



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

WINTER 2013|14

THE ALUMNI MAGAZINE + BILLET & GENERAL COUNCIL PAPERS

# edit

## LAUGHING MATTERS

SKY HEAD OF COMEDY  
LUCY LUMSDEN ON  
THE FUNNY BUSINESS

## ROAD TO REFERENDUM

HOW OUR EXPERTS ARE  
SHAPING THE DEBATE

ALSO INSIDE AWARD-WINNING FILM'S STUNNING STORY | MEADOWS MEMORIES | ALUMNI WEEKEND PHOTOGRAPHS



# SAVE THE DATE

19 - 21 June 2014  
Toronto, Canada



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of EDINBURGH



The University of Edinburgh  
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Join us in Toronto from 19 to 21 June 2014 for a spectacular weekend of talks, tours and tartan.

As well as the General Council half-yearly meeting, the weekend will include a programme of distinguished speakers, social gatherings, city tours and a very special honorary degree ceremony.

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## FOREWORD

Welcome to the Winter issue of *Edit*. The turn of 2014 heralds an exciting year for our staff, students and alumni, and indeed for Scotland. Our experts are part of history as they inform the debate on the referendum (p10), while in a very different arena the University will play a major role in the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow (p5). In a nationwide public engagement project our researchers are exploring the impact on Scotland of the First World War throughout the four years of its centenary (p17), and on p16 we look back at the heroism of an Edinburgh alumna during the conflict. If you are seeking light relief, you may have to thank Lucy Lumsden. She has commissioned some of Britain's most successful television comedies of recent years, and in our interview (p8) she talks about the importance of making people laugh. We report on an exceptional string of successes, from Professor Peter Higgs's Nobel Prize (p5), to BAFTAs, including one for a documentary whose story is told by a remarkable Edinburgh graduate on pages 12-15. Find your friends in photos of our alumni weekend (p22) and, if you couldn't make it, we hope to see you at the next one in 2015.

**Kirsty MacDonald, Executive Director  
of Development and Alumni Engagement**

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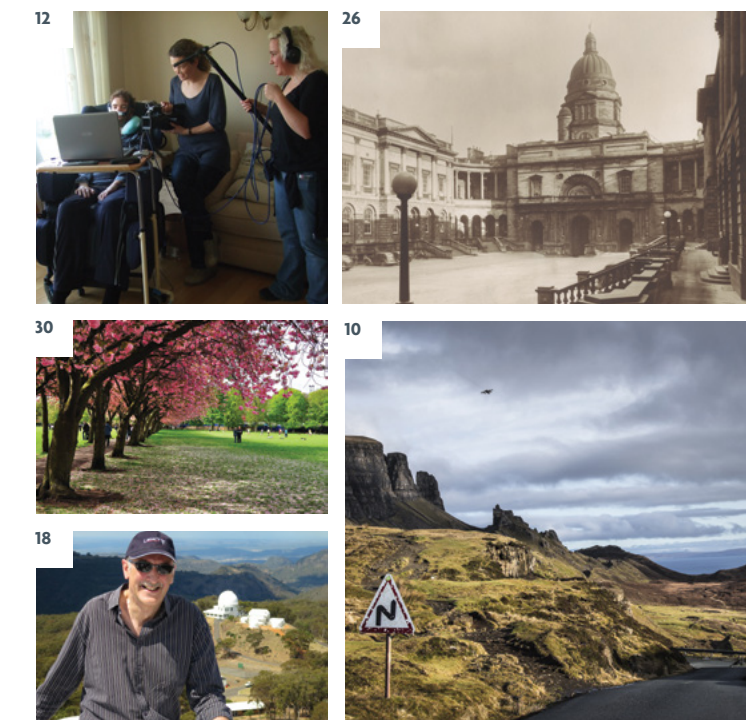
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## CONTENTS



### 04 Update

### 08 The Interview

Lucy Lumsden,  
Sky's Head of Comedy

### 10 Road to referendum

Professor Tom Devine  
maps the route to  
Scotland's historic decision

### 12 Something beautiful

Louise Oswald on the film  
her terminally ill husband  
was determined to make

### 16 Fighting to help on the front line

The story of Elsie Inglis and  
Scottish Women's Hospitals

### 18 What You Did Next

### 20 Edinburgh Experience

### 22 Snapshot

### 24 Arts Review

### 25 Science Digest

### 26 The History Makers

### 28 Ideas Exchange

### 29 The Two of Us

### 30 Landmark

### 31 The Last Word

### 32 Billet

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Look out for news in the next issue of *Edit* of our planned digital edition. And don't miss out – please let us know your email address: [alumni@ed.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@ed.ac.uk)



UPDATE



FOR ALL THE LATEST UNIVERSITY NEWS, VISIT  
[WWW.ED.AC.UK/NEWS](http://WWW.ED.AC.UK/NEWS)



02 CHANCELLOR  
OPENS RESEARCH  
FACILITIES

A clinic for research into neurological conditions, founded by author JK Rowling (PGCE 1995), has been opened by the Chancellor, HRH the Princess Royal.

The Anne Rowling Regenerative Neurology Clinic will research ways to treat neurodegenerative conditions including multiple sclerosis, motor neurone disease and Parkinson's disease.

The Chancellor also opened the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation George and Kaity David Centre, at High School Yards – named after the couple whose donations enabled its construction. George David is an Edinburgh alumnus (BA Commerce 1959).

> FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT  
[WWW.ANNEROWLINGCLINIC.COM](http://WWW.ANNEROWLINGCLINIC.COM)  
[WWW.EDINBURGHCENTRE.ORG](http://WWW.EDINBURGHCENTRE.ORG)



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01 ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR:  
PROFESSOR LESLEY YELLOWLEES

PROFESSOR LESLEY YELLOWLEES HAS BEEN NAMED ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR, IN RECOGNITION OF HER CONTRIBUTION TO SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY, AND PROMOTING WOMEN AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT.

Professor Yellowlees (pictured) is Vice-Principal and Head of the College of Science & Engineering. She completed both her BSc in Chemical Physics and her PhD in Inorganic Electrochemistry at Edinburgh, in 1975 and 1982 respectively.

Presenting Professor Yellowlees with her award, Professor Mary Bownes, Senior Vice-Principal External Engagement, said: "While we often look externally to select our Alumnus of the Year, Lesley is such an outstanding researcher and leader and a stunning role model and advocate for women in science, engineering and technology that we are delighted to have chosen one of our own members of staff this year."

Professor Yellowlees has been central to the promotion of women in science at the University. The School of Chemistry, where Professor Yellowlees holds a personal chair in inorganic electrochemistry, is one of only four university departments in the UK to hold an Athena Swan Gold Award for commitment to advancing women's careers.

A pioneer of dye-sensitised solar cells, and a specialist in spectroelectrochemistry, Professor Yellowlees is President of the Royal Society of Chemistry.

> YOU MAY ALSO BE INTERESTED IN PROFESSOR POLLY ARNOLD  
ON WOMEN IN SCIENCE: THE LAST WORD, PAGE 31

03 YOUSAFZAI  
AMONG  
HONORARY  
GRADUATES

A range of high-profile figures including education campaigner Malala Yousafzai and former US president Bill Clinton have been awarded honorary degrees.

Ms Yousafzai (pictured), the 16-year-old Pakistani girl who was shot in 2012 by the Taliban and has since campaigned for universal access to education, was guest of honour at the inaugural meeting of the UN Global Citizen Commission hosted by the University.

Mr Clinton received an honorary doctorate in recognition of his charitable work. Other recent honorary graduates include rower Sir Steve Redgrave, film director Lynne Ramsay and author Anne Donovan.

MALALA ADDRESSES MCEWAN  
HALL AUDIENCE [WWW.ED.AC.UK/  
NEWS/2013/MALALA-211013](http://WWW.ED.AC.UK/NEWS/2013/MALALA-211013)

04 GAELIC GAINS  
GREATER VOICE

The University has launched a Gaelic Language Plan to raise the profile of the language on campus and create opportunities for its use.

Developments include a new undergraduate degree in Gaelic and Primary Education and a free online course in Scottish traditional music. The Plan also covers staffing and the use of Gaelic in branding and communications.

A Gaelic Fair marked the launch of the Plan in November, where students from the Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies ran taster sessions in Gaelic language and culture. The University of Edinburgh Highland Society organised a ceilidh.

The University appointed Bria Mason (MA Celtic 2009) as Gaelic Officer in February 2013.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT  
[WWW.ED.AC.UK/ABOUT/  
GAELIC-LANGUAGE-PLAN](http://WWW.ED.AC.UK/ABOUT/GAELIC-LANGUAGE-PLAN)

05 GEARING UP  
FOR GAMES

Alumni, staff and students of the University are preparing to take central roles in the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

Among the first athletes confirmed for Team Scotland in the Games are 400m hurdler Eilidh Child (pictured) (BEd Physical Education 2008) and squash player Alan Clyne (BEd Physical Education 2008), who both followed the sport performance programme at Edinburgh, and are both medal hopefuls for Glasgow.

Current students to look out for include first-year undergraduate Sarah Adlington in judo and postgraduate Caitlin McClatchey in swimming. Among University staff taking part will be Scotland's hockey team manager Eugene Connelly and sports medicine staff, three of whom have been chosen for Team Scotland.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT  
[WWW.ED.AC.UK/SPORT](http://WWW.ED.AC.UK/SPORT)

06 NOBEL PRIZE FOR PETER HIGGS  
BRINGS BOOST FOR PHYSICS

FOLLOWING THE AWARD OF A NOBEL PRIZE IN PHYSICS TO EMERITUS PROFESSOR PETER HIGGS, THE UNIVERSITY IS TO FURTHER ENHANCE ITS RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN THE SUBJECT.

Professor Higgs (pictured) was named joint winner of the Nobel Prize with Belgian physicist Francois Englert in October, and in December received his award from the King of Sweden at a ceremony in Stockholm.

Professor Higgs was awarded the prize for his theory predicting a fundamental particle that gives mass to all other particles, which he produced in 1964 while a lecturer at the University of Edinburgh. The existence of the Higgs boson was detected in 2012 and confirmed in 2013 by experiments at the Large Hadron Collider at CERN. Professor Englert also produced a theory about how particles achieve mass, at around the same time as Professor Higgs.

A new Higgs Centre for Innovation and a second phase of development

for the Higgs Centre for Theoretical Physics will build on the legacy of the achievements of Professor Higgs.

The Scottish Government has pledged support for a new building (pictured) to house the Higgs Centre for Theoretical Physics, which will be built at King's Buildings. The Centre also received a £100,000 pledge from Edinburgh alumnus Professor Walter Nimmo (MBChB 1971, MD 1982). The Centre was established in 2012, with funding for new academic staff, PhD studentships and a programme of international visitors and workshops.

The UK Treasury, meanwhile, has announced a £10.7 million investment to create a Higgs Centre for Innovation, which will provide support for start-up businesses and new partnerships. This Centre will

be built at the Science & Technology Facilities Council's UK Astronomy Technology Centre, alongside the University's Institute for Astronomy on the Royal Observatory Edinburgh campus.

Professor Higgs said: "This support from the Treasury and the STFC will create an environment in which future generations of scientists from around the world can share and develop ideas in theoretical physics."

The University has launched a free seven-week Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) entitled The Discovery of the Higgs Boson, which will be available in February.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT  
[WWW.PH.ED.AC.UK/HIGGS](http://WWW.PH.ED.AC.UK/HIGGS)



# UPDATE



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01



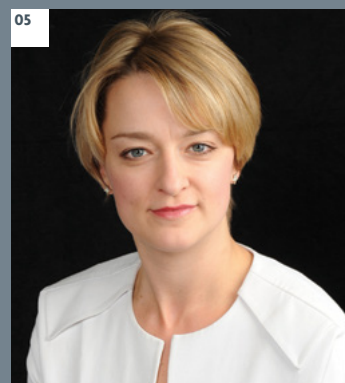
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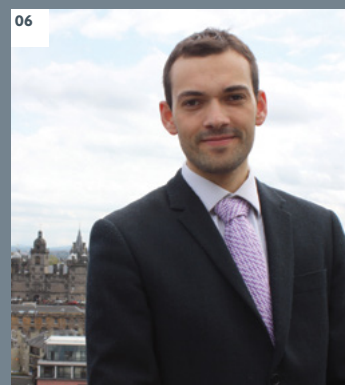
03



04



05



06

## NEW RECRUIT TO NEWSNIGHT

Laura Kuenssberg (MA History 1999) joins the BBC's *Newsnight* team in February, as presenter and chief correspondent. She has been ITV's business editor since 2011.

Ms Kuenssberg (pictured) will present *Newsnight* around once a week, replacing Gavin Esler, who is leaving the programme. She joins the team that includes Jeremy Paxman and fellow Edinburgh alumna Kirsty Wark (BA Arts 1976). Ms Kuenssberg was chief political correspondent of the BBC News channel before she moved to ITV, where she has recently presented *News at Ten*.

As an undergraduate at Edinburgh, Ms Kuenssberg spent a year at Georgetown University in the US, where she spent time working on a TV current affairs programme, an experience she says "confirmed that I wanted to work in broadcasting".

## PROTECTING FISH – AND FISHING COMMUNITIES

A MARINE CONSERVATION PROJECT IN MADAGASCAR HAS EARNED DR ALASDAIR HARRIS (BSC BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES 2002) THE HIGHLY COMMENDED PRIZE IN THE INAUGURAL TUSK CONSERVATION AWARDS – THE LATEST IN A STRING OF INTERNATIONAL ACCOLADES FOR HIS WORK.

Dr Harris (pictured) is founder of Blue Ventures, which works with communities to nurture sustainable fishing practices.

As an undergraduate Dr Harris set up Eucare (Edinburgh University Coral Awareness and Research Expeditions), and in 2001 took his first expedition to Madagascar, funded by University expedition research grants. Blue Ventures, established in 2002, now employs about 90 people. It has worked in several tropical countries, and has permanent programmes in Madagascar and Belize.

"Edinburgh is unique in the support and opportunities it gives undergraduates to undertake independent research expeditions," says Dr Harris. "It was because of the support that went to Eucare that I had the confidence and contacts to set up Blue Ventures."

Dr Harris was presented with his prize by the Duke of Cambridge, who has a close interest in conservation in Africa, and is patron of Tusk.

 [www.blueventures.org](http://www.blueventures.org)

## HIGH FLYER JOINS 'REDS'

Stewart Campbell (BEd Physical Education 2002), a Flight Lieutenant in the Royal Air Force, is one of two new pilots to join the Red Arrows aerobatics display team.

Flt Lt Campbell (pictured) began his Red Arrows training in October and will fly with the nine-aircraft team for three years. In April the Red Arrows begin their 50th season.

He joined the RAF in 2003 and has flown two operational tours in Afghanistan in Tornado aircraft. His selection for the Red Arrows – also known as the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team – involved flying tests, interviews and peer assessment.

Flt Lt Campbell, from Peebles, said: "The Red Arrows represent the pinnacle of fast jet display flying and I'm honoured to be joining this famous team. The way the team operates and how it represents the RAF and UK as a whole is something I very much wanted to be part of."

## NEW CHAIR OF FUNDING COUNCIL

Alice Brown, former Emeritus Professor of Politics and Vice-Principal, has been appointed chair of the Scottish Funding Council.

Education Secretary Michael Russell said Professor Brown's "extensive experience will help to forge innovative partnerships between the further and higher education sectors, and beyond".

From 2002 to 2009 Professor Brown (pictured) served as the first Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. She steps down from her University post and as General Secretary of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, to take up her new duties.

Professor Brown graduated from Edinburgh in Economics and Politics in 1983, winning the DP Heatley Prize. She completed a PhD in 1991 and received an honorary doctorate in 2010.

## CURTAIN RAISES FOR EDINBURGH UP


ELEVEN ALUMNI SPANNING SIX DECADES OF STUDYING, PLUS A CURRENT STUDENT, FEATURE IN A NEW 30-MINUTE FILM, *EDINBURGH UP*, ABOUT THE IMPACT OF AN EDINBURGH EDUCATION.

The film, narrated by the journalist and broadcaster Sheena McDonald (MA English Language and Literature, 1976), was premiered at the Playfair Library at an event attended by participants, families and invited guests, and introduced by the University's Principal, Professor Sir Timothy O'Shea. A second launch event took place at the Caledonian Club in London.

All of those featured in the film received some form of financial assistance to support their studies, and in their interviews they explain the impact this had on their time at Edinburgh, and their subsequent careers.

The interviewees cover a wide range of experiences, from current Medicine student Megan McGregor, to Jann Brown (MA History 1978), who is Finance Director of oil and gas giant Cairn Energy. The reverend John Hardy is the earliest graduate in the film, having studied Geography between 1965 and 1969.

Their individual stories and the 30-minute film can be viewed online.

 [www.edinburghup.ed.ac.uk](http://www.edinburghup.ed.ac.uk)

## HELPING LANDLORDS REACH TENANTS...

Sam Zawadzki (UG Certificate 2012) and Bilal Khan (BSc 2010, MSc 2012) are working to expand their online property service after winning a national business competition.

AdvancetoGO, a free service, enables private landlords to access major property advertising websites and provides online lettings management tools.

In 2012 Mr Zawadzki and Mr Bilal won initial funding from the University's Edinburgh Technology Transfer Centre, having been supported by Launch.Ed, the University's service for student entrepreneurs.

Mr Zawadzki went on to win The Pitch UK, receiving £50,000 in business support.

 [advancetogo.com](http://advancetogo.com)

## ... AND HELPING YOU SETTLE IN

Gemma Pirnie (MA International Relations 2009) has launched a service to help new graduates seeking work in Glasgow and Edinburgh meet and make friends.

Your New Crew, which was supported by Launch.Ed, has organised a series of social events to bring together young professionals who are new to Scotland's two biggest cities. Ms Pirnie says: "YNC is about real life experiences and getting offline to meet new people and make new friends."

 [yournewcrew.com](http://yournewcrew.com)



To share your experiences about where your degree took you, email us at [alumni@ed.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@ed.ac.uk) or follow us on Twitter at [@edinburghalumni](https://twitter.com/edinburghalumni)



# THE INTERVIEW



## THE POWER OF COMEDY

Lucy Lumsden, Head of Comedy at Sky, has an astonishing record of commissioning TV shows that have been among the biggest hits of the past 15 years. She tells *Joanne Morrison* how her enthusiasm for student theatre helped ignite her love of making people laugh.

It was the student theatre that ultimately influenced the direction of my career.

”

**Q** You graduated in 1991 with an MA History of Art. Why did you move from England to study in Scotland and why Edinburgh?

**A** I wanted to get as far away from London and my family as possible. I loved the city, which I had got to know during a Fringe Festival. I had a brilliant time at Edinburgh. I loved it, I am so glad it chose me, or I chose it.

**Q** What are your main memories of your student experience?

**A** I remember being extremely cold all the time, and there was this pressure every year to find a boyfriend before winter kicked in to keep you warm. I lived in several parts of Edinburgh, starting in Leith then ending up in the New Town.

**Q** Did living and studying in the world's leading festival city influence your choice of career?

**A** When I started at Edinburgh I felt quite self-conscious about being English, but this soon changed when I started working at the Bedlam Theatre, where I met an incredibly diverse group of people. I worked on loads of productions; it was where I felt at home.

**Q** Did your degree or any of your tutors influence your first career steps?

**A** Yes and no. I realised quite quickly that it was great to

have an arts MA, but it was the student theatre that ultimately influenced the direction of my career. When I graduated I started with some grand ideas about being an illustrator, I did the artwork for Daunt Books in London. I then volunteered at the National Film and TV School, as production manager on a graduation film. I blagged my way through it, I really didn't have a clue. It was from that job that I got the call from The Comic Strip to go and work with my good friend, producer Nira Park.

**Q** During 11 years at the BBC you developed, commissioned and worked with the very best in British comedy to produce an array of hits such as *Outnumbered*, *Gavin and Stacey*, *The Catherine Tate Show*, and *Miranda*. Why were you drawn to comedy rather than drama?

**A** I knew very quickly that there is something so interesting about making people laugh. It is a mysterious, unpredictable thing and I'm constantly in awe of people who can do it well. It has always fascinated me.

**Q** In 1998 you became the Controller of Comedy Commissioning at the BBC. Given the immense legacy and history of British comedy at the BBC, broadly how did you approach your task?

**A** I tried not to be intimidated by that amazing legacy and focused on the new writers and performers coming through. The key part of the role was to ensure the best ideas got through and to help the best talent shine.

**Q** You moved to Sky as Head of Comedy in 2009. What did this move give you the freedom to do?

**A** We had a standing start to work to introduce British comedy to a broadcaster known for news, sports, movies and US content. But I felt trusted to get on with it by my boss Stuart Murphy. It meant I could be more choosy about who we wanted to work

with and the creative freedom we felt we could give them. It was about placing risk in the hands of the experts. Sky is fast moving and has a really dynamic atmosphere which spurs you on. I'm thrilled with the success we've had with shows like *Stella*, *Hunderby*, *A Young Doctor's Notebook*, *Spy* and *Trollied*.

**Q** Looking back over your career, which achievement are you most proud of?

**A** I created an anthology series for Sky for Christmas 2010 called *Little Crackers*. It was a series of short autobiographical films featuring comedy stars, including Stephen Fry, Dawn French, Chris O'Dowd, Kathy Burke, Victoria Wood, Bill Bailey and many others. The success of it felt like a complete accident at the time, and I was thrilled that Chris O'Dowd's series *Moone Boy* came out of it. They've just finished filming the third series.

**Q** Both at the BBC and Sky you've had the golden touch with comedy commissioning. What do you think are some of the main ingredients in fantastic comedy?

**A** Comedy, like music, has an immense range to it and certain styles come in and out of fashion. We're clearly now in a time where the big and silly is back in vogue. But in my role you have to always be looking out for the thing that is going to surprise.

**Q** With a massive number of TV channels and social media, audiences can tune into anything when and where they want. Is this a new era for comedy or are the same formulas working?

**A** I think all of these things provide an avenue for young talent to be seen and heard in ways that weren't possible before. Laughing together can really unite a nation, and I have very fond memories of laughing with my parents at a character or scene. It's the best feeling in the world.

## FUNNY FAVOURITES

DESERT ISLAND BOX SET:

*Fawlty Towers*

WHAT IS THE BEST PIECE OF ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED?

Feel the fear and do it anyway

FAVOURITE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

*Bossypants* by Tina Fey

FAVOURITE LAUGH-OUT-LOUD MOMENT

There is a moment in *Touch of Cloth* where a character played by Suranne Jones gets out of bed naked and then it cuts to an image of a man's big hairy bottom. I nearly spat my tea out at that, and that's a good thing.

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE THAT MAKE YOU LAUGH MOST?

Julia Davis, Peter Kay, the entire cast of *Modern Family*.



# ROAD TO REFERENDUM

In 2014 students and staff at the University of Edinburgh find themselves at the centre of history in the making, as Scotland decides whether to become an independent country.

*Tom Devine*, Senior Research Professor in History, reviews Scotland's journey towards this vote over the past generation.

## SHAPING THE DEBATE

The University is helping both voters and politicians steer a course to the historic vote in September.



**PROFESSOR CHARLIE JEFFERY**  
VICE-PRINCIPAL,  
PUBLIC POLICY AND  
IMPACT AND  
DIRECTOR OF THE  
UNIVERSITY'S  
ACADEMY OF  
GOVERNMENT

Edinburgh academics are playing a central role in shaping the debate over Scotland's future.

Public engagement is a vital part of this work, says Professor Charlie Jeffery, Vice-Principal Public Policy and Impact, and Director of the Academy of Government. "It's really striking that when we put on public lectures or debates, we get an awful lot of people coming," he says. "That's a reflection of this setting being a trusted one to get beyond the simplified messages of yes or no."

Academics have also been working with both the UK and Scottish governments on all kinds of issues in the run-up to the referendum, including "stress testing" ideas on both sides, in light of research and scholarship.

At the same time, the independence debate is a living laboratory for researchers from many disciplines, as they study the effects of a population deciding whether to create a new nation state.

As the vote nears, Professor Jeffery predicts a heating up of the arguments, and says a focus for the University's work will be "helping people think about what happens the day after the referendum".



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT  
[WWW.REFERENDUM.ED.AC.UK](http://WWW.REFERENDUM.ED.AC.UK)

The failure of the first referendum on Scottish devolution in 1979 caused acrimony, bitterness and disillusion among its supporters.

James Turnbull's famous cartoon in the *Glasgow Herald* the day after the result, depicting the Scottish lion cowering in the cage with the door wide open mumbling "I'm feart", captured the mood of despondency and recrimination in the Yes camp.

Yet, a mere two decades later, in July 1999, the Queen opened the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh to the acclaim of a virtually united nation after the Scots voted overwhelmingly in another referendum for a more powerful devolved administration than that on offer in 1979.

The outcome was far from inevitable and would indeed have seemed a pipe dream to the disappointed campaigners of 20 years earlier.

Soon after that first referendum both the SNP and Labour, the two pro-devolution parties, were mired in profound factional difficulties. The SNP threatened to split apart as war raged between different groups for the soul of the party while the threat

of the militant tendency paralysed Labour for several years.

Devolution no longer seemed relevant; the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly, which attempted to carry the torch for Home Rule, was a voice in the wilderness until the later 1980s. It was eventually deeper and wider political and economic factors that brought constitutional change back on to the agenda towards the end of that decade.

Whole sectors of Scottish industry, both old and new, went to the wall as a result of the steep climb in oil prices and the determination of the Thatcher government to squeeze inflation out of the UK economy by raising interest rates to unprecedented levels. Old-style support for ailing industry came to an end and it became easy to depict the Conservative government as uncaring and anti-Scottish.

This view hardened when in 1987 the hated community charge or poll tax was imposed on Scotland before England, suggesting that the Scots were being treated as tax guinea pigs. Charles Kennedy MP at the time described Margaret Thatcher as "the

greatest of all Scottish nationalists" because she had managed to unite the nation against most of her policies.

A so-called "democratic deficit" developed. Scots voted against Thatcherite policies but they were foisted on them anyway as the Conservatives continued to win UK majorities.

Home Rule now had wide appeal as it seemed the only way to insulate Scotland from unacceptable decisions made in Westminster. The dormant devolution movement came alive.

Prominent Scots drawn from across civil society drew up a Claim of Right for Scotland, stating the need for a Scottish Constitutional Convention to plan for a devolved assembly with more powers than that mooted in 1979.

The SNP proclaimed triumphantly "Free by '93", only to be disappointed yet again with the election of John Major's government in 1992.

But during the years that followed, Labour, a party that could win a UK election outright and was sympathetic to devolution, committed itself to the proposal for a Scottish Parliament with tax-

Scots voted against Thatcherite policies but they were foisted on them anyway.

varying powers. Its landslide victory of 1997 was followed swiftly by the promise of a referendum on Scottish devolution later that year.

Some thought that the establishment of the Holyrood Parliament might spell an end to further Scottish constitutional experiments. George Robertson, former Secretary of State for Scotland, notoriously predicted that "devolution will kill nationalism stone dead".

Twelve years later, however, in May 2011, the SNP won what was previously thought to be impossible, namely an overall majority in the Scottish Parliament. One immediate result was the promise by the First Minister, Alex Salmond, to

hold a referendum on Scottish independence within the five-year term of his administration. This will now take place in September 2014.

The independence referendum was certainly a direct consequence of the landslide victory by the SNP. But analysis of the 2011 poll results does not suggest that a general aspiration for Scottish independence was at the heart of the nationalist success. Other factors were much more influential.

The key battle in the election was between Labour and the SNP. The Tories still languished as an electoral rump and the Liberal Democrats were virtually wiped out.

Labour was weaker than pre-election commentaries suggested. Afterwards the veteran journalist Neal Ascherson described the party's campaign as "hopeless". But others saw this poor performance as symptomatic of a more profound malaise in a party that had grown accustomed to ruling Scotland. Descriptions such as moribund and ossified were bandied about by both insiders and external critics. Many traditional Labour voters were also alienated by neo-liberal Blairite policies and memories of the Iraq War.

Indeed, the SNP, with its vehement condemnation of the war and left-of-centre policies, could be depicted as the rightful heir of Old Labour values. The SNP also came across as having run a very positive campaign, competent in government, the source of popular policies and committed to the defence of Scottish interests.

This last was vital, as the Scottish electorate had mastered the habit of supporting a party in Holyrood thought best able to run Scotland, and a different party in Westminster. It was a substantial bonus that in their leader, the SNP had perhaps the most accomplished politician in the UK.

Thus it is that through a complex recent history of domestic politics, the Anglo-Scottish Union faces its biggest challenge for more than three centuries. ■



Professor Tom Devine is the author or editor of more than 30 books on Scotland's history, and in 2012 won the Royal Society of Edinburgh's Sir Walter Scott Prize for his contribution to the study of Scottish history. He is Director of the Scottish Centre for Diaspora Studies.



# SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL



Neil Platt and his son Oscar with filmmakers Emma Davie (left) and Morag McKinnon

Louise Oswald was the wife of Neil Platt, whose battle against motor neurone disease was documented in the award-winning film *I Am Breathing*. The documentary, directed by two Edinburgh College of Art staff, has been viewed in cinemas around the world, and has changed the lives of many sufferers and their families. Here, Louise tells us how humour, boundless energy and great, talented friends have enabled Neil's legacy to continue.

Neil and I first met at Edinburgh College of Art in the early nineties when he was studying architecture and I was studying theatrical costume design. We had mutual friends in the film department, as my costume skills were often called upon and Neil was always willing to jump in front of the camera to try his hand at acting.

It was due to this group of friends that we met again in 2003 when we were both living and working in London. They were the same friends who danced at our wedding and shared in the excitement of our baby boy, Oscar, when he arrived in August 2007. They were also the

friends who helped me nurse Neil and keep his sense of humour alive after the diagnosis of motor neurone disease when Oscar was only five months old.

I remember when the first symptom appeared. Neil came home complaining of a limp. There was no pain and he explained it as his foot "kind of slapping itself on the ground" when he walked. At this point, I have to admit, I was more concerned about baby issues than a slight limp from my strong, fit husband. I pointed out that he'd been wearing the same pair of shoes every day for a while, and the sole was thinning, so we bundled Oscar

up and drove to get him a new pair of shoes.

He came home the next day worried that the problem was still there and before he even took his coat off, he sat down to remove his shoes and socks to inspect his feet.

Neil's father had died of motor neurone disease (MND) at 51 and his grandfather at 60. Unlike me, Neil knew that the cause of his discomfort could be a lot more serious than an old pair of shoes. This was the start of it all.

Neil and I knew that we could no longer stay in London: that we would

need to be nearer family, and that we would need a house that could accommodate disability. All of these things led us to a rented bungalow in Harrogate, North Yorkshire. We moved there in April 2008. Neil was already using a walking stick and quickly needed crutches. By June we had a wheelchair in the house and by July he could no longer walk at all.

It was around this time that we started to write a blog, to let friends and family know how we were coping. I had very little time to keep in touch with those who cared about us and the blog offered a way of letting everybody know how we were. It also created a facility for people to send us support through the comments page. Gradually, we realised that our blog was reaching other people in a similar situation.

Around September 2008, shortly after Oscar's first birthday party, when Neil could no longer wheel himself in his chair, and had started using ventilation, he put a call out on the blog for anyone who had any media contacts to get in touch with ideas of how we could raise more awareness of MND, also known as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)

and Lou Gehrig's disease. It was this blog post that caught the attention of our good ECA friends Morag McKinnon and Emma Davie. They are both film directors and ECA teachers – Emma is Head of Film and Television and Morag is a tutor in directing.

None of us knew at this point quite how involved we would all become in what would evolve into the film *I Am Breathing*.

One of the most common questions I am asked by audiences is "How intrusive was it to have the cameras there at such a difficult time of your lives?" I have come to look forward to answering this question, because I have so many reasons why the word "intrusive" didn't figure at all in the making of the film.

By the time we started filming, Neil and I had already lost all sense of privacy for our little unit of three. We had needed physical help round the clock a long time before the camera arrived.

Time was something that Neil knew he didn't have, and once we started filming, he realised that



Neil Platt's blog 'The Plattitude' continues to offer support to sufferers and their families.

[www.iambreathing.com/plattitude](http://www.iambreathing.com/plattitude)

Louise has now completed the book inspired by Neil's words, and is currently seeking a publisher.



Neil and Louise on their wedding day





I promised I would turn our story into something beautiful, so that people would want to listen rather than look away.

the documentary could speak for him long after he was gone. Having Morag and Emma there was good for me too, as they didn't wear uniforms like everyone else coming to the house to work. There was always a sense of satisfaction and calm after Neil had been filming.

After Neil died, he left us all with the responsibility of having his words heard, and Morag and Emma really took this on board when developing the film. I promised him that I would write a book about our story and have his words published alongside my own. I promised I would turn our story into something beautiful, so that people would want to listen rather than look away.

On 21 June 2013 *I Am Breathing* was chosen as the centrepiece for the MND/ALS Global Awareness Day campaign by the MND Association and, due to the talented and innovative outreach work of the team at the Scottish Documentary Institute, it screened in more than 200 venues in 45 countries that day, and it still continues to travel, most recently to New York and Los Angeles.

I have been amazed at just how many

people have taken *I Am Breathing* into their hearts (many of them hardened film critics) and helped us to spread awareness of this devastating disease.

One of the most difficult things for me to deal with is knowing that awareness of this disease is so low in the public consciousness. It's sad to say, but this is because there are no survivor stories. Lack of awareness adds to the feeling of isolation, so I have been very proud that Neil has managed to bring so many sufferers together and give families a way of understanding how to help. Most of all, I'm touched that the spirit of the outreach attached to the film reminds me of Neil's ability to gather friends together, make everyone welcome and include as many people as possible, doing so with boundless energy.

I have managed to move on and Oscar and I are now very happy, but obviously raising awareness of MND is something that will always stay with me, as Neil suffered from a familial strain. As a mother, all I can wish for is some positive news for those diagnosed. Cure is a long way off but with further research funding, we could at least have hope. ■

## SCREEN OR WATCH THE FILM

*I AM BREATHING* DIRECTORS EMMA DAVIE (DIRECTOR OF FILM & TV AT ECA) AND MORAG MCKINNON (BA FILM & TELEVISION 1993) WON THE 2013 BAFTA SCOTLAND AWARD FOR BEST DIRECTING. THE FILM WAS ALSO RUNNER-UP IN THE BEST SINGLE DOCUMENTARY CATEGORY.

You can host a screening of the film, helping to raise awareness of MND/ALS. At [www.iambreathing.com](http://www.iambreathing.com) you can sign up for an event, advertise your screening, invite viewers and get involved.

You can also watch the film in full online.

## TOWARDS TREATMENTS

EDINBURGH IS PART OF AN INTERNATIONAL EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND AND COMBAT MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE

Motor neurone disease (MND) is an untreatable condition that results in progressive muscle weakness leading to paralysis and ultimately death, usually within a few years of diagnosis and generally due to respiratory failure.

The University of Edinburgh is at the forefront of research into the disease and potential treatments, as home to both the Euan MacDonald Centre for Motor Neurone Disease Research and the recently opened Anne Rowling Regenerative Neurology Clinic.

### EUAN MACDONALD CENTRE

In 2007 the University opened the Euan MacDonald Centre for Motor Neurone Disease Research, made possible by the generosity of MND patient Euan MacDonald and his father Donald, who are both Edinburgh alumni. The Centre is a group of 30 experts across Scotland seeking to improve the lives of patients through research, including both fundamental discovery science and patient-oriented projects.

Recently, the Centre hosted a visit from the World Cup-winning South African rugby star Joost van der Westhuizen, an MND patient, and his J9 Foundation.

In February 2013, Euan MacDonald Centre researchers, with UK and US collaborators, pioneered a way to grow nerve cells "in a dish" that were made from stem cells derived from the skin of an MND patient. This so-called regenerative neurology holds great promise for understanding the disease processes in MND and for testing potential new treatments.

"Our aim is to find ways to slow down progression of this devastating

disease and ultimately develop a cure," says Professor Siddharthan Chandran, MacDonald Professor of Neurology and Director of the Euan MacDonald Centre.

[euanmacdonaldcentre.com](http://euanmacdonaldcentre.com)

### ANNE ROWLING REGENERATIVE NEUROLOGY CLINIC

The clinical side of the research into MND and other neurological disorders is undertaken at the Anne Rowling Regenerative Neurology Clinic, which was opened by the University's Chancellor, HRH the Princess Royal, in October 2013. The Clinic was founded by the author JK Rowling (PGCE 1995) and is named after her mother, who died of multiple sclerosis aged 45.

The Clinic is a research facility based at the University's Little France campus, focusing on a wide range of neurological conditions, including multiple sclerosis, MND, Parkinson's disease and dementia. It hosts specialist NHS clinics, integrating patient care with clinical research, including disease registries and clinical trials.

At a ground-breaking ceremony to mark the beginning of construction of the centre, JK Rowling said: "I cannot think of anything more important, or of more lasting value, than to help the University attract world-class minds in the field of neuro-regeneration."

The Anne Rowling Clinic and Euan MacDonald Centre place great emphasis on partnership — with academia, the NHS and industry, and with their many community supporters whose fundraising is crucial to supporting the ongoing research.

Professor Chandran took part in a panel discussion after the premiere of *I am Breathing* at the 2013 Edinburgh International Film Festival.

[annerowlingclinic.com](http://annerowlingclinic.com)



# ONE WOMAN'S FIGHT TO HELP ON THE FRONT LINE

This summer countless people across the globe will commemorate the beginning of the First World War a century ago. Here, *Edd McCracken* tells the story of one Edinburgh graduate who left her own mark on history through an astonishing altruistic determination.

01 Dr Elsie Inglis 02 Nurses at the Royaumont hospital 03 SWH ambulance and staff



The local staff proudly identified themselves as 'Scottish women' in honour of the hospitals' name.

One of the many cruel ironies of the First World War was the name it acquired while it was happening: the war to end all wars.

Sadly, instead of burying conflict, it birthed a new kind – mechanical, relentless, death on an industrial scale. The screaming howitzers of the Somme were the terrible heralding of the modern age of warfare. The war sucked in all of society, tore up ancient empires and orders. It reached across the globe and the century. Even after 100 years, no one is a bystander.

Yet amid the mangle of barbed wire and the choke of chlorine gas, the war birthed something more human. Women arrived on the front line, in every sense.

Among them was Elsie Inglis: one of the University's first female medical graduates, prominent suffragette, and the founder of the Scottish Women's Hospital for Foreign

Service. Like the war she gave her life to, her impact is still felt today.

Fittingly, Inglis's first auxiliary hospital was in a Cistercian monastery. The monastic order dedicates itself to "choosing the narrowest gate and steepest path to the Kingdom of Heaven". Inglis's medical and social spirit was of a similar vocation. In her passion to lessen suffering and improve her society, she passed through many narrow gates. And where there was no gate she made one.

Born in India in 1864, she moved to Edinburgh in 1878 when her family returned home to Scotland. When she began her studies at the University of Edinburgh in 1886, the gates to the medical school on Teviot Place were just opening. Inglis was among its first cohort of female medical students.

She initially studied under the pioneering Sophia Jex-Blake but the pair soon fell out. With money

from her father, Inglis set up her own rival medical school, the Scottish Association for the Medical Education for Women.

After qualifying in 1890, she moved to London to work with another pioneer, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, at the New Hospital for Women, before returning to Edinburgh four years later. She was shocked by the level of care afforded to poor women, so she established The Hospice, the first female-run maternity hospital in Scotland.

The status of women across society, not just in its hospitals, moved Inglis to join the Suffragette movement. She launched the Scottish Women's Suffragette Federation in 1906 and campaigned alongside her mentor Garrett Anderson and the National Union of Suffrage Societies.

Then, in 1914, war broke out. Europe tumbled into conflict. The continent's men heeded their countries' calls. Inglis and many other

women did likewise. She contacted the War Office offering to set up medical units run by women to treat the casualties. She was reportedly told by an official: "My good lady, go home and sit still."

But while Britain's masters of war were sniffy, their continental allies breathlessly accepted the offer. Both France and Serbia were desperate for help. So, with money raised via women's suffrage societies, Inglis established the Scottish Women's Hospitals for Foreign Service (SWH).

On 1 November 1914 the first auxiliary hospital was established in Royaumont Abbey, 20 miles north of Paris. Two hundred beds were expertly organised amid the 13th century cloisters. It set a template that Inglis repeated 14 times across Europe during the war, from Malta and Greece in the south, to Russia in the north and Romania in the east.

In April 1915 she left her fundraising activities and served in an SWH unit

in Serbia. Her expertise instantly helped reduce typhus's fatal grip on the camps. However, that summer Austrian troops overran the Serbs.

Inglis and her fellow nurses refused to leave their patients. They were captured and became prisoners of war, before the United States helped gain their release.

Undeterred, Inglis returned home to raise funds for a new hospital in Russia. In August 1916, she set sail with the newly formed SWH unit. After a year on the front line she fell ill with cancer, forcing her to return to Britain. Elsie Inglis died on 26 November 1917, aged 53, one day after arriving in Newcastle Upon Tyne.

Cancer may have claimed her life, but her legacy proved indomitable. By the end of the war, in Inglis's hospitals 1,000 women treated thousands of men. The local staff proudly identified themselves as "Scottish women" in honour of

the hospitals' name. The units suffered a significantly lower rate of death from disease than other auxiliary hospitals. Scottish Women's Hospitals were one of the most successful medical initiatives of the war.

Inglis's body lay in state in Edinburgh's St Giles Cathedral. She was buried with full military honours in the city's Dean Cemetery. Later, Sir Winston Churchill was so moved by her work that he said she would "shine for ever in history".

A century on, a glimmer of Inglis's achievements can be seen in every woman standing resolute in the face of adversity, be it in a war zone, hospital ward, or debating chamber. It can also be seen in every ambitious student graduating in the McEwan Hall, mere metres away from the medical school that launched Inglis into the world. ■

## COMMUNITY RESEARCH MARKS CENTENARY

A PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECT IS HELPING UNCOVER HOW THE CONFLICT AFFECTED PEOPLE ACROSS SCOTLAND

The University is running a major community-based research project throughout the course of the centenary of the First World War.

"Scotland's War" will run for four and half years. It is "probably the largest public engagement project that's ever been undertaken in Scotland about the First World War", says Yvonne McEwen, Honorary Fellow and Director of the project.

From Shetland to the Borders, communities are contributing to the research effort. The University is partnering with the Scottish Library & Information Council, the National Library of Scotland, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the Scottish Military Research Group.

As an illustration of the kind of discoveries being made, Ms McEwen recalls a family in South Queensferry presenting small items that "looked like scrap metal". In fact they were "trench art" – sculptures and models that soldiers fashioned out of empty shell cases and other materials while fighting in the trenches. "They had used the heads of two shell casings and made them into peaked caps like the Tommies wore, and they even put the regimental crest on them," says Ms McEwen.

One major task is to update "rolls of honour", the lists of those killed in the war, many of which are known to be incomplete.

As yet unknown results of the project will emerge throughout its progress, and "everything we do will have a research outcome and legacy", says Ms McEwen.

For more information visit [www.edinburghs-war.ed.ac.uk](http://www.edinburghs-war.ed.ac.uk)



# WHAT YOU DID NEXT

Edinburgh has been the starting point for the careers and life choices of many alumni. So where did your journey take you? In this edition we profile a pioneer of permaculture in Swaziland and a star of science communication in Australia.

## “WE ALWAYS DISCUSSED THE ILLS OF THE WORLD.”

EMMA GRANVILLE,  
MA ENGLISH LITERATURE 2000

The seeds of a remarkable project were sown when Emma Granville met Sam Hodgson in 1995, when they were both first-year students.

“We flat-shared with a whole load of friends. We always discussed the ills of the world, and were always interested in finding solutions,” says Ms Granville.

Today the couple live with their young daughter on a farm in Swaziland, where for five years they have run Guba, an organisation aiming to alleviate extreme poverty and the effects of the highest HIV infection rate in the world.

Guba, which in siSwati means “to dig”, helps people improve their quality of life through training in permaculture, encompassing sustainable agriculture, appropriate technology and natural resource management.

In Swaziland, 31 per cent of adults are infected with HIV, life expectancy is 48, and two-thirds of the population

live below the World Bank’s poverty line of \$1.25 a day.

The HIV pandemic has created a generation gap, devastating the traditional “homesteads” at the heart of the rural economy. “It’s very common when we go to people’s homesteads that there will be about eight children under five, teenagers, and a grandparent, usually a ‘gogo’, or grandmother,” says Ms Granville.

With the middle generation largely missing, many people have either yet to learn or have lost important skills. That’s where Guba comes in, providing practical training, and “tools for designing better quality of life.”

Ms Granville says: “The tools that we share – always with their input – support our community to reskill without having to go cap in hand. To be self-sufficient is hugely empowering whoever, wherever you are. But when you’re in the position that most people are in here, which is often one of poverty and hunger, it can mean the difference between life and death.”



Since establishing Guba in 2009, Ms Granville, Mr Hodgson (MA Social Anthropology with Development 1999) and a team that now numbers 10 have trained 745 local people in permaculture design and practices, which Ms Granville says indirectly benefits nearly 10 times that figure. A typical long-term course is one week of training per month for a year, followed by two years of support and monitoring. Shorter skills training courses are also offered.

Former trainees and members of the surrounding communities are now Guba staff – a development that brings a huge sense of achievement for Ms Granville. “In a relatively short time, these guys who had very little prospects have been able to – as they would say – ‘be the change they want to see’. They have done it,” she says.

And such a turnaround can have wide-reaching impact. Ms Granville explains: “We believe that risky behaviour associated with poverty and HIV has declined in the communities we work with, because they have something to fight for that they have created for themselves.”

Ms Granville does not consider her work an act of altruism; she talks about it more as though it is self-indulgence – finally getting to tackle those “ills of the world” that she and her partner talked about all those years ago.

In 2007, during a trip to Europe together, the pair drew up a list of aspirations. She says: “We never thought our wishes would come true, as they seemed beyond reality, but here we are living them.”



Professor Fred Watson at the Australian Astronomical Observatory

## “THEY DON’T TAKE THEMSELVES TOO SERIOUSLY, AND I THINK THAT’S A GOOD MESSAGE FOR ALL SCIENTISTS.”

FRED WATSON, PHD PHYSICS 1987

Fred Watson is like a child with new toys when it comes to astronomy – an enthusiasm that has made him Australia’s best-known space expert, through countless appearances on TV and radio, and even as a star-gazing folk singer.

Professor Watson is Astronomer-in-Charge of the Australian Astronomical Observatory, New South Wales, and has been widely honoured for his services to astronomy and science communication.

When he speaks to *Edit*, Professor Watson’s day has already included three radio interviews, and he is

preparing to sing at a “Science in the Pub” event. It’s a fairly typical day, he says.

His boyish excitement remains irrepressible 50 years after he first got his hands on those “toys” of physics, as an A-level student in Yorkshire, thanks to the open-minded approach of his teacher.

“If I wanted to use a spectroscope or something like that he just let me take it home and play with it,” says Professor Watson. “I had the opportunity to fool around with all this kit, and it gave me hands-on familiarity.”

Spectroscopes in particular have come to play a central role in Professor Watson’s achievements as a physicist.

The device can analyse light from a star to decipher all sorts of information – from what it is made of to how fast it is moving. In the 1980s, including during his Edinburgh PhD, Professor Watson pioneered the use of fibre optics in astronomy, which enabled the spectroscopic analysis of many stars simultaneously, where previously it had been possible to analyse only one star at a time.

Professor Watson remembers his “eureka moment” during his Edinburgh PhD. He recalls: “I had the fibres lined up on stars, pointed the telescope where I thought it ought to be and at the other end I had all these little fibres in my hand. I looked down at them, and I could see all the stars, all the different colours. That was a magical moment.”

Today Professor Watson works in the field of “galactic archaeology”. He and his colleagues use fibre-optic techniques to study vast numbers of stars to unveil the history of our part of the universe. “You’re poking about in the ruins of our galaxy, looking for evidence that it’s grown in a certain way,” he says.

Through their decade-long RAVE project, they have, for example, identified the “Aquarius Stream” of stars, thought to be a small galaxy gobbled up by our own, about 600 million years ago.

It’s heady stuff, but Professor Watson likes to keep his science down to Earth. In a twice-weekly Sydney-based radio show, Professor Watson answers listeners’ questions on physics and astronomy. One of his several books – one that earned him the Queensland Premier’s Literary Prize for Science Writing – takes its title from one of those questions, “Why is Uranus upside down?”

Music is a second major passion for Professor Watson, and once again he is no dabbler. As a folk singer he has performed alongside Billy Connolly and Gerry Rafferty, having learned his craft in the folk clubs of Scotland, when an undergraduate and masters student at St Andrews.

In 2008 he won the prestigious APRA Award for Choral Work, for his libretto for a choral symphony, *Star Chant*, which has been performed at the Sydney Opera House.

Physics today “is a really inspiring science”, says Professor Watson, adding that scientists must themselves make sure the subject is accessible to the wider public.

Recalling a visit to CERN in Switzerland, where the Higgs boson was famously discovered, he says: “They have a cafeteria where people think and breathe science over their lunches. But there’s a little ‘animal sanctuary’ off to one side, and it’s full of old computer mice. It tells me that they don’t take themselves too seriously, and I think that’s a good message for all scientists.”



# EDINBURGH EXPERIENCE

From artists to academics, many graduates view their time at Edinburgh as the formative years of their professional lives. Here are a few of your experiences and updates on recent achievements and successes.

## KIRSTY DUNCAN PHD GEOGRAPHY 1993

“As a highland dancer, Gaelic speaker and piper, my dream was always to study in beautiful, historic Scotland, and to attend one of the world’s truly great universities.

I loved my time at Edinburgh, my first-class professors, and my friends, many of whom I am still in touch with today; in fact, I had lunch with my dear friend, Dr Andy Kerr, Executive Director for the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation, just a few weeks ago in the new state-of-the-art building at High School Yards.

As a student, I took every job available at the time, including teaching dancing, trampolining and weightlifting. And when I wasn’t buried in the basement of Drummond Street studying, or at the gym, I loved volunteering every Friday morning at the Royal Infirmary, or volunteer teaching “tiny tot” gymnastics.

A shocking 20 years later, there is nothing I like more than visiting my treasured alma mater, and of course sharing stories of Edinburgh and Scotland with students and young Canadians.

Since returning home, I taught at three universities in Canada for 16 years, consulted to government, and had the honour of serving as a lead author for North America on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which was jointly awarded the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize with Al Gore.

During the same time, I spent a decade leading a search for the cause of the 1918 Spanish flu virus, which killed upwards of 50 million people.

Today, I have the privilege of serving the community where I was born and raised as a second-term Member of Parliament for Etobicoke North in the Canadian House of Commons.”



## MATT BILSLAND LLM INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW 2011 BY ONLINE DISTANCE LEARNING

potential opportunity. I thought the only way really to understand copyright was to understand the law that underpins it.

I wanted to understand it from an international perspective, not just focus on Australian IP law, and I wanted to study at a university that is held in high esteem. The School of Law at Edinburgh has a good reputation, and it seemed like a good online course. I was working full time, and we’d just had our first child, so the studying had to be flexible. It couldn’t be evening classes that I had to attend, it had to be something I could do in the middle of the night if necessary.

I now work for Google in Dublin, and Google had always been at the top of the list of organisations I wanted to work for. I got that job, and that was really exciting.

Many big companies seem to value learning beyond work. The degree also showed I could operate in new areas, and that I was able to absorb a lot of detail quickly.

Online distance learning was a very encouraging environment. I had some really good advice early on: read a little, post a little – really dive into the forums. Don’t be afraid to make mistakes. I learnt more from the times I made mistakes

than when I got things right. The more you post, the more confident you get.

We had a dinner at the graduation, where we all met for the first time. It was great. The geographical scope of the people on the course was amazing – pretty much every continent. I’ve got very fond memories.”

**ONLINE  
LEARNING**  
Explore our online opportunities:  
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If you’d like to share your experiences, we’d love to hear from you at [www.ed.ac.uk/alumni/yournews](http://www.ed.ac.uk/alumni/yournews)

## GRACE LEE MSC NEUROSCIENCE 2005

“During my childhood I was involved in a motor vehicle accident that left me with a serious occipital-cervical dislocation and the loss of my mother due to irreversible brain trauma. These experiences fuelled my interest in everything related to neuroscience.

My most notable experiences of being a student at Edinburgh are the ones that every student enjoys while living in halls of residence. Every day was an opportunity to interact with brilliant people from around the world, each with their own unique story. I particularly enjoyed ceilidh nights at the Caledonian, Burns Suppers, and visiting the Highlands where I learned to sail – and saw lots and lots of sheep!

After finishing my masters, I decided to return to Vancouver to complete a doctoral degree from the University of British Columbia. I received a full four-year scholarship

from the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation of Canada.

My passion is to help improve the care for patients with traumatic brain injury. Currently, I investigate the development of brain imaging technology, and its applications in diagnostics, informed consent, treatment decision-making, and end-of-life care. I oversee the strategic direction of a Canadian-based investigation assessing social, ethical, and legal issues intersecting brain imaging and clinical health care for patients with disorders of consciousness from brain trauma.

I also write recipes and home kitchen recommendations for my food blog (Graceful Cuisine) and I’m co-founder of Krimson Marketing.

I still speak fondly of my experiences in Edinburgh, and I’m proud to have started the University of Edinburgh Alumni Club in Vancouver.”



## JULIAN JAMES WAGSTAFF PHD MUSICAL COMPOSITION 2008



At the time I was a fairly youthful-looking 30, and everyone at the conference simply assumed I was a music student. That got me thinking, ‘if everyone assumes I am a music student, why don’t I become one?’ The following Monday I requested a University of Edinburgh prospectus.

I was proud to serve as the founding president of Composers’ Orchestra, which is still going strong, though somewhat less proud of crashing a University minibus into a bridge during Wagner study week.

I am currently serving as composer in residence in the School of Chemistry, where I have completed a new opera entitled *Breathe Freely* to celebrate their tercentenary.

The connections and friendships I made while a student continue to stand me in good stead as a professional musician today.”

## HELEN QUINN BSC GEOLOGY AND PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY 2001, PHD 2006

“Fieldwork formed a very big part of my enthusiasm for the joint honours I did in Geology and Physical Geography.

My favourite memories are of the Scottish trips, particularly the second year field trip to Torridon. The beauty of the place blew my mind. By learning traditional geological sciences in such stunning landscapes I got hooked on fieldwork, eventually staying at Edinburgh to study a PhD, which resulted in spending a season in Antarctica.

Antarctica and my studies at Edinburgh hugely shaped my career. The science began to lend itself to a story that could be much more widely communicated. After attending a science communication course during my PhD I started to write some of the results up as stories for newspapers. Today I work

in the science department at the BBC making TV documentaries. It involves researching stories, writing scripts, interviewing scientists and travelling the world to film these stories. *The Rise of the Continents* with Professor Iain Stewart on BBC 2 was an amazing series to work on.

I am regularly suggesting ideas for a new geology series on Antarctica!”





# SNAPSHOT

## NICE TO SEE YOU

In June 2013 the University hosted an alumni weekend with a packed programme of varied events spanning Friday to Sunday. Graduates from as far away as Australia and New Zealand travelled to Edinburgh, where they recalled student memories, reunited with old friends, and enjoyed activities ranging from a thought-provoking political debate to dancing and live comedy. The weekend encompassed reunions of alumni from particular subjects, societies and year groups, as well as the wider general alumni gathering. It was the first such event for some years, and the University now hopes to host alumni weekends in Edinburgh every two years, with gatherings at international venues in the years in between – starting with Toronto in 2014.

PHOTOGRAPHS HERE WERE TAKEN DURING THE ALUMNI WEEKEND 21-23 JUNE 2013.

Photography by Graham Clark



### STAY CONNECTED

Class reunions are more popular than ever. They are a great way of renewing old acquaintances and keeping in touch with friends who may be based all over the world. About 40 reunion groups get together each year, many at the University. We can help you contact old classmates and organise discounted rates on accommodation and venue hire.  
[www.ed.ac.uk/alumni/services](http://www.ed.ac.uk/alumni/services)



**01** Alumni and their families enjoyed a full weekend of varied events. **02** Ruth Davidson MSP, leader of the Scottish Conservatives; Professor Charlie Jeffery, Vice-Principal Public Policy and Impact; and Blair Jenkins, chief executive of Yes Scotland, during a debate on independence. **03** Catching up at a barbecue for staff and alumni in the Old College Quad. **04** One of the many happy reunions. **05** A group of MBA alumni pose with a ceremonial piper. **06** Political debate entertained the McEwan Hall audience. **07** Old friends together again. **08 & 09** Comedian Craig Hill was among the line-up for a night of entertainment at Teviot. **10** Former members of the University Air Squadron, which offered flying training to undergraduates in the 1950s and 1960s. **11** A drinks reception in the Playfair Library began the weekend. **12 & 13** Alumni offspring enjoyed family entertainments in the Old College Quad. **14 & 15** A ceilidh put a swing into the weekend for alumni and guests, including... **16** ...the Principal, Professor Sir Timothy O'Shea, and Lady O'Shea.



# ARTS REVIEW



If you'd like to contribute to Arts Review, email your suggestions to [editor.edit@ed.ac.uk](mailto:editor.edit@ed.ac.uk)

The arts have always featured prominently in our alumni activities. Here we showcase a selection of your artistic endeavours.

## 60 SECONDS ASTRID JAEKEL



**BORN:** Kilkenny, Ireland, to German parents

**EDUCATION:** BA Fine Art and Art History, Osnabrück 2009; MFA Illustration Edinburgh College of Art 2012

**CURRENT HOME:** Edinburgh

**CURRENT ROLES:** Tutor at the Illustration Department of Edinburgh College of Art and the Office of Lifelong Learning. Artist in Residence for the Wigtown Book Festival and Spring Fling 2013–14.

**FAVOURITE READING:** I have a love for beautifully illustrated books. I'm awaiting delivery of Hartmann Schedel's *Chronicle of the World*.

**FAVOURITE LISTENING:** Rain against the window when lying in bed.

**FAVOURITE VIEWING:** I enjoy watching old men in pubs; they are one of my favourite drawing subjects!

**WHAT MOST INSPIRES YOU:** Memories of living in West Cork where I grew up with my siblings; its landscapes still have a great impact on me.

Astrid Jaekel initially trained as a dietician but says that in 2005 "I finally accepted that art was my true calling and set about making up for lost time". In October 2013 her large-scale work *Beachcomber* was installed at the west end of Edinburgh's Rose Street. Words and illustrations representing the poem *Beachcomber* by George Mackay Brown have been cut into metal sheets and installed, backlit, in the street-level arched windows of the former BT Exchange building.

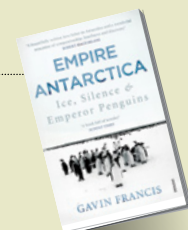
Rose Street is a place with a vibrant history that has managed to maintain its character while seeing many changes. It's a little gem within Edinburgh's centre, so different from the two shopping streets it's sandwiched between. It has been a huge honour to be able to create a piece of work to contribute to the place and I hope that people will enjoy it.

ASTRID JAEKEL  
MFA ILLUSTRATION  
EDINBURGH COLLEGE OF  
ART 2012

## TO READ

Gavin Francis (BSc Neuroscience 1996 and MBChB 1999) has won Scotland's biggest literary prize, the Scottish Mortgage Trust Book of the Year, for *Empire Antarctica*. It has just been published in paperback by Vintage Books. Dr Francis, a GP based in Edinburgh, spent 14 months as the doctor for 13 staff at the Halley Research Station, one of Antarctica's most remote bases. He wrote *Empire Antarctica* during his time there, exploring his fascination with the continent and both its loneliness and the comforting presence of its dominant inhabitants, emperor penguins.

Gavin Francis,  
*Empire Antarctica*



Meanwhile, Edinburgh College of Art alumnus and tutor Edward Hollis saw his latest book *The Memory Place: A Book of Lost Interiors* (Portobello) long-listed for the 2013 Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-Fiction. "Nobody writes about the human nature of architecture quite as movingly as Hollis," wrote Stuart Kelly in the *Scotsman*.

Edward Hollis,  
*The Memory Place:  
A Book of Lost Interiors*



## ECA SUCCESSES

EDINBURGH COLLEGE OF ART GRADUATES HAVE BEEN CAPTURING THE HEADLINES WITH A STRING OF RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS.

Sara Ishaq's short documentary *Karama Has No More Walls* has been shortlisted for an Oscar. The film, about the Yemeni uprising in March 2011, was part of her MFA, and featured in the ECA degree show in 2012. The Oscar results are announced on 2 March.

Lauren Smith (pictured), graduating in 2013, took the top prize at the internationally renowned Graduate Fashion Week in London – the George Gold Award for best collection. And the Menswear Award went to a collaboration between two ECA graduates: fashion student Shauni Douglas and jewellery student Olivia Creber.



Designer Iona Crawford, who graduated in 2007, has been named creative director of Stirling 2014, a year-long programme of events to mark the 700th anniversary of the battle of Bannockburn and Scotland's Year of Homecoming in her home town.

Painter and illustrator Owen Normand won the Young Artist prize in the BP Portrait Awards 2013, for his painting *Das Berliner Zimmer*.

# SCIENCE DIGEST



If you'd like to contribute to Science Digest, email your suggestions to [editor.edit@ed.ac.uk](mailto:editor.edit@ed.ac.uk)

Our alumni's work helps sustain Edinburgh's outstanding reputation in science, technology, engineering and medicine. Here is a typically eclectic range of highlights.

## BAFTA TRIUMPH FOR GAME-MAKING COUPLE

AN ALUMNI COUPLE HAVE CREATED AN ADDICTIVE IPAD GAME THAT HAS WON A SCOTTISH BAFTA AND BEEN USED BY APPLE TO PROMOTE ITS DEVICES.

Coolson's Artisanal Chocolate Alphabet is a hand-illustrated game where the player has to make words from random chocolate letters travelling on a conveyor belt.

Emily Thomforde, a computational linguistics PhD graduate, and her husband Jamie Montgomerie, a computer science graduate, spent six months creating the app. Players follow the story of a student who takes a job in a chocolate factory, which, in the narrative of the game, is sited on Edinburgh's Candlemaker Row.



[coolsons.com](http://coolsons.com)

## 60 SECONDS QUENTIN COOPER



**BORN:** Grimsby, Lincolnshire 1961

**EDUCATION:** MA Psychology 1983

**CURRENT HOME:** Deep in the Chilterns, Buckinghamshire

**CURRENT ROLES:** Freelance, regularly hosting science and other events worldwide, and presenting programmes for BBC Radio 4 and World Service.

**FAVOURITE READING:** Big soft spots for Russell Hoban and Alan Moore but currently enjoying reading Tove Jansson's *Finn Family Moomintroll* to my three-year-old.

**FAVOURITE LISTENING:** Sonically promiscuous – lots of radio, lots of music. The Triffids are my top band of all time but I've fond memories from my undergraduate years of Edinburgh's Josef K.

**FAVOURITE VIEWING:** Manchester City playing scintillatingly and winning (you rarely get both at once). It's almost like watching Brazil, which, as it happens, is my favourite film.

**WHAT MOST INSPIRES YOU:** Long walks, good talks, great cheese.

Quentin Cooper is a science communicator and broadcaster, best known as the voice of the popular BBC Radio 4 series *Material World*, which he presented from 1999 to 2013. He was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Science by the University of Edinburgh in July 2013. Quentin is a guest lecturer on the recently launched MSc in Science Communication and Public Engagement, putting the students through their paces with mock radio and television interviews and covering how print and broadcast media works.

## LIFE-SAVING TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Consultant anaesthetist Adam Paul and two colleagues at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh have won funding for a device that could save lives during surgery by helping keep airways open.

Edinburgh alumnus Dr Paul shared the top prize in the BioQuarter Innovation Competition with Dr Alistair Gibson and Dr Oliver Robinson for their "traffic light bougie". A bougie helps the placing of a breathing tube, and the team's traffic light system reduces the chances of harming the patient. Dr Paul also helps organise the annual Edinburgh Anaesthesia Festival, a three-day event hosted by the University, and teaches two University medicine courses.

## SMALL BUT POWERFUL

Mechanical Engineering graduate Andrew Fraser has won a prestigious award for designing a small petrol engine that has the power of much bigger engines but far lower fuel consumption and emissions.

Mr Fraser was presented with the Jim Clark Memorial Award by the Association of Scottish Motoring Writers for his work on a 1-litre EcoBoost engine for Ford, where he is gasoline calibration manager.

The engine has won the Ford Fiesta car the International Engine of the Year accolade two years running. It produces the power of a conventional 1.6-litre engine but achieves 65mpg and emits only 99g/km of carbon dioxide.

Science permeates every aspect of our existence and there is a scientific dimension to every story and subject, so whatever anyone is interested in – sport, food, TV, politics, drink, yodelling – there is always at least a sliver of science to be found. My favourite stories and programmes are ones that mix arts, science and preferably a few other elements too.

QUENTIN COOPER  
MA PSYCHOLOGY 1983



## CLASS OF 1953 REUNION

In June 2013, 10 graduates of the 1953 law class met for lunch at the Playfair Library to celebrate the 60th anniversary of their graduation. For more information on our regular reunions, see [www.ed.ac.uk/alumni/services/reunions](http://www.ed.ac.uk/alumni/services/reunions)



# THE HISTORY MAKERS

## LONG ARM OF THE LAW SCHOOL

The history of legal education in Edinburgh can be traced to the 16th century, and the University's Faculty of Law was formally established in 1707. Since then, our law alumni have made an impressive mark on history, both within the legal profession and beyond.



### DID YOU KNOW...?

The foundation stone of the Law School's home at Old College was laid on 16 November 1789. The ceremony was led by the architect Robert Adam and the Principal William Robertson and attended by 30,000 of Edinburgh's then 80,000-strong population. Interrupted by the Napoleonic Wars and the death of Adam himself in 1793, construction was not finished until 1816 – with William Playfair completing Adam's plans.

Old College Quad in the late 1940s



**LORD RUTHERFURD OF CROSSHILL**  
(BORN ANDREW GREENFIELD) (1791–1854)

Lord Rutherford was a Scottish advocate, judge and politician. Called to the bar in 1812, he was appointed Solicitor General for Scotland in 1837, becoming Lord Advocate in 1839 and Whig MP for Leith Burghs in the same year.

**SIR WALTER SCOTT**  
(1771–1832)

Although known throughout the world as an author and poet, Scott was a lawyer by profession.

He began studying classics at the University in 1783, aged 12, and initially stayed for two years. After a spell working in his father's office as an apprentice Writer to the Signet – equivalent to solicitor – he returned to the University in 1789, and was called as an advocate in July 1792.

Scott's experiences as a fledgling advocate are echoed in his 1824 novel *Redgauntlet*. Scott went on to become Sheriff-Depute of Selkirkshire in 1799, a post he retained until his death in 1832. From 1806 he also served as Clerk of the Court of Session in Edinburgh.

The current head of the Law School, **Professor Lesley McAra**, is the first woman to hold the post.



**ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON**  
(1850–1894)

One of Scotland's best-known writers had been expected to follow his father's footsteps into lighthouse design, and at 17 Stevenson entered the University to study engineering.

He showed no enthusiasm for the profession, and switched his studies to law. He qualified in 1875, but never practised – during his summer vacations as a student he travelled among like-minded artists in Europe, and before he graduated had decided his calling was as a writer.



The Law School has **doubled** in size over the past five years and now has **83 academic staff** and more than **1,500 students**.

**BARONESS LEE (JENNIE LEE)** (1904–1988)  
MA 1925, LLB 1927

Jennie Lee was a key figure in the establishment of the Open University. A daughter of a Fife miner, Lee graduated from Edinburgh with an MA, a teaching diploma and an LLB in 1927. Having inherited her father's socialism she became a Member of Parliament for the Independent Labour Party in 1929, and for the Labour Party in 1945. She became arts minister in 1964 in the Harold Wilson government, and in 1966 she put forward a white paper for the "University of the Air" – a reference to "airwaves" taking teaching into homes via radio and television.

Today, the Open University credits Lee with its existence.

**DAME MARGARET HENDERSON KIDD**  
(1900–1989) LLB 1922

Dame Margaret Henderson Kidd achieved many firsts for women lawyers. When she was called to the Faculty of Advocates in 1923 she became its first female member. In 1948 she was the first woman appointed King's Counsel, and in 1960 she was appointed Scotland's first female sheriff, for Dumfries and Galloway. Dame Margaret was the first female advocate to appear before the House of Lords and before a select committee of the House of Commons. In 1949 she said: "Much excellent work is being done steadily and faithfully by many able women solicitors in town and county districts throughout Scotland. The general public know too little of the service which they give."



**LORD (RANALD IAIN) SUTHERLAND**  
MA LLB 1953

Lord Sutherland was the presiding judge at the Lockerbie bombing trial of 2000–1, which found Abdelbaset al-Megrahi guilty of 270 murders by the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Scotland.

He has served as a member of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board and as Scottish Representative to the International Association of Judges.

Lord Sutherland was among those who attended the Class of 1953 reunion in June 2013 – see above.

**LORD (PATRICK STEWART) HODGE**  
LLB 1980

Lord Hodge was sworn in to the Supreme Court London in October 2013, replacing Lord Hope as one of two Scottish judges serving on the Supreme Court. He has sat in both the Court of Session and High Court of Justiciary in Edinburgh.

Lord Hodge famously consented to the liquidation of Rangers Football Club in 2012.

**JUSTICE JULIA SEBUTINDE**  
LLM 1990

Justice Julia Sebutinde is the first African woman to sit on the International Court of Justice, having been appointed in 2012. She grew up and studied in Uganda, where she returned after gaining her masters at Edinburgh. She was appointed Judge of the High Court in Uganda in 1996, and in 2005 to the Special Court on Sierra Leone. She is Chancellor of the International Health Sciences University in Kampala.



**KATHERINE GRAINGER**  
LLB 1997

Katherine Grainger took up rowing as an Edinburgh law student in 1993, and went on to captain the Edinburgh University Boat Club. She won three successive Olympic silver medals before taking gold in the double sculls at the London 2012 Games.

Ms Grainger was named Alumna of the Year in 2001, was inducted into the University's Sports Hall of Fame in 2008, and was awarded an honorary doctorate in 2011.

She opened a rowing gym and launched a scholarship both named in her honour at the Centre for Sport and Exercise in December 2012.

She completed a PhD in Law at King's College London in July 2013. ■



# IDEAS EXCHANGE

The global exchange of ideas has always been part of Edinburgh's impact. A new 'Go Abroad' initiative aims to help the University reach its target of more than doubling the number of students gaining an international experience during their degree.



Photograph courtesy of Alasdair Keane

Create at least 800 new opportunities for our students to gain an international experience. That's a very clear statement of intent in the University's Strategic Plan 2012–16.

Currently the University offers about 650 international opportunities and the recently launched "Go Abroad" initiative aims to help meet the ambitious strategic target.

"We want to ensure students have a really enriched experience at the University,"

says Isabell Majewsky, Acting Deputy Director of the University's International Office.

"Having an international perspective and experience helps students understand what it means to be a global citizen, what it means to operate in a global marketplace, and get an insight into different cultures."

There are three main strands to the Go Abroad campaign: create new opportunities for travelling abroad to study, work or volunteer; increase funding support; and encourage students and staff to increase participation in existing and new

opportunities. There is also a new Go Abroad website, described as a "one-stop shop" for students and staff, bringing all international exchange opportunities into one portal.

At the heart of the project is the University's commitment to enhancing the student experience.

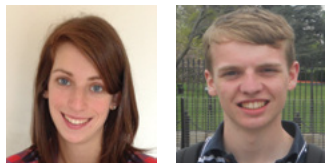
Go Abroad "seeks to build on our tradition of mobility, by inspiring and increasing participation and the range of opportunities available for our students", says Ms Majewsky.

The scheme embraces the University's

Widening Participation (WP) priorities, through increasing funding for international exchanges, as well as creating new travel opportunities aimed specifically at WP students. There are also new short-term schemes intended to appeal to students who may not wish to spend longer periods abroad.

Ms Majewsky says: "Yes, we have an academically brilliant standard. But we also have this fantastic opportunity for students to get a whole new understanding of how the world works and your role within it."

## WHAT THE STUDENTS SAY...



**CHELSEA MARTIN**  
LAW YEAR 2 AND ALASDAIR KEANE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS YEAR 2

Chelsea and Alasdair spent two weeks at the University of Virginia on the inaugural Study America visit, fully funded for students who

joined Edinburgh via Widening Participation programmes. Chelsea says: "I'm not sure what it was about the trip, but we just all feel more confident now. It's also piqued my interest in going abroad later, rather than staying at home." For Alasdair, as an International Relations student, a visit to Capitol Hill "was an amazing opportunity". With an ambition to work in broadcast media, he took the chance to "speak with student media people, and it has made me think about how things work back here".



**NICOLE TURNER**  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND HISTORY, YEAR 2

Nicole joined the University of Delhi's "College on Wheels", a week-long educational journey through north-west India. She says: "It was as if we were doing a year abroad in one week. I learnt so much: it was cultural immersion. And it teaches you a lot about yourself and how you react to situations. I have come back with so much more confidence."



There are numerous ways in which alumni can help current students benefit from international experiences. If you have an idea about how you'd like to get involved, email us at [alumni@ed.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@ed.ac.uk)

# THE TWO OF US

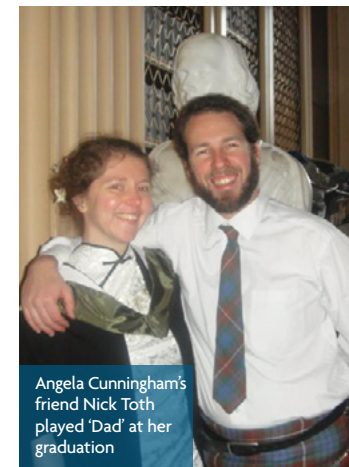
Many a friendship is forged during our university days and we want to hear how you met your partner or best friend. Here's a range of memorable on-campus moments that led to lifetimes together.



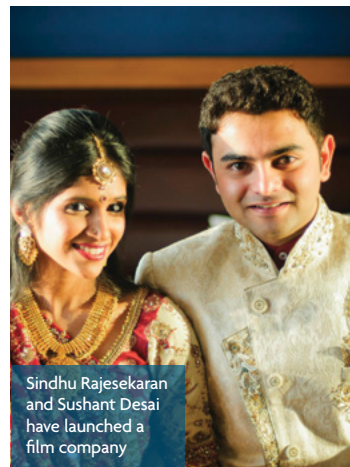
'We look back in gratitude'



Kirsty and Rob White with their son Harrison



Angela Cunningham's friend Nick Toth played 'Dad' at her graduation



Sindhu Rajasekaran and Sushant Desai have launched a film company

**William Cutting**  
MBChB 1958

**Margaret (Margot) Cutting**  
(nee Manderson)  
MBChB 1957

### FLASH OF LEG

"One of my earliest memories of my wife was in the anatomy dissecting room above the Medical Quadrangle in 1953. She was a year ahead of me, revising for the second MB exam, and she nonchalantly pulled a whole human leg out of the formalin tank on the far side of the hall.

She graduated in 1957, I graduated in 1958 and we were married in Edinburgh a week later.

We look back in gratitude on 55 years, a wonderful, varied and interesting life, including 12 years at a Christian hospital in India, six years in London, and 20 years back in Edinburgh. We have four children, 11 grandchildren, four great grandchildren and still counting."

WILLIAM CUTTING

**Kirsty White**  
(nee Sneddon)  
MA Business Studies 2003  
**Rob White**  
BSc Biological Sciences 2003

### DOWNHILL FROM THE START

"Rob and I got together in December 2000, having met through close friends. Rob was always involved in the Snow Sports Club and was president in 2002–3. I had never skied in my life, but he wanted us to go to Whistler, British Columbia, after graduating, so he dragged me to the dry ski slope at Hillend. I didn't make much progress, and I think he was a bit embarrassed that the "first lady" of the EUSSC was not a snow bunny.

We went to Whistler in 2003 and ended up staying a year. He was a snowboard instructor, and I sold lift tickets – we had the best year of our lives! I am eternally grateful to him for introducing me to skiing, which is now a passion for both of us."

KIRSTY WHITE

**Angela Cunningham**  
MSc by Research  
Geographical Information Science and Society 2010  
**Nick Toth**  
(non-alumnus)

### THE COFFIN CONNECTION

"I met one of my best friends, Nick Toth, at Pollock Hall's first public ceilidh of the 2009–10 academic year.

I went alone and sat down among a group of dateless lads (including Nick), figuring one of them would ask me to dance. They were having a rambling conversation that eventually turned to the topic of the kind of events that might be part of an Olympic Games for undertakers. Coming from Colorado, where there is more than one quirky mountain town that hosts coffin races, I jumped right in.

A lifelong friendship was born. Nick and my friend Eva played 'Dad' and 'Mom' at my graduation."

ANGELA CUNNINGHAM

**Sindhu Rajasekaran**  
MSc Creative Writing 2011  
**Sushant Desai**  
MBA 2011

### FILMING WITH FRIENDS

"I met Sushant at Fleming House – University accommodation overlooking Arthur's Seat – where we shared a kitchen and a love of films. We were married in 2012.

My husband is a Mumbai-based entrepreneur, and in late 2012 we started an independent film production company, Camphor Cinema. We are in post-production of our first feature film, about the mathematical prodigy Srinivasa Ramanujan. It will be released in early 2014.

Good friends I made on the Creative Writing masters have crucial roles in our project.

This has been my dream project, and it's been a great pleasure to work with all these great people we met at the University."

SINDHU RAJASEKARAN

@ If you met your partner or best friend at Edinburgh and would like to share your story, email us at [editor.edit@ed.ac.uk](mailto:editor.edit@ed.ac.uk)

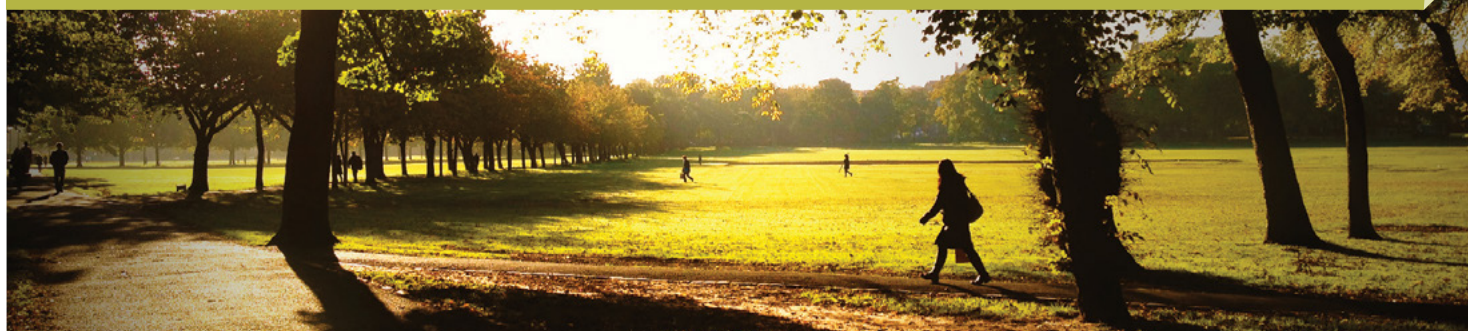


# LANDMARK



Send us your recollections of The Pleasance, to [editor.edit@ed.ac.uk](mailto:editor.edit@ed.ac.uk)

Studying in a unique city like Edinburgh is an unforgettable experience. In each edition we tell the story of an iconic campus or city landmark – and share your memories of its role in your student days.



Luigi Gao

## THE MEADOWS

The Meadows are a storied part of the Edinburgh cityscape. Today they play host to countless gatherings and events, from impromptu picnics to the new Meadows Marathon, while in the past they have been dug up to grow vegetables for the war effort, and even served as a quarantine area for plague victims in the 16th century. Both a thoroughfare and a retreat, the Meadows have a special place in the heart of many students. Here we share your memories.

## I REMEMBER...



**Shaun Murphy**  
BSc Civil  
Engineering 1972

"Pain – from the 12-hour pedal car race round the Meadows during Charity Week. First-year Civils came second and won crates of beer, better than the first prize of a bottle of whisky!"



**Treva Goodhead**  
MA Politics 1995

"First year had me walking across the Links and Meadows every day from Warrender Park Terrace. While every day had something new, my favourite one was when the morning fog sat waist high. Totally clear at eye level, but couldn't see your feet. Only happened to me once, but made such an impression."



**Charlton Leung**  
MA Business  
Studies &  
Accounting 2004

"As a first-year student living at Warrender Park Crescent, my friend and I had just completed an

all-nighter for an essay at 5:30am and we decided to celebrate by going out for a few holes of golf at the Meadows just as the sun was coming up. The tranquility of the still-sleeping city was beautiful."



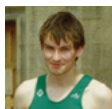
**Wendy Barrett**  
MA English  
Literature &  
Language 1985

"Walking through the Meadows after my finals and the blossom falling like snow."



**Sarah Glanville**  
MA Latin Studies  
2012

"Playing on Bruntsfield Links in November 2010 late at night after deep snow had fallen. We were the only people there in fresh snow and it was beautiful."



**James Jarvis**  
PhD Biochemistry  
1999

"For me the Meadows was the rendezvous for Hare & Hounds runs. We would run on the

inside of the tarmac to reduce the impact, leaving a trod through the trees. Monday night was particularly special as we would do a few laps slowly to keep everyone together before heading back to have pasta at someone's flat."



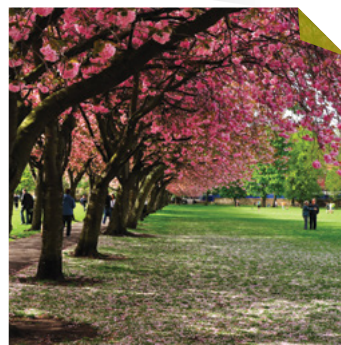
**Dr Anthony R Dickinson**  
PG Diploma  
Neuroscience 1988

"Hiking to and from the George Square library, knowing that the many plague victims were left here in what is now the Meadows to drown or otherwise decompose when it was a lake, so many years ago."



**Carol Brown**  
BSc Mathematics  
1980

"Studying for first year exams in Warrender Park Crescent and when needing a break going to the swing park I could see from the windows. When having a reminiscent go down the slide one kid said 'there's a mum playing!' I felt so old at 19."



Huihong Hu, PhD Molecular & Clinical Medicine 2011



**Madeleine Lefebvre**  
MA Arts 1972

"My best memory was going into the Meadows with friends after a party nearby and listening and singing along to my classmate Jeremy Rossiter and his guitar. We sat there until the sun came up – good friends, good memories."



**Spencer Hamill**  
BSc Mathematics  
1970

"Most mornings in 1967–8 I walked from my student digs in Warrender Park Road across the Meadows to 9 o'clock lectures in Drummond Street or Chambers Street. I shared a room with a fellow second-year Maths student who owned a car, and he would occasionally, on the rare days he attended lectures, give me a lift. He died, aged 20, on 8 May 1968 after suffering a bad asthma attack. We both played the guitar and I still have his words to Tom Paxton's *Talking Pop Art* he wrote down for me a few months before he died."

# THE LAST WORD

## PROFESSOR POLLY ARNOLD CRUM BROWN CHAIR OF CHEMISTRY

'A Chemical Imbalance', a project led by Professor Arnold, investigates why women remain under-represented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The work has resulted in a film, a book, a call for action, and some embarrassment over the f-word.



Dominic Ibbotson

Edinburgh Chemistry has an encouragingly high number of female students and academics: 30 per cent of our professors are women, while the UK average is 11 per cent.

While we are still a long way from equal, we wanted to see if there was anything in particular we had done right. To make *A Chemical Imbalance* I hired a journalist and two film-makers, all Edinburgh alumni, to help investigate. We sent questionnaires to Edinburgh's current chemists and alumni of all ages, and to many other UK chemists, through social media.

We received responses from more than 700 people of all backgrounds and ages, including an important but harder-to-access (for a geek like me) group of people who had moved out of science. We also had some inspirational anecdotes. I am hugely grateful to all those who took time to reply to yet another survey. We interviewed chemists of all academic levels, and ex-chemists, such as Dr Elaine Murray MSP. We asked about factors that affected their career directions such as mentoring, role-models, conscious and unconscious bias, and family-friendly policies.

But analysis of the data did not reveal a magic bullet. If it had, that would suggest there was a simple solution – which of course would

mean we'd have solved the equality problem by now.

We are unconvinced by continued calls for inquiries that produce familiar mixtures of issues. We are calling for action now, before the hard work of the generation above us is lost through complacency.

Here are our four action points to drive progress towards equality in the workplace.

**Monitor our numbers.** Monitoring is not about establishing quotas, it's about removing an unconscious bias. We've nearly eradicated overt dinosaur sexism but research studies show consistently subconscious biased behaviour in many subject areas. We need to know ourselves and our biases to avoid lapsing back into hiring in our own image.

**Mentor our people and make sure the best are applying.** The thing that marks out Edinburgh as different, and the point that came up repeatedly in interviews, is the effect that mentoring can have. While I understand that everyone's busy and academics are mostly introverts, communicating with our young talents is crucial. The saying goes that women wait until they're 120 per cent ready but men wait until 80 per cent. If our youngsters perceive themselves not to be good enough,

even if it's not true, we've already lost them. And many hiring panels could also benefit from mentoring.

**Create a workplace that supports everyone and allows flexibility.** Creating a workplace in which everyone wants to work is something I'd like to change about society, not just the odd chemistry department. Allowing human beings flexibility to deal with all the messy parts of their lives might give our brains the space to come up with even better science.

**Reclaim the meaning of feminism.** Asking interviewees about the f-word was a huge shock for me. Are you a feminist? It's a simple question that tied my male and female colleagues in knots. The answers made me laugh out loud. I felt naïve. And then angry. Everyone was in agreement on all the other difficult themes we probed, but hardly anyone admitted to being a feminist.

Since I outed myself as a feminist a few months ago, 7,000 people have visited "A Chemical Imbalance" and scores of men have felt able to tell me they are also feminists. I am hopeful that we can reclaim

Are you a feminist? It's a simple question that tied my male and female colleagues in knots.

the word and its simplest message of equality. In the meantime by mentoring and seeking mentoring, I think we stand the best chance of building talented and diverse teams. And mentoring starts with just being nice to people. Shouldn't be so hard – should it? ■

"A Chemical Imbalance" was funded by the award of a Rosalind Franklin prize from the Royal Society to Professor Arnold. The book is written by Cameron Conant, and the film was made by Siri Rødnes and Marie Lidén.

[www.chemicalimbalance.co.uk](http://www.chemicalimbalance.co.uk)  
[www.homepages.ed.ac.uk/parnold](http://www.homepages.ed.ac.uk/parnold)



# BILLET

## The General Council of the University of Edinburgh



### REPORT

By Professor Charles Swainson  
Convener of the Business  
Committee of the General Council

The General Council provides graduates with a continuing voice in the management of the University's affairs, and every graduate automatically becomes a member. Academic staff and members of the University's governing body, the University Court, are also members of the General Council. It meets twice a year and has the right to comment on matters affecting the University's prosperity and wellbeing. For more information on the work of the General Council, visit [www.general-council.ed.ac.uk](http://www.general-council.ed.ac.uk)

THE GENERAL COUNCIL HAS RELAUNCHED ITS WEBSITE. TO SEE OUR NEW LOOK AND JOIN IN THE DISCUSSION, VISIT [WWW.GENERAL-COUNCIL.ED.AC.UK](http://WWW.GENERAL-COUNCIL.ED.AC.UK)

The Business Committee was delighted to welcome the new General Council Assessor, Ms Doreen Davidson, who served with distinction on the Business Committee 2008–2012. She brings considerable experience of strategic human resources management. It has also welcomed the new Business Committee members elected to serve until July 2016, John Clifford, Matt McPherson, Anne Paterson, Scott Peter and Ian Stevens.

In June Development & Alumni held their first alumni weekend to coincide with an Edinburgh Half-Yearly Meeting, held at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies at Easter Bush. All present were informed and entertained by Professor David Argyle, Head of School, and after lunch by an interesting account of veterinary developments and medicines worldwide from Dr George Gunn of Novartis. Other weekend events included a reception, a ceilidh and a barbecue hosted by the University.

The Committee heard from Ms Kirsty MacDonald, Executive Director of D&A, on the annual report of the University of Edinburgh Development Trust to July 2012. It showed that income was stable at £11 million with good support from legacies and our

colleagues from the United States, who had contributed £750,000. Highlights included a major gift from the Shirley Foundation for the Patrick Wild Centre for the study of autism and fragile-X chromosome syndrome, and major support for the HRH Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Centre for the Study of Islam in the Contemporary World and the (Handa) Chair of Japanese–Chinese Relations. Corporate donations had fallen but were outweighed by substantial private donations. Members of the General Council could assist fundraising by providing introductions to potential donors through their extensive personal networks.

The Standing Committees have been working diligently, with new information for candidates for our elections and improved induction packs being published by the Constitutional Standing Committee.

The Academic Standing Committee has enquired into the efforts made by the University to improve the student experience. The University has made considerable investment and the Business Committee recognises that it will take a few years to be reflected in the Student Survey results. The Committee also enquired into the integration and support of international students

and would continue to follow both of these themes as they were of fundamental importance.

The Public Affairs Standing Committee has worked with D&A and the Secretary to develop the new General Council website. This has been simplified with a fresh look and feel. There is now an interactive blog which provides opportunities to contribute to discussions, for example about the future of the University.

The June 2014 Half Yearly Meeting will now be held in Toronto, the Grand Prix schedule preventing it being held in Montreal, as planned originally.

The Finance and Services Standing Committee met with Dr John Scally, Director of Library & University Collections who covered the extensive redevelopment of the Main Library. The improved student facilities had increased usage considerably, with students commenting that it was now one of their favourite spaces. Continuing emphasis on the digital future also raised many issues. The Committee also heard from Mr Nigel Paul, Vice Principal and Director of Corporate Services, on the University's excellent commercial enterprises which also created additional

income and from Mr Derek Waddell, Chief Executive, Edinburgh Research and Innovation, about wide ranging initiatives to commercialise the University's intellectual property and encourage entrepreneurialism.

In early October, the Chancellor visited and opened magnificent new facilities, hosted a dinner at the Palace of Holyroodhouse for the Chancellor's Award winners, and presided at a celebration of excellence where three honorary degrees and a fellowship were awarded. The University builds communities of support in this way and identifies people who could be inspirational to us all. It was a great honour and pleasure for the General Council to be fully involved.

Videos of previous  
Principal's and  
Convener's Reports,  
and a selection of  
after-lunch addresses,  
can be viewed at  
[www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/media](http://www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/media)



## BILLET NEWS

Chris Paik © Talbot Rice Gallery



Chris Paik © Talbot Rice Gallery



Chris Paik © Talbot Rice Gallery



### PAIK EXHIBITION A FESTIVAL TREAT

Ms Pat Fisher, Principal Curator of the Talbot Rice Gallery, Old College, once again welcomed members of the General Council and their guests, the Graduates' Association and Friends of the Talbot Rice Gallery, to a private viewing of the work on display during Edinburgh International Festival in August.

This year the exhibition featured Transmitted Live: Nam June Paik Resounds, celebrating the 50th anniversary of Paik's first solo exhibition, Exposition of Music – Electronic Television (Wuppertal 1963), when the artist brought television into the realm of art for the first time, presenting it as a tactile and multisensory medium.

As part of the counter-cultural movements of the 1960s, Paik believed that artists should humanise technology, get their "fingers in and tear away the walls" of the establishment. Paik, a trained musician, treated technology as a material part of his repertoire, which later expanded to include video, satellite transmissions, robots and lasers.

A fascinating insight to the work of the artist was given by Ms Fisher after which guests were able to roam the gallery and enjoy a reception with friends.

### UPDATED WEBSITE

The General Council has recently launched its updated website. We hope that members will find it easier to navigate and more attractive and will use the interactive blog facility to enhance communication with us.

Please visit [www.general-council.ed.ac.uk](http://www.general-council.ed.ac.uk) and let us know what you think.



### PRIORITIES FOR NEW SESSION

After input from members, Court Assessors and EUSA the Business Committee reviewed the priorities that should be addressed this session. Events will happen and new issues arise which need to be dealt with throughout the year but the following themes were regarded as priorities for the Committee and its Standing Committees.

#### The student experience including learning and teaching

We have been encouraged by the breadth of actions and the scale of investment by the University in tackling the issues identified in part by the National Student Survey. However, we feel it will be important to review the progress being made implementing the many proposed enhancements. We want to look into what impact these changes have had on both staff and students. There are initiatives to develop innovative teaching and learning methods but we need to see how widespread these are.

#### Engaging with communities

The University has continued to grow, in both numbers and geography. Efforts need to be made to create community spirit such as the initiatives being developed in the Vet School. We are seeking ways to engage with the wider civic community. We wish to build on our links with current students, including EUSA. Finally, we are involved in the new Alumni Engagement Strategy and wish to support enhanced alumni relationships.

#### Other strategic issues

The University's progress in implementing the Strategic Plan must be followed. Implications for of any changes in Scotland's constitutional arrangements should be identified.



BILLET NEWS



TORONTO TO  
HOST WEEKEND  
OF EVENTS AND  
JUNE MEETING

The June 2014 General Council Half-Yearly Meeting will be held at Toronto University, on Saturday 21 June 2014. Please check our website for further details.  
[www.general-council.ed.ac.uk](http://www.general-council.ed.ac.uk)

It is hoped that members, their families and friends will be able to join the General Council at the first overseas weekend of alumni events to be held in Canada. The weekend will follow the successful formula of previous overseas weekends in Washington DC, Hong Kong and Berlin, and will include an intellectually stimulating conference, the General Council Meeting and Lunch and a Gala Dinner.  
[www.ed.ac.uk/alumni](http://www.ed.ac.uk/alumni)



LUNCH WITH A LEGAL THEME

As usual, following the Half-Yearly Meeting on Saturday 15 February 2014, members of the General Council, alumni, partners, family and friends are cordially invited to the General Council Lunch in the Playfair Library Hall, Old College.

Sheriff Principal Edward Bowen CBE, Chancellor's Assessor and eminent lawyer, has kindly accepted our invitation to speak after lunch and we are confident that his talk will be fascinating. Sheriff Principal Bowen has a long and distinguished career behind him, including as Advocate Depute, Sheriff of Tayside Central and Fife and Queen's Counsel, before being appointed Sheriff Principal of Glasgow and Strathkelvin and then transferring to the Sherifffdom of Lothian and Borders in 2005, retiring from that office in May 2011.

He has also served in numerous other capacities, including Commissioner and then Chairman of the Board of Northern Lighthouses.

If you would like to attend the next General Council Lunch, please book online by following the links at [www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/whats-happening](http://www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/whats-happening), or complete and return the form adjacent no later than Friday 7 February 2014.

Tickets at £20 include pre-lunch wine reception and a buffet lunch in the Playfair Library Hall. Table wines will be available to purchase.

THE FEBRUARY 2014 GENERAL  
COUNCIL LUNCH

Playfair Library Hall, Old College, on Saturday 15 February 2014, 12.30pm for 1pm.

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ tickets (£20 each)

A cheque for £ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed payable to the University of Edinburgh.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of guest(s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Dietary requirements/preferences \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to: Mrs Mary Scott, Assistant to the Secretary of the General Council, University of Edinburgh, Charles Stewart House, 9–16 Chambers Street, Edinburgh EH1 1HT, Scotland, UK, or, alternatively, you may order online at [www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/whats-happening](http://www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/whats-happening)

Closing date for applications: Friday 7 February 2014.

ELECTIONS

GENERAL COUNCIL ELECTION, FEBRUARY 2014

CANDIDATES FOR MEMBERS  
OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

The following nominations have been received for the election of five members of the Business Committee to serve from 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2018.

The names of the candidates appear in random order, as drawn by ballot. This is also the order in which they will appear on the voting screen and ballot paper.



Sarah Morgan  
BSc 1997  
**Proposed by** Charles Patrick Swainson, MBChB 1971  
**Seconded by** James Alexander Norman Graham, BSc 1995

Sarah is an entrepreneur and nano-technology geek, with a background in business development across three countries, UK, US and Canada. An early career in television, film and music production has led to a successful fashion business in the US and funding of a nano-technology lighting company in Scotland.



Samuel Joseph Trett  
MA 2011  
**Proposed by** Stuart James Ritchie Walker, MA 1968  
**Seconded by** Ian Herbert Stevens, MA 1985

After an Edinburgh University MBA, I founded a drinks company. My experiences as a recent Sport Union President and committee member of the Graduate, and Sports Union, Alumni Associations give me helpful insight into the University's working and its challenges. My passion and experience will ensure strong representation on committee.



Simon Maurice Lytton Fairclough, MBA 2004  
**Proposed by** Charles Patrick Swainson, MBChB 1971  
**Seconded by** Frances Diana Dow, MA 1969

I have over 25 years' experience in organisational representation, gained in senior roles across several sectors. As Convener of the Public Affairs Standing Committee I am currently enjoying working with Business Committee colleagues to deliver enhanced opportunities for engagement between the General Council, students, staff, management and other University stakeholders.



David James Robert Houston  
PhD 1976  
**Proposed by** Alan McDougall Johnston, MBA 1989  
**Seconded by** Gordon Douglas Cairns, LLB 1979

My strengths are in strategic finance and management which have served me well in local authority top teams, as a director of a professional society and a management consultant. I wish to bring these skills and experiences to assist the University's strategic planning in consultation with members.



William Gordon Daniel Jack, BDS 1983  
**Proposed by** Kirsty Joan MacGregor, MA 1981, MBA  
**Seconded by** Jill Robertson, MBA 2003

I worked in Wales and Shropshire for 27 years establishing two dental practices and successfully selling both. After gaining three more qualifications from Royal Colleges and Sheffield University, plus working for Universities of Wales and Birmingham, I feel I have much to offer Edinburgh now we have returned to Scotland.



Philip John Courtney Mawer, MA 1971  
**Proposed by** Hilary Leith Watkinson, BSc 1968  
**Seconded by** Ian Angus Moffat, MBChB 1968

After a varied career in public service and Church administration, and with experience in regulation, financial services and charities, I now offer that experience to the University. I particularly look to help with the University's governance, its engagement with alumni and the external world, and with student and staff support.



Jane Elizabeth Kille  
MA 1973  
**Proposed by** Charles Patrick Swainson, MBChB 1971  
**Seconded by** Gordon Douglas Cairns, LLB 1979

I offer the General Council a further term of commitment by building on my previous experience on the Business Committee – in particular, the review process. I would use this to continue developing its positive relationship with the University by representing the views of alumni and colleagues proactively and constructively.



Dorothy Turvey  
MacLeod, MBA 2001  
**Proposed by** Kirsty Joan MacGregor, MA 1981  
**Seconded by** Jill Robertson, MBA 2003

The University is a power house for future growth and development. Risk management and collaboration are critical factors in maintaining its global position. I would contribute key skills in partnership building and investment, developed over 25 years working with both public and private sector organisations to ensure its ongoing success.

VOTING IN THE GENERAL  
COUNCIL ELECTION

This is the opportunity for you to participate in the governance of the University by voting for members of the Business Committee of the General Council, who are responsible for much of its work.

In February 2012 the General Council introduced online voting on a secure website, the Elections channel of the MyEd Alumni Portal, which will be open from Monday 6 January 2014 until 1700 GMT Wednesday 12 February 2014. In order to vote you must register via the EASE registration process as explained below by 1700 GMT on Tuesday 11 February 2014 at the latest.

Voting Papers are enclosed only where members have specifically requested them previously, no later than 30 November 2013, and should be completed and returned in the enclosed addressed envelope to the Secretary of the General Council. Details of all candidates appear on this page. Anyone still wishing to vote by post may do so for subsequent elections by requesting a postal vote from the General Council Office before 30 November in the year prior to any election.

To be able to vote online you need to be a member of the General Council eligible to vote in this election and registered through EASE as a MyEd Alumni Portal user. Those who registered for previous elections do not need to do so again, simply use the same user name and password. If you have already used the Portal as a student, you should still be able to use your student username and password to access the Alumni Portal. If you are a new user you will need to contact the support service. To do this send an email to the Information Services helpline at [IS.Helpline@ed.ac.uk](mailto:IS.Helpline@ed.ac.uk) requesting access to MyEd and giving your full name, date of and degree awarded at first graduation from Edinburgh. A username and initial password will be sent to you.

If you experience problems at any point when registering for, or accessing, the Alumni Portal, please also contact Information Services at the above address, identifying yourself as above.



# BILLET GENERAL COUNCIL PAPERS

## PAPERS FOR THE GENERAL COUNCIL HALF-YEARLY MEETING ON SATURDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2014

10.30AM: ROOM LT175, SCHOOL OF LAW, OLD COLLEGE

- 10am to 10.30am:** Coffee, tea and biscuits in the Lorimer Room, School of Law, Old College
- 10.30am:** General Council Meeting in Room G175, School of Law, Old College
- After the meeting:** Lunch in the Playfair Library Hall (see page 34 for details)

Members are invited to submit questions to the meeting by email to [generalcouncilquestions@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:generalcouncilquestions@hotmail.co.uk) either in advance or live during the meeting. The meeting will be web-cast and may be viewed live at: [www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/media](http://www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/media)

## AGENDA FOR THE GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING

- 1 Results of the Election of Five Members of the General Council Business Committee
- 2 Minutes of the Meeting of the General Council held in the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, The University of Edinburgh, Easter Bush Estate, Midlothian on Saturday 22 June 2013 (PAPER A)
- 3 Matters arising
- 4 Report of the Business Committee
- 5 Dates of future meetings of the General Council
- 6 Notice of forthcoming Elections
- 7 Presentation by Professor Sir Timothy O'Shea, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the Annual Report to the University
- 8 Any other competent business
- 9 Adjournment

### PRESENT

- MR PETER McCOLL**  
Rector, in the Chair
- MS SARAH SMITH**  
University Secretary and Registrar of the General Council
- PROFESSOR DAVID ARGYLE**  
Head of the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies

- DR MICHAEL MITCHELL**  
Secretary of the General Council
- PROFESSOR CHARLES SWAINSON**  
Convener of the Business Committee
- 49P AND 4V = 53 OTHER MEMBERS**  
(P = Physical; V = Virtual)
- REV DR HARRIET HARRIS**  
Chaplain to the University

## PAPER A

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL HELD IN THE ROYAL (DICK) SCHOOL OF VETERINARY STUDIES, THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH, EASTER BUSH ESTATE, MIDLOTHIAN ON SATURDAY 22 JUNE 2013

### 1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL HELD IN OLD COLLEGE, EDINBURGH, ON 9 FEBRUARY 2013

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 February 2013 were approved.

### 2 MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman reported that there were no matters arising from the Minutes.

### 3 REPORT OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

The Convener welcomed in particular those Members of the General Council who had travelled to Edinburgh as part of this Alumni Weekend. He also welcomed Sarah Smith as new University Secretary and looked forward to working closely with her and her team.

The Committee had completed agreed guidelines for consultation between the General Council and the University. These had now been approved by Court and were available on the General Council website. The Business Committee benefited from regular updates from Communications & Marketing. The range and the number of newsworthy events and the research that came out of the University were hugely impressive.

The Constitutional Standing Committee had produced new information for those wishing to stand for election and had refreshed the information available for those who were elected thus improving induction. The commitment expected had been clarified and the way in which we operated to support your university. They had considered

further whether our election procedures for a future Chancellor should be updated and no further changes were proposed. New procedures for publicising the election had already been introduced.

The Academic Standing Committee had been enquiring into the new approaches to student support for both Home and International Students. The University had invested in single point of access services and the Personal Tutor scheme. It had met with students to listen to their experiences with these changes. The Committee continued to investigate whether these were having their intended benefits.

The Finance and Services Standing Committee had reviewed the excellent previous financial year as described in the Report and Financial Statement to 31 July 2012 (available on the University website) with the Director of Finance, Phil McNaul. He had described the emphasis on the University becoming less dependent on Government Teaching Grants and seeking as broad an income base as possible.

The Public Affairs Standing Committee had been working on a redevelopment of the General Council website. Development & Alumni was a key partner in this and other related work. The new Executive Director of Development & Alumni, Kirsty MacDonald, had been welcomed to the Business Committee in January and gave an excellent introduction to the new strategies for alumni engagement.

The Business Committee responded to the publication by the Scottish Government of

the new Post-16 Education Bill. In the submission it emphasised the objections to the potential removal of the General Council from the Governance of the University and to sweeping powers to direct an institution and its curricula proposed in Section 2 of the Bill. The evidence given to the Education Committee of the Parliament and the subsequent Parliamentary debate had resulted in a Bill which was substantially improved. The Committee supported the draft Scottish Code of Higher Education Governance, which had been prepared under the Chairs of Court. We emphasised the role of the General Council, the election of the independent Assessors to the Court that it undertook, and supported the concept of elected staff and student members on Court.

The Convener thanked a number of retiring Committee Members for their contribution: Jane Kille, Ruthven Gemmell, Ian Sutherland, Neil Hynd and Shields Henderson. Ian Sutherland had been Convener of the Academic Standing Committee from 2009 to 2012 and had been a member of the Business Committee since 2001. Neil Hynd had been Convener of the Public Affairs Standing Committee since 2010, and Vice Convener of the Business Committee 2004-8, serving a total of 11 years as a member of the committee. Between them they had given over 23 years to service on the Committee. The Convener also thanked the retiring General Council Assessor, Mrs Margaret Tait, who had made an outstanding contribution to the General Council and the University for an astonishing 27 years. Mrs Tait had been elected to the Business Committee in 1986, had served on various committees, had been Convener of Public Affairs Standing Committee 1990-1992, Vice Convener 1992-96, and then Convener of the Business Committee 1996-2000 and had then been elected to the

University Court, where she served 2001-2013. She championed the causes of the disadvantaged and had always held the torch aloft for students in particular. The University community had much to thank her for.

The report of the Business Committee was approved.

*The full text of the Convener's remarks are contained in the Annex to the Billet.*

### 4 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

The next Half-Yearly Meeting would take place on Saturday 15 February 2014, in Old College. Any Motions for discussion at this meeting should be received in the General Council Office by the 27 November 2013.

Post Meeting Amendment: With the agreement of the Business Committee the date for the following Statutory Half-Yearly Meeting had been changed to Saturday 21 June. Any Motions for discussion at this meeting should be received in the General Council Office by Monday 31 March 2014.

### 5 NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS

There would be an election for five Members of the Business Committee in February 2014. Nominations on forms available from the General Council Office and on the website should be received in the General Council Office by the 27 November 2013.

### 6 PRESENTATION BY PROFESSOR DAVID ARGYLE, HEAD OF THE ROYAL (DICK) SCHOOL OF VETERINARY STUDIES

Professor Argyle highlighted the three main strands to the work of the Veterinary School; education, research and clinical work, all important and interrelated. The history of the School was



# BILLET GENERAL COUNCIL PAPERS

described, from its origins in Clyde Street under William Dick, through the Summerhall era to the latest major campus developments at Easter Bush. The close working relationships with the Medical School were also highly influential and created major opportunities for a “One Health” agenda. Another major development for research had been the incorporation of the Roslin Institute which was now housed in an adjacent location in a stunning new building. There had been major expansion in animal cancer care and research, also new facilities including a linear accelerator. The vision for the campus was to create a world-leading centre of veterinary research, education and clinical care.

One of the major emphases was to enhance the student experience and to build some really strong academic communities and the new facilities helped tremendously. The next generation of vets needed to be research literate, able to use evidence-based medicine to make clinical judgements, clinically confident, and able to communicate to the general public. Curriculum choice had been expanded, including forming partnerships with other universities, such as Stirling for aquaculture. Technology had enhanced learning, including virtual farms or abattoirs and using functioning models of animals.

The School had been very active in the enhancement of the Student Experience; it had its own version of the Personal Tutor system and had introduced a Student Experience Officer together with Student Support fellows. The students had been involved in developing systems and structures relevant to their needs. This had included developing a House system, enhancing staff and student interaction, support and advisory teams and an on-campus referrals service. Study skills advice, stress management, mental

health monitoring and professional counselling were all on board. The students themselves designed and ran a Student Welfare Week.

Education in a research-led environment was the driving concept. The vision for Easter Bush was a European Centre of Excellence in Animal Science. This was based on two elements; firstly “One Health”, taking full advantage of the fact that the School was strategically sited within the College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine and the other was Food Security, which was really all about the livestock industry and making sure that it could feed the nation and help our international partners. Major areas of impact for the campus were those of livestock and human genetics.

Thus research on animal health, including the underlying biological mechanisms, fed into it and was itself supported by the work on human health. The main aims were enhancing animal health and welfare through knowledge, sustainability of livestock systems, food safety, enhancing human and companion animal health through understanding the basic mechanisms of health and disease, and identifying new diseases and treating them. The research divided into genetics and genomics affecting immunity, neurobiology, developmental biology and clinical sciences, all interlinked. In terms of genetics capabilities, this campus was second only to the Sanger Centre in Cambridge for sequencing technologies and the sequencing output.

The other main aspect of the work was clinical service. There were three main hospitals; the Small Animal Hospital, the Equine Hospital and the Cattle Practice. Everything done could be directly reflected in human health. For example, in terms of One Health One Medicine and One Biology, donkeys, which suffer from chronic fibrosis, were a very good model

for human chronic lung fibrosis. A very large Medical Research Council Grant had been awarded to develop the donkey as a model for human disease. Chronic disease and diseases associated with ageing in humans and animals were incredibly common. A number of important diseases being studied included cancer, liver disease, osteoarthritis and kidney disease, which were as common a cause of reduced quality of life or death in dogs and cats as they were in humans. Another major research project across Schools, including Engineering and Human Medicine, was investigating ways to make radiation therapy much more effective using micro-sensors to detect areas of hypoxia in tumours. Working on mitral valve replacements grown in tissue culture for dogs had direct relevance to human heart disease.

For a successful future it was important that the clinical services were excellent and that postgraduate education and research income were competitive. This meant investing in people and investing in technologies. The profession had changed; 80% of graduates now went into small animal practice which was a big change even from 20 years ago and 80 per cent of graduates were now female, which changed the profession. There was heavy investment in the clinics as a platform for translational research, thus maintaining the cutting edge, providing opportunities for the clinicians to change practice and lead innovation, providing key clinical questions to underpin research as well.

This enabled the School to produce the next generation of veterinarians, and provide education opportunities to lead postgraduate education nationally and internationally. Considerable investment in additional new facilities was on-going or planned including the Pathology Extension, Innovation Hub, new Avian Facilities, Large Animal Research

and Imaging Centre, Large Animal Hospital, and a new Sustainable Biodiversity Funded Avian Facility to ensure that the current level of success was at least maintained.

The presentation was closed with a stimulating and wide ranging question session.

*The full text of Professor Argyle’s remarks, and the record of the discussion that followed the presentation, are contained in the Annex to the Billet. The presentation may also be seen as a video on the website.*

## 7 ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

There was no other competent business.

## 8 ADJOURNMENT

The Motion by the Convener of the Business Committee that, for the purpose of considering matters which may be transmitted to the General Council by the University Court or any other business of a competent nature, the Business Committee be empowered to act on behalf of the Council, and that this meeting be adjourned to a date to be fixed by the Business Committee, was approved.

Rev Dr Harriet Harris closed the meeting with a benediction.

### OFFICERS:

<b>Chairman:</b>	HRH The Princess Royal	
<b>Secretary:</b>	Michael J Mitchell, BSc, PhD	2015
<b>Registrar:</b>	Sarah Smith, University Secretary	ex-officio

### GENERAL COUNCIL ASSESSORS ON THE UNIVERSITY COURT:

Alan M Johnston, MBA, CSci, CChem, FRSC, CBiol, FIBiol	2015
Ann M Smyth, BSc, PhD, MPhil	2015
Doreen Davidson, BA, AIPD	2017

### BUSINESS COMMITTEE:

Convener: Charles Swainson, MBChB, FRCPE, FRCSE, FFPHM	2016
Vice-Convener: Frances D Dow, MA, DPhil, CBE	2016

A	Convener of Academic Standing Committee: Bruce Ritson, OBE, MBChB, MD, FRCPE, FRCPsych	2014
P	Convener of Public Affairs Standing Committee: Simon Fairclough, MBA	2014
F	Convener of Finance and Services Standing Committee: Kirsty MacGregor, MA, MBA DipEd	2015
C	Convener of Constitutional Standing Committee: Gordon D Cairns, LLB	2016

### MEMBERS:

‘A’ denotes a member of the Academic Standing Committee, ‘C’ a member of the Constitutional Standing Committee, ‘F’ a member of the Finance and Services Standing Committee, and ‘P’ a member of the Public Affairs Standing Committee:

### CHANCELLOR’S ASSESOR:

Sheriff Principal Edward F Bowen, CBE, TD, QC	ex-officio
---	------------

P	LuiSe Locke, BA, MA	2014
P	Elizabeth Morris, MBChB MRCP	2014
C	Ann M Sutherland, MA, FBCartS	2014
P	Morven Brown, M.A, DipEd, DipEd Psych, AFBPsS	2015
F	Waverley Cameron, BSc, SM	2015
C	Michael Lugton, MA	2015
A	Ritchie Walker, MA, BSc, DipEd	2015
F	Robert (Bobby) Burt, MD, FRCA, FRCPE, FACP	2016
A	Stuart Macpherson	2016
F	Hamish McKenzie, MA	2016
C	David M Munro, MBE, BSc, PhD	2016
P	John Clifford, MSc	2017
A	Matthew McPherson, MA	2017
A	Anne W Paterson, BSc, Dip. Social Study, AIMSW, CCE	2017
C	Scott Peter, MA, PGDE	2017
F	Ian Stevens, MA, ACA	2017

### ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY: Mary T Scott, BA

The *Annex* to the *Billet*, containing supporting papers for the Agenda, including communications from the University Court, full Standing Committee reports, a transcript of Professor Agyle’s presentation, and the Business Committee’s report to the meeting on 22 June 2013, is available on the website at:

**[www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/annex.htm](http://www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/annex.htm).**  
General Council members may also request it by post from: Mrs Mary Scott, General Council Office, Charles Stewart House, 9-16 Chambers Street, Edinburgh EH1 1HT. Tel. 0131 650 2152; Email: [general.council@ed.ac.uk](mailto:general.council@ed.ac.uk); or pick a copy up at the location of the Council Meeting from 30 minutes beforehand.

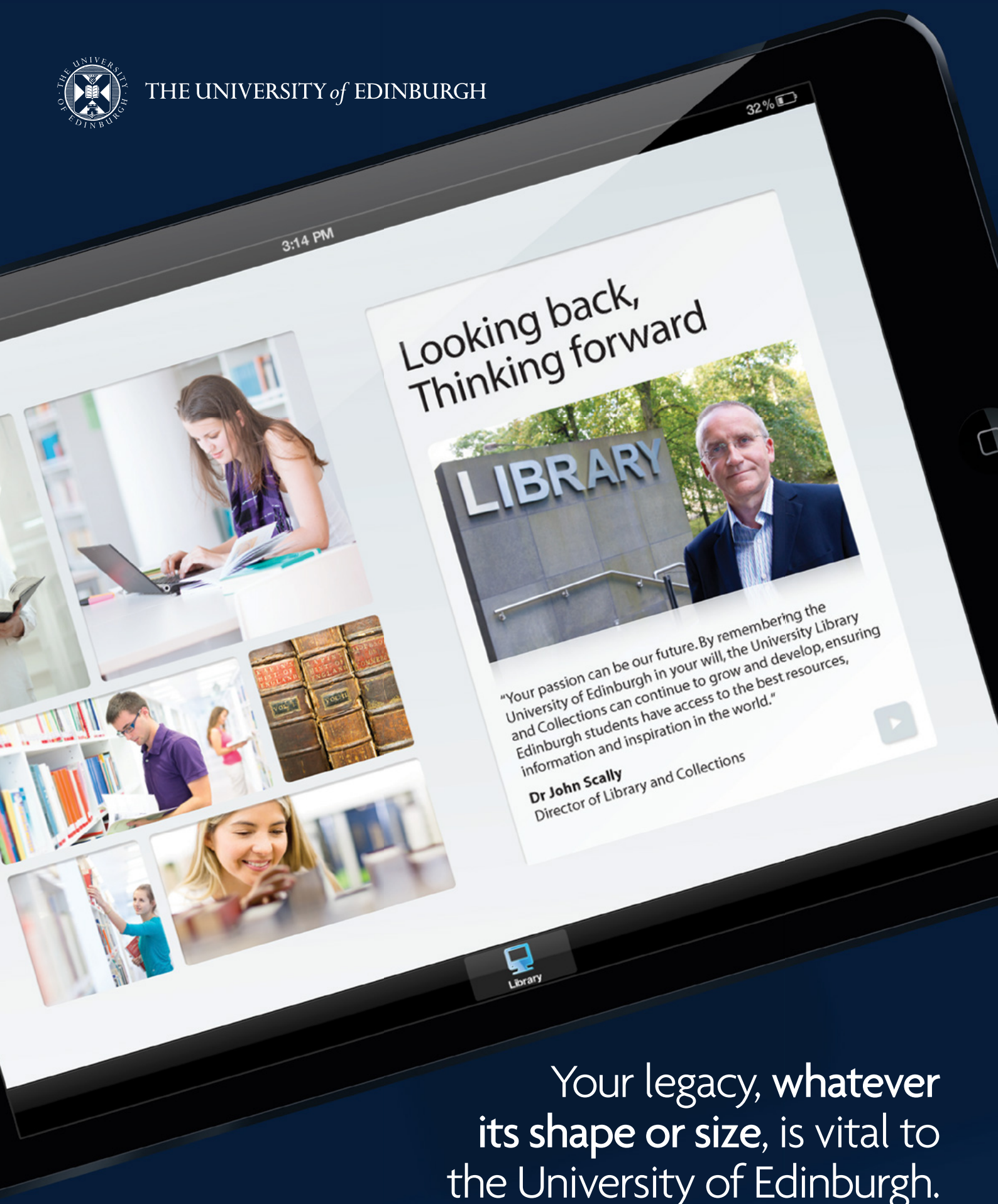


**Previous copies of *Billet* can be found under the Publications tab at [www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/media](http://www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/media)**





THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH



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