

GRADUATE TESSIDE

2021/2022



Teesside
University

Meet

WENDY CRAIG

Welcome

This academic year promises a return to a more normal way of campus life, with in-person teaching, events and sporting activities now able to take place. Looking ahead, we will see the progression of our ambitious campus masterplan, and soon the launch of our new Alumni Engagement and Development Strategy, which will set out the aspirational vision for our wider Teesside network.



Our University community is inspirational, global in reach and passionate about making a real, tangible impact. We are not a University that stands still, and despite the challenges of the pandemic and an increasingly uncertain landscape in the Higher Education sector, we are ready to rise to the challenges of the times. We generate and apply knowledge that delivers impact for our students, partners and the communities we serve.

Teesside is committed to ensuring that students from all walks of life have the opportunity to succeed. Through the Teesside Transformation Fund we will continue to support our students in realising their potential, through scholarships, prizes, mentoring, internships and coaching, ensuring our graduates become the leaders of the future.

I hope you will enjoy reading about the stories and successes of your fellow Teesside alumni, and will join us in our mission to deliver an outstanding student and learning experience, level-up opportunity and generate positive social impact. I look forward to working with you in achieving and celebrating this ambition.

Professor Paul Croney
Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive



Calling

ALL TEESSIDE ALUMNI



It's a pleasure and a privilege to have joined the team at Teesside as the new Deputy Director for Communications & Development, and what better way to start than with the launch of this year's Graduate Magazine.

On arriving at Teesside what has become immediately apparent is the can-do spirit of our staff, students, and alumni. The determination, decisiveness, and entrepreneurialism our community embodies is echoed throughout this year's Graduate Magazine in the stories that our alumni have shared. From student nurses graduating into the frontline of our NHS Covid-19 response, to the alumnus tackling cybercrime on behalf of the United Nations, our alumni are delivering impact and making a real difference both here in the region and on the global stage.

As the Vice-Chancellor's call to action has indicated, we are anticipating an ambitious year ahead. While we must all remain fully reactive to the circumstances of the pandemic, we are still excited to grow our proactive engagement with our graduates, partners, and supporters in the months to

come. I personally look forward to inviting you all to re-engage, and to become an active part of a thriving Teesside alumni network.

On that note I would like to make an open call to you all to get in touch, to give back, and to make a difference. Our University is in a unique position to make an impact here in the North East, and indeed on a truly international scale, and we can and do change lives through the students we recruit and support. If you can be a part of that – as a mentor, an advocate, an event host, or even as a donor – I hope you'll get in touch.

With best wishes

Lauren Bradshaw

Deputy Director,
Communications & Development

tees.ac.uk/alumni

FUTURE MAGAZINE CONTENT.

We love hearing your stories and celebrating in the successes of our thriving alumni community. If you'd like to share the story of your own personal or professional journey and would be interested to appear in a future edition of Graduate Teesside, please contact us at alumni@tees.ac.uk.

WIN.

To stay in the loop with our alumni news, offers, and events make sure your details are up to date at tees.ac.uk/alumni. If you update your details by 31 January 2022 you'll be automatically entered into our prize draw to win a £100 Amazon voucher (winners to be announced in February 2022).

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Transforming LIVES

Teesside University is proud to have launched a flagship scholarship and bursaries scheme that transforms students' lives.

The Teesside Transformation Fund supports students through the direction of scholarships, prizes, and transformational research projects. Funding can also be coupled with the provision of bespoke mentoring and internship opportunities, providing students with a comprehensive package of support to help realise their full potential.

The University already contributes more than £2m a year to the Fund, but with the help of local businesses, supporters, and the wider Teesside alumni community, the ambition is to increase this to £10m by 2025.

Donations support the overarching fund and scholarship programme, or can be targeted towards particular themes.

Teesside University's Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Professor Paul Croney said: "Through education enriched by research, innovation and engagement with business and the professions, we transform lives and economies.

"We are acutely aware of the power of education and the life-changing opportunities it can bring. We believe that individuals should be able to achieve their full potential and are committed to creating an inclusive learning environment that

embraces diversity and supports students."

Social housing provider Thirteen Group, was the first organisation to contribute to the Teesside Transformation Fund. Alongside a Scholarship programme open to Thirteen residents, the organisation has also funded an initiative that provides support to budding entrepreneurs.

Thirteen Group Executive Director of Business Growth Chris Smith added:

"We are delighted to be sponsoring this inspirational and innovative project to help people in our community heartlands who are thinking about developing their own businesses.

"It is a vital tool to help regenerate the local economy and create new jobs and opportunities. Thirteen is developing its Community Resilience Strategy to build on the strengths that already exist and co-create interventions with residents and partners that will really have an impact, helping develop a sense of optimism for the future."

To find out more about the Teesside Transformation Fund and how you can make an impact, please contact Lauren Bradshaw at l.bradshaw@tees.ac.uk

A SOURCE OF *inspiration*



In a poignant tribute to Professor Jane Turner OBE, the University's Pro-Vice-Chancellor who recently passed away, we speak to entrepreneur, champion of women in business and alumna Jessica Williams about how she has been inspired by Jane's example.



"Jane was an incredible woman and I was privileged to work with her many different projects. Her loss as a leading inspirational figure in our region is significant. Jane influenced more change than anyone else I know. She was never one for just talking, she did it; she was so resilient and created a hub of activity.

Anyone who met Jane was genuinely the better for it. She was a figurehead and a role model throughout the region, not just in the Tees Valley and change happened because of her. She put the region on the map and increased our visibility. She brought national organisations here and put levelling up on all our agendas.

She was a daughter, a mother, a friend and a colleague and she will be sorely missed."

Jessica Williams, the managing director of Just Williams, worked with and supported Professor Jane Turner's mission to encourage and empower girls and women to push through barriers, to use their talents and to recognise the role they could play in changing their own, and the region's, economic future.

This feature was intended to be a conversation between the two of them,

to discuss the importance of female role models in business and to share ways in which alumni can support young women to fulfil their potential and ambitions. Sadly, Jane passed away before the interview could take place. We spoke with Jessica about the influence that Jane has had on her own work.

You were in the first cohort of mentors to join The Girls Network, why?

The Girls Network is a national charity. It's been in Newcastle for two years and we have just come to the end of its first full year in the Tees Valley after Jane launched it here. We now have 120 mentors, all professional women who are matched with a girl aged 14-18. Some mentoring can be transactional, but this is transformational. You are involved with your mentee on a daily basis. Mine, Amy Blakemore, is 18 and has just left Bede Sixth Form College ahead of going to university. We met in September last year and I have done ten formal, hour-long mentoring sessions with her. Watching her develop, increase her confidence levels, find her writing style, express herself and create goals has been an absolute honour and privilege. The way she engages with people

and has improved her communications skills has been amazing to see. I set her up with ten interviews with professional women who are in a communication role but didn't start there so she could see how they developed those skills. Even though the formal part of the mentoring is over, I will continue to support Amy. She is coming to Just Williams for work experience and I'm paying for her to do LinkedIn training. And she has promised that she will become a mentor further down the line, so it becomes a continuous cycle of giving.

You have also promoted The Girls Network through your other roles...

Mentoring is an essential part of my business and a number of my team mentor in The Girls Network. In August 2019 I became the youngest ever non executive director of a building society when I joined the board of Darlington Building Society, who are the biggest employer providing mentors to The Girls Network. For me, it's about giving girls and women equal opportunities and trying to inspire them to be the best they can be. I didn't always have mentors but when I did it really made a difference. In other roles I set up the Teesside board of the national charity Young Enterprise, taking us from the second worst performing region into the top two. I was on the Tees Valley Combined Authority business group board and the University Business School board and Advance

Northumberland, the rural growth board for a time. I staged the first Tees Valley International Women's Day festival in partnership with Teesside University in March last year and we're working towards 2022 now.

You did an MBA at Teesside University, but you didn't follow a conventional academic route...

I left my girls school in Sheffield at 16, moved to the North East when I was 18 and went straight into work. I worked in banking, managing high net worth clients many of whom were business owners, then made a strategic move to join the Entrepreneurs' Forum where I managed corporate partners, one of whom was the University. I always knew I would have a business and said at 14 that I was going to be a chief executive by the time I was 30. I did it at 28, but was only chief executive of me, which wasn't quite what I'd been thinking it would be, but a goal is a goal! The University accepted me for the MBA, which I did part-time and self-financed. It was hard working full-time and studying so much. My thesis was on sales psychology and I interviewed a number of business leaders to ascertain their techniques for hiring, developing and training successful sales people. A year into the MBA, I set up Just Williams and still, to this day, have a strong working partnership with the University and am a proud alumni student.

What does the business do?

In surveys the Entrepreneurs' Forum did among its members, finding and retaining great sales staff was, after accessing finance, their biggest barrier to growth. It got me thinking there had to be a better model. We started as a sales consultancy and now offer outsourced sales and marketing solutions to small businesses that are looking to diversify and grow. There is no entry criteria and no industry standard for sales. In 2019 I started a sub brand called Just Williams Academy and since then we have trained 1,500 people. In September, we're launching it is a separate business with a target of 10,000 learners a year by offering a range of online training modules for the small business market. We want to professionalise sales at a time where it's fundamentally changing. The pandemic meant people couldn't go and see customers, hold expos, take part in

exhibitions; we're having to be multi skilled and engage with target audiences in a much more adaptive and emerging way.

I set up the northern board of the ISM (Institute of Sales and Marketing). I'm passionate about elevating the importance of sales as we come out of the pandemic and am grateful that, for the first time this year, the Office for National Statistics has allocated sales as a profession so we will start to track more clearly the role sales plays in our economy.

For me, being successful in business is also about giving back: the team choose a charity then set me an annual challenge. Last year we raised £4,000 last year for the British Heart Foundation.

Success is about creating a legacy and I'm proud to do that with amazing organisations like the University.



LENDING *a helping hand*

From counselling in hospitals to helping adults in custody, our alumni community volunteer in a wide variety of different settings.

JAMES BROWN

Volunteering with the RAF Reserves proved to be pivotal for defence systems engineer James Brown.

"We were deployed to help with testing in Liverpool and Manchester and while I was there I met someone who led me to my current job," said James, of Middlesbrough, who studied a BEng (Hons) Aerospace Engineering with Industry and is now doing his masters.

"This shows just how much volunteering can help you. It was great being involved in the testing programme and now I've just started a new job with Italian defence company Leonardo, working on electronic warfare systems, as a result of meeting that person."

ANITA RUTKAUSKAITE

For forensic psychologist Anita Rutkauskaite volunteering comes from a passion to help others that also gives her a greater insight into her work.

The Teesside University BSc (Hons) Forensic Psychology graduate now works for Middlesbrough Children's Services and, while studying for her masters, also volunteers with the mental health charity Mind as an appropriate adult for people in custody.

"I have always done something I love and it's the same with volunteering," said Anita, originally of Lithuania, now Stockton, who used to be a professional pianist until injury pushed her towards psychology. "I learn something new every time I am there and, while supporting people at their toughest time, I also gain a greater insight and understanding which helps me in my job."



EMMA NELSON

Emma Nelson's volunteering saw her helping children with dyslexia as she expanded her experience for a career in teaching.

Between 2016 and 2020 she also regularly volunteered in schools, alongside her studies, to develop her repertoire of teaching skills.

The BA Hons education studies graduate, who now teaches at a school in Stockton, had been teaching in an international school in Saudi Arabia before completing her teacher training in Ingleby Barwick.

"Working abroad does make you appreciate how fortunate we are in this country to have free education of a very high standard," said the mother of two boys. "The volunteering was great and the longer I was there the more responsibility I was given. I loved teaching English to three pupils with dyslexia to progress their learning and hope one day to be a literacy lead."

HEATHER CARABINE

A patient was inspired to work for the NHS by the medical team who reconstructed her face as she lay awake on the operating table.

Heather Carabine was diagnosed with a basal cell carcinoma when she was 47.

"I couldn't have general anaesthetic as it made me ill and had to have local," said Heather, of Middlesbrough. "Because I was awake they involved me – and I thought I want to be part of an NHS team delivering world class care."

The mum of two enrolled on a BSc (Hons) Psychology and Counselling course at Teesside University, joined the Therapeutic Care Volunteers at James Cook Hospital and also volunteered with the Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust, putting her in prime position for a permanent job.

"The volunteering definitely gave me the right experience to start my career – it's why I am where I am today," she said.





ON *the rise*

Graduate Fran Hammill is helping the university break bread with the community in a project that's reaching out through food.



After walking into Teesside Launchpad, an on-campus incubator for emerging enterprises, looking for a social enterprise he is now manager of a community bakery.

The idea of the University's Head of Enterprise Steve Dougan, the project is the result of a partnership involving a similar venture in Newcastle, The Big River Bakery, which was founded by Andy Haddon.

It seeks to inspire students to channel entrepreneurship into positive action, help people in the community living in social exclusion and food poverty and has also linked up with refugee charities including Open Door North East and the Ubuntu Cultural Centre.

"Launchpad is not just commercial, it's there for the university to project its civic mission out into the community," said Steve.

Enterprise co-ordinator Lizzie Dixon said "I visited the Big River Bakery in Newcastle with Andy Haddon to get it off the ground."

Fran added: "It is wonderful to be able to share bread with people. There's nothing like freshly baked bread; the process of making it is therapeutic and it is a great way of breaking down barriers. Making it gives people a sense of pride. Hopefully the passion will come across in all the classes we do together."

Steve added: "It doesn't matter what your cultural background is or language you speak, we can all appreciate the smell and taste of bread. Hopefully this will bring groups together as they see this as a safe space and help us address food inequality."





GOING FOR *green*

Climate change is top of the agenda as Teesside University supports a range of initiatives designed to ensure a cleaner future.

A team of scientists and artists from the Tees Valley are developing a public art project which aims to address climate change and social justice.

The University is also spearheading a £13million industry-led Net Zero Industry Innovation Centre (NZIIC) based on the Tees Advanced Manufacturing Park (TeesAMP) to support the ongoing drive for clean energy and sustainability.

Alongside this, the University is also backing a National Hydrogen Transport Centre on Teesside, the first of its kind in the UK, resulting in the research, development and testing of new hydrogen vehicle technology which will create hundreds of jobs.

Led by MIMA School of Art & Design and the University, the art project has secured £100,000 funding which will see experts from the Tees Valley connect science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics to climate change.

The Net Zero Futurism project is led by Director of MIMA and Dean of Teesside University's MIMA School of Art & Design Laura Sillars.

It also includes a team of experts from MIMA, the University's National Horizons Centre and the School of Computing, Engineering & Digital Technologies. External partners include Cambridge University, The British Antarctic Survey, research and technology organisation TWI Ltd, Tees Valley Nature Partnership and creative people and places project Borderlands.

The creative team is one of 30 from the UK selected to take part in the Festival UK 2022 Research & Development project, which will showcase the country's innovation globally.

Research funding totalling £3m has been allocated to enable them to develop their ideas for the festival.

Ms Sillars said: "MIMA is about collaboration and community and using art as a force for change."

Leading THE WAY

A national centre of excellence for the bioscience industry is having a global impact by bringing together industry, academia, talent and world-class facilities.

The £22.3m National Horizons Centre (NHC), based at the University's Darlington campus at Central Park, is playing a leading role in helping train the UK's vaccine manufacturing workforce.

Working closely with partners, the NHC works to discover diseases earlier, develop novel treatments and deliver life-saving medicines more quickly, safely and affordably.

The NHC is one of three National Training Centres to deliver cutting-edge training in cell and gene therapy and vaccine manufacturing as part of the Advanced Therapies Skills Training Network.

NHC director Dr Jen Vanderhoven said: "Collaboration is the key to success and I am delighted we have been chosen to provide the vital training of the future advanced therapies and vaccines workforce."

Further prestige was added this year after NHC chief industry advisor Steve Bagshaw was awarded a CBE in recognition of his

services to the UK manufacturing and biotechnology sector.

The centre has also become a bioprocessing, biomanufacturing and biopharmaceutical hub as part of a collaboration between CPI and FUJIFILM Diosynth Biotechnologies to accelerate the growth of the sector in the Tees Valley. The Northern Bio-Accelerator Partnership (NBioP) aims to inspire innovation, attract investment, enhance education and workforce development and ultimately bring life-changing medicines to market faster.

Further strategic partnerships have also been signed with the Shonan iPark in Japan, Discovery Park in Sandwich, Kent, and the National Measurements Laboratory; enhancing the opportunity for collaboration and knowledge exchange while widening the national and global footprint of the NHC.



LIVING THEIR *dreams*

LISA TOMLINSON

Once a student, now a mentor to others, Lisa Tomlinson is a beacon for resilience over-coming countless obstacles in the relentless pursuit of her dreams.

The band 4 nurse, who left Teesside University with an FdSc Nursing Association qualification, works in outpatients, orthopaedic outpatients and lung health clinics and the Medical Rehabilitation Day Unit at North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Trust.

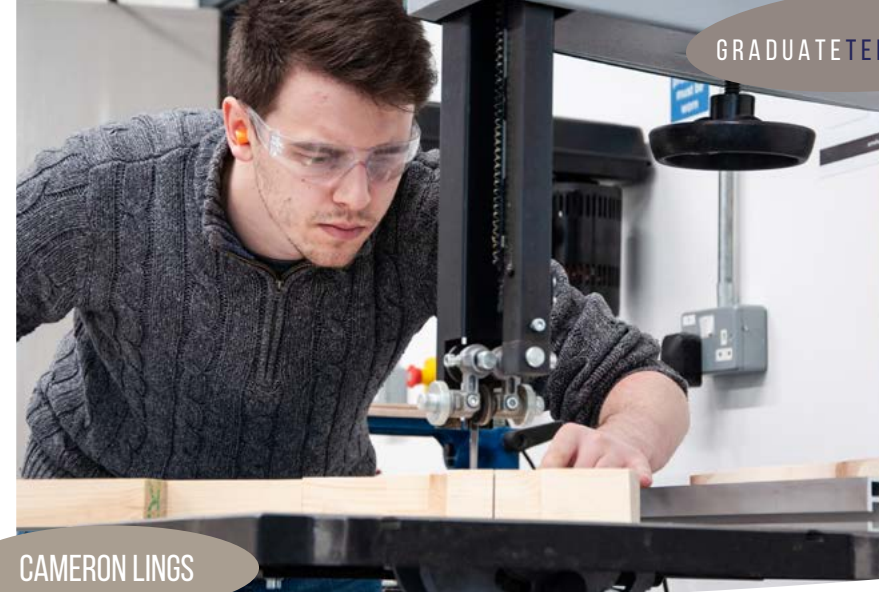
Her journey to success saw her having to re-sit functional skills after her certificates were destroyed in a fire.

But after 15 years working as a care assistant for the Trust she was determined to become a nurse, overcoming three serious health scares. In 2007 she beat cervical

cancer, aged 31, only to see it return in 2015 in her appendix, and had another operation two years ago to remove a benign growth on her liver.

Covid-19 forced her to reschedule her wedding to partner Colin Cowie five times and cancel honeymoons, but they hope to marry in April.

"I met a great bunch of people at Teesside who are now friends for life and the lecturers were wonderful helping me so much when I felt I was struggling," said Lisa.



CAMERON LINGS

Life is on the up for fine arts graduate Cameron Lings if his sculptural installations are anything to go by.

Huge larch timber fan sculptures trace the fortunes of the British economy over the past 50 years; based on official data, they reflect a huge drop off in output because of the pandemic.

Cameron's current practice allows us to visualise the relationship between Science, Maths and Art in a new light. Funded by the Gillian Dickinson Trust, he is currently exhibiting 13 works, made from British Larch Timber, at Cheeseburn Sculpture Gardens.

"Official data, collected in the North East throughout the pandemic, is used to generate an artistic sculptural form," said Cameron. "It is a means of realising art,

which I have found to be fascinating. And there is plenty that I can learn from these studies going forward."

That optimism is keeping the 22-year-old from Scunthorpe busy since he graduated from Teesside University's MIMA School of Art & Design with a first class BA (Hons) Fine Art.

"As soon as I saw Teesside University's facilities I knew I could realise my potential there more than anywhere else in the country," he said. "The pandemic has been massively challenging but also a unique opportunity to transform my creative practices."



EMMA WOODWARD

Graphic design graduate Emma Woodward has her career well and truly boxed off after a leading employer created a post to match the skills she honed at Teesside University.

The 23-year-old, from Darlington, went for a CAD operator's job at Durham Box, Bishop Auckland, but when they realised she had a BA (Hons) Graphic Design and Illustration from Teesside University's MIMA School of Art & Design they offered her a new role instead.

As a junior graphic designer, she now helps develop the

artwork printed on myriad packaging including for a number of breweries.

She said: "I hadn't planned to go to university straightaway but did well in graphics at college so applied to Teesside. I loved it there and was thrilled when my designs were used in the new Cornell Quarter student accommodation complex."

Meet WENDY CRAIG

Wendy Craig CBE is one of Britain's best loved television actresses with a career spanning 65 years. Best known for her roles in sitcoms like *Not in Front of the Children* and *Butterflies* in the 1970s and 80s, as the title role in the drama *Nanny* and as *Matron* in *The Royal*.

She also appeared in films including *The Servant* with Dirk Bogarde and *The Nanny* alongside Bette Davis.

Wendy was born Anne Gwendoline Craig in County Durham, in 1934, and went to school in Durham, Darlington and Yarm before training at the Central School of Speech and Drama in London. She was awarded an honorary degree by the University in 1994 and the CBE for services to drama and charity in 2020. Wendy lives in Berkshire.

How does a girl born in County Durham in the 1930s make it to prime time TV?

I started in Sacriston. My parents took me to see Goldilocks the pantomime at the Theatre Royal or the Empire in Newcastle when I was three or four. I fell in love with the theatre then, it just brought something to life in me, like a switch going on. I came home and re-enacted the show in front of the fire for them all. I'm sure my parents thought 'what on earth have we bred?', but I never wavered from then on.



What influence did your schooling have?

My first school was Durham High School and then I had three years at Darlington High School. Next we moved to a farm at Picton and I went to Yarm Grammar School. It had a very good drama teacher, Miss Manners, she was absolutely superb and pushed me and helped me. She got me into Middlesbrough Little Theatre where I played Ophelia for the Festival of Britain production of Hamlet when I was 14. I left school at 17. Lady Crathorne loved everything to do with the arts and she mentored talented young people in singing, music, acting. She saw my work at the theatre and said to my parents 'you really must let her go on with it'; that encouraged them to let me come to London, to the Royal Central School of Dramatic Art. You can imagine the change going from the farm to Kensington, it was just amazing, so exciting, all the theatres, lots of students all speaking the same language. At the end of the course we had a big show and from that you hoped to get picked up by an agent. I was offered a job at the repertory theatre in Ipswich, which was just what I wanted, to spend a long time doing different plays and different roles. It was terribly good for me and stretched me in all directions. Rep was where you got your training, there's nothing like it for young actors now.

What was your career break?

I had a good agent who got me plays in the West End then dramas when television took off.

I became good friends with Richard Waring, a comedy writer, and he said 'you've got a comedian lurking inside you'. He offered to write the pilot of Not in Front of the Children for the BBC, it was successful and we did several series. I learned how to play comedy and absolutely loved it, to hear people laugh and make them happy. Then ITV made Mother Makes Three and Mother Makes Five. After that I was very flattered to be asked to play Ria in Butterflies. It was written by Carla Lane who was already very successful. It was a different sort of comedy, more serious, more thoughtful and the writing was really quite poetic. I adored it and adored the cast – Geoffrey Palmer, Bruce Montague, Andrew Hall and Nicholas Lyndhurst, it was pure magic

You were a household name, what was that like?

I have to admit it was really nice, it was what I had set out to do, not to be famous but doing work that was giving pleasure to as many people as possible. I couldn't go anywhere or be in a restaurant without people asking for an autograph, which the



children found a bit of a drag; it was a price to pay, but not a very high price.

How did you come to create Nanny, and under a pseudonym?

I was going north on the train and picked up The Lady magazine and there were lots of ads in there for people wanting nannies. I thought that would make a very interesting storyline, the life of a nanny going from house to house and the different children and bosses. I wrote the storyline and the characters when I got home and sent it to the BBC drama department under the pseudonym of Jonathan Marr, then forgot about it. Quite a long time later my agent called and said 'the BBC want to do that idea you sent in and they want you to play the nanny'. I'd thought if I sent it as Wendy Craig they would just say 'oh it's another actress writing a part for herself'. Then I had to come clean. I chose green for nanny's uniform because it was the same as my uniform at Durham High. I loved wearing it, a bit like the costume I had for Matron in The Royal.

Is there a role you wish you'd had?

I would have loved to have done more classical work, but you can't do it all. I wanted to play Gertrude, Hamlet's mother,

but I did have the joy of playing Mrs Malaprop in The Rivals for the RSC.

What does life involve now?

Gardening, and since Covid, I've been doing some sound recording, audio dramas and plays. I was asked to do a Doctor Who series; it's good because you don't have to learn lines or get into costume.

What does having an honorary degree mean to you?

Having spent much of my youth in Teesside, it means a great deal to me. I used to come up to the university to events and really enjoyed it, then I thought why don't I do something for the students that's more useful than just putting in an appearance? So now I give a sum every year, which is divided into two prizes, for students who have struggled and students who have done really well, preferably in performing arts. My memories of the north are wonderful. I wake up sometimes and I could weep I am so homesick for the little mining village where I was born, the farm at Picton, the beautiful Cleveland Hills, Yarm-on-Tees, glorious Durham... my heart will always be in the north.

Working AGAINST THE ODDS

Teesside alumnus Neil Walsh tackles global terrorism while battling a range of chronic health conditions.

But the affable Irishman doesn't let his health interfere with his day job of being a cyber thorn in the side of organised crime using a skillset developed in the lecture rooms of Teesside University.

Belfast-born, Neil's path to crime fighting began with an IRA bomb blast when he was just 12 and shopping in the city centre with his father. Fortunately they survived but not without witnessing the carnage outside. With an aim to work in law enforcement, Neil came to Middlesbrough at 18 to study one of only two courses of its type in the country, a joint honours degree in criminology and psychology.

"If I had my time over I would not change a thing," says the father of four, who is Chief of the Cybercrime, Counter-Terrorist Finance and Anti-Money Laundering Department at the United Nations.

"The tutors on the course were inspiring

and made me want to be better and the skillset I developed I still use today. When I thought about taking my masters in Criminal Investigation I had no hesitation about coming back to Teesside because the quality of teaching and the place felt like home."

After leaving Teesside, Neil had hoped to become a police officer but spotted an opening for a strategic intelligence analyst. "I thought it sounded like me and from 6,000 applicants I got the job," he recalls.

Working in intelligence around the cocaine trade to the UK and Western Europe from South America, and now just 23, he was then asked to advise after the 9/11 terrorist attack on New York.

His next step was working at Europol in The Hague running international surveillance and arrest operations. "It was just brilliant and I loved it," he says, only leaving when he spotted his dream job of working for the UN.

Now 41, his job involves combatting crime in a fractured world where COVID has played into the hands of organised criminals, cyber-sex traffickers and terrorists. He also works in preventive diplomacy trying to keep the peace in cyberspace globally.

"Criminals rapidly exploit any vacuum that appears and the pandemic has seen governments switch to health and vaccines in preference to countering crime," he says. "Online sexual abuse has risen at an horrendous pace, particularly of children. It is of such a scale that sometimes your brain does feel like it is going to pop like a champagne cork so you have to find methods to cope with it yourself."

These same methods he uses to compartmentalise his almost 20-year

battle with chronic and almost fatal health problems.

"I've come back from the dead so many times that my doctors call me Lazarus," says Neil, who has had to endure bouts of cancer, multiple complex operations, a cardiac arrest, brain haemorrhages, liver failure, osteoporosis and pulmonary embolisms. He has just been told his pancreas is now not working as it should.

"Waking up every day is pretty much a victory," he says. "And knowing that I may not be here in five years' time, or even next year, drives me to do all I can to make a difference in the time I have left and make the best of the skills I developed at Teesside University."

“THE TUTORS ON THE COURSE WERE INSPIRING AND MADE ME WANT TO BE BETTER.”



Collaborating WITH BUSINESS

Talented students, renowned academics and dynamic businesses are coming together in a joint enterprise to ensure the future prosperity of the Tees Valley.

Led by Dr Elaine Hooker, Head of Business Innovation, a close-knit team of experienced industry professionals works on different projects, across multiple sectors to help businesses in the Tees Valley and beyond.

BUSINESS INNOVATION MANAGERS

Connecting businesses to expertise, facilities, networks and grant funding to drive growth through innovation, Business Innovation Managers (BIMs) help organisations develop new products and services which disrupt business models to increase market shares and competitiveness. The team supports consortium development, grant funding application development and ongoing project and relationship management.

ENTERPRISE EUROPE NETWORK (EEN)

Part of a national network of innovation and growth specialists, with access to a global business and innovation eco-system, the EEN team focuses on helping companies exploit their business potential by driving innovation, protecting and harnessing intellectual property and accessing international markets. The team also provides support to companies considering funding research and development and the new product commercialisation.

GROW TEES VALLEY

Grow Tees Valley helps Tees Valley's ambitious SMEs access the funding and expertise they need to grow. Whether SMEs want to improve or develop a product, embed a new service in their organisation or enter new markets, Grow Tees Valley points them in the right direction. If companies already have a project in mind, Grow Tees Valley will assess its potential and draw up an action plan.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

This team provides non-accredited leadership and management programmes and currently has three fully funded leadership programmes, each designed to develop the skills of people at different stages of their leadership journey. The programmes are practical and are designed around enhancing leadership and management skills, both from the University learning and from like-minded business peers. They are very interactive, supportive and thought provoking and, the team likes to think, fun.



Meet
ADELE PARKS

Adele Parks is marking her 21st year as a published author of fiction. We asked about her coming of age.

My love of reading and writing came very early on. I lived in Eaglescliffe and often visited the little library in Durham Lane after school. I'd take books out, read them that night and take them back the next day. I remember a librarian suggesting that I might want to be an author when I grew up. The idea once advocated stayed in my head. I used to write my own little fairy tale books. There were always books in the house, Catherine Cookson, Julie Cooper, Jackie Collins. I grew up having no snobbery about books. I don't write to win the Booker Prize, I write to entertain, for escapism: from romcoms, to relationship dramas, to historical novels and now psychological thrillers, I've enjoyed moving from genre to genre.

I graduated from Leicester University and wanted to be a writer but didn't know how to go about it. I taught English as a foreign language in Italy then I worked in advertising. I enjoyed a successful and fulfilling career, including spending two years in Botswana where I helped set up an advertising agency called Horizon, it was an affiliate of Saatchi and Saatchi.

Getting published turned out to be surprisingly easy really, but I didn't know a single person in publishing. I was writing in the evening and at weekends whilst maintaining my day job. I set myself a deadline of finishing the pitch document and the first three chapters by my 30th birthday. I took my pitch to Curtis Brown agency because Jonny Geller [now CEO] was often acknowledged in a number of the books I liked to read. After incredible initial encouragement, I rushed to complete a draft, resulting in a letter suggesting I either redraft or contact other agents. I took this as encouragement and redrafted! I spent three months re-working it and then resubmitted. Jonny loved the second draft and took it to six publishers, who all accepted it. There was a bidding war and ultimately Penguin offered me three times my salary in advertising and a contract for two books. I was off the starting blocks!

I try to write 1,000-2,000 words most days, I work from home. I deliver 11 months in advance of publication, which allows plenty of time for creating covers and selling abroad.



WHAT TEESSIDE UNIVERSITY
IS DOING IS REALLY EXCITING.

I know now how long it takes me to plan, to write and to edit. I'm disciplined and like a routine.

Running out of ideas is not something that worries me, human beings are so complex there's a lot to explore – jealousy, love, hate, brilliance, there are infinite plots and characters... it's more likely that I'll run out of time.

Because I've written 21 bestselling novels in 21 years, I feel very established and respected by my peers, I feel I have a seat at the table. However, I'm not complacent. I'm always proving myself and I want to stay at the top of my game, to keep readers entertained and for each book to be better than the last. I'm quite confident about my own place now and want to pass on a bit of wisdom if I can. I'm a judge for the Costa

Book Awards and The British Book Awards which is a great privilege.

I'm a proud Ambassador for the National Literacy Trust and The Reading Agency's Reading Ahead Award, a scheme that encourages emerging adult readers.

Reading is so important for education, empowerment and entertainment. If your vocabulary is expanded then you are more empowered because you can express yourself better and it will help you get on in life. It's a really important part of mental health; most young adults are under a lot of pressure, this is a really difficult time to grow up, yet reading gives you the opportunity to have so many experiences through the page. I can't bear literary snobbery. We shouldn't judge anyone for what they choose to read, it doesn't matter as long as they are reading.

It's really important for children to own a book. Libraries are free, but most people only go into a library if they are already confident about reading; if there isn't a book in your house in the first place then you're unlikely to go to a library. It's great when new mums get books in their new baby packs. The most important thing is for parents to have confidence to read to their own children. If you know somebody who's had a baby, buy them a little outfit or a toy by all means but spend a couple of quid on a book as well.

I visited Teesside regularly pre-COVID because my mum and dad and sister are there, it's still very much home: the warmth, people who'll have a chat and make time for you, the sense of humour, the sharpness, the banter. Where I come from is very

important to me and being recognised with an honorary degree was really meaningful. People saying we're proud of you and want to honour your achievements is wonderful, and my parents were ecstatic!

What Teesside University is doing is really exciting. In the north we have a tendency not to shout about our successes, but the university quite rightly celebrates its students and their achievements; it's exciting and vibrant.

In the late summer I'll start thinking about plots for my 2023 book. I'm hoping to go to LA in September because two of my novels, *Both of You* and *Just My Luck*, are in development with Hollywood scriptwriters. I'm planning quite a lengthy stint there which is incredibly exciting.

Creative THINKING

Creative industries across the Tees Valley are being helped to bounce back from the impact of the pandemic thanks to an initiative backed by Teesside University.

Small and-medium-sized enterprises and freelancers in the creative industries are benefiting from the launch of a new programme of financial resources and support.

Teesside University is part of Creative Fuse Tees Valley and North East, a partnership funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the European Regional Development Fund, which, in conjunction with DigitalCity, has devised a high-impact scheme to help enterprises working in the creative, cultural, heritage and digital sectors.

The programme will be delivered by business advisory and financial professionals firm Edale.

Free to eligible individuals or companies, it includes four masterclasses, plus one-to-one mentoring support from industry experts covering investment, grant applications and securing funding from a wide range of sources.

Sharon Paterson, associate director of Culture and Engagement at MIMA and Teesside University, said: "Creative Fuse Tees Valley is here to help identify how SMEs and freelancers in these sectors complement each other, sharing best practice and encouraging innovative ways of working.

"This project will be absolutely vital to the future success of individuals and companies in our region at a time of further economic difficulties facing the sector – and also directly supports the objectives of the Tees Valley Combined Authority's £1m cultural industries and visitor economy recovery programme, which was launched by Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen."

For more information contact Business Development Manager Wendy Parvin at w.parvin@tees.ac.uk.

THIS PROJECT WILL BE ABSOLUTELY VITAL TO THE FUTURE SUCCESS OF INDIVIDUALS AND COMPANIES IN OUR REGION.



Online, Learning

CONTINUES
TO GROW

Emma Adcock, Head of TU Online Ltd talks about the growth of online learning courses at Teesside University, the global student audience embracing it and the range of courses on offer.

What is different about the Teesside University approach to online courses?

Students aren't expected to learn in a passive way. Our virtual learning environment supports interactive formats where students can actively collaborate and share ideas and learnings together. Our tutors are present to guide throughout. You aren't on your own - it's a really immersive, interactive and supported way of learning.

What online courses are on offer?

Students can choose to do HNCs/ HNDs, degrees, masters, and doctorates online – in areas such as Creative Writing, Cybersecurity, Engineering, Business Administration and Health Care, with plans to grow and expand the subject areas and disciplines.

Who usually takes an online course?

We have a diverse student audience with different reasons for taking our courses – students located in different geographic

areas globally; students who work or have children and need the flexibility to schedule their studies around their other commitments, and everything in between. Our virtual learning environment is active 24/7 – so you can work at the weekend or later at night, whatever works to your schedule.

Any other benefits to students?

The real benefit is that the courses are all designed and created by Teesside University academics. You won't find these courses anywhere else and students appreciate the quality of the content blended with a focus on practical application too. Many courses are accredited, and all courses are reviewed and refreshed on an annual basis so students can feel confident course materials are relevant and reflective of current practices and new concepts.

For more information contact
onlinelearning@tees.ac.uk.

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BUDDYING UP FOR *business*

Students are being offered the perfect blend of academic excellence, entrepreneurial thinking, and real-world orientation thanks to the skills of the University's modern enterprising and dynamic Business School.

Students have access to real-world, practice-based opportunities from the day they join until after they graduate.

Staff work with industry partners to develop confident, enterprising and proactive graduates who are civic in thinking, enterprising in attitude, collaborative in action and global in outlook.

Module Buddies help academic tutors to develop real world practice in the curriculum and support students to enhance their knowledge, skills, behaviours and experience. They help students become 'work ready'. The university is looking for practitioners who would like to be involved.

They will commit to:

- > Supporting a nominated academic professional to exchange knowledge and help inform the curriculum
- > Deliver a minimum of two inspirational guest lectures
- > Participate as an external consultant at course approvals and reviews
- > Support academic research groups and advise on commercialisation of research
- > Participate in panels and topical breakfast events

Buddies will need experience in the functional areas of their business and partnership working within multi-stakeholder groups. They will also have an understanding of Higher Education and access to extended networks.

In return they will be kept informed of the latest opportunities to access students as interns, have the chance to participate in either the Business Clinic or the Marketing Clinic and be kept aware of the latest funding opportunities.

Buddies will have opportunities to engage with research projects and be invited to appropriate University events.

Principal Lecturer in Enterprise and Business Engagement Suzanne Withrington said: "We recognise the importance of providing students with the opportunity to meet the region's business leaders. Their input and experience are incredibly valuable in supporting students to be 'work ready'. Likewise, the business leaders have access to our incredibly talented students."



EXPANDING OUR *international footprint*

A major increase in international students is continuing despite the pandemic, prompting Teesside University to open new offices overseas and recruit more expert staff.

While health concerns, financial anxiety and bureaucratic delays caused many overseas students to put their plans to study abroad on hold, Teesside University has continued to attract strong interest from international students.

Strong partnerships with higher education institutions abroad – particularly in India and China – and the University's decision to open regional offices in key markets have led to a significant rise in its international profile.

Teesside University continues to develop new partnerships around the world, most recently with Prague College in the Czech Republic, Kaplan Myanmar University College in Myanmar and Vishwaniketan Institute of Design and SRM Institute of Science and Technology in India.

As a result, the University has opened a

regional office in Lahore to support the recruitment of students from Pakistan and the surrounding region, including Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Iran and Bahrain.

A host of new recruits have been taken on to strengthen the University's international team, both in the UK and abroad.

A team was recruited in Lahore to staff the new Pakistan office, led by Regional Director Syed Abidi, a veteran with 25 years' experience in international education, particularly in the Pakistan and wider Middle East/North Africa markets.

In the UK, the Department of International Development has added five new staff since January, including International Marketing Manager Laura Peat, International Recruitment Managers Grace Dickinson and



Imran Rashid, International Student Mobility Manager Alizée Cordes and International Recruitment Assistant Luke Cumiskey.

The University's reputation abroad has also been boosted by overwhelmingly positive feedback from its students via the International Student Barometer Survey, which has the average satisfaction rate as 95.8% in 2020*.

Teesside was particularly well equipped to handle the switch to online teaching necessitated by the pandemic because of the University's long-standing focus on digital and hybrid learning. As part of its Future Facing Learning Strategy, the University has been providing iPads pre-installed with software including lecture capture technology to students upon enrolment on a full-time undergraduate

course. In the International Student Barometer 2020, the satisfaction rate with the virtual learning environment was 91.7%*.

In March this year, the UK government launched the revised International Education Strategy (IES), aimed at increasing the number of international students at UK higher education institutes and revenue from education exports. Teesside University was ahead of the curve because it had identified internationalisation as a key part of its five-year corporate strategy in back 2015 and had already launched its own 2021 International Strategic Plan.

* (780 students participated) See tees.ac.uk/international/isb2020.cfm for more information.



KEEPING *in touch*

More than 100 members of our alumni community came together online as part of the first Virtual Reunion.

The event, on 26 June, included a wide variety of activities for alumni to engage in including live sessions, mentoring opportunities, and a chance to meet staff from the international office and MIMA.

The reunion also hosted "Class Of" chat rooms for each decade from 1960 through to present day.

Visitors were able to take part in an ambassador-led virtual campus tour and look back in time at various videos of the university campus featuring new developments, graduation ceremonies and the region's landmarks.

Joe Bulmer from the alumni and development team, said: "Obviously these

past few months have made it harder for us all to keep in touch, but it's been fantastic to have so many people from around the world get together to celebrate their time at Teesside University.

"These events are a great way to find out more about our Alumni Association and how we can support you as you progress with your career.

"We're really looking forward to being able to catch up with you in person very soon."

Look out for futures dates for more of these events and including the on-campus reunion planned for June 2022.

Class notes



MARIE GOOLJAR

FABIAN LORD

University life brought love and rewarding careers for two students who met at Teesside.

Marie Gooljar, of Norwich, and Fabian Lord, of Greater Manchester, met in 1994 on a HND Business and Finance course, later studying degrees.

Fabian was chair of Athletic Union, on the Student Council and Sports Committee and both he and Marie and played very active roles in sports, university life and the local community, acting as trustees to a local charity during their time in Middlesbrough. Since leaving, Marie has worked in several high-profile roles in the City of London and

is now a Head of Finance, while Fabian has served with Cleveland Constabulary, Greater Manchester Police, the Counter Terrorist Unit, the British Army and is now an independent TV producer. He achieved a Guinness World Record last year for the most translated short film in the world.

Over the years, love and learning brought these two alumni together and after marrying in 2019, they now live in Preston, with their three children.



ZOE SLASOR

A gastroenterology nurse has been coping with the impact of Covid-19 thanks to her university placement in Vietnam.

Now a qualified nurse in the University Hospital of North Tees Gastroenterology Department, Zoe Slasor took up a placement in a hospital in Hue as part of Work the World, an initiative that specialises in creating opportunities in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

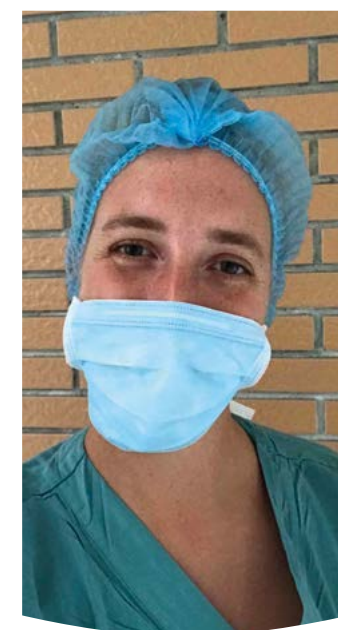
"I graduated from Teesside University right into the pandemic," she said. "But when you've got a good team around you, you start gaining confidence in yourself and so just get on with it."

The patient experience in the UK is a far cry from what she witnessed in Vietnam.

"The first day was a bit of a culture shock," she said. "It was massively different. The rapport between the nurses and the patients was very different."

"One of the things that most surprised me was that patients were only partly sedated for surgery as they couldn't afford to be fully sedated. Very few patients took pain relief because it was seen as a sign of weakness. It was very brave and, being based on culture, shows how we can overcome a lot."

"Working abroad challenges you in ways you can't imagine, but afterwards is something you appreciate for the rest of your life."





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STUDENT FUTURES