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YORK
ST JOHN
UNIVERSITY

Alumni Magazine

2024/2025

1841



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Vice Chancellor's introduction

A very warm welcome to the third edition of our Alumni magazine at York St John University. As Vice Chancellor, it is always a pleasure to write to you as a valued member of our community, and to update you on the amazing work of our students and staff throughout the year.

Inside these pages, we have lots to share. From exciting developments across our academic schools, and alumni stories to be proud of, to a sneak preview of our 2025 reunion plans. This magazine is packed full of stories to help keep you connected with your university.

This month will see York St John launch its new Strategy, setting out a vision for the type of university we want to be in the future. 'The University for Social Impact' builds on our incredible journey, right from our foundation over 180 years ago, to reflect a longstanding commitment to improving lives through education. We will be sharing more details of our vision and future aims with you in our regular alumni newsletters so please do look out for this.

I hope our new strategy will resonate with you, and that you continue to be proud of our work.

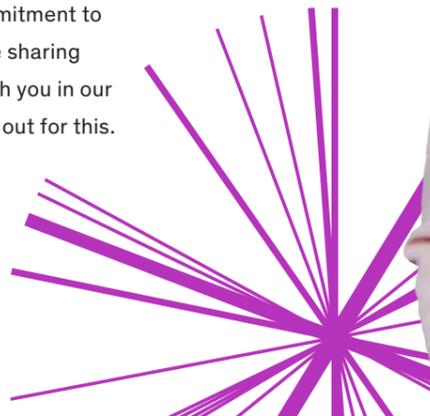
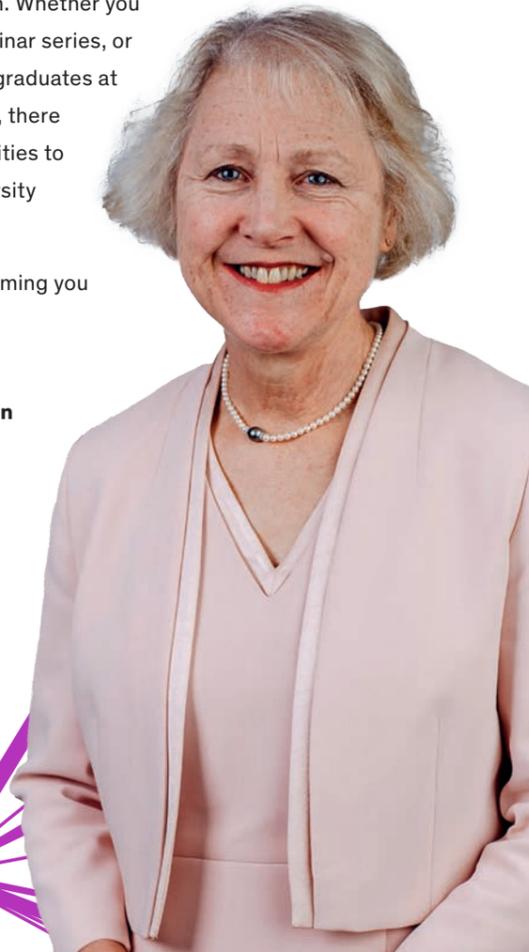
Please do stay in touch. Whether you join our upcoming webinar series, or reconnect with fellow graduates at our networking events, there are plenty of opportunities to engage with our university community.

I look forward to welcoming you back soon.

Kind regards

Professor Karen Bryan

Vice Chancellor



Welcome from the alumni team

Welcome to this year's edition of 1841, your annual Alumni Magazine. We hope you enjoy learning more about current research, projects and trips happening in our Schools, and discovering more about our history, and how we plan to celebrate the creation of the College of Ripon and York St John.



In the next few months, we're excited to connect with alumni in Darlington and Ripon, celebrate the Class of 2024 at graduation, and continue sharing your stories and successes with our community.

In 2025, we're excited to host our next all-years, all-campus reunion at our York campus. We hope you are able to join us on Saturday 28 June 2025 for a fantastic day.

We're also excited to continue supporting our current students in an ever changing world. With you, we can support students to continue their studies and get the most from their time studying at York St John, just like you did. Thank you to everyone who makes our work possible, including alumni who share their stories and expertise with us, staff who support our events, our generous donor community, and everyone who helped make this magazine possible through their contributions.

We can't wait to share your stories, celebrate your successes and welcome you back to campus over the next year.

Best wishes, The Alumni Team

Upcoming alumni activity

We are always looking at how we can enhance your alumni experience. In the last year this has included launching two alumni networks, showcasing alumni achievements on Alumination and developing our London campus newsletter. We also hosted our first YSJ Community Festival, and had the opportunity to hold our first international event in New York.

This year we're excited to mark the 50th anniversary of the creation of the College of Ripon and York St John with a range of activities for alumni to enjoy. For more information on how to get involved, please see page 22.



Celebrating our achievements and history

Our alumni have always gone on to do amazing things, and that's why we want to showcase your achievements. On Alumination, we celebrate alumni from across our campuses pursuing careers around the world. If you'd like to share your successes, or share memories of your time studying with us, please complete an alumni snapshot.

In the 2023-2024 academic year, we shared even more webinars from our alumni community. This academic year, we're excited to share seven more, including alumni who studied at our London campus. This year's webinars cover industries as diverse as 2D animation, cyber security, TV production for the BBC and teaching. The first webinar of our new series will be released in October 2024, so keep an eye on your alumni newsletters to find out more!

Every year, we share snippets and more detailed information about our University history. Last year we created a new audio heritage guide for campus, which is narrated by members of our alumni community. We also shared blogs and videos about our past. This year, we'll be looking more closely at the College of Ripon and York St John, and how the amalgamation took place.

Discover your alumni benefits

As an alum of York St John, you can access a range of alumni benefits. This includes discounted room hire at our York campus, lifelong career support, discounted access to The Dock at our London campus, and free in person library access.

You are also entitled to 10% off eligible postgraduate course fees, including PGCE courses and Research Degrees. If you graduated recently, you are also eligible for our Progression Scholarship, which offers an enhanced fee discount on eligible courses.

Quarterly campus newsletters

We produce two quarterly newsletters, one for alumni who studied in Ripon, and another for alumni who studied in London.

Ripon newsletters are sent in March, June, September and December. London newsletters are sent in January, April, July and October.

If you studied at our Ripon or London campuses and haven't been receiving quarterly newsletters alongside your monthly newsletter, please update your details by completing the form on our website, or emailing alumni@yorks.ac.uk.



You can learn more about your alumni benefits, upcoming events and discover our blog on our website. You can also submit a snapshot, connect to Aluminations and watch our webinars from our website too: www.yorks.ac.uk/alumni

You can stay in touch with us by following us on Facebook, Instagram and on X, just search 'ysj alumni'.



Alumni networks and events

This year, we launched two new alumni networks. In March we welcomed local alumni to our London campus for a keynote address from the Head of Membership at the Royal Opera House, Jessica Thompson. As a published author, Jessica also spoke about her parallel writing career and how she manages her time.

On Wednesday 30 October, we're excited to launch our second alumni network in Darlington. All North East based alumni are invited to join us in Darlington for an evening of reconnecting with your alumni community. This event will consist of a brief introduction from the Alumni & Fundraising team, light nibbles, a quiz and time to chat to alumni. Whether you are looking to find people in your career field or looking to connect with local alumni, this event is an informal opportunity to bring our North East alumni together.

Your YSJ Reunion 2025

Join us on Saturday 28 June 2025 for Your YSJ Reunion 2025! We can't wait to welcome as many alumni as possible to our York campus for a fantastic day of reconnecting, reminiscing and fun.

Listening to our alumni

In July 2023, we held our first reunion this decade and had a great day, despite the wet weather. Afterwards, we asked for your feedback so we could make our next major event even better!

Some of you asked for a more family friendly atmosphere, so we ran our first YSJ Community Festival in June 2024. Open to alumni and our wider community, our family friendly Festival gave alumni a chance to return to York, enjoy our facilities and try something new. For more information on this year's Festival, please see page 21.

We also received feedback about the wet weather. That's why we're planning a slightly different reunion set up so that the weather doesn't matter, although we'll still be keeping our fingers crossed for sunshine.

You also asked for more organised activity during the day, so keep an eye out for a slightly more structured day, for those who want it! We'll be reviving our Treasure Hunt, holding a quiz and giving you space to connect with other alumni who studied at the same time as you.



Reunion details

We're still working out all the details for Your YSJ Reunion 2025, and we're excited to make it our best reunion to date! So far we can tell you there will be:

- Different tickets so you can decide how much of the day you attend
- Bookable campus tours
- Mini exhibitions, including one about the College of Ripon and York St John
- Collection points for the CRYSJ yearbook and badges
- A reunion dinner
- Opportunities to connect with alumni who studied at the same time as you

Supporting our students

For Your YSJ Reunion 2025, all ticket prices will again include a contribution to our scholarship fund. In 2023, Your YSJ Reunion raised over £2800 for our alumni-funded scholarships from ticket sales alone! On page 8, you can find out more about the students we support and the impact of your donations.

As with any of our alumni events, tickets are priced to cover costs and not to make a profit. In the event we don't spend as much as anticipated (for example if we are charged less than anticipated for a service), any surplus funds will be donated to our scholarship fund.



Register your interest

We want to know how many alumni are interested in attending Your YSJ Reunion 2025 so we can start working on the finer details, including ticket prices and whether we need a bigger venue for our reunion dinner.

If you register your interest, you'll also receive early booking access so you can guarantee your tickets.

Upcoming alumni events



There's always something happening at York St John University! From one-off events like book launches or performances, to our annual Chancellor's lecture, Ebor lectures or our Inaugural Lecture series, alumni can return to campus for a range of exciting events all year round. We always try to share upcoming events in your monthly newsletters, but you can also connect with our Events team directly to see what's happening next on campus!

Find out about upcoming events and connect with our Events team: <https://linktr.ee/ysjevents>

October 2024

Black History Month: Throughout October, York St John will mark Black History Month with a range of events. Full event details and tickets will be available in September.

North East Network: Join us in Darlington on Wednesday 30 October for our first North East Network! Reconnect with friends, hear from the Alumni Office and learn more about our alumni community. If you haven't already received an invite, but would like to attend, please email alumni@yorksja.ac.uk.

Ask Our Alum: In October, we're launching our new Ask Our Alum service where you can support other alumni and current students by answering career questions. You can also use Ask Our Alum to answer your own career and industry questions. To learn more about Ask Our Alum, please visit our website: yorksja.ac.uk/alumni/alumni-community.



November 2024

Graduation in York Minster: We're excited to celebrate the Class of 2024 from our York campus as they mark their achievements. We can't wait to cheer you across the stage during your big day!

Aesthetica Short Film Festival: Did you know that we host several Aesthetica Short Film Festival events? The full programme of events will be released in autumn, and we'll signpost how to book tickets in your monthly newsletters too.



December 2024

Christmas Carol Service: Join us on Monday 2 December for our University's annual Christmas Carol Service at York Minster. Including traditional carols and a student performance, free tickets will be available in November.

A Very Ripon Christmas: If you studied in Ripon, please join us for our second annual Ripon Christmas event, on Thursday 5 December at Ripon Golf Club. Please keep an eye on your emails for more information, or email alumni@yorksja.ac.uk to learn more.



February 2025

LGBTQ+ History month: February is LGBTQ+ History month. To mark this, the University will be hosting a range of events. We'll let you know when tickets are available in your monthly newsletters.

March 2025

International Women's Day: Celebrated on 8 March every year, York St John will be holding events throughout March. We will also share webinars, snapshots and blogs about our alumnae throughout March as well.

York Literature Festival: From bestselling authors to debut writers, York Literature Festival will be taking over York in March. We'll include information on events and how to book in February.

Graduation in London Guildhall: For the first time, we're excited to celebrate the achievements of London graduates in London! If you studied in London, make sure your details are up to date to receive all your Class of 2024 graduation communications closer to the time.

YSJ London Network: Join us for another fantastic networking event in London. Network with local alumni and discover more about your alumni community.

April 2025



York International Shakespeare Festival: To be, or not to be? We're proud to be sponsoring and hosting York International Shakespeare Festival. The Festival will include a range of performances and activities across York. Tickets and a full Festival programme will be available in March.

York Open Studios: Every April, York celebrates local artists by showcasing their work at venues across the city. Last year, over 150 artists and makers took part at over 100 locations. Keep an eye on your newsletters for more information.

June 2025

School of the Arts Festival: Every year our fantastic School of the Arts holds a series of events showcasing the work of their students. Including concerts, screenings and of course, the annual art degree show, keep an eye out for tickets in May.

Festival of Ideas: In June, York holds a Festival of Ideas to bring a range of ideas to the public. From walking tours to lectures, there's something for everyone to enjoy! Including hybrid events, a full event programme will be released in May.

York Pride: Join us for York Pride as we celebrate and support our LGBTQ+ community. York St John will be taking part in the march, so please feel free to join us if you see our banners!

Your YSJ Reunion: Join us on Saturday 28 June 2025 for our bi-annual alumni reunion! Find out more on page 5.



August 2025

York 10k: Lace up your running shoes, we'll be running the York 10k for the third year in a row! Whether you're a seasoned runner or are still working up to a 5k, all alumni are welcome to join our team. Tickets will go on sale in Spring 2025.

Quiet Pride: Keep an eye out for information about attending Quiet Pride, a calm, inclusive and welcoming Pride event for everyone to enjoy. Quiet Pride usually includes bookable scheduled activities too.



October 2025

Black History Month: Join us for a range of events to mark Black History Month. Full event details and tickets will be available in September.

North East Network: Join us for our second North East Network event. Keep an eye on your newsletters and emails for more information.



With you we can do more

Regular donations from York St John University alumni are giving new students the opportunity to flourish. York St John has always had a strong community spirit, and our alumni carry this with them by giving back to the next generation and collectively making an impact.



This year, we created a video campaign which showcased the impact your donations have and the need for your continued support.



You can watch the video here

www.youtube.com/watch?v=A3DacVliBaA

If you donated £5 every month, your donations alone could pay for a parking permit for students like Katy, who commute to university. You can read more about Katy's story on the next page.

Last year, thanks to the generosity of our alumni donors, we were able to support 10 new scholarship recipients. This means that over the past 5 years, your regular donations have supported 55 students reach their potential, including product designers, mental health nurses, creative writers, and counsellors.

If you would like to join our growing community of regular donors, please see the enclosed donation insert for our standing order form and information on how to set up a regular donation online.

Thanks to you we can do more.

It only takes 25 individuals donating £10 a month to fund a three-year Welcome Back to Education Scholarship like Katy's.



When I found out I had been accepted for the scholarship I was over the moon!

Katy graduated from her Law degree this year and was a recipient of our Welcome Back to Education Scholarship from 2022 to 2024.

Why did you apply for the alumni-funded scholarship?

I applied for an alumni-funded scholarship for financial assistance due to difficulties I was facing after my first year of study.

I am a single parent with a young daughter and no financial help from my family. This had a huge effect on my mental health during my first year of university as I was struggling to pay bills and feed us both on just my student loan. We also commute to York every day, which further added to the difficulties I was facing. I unfortunately cannot work during term time, only school holidays, as I do not have any other childcare than that of holiday clubs and wrap-around school care.

How did the scholarship help you?

By the end of my first year, I was honestly contemplating not returning to university as I did not feel it was fair for my daughter to suffer. So, when I found out I had been accepted for the scholarship I was over the moon.

I am a mature Law student and hope to carry on to qualify as a Family Law solicitor when I leave university

after I complete the LPC (Legal Practice Course). The scholarship has helped me and my daughter so much, as I have been able to break it down over the course of the year for any large expenditures I have to make. Leaving my student loan to pay for the day-to-day things.

What would you like to say to those who supported your scholarship?

I would like to take this chance to thank the Alumni for donating to this fund and allowing students like me the opportunity to further educate myself and go on to a rewarding career. The scholarship has taken the pressure away for me to be able to achieve the grades I deserve. I completed my second year with a high 2:1 and was entered on to the Honour Role for finishing within the top 10% of my year and the Contributory Role for my work in the law clinic and helping others.

By donating today, you can help open the doors of education to students like Katy and allow them to pursue their dreams. Thank you.

A fundraising update

Since your last alumni magazine, we've had a fantastic year of fundraising activity! We introduced a new event to thank our donors, ran the York 10k for the second time and launched a new scholarship to assist even more students, thanks to the generous support of two new donors.

Donor Christmas Event 2023

Ahead of the Christmas Carol service last December, we hosted a festive gathering with drinks and nibbles to thank all those who had supported our students that year. Afterwards, we joined the rest of the University community to enjoy the Christmas Carol Service in York Minster. If you have donated this year, please keep an eye out for your invitation which will be sent out in November.

Cordukes Circle Event 2024

We were delighted to welcome members of our Cordukes Circle back to campus in February for our annual Cordukes Circle event. This year, guests received a tour of our new Communities Centre before attending the Chancellor's Lecture given by Katya Adler, BBC's Europe Editor. Professor Karen Bryan OBE thanked members for their continued support of the University, and it was fantastic to see past colleagues and classmates reunited in support of our students.

York 10k 2024

Building on the success of last year's run, a new group of YSJ staff, students and alumni took part in the York 10k. Team camaraderie was high with some members of the team completing a 10k for the first time. There was plenty to celebrate including raising over £1500 for our alumni-funded scholarships.

This will directly support underrepresented students, allowing them access to the YSJ education we know and love. If you want to join our growing team, we will be back to run the York 10k in 2025!



Fundraising Highlights

This year, we have received four generous donations from our community to support our students through scholarships.

We are incredibly thankful to a graduate of the university, 1983-1987, and her partner who was a lecturer at the university for creating the Gateway Scholarship, a new scholarship which will support more students access education at York St John.

We are delighted to say that the Ed De Nunzio Charitable Trust are continuing their support of York St John University students with a further donation towards the Ed De Nunzio Scholarship. The Trust provides grants to support children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds offering them opportunities to expand their physical, educational, social and emotional horizons. The grant will be used to offer a scholarship of £1,000 per year for 3 years to help support 4 students facing financial difficulties. The students supported will be from York and the surrounding area and be aged 25 or under.

We have also been successful in receiving funds from The Fernhurst Trust and the York Common Good Trust to further support our alumni-funded scholarships.

We are incredibly humbled by this support.



Ripon College's final principal

As we begin a year of celebrating the creation of the College of Ripon and York St John, we look back at Ripon College's final years under its last Principal, Marjorie Gage.

A growing College

In January 1961, Principal Gage joined a women's college on the precipice of change. With 235 students enrolled, 40 lived elsewhere due to a lack of onsite accommodation, unintentionally increasing student freedoms.

When the three year teacher training course was introduced in September 1961, College life changed forever; students had more time than ever before to develop inside and outside the classroom.

Centenary celebrations

In July 1963, Ripon College celebrated its centenary. Nearly 1000 alumnae and staff attended a reunion to celebrate, reminisce and see how College had changed. For the reunion's oldest attendee, Class of 1901 alumna Bertha Walker, the College must have seemed very different. The 1899 chapel, which had been new when Bertha started, had recently been converted into a library, and a new, modernist chapel had been built in replacement!

By September 1963, the College had grown to 370 students and an era of continued growth and security seemed certain. But history tells us a slightly different story.

Looking back, looking ahead

Throughout the sixties, Ripon College continued to innovate. In 1965, men were admitted for the first time and from 1967, students could complete an optional fourth year to receive a Bachelor of Education degree. But uptake was low. In its first year, only six out of 576 students were fourth year students, and only 25 students were men!

Whilst looking ahead, Ripon College continued to honour its past. In 1969, three important people from the College's history were remembered on campus. A former vice-chair of Governors, Dean Wilkinson, was remembered with 'The Wilkie'. Our first female Principal was commemorated in the Eva Lett House, and Maud Buysman, who retired in 1946 after a 43 year College career, was memorialised by furnishing the new School Practise Library.

The final years

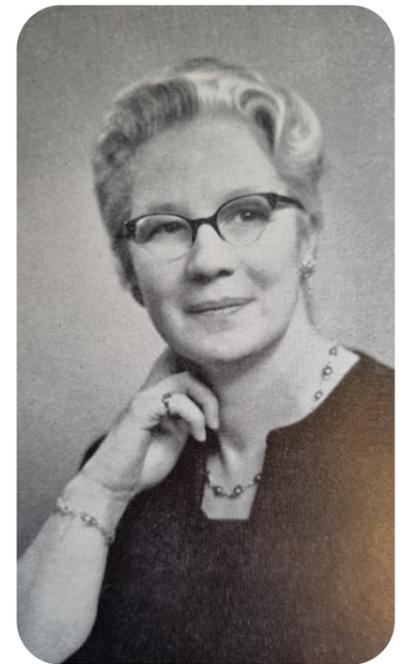
By 1971, Ripon College had nearly 600 students and some of the best exam results for any College overseen by the University of Leeds. But with a declining national birth rate, government reports questioned the number of teacher training places on offer.

North Yorkshire had three teacher training colleges: Ripon College, St John's College in York and East Riding College in Scarborough. The reduced number of teacher training places wasn't enough to sustain all three colleges, and it soon became clear that colleges around the country would need to adapt to survive.

As other teacher training colleges looked for solutions, Principal Gage and Principal Barnett from St John's made a radical suggestion: reunifying their two colleges and offering a much wider selection of courses. In late 1974 they finally received government approval, leaving them only a few months to complete the amalgamation.

The end of an era

Ripon College closed its door for the final time in Summer 1975. Thanks to Principal Gage's efforts, when the College of Ripon and York St John opened its doors in September 1975, Ripon campus was an equal partner in an exciting new educational era.



For more information on how we're marking 50 years since the amalgamation and the creation of the College of Ripon and York St John, please see page 22.



The School of the Arts

The School of the Arts has had a very busy year. Staff and students hosted festivals, produced music at an iconic location and supported our local community. In this year's magazine, we take a closer look at some of this year's highlights.

A year of festivals

Alongside their usual work, Performance students and staff took part in a range of wider reaching activities. This included the School of the Arts and the School of Humanities co-hosting this year's York International Shakespeare Festival. Our York St John University choir also performed in the Cathedral Group Universities Choirs Festival in Chester Cathedral, a fantastic opportunity for our students!

In May, students hosted another successful York Theatre Royal Takeover Festival. During this weeklong takeover, students organize, advertise and produce a range of performances and activities.

Supporting our local community

In the last twelve months, our Design students and staff have been very busy. Our Virtual and Augmented reality research group has further developed, taking their research into primary schools. Their work aims to make teaching science more engaging for pupils.



“Despite the growing potential of using augmented reality, there remains a low uptake for teaching and learning due to constraints in day-to-day delivery in primary classrooms.” Warren Fearn, Associate Professor in Virtual and Augmented Reality

Meanwhile, our Interior Design Students worked with Converge, an ongoing arts project to support mental health and wellbeing, to develop inclusive, welcoming, and accessible spaces for mental health service users in our community.

Our Animation students have also been collaborating with local businesses as part of their work-place learning. A small group of recent graduates have even set up their own Animation business, Hijinks Studios, which offers bespoke animated content and is currently based in our Enterprise Centre.

On track for success

In January, second year student, Ellie Philips, won a prestigious scriptwriting award for her first ever script. 'Season of the Witch' is a nostalgic trip to childhood trick or treating, with a sinister twist. We can't wait to see how Ellie develops her work in her final year!

Earlier this year, final year Music Production students returned to London's Abbey Road Studios to record and produce their work as part of an ongoing project with BBC Music Introducing in York & Humberside. Students spent two days in Studio 2, the same studio used by The Beatles, Kate Bush, and Ed Sheeran. The final tracks, produced by our students, were broadcast this Summer.



City wide art

If you visited York this Spring, you'd have seen a city overrun with Snooks as part of a charity tourist trail. But did you know that one of them was designed by second year student, Emma Parker? When Emma's Snook was auctioned, it raised £1150 for St Leonard's Hospice and the York Creates Fund.

In April, students also exhibited their work during York Open Studios, a city-wide initiative to showcase the city's artists and makers. It was great to see students exhibit to such a broad audience!

The School of Humanities

The School of Humanities has enjoyed a successful year. In this year's magazine we share how staff and students got involved with York Literature Festival and how the Centre for Religion in Society is welcoming everyone to consider a new viewpoint.

Considering new perspectives

During term time, our Centre for Religion in Society holds a weekly research seminar. Held in person, online or as a hybrid session, speakers cover a wide range of topics including faith, global perspectives and social justice issues. Everyone is welcome to attend and a full list of upcoming topics, and how to watch previous seminars is available on their blog.

Alongside weekly seminars, the Centre has relaunched the Ebor Lectures series. First established in 2006, the lectures are sponsored by a range of organisations, including York Minster, the local Methodist Church, York Area Society of Friends, and the J B Morrell Trust. Lectures aim to share knowledge and inspire creative decision-making across a diverse range of religious beliefs. Previous speakers have included astronomers, archbishops and social activists! Keep an eye on your alumni newsletters to learn about the next Ebor Lecture.

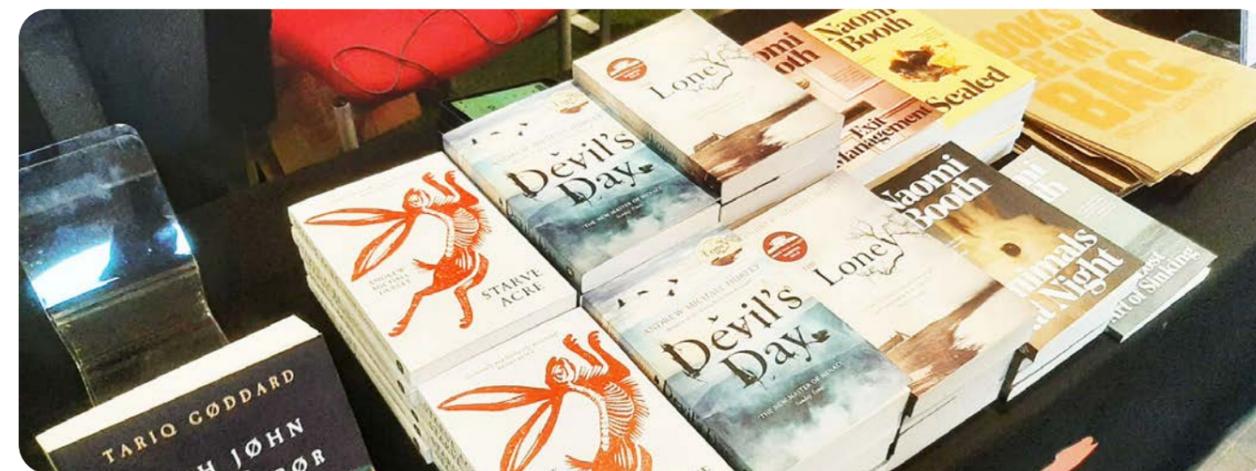


Find out more about upcoming seminars:
<https://blog.yorks.ac.uk/cris/events-and-news>

York Literature Festival

In March 2024, York Literature Festival delighted audiences in venues around York, including several on campus. For the second year running, York St John University sponsored the Festival, which included a whole day dedicated to Folk Horror, a writing workshop and an author panel about Writing the Future, and a Publishers and Agents panel giving practical advice to budding writers. York St John staff also provided their expertise by interviewing authors and speaking on topics ranging from satire to music memoir.

During the Festival, students got involved as attendees, hosts and event organisers. Students developed and hosted a poetry event for International Women's Day, organised LGBTQ+ cabaret with Polari Literary Salon, held a mini fair promoting local Zine artists and publishers, and launched our annual anthology, Beyond The Walls.



Have you considered postgraduate study with us?

The School of Humanities has a thriving community of postgraduate students studying taught and research degrees. Our students join us to build on their existing knowledge, pursue their academic interests and develop their skills.

As an alum of York St John or our founder colleges, you can receive 10% off eligible postgraduate courses. In the School of Humanities, you could study or complete research in:

- Creative Writing
- Film and Screen Studies (from 2025)
- Environment and Social Justice
- History
- Contemporary Literature
- Publishing
- Religion in Society
- International Politics and Security

For more information on studying at postgraduate level, please visit our website:



yorks.ac.uk/schools/school-of-humanities/

Menfulness: Don't Man Up, Speak Up



In 2018 Dan Braidley, Jack Woodhams and Mike Hewitt set up a Facebook group called Menfulness. Their aim was simple: to challenge preconceptions around men's mental health and support men in their local community.

Dan and Jack both studied and met at York St John. After Jack graduated in 2004 and Dan in 2005, they remained friends and stayed in York. In fact, they both started their working lives at York St John: Dan as a Graduate Intern in our marketing office, and Jack as President of the Students' Union!

Fast forward to 2015 and Dan, Jack and Mike set up Yorkey Dads, a support group for father figures, after struggling to find a group to join themselves. The group, which is still running today, hosts activities like breakfast clubs, Lego sessions and their viral hair school to help Dads get to grips with long hair. During activities, men were opening up about their mental health outside of parenting, and Menfulness was born.

Since 2018, a lot has changed for Menfulness, including gaining trustees Matty Lewis and Sam Watling, and becoming a charity in May 2022. But their ethos has remained the same: don't man up, speak up about mental health.

Menfulness holds over 20 weekly and monthly activities, including social activities like friendly football or tending an allotment. Many sessions are run by people Menfulness has helped, who now volunteer their time to support other men's mental health. Members can also listen to their podcast, or use WhatsApp groups for informal peer support.

Alongside social support, Menfulness offers more formal mental health support, including a talking group supported by York Knights and a unique, free counselling offer. Their counselling offer helps men quickly access free, professional counselling services without long waiting lists.



How do you balance Menfulness with your other commitments?

Dan: To be honest I've no idea! Outside of work and Menfulness I'm married with two kids and am a carer at home, so life can get quite hectic at times. Menfulness has to fit around my family life and job but I manage to balance it all out. Some weeks there will be very little Menfulness activity, and then some weeks I'll be out three nights a week doing Menfulness events!

Jack: Unsure really, it's definitely a juggle! Having a strong team and a committee of friends makes it easier. We all bring different skills but also enjoy hanging out together. We're very lucky to have supportive partners and wives; without their support, Menfulness wouldn't be possible. They see the benefits for others and for us, and are incredibly supportive. Shout out to my wife Rose, who is also an alum; we met at York St John 23 years ago!

Can you tell us more about how Menfulness offers counselling to members?

Jack: At many of our events, we encourage guys to open up and talk. Most of them felt the benefit, but around 1 in 10 needed professional support. We'd suggest they go to their GP or call a crisis line, but inevitably, they'd say, 'They sent me to you.'

I used to work with Sinead, who runs our counselling offering at Serendipity Counselling. She has always been a good sounding board and trusted friend. We discussed this issue, and that's how our counselling offer came about. We have now supported over 500 guys to access this service.

What's really nice is that we use counselling students from York St John on placement. This allows us to keep costs down and easily increase capacity. We started with one student and now have over 20. Thanks to Sinead for all you do for us, we'd be lost without you.

What's next for Menfulness and how has your recent research, funded by York St John's Institute for Social Justice, impacted your plans?

Dan: The research has shown that we're doing something that is truly making a difference. It's certainly given us food for thought; we have often discussed whether we can grow Menfulness beyond York's boundaries. Now that seems more of a possibility on the back of the York St John study; our researchers' fantastic work has given us the data and stats to prove that what we are doing is legitimately changing lives for the better.

Where would you like Menfulness to be in five years time?

Dan: I'd love Menfulness to be seen as the main mental health support offer in the North. Menfulness operates across the spectrum of need, from a 'grassroots' social level all the way through to intervention when men can access our unique free counselling offer. We are changing outdated narratives and attitudes on men's mental health and want to make positive mental health a key aspect of a healthy lifestyle.

I worked in schools in Leeds for five years and am convinced we could do a lot of good work in schools and colleges. The Menfulness brand ensures inclusivity, support and positive growth. I am biased, but I strongly believe we're doing something that's a difference maker and deserves wider attention.

And finally, what's your favourite Menfulness memory so far?

Dan: Too many to mention; we've been blessed with some brilliant experiences from what we do. As a rugby fan it was brilliant to be invited to meet Kevin Sinfield last year! We did the three peaks in 2021 and had a huge group running the York 10k for us last year. Winning a national award last year for the suicide prevention video we produced called 'One More Day' was also incredible!

You can find out more about Menfulness, their work and how to join in with their activities on their website:



<https://menfulness.org>



Find out more about fellow alum, Sinead and Serendipity Counselling on their website: www.serendipityyork.co.uk



If you would like to watch their award-winning video or listen to their podcast, you can do this on YouTube: [youtube.com/@Menfulness](https://www.youtube.com/@Menfulness)



The School of Education, Language and Psychology

In the School of Education, Language and Psychology, staff and students work together to improve our understanding of some of the most important and complex issues we currently face.

Our research informs the services we provide to our local community and in turn, these services create student work experience, and opportunities for further research. This 'virtuous circle' of research is a huge benefit to both the University, and those we support in our local community.

Working within our community

Launched in October 2023, York St John University Communities Centre offers a range of high quality and affordable services, including counselling, coaching and wellbeing services. The Centre also runs free groups, drop-ins, and community projects like our Community Language School.

The Centre provides new ways for staff and students to engage with our community and conduct impactful research. Our current Centre focused research explores issues including bereavement, domestic and partner abuse, and anger management. A lot of our Centre focused research has practical implications for users, including the recent work undertaken by Dr Penn Smith (Counselling) and Professor Divine Charura (Psychology). They use a human rights, trauma-informed approach in their practice, and when teaching trainee counsellors.

In their research paper, they concluded with recommendations for psychotraumatology therapeutic practice and trauma-informed training, a conclusion which will directly and positively impact those receiving counselling.



Read Professor Charura and Dr Smith's research: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/capr.12749>

From student awards to impactful research

In Psychology, our staff team were delighted to receive the Students' Union Course of the Year award. The Student Rep trophy was also awarded to Psychology, with our School Chair, second-year BSc Psychology student Kiera Coxon, taking the well-deserved award home. Congratulations team Psychology!

Outside of award season, our staff continue to undertake impactful research. Associate Professor Dr Lorna Hamilton, and Dr Stephanie Petty recently wrote a conceptual analysis around creating a compassionate pedagogy for neurodiversity in higher education:



www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9978378

Expanding our knowledge

In Education, staff successfully re-accredited our programmes with the Department for Education. This September, we welcomed new partners and students onto an expanded range of Secondary School programmes.

In July, we hosted the 'The Developing Pupils' Agency Conference: Comparing Schools in England and Finland'. With policy, curriculum and practice significantly different in England and Finland, the conference facilitated illuminating and transformational professional discussions around the prioritisation of developing pupil agency in schools.

Two recent pieces of research relating to Education are now available to read for free:



Read Associate Professor, Dr Clare Cunningham's paper unpacking 'inert benevolence' towards pupils who require additional support or advocacy to thrive in school:

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/17577438241239832>



Read Professor Tom Dobson and Timothy Clark's paper embracing hybridity and the affordance of arts based research in a professional doctorate in education:

www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13562517.2024.2336163



The School of Science, Technology and Health

The School of Science, Technology and Health has a lot to celebrate! In the last year, we've welcomed a new Professor, secured exciting research opportunities, celebrated our first Nursing cohort and supported our students to gain valuable industry experience.

Good luck to our first graduate nurses

As our first cohort of Nursing students graduate and begin their careers, it marks a significant milestone for both our Nursing graduates and York St John University.

Thanks to our truly integrative approach, our Nursing graduates are poised to make lasting impacts on the health outcomes of both individuals and communities. With empathy and evidence-based practise as their guide, they carry with them our University's values of tackling inequality, promoting fairness and challenging prejudice in healthcare.

Good Luck to our Class of 2024 Nursing graduates!

Welcome to our new Professor

This year, our Biosciences Department proudly welcomed Professor Thomas Hughes to the team. With a distinguished career in Cancer Biology, Professor Hughes brings a wealth of knowledge and a passion for discovery which promises to invigorate both research and teaching at York St John.

Professor Hughes appointment also reaffirms our commitment to advancing the frontiers of biosciences education and research, and we can't wait to embark on this new journey of discovery and growth.

Find out more about our newest Professor on our website:



yorksj.ac.uk/our-staff/staff-profiles/thomas-hughes.php

An exciting new research opportunity

Dr Graeme Law, Associate Head of School: Sport, and Professor Paul Galdas, from the University of York, have recently been commissioned by global men's health charity Movember to undertake a pilot study.

Performance Habits will deliver and evaluate a mental health fitness programme with Leeds United Football Academy. The study is designed to help players develop healthy routines and schedules to optimise their wellbeing and performance. Players will follow a 5-step plan to develop day-to-day habits that maintain mental fitness. They will also be supported over the phone by a trained Performance Habits Coach.



Full steam ahead for Computer Science student's year in industry success

Over the past 2 years, I have worked on the data of our railway network, firstly at Jacobs Solutions, and since July 2023, at Network Rail.

I started out as an Undergraduate Asset Management Consultant on the Transpennine Route Upgrade, a multi-billion-pound programme to deliver electrified, faster train journeys between York and Manchester. During my year in industry, I led on the development of a suite of tools to improve data quality and model the performance, reliability, availability and maintainability of an asset. I also supported the development of rolling stock strategies, and the requirements for the programme which outlines the specifications of new train purchases. At the end of my year in industry, I was awarded the Chief Engineer's You Make a Difference Award for my work, and was offered further opportunities to continue my development at Network Rail alongside my degree.

After finishing my placement, I moved to a new project as an Undergraduate Data Analyst before moving into my current role as the North and East Route Engineering Data Analyst. My main responsibility is supporting the Route's digital vision. This includes aggregating all data into a digital twin of the route so that artificial intelligence and machine learning can better identify and predict asset failures, reducing the number of delays.

These experiences have and continue to build a strong foundation for future career growth alongside my degree.

Written by Thomas Wood

York Business School

York Business School encapsulates a wide and diverse range of courses. This year, students and staff have been busy developing their research and increasing their knowledge base. For this year's magazine, we're focusing on a visit to Paris Fashion Week, and the ongoing work of our Games Lab at Aesthetica.

Paris Fashion Week

In March 2024, students from BA (Hons) Fashion Marketing and MSc International Fashion Marketing courses soaked up some Parisian ambience when they visited the French capital during its ready-to-wear Fashion Week. Students sought out the Mona Lisa at the Louvre and marvelled at the collections in the YSL Museum before splitting off to enjoy various sites.

During the visit, staff ensured that students experienced the best of Paris and its fashion week. Dr Sarah Cooper, senior lecturer, visited La Samaritaine and Versailles with students. La Samaritaine is an iconic department store in the first arrondissement, with designer collections housed in a historic building. Outside of the city limits they ventured to Versailles in the hope of stumbling across another fashion show.

Meanwhile, Lecturer George Kyprianou took students to the "Traversing Appearances" exhibition at the Pompidou Centre. The exhibition showcased the art-like nature of fashion and included iconic designs like the Dior new look, and designs by Yoji Yamamoto, Jean Paul Gaultier and Chanel.

The trip ended with a visit to the Basilica of Sacré Coeur de Montmartre where students appreciated the Parisian scenery. Lastly, students visited the Azzedine Alaïa Foundation to discover the history of the fashion house, and see the work of Madame Grés and featured South African fashion designer, Luke Radloff.



Games Lab at Aesthetica Festival

Since the 2023 alumni magazine, our Games Lab has continued to grow and develop. Games Lab is an opportunity to promote independent games creators who produce socially important, and responsible, games which prompt introspection, reflection on our place in the world, or offer new ways of seeing.

As a collaboration between York St John University and Aesthetica, it was great to see 650 seats filled across 18 games and one VR station during the 2023 Festival. Our masterclass speakers included Tom Knights (Senior Narrative Designer, UBISOFT) and Luke Hebblethwaite (head of BAFTA games) who spoke about the importance of social responsibility in game design.

For the 2024 Festival, Games Lab will continue to grow. Still run by York St John students, we will expand to 20 games stations from 18, and grow our VR stations from one to three. Looking ahead, Games Lab will also continue to promote interactive creative arts in York and inform investigate.games' important research work on gaming. This includes projects on developing socially responsible games, gaming and mental health, and educational gaming.



Our new Postgraduate Research School

In a major milestone for York St John University and our wider community, we launched a new Postgraduate Research School in October 2024.

In 2006 York St John became a university, but it wasn't until 2015 we were granted the ability to award research degrees. We awarded our first Masters by Research and PhD in 2017. Now, we have over 300 postgraduate researchers completing their professional and practice-based doctorates, PhDs by Publication, and Masters by Research degrees.

Transformative research

Postgraduate researchers are a unique part of our University community. By completing original research, our postgraduate researchers make novel contributions to their disciplines with research topics as diverse as our student population. Current areas of research include:

- Community music
- Delaying and reversing frailty in rural communities
- Greenwashing
- School transition experiences for pupils with SEN
- Women's indie music memoirs

Looking ahead, our new Postgraduate Research School will continue supporting the growing ambitions of our postgraduate research community. Not only does the School encapsulate our University values and mission, but it will also continue providing high quality support, increasing our capacity for world-leading, transformative research.

A vibrant research community

Our new School supports our postgraduate researchers from application to graduation, and beyond. By providing a range of in-house services for postgraduate researchers, students will be able to easily access support and training to ensure their success, and fuel their future career aspirations.

The new Postgraduate Research School:

- Provides dedicated application and admissions support
- Helps students identify funding and scholarship opportunities
- Delivers essential researcher skills workshops
- Hosts a range of events and activities to foster a vibrant, connected community
- Supports postgraduate researchers to run their own events

The Postgraduate Research School will also enhance its fantastic internal conference: the Annual Postgraduate Research School Conference. The conference creates opportunities for our students at the start of their research careers, including the chance to formally present their work and network with peers.

Our new School will also benefit our staff with the creation of a PGR Supervisor Network. This Network will be led by our most experienced supervisors and provide staff with training, support and mentorship.

Looking ahead

Did you know that York St John has been ranked in the top 10 UK universities for postgraduate research student experience for part time students, three years running? At York St John, we're proud to support our students, and as we develop the Postgraduate Research School, we're excited to continue supporting our research community to thrive as they begin their research careers.



Did you know that all alumni receive 10% off eligible Research Degree fees? You can learn more about this on our website: yorks.ac.uk/alumni/scholarships-for-alumni

“YSJ is a welcoming, friendly and inclusive community that celebrates and embraces people from diverse backgrounds ... The launch of the PGR school is an exciting opportunity to harness the potential of PGRs and provide them with the necessary skills for a successful research career and beyond.”

Marianne Etherson, Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Glasgow



Highlights from our London campus

It has been another amazing year at our London campus, with more students than ever enrolled on our range of postgraduate courses. In this year's alumni magazine, we take a look at some of this year's campus highlights.

Enhancing student support

With more students than ever before, we've developed a dedicated team to support students during their time studying in London. This includes more structured wellbeing support for students. This year, we've started hosting regular wellbeing brunches and lunches to give students an informal opportunity to talk to staff and connect with others.

After feedback from students, we have also embedded an Academic and Careers Skill Programme into the first few weeks of every course. This enhanced skill programme supports students in preparation for their first assessments and placements, something which has proven invaluable as students now feel more confident in their abilities.

Creating opportunities

This year we have held multiple career fairs to support our students as they look for placements, part time work, and post-graduation employment opportunities. It was great to host local, national and international companies and see our students benefit from the chance to talk to such a diverse range of organisations. Even Arsenal Football Club attended one career fair, although sadly not to recruit anyone for the Premier League!

Since the last alumni magazine we have also transformed our Venture Creation Lab programme into an Enterprise Academy. The Enterprise Academy includes new leadership pathways to support our students as they look for roles after graduation. We also held our first London Advisory Board meetings where we work with industry experts to benefit our students both inside, and outside, the classroom.

At York St John University London campus, it's important that our students enjoy their time outside the classroom as well as their time studying. In the last year, we've introduced several new activities, including:

- Lunches with our Dean
- Trips to York to visit the city and the York campus
- Free weekly home cooked meals provided by one of our social enterprise partners
- A range of cultural celebrations on campus, including celebrating Holi and Vesak
- Free guest speaker events and workshops

Students have also participated in street plays, attended conferences and taken part in poster design competitions.



Annual Business and Health Student Conference

In June, we held our first Annual Business and Health Student Conference. This year's theme was 'Emerging Trends: Advancing Innovation, Embracing Inclusion, and Creating Impact'. During the conference, staff and students from our Business and Health Department gave over 15 presentations, presented impactful posters, and received valuable feedback. Students also had the opportunity to network with industry professionals as well as their peers.

Looking ahead

This year we're launching new courses, including our first undergraduate Top Up Degree. We're also excited to continue developing our Executive Education courses, which support professionals across a range of areas. We offer both in person and online courses in:

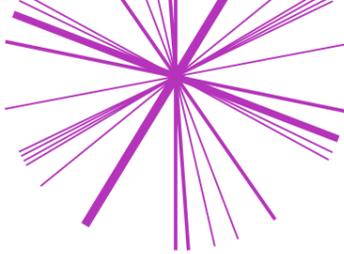
- Developing Faculty Competence for Excellence in UK Higher Education
- Corporate Governance and Public Management
- Executive Leadership, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship (ELIE) Program
- Global Health Fundamentals Programme (in-person/online)
- Digital Marketing Executive Programme

In the next few months, we will also be unveiling new spaces and opportunities for our students, including a specialist podcast creation space. Students will also be invited to attend more conferences, visit new places and take part in more activities than ever before.

For alumni, we can't wait to hold our second networking event! For more information on this, please see page 6.



For more information on our London campus, including our range of courses, please visit our website: yorks.ac.uk/london-campus



YSJ Community Festival

A day for all

On Saturday 8 June, we welcomed close to 250 alumni, staff, students, and members of our local community to our York St John University Sports Park for the inaugural YSJ Community Festival. The day was packed full of activities run by local providers and University representatives.

Activity extravaganza

Sporting skills were tested with workshops for football, tennis, bowls, archery and wheelchair rugby. While the Army put attendees through their paces with a military-style bootcamp.

For those wanting a boost to their wellbeing, the Communitas Choir hosted an inclusive singing session and Tai Chi York took over the sports hall. Our student ambassadors and Widening Participation team also helped younger attendees experience a taste of University through the medium of graduation hat making, and the creation of their own student society.

The funfair corner went down a storm with both children and adults having their faces painted, racing each other up the climbing wall, and beating the clock on the assault course. Our live DJ also entertained attendees while they queued for pizzas, burgers, ice cream and coffee from local food vans.

We wouldn't have been able to put this event on without the support of our partners and local activity providers so it was lovely to receive some positive feedback from them post-event:

“The YSJ community event was fantastic, we were busy all day giving people a go with a bow and arrow and were super impressed with the facilities available at the university. We engaged with some enthusiastic parents and children and hope to have given a few people a new hobby.”

Dave Shaw, York Archers.



“We had an excellent experience at the event. The fantastic planning and flawless execution made it truly enjoyable. Thanks to everyone involved, it was wonderful to see the positive impact we made on the children and families who attended. The event was very well received, and we are proud to have been a part of such a meaningful day.”

Marc Potter - Kixx York.



Thank you to everyone who made the day such an exceptional one. Special thanks to the YSJActive team for allowing us to use their fantastic facilities for everyone to enjoy.

Celebrating 50 years



In 1974, Ripon College and St John's College in York faced a dilemma: how could they survive with a planned reduction in teacher training places?

By the end of the year, their plan to reunify as the College of Ripon and York St John (CRYSJ) finally received government approval. They had until September 1975 to complete the amalgamation, including figuring out how to unify two campuses, how they'd teach new courses, and how to recruit students to a new college experience.

When CRYSJ opened its doors in Ripon and York in September 1975, they couldn't have imagined that generations of students would study under the same College basis. Over the years, the name of the College might have slightly changed, but CRYSJ remained at its core until the closure of our Ripon campus in 2001.

Celebrate 50 years with us

The 2024/5 academic year marks 50 years since the process of amalgamation began, and just like 50 years ago, we want to create something memorable.

In September 2025, we want our CRYSJ alumni to have a yearbook showing the fantastic lives of other CRYSJ alumni, and how to contact each other. We also thought it was time to bring 'the tapeworm' back, for one year only, in the form of a one-off badge available for purchase.

In November 2025 and March 2026, we also want our Class of 2025 graduates to mark the 50th anniversary with a one-off Graduation Prize.

But for any of this to happen, we need your help and support.



Join our CRYSJ yearbook for free

We're putting together a yearbook with the help of our partner, GradFinale, and we need your help to make it succeed. If no one completes their yearbook page, it won't be a very good yearbook!

We want to celebrate your memories of studying at the College of Ripon and York St John and what you've been up to since. We also want to help you reconnect with your peers.

If you studied with us between 1975 and 2001, you can create a free yearbook profile. You'll be able to answer questions, upload photos and share your contact details so people can get in touch. If you'd like to reconnect with old friends, you'll also be able to say who you're looking to reconnect with.

Once you've completed your yearbook profile, you'll have the opportunity to pre-order your copy, which you'll be able to pick up at Your YSJ Reunion, get posted to your home address in September 2025, or view digitally.

We'll be closing the CRYSJ Yearbook on Friday 4 April 2025, so don't take too long to find your old photos to upload!

If you are unable to complete your yearbook profile online, please contact us for a paper form.

Keeping an eye on the environment

You might have noticed both the yearbook and badges are only available on a pre-order basis. This is to stop us creating any unnecessary waste as part of this campaign. But it does mean when we say these are one-off opportunities, we really do mean it!



Return of the tapeworm

What did the CRYSJ logo mean to you? We've seen it be called a tapeworm, a river and a reminder of fun times. Whatever it meant to you as a student, we're bringing it back for one year only as a pin badge.



In spring, you'll have chance to pre-order your badge. You'll be able to collect it at Your YSJ Reunion or have it posted out to you for September 2025.

Unfortunately we can't tell you a price yet, because metal prices might have drastically changed by next year! But we do know badges will be around £5, which will include a small contribution to our CRYSJ Graduation Prize.

Keep an eye on your emails for when our badge pre-ordering begins.



Tell current students your story

Studying with us changed your life. That's why we wanted to mark the 50th anniversary of CRYSJ by rewarding current students as well.

At Graduation, students receive Prizes. These are often for academic achievement, but we know that life at York St John isn't just about grades. We want to reward 50 students who are:

- Community-driven
- Resilient and
- Supportive of others during their educational
- Journey.

You might have noticed that the Y in this acronym is missing, and that's because this will only be possible with **Your** help.



Over 5000 alumni reading this magazine studied at the College of Ripon and York St John. To award £50 to 50 students, we need to raise £2500 by August 2025.

If everyone who receives this magazine and studied with us between 1975 and 2001 donated £2 today, we'd raise the Prize money by the end of November 2024.

You can donate to the CRYSJ Graduation Prize using this year's magazine insert.



Celebrate 50 years with us



For more information on our Prize, the return of the tapeworm and how to complete your yearbook profile, please see our website:

www.yorks.ac.uk/alumni/alumni-community/celebrating-50-years

Your legacy can do more

From our foundation in 1841, York St John University has been centred on our community approach, allowing students, colleagues, alumni and partner organisations to come together to support education for everyone. By leaving a gift in your will, you have the opportunity to continue this legacy and become a part of our future.

“ It has been a tough nine months of studying and teaching...However, I have laughed more than I have cried and have thoroughly enjoyed this challenge in my life. Additionally, I have shown all three of my children what is possible and that hard work really does pay off.

All of this wouldn't have been possible though without your kind donation. It allowed me to secure appropriate wrap around care for my 10-year-old son and paid for all the travelling to and from placements, university and alliance days. Thank you so much for taking a chance on me and for making the past 9 months a little easier financially.”

Marieanna – recipient of the Education Opportunity Award.

The Education Opportunity Award was created after we received a gift in a will from the wife of an alum. The Award carries out their wish to help mature students access PGCE courses, just like her husband did as a teaching student in the 1950s.

Anyone can make a will and leave a gift to support the future. We advise that you consult a solicitor before drafting a new will or changing an existing one. Alternatively, if you are local to York, our free York St John Law Clinic is on hand to help with any queries you may have.

Leaving a gift in your will to York St John University is simple, all you need is our address, charity number and your intention for the gift.

Address:

York St John University
Lord Mayors Walk
York
YO31 7EX

Exempt Charity Status Number:

GB 4498 683

The details included in your will are personal, however, we would love to be able to thank you for your support and work with you in making sure your gift achieves the biggest impact. Please consider contacting us on alumni@yorks.ac.uk or **01904 876741** for a confidential chat and to receive our legacy pledge form.

**With you we can do more;
leave a gift in your will.**

Est.
1841

**YORK
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UNIVERSITY**