

# GRADUATE TESSIDE

2020/2021



Teesside  
University

Meet  
SKIN



# Welcome

It is five years since I became the Vice-Chancellor of Teesside University, and this summer sees the completion of the corporate strategy that I put into place upon my appointment. I am exceptionally proud of how much this University, and Team Teesside, has achieved during this time, from the delivery of the first phase of our ambitious campus masterplan, through to establishing a strategic network of international partners, and making significant gains in our placement in various sector league tables.

In all of that forward planning, we did not imagine the swift and significant changes we have seen to the higher education sector, and indeed global society, over the past few months. The current health emergency caused by Covid-19 has resulted in a reshaping of our teaching and learning and, at the time of writing, our usually vibrant and busy campus remains in restricted operations.

Our plans for a return to campus in the new academic year are well underway, and while the pandemic has presented challenges, it has also given us the opportunity to further reimagine the Teesside of the future.

Our new corporate strategy, Teesside 2025: Ambition Delivered Today, will shift Teesside to become a high-performing University. You can look forward to seeing even more in terms of innovative teaching, applied and impactful research and civic engagement, on a global scale. I am also delighted to launch

a major fundraising initiative, the Teesside Transformation Fund, which will support talented students to study and succeed, in line with our mission to transform lives.

Reflecting on the past five years, one thing has remained consistent: the achievements and successes of our student and alumni community. This magazine once again highlights a great many reasons to celebrate and demonstrates that despite the uncertainty in the world, Team Teesside continues to impress and deliver.

With best wishes

*Paul Croney*

Professor Paul Croney  
Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive





# Hello

## ALUMNI AND FRIENDS



### 2020 has been a year none of us expected – and, equally, one none of us is likely to forget.

It's been a particularly challenging time for the education sector but it's a challenge to which Teesside University has risen with its usual ingenuity and creativity.

As your Alumni Team, we have felt it more keenly than ever that we value our graduate community, and that we must support one another and, importantly, celebrate successes together.

In this year's Teesside Graduate magazine, we bring you compelling stories of achievements and some of the inspirational journeys our alumni have travelled.

We love reading about what you've been doing since you left University, and what you're planning next; the doors that being a Teesside graduate have opened for you, the opportunities that have come your way and the connections you've made across the globe.

We are hosting a series of events in 2021, including our on-campus reunion. Head to

page 35 to register your interest and to enter our competition for the chance to win your accommodation up to the value of £100.

We'll be hitting the road too next year, so we'd welcome your feedback on where we should take our roadshow.

If you're still discovering career options, are seeking opportunities for personal and professional growth, or need employability support, don't forget help is available from our Student Futures Team for as long as you need it. Just visit [tees.ac.uk/studentfutures](https://tees.ac.uk/studentfutures) to find out all the opportunities available to you.

For any other support please email us and we will endeavour to do our best to support you.

With our warmest wishes

Joe, Claire, Jessica

Your Alumni Team

[tees.ac.uk/alumni](https://tees.ac.uk/alumni)

For future editions, why not share your experiences, your personal or professional journey, what has inspired you, your highlights and how you've overcome challenges.

We can't wait to hear from you, so please email us at [alumni@tees.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@tees.ac.uk).

**WIN.** Finally, to make sure you stay connected with us and fellow alumni, please update your details at [www.tees.ac.uk/alumni](https://www.tees.ac.uk/alumni). If you update your details by 31 January 2021 you'll go into a prize draw for the chance to win a £100 Amazon voucher (the winner will be selected and contacted in February 2021).

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## Introducing THE TEESSIDE TRANSFORMATION FUND

**Teesside University is committed not only to galvanising the success of our students and graduates, but also powering the wider economy of our region and the communities we work with.**

Teesside is a region of innovators, inventors, entrepreneurs and creative minds; but we are all too aware that we are also a region of missed opportunity and curtailed ambition.

We know that university study remains out of the reach of many. Our students come from all walks of life; many are adult learners, who are balancing family commitments, or care-experienced young people, who lack a support network.

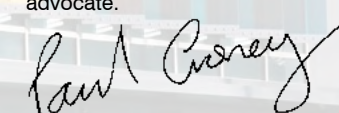
We already offer a range of scholarships, bursaries and financial assistance, but we are determined to do much more. We intend to break down these barriers to opportunity and build beyond the horizon to help shift this region forward.

Aligned to the publication of our 2025 corporate strategy, Ambition Delivered Today, we are proud to launch the Teesside Transformation Fund, an initiative to support more young people in the region to access higher education.

We are calling for your support to actively change people's lives by providing scholarships, mentoring and access to business networks.

Our ambition is clear. Through increasing access to education, we directly benefit our communities, economies and wider society. This need has been exacerbated by the impact of the global health emergency, which will be felt for many years to come.

I would be delighted to speak to you about how you may support the Teesside Transformation Fund, as a donor, mentor or advocate.



Professor Paul Croney  
Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive

Contact:  
The Alumni and Development Team  
[alumni@tees.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@tees.ac.uk)





**When the Covid-19 pandemic struck the world stood still... but not everyone was prepared to sit around. Here we share with you three stories of how #teamteesside have been using their skills and resourcefulness to make a difference.**



#### APPLIANCE OF SCIENCE

**The University provided specialist scientific equipment for the Government's Covid-19 testing programme.**

Thousands of pounds of specialist kit was supplied to North Tees and Hartlepool Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, including a QIAcube Connect Platform from QIAGEN and RNeasy extraction kits, which rapidly speed up testing.

The equipment was provided by the University's National Horizons Centre (NHC), a £22m research, teaching and training facility and Centre for Excellence for the bioscience industry.

The University also offered lab space and specialist scientists as well as gloves and pipettes, specialist PCR test machines and the Illumina MiSeq System for high-throughput sequencing of the virus.

Professor Vikki Rand, Head of Biosciences Research in Teesside University's School of Health & Life Sciences and the NHC, said: 'We have access to high-tech, specialist equipment, as well as world-renowned expertise and we were happy to be able to lend our support.'

## OUR STUDENT NURSES ARE AN AMAZING ASSET TO THE NHS

### NURSES GET TO WORK

**Student nurses volunteered to start work on hospital wards before completing their studies to help South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.**

The third-year students, who were in their last six months of training, took on extended placements at The James Cook University Hospital in Middlesbrough and the Friarage Hospital, Northallerton.

The 80 student nurses were placed on adult wards, with 11 specialist nurses working in children's services.

Joanne Porritt, 30, of Normanby, who volunteered, said: 'I thought I needed to put the skills to use that I'd already obtained and help the NHS in this time of crisis.'

Dr Susy Cook, Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching), School of Health & Life Sciences added: 'Our student nurses are an amazing asset to the NHS. We are all incredibly proud of them.'



### WELL DONE ADAM!

**Final-year BA (Hons) Product Design student Adam Richardson put his lockdown spare time to good use by making vital personal protective equipment (PPE) for local care homes.**

Adam, 21, from Hartlepool, said: 'I noticed that my local area was in desperate need of PPE so I decided to put my 3D printer to good use and produce this much-needed equipment for care homes.'

'It is nice to be able to use the skills and equipment I have to help out and make a positive contribution during these difficult times and the response and support I received has been amazing.'



**Well done**  **Team TEESSIDE**  
we couldn't be more proud of you.

# Meet ELIZABETH ESTENSEN

Elizabeth is one of the country's best known and loved actresses. She is familiar to many for appearing as Carol Boswell in the 1970s sitcom *The Liver Birds* and, for the last 20 years, as Diane Sugden, former landlady of the Woolpack in *Emmerdale*, in which she is the programme's longest-serving actress.

Born in Fairfield, Stockton-on-Tees, Elizabeth attended Teesside High School and Billingham Technical College. Having left the region aged 18, her first big break came when she played Susan in the film version of Willy Russell's play *Our Day Out*. She then played Bert's girlfriend in Russell's musical *John, Paul, George, Ringo... and Bert* in Liverpool before transferring to the West End in 1974.

In the late 1990s Elizabeth appeared in *Coronation Street* as Pam Middleton and is also remembered as T-Bag in the children's television programme *Wonders in Letterland*.

In 2004 she was awarded an Honorary Master of Arts degree by Teesside University. She lives in London with her husband and has one son who is an artist and teacher in Italy.

## What was your journey into acting?

I can remember performing at school when I was nine and being pleased that the audience responded. I suppose that was the start but at first I kept it a secret because I was quite shy. It was a ludicrous thing to want to be an actress in those days. I studied drama at Billingham then went to what became Manchester Polytechnic where I did a teaching course and drama. When I was offered an acting job in Harrogate my parents were very understanding. I loved my time at the Liverpool Everyman Theatre and still see myself as a theatre actress. Five years after that I was offered *The Liver Birds*.

## Emmerdale has given you some diverse storylines – which has been the most challenging?

There have been a lot and the character has changed a lot too over the years. Soaps



EVERYTHING HAS  
CHANGED ON TEESIDE

are strange because there's no beginning and no end, they just keep going. It's a surprisingly solitary job because you only work with the people in your particular storyline.

## Do you come back to the North East very often?

No, because I don't have any family there now. Everything has changed on Teesside since I was a girl and young woman there. There was no University and a lot of industry.

## What's been your most rewarding achievement?

The things I'm most proud of are theatre performances people won't have heard of. I've also enjoyed all the travelling I've been able to do as an actress – India, Singapore, Thailand and, in the early 1990s, I travelled across America teaching and performing Shakespeare in universities.

## What's the best piece of advice you've been given?

I pick up hints all the time about the technical aspects of acting. I know that actors today talk a lot about a character's feelings but the fact is that bringing out that inner side only works well if you have the technical knowhow, and comedy is slightly easier than tragedy.

## You're the longest-serving actress on Emmerdale but when the end comes how would you like to exit?

I've always had an annual contract, except at the very beginning, and you sort of expect that to continue, touch wood. I haven't been asked to leave and I don't envisage leaving, but I don't know what the future holds.



MATTHEW  
WILLIAMS

# Passion and purpose

**When Matthew Williams was developing his character traits of self-reliance and resilience as he studied a sports science degree, little did he know the full value of his Teesside experience.**

Today he draws upon those characteristics and presentation skills as he writes books and articles, and delivers workshops on mental health and wellbeing.

Author of *Something Changed: Stumbling Through Divorce, Dating & Depression* and *A Familiar Stranger*, Matthew, of Middlesbrough, studied his BSc from 1994-97, securing a 2.1.

Going to Teesside University allowed him to keep his established friendships while meeting new people.

'The course and the people were brilliant and lecturers told me they thought I was good at presentations and it was something I should pursue. That set me along the right path.'

As a middle-distance runner and boxing fan, Matthew was also able to follow his passion for sport and, on graduating, worked as a college lecturer before moving to London to work in sports development for a local council and with England Boxing for 11 years.

But his greatest challenge became personal when he had to overcome bouts of depression. 'These experiences prompted me to start writing and raising awareness about the issue and that has become my passion,' he said.

'I feel most alive when I am helping other people and I have developed a course to help set out life goals. It helps you question yourself, what you want, what is good for you.'

'Teesside University laid these foundations, teaching me to pursue something I'm passionate about.'

Change is a unique, online personal development course that uses storytelling principles to help people find greater passion, purpose and meaning. For more information and to book, visit

[www.afamiliarstranger.co.uk](http://www.afamiliarstranger.co.uk)

MEGAN  
LILLIE

# The journey back to my life

**Mindfulness has become a way of life for blogger and digital marketer Megan Lillie who uses her everyday experiences to achieve the perfect work-life balance.**

Middlesbrough-born Megan took full advantage of what was on her doorstep when she studied at Teesside University from 2013-16, achieving a first-class honours degree in marketing.

Throughout that time she wrote her blog, [www.thumbelinalillie.com](http://www.thumbelinalillie.com), which she continues to populate eight years later, alongside her work as Head of SEO and Content at Stockton digital media company Breakout Media.

'I started my blog before I headed off to university and blogged about my experience,' she recalled.

'I chose Teesside University because I love my area and think it has so much to offer. I knew that it was successful, renowned and respected, so why not go there when it's on my doorstep? It has great facilities and a wonderful teaching staff.'

In 2017 Megan realised she was struggling with her mental health and looked for help. 'It was only then that I took charge of my health and wellbeing and started to change how I cared for myself, both internally and externally,' she said.

'At first, I overdid it, throwing everything I had into fitness, to the point where that became unhealthy. But now I feel I've achieved a greater balance of fitness, health and life in general. Before this I'd become a recluse, so it was a case of taking the journey back to my life.'

'I've learned the importance of being happy in a job and blogging has definitely helped me reach where I am. It's important to focus on the now and that makes me want to improve myself and everything I do.'



STEVEN  
ASKHAM*Sweet  
success*

### Heading off to university proved to be the icing on the cake for a mature student wanting a change of direction.

Marketing graduate Steven Askham ended up as cake maker to the stars after a sideline became a full-blown business, That Cake.

'I'd been working in a solicitor's office in accounts and franchising for ten years and felt ready for a change,' said Steven, of Redcar, who graduated in 2018 with first-class honours.

'The cake idea was random; someone had baked some cakes and, being competitive, I felt I could do a better job. The business snowballed from there. The next thing I knew, ITV was on the phone asking me to make a cake for the X Factor, for when James Arthur visited his home town with judge and mentor Nicole Scherzinger.

'I was also asked to go to London to film a baking programme for Channel 4 and it got to the point where the business took off, so I decided to leave work.'

Steven chose to do a marketing degree and Teesside University was on his doorstep. Since then he has launched a coffee shop in a friend's interior design shop in Saltburn, Lillian Daph; developed a website and mail order business; and signed a lease on commercial kitchens.

'Teesside University proved to be such a great help,' he said. 'I loved the modules on strategic marketing and branding and I'm certainly using this to develop my business brand. As part of the course, I also completed an internship with a global chemical company which was really useful – so I am still using all this knowledge today.'

STEPHEN  
TRIGG*Bon bon  
voyage!*

### When guests got their teeth stuck into the chocolates at IT consultant Stephen Trigg's wedding little did they know they had been made by the groom and his bride.

But as his artisan chocolate business, Lauden Chocolate Ltd, goes from strength to strength, the roots of this sweet story of success can be traced back to Teesside University.

'I'm from Middlesbrough but was an expat child living in Algeria, Saudi Arabia and a boarding student in Kent,' he said. 'So when I ended up at South Park Sixth Form College, Middlesbrough, with some really good friends, I wanted to lay down some roots.

'Teesside University also had a great reputation for IT and today I run my business on a spreadsheet using the skills I developed there, including business acumen, analytical thinking and risk management.'

Stephen graduated in 1997 with an HND in Business and Information Technology. Soon after, he visited a friend in Leeds and ended up walking into a recruitment office where he secured an IT job with the Halifax.

He moved from banking support to Kvaerner Engineering in Stockton before becoming an IT consultant.

'My wife is from Singapore and we both share a love of food and chocolate,' Stephen said. 'We couldn't find any chocolate we really liked so we started making our own and guests at the wedding loved it. We started selling it at farmers' markets and I was working as an IT consultant during the day and making chocolate before and after work and at the weekend.'

Today, Stephen runs a factory employing ten staff making a range of chocolates, including bon bons with fruit centres and a signature salted caramel, for British Airways, Cunard and top restaurants and hotels around the globe.





# Your graduation HIGHLIGHTS

We are thrilled to share with you some memory snapshots from past graduations. We always love to hear about your student days your life since graduation; your achievements and occasions; as well as your highs and lows during challenging times.

We admire and honour our alumni community, so please do get in touch with us and share your experiences. These tremendously powerful stories support and inspire each and every one of us, especially those who are still on their journey. Email [alumni@tees.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@tees.ac.uk)



HARRY  
TANFIELD

# Harry's games

**When top cyclist Harry Tanfield opted to study at Teesside University it began a chain of events that led to success.**

A fanatical and talented cyclist since childhood, Harry, of Great Ayton, was picked up by the GB training programme when he was 13 but missed out on selection for the senior squad at 18.

'At that point I looked at universities and decided Teesside was the best for me,' said Harry, 25.

He studied a BEng (Hons) Civil Engineering degree over four years and also benefited from the University's Elite Sports Bursary to support his cycling.

'University was great, allowing me to live at home, which helped me financially, and being so flexible it fitted perfectly around my cycling,' he said.

'The sports facilities and staff were brilliant too and I could literally train before, in between and after lectures, while the season coincided with the summer holidays.

'The degree was so wide-ranging covering everything from beam and portal frame design, to the incorporation of sustainability into building projects, as well as geology and geo-technical engineering design.

'I started my Master's degree but, with the support of the University, was allowed to postpone it, after deciding to commit to racing the 17/18 Track World Cup season, requiring to be based in Derby. I can always return to it later, picking up where I left off.

'In 2018 I competed in the Commonwealth Games road time trials and took silver and I currently ride for the professional team AG2R La Mondiale. I'm sure my success has been helped by the world class support I received at Teesside University.'

BETH  
MEAD

# On the ball

**Studying at Teesside University allowed professional footballer Beth Mead to pursue two goals in life.**

The England and Arsenal forward first played football at the age of six and had enjoyed considerable success in the youth game before being picked up by Sunderland Women at 16.

The part-time nature of the women's game then left her the time to follow her other dream of going to university.

'I chose Teesside because I'd heard such good things about it, particularly from my cousin who was studying there,' said Whitby-born Beth. 'I also was very interested in sports development and the course leader Stuart Braye was amazing, telling me how the University could help with my specific needs of studying around my football.

'In the final year I became a full-time professional which made it impossible to get to University except on my days off. But I came out with a 2.1, with a first in my dissertation, which I was over the moon with.

'University helped me with my time management and prepared me for life. Career highlights include winning WSL2 with Sunderland and being promoted, then progressing to Arsenal, and winning WSL1 with them. A huge moment was representing my country in the FIFA 2019 Women's World Cup.

'But I am also very happy to have my degree, which I'm sure I wouldn't have without the support of Teesside University.'





# Meet SKIN

Teesside graduate Skin is the charismatic lead singer and songwriter for British rock band Skunk Anansie, who recently marked their 25th anniversary. She has also performed solo shows across Europe, including support slots for the Robbie Williams stadium tour and Placebo.

She is also a sought-after DJ playing techno all over the world, including a collaboration with Anglo-Lebanese DJ Nicole Moudaber, leading to a pre-Grammy nomination for their critically acclaimed *Breed* EP. She's also tried her hand at acting, featuring in two indie films, *Andron* and the Italian-produced *Ulysses*.

In 2000 Skunk Anansie duetted with Luciano Pavarotti for *Pavarotti & Friends* alongside George Michael and Annie Lennox, hosted by the Dalai Lama for his Tibetan charity.

Since reforming Skunk Anansie in 2008 after an eight-year break, Skin and her band mates have toured extensively. Last year included a performance in front of 800,000 fans in Poland.

Skin was also a judge on the Italian *X Factor* and, with renowned producer Paulo Buonvino, she wrote and performed the theme song for Netflix Original hit show *Medici: Masters of Florence*. In 2018 she

won the Inspirational Artist Award at the Annual Music Week Awards.

Since leaving Teesside, Skin continues to challenge herself, even appearing as Duck on this year's first UK season of *The Masked Singer*.

With her striking looks and attention-grabbing soprano voice, she is cited as an inspirational 'anti-role model', for people all over the world who also try to break the mould.

**You're from Brixton, London...why did you choose Teesside University?**

I was fascinated with design and I also loved the fact that every course at Teesside had a computer section, which was brand new technology in 1986. I was also dying to leave home as I wanted to pay my own bills, make my own mistakes and go to bed when I felt like it. Teesside was a five-hour bus ride from London so it meant for the first time in my life I was truly independent.



**You studied interior design – was that part of an alternative career plan?**

I wasn't entirely sure what I wanted to do so I stayed at school for an extra year to study design technology. I was the first girl to do the course and topped the class; I loved all the arts, literature, design, fashion, architecture, music, film, photography, making things and being creative. I applied to a furniture-making course at the London School of Furniture but on the way to my interview popped into an exhibition of all of these skills under the banner of interior design, so I switched course and studied that instead.

**What was your journey from Teesside into music?**

I joined my first band at Teesside. In my second year I was entertainments officer, so I was always in the Students' Union. I joined a friend's band, J.A.S.S. (Jazz and Soul Septet), and my very first gig was in the Students' Union hall. We did obscure covers of Talking Heads and Rufus and Chaka Khan songs, and before Hue and Cry's version of Prince's *Kiss* – people thought some songs were our own material. My first time on stage was terrifying, but the place was rammed, people went crazy! It was a riot, I had fun and I got a taste for singing live.

“MY HOUSE MATES HAVE  
BECOME LIFELONG FRIENDS.”

**What did you like most about Teesside?**

The house we rented was abysmal but we absolutely loved it. My house mates have become lifelong friends. We had so much fun; we threw parties, cooked a lot and learned how to be grown-ups. I became friendly with a lot of locals and floated along on two different tiers. Middlesbrough was a lot quieter then, so life centred on the Students' Union, but we went to clubs in Middlesbrough and Newcastle and I had a lot of artistic friends, so I got involved in the jazz and open mic scenes and dipped my toe into the arts scene.

**Have you been back or are you still in touch with student friends?**

I've been back; I couldn't get to my original graduation but I went back when I became

an honorary graduate and was awarded a Master of Arts in 2000 and graduated properly then. I do keep in touch with all the people I shared a house with.

**How does DJing compare with performing with the band?**

Both are huge amounts of fun but DJing is harder because the scene is ever changing, not as well organised, very picky and you're playing other people's music. It's also different because once you've conquered the technical side, which is considerable, the other side is spiritual. Reading the room takes years and you make a lot of mistakes. There is a lot of pressure with a rock gig but at least you're preaching to the converted. In a DJ gig they just want to dance and don't really care who you are if you mess up.

**What was it like singing with Pavarotti?**

Wonderful! We hung out together for a while at his house in Modena. He cooked one night, gave me a singing lesson and taught me about breathing. Then we went to Rome for the music festival. He was very sweet and jovial.

**What was *The Masked Singer* experience like?**

At this stage of my life it's great to be able to break out of the box. I thought my friends would really rib me for playing a Duck and maybe a lot of my hardcore fans wouldn't like it, but I was wrong, everyone loved it. The hardest thing was singing in an outfit that was crushing my vocal cords and with no air.

**Do you like the role-model label?**

The idea of the perfect person only doing good doesn't sit right with me. If you put yourself on a pedestal it's quite likely your own dubious actions will kick you off. Rock stars don't make great role models because they should be encouraging kids to be rebels. I think it's better to inspire, so if a young kid goes to a gig, then picks up a guitar and starts screaming down a mic because of me, I've done my job.

**What's the most rewarding aspect of your work?**

Creating, organising and being in control of my own life, writing my own schedule, directing my own journey. I wake up with the knowledge that what I'm about to do that day has been decided by me, so it's probably going to be enjoyable.

“FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE  
I WAS TRULY INDEPENDENT.”



**Future plans...?**

I have just finished writing, with my long-time friend Lucy O'Brien, my autobiography *It Takes Blood and Guts*, which tracks the trials and tribulations of how a black girl from Brixton shook the world of rock. It's out on September 24. It's published by Simon & Schuster. I've also been writing new material at home. It was the perfect thing to do in a lockdown with no plans, no deadlines and therefore no stress.



# Transforming THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

**Teesside's innovative approach to bringing all support and wellbeing services under one roof has been praised as 'a shining example' of how universities should provide for students.**

In Middlesbrough to officially open the new £13.2m Student Life Building, the then Universities Minister Chris Skidmore said the new building would improve the student experience, and he commended Teesside for its pioneering approach and swift and decisive response to the growing need to offer flexible support to students.

Designed in collaboration with students, the building is the latest project to be completed as part of the £300m Campus Masterplan up to 2026. More than just a building, however, it represents a culture change and a whole new way of life for Teesside students, making it simpler for them to access services from counselling to careers advice to finance, along with wellbeing, relaxation and social

activities. It is also home to StrEAT, new campus catering with a traditional pizza oven.

Mr Skidmore said: 'It's incredibly important to help promote student wellbeing and experience, and this is a shining example of how students can get the advice and help they need to fulfil their ambitions in their academic careers.'

The new development is supported by a 24-hour digital service staffed by Charlie, a trained 'chatbot', who will help students access the right advice and services whenever they need them, and a dedicated CreatorLab acting as a hub for digital innovation.

THIS IS A SHINING EXAMPLE OF HOW STUDENTS CAN GET THE ADVICE AND HELP THEY NEED TO FULFIL THEIR AMBITIONS



## Leisure & LEARNING

**Students are being promised accommodation with a contemporary but homely feel, as well as leisure and learning facilities, as a £21.4m residential block begins to take shape. A 300-bed facility has risen from the surface of a former car park in the Cornell Quarter, Middlesbrough, as the University invests in enhancing the student experience.**

The programme of work was completed in September 2020 with individual accommodation being arranged in clusters and a communal space, all within walking distance of the campus heart.

Rooms have a variety of internal finishes to provide a contemporary feel, moving away from the traditional corporate environment, to give a homely ambience.

A main reception provides the only off-street access into the building. Bedrooms, accessed using an electronic key fob, have space for learning, with discreet luggage storage.

The landscaped internal courtyard provides a safe and tranquil space to work and

socialise, with trees and shrubs to soften the surroundings.

Communal spaces include a gym with 24-hour access, a games lounge and cinema. The wi-fi provision is a 1GB connection with the ability to establish a home network for up to 20 devices.

Five per cent of the rooms will cater for students with special mobility needs including a lift accessed from the secure internal courtyard.

The building has also been constructed with a reduced carbon footprint and carbon offsetting to minimise the impact on the environment.





# Marek REICHMAN

**Born in a Northern steel town, it was perhaps understandable that Aston Martin's chief designer would choose another, Middlesbrough, to forge his path to success.**

Sheffield-born Marek Reichman graduated from Teesside University with a first-class BSc (Hons) Industrial Design degree, giving him the drive to fulfil his dreams.

'My father worked as a blacksmith, which is why I grew up with knowledge of making things,' he said. 'It's where I picked up my artistic skills and realised that design surrounds us, whether it's through a traditional method of designing or through a craft.'

'Design is integral to the human race. I grew up in a family with many car fanatics and I wanted to be an industrial designer, to learn the science behind materials, so I studied industrial design to get the knowledge base.'

Marek's career started in 1991 with Rover Group which, in 1994, was acquired by BMW and he moved to BMW Designworks in California. Eventually he became senior designer, leading the design direction of Land Rover's future production models, including the 2003 Range Rover.

At Aston Martin he was responsible for the One-77, the DBS, the Rapide, the 2012 Aston Martin Vanquish and the Aston Martin Vulcan, while his other celebrated designs included the Rolls-Royce Phantom VII, the Lincoln MKX and Navicross concept cars.

In June 2014, the Aston Martin DP100, a concept car designed for the videogame Gran Turismo 6, was unveiled. The following year Marek directed the design of the stunning Aston Martin DB10 concept car, used in the James Bond film, *Spectre*.

'I love designing and what gets me out of bed is the thought of creating something new, something that didn't exist when you went to sleep,' he said.

'What attracted me to Teesside is that the campus is at the heart of Middlesbrough. My fondest memories are the closeness to the lecturers, who became friends, the closeness of my peers within Teesside, and the community.'

'There are lots of my peers who are in very important positions in the world of design and I think what

Teesside gave us was the opportunity to grow and to challenge. We could think freely and we could really create something fresh.

'There is a passion behind Teesside and I think that if you are going to university, the one thing you need is passion to drive you along because it's not always easy and you need that environment to nurture you. Teesside is that nurturing environment, which is really important as you set off on a career path.'





PLUG IN,  
*get on!*

Online learning has never had such a high profile and the use of technology in education has never been more important to ensure students are career-ready.

The University has been providing high-quality open learning for over 30 years and currently has more than 1,000 students enrolled on online courses, a figure that is expected to continue growing.

A broad range of flexible-learning courses are available, all designed to fit around learners and their other commitments, putting them in control of where and when they study.

Online learning is a pathway to a university-level qualification without having to physically attend campus. However, access to the world-class teaching and support that Teesside offers remains at the heart of our learners' experience.

Courses run for a fixed duration at certain points in the year and lectures, tutorials,

webinars, assessments and scheduled meetings with tutors take place online. Beyond this, students are free to access and work through the video lectures, reading materials and other online activities at their leisure, studying anytime, anywhere, building learning around when it's convenient.

Using cutting-edge digital tools and platforms, students are also encouraged to access opportunities to collaborate and network with learners across the globe.

Importantly, the widespread use of the latest technologies in learning also supports course content, providing a seamless transition between education and the workplace to meet the needs of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

[tees.ac.uk/onlinelearning](https://tees.ac.uk/onlinelearning)

#### BRIGHT IDEA

Teesside has partnered with global software provider D2L to offer an up-to-the-minute approach to online distance learning using its Brightspace platform.

The new Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) has been developed to meet demand for flexible access to learning. It can even be accessed from a mobile phone through an easy-to-navigate interface.

Three courses are on offer initially – BA (Hons) Business and Enterprise (top-up),

MSc Cybersecurity and the University Business School's flagship MBA – with more to come on stream soon.

Since the platform allows students to tailor their learning around their needs, it's ideal for people who are also employees juggling the demands of work, or part-time and mature learners who want to study at their own pace.

# WHAT'S YOUR MASTER PLAN?



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\* Subject to eligibility criteria





# Taking OFF

**Enterprising graduates are being offered the chance to launch their dreams thanks to a £1.5m makeover of an institution that has been supporting them for 15 years.**

The University's business incubator, Teesside Launchpad, is undergoing a major reconfiguration, including a 35-seater commercial co-working space to support the region's 'breakfast bar' and 'spare room' entrepreneurs.

The development will allow them to access a peerless workspace with free coffee, fast wi-fi and a great community of fellow innovators.

Based on campus in a converted Victorian primary school building and part of the successful University Enterprise Zone, the facility is open to all Teesside graduates (up to five years from graduation) and current students.

Teesside Launchpad prides itself on building a sense of community and shared endeavour in its subsidised office, studio and co-working spaces and through a mentoring programme, workshops and networking.

Office space is being converted into micro-factories to give entrepreneurs a place to manufacture and ship out products. Upstairs, 12 new starter offices and six large video games studio spaces complete the purpose-built start-up centre.

Over the past 15 years many, if not most, of the digital businesses that make up Tees Valley's growing tech cluster started life in the incubator, as well as enterprises in the fashion and manufacturing sectors. More than 400 businesses that started there have gone on to create jobs and growth in the region.

To find out how Launchpad could help launch a new venture email the Enterprise Team at [L.dixon@tees.ac.uk](mailto:L.dixon@tees.ac.uk).

Recent start-ups making a name for themselves across the region and further afield include:

## WANDER FILMS

was founded by Chloë Clover and Lou Tonner. It specialises in creating video stories with impact to stand out on ever more crowded social media platforms. They've carved a niche with their ultra-modern Epic Vlog Package™ and a twist on corporate films with Intro Vids™.

## RADICAL FORGE

creates a range of innovative, engrossing and 'insane' projects, crafting video games into experiences to remember through services including game optimisation, technical art and cross-platform apps.

## HUANI

is an innovative eco-clothing creator specialising in hand-drawn animal design. It was one of the first enterprises to start trading from the MicroBiz Academy, which supports students to create a 'side hustle' business that can provide additional income and build skills.

## MY BREAKFAST BOX

home of the healthy breakfast delivery service, their subscription services allow customers to order the most important meal of the day from a choice of nutritional porridge, granola breakfast bars and more delivered to their door.



## STEVE DOUGAN,

HEAD OF ENTERPRISE

AT TEESIDE UNIVERSITY,

SAYS:

'Our students and graduates are incredibly resourceful, innovative and resilient. Launchpad gives them the support and the space they need to succeed.'

'Incubators need to change to meet the needs of a generation of students and graduates emboldened and enabled by technology; from micro-manufacturing to e-commerce, they

are a new cohort of entrepreneurs with far fewer barriers to success.

'Teesside University has always been about creating opportunities for students to be the very best they can be, to succeed and achieve. Launchpad is a great example of that drive to overcome barriers and get to where you want to be.'





KEEPING IT IN  
*the family*

**Learning proved to be a family affair for the Evans family after mum, dad and their four children all graduated with flying colours.**

#### PROFESSOR GRAHAM EVANS

Graham originally studied at Teesside Polytechnic from 1984-86, graduating with an HNC in Engineering (Instrumentation and Control), returning to the Business School in 1997 and graduating with an MSc in Organisational Change and Management Development, and in 2009 graduating with a Doctor of Professional Studies linked to technology transformation within healthcare. An honorary professor at Teesside, Graham is currently Chief Information and Technology Officer for North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust and Chief Digital Officer for the Integrated Care System across the North East and North Cumbria.

#### YVONNE EVANS

Yvonne graduated with a Diploma in Nursing and a Bachelor of Laws degree in 1998. She undertook a Postgraduate Certificate in Innovation and Transformational Change in 2011. In 2015 she graduated with an MA in Work-based Leadership. Yvonne has taken on various roles within the NHS since securing her first job as an anaesthetic theatre nurse at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust. She has worked locally, regionally and nationally as an advocate for patient safety, patient experience, clinical governance and quality improvement.

#### MARK EVANS

Mark graduated in 2006 with a BA (Hons) degree in E-business. He and his youngest brother Luke initially followed their dreams in music, touring the world. His Teesside experience proved highly relevant as the music industry became more reliant on online and internet technologies. In 2017, Mark joined the NHS and is a Project Manager within the Project Management and Improvement Office Team at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust. He is currently studying a Master's degree in Global Leadership and Management in Healthcare.

#### SCOTT EVANS

Scott studied at Teesside University between 2004-06, graduating with an HND in Business Studies. He initially worked in the NHS, training as a theatre support worker, gaining skills such as procurement, lean methodology and productive theatres, before acquiring a range of additional programme and project management skills and qualifications. Scott has since become a self-employed Project Planner within the chemical and manufacturing sector, undertaking key contracts and large-scale industrial projects.

#### SOPHIE EVANS

Sophie graduated with a Diploma in Nursing in 2011 as well as qualifying as a registered general nurse. She trained in haematology and is now a senior nurse for the Marie Curie rapid response service in Durham, a palliative care community service. Sophie has since returned to Teesside University to study a range of short courses linked to continuous professional development as well as establishing her own aesthetics company.

#### LUKE EVANS

Luke initially embarked on a successful professional music career, returning to full-time education after ten years. He graduated in 2018 with a first-class BA (Hons) Marketing degree. He secured a role with the North East Ambulance Service Foundation Trust, where he is currently a Marketing Intelligence Officer and Bid Coordinator.



## MARK EASBY



## Better by far

**More than 20 years on, branding expert Mark Easby remains a huge fan of the University, which continues to be at the vanguard of digital learning.**

The Managing Director of the Better Brand Agency stays in touch with Teesside University as he strives to help develop and retain the region's young talent.

'I had a settled life with a good set of friends, a part-time job and lots going on at home so I didn't want to go far,' said Mark, of Thornaby, who studied a BA (Hons) in Multimedia Enterprise from 1997-99, followed by a Master's degree in 2000.

'But the course really interested me too and the University had a growing reputation for expertise in the digital space. As students we moved into new buildings with new kit and it felt very exciting and ahead of the game.'

After graduating and working for a web design company, Mark and two colleagues set up their own business. Better Brand Agency, with its 11-strong workforce, now operates across the region, nationally and

internationally, from its headquarters in Queen's Square, Middlesbrough.

Always keen to maintain links with the University, Mark also chairs the High Tide Foundation, which shows 11 to 18-year-olds the world of incredible learning and career opportunities available to them on Teesside.

'We started doing river trips showcasing the industry up and down the Tees, showing students the wide range of career opportunities available,' he said. 'Now this has been expanded and we have work-experience weeks covering lots of key sectors including creative, digital, law, engineering and manufacturing.'

'We can all help influence the decisions young people make throughout their education and change the perceptions that they need to jump on a train and leave the area for a good job.'

2021

## Reunions and events



### SAVE THE DATE!

Following the huge success of last year's reunion, we are pleased to announce 2021's reunion will be held here on campus on Saturday 26 June from 10.00am - 2.00pm.

To reserve your place email [alumni@tees.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@tees.ac.uk).

### Competition time

Once you've registered for our on-campus reunion and updated your details, you will be in with a chance of getting your accommodation paid\* for!

As our Alumni Association continues to grow, and our reach stretches far beyond Teesside, we would also like to host informal reunions in other cities across the UK. Let us know where you would like us to host by emailing [alumni@tees.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@tees.ac.uk). We will monitor demand and announce two further reunion locations later this year.

\*up to the value of £100.



# Class notes

## & IN MEMORIAM



### BOXING CLEVER

**Louis Cunningham's choice to study at Teesside supported not only his future career as a full-time sports scientist but also helped him progress to represent his country and win senior-level boxing titles.**

Louis won his first national title at 14 and was in the youth team for England Boxing when deciding where to study, choosing Teesside for its facilities, the flexibility to balance his training and studying, and to benefit from top-quality, holistic, sport-science support.

During his MSc Strength and Conditioning 2014 and BSc (Hons) Sport and Exercise (Applied Sport Science) 2012, he also made use of the University's careers service to secure volunteering positions in sports including boxing, rugby, football, swimming, table tennis and athletics, and a part-time job in a gym.

He was strength and conditioning coach for the male academies at Sunderland Association Football Club and lead sport scientist for the foundation (under 9-11) and youth (under 12-16) phases.

Louis recently returned to Teesside to his home town football club, Middlesbrough, where he delivers pitch-based physical conditioning with the U18s, and strength and conditioning gym training for U18s and U23s.

THE MA PROGRAMME AT TEESSIDE WAS AMAZING AND I FELT SUPPORTED BY TEACHERS AND FELLOW STUDENTS.



### CREATIVE CAREER

**With two sons on the autism spectrum, Rachel Dove chose Teesside University to study an MA in Creative Writing by distance learning, seeking flexibility as well as course reputation.**

She said: 'The MA programme at Teesside was amazing and I felt supported by teachers and fellow students.'

'My final project covered issues very close to my heart. I specialise in autism and special needs as a post-16 tutor and being able to nurture my writing, push myself out of my comfort zone and try new things really made my two years at Teesside.'

After signing a two-book contract with the Mills & Boon medical line, her first title, *Fighting for the Trauma Doc's Heart*, was out in July 2020 worldwide and she is working on the sequel.

'It was one of the first projects I worked on post-MA and I really feel that my studies made me a better writer and a better student,' she said.

'Having to be at home is more important than ever for many men and especially women, so having courses out there like this, run by working and publishing women tutors, is empowering.'





## LIFELONG LEARNER

**Alumnus and former University governor John Irwin was presented with an MBE at Buckingham Palace this year for services to business and economic regeneration in Teesside.**

A chartered surveyor by profession, John was in his 60s when he completed his MA in Local and Regional History in 2015 with a dissertation on the deindustrialisation of Teesside since the 1970s.

He was a senior partner in a Teesside practice and was on many regeneration boards including the Middlesbrough Town Centre Company, which brought MIMA to the town, Tees Valley Tomorrow and the Tees Valley Community Foundation.

As a past president of the Teesside Chamber of Commerce in 1988-89, he was heavily involved in the merger of chambers to form the North East Chamber of Commerce, becoming its president in 2001-03.

John, who lives at Carlton in Cleveland, was also a long-serving governor at the University, including chairing its audit and estates committees.



## LIFELONG FRIENDSHIP

**Keeping in touch went way beyond friendship for Katie Louise Cartwright and Ellie-Louise Jackson.**

They met and became close friends at Teesside University while studying Master's degrees in Forensic Psychology.

Since graduating in 2017, they have both worked closely with the careers and psychology departments, returning every year for the University's Psychology Postgraduate Conference, which Katie helped set up.

Ellie has worked with young people involved in antisocial and offending behaviour, within a Community Prevention Team, before securing a role as a children's rights and advocacy worker in a Youth Offenders' Institute. She also secured the role of forensic psychologist in training at the end of last year.

Katie went on to facilitate a Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme, later working as an interventions facilitator in the Prison Service. She was also successful in becoming a forensic psychologist in training.

They both believe networking and socialising at university are extremely important and

by keeping in touch they were able to help future graduates. 'Our advice is to get yourself out there, network as much as possible and you may even end up with a lifelong friendship,' said Ellie.



Katie Louise Cartwright and Ellie-Louise Jackson (MSc Forensic Psychology 2017)



## IN MEMORIAM

## WALLY K DALY

**Renowned playwright and Teesside honorary graduate Wally K Daly passed away in April.**

Born in Grangetown, Middlesbrough, Wally left school with no qualifications to work as an apprentice electrician at Dorman Long. Whenever he could, he acknowledged the huge debt he owed to a local theatre group which gave him a chance to perform.

He moved to London in 1961 and, after a few short roles in TV including Z-Cars, he became chief electrician at the Duke of York's Theatre. While there, he tried his hand at writing, submitting *Whistling Wally* to BBC Radio in 1973, the first step in a new career.

The success of his musical *Follow the Star* and grant funding allowed him to write

full time, whether farce, comedy, horror or sci-fi. As well as writing popular radio plays, including his *Screaming* trilogy for the BBC – he won two Giles Cooper Awards for Radio Play of the Year – he also wrote for TV programmes including *Dr Who*, *Casualty*, *Juliet Bravo* and *Byker Grove*.

He was chairman of the Writers' Guild of Great Britain in 1988-89 and was district governor of Rotary London in 2008-09. Wally was made an Honorary Master of Literature at Teesside in 1995.



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## WHY NOT JOIN THEM?

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Sarah Oatway, first-class BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy graduate, who is managing an KTP between Teesside University and Medi-Direct while studying an MSc Global Leadership and Management in Healthcare.

To get involved, and to read more about Sarah's story, visit [ktp-uk.org](http://ktp-uk.org)