

Newsire June 2025

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Your alumni newsletter

In May, we paid tribute to the Second World War generation from across the United Kingdom and Commonwealth on the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day with a special evensong service held by Durham Cathedral.

The Cathedral will also host our forthcoming congregation ceremonies in July, marking the achievements of our graduating students as they transition to become our newest alumni.

We're taking a comprehensive look at how we engage with our 215K alumni community across the UK and the world. Your input is critical. Have your say in our **Global Alumni Survey** before the 16 June and help shape the future of alumni engagement at Durham.

Explore our latest news below.



Alumni return to help our Rugby Club mark 150 years

May saw our men's and women's rugby clubs take on the world-famous Barbarians and the North East Women's Select XV respectively in a celebration of all things rugby.

Pictured (left to right): Steve Longwell (Glasgow Academicals), Freddie Charles (DURFC scrum-half, 3rd year undergraduate - Economics, Hatfield College), Fred Davies (Doncaster Knights; Durham alumnus – History, Collingwood College, 2013-16). Image courtesy of John Ashton.

[Read more and watch the matches](#)


On the historic appointment of Pope Leo XIV

Our Theology and Religion experts have offered their comments on the new head of the Catholic Church.

Pictured: Pope Leo XIV (left) with Professor Anna Rowlands (slightly behind). Image courtesy of Sr. Nathalie Bequart.

[Read more](#)


Truth Tellers 2025: alumnus Sir Harry Evans' continuing legacy

Global leaders in journalism gathered for our annual summit exploring challenges facing press freedom in honour of the late, great Durham University graduate Sir

Harry Evans.

[Read more](#)



Universities for North East England: a UK blueprint

The partnership, which consists of Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria, Sunderland and Teesside universities, could be a blueprint for the rest of the UK, an MP has told an event in Parliament.

Pictured (left to right): Professor Sir David Bell (Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive, University of Sunderland); Professor Andy Long (Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive, Northumbria University); Kim McGuinness (Mayor of North East England); Professor Chris Day (Vice-Chancellor and President, Newcastle University); Professor Paul Croney (Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive, Teesside University); Professor Karen O'Brien (Vice-Chancellor and Warden, Durham University).

[Read more](#)

Research to empower and inspire

We conduct innovative and impactful research to transform lives and make a difference globally and locally.



Professor Chris Stokes (Department of Geography) has led new research suggesting efforts to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5°C may not go far enough to save the world's ice sheets.

[Read our latest research](#)

Our Community



Congratulations to our latest Dunelmensis Award winners

Alumnus Ralph Grayson was presented with his award while visiting Durham recently. Alumna Kate Davies is due to receive hers over the summer.

Pictured (left to right): Vice-Chancellor and Warden, Professor Karen O'Brien, with Ralph Grayson

[Read more](#)



Alumna and MP Carla Denyer returns to visit Durham

Carla Denyer (Mechanical Engineering, St Chad's College, 2005-09) spoke about her "epiphany moment" decision to dedicate her life to tackling climate change while a student at Durham.

Pictured (left to right): Vice-Chancellor and Warden, Professor Karen O'Brien; Carla Denyer MP; Professor Simone Abram (Executive Director of Durham Energy Institute); Professor in Practice Andrew Crossland

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University spin-out receives prestigious King's Award for Enterprise

Geoptic was named in the Innovation category and was praised for its pioneering approach to assessing the condition and safety of railway tunnels.

[Read more](#)



UK Prime Minister leads tributes to Durham alumnus

Alumnus Andrew Norfolk (English Language and Literature, College of St Hild and St Bede, 1984-87) was an award-winning journalist who exposed the Rotherham grooming gang scandal in the UK.

[Read more](#)

Class Notes

We're proud to celebrate your successes and achievements. Click the button below to read more about what you've been up to this month.



Will Rosemary Coogan be the first Briton to walk on the Moon?

Dr Rosemary Coogan (MPhys in Physics & Astronomy 2009-13; MSc in Physics, 2014-16; University College) has spent the last six months training at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas. Rosemary was selected by the European Space Agency from over 22,000 applicants to become a new astronaut and the aim is to get her to the International Space Station by 2030.

The BBC caught up with her in Texas as she went through testing at NASA's Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory to assess her readiness for a spacewalk.

Image courtesy of ESA – P. Sebirot

Sarah Elliott (Combined Social Sciences, St Chad's College, 2000-03)

Dr Paul Hawkins OBE (BSc in Natural Sciences, 1993-96; PhD in Computer Science, 1996-2000, Grey College)

Nish Kumar (English & History, Grey College, 2004-07)

Why not share your own news with us?

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Lifelong learning

We have a wide range of postgraduate study options for you to continue your education and programmes for working professionals.

You can also browse a range of extracurricular activities on our alumni for extracurricular and new

You can also receive a range of scholarships, including our Durham Postgraduate and new postgraduate student support scholarship.

[Read more](#)

Get Involved



Don't forget to complete our Alumni Survey

Help us shape the future by sending us your thoughts in our online survey – your opinion matters! Respondents will have the chance to win one of five £100 prizes.

[Read more](#)

View all upcoming events

Check our events pages regularly for all the upcoming alumni events across the world, and how you can join in.

[Events calendar](#)

Colleges



Our annual telephone appeal with a difference

Our annual telephone appeal raises essential funds to enable our students to embrace their university experience. In 2025, this included specific campaigns from three Colleges.

[Read more](#)



St John's College unveils 'Under the Library' archaeological display

Find out what was discovered under St John's College library by Durham University Archaeological Services when the building was being constructed in 2017.

[Read more](#)



Over 75 years of University College's 'Castellum' magazine

This year's issue of 'Castellum' magazine is now available digitally. Find out more about the bear in space, or explore previous issues dating back to 1948.

[Read more](#)

Read more from our Colleges

Explore our College pages to discover the latest news.

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Retail



Celebrate your Durham connection

Planning to return to Durham for our graduation ceremonies this summer?

Celebrate your connection to the University by ordering from our updated graduation gifts collection.

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Durham University takes pride in the achievements and contributions of its 230,000 alumni and supporters. Stories that cite views, talks and published work reflect the individual's contribution in their personal or professional capacity and do not represent the University's position or endorsement.

Newswire is curated by Editorial Group members Lucian Hudson (Chair), Glen Whitehead, Claire Whiteleaw, Tristan Alltimes, Vicky Fisher and Debbie Mayne, and assembled by Sophie Algeo and Jo Coombs.

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