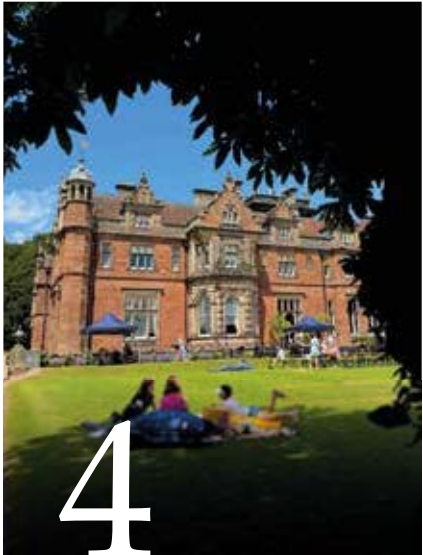




FOREVER *Keele*

— Autumn 2026 —



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KEELE NEWS AND UPDATES

Keele Day 2026

On Saturday 27th June 2026, we welcomed the sunshine and over 500 alumni and their families back to Keele University campus. With temperatures in Staffordshire soaring up to 28 degrees, plenty of complimentary refreshments and delicious picnic packs helped to fuel us for a fun-filled day at Keele Hall!

Keele Day is an annual event that offers alumni the chance to reconnect with the University, reflect on shared memories and look ahead to the future. This year, Keele Day coincided with the University's Undergraduate Open Day, providing the valuable opportunity for prospective students to learn about the outstanding legacy of Keele. What's more, Keele Day was celebrated by the international alumni community, with Keele Day reunion dinners and virtual meetups taking place in Sri Lanka and Washington DC.

Guests at Keele Hall tried their hand at cheerleading, exercised their competitive side playing giant outdoor games and sports, tested their skills of deduction in Keele Hall Escape Rooms, and lounged on the lawns listening to fantastic music from the very talented Keele alumna Heidi Rolph-Stott. A team of dedicated volunteers from across the University also hosted Earth Stories Film Festival screenings, the Postcards from the Past photography exhibition, and led campus tours of Keele Observatory, Horwood Energy Centre, and much more.

We will share the date of Keele Day 2027 in the new year. We hope to see you there!



Keele Day reunion lunch in Washington D.C.



Keele Day celebrations in Colombo, Sri Lanka



KEELE NEWS AND UPDATES

Golden Graduates Reunion Dinner: Class of 1976

On the evening of Keele Day, the University's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Kevin Shakesheff, welcomed the Class of 1976 and preceding years to Keele for this year's Golden Graduates celebration.

Our attendees enjoyed a three-course dinner in Keele Hall's Salvin Room, with brilliant speeches from the Vice-Chancellor, John Ucheagwu (Keele Postgraduate Association President, Keele SU), Keith Clement (Pioneer Graduate, Class of 1956), and Hannah Azizollah (Class of 1976 representative). In her heartfelt speech, Hannah spoke about her extensive work as a psychologist and fond memories of Keele's campus and community, ranging from heated political debates to nights out at the Students Union.

She said that, looking back 50 years, she can see how her experiences at Keele profoundly influenced the person she is now and why it continues to have a special place in her head and heart.

We thoroughly enjoyed sharing our memories of Keele University and were delighted to hear that so many attendees had such a wonderful time.

Find the attendee list and read the speeches here: keele.ac.uk/golden





Barbara Crane, Class of 1968



Gillian Gutteridge, Class of 1976



Gillian Gutteridge, Class of 1976



Sylvia Morris, Class of 1976



Barbara Crane, Class of 1968



Rosemary Dearman, Class of 1965



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Richard Hayler, Class of 1992

KEELE NEWS AND UPDATES

Postcards from the past

As part of Keele's Festival of People, Planet & Place in April 2026, we created a postcard style exhibition to celebrate not only Keele University of the past, but the threads that connect generations through our landscapes, our community, and our shared responsibility for the future.

We invited our alumni to send us a photograph that feels like a postcard from their time at Keele - something that captures how people, places, and shared experiences shaped them while they were here. The postcards helped us to reflect on how Keele's environment and community have evolved and how the places we love continue to support wellbeing, connection, and sustainable futures for generations to come.

The postcards were showcased as postcard style prints in a physical exhibition on campus, during the festival in April and at Keele Day in June. The memories they show help tell a story of place, connection, and care, and by sharing these postcards, you help us celebrate the Keele we inherit, cherish, and pass on.

The postcards form part of an ongoing exhibition. Send your submissions to alumni.hq@keele.ac.uk



memories of Keele from the 80s

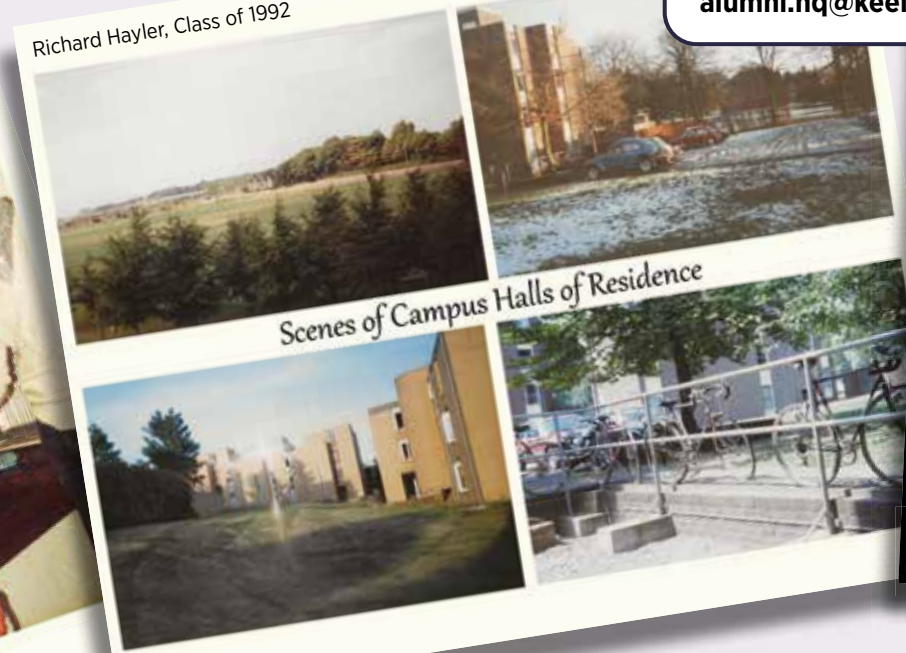
Richard Winspear, Class of 1986

Lee Wolstenholme, Class of 1983

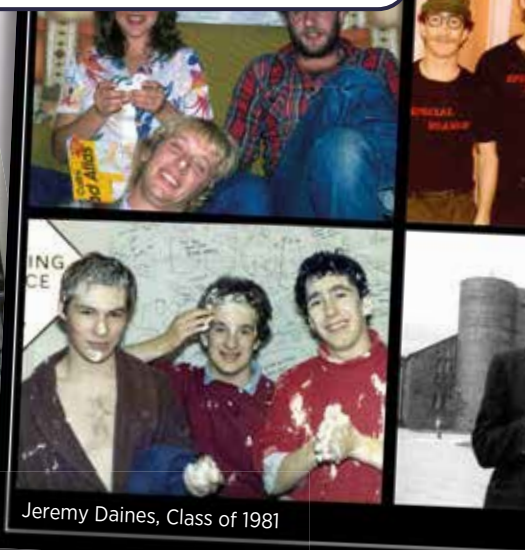


In Good Voice

Richard Hayler, Class of 1992



Scenes of Campus Halls of Residence



Jeremy Daines, Class of 1981

GRADUATE NEWS

Our Summer 2026 Honorary Graduates

An F1 doctor, an internationally renowned biophysicist, and a leading Japanese expert on cherry blossom trees were among the guests who received honorary degrees at Keele University's 2026 summer graduation ceremonies.

The University awarded six honorary degrees this summer, honouring six inspirational people in recognition of their exceptional achievements in their respective fields. They accepted their awards alongside thousands of students graduating in ceremonies from July 13th to 17th at the University's Chapel, joining a distinguished community of Keele Honorary Degree recipients.

Professor Kevin Shakesheff, Vice-Chancellor of Keele University, said: "Our honorary degrees have always recognised pioneers in their fields, and exceptional people whose ideas, achievements and leadership inspire change on a global scale. This year is no different, and we are delighted to welcome these influential people to the Keele community from such varied walks of life."

This year's honorary degree recipients were:



Dr Ian Roberts
Doctor of Science

As the FIA's Medical Delegate and former Chief Medical Officer for Formula 1, Dr Ian Roberts was regularly on standby during races, ready to jump in the FIA Medical Car with a professional driver and rush to the scene of an accident at a moment's notice.

When Romain Grosjean crashed heavily into barriers on the first lap of the Bahrain Grand Prix in 2020, his car ripped in half and burst into flames. Considered one of the most miraculous escapes in Formula 1's history, Ian was among those first on the scene and received the FIA President Award and international praise for his bravery and reaction after helping to pull Grosjean to safety. Ian has helped ensure the safety of F1 drivers at more than 250 Grand Prix races and received the HRH Prince Michael of Kent Award of Merit in 2022 for his exceptional work in motorsport safety and medicine.

Before his career in motorsport medicine, which began with his appointment as the chief medical officer for Silverstone with responsibility for the British Grand Prix, Ian worked as a rotational Registrar in the NHS between 1993 and 1998. This included regularly working at Stoke-on-Trent's North Staffordshire Royal Infirmary and City General Hospital sites, and he also completed a Master of Medical Sciences degree with Keele University between 1996 and 1998.

Professor Eva Nogales
Doctor of Science

Professor Eva Nogales earned her physics degree from the Autonomous University of Madrid and her biophysics doctorate from Keele University. She is a Distinguished Professor in Biochemistry, Biophysics and Structural Biology at the University of California, Berkeley, a Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator, and senior scientist at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

Professor Nogales' research is focused on defining the molecular bases of cellular activity by describing the structure, dynamics and interactions of cellular components essential for eukaryotic life.

She has received awards from scientific societies in the US, including the Microscopy (MSA), Biophysics (BPS), Cell Biology (ASCB), Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB) and Protein Societies. She is member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the National Academy of Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and a foreign member of EMBO and the Royal Academy of Exact Sciences of Spain. In 2020 she was president of the American Society for Cell Biology. Nogales received the Grimwade Medal from the University of Melbourne (2019), the Shaw Prize in Life Sciences and Medicine (2023), and the CSIC Medal for Extraordinary Scientific Merit, the highest honor awarded by the National Science Council of Spain (2024). In 2025 she became a Foreign Member of the Royal Society.





Joanna Killian OBE Master of the University

Joanna is an experienced, dedicated public servant, who has built a career and voluntary life focussed on supporting communities, families and individuals across the country.

Her priority has always been to protect and improve the lives of the most vulnerable in society – especially children and young people, those who are street homeless and individuals living with complex mental health issues. Joanna is a strong advocate of Local Government and the invaluable role that dedicated local politicians and officers play in their communities, economies and wider public services.

Joanna has been Chief Executive for two County Councils, Essex and Surrey, as well as the Local Government Association. She was appointed as a Commissioner for Liverpool City Council too. She was a Trustee and Chair for St Mungo's, a London based charity focused on supporting rough sleepers and has been a Partner with KPMG.

Francesca Hegyi OBE Master of Letters

Francesca Hegyi OBE is Chief Executive of the Edinburgh International Festival. She has worked in culture, the arts and major events for more than 25 years.

Francesca began her career in the museums sector before becoming Head of Regions and International at the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council.

In 2005, she joined the London Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Here she was responsible for the framework for the UK-wide cultural programme, leading fundraising and commercial partnerships for the Cultural Olympiad and London 2012 Festival - a £126 million programme which worked with more than 40,000 artists.

As Executive Director of Hull 2017 UK City of Culture, Francesca oversaw a programme of events which reached over 95% of Hull residents, created over 800 jobs and added more than £300 million to the local economy. She was awarded an OBE in the 2018 New Year Honours list for this work.

Having previously studied and worked in Edinburgh, Francesca returned to the city to join the Edinburgh International Festival in February 2019.

Since March 2021, she has served as Deputy Chair of the Creative Industries Council.



Masatoshi Asari Master of Science

Mr Masatoshi Asari is a flowering cherry specialist and breeder in the Matsumae region of Hokkaido. He was born in 1931 in the town of Nanae, in the southwest corner of Hokkaido.

He was a teacher in an elementary school in Hakodate, Hokkaido, where he taught the children how to grow cherry trees on the island. His hybridisation work has resulted in the raising of more than 100 new cultivars, most of which are still not readily available in the west. These cultivars are all denoted by the prefix Matsumae-.

Currently at Keele there are a range of different Matsumae cultivars which feature as part of the university's internationally renowned flowering cherry collection.

The importance of these new cultivars is that they have been made in the north of Japan where the climate range is more akin to Western Europe.

He has now retired but is still living as a specialist on flowering cherry trees. He has been given the title "Sakura Mori"; or "protector of the cherry trees".



Chris Sanders Master of Science

Chris Sanders was born in Worcester and educated at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School in Hartlebury, Worcestershire. After leaving school in 1960, he spent four years working in the horticultural industry and two years in full-time training at Pershore College of Horticulture, Worcs. before gaining a Masters degree in Horticulture from the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) in 1969.

He spent 16 years as General Manager of John Hill & Sons, Spot Acre Nurseries near Stone, Staffordshire, where his interest in Flowering Cherries first began. In 1982 he joined John Ravenscroft at Bridgemere Nurseries, first as Production Manager, later becoming Production Director.

In 1993 he was instrumental in organizing the importation from Japan of the scions of 58 new cultivars of Flowering Cherry, all bred by Mr Masatoshi Asari in Matsumae, Hokkaido. These were successfully grafted at Bridgemere and nearly all are represented in the National Collection at Keele. Some are now widely grown throughout the UK and Europe. Chris made five visits to Japan to study Flowering Cherries and first met Mr Asari in May 2016.

In 1999, he was made an Associate of Honour by the RHS for services to horticulture and retired in 2002. He is still actively involved in writing, teaching, show-judging and serving on various RHS committees.

In 2014 the RHS bestowed on him their highest award, the Victoria Medal of Honour, which can only be held by a maximum of 63 people at any one time.

GRADUATE NEWS

The remarkable stories of our new graduates

Read about the journeys of our newest alumni - from our Student of the Year, to a new doctor with an inspiring story

Lauren Keen has been named Keele University's Neil and Gina Smith Student of the Year after graduating with a degree in Biochemistry and Medicinal Chemistry while balancing life as a new mother, NHS worker and full-time student.

Lauren's route to higher education was far from traditional. After leaving school at 12 and spending much of her teenage years living abroad in Norway and Malta, she returned to the UK at 18 with few formal qualifications and began rebuilding her education from scratch. She completed her GCSEs, worked as a healthcare assistant, and studied for an Access to Higher Education diploma before joining Keele.

During her studies, Lauren worked part-time as a nursing assistant in the Accident and Emergency Department at Royal Stoke University Hospital while raising two young children.

Her son was born just weeks before the start of her second year and required intensive care shortly after birth, adding to the challenges she faced.



Reflecting on her journey, Lauren said: "I started my journey in education a bit later than others, and you could say I took a slightly alternative route to most people to get to where I am today."

Lauren credits the support of Keele staff and lecturers for helping her succeed.

"There were times when I struggled, but the support from staff and lecturers made all the difference," she said. She also found solace in the University's campus, particularly its woodland and lakes, which became a place for reflection during difficult periods.

Alongside her studies and NHS work, Lauren volunteered as a safeguarding officer at St Giles Church in Newcastle-under-Lyme, helping to introduce its first equality and diversity policy.

Now a Keele graduate and Student of the Year, Lauren hopes to pursue a career in hospital-based research. She said: "I want to make a difference to people's lives, and research is one way to do that. You might not see the results instantly but ten years down the line, it could have a massive impact on people and how they live."

"I have found a genuine passion and interest in medicine and how I can try to actively change problems in the future."

The Student of the Year award is kindly supported with a donation from Keele University alumnus Neil Smith.



Young woman inspired to study medicine after teenage cancer diagnosis graduates as a doctor

A young woman who was inspired to study medicine after overcoming cancer as a teenager has graduated from Keele University and is now beginning her career as a doctor.

Ellie Waters-Barnes, 25, graduated from Keele's School of Medicine this summer and received the Vice Chancellor's Commendation. She will start work as a Foundation Doctor at Royal Stoke University Hospital.

Ellie was just 14 when she was diagnosed with alveolar rhabdomyosarcoma. She underwent 18 months of treatment, including intensive chemotherapy and radiotherapy, and missed an entire year of school. Determined not to let her illness define her future, she repeated Year 10 and focused on achieving her ambition of studying medicine.

Reflecting on the experience, Ellie said: "I coped with everything by throwing myself into studying and revising, with my dream of becoming a doctor keeping me going."

It was during her treatment that Ellie discovered her passion for medicine, inspired by the healthcare professionals who cared for her.

"I was really interested in medicine and wanted to pursue this career," she said. "I'm thankful it's led me on this path because I love helping people, it's everything to me."

After joining Keele in 2021, Ellie spent five years working towards her goal and believes her own experiences as a patient will help shape the kind of doctor she becomes.

"Patients care about your communication, your understanding, and you advocating for them," she said. "I hope it makes me a better doctor for my experiences because I understand what their priorities are."

Looking back on her journey, Ellie hopes her story can encourage others facing difficult circumstances. Her advice is simple: "You cannot control what has happened, but what you can control is your attitude towards it." She added: "No matter what happens you can always pick yourself up and not let it get the better of you or define you. Take these problems in your stride and remake them into something positive."



From hospital bed to first-class degree: Aliya's remarkable Keele journey

A Keele University student who feared her degree ambitions were over after being diagnosed with sepsis just weeks into her first term has graduated with first-class honours and received the Vice-Chancellor's Commendation Award.

Aliya was only a month into her studies when she became seriously ill and was admitted to Royal Stoke University Hospital with sepsis. After spending a week in hospital and continuing her recovery at home in Yorkshire, she worried she might never return to university.

Reflecting on that difficult period, Aliya said: "When I became ill, I genuinely thought my university journey was over before it had really begun." However, while recovering, she received the result of her first university assignment.

"Seeing that I had done well gave me a huge boost and reminded me why I'd chosen to come to university in the first place," she said.

Determined not to give up, Aliya returned to Keele and went on to excel in her Biochemistry and Neuroscience degree. Alongside her studies, she contributed to research exploring health inequalities and neurodegenerative diseases, completed a Business Transformation internship with the General Medical Council, and took on a range of student support roles, including Student Ambassador, Resident Adviser and Students' Union Hub Adviser.

Reflecting on her time at Keele, Aliya said: "When I returned to Keele after my illness, I realised how precious time is and that I wanted to make the most of every opportunity available to me."

She credits the University's supportive community with helping her thrive. "I fell in love with Keele from my very first week. The campus, the community and the support I received made it feel like home," she said.

Looking back on her achievement, Aliya added: "Graduating with first-class honours feels incredibly special because of everything it took to get here."



Read more inspiring stories
from Graduation
keele.ac.uk/graduation/inspiringstories

Twin brothers graduate with same degree after studying side by side

Twin brothers Adrian and Ainsley Dondo have graduated together from Keele University after studying the same Biomedical Science degree, achieving the same classification and even living in neighbouring rooms throughout their studies.

The 22-year-olds, from Bradford, spent four years studying side by side, supporting each other through coursework, exams and university life.

"Studying alongside each other made the whole experience feel much less daunting," said Adrian. "We always had someone to bounce ideas off, revise with and support one another."

The brothers chose Keele because of its strong reputation for Biomedical Science and quickly found that sharing the experience helped them stay motivated. Alongside their studies, they both played for Keele's basketball team and built lasting friendships through campus life.

Ainsley said: "From growing up together in Bradford, to choosing the same Biomedical Science course at Keele, achieving the same degree classification and now graduating on the same day, it feels surreal."

Despite their remarkably similar journeys, the brothers said university also helped them develop their own independence and identities while continuing to support one another through challenges and successes.

Following graduation, Adrian and Ainsley are due to begin Biomedical Science internships in Milton Keynes as they work towards becoming HCPC-registered biomedical scientists.

"We're both passionate about healthcare and laboratory science," said Adrian. "We're excited to continue this journey together."



ALUMNI STORIES

Former Keele student celebrates 20 years at the top with major international award

Paul Johnson, a former student of Keele from 1989 to 1996 (BSc in Geography and Geology, and PhD in Glaciology) and the editor behind the world's first and most influential luxury travel blog, has been named the "Best Niche Voice in Travel" at the prestigious TBEX Summit held in the USA.

The award comes as he celebrates a landmark 20th anniversary of his site, A Luxury Travel Blog. Launched from South Cumbria all those years ago, the blog has grown from a pioneering digital project into a global authority, serving millions of affluent travellers seeking the world's finest experiences.

At the international summit, which brings together the world's leading travel media professionals, Dr. Johnson was also shortlisted for the 'Best Travel Blog' title, cementing his position as a leader in the field. He was able to receive the award in person at the event held in Wichita, Kansas.

"Winning this award in the US, especially as we mark 20 years of the blog, is a proud moment," he said. "When I started the site in 2005 from my home in the north-west, the landscape of travel media was completely different. To still be at the forefront of the industry two decades later – and to bring this recognition home – is incredibly rewarding."

The award follows a number of previous accolades, including 'Best Travel Blog' (Travelmole Web Awards) and 'Best Travel Influencer' (Wired Magazine), in addition to being named "one of the world's best travel blogs" and "best for luxury" by The Telegraph.



A Luxury Travel Blog was the first travel blog in the world to focus exclusively on the luxury sector. Over the past two decades, Johnson has navigated the evolution of the internet, outlasting many traditional publications to remain a trusted independent voice. His work has previously been recognised by the BBC, CNN Travel, New York Times, The Telegraph and other media.

Despite the global reach of the site, which covers everything from private islands to sustainable high-end tourism, Johnson remains firmly rooted on the edge of the Lake District, managing the operation from his base in South Cumbria.

His travels have taken him all over the world, from Kendal to Kazakhstan, and even Kangerlussuaq in Greenland, working with multiple airlines, luxury hotels and resorts, tourist boards and the automotive industry. Last year's adventures saw him doing everything from bobsledding in Austria and swimming with penguins in the US, to running a half marathon in Turkey and sailing a 46ft yacht around the islands of Greece. He has also spoken at several prestigious international events, from the World Travel Market in London to MALT Congress in Abu Dhabi, amassing a combined social media audience of more than 1.2 million across all channels.

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ALUMNI STORIES

Keele alumna Ruth Wallbank-Hughes on opening Drop City Books and building community one chapter at a time

Drop City Books (DCB) has become a firm fan favourite among locals from all walks of life. Opened by Keele alumna Ruth Wallbank-Hughes in 2023, DCB is a bright, friendly, radical bookshop nestled in Hanley's Cultural Quarter near Stoke-on-Trent city centre.

Ruth describes bookselling as “the best job in the world”, and despite tackling head-on many of the stresses that small business can bring, notes that the rewarding highs of inspiring the next generation of local readers, and interviewing authors who encourage us to think differently about the world, far outweigh the lows.

Ruth's mission is clear: to “reclaim our attention spans, protect human creativity, and cultivate ‘courage, empathy, and kindness’ through books”. Beginning her Counselling and Psychotherapy MSc at Keele in 2019 she acknowledges, “it might seem like where I've ended up is not even related to the thing I studied for, but it absolutely is.”

Opening a bookshop had been a quiet pipedream for Ruth, who began studying her Master's degree just months before the Covid-19 pandemic began. Writing her dissertation about the impact of reading on her own empathy and understanding, Ruth wanted to share the magic of books to bring people together, broaden our perspectives, and shape how we feel about each other and the world around us. Despite juggling her coursework, the challenges presented by the pandemic, and recovering from a serious illness, something told Ruth it was time to make her dream a reality. “Training to be a therapist at Keele”, she explains, “gave me the confidence, self-understanding and courage to take a huge leap into the unknown”.



Ruth's passion and enthusiasm radiates through every colourful wall, curated bookshelf, and cosy corner of Drop City Books. “Every element of the shop, from the layout to the way I host events, is totally informed by my practice as a therapist”, she explains. “At Drop City Books I go to work every day and get to be completely and totally myself, and the best thing about that is it gives other people permission to do the same.”

True to her mission, Ruth handpicks every book in the shop, spotlighting small publishers and marginalised authors. “If I wouldn't want to read it”, she quips, “it doesn't go on the shelves!”. With Ruth's lead and collaboration with the wider community, DCB is now building a reputation for hosting and interviewing world-renowned authors, with Robin Ince, Michael Pederson, Shenna Kalayil, Ben Pester, and Tobi Coventry among this year's big names.

Ruth reflects on her Keele experience with real warmth, despite the challenges presented by Covid-19, illness, and opening a startup at the time. “My time at Keele wasn't easy”, she acknowledges, “but it taught me that an experience doesn't have to be perfect to change you. The lessons I learned about perseverance, changing direction and asking for help are things that will stick with me forever.”

Having access to flexible study options and a truly person-centred approach made returning to study alongside opening DCB the right option for Ruth, who graduated from Keele in 2022. Since then, Keele have been delighted to welcome her and other Counselling alumni back to campus, including selling books at the Keele Counselling and Psychotherapy conference in 2025 and 2026 and hosting a book signing event for the launch of fellow course mate Josh Fletcher's second book *Same Time Next Week?*

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ALUMNI STORIES

The School of Anxiety's Joshua Fletcher on learning, growth, and empowering others to thrive

Keele alumnus Joshua Fletcher has dedicated the last decade to helping people understand and overcome anxiety. Through his initiative, The School of Anxiety, Josh delivers psychotherapy, consultancy, workshops, and keynote talks, empowering people and organisations to prioritise mental health and wellbeing.

Now a three-time bestselling author and psychotherapist in his thriving private practice The Panic Room, Josh supports a community of over 300,000 people navigating their own mental health journeys. As a TEDx and professional speaker, co-host of the hugely popular *Disordered* podcast, and thought leader on anxiety disorders, two days rarely look the same. Nonetheless, acknowledging the importance of rest and recuperation, he also speaks candidly about making space to travel, see friends and family, and recharge with sausage dog Strudel by his side.

Josh graduated with Distinction from Keele University in 2017 with an MSc in Counselling Psychology. "If I hadn't had my MSc training to be a psychotherapist, I categorically wouldn't be here now", he says, "the course was essential to a career I am very happy with and proud of".

Josh reflects fondly on his time spent at Keele, from enjoying a pint in the Keele Postgraduate Association bar with supportive colleagues "who were friends and tutors", to late night studying in the library. "I will always look back very fondly at Keele", he says, "It was a beautiful time of my life. It also taught me that I am more capable than I think. I came away from that MSc with more self-belief and so much knowledge to take into the big wide world". Hailing from Manchester, "a city full of distractions", the peace and quiet of the Keele Bubble helped Josh to really focus on his studies – leading to great things.

Josh can list an impressive number of career highlights and hobbies, including public speaking for organisations and festivals, reading and studying, and collaborating with other experts in the field of anxiety disorders. Showing that his hard work pays off, he also reflects on how rewarding it is being able to spot his own books in bookshops.

However, what really stands out is Josh's deeply personal motivation for his work: "What drives me is that I've been on both sides of the couch", he explains, "I know what anxiety feels like from the inside."

Driven by his desire to help others, Josh's books cover topics including information and insights into how to deal with an anxiety disorder, honest and empowering self-help tips, navigating health anxiety, and therapy experiences from both perspectives. Likewise, the weekly *Disordered* podcast, surpassing 3 million downloads and 2000 five-star ratings, covers professional expertise and personal insight on overcoming panic disorder, generalised anxiety, health anxiety, Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), depersonalization-derealization disorder (DPDR), driving anxiety, sleep anxiety, and more.

Keele have been fortunate enough to welcome Josh back to campus, including twice as a keynote speaker at Keele's Counselling and Psychotherapy conference. At the most recent conference in April 2026, Josh showcased his latest book, *Same Time Next Week?*, alongside fellow counselling alumna and Drop City Books owner Ruth Wallbank-Hughes.



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Dr Kevin De Sabbata



Laura Oseland



ALUMNI STORIES

Keele alumni help to launch innovative new law module bridging classroom and practice

In his five years' experience as a Law Lecturer at Keele, Dr Kevin De Sabbata noticed a common problem: although Private International Law makes up a large portion of today's legal job market, students all over the country are being offered very few opportunities to apply and practice it.

Striving to set his students up for success, Kevin set up a voluntary collaboration with two Keele alumni who are now renowned for their international legal practice. Making use of alumni volunteering hours, the team have pioneered a new practice-based law module to engage students in directly applying their learning to real-world legal scenarios. "This area of law is an art", says Kevin, "not just about the rules, but about understanding how to creatively apply them."

Working with alumni, Laura Oseland and Michael Todd KC, helped Kevin to showcase the possibilities for Keele's Law graduates today. Being a role model for current students was especially important for Laura, who has led an inspirational career from local Paralegal to full-time Partner at a firm in the Cayman Islands. From her self-made background, Laura wants to prove to current students that dedication, strategy, and a strong network pay off. "Keele taught me the value of community", she says, "you need community to thrive through your career, and volunteering is about giving back to the communities we serve."

At the heart of Kevin's idea is making law exciting again. "We know that certain aspects of law can be really difficult to understand, and sometimes quite dry for students", he acknowledges, "so the purpose of this module is to create an engaging connection between classroom and practice". For Laura, the constant desire to learn underpins her phenomenal journey, which is something she wants to instil in students early. "I said yes to everything when I was at Keele", she explains, "I want to show how many options are at students' fingertips and encourage them to do the same."

The new module will run for second year undergraduates from the academic year 2026/27. It will take shape as co-taught sessions focussing on legal practice and industry experience including networking, teamworking, negotiation, and critical and strategic thinking. The team hope the module will become a regular addition to the curriculum, demonstrating the long-lasting impact of alumni volunteering, academic expertise, and a passion for the future generations of legal scholars.

ALUMNI STORIES

From Keele to Coldplay: Davide Rossi's remarkable musical journey

If you've ever sung along to *Viva la Vida* or *Paradise* by Coldplay, you've already heard the work of Keele graduate Davide Rossi.

The musician behind the iconic string arrangements on two of Coldplay's biggest hits has enjoyed a remarkable career that has taken him from Glastonbury Festival's Pyramid Stage to the Super Bowl 50 half-time show.

A violinist, string arranger, orchestrator, songwriter, composer and conductor, Davide moved to the UK from Italy in 1995 to study and later completed an MSc in Digital Music Technology at Keele University in 2000.

Reflecting on his time at Keele, he said: "I was at Keele during a transitional period in my life, and I used my time there to focus on my violin playing, both classically and towards pop music.

"My biggest memories from Keele are the professors and technicians who were always very supportive, and the grounds and the beauty of the countryside surrounding the campus."

Not long after graduating from Keele, Davide joined British electronic music duo Goldfrapp, embarking on a worldwide touring career that saw him perform with the band for more than a decade.

He also forged a long-standing creative partnership with Coldplay and frontman Chris Martin. His work features on six tracks from the band's acclaimed album *Viva la Vida or Death and All His Friends*,

and he has performed alongside the group on some of the world's biggest stages in front of tens of thousands of fans – including Milan's San Siro stadium.

Davide's extensive list of collaborators includes Depeche Mode, U2, The Killers, Neil Diamond, Alicia Keys, Dido, Duran Duran and Ed Sheeran, among others.

Other career highlights include performing with The Verve when they headlined Glastonbury in 2008, leading the BBC Philharmonic, and contributing to Coldplay's artistic production team for the Super Bowl 50 half-time show alongside Beyoncé and Bruno Mars.

For Davide, one moment stands above the rest.

"When *Viva la Vida* was released by Coldplay in 2008, it changed my life," he said.

"I was fortunate enough to be at the right place at the right time, with a band who wanted to experiment with what I had to bring, which was, and still is, a unique approach to string arranging.

"It became the first number one single for Coldplay in the US and the UK at the same time, which was a pretty big deal. The beautiful thing about it was that I found out after a concert with Goldfrapp in Birmingham, when I heard Chris's voice telling me how thankful he was and that my contribution had played a part in that success.

"I was lucky that my part was really strong on a song that I could only have dreamt of working on in my whole life, and it was a magical coincidence that it became one of the band's most renowned tunes.

"My memory of performing with The Verve when they headlined Glastonbury in 2008 also remains one of my dearest, as it felt like reaching a summit I never thought possible."



Having spent more than two decades working at the highest levels of the music industry, Davide has witnessed first-hand how the profession has evolved.

"It has changed enormously, not just because of the time that has passed but because of the technology involved and, of course, the internet," he said.

"I feel like nowadays we are living in a strange limbo where it's getting harder and harder to be a musician. However, it has never been easy, to be honest. I feel extremely lucky and it's surreal that I can still make a living out of doing what I love.

"I'm proud of all I've done and at the same time I often feel that I still haven't really achieved what I want. I find that a lot of artists share this frustration somehow.

"It's what makes you move forward, I guess. It is a lifetime search into what you can or cannot do, while trying to remain as creatively active as possible."

Despite an already remarkable list of achievements, Davide shows no signs of slowing down. He continues to collaborate with some of the biggest names in music while supporting emerging artists and developing his own projects.

He said: "I'm working with many different producers and artists, including Max Martin, Ilya Salmanzadeh and Oscar Holter of the Max Martin production team, with artists such as Ariana Grande, The Weekend, Chloe Qisha and many more.

"I'm always working with Coldplay in some capacity. I've also been working with exciting UK talents such as Myles Smith and Elliot James Reay, while continuing to work on my own music, which I intend to release at some point."

Asked what advice he would give to current Keele students hoping to build a career in music, Davide encouraged them to embrace their natural talents and pursue their passions.

"I think whatever comes to you easily has to be followed through. There's a great advantage in following your talent somehow, and there are many different ways to make music."

ALUMNI STORIES

“Forever grateful” 46 years on: Ron’s story

The Alumni team often receives messages from graduates reflecting on their time at Keele, but some stories leave a particularly lasting impression. When alumnus Ron Henry wrote to the Vice-Chancellor, he enclosed not only a donation to the University but also a heartfelt account of determination, gratitude and the life-changing impact of one remarkable tutor.

Ron’s journey to higher education was far from conventional and the letter to the right explains how he found an unwavering champion in Keele lecturer Joyce Warham, whose guidance and encouragement helped him overcome setbacks and achieve a goal he had pursued for nearly two decades.



Left to right- Lauren Bailey, Chloe Lambert, Ron Henry, Malcolm Clarke, Lesley Clarke, Lauren Huss



Dear Vice-Chancellor,

Please find enclosed a donation which I make a) to honour my tutor, Joyce Warham, and b) in thanks to the University.

Joyce was a tutor without whose guidance and support would have meant that I would have failed to be awarded the Advanced Diploma in Social Administration.

If my gift could be used in some way both to honour Joyce and somehow to be of benefit to present staff, that would be excellent.

There is a context to this letter as I was in contact with the University in 2022.

Briefly I had left school early at age 15 through bullying. For years I felt angry with myself for giving in and not completing secondary school. I had no qualifications but felt that I would have gone on to university.

I worked as a salesman and then as a civil servant for the next 9 years. I found myself thinking about a career in social work, and that I would need to go back into education and gain some qualifications.

I went to night school to study for three “O” levels. Unfortunately, my father suffered a minor stroke and for 4 months I struggled with my own full-time job, duties with my father’s shop, and night school. However, I was awarded two “O” levels. Still a long way to go for university entrance requirements.

However Social work training was just starting to become more widely available. Moray House College of Education began offering 2-year courses for social workers. There were no formal education requirements, but successful candidates had to take the Moray House IQ test to confirm an applicant could successfully complete their education.

I was accepted and was awarded the 2-year Certificate in Social work in 1969.

During the next few years as a social worker and then senior social worker I gained sufficient experience to be accepted by Edinburgh University as a fieldwork student supervisor and also served on interview panels.

Through this contact I came to know Professor John Tresiliotis, Head of Social Work.

Becoming aware that in order to enhance my promotion efforts that I should perhaps obtain some management/organisational skills I asked John for advice, worried about my poor qualifications. He encouraged me to apply and offered to be my academic referee.

I applied to Keele and was accepted. To have finally made it to study for a university award after being derailed some 18 years earlier meant so much to me.

To my surprise I passed all my exams but failed my dissertation. Through ignorance I had tried to do original research without knowing anything about the need to formally validate it. Professor Leonard, the then academic leader in Social Administration, refused the award.

Allowed the one resit, Joyce stepped up for me, and for the next year I shuttled between my home and Keele on a frequent basis. She was very careful in guiding me to what the standards were for a university dissertation and changing what I was writing to library rather than original research.

I have been forever grateful. I enclose a copy of her letter to me.

The one fly in the ointment was that to confirm the award when applying for a new post the University sent me a “scrappy” piece of paper with two names on it, mine and another.

Some 46 years later having been irritated about this all these years, and with my wife and two daughters all posing with their certificates and gowns, I finally wrote to former Vice Chancellor Professor McMillan.

The University came up trumps. As the Advanced Diploma no longer existed, I was made a bespoke official university certificate which I was at last proud to put on my wall and so share achievement with my wife and daughters.

Those for whom academic achievement is easy can have no comprehension of those who have had to battle to get some form of university education and award.

I hope that I have explained how grateful I am to Keele for accepting me with my academic deficits, for the education given, and for a tutor such as Joyce who willingly helped me to succeed. Hopefully there have been many others who have similarly supported their students.

With all best wishes,

Arthur Ronald Tyrie Henry

Alumni Dr Malcolm (Philosophy & Sociology and Social Anthropology, Class of 1969) and Lesley (Applied Social Studies and Sociology, Class of 1969) Clarke also remember Joyce with great fondness and said of her

“Joyce was not only an acknowledged expert in her field but also had a unique ability to inspire her students, about whom she cared greatly, and equip them to use the knowledge and skills she had imparted in their subsequent careers. The world, particularly social services, is a better place for this. I was but one of thousands of Keele students who benefitted from her wisdom and expertise as both an undergraduate and when she took over as my Ph.D. supervisor at a time when I greatly needed the intellectual rigour she provided”.

In honour of Joyce, Ron dedicated a tree in Keele’s memorial garden. This plaque was unveiled as part of the Keele Day celebrations on 27th June 2026, and the event was attended by Ron, Dr Malcolm Clarke, Lesley Clarke, Lauren Huss (Associate Director of Alumni and Supporter Engagement), Chloe Lambert (Lecturer in Social Work) and Lauren Bailey (Lecturer in Social Work).

More than 40 years after completing his studies, Ron’s gratitude remains as strong as ever. His generous gift to the University and dedication of a tree stand as a tribute to Joyce’s lasting influence and to the transformative power of education. His story is a moving reminder that the impact of a great teacher can be felt for a lifetime.

ALUMNI STORIES

Where are they now?

Here at alumni HQ, we love receiving your news and often receive feedback from alumni who enjoy finding out what their former classmates are up to now. We have therefore introduced a new 'Where are they now' section to our webpages. Alumni can send in their updates, which we will regularly publish online. We've included some below to get us started!

David Penn

Class of 1980
English & Sociology and Social Anthropology

Having enjoyed life as a casual writer since his graduation in 1980, English and Sociology Graduate, David Penn, celebrates the publication of his debut poetry pamphlet, *Birdmen and Astronauts*. Publishing under the pseudonym 'Dharmavadana', a name he was given upon joining the Buddhist order in 2005, his poetry explores masculinity, coming-of-age, relationships, and more.



Katie Davis

Class of 2023
Geography, Geology, and Environment

After graduating in July 2023, Katie Davis channelled her Geography, Geology, and Environment (GGE) degree into secondary school teacher training with a geography specialism. As a full-time teacher and House Leader at her school, Katie was fondly reminded of her time at Keele when showing her own students the GGE video that she herself stars in!



Hannah Azizollah

Class of 1976
Economics and Psychology

Psychology and Economics graduate Hannah Azizollah is celebrating her 50-year 'golden graduation this year'. After graduating from Keele in 1976, Hannah completed a Masters in Industrial Psychology at Hull University. She went on to a rewarding and varied career in occupational psychology which she continues to enjoy through occasional and pro-bono work. To this day, her alter-ego 'Psychologist Hannah' frequently enters conversations to share deep thoughts, meaning and wisdom e.g. how Keele has profoundly shaped her life and work and possibly many other Alumni.

Ian Duncan

English & Roman Studies, 1989

Despite spending the last 30 years living and working in Japan, English & Roman Studies graduate Ian Duncan's most recent poetry collection celebrates local lore. 'Capturing the atmosphere of Stoke-starting summer nights and paying homage to local icons', *T-Shirts and Trebuchets* is inspired by Ian's golden years at Keele.

Read your alumni updates here:
Where are they now? Alumni updates -
Keele University



If you'd like to feature in the next edition of *Forever Keele*, please share your updates to alumni.hq@keele.ac.uk



CAMPUS NEWS

The Memorial Garden: a place of reflection and learning

Tucked within Keele's beautiful parkland campus, the Memorial Garden is a special place where reflection, nature and learning come together. Developed as a space to be used by staff, students and community, filled with flowering cherry and fruit trees, the garden offers a tranquil space on the outskirts of the busy campus.

The garden forms part of Keele's wider arboretum and the planted cherry trees form part of the National Collection of Flowering Cherry Trees. Students regularly benefit from this natural environment through teaching, research and fieldwork activities, with the grounds serving as a living laboratory across a range of disciplines.

Commenting on the impact of the garden for teaching and learning, Lecturer in Bioscience Dave Hulse says:

"The memorial garden is a vital resource for us to deliver an introduction to fieldwork skills. It is a short walk from our Life Science buildings and is an excellent space to learn ID of key common flowering plants and grasses and learn grassland surveying skills. It is wonderful to have a space so connected to our alumni community, a place of thoughtful reflection where teaching and learning can still take place.

The research literature on students' perceptions of field work tells us that the 'novelty effect' can be overwhelming for some, going to a new place to learn new skills and ID species not seen before, using ID guides not used before, can be too much and can foster disengagement with fieldwork. Anything to reduce the newness of the experience can be really valuable. Thus, our students are learning to ID specimens they have noticed before but maybe do not know the name of, in a place they have probably been before, and on their campus. Reducing this novelty effect has been important on our field courses, we can build on these foundational skills then progress to much more demanding environments such as sand dunes and heathlands.

Similarly, we introduce terrestrial invertebrate and small mammal surveying techniques, giving the students the chance to hone and apply these skills in the memorial garden before progressing to habitats previously unencountered.



In the last two years we have even used the memorial garden as the location for an objective structured practical exam, or OSPE. This assessment is vital in testing students' skills as well as their knowledge. Some assessments take place in the exam hall, we use the memorial garden as an exam hall for parts of our fieldwork training assessments!"

The garden is also home to dedicated trees. One such tribute took place in November 2025, when alumna Sarah Davnall and a group of fellow graduates gathered to plant a memorial tree in honour of her husband, John ("Dav") Davnall, who had passed away two years earlier. Fourteen Keele graduates, together with family members, joined the ceremony, enjoying a reunion in Keele Hall before making their way to the garden to help complete the planting of a damson tree. Native daffodil bulbs were also planted, creating a lasting tribute that will continue to flourish for years to come.

Reflecting on the day, Sarah wrote:

"It was a very enjoyable and happy event. Many of us had booked into the on-campus hotel for one or both nights around the date, so there was plenty of opportunity for reunion and catch-up, and everyone was in excellent form. On the day, we assembled for drinks and an excellent hot buffet lunch in the Old Library of Keele Hall and afterwards walked down to the memorial garden. The weather angels were kind, so although it was dull and damp the rain held off.

Dav's tree, a little damson, was already planted, but the arboretum folk had removed some of the soil so we could each have a turn at shovelling some back in. Afterwards we were able to wander the Keele grounds, visiting other memorial trees and enjoying the amazing autumn colours. As we all know, Keele, being an old stately home, has glorious woodlands".

She also expressed her thanks to the Alumni, Events Management and Arboretum teams for making the occasion so memorable.

Stories such as Sarah's demonstrate the unique role the Memorial Garden plays within the Keele community. Each tree adds to the landscape while creating a lasting connection between alumni, supporters and the University. Memorial plantings ensure that loved ones are remembered in a place that continues to inspire future generations of students.

Support for spaces like the Memorial Garden is only made possible through the generosity of Keele's alumni and supporters allowing the University to care for its campus environment, enhance green spaces and ensure that places such as this continue to thrive.

To find out more, scan the QR code below



A list of dedicated trees can be found at the below link
keele.ac.uk/arboretum/legacytreesandbenches

CAMPUS NEWS

Past vs Present: save the date!

It's time to pull out those Team Keele ties, start practicing your victory celebrations, and get ready for a trip down memory lane...

We're delighted to announce that Past vs Present is returning for 2026!

Save the date: Saturday 7th November 2026

Join us for a day dedicated to everything that makes Team Keele special, as alumni return to campus to compete, spectate, reconnect and relive the memories that made their time at Keele unforgettable.

Throughout the day, our sports clubs will be inviting alumni back to take part in and watch a range of fixtures and activities, bringing together past and present generations of Team Keele. Whether you're stepping back onto the pitch, court, or sidelines, it's set to be a fantastic celebration of Keele sport and community.

And that's not all...

For the first time ever, we're excited to be hosting a Past vs Present Alumni Dinner at Keele Hall in the evening.

This special evening will give alumni the chance to reconnect with old teammates, share stories from years gone by, and perhaps even relive some of those legendary AU Winter Ball memories.

More details about the dinner and ticket information will be released in the coming months as these will be limited, but for now, make sure the date is firmly in your diary.

We can't wait to welcome you back to campus for a day of sport, nostalgia, and Team Keele spirit.

Save the date and watch this space!

Keep up to date:



Fixture details and club plans are still being finalised, but you can keep up to date with the latest information here:
keelesu.com/events/6033/11859



CAMPUS NEWS

Your future, at Keele: Continue your journey with postgraduate study

For postgraduates, our rural campus provides an environment that is focused, relevant, and mature. Whether you're looking to specialise in your field, deepen your knowledge, or gain a competitive edge in the job market, postgraduate study allows you to build on your experience in a supportive and familiar environment.

Our career-focused master's courses combine advanced study with practical learning supported by funding opportunities, varied study options, and multiple start dates throughout the year to provide added flexibility.

We spoke to Oluwaferanmi (pictured, right), an MSc Digital Marketing student, about her experience of postgraduate study at Keele.

Why did you choose postgraduate study?

It felt like the right 'next step' in progressing my career. Building strong and high-quality knowledge to support the experience I've previously gained, while also preparing me for the next stage of my journey.

What's been the biggest surprise about studying at Keele?

A lot of things surprised me when I came to Keele. From the constant support from student services, to having an assigned academic tutor guide you every step of the way, and the wide array of resources available to support learning. More importantly for me, is the blend of academic theory and practical application that stand out making stepping into a job afterwards feel far less daunting because you are prepared.

How have you found balancing postgraduate study with your other commitments?

There is a lot of flexibility, especially with how the academic calendar and timetabling are structured, giving you space to pursue other things. Balancing everything has been quite easy for me as I work part-time and still have a lot of time to spend with my friends and family.

How has your course helped you gain real-world experience?

I have had numerous opportunities to network with brilliant professionals through events and meetings designed to connect postgraduate students with industry leaders. I had the opportunity to meet a marketing leader at Netflix, which was incredible. Beyond that, consultancy and placement opportunities like working with the local council have allowed me to help solve real-world problems and understand how business structures work in practice. That's something I don't take for granted.

What's your advice for anyone considering a postgraduate degree?

I believe in going for things we want, even if it feels a little scary. Speak to people currently on the course, ask questions, explore scholarships and funding opportunities to support your journey, and attend a Postgraduate Open Event to get a real feel of the environment. Most importantly, dare to dream. Do this for your future self.

Postgraduate study alumni rewards

As a valued member of our alumni community, you can find out more about postgraduate study and your exclusive benefits on our Alumni Rewards webpage - including **up to 20% off your postgraduate tuition fees with our Alumni Discount***



Find out more:

Postgraduate study alumni rewards
*Full eligibility criteria and terms apply



CAMPUS NEWS

Keele University launches pioneering green hydrogen generation hub

Keele University has launched a new Green Hydrogen Generation Hub, strengthening its position as a national leader in low-carbon energy research. Senior figures from government, industry and climate science visited campus for the official opening, which showcased Keele's unique approach to producing hydrogen from excess renewable energy generated on site.



(L-R) Dr Charlie Creissen, Professor Anna Meredith OBE, Baroness Luciana Berger, Professor Kevin Shakesheff, Professor Mark Ormerod OBE, and Chris Garlick.

The university has a strong track record in hydrogen innovation, from hosting the UK's first live-gas-grid hydrogen-blending trial (HyDeploy) to leading the HyDEX project preparing the Midlands for the hydrogen economy.

The new facilities use an electrolyser powered entirely by Keele's own renewable electricity—produced by two wind turbines and more than 12,000 solar panels through the Smart Energy Network Demonstrator. This allows researchers to generate and store truly “green” hydrogen without relying on imported supplies, offering a distinctive testbed for developing future materials, technologies and infrastructure.

Hydrogen from the hub is already in use, fuelling two Toyota Mirai vehicles recently added to the university fleet. The electrolyser will also underpin new research into hydrogen systems that could support national efforts to cut carbon emissions.

Representatives from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, leading manufacturers including JCB and Toyota, and climate experts attended the launch.

Dr Charlie Creissen said the hub marks “a major milestone on the path to a more sustainable future,” while Professor Mark Ormerod highlighted the unique integration of the university's renewable energy park and hydrogen systems. Baroness Luciana Berger praised Keele's ambition and the project's potential contribution to the UK's low-carbon transition.

RESEARCH

Keele researcher secures funding to help treat war-related burn injuries in Ukraine

A Keele University scientist has secured international funding for research that could help improve treatment for patients suffering severe burn injuries caused by the war in Ukraine.

Dr Oksana Kehoe (pictured, right) has partnered with researchers at Ternopil National Medical University, in Ukraine, on a project investigating innovative cell-free regenerative therapies for burn wounds.

The collaboration is one of only 22 projects selected for support through the Seed Funding Programme within the Twinning Initiative administered by Cormack Consultancy Group (CCG), chosen from 234 applications submitted by universities and research institutions across Ukraine and around the world.

The research addresses an urgent healthcare challenge in Ukraine, where the number of complex burn and blast-related injuries has increased significantly following Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022. Burn injuries are associated with a high risk of complications, including infections, organ failure, and psychological trauma.

The project will examine the effectiveness of cell-free regenerative medicine approaches that could improve wound healing and support better clinical decision-making for patients with severe burns.

Dr Kehoe, Reader in Inflammation Biology at Keele University, said the war in Ukraine had made the research "more urgent and clinically relevant."

"Ukrainian hospitals are treating increasing numbers of military personnel and civilians with blast-related burns, contaminated wounds, tissue loss, infection complications, delayed healing, and severe scarring," she said.

"These are often combined with injuries that damage arteries and veins, fractures, or soft-tissue defects, making treatment especially complex. This reality has directed the project toward advanced regenerative approaches for difficult wartime wounds."

"While standard burn care remains essential, there is a strong need for additional treatments alongside standard care that can accelerate wound closure, improve tissue regeneration, reduce excessive inflammation and scarring, prevent tightening of the skin that can restrict movement, and improve long-term recovery."

The UK-Ukraine Twinning Initiative has created more than 100 partnerships between UK and Ukrainian universities, helping to strengthen research, education and innovation despite the disruption caused by war.

Dr Oksana, who moved to the UK from Ukraine in 2000 after completing her PhD and first postdoctoral position there, added: "This approach has the potential to support the body's natural healing processes while being easier to produce and deliver than some existing regenerative treatments."

"In Ukraine, where many patients are suffering complex burn injuries caused by explosions and other wartime trauma, it could help address a significant and urgent medical need."

"Although the research is particularly relevant to conflict-related injuries, the therapies being investigated could also have important applications for civilians who suffer severe burns from accidents and fires."



In *memoriam*

You can read the full tributes to all alumni remembered here on the 'in memory' web pages: [keele.ac.uk/inmemory](https://www.keele.ac.uk/inmemory)

Sandra Marjorie Alderton (Née Kelly)

KEELE UNIVERSITY'S
ATHLETIC UNION
ADMINISTRATOR

Sandra Marjorie Alderton (Née Kelly) was born in Liverpool on 7th June 1939 and passed peacefully in her sleep after a short illness on November 25th 2025.

Sandra was Keele University's Athletic Union Administrator for nineteen years from 1985 to 2004. She enjoyed every aspect of her job, organising and co ordinating the sports clubs, liaising with other Universities to arrange fixtures and being something of a surrogate mother to many of students.

She remained close to her colleagues in the AU admin teams at other universities and had lifelong friendships with a great many students, following their lives and careers with great interest.

Link to full obituary:
<https://www.keele.ac.uk/about/alumni/alumnicommunity/inmemory/#sandra-marjorie-alderton>



Sheila Binns (née West)

CLASS OF 1972
BA FRENCH &
RUSSIAN STUDIES

Sheila Binns (née West) died on 18 May 2025. Sheila arrived at Keele in the late 1960s, drawn - by her own admission - to a university far enough from home to offer independence, yet close enough for occasional weekends back in London. It was here that she built some of the friendships that would sustain her for the rest of her life, and where her intellectual curiosity, love of languages, and appetite for new experiences truly flourished.

Studying French and Russian, Sheila embraced the breadth and openness of a Keele education.



She was diligent in her studies and seized the opportunities that came with them - including a memorable trip to Russia that left a lasting impression. But it was the life-long friendships forged at Keele, as much as the academic experiences, that she cherished most deeply.

After graduating in 1972, Sheila brought the confidence and independence nurtured at Keele to a varied and adventurous career. She joined the British Council, where she temporarily became the first woman to serve as Assistant Representative in Sierra Leone. Her time there was, in her words, "life-changing".

Her career later took her into higher education administration and teaching, before a so-called "retirement" that was anything but. Sheila continued to study - earning further degrees including an MBA, PGCE and MA - and went on to become a respected authority on Victorian architecture. Her biography of architect W. H. Crossland, creator of Royal Holloway's Founders Building, established her national profile in the field.

Though her life took her far from Keele, she carried its values with her: a belief in lifelong learning, a commitment to community, and a deep appreciation for history, culture and social justice. These qualities shaped her contributions as a volunteer archivist, researcher, writer, village hall committee member, and dedicated guide for heritage groups and societies.

Sheila is remembered by her family as determined, dynamic, compassionate, intellectually curious, and fiercely fair - a woman whose encyclopaedic knowledge was matched only by her warmth and humanity.

She leaves behind her husband, Peter, her sons Rowan and Lawrence, her grandchildren, and a wide circle of friends whose lives were enriched by her generosity, humour and insight.

Link to full obituary:
<https://www.keele.ac.uk/about/alumni/alumnicommunity/inmemory/#sheila-binns>



Helen Anne Ross

CLASS OF 1984,
POLITICS & PSYCHOLOGY

Helen died on 3 May 2026 at the age of 64.

Helen loved her time at Keele and threw herself into study, social life and the operation of the university democracy. She was secretary and treasurer of several student societies, coordinator of the Women's Resource Centre, block rep on the hall council and a student representative to the University Grants Commission. She also held the exalted position of Chipfinder General, whose function was to alert meetings of the SU when the chip van arrived in the car park.

Helen met her future husband Tim at Keele although it wasn't until their paths crossed again four years later that they became a couple. Nineteen years and three engagement rings after that they were married on a beach in Jamaica. Helen was in hospital when she and Tim celebrated their twenty-first wedding anniversary, two weeks before she died.

Link to full obituary:
<https://www.keele.ac.uk/about/alumni/alumnicommunity/inmemory/#helen-anne-ross>



Hilary Gee

CLASS OF 1966
BIOLOGY & GEOLOGY

Written by Tom Fraser

"My partner Hilary died of biliary sepsis and related complications on September 3rd 2025. She spent 8 years as a student and/or employee at Keele: 1st degree in Biology & Geology 1962-66, returned as a Biology Demonstrator from 1973 to 1976, and then studied for a PGCE in 1976-77. She was also Resident Tutor in Sneyd Hall from 1973 to 1977.

I exploded into her life in December 1975, a slightly mature Oxford graduate, doing a MA in American History & Politics in the American Studies Dept., when we met at the Postgrads' Xmas party. We made a good team – e.g. I've got a photographic memory so I could always tell her how to spell a word – and Hilary could always tell me what it meant! She was the most widely-read and intelligent individual I ever met.

The Resident Tutor's job came with a flat, which I moved into in the summer to save money – after which we considered ourselves co-habitees.

We shared a common interest in travel and mountains, but as we both hated airports, most summers we took a car ferry to Europe and headed to the Alps with our tent, via various wine regions. Norway, Spain and California came into the equation in other years.

She was always a passionate conservationist, supported wildlife charities and was a defender of the downtrodden and underprivileged, as well as a pacifist – she was still a CND member right to the end, but her disability increased her fervour as she conducted a one-woman armchair campaign, writing to MPs and ministers and making a huge number of small donations to the charities she supported.

Hilary: best pal, best lover, soulmate, laugh-mate and Sugar Magnolia. You are missed by all who knew you."

Link to full obituary:
<https://www.keele.ac.uk/about/alumni/alumnicomunity/inmemory/#hilary-gee>

Arthur Alan Treherne

CLASS OF 1961,
PHILOSOPHY &
MATHEMATICS

Alan was born in Hammersmith on 24 April 1938 and raised in Cobham and Barnes. At the age of 5 he received a good school report, particularly with regard to Mathematics, but was also described as being 'somewhat disobedient' – a term which the family like to think was a clear indication that he was an independent thinker from a very early age!

Awarded a double First-Class degree from Keele, Alan went on to work on one of the first computers as a Mathematical Logic research student in Manchester. He then went on to lecture in Mathematics at Glasgow University before returning to Keele to lecture in Philosophy in 1967. At the age of 47, he undertook a post-graduate Conversion Course in Computer Science at Imperial College, London, returning to Keele the following year to lecture in the Department of Computer Science. He became Head of Computer Science in 1988, and those he worked with greatly appreciated his people management skills. During his time at Keele he also worked as Admissions Tutor for both Philosophy and Computer Science and travelled abroad to recruit students.



Outside of academia, Alan possessed an extraordinary range of interests, as a committed Methodist lay preacher, gifted linguist, musician, clockmaker, and community campaigner. He was also Council Member of the Antiquarian Horological Society from 1977-2018, being appointed a Fellow of the Society (FAHS) in 2020.

Alan Treherne did not need to be at the front of the room. But for more than half a century he helped hold a scholarly community together – quietly, diligently, and with immense generosity. Much of what future researchers will take for granted will rest on foundations that Alan quietly laid. For that, and for his generosity of spirit, we owe him more than we can easily say.

Link to full obituary:
<https://www.keele.ac.uk/about/alumni/alumnicomunity/inmemory/#arthur-alan-treherne>

Ruth Raymond

CLASS OF 1956,
MATHEMATICS & PHYSICS
10.11.1932 – 27.01.2026

Ruth Raymond (née Grainger) was born in London and spent her childhood between London and Shropshire before attending King Edward VI High School for Girls in Birmingham. She went on to study at Keele University, joining one of its earliest cohorts of students and graduating with a BA in mathematics and physics (1951–56). As a woman studying science subjects in the early years of the university, she was something of a rarity, and she remained a proud alumna throughout her life. She spoke about Keele's founding vision, particularly its emphasis on interdisciplinary understanding, as formative to her intellectual outlook.

Ruth led a remarkably wide-ranging and pioneering professional career. She initially worked at Sperry Gyroscope, writing up research and development projects, where she later remarked that she "got into the habit of polishing the mathematics" produced by engineers. When her head of department moved into rocket design in Bracknell, Ruth followed him into aerodynamics, working for several years as a flight analyst, including at Hawker Siddeley Dynamics. Her career later broadened into computing and applied maths across an unusually diverse range of sectors. After her marriage to Eugene Raymond, Ruth lived for several years in the 1960s in Trinidad, where she taught maths and physics

at Bishop Anstey High School in Port of Spain. At a time when opportunities for girls to study science were limited, her teaching opened doors for many young women who later went on to careers in medicine, science, and engineering. She later returned to England, living for some years in Leamington Spa before settling back in London, where she spent the final four decades of her life.

Ruth was a committed feminist, humanist and a longstanding member of the Labour Party, opposing discrimination not only in principle but in practice. She travelled widely and retained close international friendships throughout her life, including several with family and friends in Trinidad. She died aged 93, having lived a life marked by intellectual curiosity, independence, and a determination to do things her own way.

Link to full obituary:
<https://www.keele.ac.uk/about/alumni/alumnicomunity/inmemory/#ruth-raymond>





Alan Emerson Tipper

CLASS OF 1954
FRENCH & ENGLISH

Alan was born in Leek, Staffordshire, and was one of the first students to attend Keele which is where he met his future wife, Yvonne Jervis. They were happily married for an entire lifetime of 69 years before Alan passed away recently this year in Surrey, where Yvonne still lives.

Alan always had a very strong connection with Keele as after obtaining his ALA Library qualifications at Manchester, he then returned and spent all his working life at the University Library until his retirement. Both his children attended Keele nursery and his daughter was christened at the new University Chapel on its opening in 1965.

He had fond memories of his student days and career at Keele, often telling tales about living in the army huts before the refectory and University Chapel were built, and the opening of the New Library Building by Sir Sydney Roberts in 1962.

Both he and Yvonne thoroughly enjoyed attending the alumni reunions over the years whilst they still lived in North Staffordshire and they made long standing, valuable friendships with fellow students from those early Keele years.

Link to full obituary:
<https://www.keele.ac.uk/about/alumni/alumnicommunity/inmemory/#alan-emerson-tipper>

Eric Batten

CLASS OF 1957
ECONOMIC & POLITICS

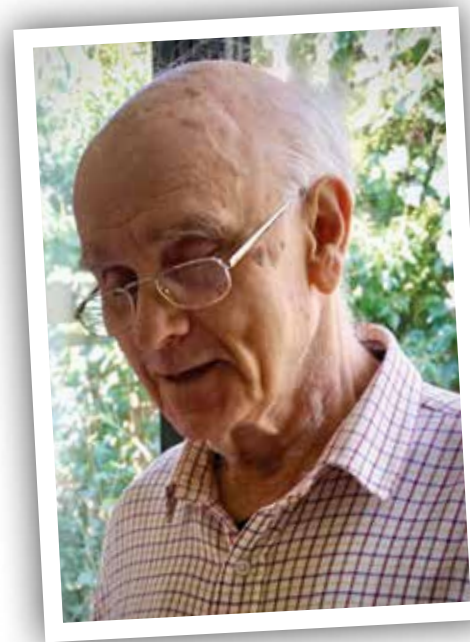
Eric came to Keele in 1953 after a year's National Service. His main subjects were Politics, Philosophy and Economics, plus a teaching qualification. While at Keele he met his future wife, Elizabeth "Betty" Dutton. They were married in 1959.

Some of the things Eric enjoyed at Keele were table tennis (sometimes playing for the team) and helping backstage at a wonderful production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" staged by the lake.

After graduating, Eric took up teaching, first at William Penn School in Peckham, one of the first Comprehensive schools. After teaching for a short time at London College of Printing he moved, in 1965, with his wife and baby girl to Manchester University to take up a research post. This involved interviewing families to assess the connection between family situations and its influence on the academic achievement of its children, based on the Plowden report.

While at Manchester, Eric became a lecturer in the Education Department and gained his doctorate, PhD. After more than twenty years at Manchester University, on his retirement Eric worked for Stockport MIND.

On being diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, Eric immediately wanted to be involved in, in his words,



"something to make things better," and became involved with a charity called EDUCATE whose aim is to "make the environment more dementia-friendly" and to help make the general public more able to understand these debilitating illnesses.

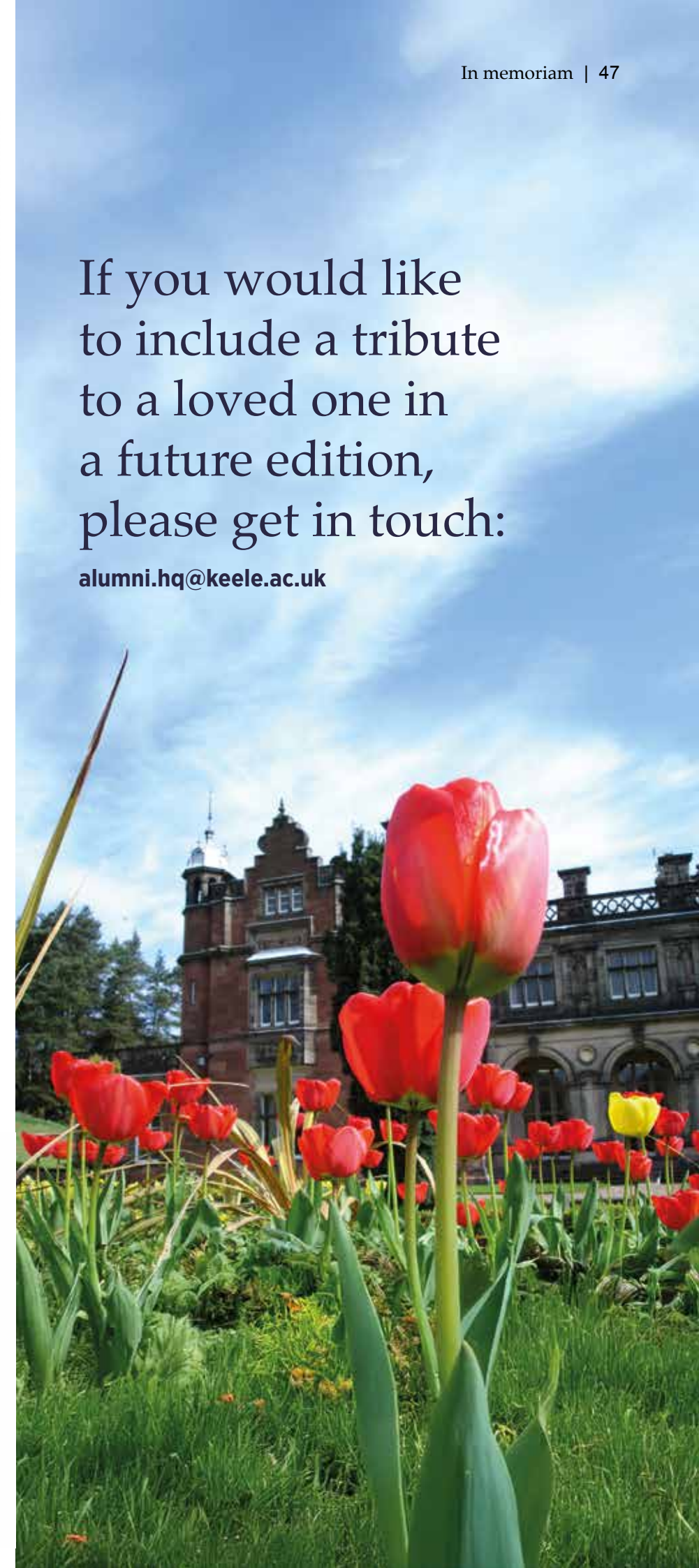
Eric died on September 19th, 2025. He is sadly missed by his friends and family, his wife, three children, foster son and two grandchildren.

Link to full obituary:
<https://www.keele.ac.uk/about/alumni/alumnicommunity/inmemory/#eric-batten>



If you would like to include a tribute to a loved one in a future edition, please get in touch:

alumni.hq@keele.ac.uk





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