partnership of organisations, including Beamish Museum, Durham Cathedral, Durham University and Locomotion.



Why Durham?

I knew I wanted to get into a top university. I looked at the top universities in the league table and applied based on academic reputation and opportunity to get involved in the wider student community and develop other extracurricular skills. Durham clearly stood out because of the collegiate structure. Durham is a beautiful place and, combined with its small size and academic ranking, it was the perfect place to get a good degree, while also being able to completely immerse myself in the student community.

What activities were you involved in?

I was involved with various clubs and societies at Durham. These included: Cricket, Football and Badminton and volunteering through Student Community Action (SCA). I was also part of the executive committee of my college as the clubs and societies officer. This helped me keep active and take my mind off academic stress. I also met very close friends in the process.

What were you most proud of at Durham?

I am most proud of my volunteering work with SCA, as it made me realise that Durham is an extremely privileged student bubble and that there are important projects in the local community that students can get involved with and contribute towards.

What are your fondest memories from your time here?

Interestingly, my fondest memories of Durham were from the last few years. It's the little things like organising movie nights and meals with your housemates and the memories you share from nights out with them.

How has Durham inspired you?

I am a very driven person, so Durham was a massive step up for me from the background I came from. It helped me step out of my comfort zone and become more confident in the process.

What have you been up to since leaving?

Since leaving Durham, I have been immersed in the world of start-ups and venture capital, by founding a start-up that I am still involved with and working as a scout for a tech venture capital firm. This has also led to me being appointed a Non-Exec Director at the National Trust, Kielder Forest & Waterparks.

“Don't worry too much about what you want to do after graduation and also don't follow the herd and apply for jobs that your friends are applying for”

What are you doing that is most meaningful to you now?

I am passionate about entrepreneurship, so being able to work on my own company is both exciting and rewarding. I also get to speak with and mentor very exciting early-stage start-ups, so you get to learn something new about a particular sector or technology every day!

Tell us your latest news

I am still primarily involved with my start-up, Scientistt, where we are at an exciting stage of working with leading STEM recruiters, such as consulting and patent law firms. Because of this interest by employers to access our community, we will also be expanding our team to help with the recruitment side of the business. Outside this, I am looking at developing ways to help more international students consider start-ups as an alternative to the few Tier-2 visa sponsors they have to compete for.

Personal interests

My other interest currently is football. I follow the Premier League, especially Man City, religiously. The team is currently doing well, so it's good for the mental health as well!

What would be your top piece of advice for current students and/or recent graduates?

Don't worry too much about what you want to do after graduation and also don't follow the herd and apply for jobs that your friends are applying for. Try to focus on a specific interest and dedicate time to being very good at that. First and second years of university are a great time to explore career opportunities in different areas and whether you see yourself doing that in the future. I see too many students applying for jobs at law, consulting and banking firms just because it's the 'thing to do', or because of peer pressure. Working in start-ups or founding your own company can be more of a steep learning curve than two or three years at a top graduate scheme. I think because of the pace, agility and being able to take on various roles at a start-up, you become much more well-rounded. You can also be quite tactical about career choice, by being involved with a start-up in a certain role for a few years and becoming highly sought after, compared to someone who has been a small cog in a big firm.

Is there anything that you know now that you wish you'd known when graduating?

Yes, I wish I had known the opportunities there are to work in start-ups and alternative career paths outside the traditional consulting, banking and law firms. The top US universities are very good at promoting entrepreneurship to students and the UK is now slowly catching up as well.

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After an exceptionally difficult year, we marked Dunelm Days 2020 in a different way that still brought alumni and friends together, while celebrating the spirit of support and everyone’s connection to Durham.

Dunelm Days has been an annual event for the past six years, with alumni and supporters from all around the world coming together to celebrate their shared lifelong connection with Durham University and to meet fellow graduates.

Since its launch in 2014, Dunelm Days have been celebrated around the globe through entertaining social gatherings hosted by members of the alumni and supporter community during a defined period.

In 2019, for example, Dunelm Days saw over 800 alumni and friends meet up at over 60 events in 33 countries throughout November. Events ranged from Durham-like formals, museum tours, afternoon teas, picnics and boat trips. These events were all made possible thanks to our dedicated volunteers, who organised the gatherings in their local area to reconnect with the Durham community, meet new people and have fun.



Doing it differently in 2020

Covid-19 made us rethink our plans for 2020. We wanted to mark Dunelm Days in a way that still encapsulated the spirit of support and community that the programme is known and loved for.

So in a united celebration of International Volunteer Day on Saturday 5 December 2020, we partnered with Durham University’s Student and Staff Volunteering Team to invite alumni, students and staff to connect with each other from the safety of their own home for the week leading up to International Volunteer Day. We created a Facebook Group for the community to share happy Durham memories, to offer support and to exchange their volunteering contributions.

“Celebrating our connection to Durham in an exciting and collegiate way”

The group was a busy hub of activity and attracted 500 members. We had members joining us from Australia, Austria, Canada, France, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Luxembourg,

What are Dunelm Days?

All Dunelm Days are organised and hosted by friendly Durham alumni, with the support of the Alumni Team. Events can be big or small, and must be held in November. They are a fantastic opportunity to meet new people, catch up with old friends, and reminisce about your time at Durham.

Wherever you are, you will not be too far from someone who has a Durham connection. With over 200,000 alumni around the world, we want to continue growing these annual global gatherings along with the increasing alumni body.

Mexico, Nigeria, Oman, the Philippines, Singapore, Sweden, the UK and the USA.

Alumni, students and staff connected with each other and shared throwback photos, fond memories and the impact they make through their incredible volunteering efforts at Durham and around the world.

Some of our alumni and supporters in China were fortunate enough to get together in person to celebrate Dunelm Days. The new Durham University Alumni Chapter in Nanjing used the occasion as an opportunity to launch the group. Meanwhile, alumni in Beijing organised an event with Professor Lu Feng from Peking University on ‘Slow Down or Speed Up for China Economy in 2021’.

We are looking forward to celebrating Dunelm Days again soon and hope you will join us!

Thank you to everyone who has supported Dunelm Days over the years and who continues to do so today. We are committed to bringing together the global Durham community to celebrate our connection to Durham in an exciting and collegiate way.

Please make sure that your alumni record is up to date with your current location and email address, so that we can invite you to events in your area. If you would like to take part this year, please get in touch at: alumni.volunteer@durham.ac.uk



Thank You for Supporting our Covid-19 Appeal

In July 2020, Durham Chancellor Sir Thomas Allen put out an appeal to help our students affected by the pandemic. We are so grateful for the immediate and generous response of the global Durham community.

The loss overnight of part-time work meant real hardship for many students. Many were faced with unexpected family commitments, travel costs or having to buy laptops to study remotely.

Similarly, our graduating students last year found themselves in a very different job market and needing to explore additional training or education to improve their employability.

In around six weeks, you donated an incredible £148,000 in over 200 individual gifts. We added to the pot some existing

philanthropic funds donated for student support, giving us £300,000 to distribute to students.

A third of this is set aside to support research. The remaining £200,000 has been used to respond to students in urgent financial need and to help the Class of 2020 as they entered an extremely difficult job market.

In total, we have been able to help 400 students with hardship grants and a further 43 with Career Development awards.

“Research at Durham is a cornerstone of both our international reputation and our ambition for the future. The lockdowns made necessary by the pandemic coupled with a reduction in government funding are having a serious impact on our diverse research community; it’s undoubtedly a worrying time. Thankfully, the Appeal Fund you have helped us build has earmarked £100,000 for research and I look forward to updating you in the coming months about which projects have been directly supported by your generosity.”

Professor Colin Bain, Vice-Provost (Research)

Incredibly Grateful

We’ve received so many lovely comments from students who feel enormous gratitude for the support you have given to the Covid-19 Appeal. Here are just a few.

Jude Hanlon (*Psychology, Josephine Butler College*) spoke for many, when he told us: “I am thankful to those who provided the funds I have been awarded, which have allowed me the practical capability, mental energy and lower stress levels that would have been severely impacted by the pandemic if not for the fund. I am incredibly grateful, thank you.”

The appeal helped students like **William Thomson** (*Geography, Van Mildert College*) to secure employment: “I completed a project management qualification in October with funding from the appeal. I just got offered a six-month placement at an IT firm as a web developer, until the start of my Master’s, and the project management qualification I did definitely helped me in my interview and ultimately helped me secure the job.”

Andrew Bannister (*Engineering, Josephine Butler College*) said: “I am eternally grateful as without those donations I may have had to suspend my studies or leave the University altogether to get a position in a company that required a fixed term of employment working during the week. You have my most sincere thanks for your kindness.”

Sophie Miller (*Natural Sciences, John Snow College*) was also very grateful: “I have worked part-time since the age of 13 but due to Covid-19, I haven’t been able to work for over a year, because I have been shielding as a result of my long-term health condition... I am therefore so grateful for the support of the Covid-19 recovery fund, which will help ease financial worries and allow me to focus on my studies. This money will help go towards rent and resources for my course, enabling me to put my all into my university work!”

Alumni

Honours

Given to Durham Alumni

From supporting women to access education, to the protection of our natural world, to stellar lifetime achievements across business, society and the arts – those individuals celebrated below represent the inspiration and leadership that characterises Durham alumni and friends the world over. We are inspired by their success and honoured by their affiliation with our institution.

The Queen’s Birthday Honours 2020

Sir David Attenborough GCMG
Honorary DSc, 1982
For services to television broadcasting and to conservation

Mrs Eileen Bellett BEM
Education, Graduate Society, 1984
For services to the community in Osmotherley, North Yorkshire

Mr Peter Cardy OBE
Politics & Sociology, University College, 1968
For services to the community in Gosport, Hampshire

Miss Julie Carlton MBE
Classics, St John’s College, 1985
For services to maritime safety

Mr Paul Chakravarti CMG
Applied Physics & Electronics, St Cuthbert’s Society, 1986
For services to national security

Ms Miranda Curtis CMG
Spanish, St Cuthbert’s Society, 1978
For services to gender equality globally

Mr Jonathan Douglas CBE
Theology, St Chad’s College, 1991
For services to education

Ms Rosemary Drinkwater OBE
Mathematics & Economics, St Mary’s College, 1981
For services to higher education, innovation and enterprise in the West Midlands

Mrs Gabrielle Eirew MBE
Education, University College, 1992
For services to charities and the terminally ill

Sir Brendan Foster, Knighthood
Advisor
For charitable service in North-East England

Mr Jeffrey Godfrey CBE
Law, University College, 1981
For services to devolution and the legislative process in Wales

Mr Ian Hammond MBE
Software Engineering, Van Mildert College, 2005
For services to the NHS during the Covid-19 response

Ms Caroline Hoddinott OBE
Education (Secondary), Graduate Society, 1987
For services to education

Mr Niall Mackenzie CBE
History, Collingwood College, 1986
For services to business and industry

Miss Kathryn McCloghrie MBE
Law, University College, 1995
For services to business and the community in Cumbria during the Covid-19 response

Mr Simon ‘Sam’ Melliush MBE
Economics, College of St Hild & St Bede, 1986
For services to young people and charity

Miss Julie Scurfield BEM
Community & Youth Work Studies, Graduate Society, 1990
For voluntary service to girls’ football in Chester-le-Street, County Durham

Mr Simon Walls, Queen’s Police Medal
Theology, Hatfield College, 1989

Mr Stephen Walthall MBE
Engineering Geology, Graduate Society, 1970
For voluntary service to scouting in Heywood, Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale

Mrs Jane White OBE
French, St Mary’s College, 1980
For services to Parliament

Mr Colin Wilkes MBE
Law, Grey College, 1982
For services to business in North-East England

The Queen’s New Year Honours 2021

Mrs Janet Arthur MBE
History, St Aidan’s College, 1977
For services to the community in Smeeton Westerby, Leicestershire

Mr David J Bickle OBE
Geography, Collingwood College, 1991
For services to UK/Japan relations

Miss Margaret A Esslemont BEM
Mathematics, Van Mildert College, 2001
For services to young people in Roundhay, Leeds, through Girlguiding UK

Mr Mohammed I Hamid MBE
Community & Youth Work Studies, St Cuthbert’s Society, 1994
For services to youth empowerment and social welfare projects

Ms Elizabeth R Hughes OBE
Archaeology & Anthropology, Trevelyan College, 1985
For services to humanitarian crisis operations

Dr Robert H MacFarlane OBE
Business Administration, St Aidan’s College, 2016
For public service

Mrs Carol J Mack OBE
Economics & Politics, Trevelyan College, 1988
For services to charity

Mr Nigel W Mellor MBE
Geography, Grey College, 1966
For services to the homeless and disadvantaged in Merseyside

Mr Alan P Mills MBE
Geography, Grey College, 1990
For services to international development

Ms Malini Nebhrajani CB
English Literature, Van Mildert College, 1990
For public service

Miss Michelle C Ovens MBE CBE
English Literature, Hatfield College, 1998
For services to small businesses and entrepreneurs

Mr Joseph B Plumb MBE
Theology & Ministry, Ushaw College, 1994
For services to British nationals overseas

Mr Barnaby J Sandow BEM
Engineering, Van Mildert College, 1995
For services to education

Ms Claudia C Sykes OBE
Chinese, St Cuthbert’s Society, 1994
For services to social enterprise and to the social care sector

Ms Jan Thompson OBE CMG
French & German, Collingwood College, 1987
For services to British foreign policy

Mr Benjamin M Wastnage MBE
Politics (European Studies), University College, 2006
For services to British interests in Lebanon

Mrs Margaret E Williams OBE
German & Russian, Van Mildert College, 1980
For services to British nationals overseas

The Queen’s Birthday Honours 2021

Ms Sally Alexander MBE
Music, St Mary’s College, 1996
For services to education

Lt Colonel Richard Alston OBE
Anthropology, University College, 1997
Military division

Mr Alexis Boon, Queen’s Police Medal
Geography, College of St Hild & St Bede, 1997

Mr Andrew Burns OBE CB
Geography, Hatfield College, 1992
Military division

Dr Frederick Clements OBE
Zoology, Van Mildert College, 1983
For services to conservation and policy

Mr Michael Cunningham QPM CB
Theology, University College, 1984
For services to policing and public service

Mrs Frances Elliot MBE
Modern Languages, College of St Hild & St Bede, 1998
For services to the community in Harrogate during Covid-19

Mr Henry Faure Walker MBE
English Literature, Hatfield College, 1994
For services to regional news and journalism and to charity

Miss Wendy Hardaker CB
Law & Politics, Trevelyan College, 1994
For services to the law

Mrs Norma Higton BEM
Economics, St Cuthbert’s Society, 1977
For services to the community in Wragby, Lincolnshire, during Covid-19

Ms Emma Howard Boyd CBE
Economics & Law, St John’s College, 1986
For services to the environment

Mr William Husband MBE
Education (Secondary), University College, 1989
For services to young people

Mrs Rachel Huxford MBE
English Literature, University College, 1997
For services to the RAF community during Covid-19

Dr Peter Knights OBE
Zoology, Van Mildert College, 1975
For services to wildlife conservation

Mrs Shelagh Legrave OBE CBE
Arts Combined, St John’s College, 1980
For services to education

Mrs Christine Megson MBE
French, St Aidan’s College, 1970
For services to gender equality

Ms Mahtab Morovat BEM
Academic Practice, 2019
For services to charity in Sunderland, Tyne and Wear

General Timothy Radford DSO OBE KCB
Politics, St Chad’s College, 1984
Military division

Mr Robert Sherman BEM
Russian, Van Mildert College, 1971
For services to the community in Harbury, Warwickshire, particularly during Covid-19

Mr Jack Stallworthy MBE
Modern Languages, University College, 2012
For services to British foreign policy

Mr R Neville Tate OBE
Education, University College, 1975
For services to education

Mr Peter Xeros MBE
Community & Youth Work Studies, Graduate Society, 1993
For services to children and young people

Durham Inspired Live

Our virtual events series to keep you connected to Durham!

In May 2020, as a result of the global pandemic, we introduced Durham Inspired: Live in Lockdown, inviting our global community of alumni, donors, supporters, students and staff to take advantage of an ongoing series of events focused on continual learning, career development and networking.

Now in its 18th month, and now aptly dropping the 'lockdown' element in its name, Durham Inspired: Live continues to offer the continued connection value for our community.

We deliver a series of talks, workshops, virtual campus visits and entertaining content through one of four pathways...

LEARN

Academic insights and expertise – bringing you the latest Durham thinking and intellectual discussion around current issues, challenges-faced and what the future looks like for us all in this new world;

DEVELOP

Careers support – a series of discussions, workshops and resources to help you manage your career and professional life throughout the global pandemic (and beyond);

NETWORK

Social networking – engage in fun and socially interactive occasions which aim to help us relieve stress, remember fond memories of Durham and look after our mental health, wellbeing and personal connections to each other within the Durham community;

INDUSTRY

Focused conversations - featuring notable leaders and executives discussing the current challenges, solutions, and future of their industries.

Extinction and survival in the history of animal life: Lessons from deep time

Thursday 27 January, 6pm (GMT)

Life has been evolving on our planet for at least 4 billion years yet animals appeared relatively recently, only within the last 600 million years. During this interval animal life has massively diversified but was retarded by five major extinctions events, the end Permian (250 million years ago) being the most spectacular and devastating. Many animals disappeared for ever, some adapted to change and others set a new direction for animal evolution and the planet's ecosystem. Much can be learnt from a detailed study of past extinctions, their causes and their survivors and victims. Life has survived these events but commonly not its ecosystems.

To keep up to date on our latest events and for your chance to continually learn, develop and network, please visit dunelm.org.uk/events

Dunelmensis Awards 2021

The Dunelmensis Award is given by the University's Senate to a Durham alumnus or alumna for meritorious and exceptional service in support of the University, particularly for our institutional advancement and for enhancing the University's reputation, nationally and internationally.

Dr Carl Stephen Patrick Hunter Arts Combined, Hatfield College, 1981-84



Carl has given enormous support to our Physics Department and was confirmed as Professor-in-Practice at Durham University Business School, lecturing from January 2019 on undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and

supporting the Business School in building capability with respect to data and decision sciences. Over a sustained period, Carl's efforts have underpinned and supported Durham University's strategic aims in terms of research excellence, education and enhancing the University's reputation nationally and internationally.

Carl has given time and support over many years to create his company's unique Undergraduate Internship Programme, which he attributes to the extraordinary professors and academic staff in Durham Physics. The programme gives students, across all academic disciplines, opportunities in R&D and employment – in

term-time, holiday and summer project environments. This gives undergraduate Physics, Engineering, Science, Law, Arts, Social Sciences and Business students an opportunity to tackle scientific problems, to learn about industrial research, to do project planning and to integrate their presentation, project and team-working skills in an advanced manufacturing environment, overseen by Carl himself.

He is a member of the Senior Common Room of Hatfield and a great supporter of the Hatfield Association and the Leadership, Strategic and Development teams at the University.

Smiti Kumar Management Studies, Graduate Society, 1980-81



Smiti has been a senior volunteer for Durham University via DunelmUSA since its inception in 1992. She joined the Board

of the North American Foundation for the University of Durham (DunelmUSA, our US 501c3 charitable entity) in 2010, and was appointed President in 2016. Over this period, the DunelmUSA operation has grown from a small charitable thoroughfare for donations to the University to a fully functioning, non-profit entity, receipting over \$3 million in the last financial year and managing over 25 senior regional volunteers.

In recent years, Smiti has directly managed Board leadership positions, created

volunteer groups to support University promotion and recruitment in the US, established our US gala, and created succession plans to ensure the future of the organisation.

In addition to her work on DunelmUSA, she has been an active member of the Durham University Business School International Advisory Board, participating in thought leadership sessions and organising numerous class reunions.

Richard Roberts Law and Politics, St John's College, 1976-79



Richard is an active part of the ongoing growth and development of the St John's College community through the Senior Common Room and as a trusted adviser to College Council and the Development Board.

He is a John's Eagle, a guest speaker and contributor, as well as a donor. He also gives his time to the Law School and the Development Office.

Through his engagement with the Student Art Prize, (see pages 14-15) Richard has also proved to be a friend to students, to the Art Collection and to the University. He has been generous with his time, not just in the planning and delivery of the award, but also in his enthusiastic engagement with the participants and prize winners. His contribution has brought a wealth of experience, expertise and challenge to the initiative.

Charles Wilson Geography, Grey College, 1983-86



Charles was one of a small group of founding donors who conceived the idea for the Institute of Hazard, Risk and Resilience (IHRR) and contributed the initial financial resources to help establish the institute in 2007.

He has continued to support the institute in numerous ways, including the establishment of the Wilson Chair in Hazard, Risk and Resilience, which has enabled senior staff to focus on

high-quality, high-impact research in the field of hazard and risk.

Charles has also played an important role in thought leadership for the IHRR, acting as a critical friend to the institute and ensuring that it stays focused on its mission: to improve the lives of people worldwide through a better understanding of risk and resilience.



Past Events

2020 marked a year we will never forget. During the pandemic, we delivered 57 virtual events featuring esteemed academic, professional and guest speaker experts from across the campus and the global Durham community.

The Battle of Dunbar and the Scottish Soldiers: People and Place, Now and Then



In November 2013, two mass graves were discovered during construction work at Durham University's Palace Green Library, on the City's UNESCO World Heritage Site. This discovery generated an extensive period of analysis led by experts in our world-leading Department of Archaeology. This analysis concluded that the remains were indeed those of the Scottish soldiers from the Battle of Dunbar; a finding that helped solve the near 400-year mystery of their last resting place.

Dr Arran Johnston, Director of the Scottish Battlefields Trust, gave us an overview of the Battle of Dunbar itself, the legacy of the battle site and how the Trust is preserving its memory.

Professor Chris Gerrard, project lead from our Department of Archaeology, told some of the fascinating stories from those who fought, survived and went on to lead full lives in distant lands, and how their descendants today are shaped by their Scottish identities.

Bill Bryson in Conversation with Alison Gowman

Author and former Durham Chancellor Bill Bryson interviewed Alison Gowman (*Law, Van Mildert College, 1974-77*), Alderman of the City of London (pictured below), who is tipped to become one of the two Sheriffs of the City of London in September 2021.



A Lockdown Lunchtime Tour of the Botanic Garden

Head Gardener Mike Hughes took us on a virtual tour of life in the University's Botanic Garden, which had been closed to the public for most of the year due to the global pandemic. We learnt about the mushroom archway, Durham mustard, the 'playing dead' plant and much more, including the badgers, butterflies, trees and plants found in the garden.

Eat Medieval

Professor Giles Gasper of Durham's History Department talked about research into medieval food, with a reconstruction of a Christmas feast from 1296 in a very unusual research collaboration with Blackfriars Restaurant in Newcastle (pictured opposite).

Gin-gle Bells: An Evening with Durham Gin

In a whirlwind tour through the history of gin, Jon Chadwick from Durham Distillery covered the Thirty Years' War, the 18th-century gin craze and the rise of British sea power, through to the modern growth of craft gin. Along the way, Jon showed us some classic gin cocktails to make at home.



Feisty 50 Fitness Challenge

For the first 50 days of 2021, Durham alumni, family and friends set out to test their fitness, hang on to those New Year's resolutions, and come together in the name of health and wellbeing. As a community, we've rekindled our motivation, inspired one another, smashed goals and personal records, lost weight, had a little break in our lockdown routines, and worked out with our Durham friends around the world.

dunelm.org.uk/F50roundup



DunelmOTTAWA St Patrick's Jeopardy Happy Hour

The fun-loving DunelmOTTAWA alumni group (pictured above) celebrated St Patrick's Day with a Jeopardy-style quiz extravaganza. Alumni and friends were encouraged to join the happy hour with a green beverage in hand and to test their knowledge on topics as varied as Durham, Irish culture, and the meaning of Ottawa in the Algonquin language.



Vatican Museum Lecture Series

In partnership with the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums, we were pleased to offer our alumni, benefactors and friends access to a special three-part lecture series:

- 'In Conversation', with Dr Barbara Jatta, Director of the Vatican Museums, and Dr Gabriele Finaldi, Director of the National Gallery in London;
- 'The Cult of Raphael', with Professor Stefano Cracolici (Durham University);
- 'Unlocking a Hidden Heritage: Developing the Historical Collections of the Venerable English College in Rome', with Professor Maurice Whitehead (Durham University).

Getting the Most From Your LinkedIn Profile

Sam Waterfall (*Entrepreneurship, 1999-2000*) and Charles Hardy (*Psychology, St John's College, 1993-96*) from LinkedIn joined us to explain what the platform can do for you.

Honouring Mary Thoits, the legend of Long Beach, California



Mary Thoits led an incredible life, learning to fly planes at just 16, before going on to teach other women to fly in the Second World War as part of the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs). Studying initially at DePauw University in Indiana, USA, Mary decided to come to the UK for a year abroad at Durham, immersing herself in English literature and forming a lasting affinity with the region.

Mary's career as a recreation director for the military took her across Europe and to Korea, before returning to the States and settling in Long Beach, where she became a pillar of her community as the manager of the Senior Studies Program at Long Beach Community College. Mary's zest for life and passion for lifetime learning were infectious, and she revamped the Program with classes in world affairs and politics. She also became somewhat of a celebrity in the Long Beach area for her fun-loving approach to life, going skydiving to celebrate her 85th birthday.

In 2020, Mary was nominated posthumously for an Honorary Doctorate at Durham in recognition of the outstanding impact she had made in her community, and for her role as a wonderful supporter and ambassador for Durham in the USA. We conferred degree posthumously with Mary's friends, family, and alumni in an online ceremony in her memory.

Catch up on any events you have missed:
dunelm.org.uk/events/online/recordings

Class Notes

Your news from the past year

Jason Ash (*Politics & History, St Cuthbert's Society, 1994-97*) and **Emma Ash** (*Philosophy, Collingwood College, 1994-97*) have founded the app *YoungPlanet*, to cut the number of children's toys going to landfill by swapping toys for free.

Chris Atkin (*Social Sciences Combined, College of St Hild & St Bede, 2008-11*) has published a non-fiction book, *(Just As Well) It's Not About The Bike*.

Graham Barker (*Law, Van Mildert College, 1977-80*) has been appointed as Vice Lord Lieutenant for the Royal County of Berkshire.

Katie Bell (*Arts Combined, St John's College, 2000-03*) has been awarded the Royal Society of Chemistry's Industry Technician of the Year.

Dr Emma Black (*Accounting and Finance, Ustinov College, 2009-14*) has been named as the Cash Management Woman of the Year in the National #WomeninFinanceAwards2020.

Catherine Brahams (*Arts Combined, Grey College, 1987-90*) has published *Imprisoned by Love*, a novel in which the two main characters meet at Durham.

Oliver Camp (*Modern Languages, Collingwood College, 2011-15*) was named one of the GreenBiz 30 Under 30, a cohort of sustainability leaders working across a range of environmental and social issues.

Sarah Chadwick (*Arts Combined, Collingwood College, 1984-87*) has published *The Sweetness of Venus: A History of the Clitoris*.

Jeff Cousins (*Engineering, Collingwood College, 1975-78*) has been awarded the ACM SIGAda Robert Dewar Award for Outstanding Ada Community Contributions.

Nick Daniels (*Engineering, St Cuthbert's Society, 2006-10*) and his brother **Tim Daniels** (*Natural Sciences, Collingwood College, 2008-11*) together run *Portal*, an iOS wellbeing app that supports people's mental health and productivity, through focus, sleep and relaxation.

Carla Denyer (*Mechanical Engineering, St Chad's College, 2005-09*) is named one of the top 50 women in engineering by the Women's Engineering Society.

Jack Edmondson (*History, Hatfield College, 1996-99*), Deputy CIO of the Oxford University Endowment Management office, discusses his career and investment philosophy with The Money Maze Podcast.

Professor Elspeth Garman (*Physics, St Mary's College, 1973-76*) became a Life Sciences Awardee for 2020 in the Suffrage Science Awards.

Sarah Hawes (*Physics, Grey College, 1988-91*) reflected on her own experience in the webinar 'What's unique about nuclear asset management', as part of Women in Engineering Day on 23 June 2020.

Chris Howard (*Business Administration, John Snow College, 2008-11*) has been included in the OUTstanding LGBT+ Future Leaders 2020 lists for his ongoing work within diversity and inclusion.

Mohamed Huballah (*International Studies, Ustinov College, 2007-09*) has published *Beyond Your World (The Manifestation of Wishes)*.

Stephen Israel (*Physics, Van Mildert College, 1981-84*) has recently produced his twentieth film, *Last Moment of Clarity*.

Craig Lawrence (*Engineering, University College, 1983-86*) has published *Reasonable Doubt*, a novel that mentions Durham throughout.

Amy Mead (*Natural Sciences, Collingwood, 2006-09*) has helped set up *Now-u*, a non-profit app that enables users to tackle global issues with simple actions.

Nick Mohammed (*Geophysics, St Aidan's College, 1999-2003*) was nominated for an Emmy Award for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series for his role as Nathan Shelley in *Ted Lasso*.

Sam Newbould (*Geography, Josephine Butler College, 2008-12*), a professional jazz saxophonist, has released his first single from his second album, entitled *Bogus Notus*.

Moirra Newiss (*Geology, University College, 1994-97*) recently launched *Skirrskin*, a sustainable sport skincare brand including an anti-chafing sport balm made from natural and organic ingredients.

Catherine Racine (*Theology, St Chad's College, 2011-17*) has recently published *Beyond Clinical Dehumanisation Towards the Other in Community Mental Health Care: Levinas, Wonder and Autoethnography - Psychology and the Other*.

David Russell (*Geology, St Cuthbert's Society, 1971-74*) has written a book of eco-poetry, *An Ever River*.

Emma Russo, née Richardson (*Physics, Van Mildert College, 2007-11*) has been awarded the Daphne Jackson Medal by the Institute of Physics.

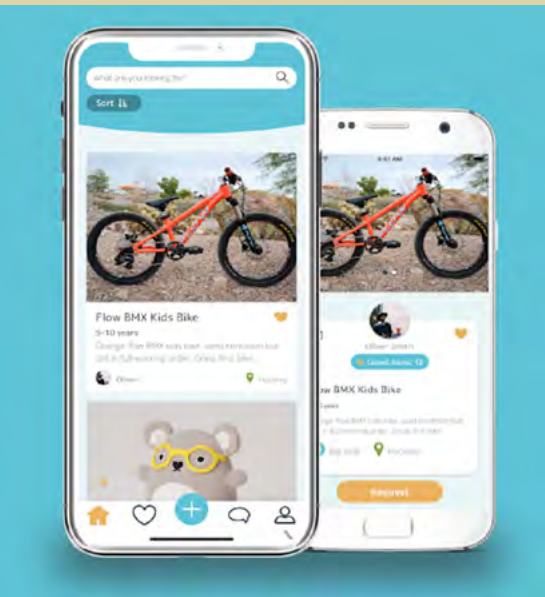
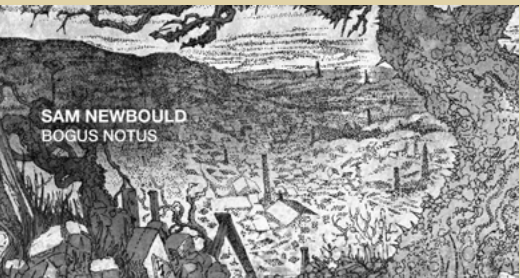
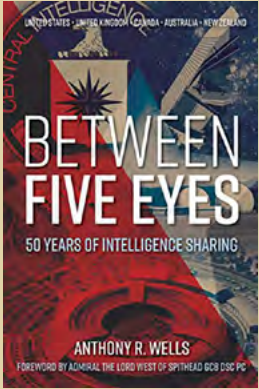
Cathy Shelbourne (*Arts Combined, St Mary's College, 1974-77*), maritime historian, has spent lockdown creating an illustrated 52-card deck, showcasing some of Norfolk and Suffolk's sailing heroes.

Sam Stroot (*Business Administration, Ustinov College, 2011-13*) has launched GoodSam Foods, a chocolate brand on a mission and an ally for small farms, available exclusively on Thrive Market.

Martin Talks (*History, Hatfield College, 1985-88*) has written a future-fiction novel, *Blinky's Law*.

Commander Dr Anthony Wells (*Modern German History, St Cuthbert's Society, 1965-69*), former Dunelm USA Director and North American Development Board Chair, has published *Between Five Eyes: 50 Years of Intelligence Sharing*.

Dr Rebecca Webster, née Orme (*Psychology, Van Mildert College, 2010-13*) has contributed to articles in the World Health Organization essential reading on the Coronavirus pandemic.





Psychiatric Illness Then and Now

Jacqueline Hopson (née Hutchinson) (*St Aidan’s, 1971-74, English*) talks openly about her own mental health, and offers hope and advice to anyone experiencing mental illness

It is good to see that striving for mental health has become an important focus in the Covid-19 pandemic. Open discussions and real concerns about the proliferation of depression and severe anxiety – both results of major societal disruption – are positive and very welcome reactions to the dreadful toll of the virus. The appalling effects of Covid-19 are not only felt in the bodies of the infected: the isolation of lockdown is proving damaging for many, including students.

Recently, I gained my PhD at the University of Exeter. My thesis considered how psychiatrists and allied professionals are negatively represented in cultural artefacts, particularly in fiction. I also note, however, that widely disseminated films and comic books add much to this overwhelmingly damaging picture. My PhD was an extension of my undergraduate interests at Durham. My research shows how ‘psy’ professionals are generally vilified in fiction, frequently appearing as insane, incompetent charlatans, extorters of money, manipulative sexual abusers, torturers and even murderers. Unsurprisingly, fear of approaching the professionals who are able to provide help to sufferers is a major result of these harmful representations.

As well as my lifelong interest in fiction, my own history of psychiatric illness has guided my academic work. The terrifying

asylums that feature prominently in popular film and fiction have their basis in the institutions that still existed in the 1970s, when I was a patient. Being forcibly locked up as mad was terrifying, with its excessive use of stupefying medication, barbaric electroconvulsive therapy, and closely guarded lack of access to the outside world. Psychiatrists – rarely seen overlords – mandated punishing treatments for patients, without explanation.

“I am sure Durham University remains as caring to current students as it was to me”

In contrast to the terrors of the county asylums, where I was an inmate for lengthy periods, was the care I experienced within the University. Foremost were my good friends, without whose support I would not have survived. My Aidan’s roommate, Jacqueline Ward (now Mulvey) was a source of firmly reliable, essential friendship and she remains my closest friend some fifty years on.

Moreover, those in authority in the University were also very helpful indeed. The St Aidan’s Principal, Irene Hindmarsh, and Professor of English John Bradley were vital to my supported reintegration into

academic life. University Medical Officer Dr John Munro offered me extraordinary care and was constantly available, for which I am immensely grateful. Dr Munro’s role in referring me to the therapeutic community at Bethlem Royal Hospital set me on the road to a better life. Lacking a safe and supportive home life made these sources of kindness particularly valuable.

I am sure Durham University remains as caring to current students as it was to me. Importantly, major changes have occurred in the NHS treatment of mental illness. The damaging stigma carried by psychiatric patients is considerably less. Once abandoned to the distant asylum, where many spent their entire lives, patients can now achieve improvement – and even recovery.

My advice to those experiencing mental illness today is to seek help. As well as good general practitioner care, I received many years of life-saving psychotherapy (see *BMJ*, 11 April 2011, Hopson and Holmes: *Through the Wasteland: Chronic Depression*). Illness returns periodically, but good treatment has made life manageable and often pleasant!

A last word: I deplore the current, undermining, unhelpful phrase “mental health issues” to describe major suffering. Imagine King Lear crying, “Let me not have mental health issues, sweet heaven...”.

Jacqueline’s PhD, *Malevolent, Mad or Merely Human: Representations of the ‘Psy’ Professional in English, American and Irish Fiction*, was awarded by the University of Exeter in November 2020.



2021: Good treatment has made life manageable



Broadcast journalist Alexandra Hamilton (BA *English Literature, 2011, MA Medieval and Renaissance Literary Studies, 2012, Grey College*) explains how her student journalism helped her to become a BBC presenter.

Why Durham?

I first chose to study at Durham when I was going through the UCAS process at school. The English department frequently topped the results tables and the course was one of the most interesting and dynamic of all the places I researched. I didn’t want to go to a large campus-based university. I much preferred the idea of a small, collegiate environment. After visiting for an open day I fell in love with the city and the rugged coasts and countryside of the North East. When I finished my undergraduate degree, it felt natural to progress to my postgraduate studies in Durham – the department was second-to-none for my specialism and I wanted to continue my involvement in the societies I had joined.

What activities were you involved in?

I did a huge amount of student media at Durham. I joined Purple Radio as a Fresher, I went on to be Head of News and then I became Station Manager in my Master’s year. I worked as the Comment Editor and Deputy Editor of Palatinate – the student newspaper. I also co-founded The Bubble online magazine – which is still publishing today I believe! I also loved being part of the Durham Union Society and I enjoyed watching lots of student theatre during my time at university.

What were you most proud of at Durham?

Academically I’m probably most proud of my MA Dissertation – it remains the longest and most thorough piece of academic writing I’ve ever done and it became a real labour of love. I’m also proud of the student journalism I did, particularly at Purple Radio. I interviewed Russell Crowe and Bill Bryson, I organised a debate between the MP candidates for Durham in the 2010 general

election and I interviewed Nick Clegg and David Miliband – it was a busy time! Purple Radio was also nominated for ‘Best Student Station’ for the first time in its history at the Student Radio Awards. This was a big achievement as lots of universities have professional studios to go with their media courses. Purple Radio was entirely self-taught and self-funding so it was great to get the recognition!

What are your fondest memories from your time here?

It might be cheesy to say but honestly – my fondest memories are of the friends I made through my subject, my College and the societies I was involved with. Whether it was sledging down one of Durham’s many hills in the winter, trips to the beach in the summer or celebrating exam results – I met friends for life during my time at Durham. I also never intended to study medieval literature – two really inspirational lecturers opened my eyes to the subject and it fostered an interest which I never would have found.

How has Durham inspired you?

The students and staff are passionate and inspiring people. There is a culture of healthy competition which really pushes you to “be the best you can be” both academically and in your societies. At the same time, it is a very caring environment – people support and take care of each other when they are struggling as well as celebrating each other’s successes – it feels like a family! The student media opportunities I had at Durham led directly to some work experience which turned into a job – without that experience, I wouldn’t be where I am today.

What have you been up to since leaving?

I did a Post Graduate Diploma in Broadcast Journalism. After that I worked as a reporter, producer and newsreader at the BBC before becoming a BBC Weather Presenter and Broadcast Journalist. I broadcast to three television regions and ten BBC Local Radio Stations – often doing 40 bulletins a day. When time allows, I do reports for the Sunday Politics programme as well. The pandemic has turned everything on its head! I used to be in the television studios at 4.30am for breakfast news, now I’m working and broadcasting from home a lot of the time. This has meant learning new skills very quickly as well as being flexible and adaptable.

I love working for the BBC. Public Service Broadcasting is a very special thing – particularly in the midst of a global pandemic. Many people are lonely or isolating but through radio and television you can reach people and keep them company, make them laugh and keep them informed at the same time. I also love the weather of course – it’s always part of the “national conversation” and I join that conversation every day!

Is there anything from Durham that has stayed with you and still inspires you now?

The Durham work ethic has certainly stayed with me. You need to work hard to get to where you want to be. It’s not just about hard work though! The culture at Durham also encouraged you to look out for your friends and fellow students. It really felt like a family and it taught you to take the time to listen and check how other people are doing.

Personal interests

I’m lucky to live near to the Peak District and I really enjoy hill walking. I love to ski and I’ve recently been on a sailing course too. Whenever I can I love to go and see live music and theatre – I’m really missing this now the theatres have closed. Also, once a literature student – always a literature student! I still love to read and whenever I can I try to dip back into medieval literature.

What would be your top piece of advice for current students and/or recent graduates?

Staying in touch with your university friends after you leave is really important. When you all travel to jobs at different ends of the country (or even around the world) it’s easy to let friendships drift but if you put the effort in, you’ll be rewarded with a “Durham family” for life. I wasn’t quite a “Durham cliché” – I didn’t meet my future husband at university but I did meet wonderful friends who were the bridesmaids and ushers at my wedding!

Is there anything that you know now that you wish you’d known when graduating?

Your aspirations as a student will probably be very different to your aspirations when you are 30! You can’t look for “life satisfaction” or happiness in work alone. Leisure time is important and it’s often where the happiest memories are made. Spending quality time with the people that matter to you is more important than the amount of overtime you do.

Twitter: @AlexHamiltonTV

LinkedIn: Alexandra Hamilton
[linkedin.com/in/alexandrahamiltontv](https://www.linkedin.com/in/alexandrahamiltontv)

Alumni

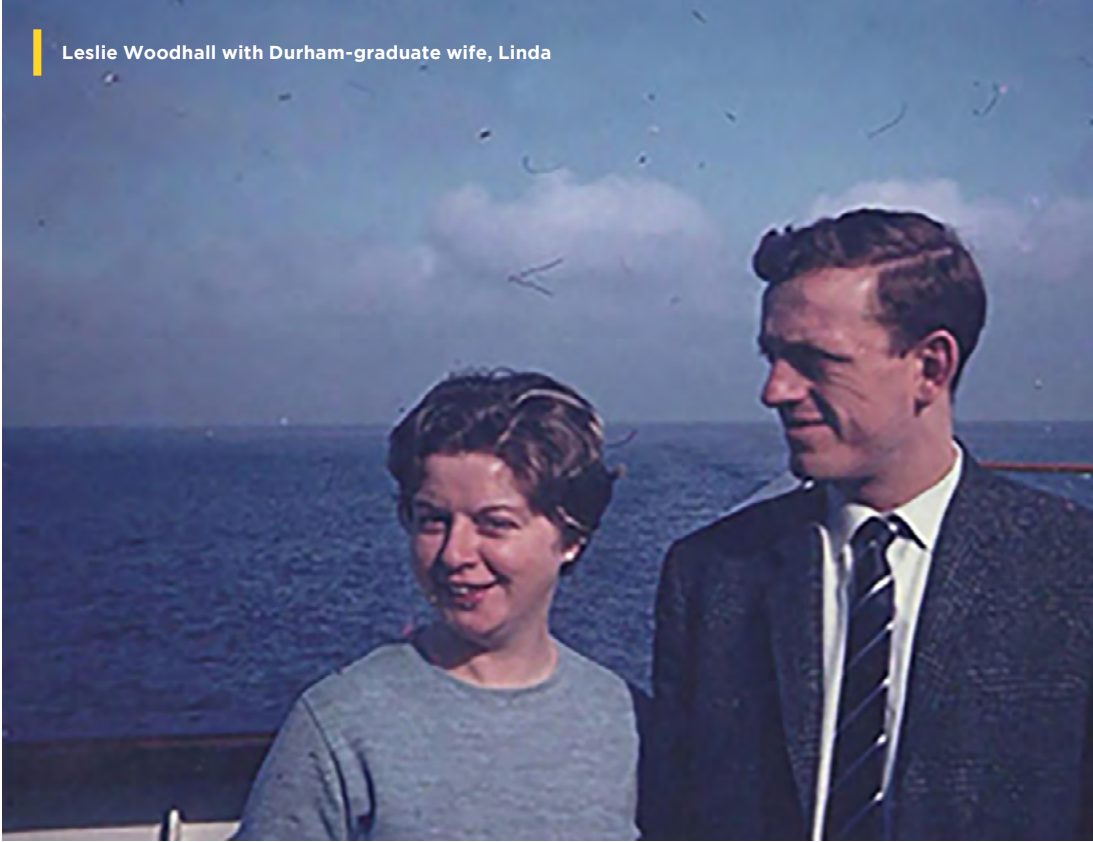
My Durham Story

Leslie Woodhall

Leslie Woodhall (*French and German, King’s College, 1959-63*) recalls his time at King’s College, Newcastle (then part of Durham but now Newcastle University), when the weather was cold but student life was heart-warming.

As a ‘nesh’ [delicate] West Midlander, I spent my (formative) student years (October 1959 to July 1963) reading Joint Honours in French and German at King’s College, Newcastle. Oh dear, it was so cold up there in the North-East, and that was just in summer. Many years later, I was warmer among the glaciers of Patagonia than I had been playing soccer for King’s at Seaton Sluice on a Saturday afternoon in the middle of January – all the more so since the football club had recently acquired a set of high-fashion pale blue shirts with a V-neck and short sleeves. Crazy!

But I must get my priorities right: sport; studies; matrimony. Alphabetical order (and the desire to avoid any unnecessary domestic aggro) dictates that I should begin by recording that I met my future wife at King’s very early on in October 1959. We were married in the summer of 1963 after graduation, and celebrated our 57th wedding anniversary in August 2020.



Leslie Woodhall with Durham-graduate wife, Linda

My studies took me into the French and German Departments, at that time housed in somewhat dilapidated Victorian dwellings off the North Road, just south of Exhibition Park. The German Department, under Professor Mennie, was in Sydenham Terrace, its French counterpart, under Professor Girdlestone, in Devonshire Terrace – I think.

My lecturers were all highly competent in their respective fields. I owe them a lot, and I did keep in touch with some of them for many years. Just one anecdote: Norman Suckling, a senior lecturer in French and man of many interests, departed in haste at the end of a lecture, saying: “Must dash, I’ve left my harpsichord on Barras Bridge”.

Student life in the early 1960s was much more sedate than would seem to be the case now, more than 50 years on. The occasional parties that were organised were strictly BYOB. That entailed a quick visit to the nearest off-licence to purchase a bottle of either “Spanish Sauternes” (arguably a white wine) or some red wine, the name of which (fortunately) escapes me. The wine was decanted from very large barrels into (empty and possibly washed) “Newky Broom” pint bottles and cost half-a-crown (= 2/6d or 12 post-1971 pence).

No record of this period would be complete without a reference to the Bun Room in the Students’ Union. Any readers who were there will need no further explanation, and anyone who wasn’t there wouldn’t believe me anyway. At lunchtime, the Barras Bridge

refec offered, for a pittance, a wonderful Welsh rarebit, the like of which I have never tasted since. Those flush with money could even order baked beans on the side. Luxury!

After settling in at Eustace Percy Hall – the largest one-storey hall of residence in the entire Kingdom, or so we were told – my burning ambition was to claim the No 10 shirt for the KCAFC. I achieved that goal just before Easter 1960 and retained the shirt during my second year. My year abroad in France (1961-62) interrupted my footballing career at King’s, but it was a privilege and pleasure to play with Matt McCargo, Dave Hookway, Bill Douglas, Dave Kidd, Max Haggett, John Scott, Dave Grogan...

I began this recital with a reference to how cold it was in Newcastle. The winter in my final year (1962-63) was the coldest since 1947, or 1954, or whenever. People were actually skiing along Jesmond Road into the city centre.

Writing this piece has brought many more memories flooding into my brain, but I had better close this (for me) enjoyable trip down Memory Lane, before I get really carried away.

Check out other King’s College memories at: dunelm.org.uk/kings-college

Music Production Bolstered by Jazz-lover’s Gift

The University was fortunate to receive a gift in the will of Christopher de Saram (*Natural Sciences, Hatfield College, 1964-67*), a passionate jazz enthusiast, who died in 2018, aged 72.

Chris de Saram’s student years were truly life-changing. He met his wife Teresa at Durham and, as a student here, he developed a love of live music. His daughter, Katrina de Saram, reflects that he never forgot the awe-inspiring experience of seeing live musicians of the calibre of Thelonious Monk at Durham.

Throughout his life, Chris dedicated a great deal of energy and enthusiasm to developing the jazz music scene, particularly in his corner of the world, West Yorkshire. After retiring as a secondary school science teacher and Head of Lower School in Pudsey, he was for many years the promoter for Wakefield Jazz Club. He was a well-known figure, who scoured the country for new talent and provided opportunities for burgeoning musicians to advance their career by playing at a club widely known for its inspirational live music and sense of community.

Durham University has a rich history of excellence in music, both through formal academic study and live performance. We

share Chris’ love for music and, having worked with Katrina, we were pleased to direct his gift to Music Durham, the home of extracurricular student music, which comprises 28 ensembles. Now, two years on, his legacy has funded new equipment to facilitate the production of live music, including rehearsals and concerts, livestreams and recordings.

In total, 199 items were purchased, but the main pieces of equipment were a Behringer X32 Producer (a professional-grade digital mixer) and a Yamaha DTX-Multi 12 drum sampler.

Hugely grateful

Barnaby Collins, Music Durham’s Tech Officer, says: “A significant portion of the budget was allocated to equipment that will facilitate the organisation of high-production-value livestreamed and recorded content.

“While this is especially important in these times, it will also play a huge part in allowing groups to share the results of their work online, bringing those with accessibility concerns – as well as distant alumni, friends and family members – closer to the student body.”

Collins and fellow students have formed a Tech Team, to support the use of the equipment on an ongoing basis, learning about music production from each other as they do so. He explains: “A highly trained group of knowledgeable and friendly individuals will be available for free to any music society running any event. All of this allows the inclusivity of Durham’s music scene to be maximised, as no money or specific knowledge will be required for groups intending to produce professional-grade concerts, recordings or livestreams.

“It also opens the door to further collaboration between groups, and encourages the foundation of new music societies with a significantly reduced financial barrier to entry, especially for more modern and less established disciplines, such as electronic music, that may be more reliant on tech.

“I am hugely grateful, on behalf of the thousands of musicians who will pass through Durham over the next few decades, for this generous legacy gift. I am truly excited to see what the wide range of creative people at the University will be able to make with it!”



Putting a Gift in Your Will

Gifts in wills are hugely beneficial to our University community. If you would consider putting a gift in your will, or have already done so, thank you.

We would be delighted to hear from you, to ensure that we understand your wishes. Please feel free to contact the Development Manager for Legacies and Planned Giving, Louise McLaren (email louise.mclaren@durham.ac.uk; telephone 0191 334 6313).

Information is also available at dunelm.org.uk/legacies



“This gift allows the inclusivity of Durham’s music scene to be maximised”

Team Durham

Olympic Success for Durham Stars in Tokyo

Fiona Crackles



Eli Schenkel
Part of Canada's Fencing Team

A record-breaking eight Durham University students, past and present, have been welcomed home after proudly representing their countries at the recent Tokyo Olympics.

Seven sporting stars represented Team GB in Hockey and Rowing, and one recent graduate represented Canada in Fencing, with two coming home with medals.

Current second year Sport and Exercise Science student **Fiona Crackles**, 21, was part of the Team GB women's hockey squad who won a bronze medal after their victory over India.

Fiona, who only joined the Team GB squad in January, has worked tirelessly to juggle her academic and sporting commitments. She is Durham's first ever student to win an Olympic medal while still undertaking her degree.

Joining Fiona on the Olympic podium was alumnus **Angus Groom** (Natural Sciences, Hatfield College, 2010-13). Angus, 29, was selected as a member of the Team GB rowing team and won a silver medal as part of the men's quadruple scull crew. This was the country's first medal in this discipline.

Alongside Angus in the rowing team was **Matt Rossiter**, 31 (Biology, St Cuthbert's Society, 2009-12) who narrowly missed out on a medal position in the men's coxless four final. Matt and Angus were joined by former Durham students James Harris and Dan Moore who formed part of the GB rowing coaching team.

Jack Waller, 24 (History, College of St Hild & St Bede) and **Ollie Payne**, 22 (Sport Health & Exercise, Josephine Butler College, 2017-20) were part of Team GB's men's hockey squad. The team battled through the group stages but were defeated by a tough Indian team in the quarter-finals.

Finally, former MSc Management student **Eli Schenkel** (Internet Systems & E-Business, Ustinov College, 2017-19) made his Olympic debut and represented Team Canada in the individual and team foil fencing event.

The Paralympic Games followed and we were thrilled to watch alumna Gemma Collis McCann (Law, St Cuthbert's Society, 2011-14) in the Team GB Fencing team for her third Games.

Gemma, who started her fencing journey while studying at Durham, took part in both the épée and sabre.

Director of Experience Durham, **Quentin Sloper** said: "It was wonderful to see our past and present students representing their countries at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. We are immensely proud of each and every one of them and we would like to congratulate them all on their amazing achievements - they are truly an inspiration.

"We are delighted to have played a part in their Olympic journey and, following the construction of our new £32m Sports and Wellbeing Park we are confident that, coupled with our outstanding coaching and support team, we are very well placed to continue to provide a platform for elite athletes to excel athletically while studying a world class degree."

Durham University has a rich history of high-performance sport success. Since 2013, Durham has been Britain's Number 1 Team Sport University, supporting over 50 capped international athletes and 20 high performance club programmes per year



Angus Groom with his rowing team

29 January - 19 February
FRANKENSTEIN
Adapted by
Sophie Wright
£4 / £4.30 / £4.50

Theatre

Despite live theatre being unable to take place in Epiphany Term, the Durham Student Theatre (DST) community has strived to thrive.

An early highlight included Castle Theatre Company and Green Door Theatre Company's audio production of *Frankenstein*, released to widespread (virtual) applause. Involving more than 20 students recording over Zoom, and featuring stunning illustrations, the radio play's quality was such that one DST First Night reviewer remarked that it was easily good enough to be found on BBC Sounds.

Meanwhile, the Durham Drama Festival continued online with great success. The student-run, written and performed festival highlighted the sheer adaptability and wealth of creative talent at Durham, and included an impressive array of interviews and workshops around the theme of 'Radical Voices for Radical Times'.

The resilience of the DST community has never been greater tested, nor have its stars shone more brightly. We are now on the verge of the return of live theatre, which we are awaiting with tremendous excitement.

"Radical Voices for Radical Times"



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Jenny Laahs

Alumni

The Power of Music

Music therapist Jenny Laahs (Molecular Biology and Biochemistry, Grey College, 2008-12) explains how music can help everyone to improve their health and wellbeing and express their creativity – even in a pandemic

Music is a powerful force in our lives, whether we are consciously aware of it or not. Our emotions are modulated by the music we hear, be it what we choose to listen to or background music in film or game scores enhancing the impact of a scene. It's the fuel we use to motivate us during exercise, or as company on a long drive. It creates atmospheres in public spaces, parties and other celebrations, and gives us shared experiences as we listen and sing or play together. It is part of every culture in the world.

Some of us consider being a musician or liking music to be an important part of our personality; even for those who don't, music still impacts our lives. We aren't taught to respond to music; it's innate to all of us. As a music therapist, my work is built around this understanding of music as something everyone can respond to. This responsiveness is not impaired by health conditions or disabilities. Since music can bypass the need for words, it can be particularly helpful for people who find words difficult, perhaps due to a learning disability, mental health, dementia, autism or a neurological condition. Music therapists use music to reach those who can't otherwise be reached, helping to reduce isolation and build companionship, develop



communication skills and give unique opportunities for self-expression and creativity.

My path to becoming a music therapist was an unconventional one. Most trainees have a background in music, psychology or healthcare. I studied Molecular Biology and Biochemistry at Durham, although I spent more hours in rehearsals than in lecture theatres. I'm grateful to have had so much opportunity for music-making at Durham; I conducted the concert band, played cornet in a local colliery band, played trumpet in orchestra, big band and musicals, and had some gigs playing pop songs on harp and piano. These experiences had a huge impact on my wellbeing and social life at the time. Not only that, but this rich musical extracurricular experience was likely a crucial contribution in my application for my Master's in music therapy at Queen

“Music can be particularly helpful for people who find words difficult”

Margaret University, given my non-musical undergraduate degree.

Since qualifying in 2014, I have worked with a wide range of clients, both adults and children. I have worked for Nordoff Robbins since 2015, the largest music therapy charity in the UK. I love my work for the moments of connection with those I support. For Sam, a young non-verbal boy with autism, those moments come when he vocalises to join in with songs, even though he doesn't otherwise use his voice to communicate. For Jordan, a teenager with complex needs, music is the only thing that can be relied on to make him open his eyes and smile, and each week during music therapy I tap into that by improvising with him to meet him in his world. With Mary, an elderly lady in end-of-life care, our connection is through the songs we write together, commemorating important moments and relieving her of

“Online music therapy has uniquely bridged the isolation of the pandemic”

emotional burdens.

All my work during the pandemic has been online. This has included not only therapy sessions over video call, but also skill-sharing workshops with parents and carers, and music for wellbeing workshops for corporate settings. Lockdown has made it clearer than ever how important access to music therapy is for the wellbeing of my clients. I have heard many times how online music therapy has uniquely bridged the isolation of the pandemic. From my home in Edinburgh, I've had sessions with clients as far away as Southampton; no matter the distance, I still feel that palpable connection that music brings across the Zoom call.

Music therapy is a registered profession, regulated by the Health and Care



Jenny Laahs

Professions Council. To train as a music therapist, a two-year Master's degree is required from one of seven accredited training courses in the UK.

If you are interested in learning more about how music therapists use music to improve health and wellbeing, visit the British Association for Music Therapy website: bamt.org or my website: jennylaahs.com



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