



**Reunion  
weekend**  
is one to  
remember



UNIVERSITY OF  
**SURREY**

AUTUMN/WINTER 2023

# FOREVER SURREY

The magazine for alumni, supporters and friends



## Meet our Oscar winners

**Ross White** and **Tom Berkeley** recount their journey  
from Surrey to Academy Awards success

**"I have the best job  
on and off the planet"**



**"Why I still donate to  
Surrey after 20 years"**



**£10 million gift to help  
animal welfare**





# Welcome from the Vice-Chancellor

I'm delighted to introduce the latest edition of *Forever Surrey* magazine.

It's been a busy 12 months. We've built on past successes, and launched new initiatives to accelerate our twin goals of providing a first-class education for our students and creating research to help shape a better world.

In a year of significant triumphs, I'm delighted to reveal that The Future Says Surrey, our international fundraising campaign launched in February 2022, has reached £50 million. Our goal is to raise £60 million over three years. We're humbled by the generosity of our alumni and supporters who've helped us reach the £50 million milestone.

Elsewhere, the launch of our new Institute for Sustainability promises to drive our commitment and impact in this challenging area, while the development of our new School of Medicine means our University will graduate its first medical doctors in 2028.

Earlier this year, we celebrated the achievements of our graduates in our Annual Alumni Awards. Cancer treatment pioneer Professor Nicola Curtin, NASA scientist Dr Nicola Fox, and Oscar winners Tom Berkeley and Ross White were among those honoured.



Their achievements make us proud to belong to a community that produces such exceptional people.

We've also seen significant climbs in several university league tables. We are ranked 13th in the UK in the *Complete University Guide 2024* and we moved into the Top 50 in the world in the *Times Higher Education Impact Rankings*. This assesses institutions across the globe against the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. We've cemented our Top 10 position (4th) for overall student satisfaction in the *National Student Survey 2023*, too.

I hope you enjoy reading about the above and other highlights from our year. If you attended the Surrey Weekender reunion, you may even find yourself pictured on pages 16-17. It was a particularly joyful event because it allowed us to renew our relationships with the 300 graduates who returned to campus.

It was another reminder that we remain blessed to have such a supportive alumni community.

Please read on. And be inspired.

**Professor Max Lu**  
AO DL FREng FAA FTSE FICHEM FRSC FNAI FCAS  
President and Vice-Chancellor

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Kobna Holdbrook-Smith

## Meet Dr Kobna

Guildford School of Acting (GSA) graduate Kobna Holdbrook-Smith MBE has been awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Surrey.

The actor, who was born in Ghana and graduated from GSA in 2000 with a Bachelors degree in Acting, won an Olivier Award in 2019 for his portrayal of Ike Turner in the West End musical, *Tina*. Kobna also appeared at the Barbican Theatre in 2015 as Laertes opposite Benedict Cumberbatch in *Hamlet*. His most recent stage role is playing Dr Toby Sealey in the National Theatre production of *The Effect*, the hit drama by *Succession* writer Lucy Prebble.

Film roles have seen Kobna again team up with Cumberbatch in the Marvel movie, *Dr Strange*. His TV roles include Balthamos in the acclaimed BBC series, *His Dark Materials*. Alongside his acting work, Kobna co-founded the Act for Change Project, which campaigns for diversity and representation in UK live and recorded arts.

Read more about [Kobna Holdbrook-Smith](#)



Kobna with Benedict Cumberbatch in *Hamlet*



Kobna in *His Dark Materials*





A top five rating is on the Food Science menu

## Your University rises in UK and global rankings

It's been a positive 2023 for Surrey as we've improved our positions in several significant league tables.

### Complete University Guide

We climbed five places in the *Complete University Guide 2024*. Ranked 13th in the UK, we had strong performances in Student Satisfaction, Graduate Prospects and Student-Staff Ratio measures. Five of our subjects – Paramedic Science; Information Technology and Systems; Tourism, Transport, Travel and Heritage Studies; Food Science; Veterinary Medicine – are rated in the top five in the UK.

### THE Impact Rankings

We also moved into the Top 50 in the world in the *Times Higher Education Impact Rankings*. This table assesses institutions across the globe against the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. Surrey is ranked 46th out of 1,591 participating universities worldwide and an impressive 9th in the UK.

### World Rankings and NSS

In the *QS World University Rankings 2024*, Surrey has risen 61 places and, rated at 244, is ranked in the top 250 in the world. The latter is our best result since 2011.

Finally, we've also cemented our top 10 position for overall student satisfaction in the *National Student Survey 2023*, ranking 4th in the UK.

Read about our [QS World](#), [THE Impact](#) and [Complete University Guide](#) rankings success

## Indian Science Minister visits campus



Our VC and Dr Jitendra Singh

Dr Jitendra Singh, India's Minister of State of the Ministry of Science and Technology, and Mr Sanjeev Kumar Varshney, Advisor and Head of the International Bilateral Cooperation Division, were guests at our Advanced Technology Institute (ATI) and Ion Beam Centre.

Their visit came two days after the UK and Indian governments signed a landmark agreement on science and innovation to facilitate a raft of new joint research programmes. A key feature of the day was a roundtable discussion with key players involved in the UK semiconductor industry.

Semiconductor chips are integral to the evolution of the modern world, enabling technology in homes, offices, factories and transport networks to function efficiently, sustainably, and in a secure and safe environment.

Professor Ravi Silva, Director of ATI and Head of our Nano-Electronics Centre, adds: "The importance of building the entire semiconductor supply chain to contribute to technology and society has never been greater. Meetings such as this could facilitate a new dawn in the advancement of semiconductor research and development."

## Gold award for biosciences



Athena Swan success

The University has received its first Athena Swan Gold Award, which recognises work to transform gender equality within higher education and research.

The accolade was granted to our School of Biosciences, which delivered an impressive 99 actions over a five-year period. Surrey is one of only 16 UK universities to hold a Gold Award.

## Surrey sports stars shine in the spotlight

Our Proud to Be Surrey campaign continues to feature alumni, staff and students who discuss their University with pride.

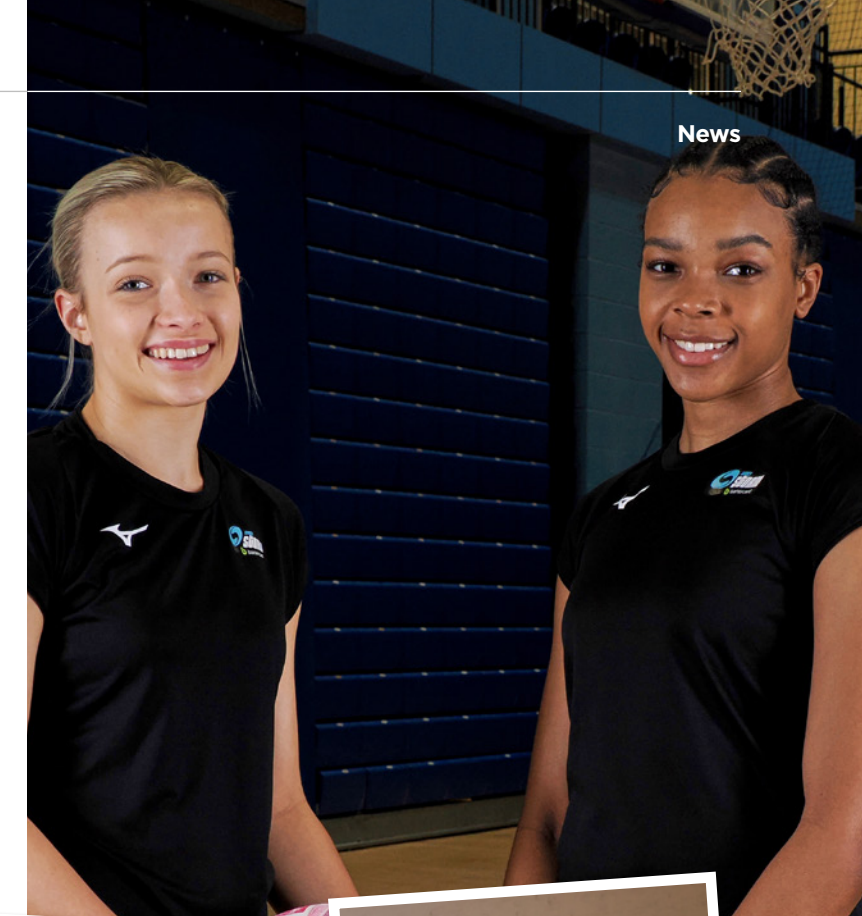
The latest people to feature are students on our Dual Career programme, which allows them to pursue sporting goals alongside their academic ones.

Giselle Burnett and Taren Ayivor-Grant, who are psychology and media and communications undergraduates, are part of the Surrey Storm Under-21 Academy Team. Both aim to play in the Netball Super League.

Ayo Amolegbe, meanwhile, balances his accounting and finance degree with playing professionally for Surrey Scorchers in the British Basketball League. His ambition? To play in the National Basketball Association in America.

Rutuja Naigade, meanwhile, is already an established star. Studying for a masters in economics, she's twice Indian champion in Thai kickboxing. She's also represented her country in karate, winning gold at an international event in Malaysia in 2018.

Meet our other student [sports stars](#)



News



## Jim honoured by Royal Academy of Engineers

Surrey's Professor Jim Al-Khalili, who studied as an undergraduate and a PhD student at Surrey, has been awarded an Honorary Fellowship by the Royal Academy of Engineering.

The renowned science communicator and host of BBC Radio 4's long-running series, *The Life Scientific*, has been recognised alongside internet pioneer Baroness Martha Lane Fox and UK Space Agency Chair, Lord David Willetts.

"I feel extremely proud to be elected," reveals Jim. "I come from a family of engineers – my father, brother, sister-in-law and son are all engineers – so I'm not sure how I ended up as a mere physicist!"

Jim, a winner of the Royal Society's Michael Faraday Medal, will be formally admitted to the Academy at a special ceremony in London on 28 November when each new Fellow will sign the Fellowship Roll Book.

Read more about [Jim's latest award](#)



Professor Jim Al-Khalili



# Campaign hits £50 million milestone

The Future Says Surrey, our first global fundraising campaign, was launched in February 2022. Its ambition: to raise £60 million in three years to turbo-charge our cutting-edge research and life-changing scholarships schemes.

## Achievement

We're delighted to announce that we've reached the milestone of £50 million.

"The tremendous success of The Future Says Surrey will elevate our research in pivotal areas like sustainability, artificial intelligence and animal/human health," says Professor Max Lu, our President and Vice-Chancellor.

The £50 million total includes a £1.25 million gift from the People's Postcode Lottery. This will support our research into biodiversity that utilises artificial intelligence and satellite imaging technologies – with much of the research focused in the Surrey Hills around Guildford.

## Generosity

The University has also received a gift of more than £1 million from one of its alumni to support the education of students from a care background. This money will also help UK students hoping to study at Surrey's new School of Medicine.

"A university education is often a formative and incredible time in a person's life," says Patrick Degg, our Vice-President, Global, "But many talented students cannot access this opportunity due to personal circumstances." Our campaign allows us to expand the University's proud history of supporting talented people, regardless of their personal background or financial means."

Read more about [The Future Says Surrey](#)

# £10 million gift to help animal welfare

In November last year, the University received its largest philanthropic gift. The £10 million legacy, which contributes towards The Future Says Surrey, is the largest single gift in the University's history.

## Anonymous donor

Given by an anonymous benefactor, the £10 million legacy was gifted after the donor learnt about the ground-breaking research being trialled at our School of Veterinary Medicine. Projects with the welfare of animals at their heart are a priority for the donor and will benefit from the donation.

An example of this existing research includes work to reduce pain and suffering in dogs caused by selective breeding that makes unnatural head-shapes more common in some breeds.

## Fund critical research

"This extremely generous gift will help advance our knowledge and understanding of how best to look after and treat our companion animals," says Professor Christopher Proudman, Professor of Veterinary Clinical Science at Surrey. "It will enable us to fund critical research, while supporting the innovative educational programmes which are the hallmark of the school's approach to training the vets of the future."

Some of the gift is expected to support scholarship schemes for students. These will allow the very best veterinary medicine students to study at Surrey, irrespective of their financial circumstances.

Read more about [our largest philanthropic gift](#)



HRH The Duke of Kent at the campaign launch in 2022



The £10 million gift will support animal welfare

# Fighting global diseases

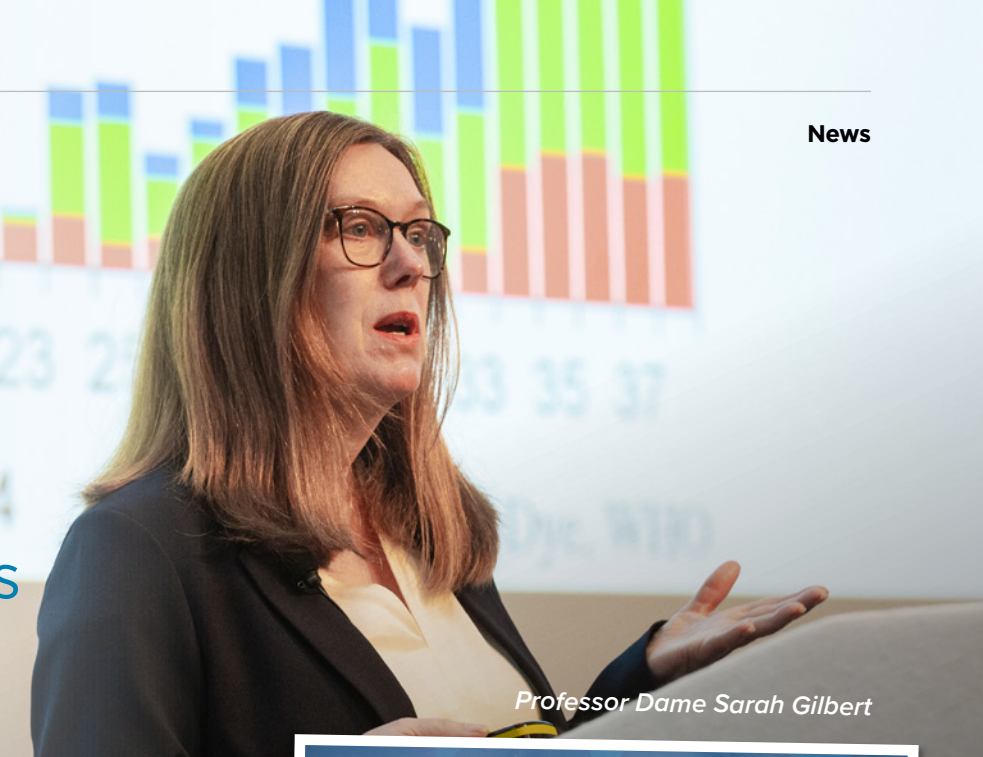
The University was honoured to welcome Professor Dame Sarah Gilbert to campus in May.

The acclaimed vaccinologist, who co-developed the Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine, visited Stag Hill to give the latest in our Adams-Sweeting Lecture series.

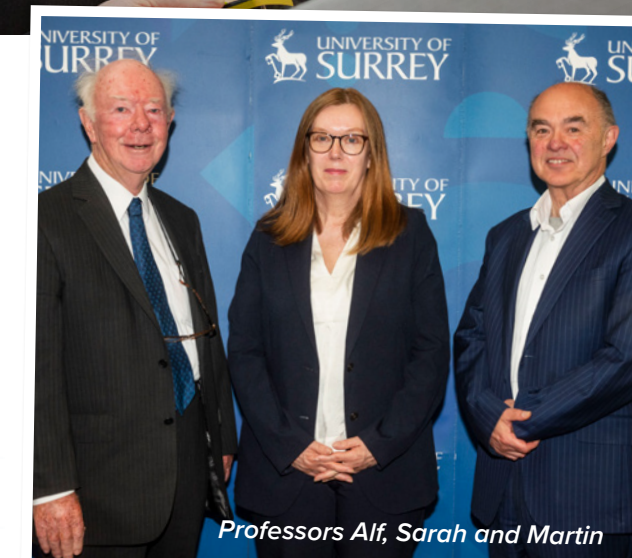
She discussed her experience of developing a new drug to fight the pandemic, and how she and her team devised best practice strategies to combat both known infectious disease outbreaks – and unknown future threats.

A Q&A followed where Sarah answered questions from the capacity audience. She also met Professor Alf Adams and Professor Sir Martin Sweeting, whose legacy at Surrey these lectures honour.

Watch the full [Adams-Sweeting Lecture with Sarah Gilbert](#)



Professor Dame Sarah Gilbert



Professors Alf, Sarah and Martin



Professor Annabelle Gawer

# Digital expert elected to the British Academy

Professor Annabelle Gawer, a thought-leader and expert on the business of digital platforms, has been elected as a Fellow of the British Academy for 2023.

The Surrey academic's work has been featured in *The Financial Times*, *The Economist*, *The New York Times*, *The Times* and *The Harvard Business Review*.

Annabelle adds: "As I join as a Fellow, I reflect on both the privilege and responsibility that comes with joining a community of leading scholars, spanning all disciplines across the humanities and social sciences."

Read more about [Professor Gawer and her work](#)



# The problems we face require connected knowledge – and action...

**Professor Lorenzo Fioramonti is the Director of our new Institute for Sustainability. He discusses his ambitious plans for our latest pan-university initiative...**

"I was a political economist until the age of 40," explains Lorenzo. "I researched ways to transform the economy to help people enjoy better lives in a more sustainable way."

"In 2018, I was appointed to the Italian government as Minister of Education, University and Research. I stayed in politics for four years. When I was approached by the University of Surrey, the opportunity to be the Director of its new Institute for Sustainability was too tempting to refuse."

## A different role

Lorenzo says a key attraction about the role was its scope.

"I like the fact the Institute wants to create impact," says Lorenzo. "After four years in politics, I wasn't going back to academia to write papers that were going to sit in a library. This is a hands-on job that uses academic research to drive policy action and it unites many different streams of work. Because it's a pan-university initiative, it connects the dots across different faculties to ensure our sustainability work has maximum impact. One of the issues we face with modern research is that we operate in silos. What happens in one field doesn't necessarily affect what happens in another. This is a problem when you want to transform society because a single solution won't work. We need answers that operate in symphony. Our Institute is about creating long-term collaboration and implementing solutions from several perspectives."

Professor Lorenzo Fioramonti

Read our **full-length interview with Professor Lorenzo Fioramonti**

## Operating in symphony

Lorenzo explains how such an approach works.

"If we have to rethink our energy systems, what do we need to do?" he asks. "We need scientists to create the system and engineers to build it, environmental experts to investigate how to make it sustainable, and architects to design how these new systems will be incorporated into existing and future buildings and homes. We also need psychologists to help change behaviours, marketers to promote messaging and economists to ensure it's not too expensive."

"On top of this, we need business analysts to ensure that these new technologies don't end up destroying existing industries and creating mass unemployment. All these concerns need to work together or we may create new problems while we're trying to fix current ones."

## Starting local

Lorenzo doesn't shy away from global aspirations for the Institute. But he argues we must develop proof points of how we've turned collaborative sustainability research into policy in our University and home county first.

"Our plan to become a Net Zero university by 2030 is a good example," he reports. "As is the creation of our new solar farm to increase our on-site renewable energy requirements. On a county level, we are influencing the local policy community through the launch of the Green Futures Board. This partnership between the University and Surrey County Council will help develop the long-term strategy of the region when it comes to building a more sustainable future."

"In education, we're investigating how sustainability is taught at our University and how it's taught in schools. Can we better teach children and create the kind of transformative culture that is indispensable to achieve sustainability goals?"

## Long-term goal

Lorenzo's long-term goal is for the Institute to become an example in breaking down departmental and research silos, and building an inclusive pan-university synthesis centre.

He explains: "By that, I mean an organisation that has brought the best available expertise and thinking to tackle a problem from different angles. Too much of our research is based on sanctified categories. The problems we face require connected knowledge – and action. I hope the Institute will create future research that goes beyond individual disciplines."

# Sustainability research at Surrey

The University has a kaleidoscope of exciting research on different sustainability issues, says Lorenzo. The key to unlocking these is to ensure we can translate them into plug-in solutions that businesses and policy-makers can use. Here are three examples of projects at Surrey that Lorenzo is excited about...

## Nature-based solutions

The work at our Global Centre for Clean Air Research on employing nature-based solutions to make our communities more resilient is very strong. The idea of using plants to make air cleaner or to purify water is significant.



## Artificial intelligence

The application of artificial intelligence to ensure we can best use the data we receive to produce meaningful information is hugely impactful. Could this prevent natural catastrophes or optimise how we best use and share our finite planetary resources?



## Clean energy

Our Advanced Technology Institute's work on next-generation solar energy capture and storage remains very impressive. As is work elsewhere at the University on sustainable batteries and fuels, wind and wave power, and hydrogen production.





# Nurturing the next generation of doctors

Professor Juliet Wright is the Founding Dean of our new School of Medicine. We caught up with Juliet to learn more about how we'll train the next generation of medical doctors...



Professor Juliet Wright

## Bold vision

"To be part of the set-up of a new medical school is a rare opportunity," says Juliet. "The chance to lead a team charged with delivering that is even rarer. I'm passionate about high-quality undergraduate education. Being able to build this School from the ground up is exciting, particularly as the aspirations here are to have an integrated and clinically focused programme, and a relatively small one in terms of student numbers.

"This means we can more closely support our doctors in training both professionally and academically. "It also offers the chance to review, revise and refine the education that modern medical students need. "When I trained as a doctor, there was no internet. You had to retain the knowledge in your head! The resources available to students are now so much greater. It's exciting to revisit how we can help students who have only known a world with the internet to learn the skills needed to be an excellent doctor.

"Our students will use technology to help them learn. We'll use virtual reality streaming of live surgery, plus the latest 4D software to teach anatomy and radiology. We'll also help our students understand how technology is used in the clinical domain in virtual clinics, hospital or at home."

**"I studied for my Doctor of Medicine at Surrey from 1999-2001," recalls Juliet. "I was based at the Royal Surrey County Hospital, but my academic link was with the University.**

"Back then, there was no School of Veterinary Medicine and no Kate Granger Building. There was impressive clinical medical research. The missing ingredient was a medical school."

That "ingredient" is no longer missing. Surrey announced the foundation of its new School of Medicine in May 2022. In July that year, Juliet, then the Director of the Brighton and Sussex Medical School, was confirmed as its Founding Dean.

## Accelerated learning

Our new School offers a four-year medical degree for graduate students.

Juliet explains: "The first year is spent learning clinically relevant biomedical knowledge and introducing professional skills, such as taking a history and examining patients. This will be achieved in small-group teaching seminars and in our clinical simulation facility, as well as in GP and psychiatry community placements. In years two and three, students are 90 per cent based in clinical rotations in different NHS Trusts. Students will experience all the major clinical specialities and learn about clinical presentations, and how to assess and manage patients.

"In year four, students further develop the skills needed to be a successful foundation doctor. Students sit the national medical licensing assessment half-way through the year, then spend the second half of the year in hospital placements securing the clinical experience and skills to start the next part of their training as a foundation doctor. This is an accelerated programme. It will be fast-paced. Our students will be frequently assessed, but with lots of support and feedback so we can spot areas where they may need more help and address those proactively. It's very supportive in that respect."

## The future

Juliet says her initial goal is ensure the School delivers on its promise to nurture small cohorts of high-performing medical students. But she's also planning much further ahead.

"I hope the School will be a strong contributor to the local health economy," she explains. "Because of current restrictions on the number of medical students imposed by the Office for Students, we're largely taking an international cohort at first. But I'm excited by the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan. The proposed increase in places at UK medical schools means we'll be well situated to become a home medical school for UK students in the future.

"We'll also build strong academic networks and leverage the opportunities that come with having a medical school. This includes establishing new research partnerships with local, national and international collaborators, and we look forward to increasing our support for postgraduate training.

"Looking even further ahead, it would be lovely if some of our first cohort came back to our school as medical educators and researchers working in local clinical teams. That would be a wonderful moment."

Read our full-length interview with Professor Juliet Wright at [surrey.ac.uk/fslinks](https://surrey.ac.uk/fslinks)

# Surrey's medical milestones

Our School of Medicine is just the latest addition to a rich history of health teaching and research at Surrey...

- 1978** Launch of our BSc Nursing Studies degree
- 1991** Department of Nursing and Midwifery established
- 1995** European Institute of Health and Medical Sciences launched
- 1996** Dr John Joe McFadden develops a rapid blood-based test for meningitis
- 2000** We open our £12 million Duke of Kent Building, which houses our Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences
- 2011** Research on safe drinking water and sanitation wins the Queen's Anniversary Prize
- 2013** We contribute to the first large-scale study on iodine deficiency, pregnancy and child health
- 2016** Vitamin D research informs Public Health England's national guidelines
- 2020** Our state-of-the-art Kate Granger Building, housing our School of Health Sciences, opens
- 2022** We celebrate 40 years since our first nurses graduated
- 2022** We announce the foundation of our new School of Medicine, with Professor Juliet Wright as its Founding Dean



# £12 million supports greener telecommunications

University of Surrey's 5G/6G Innovation Centre (5G/6GIC) will play a key role in a £28 million project to ensure the UK's telecommunications network is secure, caters to all of society, boosts the economy and is highly energy efficient.



Professor Rahim Tafazolli

The TUDOR (Towards Ubiquitous 3D Open Resilient Networks) project is funded by the UK government. Alongside 5G/6GIC at Surrey, the TUDOR consortium includes several major players such as Amazon, BAE Systems, British Telecom, Ericsson, Imperial College London, King's College London, Nokia, National Physical Laboratory, OneWeb, Toshiba and Virgin/O2.

## Future aims

TUDOR's goal is to collaboratively research and develop technologies that could be used in a more open, flexible and scalable future mobile network beyond 5G and 6G. The team will also focus on assessing how new technologies could be used to enhance telecommunications infrastructure, and understand how emerging intellectual property could contribute to global standards and skills generation in the UK. Crucially, TUDOR will help design and promote a more diverse telecoms market.

## Award-winning

Regius Professor Rahim Tafazolli, Director of 5G/6GIC at Surrey, which secured £12 million of a £28 million shared pot said "We're looking forward to working with our strong international TUDOR team to ensure our award-winning 5G/6GIC adds to the multiple contributions we've already made to telecommunications innovation and technologies.

"I'm confident this project will help ensure the UK's critical telecommunications infrastructure keeps up with the blistering pace of innovation that is happening across the globe, and that the benefits of faster and more reliable communications are delivered in the most sustainable way possible."



## Key figures attend 6G summit

Surrey's Institute for Communication Systems, which is home to our 5G/6GIC, hosted a major event for key industry figures earlier this year.

The two-day gathering, titled *Beyond the Hype*, saw 160 people attend in person, with another 620 online. Participants included delegates from Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas, plus representatives from leading companies, including Vodacom and the BBC.

The goal was to build consensus on the shape that 6G will take as next generation networks move towards concrete strategies and actions. One hot topic focused on what end users want from 6G.

Speakers included Mike Short, the Chief Scientific Advisor to the UK Department of Business and Trade, and Magnus Frodigh, Vice President and Head of Research at Ericsson.

Delegates also saw demonstrations of prototype 6G technologies. These included Reconfigurable Intelligent Surfaces, developed at Surrey to combat the challenge of blind spots and patchy connectivity in urban areas where mobile signals cannot penetrate or bypass the density of tall buildings.

# \$1.5 million Google award funds our AI research into sign language

The University of Surrey is receiving \$1.5 million in grant funding and additional support from Google's philanthropic arm, Google.org.

This will accelerate our bid to develop artificial intelligence (AI) to pave the way for instant sign language translation.

## Digital access

Our venture will translate websites into sign language, boosting digital inclusion for the 600,000 deaf people in the US and UK who use signing as their first language.

Of the seven million profoundly deaf people worldwide whose first language is sign language, 80 per cent can't properly comprehend the spoken word in their country as learning a language you cannot hear is challenging.

Using generative AI, the University and its spin-out company, Signapse, will automatically translate online and offline text into real-time, photo-realistic sign language videos. This will make quick translation more affordable and easy for the deaf.

## Supporting the deaf

"The lack of digital accessibility and sign language translators makes it difficult for deaf people to navigate everyday information and activities," says Professor Richard Bowden, an expert in computer vision and machine learning at Surrey. "This can limit access to education, healthcare, employment and transportation.

"Thanks to this funding from Google.org, we'll work with Signapse to boost digital inclusion. The benefits will spread across the whole of the deaf community."

## Harnessing AI for good

Google.org's AI for the Global Goals Impact Challenge aims to accelerate progress towards the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Our University is one of only 15 organisations receiving this support.

"Each of the 15 selected organisations shares our vision for using AI to accelerate progress on SDGs," adds James Manyika, Google's Senior Vice President of Research, Technology and Society. "We're inspired by the possibilities they see for how AI can be harnessed."

# More AI success

Our Institute for People-Centred AI has had other notable accomplishments...

A new AI system has shown world-leading accuracy and speed in identifying protein patterns within individual cells.

Developed at our Institute, this could help scientists understand differences in cancer tumours and identify new drugs for diseases.

## Accuracy

In a study in *Communications Biology*, researchers demonstrated how a search tool called the Hybrid subCellular Protein Localiser (HCPL) identified the location of proteins and their behaviours within individual cells.

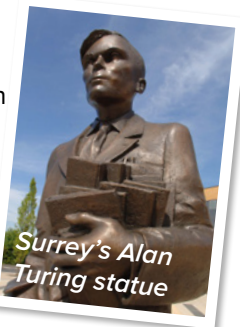
"To understand how proteins work inside cells, scientists need to study where they are located," explains Professor Miroslaw Bober, leader of the HCPL project at Surrey. "But this can be time-consuming and complicated.

"HCPL uses a deep-learning model to accelerate the process. We hope it can help scientists develop new treatments for diseases."

## National body

Elsewhere, our Institute has been confirmed as a new member of the Turing University Network.

This initiative, organised by the Alan Turing Institute, the UK hub for data science and AI, is a new way of working with universities whose research drives change for social good.







### Gaming levels up careers

Good news for fans of computer games! Academic research at Surrey suggests that employers should more widely interview applicants who play online games. A study of 16,033 participants found that puzzle-solving, roleplay and strategy games can help nurture spatial, planning and strategy skills.

These already honed soft skills then help successful job candidates learn similar hard skills required in specific roles.

### Gut bacteria linked to Parkinson's

New research at Surrey may point towards a new focus in the search for a cure for Parkinson's. The results of our study, the largest of its kind, suggests the disease may start in the gut and spread to the brain.

"Impairments and deaths due to Parkinson's are increasing faster than any other neurological disorder worldwide," says Dr Ayse Demirkan, who led the study. "However, the more we learn about the causes of the disease, the more informed we can be in developing new treatments and, eventually, a cure."

### Making safer skyscrapers

Structural engineers at Surrey have found a novel way of testing the safety and resilience of skyscrapers.

Dr Juan Sagaseta, lead author of the study, explains: "Using a model our team developed, we examined what would happen if external factors such as a vehicle impact, blasts or fires caused a particular type of failure."

"Reassuringly, our research showed the robustness of typical well-designed modern buildings in non-seismic areas."



## Helping children with ADHD

**Non-invasive brain stimulation coupled with cognitive training could improve life for children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). That's according to research at Surrey.**

In a clinical trial involving 23 unmedicated children diagnosed with ADHD, researchers investigated whether a novel form of brain stimulation – that involves applying a mild electrical current during cognitive training – can improve the symptoms of ADHD.

After a two-week programme, the study found 55 per cent of children showed significant clinical improvements in ADHD symptoms. This was compared to 17 per cent in the control group.

### Transforming lives

"The scientific community is duty-bound to investigate and develop ever-more effective and longer-lasting treatments for ADHD," says Professor Roi Cohen Kadosh, co-lead of the study at Surrey. "We demonstrated that transcranial random noise stimulation, which is shown to be safe with minimal side effects, has the potential to transform the lives of children and their families."

If these results are replicated in larger studies, our findings may offer a non-invasive treatment to large numbers of children, not only in the field of ADHD but in other neuro-developmental disorders.

## Combatting the increased threat of dengue fever



**A study at Surrey links dengue fever, the most prevalent mosquito-borne disease in the world, to harm in newborn babies.**

Unborn children of mothers infected by dengue not only suffer from lower birth weights and an increased risk of preterm birth, but also from a much higher chance of being admitted to hospital after birth.

Dengue fever poses a grave threat to populations in tropical and sub-tropical regions. But with the climate crisis impacting the world, Aedes mosquitoes, the carriers of dengue fever, are now finding new homes in countries previously unaffected by the disease. These include Croatia, France, Portugal and Spain.

"There is compelling evidence of the ill effects of maternal dengue infections on birth outcomes," says Dr Martin Foureaux Koppensteiner, lead-author of the Surrey study. "There is an urgent need for increased awareness and targeted interventions to mitigate the impact of this disease on maternal and child health. "I hope we begin to see dengue in the same way we see Zika and influenza – which we manage and avoid when pregnant."

## Centre for Ageing will champion elderly

**Fighting ageism and promoting the interests of older people through scientific research are two key goals of Surrey's new Centre of Excellence on Ageing...**



**More than 1.1 billion people worldwide are older than 65 years of age. This number could reach 2.1 billion by 2050. Improving the standard of living, participation and inclusion for this population is a key societal aim.** To achieve this, Surrey academics are working in partnership with the Global Initiative on Ageing, which operates under the United Nations.

### Critical role

"I'm incredibly proud to be part of our new Centre of Excellence on Ageing," says Professor Paul Townsend, the Director of this initiative. "We aim to play a critical part in a global movement that recognises the need for a better understanding of the life course and ageing."

"We'll focus on processes ranging from preconception through to appreciating the treatment of our elderly. The pandemic disproportionately affected our seniors. They faced discrimination and a lack of sympathy, with many left in care homes unable to see their families."

"Our new Centre is dedicated to helping older people benefit from the latest research and greatest advances in science today. They should receive the respect, care and quality of life that they deserve."

Surrey research will explore our work improving the quality of sleep of individuals living with dementia, improving inclusion of the elderly population in the tourism and hospitality sector, and investigating the mechanisms underlying osteoarthritis.

## Tackling climate change in Singapore



**Our University is leading an international UK Space Agency project to monitor climate change in Singapore.**

The joint mission operates under the Space South Central cluster. It will use Earth observation satellites, plus new technology developed specifically for the mission, to record and detect air pollution and atmospheric weather forecasting.

This data will help academics in Singapore, a country particularly vulnerable to the impact of climate change, better understand and prepare for current and future challenges it faces.

### Collaboration

"We're thrilled to have been awarded this project by the UK Space Agency and we're excited

at the prospect of further deeper collaboration with our partners in Singapore," says Surrey's Dr William Lovegrove, who leads on international liaison for Space South Central. "This project, which involves developing critical instrumentation for climate change monitoring, encompasses so much of the newly announced National Space Strategy by unlocking growth through international collaboration."



## In the picture



# Surrey Weekender was wonderful

More than 300 alumni from several graduating decades returned to Guildford in June for our on-campus reunion. And what a fun three days it was...

## Welcome back

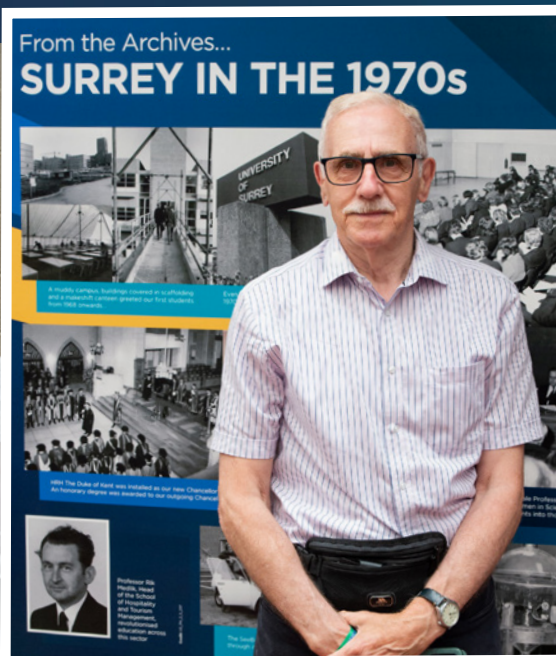


Our alumni have been there, done it and bought the t-shirt. They bought lots of Surrey Weekender t-shirts, too

## Friday night fun



The reunion weekend kicked off with a BBQ by our lake



Our display boards in the Rik Medlik Building prompted several walks down memory lane for our guests



Former Students' Union quiz-master Andy Vale, returned to Hari's Bar to present posers to our alumni

## Out and about



Our Saturday morning campus tours gave our alumni the opportunity to see how much Stag Hill has changed since their student days



Surrey Showcase Live on Saturday afternoon gave our guests an additional chance to explore campus

## Dinner delights



Saturday evening saw our alumni gather near our amphitheatre for pre-dinner drinks



Guitar maestros Duo stopped off en route to Glastonbury to provide entertainment for diners



Dinner was a delight but the night was still young as far as our alumni were concerned. And Rubix was open...

## Saturday night fever



DJ LEROY was mixing the music and our alumni showed they still have the stamina to party – and how!



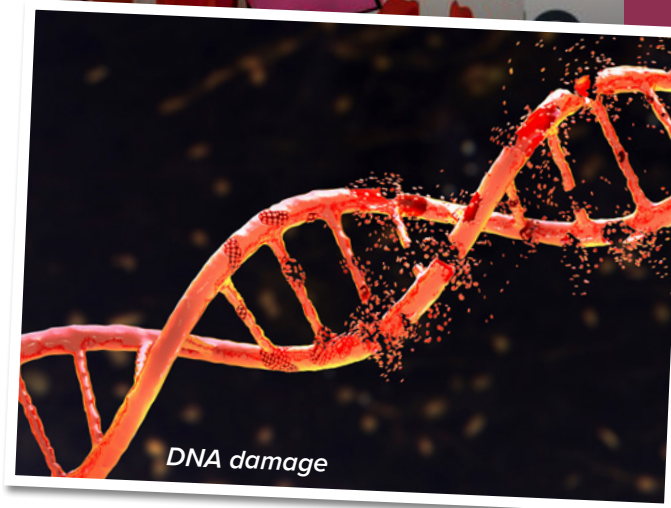
## Celebrating our amazing alumni

The Vice-Chancellor's Alumni Awards are always an annual highlight at Surrey. Entrants this year included acclaimed entrepreneurs, scientists, engineers, diplomats, medical professionals, sustainability experts, theatre impresarios...

Reading about so many impressive achievements is an inspiring experience for our judging panel. After much deliberation, we chose the following six people as this year's winners...



Professor Nicola Curtin



DNA damage

## Alumna of the Year

"I wanted to conduct medical research from my early teens," says Professor Nicola Curtin, (PhD Biochemistry, 1981).

Nicola's first post-doctoral role led to a position in a new drug discovery unit in Newcastle. Here, she began her ground-breaking research on using PARP inhibitors (PARPi) to tackle cancer.

### PARP & PARPi

Nicola explains: "PARP – or Poly(ADP-ribose) polymerase – is an enzyme that helps repair DNA. The most common type of DNA damage involves a break in one of the two strands of DNA. PARP helps repair such common breaks. We were developing PARPi for use alongside certain types of chemotherapy and radiation."

This led to the creation of the drug, rucaparib. In 2003, it was the first PARPi, used in combination with a chemotherapy drug, to go into clinical trial for the treatment of cancer.

### Against the grain

Following this, Nicola started exploring if PARPi could be used on their own to exploit a cancer-specific defect in another DNA repair pathway called homologous recombination DNA repair.

This resulted in a treatment that could target cancer cells without

harming normal cells. Her findings were published in the science journal, *Nature*, in 2005.

"The article went against the grain of scientific thinking," recalls Nicola. "Most cancer treatments then involved either poisoning the cancer or damaging the cancer cells, so it kills them without hopefully killing all the healthy cells, too. Exploiting a defect in DNA repair that was specific to the cancer meant it was not going to be as toxic to the patient. It was a new concept in cancer therapy."

Nicola's research then provided proof that PARPi could successfully work in a bigger demographic of ovarian cancer patients than was previously accepted.

### Making a difference

Nicola's research has saved thousands of lives. She also used her £865,000 royalty payment from the commercialisation of rucaparib to set up the Curtin

PARP Fund. This charitable venture helps disadvantaged people overcome barriers to education and employment.

"It's nice to know I've made a difference," she reflects. "Winning Alumna of the Year is a lovely thing. Surrey got me started on my career path. It's nice to have it come full circle."

Read our full interview with [Professor Nicola Curtin](#)

## Alumni Achievement

"At NASA, I have the best job on – and off – the planet!" says Dr Nicola Fox, (MSc Telematics, 1991) who landed the role of Associate Administrator for NASA's Science Mission Directorate in February this year.

### Launching a career

Nicola graduated from Surrey in 1991 and following PhD study, she landed a research role at the Goddard Space Flight Centre in 1995.

Nicola accepted a new job at Johns Hopkins University in 1998. She worked there for 20 years on many space missions. She was also the Chief Project Scientist on the Parker Solar Probe.

Nicola was lured back to NASA in 2018 as Head of the Heliophysics Division.

She explains: "We explore the behaviour of the Sun and how it influences the Earth and the other planets in our Solar System. Instead of working with one or two missions, I was working with all the missions that were part of the extensive Heliophysics portfolio."

### Star role at NASA

This year, she took on the Associate Administrator role at NASA. She's in charge of six divisions in the organisation's Science Mission Directorate. This means she's responsible for 140+ space missions and an \$8 billion budget.

"I love the role," she adds. "I get in early every morning. Most days, I still have a moment where I realise, 'This is amazing. I'm working at NASA! It's so cool!'"

### Dream big

Despite her success, Nicola hasn't forgotten her roots at Surrey.

"Being honoured in the Vice-Chancellor's Alumni Awards was unexpected," she says. "It's lovely to be recognised in this way. 'I tell schoolkids to 'Close their eyes and dream big. If you can't see it, you'll never be it.' 'That remains a key piece of advice I'd offer to anyone who wants to launch their own career doing something they love.'"

Read our full interview with [Dr Nicola Fox](#)

“

I love the role. I get in early every morning. Most days, I still have a moment where I realise, 'This is amazing. I'm working at NASA! It's so cool!' ”



Dr Nicola Fox



# Outstanding Contribution to Surrey

**Mike Banfield, (BSc Eng Chemical & Process Engineering, 1958), was a driving force in establishing our hugely successful Battersea Scholarship Fund.**

## Battersea days

Mike's links with Surrey stretch back nearly 70 years. In 1954, he left factory work after securing a scholarship to study a chemical engineering degree at Battersea College of Technology, the forerunner institution to our University. It was a transformative experience.

Following graduation, Mike secured a variety of engineering roles, which saw him travel extensively in Europe and Africa. He then set up his own successful consultancy company to help businesses adopt engineering management software.

## Scholarship fund

In the early 2000s, Mike recalled the opportunities his own scholarship had provided. "If I hadn't gone to Battersea, I'd have settled down and stayed for a long time in that factory," he reflected. "Fortunately for me, Battersea was founded by a charitable collective



Mike Banfield

to provide educational opportunities to sons and daughters of artisan working-class people." Mike was fundamental to the organisation of alumni reunions in 2014 and 2016. Recently Mike was the driving force behind the Battersea Scholarship Fund, which has since raised £142,000. This will fund nine scholarships for students estranged from their families.

## Legacy

Sadly, Mike passed away earlier this year, Daniel Lawrence, the Regular Giving and Legacy Manager at Surrey, remembers Mike with great affection. "At a time when most people would be enjoying retirement, Mike was helping others," says Daniel. "It's sad Mike is no longer with us. But his legacy lives on in our current Battersea Scholars – and our future ones."

Read our full article on [Mike Banfield](#)



Cled Cole

# Volunteer of the Year

**Cled Cole arrived at Surrey in 1974 to study a BSc in Chemical Engineering. The degree introduced not only the hard skills needed to succeed in this sector, but it introduced business concepts and soft skills, too.**

It also offered another key to unlock Cled's future. "I met my wife, Val, at Surrey," he reveals. "We met through friends and have been together for 50 years."

## A global career

Following graduation, Cled took a job with Ralph M Parsons. After marrying Val in 1981, he accepted a new position in Calgary.

## Return to Stag Hill

In 2004, a trip to the UK brought Cled back to Surrey. "Driving past Guildford, Val and I decided to show our sons where we'd met and studied," recounts Cled.

This kickstarted a 15-year journey of re-engagement and volunteering in various capacities. "I've been a long-time volunteer with the University's US Board and a Board Member since 2005," says Cled. "I've also supported The Future Says Surrey campaign."

## Award-winner

These roles were instrumental in Cled being named our Volunteer of the Year. But he wasn't expecting it.

"I was a little puzzled as to why I'd won it," he recalls. "Giving back to Surrey has always been my motivation for my involvement. It was never about collecting accolades. I feel very honoured to receive it, though."

Read our full interview with [Cled Cole](#)

Ross and Tom with their Oscar and BAFTA awards

# Young Achievers of the Year

**Ross White and Tom Berkeley**

**Oscar winning film-makers Ross White and Tom Berkeley graduated from Guildford School of Acting (GSA) with a BA in Acting in 2017. Alongside their studies, they'd built a successful theatre company. One of their first decisions, though, saw them abandon this venture.**

Tom explains: "We asked if we wanted to just be theatre producers. We loved writing and we wanted to focus on that. So we left the company and we set up Floodlight Pictures to explore projects for the screen."

## Short films

Their debut short, *Roy*, which starred *Game of Thrones* actor David Bradley, was long-listed for a BAFTA. Their next short was *An Irish Goodbye*, a comedy about estranged brothers reunited by the death of their mum.

"We came away feeling proud of the work and we hoped it would find an audience," says Ross. "We were bowled over by the fact it played at 70 film festivals."

## Oscar-winners

This wasn't the only success it achieved. Following a win at the BAFTAs, a global audience watched on as *An Irish Goodbye* claimed the Oscar for Best Short Film.



An Irish Goodbye

"I had a sort of memory blackout after they called out the name of our film as the winner," laughs Tom. "I do recall looking out and seeing Harrison Ford."

Ross, meanwhile, remembers the moment the reality of this big win sunk in: "We were backstage after the presentation. I had the Oscar in my hand. I remember peering down and seeing it. I burst into tears."

## Feature film

Tom and Ross' third short film, *The Golden West*, is out now. Signed up with prestigious agents in London and Los Angeles, they're working on their first feature film.

"While industry accolades have enabled us to work on our first feature, winning the Young Achiever of the Year is still special," says Tom. "The University and GSA is where we met. To be recognised by the institution that helped nurture us is touching and heartening."

Read our full interview with [Tom and Ross](#)

## Enter the Vice-Chancellor's Alumni Awards

If you've been inspired by this year's winners, why not put yourself or a fellow Surrey graduate forward for next year's awards? We're accepting nominations and the deadline for entries is 31 December 2023.

Details on how to apply can be found at: [surrey.ac.uk/alumniawards](https://surrey.ac.uk/alumniawards)





## I want to be a voice for care-leavers and disadvantaged youngsters...

**Lucy Barnes, (LLB Law, 2018), went into care at 13 and then had government support withdrawn at 16. Next year, she begins her pupillage as a barrister. She discusses her career path and her role as an advocate for the care-experienced and disadvantaged young people...**

Lucy's road to Surrey was far from smooth. Family dysfunction saw her fostered at 13. At 16, Lucy no longer received social care or local authority support. Kicked out of foster care because she found the idea of a stable home difficult, she was forced to return to an unstable house with her biological family.

Lucy explains: "After a mental breakdown at 16, I felt I'd hit rock-bottom. My foster dad sat me down and told me he believed in me. These were rare words for me to hear. We discussed career ideas and he said, 'You'd make a good solicitor.'"

"I nearly spat my tea out. He paused and, in a movie moment, added: 'No. You can do one better. You could be a barrister.'"

### Life at Surrey

Lucy began studying her Bachelor of Laws at the University of Surrey in 2014.

"I came from a place that wasn't diverse, so meeting people from different backgrounds was amazing," she recalls. "I also remember my roommate greeting me with a hug and a warm smile. Straight away, I knew this was going to be a new life for me. I needed that. As a young person, I had to grow up quickly. At the University, I could be the teenager I never had the chance to be. I studied hard, but I could breathe and be myself."

And a large part of that meant Lucy coming to terms with her own background.

She adds: "I always felt the stigma of being care-experienced. But I told my new friends and they didn't judge me. It took me years to integrate my past into my present life. Surrey provided the initial opportunity to begin that process by being accepted for just who I was."

### Legal career

Lucy finished her degree in 2018, but she soon faced fresh challenges.

"Trying to enter the legal world was a struggle," she reveals. "Pretty much everyone I met was from a privileged background. It made me feel isolated and different."

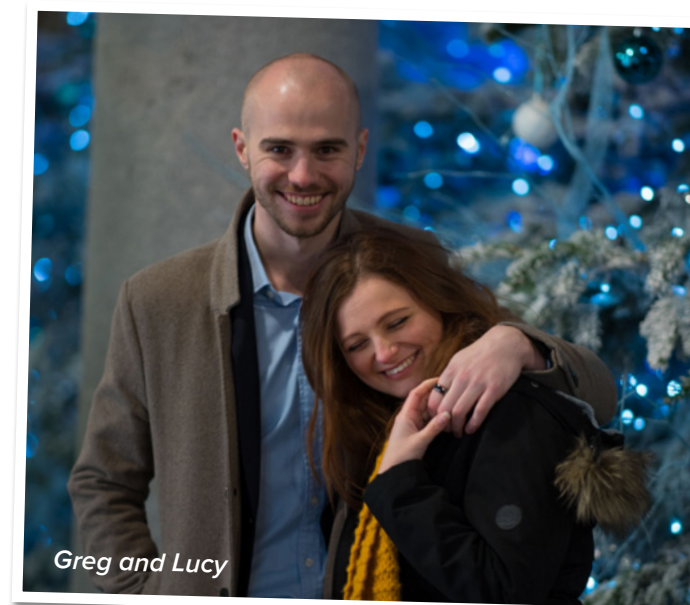
A trip to Asia, however, provided a pivotal experience for reflection. "Being away from the UK, I decided to reassert myself," says Lucy. "I landed a role working as an assistant at a chambers with a barrister who believed in me."

Work in the UK and Europe followed. In 2019, Lucy set up a niche practice as a freelance paralegal for barristers. This grew... as did her ambition to be a barrister.

"I realised I wanted to follow through on my initial goal," she confesses. "But the Bar course fees to train as a barrister were £14,000+."

"When the pandemic struck, I decided not to allow limiting beliefs to hold me back, so I applied for a scholarship from Middle Temple Inn in Temple, London. As I filled in the form, I took ownership of who I was. It was the first time I'd mentioned being care-experienced in a job application. But I didn't want to start a new phase of my career without integrating that."

Lucy secured a major scholarship and completed Bar School in November 2021, obtaining a Master of Laws, too.



"I was called to the Bar while pregnant," she recalls. My partner, Greg, who I met at Surrey, came as well. It was a big moment. It sparked the start of my new life."

More big moments followed. Lucy gave birth to a baby boy in 2022, then secured a pupillage with a firm of barristers near her Norfolk home. She and Greg are also planning their wedding.

### Advocacy

Despite finding fulfilment and happiness with her family and career, Lucy remains a vocal advocate for disadvantaged young people and those from care-experienced backgrounds.

"I started a new Twitter/X account after securing my pupillage," explains Lucy.



"I made my first post an introductory one, explaining who I was and what my life experiences were. I was astonished by the response. It's had more than 900,000 views and so much support from so many people. I've also been speaking in schools and summer schools to those in care and those from impoverished

areas. Some advocacy work involves training professionals in dealing with individuals who've had traumatic backgrounds. I'm an Independent Visitor for a young person in care with the amazing charity, Coram Voice, too. I love all of these new roles. I feel more 'me' than I ever have before."

### The future

Lucy says she aims to move into family and children law, and potentially write a book. For the moment, however, she's enjoying the life she has – and trying to make life better for those from similar backgrounds to her.

"I love my family," she says. "Having a son gives me the chance to be the mother I never had. I also want to be a voice for young people in care and leaving care, young people struggling with mental health and disadvantaged young people."

"I often felt that I wasn't good enough. I was embarrassed about my upbringing and I never want anyone else to feel that way. That doubt and fear can easily take a hold if you allow it to. I've had to confront that, learn to be confident and self-assured, and know who I am and what I'm trying to do. That means I can be a voice for those who haven't yet found theirs."

Read our full-length interview with [Lucy Barnes](#)



# It's incredible how lessons learnt at Surrey remain relevant...

**Folarin Oyeleye, (BSc Electronic Engineering, 2005), is a former President of our Students' Union, he's now a Managing Director at JPMorgan...**

The first time Folarin visited Stag Hill was when he started his degree.

"I left Lagos at 17 to attend school in Dublin," says Folarin. "I returned to Nigeria and researched studying in the UK on the internet. Surrey had a good reputation and strong graduate employability. But the online pictures didn't prepare me for how hilly Guildford was. I lived at the bottom of Stag Hill. I had to walk up several inclines every day to get to my lectures!"

## Students' Union

Uphill struggles didn't feature much for the rest of Folarin's time at Surrey thanks to the Students' Union.

"I have fond memories of that place," he recalls. "My brother advised me to get involved. Which is why I walked into the building and asked a representative, 'How can I participate?' "I started as a volunteer and I ended up as President of the Students' Union. I made amazing friends on that journey. Several are like my family and we're still in touch."



## A challenging job

Folarin remembers his time as President with fondness.

He explains: "I represented the student body to the University authorities. I was also in charge of a pretty large organisation that generated millions and employed 30-40 staff. "It was an amazing opportunity. Most people don't experience that type of responsibility until they're mid-career. I recall reviewing early plans for Surrey Sports Park."

## Hardship

Folarin served his term as SU President and left in 2006.

"I completed my degree in 2005 and spent the next year as President," he explains. "But I had issues paying my fees, so I didn't get my degree certificate until early 2006. That experience is a key reason I give to student hardship via the Forever Surrey Fund. I've done that since I've been in employment. I just about made it through uni. I want to help those coming behind me who may need support."



*Folarin was a guest speaker at a recent graduation*

## Career plan

Folarin says he didn't have a clear plan when he left in 2006.

"I wanted to work in finance for a few years," he reveals. "I had no idea where it would take me when I started at JPMorgan. But it's been amazing and, 17 years on, I'm still here. I lead a group of client advisers who report to me. It's an interesting role. No two days are the same. Its multi-faceted nature means it's not too far removed from my role as SU President. There I also had to combine soft skills, such as active listening, with hard skills, like solving problems. It's incredible how lessons learnt at Surrey are still relevant."

## Forever Surrey

Despite a busy career, Folarin remains involved with the University.

"I sit on the board of The Future Says Surrey campaign," he says. "Many of the areas they're raising money for align with my values. The support for hardship funding is particularly important to me.

"Funnily enough, I was a student caller on the first Telethon the University did to raise money in 2003. Fast-forward 20 years and I'm still helping to raise funds."

**Read our full-length Q&A with [Folarin Oyeleye](#)**

# It's OK to take an unusual route to get where you want to go...

**Dr Dianne Jackson (née Carter) graduated with a BEng in Materials Science and Engineering at Surrey in 2002, then returned to undertake an EngD in Environmental Technology, graduating in 2008. She now works as a doctor in the NHS, but her career has included roles at a ski resort and as a combat medic...**



*Dianne (second left) and her Surrey Weekender crew*

## What are your favourite memories of Surrey?

I played rugby from pretty much day one. A friend nicknamed "Storks" asked me if I fancied going to a training session. I'd never played before, but it was excellent.

I'm still in touch with the women I played alongside. We regularly meet up. I retain life-long friendships with "Brian", "Blue" and "Tewy".

## What was the plan when you graduated?

When I finished my BEng, I fancied a change. I got a permit to work in Canada and I landed a job at a ski resort. I had no idea about skiing or snowboarding, but I soon learnt. I lived halfway up one mountain and I worked at the top of another one.



*Dianne at her graduation*

## Then you returned to the UK...

I met Professor Chris France, who oversaw the EngD in Environmental Technology at Surrey. It was a good fit for me. I conducted PhD-level research while working in industry.

One of my proudest achievements was meeting my supervisors early on and telling them I'd hand them a chapter on a particular date three years in the future, and they'd hand it back to me one week later. They all signed up thinking it wouldn't happen. But I kept that deadline and I completed my EngD in four years.

## What did you do next?

I taught English in China for four months. When I returned, I became a materials engineer in Macclesfield. It was interesting, but I was on my own a lot. I fancied something new.

Fortunately, when I moved to Yorkshire, I'd joined the Territorial Army as a medic. I loved helping people, being part of a team and the gratification of making an instant difference. I did every medical course with the TA that I could.

I thought, "Maybe I should try for medical school..." In 2011, I got a place at the University of Leicester and I started to train as a doctor.

## What are you doing now?

I'm a Registrar in Emergency Medicine at University Hospitals Leicester. I worked through Covid. In fact, I had my daughter during the pandemic, which was very tough.

I don't think I'd have completed the training for medicine when I was 18. I wouldn't have had the life experience I have now that makes

me understand what kind of doctor I am. I'm glad I took this path.

It's OK to take an unusual route to where you want to go as long as you enjoy the journey.

## You attended the Surrey Weekender. What it fun?

It was fab. My husband, who's also a Surrey graduate, and "Blue" came with me. We went to everything.

I also met "Storks" who was there with her dad. On Friday night, some of us stayed up chewing the fat until 4am in our kitchen. It was like we were students again.

A group of us stayed up to watch the sun rise on Sunday morning.

## Finally, what advice would you give to the undergraduate version of yourself?

I don't think I would. The 18-year-old me would just ignore it. But that's one of the joys of youth. You get the chance to find your own way.

If I had to offer wisdom, it would be about reflecting on that process and I'd borrow a quote from *Doctor Who*: "We're different people throughout our lives. That's good – as long as we keep moving forward and as long as we remember all the people we used to be."

**Read our full-length interview with [Dr Dianne Jackson](#)**



# “A career highlight? Arranging a royal visit to Amman...”

**Marc Jessel came to Surrey to take a degree in Russian and European Studies (1989-1993). After a career in cultural diplomacy, he now works in sustainability...**

## How was life at Surrey?

It was great. I made a lot of friends early on. One person I met at Freshers' Week remains my best friend to this day. I also discovered yoga and I still practice it.

## How did you find the course?

The former Soviet Union was collapsing during my time at Surrey. The Berlin Wall came down a few months after I started. We were witnessing an important piece of history and studying it in real time.

## What are your favourite memories of Surrey?

My first trip to the Soviet Union in 1990 was memorable. It was an amazing opportunity to discover this extraordinary region. Graduation week was a period of absolute joy.

## What was the plan when you graduated?

I didn't have one. Then I landed a 10-month job as a Student Liaison Officer in Moscow. That pretty much shaped the rest of my career.

## What happened after that?

With the former Soviet Union opening up, there was a desire in the West to build stronger ties. That created opportunities.

I secured roles at the European Training Foundation and a European Union unit advising the Uzbekistan government. I met the person who became my wife in the latter job.

## Then you returned to London?

In 1999, I returned to study a masters. A 16-year career with the British Council followed. Broadly speaking, the Council builds trust between the UK and its partner countries via arts and social development projects. I worked

in the Palestinian territories, Indonesia, Malawi, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates and Iraq.

One highlight involved arranging a visit by His Royal Highness, the former Prince of Wales, Prince Charles to an inter-faith dialogue forum at the main mosque in Amman, Jordan.

## How did you begin working in sustainability?

I reached a point where I no longer wanted to move countries every few years with the British Council. My teenage children also needed a bit of stability with exams looming.

I joined a Swiss multi-national to lead the development of NGO benchmarking services. My role broadened to oversee sustainability and certification schemes.

This led to a job with the Forest Stewardship Council. I work here as its Chief System Integrity Officer.

## You spoke at a graduation ceremony in 2023...

I attended the Surrey Weekender and that put me on the alumni radar.

I was asked if I wanted to be a guest speaker at graduation shortly afterwards. It was a real honour.

## You have additional family ties to Surrey don't you?

Yes. My daughter, Maria-Danae, graduated from Surrey in 2021 in biomedical science. My son, Emile, is in year three of his law degree.

Sadly, I couldn't give them advice on anything like the best pubs. The local nightclub was Cinderella's in my day. That doesn't exist any more.

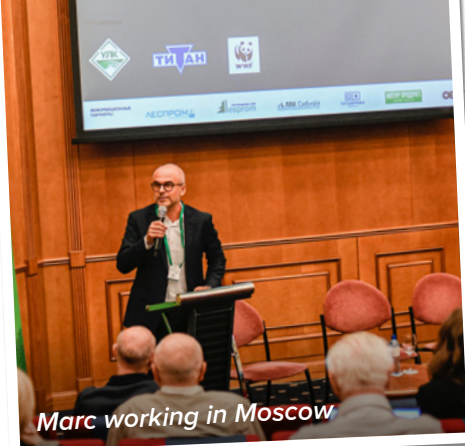
## Finally, what advice would you give the undergraduate version of yourself?

I'd say, "Trust your gut. It knows you a lot better than any algorithm."



Marc at the Surrey Weekender

Read our full-length Q&A with [Marc Jessel](#)



Marc working in Moscow

## Professor Patrick Dowling CBE (1939-2023)



Professor Patrick Dowling

A graduate of University College Dublin and an expert in structural engineering, Patrick joined our University in 1994 as its third Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive.

Almost immediately, he began a process of consultation and discussion to create an ambitious Vision Statement. That was of a University working

in partnership with industry and commerce to create an institution of real international standing.

Under his leadership, Surrey began the largest building programme on campus since the University first established its Guildford home on Stag Hill in the 1960s. The Duke of Kent building, completed in 1999

## Professor Ron Shail (1935-2022)

Ron joined Surrey as a Reader in Applied Maths in 1966 when our institution was still Battersea College of Technology. He moved to Guildford when our University opened its doors in 1968.

In 1987, he became a Professor of Maths at Surrey, the Head of the Department of Maths from 1989-1994 and an Emeritus Professor on his retirement in 2000.

Passionate about his subject, he was also a keen cricketer. He used to joke his research fellows, assistants and PhD students were recruited based on their ability to bowl at him in the nets.

Ron left Guildford in 2016 to be nearer his family. But he looked forward to receiving news and was proud of how well Surrey performed in various league tables.

## Professor Josephine Arendt (1941-2023)

An Emeritus Professor of Endocrinology, Josephine was instrumental in founding our specialisms in sleep and chronobiology at Surrey. She was internationally recognised for her enormous contribution to the field of melatonin, circadian rhythms and sleep.

## Jeremy Towner (1933-2023)

A student at Battersea College of Technology, Jerry became a lecturer at the University of Surrey immediately following his graduation. A passionate academic and lifelong educator, he retired at the age of 75 in 2008.

## In our thoughts



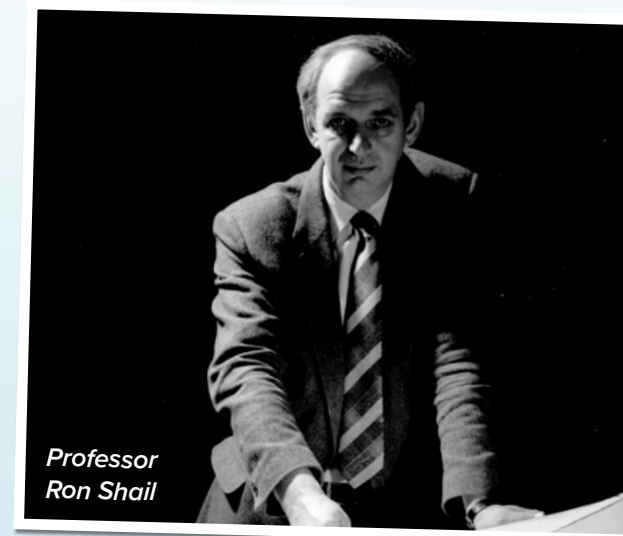
HRH The Duke of Kent and Patrick

at a cost of £12 million, is one of his many legacies from this period.

Patrick also implemented changes that extended our research

profile and established links with international academic institutions. Passionate about the local community, he saw great value in forging important relationships with local schools in Guildford, too.

Patrick was awarded national and international distinctions. He was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of Surrey in 1999 and a CBE in 2001. He remained a loyal and supportive member of our University community. Long after he retired in 2005, he continued to visit us on campus with his wife, Dr Grace Dowling.



Professor Ron Shail

## Dr Anthony Donald Keedwell (1928-2023)

Part of the Faculty of Maths at Battersea College of Technology, Don stayed with the University when it moved to Guildford and became a Senior Lecturer. Despite retiring in 1993, he continued to publish papers and supervise PhD students.

## Professor Karl Koch (1940-2023)

One of the first generation of students at the new University of Surrey in the 1960s, Karl returned to Surrey as a lecturer in German Studies in the Department of Linguistic and International Studies in the 1970s. In the 1990s, he moved to London South Bank University, where he taught for 20 years.



## Our scholars



Luke, Christian  
and Anwar



Anwar and Mike

# Battersea Scholarship

**It's been a busy year for the Battersea Fund and its first two scholarship recipients. Earlier in the year members of the team caught up with Mike Banfield, (BSc Chemical and Process Engineering, 1958), who was a key figure in founding this initiative.**

Mike was so pleased that the venture that he and his fellow Battersea alumni established, continues to go from strength to strength and will soon be supporting a third scholar. Due to Mike's efforts, he was awarded the Vice-Chancellor's Alumni Award for Outstanding Contribution to Surrey (see page 20).

We were very sad to learn that Mike passed away in April of this year, but we were honoured that his son, Christian Banfield, accepted this award on his behalf. Christian also announced that the Battersea Scholarship will benefit from a £30,000 family gift from Mike's estate. That means we'll have more amazing recipients such as Anwar and Luke for years to come.

### Anwar's story

Anwar, our first Battersea Scholar, has just started the third year of his BSc in Business Management.

"My second year was significantly better than my tumultuous first," says Anwar. "That was full of upheaval, largely due to the loss of my mother. However, my second year proved to be smoother and more enjoyable. The best part of the course was learning about business law. I found it enlightening. I've managed the balance between my studies and my social life a lot better in my second year, too. The Salsa Society had a lot of meet-ups, and myself and my friends hosted a few BBQs as well. Thinking back on the last year, I've experienced a lot of academic – and personal – growth."

Reflecting on the support he receives from the Battersea Fund, Anwar adds: "It makes a huge difference. It removed a lot of financial pressure and enabled me to focus on my degree."

He also fondly remembers Mike. "Quite simply, he was a great person," recalls Anwar. "Mike achieved so much in his career that you could always learn from him. It was impossible not to be motivated by his endless enthusiasm for everything."

### Luke's story

Our second Battersea Scholar, Luke, finished his Foundation Year at Surrey in July – and he started his BSc in Business and Accounting in September.

"My Foundation Year was more relaxed than I thought it was going to be," says Luke. "It helped me build the skills I need before going into the first year of the BSc. I remember putting a lot of work into one research project I was passionate about. It examined how football teams trade players. It was a fun topic."

Luke says the scholarship has had a huge impact. He explains: "The financial support has been invaluable. It not only ensured I could finish the Foundation Year, but it meant I didn't have to work additional hours in my part-time job to subsidise my studies. In fact, when things were tough on the course earlier this year, it meant I could quit the job and focus on my studies without having to worry about money."

"There's also been the pastoral and mentoring support from everyone who's involved in the Fund. If I need to talk to someone, I know there are people in my corner. I appreciate the support everyone involved with the Battersea Scholarship Fund has given me on this journey as I try to get through university. I'd struggle to do it on my own. That's why meeting our new Battersea Scholar later this year and offering that sort of support to them is important to me."

Read more about our [Battersea Scholarship Fund](#) and our [Forever Surrey Fund](#)

# Ted Adams Scholarship

**Jenni, (BSc Midwifery, 2023) left a career in finance to train as a midwife at Surrey. She discusses her career transition and explains how the Ted Adams Scholarship helped her...**



Jenni

### What was your route to study as a midwife?

I originally studied events management, then I went into finance. After I'd had my second child, I didn't want to go back into that sector. I wanted to retrain. After we had our third child, my husband suggested I'd make a good midwife.

### Why did you choose the University of Surrey?

Living in Guildford made it an easy decision. The fact I'd decided on this new career – and the ability to train in it was right on my doorstep – made it feel like the stars had magically aligned.

### How did you first learn about the Ted Adams Scholarship?

A friend mentioned it to me. I found it was exactly the sort of thing I was looking for. It specifically supports mature students aiming to transition into a career in nursing or midwifery.

### What material difference did it make?

Unless you're from a wealthy background, studying for a degree is always going to be financially demanding. Depending on one income to support a household with three kids while one of the adults isn't earning for three years is intense. And we still had to buy necessities for the children such as school shoes and uniform.

### How important are scholarships?

They're hugely important. It took me a while to find a career route that took me to university. If I'd have taken this path at 18, I don't think my parents would have been able to support me through it.

### You've just graduated. What's the plan?

When my registration number comes through, I start work at the Royal Surrey County Hospital as a midwife.

I'm super happy to be working there. I'm lucky to have found something that is so rewarding.

# Shining Star Scholarship

**Stacey-Marie, (BA Musical Theatre, 2023), discusses the positive impact of scholarships...**

### Why did you study musical theatre?

Acting in school plays was always something I loved doing. But because of the additional financial demands of studying a drama course, I couldn't see a way I could afford it. I'm not from a wealthy family. There weren't many people who looked like me on these types of courses either.

### How tough is degree study if you're not financially secure?

When I got offered a place at Guildford School of Acting (GSA), I worked all through the summer. My dad also got a second job, just so I could afford to initially move down here from Manchester.

I was lucky at GSA. I was awarded scholarships every year I was here. Without them, I wouldn't have made it through. Even with this support, I still had meetings with course tutors to discuss the fact I may not have the money to complete my studies.

### What difference have scholarships made?

Securing scholarships was the only reason I was able to accept and complete this course.

But it's more than that. It meant that somebody who I've never met saw me, where I was from and where I wanted to go, and chose to support that.

Suddenly, it wasn't just me and my dad trying to make this dream work.



Stacey-Marie on stage  
(inset) and at graduation



## Class notes

Who's doing what and where?



Tom and Sol (left) and Tom revisits his room in Wandle 1 (above)

### A Surrey pioneer returns

**Tom Abraham, (BSc Electrical and Electronic Engineering, 1972)**, was part of the first student intake at our Stag Hill campus in 1968. He studied Electrical Engineering, did a PhD at Imperial College, then worked in the semiconductor industry for 40 years. Career highlights included a memorable run-in with Apple boss Steve Jobs. Now retired, Tom made the journey back to Guildford for the Surrey Weekender. En route, he found time to meet up with fellow 1968 undergraduate Sol Isaac. Now living in Texas and retired, Tom enjoys looking after his grandchildren.

The Surrey adventurers on campus (below) and near In Salah, Algeria

### John's African adventure



Next year marks the 50th anniversary of four Surrey students tackling an exciting expedition across Africa in a Land Rover. The journey taken by physics alumnus **John Rowland**, chemical engineers **Martin Eldon** and **Hugh Tarran**, and sociology graduate **Marilyn King** was part-sponsored by the University. On their travels, which took them across the Sahara desert to Nigeria and, via the Congo, to East Africa and Kenya, they conducted an experiment funded by our Department of Physics and the World Health Organization, and one in conjunction with the Science Museum. John and Hugh now live in Cheltenham, Martin resides near Edinburgh and Marilyn is in San Francisco. All have all met for several reunions in the past.

### DRIIA signed by Ministry of Sound

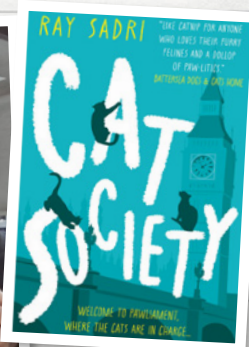


**Alex Eyre, (BMus Creative Music Technology, 2022)**, (pictured left), who records and produces music under the name DRIIA, has signed her first deal with a major record label. The acclaimed DJ and rising star of the UK garage scene will

release her music from January 2024 under the Ministry of Sound banner. "I am delighted to have signed with a label as iconic as the Ministry of Sound. It is an amazing position to be in this early on as a self-produced/written artist. I can't wait to explore whatever musical worlds this collaboration creates"

### Ray's 'purr-fect' read

**Ray Sadri, (LLB Law and European Studies, 2004)**, (pictured left), has published his first novel in September. *Cat Society* chronicles life in Westminster, reimagining the debates, events and headlines of recent years in an alternative world that our feline friends have taken over.



### Get in touch

If you want to feature in our next issue of Forever Surrey, please let us know what you've been up to at:

[surrey.ac.uk/shareyourstory](https://surrey.ac.uk/shareyourstory)



### Izzy's West End debut

Guildford School of Acting graduate **Izzy Cross, (BA Musical Theatre, 2023)**, (pictured right) has landed her debut role in the West End is on stage at the Novello Theatre in the hit musical *Mamma Mia!*

## The last word

## Down time

Professor Melaine Coward is the Head of our School of Health Sciences. She's also a fan of *EastEnders*, reggae, fast cars and Winnie the Pooh. But not the *Barbie* movie...

Professor Melaine Coward

### What are your must-see TV shows?

I've watched *EastEnders* from the start. Given my background as a cancer nurse, they do stories on long-term illnesses well.

*Enders* matriarch Pat Butcher's my favourite character. I also met Bianca actress Patsy Palmer when I was a nurse at the Royal Marsden. She was in the canteen and I shouted "Rickayyy!" She laughed, even though she must get that 20 times every day.

### What's your most recent boxset binge?

I hadn't seen the last series of *Happy Valley*. I had a rare day off and I did nothing but watch it all in one go. It was excellent, but I admit that I was emotionally exhausted at the end of it.

### What's the last film you saw in the cinema?

I went for a night out with my best friend. We went to see *Barbie* because we'd heard it was a film with strong feminist messages.

We didn't enjoy it and have vowed that we'd never speak of it again...

### What are you reading?

It's a book called *The Big Blue Jobbie* by Yvonne Vincent. It's the story of a menopausal and middle-aged woman during lockdown in Scotland. I'm laughing out loud when I read it.

### What's your favourite book?

It's *House at Pooh Corner* by AA Milne. I often teach about reflection and thoughtful practice in healthcare, and I drop quotes from it into my lectures. There are many messages for life and learning that come from Winnie the Pooh.



Barbie was bad

### What kind of music do you like?

I'm a massive reggae fan. I'll also listen to ska, jungle, drum and bass, hip-hop, R&B... When I get into my car and turn the music system on, some of the reactions from my students are hilarious. They look around and assume the noise is coming from somewhere else – until they realise it's me.

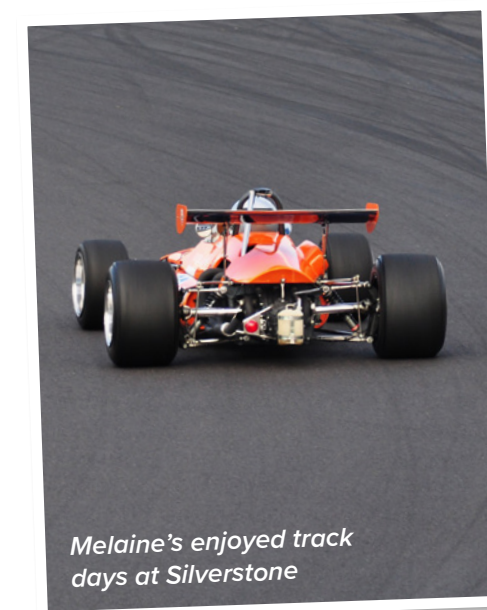
### What are your other passions outside work?

I'm a complete "speed demon". I love fast cars. I have a new BMW M4 convertible and it goes from zero to 60 in 3.9 seconds.

I grew up in a remote area and my dad was worried about me being out on winding country roads. He sent me on a course at Silverstone. One of the instructors asked me if I fancied doing a track day... and that was that. I've done handbrake turns and I've driven all sorts of high-performance cars on the track at Silverstone.

### Finally, we've built you a time machine. Where are you going?

I'd go back to 1921 when the General Nursing Council for England and Wales opened the first register for nurses. I'd have loved to have been on the first page of that list. I'm so proud to be a nurse.



Melaine's enjoyed track days at Silverstone





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