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1841

YORK  
ST JOHN  
UNIVERSITY

ALUMNI MAGAZINE  
2019



1841



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## VICE CHANCELLOR'S INTRODUCTION

It is with a great sense of purpose and pride that I write to you as Vice Chancellor of York St John University to introduce 1841 - our new magazine for the thousands of alumni whose lives have been shaped, changed and enhanced by studying with our University, and before that our College, over so many years. The name of the magazine reflects our founding year and highlights that this is a magazine for alumni across the generations.

I feel purpose because it has long been our intention to create a printed magazine that helps keep you up to date and reconnect you with what has been happening at York St John. This magazine is part of a growing number of activities we are organising to bring our alumni community together.

My pride reflects the fact that this is an alumni magazine with a difference. It was created and curated by alumni, for alumni. Over several months a team of York St John graduate interns, each working in a different part of the University, has come together, with support from our Alumni Office, to research, write and design this magazine with you in mind. Their passion has driven this project and in doing it they have gained valuable experience that will support their future careers. You can read more about them on the page opposite.

Bringing people together to achieve a common purpose is a hallmark of what we do at York St John. In this magazine you will read about fantastic collaborations between staff and students to support people with mental health challenges, inspire children and young people and contribute to our community.

Today, York St John is very much a thriving, modern university with a global outlook. Major investment in our sports facilities, Students' Union and careers service, alongside a growing suite of study options have helped to enhance our

students' experience. At the same time we have stayed true to the values our institution has always held dear: inclusivity; opportunity; and a belief that people from every background can benefit from the transformative power of education.

We are very proud that sixty per cent of students who study with us come from backgrounds underrepresented in UK higher education, including those with disabilities, those in care and those who are the first in their family to enter university. This year we introduced the first radical scheme of its kind in the country that weights our offer of places to support students who might otherwise not get the chance to experience university.

Reconnecting with our extensive alumni network is part of this mission. The wider and stronger our community, the more inspiration and opportunities we can help create for the next generation. In June we will welcome back hundreds of former students as part of our honorary graduation event for our teacher trainee alumni. It promises to be an occasion that lives long in the memory and I look forward to seeing many of you there.

I hope you enjoy this magazine, we welcome your feedback and please remember that as alumni you are always welcome back at York St John.



*Karen Stanton*

Professor Karen Stanton  
Vice Chancellor of  
York St John University

## CONTRIBUTORS' PAGE

Our magazine has been written and designed by our graduates for our graduates. A team of graduate interns currently working in departments across the University have come together to create 1841. Get to know them better!

## Becky Lowe – Events Graduate Intern

Becky (pictured first left) graduated from York St John University in November 2018, with a degree in English Literature. Despite loving her home city of Sheffield, she wasn't ready to leave York after graduation. York St John's internship scheme gives new graduates the opportunity to gain paid experience in a number of university departments, Becky gladly accepted the position of Events Intern and is now learning how to plan and run events including the University's graduation ceremonies. Becky moved to York because of the city's welcoming and picturesque surroundings.

## Scott Halewood – Digital Design Graduate Intern

Scott (pictured fourth left) is a recent graduate of York St John, graduating with a BA in Graphic Design. Scott has a keen eye for design and has been heavily involved with the University rebrand as a member of the Digital Development Team. As Scott is from Liverpool, the move to Yorkshire brought some new and interesting challenges, but the city and York St John soon became home.

## Nicoletta Peddis – Fundraising and Alumni Graduate Intern

Nicoletta (pictured second left) graduated in English Literature and Creative Writing from York St John University in November 2018, and then stayed at the University to study a Masters in Contemporary Literature and to work as a Graduate Intern in the Alumni Team. She loved York St John's close-knit community during her time as an undergraduate student, and she didn't want to go anywhere else to study for her Masters. She moved to York in 2008 to attend a short English language course and despite missing the sunny island of Sardinia where she was born, she fell in love with York and decided to live here permanently.

## Romily Richardson – Strategic Projects and Change Graduate Intern

Romily (pictured third left) has undertaken a graduate internship as a PMO (project management office) coordinator, after recently graduating from her MSc in International Marketing. Although Romily is very new to working at York St John, she was formerly a student here for four years. Romily moved to York in 2014, because she fell in love with the city and the York St John campus.





# LOOKING BACK

York St John University recently unveiled a new brand and this prompted us to take a look back at how the institution identity has evolved over the decades.

## 1953 →

In 1953 the College of Heralds approve the St John's College's crest, together with the motto 'Ut Vitam Habeant et Abundantius' (that they have life and have it more abundantly). The crest incorporates the eagle of St John and the Crossed Keys of the Arch Diocese of York.



## 1974 →

Between 1974 and 1976, St John's College merges with Ripon College and the crest changes to incorporate Ripon College's symbol, the Ripon horn blower, and the colour red, Ripon College's Crest's prevalent colour.



## 1978 →

In the late 1970s, the College of Ripon & York St John adopts a new brand: two rivers forming the letters R and Y representing the union of the two colleges.



The Ripon and York St John crest is still used to represent the University during special occasions, for instance graduation ceremonies, and sports events.

## 1998

The College becomes University College of Ripon and York St John and the brand reflects this, changing to a blue and green ribbon.



## 1999 →

Between 1999 and 2001 all activities transfer to the York campus and the Ripon campus closes. We are known as York St John College and lose the blue and green, keeping the two ribbons in white. In 2005, we become York St John University College, a change reflected in the logo.



## 2006 →

On 1 October 2006, 165 years after our foundation as a higher education institution, York St John receives official approval from the Privy Council of the UK to become York St John University. Our first logo as a university is the green leaf, representing a new-born university with the confidence to grow and keep changing.



## 2019

We have now been a university for 13 years and a higher education institution for 178 years. Despite many changes we are still recognisably the inclusive and transforming institution our alumni love and our motto – that our students should have life and have it more abundantly, is as relevant now as it has always been.

We launched our new brand in February 2019 demonstrating both our pride in our heritage and our readiness for an exciting and confident future.





# STEMSATIONAL WOMEN

TALKING TO SOME OF OUR MOST INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN IN STEM

As advancements across Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) increasingly shape our lives, York St John University is making a growing impact in these fields. The University is one of the first in the country to offer a Degree Apprenticeship in Data Science, developed in partnership with some major businesses and in November 2018 our first cohort of Biomedical Scientists graduated. Rebecca Hand was one of them.

'Developing STEM subjects at York St John will bring intelligent, creative individuals to the city, who will propose innovative solutions to society's needs,' says Rebecca, who graduated with a First-Class degree and won the Dissertation Prize, awarded to students who achieve the highest dissertation marks in their courses.

'The accreditation of the degree, and the skills I acquired allowed me and my peers to progress onto our desired careers. I would encourage everyone to consider York St John, as the academics I worked with always went above and beyond.' Rebecca is currently studying for a Masters Degree in Biology and Control of Parasites and Disease Vectors at the Liverpool

In the late 1980s, Helen Sharman responded to an advertisement calling for "Astronauts wanted. No experience necessary". This advert was part of Project Juno – a British space programme formed in collaboration with the Soviet Union with the purpose of sending a Briton to the MIR space station. There were nearly 13,000 applicants.

In November 1989, Helen was selected to be the first Briton in space. Her chemistry background, along with factors such as her physical fitness helped her be selected for the mission.

Project Juno had a scientific focus and Helen performed medical and agricultural experiments whilst in space where she spent eight days. Since her return to earth she has worked on outreach projects promoting chemistry and speaking out on the needs for increased UK space funding.

In November 2018 York St John University presented Helen Sharman with an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science. In her

School of Tropical Medicine. Her goal is to progress onto a PhD and ultimately, she aims to work as an epidemiologist, specialising in Neglected Tropical Diseases.

According to recent research conducted by WISE, the UK STEM gender equality campaign group, women make up just 14.4% of all people working in STEM in the UK. Rebecca told us: 'Although the government is producing targets in a bid to increase women in STEM, there is still a lot of progress to be made. I think the most important part of being a woman in STEM is to inspire younger generations, to encourage women that they can and will succeed in STEM and engaging them from a young age. If I can do that at least once in my career, and all women in STEM do the same, we'll be progressing in the right direction.'

Rebecca and her cohort graduated alongside Scientist and astronaut Helen Sharman, who was awarded an Honorary Degree. 'Graduating alongside Helen Sharman showed me and everyone who graduated on that day what we can achieve if we set our minds to it, and if we try and grab all the available opportunities.'

acceptance speech, she remembered when she 'launched into space and got to feel weightless. It was a very relaxing feeling: I forgot what it feels like to stand up or to sit down'.

'I have been able to use my astronaut experience to communicate about science, technology, engineering and maths, and that has given me more pleasure than I ever could have imagined' '

Helen is the Operations Manager for the Department of Chemistry at Imperial College London, the President of the Institute of Science and Technology, a Fellow of the Science Museum and a patron of the Spacelink Learning Foundation. In 2018 she was appointed a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George for her science and technology outreach work.

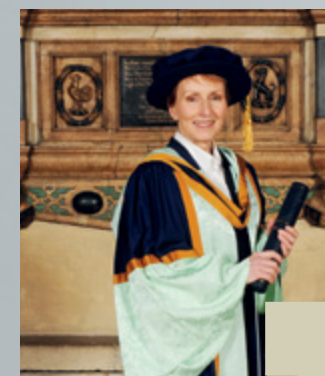
I think the most important part of being a woman in STEM is to inspire younger generations, to encourage women that they can and will succeed in STEM and engaging them from a young age.

Rebecca Hand



'There are areas for us all to explore, if we remain open to learning. You are the stars of the future: shine brightly.'

Helen Sharman





# LONDON CALLING

Did you know that York St John University now has a London campus? The Glasshouse opened its doors to the first cohort of students in February 2019.

Students can choose from an innovative range of postgraduate MBA and MSc degrees carefully designed to meet the future needs of both students and employers. Each programme has been developed, and will be delivered, with the extensive cooperation of industry experts, entrepreneurs and business leaders.

Chris Anderson, London Campus Manager, was responsible for getting the London campus open for business. 'After months of planning and a great deal of hard work by teams in York and London, we were delighted to open our Glasshouse Yard doors to our York St John London students in February 2019. I am very proud to welcome staff, students and industry partners to our amazing facilities.'

A welcoming and modern learning space, the campus has a professional feel and identity, providing an excellent space for seminars, short-courses, masterclasses and cultural events. As well as a postgraduate campus, the Glasshouse is also a base for York students to access all the benefits and advantages of the capital, working with businesses, public organisations and charities to advance their learning, extend their professional contacts and enhance their career prospects.

| [www.ysulondon.ac.uk](http://www.ysulondon.ac.uk)

The first cohort of students have signed up to study for the MBA and the MSc in Fashion Marketing. New courses launching this year include the MSc in Design Business Creation, Fitness Business Creation, Branding and Psychology, Fashion and Luxury Business Creation and for those interested in a career in the digital arena, the MSc in Experience Design and the MA in Visual Brand Communication. We are also continuing to develop our Degree Apprenticeship offer so keep an eye on our website for details.

The London campus is ideally placed in the heart of the city, close to the world-famous Barbican Estate, the Silicon Roundabout, the City of London, and the design & enterprise hubs of Clerkenwell and Shoreditch. Cultural venues, such as The Museum of London and the Barbican Concert and Cinema venues are close by, whilst the theatres, parks and shops of London are just a short tube ride away. For more information on all we offer in London please visit [www.ysulondon.ac.uk](http://www.ysulondon.ac.uk)



## IMPACTFUL RESEARCH IN THE HEART OF YORK

**York St John academics aren't just inspiring lecturers and tutors, they are also engaged in groundbreaking research.**

A study lead by York St John's lecturer Dr David Zendle, world-leading expert on the effects of video games, has had a profound influence on the evaluation of the links between gaming and gambling addiction.

Many popular games now feature loot boxes; packs of items gamers purchase with real-world money containing randomised in-game rewards which are not revealed until after purchase. Loot boxes currently appear in games rated appropriate for three-year-olds and above.

Dr David Zendle, along with Dr Paul Cairns of the University of York, carried out studies on over 8,500 gamers and discovered a connection between the purchase of loot boxes and gambling addiction, demonstrating that the more money a person spends to buy loot boxes, the more likely they are to be a problem gambler. Research by the UK Gambling Commission has raised concerns that loot boxes exposed almost a million young people to gambling.

Although it is unclear whether buying loot boxes acts as a gateway to problem gambling, or whether spending large amounts of money on loot boxes appeals more to problem gamblers, these results suggest that there may be good reasons to regulate loot boxes in games. 'We recommend that games with loot boxes are restricted to players of legal gambling age,' said Dr Zendle. 'Given the severity of the link seen here we also strongly recommend that relevant authorities restrict access to loot boxes as if they were a form of gambling.'

Dr David Zendle and Dr Paul Cairns' research has made a fundamental intervention in the discussions on the risks of loot boxes conducted by gambling compliance organisations and parliamentary commissions. Legislators around the world are starting to analyse the issue of loot boxes.



Early in 2018 Belgium's Gambling Commission ruled that loot boxes were a form of gambling. In September 2018, Dr David Zendle and Dr Paul Cairns gave evidence to the Australian Senate Committee which was conducting an inquiry on loot boxes. In November, the Committee recommended that the Australian Government 'undertake a comprehensive review of loot boxes in video games'. In October 2018, a coalition of 15 gambling authorities, including the UK and the US, started an investigation into loot boxes. Following the debates, in January 2019, Epic Games, the creator of popular game Fortnite, announced the launch of 'clear' loot boxes to enable users to see what's inside before buying them

**We recommend that games with loot boxes are restricted to players of legal gambling age.**

David Zendle



## BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND INCREASING ASPIRATIONS: THE GREEN APPLES PROJECT

**Jenni Addicott**  
Widening Participation Officer  
at York St John University



**Green Apples is a collaborative project between York St John University, the University of York, York College and Askham Bryan College.**

The project, which recently celebrated its 20th anniversary, works with local primary and secondary school pupils to increase their knowledge about higher education.

Developed and supported by funding from the Higher Education Funding Council and Aimhigher, Green Apples starts working with Year 6 pupils in ten York primary schools. They continue the programme with pupils in Years 9-11 from seven York secondary schools, and recently expanded to schools outside the immediate York area.

The programme includes introductory workshops and visits to the universities involved. Selected Year 9 pupils, along with their parents or carers, are invited to York St John University to celebrate their involvement with Green Apples, before the pupils spend a day at one of the partner institutions to learn about further and higher education and what student life is like.

During Year 10, students attend a one or two-day event either at York St John University or the University of York. During this visit they take an in-depth look at the world of higher education, with the chance to experience academic and student life

taster sessions. In Year 11, the entire Green Apples cohort attends a collective event, reflecting on the whole initiative and looking ahead to educational and life choices post-16.

All these activities are designed to help students build their own skills set and to help them make informed decisions about their future by giving them a supported, first-hand experience of University and College life. Results show students demonstrating confidence and an awareness that higher education is a realistic option for them.

Various evaluations of the project conducted up to 2017 have shown that a higher percentage of the Green Apples cohort continue their education at post-16, compared with all York Year 11 students.

**'Green Apples is a fantastic project and means so much to all those who work and participate on it,' says Jenni Addicott, Widening Participation Officer at York St John University. 'We love being a part of something that has been running for so long and covers such a wide area, as well as working with colleagues from a range of other institutions. We see a huge difference in the young people from when they start with us to when they finish and it is wonderful to know that they are equipped with the information to choose the right option for them in the future. We would love to hear from any alumni who took part in Green Apples whilst they were at school and to hear your stories!'**

Born of a unique collaboration between the NHS and York St John University, Converge delivers educational opportunities for people who suffer with mental health. Courses range from singing in choirs to playing percussion, theatre to creative movement, and creative writing, offering work-based experience to university students involved in the programme. All classes are taught by undergraduate and postgraduate students, staff and those with experience of mental health challenges.

The project has a track record of delivering quality courses. Careful support and mentoring underpin Converge's work, allowing students to experiment with their own ideas and creativity whilst gaining real world experience in the community and enhancing their employment prospects post-university. Dr Nick Rowe, Associate Professor in Theatre and Health for the School of Performance & Media Production is the Director of Converge and was awarded an MBE in 2018 for his work on the project. 'So many others are equally deserving of recognition but I am thrilled and honoured to receive this award,' he said at the time. 'It would not be possible without the hard work of York St John University's staff and students, NHS colleagues and of course, Converge students themselves.'

Nick established Converge with a passion for the benefits of education and a belief that the University can be a place where people can build skills, confidence and develop their hopes for the future. The programme has seen a 30-60 per cent reduction in dependence on local mental health services.

Hugh McCormick and Faye Allison are the current Graduate Interns working on the programme. 'It's been really interesting, it's given me the chance to practice and develop a range of skills, whether developing courses, providing support or writing reports,' said Hugh.

Hugh and Faye have both been working to develop courses for Converge and teach some of the courses such as creative writing. 'Working in Converge has provided me with a feeling of support, belonging and equality with both students and staff,' Faye explained. 'Participants who use mental health services often create a negative narrative for themselves, so one of the ideas within Converge is to have students recreate new narratives, gaining confidence and self-esteem. It's not unusual for participants to have isolated themselves for a long time, but within classes such as 'Discover Books and Writing' which I teach at York Explore Library with Dr Helen Kenwright, students are sharing work, building friendships and becoming part of a community.'

# CREATING MENTAL HEALTH

Our innovative Arts-based initiative Converge was established in 2008 thanks to one simple idea: offering local people who use mental health services good quality courses in a university setting and taught by students and staff. Now ten years later Converge is an integral part of our community work in York and further afield.



# MENTAL HEALTH

## WORK AT YORK ST JOHN UNIVERSITY

**We have the opportunity to forge a thriving research community with the potential to generate impactful research in areas of mutual interest for the benefit of local, national and international mental health communities.**

Professor Mark Edwards



Good mental health is a priority at York St John University. Not only are we working to ensure our students and staff are well supported, but we are also working with the local community to make a difference in local people's experiences of mental health and wellbeing.

### A new Mental Health Hospital for York

Since Bootham Park Hospital closed in 2015, patients in York and the surrounding area have had no dedicated in-patient mental health resource. A new in and out patient hospital built by the Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys (TEWV) Foundation NHS Trust next to our Haxby Road site will remedy this and provides exciting partnership opportunities for the University when it opens in early 2020. The University's objective is to create a world-class hospital based on a strong and dedicated partnership between us and the TEWV Trust. 'This partnership opens up so many exciting opportunities for both organisations,' says Professor Mark Edwards, Pro Vice Chancellor for International, and Head of the School of Psychological and Social Sciences at York St John.

The University and TEWV staff have already started collaborating on the new Doctorate of Counselling Psychology programme, which welcomed its first cohort in September 2018. The programme is designed to prepare students for real world clinical practice. 'As neighbours, we have the opportunity to forge a thriving research community,' says Professor Edwards. 'With the potential to generate impactful research in areas of mutual interest for the benefit of local, national and international mental health communities.'

### York St John University Counselling and Mental Health Clinic

York St John's Counselling and Mental Health Clinic (CMHC), offers low-cost counselling facilities to members of the public, to improve their mental health and wellbeing. The clinic offers a general counselling service as well as specialist provision for domestic abuse and violence, anger management and bereavement. CMHC has eight trained therapists – including three assessors – plus 17 trainee therapists from the University. The clinic also has four student research assistants and a PhD student.

'The initial idea for the clinic emerged because we wanted to provide accessible clinical services to the public,' says Lynne

Gabriel, Professor of Counselling and Mental Health and CMHC's director. 'We support people to advance and live life to its fullest potential. The University's original motto is 'That they have life and live it more abundantly' and that chimes well with the clinic.' Clients can be referred via the NHS or other professionals, or they can self-refer. 'Our priority is providing clinical services to clients, but research is key too and is a major part of the ethos at the clinic,' Lynne continues. 'Research is based on client consent and provides valuable statistics and detailed case information. We are also a training clinic, providing service-related opportunities to trainee therapists.' The University has recently invested in providing accommodation on campus for CHMC, which is due to open in September 2019.

### Fish and Chip Friday

York St John University and the York City Knights Foundation, together with Millers Fish & Chip Shop, organise a monthly Fish and Chip Friday at the York St John Sports Park in Haxby Road. The aim is to give people who may be feeling lonely or isolated the opportunity to come together for some food, a hot drink and a chat.

'We are delighted to host such a fantastic event which offers members of the local community the opportunity to come together,' says Lucie Crowley, Sports Facility and Service Coordinator at York St John. 'One of York St John University's key priorities is to promote health and wellbeing in the community. This event is a fantastic way to integrate individuals who may be isolated or lonely in the friendly atmosphere which we intend to create. Not just on Fish and Chip Friday but at any time – we want York St John Sports Park to be a place that people feel they can come to see a friendly face and have a chat.'

The venue has excellent accessibility and associated facilities and is well located on a main road into York with ample parking, access by footpaths and on a main bus route. For more details, or to book call 01904 876340 after 3.30pm or email [n.gulliver@yorkcityknights.com](mailto:n.gulliver@yorkcityknights.com).





## YEARS OF THEATRE FOR THE COMMUNITY

The Drama and Theatre department at York St John University has been contributing to national theatre and to the community for over fifty years, producing diverse and socially engaged arts performances. Read about how two of these projects are having a huge impact on local and national communities.



### YSJ: Spark Community Theatre

In September 2018, York St John University launched a new community project at Spark: York. This city centre community theatre offers and promotes community arts performance and engagement for anyone in the city who wants to promote social justice and foster creative relationships through accessible art participation and performance making.

When the project launched in 2018, Professor Karen Stanton, Vice Chancellor of York St John University, emphasised the University's commitment to community arts, saying: 'We're very pleased to be part of this social innovation project set in Spark: York's exciting and innovative space. We hope to inspire and merge communities so that participants can come together in an arts process that emphasises collaboration, dialogue and social justice and provide great art for all.'

Spark: York is a new and inspiring urban space in the heart of York that supports and provides space for creatives, independent businesses, social enterprise and community groups

### 'It's Not OK'

In January 2019, York St John University hosted the launch of the digital version of their play 'It's Not OK'. The play was created in 2015 by Rachel Conlon and Jules Dorey Richmond, senior lecturers in the School of Performance and Media Production at York St John, and was commissioned by the City of York Children's Safeguarding Board and developed by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).

Focusing on four characters, the play highlights several ways in which unhealthy relationships can develop quickly and can be difficult to identify. The aim is to deliver the message that abuse is never okay and to encourage young people to seek support if they are victims of sexual abuse and exploitation.

Following a successful series of shows in York schools and a subsequent national tour and workshop, the 'It's Not OK' play has now reached over 25,000 young people across the UK. To reach even more children, the School of Performance and Media Production has created digital versions of the play, which are now available on the NSPCC's website free of charge for schools, youth organisations and others to use with young people.

To find out more about the play and explore the resources available, visit <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/schools/its-not-ok>

**With this resource we can empower children to know when something isn't right, to have the confidence to say no and speak out.**

**Helen Westerman, NSPCC's Campaigns Manager for the North of England**



# ALUMNI CAREER UPDATE PETER JONES

After completing a graduate diploma and an MA in Counselling from York St John in 1999, our alumnus Peter Jones has become a leading expert in prison counselling and Chair of the Counselling in Prisons Network (CiPN) since 2007.

After graduating from York St John University, Peter helped found Hull-based charity Survivors, which provides a vital service to victims of rape and sexual assault. It was through Peter's work with Survivors that CiPN was founded. 'In 2007, we received a call to the Survivor helpline, after a serious sexual assault in a local category A prison,' he said. 'The incident sparked the realisation that there was a significant lack of essential counselling service available in the criminal justice system. The CiPN was established as an ethical response to governance and accountability in prisons with the aim to develop and agree best practice.' In 2008, the CiPN held its inaugural conference here at York St John University.

Peter has also worked as an academic, first at City University London and then at Bournemouth University. In 2011 he published his first book, based on the dissertation on male sexual abuse he completed for his MA at York St John. The text is a useful training resource for the treatment of men who suffered from sexual abuse and trauma. Peter went on to publish two further books, working to change the criminal justice approach from 'dealing with and fixing' prisoners to 'understanding and working with' prisoners. The CiPN is now regarded as a leading authority on sharing publications, good-practice guidelines, and other health-related prison information.

For the last six years Peter has been a Pioneer Minister in Dorset. 'I helped set up another charity, Growing Compassionate Communities, with the aim of promoting social inclusion, particularly among elderly people, those with disabilities and people of a particular racial or ethnic origin. Through this I began



York St John University appealed to me because of its location, and its reputation. There was a really good setup and a challenging environment to help students develop.

my work as a Pioneer Minister, creatively responding to initiatives outside of the Church and working closely with the local community. One of our aspirations is to repurpose the local vicarage to set up a rehab centre for members of the local community.'

Peter's ground-breaking work throughout his career has earned him several accolades, including an award for innovation from Queen Nursing Institute in 1998, an award for outstanding effort in Prison Healthcare from HM Prison Service and the Department for Health in 2004, being made a British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy fellow in 2009. More recently, in 2013, Peter became an elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.



## DONNA SMITH COMING HOME

**Donna Smith has recently returned to York St John to take up the reins as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Students' Union. We chat to the former student about her career so far and how the University has changed since she studied here.**

Donna studied Theatre at York St John University, graduating in 2006. After graduating, she was the Students' Union Vice President of Education and Welfare for two years, and then stayed at the University, working as a Welfare Adviser in Student Services. In 2012 she moved to London to join St Mary's University, Twickenham Students' Union, first as the General Manager and then as Chief Executive Officer.

Donna came back to York St John in January 2019 to take up her new role as Chief Executive Officer of the Students' Union. As CEO, she is Head of the Charity and also manages the team who supports the Sabbatical Officers and other elected representatives in delivering the SU Strategic Plan enhancing the student experience.

Donna soon found that York St John may have grown, but the University retained the feeling of home she loved as a student. 'At least two people who were in my year group are now lecturers here,' she said. 'I keep walking around campus and noticing faces that I knew from my time as a student. The fact that so many alumni stayed on as members of staff testifies to the community feeling for which York St John is known and respected.'

Donna's theatre and performance studies provided her with skills that have helped her throughout the course of her career. 'When you perform you have nowhere to hide. That helped me to build the confidence that propelled me into my first role as CEO. Also, by engaging in performance production during my studies, I developed strong organisational and project management skills that are crucial in my current job.'

During her time at York St John, Donna was also Chair of the Sports and Societies Committee and Vice Chair of the Musical Production Society.

And what about Donna's favourite student memories? 'There are so many moments to choose from. Having been on the Sports and Societies Committee, I have very fond memories of Varsity, which at that time was played against the University of York. Being elected Vice President of Education and Welfare is also something to which I look back with great pleasure.'

York St John is extra special to Donna because it's also the place where she met her husband Tom, who is an alumnus himself and a former member of staff. They met at York St John when she was a Students' Union Officer and he was the Marketing Coordinator, and they got married in 2015.



# WHAT'S ON?

Whether you live in York, visit regularly or are looking for an excuse to come back for a nostalgic trip, York St John has the perfect lecture, talk or event for you. Every year we run a huge variety of events, many free, others with innovative partners like York Literary Festival and Aesthetica Film Festival. Choose from student showcases offering the best in drama, art and music, inaugural lectures where our new professors share their academic journeys, or one of our thought provoking lecture series.

Details at [www.yorks.ac.uk/events-calendar/events](http://www.yorks.ac.uk/events-calendar/events)

## HIGHLIGHTS 2019 – 2020

### Autumn 2019 onwards

**Conversations that Matter:** A celebration of STEM including our Stemsational Women panel and interactive activities and lectures. Details on our website soon!

### The Ebor Lectures: Science, Wonder, Gift & Challenge:

If you wonder what the future holds, come and be moved to wonder at the extraordinary possibilities offered by science, to wonder at the beauty, fragility and complexity of the world, and to consider what it means to be human in a rapidly changing world.

7.00pm, Wednesday 3 July 2019 - Dame Ottoline Leyser

2.30pm, Wednesday 21 August 2019 - Brother Guy  
Consolmagno - Family Event

7.00pm, Wednesday 21 August 2019 - Brother Guy  
Consolmagno - Evening lecture

7.00pm, Wednesday 6 November 2019 - Revd Prof David  
Wilkinson FRAS

### November 2019

**Aesthetica Short Film Festival** celebrates the best independent film making in the UK, and this year's festival promises to be the biggest and most ambitious yet. Curated by Aesthetica magazine editor and York St John alumna Cherie Federico, the BAFTA short film qualifying festival will be showcasing films across 18 venues throughout the city. Go to [www.asff.co.uk](http://www.asff.co.uk) for more details.

### Spring 2020

**York Literary Festival:** packed with book launches, author talks and poetry readings, the festival is at the heart of York's literary scene with events for book lovers and aspiring authors alike.

**Aesthetica Symposium** ; details tbc

**Exhibition** space in the Grand Hotel all year round

### Events intern Becky tells us about her favourite time of year – Christmas!

Our annual Christmas Carol service is the perfect way to get yourself in the festive spirit, so start warming up your voice and put Thursday 5 December in the diary! Held in the glorious surroundings of York Minster with performances from our very own Drama and Theatre Department, this annual event finishes back on campus with mulled wine, hot chocolate and mince pie. It's one not to be missed, so why not combine some Christmas shopping with the perfect festive treat?

Fancy an event but are just too far away? Why not visit our new Sound Cloud page, where you can listen to our public talks for free whenever – and wherever – you want?

To find out more sign up to our newsletter we want to make the unmissable, unmissable.

<https://soundcloud.com/ysjuevents>





# WE ARE YORK ST JOHN!

At the end of 2018 we sent a Twitter shout out to our alumni, asking 'Why YSJ'? We were overwhelmed with all the lovely responses we received - so we thought we'd share some of the replies we received!

**I chose York St John 15 years ago due to its amazing community spirit, great staff and beautiful location. I can't wait to come back and be part of the YSJ family again.**

**#WEAREYSJ**

Donna Smith  
CEO of York St John  
Students' Union



I came to York St John because of the little things I noticed on a tour... I could hear music coming from the Music Block, the library was busy, and in the Art Building a student was looking at Archibald Knox (a famous Manx painter) - I took that as a sign!

**#WeAreYSJ**

Stephanie Foxton  
President of Education  
for York St John University



I chose to come to YSJ because of the close community spirit, the fact all the activities and students were on one campus and the city of York! It's been a beautiful place to call home for the past 4 years.

**#WeAreYSJ**

George Coombs  
President of York St John University  
Students' Union



I remember how much I enjoyed the campus at York St John, small in size but not in what it had to offer. Set in the heart of York this university had a real feel of both heritage and a pioneering attitude to its purpose. **#WeAreYSJ**

Ethan Glanfield  
Film and TV, 2014



My lecturers and all those supportive staff members at YSJ made my journey incredible and I would highly recommend YSJ to all those who are considering it. By choosing YSJ I assure student it's one of the many decisions they will never regret.

Ahmad Hassan Ali  
Occupational Therapy, 2018



Joining York St John changed my life, no other university accepted me for a course in Japanese, so I was ecstatic to be taken through YSJ's clearing. The campus was welcoming, I made amazing friends and spent a year in Japan that I'll never forget. Now I tutor Japanese at a different university, thanks to my teacher at YSJ recommending the post to me. My life would be so different, and much less full, if I hadn't gone to YSJ!

Bethany Bradley  
Modern Languages, 2015



York St John provided me with an amazing education but also so much more. Studying at York St. John has helped me grow so much as a person and this is down to supportive staff that genuinely want the best for you. I was offered so many new opportunities at York St. John and made friends I'll have for life.

Jenna Houston  
English Literature, 2018





# CELEBRATING RIPON COLLEGE

In June 2018, York St John University welcomed around four hundred Ripon College alumni to Lord Mayor's Walk.

Founded in 1862, Ripon College initially trained only female teachers; the first men were admitted over one hundred years later. In 1976, the college combined with York St John's College and started offering other degrees. 'Everyone who studied there knew what a special place it was,' said former Ripon College student and current Deputy Head of the School of Education at York St John University, Caroline Elbra-Ramsay. 'Thousands of women, and later men, graduated from the College over its 123 years of service and, as a primary education graduate myself, I know that many of them went on to have a profound impact on children and young people all over the world.'

Held on a glorious summer's day, the event began with a ceremony to rename 'New Wing', home to the University's primary teaching classrooms, 'Ripon Wing' to acknowledge the outstanding contribution the college's students and staff made to higher education, especially teacher training, for over one hundred years. After the ceremony, graduates aged from 35 to 95, joined by friends, family and staff, enjoyed afternoon tea and lawn games whilst catching up with old friends and making new ones.

Our Vice Chancellor, Professor Karen Stanton, said: 'We know what an incredible contribution Ripon College made to teacher training and to the University today and we wanted to publicly acknowledge it.'

Honorary Degrees for our Certificate in Education alumni.

We are delighted to announce that, at the end of June 2019, we presented Honorary Degrees to alumni who were awarded Certificates in Education from Ripon College, St John's College and The College of Ripon and York St John before 1980.

Until the 1980s, primary and secondary teaching students were awarded Certificates in Education instead of degrees. We want to recognise the academic effort demanded by the Certificate in Education, and the subsequent services to education of our alumni. The teachers we trained had a profound impact in inspiring thousands of students, and York St John awarded them with Honorary Degrees to thank them for their contribution. Angela Train was awarded a Certificate in Education in 1980. Commenting on the prospect of receiving an honorary degree she said, 'I am immensely proud to be part of an institution which can look at the past and honour those who went on to lead diverse and rewarding careers.'

The degrees were presented to over 700 alumni in the York St John University chapel, during three days of very special ceremonies. The earliest graduand left Ripon College in 1944.

If you think you are eligible for an honorary Bachelor in Education degree then please contact [alumni@yorks.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@yorks.ac.uk).



1841



**I AM IMMENSELY PROUD TO BE PART OF AN  
INSTITUTION WHICH CAN LOOK AT THE PAST  
AND HONOUR THOSE WHO WENT ON TO LEAD  
DIVERSE AND REWARDING CAREERS.**

ANGELA TRAIN, ALUMNA





# STUDYING ABROAD IN THE 1960'S

York St John University has always been appreciated for its welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, and for its sense of community. Digging in our archives to look for insights into our history, we have found the story of Margrit Nieland, an exchange student from Münster, Germany. Margrit came to St John's College in 1965 and wrote an account of her experience in the college student magazine, *The White Rose*:

'When I first came to England I was aware that I would meet many new people and was naturally apprehensive. However, I had nothing to be afraid of. I found everybody extremely friendly and helpful and what I especially appreciated was the tactful way in which this help was offered. Also, among themselves the students were kind and tolerant which I believe to be a good basis for community life. [...] The relations between staff and students are more personal in St John's than in our College. Especially the tutorial groups seem to be a good idea. What I really admire is that the lecturers speak freely instead of reading from typed notes. The personal contact between student and lecturer is a

positive influence. The listeners have an opportunity to put questions after a lecture, which I think is really important. [...] Another big difference concerning the lectures is that St John's students learn a great deal about sciences. I mean, they gather perhaps more knowledge; they know more facts when they leave College than our students do.

[...] A St John's student is lucky in having so many opportunities to see something of York and its surroundings. I am referring to the various outings I went on, especially that on Ascension Day. It is indeed very nice countryside round York. If I were a student here I would go every weekend to another attractive place in order to learn more of the country (not only to escape College meals)! However, it has been a very interesting and profitable time, in every respect. I hope that this exchange will be carried on for the sake of some more English and German students'.

Student exchange programmes have carried on at York St John long after Margrit's time here. Current students of the University and international students from all over the world have many different opportunities to study abroad. If you want to find out more about the exchange programmes that the University currently offers, you can find out more on our website: [www.yorksja.ac.uk/international](http://www.yorksja.ac.uk/international)



## In memory of **PROFESSOR GORDON MCGREGOR**

Former Principal of the College  
of Ripon and York St John.

**1932 – 2019**

After graduating from Bristol University in 1953 with a degree in English, Gordon served his National Service as an education officer in the RAF. In 1956 he accepted a teaching post at Worcester College for the Blind, near Bristol, and in 1959, newly married, he made the bold decision to move out to Uganda to become a teacher at King's College, Budo.

In Africa his career flourished. During the next ten years he taught at Budo, lectured in the Education department at Makerere University in Uganda and then became the first Professor of Education. He also wrote a history of King's College, Budo, and three books on the teaching of English in Africa, at least one of which is still in active use.

In 1970 he returned to England with his young family to become Principal of Chichester College of Education in Sussex, before taking up his final post in 1980 as Principal of the College of Ripon and York St John, which subsequently became York St John University.

Gordon was naturally modest and irrepressibly – almost outrageously – optimistic, but he had very firm educational, political and moral convictions. He fought for the right of all colleges academically close to their validating university to have the title 'University College' but that did not finally attract Government support. But a major symbolic success came with the College's Degree Congregation, which had always been held at the University in Leeds. Gordon wanted it in York. He discussed it with the Dean of York and the Vice Chancellor at Leeds and, in 1989, the first Degree Congregation was held in the magnificent setting of York Minster. It was a powerful demonstration of the College's academic maturity and its Christian heritage. Gordon was rightly jubilant.

By the time he retired in 1995, he had written 12 books on education, two histories of the College, received his PhD from Sussex University, and been awarded four honorary doctorates, three of which were conferred in America. He also held two visiting professorships, one at Oxford Brookes University, the other in South Africa, and he had accepted a number of British Council, UNESCO and Commonwealth appointments in India, Australia and England. Even after his official retirement he returned to Uganda several times. On the last occasion, in 2006, he was welcomed by President Yoweri Museveni who asked him personally to chair the Presidential Visitation Committee for Public Universities. It was required to assess and advise the President on the state and future development of four public universities. The report was presented to the President a year later, at which point Gordon decided it really was time to retire. In 2017 he published his last book *In and Out of Class, Ventures in Education and Community: A Memoire*. It is effectively his own obituary and in typical Gordon fashion it begins with a pun and ends with a wry joke at his own expense.

The national recognition he had long deserved finally came in 1996, when he received the offer of a CBE. He declined it on principle: the Honours system was incompatible with his ardent belief in social equality. He could not accept it.

He is survived by his wife, Jean, and their three daughters, Clare, Helen and Fiona.

**This obituary was written by Gordon's friend and colleague, Dr John Axon, former Vice Principal of the College of Ripon and York St John.**



# YOU CAN CHANGE A LIFE...



Some of our students cope with the extraordinary every day – and for those students a scholarship makes a huge difference, giving them the space they need to concentrate on their studies. Students like Betheny, who is a carer for her younger siblings:

'I travel home every Friday straight after my university classes to start looking after my two younger siblings, one of whom has severe learning disabilities and a genetic condition. I pay my travel expenses out of my maintenance loan which leaves me with less money for food and course materials. There are also times when I am needed at home during the week to look after them overnight, travelling back early the next day for my university classes again.

'Having a scholarship means I am worrying less about money and can focus on my work. Graduating from

my course would be a great achievement and aid my ambition of working in Sure Start centres to help other under-privileged children and families.'

Betheny was one of several of our incredible students awarded a Vice Chancellor scholarship (once known as the SPARK fund) of £1000 per year throughout her Undergraduate degree. This was only possible with the help of alumni like you. Will you help Betheny and other students in situations like hers to achieve their dreams?

If you can help us support students like Betheny then please visit <https://nfp.everydayhero.com/uk/york-st-john-university> and help us change lives. Email [fundraising@yorks.ac.uk](mailto:fundraising@yorks.ac.uk) for more details.

## YOUR MEMORIES... THEIR FUTURE

Time and time again you tell us that your college and university years were the best time of your life. We are so proud of that heritage, and want every single student to feel the same way. But more than that, York St John and Ripon College were set up to transform lives – and we hear just as much about that power of transformation from you. Every single thing we do, from teaching to research to our community work focuses on transforming lives – but we need your help.

Did you know that leaving a small gift in your will could make a huge difference to our work? Whether you wish to endow a scholarship, create world class learning facilities, fund groundbreaking research or help us make a difference through one of our many community projects, a gift to York St John University will transform lives today, tomorrow and beyond. If you would like to talk to someone about your plans and discuss the possible terms of your gift then please call Jessica Thompson in complete confidence on 01904 876576 or email [fundraising@yorks.ac.uk](mailto:fundraising@yorks.ac.uk).

## OTHER WAYS TO GET INVOLVED...

Our alumni stay part of the YSJ family for life - and we love to hear from you, no matter when you graduated or what you're doing now. Whether you would like to volunteer here in York or help out at a recruitment fair nearer to home, set up an alumni chapter or guest lecture then, whatever your skills and interests, we would love to work with you! Email [alumni@yorks.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@yorks.ac.uk) for more details.





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# The Advantage.

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Helping you find it. Helping you keep it.

Introducing The Advantage – York St John University's specialist team providing training and development, consultancy services and a wide range of personal interest courses. From improving self-awareness and confidence to coaching, wellbeing and mindfulness, plus many more specialisms – The Advantage Team can work with you to provide bespoke study days and masterclasses, all delivered by subject experts.


Our offer includes training to support:

- **Women in the workplace**
- **Communication**
  - Challenging conversations
  - Getting your voice heard
  - Foundations of effective communication
- **Employee health and wellbeing**
  - Strengthening personal resilience
  - Introduction to mindfulness
  - Introduction to CBT
  - Overcoming insomnia
- **Leadership and team development**
  - Leading and developing others
  - Motivating and inspiring teams
  - Psychometric testing
  - Developing a coaching culture within your team
- **CPD for Schools and Teachers**
  - Body image in the digital age
  - Thoughts and feelings about bullying
  - The perils of perfectionism and student mental health

**Contact us to discuss your individual, team or organisational requirements:**

[www.yorks.ac.uk/the-advantage](http://www.yorks.ac.uk/the-advantage)

E: [headadvantage@yorks.ac.uk](mailto:headadvantage@yorks.ac.uk)

 [@TheAdvantageYSJ](https://twitter.com/TheAdvantageYSJ)