



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

EDUCT News

Issue 70

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The Newsletter of the Edinburgh University Club of Toronto

In This Issue

Click the heading to go directly to the article

- EDUCT's McMichael Gallery Outing Portrayed in Pictures
- Richard Messina Introduces EDUCT to The Jackman Institute of Child Study
- The Mystery of the Vineyard: Trouble in the Terroir
- David Argyle to Speak on 300 Years of Medicine at Edinburgh
- EDUCT Decennial Endowment Fund: Good News
- EDUCT Geography Centenary Fund: Mixed News
- Famous Alumni: John Rutherford
- Welcome to new members Sarah Howland & Alexandra Lamy
- Obituaries: Kirsty Duncan, José Luis Moreno & Eileen Jarman
- Book Review: *She's a Lamb!*
- Treasurer's Report

MEMBERSHIP FEES:

Membership fees for 2026 are due in January. If you have not yet renewed, please see **page 20** for details. We now take INTERAC e-transfers.

Mark Your Calendars

Check out the full events listing and details on [page 2](#)

Solar Energy: Why we need more; how to get it; and the implications for individuals and society

Sunday, 1 March 2026, 12 noon on Zoom

EDUCT Annual Dinner

Friday, 17 April 2026, 6:30 p.m.

The Arts & Letters Club, Toronto

EDUCT AGM

Sunday, 31 May 2025, 1 p.m.

Location TBA, but likely on Zoom

For more details on the above events, see [page 2](#)

Message from the President



Happy New Year! Last fall, we enjoyed some exceptionally interesting activities. In October we had a very enjoyable outing to the McMichael Gallery in Kleinberg. We had put the emphasis on making this an occasion for a family outing and fortunately the mild weather cooperated.

We enjoyed a splendid lunch, walks in the grounds, and a rich and interesting variety of art exhibits. In November we visited the Jackman Institute of Child Study for a fascinating talk by Richard Messina, the Principal of this laboratory school. Richard also guided us around the building and the playground to better convey how the facilities have been designed and are used to support the implementation of the school's philosophy of child education. In December we attended a very educational wine tasting. These activities are written up in this issue.

Our annual Burns Night was also a great success, with plenty of excellent performances. This will be covered in our May issue.

Upcoming, on 1 March, we have a talk, on zoom, on solar power, by two faculty members from Edinburgh, and on 17 April we have our Annual Dinner, which will focus on the Medical School's tercentenary. Pencil them in!

Being January, please renew your EDUCT membership for 2026. See p. 20 for details.

Anna Voineskos

Promoting Your Event

If you are organizing an event or participating in an activity that would be of interest to fellow alumni in the GTA, please get in touch with our Communications Officer: Paul Bradley
pauljfrbradley@gmail.com.

You may also join us on LinkedIn or Facebook to submit your information directly to participating members through these networks.

Our Response to COVID

Although the public is still relaxed about Covid, we continue to learn of new variants that could well spread rapidly and that may not be as susceptible to control with our currently available vaccines. Given this air of uncertainty, and the history of waves of new variants of Covid and the ever-changing government cautions on public gatherings, we will decide how to stage each event about six weeks prior to that event. We shall retain the online format for a few events each year, given the ease of access this offers to those members living far from Toronto.

Tell us your news

EDUCT News is always looking for interesting alumni stories and news. We are happy to hear about what's new with you! Whether you have just returned from an interesting trip or have a memory you wish to share with your fellow EDUCT Members, we would love to hear from you.

If you have something you would like to share, please contact the EDUCT News Editor, Simon Miles at
simon-miles@sympatico.ca.

Upcoming Club and Alumni Events

Solar Energy: Why we need more; how to get it; and the implications for individuals and society

Sunday, 1 March 2026 | 12 Noon (on Zoom)

Our speakers are **Professor Neil Robertson**, Head of Inorganic Chemistry, and **Dr. Arno Verhoeven**, Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor) in Design, and ECA Director of Sustainable Development, University of Edinburgh. The backdrop to their talk is familiar: if the world is to remain livable, all countries have to intensify their efforts to lower greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs). Currently, about 17% of global energy is derived from renewable sources. The speakers will argue that we should be looking to solar power to be the most reliable of those renewable sources for providing much of the world with the energy it needs over the long term. They will cover the development of solar energy to date and possible future trends, including discussion of the key technologies involved, and what it will take to realize a sustainable and equitable society, while providing the energy needed.

Cost: \$5 for members and guests; \$10 for non-member alumni.

Info: Simon Miles, simon-miles@sympatico.ca 416-466-8793

EDUCT Annual Dinner

Friday, 17 April 2026 | 6:30 p.m.

The Great Hall, The Arts & Letters Club – 14 Elm Street, Toronto

Professor David J. Argyle, William Dick Chair of Veterinary Clinical Studies, Vice Principal, and Head of the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, The University of Edinburgh, will be our after-dinner speaker. Dr Argyle's theme will be *300 years of Medicine at Edinburgh: past landmark achievements; recent breakthroughs; and current challenges*. 2026 is a major landmark date for the University of Edinburgh, as it marks 300 years of the Edinburgh Medical School and is thus an excellent time to reflect on the School's place in the world, the impact that it has had, and the vision for the future. Dr. Argyle will look back to the beginning and the rise of the Medical School, and the benefits of being part of a civic university rather than one that was heavily influenced by religion. This allowed medical advancement at a pace, through anatomy and comparative anatomy. He will touch on many of the characters who have played a major role, such as Lister and Simpson in earlier times, through to more contemporary times and the impact of people like John Crofton in tuberculosis and Iain Wilmut and the impact of Dolly the Sheep on modern day regenerative medicine. This will also tie into the School's close links across comparative medicine and the 200 year old vet school intertwined with medicine. And he will articulate the School's future vision, the growth of the health innovation campus at Bioquarter, the building of a new medical school fit for 21st century medical education, and how the School is tackling the major challenges that face humanity both locally and globally.

Cost: \$110 for members and guests; \$115 for non-member alumni.

Info: Simon Miles – simon-miles@sympatico.ca, 416-466-8793

Annual General Meeting

Sunday, 31 May 2026 | 1:00 p.m.

Location TBA (likely on Zoom)

Cost: There is no charge for the AGM.

Info: Anna Voineskos – avoineskos.architect@gmail.com, 416-826-6655

EDUCT's McMichael Gallery Outing Portrayed in Pictures

by Simon Miles

Everyone seemed to thoroughly enjoy themselves at EDUCT's outing to the McMichael Gallery in Kleinburg. And this despite the fact that Sunday the 19th of October, while being perfect timing for the autumn colours, was dreadful timing for the weather! We had emphasized that this was an event for socializing and that attracted 30 members and their guests, despite their having to get up painfully early to be part of the brunch at the unholy hour of 11:00 am. Yes, more bad timing, for which we apologize! But the early arrival was called for given the size of our party. However, Judith, the manager of The Cabin, the Gallery's restaurant, made the pain worthwhile by delivering a splendid brunch for us. Not surprisingly, therefore, people lingered over their meal. Paul Bradley even got a very small cake to celebrate his birthday. Some kind fairy godmother had discovered his big day had arrived and waved a magic wand - and up popped the cake!

Here we capture something of the flavour of the day through photos.

Our first photo shows some of our party. Next, Birthday Boy Paul is clearly delighted that he was not the only one who remembered this was a special day.



Some of our party at brunch



Paul, 'Birthday Boy' and Kim Bradley



Jenna Shelley and her two guests, Clarice Dale (left) and Tina Tammsalu (centre)—who has since joined EDUCT—and Clarice's daughter, Betty, and Jenna's son, Edward, on the fence.

After lunch, some went straight to the galleries, others took off the gardens. Jenna Shelley, who had been very busy organizing our outing, finally managed to get some downtime. The photo of her party, posing as the Idlers, says it all when it comes to conveying what a relaxing time we had: feel free to idle! The kids have it down pat ... adults may call it fence-sitting, but that's really just another nice euphemism for idling. I am reminded that EDUCT member and philosopher, Mark Kingwell, wrote a book with Joshua Glenn on the merits of idleness and the many euphemisms we use for this pleasurable activity. Surely, he would have approved of a zone in which one can idle freely.

And other youngsters found other ways of giving the art a miss. Our fourth photo shows the aptly named Artemis and her sister Althaea, granddaughters of Anna Voineskos, playing hide and seek, up a tree. To give them their due, they have the game down to a fine art!



Artemis (top) and Althaea give the art a miss

Finally, when the rain came, everyone headed inside. The McMichael had a number of distinct exhibitions on display that were drawn from the Gallery's permanent collection. One that attracted a number of EDUCT members was an exhibition of works by Norval Morrisseau. Since there are probably more forged Morrisseau paintings than genuine ones in existence today, it was a delight to be able to take in works the authenticity of which one did not have to be constantly questioning. Anne Brusby's daughter, Lauren, who is just starting a career in teaching, was particularly pleased to have the opportunity to see so many works by Morrisseau in one place. She remarked that she had been studying Morrisseau and other Indigenous artists for two years while at Wilfrid Laurier University and to see such a large selection of works made everything she had learned come alive. To see the brush strokes and to be able to appreciate the time and effort that had gone into the paintings really moved her.

For many, the icing on the cake was the exhibit of James Wilson Morrice's paintings of Venice. This show had been extended, given its popularity, and we were fortunate to catch it. Morrice, a Canadian, lived in Paris for much of his life. He was a frequent visitor to Venice in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. He was fascinated with the buildings - their architecture, their texture and their varied colours that changed with the light - and the people in the streets.

Do you know of other Edinburgh alumni in Toronto?

Please pass this newsletter on to anyone who might be interested.

Our fifth photo shows a magnificent painting that greets one at the start of the exhibit. It is called "Palazzo Dario" (c.1905). In 1912, it won a prestigious prize at the Art Association of Montreal's annual Spring Exhibition. Sandra Paikowsky, the Guest Curator of the McMichael Exhibition and Professor Emerita of Art History at Concordia University, observes that it was rare for Morrice to place a building on a strong diagonal to show its depth. This palazzo, with its distinctive leaning façade, was seemingly a favourite subject for many foreign painters, including Claude Monet.



J. W. Morrice, Palazzo Dario, c. 1905, oil on canvas, Collection of Power Corporation of Canada



J. W. Morrice, Public Gardens, Venice, (c.1903), oil on canvas, Private Collection

The second painting is a view of the Bacino di San Marco from the Giardini della Biennale, with people sitting or standing and enjoying the view. The painting, called "Public Gardens, Venice" (c.1903), was one of the most-frequently exhibited of Morrice's paintings during his lifetime. Of this painting Paikowsky remarks that it illustrates how Morrice employs his familiar horizontal bands in composing the scene, while using feathery trees to divide the vista vertically and unify the panorama. Again, the painting shows us how Morrice plays with light - in this case with a glimmering pink-and-blue sky filling much of the canvas, while complementing the opalescent tones of the water.

It proved to be a very comfortable way of visiting Venice. To round out the day, some of us then went into the village of Kleinberg to hunt out the best butter tarts in the GTA. A sweet note on which to end our outing.

Our thanks to Jenna for being the main organizer of the day!

[Editor's Note: That book on idleness: Joshua Glenn and Mark Kingwell, *The Idler's Glossary*, \(Windsor, Ontario: Biblioasis, 2008, 136 pp.\)](#)

Richard Messina Introduces EDUCT to The Jackman Institute of Child Study

by Simon Miles

Richard Messina is the Principal of the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study, a laboratory school in Toronto. He is also the father of two University of Edinburgh alumni: Simona and Thea. And it was in that capacity that EDUCT had the good fortune to first get to meet him. He is one of the most enthusiastic speakers that EDUCT has had the opportunity to hear from. His passion for his role as Principal of this very important educational institution is palpable.

The Jackman Institute of Child Study (JICS) was celebrating its Centenary when we heard from Richard on 16 November 2025. Richard kindly hosted us at the JICS for this talk. He introduced us to the history of laboratory schools, the philosophy underpinning the operation of JICS, and how the school puts that philosophy into practice.

The idea of laboratory schools has its origins in the work of the famous educator, John Dewey. Dewey (1859 – 1952) made his mark by establishing the laboratory school at the University of Chicago in 1896. Although there had been schools associated with universities before Dewey appeared on the scene, it was Dewey who gave new direction and meaning to them by moving beyond teaching to include a focus on the role of the school in conducting research on the ways children learn and how to support that learning through improvements in teaching. Dewey's understanding of education was remarkable for his time. In his own words: "Education is a social process. Education is growth. Education is not a preparation for life, education is life itself." His laboratory school is still in operation.

The JICS, which is formally part of the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), was established in 1925 as the St. George's Nursery School. In the 1950s, Leighton G. McCarthy, a former Canadian Ambassador to the US, bequeathed his spacious house on Walmer Road to the University of Toronto, to relocate the Nursery School and accommodate a new junior school for children up to grade 6. Today, the JICS has about 200 students, from the age of 3 to 12 (nursery school to grade 6). In addition to providing them with an outstanding setting for learning, the school hosts a constant flow of teachers and administrators from the public school system, international visitors, and policy makers who visit to learn about the latest developments in teaching. In addition to these components of the laboratory school, the mandate of the school includes research on children's education and development, which is given focus with the presence of the Dr. R. G. N. Laidlaw Centre within JICS, and the provision of support for the University of Toronto's two-year M.A. in Child Study and Education, which includes the Ontario Teacher Certification.



Richard Messina

There is a three-part philosophy underpinning the pedagogy (i.e., the teaching methods and practices) employed at JICS: in short, one must have a thorough understanding of child development, of security theory, and of inquiry-based learning.

Teachers are expected to have a deep understanding of child development. The JICS believes that each child develops at a rate that is unique to that child and that, because each child is unique, with his own particular interests and potential, it is essential to know each child well. Further, the approach must be holistic, embracing support for the social-emotional aspects as much as the cognitive aspects of the child's development.

Security theory owes its origins, in part, to the work of Dr. William Blatz, the first Director of the JICS, a century ago. Dr. Blatz, a clinical psychologist, had worked with the rehabilitation of WWI veterans. He had discovered that the more he could make them feel secure, the more willing they were to participate in the programmes designed to improve their well-being. He decided to apply this to the education of young children, by giving them a sense of not just physical but also psychological security. The theory holds that a secure child is one who feels loved and known, is confident in being himself, is aware that his thoughts, questions and ideas are respected, and, at the same time, recognizes that making mistakes is part of the learning process, and that one must be willing to accept and deal with the consequences of one's behaviour.

And since Blatz, like Dewey, believed in the importance of play-based learning, he wanted to give children the sense that they can take risks, by exploring new spaces, activities and ideas. In this sense, Blatz saw safety as the antithesis of security. This means that the role of adults in a child's life – the parents and teachers – is a constant balancing act. The young child, with an immature sense of dependency, needs to be given a feeling of security. And, as the child develops, the adult must move from providing, supervising, and fostering security to releasing power to the child. Thus, teachers have to be very flexible as they work with each child. And play spaces need to be designed to enable their exploration by children of different ages.

Moving to the importance of inquiry-based learning, Richard started with what we all know: children are constantly coming up with many questions and theories that may answer those questions. However, what we may not appreciate is that teachers, and parents, should not necessarily be telling the children they are wrong and then giving them the right answer. Rather, they have to foster that continuing inquiry. Richard again cited Dewey who, in his seminal book *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (1916), proposed that:

- the aim of education is the continued capacity for education.
- students should enjoy and value the learning process.
- activities should be meaningful and engaging.

In short, children have to learn how to learn.

And the teachers, and the parents, have to recognize, as Dewey did, that “We never educate directly, but indirectly by means of the environment”, and that “Learning cannot take place by direct conveyance of beliefs, emotions, and knowledge.” And, most importantly, both Dewey and Blatz did not believe that children learn through extrinsic motivation (such as grading); they believed that one has to understand what a child’s interests are since it is intrinsic motivation that is so important a driver for learning.

In his work with teachers, Richard will often ask them what they want the children they teach to be like as adults. He hears: “they have learned how to learn”, “they know how to deal with complexity”, “they will exhibit empathy for, and concern for their impact on, others and the environment”, “they will be innovative”, and “they will be collaborative”.



At the Sara Jackman Playground, designed by PLANT, kids are encouraged to take risks, including climbing existing trees. Photo by Steven Evans. Courtesy Canadian Architect

In response, Richard is promoting what he terms a ‘co-constructive approach’ to learning on the part of the child; i.e., they want to work collaboratively with other children to co-construct knowledge that is meaningful to them, that answers their authentic questions. He wants JICS to produce children who are wanting to roll up their sleeves to get to understand a situation. He believes that there will be gaps in a child’s understanding of any situation if they are not actively engaged in:

- Observation and reporting
- Building explanations
- Reasoning with evidence
- Making connections
- Having the opportunity to look at issues from different perspectives
- Synthesizing to form conclusions
- Wondering and asking questions
- Uncovering complexities.

To illustrate how JICS applies this theory in practice, Richard introduced us to an outing for grade 1 students to a park in autumn. The children are asked why leaves change colour. A wonderfully imaginative array of responses may be given, including, for example: “colour is leaking off the leaves at night”, “it’s getting colder”, “there’s less sunlight”, “the days are shorter”, “it’s a fairy who knows it’s my birthday”. The teacher will collect and archive these theories, without the children’s names being attached, since the theories now belong to the group. The children are then encouraged to conduct experiments. One child put her leaf in the freezer overnight; another put his leaf in a microwave; and, another put hers in a dark but warm cupboard. Their inquiry is supported by resources such as picture books and, as their understanding deepens, new questions arise, such as “where does chlorophyll hide in the winter?” Next spring, months after the Leaf Study was over, the children are taken to a wood to collect maple sap in buckets. After observing the clear sap, a 6-year-old child recognized his earlier thinking (that chlorophyll is stored in tubes inside tree trunks) was wrong. He was not embarrassed to admit he was wrong, he simply wanted to correct his understanding and share this new information with his classmates.

Richard then took us on a tour of the school’s learning spaces. The library is central to the operation of the school. To reflect the diversity of backgrounds of the children, there are books by authors from distinctly different cultures and lived experiences. To encourage reading, homework assignments may include producing a review of a book. The Principal’s office is kept deliberately messy and filled with stuffies and toys to encourage the children to see it as a welcoming place to enter. The classrooms are not organized around desks and chairs; there are tables that are regarded as ‘watering holes’ where children can collaborate and carpeted areas, regarded as ‘camp fires’, where the class gathers for discussions or demonstrations. The grade 1 space has very little storage space for the plethora of objects that tend to remain left out on tables and the floor. The idea is to encourage the children to develop ownership of their space. There is an art room with materials designed to encourage the children to be creative with clay, paper, wire, wood, etc.

As Richard observed, for many adults their experience of art class was learning that they were “not talented,” despite having been naturally artistic as children. At JICS, they work intentionally to teach skills and knowledge in ways that honour each child’s individuality and ways of seeing. Returning to Dewey’s assertion that “the aim of education is the continued capacity for education,” they want children to see themselves as artists and creative thinkers—capable, confident, and eager to continue exploring, experimenting, and expressing themselves long after a single project or course has ended.

The playground space was redesigned recently by a firm called PLANT. It has since been recognized with a National Award of Excellence from the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects. The playground features structures that challenge the children to take risks. Somewhat surprisingly, since the new playground has been in place, the number of injuries and social issues have actually dropped. That may be due in part to the school teaching the children three questions that they should ask themselves to guide their outdoor play: is it safe?, is it kind?, is it inclusive? But clearly the design has contributed much by encouraging children to assess and take risks, while keeping the setting safe. One has to remember that, in the last two decades, schools have had to remove many structures from playgrounds because of the rising costs being incurred in an increasingly litigious environment.

There are 22 to 24 children to a class. Richard observed that after several years of being together the children tend to develop a bit of a social hierarchy, so in grades 4 and 5 they have two combined grade 4/5 classes to break up this hierarchy a bit, before they come back together again in grade 6.

A key feature of the staffing model is the inclusion of two teachers from the public school system who bring their expertise while also using their time at JICS to explore what is possible in teaching and learning. They engage in inquiry, experimentation, and reflection. When they return to their public school boards, they often assume leadership roles, sharing and disseminating the insights and practices they developed at JICS.

The large-scale Wave structure, developed by commercial playground manufacturer Kompan, includes areas for activities including climbing, sliding, running, and lounging.

Courtesy Canadian Architect



Technology at JICS is used in intentional and thoughtful ways to support student learning. Tools such as laptops and interactive whiteboards are integrated purposefully, to deepen inquiry, document learning, support collaboration, and make thinking visible, rather than as ends in themselves. At the same time, the school continues to explicitly teach handwriting skills, recognizing the important role that fine-motor development, fluency, and embodied learning play in children’s cognitive growth and communication.

The school is also mindful of the growing body of research indicating that use of social media and texting among young children can contribute to increased anxiety, social difficulties, and experiences of exclusion. For this reason, JICS discourages these forms of technology, prioritizing face-to-face interaction, play, and the development of healthy relationships.

This balanced approach ensures that students develop strong digital competencies while also building foundational skills, well-being, and a strong sense of social connection and belonging.

There was an extensive discussion after Richard’s talk and more while we toured the building and playground. We learned about who attends the school: one has to live in Toronto, apply, and after that enrolment is on a first come, first served basis. The fees, being about \$30,000 a year, have had some influence on the diversity of the children at the school. There is now an endowment fund to reduce the financial road blocks facing households with financial challenges. About 15 per cent of the children now receive some degree of financial support. Richard is aiming to get this to 25 per cent.

Graduates of JICS consistently do exceptionally well academically and socially at their new schools. Grade 7 schools—both public and independent—regularly share that they would welcome more JICS graduates. They particularly value the collaborative approach to learning that JICS students bring, along with their curiosity, independence, and strong learning habits. While some students initially need time to adjust to the testing culture of their new schools, they do so successfully and go on to perform very well. In fact, the long-term success of JICS graduates is evident in the school’s practice of inviting Grade 12 alumni to return to JICS to speak with students about their transition to secondary school—offering authentic reassurance and perspective grounded in experience.

The school also hosts speakers from the community and from the parent body. One upcoming speaker of interest to EDUCT is Geoffrey Hinton, the Nobel Prize recipient and Edinburgh graduate, whose children attended the school. He is to be part of a panel discussing “The Future of Education.”

As an end-note, it should be mentioned that Richard has all but completed the research for his doctorate at OISE. Hopefully, he will publish his thesis. It would make for a very interesting read!

EDUCT owes Richard an enormous debt of gratitude for such a fascinating talk about this important institution. Those who are interested in possibly sending their children there are encouraged to follow up. More immediately, I would like to encourage those who feel that this is the type of institution that is critical to the ongoing development of our society to consider a donation to the school's endowment fund as a way of helping it to mark its first 100 years of excellent work. Since JICS is part of the University of Toronto, your donation will go to the University, and thus should be designated for JICS. For more information, see: <https://www.jicsfamily.com/donate>

The Story Behind EDUCT

“EDUCT” is intended to form the acronym for the Edinburgh University Club of Toronto. “Educt” is a word which means, in the language of chemists: “A body separated by decomposition from another.” In addition, there is “e-duct”, an electronic channel, which seems appropriate for all of our members receiving EDUCT News via e-mail.

The Mystery of the Vineyard: Trouble in the Terroir

by Paul Bradley

On Thursday, 4 December 2025, Stephanie Christian and Lesle Gibson, from the Gibson Family Group, led a tasting to try six wines they had chosen for the impending holiday season.

Our guides selected five French wines and one Italian: three whites and three reds. Each wine had its distinct characteristics both to complement the food and events of the holiday season as well as offering clear examples from which we could learn the essential elements of interesting wines.

Stephanie and Lesle carefully educated us on how to taste each wine, on the producers, and the areas in which the wines were cultivated, as well as potential food pairings.

Our hosts revealed that a bottle of wine is a puzzle waiting to be solved. The diligent sommelier observes, evaluates and digests the clues to understand a wine's story, its genesis and its place in the world. It is at heart an exercise in detection.

Not all of us drink. So, I'm going to explore the mystery of the vineyard through the wines and the work of detectives. Specifically, six novels set in the regions of the wines we tasted. Whether your preference is for Merlot or Marlowe, I hope you find something of interest.

The wines are readily available through the Gibson Family Group. You may have more difficulty finding the novels (I am happy to help) and you will need reading-level French for Bastien Cordier's *Todesrune*.

Detectives pursue the forensic, sommeliers the sensory. In the tasting room, as at the crime scene, nuance is the essence. A hint of flinty soil, a stray footprint, a note of overripe fruit, an overheard conversation, each perhaps a fragment of a larger narrative.

For the sommelier the investigation is rooted in terroir: the distinct expression of place and grape. Just as landscape shapes a vintage's flavour, it provides the setting for a mystery. In vineyards as in villages, the land imposes rules, communities guard secrets and history leaves traces that only the keen eye can uncover.

Detective fiction exploits the ‘mystery of place’, by transforming locations into active characters in a drama. By examining specific wines alongside their literary counterparts, from the layered soils of Burgundy to the foggy hills of Piedmont and the hierarchical estates of Bordeaux, we can see how the land invites the taster, and the reader, to detect the secrets lying beneath the surface.



All upright and ready to go

Burgundy: Limestone and Secrets

Burgundy is a region built on layers. Its limestone and marl soils vary by the metre. Its human history stretches from medieval monastic vineyards through wartime occupation to today's closely held family estates. Reflecting that heritage, we tasted three wines from the region. We started with the brisk Vitteaut-Alberti Crémant de Bourgogne, followed by the crisp Domaine Garnier et Fils Chablis and the earthy Domaine Danjean Berthoux Givry 'Meix au Roi'.

Each bottle finds a literary analogue in the annals of detection. A.E.W. Mason's *The House of the Arrow* brings Inspector Hanaud to Dijon. Hanaud is the very model of the Agatha Christie school of detection rooted in logic, detail and precision. Hanaud's method mirrors the Chablis itself: clear and flinty. The wine and the novel reward careful attention to detail, as each reaches a bright and slightly acidic finish.

At the other end of the tonal spectrum lies Michael Bond's *Monsieur Pamplemousse Afloat*. Buoyant Crémant finds its echo in this comic mystery that follows a French food inspector and his bloodhound along the Canal de Bourgogne. Here, the crimes are slight and bubbly, involving missing undergarments and the perils of portholes, rather than murder. The pleasure of both the wine and the text is immediate, festive and lightly worn. Not every mystery is a tragedy.

Burgundy's darker side emerges in Susan Shea's *Love & Death in Burgundy* and Bastien Cordier's noir *Todesrune*. Shea examines village life through the eyes of an American expatriate struggling to penetrate a closed community, while Cordier links contemporary crimes to buried Second World War secrets. Both novels resonate with the earthy, grounded character of the Domaine Danjean Berthoux Givry. They remind us that the same soil yielding a fine vintage also holds the weight of the past, hiding secrets that only a detective, or the dedicated aficionado, can unearth.

Northern Rhône: A Revival

From Burgundy, the tasting moved south to the Northern Rhône and the Julien Pilon Viognier. Once nearly extinct, Viognier has staged a dramatic revival. Aromatic and assertive, it announces itself immediately, with notes of stone fruit and ginger that dominate the glass.

Its literary kinship is found with Pamplemousse. Though Bond's *Afloat* is set in Burgundy, the spirit of the Rhône runs through the series. Pamplemousse represents a distinctively French archetype, a detective for whom meals matter as much as motives. Bond's prose shares Viognier's flair, expressive yet controlled, a complement for the lightly spiced dish.



Lesle Gibson, owner of Gibson Family Group, and sommelier Stephanie Christian

itself. The man's son has been arrested, but the family needs him freed as only he has the expertise to harvest and produce that year's vintage.

Barbera d'Alba, often called the people's wine of the region, suits Dibdin's story perfectly. Bright, acidic, and grounded in cherry fruit flavours, it reflects the working vineyards that dominate the novel. Dibdin captures the Piedmontese worldview with chilling economy: "Only spilled blood can separate a family from its land". The wine's long finish mirrors the novel's moral aftertaste, as secrets involving truffles, territory and loyalty unfold.

Bordeaux: Murder Among the Grands Crus

The evening concluded in Bordeaux with Château de Viaud-Lalande from Lalande-de-Pomerol. Few wine regions are as bound by hierarchy as Bordeaux. Classifications are rigid, reputations inherited and social boundaries carefully policed.

Allan Massie's *Death in Bordeaux* captures this world under strain. Set in 1940 during the German occupation, the novel follows Superintendent Lannes as he navigates collaboration, resistance and personal integrity under the new regime. Lalande-de-Pomerol sits just outside the famous Pomerol boundary, adjacent to the most prestigious vintages. Superintendent Lannes finds himself in a similar position, principled but on the margins of the higher echelons of Bordeaux society.

Merlot-dominant, the wine reflects the down-to-earth qualities of Massie's protagonist. As France collapses politically, the novel insists that attachment to the land endures. Like the wine's complex flavours, the novel's truths emerge gradually, revealing themselves only with time and perspective.

Piedmont: Murder in the Fog

Italy entered the evening with the Amalia Barbera d'Alba from Piedmont, a region defined by tension. Fog-shrouded hills picked over by truffle hunters sit beside aristocratic estates producing some of Italy's best red wines.

Michael Dibdin's *A Long Finish* is the most wine-centred mystery of the novels covered here. Inspector Aurelio Zen is sent to Alba during harvest season to investigate a winemaker's murder. The case hinges on the land



Our host, Chris Valley Ban, with Caroline Warnock

Conclusion

Vineyards are enclosed worlds, shaped by inheritance, the land, the seasons and the pressure to protect reputation. They offer fertile territory for crime fiction.

For those who do not drink, detective fiction explores the mysterious places in which wine is cultivated and produced. The detective's forensic analysis and the sommelier's sensory evaluation suggests that a region's flavour is not confined solely to the bottle.

The wines: (1) Vitteaut-Alberti Crémant de Bourgogne France NV, (2) Domaine Garnier et Fils, Chablis, Burgundy, France 2023, (3) Julien Pilon Viognier Northern Rhône, France 2021, (4) Domain Danjean Berthoux Givry 'Meix Au Roi', Burgundy, France 2023, (5) Amalia, Barbera d'Alba, Piedmont, Italy 2023 and (6) Château de Viaud-Lalande, Lalande-de-Pomerol, Bordeaux, France 2023. The wines are not available at the LCBO. To order any of these wines, you should contact Lesle Gibson at : lesle@gibsonfamilygrp.com

The novels: (1) A.E.W. Mason *The House of the Arrow* (1924) – there are four Inspector Hanaud novels, (2) Michael Bond *Monsieur Pamplemousse Afloat* (1998) – there are 18 novels in the series, (3) Susan Shea *Love & Death in Burgundy* (2017) – there is a second novel in the series, (4) Bastien Cordier *Todesrune* (2024), (5) Michael Dibdin *A Long Finish* (1998) – there are 11 Aurelio Zen novels, (6) Allan Massie *Death in Bordeaux* (2010) – there are four Superintendent Lannes novels.

EDUCT thanks Lesle and Stephanie for an excellent presentation. You are encouraged to try their wines!



The wines: missing in action is the Julien Pilon Viognier Northern Rhône

David Argyle to Speak on 300 Years of Medicine at Edinburgh

By Simon Miles

Can you imagine what it must be like for an institution to be constantly at the cutting edge of medical research and teaching for 300 years non-stop? Today, such questions as the potential role of quantum computing and artificial intelligence in advancing medical research and practice are among those occupying time of faculty at Edinburgh's Medical School. But it was ever thus. Since its founding in 1726, the Medical School has been a world leader in medical research and teaching. How does an institution keep up with the pace of change and remain at the forefront? Come to EDUCT's Annual Dinner on Friday 17 April 2026 to find out.

Our Dinner will be one of many events being held worldwide in 2026 that will provide an opportunity to celebrate the Medical School's tercentenary. We are extremely fortunate to have **Professor David Argyle, Head of the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine at Edinburgh**, as our after-dinner speaker. Professor Argyle is a veterinarian by background, and is also the William Dick Chair of Veterinary Clinical Studies at our University. Not surprisingly therefore he will also be highlighting links between the work of the Veterinary School with the Medical School. Indeed, the Veterinary School has a storied 200-year history, and has, like the Medical School, always been at the forefront worldwide in its discipline. In fact, today it is ranked as number one in the world!

In recent issues of EDUCT News we have already touched on a few of the famous figures from the Medical School's past. In our May 2025 issue we profiled the three members of the famous Monro family who dominated the early years of the establishment of the School and its reputation, and in the September 2025 issue we looked into the life and achievements of the famous Sir James Young Simpson, the first to use chloroform in surgery, and a surgeon to Queen Victoria. In the same September issue Noel Wright also gave us a sense of some of the changes at the Medical School since his time there some 60 years ago. Professor Argyle will introduce us to a number of the prominent faculty members whose achievements stand out in the history of the School:

people from earlier times, such as Joseph Lister, who became Lord Lister in recognition of his contributions to the reduction of post-operative infections, and Simpson, to the more recent contributions of people like Sir John Crofton, who had such a profound impact on the control of tuberculosis. The benefits of collaboration with the outstanding Veterinary School will be illustrated by reference to Sir Iain Wilmut, whose work at the Veterinary School on Dolly the Sheep made such a significant contribution to modern-day regenerative medicine. And, of course, there have been literally hundreds of famous alumni of the Medical School who have themselves made significant contributions to society all over the world.

Part of the secret to maintaining institutional prominence is to have a clearly articulated vision of the future of medicine and then to create the right setting, in the form of buildings and equipment, to enable the realization of the vision. Professor Argyle will introduce us to the new Medical School – both its building and its work in tackling the major challenges that are facing humanity both locally and globally.



Professor David Argyle

Professor Argyle received his Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery and his Ph.D. in Immunology and Oncology from the University of Glasgow. His prime research interests are cancer biology and comparative oncology. Much of his research is pursued through collaboration with fellow members of the Comparative Oncology and Stem Cell Research Group based at the University of Edinburgh. The group's multidisciplinary team draws upon both clinical and laboratory trained members from across the University and beyond the UK from the USA and the EU. The group's integration of laboratory and clinical research enables it to carry out high quality translational studies (i.e., in this instance, those that draw upon research on animal cancers to improve treatment of cancers in animals and humans). In 2011, he was appointed to the William Dick Chair of Veterinary Clinical Studies and Dean of Veterinary Medicine at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies. In 2022, he was appointed Vice-Principal and Head of the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine at the University of Edinburgh. He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts.

Save the date now: Friday 17th April 2026, at the Arts & Letters Club.

EDUCT Decennial Endowment Fund: Good News

by Simon Miles

The EDUCT Decennial Endowment Fund enjoyed a healthy increase since our last report in September. As of the end of December 2025, the total investment in the Fund stood at £247,976, which is up from the £237,189 reported at the end of July 2025.

As ever, we remind all who are interested that the Fund remains open for further contributions. For details on how to donate, and to receive the appropriate form for donors from your country, please contact me at simon-miles@sympatico.ca

EDUCT Geography Centenary Fund: Mixed News

by Simon Miles

The EDUCT Geography Centenary Fund, like the EDUCT Decennial Fund, experienced healthy growth since our last report. As of the end of December 2025, the total investment in the Fund stood at £138,839, up from the comparable figure of £132,843 for July 2025.

Additionally, we have continued to enjoy donor support. Being January, and as is our tradition, we thank our donors in the previous year. This year we extend our thanks to the following for their generosity.

- A first generous donation from **Jennifer Jarman**, of Orillia, Ontario, in memory of her mother, Eileen Jarman, who enjoyed her time as a student of Geography, and whose obituary appears in this newsletter.
- A seventh generous donation from **Fionna Tompkinson**, of Toronto.
- A ninth generous donation from **Margaret Wyeth**, of Victoria, B.C.
- An eleventh generous donation from **Ann Wilkie**, of Halifax, Nova Scotia.
- A twelfth generous donation from **Linda Mason**, of Picton, Ontario.
- A sixteenth generous donation from **Simon Miles**, of Toronto.
- And a seventeenth generous donation from **David Kemp**, of Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Our thanks are extended to all.

The sad news is that, in addition to Eileen Jarman, mentioned above, EDUCT lost Kirsty Duncan, a founding Board member, a Geography graduate, and former generous donor to this Fund, just as we were going to press in January. Her obituary appears in this issue.

All interested are reminded that the Fund remains open for further contributions. Any assistance you can give to help us get to the next very important milestone of £140,000 would be much appreciated by all in Edinburgh. For details on how to donate, and to receive the appropriate form for donors from your country, please contact me at simon-miles@sympatico.ca

Famous Alumni

John Rutherford

by Simon Miles

Editor's Note: As in our May and September newsletters, we have dedicated this column to a famous alumnus who had been part of the School of Medicine or its precursors as a way of recognizing the tercentenary of the School in 2026, and of encouraging EDUCT members to attend the Annual Dinner on 17 April 2026 when Professor David Argyle, Head of the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, will be our speaker.

John Rutherford was one of the founding faculty members of the then-Faculty of Medicine at the University of Edinburgh in 1726. In the May 2025 issue of EDUCT News, the profiles of the members of the famous Monro family members, who were so prominent in the first 126 years of the Faculty, made only passing mention of some of the other key figures in the early development of the Faculty. John Rutherford was one of that core team.

John Rutherford was born in 1695, in Yarrow, in Selkirkshire. His father was a minister in the church. Following his early education at the local school, young John entered the University of Edinburgh at the age of 14, in 1709, and studied mathematics and natural philosophy (physics) for a year. In 1710 he became an apprentice to Alexander Nesbit, a surgeon in Edinburgh. He presumably enjoyed this work since he remained there until 1716, when he decided to go to London where he worked at several hospitals and attended lectures on anatomy and surgery. His next move was to Leiden, with its famous medical school. Rutherford was attracted by Hermann Boerhaave's teaching of medicine, which was much talked about in medical circles of the day.

By 1717 he had moved to the University of Rheims, in France, where, in two years, he earned himself the degree of M.D. in 1719. He then spent some time in Paris before returning to Edinburgh in 1721.

Back in Edinburgh he joined forces with three other young men with medical backgrounds: Andrew St. Clair (1698-1760), Andrew Plummer (1697-1756), and John Innes (1696-1733). Parenthetically, it seems that none of these three gentlemen were alumni of the University of Edinburgh. Together they started a laboratory which produced compound medicines. By 1724 Rutherford had been appointed to the Chair of the Practice of Physic (Medicine) at the University, where Alexander Monro primus (1697-1767) had been serving as Professor of Anatomy since 1720. In the same year, 1720, John Monro, Alex's father, had helped to bring about the appointments of Charles Alston as Professor of Materia Medica (pharmacology in today's world), and James Crawford as Professor of Chemistry. (In 1738, Alston was appointed to the Chair of Botany.) Thus, before the official creation of the Faculty of Medicine, there were several people teaching in fields that would be central to the work of the new Faculty. Rutherford, St. Clair, Plummer and Innes were, along with John and Alex Monro primus, the key people who presented the Town Council with the petition, on 9 February 1726, requesting that the Council establish the Profession of Medicine at Edinburgh University and that St. Clair, Plummer and Innes be appointed, alongside Professors Monro and Rutherford, to teach medicine. The Town Council obliged by passing an Act to institutionalize the teaching of medicine, the examination of students and the granting of degrees at the University. Although the original assignments were soon changed, the net result was that Rutherford continued as Chair and Professor of the Practice of Medicine, St. Clair became Professor of the Institutes of Theory of Medicine, Plummer became a Professor of Chemistry, and Innes a Professor of Medicine. John Gibson was appointed Professor of Midwifery at the same time. Alex Monro primus had already been elevated to the Chair of Anatomy in November 1725.

By October of 1726 the Faculty had been created. Rutherford's main contribution to the early success of the Faculty was that he was the first to pioneer clinical teaching in Britain. In 1748, he also began to teach at the Royal Infirmary, which led to the formal ties between the two institutions. His lectures were delivered in Latin, which was common practice at the time. His style of teaching was very popular. He would invite his students to bring patients to the lectures, where he would diagnose them and prescribe treatment in the presence of his students. This was regarded as highly innovative for the time and, not surprisingly, the number of students attending his lectures grew rapidly.

Rutherford was also active in the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh and served as its President from 1752 to 1756.

Rutherford married twice. Anne, his daughter by his first marriage, married Walter Scott and their son grew up to be the eminent author, Sir Walter Scott. Daniel, his son by his second marriage, earned an M.A. and an M.D. from the University of Edinburgh, where he later became a Professor of Botany and Keeper of the Royal Botanic Garden. He was also a Clinical Professor at the Royal Infirmary and taught at the Faculty of Medicine. His dissertation for his M.D. led to his discovery of nitrogen, which brought him considerable fame. Like his father, from 1796 to 1798 he also served as President of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh.

In his later life, following his retirement in 1765, Rutherford enjoyed the company of his many notable former students. He died at the age of 83 and was buried in Greyfriars Churchyard on 10 March 1779.



John Rutherford.
Courtesy Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh

Welcome To Our New Members

by Simon Miles

Alexandra Lamy

Alexandra Lamy graduated in 2025 from Edinburgh with an M.Sc. in International Relations and is currently seeking employment that will involve her in international affairs. Her academic background and experience to date certainly make her well qualified for such work.

Alex, as she likes to be called, grew up in Toronto. Her father is French Canadian and since Kindergarten she was enrolled in French immersion classes at school. Not surprisingly, she graduated from Lawrence Park Collegiate Institute with an Honours Bilingual Certificate. One other activity that left its mark on Alex from her school days was her participation in DECA. This is an international network run by volunteers drawn from the ranks of teachers and school administrators at high schools, that aims to develop the business acumen of students. The Ontario chapter is the largest in the world. Every year, students are given an opportunity to compete regionally, provincially and internationally in a business case study competition, with the overall objective of enhancing the participants' competences in marketing, finance and, more generally, entrepreneurship. Alex competed both regionally and provincially, and found it a very stimulating learning experience.

Alex's undergraduate days were spent at Queen's University. There, she pursued an Honours B.A. in Political Studies and was active in the Queen's chapter of Her Campus, the international network of student-run newspapers.

In her final year, she served as Co-Chair of the Queen's chapter of the newspaper. This involvement with the newspaper enabled Alex to develop her talents as a writer, editor and administrator, and gave her a taste for work in the newspaper world. These skills were further enhanced when, on her own initiative and unrelated to her university study programme, Alex undertook internships, at the end of both her second and third year at Queen's, which involved her in working with the communications team in the Information Technology department of Intact Financial Co., a leading provider of property and casualty insurance in Canada.

While at Queen's Alex also had the opportunity to be part of a six-month student exchange programme with the University of Edinburgh. This early introduction to Edinburgh obviously shaped Alex's choice of university for her master's degree. Thus, not surprisingly, on graduating from Queen's in 2024, Alex proceeded to Edinburgh to undertake an M.Sc. in International Relations. She loved the city and the University. She found the large number of international faculty, and the extensive range of courses offered in her programme, particularly attractive. Those faculty members offered very varying insights on issues, based on their differing experiences of life. And she was very surprised to see that, of her class of about 60 students, only two were British.

While at Edinburgh Alex was active in both the Women and Politics and International Relations Society and the Book Society. This helped Alex further hone her skills as political analyst and writer.

Returning to Toronto in September 2025 Alex has begun the search for a rewarding job. While she is leaning towards work in the non-governmental, not-for-profit sector, she is very open to work in a governmental or private sector position with international exposure. Alex took courses at Edinburgh on the analysis of organizations such as The Red Cross and Amnesty International, and courses on environmental risk, and global negotiations in such networks and fora as the UN's Conferences of Parties (COPs) – all of which, along with her skills as a researcher, writer, and editor, give her a sense that she can bring much to the table, whether in the public, private or NGO sectors.

EDUCT welcomes Alex and wishes her every success in finding that perfect fit of a job. If you have any suggestions for Alex to explore, she would welcome hearing from you. Her e-mail is alexandra.lamy@rogers.com.



Sarah Howland

Sarah Howland is the Imprint Sales Director for Penguin Random House Canada. Not surprisingly, Sarah is an avid reader. Somewhat more surprising is just how many books she reads in a year. While you or I may have four or five books by the bedside for months, Sarah reads about 60 a year ... and those are the ones she reads completely. There are countless others which she has read partial versions of, as that is often how books are submitted to publishers.

Sarah was born in Toronto and grew up in Mississauga. Early on, she developed a great attachment to nature. She had been actively involved in Brownies and Girl Guides but, with a father who was a Scout Leader, she shifted her attention to Scouts Canada, which offered far more challenging and exciting adventures.

That love of reading had come early in life and Sarah pursued a B.A. (Hons.) in English Literature at Guelph. One of the attractions of Guelph was that she was able to spend



her fourth year at the University of Lund, in southern Sweden. The University is known for its extensive international programme. Her classes were taught in English, and thus, on top of her course in English Literature, Sarah also decided to study Swedish literature and world literature. And, of course, that love of adventure led to her travelling around Sweden and Europe.

Upon graduation from Guelph in 2010 Sarah was already contemplating a graduate degree. To make that possible, she capitalized on her newly-acquired qualifications and did what so many equally qualified young graduates do ... she worked in a restaurant for the next year. In addition to the money, that gave Sarah time to contemplate where she might best pursue a masters in English Literature. The University of Edinburgh's English Literature programme, with its reputation as being the oldest in the world, while also being ranked seventh worldwide, when combined with the City of Edinburgh's cachet as UNESCO'S first City of Literature, made the decision an easy one. But the icing on the cake was that, at that time, Professor Susan Manning, a world-renowned scholar of comparative literature, was the Grierson Professor of English Literature, and Director of the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at Edinburgh, and she was offering an M.Sc. in Literature and Transatlanticism. Sadly, Professor Manning died suddenly in 2013 and the degree is no longer offered. But Sarah arrived in time to benefit from Susan's wisdom and teaching. Sarah was extremely fortunate in that there were only two students pursuing that degree that year, which meant they enjoyed plenty of Susan's time. (Sarah's fellow student, Jessica Gaitán Johannesson, has since become an author of note.)

And what is Transatlanticism? In Sarah's words, the term refers to the study of literary and cultural exchanges between Europe and the Americas, particularly focusing on the

Atlantic as a space of contact, conflict, and communication. As a form of comparative literary analysis, Transatlanticism emphasizes the interconnectedness of literary traditions highlighting shared themes like identity, exile, modernity, and resistance – while also challenging traditional nation-based literary frameworks.

When Sarah learned of the degree, she became curious about the concept of Transatlanticism and the role that literature could play in giving expression to the concept. Since she was pursuing a taught masters, Sarah was taking classes devoted to themes such as American Literature, and Diasporic Literature, but because there were only two students, Susan tailored courses to their needs. Sarah's dissertation was on jazz fiction. It focused on a novel, *Half-Blood Blues*, by a Canadian writer, Esi Edugyan, that had been published in 2011, shortly before Sarah started her degree that year. And in November that year, the novel earned Edugyan the Scotiabank Giller Prize for 2011. One senses that, even then, Sarah knew how to spot a good author: Edugyan won a second Giller Prize in 2018 for her third novel, *Washington Black*. *Half-blood Blues* tells the story of a young, Black jazz performer who goes from Canada to Paris before World War II. Sarah wanted to capture something of the spirit of the age as conveyed through the book. In addition, Sarah wrote about Toni Morrison, who published her novel *Jazz* in 1992; *Trumpet*, by Scottish author, Jackie Kay, published in 1998; *Soldier's Pay* by William Faulkner, published in 1926; and *Coming Through Slaughter* by Michael Ondaatje, published in 1976.

Although studies consumed most of Sarah's time at Edinburgh, she did find time for exploring the Highlands. She was also a Residence Assistant for a post graduate student accommodation, Richmond Place. The job was essentially one of being the 'go-to' person for any sort of problem. And since there were about 50 students – all international students, and from all corners of the world – there were plenty of calls on her time. And time for the Book Festival and the International Festival? Well, the former was a must, but the dissertation was completed only days before the latter came to an end.

After completing the requirements for her degree, Sarah spent time in London. She tried to find a job in publishing but soon discovered that, for other than entry-level roles, one needed a degree in publishing. She did get back to her graduation in Edinburgh in November 2012, but decided that Canada was a better bet. On return to Toronto in early 2013 she was offered a job at a literary agency. At that time, she took a course in publicity at what was then Ryerson University. This led to an internship, in digital sales, at HarperCollins Canada. Then it was on to Kobo, a start-up in the then booming e-reader business. By 2014, Sarah had started at Random House Canada and shortly after her move, Penguin Canada merged with Random House Canada. She became an online and digital sales associate and has since worked her way up in sales.

Penguin Random House Canada (PRHC) has six major Canadian divisions. Sarah works mainly on McClelland & Stewart, but finds plenty of diversity in her work in that PRHC is a distributor for independent publishers, such as Melville House (based in New York). She was particularly helpful to EDUCT at the time Professor Frank Cogliano spoke to us at our Annual Dinner in 2025. Harvard University Press, the publisher of the book Frank was talking about at the dinner, is a client of W.W. Norton in the US and W.W. Norton is a client of PRHC for Canadian distribution. Sarah made our task of sorting out how to get hold of Frank's book such an easy one! In essence, Sarah spends much time pulling every lever available to draw the attention of readers to the books she is marketing. For the McClelland & Stewart imprint she is also involved in the intricacies of pricing and identifying target readers. One is constantly taking the pulse of the market, and readjusting one's marketing. Reading all those books every year must help enormously!

EDUCT welcomes Sarah.

OBITUARIES

by Simon Miles

Kirsty Duncan

Kirsty Duncan was one of the six founding members of EDUCT. It was with great sadness that we learned of her death, in late January, at the age of 59. In keeping with her character, Kirsty had been very open with the public on her struggle with cancer since her diagnosis in 2023.

Kirsty was a public figure. She was first elected to the House of Commons in the federal election of 14 October 2008, as the M.P. for Etobicoke North. She was reelected in four subsequent elections in 2011, 2015, 2019 and 2021. In 2015, Prime Minister Trudeau appointed Kirsty as Minister of Science.

Kirsty was certainly equipped for the task of building this new ministry. She had attended Kipling Collegiate, in north Etobicoke, before entering the University of Toronto for her undergraduate studies in geography and anthropology. Later, she moved to the University of Edinburgh to pursue her doctorate in geography, which she received in 1993. She then joined the faculty of the University of Windsor, Ontario, where, until 2000, she taught meteorology, climatology and climate change. While at Windsor her interest in medical geography led to her having organized an expedition, in 1998, to the Arctic to try to discover the cause of the Spanish 'Flu epidemic in 1918. Although the cause remained elusive, Kirsty wrote a book on the expedition "*Hunting the 1918 Flu: One Scientist's Search for a Killer Virus*".

Prior to first being elected to Ottawa in October 2008, Kirsty had been teaching in the health studies programme at the University of Toronto. While there, she published her second book "*Environment and Health: Protecting Our Common Future*".

Another notable achievement prior to entering Parliament was her role as a member of the Canadian team of scientists that, along with other teams from other countries, contributed to the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The IPCC was named as a co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007. It shared the prize with Al Gore for their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about human-made climate change and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change. Kirsty's own contribution was on health impacts of climate change.



Kirsty Duncan receives her honorary degree from Principal Peter Mathieson

Thanks to our archives, I have been able to retrieve the several letters that Kirsty wrote for publication in EDUCT News while she was an M.P. Together, they give one a good sense as to what it is like to serve as an M.P. And they also convey how she tackled the challenges in dealing with her initial priorities that drove her to run for a seat: child hunger; climate change; and neurological disease. On arrival in Ottawa, Kirsty was asked to serve as Public Health Critic for the Liberal Party, then the Official Opposition. She pressed for a comprehensive national food policy and managed to get all-party support to establish a sub-committee, of the health committee, that would focus on neurological disease. While the committee could not examine every neurological disease condition, it did focus on five: autism spectrum disorder (affecting about 190,000 Canadians); Parkinson's (affecting some 80,000 to 100,000); amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS); multiple sclerosis (MS); and, Alzheimer's. For the latter four diseases there are no known cures, and no effective treatments that consistently slow or stop the course of these diseases. Kirsty saw the prevention and treatment of these disorders as one of the critical goals for medical research. In a later letter to EDUCT, in January 2012, Kirsty relates in some detail the struggles she had in getting the Harper government to take MS seriously. In brief, she had been in direct communication with some 1,500 MS patients across Canada in 2010 and 2011. With Carolyn Bennett, a fellow M.P. and medical doctor, Kirsty had been pushing for a registry and clinical trials. They finally got their way with a registry being agreed to in March 2011, albeit that tracking would not commence until July 2012, and with clinical trials being agreed to by the Minister of Health in June 2011.

Shortly after her arrival in Ottawa, the world was hit with the H1N1 influenza pandemic. Kirsty was among the best prepared of our elected representatives: she had been conducting research for the previous 16 years on pandemic flu preparedness, response, and business continuity. With her colleagues, she called for and obtained an emergency debate on H1N1 and what could be done to improve the inadequate response to the virus. It is telling that in November 2009 the Indian Chamber of Commerce honoured Kirsty with the Knowledge Millennium Award, which is presented annually to a Nobel Laureate who has made a significant mark on the theme of the current Global Knowledge Millennium summit. That year, the theme was emerging health threats, and Kirsty was recognized for her contributions to influenza research. And of particular interest to EDUCT members, Scotland also recognized her work. While an M.P. and before the Liberals regained power, Kirsty was active as a Canadian M.P. in establishing the Canada – Scotland Friendship Group, which brings together parliamentarians from the two countries to share insights and experiences. This may well have contributed to her being appointed by Alex Salmond, then Scotland's First Minister, to the Scottish Council of Economic Advisers in 2013. Salmond was very interested in Kirsty's work on climate change, other environmental matters, and health.

Prior to the October 2015 election, which returned the Liberals to power, Kirsty had been the Liberal critic for consular affairs, international development, and the Status of Women. And in early 2015 she had added sport to her duties during the Year of Sport in Canada. Again, sport was a field in which Kirsty had experience. By that time she had already been a gymnast, marathoner (she had competed in several Boston Marathons), triathlete, diving coach, and sports judge.

Following the election of October 2015, Prime Minister Trudeau appointed Kirsty to the new post of Minister of Science. She held that post until the election in 2019. In 2018 Kirsty added the portfolio of Minister of Sport to her responsibilities, and for a brief period in 2018 she also served as Minister for Persons with Disabilities. As Minister of Science, she appointed a chief science adviser and brought back the long form census as a basic instrument in maintaining a useful profile of Canadians for scientists to draw upon. As Minister of Sport, she pressed for safe sport for all athletes and continued to do so long after she had left that ministry. She was particularly concerned about the abuse, and entrenchment of that abuse – emotional, physical, psychological, sexual and verbal – to which many athletes were subjected.

Following the election of 2019, when the Liberals were returned to government but with a minority, Kirsty was made Deputy Government House Leader. In a minority government this role is critical in ensuring that votes are not lost. Kirsty commanded the respect of her parliamentary colleagues and was well suited for the task.

After the election in 2021, Kirsty moved to the back benches and in early 2023 she took health leave but remained as an M.P. However, she continued to champion her causes and remained very active in her constituency. Indeed, the fact that she won five straight elections owes a lot to her commitment to the people of her riding. In her first 18 months as an M.P. she attended over 750 events in the riding and across Canada. She kept up this pace throughout her time as an M.P. And her riding was demanding: in 2010 it was ranked fifth in terms of the percentage (74%) of people who are first generation Canadian; by 2015 she was pleased with her progress in speaking some Hindi, Punjabi, Somali, Tamil, and Urdu. The office had its own youth group to run a free weekly homework club, it had a clothing bank, plus a group of volunteer women knitted warm woolen clothes for the community, and it delivered about 700 Christmas and New Year's toys to needy children each year. Kirsty thought her office, which would see about 100 families each day, was one of the busiest in the country.

One of the highlights of her life was being awarded a doctorate, honoris causa, from the University of Edinburgh on 30th June 2018. Prime Minister Trudeau was also awarded an honorary doctorate at the same time. Looking back on her accomplishments, one can appreciate why Kirsty was granted this degree.

Our University very kindly decided to fly the University's flag at half-mast on the day of Kirsty's funeral.

EDUCT extends its condolences to Kirsty's family.

José Luis Moreno

José Luis Moreno died in June 2025 at the age of 60 after a valiant battle with cancer. José Luis graduated with his M.B.A. from the Business School at the University of Edinburgh in 1991 and for much of his career he had been in sales for DuPont Canada. He had greatly enjoyed his time at Edinburgh and had been an active member of EDUCT for many years. Living in Stoney Creek, on the east side of Hamilton, it was quite a trip to come in for meetings. His wife, Claudia, would also come in with him for our Annual Dinners and he even had his children, José and Mariana, who have an interest in social work, join us for our session with Professor John Devaney on the University of Edinburgh's collaboration with the University of Toronto on that theme..



José Luis Moreno

José Luis and Claudia were born in Colombia and the family has retained strong attachments to the country. I recall several discussions about their plans to travel from Alaska to Colombia as soon as he retired. I had talked him into promising to write articles for EDUCT News as they made their journey south. I had been looking forward to reading his account of their adventure; he was always so positive in his outlook on life, even when he was going through tough times. He will be very much missed.

EDUCT extends its condolences to Claudia, José, Mariana and the extended family.

Eileen Jarman

Eileen Jarman (née Beck) died in September 2025 at the age of 94. Eileen had been a long-time member of EDUCT, joining us in our early days. She grew up in Colne, in Lancashire. She pursued an M.A. (Ordinary) at Edinburgh, which led to her taking courses in many subjects, among them being Latin, English, French, History, Philosophy and Geography. She told me that she had taken two years of Geography since she really enjoyed it. After graduating from Edinburgh in 1952, she went to teachers' college at the University of Manchester and became a Geography teacher for a number of years in Birmingham, England. There, she met her future husband, Ron, and followed him to Toronto, where they married. She served as a supply teacher with various boards of education in the region, until she settled into a permanent post teaching Grade 2 at Walter Perry Junior Public School, in Scarborough.

One ingredient for living a healthy life for 94 years is physical activity. Eileen loved crewing on Ron's sailing dinghy and, in later years, enjoyed aqua aerobics with the "Pan Am Ladies Volleyball Team". She was a frequent audience member at Toronto Symphony concerts and National Ballet of Canada performances with her granddaughter and friends. However, it is particularly touching that she underscored how much she enjoyed being part of EDUCT events. Our photo shows her at the Arts & Letters Club waiting for the start of the talk by Professor Dick Peltier on climate change. When she stayed with her daughter Jennifer in Orillia, the zoom events we held worked out really well for her.

She is survived by her children, David and Jennifer, and her granddaughter, Natasha. Jennifer has kindly made a generous donation to the EDUCT Geography Centenary Fund in memory of Eileen.

EDUCT expresses its condolences to the family. Eileen will be missed.



Eileen Jarman at an EDUCT event on climate change in 2014

Books

Meredith Hambrock explores a delusional quest for stardom and acceptance in *She's a Lamb!*

by Sarah Howland

Meredith Hambrock, *She's a Lamb!* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2025), 312 pp., ISBN 9781770417892, paperback, Cdn\$24.95.

"Totally unprepared am I, to face the world of men"
– Liesl to Rolph in "You Are Sixteen", in *The Sound of Music*

"Perhaps I had a wicked childhood,
Perhaps I had a miserable youth,
But somewhere in my wicked, miserable past,
There must have been a moment of truth."
– Maria and Captain Von Trapp, in "Something Good", in *The Sound of Music*

I've loved *The Sound of Music* since childhood, when my parents introduced me and my siblings first to the musical soundtrack, and then to the 1965 film adaptation (which we had on a two-volume VHS set, to age myself). I've seen the musical a number of times (although I did miss its current run in Toronto at the Princess of Wales Theatre), and I try to rewatch the film once a year, usually around the holidays when I have the time and my partner the patience to get through the nearly three-hour runtime. I note all of this because when a book popped up into my peripheral attention with the title, *She's a Lamb!* I instantly recognized the reference, and had to pick it up to learn more – especially with a cover image so campy and delightful as is envisioned on Meredith Hambrock's 2025 novel. *She's a Lamb!* references a lyric from "Maria", one of the first songs in *The Sound of Music*, when the nuns of Nonnberg Abbey are expressing their frustrated wonder with the spirited, unconventional novice nun, Maria. It makes for the perfect title for a novel that explores the many facets of a woman so determined to achieve her dreams of becoming a star beloved by all, that she is pushed past a rational sense of herself, to one so delightfully deluded as to entertain this reader from cover to cover. Here is that line with some context:

“She’s a darling
 She’s a demon
 She’s a lamb
 She’d out-pester any pest
 Drive a hornet from its nest
 She can throw a whirling dervish out
 of whirl
 She is gentle
 She is wild
 She’s a riddle
 She’s a child
 She’s a headache!
 She’s an angel!
 She’s a girl!”

Turning to the novel, Jessamyn St. Germain is a star. She just hasn’t been discovered yet. It’s difficult to be found by the celebrity powers-that-be when you’re stuck in the role of usher at a suffering mid-size theatre in Vancouver and beleaguereably booking gigs as “tired mom” in commercials for laundry detergent on the side. But things look up for Jessamyn after she’s hired as a “child minder” at her theatre’s upcoming adaptation of *The Sound of Music*. This isn’t the role she auditioned for, but Jessamyn is determined to make it mean something much more. She is, after all, training with the child actors, teaching them their lines, and looking after them during rehearsals – despite the occasional fantasy of passing a child’s pigtail through a paper shredder. She’s also helping out by giving staging advice to the theatre director (whom she’s only thought of strangling a few times), and offering to step in with difficult dance scenes with Captain Von Trapp after the lead somehow manages to fall off a pier and sprain her ankle.

She’s basically Maria! A saviour to this production!

At least her voice coach thinks so, and she’s really the only person who truly knows Jess’s talent as a singer (she’s been “training” with her for years after all, a several thousand-dollar investment Jessamyn has made in herself).

Jessamyn’s journey to become Maria reaches new levels of deluded determination as the production moves closer to opening night. She becomes obsessed with the level of dedication – or to Jessamyn’s tastes, the lack thereof – paid by the woman cast as Maria, her chronically online rival with a golden voice. This demented determination continues apace, despite her life collapsing around her – she stops paying her rent to spend the last of her savings on emergency voice lessons and she takes a step back from her two relationships: one with a finance bro who is suddenly interested in making Jess his wife; and the other with her stalker-turned-boyfriend, who’s blind belief in her talent has become more annoying than uplifting, of late. She also ensures her estranged father, who cut her off financially years ago, knows about her newly secured leading role, inviting him and his much-younger girlfriend to attend on opening night. Perhaps, finally, he’ll see her as good enough once she’s admired as Maria.

It’s this connection to self-worth and obsession with becoming a “star” that had me rooting for Jessamyn through the many many insane decisions she makes as she spirals further and further into a dangerous psychosis. At its heart, the novel offers this smart, damning look at an industry built upon exploiting women as they strive to make art. But it does so with brilliant plotting, sparkling dialogue (most as interior thoughts Jess bats back and forth with herself) and some genuinely laugh-out-loud, darkly funny moments.

By the time I reached the final pages of *She’s a Lamb!* I so wanted Jess to achieve her dream of being embraced for her talent and star power, and for the question of “how do you solve a problem like Maria?” to be answered by the crowd cheering “Jessamyn St. Germain!” – a feeling that I think could have only been produced by Hambrock’s skill as a writer. I will think of Jess long after this reading, likely every time I turn back to the film I have loved for so long – and will definitely be looking out for the next book from Meredith Hambrock.

Editor’s Note: EDUCT thanks Sarah Howland, a new member of EDUCT, for preparing this review. More can be learned about Sarah in the profile of her to be found in this newsletter, in the section Welcome To Our New Members.



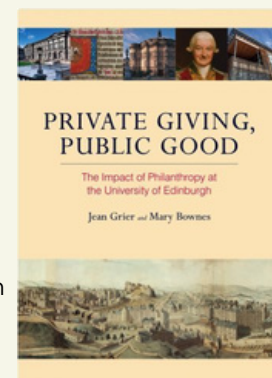
A Special Offer to EDUCT Members

Would you like to own a copy of the latest book on the University of Edinburgh?

Jean Grier and Mary Bownes, Private Giving, Public Good: The Impact of Philanthropy at the University of Edinburgh, (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2014), 224 pp., £30.

EDUCT would like to make it possible for every member to own a copy of this magnificent book on our University. We have arranged for a slight discount to be offered to members. Just how much we can offer off the market price of £30 depends on our shipping costs. If you would like to purchase a copy, or if you are planning to visit Edinburgh soon and can help with the transport of a few copies at no charge, please contact Simon Miles at 416-466-8793 or simon-miles@sympatico.ca.

For a review of the book, see EDUCT News, September 2014, p.19.





**EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY CLUB OF TORONTO (EDUCT)
UNAUDITED ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2025**

As of December 31, 2025

BALANCE SHEET	2025	2024
Total Member Funds Being:	\$13,445	\$12,109
Cash in Bank:	\$13,445	\$12,109
INCOME STATEMENT		
Income:		
- Membership Fees (in year)	\$1,745	\$2,305
- Events	\$8,226	\$8,009
- Donations	\$15	\$5
- Off Year Membership fees and Early Event Payments that will carry into the next year.	\$35	\$15
Total Revenue:	\$10,021	\$10,334
Expenses:		
- Events	\$6,386	\$6,841
- Newsletter	\$0	\$1,170
- Bank Charges	\$72	\$72
- Donations to the University	\$1,891	\$1,740
- Refund to Member for event missed with notice	\$335	\$210
Total Expenses:	\$8,684	\$10,033
Net Gain/Loss:	\$1,336	\$301
Opening Funds:	\$12,109	\$11,808
Closing Funds:	\$13,445	\$12,109

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Anna Voineskos

Treasurer

Fiona Bruce
January 15, 2026

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Membership Dues

Annual membership fees are due in January of each year. If you have not yet renewed for this year, please send \$35 to our Treasurer, Fiona Bruce, either by Interac e-Transfer, via **educt.treasurer@gmail.com** or by cheque, payable to EDUCT, and marked "membership".

Your promptness in this regard greatly lightens the load on our volunteer Board and is thus much appreciated. Thank you, in advance, for your payment.

Friends of EDUCT

Friends of EDUCT are recognized by virtue of the generosity they demonstrated when, as nonmembers, they donated to the University of Edinburgh through an EDUCT-initiated special fund.

Carlyle Circle Members in Canada

EDUCT wishes to acknowledge the generosity of alumni and friends of the University of Edinburgh who have decided to leave a bequest to the University in their wills. They are recognized by the University as Carlyle Circle members. We extend our gratitude to each of them. If you are a member of the Carlyle Circle or know of such members, you are encouraged to contact us.

Honorary Members of EDUCT

Recipients of Honorary Degrees from the University of Edinburgh who reside in Canada are invited to become Honorary Members of EDUCT.

Are you on our list?

We know of over 240 alumni in the Toronto area. As of 31 January 2026, we have 164 members, most of whom are in the Toronto area. If you would be interested in joining EDUCT, please do not hesitate to contact the EDUCT President or the Club Treasurer.

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