

Dunelm

The Magazine for Alumni and
Friends of Durham University

**Major Scholarships
Initiative Launched for
Low-income Students
as Part of Record
Alumni Donation**

**UK Government
Supports Covid-19
Detection Dogs Trial**

**Supporting
Women in Sport:**
Shirin Gerami

**Southern African
Scholars**
The Ruth First Scholarship

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see p38

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For an institution built around a thousand year old World Heritage Site, it fills me with great pride to tell you that this has been a period of significant firsts, records and new discoveries for Durham University.

Despite the global challenges we have all faced, I hope this belated edition of Dunelm magazine gives you a moment to reflect on, and to be proud of, the major advancements we have seen at the University over the past 12 months. I know many of these have enjoyed your support and encouragement, for which we are very grateful.

Our research has made headlines the world over through pioneering innovations

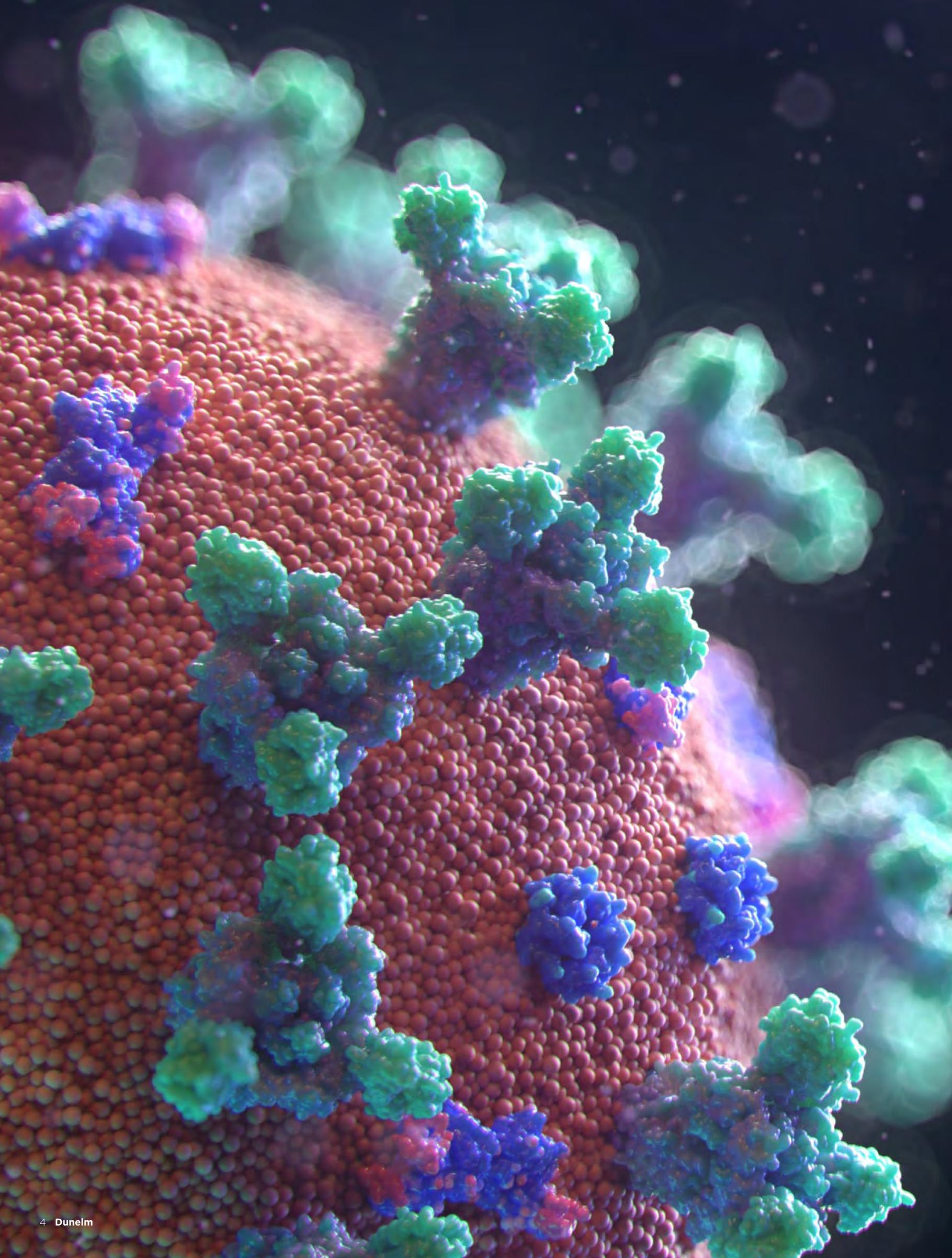
in medical diagnostics and detection, sustainable energy and creating the world's first uncuttable material. Our enrichment programmes have benefitted from major investment and exceptional student leadership. From the launch of our Durham Inspired Award to substantial investments into Maiden Castle and the Assembly Rooms, we are complementing our degree and research programmes with world-class developmental opportunities for our community.

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. You have launched initiatives which diversify the world of global technological leadership; you have given generously to provide for students from low-income and under-represented backgrounds, ensuring everyone has the chance to fulfil their full potential and to relish every aspect of the Durham experience. You have enabled transformative research which saves and transforms lives. We are truly grateful for what you have helped so many members of our community to achieve.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly during this terrible global pandemic, thousands of you have come together to learn, to hope, and to heal. Our Live in Lockdown series has welcomed students and alumni from every continent and provided a forum in which you can connect and develop - something which we will continue into the future. We are so proud of our alumni community and everything you have achieved and undertaken together throughout this unique period in our history.

On a personal note, following the announcement of my retirement next summer, I wanted to say thank you to all of those whom I have met personally or communicated with during my time at Durham. During my time as Vice-Chancellor, our alumni have never failed to offer helpful insight, appropriate challenge, limitless encouragement and inspiring leadership. I look forward to remaining part of this community for many years to come and to being in touch again before I leave.

Professor Stuart Corbridge
Vice-Chancellor and Warden



Covid-19 Responses from Durham



University Donates Equipment and Food

Colleagues from Geography, Archaeology, Earth Sciences, Biology, Chemistry and Engineering have donated 20,000 gloves plus aprons, masks and other personal protective equipment to the University Hospital of North Durham.

Durham University donated surplus food to the foodbank (see image above), so that it could be distributed to those in crisis.

We want to do as much as we can to support the effort against Covid-19.

We're already providing beds for critical workers, helping with virus testing and loaning and donating medical equipment. And we hope to do more.

[View more.](#)

Handcrafted and RefUSE Feeding

Two organisations, both founded by Durham alumni, are helping those at risk during Covid-19. They are delivering meals to individuals who are unable to afford food or can't leave the house.

Durham City Mutual Aid

Durham City Mutual Aid was set up by two students, a staff member and a local partner to help people locally. If you'd like to contribute or need support, join [here](#): 

Resources from Durham Resources

Team Durham Workouts and Sport Camps

Team Durham are sharing games and activities for children (and grown-ups!) who are stuck in the house.

[View:](#) 

[View:](#) 

Zumba with Adriana from IT

A golden opportunity to experience the real Latin flavour with licensed instructor Adriana Salazar who is giving virtual Zumba lessons.

[View:](#) 

Kerry-Anne Street Aerobics

Our women's first team hockey captain and scholar, along with her family have been doing their bit for the community to keep their elderly neighbours fit, healthy and entertained during these times of uncertainty.

Kerry-Anne Hastings, a second-year postgraduate student of St Aiden's College and Senior Scottish International Hockey player, joined by her mum and dad, Jenny and Scott, have been leading 'Street Aerobics' for local residents from their front garden in Edinburgh, all whilst following the government guidelines of social distancing.

[Read the full story.](#)

Hannah Ciotkowski Songs

Alumna Hannah Ciotkowski has been entertaining older people in isolation by singing to them through the window of their care home. Hannah travels across the West Midlands with charity Kissing It Better in a bid to spread joy to isolated residents.

[View full article.](#)

University News

The Origins of Life on Earth Challenged in New Research

How did life on Earth begin? There's hardly a bigger question, but one of the most commonly held theories has been challenged by new research.

When the first modern microscopes were discovered, scientists learned that all living things are made of cells – tiny bags of living matter in different shapes and sizes.

One hypothesis is that the cells were formed over 4 billion years ago, when meteorites fell from the sky and dissolved in ponds, creating a broth of RNA molecules (the lesser known sister of DNA that plays a role in coding and regulating genes). But this does not explain how the complex macromolecules found in cells today have evolved from this broth.

Geography and Physics Research Wins More Than £7 Million in Funding

Our Geography and Physics research is among the best in the world and we've just received three prestigious awards.

Also the European Research Council has announced that it is giving Durham over £7million to fund separate research into ice sheet collapse, the ethics of life in the ages of machine learning and how fluids flow.

Teaching Science in Prisons?

Education in prisons has a long history, but the teaching of science, other than by distance learning, has been absent – in part because much science teaching traditionally relies on experimentation using technical equipment that is unavailable in prisons. One of our academics has developed a science course that requires only a presentation plus writing and reading materials. Dr Phil Heron taught 'Think Like A Scientist' to a group of residents of HMP Low Newton, a women's prison near Durham City. It is the first known instance of a science course being taught face-to-face in an English prison.

A Simple Mesh to Clean Up Oil Spills

Oil spills happen frequently, ranging from large ones like the 2010 Deepwater Horizon disaster to smaller ones on industrial sites. All have a damaging impact on the environment and wildlife. The clean-up is by no means simple, and there is a clear need for new, easy, quick ways to separate oil from water. Our surface scientists have now developed a coated mesh, which could be a faster and more eco-friendly way to clean up oil.

The team from our Chemistry Department have invented a smart coating that loves water 'hydrophilic' and rejects oil 'oleophobic'. When the oil-water mixture is poured onto a coated mesh, the water drips through but the oil stays on top of the mesh.

Strengthening Strategic Partnerships in the US

Here at Durham, we aim to deliver world-leading research that has a positive impact on global challenges. To do this, we need to develop and sustain strategic partnerships with institutions that share our common goals.

As a values-driven University, which combines a truly global outlook with research expertise from all disciplines, the University of Notre Dame (USA) is a natural partner. We have a long and exciting history of collaboration with Notre Dame, with a strong focus on Theology, Catholic Studies and Anthropology.

[Read more.](#)

Archaeologists Unearth Durham's Earliest-known Resident

Durham is well known for its inspiring World Heritage Site, home to the 900-year-old Durham Castle and Cathedral. But our archaeologists have now found proof that people have been living in the area for at least 2,000 years.

Our archaeologists were digging at a site about 1km from the Cathedral, before a building project began. They found parts of human skull, arm and leg bones. These have now been dated to 90BC-60AD, making their owner Durham's earliest-recorded human resident.

Durham to Host NICE New National Supercomputer

We're hosting a new £3.1 million supercomputer facility to address challenges in subjects ranging from artificial intelligence to advanced X-ray imaging.

The Northern Intensive Computing Environment (NICE) supercomputer will be based in Durham and will be used by the N8 Research Partnership of leading universities in the North of England.

NICE will allow greater understanding of data, such as the great volumes being generated from experiments and found in digital collections across the UK, by providing a platform where machine learning, models and simulation can be combined, allowing better explanations of artificial intelligence.

Among its many uses, the supercomputer will help scientists to advance imaging techniques to produce the next generation of X-ray instruments.

Students will also benefit, by working on deep learning techniques – artificial intelligence that imitates the human brain when processing data – at the interface of computer calculations and High Performance Computing.

Durham Named One of the World's Most International Universities

We've been ranked joint 30th among the world's most international universities in a new league table. The Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2020 named us as one of the world's best for having a high proportion of international students and staff, for collaboration with universities worldwide and for our strong global reputation.

Ranked Fifth in the UK

We find it easy to be proud of the extraordinary people we have at Durham. Now, our University has once again been ranked fifth in the *Guardian University Guide 2020*, maintaining our position from last year and achieving our third consecutive year in the top five of this influential guide.

Highlighting our outstanding student experience and cutting-edge teaching, the *Guardian University Guide 2020* ranks English as top in the UK. We now have 19 subjects ranked in the top ten, with eight of these placed in the top five.

A World Top 100 University

Durham University has again been ranked as a World Top 100 university – putting us in the top 8% of universities worldwide in a new league table.

The QS World University Rankings 2020 place Durham 78th globally out of more than 1,000 higher education institutions and 24th in Europe.

Top Subjects

The QS World University Rankings by Subject 2020 position us in the World Top 10 for Archaeology (fourth), Theology and Religion (fourth) and Geography (tenth).

Anthropology, Classics and Ancient History, Earth Sciences, English Studies, History and Law also feature in the World Top 50.

This recognises the outstanding quality of our research, education and overall student experience.





Freya



Star



Asher



Bumper

Durham University/Medical Detection Dogs
/London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

UK Government Supports Durham's Covid-19 Detection Dogs Trial

The UK Government has awarded a specialist team of researchers more than £500,000 to find out whether specially trained bio-detection dogs could be used as a new rapid testing measure for Covid-19.

The initial stage of the research aims to determine whether the dogs are able to detect coronavirus in humans from odour samples.

The project is a collaboration between the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, the charity Medical Detection Dogs and Durham University. The team has previously worked together to successfully prove that dogs can be trained to sniff out the scent of malaria.

Disease Detection

Bio-detection dogs have already been shown to effectively detect specific conditions such as malaria, Parkinson's disease and some cancers in humans with high levels of accuracy. Now this trial will look at whether dogs can be trained to detect coronavirus in people too, even if they are asymptomatic.

If the trial gathers sufficient evidence, the first set of dogs could be deployed to key points of entry into the UK within six months, to assist with the rapid screening of people travelling from abroad.

The initial phase of the trial will see the collection of samples from NHS staff in London hospitals, following which six bio-detection dogs, a mixture of Labradors and Cocker Spaniels, will undergo thorough training.

Testing Method

More than ten years of research by Medical Detection Dogs has shown that dogs, which could each screen up to 250 people per hour, can be trained to detect the odour of disease at the equivalent dilution of one teaspoon of sugar in two Olympic-sized swimming pools of water.

If successful, these dogs could provide a fast and non-invasive detection method to support additional testing efforts used for Covid-19.

Find Out More About Our Expert, Professor Steve Lindsay

- [Meet the six dogs that will undergo the training;](#)
- Interested in studying Biosciences? [Take a look at our undergraduate and postgraduate opportunities.](#)

View video:





CO₂ Emissions are Plummeting – Here's How to Keep Them Down

One positive result of the world's response to Coronavirus means that CO₂ emissions have been slashed. Professor Simone Abram, from Durham's Department of Anthropology, looks at how we can maintain this environmental benefit.

How do you respond to a crisis? It's obvious that the response to the Covid-19 pandemic has been dramatically different to anything provoked by repeated scientific warnings about climate change. The many organisations that declared climate emergencies throughout 2019 and 2020 have so far enacted nothing like the scale and speed of action to limit the spread of coronavirus.

While action on Covid-19 has lowered CO₂ emissions drastically, with flights suspended and factories closed in many parts of the world, it has also shown how damaging a rapid response can be, compared to a steady and planned transition that could have been adopted to phase out emissions decades ago.

The urgent question now is how to maintain the environmental benefits once the Covid-19 epidemic wanes, and how to learn from one crisis response in the pursuit of another.

Our house is on Fire

In January 2020, I was asked by authors of Durham County Council's climate action plan why the climate crisis had evoked such a muted response. Why does one crisis evoke action and another apathy? Much has been written about denial, but there are good reasons why the climate crisis seems more remote than Covid-19. The consequences have been emerging slowly (a classic case of "boiled frog syndrome"), and the effects aren't evenly felt.

Arctic populations have been sounding the alarm for years, as have those living on low-lying Pacific islands. But those living in rich countries in Europe and North America have been able to postpone the climate issue as something belonging to the distant future. Yes, it is terrible, but it seems both too big, and too remote to deal with. As floods and wildfires close in, responses have started to change, but only slowly and sporadically.

A pandemic in these same countries very much belongs to the here and now. Infections spread in days and weeks, not years and decades, and this time difference shocks people into action.

In a situation of immediate life or death, most of us will take action to reduce our risk if we are offered a choice. Climate change, on the other hand, may well bring about just as many deaths or more, but responses have not been sanctioned so quickly. People act on the immediate demands of the near future – or believe in ultimate salvation, even while the medium-term threats are inordinately greater.

As flights are cancelled and significant numbers of people work from home, there's less travel, and so fewer CO₂ emissions. Is it possible to ensure that some things don't go back to the way they were?

Locking in Long-term Change

Social science research shows us that how we travel, how we use energy and how we expect to live are not merely questions of personal choice. When families go on

holiday, they instil expectations in their children about how to live well, how to put up with discomfort in the hope of future pleasure, and how to talk about holidays once they get home again.

In the same way, what we define as home comforts changes over time, and they vary between homes. No Victorian ever expected to lounge around on a sofa in a T-shirt in the middle of winter. How we imagine our future changes, and we plan accordingly. So it's not just about making better choices, but having better options to choose from.

As people realise that remote working can be effective for some, and that leisure can be fun at home too, now is the time for governments and businesses to write policies that nurture these tendencies – like high-quality public broadband, and taxes on aeroplane fuel.

States seem to be recovering their old confidence to take decisive action in light of the virus. The shock of seeing governments like those in the US and UK – which have tended to entrust planning to markets and private enterprise during the last 40 years – contemplate universal basic income to protect workers should give hope to environmentalists with a new vision of what's possible. Once Covid-19 subsides, we could all apply pressure to ensure governments throw their weight behind a similarly ambitious response to climate change.

It's phenomenally important for people to return to social life after the lockdown ends, but we can do that based on new priorities – socialising and enjoying arts and music locally or through livestreams, and letting go of 20th-century visions of the future based on unlimited growth, unlimited travel, and unlimited consumption.

If governments bail out travel companies in the way they bailed out banks in 2008 and 2009, then all the forces to promote travel will return and expectations are likely to go back to pre-coronavirus standards, as the behaviour of banks after the crash demonstrates.

But if investments are shifted to low-carbon alternatives and industries are forced to change shape, we might see a change in public expectations too. It's during moments of crisis that what is possible starts to shift – everything is up in the air, and we have a moment to reconfigure things before they fall back into place. Studies have shown how discoveries and developments are not smooth and even, but come in bursts and lulls, and broad consensus in a society can suddenly change, in what philosopher Thomas Kuhn called "paradigm shifts".

Maybe, just maybe, the pandemic will give us a new perspective on what a crisis is. While everything is up in the air, there is time to rethink.

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Alumni

Supporting Women in Sport

Shirin Gerami

Shirin Gerami (Politics, Philosophy and Economics, St Chad's College, 2008-10), tells Julia Atherley how starting triathlon training at Durham led to her becoming a pioneer in women's sport - and how she is now helping other women to follow in her footsteps.

Shirin Gerami



Shirin Gerami, known as Shiz, only started triathlon in her final year at Durham. She had been to a training session in her second year, but had made a swift exit, after finding it too intimidating. But in 2013, she became the first woman to compete for Iran as a triathlete, when she made a triumphant debut at the World Championships in London. She overcame institutional barriers to achieve her goals and is now determined to help other women follow her lead.

Talking in central London, Shiz recalls the moment in her final year, when she finally pushed herself to join the University triathlon team.



“The lack of availability of covered clothing could be such a big deterrent in engaging in sports”

“I thought, if I don't do it now, I'll never do it. I was totally and utterly intimidated.”

“I borrowed my housemate's hybrid bike to do the ride, I was lapped continuously in the run, and I was just trying to stay afloat in the slowest lane in the pool. But because all the other triathletes were so encouraging and lovely, I'd always just turn up for the love of being there.”

Shiz studied PPE at St Chad's, before moving to London to start a job in venture philanthropy. Once in the city, she joined a triathlon club and continued to train, but mainly just as a fun hobby.

It wasn't until 2013, when the World Championships came to London, that she considered competing professionally. *“Amongst friends, everyone was saying ‘I'm going to represent France’ or ‘I'm going to represent New Zealand’. Someone turned to me and said, would you represent Iran? We all laughed, because we thought that wouldn't be possible.”*

Women in Iran are required to cover up by law, and wearing a hijab is compulsory. Any athlete representing Iran at a sporting event would have to follow such guidelines.

Shiz says: *“We laughed, but why dismiss it, without exploring it a little bit more? I did some research and found out that there was a triathlon club in Iran, which I wasn't expecting.”*

“Initially, I was told they don't support a women's team. They said there is no way you can do a triathlon while respecting the dress code. To which I said, ‘Well, if that is the only thing that's stopping women from participating, if clothes are the only barrier, then give me some time to find a solution’.”

Shiz doesn't wear a headscarf in her day-to-day life, so competing while covering had never been something she had had to consider.

“Initially, I thought it would be a very easy solution: just rock up to a store and buy some covered clothes and that's it. But when I actually went into various stores, I realised that something functional is really hard to come by.”

“Ultimately, I ended up – with the help of a sports shop in Iran – creating a custom-made piece of clothing, which then got the approval of the authorities. That is what I did the first race in.”

“But it completely opened my eyes to something which could be so trivial yet such a huge deal at the same time. For women who want to – or need to – cover for whatever reason, the lack of availability of covered clothing could be such a big deterrent in engaging in sports.”

Breaking down barriers

Shiz seems to thrive on breaking boundaries and trying new things. When she first moved to London after university, she started riding rickshaws part-time – one of only three women in the entire city in the job.

“I was just walking around central London, and I was eyeing these guys on their rickshaws. I thought, wouldn't that be a cool thing to do?”

“So, I just tapped one of them on the shoulder and asked them how I would go about doing it. They weren't electric rickshaws; it was pure muscle work. It was a 700-strong community, and there were only three girls doing it. It was quite a novelty.”

After the World Championships, Shiz had not planned to carry on competing. She had left her job in venture philanthropy and moved into management consulting, still in the city. After the immensely positive media portrayal of her at the 2013 race, she had to choose between her stable job or competing full-time. *“I was put in a position of choosing between management consulting or chasing this absolute crazy, who knows what it is, thing. But triathlon was based on action and outcome, and that appealed to me. Little did I know that it would be the path I would go down.”*

Shiz now spends most of her time training and competing. *“I decided to focus on doing triathlons and becoming such a norm in a way that people would look at me and think, ‘Oh, just another girl doing triathlon’. I hoped that the taboo would disappear with time.”*

“Then I thought I would commit for another year, but after that I did the Ironman World Championships in 2016. One thing led to another and, before I knew it, I was doing triathlon full-time.”

Shiz is grateful that she took the plunge and joined the team at University. She still considers Durham to be where she planted her roots. *“Although I'm quite an ‘all over the place’ kind of girl, I do enjoy having that thread of connection still with Chad's. A big part of that is down to Dr Masson and the friends I made when I was there.”*

Creating a bespoke solution

Alongside her busy training schedule, Shiz is planning to start a company to make specialised clothing for women who want to cover up while they train and compete. When she's not at an intense training camp or catching up with friends, she is in meetings, trying to make sport more accessible for women.

“The company's main mission is to create high-tech, high-performance, state-of-the-art clothes that would put you on the same level playing field as everyone else. Right now, if you compete and you are covered, then you are at a massive disadvantage. I thought, why not come up with a solution that was accessible to everyone?”

“Then the second aim is to create teams and to support teams in regions that can't access sports as readily as us.”

“And finally, to support and sponsor events for women to train and compete in those different locations. When you race, there is a very inspiring, motivating buzz to it. I want everyone to be able to experience that.”

Jack Waller



Durham's Olympic Hopefuls

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has announced new dates for the Tokyo Olympic Games.

Due to a 12-month postponement instigated by the coronavirus pandemic, the Games will now start on 23 July 2021 and run until 8 August and will honour the name 'Tokyo 2020', although taking place a year later. Similarly, the Paralympic Games, have moved to new dates too: 24 August to 5 September 2021.

Dave Goodchild, Durham's Head Volleyball Coach, who was also the Assistant Coach to Team GB at the London 2012 Games said: "I think it is amazing the IOC have acted so quickly and provided a date for the event, so that everyone can rearrange their training plans and strategies, as well as letting the world know that this amazing event will still go ahead".

Among the athletes hoping to be included in the Games and representing Team GB are current Durham University students and alumni in various sports, including rowing, hockey, fencing and wheelchair fencing.

Hockey-player Tess Howard, a current Geography student at Castle and a Tokyo 2020 hopeful, said: "These are unprecedented times for everyone, and postponing the Olympics is definitely the right decision. The IOC's quick turnaround with new dates was really inspiring. It helps us to organise and refocus training - it's the same dream, just a different date!"

"With more days to hand, there's a huge opportunity for personal and team development and for GB Hockey to keep progressing - preparing to go for Gold in Tokyo.

"I feel the Olympics can be one of the shining lights waiting for us after this period, but at the moment we are all committed to just safely getting through this together, with enormous gratitude for the frontline heroes to the fore."

"It's the same dream, just a different date!"

Angus Groom



Jess Howard

New Sports and Wellbeing Park at Maiden Castle

The new Sports and Wellbeing Park at the Maiden Castle site has had a £32 million extension and refurbishment of the existing centre. The Park will offer world-class facilities for University students, staff and the local community.

The project has included: the creation of a new indoor cricket hall; a 12-court multi-use sports hall, suitable for national and international competitions; a martial arts dojo; a fitness centre; recovery facilities; and high-performance weights rooms.

There have also been significant improvements to outdoor facilities, including a new rubber crumb sports pitch, and upgrades to existing hockey pitches.

The Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences will also base its state-of-the-art research laboratories within the Park. This will mean that the academic study of sport and exercise will maintain close links with sport and exercise in practice – benefiting researchers, undergraduate students and athletes alike.



Maiden Castle Interior





Charles Wilson
Booker Group CEO

Alumni

Major Scholarships Initiative for Low-income Students as Part of Record £7.5 million Alumni Donation

We have received a transformative donation from Booker Group CEO, Charles Wilson (Geography, Grey College, 1983-86) and his partner Dr Rowena Olegario.

Part of this huge £7.5 million donation will go towards launching the 'Durham Inspired - North East Scholarships' programme, which will support students coming in low-income backgrounds from the North East of England.

North East Scholarships

An endowment of £2 million, which includes matched funding from a number of other generous benefactors, including the Ruth and Lionel Jacobson Charitable Trust, will be used to inspire and support exceptional young people from across the region to reach their full potential here at Durham, regardless of financial means.

The North East Scholarships programme will support 20 students each year from low-income backgrounds from the North East, empowering and enabling them to study for qualifications, while also pursuing vital leadership and development experiences offered at Durham.

This builds on a number of North East focused scholarships currently available at Durham, including the Robert Young Scholarship, the St Nicholas Scholarships and the Brian Cooper Scholarship.

View video: 



Institute of Hazard,
Risk and Resilience
Durham

Largest single donation

The North East Scholarships are part of a record £7.5 million donation from Charles Wilson and partner Dr Rowena Olegario – the largest single donation in our history. The donation will also establish the new Wilson Institute for Small Business and Entrepreneurship at the Business School and an endowment for our Institute of Hazard, Risk and Resilience (IHRR).

Research and business

The new Wilson Institute will provide entrepreneurs and leaders, especially in small and family businesses in the local region, with insightful and practical support to develop those businesses to their full potential.

In addition the IHRR will now be able to increase its ability to produce leading, front-line research that helps professionals around the world to protect, save and recover thousands of vulnerable lives and communities every year around natural hazards.

We are also delighted to recognise the contribution that this gift will make towards University's wider Durham Inspired Campaign, chaired by former Saatchi and Saatchi CEO Worldwide, Rob Senior, which seeks to support the next generation of inspired leaders through Durham University.

Find out more

- Learn more about the impact that scholarships like this are having on students from the North East: [Durham Inspired North East Scholarships Impact](#) (see right).
- [Durham University rooted in the local community](#)
- [Durham University Business School](#)
- [Institute of Hazard, Risk and Resilience](#)



Beth Henderson
North East Scholar

Laura Scott recipient of Vice-Chancellor's North East Scholarship whilst undertaking her Research Masters in the Earth sciences Department



Supporting Local Students

Despite living close by, Durham University can seem like a world away to those local students who experience economic barriers to higher education. But now, with the generous support of our donors, we are able to offer scholarships to the brightest and most talented local students, bringing a Durham education within reach.

The University has a significant economic impact on the City and region, and is a custodian of beautiful buildings and cultural treasures. An organisation with global reach, Durham University strives to engage with the world on our doorstep through partnerships with local schools and by facilitating student volunteering, and enterprise and entrepreneurship.

Importantly, our growing portfolio of Durham Inspired North East Scholarships, funded and driven by the passionate support of our alumni and friends around the world, is removing economic barriers and unlocking the vast potential of local students, enabling them to broaden their own horizons through the opportunities that come with a Durham degree.

Overcoming barriers

The following scholarships are open to students from families with low incomes across the North East region, helping them to take their first steps into higher education or to continue on to postgraduate study:

- St Nicholas Scholarships;
- Glaister Northern Scholarships;
- Robert Young Scholarship;
- Batey Scholarship;
- Brian Cooper Scholarship;
- Durham Inspired - North East Scholarships (see page 14).

[Discover more](#)

First steps

William Chan, a St Nicholas Scholar, believes that without the support provided by the St Nicholas Education Trust he would not be able to attend Durham University to study Mathematics. The support he has been given has inspired him to make the most of his time at Durham. He said: "the fact that I have been given this fantastic opportunity has driven me to strive to put it to good use and obtain as high a grade as possible year on year."

As well as striving academically, William represents the University at basketball. He is very active in college-level sport and uses his role in Grey College Basketball as a way of providing welfare support to current students.

Continuing the journey

Laura Scott has been the recipient of a Vice-Chancellor's North East Scholarship while undertaking her Research Masters in the Earth Sciences Department. The support she received has enabled her to concentrate on her studies, Laura said "the scholarship has helped me with financial worries". It has also enhanced the quality of the research she was able to undertake. "The extra work I carried out has made my work so much more credible, as I now have a lot more geological measurements for analysis."

Laura is now undertaking her PhD at Liverpool University; you can read more about her research at the link below:

[Laura Scott PhD Research Liverpool University](#)

The generosity of our donors is enabling exceptional local students to thrive, and we would like to say a sincere thank you to all the donors who make these awards possible.

Alumni

Southern African Scholars

The Ruth First Scholarship



Simplicio Bhebhe
from Zimbabwe

In 1964, students and staff at Durham University set up a scholarship for South African students, as a way of combating the devastating effects of apartheid. It was renamed in memory of Ruth First, the writer, researcher and anti-apartheid campaigner who lectured in Sociology at Durham in the 1970s and who was murdered by the South African police in Mozambique in 1982.

Educational opportunities in post-apartheid South Africa have been transformed, but there is still an urgent need for international help to build knowledge, skills and leadership capacity in the region. The Ruth First Scholarship now supports one student per year from anywhere in southern Africa taking a taught Master's degree at Durham.

Scholars are chosen for their leadership in working for the benefit of their communities as well as their academic ability. The University plays a key part in making the Scholarship possible, by covering the cost of tuition fees, while St Chad's College provides subsidised accommodation and welcomes each year's Scholar into a supportive community.

Former Ruth First Scholars are putting qualifications in a wide range of subjects to good use in teaching, business, research, public administration and community work. They form a very special group of alumni, committed to using what they gained from their Durham education to make a difference in southern Africa.

Simplicio Bhebhe from Zimbabwe Ruth First Scholar 2009-10, Law, St Chad's College reflects on his time at Durham and the impact it has had on his life and work:

"I am proud to be the first Zimbabwean to have been awarded the Ruth First Scholarship. I am forever grateful to Durham University and the Ruth First Educational Trust for the tremendous opportunity they gave me and for the knowledge, experience and expanded perspective on global issues which I gained from my time at Durham.

"Having grown up in a poor country, with limited opportunities, and to a poor family, it was beyond imagination that I would one day be able to attend one of the world's most prestigious institutions of higher learning. I did my Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree at the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) from 2004 to 2008, at a time when such education was funded by the government, allowing people of limited financial means, such as myself, to attend. My time at UZ also coincided with one of the most difficult periods in Zimbabwe's history, both politically and economically. We had the highest inflation rate in the world at the time (reaching 89.7 trillion per cent in

2008) and most shops were empty as a result. Politically, the country was under the presidency of the infamous late Robert Mugabe, who ruled with an iron fist, limiting all political freedoms and civil rights. During my final year at university, there was also a national election in which hundreds of civilians were tortured and killed for political reasons.

"During my time at UZ, I assisted indigent persons with legal representation, through the law faculty's legal aid clinic. I was also a member of SHAPE Zimbabwe, which is a university-based non-profit organisation dedicated to improving health, HIV prevention and fostering of gender equality.

"My time at Durham University was eye-opening and enriching. The social, cultural and academic knowledge and experience I acquired are invaluable to me to this day, and some of the friends I made remain close. The experience was made all the better by the members of the Ruth First Educational Trust, who were friendly, welcoming and at all times treated me as part of their families.

"Durham University staff were very helpful and assisted me to seamlessly acclimatise to the university environment. Academically, the lectures were splendid and enlightening – always detailed, well researched and well prepared. There was an abundance of study material and assistance from the ever-helpful lecturers and faculty staff. My dissertation, for which I got a distinction, was on how victims of torture might seek justice from international justice tribunals. It was motivated mainly by my personal experience from Zimbabwe, where many torture victims fail to get recourse as

“My year at Durham University was invaluable and not only changed my life for the better but also the lives of the people I have directly or indirectly assisted”

a result of the perpetrators of such torture being in charge of law enforcement bodies.

“My stay in Durham was also helped in no small part by the fact that as a Ruth First Scholar, I was a member of St Chad’s College. The activities organised for international students, for example weekend tours across the North East, were enriching and enjoyable.

“Following my graduation from Durham University, I returned to Zimbabwe and joined Kantor and Immerman Legal Practitioners and went into private legal practice. I have handled a number of human rights cases and have assisted victims to get justice or compensation. I also provide legal assistance to human rights and charitable organisations such as Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights. Through Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, I have represented many political prisoners and assisted in human rights cases in the courts, as well as taking part in marches for human rights. I have also given legal assistance and participated in many outreach and educational programmes

with charitable organisations such as the Zimbabwe Peace Project, Humana People to People, Development Aid from People to People, and Population Services International Zimbabwe. I was a lecturer in law at UZ for two years, and I continue to lecture there on a part-time basis and contribute to the training of recent law graduates.

“I am currently a Trustee and legal adviser of ARK Zimbabwe, an NGO dedicated to assisting underprivileged mothers. The organisation runs awareness and training programmes, and supports health facilities throughout the country geared towards reducing neonatal and maternal deaths, child mortality and mother-to-child HIV transmissions.

“In all respects, there is no doubt that the knowledge and experience I acquired during my year at Durham University, thanks to the Ruth First Scholarship, was invaluable and not only changed my life for the better but also the lives of the people I have directly or indirectly assisted.

“While economic hardships still persist in Zimbabwe and while cases of human rights abuses continue, there has been a marked improvement in respect of tolerance by the government and the opening-up of political space and freedom over the past few years. There is, however, still a lot of work to be done before the country reaches the level that I hope it can reach. The legal defence of human rights and the fight for justice for the victims of human rights abuses will be an important part of that work.”

“My time at Durham University was eye-opening and enriching”

Simplicio Bhebhe
from Zimbabwe



Debra Sithole
from Zimbabwe
current Ruth First Scholar

The 2019-20 Ruth First Scholar is Debra Sithole from Zimbabwe, who is taking an MSc in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding. You can find out more about Debra, former Scholars and Ruth First herself on the Trust’s website.

For more on The Ruth First Educational Trust, please get in touch with the Chair of the Board of Trustees, Dr Mike Thompson:

m.p.thompson@durham.ac.uk

Events

Lighting up Durham for Lumiere Festival

2019 light festival



For The Birds, Jony Easterby and Kathy Hinde, Mark Anderson,
Pippa Taylor and Ulf Pedersen, Botanic Garden.
Lumiere festival 2019



Lumiere, the UK's largest light festival, returned to Durham in November 2019, and the University was a major partner.

This Lumiere festival was a special tenth anniversary edition, including favourite installations from previous years and new commissions.

Over four (very wet!) evenings in mid-November, around 165,000 people visited the festival – taking the total number of visitors since Lumiere began in 2009 to over one million.

We sponsored the festival financially, our staff and students helped to make it run smoothly, and we hosted new and returning installations across our campus.

These included:

- Cosmic Architecture, a stunning audio and visual experience centred on our Ogden Centre for Fundamental Physics and inspired by the world-leading research undertaken there;
- Keys of Light, which saw pianists' tunes visualised through dazzling projections onto Rushford Court, home of John Snow College;
- For the Birds (pictured left), which took visitors to the Botanic Garden on a meditative and immersive journey through the night-time wilderness;
- Fool's Paradise, a fairytale projection onto Durham Castle;
- Lift Off, a video-mapping projection onto Dunelm House;
- Shoefiti, illuminated shoes strung across South Bailey.

We hope that everyone had a great time and we look forward to Lumiere returning to Durham in 2021.

Lumiere is produced by arts charity Artichoke and commissioned by Durham County Council, with additional support from Arts Council England, Durham University plus many other funders and supporters.



Shoefiti, Deepa Mann-Kler, South Bailey, Durham.
Lumiere festival 2019



Echelle, Ron Hasleden, Saddler Street, Durham.
Lumiere festival 2019

durham.ac.uk/lumiere

Global Graduate Gatherings

2019 marked the fifth anniversary of Durham's annual global graduate gatherings, Dunelm Days.

Dunelm Days
in Brussels



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 (other alumni events not specific Dunelm Days organised with University support) can be held at anytime of the year). They are a fantastic opportunity to meet new people in your local area, catch up with old friends, and reminisce about your time at Durham.

Dunelm Days
in Chengdu



We were on a mission to celebrate this milestone in style, by making Dunelm Days 2019 the biggest celebration to date. We think we achieved this, with over 60 events across 33 countries taking place last November – all thanks to incredible volunteers in the Durham alumni community. Just under 700 alumni and friends got involved and participated in an event in their local area.

As you can imagine, November 2019 was an extremely busy month for the Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO). We had up to seven events taking place on some days, in multiple time zones across Europe, North America, Asia and Australasia, including:

- Sydney kicking off the 2019 celebrations with a ‘Ghostly Dine’ experience, featuring a dinner and a private ‘ghost tour’ of the North Head Quarantine Station;
- Durham itself holding a reception during the UK’s biggest light festival, Lumiere (see also pages 18-19);
- colleagues from DARO meeting alumni and friends at The Gherkin in London for a drinks reception, to celebrate Durham connections ahead of the Lord Mayor’s Show, where alumna William Russell was appointed Lord Mayor of London;
- in Jakarta, alumni enjoying afternoon tea;
- alumni meeting up for picnics and jogging activities in China.

Get involved

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

Whether you’ve celebrated with us in the past or you’re reading about our Dunelm Days global graduate gatherings for the first time, why not get involved with your local Durham community this year?

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.

“The event was attended by friendly, open-minded people, all of whom had had a more recent experience of Durham than my own and [were] interested in sharing views – enriching for all, I think.” – Tübingen Dunelm Day



Dunelm Days in Exeter

“They’re a great chance to catch up with new and old alumni in a setting that is a little different to regular catch-up drinks.” – London Dunelm Day



Dunelm Days in Kuala Lumpur



Dunelm Days in Boston

Get in touch

We’d love to hear from you, if you would like to get involved in a 2020 global gathering as either a guest or a host.

Email us at alumni.volunteer@durham.ac.uk
#GG20



Dunelm Days in Karachi

Ian Ellison-Taylor (Computing, Grey college, 1987-90), Corrina Black and Professor Gordon Love (Head of Computer Science) with AMI Scholars; Alicia Hawksworth, Lucy Wood, Alisa Hussain and Panagiota Konstantinou.



Unearthing Top Tech Talent

We are delighted to announce that a transformative donation of \$3.5 million has been received from Durham University alumnus Dr Neil Hunt, (Computing and Electronics, Collingwood College, 1980-83) former Chief Product Officer of Netflix.

Dr Hunt's hugely generous gift will be used to establish the 'Hunt Programme', which will provide targeted scholarship, bursary and internship support across the Department of Computer Science and at Collingwood College, where he was a student.

As an engaged and founding member of the University's Computer Science External Advisory Board, Neil has been strategically involved with the University since 2016, supporting the University's advancement in North America, while playing an active role in the direction and ambitions of the newly launched Department of Computer Science in Durham.

Women in Tech

The Hunt Programme will have a substantial impact within Computer Science, expanding the Anne Marie Imafidon Women in Technology programme, creating new scholarships to support students from low-income and underrepresented backgrounds, and launching a pioneering new internships and industry programme, to ensure that our Computer Science students have access to unrivalled career opportunities across the globe.

Professor Gordon Love, Head of Computer Science, said:

“Neil’s gift will be absolutely transformational to Computer Science at Durham, and we’re immensely grateful for his support as a valued member of our advisory board and as a donor to the University. The Hunt Programme will be pivotal in helping us to create vital scholarship support, ensuring talented students from all backgrounds can study Computer Science here and access formative industry experiences which will shape their future careers. Programmes such as our AMI Women in Technology scholarships would not have been possible without the immeasurable support of Neil and fellow supporters, and it has been truly inspiring to have industry leaders of this remarkable calibre working with us to tackle this ubiquitous issue of diversity in tech.”

Anne Marie Imafidon MBE, Computer Science Advisory Board member and CEO of Stemettes, said: *“The issue of diversity in tech is systemic, and universities can play a huge part in bridging the gap between schools and industry to collaboratively grow the pipeline of talented young women in the sector. I’m pleased to see this approach working at Durham, and am proud to be part of the University’s AMI Women in Technology programme, which we will be able to expand significantly with Neil’s generous support.”*

Transformative opportunities

This donation will also have a substantial impact on Neil’s College – Collingwood. In addition to The 1972 Club Student Opportunities and existing endowments provided to Collingwood via the Sara Pilkington Student Development Fund and College benefactor Mark Hillery, a major proportion of Neil Hunt’s donation will enhance the College’s already-thriving student development programme. It provides financial support to students undertaking developmental activities as well as bespoke opportunities for students to undertake career placements around the world.

Professor Joe Elliott, Principal of Collingwood College, commented: *“Neil is a role model who exemplifies the qualities of aspiration, inspiration and commitment to others that Durham University seeks to engender. His gift to Collingwood will help us to grow and sustain our burgeoning student development programme for years to come, and many of our students will have their lives changed forever as a result of his immense generosity.”*

Cultivating innovation and leadership

Neil became the first-ever Chief Product Officer of Netflix in 1999, steering the company from a nascent start-up providing an online DVD rental service to one of the largest and most recognisable streaming platforms in the world. He is widely credited with the development of this personalised user experience, which is now synonymous with the Netflix brand.

Since leaving Netflix in 2017, Neil has gone on to co-found a machine-learning based start-up in the healthcare sector called Curai, with the mission to ‘scale the world’s best healthcare for every human being’.

As a Durham *Computer Science and Electronics graduate from the 80s*, Neil attributes much of his early career trajectory to the industry experiences he had access to through his Durham degree, deciding to give back to the University across areas of personal significance to him – particularly in relation to leadership and diversity in the tech sector.

Neil Hunt



Neil Hunt commented:

“Today’s high-tech industry is fiercely competitive for talent, and we cannot afford to shut out 50% or more of the potential from even getting to the starting gate. Women make up just 15% of Computer Science graduates – a figure that continues to fall – and this cries out for correction. My education at Durham University was a key stepping stone to the success that I have been fortunate to enjoy in my career, and I want to maximise the opportunities for those who follow. I hope my gift will inspire others – in industry and in education – to cultivate future generations of innovation and leadership from all walks of life.”

Durham Inspired

The University has recently launched a major philanthropic campaign – Durham Inspired – which aims to support the next generation of inspired leaders at Durham University. The Durham Inspired Campaign cultivates support: to enhance student opportunities and scholarships; to create an inspiring university environment through the development of University and community-related capital programmes; and to enable the pursuit of transformative research.

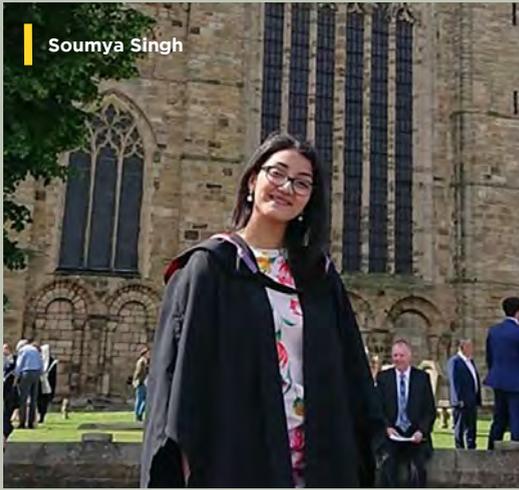
The Campaign is chaired by former Saatchi and Saatchi CEO Rob Senior, who is joined on the Campaign Board by a number of senior alumni and benefactors, including the newly elected Lord Mayor of London, William Russell. The Campaign Board is working with University leaders to deliver the first phase of this initiative in partnership with the Development and Alumni Relations Office.

Neil’s campaign donation is one of the largest single gifts received in the University’s history and the largest-ever gift donation to be received from the US, where the University is supported by an affiliated charity, DunelmUSA.

Find out more

For more information on the Hunt Programme or the Durham Inspired Campaign, please contact Lauren Bradshaw, Development Executive in the Development and Alumni Relations Office: at lauren.bradshaw@durham.ac.uk

[Read more on the Anne-Marie Imafidon Scholarships for Women in Technology and this year’s scholars.](#)



Alumni

Soumya Singh

Computer Science,
St Hild and St Bede College,
2015-19

“The [academic staff] always make time to guide and inspire students”

Why did you choose Durham?

As an international student, I was not very aware of what made Durham different from other universities. The biggest factor was that Durham was one of the top five universities in the UK, top 100 in the world and also the best for my subject out of all the universities I applied to. It was only when I had spent a couple of years here that I realised how the collegiate system made it stand out – you have another community of your own in addition to all your classmates with a more accessible support system for each student. And being a small, mostly student-populated City just makes Durham life so much easier.

Did you try out other activities?

Extracurricular activities were an indispensable part of my time at Durham. I tried out loads of different things – from debating to learning Mandarin, volunteering, attending Business Psychology lectures, playing for the Hild Bede Badminton team, serving as a Computing Society exec (helping to organise Durham’s annual 24-hour hackathon), and writing – for *Palatinate*, *the Bubble* or student blogs. I also did two part-time jobs, as a demonstrator for Year 1 Programming Practicals and with the Marketing and Communications Office.

What were you most proud of at Durham?

Definitely graduation – the culmination of everything you have done at Durham, but it only hits you on the day! I also got a lovely surprise in the form of the Dr Sue Black Award for Technology Evangelism, for my endeavours in spreading technology and digital skills in the community outside Durham. I also felt proud upon being felicitated with the Durham Award in my penultimate year.

What have you been up to since you left Durham?

I became a software engineer at Deutsche Bank in London. I have also been involved in a number of volunteering initiatives, focused on mentoring school students with employability skills, literacy skills and giving an insight into technology careers, especially in the finance industry. I also got trained as a mental health first aider, thanks to Deutsche Bank, so that I can serve as the first point of contact for anyone who may be struggling.

Tell us about your latest news or developments

I recently visited Durham as a panellist in an event hosted by Durham University Women in Business and Talk About UK, where we discussed how technology is transforming different industries like finance, law, life sciences, geophysics. I’ve also had the honour of sharing the stage, again as a panellist, with the Chief Operating Officer of Deutsche Bank, one of our managing directors and a vice-president to open up about mental health, the stigma associated with it, how it does not discriminate by age and how the young generation can be instrumental in spearheading the change towards a more hospitable social and professional environment. I also

“The thing that impacted me most about Durham is the diversity of the student body”

collaborated with Vicharvedh (a non-profit in India that encourages discourse to spread knowledge about new topics), to talk about my dissertation on how machine learning can combat cyberbullying.

[You can watch the video here.](#)

What’s your top advice for recent graduates?

It is easy to feel lost in the sea of opportunities and get caught up in looking for “the best company out there”. As much as a particular corporate giant might be coveted, it is important to realise that everyone’s experience will be different and there is no one set path. Try to figure out what is right for you. Also, remember that rest and relaxation are a necessity, not a luxury. Work hard, play hard, but do not neglect your physical and mental health.

What do you wish you’d known when graduating?

We often assume that any problem we are facing is exclusively our own and tend to keep it to ourselves. But the chances are that it is common to a lot of us, and coming together can make all the difference. Voice what you want. If there is anything you’re interested in – a club, a society, a peer group, whatever – but it does not exist, just start your own thing. Towards the end of my degree, I randomly organised an event on unconventional tech careers and was blown away by the interest from students from various disciplines, professionals and the Computer Science Department.

What has stayed with you?

The thing that impacted me most about Durham is the diversity of the student body. Having spent four years with people from completely different age groups, cultural, religious and socio-economic and academic backgrounds has inculcated a massive respect for diversity in me and has helped me understand its merits and necessity in all aspects of our lives, particularly our professional environments. It has made me so much more tolerant and has taught me to consider things from different points of view.

How has Durham inspired you?

I love the fact that the people at Durham, despite being so brilliant and busy in their fields, always make time to guide and inspire students – including prominent alumni who have done some revolutionary stuff in the field of technology. This has taught me the importance of mentorship and humility.

You can connect with Soumya on LinkedIn ([linkedin.com/in/soumyasingh1](https://www.linkedin.com/in/soumyasingh1)) and Twitter (@singhuist1).

I Learned a Lot as JCR President

Chris Howard (Business, John Snow College, 2008-11), tells Julia Atherley how being JCR President at Durham prepared him for a career in technology consultancy – and how he is now striving to make a difference.

Chris Howard is the sort of person who can't sit quietly when he notices that something isn't right. He thrives on identifying problems and fixing them, whether that be in his job as a technology consultant, or at the three primary schools where he chairs the board of governors, or at his non-profit LGBT+ organisation. This journey into leadership and consulting began in his first few days at Durham as a Business student at John Snow.

We caught up with Chris, just before he boarded a flight to Poland for a conference. He explained how, even during freshers' week, he had had big ambitions.

"I knew pretty much from arriving at John Snow that I wanted to be JCR President. Luckily, when I ran [for office] during my third year, I won."

"It was such an incredible job and, at the time, it was my entire world. John Snow is one of the biggest colleges, with over £140,000 of revenue – that is a lot of money to deal with as a 22-year-old."

"The conversations I had were important. I was not just organising a summer ball. We were accountable for a lot of things and it taught me a lot of soft skills."

"Looking back, I can see that sometimes the student politics was a bit of a storm in a teacup, but it was good fun."

Developing diplomacy and listening skills

During his time as JCR President, Chris pushed for more engagement from the student body and achieved higher attendances at JCR meetings. But things didn't always go his way, a fact he is glad to have realised during his university years.

"I learned a lot about diplomacy: how to listen to people and take on board their opinions. At the same time, I learned the hard way that more than half the people in the JCR didn't really care. They were at university to get their degree and have a nice time, and that was completely fine. No matter how powerful your speeches are, if people's hearts aren't in it, then they are just not going to bother."

"In a recent meeting, I was advising eight CEOs on how to collaborate globally. At one point, one of the CEOs said, 'Enough of the theory, can you just get to the point?'"

"I found at Durham that students will tell you when they don't care – they were often incredibly honest. So, the comment from the CEO didn't shock me that much. As JCR President, I learned that people aren't always on the same page."

Chris left Durham in 2012 and joined Capgemini as a graduate consultant, working for big clients such as Royal Mail and the NHS. Two years ago, he joined EPAM Systems as a senior business analyst. *"I'm incredibly lucky, because I love my job,"* he says. *"I like to swoop in, get it all*

sorted out and then move on. I like finding a problem, picking it all apart, and then making a recommendation."

From London to Munich, Amsterdam to the Canary Islands, his career has taken him all around the world, doing what he loves.

Networking and advising

When he's not jet-setting to meetings, Chris runs a charity called Intertech, which encourages LGBT+ diversity and inclusion in the UK technology sector. Three years ago, he noticed that the organisation was facing difficulties and decided to take a lead in improving its direction. It now has over 3,000 members, with bases in London, Sydney and Dublin.

"We still do our networking events as our main focus, but with all of those people we have got on-board, there's an amazing opportunity for us to advise on policy and connect companies, so we have started to do more in that space."

"Now working for EPAM, I am able to input into diversity policies at a global level. I advise on what we should be doing not just in LGBT+ issues but women in leadership too."

Chris also finds time to sit on the British Army LGBT+ forum, to advise on media issues. When the BBC or *The Telegraph* come to the organisation with a query, they turn to him.

Connecting and supporting schools

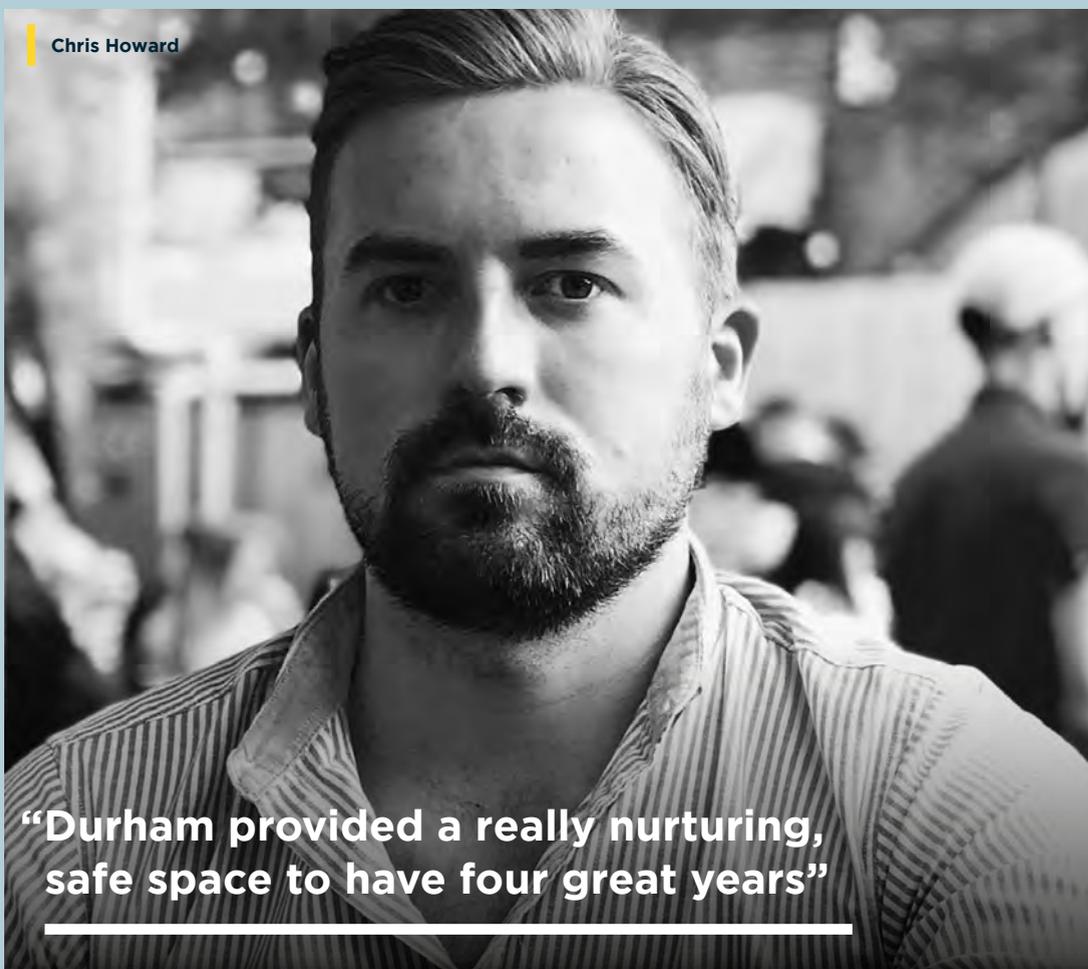
About three years ago, Chris was invited to provide strategic direction to three primary schools in the New Wave Federation, based in Hackney in London. Initially, he thought he would advise on the new technology the schools should buy, before moving on to another project. But two years into his connection with the schools, Chris was elected to chair the governing board. He now relishes the task of helping over 1,600 primary-age children to achieve their potential.

"There are three schools, and they're all graded Outstanding by Ofsted, but they are on a real spectrum," Chris explains. *"What I most enjoy is when I go in on a Wednesday morning and go on a learning walk, see the teachers in the classrooms and just see the kids having the best time. It is one of the most rewarding things I have ever done. Some of the things I am dealing with are outside of my circle of daily life, particularly when I was a child."*

Forward planning

"I'm 31 soon and, over the last few years, I've been thinking less of living the London graduate life and more of where I'm going to root myself," Chris muses. He has just bought a house in the Canary Islands with his partner of six years, Alberto, where they are making a home with their French bulldog, Lily.

Looking to the future, he is thankful for what his time at Durham taught him. *"It provided a really nurturing, safe space to have four great years. I was pushed really hard and the best was pulled out of me. People expect the best of you and I always had a lot going on. That is what makes me who I am."*



Chris Howard

"Durham provided a really nurturing, safe space to have four great years"

Melissa with a southern white rhino, during the horn-trimming procedure. Horn-trimming improves the survival of a rhino by 85% by discouraging poaching.

Protecting Endangered Rhino

Melissa Dawson (BSc Biology with Industrial Placement, Hatfield College, 2014; MSc(Res) Conservation Management of Savanna Grasslands, 2018), who works on the front line of wildlife protection in South Africa, tells *Dunelm* what inspired her career choice.

“Hatfield College always tried to instil in us that we should pursue our goals and strive for the best”

my supervisor. He was kind and supportive, and met with me whenever I requested, to help with work or advice. It is down to him that I am now doing a PhD for the right reason, and why I waited to find the right project title for me. Dr Gates not only inspired me to continue to study biology and conservation, but also to make sure that you are passionate about your subject.

A life-changing field trip

Hatfield College always tried to instil in us that we should pursue our goals and strive for the best. In my fourth year, I got the opportunity to go to South Africa on a field course. That is when I first came to Mankwe Wildlife Reserve, where I now work, and saw the incredible work the staff here do.

That trip inspired me to fight for endangered species and to continue my education and improve my knowledge, so that science can shape policy to protect species. From this field course, I was offered a Masters with Dr Stephen Willis, with field work based at Mankwe.

This pushed me to pursue a research career in African wildlife – the more I worked with the staff at Mankwe, the more passionate I became about conserving the species on site.

Conserving endangered species

While writing up my Masters, I was offered a research position at Mankwe Wildlife Reserve. The job role was initially to run the Nkombi Volunteer Programme alongside Luke Levitt, to support young and early career conservationists and ecologists, by giving them field-based experience in research data collection and reserve management.

After a few years in this role, managing the volunteers and improving their skill-set on research techniques, I was promoted to Research Co-ordinator. This role entails overseeing the research done on site, working with lecturers from a range of universities who come to the site for field courses, as well as working as part of the Earthwatch Institute, managing the field-based data collection for its on-site research. I am currently also doing my PhD, based on site with the University of Brighton, into the habitat utilisation of the southern white rhino.

Working as Research Co-ordinator at Mankwe Wildlife Reserve is not just a research position, collecting data and writing papers. It is so much more than that! I work every day on the front line with anti-poaching teams, protecting our rhino from poachers and helping to manage the reserve, to ensure that all the wildlife that reside within the boundaries have the resources they need to survive and thrive.

I work with an incredible team of trackers, who work tirelessly to manage firebreaks, control bush encroachment, manage soil erosion, and do foot and driven patrols. That is just the tip of the iceberg of their job. The management team are on call 24/7 and

Why Durham?

Choosing Durham University was mostly to do with the subject and course, but obviously the collegiate system played a big part in it being my first choice. At high school, I enjoyed biology and conservation, and have always thrived on field work. When it came to choosing a university, it was therefore important that there were options for me to work in the field.

The Durham Biology course offered broad study opportunities, from lab-based cell biology to whole-organism botany and zoology. It was important for me to ensure I had a well-rounded biological knowledge. What drew me specifically to the Durham course was the South African field course and the ability to do a placement year. Also, Durham itself has always held a place in my heart, as my extended family are from the area and I have always loved the City, and the community feel that the University creates.

While doing my undergraduate degree, I was captain of the Hatfield College netball team for a year, a member of the college Boat Club, and co-leader of Hatfield DUCK [Durham University Charities Committee] for a year. DUCK took a lot of my time during my second year, organising events and supporting other DUCK events, but it was worth it. We raised an incredible amount for charity, and the ‘DUCK family’ was so important for me during my time at Durham.

The friends I made at Durham have stuck with me, and most of my fondest memories are within my college. But one memory that sticks out for me is the numerous meetings with Dr Phil Gates in my first year. He was

even when off site are responding to crises or issues onsite. I am so proud to work as part of such a dedicated team, whose main aim is to conserve the endangered species we have on site.

“I am so proud to work as part of such a dedicated team, whose main aim is to conserve the endangered species we have on site”

In 2014, while I was a Masters student at Mankwe, the reserve was hit by rhino poachers. In one incident, a total of five white rhino were lost: two were directly shot that night, so the rhino poaching stats will only show their loss, but one of them was a month off giving birth; and another male rhino was injured and died a few weeks later, due to internal bleeding during our now necessary horn-trimming to protect the rest of the rhino on site; finally, the other female poached in 2014 left behind a six-month-old calf, who sadly passed away around eight months later. One poaching incident shook this reserve to its core, and has changed everything here on site.

We are constantly at threat from poachers, and have to patrol 24/7. Not only are we fighting to protect our rhino, but we work with rhino organisations such as Rhino 911 to try to conserve the species, by spreading the message of the rhino crisis and undertaking vital research that can support policy change in conserving this species.

Dr Lynne MacTavish, who is operation manager on site, has worked with numerous

researchers and journalists to try to show the world the rhino crisis, while ensuring that the science is behind all the measures taken to protect these rhino.

Covid-19 crisis

Covid-19 has created a major crisis for us here, as our main source of income comes through hosting university field courses from the UK – with no international travel, we have no form of income.

Running a reserve does not come cheap: even without guests, we still have to burn our fire breaks to prevent wild fires; horn-trim our rhino to keep them safe from poachers; patrol the fence day and night; and pay our trackers and anti-poaching scouts, who total 15 people, but who support 131 people at home. These costs are not something we can just ignore or not pay. They have to be done to keep the animals safe. So where do we find that money?

My work here is so meaningful to me. I am over 6,000 miles away from my family and friends, to help protect a reserve, animals and my South African family and to get through one of the most dangerous – and financially challenging – times the reserve has ever faced. With the economy falling, poaching is increasing; and with no money coming in, protecting the reserve and the animals is becoming harder than ever.

Durham always inspired me to work hard, and to keep pushing, no matter how difficult it gets, which is invaluable in the current scenario. The passion and determination of all my lecturers showed me that if you work hard and educate yourself, you can achieve whatever goal you are aiming for. I am so proud of my Durham education and the skills it has given me both academically and practically.

Pass it on

My advice to current students and recent graduates would be: you have had a fantastic education and you have learned so much, but remember to be humble and that you can always learn more.

People working on the front line and in the field have probably been through most scenarios that you have read about, so take their advice. Remember that you may have academic knowledge, but those on the ground are seeing and experiencing the issues every day. Take on what they know, and work with them when dealing with research or your field of work. When you work with people, projects develop and progress much quicker.

A job in conservation doesn't come easily; it takes a lot of hard work and networking. Sadly, there is still a lot of 'who you know', but without the right knowledge behind you, you will never progress. So be passionate, work hard and find a research focus that really interests you. Hold on to that knowledge and keep learning, so that when the opportunity arises, you will be ready.

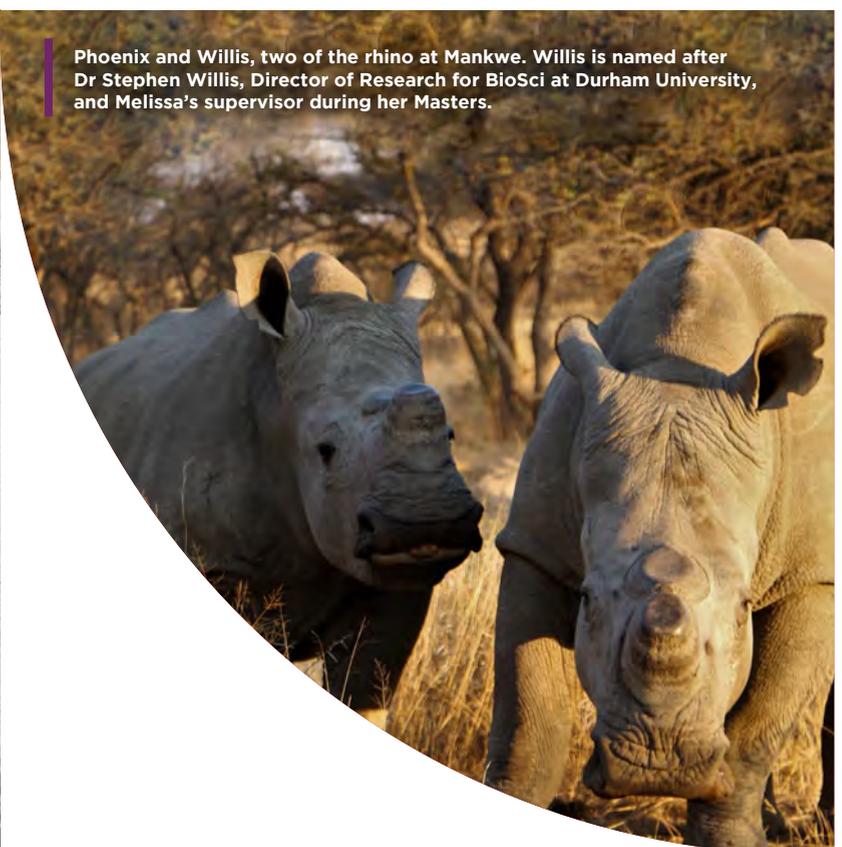
Further information

Mankwe Wildlife Reserve:
mankwewildlifereserve.com

Endangered Rhino Conservation:
endangeredrhino.org



Melissa taking a dung sample from a southern white rhino during a horn-trimming procedure.



Phoenix and Willis, two of the rhino at Mankwe. Willis is named after Dr Stephen Willis, Director of Research for BioSci at Durham University, and Melissa's supervisor during her Masters.

Durham Inspired:

Live in Lockdown

Academic insights, career resources and a global support network – Durham’s new virtual events series is here to help our community during Covid-19 and beyond.

It goes without saying that we are all facing immense challenges during this unprecedented time. As the Covid-19 pandemic redefines much of our world, it is more important than ever to bring our community the most relevant and useful resources that Durham University can deliver.

With this in mind, we are inviting our global community of students, alumni, donors, staff and friends of Durham to attend a series of online events featuring esteemed academic, professional and guest speaker experts from across the campus and the global Durham community.

From ‘Forgotten Workers’ to ‘Key Workers’
Wednesday 9 September 2020, 6pm (BST)

The Covid-19 pandemic must ensure the end of zero-hour contracts and their lack of employment security. Register [here](#).

A Pandemic of Breathlessness
Thursday 10 September 2020, 6pm (BST)

Join Professor Jane Macnaughton and Dr Sarah McClusky as they share insights from the Life of Breath research, exploring findings on the experience of breathlessness and the cultural significance of the breath, as well as sharing practical and creative tools which can be helpful and empowering for anyone experiencing breathlessness – whether it is caused by Coronavirus or COPD. Register [here](#).

The Battle of Dunbar and the Scottish Soldiers: People and Place, Now and Then
Thursday 17 September 2020, 6pm (BST)

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. Register [here](#).

Covid-19 in the USA: Transitioning Business Practices to the New Norm

Thursday 24 September 2020

A stellar panel of alumni will join colleagues from the University and Durham University Business School to discuss how businesses will adapt to Covid-19 in the USA and the outlook for the future. Register [here](#).

Medieval Mysteries

Thursday 22 October 2020, 6pm (BST)

Our colleagues from Libraries and Archives were such a huge hit in their Behind the Scenes event, we’ve invited them back for another. This time, we’re taking inspiration from one of THE most iconic of medieval buildings – Durham Cathedral. Register [here](#).

Tackling an Old Foe: Understanding New Ways to Kill Tuberculosis

Thursday 10 December 2020, 6pm (BST)

Scientists have discovered a new way of killing the bacteria that cause tuberculosis, using a toxin produced by the germ itself. Register [here](#).

If you missed events that have already taken place, you can still catch up by logging in at dunelm.org.uk/recordings

Durham’s Scottish Soldiers Project – Behind the Scenes

August 2020

The project team take us behind the scenes on the history, the DNA, and the archaeology.

A Look Behind the Scenes of Durham’s Special Collections

July 2020

Our colleagues from the Archives and Special Collections team join us to share some of the treasures they are privileged to work with and look after for future generations.

Inaugural Student Art Prize

July 2020

Introduced by the Vice-Chancellor, this features the announcement of the three prize-winners live, see some of the amazing entries, and some hear words from the sponsor of this year’s prize on the importance of the visual arts.

The BIG Durham Talent Show

July 2020

See our remarkable range of Durham talent and find out who won!

Your Professional Profile

June 2020

Our Durham Careers team guides you through how to put yourself out there, when looking for a first job or a post-Covid change. Areas covered include networking, social media, LinkedIn and speculative approaches.

Risk and Decision-Making in the Covid-19 Pandemic

June 2020

Understanding the current position and the potential policy avenues is an intensely complex problem. Durham’s Institute of Hazard, Risk and Resilience is working on a framework for risk and decision-making for non-medical professionals. Professor Julian Williams takes us through their approach.

Digital Games and Artificial Intelligence

May 2020

Professor Kiran Fernandes, Associate Dean for Internationalisation and Professor of Operations Management at Durham University Business School, discusses how technologies such as artificial intelligence and gamification can offer immense opportunities for companies to develop a resilient business model.

Managing Your Career During a Crisis – Alumni Perspectives

May 2020

A panel of Durham alumni from across Europe discuss different perspectives on employment and employability during these changing times.

Wicked Problems – Traversing the Unknown Unknowns with Dr Joanna Berry

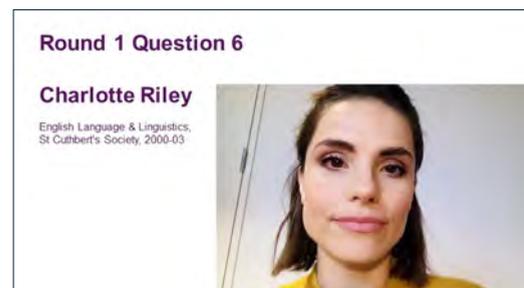
May 2020

Dr Joanna Berry of Durham University Business School takes us on an introductory tour of Problem Based Learning. Join us on a learning experience to find out more about this system and how we can apply it to the world we face.

The Big Durham Quiz LIVE!

May 2020

The BIG Durham Quiz LIVE! will feature questions on all things Durham and beyond from some famous University faces, including: beloved Chancellors, Sir Thomas Allen and Dr Bill Bryson; England Rugby superstar Will Greenwood; women in tech guru, Professor Sue Black; Downton Abbey’s Matt Barber, and many more.



Dunelmensis Awards

2020

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.

The 2020 awards will be presented later this year to two outstanding alumni.



Joanna Barker, MBE



Dr Rashmi Misra

Joanna Barker, MBE

French, Collingwood College, 1977-81

Joanna has shown exceptional commitment to the University over many years. She has played a major role in the governance of our University on Council, Finance Committee, the Campaign Board and the International Advisory Board of the Institute for Medieval and Early Modern Studies. This work has immeasurably supported the direction of the institution. The academic contribution that Joanna has made, particularly in the field of Early Modern studies, has included support for events and the publication of her own distinguished scholarly work. The philanthropic support she has given together with her husband Graham has been a crucial part of significant, transformational activity. We greatly appreciate the access that this has made possible to the University's Special Collections in the Palace Green Library, and the MA and PhD scholarships that the School of Modern Languages and Cultures has been able to award to high-performing students.

Over a sustained period, Joanna's contributions have underpinned and

supported our strategic aims in terms of research excellence and education, as well as enhancing the University's reputation nationally and internationally. Joanna has, in her own working life, enacted the commitment to diversity and equality that we ourselves embody, in her finance career, her charitable work, and her own ongoing scholarly practice. The conferment is an opportunity for the University to thank Joanna for the countless hours she has given to supporting Durham University and the School of Modern Languages and Cultures.

Dr Rashmi Misra

Computer Science, St Mary's College, 1989-92

Rashmi joined the Computer Science External Advisory Board shortly after its inception in 2016, and has since played an integral role in the developments of the Department in relation to a wide range of issues, including recruitment, curriculum, gender diversity, and student enterprise. Rashmi and her husband Rajiv – also a Durham graduate – hosted their first alumni event at their home in Texas in 2017,

welcoming the Vice-Chancellor and some 50 guests in the first-ever co-ordinated event in the area. Since then, Rashmi has also participated as a panellist in a Career Networking Event in London, before hosting another alumni event with her family in their new home in Seattle.

Despite a busy schedule of international travel leading the AI and Mixed Reality Business Development team at Microsoft, she frequently makes herself available to support the University, returning to Durham last year to deliver a talk to first-year Computer Science students as part of the new Computational Thinking Module led by Professor Sue Black.

Rashmi is a global figurehead in the technology industry and a wonderful ambassador for the University. She has had a high level of involvement in the University's activities at home and abroad, operating in both a strategic advisory capacity and as a host to our North American alumni communities. Rashmi is always generous with her time and support despite working at an extremely senior level, and the University is delighted to recognise her immense contribution with this Award.

Past Events



Dr Bill Bryson
Former Chancellor of Durham University

Networking in Prague

February 2020

A big thank you to the Durham University Czech Republic Alumni Group for hosting a wonderful evening of networking in Prague, with special guest speaker His Excellency Nick Archer MVO, British Ambassador to the Czech Republic, a Durham alumnus.

Visit from Dr Bill Bryson

January 2020

We were thrilled to host our former Chancellor, Dr Bill Bryson, who gave a talk to an appreciative audience at the Small Island Café on his new book *The Body*. This talk was one of the first in our 'Café Culture' series on campus.

Malaysia - Durham Alumni International Chapter launch



Malaysia 2019

January 2020

Senior leaders from Durham University's Global Strategy Team joined our alumni in Kuala Lumpur to launch our newest International Chapter. The event was a huge success and it was great to see so many of you come together and celebrate Durham, as well as making new friends and contacts. [View photos.](#)

DunelmUSA Annual Gala Dinner

December 2019

Thursday, 5 December saw DunelmUSA hold the third Annual New York Gala event at the Prince George Ballroom in Manhattan. Over 100 guests came along to catch

up and celebrate all things Durham on a wonderful evening, headlined by our special guest speaker Henry Timms, President and CEO of the Lincoln Center. Henry talked passionately about the difference the performing arts can make to students, as well as revealing that his family were the original creators of 'The Star-Spangled Banner'!

Henry's enthusiasm for the performing arts set the tone for the fundraising drive and what he said clearly resonated - more than \$80,000 was raised at the event, all of which will support the performing arts at Durham University. Thank you to all who came and contributed to such an amazing total. [View photos.](#)

Asia tour

September 2019

More than 500 alumni engaged in a series of alumni events in Singapore, Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Hong Kong over nine days in September, including: an amazing night with our alumni at the Singapore Cricket Club, where Durham Ambassador Michael Shearer OBE (from McLaren Applied Technologies) gave a Formula One themed talk; and over 180 alumni (spanning four decades of Durham cohorts) braving typhoon-grade winds to join us for afternoon tea on the terrace at the Langham Hotel in Xintiandi, Shanghai. [View photos.](#)

Durham Alumni in Government, Law & Politics: Career Networking Event in Washington DC



“It was great to see so many of you come together and celebrate Durham”

USA Tour

September 2019

Over 200 alumni engaged in a series of events in San Francisco, Washington DC, Philadelphia, Chicago, New York and Boston during eight days in September. Attendees enjoyed: stunning views over the Capitol building from a rooftop terrace in DC, courtesy of Jones Day and Charles Kotuby; a fun and friendly gathering in Cavanaugh Headhouse in Philly; an informal brunch in Chicago; a sunset view of the Statue of Liberty, courtesy of Hughes, Hubbard and Reed, and Durham legend John Fellas; and a breathtaking view over Boston from the 49th floor of the new Ropes and Gray facility, courtesy of Durham Law School’s alumni community member Philip Sanderson.

[View photos.](#)

Law Meet-up at Ropes and Gray

June 2019

Philip Sanderson and his colleagues at Ropes and Gray hosted a fantastic evening for our Durham in Law meet-up in London, with a Q&A, followed by networking with drinks and canapés. We also had a special guest appearance from former Prime Minister Tony Blair, who presented student Mia Purdy with the inaugural Leo Blair prize.

[View photos.](#)

Schienman Career Networking Events in the USA

May 2019

A series of Career Networking Events took place throughout May last year. In New York, we hosted a fireside chat with James Roscoe (*Politics, St John’s College, 1995-98*) and Jeremy Diamond (*Economics and Law, Grey College, 1984-87*) on ‘The Art of Influence’; Paul Marsden (*Engineering, Hatfield College, 1996-00*) shared his valuable insights on the energy sector in Houston; and career networking in the tech sector was hosted by Wilson Sonsini Goodrich and Rosati in San Francisco. These events were all made hugely successful by the participation of our alumni and guest speakers.

British Ambassador’s Reception in Tokyo

April 2019

The British Ambassador to Japan, HE Paul Madden CMG, hosted a very special reception in Tokyo among the cherry blossoms. It was great to see over a third of all Durham alumni in Japan turn up for the event, where networks were expanded and friends were made.

[View photos.](#)

Networks were expanded and friends were made



Hong Kong 2019



Shenzhen 2019



Hatfielders Crashing Trevs Do

Our Durham Stories

Class of '70



David Breeze

David Breeze

University College

The interviews at Castle and the History Department in 1961 clinched it for me; I was captivated by Durham.

When I arrived in September 1962, my first tutor was Eric Birley, Professor of Romano-British History and Archaeology. Towards the end of term, he mentioned that the University ran an archaeological training excavation. I duly attended that, and I was hooked. I not only started the Roman Britain special subject the following year, but I embarked on learning how to dig.

In those days, a dissertation was part of the special subject and I found that I enjoyed research, so I stayed on to undertake my PhD in Durham, graduating in 1970. On the completion of that, I was offered a post as an assistant inspector of ancient monuments in the Ministry of Public Building and Works, and there I stayed for the next 40 years, witnessing many changes of departmental titles and climbing up the ladder, until I became Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Scotland in 1989.

At the age of 60, I moved sideways and spent the next few years preparing the nomination of the Antonine Wall as a World Heritage Site, successfully achieved in 2008, and helping to create the first transnational, phased, serial World Heritage Site (wonderful UNESCO jargon), Frontiers of the Roman Empire.

Looking back, it all seems so serendipitous. If Eric had not been my tutor, I would not have taken his special subject nor attended an excavation – and everything else

flowed from that. And 'that' included my wife, who I met on the university training excavation in 1966, started courting in 1968 and married in 1972. Fortunately, Pamela (*St Aidan's College, 1968-71*) did not stay in archaeology, but without her support I would certainly not have achieved so much.

Lesley Ingleson (née Read)

Trevelyan College



Lesley Ingleson in 1970

I graduated from Trevelyan College, after studying Mathematics, and married Stuart Ingleson that summer.

He was also at Durham (*Bede College, 1965-70*) and studied Geography. We are still happily married, and so will be celebrating our 50th wedding anniversary in 2020 along with all the family. We have two sons and seven grandchildren – amazing!



Ron Emerson and his wife Angie



Angela Braga



Angela and Paul Braga in 2020

I had always wanted to do Computing, so I applied to Fujitsu/ICL as a graduate trainee in application programming. Computing was a good career choice for me and very rewarding. I had quite a number of jobs, following Stuart around the country as he got promoted.

Ultimately, I had various IT director roles, but my most exciting and challenging was when I was given the opportunity to be managing director of a European travel company.

Now retired, we are very fortunate to live in the Trough of Bowland, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the north-west of England. We enjoy spending time with the family, travelling widely and getting involved with local activities.

Ron Emerson

Durham Business School

Coming to the new fledgling Durham Business School, after reading Engineering at Manchester, was a turning point in my life.

I went on to spend a good deal of time in banking, eventually being global head of wholesale banking for Standard Chartered, then took a sabbatical at Oxford and moved on in other directions with a plural career. This recently led to being the founding chairman of the UK government's economic development bank, The British Business Bank, which specialises in supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, the backbone of the UK economy.

But Standard Chartered was also a turning point as, when working for them in Malaysia, I met my wife Angie, who was visiting with Durham University for an educational fair. Angie looked after international students at Durham, and we discovered that we were both born in Hartlepool. The hand of fate descended, and we were married a couple of years later – thanks to Durham being smart enough to visit Malaysia! I should say that Angie can't wait to visit the hotel where we are staying, as it's the old Shire Hall, where she had her office.

Whilst at DUBS, I and four others founded the Grad Soc boat club, quite something given that none of us had ever rowed before. We rowed at Hexham and Durham Regattas. With the latter, we had become quite ambitious and entered an eight in the novice category. There were only

three entrants, and we had a bye to the final. When we saw that we would be rowing against a crew of 16-year-olds, the celebratory party was already organised. The trouble was, this was Durham School's European champions. We only lost by three lengths. Happy days.

Angela Braga (née Hall)

St Mary's College

The view from Durham station is surely one of the finest in the world, and arriving there for my interview as a nervous 17-year-old, I was blown away. I knew I had found my place.

I loved it all: the trunks being sent on ahead by rail two weeks before term; the cosy girls' boarding school environment of Mary's, with doors locked at 12 by Laurie the caretaker – all men, of course, to be out by then; the novelty of being called 'Miss Hall' by eminent professors in tutorial sessions; the romance of Prebends Bridge, with the Cathedral looming massively overhead; the constant dressing-up for formals, informals, sherry parties (would any modern student regard six sherry glasses as being essential uni equipment?); the gowns; the Latin grace, which as Deputy Senior Woman in my final year I was often responsible for saying; the police box in the market place, with the

white-gloved policeman directing the traffic; the modern concrete span of Kingsgate and Dunelm House contrasting with the wonderful old architecture of Palace Green and Old Elvet.

All seemed set fair, but a few weeks into term my life was turned upside down. My father, on the family's first weekend visit to Durham, suffered a stroke and died in Dryburn Hospital. It was devastating. But although I had been a student for only a month or so, the College community was incredibly supportive. In particular, Mary Holdsworth, then Principal of Mary's, took me under her wing and kept a close eye on me, until I found my feet again. I will always be grateful.

As one door closes, another opens. The week after my Dad's death, I met my future husband, Paul, a Hatfield Modern Languages student just back from his year abroad. Reader, I married him, during the summer of my graduation year, and thus we will be celebrating our Golden Wedding in 2020.

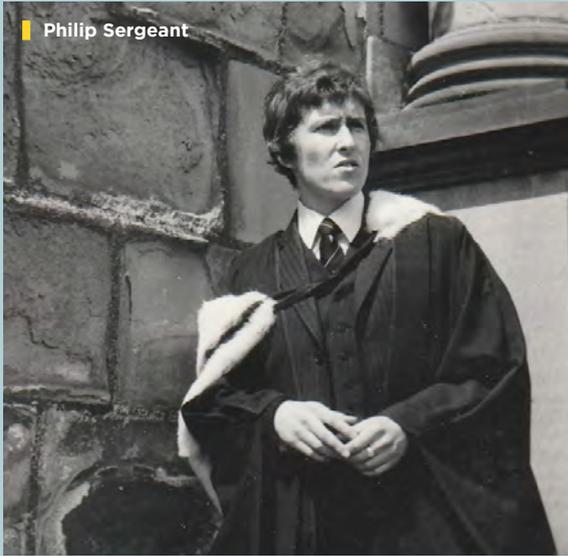
I want to end this ramble by remembering three much-loved friends, all St Mary's and all reading English, who are no longer with us: **Tessa Cullen (née Wall)**; **Liz Foster (née Whitaker)**; and **Mary Wise (née Smith)**. They too belong to the class of 1970.



Angela and Paul Braga in 1970

Philip Sergeant

University College



Philip Sergeant

Margaret Elphinstone

St Mary's College



Margaret Elphinstone and her parents



Philip Sergeant

Graduating from University College Durham in 1970, having studied Geography, was a very proud moment for me.

I had some very important family alongside me for the great day. As the youngest of six children, I was fortunate to have with me three Durham graduates: my father, who graduated in the 1930s, having studied Maths at Hatfield College; my sister Pat, who graduated with Honours from King's College in 1961 studying Classics; and my brother Rick, who also studied at King's College, gaining an Honours degree in French and Spanish. (King's College is now Newcastle University.)

Last but not least was my wife-to-be, Sylvia, who was already teaching when I graduated. Also, there was my junior school teacher and her husband, my senior school Maths teacher, whose son John Holme gained a First in Geography that year.

To finish off, I have returned to Durham again for my daughter Elizabeth's graduation in the Castle with a 2:1 Honours in Biology from Trevelyan. I have been back since and stayed in the Castle. I regard Durham as the place that helped define my later life.

At my interview for Durham, I was asked about Browning, whose poems we were studying for A-level. I said he was all very well, but Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote better sonnets and always had to look up the trains when he was being hopeless.

I wonder if that was why I was offered a place. I fell in love with Durham when I walked across Prebends Bridge for the first time, pausing to read the Scott quatrain, now forever engraved upon my memory, and up to Palace Green. Later, I did that walk almost every day, going from Mary's up to the library. It was my preferred way of getting to the English Department, then housed uninspiringly in Elvet Riverside. In some ways, Durham abetted me, in never quite entering the modern world, though in 1968 I did take part in my first political protests, a lifelong habit into which I have recently relapsed.

The combination of the ever-present past in Durham and ancient Northumbria, and the chance to read widely and avidly for three years, is what truly educated me. Highlights of formal study were Professor Dorsch's Shakespeare class, a special option on W.B. Yeats, and yes, all that Anglo-Saxon and Middle English, although I didn't appreciate it at the time.

Some years later, I became a writer myself. My earliest novels are set in a possible future

which now appears alarmingly prophetic. Most of my work has been historical. Eight years in Shetland were the catalyst for two Norse novels, a spell in Michigan produced a novel set in the 1812 war, and a passion for islands, lighthouses and Atlantic history informed the rest. My latest novel, set on the Argyll coast 8,000 years ago, has brought me circling back to the environmental themes of the early books. There has always been the day job too: gardener, home help, library assistant, academic. I ended up as Professor of Writing at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, but since I retired from paid work, it's back to gardening, which (unlike academia, sad to say) gives me time to think, and to cultivate some new varieties of writing.

All this aside, the central theme of the past 50 years has been my family and my friends. I look at the photo of myself at my Graduation in 1970, with my parents standing one on either side of me. At 21, that seemed like a steady state: mortality was still merely a concept. If anyone takes a photo in 2020, it will be of myself and my partner Mike, but implicit in that would be our respective descendants, all 13 of them. One thing I have learned in 50 years is that while the personnel change almost entirely, family and friends are the constant, *sine qua non*. So many happy memories and celebrations!

Hatfielders graduating in 1970



Our Alumni and Supporter Engagement Team are thrilled to have been awarded the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) Gold Award for the Class of 1970 50th Anniversary event held in January 2020.

[Click to view.](#)

My Durham Story

Alumna Julie Stobbs (*Ecology, Graduate Society, 1969-70*) looks back at her time at Durham and the influence it has had on her life and her career in nature conservation.



I was delighted to receive an invitation from the University's Alumni Office to attend the Winter Congregation, in order to celebrate the golden anniversary of my graduation in 1970. Living in West Rainton, only five miles from the City of Durham, and being free on 9 January, there was every reason why I decided to attend. There were only 17 "golden oldies" there, none of whom I had known previously, but it was a most enjoyable afternoon and quite moving as we processed down the nave of the Cathedral to wonderful music following Chancellor Sir Thomas Allen's excellent speech.

Originally from Birmingham, I attended the Mount School, York, and then went on to Cambridgeshire College of Arts and Technology, as it was then called, to do an external London degree. My interest in ecology had grown and, on graduation, I applied to Durham to do the MSc Ecology course, which that year was run by the late David Bellamy. As he had done an external London degree himself, and recognised that it wasn't the easiest course to do (as your examiners were unknown to you and there was therefore no opportunity for 'question spotting'), he readily accepted me. That was in 1969 and, apart from a year working for the Nature Conservancy in Bangor, North Wales, I have been in the North East ever since.

When I returned to Durham from Bangor, it was David Bellamy who told me about an advertised position working for the Horticultural Officer at the University on the technical development of the new Botanic Garden. My application was successful and I stayed for two-and-a-half years. Whilst there, I got involved as a volunteer with Durham Wildlife Trust, and my application for the first paid post with that organisation was successful. I stayed there for 16 years, leaving in 1990, by which time my title was Conservation Director. There is not space to enumerate here the many and varied tasks that I had to undertake, but on the administrative side I learned a great deal from Dame Enid Russell-Smith, who was Chair for the first three years of my

employment. Previously, she had been Principal of St Aidan's College, as some older alumni may remember.

David Bellamy was a fantastic ambassador for the cause of nature conservation throughout my employment with the Durham Wildlife Trust, and I have many fond memories of working with him on different projects. His imaginative ideas included the Country and Forest Workshops, which we ran jointly with the Forestry Commission at Hamsterley Forest. Visitors could try their hands at all sorts of activities, and David's own role was to run nature trails for children in the Bedburn Beck.

In 1985, the Trust was fortunate to be selected as one of 12 county trusts to host a talk by Sir David Attenborough. This was held at the Sunderland Empire Theatre on Bonfire Night, and David Attenborough was introduced by his colleague David Bellamy. As well as organising the arrangements for the day, I was privileged to act as David Attenborough's driver. My job was certainly diverse.

“My time at Durham University certainly placed me in good stead for a busy and interesting life”

In 1991, I commenced work with Durham County Council, leaving in 2005, by which time I had been promoted to the post of County Ecologist. As with my employment with the Trust, it was fantastically busy but always interesting, and I felt worthwhile in espousing the cause of nature conservation, in which I am a passionate believer. From 2005, the only paid work that I have done has been on a freelance basis, mainly consisting of undertaking botanical surveys.

Coming from a sporty family (my mother taught PE and my father, who was 6'7" tall,

played badminton until he was 85), sport has always been important to me, particularly tennis, which I still play on a restricted basis. I remember playing tennis for the University while undertaking my MSc, when we reached the semi-finals of the Women's Inter-Varsity Athletic Board tournament, which we played, and lost, at Keele University. In later years, I was a member of the Staff Badminton Club at the University, for whom I also played in matches. Being 6'2" myself, there are some situations where height can be an advantage!

My other main interest is music, both singing and instrumental. Way back I have good memories of singing in Durham University Choral Society, when the conductor was Brian Primmer. Later on, I sang in other choirs, including the Durham Singers, and my husband and I met through our early music interests of playing recorders and viols. Viol playing is a slightly specialised interest, and during our travels we have had the pleasure of playing in Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. I once wrote an article for *The Viol* magazine on the pleasures of international networking through viol playing. We have certainly made a lot of friends through this combined interest, and often welcome people to our house to play.

There is no question that undertaking a postgraduate qualification at Durham helped me in my search for jobs. I am now a Vice-President of Durham Wildlife Trust and, during my employment with them, when the former Lord Barnard was president, I was privileged to attend a garden party at Buckingham Palace.

Environmental work now is mainly limited to a small amount of writing, and I am also an active member of our village Green Group. At the great age of 70, my husband and I bought e-bikes and we take every opportunity to see the countryside that way.

My time at Durham University certainly placed me in good stead for a busy and interesting life.

Class Notes

Your News From This Year.

Dr Noha Aboueldahab (Law, Ustinov College, 2013-16), a transitional justice specialist, has written an article: 'Never lose sight of what victims and their families want'.

Clare Agnew, née Buxton (Archaeology/Ancient History, St Mary's College, 1979-82) was High Sheriff of Norfolk from March 2019 to March 2020.

Dr Al-Misnad (PhD Education, and Honorary Degree (Law), St Aidan's College, 1979-84) has been elected as Qatar's member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Robert Buckland QC MP (Law, Hatfield College, 1987-91) has been appointed Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice.

Jacqui Cole (Chemistry, Grey College, 1994-97) has received a Royal Society medal.

Phillip A. Cooke (Music, Van Mildert College, 1998-2001) has had his book *The Music of James Macmillan* published by Boydell and Brewer.

Graham Cornish (Theology, St Chad's College, 1963-67) has had the sixth revised edition of his standard work *Copyright: Interpreting the law for libraries, archives and information services* published.

Professor Gabrielle Finn (Health Studies, Ustinov College, 2007-11) has won a National Teaching Fellowship, the most prestigious award for teaching and learning excellence.

Lisa Firth (English Literature, Collingwood College, 2000-03) has been shortlisted for the Romantic Novelists' Association's Romantic Comedy Novel of the Year Award 2020 with her book *A Question of Us*, written as Mary Jayne Baker. Her second novel as Lisa Swift - *The School of Starting Over* - is due for publication.

Sue Flood (Zoology, St Mary's College, 1983-86), award-winning wildlife photographer and filmmaker, has been appointed an ambassador for the White Feather Foundation.

Felicia Fricke (Archaeology, University College, 2007-10) has received media attention in the Caribbean islands of Curaçao and St Maarten for her thesis research, entitled 'The Lifeways of Enslaved People in Curaçao, St Eustatius, and St Maarten/St Martin: A thematic analysis of archaeological, osteological, and oral historical data'.

Luke Grenfell-Shaw (Natural Sciences, University College, 2013-17) is cycling from Bristol to Beijing on a tandem, to show what's possible with a cancer diagnosis and to inspire others to live life to the full.

Melinda Hill (English Literature, St Mary's College, 1993-96) has written two successful non-fiction books under the name Milli Hill: *The Positive Birth Book* and *Give Birth Like a Feminist*.

Ryan Jessop (Mathematics, Josephine Butler College, 2014-17) has received a second national award for his innovative contribution to industry-leading intent data management platform Carbon DMP.

Awais Khan (Management Studies, 2010-13) has written a novel, *In the Company of Strangers*, which is due to be published in the UK in July.

Jenny Laahs (Molecular Biology and Biochemistry, Grey College, 2008-12), music therapist, has released her debut electro-pop album 'Grow Slow' under the name Pinlight.

Craig Lawrence, CBE (Engineering, University College, 1983-86) has had his book *Gurkha* published, with a foreword by HRH The Prince of Wales. The book commemorates the first 25 years of The Royal Gurkha Rifles.

Tom Lucas (Sociology, St Chad's College, 1973-76) has published *Just Help Yourself* and *Andrew Lucas: The life story of my father - an unsung hero*.

Jane Marriott OBE (History, University College, 1994-97) has been appointed British High Commissioner to the Republic of Kenya. Taking up the appointment in the summer, Jane will be the first woman to hold this important diplomatic role.

Peter Massam (*French, College of St Hild & St Bede, 1976-80*) has published his first collection of 'Sketch Poems'.

Bryony Mathew (*Biological Anthropology, University College, 2000-01*) has published a children's book, *Qubits and Quiver Trees: Awesome careers of the future*, which aims to show children as young as five that everyone is equal.

Keith McCoy (*Business Administration, Van Mildert College, 2017-19*) has written a dark comedy novel, *Hello Larry Barry*.

Katharine McMahon (*Education, Graduate Society, 1979-80*) is the author of ten novels and has recently had *The Hour of Separation* published.

Malcolm 'Irish' Mitchell (*Education, College of St Hild & St Bede College, 1966-69*) is the President of Scottish Golf, which looks after 600 golf clubs in Scotland.

Sally Morgan (*Geography, Van Mildert College, 1977-80*) became the ninth Master of Fitzwilliam College, University of Cambridge, in October.

Gavin Murphy (*Law, Graduate Society, 1997-98*) donated \$500,000, to the Ottawa Hospital to further cancer research.

Dr Lois Musikali (*International Trade and Commercial Law, Ustinov College, 2004-06*) was awarded the Governance Researcher of the Year 2019 award at the 10th Champions of Governance Awards.

Sam Newbould (*Risk and Security, Josephine Butler College, 2011-13*) is releasing his debut album with his jazz quintet.

Sharon Ney (*Philosophy, St Aidan's College, 1985-88*) has published a science fiction/fantasy book, *Entrapment in Oestragnar* (Oslac's Odyssey Book 1).

Miles Oglethorpe (*Geography, Hatfield College, 1976-79*) has been elected President of the International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage.

Joanna Park-Tonks (*Arts Combined, University College, 1996-2000*) is launching Chelsea Rocks, a collection of jewellery made from lab-grown diamonds.

Marcus Paul (*Arts Combined, St John's College, 1970-73*) has published his second book, *Ireland to the Wild West: A true story of romance, faith, tragedy, and hope*.

Pasquale Paziienza (*Economics, St Mary's College, 2007-15*) has been made President of the National Park of Gargano in Italy.

Mark Pearson (*Institute of European Studies, St Chad's College, 1969-70*) has been named Chairman of the New Hampshire Commission on Deafness and Hearing Loss. He continues as Assistant Floor Leader to the New Hampshire House of Representatives and as substitute chaplain to the House.

Harry Rice (*Geography, St Cuthbert's Society, 2012-15*) and his Durham alumni team founded mindfulness app LagomMind, which aims to improve students' and young professionals' mental health. They got to the final of an entrepreneurship competition called The F Factor and pitched at Founders Forum in front of politicians, CEOs and royalty.

Stuart Rochester (*Theology, Graduate Society, 2000*) has published *Self-Denial: A New Testament view*.

Alison Rose (*History, St Aidan's College, 1988-91*) has been confirmed as Chief Executive of Royal Bank of Scotland Group, the first woman to lead one of the UK's big four banks.

Robert Shepherd (*Chemistry, Grey College, 1962-65*) had his book *Captain Gray's Houses: The history of an important group of early Georgian houses in Twickenham* published by Durham's Sacristy Press.

Matthew Smalley (*Arts Combined, Collingwood College, 1974-77*) has self-published his first novel, *Bigfella Kidman*, the first book in a saga called 'The Song of the Butcher Bird'.

Kevin Spreitz (*Business Administration, Ustinov College, 2002-04*) has expanded his photography gallery in Huatulco, Oaxaca, Mexico.

Will Stoddart (*Business Finance, John Snow College, 1999-2002*) has started a healthcare podcast: 'What does good look like?' – covering healthy ageing from womb to tomb. Its most recent guest was another Durham alumnus, **Paul Wicks** (*Psychology, St Cuthbert's Society, 1999-2002*), ex-Vice-President of Innovation at PatientsLikeMe, Chief Scientific Officer at HealthUnlocked and member of the Editorial Board at the *British Medical Journal*.

Deborah Stone (*English Literature, St Aidan's College, 1981-84*), a leading expert in elder care, provides information and advice for families caring for older people through her website, as well as advising companies on the effective development of products and services for older people. She has recently published *The Essential Family Guide to Caring for Older People*.

Gabriela Styf Sjöman (*Business Administration, 1999-2004*) has been appointed as Nokia's Chief Strategy Officer.

Donny Thomas (*Business Administration, Ustinov College, 2007-09*) is in the new Microsoft AI video on how Forus Health is using AI to prevent blindness.

Dani Watson (*Arts Combined, Josephine Butler College, 2013-16*) and **Kitty Ball** (*Physics, Collingwood College, 2011-13*) have been selected as up-and-coming talent in New Creatives North.

Bishop John Wilson (*Theology, Graduate Society, 1999-2004*) has been appointed Archbishop of Southwark.

Ying Ji (*International Trade and Commercial Law, Ustinov College, 2004-06*) made it to the final of the Professional Achievement Award with the Study UK Alumni Awards.

“What adventures will we have today?”

In 2014, Durham graduates Esther Dingley (*Research Methodology, College of St Hild and St Bede, 2007-09*) **and Dan Colegate** (*Chemistry, Ustinov College, 2006-09*) **set off to tour Europe in a second-hand motorhome. It was supposed to be a honeymoon, career break and early-thirties life reset all rolled into one. Six years later, they're still going! We asked them about their adventures so far and their memories of Durham as well.**



Why did you choose to study at Durham?

In many ways, our arrival in Durham in 2006 wasn't planned. Dan hoped to work with a particular supervisor for his PhD, so when that supervisor relocated to Durham before Dan started, we just went with it. From the first time we stepped off the train, saw the Cathedral and walked along the river, we fell in love with Durham. That's why we went on to make our life here, buying our first home together.

Esther did her own postgraduate studies, before working as a research assistant and later at Team Durham. We also both competed for the University cycling club and, at times, were also members of other clubs, such as triathlon, hillwalkers and rowing.

It was with the help of the Blueprint Challenge awards that we started our own business, won several other entrepreneur awards and attracted North East venture/regional capital funding. Certainly, moving to Durham was a hugely positive event for us.

Why did you decide to embark on your travelling life?

When we were younger, as undergraduates, we were lucky enough to spend several summers Interrail touring between summer jobs. Those adventures planted the seed for a travel bug that never died.

However, the final push came in the form of a serious health scare. In early 2014, Dan was seriously ill and, one night, we were told to say “a proper goodbye, just in case”. We knew then that if he got better, we'd make some major changes to the way we lived. Thankfully, he recovered and as soon as we could, we bought an old motorhome and drove south.

We were in our early thirties when we left. Now that we're in our late thirties, on the one hand we regret not going sooner, but on the other hand, it meant we had more resources behind us and more life experience.

How do you fund your adventures?

So far, it's been a combination of savings, rental income from our house, and jobs we pick up on the road. We've also written some books. When we first set off, we were very nervous about money, our futures and career prospects, etc. However, the more we toured, the more we saw people carving out all sorts of different lifestyles on budgets of all sizes (and none).

It's partly that our priorities have evolved a lot following Dan's health scare, but we've also accepted that we just need to live for the moment a little more and let the future take care of itself. That may sound very reckless to some people. It would have done to us a few years ago, but it's something we're comfortable with now. Maybe that will change?

Tell us about some of your adventures so far.

There are so many to choose from. Working on an organic farm. Free diving.

Crashing a hot air balloon next to the Nile in Egypt. Two months trekking through the Alps. Adopting a stray dog, who had six puppies two weeks later. Or just parking in a field and watching the sun set.

Every morning we wake up and say out loud, “What adventures will we have today?”. It might just be litter picking on a beach, or writing a blog post for a charity we support, but mindfulness and gratitude have become an increasing part of our life experience. Not that we don't still love running up mountains as often as we can!

Have you encountered any problems along the way?

Lots of them, or very few depending on how you look at it. We know we are “living the dream”, as many people would see it, and we are. But as we've learned, travelling doesn't really solve any problems, it just changes them.



Practical challenges aside, such as vehicle breakdowns, etc., the biggest challenges have been emotional. Removing many of the conventional life stresses allowed a lot of suppressed issues to creep up. It's been a very cathartic experience at times, especially when sharing a tiny living space with a long-term life partner!

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

Don't be afraid to do something different. Travel has opened us up to new ways of looking at life, at people and at the world. There are so many ‘facts’ we used to take for granted that no longer seem obvious.

How has Durham inspired and supported you to get where you are today?

There's no doubt that our time in Durham was instrumental in our lives. In practical terms, the Blueprint Business Planning competition changed our lives completely, not to mention all we learned during our studies.

But it wasn't just the practical things we look back on fondly. Durham has a very special atmosphere that we fell in love with. That's why we made it our home.

You can follow Dan and Esther on their travels at estheranddan.com or on Facebook at [@EstherandDan](https://www.facebook.com/EstherandDan)

Honours

*Given to Durham Alumni
2019-20*

The Queen's Birthday Honours 2019

Miss Julie Carlton MBE

St John's College, Classics, 1985

For services to maritime safety

Mrs Jennifer D Charles MBE

College of St Hild and St Bede, Arts Combined, 1968

For services to the Administration of Justice and the community in Hampshire

Colonel Guy Deacon OBE

University College, Anthropology, 1984

Appointments to and promotions in the military division of the most excellent order of the British Empire

Mr Alastair D W Fothergill OBE

St Cuthbert's Society, Zoology, 1983

For services to film

Mrs Valerie J Hepworth BEM

Graduate Society, Education, 1973

For services to the Yorkshire Gardens Trust and conservation

Mr Carl S P Hunter OBE

Hatfield College, Arts Combined, 1984

For services to business and international trade

Mr Anthony H G Laithwaite CBE

Hatfield College, Geography, 1968

For services to the UK and global wine industry

Mr Richard Ovenden OBE

St Chad's College, Economic/Modern History, 1985

For services to libraries and archives

Mr Hugh G Pearman MBE

St Chad's College, English Language and Literature, 1977

For services to architecture

Mr Peter H Ransom MBE

Grey College, Natural Sciences, 1976

For voluntary services to mathematics education

Mr David J R Strang CBE

St Chad's College, Engineering, 1980

For services to law and order

Dame Sara J Thornton DBE

Trevelyan College, Philosophy and Politics, 1984

For services to policing

The Queen's New Year Honours 2020

Dr Michael S Bingham OBE

St Aidan's College, Geography, 1987

For services to planning

Mrs Alison J Brenchley OBE

University College, Geography, 1990

For services to financial services and diversity

Miss Charlotte Dring OBE

Josephine Butler College, Natural Sciences, 2009

For services to cross-government social mobility

Ms Gabrielle A Edwards CBE

Trevelyan College, History, 1988

CBE for services to the environment

Mr Mark Frost BEM

Grey College, Geography, 1984

For services to cricket

Sir Jonathan G Jones KCB QC (Hon)

St Chad's College, Law, 1984

For public service

Mrs Amanda M Kendall CBE

Hatfield College, Economics and Politics, 1992

For services to economic growth

Mrs Gabrielle N Logan MBE

College of St Hild and St Bede, Law, 1995

For services to sports broadcasting and the promotion of women in sport

Professor Anne E Osbourn OBE FRS

Van Mildert College, Botany, 1982

For services to plant science

Miss Margaret Timmins MBE

St Mary's College, History, 1981

For services to transport

The Queen's Award for Enterprise 2020

Ms Patricia Alexander

Business Administration, 2005

Managing Director of Shared Interest Society

Dr Amab Basu MBE

Ustinov College, Physics, 2000

CEO of Kromek Group plc

Mr Justin Crump

Politics, Trevelyan College, 1999

CEO of Sibylline Limited

Mr Mark Curtis

Education, Graduate Society, 1982

Managing Director of Vision Engineering Ltd

News

Honorary Graduates

Alongside our class of 2019 graduates, we awarded a number of honorary degrees at Congregation last year

The following honorary degrees were awarded at Summer Congregation 2019

Jon Boden

Doctor of Music

One of the most successful UK folk musicians of his generation, as a student Durham alumnus Jon Boden was active on the North-East folk music scene, while studying for a degree in Medieval Studies. He went on to form the 11-piece band 'Bellowhead' with fellow musician John Spiers in 2004. In addition to his ten studio albums with Spiers and Boden and Bellowhead, Boden has released three solo records and created the 'A Folk Song A Day Project', for which he recorded a different song every day for a year. As the winner of 11 BBC Radio Folk Awards, some people herald Jon Boden with reinventing big band folk, bringing a traditional genre to a mainstream audience.

Elsbeth Garman

Doctor of Science

An expert whose work transformed the field of Structural Biology, Elsbeth Garman is currently Professor of Molecular Biophysics at Oxford University. A Durham Physics alumna, she has acted as a Visiting Professor to the University's Chemistry Department for the last 13 years. With over 150 published papers (and an extra 25 as book chapters), she has received numerous prestigious awards, including the American Crystallographic Association's Fankuchen Medal and the British Biophysical Society's inaugural Sosei Heptares Prize. Her research has informed the molecular basis for common drugs such as Tamiflu®. Outside of the lab, she teaches widely at national and international workshops, inspiring the next generation of crystallographers.

Robert Gillespie

Doctor of Civil Law

Durham alumnus Robert Gillespie is a former Chair of Durham University's Council – the institution's governing body, with ultimate responsibility for its affairs. He is

Chair of the Boat Race Company Limited, which manages the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race. Robert Gillespie was also Chair of the Board of Somerset House Trust from 2006 to 2015 and a member of NSPCC's Stop Organised Abuse Board from 2003 to 2012, and was a Vice-President of Save the Children from 2004 to 2009. After graduating in 1977 from Grey College with a BA in Economics, he followed a career in corporate finance in London and New York, and was Director General of The Panel on Takeovers and Mergers from 2010 to 2013. He has served on the Board of RBS Group plc since 2014.

Lord Anthony Hughes

Doctor of Civil Law

Recreational bell-ringer and veteran oarsman, Lord (Anthony) Hughes graduated from Van Mildert College in 1969 and was called to the Bar a year later. A former lecturer at Queen Mary College, London and at Durham, in 1990 Lord Hughes became a Queen's Counsel (QC), thus joining a limited number of barristers considered to have outstanding ability suitable for instruction in very serious or complex cases. Hugely experienced in both family and criminal law, he was knighted in 1997 on appointment as a High Court Judge. Later he served in the Court of Appeal and in 2013 was appointed to the Supreme Court.

Michelle Simmons

Doctor of Science

It was here, at Durham University, where Professor Michelle Simmons began her career, designing and building solar cells. Fast-forward to today and her research in atomic electronics has set the pace in the international race to build a 'quantum computer' – a new type of computer that exploits quantum physics to provide exponentially faster processing times. An Australian Research Council Laureate Fellow, Professor Simmons's work in quantum physics saw her named '2018 Australian of the Year'. She is currently a Scientia Professor at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, where she strongly encourages women to pursue scientific careers.

The following honorary degrees were awarded at Winter Congregation 2020

Sir Kevan Collins

Doctor of Letters

A public servant for over 30 years, Sir Kevan was appointed first Chief Executive of the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), a charity dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement, in 2011. Within 18 months, the EEF was named as the UK Government's

'what works' centre for education. Durham University has worked closely with the EEF, including on its Teaching and Learning Toolkit. Sir Kevan has visited the University many times, particularly since the establishment of the Primary Literacy Campaign, based at our School of Education. He was knighted for his services to education in 2015.

Chris Kelly

Doctor of Civil Law

Having held many prestigious roles in the world of rugby, Chris Kelly was appointed President of the Rugby Football Union in 2018. He studied at Hatfield College, Durham University, in the 1970s, representing the University's First XV rugby team for four years and he was captain in the centenary season in 1975. He went on to play for Harlequins, before retiring due to injury and taking up coaching. He taught at Epsom College and Mill Hill School, before serving as Headmaster of St John's Preparatory School, Northwood, for 20 years. He has maintained strong links with the University, becoming a valued mentor for many young athletes.

The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Dr John Sentamu Archbishop of York

Doctor of Divinity

John Sentamu has served as Archbishop of York for nearly 15 years, challenging the Church and wider society on issues of poverty, racism, social integration, and the development of young people. Born in Uganda, he was educated by English missionaries and practised Law before being forced to flee to the UK in 1974. He has an extraordinary ability to connect with people, as recognised in his award was a nomination and being awarded Yorkshireman of the Year in 2007. As a Visitor at St John's College, Durham University, he has been a source of encouragement and support for students and the College itself.

Barbara Vest

Doctor of Science

Barbara Vest has enjoyed a long and successful career in the power industry, including with Northern Electric, Yorkshire Electricity, RWE and Gaz de France ESS. She is a Special Adviser to the trade association Energy UK, a member of the UK Government's Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage Cost Challenge Task Force, chairs the National Grid Joint European Stakeholder Group and serves as an Executive Council member of the House of Commons All-Party Parliamentary Group for Energy Studies. She is an active and valued member of the Advisory Board of the University's Durham Energy Institute and has selflessly devoted much time to supporting students and early career researchers.

A Thought for the Future...



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Team Durham

We are the Champions

*By Magnus Lewis
Archaeology, Hatfield, 2017-*



The 2019-20 season will be remembered as a remarkably successful one for both men's and women's rugby at Durham.

For the first time in their history, the Durham University Rugby Football Club (DURFC) 1st XV are the BUCS Super Rugby league champions, while the Durham University Women's Rugby Football Club (DUWRFC) 2nd XV won the BUCS Conference Cup with a win over Bangor 1st XV in the final.

The success of the men's 1st XV in winning the league is unprecedented, and has been defined by extraordinary teamwork and dedication from all the players and staff in the club. This was highlighted particularly during the six-game unbeaten start to the season, as well as during the eight-game unbeaten run following a tough loss at home to Loughborough, one of their main rivals. According to captain Ben Fowles, the response to the defeat to Loughborough is indicative of the spirit that has been obvious throughout the club all year, as everyone immediately banded together to bounce back.

This was a season full of highlights and standout wins. Two huge wins against Leeds Beckett included first-year Rory Stewart-Cox producing a dramatic try-saving tackle, knocking the ball out of the hands of a Beckett player who was already across the line to seal victory. Fullback Charlie Spawforth identifies his favourite moment of the season as the pitch invasion following the League-sealing win, stating that "running out in the deafening Charity match noise" was a close second, when over 3,000 Palatinate supporters cheered the fellas on to victory over north-east rivals Northumbria.

Charity matches

DURFC have also had a hugely successful season off the pitch, topping the Team Durham Charitable Donors table, with successful events raising large amounts for various charities.

For example, many club members took part in Movember, growing their moustaches while raising an impressive £2,700 for the battle to change the face of men's health. This culminated in the dedicated 'Movember Match' versus Exeter, one of our main rivals for the league, where we triumphed 38-27.

Furthermore, four club members – Jamie Adamson, Jack Hill, Rhys Belcher and Tom Catterick – climbed Mount Kilimanjaro for the charity Dig Deep Africa, while the club also raised a further £2,000 for Cardiac Risk in the Young from the amazing support at home matches this year.

However, by far the most outstanding fundraising event of the DURFC calendar was this year's charity match versus Northumbria, raising an astonishing £5,572 for Sport in Action, Zambia. This money has helped to secure the future of the Fountain of Hope project, an initiative providing a secure home and education to 94 boys and 48 girls previously living on the streets of Lusaka, the nation's capital. The club also supported the HALO charity throughout

the season, an organisation aimed at developing awareness for crimes against women and female genital mutilation.

All in all, DURFC raised over £10,000 for charity this year.

Community outreach

This year, DURFC have also developed their relationship with the local community and local community outreach programmes. This has included inviting children from local rugby clubs, such as Durham City RFC, to showcase their skills during the half-time break of multiple home games.

Furthermore, Charlie Spawforth has given coaching sessions and talks about his experiences on the England Sevens circuit at local schools around County Durham. One of the main things that Charlie has been highlighting is the different pathways that can lead to playing rugby at professional and international level. The university pathway has been evident this season in DURFC, with Jack Hill representing the Scotland U20s in the U20s Six Nations. Similarly, Josh Basham's continued success with Newcastle Falcons has shown that it is possible to play high-level rugby alongside obtaining a top-level degree.

Indeed, each player's weekly demanding training schedule, coupled with their busy University timetables, has continued to produce players with excellent organisational skills, who are strong both physically and academically.

DUWRFC

DUWRFC has also had a hugely successful season, with the 1st XV reaching the quarter-finals of the BUCS cup and the 2nd XV winning the Northern Conference Cup (NCC). Highlights included the 1st XV's huge victory over Northumbria at home in the charity match double header, where DUWRFC came away as 44-12 winners, as well as the 2nd XV's 31-0 victory over Bangor in the NCC.

Such a successful season is credit to DUWRFC's continued growth and success as the largest women's rugby programme in Britain. Part of this growth has come from introducing more student coaches and

developing players with the professional team DMP Sharks, for whom captain Beth Blacklock plays.

DUWRFC's success has also continued off the pitch, where there has been a great focus on developing the club's culture. Team socials promote inclusion and team cohesion, and do not encourage a drinking culture. A huge effort from all three women's teams has helped to develop friendships and healthy competition. DUWRFC charitable efforts have also been substantial, raising £1,500 for Sport in Action.

'Stimulation through sport'

DURFC, DUWRFC and Team Durham's continued support of Sport in Action has helped to enable the rebuilding of the basketball and netball courts at Maiden Castle, as well as a donation of £1,100 to fund sports equipment at sites in Lusaka, Zambia. Their support is testament to their commitment to the Team Durham message of "Stimulation through sport, ensuring the positive development of programmes that have a positive effect upon the community".

All in all, it has been an exceptional year for both DUWRFC and DURFC on and off the pitch. The time spent by the players, the coaches and all the staff – as well as the effort levels and determination to get both clubs pulling in one direction – has resulted in huge amounts of money being raised for great causes, as well as producing some high-level rugby across many teams.



Theatre

Conversations in Quarantine

Epiphany Term was fantastic for theatre – over 2,000 audience members saw Durham Student Theatre shows over a period of just five days! Highlights included three productions in the Gala Theatre: Durham Opera Ensemble's *Die Fledermaus*; Durham University Light Opera Group's *Singin' In The Rain*; and The Durham Revue's annual ComedyFest. Students were also involved in the 44th year of the Durham Drama Festival, a week-long celebration of student writing, amazing workshops and networking opportunities with professionals such as actor Alex Bhat and director Peter Bradley.

Fourth Walls Theatre's *Killology* was selected for the National Student Drama Festival – the fifth year running that Durham has been represented at this prestigious festival.

Conversations in quarantine, speaking with alumni artists and actors in lockdown including Arthur Bostrum (*Geography, St Chad's College, 1974-77*)



Keeping Theatre Alive

Durham Student Theatre is launching Theatre Alive, a brand-new writing and acting initiative, with writers working on monologues and actors self-filming at home – keeping theatre alive during this time.

Find out more [f](#)



Alumni 25% Fee Scholarship

We very much hope our graduates continue to have an active and beneficial relationship with us throughout their lives and careers, and we want to do all we can to enable this.

Given the current global circumstances, we realise that an even greater number of our graduating students from the 'Class of 2020', as well as existing members of our global alumni community, will be considering options for further study, retraining and career advancement.

If further study is something you are considering at this time, we are keen to support you in realising this through the launch of the Durham University Alumni 25% Fee Scholarship. This Scholarship will contribute 25% of the cost of tuition fees for all postgraduate taught Masters programmes across all faculties of the University – MA, MSc, LLM, PGCE and all MBA and other taught Masters programmes – providing support of up to £7,875*.

[Full details](#)



*This discount quoted refers to the maximum discount available for the scheme, which would be a 25% fee scholarship towards the Full Time MBA.

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Durham Rugby
see pages 42-43



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