

# Meet Kingston University's oldest ever graduate

By Josh Smith

Dr David Marjot made history as the oldest person to graduate from Kingston University earlier this month, achieving a master's degree in MA Modern European Philosophy at the age of 95.

Embarking on a two-year part-time study, Marjot leaves Kingston with a merit.

He has beaten the previous Kingston record held by a 93-year-old graduate from 1994 and is just shy of the UK's oldest-ever graduate, 96-year-old Archie White who graduated from the University of Brighton in 2021.

"I thoroughly enjoyed it, it's been a real challenge, and I was well taught," he said.

"I was chuffed to bits to get a degree and I was very amused to discover I was such an old bloke at the place."

Marjot attended the graduation ceremony at The Rose Theatre with his son and his son-in-law.

He received a thunderous standing ovation from everyone in the auditorium as he

crossed the stage to receive his degree.

Describing the ceremony, Marjot said: "It was a lovely day, and I wouldn't have not had this experience, it was priceless."

Professor Stella Sandford who taught David said: "It was like the whole auditorium recognised that it was something really special, it was really touching."

A psychiatrist throughout his professional career, Marjot was last in education in 1952 when he qualified to become a doctor.

While he never formally studied philosophy before undertaking this degree, he had always been interested in philosophical questions in his professional work.

He is using the degree to further his observations on how philosophical teachings can be applied to the practice of psychiatry.

"It's a companion to be with me that I can look to, to think about things and find things out," he said.

"The degree was delightful,

and the grade was always welcome, but it was the course itself that moved me."

Marjot is now looking to write a book about the post-war history of psychiatry, which the philosophy degree will help him with.

This will be the third book that he has written, following *The Diseases of Alcohol* and *Addiction: A Kind of Loving*.

Offering advice to those considering re-entering education, Marjot said: "Don't hesitate to be bold and do something quite different, I would say that it's great fun to learn something new.

"Don't think that you can't do it, we underestimate our talents often, think we aren't good at something when perhaps we aren't always right."

Professor Peter Hallward, another of Marjot's teachers said: "David helped to put a lot of the questions we were discussing in our classes (about social relations, power dynamics, the nature of capitalism) into perspective, and consistently offered valuable points of



Dr Marjot at graduation. Photo: Cameron P Eyles

comparison with earlier historical moments."

Sandford told the story of Marjot's unique contributions to class when she discussed French philosophy in the late 1940s.

"When I first interviewed

David, we were talking about this philosophy and he said, "I was in Paris in 1947" and it was like wow he was actually there. It was really amazing to think that he had actually been there it was fantastic," she said.