Licence to Thrill
Author Dame Stella Rimington on the facts and fiction of espionage

Our Dark Side in a New Light
How our astronomers are changing the world’s view of the cosmos

Also Inside: We celebrate 250 years of English literature at Edinburgh | Eric Liddell: The humblest of heroes
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FOREWORD

The University of Edinburgh’s global network of graduates continues to grow and Edit magazine reaches readers all around the world — to be exact, a staggering 128,364 people in 188 countries. In this edition, alumni working and living in places as varied as Germany, France, India, Greece, China, the United States, Canada and the UK share their stories and successes with us. Releasing books and CDs (p26), mastering a foreign language (p29) and setting up a school for children with learning difficulties (p21) are just some of the inspiring achievements you’ve told us about in this issue that have all grown out of your Edinburgh degree. We also hear from author and former intelligence chief Dame Stella Rimington (p18), shine the spotlight on Olympic hero and missionary Eric Liddell (p16), celebrate 250 years of English Literature at Edinburgh (p22) and showcase some of the pioneering research that our experts are undertaking, including investigations focusing on Antarctica and even outer space (p4 and p8).

We hope you enjoy this edition of the new-look Edit magazine. If you would like to feature in an upcoming edition, contact us at editor.edit@ed.ac.uk

Published by Communications and Marketing
The University of Edinburgh, Floor C, Forrest Hill Building,
5 Forrest Hill, Edinburgh EH1 2QL, UK

Contact: editor.edit@ed.ac.uk
Design: Hookson
Printing: J Thomson Colour Printers
Cover photograph: Maverick Photo Agency/Callum Bennetts

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Antarctic Lake Probe Enters Next Phase

A University of Edinburgh-led project to explore a subglacial lake in Antarctica has concluded its first phase.

A team of four British Antarctic Survey engineers travelled to the West Antarctic Ice Sheet to put in place equipment and supplies for the project’s second stage, to be carried out later this year.

The advance party endured temperatures of -35°C to tow nearly 70 tonnes of equipment across Antarctic ice and over deep snow and steep mountain passes.

In December a science and engineering team will make the 16,000-kilometre journey from the UK to collect water and sediments from the lake. The researchers will use a high-pressure hot water drill to bore through three kilometres of ice above Lake Ellsworth, before lowering a titanium probe. The corer will sample water and sediment from the lake, which has lain undisturbed for thousands of years.

Scientists have been planning for more than 15 years to access the lake, and hope their quest will yield new knowledge about the evolution of life on Earth and other planets. Lake-bed sediments could also provide vital clues about the Earth’s past climate.

New Rector Installed

Peter McColl was recently installed as the new Rector of the University in a ceremony at the Playfair Library.

Mr McColl (pictured), an alumnus of the University, is a writer, activist and charity worker from Edinburgh. He succeeds writer and broadcaster Iain Macwhirter.

Mr McColl came to Edinburgh in 1998 to read geography and holds both an undergraduate and a masters degree from the University.

He was Vice-President of EUSA, the students’ association, from 2001 to 2002 and prior to that was President of the University’s People and Planet Society.

Elected every three years, the Rector chairs the University Court, the governing body of the University.

Study Shines Spotlight on Liver Disease

Edinburgh scientists have shed new light on how the liver repairs itself.

The researchers, from the Medical Research Council (MRC) Centre for Regenerative Medicine, have discovered how to enhance the production of key cells needed to repair damaged liver tissue.

The research could help develop drugs to heal livers affected by diseases such as cirrhosis or chronic hepatitis.

The experts found they could increase the number of hepatocyte cells – which detoxify the liver – by encouraging these cells to be produced.

Professor Stuart Forbes, Associate Director at the MRC Centre for Regenerative Medicine, says: “If we can find ways to encourage the liver to heal itself, then we could ease the pressure on waiting lists for liver transplants.”
MOTOR NEURONE RESEARCH BOOST

THE QUEST FOR TREATMENTS FOR MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE, SPINAL CORD INJURY AND STROKE COULD BE HELPED BY NEW RESEARCH THAT REVEALS HOW KEY CELLS ARE PRODUCED.

University scientists have been able to manipulate the production of motor neurones – responsible for controlling all muscle activity – in zebrafish.

Zebrafish are important in helping scientists understand how motor neurones are produced, because unlike mammals, they are able to create new motor neurones as adults. Humans can generate motor neurones during embryonic development but lose the ability to generate these cells, which are important for speaking, walking and breathing, after birth.

Dr Catherina Becker, from the University’s Centre for Neuroregeneration, says: “If we could find out more about the cell mechanisms involved in zebrafish to make motor neurones, we could potentially manipulate these pathways in humans with the hope of being able to generate new motor neurones.”

The study could help researchers to find ways of turning progenitor cells into motor neurones following damage caused by motor neurone disease, spinal cord injury or stroke.

COLLEGE OF ART SIZES UP BODY IMAGE

Edinburgh College of Art (ECA) has become the first UK art school to use tailors’ dummies ranging to size 20.

The College’s Fashion department has implemented a philosophy called “emotionally considerate design”, where students are made more aware of the emotional impact of fashion design for the customer.

Earlier this year, ECA launched a project that involved second-year students designing dresses for volunteers of different shapes, sizes, ages and origins, based on the new tailors’ dummies, which fashion commentator Caryn Franklin, above, helped unveil. The final dresses were modelled on the catwalk at this year’s ECA Fashion Show at the end of May.

POET VISITS UNIVERSITY ON FULBRIGHT EXCHANGE

Acclaimed American poet and literacy critic Marianne Boruch has been appointed as the first Fulbright-Scotland Visiting Professor at the University.

Professor Boruch is based at Edinburgh as part of a prestigious Fulbright exchange, which commenced in January.

During the six-month visit she is teaching a poetry workshop and giving a series of lectures and readings as part of the University’s creative writing programme. She is a Fellow in IASH, the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities.

Professor Boruch’s readings are part of the celebrations for the 250th anniversary of English Literature at the University. For more information, turn to page 22.
Vets are working to find the cause of a neurological condition that has been affecting Scottish cats during the past decade.

The cats are believed to have a slowly progressing neurological disease, with symptoms that include an odd walking gait with a stiff, extended tail. This strange movement has led them to be described as ‘robotic cats’.

Experts from the University’s Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies are working with the Animal Health Trust to identify the cause of the condition. The illness is currently untreatable but it is hoped that if experts can determine its cause they will be able to find a treatment.

Around 50 cases of the ultimately fatal disease have been identified, mostly in Scotland, over the past decade.
HRH THE PRINCESS ROYAL OPENS PIONEERING BIOMEDICAL FACILITIES

The University of Edinburgh's Scottish Centre for Regenerative Medicine (SCRM) will undertake stem cell research to help find therapies for patients with conditions such as multiple sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease, motor neurone disease, and heart and liver diseases.

It is the first large-scale, purpose-built facility of its kind and provides accommodation for up to 250 stem cell scientists.

Funded by the University of Edinburgh, the Medical Research Council, Scottish Enterprise and the British Heart Foundation, it was opened by HRH The Princess Royal in her role as Chancellor of the University.

The Scottish Centre for Regenerative Medicine also has the ability to manufacture high-grade stem cell lines that could be used for clinical use, with the most up to date facilities in the UK to meet the newest guidelines.

SECRETS OF SLEEP ARE ‘IN OUR GENES’

The reason some people need more sleep is in our genes, a new study by University researchers suggests.

The study found that one in five Europeans carries a variation of a gene known as ABCC9, which is involved in sensing energy levels of cells. People with the gene need almost 30 minutes more sleep each night than those who do not have it.

Experts hope that future studies will establish precisely how the gene variant regulates sleep duration. Dr Jim Wilson, Royal Society University Research Fellow at the Centre for Population Health Sciences, says: “These insights into the biology of sleep will be important in unravelling the health effects of sleep behaviour.”

University scientists made the discovery by studying human sleep patterns and genes in flies.

ASTEROIDS HINT AT LIFE ON MARS

Craters made by asteroid impacts may be the best place to look for signs of life on other planets, an Edinburgh study suggests.

Scientists from the School of Physics & Astronomy have discovered tiny organisms thriving deep underneath a site in the US where an asteroid crashed some 35 million years ago. They believe that the organisms are evidence that such craters provide refuge for microbes, sheltering them from the effects of the changing seasons and events such as global warming or ice ages.

Researchers drilled almost two kilometres below one of the largest asteroid impact craters on Earth, in Chesapeake, US. Samples showed that microbes are unevenly spread throughout the rock, suggesting that the environment is continuing to settle 35 million years after impact.

The scientists maintain that drilling beneath crater sites on Mars could lead to evidence of similar life forms.
A pioneering investigation by University astronomers is helping to unlock the cosmos’s secrets. But it’s just one example of work in the School of Physics & Astronomy that is inspiring a better understanding of the universe. By Jon Drinkwater

It is invisible, virtually impossible to detect directly, and nobody knows what it is made of. Yet dark matter – the mysterious substance that makes up approximately 80 per cent of the universe’s mass – continues to tantalise the greatest scientific minds the world over.

University of Edinburgh experts have long been frontrunners in the race to crack this elusive material’s cosmic code, and their latest findings reveal that they have come one step closer to understanding not only dark matter’s make-up but also its role in the universe.

An international research collaboration, led by the School of Physics & Astronomy’s Dr Catherine Heymans, made worldwide headlines earlier this year when it shared its latest piece of this gigantic jigsaw, the findings of the Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope Lensing Survey.

“We hope that by mapping more dark matter than has been studied before, we are a step closer to understanding this material and its relationship with the galaxies in our universe,” explains Dr Heymans. “We hope that by mapping more dark matter than has been studied before, we are a step closer to understanding this material and its relationship with the galaxies in our universe.”

Edinburgh’s fascination with dark matter is far-reaching, and experts are also working alongside international colleagues on search experiments at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Switzerland and the Boulby Underground Laboratory, in north-east England. Over the next 10 years, University academics will also take a lead role in the European Space Agency’s Euclid satellite project to produce dark matter maps of the entire sky.

“By that time, we may not be able to explain the dark side of our universe with the laws of physics as we know them,” says Dr Heymans. “This could lead to a real revolution – just as Einstein revolutionised physics with his Theory of Relativity.”

Expertise and enquiry within the School of Physics & Astronomy stretches beyond the complex questions posed by dark matter and other aspects of cosmology, into the varying fields of survey astronomy, active galaxies, galaxy evolution and the formation of stars and planets.

The School’s research and teaching group, the Institute for Astronomy (IfA), is one of the UK’s major centres of astronomical investigation, and it...
The Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope has yielded dramatic results.
Astronomers are researching how our galaxy first formed.
shares the historic Royal Observatory Edinburgh site on Blackford Hill with the UK Astronomy Technology Centre, where experts design, construct and test sensitive cameras and other instruments for some of the world’s best telescopes.

One such piece of equipment is the European Southern Observatory’s VISTA telescope in Chile, recent images from which have helped to shine the spotlight once again on Edinburgh’s astronomers. In March this year, an international collaboration, led by the University’s Professor James Dunlop, released the most detailed infrared image of the distant universe ever produced. The UltraVISTA Survey image combines more than 6,000 exposures taken from the VISTA telescope, and reveals more than 200,000 galaxies, including the brightest examples ever seen in the early universe, formed less than one billion years after the Big Bang.

The survey will help astronomers to map cosmic history for a better understanding of how our own galaxy first formed, explains Professor Dunlop: “Until recently our view back to the first epoch of galaxy formation has been limited to tiny ‘pencil-beam’ images made with the Hubble Space Telescope. Now VISTA, with its panoramic imaging capabilities, is providing the first view of truly representative regions of the young universe.”

HIGH CALIBRE

Edinburgh’s students also reap the benefits of their highly collaborative environment. In addition to forming a major research area within the School of Physics & Astronomy, the IFA also undertakes a vigorous teaching programme at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.

“One of the interesting things about studying astronomy at Edinburgh is that from third year on, all the astronomy teaching is carried out at the Observatory,” explains the IFA’s Dr Ken Rice. “So the students are learning on an active site where instruments are built, with access to computing facilities, a student telescope for undergraduate projects and a lecture theatre. And there is also some overlap between research and instrumentation when supervising students at PhD level. And that’s all rather unique.”

Edinburgh’s astronomy graduates have gone on to varied careers in research groups and at organisations such as the European Space Agency and British Met Office, and within the investment banking, telecommunications, IT, software engineering and aviation industries.

Head of School Professor Arthur Trew believes that it is Edinburgh’s high calibre of academic staff and facilities that enables the University to continue to produce such highly employable graduates.

“I’m proud to be Head of School for a department demonstrating such excellence in terms of teaching, knowledge exchange and, of course, research and development,” he says. “For anyone who wants to have a fascinating time studying physics and astronomy, and a successful career in this field, the scope and quality of facilities on offer here is hard to find anywhere else in the world.”

IN SEARCH OF NEW FRONTIERS

Edinburgh astronomers have made headlines recently with their world-leading research. Here are just a few highlights.

HUNT FOR EARTH-LIKE PLANETS

The search for extra-solar planets similar to Earth has taken a leap forward, with the commissioning of HARPS-N, an Edinburgh/Geneva-built instrument that will analyse the light of stars identified by NASA’s Kepler space probe. Kepler is searching for tiny telltale dimmings in the light of stars that occur when orbiting planets pass in front of them. Edinburgh experts, in collaboration with international partners, are using HARPS-N to characterise these planets in much more detail.

BLACK HOLE BREAKTHROUGH

Our researchers have helped to gather the most direct evidence yet of a supermassive black hole shredding a star. Supermassive black holes, weighing millions to billions times as much as the Sun, lurk in the centres of most galaxies and lie quietly until an object, such as a star, wanders close enough to get ripped apart by their powerful gravitational forces. For the first time, astronomers have been able to identify the ‘victim’, and the results of a collaborative study are published in Nature.

GALAXY QUEST

Our astronomers are part of an international team that is investigating how some of the oldest stars in the universe were formed. The consortium is using the Edinburgh designed and constructed SCUBA-2, the most powerful camera of its type, to gather previously inaccessible data to study the evolution of galaxies as far back as 13 billion years ago.

FOR MORE NEWS, visit www.ph.ed.ac.uk/news
Six years on from setting a hugely ambitious fundraising target, the Edinburgh Campaign has exceeded all expectations. From visionary building projects to pioneering research, the next stage in the University’s life is taking shape. 

By Rob Tomlinson

Back in 2006, the University embarked on the Edinburgh Campaign – the largest fundraising initiative of its kind in Scotland.

The Campaign’s aim was simple but unashamedly ambitious – to generate £350 million in financial support over a five-year period for 30 major projects, ensuring that the University kept its place among the world’s leading centres of learning and knowledge creation.

It’s no overstatement to say that the recent economic climate has been a profoundly challenging time to deliver on a fundraising venture of such magnitude. What is remarkable is that, under such circumstances, the Campaign achieved its targets – and the University can now look forward to the next phase of its development programme.

The quality and range of the projects identified in the Campaign give an indication of why the targets were achieved. These are projects that matter – not just to the students and staff within the University but to wider regional, national and global communities.

Quite simply, many of these projects are already changing people’s lives for the better.

One tangible demonstration of this is the University’s Scottish Centre for Regenerative Medicine (SCRM). SCRM researchers use stem cells to find regenerative therapies for conditions affecting the nervous system, liver and other organs. Relatives of people suffering from these illnesses have been moved to fund specialist centres, which can use the SCRM’s resources to undertake pioneering research into causes and therapies. As a result of this generosity, the University has been able to establish units such as the Euan MacDonald Centre for Motor Neurone Disease Research, and the Anne Rowling Regenerative Neurology Clinic, which will conduct research into multiple sclerosis.

Yet it is not just in the field of medicine that the Campaign has been able to galvanise funding for groundbreaking projects. Evidence of what it has achieved is all around the University campus and touches every academic discipline – from the award-winning Informatics Forum, where University researchers carry out world-leading research into robotics and artificial intelligence, through the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation to the HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre for the Study of Islam in the Contemporary World, which is making real strides in building cultural bridges between East and West.

Professor Mary Bownes, Vice-Principal External Engagement, oversaw the latter stages of the Campaign, and believes that during tough economic times, people choose to give money to projects that will have “real impact” on the community. “Whether that’s helping to fund projects linked to big global themes such as climate change or research that can mean people suffering from life-threatening diseases can have a better quality of life – at Edinburgh we can demonstrate that we are at the centre of just this kind of work. I think our size and diversity, our international standing and the quality of what we do stand out and make it easier for people to commit to us.”

Making a difference

All around Edinburgh’s campus the physical manifestations of the Campaign are visible. Among...
The Campaign has generated support for more than 30 major projects.
the noteworthy examples is the £50 million project to redevelop the University’s Main Library, which now has much improved space to aid study and research, as well as a new-look Collections department where the University’s treasure trove of manuscripts, rare books, photographs, printed and handwritten music, drawings and paintings are showcased to much better effect.

Over in Old College, the newly landscaped quadrangle bears testimony to the fact that a building project that began in 1789 has finally been completed in keeping with the vision of the original architects.

The Campaign has also allowed the University to build on its extensive range of scholarships and bursaries for undergraduate and postgraduate students. In total, more than £45 million has been added to the fund, transforming the lives of talented people who might not otherwise have benefited from a university education.

“The cost of studying at university can be a very real concern for many students,” says Robert Lawrie, Head of Scholarships and Student Funding Services.

“The increasing levels of bursary and scholarship support which the University has been able to offer in recent years has been most welcome and has transformed the lives of so many of our students. Our many supporters should not underestimate the difference that their generous support provides in both enhancing the student experience and assisting in the success of our scholars’ academic endeavours.”

Similarly, in the knowledge that their money can be used to make a difference, alumni and other benefactors are choosing to support the University with legacy gifts in increasing numbers. The total number of living legacy pledgers now stands at 1,280 – people no doubt inspired by the example of Dr Albert McKern, whose generosity provided the University’s largest legacy gift to date, of more than £2.5 million. This investment is currently being used to conduct research into the alleviation of pain and distress during labour and childbirth.

The Campaign sees the University making great strides in building on the quality of its research and its teaching, as well as its cultural and economic contribution to the wider communities it serves, and organisers look forward with anticipation to what the next five years will bring.
The commitment to enhance the University continues, with development projects based around the four themes of research, scholarships and bursaries, heritage and culture, and new buildings.

“We’re entering a really interesting time that is about building on the success of the original Campaign with a number of exciting projects,” says Chloe Kippen, Head of Major Gifts in the University’s Development & Alumni department. “Among them are our £30 million vision for the McEwan Hall in Bristo Square, which we want to transform into a multipurpose events venue, and our plan to redevelop St Cecilia’s Hall, the oldest purpose-built concert hall in Scotland and home to a world-class collection of historic musical instruments. These projects are an important part of our public engagement activity and highlight our commitment to sharing our buildings and facilities with the wider community.”

Other areas where the University will be seeking to make further investment include the King’s Buildings library, the School of Biological Sciences, further research into the fields of nerve repair and maternal health as well initiatives to support postgraduate study in humanities and social science.
Edinburgh alumnus Eric Liddell’s story was famously depicted in an Oscar-winning film, but some aspects of his life remain untold. He was a modest man who stuck to his principles, astonished by the attention that success brought him. **By Edd McCracken**

Eric Liddell’s life was one defined by yards. He ran 440 of them faster than any man in history, he declined to sprint 100 of them as a declaration of faith, and the internment camp where he died measured just 150 by 200 of them.

Almost every inch of the University of Edinburgh graduate’s life has been retold and relived in popular culture, from biographies to the Oscar-winning film *Chariots of Fire*. Yet beyond these distances over which he ran, in which he served and ultimately in which he died, there remain untold leagues.

No matter how many times they are rerun, the basic facts about Liddell’s life remain extraordinary. Born to missionary parents on 16 January, 1902 in Tientsin (modern-day Tianjin) in China, Liddell enrolled at the University of Edinburgh in 1920 to study pure science.

According to his eldest daughter, Patricia, his time at Edinburgh was “formative.” “He always loved Scotland,” she says, on the phone from Canada. “He loved rugby, he loved sports, and he loved his time at the University. It was a wonderful time for him.”

It was here his athletic prowess was harnessed. He ran and played sport for the University with his trademark style – chest puffed out, mouth agape – before competing at a national level. He represented Scotland in the 1922 Five Nations rugby championship.

During part of his time at the University, Liddell stayed at the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society at 56 George Square, current home of the College Office of the College of Humanities & Social Science. The leafy square became the arena for friendly races. He would run the 100-yard dash against his friends, giving them a five-pace start. Former roommate Dr George Graham-Cumming recalls: “Catching up with me about halfway, he’d run alongside urging me to ‘Run man, run!’ then, about 15 strides from the finish line, he would suddenly dash ahead and win before I could take another five strides. There was strictly no competition but I proudly claim to have raced with Eric Liddell.”

In 1923, Liddell travelled the 20 miles from his student residences to the West Lothian town of Armadale to make his debut as a preacher in front of 1,000 miners. “Of all the things I’ve done in my life,” he later confided in his wife Florence, “the most difficult was speaking there.”

His evangelistic career began as his athletic one reached its pinnacle and abrupt end. While still a student Liddell competed at the 1924 Paris Olympic Games. He had never planned to run in the 100-yard dash, his strongest event. The first heats were always held on a Sunday, the Sabbath.

“‘He stuck to his principles,’” says Patricia. “He certainly wasn’t going to give them up to win a gold medal. That is all.” It was left to biographers and film-makers to make this a defining moment. Liddell won bronze over 200 yards before winning the 400 metres (440 yards) in a world record 47.6 seconds, two seconds faster than his average time.
Liddell returned to finish his degree at Edinburgh, and after his graduation in 1925 he left it all behind. Under the auspices of the London Missionary Society, which his parents also worked for, he took up a teaching post in a Christian school in Tientsin.

He returned to Edinburgh in 1930 until 1932 to be ordained a minister. In 1934 he married Florence McKenzie, the daughter of Canadian missionaries, in China. Patricia was born a year later and Heather and Maureen followed. The latter never met her father.

Florence and their daughters left for Canada in 1941 but Liddell stayed. Despite being only six when she last saw her father, Patricia still remembers him. Now aged 77, she recalls “how much fun he was” and how he would sprint after rabbits while walking in the Scottish hills, for sport and for dinner.

After one such trip to Scotland in 1940, the Liddells headed back to China, sailing in convoy across the North Atlantic, which was patrolled by German U-boats. It was a perilous voyage. “Yet I felt safe with him,” says Patricia.

“We would stand on deck for hours in our life jackets. We saw a couple of ships go down. One night our ship was hit by a torpedo but it didn’t explode. I fell out of bed at the thud. But we were never afraid as children. My father gave us the sense that this is the situation, there’s no point crying about it, you make the best of it. And that’s exactly what he did.”

Liddell was captured in 1943 and kept in a Japanese internment camp in Weihsien, in northern China. There, he organised sports events, taught science, took Sunday school, and tended to the sick. As the war wore on his own health suffered. He had a chance to leave as part of a prisoner exchange scheme but offered his place to a pregnant woman.

In January 1945 he gave a pair of battered running shoes to Stephen Metcalf, a teenager in the camp whose own shoes had worn away. Three weeks later, on 21 February, Liddell died of a brain tumour. He was 43. Metcalf wore Liddell’s running shoes as he carried the Olympian’s coffin to its basic grave.

In life Liddell was always bemused by the attention paid to him. Now, 67 years after his death the attention shows no sign of abating. The University has named a gym after him and holds his Olympic medals. His grave on the site of the old Weihsien camp is marked by a slab of red granite from the Isle of Mull, raised by the University. The BBC is making a new documentary about him.

Patricia laughs when asked what her father would make of his legacy: “He just felt because of the Olympics it brought him to the fore, yet there are hundreds of people who work tirelessly and nobly out there. He would be a little embarrassed by it all.”

Perhaps the most fitting marker lies in the 600 pages of the London Missionary Society’s official history. There are only two mentions of him, taking up no more than a few inches of text. A humble memorial for the humblest of men.

He’d run alongside urging me to ‘Run man, run!’ then, about 15 strides from the finish line, he would suddenly dash ahead and win before I could take another five strides.

The Olympian celebrates with fellow students.

To watch a video of Chariots of Fire producer Lord David Puttnam delivering an Edinburgh Lecture on Eric Liddell, visit www.youtu.be/r9NcLUKgqFs

With thanks to www.ericliddell.org
After a distinguished career with Britain’s Security Service (MI5), Dame Stella Rimington is now a bestselling author of spy thrillers. She tells Cate MacKenzie how a tap on the shoulder led her into the heart of the Cold War.

Q: Having grown up in England, why did you choose to study in Edinburgh and what was your initial impression of the city?
A: I’d been to Scotland once, on holiday, and the Scottish culture, and also the antiquity of the University, appealed to me. There was something rather exotic and, in a sense, romantic about it. There were a lot of smoke-stained buildings, and my first impression was that it was old, dark, cold and slightly gloomy. We’re talking the 1950s; it wasn’t that long after the end of the war and everywhere, not just in Scotland, was a bit run down. It didn’t destroy my slightly romantic feelings about the North though.

Q: What else did you take away from your student experience?
A: It was a broad education, and although there was a lot of larking about and parties, we had a lot of exams and you had to really knuckle down. A lot of my fellow students were Scottish and there were people from Orkney and Shetland and places I’d only heard of, who spoke of ceilidhs and such things. It was a very formative time of my life and I came away a much more developed person, in every way.

Q: So how did you come to work for MI5?
A: I got married and my husband was posted as First Secretary to the British High Commission in New Delhi, so off we went on the slow boat to India. There I was being a diplomatic wife when I got the tap on the shoulder, which was how British Intelligence recruited people in those days. I was offered a job as a part-time clerk typist in the small office that MI5 had in the High Commission in New Delhi. It was extraordinary as I couldn’t actually type, but it was more about who you were – I was the wife of a diplomat so must be reliable, and it didn’t matter if I couldn’t type.
There I was being a diplomatic wife when I got the tap on the shoulder, which was how British Intelligence recruited people in those days.
How much did you know about your employer?
I didn’t know much about it, but I gradually got to realising what we were doing. We’re talking about the height of the Cold War and Delhi was one of the forefronts where East met West; the place was full of spies from both sides of the divide and there was always this fear of infiltration. Our job was to try and identify the spies from the other side.

What were the challenges of intelligence work?
We came back to London and I got a full-time job as a junior assistant officer. I had one daughter and then another one. It’s not a nine-to-five job and it was quite a challenge. You weren’t allowed to talk about what you did. The classic cover story was that we worked in the Ministry of Defence, but it didn’t always work — say, if you went out to a party and people probed a bit more deeply. You had to continually embroider your story. It’s a strange life and you’re living slightly at an angle to society, always on your guard for the probing question and knocking it back.

What were the challenges of intelligence work?
We came back to London and I got a full-time job as a junior assistant officer. I had one daughter and then another one. It’s not a nine-to-five job and it was quite a challenge. You weren’t allowed to talk about what you did. The classic cover story was that we worked in the Ministry of Defence, but it didn’t always work — say, if you went out to a party and people probed a bit more deeply. You had to continually embroider your story. It’s a strange life and you’re living slightly at an angle to society, always on your guard for the probing question and knocking it back. The almost obsessive secrecy of those days has gone now but people still can’t talk about precisely what they do and that’s hard, especially for young people.

You weren’t allowed to talk about what you did... You had to continually embroider your story. It’s a strange life and you’re living slightly at an angle to society, always on your guard for the probing question and knocking it back.

You now spend your days writing spy thrillers... is your material based on real events?
I use my background experience, and my characters are based not on individuals but on a mixture of characteristics and memories of people whom I’ve met all through my life. I’m just finishing a book, The Geneva Trap, which is about drones and cyber attacks. I try to keep the plots very current to deal with the security issues of the day.

And how does that challenge compare with those of your former career?
In somewhere like MI5, you’re part of a team and everybody has their thing; they’re experts in surveillance or communications and it’s about blending all these skills together to do an effective investigation. When you’re writing you have to be completely a self-starter. It all has to come out of here [Dame Stella laughs and points to her temple], out of your imagination and experience. Motivating yourself is more difficult than when you’re surrounded by people and the pressure of events, and sometimes you want to just make a cup of tea and have a biscuit!

Looking back, of what are you most proud?
When I joined the Service women weren’t allowed to do intelligence work. But then along came the ’70s and the gradual growth of women’s lib and sex discrimination legislation and we mounted a sort of quiet revolution. That was the beginning really, of women breaking through, into the serious, sharp end of intelligence work. Then we ended up in 1992 with a woman as Director-General [Dame Stella held this post from 1992 to ’96], and another woman following me. So getting the position of women established, as being important contributors, is what I’m most proud of.

The Geneva Trap (Bloomsbury, £12.99) is out in July. Visit www.stellarimington.com
Hockey player Ali McGregor competed at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. Since last autumn he has been Deputy Head Teacher at Longdon Hall, a new school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, which he helped set up.

As a student I used to spend a lot of time at St Leonard’s Land and at the Centre for Sport and Exercise. It was a great combination because I could attend my practical lectures and do my training together – the sport and academic side of things were all in the one place. It really helped me develop as an athlete.

“A lot of thanks for that has to go to my lecturers – people like Liz Cunningham, Eugene Connolly, Peter Hill and others who supported me with my studies but also made sure I had time away to play international sport. I don’t think I would’ve been able to do my teaching degree without their support. If I was away on a hockey trip they’d make sure that my studying and lectures could be accommodated so I didn’t miss out on anything. The sports facilities we were able to use at Peffermill are incredible – I think they’re by far the best in the country for outdoor team sports.

“I’m originally from Aberdeen but I loved living in Edinburgh. I wanted to stay in the city but moved to Loughborough for work and to take my hockey training further. I spent four years as Head of PE and Exams Officer at Knossington Grange Therapeutic School, and I’m now Deputy Head at Longdon Hall. It’s a new school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. I helped set it up from scratch, and we opened in September 2011.

“We want the school to offer a therapeutic learning environment that enables pupils who have had a tough start to education to learn in a safe and supportive environment. I enjoy supporting pupils to work through difficulties and celebrate success with them. What I learned from some of my lecturers at Edinburgh is that education should always be an enjoyable experience.

“The highlights of my career as a sportsman were definitely the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008 and being named in the International Hockey Federation World Hockey All Star Team the same year.

“When I found out about being inducted into the University’s Sports Hall of Fame I was just overwhelmed, it’s an amazing honour... I hope that the success of my sports career was a way of thanking the University.

“The experience of competing in Beijing was absolutely incredible. I don’t quite know how to put into words or describe how I feel about it. We finished fifth. We were part of the British squad but there were so many Scottish athletes and faces from other tournaments. It felt like a real multi-sport event.

“Hockey has moved on in recent years and I think the Beijing Olympics may have helped to raise its profile. If a minority sport like hockey does well in a setting like that it can have a real impact.

“When I found out about being inducted into the University’s Sports Hall of Fame I was just overwhelmed, it’s an amazing honour. To be recognised alongside everyone else on the list is quite humbling. I hope that the success of my sports career was a way of thanking the University for everything.”

NEW ENTRANTS TO SPORTS HALL OF FAME

Ali McGregor is to be inducted into the University’s Sports Hall of Fame along with Chris Paterson, a former Scotland rugby international, and Susan Jackson, 2006 Commonwealth Games shooting gold medallist. Inclusion in the Hall of Fame is the University’s greatest sporting honour. To date, it has recognised the world-class sporting achievements of 15 alumni, including Sir Chris Hoy (cycling), Jon Duncan (orienteering), Sir Peter Heatly (diving), Graeme Randall (judo), Eric Liddell (athletics) and Bob Braithwaite (shooting).
The University’s English Literature department, one of the oldest in the world, is celebrating its 250th anniversary in 2012. The department is marking the milestone with a series of debates, prizes, exhibitions, lectures, readings and social gatherings. The exhibition ‘City of Words’ opens in the Main Library in August, and will tell the story of how the writing, reading and criticism of literature have been entwined in Edinburgh over the past quarter millennium.

Here, we showcase a selection of the items to be displayed, along with some of the leading lights of English literature, and their works, which have sprung from their association with Edinburgh over the centuries.
THEN: 01 Hugh Blair, first Regius Professor of Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres (1762–84) 02 The English Literature department, 1935 03 Student essay marked by William Spalding, circa 1844–45; matriculation list, 1874–75 04 James Tait Black’s Loch Ness Monster sketch 05 Andrew Brown’s 1802 lecture attendance class card 06 The famous tale from Sir JM Barrie, alumnus and past Chancellor (1930–37) 07 Alumnus and Treasure Island author, Robert Louis Stevenson 08 Alumnus and Sherlock Holmes creator, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle 09 David Masson became Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature in 1865 10 John Dover Wilson’s The Cranach ‘Hamlet’ NOw: 11 Alumnus Joe Simpson, adventurer and author 12 Writer Philippa Gregory, Alumnus of the Year 2008 13 Graduate, academic and author Professor Alexander McCall Smith 14 Edinburgh staff and students judge the James Tait Black Prizes 15 James Tait Black Prize winner Sebastian Barry 16 Rebus creator Ian Rankin’s student card 17 Man Booker Prize longlisted entry from alumnus James Meek 18 Graduate, novelist and poet James Robertson 19 Former writer-in-residence Anne Stevenson 20 Poetry collection from former writer-in-residence Liz Lochhead 21 From John Dover Wilson, Regius Professor 1935–45 22 Student creative writing magazine entry from Ian Rankin. Top text: Zadie Smith’s signed White Teeth (James Tait Black Prize winner)

For more information, visit www.ed.ac.uk/news/events/english
Edinburgh’s stunning streetscapes, rich cultural history and all-round cosmopolitan vibe combine to make studying in this unique city a memorable experience. We invite you to share what made your student days so enjoyable.

Off I went to the Big Smoke, London... but later I appreciated the compactness and beauty of Edinburgh.

Where were your favourite student haunts?
In the evenings we’d go to the Place, a jazz and folk venue, and the Traverse Theatre, where many interesting evenings of music and poetry were held. In the ‘60s, the Traverse was in an old tenement in the Lawnmarket. There was also the One O’Clock Jazz Club held in the basement of the Old College quad on Wednesdays at 1pm. The Jazz Band Balls that used to be held at the Palais de Danse in Fountainbridge were such fun, going on till about 4am.

Which book influenced your life most when you were a student?
Bertrand Russell’s History of Western Philosophy. I was deep into the meaning and purpose of life and it helped me to make up my mind on this subject.

What is your favourite view of the city?
Looking across at the Old Town and Arthur’s Seat from Calton Hill.

What would you recommend tourists put at the top of their to-do list?
A visit to Edinburgh Castle, which is steeped in history, and then a stroll down the Royal Mile of the Old Town to Holyrood Palace with its magnificent backcloth of Arthur’s Seat. If time and energy permits, it’s well worth climbing up the path to the mouth of the crater or, alternatively, walking up the Salisbury Crags. Magnificent views!

Send us your recollections of your student days to editor.edit@ed.ac.uk
Every graduate can name a mentor who inspired them. But have you ever thought how you influenced your teachers? Here, one of your role models talks about their experiences – and we hear how they affected yours.

Are you an Edinburgh alumnus? I arrived in 1971 to study astrophysics. Thanks to the flexibility of Scottish education I was able to transfer into what had become my real enthusiasm, English literature [MA English Language & Literature, 1975].

What has changed since your student days? The resources now available just by sitting down at a computer terminal are terrific. It's also great that the library almost never shuts.

When did you start work at the University? I arrived as a temporary lecturer at the end of the 1970s and managed to be kept on as lecturer, senior lecturer, reader and eventually professor.

What is the most satisfying part of your job? I've been lucky with opportunities to lecture in interesting places – Nigeria, Egypt, Korea, East Europe before 1989, Romania just after the revolution. But it's hard to beat a good seminar with Edinburgh undergraduates.

...and the most challenging? Making it work. It doesn't every time, and there's always some stress – before lectures, too – in hoping it will and trying to make it happen.

What changes have you seen in your department over the years? The subject area's success means it probably attracts more highly qualified and highly motivated students than ever before. The subject has grown more professional, with a broader, stronger base in theory, ideas, history... This diversity is also reflected in teaching nowadays – research-led, this offers a wonderfully wide range of courses.

This year marks 250 years of English Literature at the University. What does this mean to you? It's an amazing landmark. It's hugely to the credit of the University, and to the wider intellectual climate of the city in the later 18th century, that this was virtually the first place in the world where the study was institutionalised. Since then, the study of literature in Edinburgh has been intimately bound up with creating literature, too, with big effects for culture here and beyond.

Can you describe your experience of collaborating with James Mavor? James's exceptional dramatic imagination was evident in his work. It made him stand out even at a time when there were many talented students working in the area.

Randall made great writing accessible.
Whether for work or play, the arts have always featured prominently in our alumni activities. Here, we showcase some of your artistic endeavours and feature a few favourite cultural escapes.

60 SECONDS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

KENNY ANDERSON (KING CREOSOTE)

BORN: St Andrews, 1967
EDUCATED: Langlands Primary School and Madras College, St Andrews and the University of Edinburgh
CURRENT HOME: Crail, Fife
CURRENT JOB: Songwriter and record label boss
FAVOURITE BOOK: I don’t have one. This month I’m alternating Scandinavian crime novels with historical fiction, at the rate of one book every two days, but ask me questions on them and I’ll struggle to even remember any of the characters’ names.
FAVOURITE SONG OR PIECE OF MUSIC: Talk Talk’s album Spirit of Eden
FAVOURITE FILM: Grease!!
THE PLACE THAT MOST INSPIRES YOU: Wherever I’ve had a bad night’s sleep
GREATEST INFLUENCE: Stupidity in me and in others

Kenny Anderson, aka King Creosote, graduated from the University of Edinburgh with a BSc (Hons) in Electrical & Electronic Engineering in 1989. He went on to form the Skuobhie Dubh Orchestra and his own music label, Fence. Based in Fife, he has released more than 40 albums. In 2011 his album Diamond Mine, a collaboration with Jon Hopkins, was nominated for the Mercury Music Award. I Learned from the Gaels is the first of three EPs from the King Creosote Band to be released throughout 2012.

While I was at Edinburgh I grew up, going from a silly wee boy to a silly young man. I lived for things like going to the Chambers Street union and seeing bands at Potterrow, and I loved squatting my grant on records. I remember buying a new hi-fi and peddling like fury with it back to Pollock Halls.

THE HIT LIST

TO WATCH...
The video for indie group Bombay Bicycle Club’s ‘How Can You Swallow So Much Sleep?’ was made by Edinburgh College of Art student Anna Ginsburg. Anna spent six months working on the animation, which garnered more than 70,000 hits on YouTube within a week of its release.

www.annaginsburg.co.uk/filmspage.html

TO READ...
The debut novel from Catriona Child, an admissions assistant in the University’s Science & Engineering College Office, Trackman is the tale of a bereaved man who helps strangers using the power of music. With Edinburgh as its backdrop, the book will appeal to lovers of the city as well as music aficionados.

Trackman, Luath Press Ltd, £9.99

TO LISTEN TO...
The eponymous debut from Django Django, whose members met as students at Edinburgh College of Art. With its mix of electronics, insistent guitar hooks and sunny ‘60s melodies, the album is winning them critical plaudits and a reputation for refreshing the “indie” band sound.

www.djangodjango.co.uk

SCOTTISH LIVES CAPTURED ON FILM

Scotland’s first mass participation documentary film project, Northern Lights, has been launched by a University academic. Award-winning filmmaker Nick Higgins, a senior lecturer in visual and cultural studies, is asking people to pick up cameras or mobiles and share videos about their lives. Submissions — anything from a video fragment to a stream of consciousness — can be made online, with the best being edited into a unique feature-length documentary. Contributions must be uploaded to the website by 21 June. Visit www.wearenorthernlights.com
THE FAB FIVE
Can you name your favourite book? Here, five alumni narrow down their choice.

01
THE RED AND THE BLACK
BY STENDHAL
"The book speaks for itself. I read it on the grass in George Square during a beautiful spring when I probably should have been revising."
MICHAEL B GROTELL, BA, 2010

02
AND THE LAND LAY STILL
BY (EDINBURGH ALUMNUS)
JAMES ROBERTSON
"Stunning epic history of the last 60 years of Scottish history from the separate and yet connected perspectives of fictional people living through the real politics and challenges of these times."
WALT HOPKINS, MLITT (SCOTTISH HISTORY), 1972

03
QUITE UGLY ONE MORNING
BY CHRISTOPHER BROOKMYRE
"The best first page in a book and very humorous."
NEIL HARRISON, BCOM (HONS), 1996

04
MARIANA
BY MONICA DICKENS
"I read it as a student and for me, it captured the ‘finding your feet in life’ feeling that I think all of us graduates encounter."
ROSALIND PALMER, MSC (ART HISTORY), 2009

05
THE GAME OF KINGS
BY DOROTHY DUNNETT
"Perfect 16th-century Scottish history, with a flawed, suicidal hero you are guaranteed to alternately love and hate."
DENISE WOOD, MA (LINGUISTICS), 2010

WHAT’S ON AT TALBOT RICE
These distinct exhibitions showcase the achievements of two pioneering American artists. For further details, visit www.trg.ed.ac.uk

TIM ROLLINS AND K.O.S: THE BLACK SPOT
THE WHITE GALLERY, 4 AUGUST – 20 OCTOBER, 2012

Tim Rollins was a teacher in a public junior high school in South Bronx, New York, and from the early 1980s he developed striking visual art with his students, K.O.S. (Kids of Survival). This exhibition includes three new commissions, including one based on Franz Kafka’s Amerika and one on Robert Louis Stevenson’s Treasure Island, while a survey of key work provides a visual introduction and context.

WORKING PAPERS: DONALD JUDD DRAWINGS, 1963–93
THE GEORGIAN GALLERY, 4 AUGUST – 20 OCTOBER, 2012

Donald Judd (1928–1994) was one of the first artists to put into question the role of the artist. In the 1960s his work took a dramatic turn away from the traditions of representation and craft skills to become a series of manufactured rudimentary shapes, simply placed in space. This exhibition of Judd’s drawings gives a direct insight into the process-based nature of his sculptural work.

MILITARY TATTOO ENLISTS ART STUDENT
The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo has launched a search for an Edinburgh College of Art (ECA) student to become its official artist-in-residence. Students have been invited to apply for the role, now in its second year. The post, which offers the successful student the opportunity to use their artistic discipline to create original work for the celebration of the Tattoo and its 2012 production, runs from May to September and carries a £5,000 stipend. It is anticipated that the student’s work will be displayed at an exhibition held later this year. Last year Scottish landscape painter and ECA graduate Leo du Feu became the inaugural Tattoo artist-in-residence.

ON OUR RADAR
TWO EDINBURGH ALUMNI HAVE NEW BOOKS COMING OUT THIS SUMMER: THE KINGMAKER’S DAUGHTER BY PHILIPTA GREGORY (PHD, 18TH-CENTURY LITERATURE, 1981) WILL BE OUT IN AUGUST, AND THE HEART BROKE IN BY JAMES MEIK (MA HONS, 1983) WILL BE IN BOOKSHOPS IN SEPTEMBER.

WWW.ED.AC.UK
Most of us have honed our cooking skills since we were students but in case you’re in need of a little inspiration, here are some culinary insights from a fellow graduate who hails from the French Riviera.

Reader recipe

Chef’s note: “I can’t remember learning how to make this dish, as it has always been in my family. It’s great on its own with a simple salad or as an accompaniment to fish or lamb. It’s creamy and crunchy on top with a gorgeous taste of black pepper and garlic – so comforting!”

Gratin Dauphinois
Serves 4 as a main or 6 as a side

- 1kg Desirée potatoes, peeled, sliced and rinsed
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 bay leaf (bruised with a rolling pin)
- Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg (optional)
- Ground black pepper (about 20 turns of mill)
- 300ml milk
- 284ml pot double cream
- Grated Emmental or Gruyère cheese

Preheat oven to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4. In a large saucepan, combine potato, garlic, bay leaf, nutmeg (if desired) and pepper, then cover with milk, adding a little extra if necessary. Cook over a medium heat for 10-15 minutes or until potato slices are tender but not breaking. Reserve 3-4 tablespoons of the cooking liquid, then drain and quickly transfer potato to a large gratin dish. Pour over cream and reserved milk and add more pepper, to taste. Sprinkle with cheese and bake for 40 minutes or until golden.

Although she misses her mum’s home cooking, Dr Nathalie Mather-L’Huillier (PhD Medical & Radiological Sciences, 2007) is a sucker for Scottish-style fish and chips. Here, she shares a traditional French recipe.

“I was born in Lorraine but grew up on the French Riviera near Nice. A lot of fruit and vegetables, notably peppers, courgettes, olives, melons, strawberries and tomatoes, are produced there. It’s near the sea and the mountains, which brings great seafood, cheeses and lamb.

“The most distinctive feature of French cuisine is the great produce but also the time spent at the table (as schoolchildren we had a two-hour lunch break). Eating isn’t rushed and is still a real family affair.

“My earliest childhood memories centre around the food that my parents and family members grew or collected: preparing cornichons, shelling peas, picking wild blueberries, choosing a chicken for the night’s dinner, making jam and the annual family plum harvest for making my Grandpa’s mirabelle (a very strong fruity-smelling alcohol).

“If I came to Edinburgh more than 16 years ago, I miss my mum’s cooking and the markets and their variety of vibrant colours and smells, but I love the varied Edinburgh food scene. We always have haggis (vegetarian for me) on Burns Night and my guilty pleasure is fish and chips!”

If you’re a ‘foodie’ and would like to feature in Food for Thought, email us at editor.edit@ed.ac.uk
Many a friendship is forged during our university days, and we want to hear how you met your partner or best pal. For Irene and Jörg Hasler, a striped rain hat changed the course of their lives.

Irene Hasler (nee Ellis)
MA (Hons) 1968

“In 1966 I was looking forward to my junior honours year in Munich. I had attended German translation classes run by a certain Dr Jörg Hasler, from the University of Basel in Switzerland. His ironic comments in the margin of my no doubt feeble translation work caught my attention. He cut a dashing figure and was noted for smoking a pipe, enjoying Digestive biscuits in the secretary’s office and driving around town in a white Triumph Spitfire with leather upholstery.

“My plans for Munich were abandoned and it was arranged that I would spend my junior honours year at the University of Basel, where I learned my first Swiss-German phrases.

“We have lived in Switzerland, England, the USA and, for the past 35 years, in Germany, where Jörg became Professor of English and American Literature at the University of Trier, of which he was President for eight years.

“Jörg retired in 2000 and we have since divided our time between Germany (in summer) and Spain (in winter). An addiction to golf has brought about this snowbird lifestyle. Meanwhile, my German and Swiss-German are up to par and we are now trying to make some progress with Spanish and Catalan.”

Jörg Hasler
Former lecturer, the German department 1964–1966

“Our engagement was celebrated at the staff club in Chambers Street, just days before my return to Switzerland, where we got married in 1968. Irene won a prize for German pronunciation, and with her extraordinary gift she quickly and easily mastered Swiss-German as well.

“Before I met Irene, the still very stern and Calvinistic Edinburgh could be a little grim for a foreign bachelor. I remember rainy Sundays with just one cinema open and the constant howling of the wind high up in the David Hume Tower. But colleagues in the German and other departments were welcoming and I had a lively social life.

“At the very end of my two years in Edinburgh I got to know Irene. She lived on Great King Street with her parents and one night on my way home after a rather jolly dinner party I drove on to the pavement in front of their house and knocked on the window. I knew Irene was inside cramming for an exam. Instead of the hoped-for romantic response I was severely reprimanded for my unseemly behaviour!

“I knocked on the window. I knew Irene was inside cramming for an exam. Instead of the hoped-for romantic response I was severely reprimanded for my unseemly behaviour!”

Irene and Jörg today.

“I remember rainy Sundays with just one cinema open and the constant howling of the wind high up in the David Hume Tower. But colleagues in the German and other departments were welcoming and I had a lively social life.

“Already in 1964, weeks before my arrival in Edinburgh, my diabetes was diagnosed; for 44 years now Irene has scrupulously supervised my diet and general discipline. I’m still able to play golf regularly (which, with her Scottish genes she does much better than I), and I owe it all to the student who one day came to see me to remonstrate about my ironic comment on a translation blunder.

“We are very much kept on our toes by the two abandoned stray puppies we adopted in Spain and imported to Germany – wonderful pets who dictate our daily routine.”

The couple travelled in style — in a Triumph.

If you met your partner or lifelong friend at Edinburgh and would like to share your recollections, email us at editor.edit@ed.ac.uk.
The group gathers in Edinburgh in 1957 for a combined 21st birthday bash.

In the last edition of *Edit*, we asked you to submit photographs that represented your time at Edinburgh for our photography competition. Entries ranged from shots of dramatic views from Arthur's Seat to burnt toast in student halls.

The winning shot is an evocative image of the Meadows taken by Dr Rachael Imrie (BSc 2006, MBChB 2009). She wins a £150 Amazon book voucher. Rachael says: “I love wandering through the Meadows: its vibrancy evokes so many happy memories – escaping from the anatomy lecture theatre, early morning walks to ENT clinics and summer picnics with friends. This photo from April 2010 depicts the beauty of Edinburgh’s greatest green space.”

The runners-up, Graeme Gainey (MA 1977, MPhil 1979), Shiguang Fu (MSc 2006) and Professor Michael Gardner (BSc 1969, PhD 1971), each receive a £50 voucher.

If you want to rekindle friendships, celebrate an anniversary or simply just get together for an informal gathering, a University reunion will help you stay connected to your fellow graduates. For details on upcoming reunions, or for help with organising your own event, email alumni@ed.ac.uk

**MEMORY LANE**

**DOUBLE CELEBRATION**

In 1957, five University friends gathered for a combined 21st birthday party in halls of residence on East Suffolk Road. Fast-forward 54 years, and Anthony Wren (MA, 1959, DSc, 1996), David Reid (BSc, 1958), Norma Reid (BSc, 1958), Alison Lawson (MA, 1958) and Scott Carswell (MA, 1958) reunited in Mudeford, Dorset, to mark their 75th birthdays. The friends have stayed in regular touch since graduating, with another birthday bash planned for 2013.

If you want to rekindle friendships, celebrate an anniversary or simply just get together for an informal gathering, a University reunion will help you stay connected to your fellow graduates. For details on upcoming reunions, or for help with organising your own event, email alumni@ed.ac.uk

**READER REWIND**

It’s always fun — and fascinating — to reminisce about our student days.

Ed Blomfield (MA Hons, 2003) has emailed us two images taken by his father Robert (MBChB, 1964). Robert was a keen snapper during his time at Edinburgh and in his collection is this shot of the rectorial ‘battle’ between the medical students and the art students (top), taken in the Old College quad in 1957. His second picture (centre) captures the student union, c. 1956.

Fellow alumnus Chris Lawson (Pure Chemistry BSc 1966, PhD 1969) has sent in a photo (below) of his research group at King’s Buildings in 1968. Chris, pictured second from left, explains the shot: “It shows Dai Rees (now Sir Dai Rees) holding a model of the double helix structure of carrageenan (a polysaccharide used in many foods), which the research group had just worked out.”

To keep up with the latest alumni news and stay informed about reunions and events in your area, visit www.ed.ac.uk/alumni
NORTH AMERICAN LINKS

The Development & Alumni team joined forces with the University’s International Office recently to host a series of recruitment events in North America. Events were held in Chicago, Boston, New York, Atlanta, San Francisco, Pasadena, Toronto and Vancouver to provide applicants with information and support ahead of them taking up their places at Edinburgh in September. Mariana West, Edinburgh’s International Alumni Manager, says: “Prospective students greatly value the opportunity to hear first-hand from former students, and for alumni it’s a chance to give something back and learn about the latest developments.”

TELETHON SUCCESS

Development & Alumni’s recent spring telethon was an enormous success, with more than 3,000 alumni around the world canvassed over a three-week period. The telethon saw 70 student recruits dial more than 11,200 phone numbers and chat informally to alumni about their memories of Edinburgh. Volunteers also updated graduates on the latest University news and checked that they were receiving Edit magazine, the Alumni Benefits Card and up-to-date events and reunions information. Memories, including “snowballing in George Square,” “climbing Arthur’s Seat” and “Saturday nights at Potterrow” were recorded on a dedicated “Post-it wall” and on an online pinboard, which can be viewed at www.pinterest.com/edinburghalumni

NEW DEPARTMENT HEAD

Kirsty MacDonald, currently working at the University of Oxford, has been appointed as Edinburgh’s Director of Development & Alumni. She has 20 years of fundraising experience in North America and the UK and in her current role is completing the first phase of a £50 million campaign for Oxford’s Wadham College. Ms MacDonald’s previous experience across higher education and the arts includes tenures at Oxford’s Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment, London Business School, English National Opera and Glyndebourne festival. She takes up her post at Edinburgh in July.

TORONTO CLUB MILESTONE

To celebrate its 10th year, Edinburgh University Club of Toronto (EDUCT) has launched the EDUCT Decennial Fund. This generous initiative aims to raise at least £100,000, which will be used to create a permanently endowed fund for four annual student access bursaries. James Hunter (MA, 1973), Chair of the Decennial Fund Committee, says: “An Edinburgh degree opened up so many career possibilities for me. The first 10 years of our club in Toronto have been a lot of fun, and I believe many Edinburgh alumni in the area owe the University so much. Now we’d like to give back.” For more details, visit www.deved.ac.uk/Clubs/toronto
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

At February’s General Council meeting I was encouraged by the Principal’s positive account of the University’s position during these challenging times. Providing one of the most generous bursary packages in the UK has enabled us to attract the highest quality students, and at the other end of the journey our graduates are achieving high rates of employability.

The Business Committee election has been completed. The online voting system worked well but unfortunately the necessary EASE registration process was complex. This resulted in a number of Council members being discouraged or unable to register and vote, and the turnout was significantly lower than in recent elections. The Business Committee is assessing possible contributing factors and the University’s Information Services department is simplifying the registration procedure. It is vital that as many graduates as possible stand for, and vote in, our elections as we have an important and acknowledged role to play in the University’s good governance.

The sell-out lunch following the business meeting was memorable, mainly due to the riveting talk delivered by our speaker, Dame Stella Rimington, former Director-General of MI6. She is now a successful novelist, and her talk stimulated much discussion.

The Business Committee has been considering the Scottish Government’s Higher Education Governance Review and the development of the University’s Strategic Plan 2012–2016 following a presentation by Senior Vice-Principal Professor Nigel Brown.

Our scholarship fund has changed its name to The General Council Prince Philip Fund, because of a magnificent gift of an endowed scholarship by the University of Edinburgh US Development Trust. The change was necessary to accommodate different administrative procedures between access bursaries and scholarships. We are most grateful to Dr Roualeyn Fenton-May and his group, as was HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, when he was informed. The fund is going from strength to strength and I commend it to members.

Forthcoming General Council events include the Edinburgh festival exhibition viewing and reception at the Talbot Rice Gallery and, in conjunction with the University, our biennial ‘out of Edinburgh’ meeting, which will be held in Berlin on 15–16 June. If you are unable to attend you may watch the meeting on our live webcast (see page 33 for details).

Mr Iain Macwhirter has finished his term of office as Rector. We’re grateful to him for chairing our meetings and wish him well, and we look forward to working with his successor, Mr Peter McColl. I also thank the five Business Committee members who finish in July. Mr Bruce Rae and Ms Doreen Davidson have been highly effective Conveners of Standing Committees, and Professor Ron Asher, Mr Michael Conway and Mrs Mary Swarbrick have made significant contributions.

After eight memorable years on the Business Committee, including four as Convener, I’m stepping down. It has been an immense privilege being involved with the General Council and the University, particularly when this great institution is thriving. There’s not space to thank all who helped make this commitment so fulfilling. I’m grateful to those on the Business Committee and my special thanks go to the past and current secretaries, Dr Ann Matheson and Dr Mike Mitchell, the Vice-Conveners, Dr Frances Dow, and Lord Cameron, who have been wise counsellors and good friends.

It has always been a privilege being associated with this University but never more so than when it is a world-class institution so ably led by Professor Sir Timothy O’Shea and his highly professional staff. I am delighted that my successor as Convener is Professor Charles Swainson, and I know the Business Committee will flourish under his leadership. I wish the General Council and the University well and look forward to continuing to support them.
BUSY PROGRAMME PLANNED FOR BERLIN MEETING

HALF-YEARLY MEETING AND WEEKEND OF EVENTS
15–16 JUNE 2012
BERLIN

The General Council is delighted to be taking its Half-Yearly Meeting to Berlin in June. This will enable its members in Germany to hear the Principal talk about the current status of the University and meet with fellow graduates from many other countries. A full programme of events, including symposium, honorary graduation, receptions and functions, has been organised in partnership with the University.

PIioneerArTS TO BE SHOWCASEd

FESTIVAL RECEPTION AND EXHIBITION VIEWING TALBOT RICE GALLERY
THURSDAY 23 AUGUST 2012, 5.15PM

The General Council is once again holding a festival reception and exhibition viewing in the Talbot Rice Gallery this summer. To be staged in conjunction with the Graduates’ Association and Friends of the Talbot Rice Gallery, this event will showcase the works of two American artists whose work reflects the complex crucible of the New York art scene at different points in its history. The first exhibition is by Tim Rollins, a former Bronx junior high school teacher, and the second is of work by Donald Judd (1928–1994) who was one of the first artists to put into question the role of the teacher, and the second is of work by Donald Judd (1928–1994) who was one of the first artists to put into question the role of the artist. General Council members, family and friends are all welcome.

For more information on both exhibitions, turn to Arts Review on page 26 or visit www.ed.ac.uk/about/museums-galleries/talbot-rice.

Tickets are £12 and may be purchased online at www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/festivalevent.htm or by post from Mrs Mary Scott, Assistant to the Secretary of the General Council, General Council Office, the University of Edinburgh, Charles Stewart House, 9–16 Chambers Street, Edinburgh EH1 1HT, Scotland, UK. Please state how many tickets you would like and the names of any guests. Cheques should be made payable to the University of Edinburgh.

Closing date for applications: 15 August 2012

EVENTS PROGRAMME

FRIDAY 15 JUNE 2012
AFTERNOON
Lecture and panel discussion: ‘The Challenges Currently Facing the UK, Germany and the Eurozone’, the Hertie School of Governance

EVENING
Evening reception and conferment of honorary degree, the British Embassy

SATURDAY 16 JUNE 2012
MORNING
General Council Half-Yearly Meeting, Senate Hall, Humboldt University

Refreshments will be available outside the hall at 10am, followed by the meeting at 10.30am

LUNCH
A reception at 12.30pm will be followed by lunch in the Humboldt University Conservatory, with an after-lunch address from Professor Chris Brewed, Principal of ECA

Price £25

AFTERNOON
Tour: ‘Berlin – City of Change’

Ballot for tickets: €10 payable on the day for successful applicants

EVENING
Gala dinner, the Museum for Communication, with after-dinner speech from Dame Stella Rimington

Price: £50 (includes reception, dinner with table wines)

CLOSING DATE FOR ORDERING TICKETS: Friday 8 June 2012

FOR THE FULL PROGRAMME AND LINKS TO EVENT BOOKING: VISIT www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/June2012Programme.htm
The Scottish Government’s Review has received a mixed response.

**REVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION GOVERNANCE**

The Scottish Government set up a Review of Governance in Higher Education which was to develop recommendations to improve this, learning from best practice elsewhere. A balance between accountability and the benefits of autonomy was to be maintained. Input was invited to the Review and both the General Council and the University submitted papers. Our focus was principally on the advantages for good governance of the University from having an independent body like the General Council able to reflect the interests of graduates and academic staff. Such a body also watched over the ongoing activities of the University and could advise upon and influence these. The election of three independent General Council Court Assessors was another important contribution.

The Review Panel produced their report in January. There was also a dissenting minority report. Many of the recommendations or proposals are already in place at Edinburgh and these can be widely supported, such as having a majority of lay members on Court, clear and appropriate appointment procedures for Principals and having both student and staff members on Court. However there is much that does not seem necessary or perhaps even worthwhile. There is no mention at all of a statutory right to have a body such as the General Council, nor of the benefits of having one, except to mention its right to appoint Court Assessors. There is no position for the Chancellor’s Assessor on Court, while currently they sit on both Court and the Business Committee of the General Council and make substantial and highly valued contributions to both. It may be questionable if a single new statute covering all HE institutions is advisable. The suggestions regarding the chairing of University Courts require further consideration. There are further questionable proposals including limiting the size of Senate. It is not at all certain that the role of Court members as independent charity trustees is fully appreciated. Overall it seems there is much in this report to be concerned about from the perspective of the General Council.

The Business Committee has written to the Scottish Government to make its views known. Others may also wish to consider whether they should do likewise. Further information on the Review, including the report, can be found at [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/UniversitiesColleges/16640/ReviewHEGovernance](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/UniversitiesColleges/16640/ReviewHEGovernance).

**FEBRUARY LUNCH A GREAT SUCCESS**

The Playfair Library was full to capacity in February for the lunch following the Half-Yearly Meeting. Guests enjoyed an informative and entertaining presentation from the after-lunch speaker, Dame Stella Rimington, who talked about her career in the Security Service, and her success as an author.

To avoid disappointment, General Council members are reminded to book early for the upcoming General Council lunch.

**EDINBURGH AND YALE ALUMNI TO GET TOGETHER**

The General Council has teamed up with the University’s International Office and Alumni Engagement team to jointly host an upcoming event with members of Yale University’s alumni association.

The Yale Global Alumni Leadership Exchange (YaleGALE) initiative seeks the advancement of education through alumni engagement and leadership, fosters rich cultural understanding among participating universities, and shares best practices in alumni relations across institutions.

In July, its members will visit Edinburgh to enjoy a series of events, including social functions and an interactive meeting to share best practice and develop new ideas for alumni engagement.

Strong links already exist between the two institutions, and we look forward to sharing ideas and gaining new perspectives with the sizeable group who are coming from the USA.
BILLET PROFILES

MEET THE TEAM
The General Council Business Committee members bring to their roles an array of talent and expertise, with professional backgrounds ranging from medicine to leadership development and human resources. Here, we profile three of its key figures, and they describe the people, places, lessons and events from their time as Edinburgh students that had the biggest impact on their careers.

NAME: Alan Brown
EDUCATION: Merchiston Castle School, Edinburgh (1957), University of Edinburgh (MB ChB, 1963)
HOME TOWN: Falkirk
CURRENT HOME: Edinburgh
CURRENT JOB: Retired from NHS but busy with medico-legal, General Medical Council and consultancy work.
FAVOURITE STUDENT MEMORY: Starting ‘proper’ clinical medicine in the wards of the Royal Infirmary after three years of studying science.
MOST MEMORABLE STAFF MEMBER: Sir Derek Dunlop, Professor of Therapeutics. An inspirational clinician and teacher who was always immaculately dressed. On retirement we presented him with a pair of braces, to uphold the dignity of the medical profession!
FAVOURITE SOCIAL VENUE: Relaxing in the Student Union (now Teviot House) at lunchtime with the odd game of Bridge, to get away from the Medical School and the Royal Infirmary. Also the Saturday night ‘UP’ (Union Palais Dance) – packed and smoky.

NAME: Kirsty MacGregor
EDUCATION: Balfron High School, Stirlingshire; St Georges School for Girls, Edinburgh (1982); University of Edinburgh (2001)
HOME TOWN: Buchlyvie, Stirlingshire, Scotland
CURRENT HOME: Edinburgh
CURRENT JOB: Managing Director, The Macgregor Leadership Consultancy; Partner, InnerCalm; OuterChange
FAVOURITE STUDENT MEMORY: The Dean of the Faculty of Arts saying to me at the end of my first term as an undergraduate student, when I decided to change my course from Dentistry to Philosophy and English Literature: “Congratulations Miss Duff – you will never regret this decision.” I didn’t!
MOST MEMORABLE STAFF MEMBER: Richard Hamilton: Senior lecturer in Philosophy during my undergraduate MA – he was my first tutor in philosophy. I used to emerge from his tutorials heady with the excitement of discovering new ways of thinking about things and looking at the world around me. We became friends and met for an occasional lunch over many decades. It was always an inspiration to talk with him and he wrote wonderful letters. He truly cared about education and his students.

NAME: Alan Brown
EDUCATION: University of Edinburgh (MB ChB, 1963)
HOME TOWN: Merchiston Castle School, Edinburgh (1957), University of Edinburgh (1963)
CURRENT HOME: Edinburgh
CURRENT JOB: Retired from NHS and Gynaecology all taking place in the city, Edinburgh is his spiritual home. After a Research Fellowship at the Middlesex Hospital, London, he moved to Manchester as a Senior Lecturer. He returned to Edinburgh, joined the NHS and found his very supportive wife, Elizabeth. He has three adult step-children, one grandson and his dog. He enjoys golf, theatre, travel – and walking the dog.

Most Valuable Lesson: Lessons of commitment and discipline from countless clinicians, which sustained me throughout a long and enjoyable career.

Alan Brown is shortly stepping down as Convener of the General Council’s Business Committee (see page 32). With his education, medical school experience and training in Obstetrics and Gynaecology all taking place in the city, Edinburgh is his spiritual home. After a Research Fellowship at the Middlesex Hospital, London, he moved to Manchester as a Senior Lecturer. He returned to Edinburgh, joined the NHS and found his very supportive wife, Elizabeth. He has three adult step-children, one grandson and his dog. He enjoys golf, theatre, travel – and walking the dog.

“...The University of Edinburgh has been a major influence in my life and these past eight years on the Business Committee have been so fulfilling. Whether Edinburgh is near or far you can contribute in many ways to the outstanding work of the University and its General Council, thus giving something back to this institution, which will surely have had a major influence on your early professional development.”


FAVOURITE SOCIAL VENUE: Teviot Row Union – wonderful wild Friday night memories!

MOST VALUABLE LESSON: The most valuable lesson came from doing the MBA as a mature student. I had one of the most stimulating years of my life – discovering that, with determination and hard work, I could get a handle on hitherto avoided subjects such as statistics, accounting and economics. It also reminded me of the joy of working in teams of very hard-working, motivated, intelligent and creative people. The University staff gave wonderful support.

Kirsty MacGregor is a Member of the General Council’s Business Committee. She was elected in 2011 and will serve until 2015. Her passion for helping people realise their potential has been central to her working life. Returning to the University to undertake the MBA programme in 2001 opened up new areas of interest – including entrepreneurship and leadership development. She has been Managing Director of the MacGregor Leadership Consultancy since 2003 and is currently developing a new partnership specialising in helping people address the stresses of the modern workplace. She has three half-Californian children, one of whom is currently studying postgraduate law at Edinburgh and another computer science at Stanford. She would like to support the development of links between these two great universities; building on the Edinburgh-Stanford research link of 2002-07 and the Silicon Valley Speaker series.

“My years at the University have been some of the happiest and most productive of my life. I am honoured to serve on the General Council Business Committee and am delighted to have this opportunity to give back to an institution that has provided me with so much.”
BILLET PROFILES

NAME: Doreen Davidson

EDUCATION: Glenrothes High School, Fife (1974), University of Edinburgh (BA 1977)

HOME TOWN: Kinglassie, Fife

CURRENT HOME: Midlothian

CURRENT JOB: Senior Director Human Resources for a global contract research organisation

FAVOURITE STUDENT MEMORY: I have many memories of fantastic social and cultural events in Edinburgh, many of which were organised through the University. These were exciting for someone like myself living for the first time in a large city (having moved to Edinburgh from a small village in Fife).

FAVOURITE SOCIAL VENUE: Teviot Row on a Friday evening – a chance to unwind with friends after a busy week of lectures and studying. The students’ union organised some great musical and dance events there during my time at Edinburgh.

MOST VALUABLE LESSON: I appreciated the opportunity to study with individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds and to have the privilege of being taught by individuals who always demonstrated a passion for their subject and a real interest in their students. As a senior leader in my company I feel that these lessons have helped me understand how to energise and motivate people to work hard and develop themselves through commitment to their job and to help them appreciate the benefits of continuous learning.

Doreen Davidson is a Member of the General Council’s Business Committee and Convener of the Finance & Services Standing Committee. She was elected in 2008 and will serve until July 2012. After leaving Edinburgh, she gained a graduate post as an HR Officer with a publishing company in Edinburgh. After a year working in South Africa she returned to Scotland and joined her current organisational unit in 1995. She is now a Senior Director in Human Resources with responsibilities for Human Resources and Training for about 1,000 staff in Scotland, Ireland and Germany.

“I felt honoured to be given the chance to study at such a prestigious university and had often considered how I might give something back in appreciation of the opportunities afforded to me during my years there. It was suggested to me by a friend that I might enjoy participating in the Business Committee of the General Council. I have really enjoyed the experience over the past four years of participating in stimulating discussions on matters of importance to the University and being part of a group which offers advice, and at times a different perspective, on the many issues addressed.

“I was lucky enough to be appointed as Convener of the Finance & Services Standing Committee, which enabled this smaller group to have more open and detailed discussions on relevant, and sometimes sensitive, issues. To be given the chance to offer advice and hopefully influence (even in a small way) thinking on key topics has been very satisfying.”

OFFICERS

Chairman: HRH The Princess Royal
Secretary: Michael J Mitchell, BSc, PhD
Registrar: Kim Waldron, PhD

GENERAL COUNCIL ASSESSORS ON THE UNIVERSITY COURT:

A: Margaret Tait, BSc, 2013
B: Alan M Johnston, MBA, CSci, CChem, FRSC, CBiol, FIBiol, 2015
C: Ann M Smyth, BSc, PhD, MPhil, 2015

BUSINESS COMMITTEE:

Convener: Alan D G Brown, MB ChB, FRCOG, FRCS
Vice-Convener: Frances D Dow, MA, DPhil

CHANCELLOR’S ASSESSORS:

A: R E Asher, BA, PhD, DLIIT, FRSE
B: Michael C Conway, MA
C: Mary M Swarbrick, MA, PGC
D: William Ruthven Gemmell, LLB
E: William Shields Henderson, MA, CA
F: Jane E Kille, MA, MBA
G: Luise Locke, BA, MA
H: Elizabeth Morris, MB ChB MRCGP
I: Bruce Ritson, MD, FRCPE, FRCpsych
J: Ann M Sutherland, MA, FB CantS
K: Charles P Swainson, MB ChB, FRCS, FRCS, FFPHM
L: Morven Brown, MA, DipEd, DipEd Psych, AFBP S
M: Waverley Cameron, BSc, SM
N: Michael Lugton, MA
O: Kirsty MacGregor, MA, MBA, DipEd
P: Ritchie Walker, MA, BSc, DipEd

ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY:

Mary T Scott, BA

The Constitutional Arrangements for the working of the General Council of the University of Edinburgh and its Business Committee and the Regulations for General Council Elections can be found at www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/constitution.htm
AGENDA FOR THE GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING

1 Minutes of the Meeting of the General Council held in Old College, Edinburgh, on 11 February 2012 (PAPER A)

2 Matters arising

3 Report of the Business Committee

4 Dates of future meetings of the General Council

5 Notice of forthcoming elections

6 Presentation by the Professor Sir Timothy O’Shea, Principal and Vice-Chancellor

7 Any other competent business

8 Adjournment

PAPER A

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL HELD IN EDINBURGH ON 11 FEBRUARY 2012

PRESENT

SHERIFF PRINCIPAL
EDWARD BOWEN
Chancellor’s Assessor, in the Chair

DR KIM WALDRON
University Secretary and Registrar of the General Council

PROFESSOR
SIR TIMOTHY O’SHEA
Principal and Vice-Chancellor

DR MICHAEL MITCHELL
Secretary of the General Council

DR ALAN BROWN
Convener of the Business Committee

65P AND 7V = 72
OTHER MEMBERS
(P = Physical; V = Virtual)

REV DR HARRIET HARRIS
Chaplain to the University

1 RESULT OF THE ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

The Chairman announced that the five new members of the Business Committee elected to serve for a period of four years from 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2016 were: Dr Robert Andrew Philip Burt, Mr Gordon Douglas Cairns, Professor Stuart Gowans MacPherson, Mr Hamish Andrew Niven McKenzie and Professor David Mackenzie Munro.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL HELD IN DARWIN LECTURE THEATRE G10, DARWIN BUILDING, THE KING’S BUILDINGS, EDINBURGH, ON 18 JUNE 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2011 were approved.

3 MATTERS ARISING

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

4 REPORT OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Dr Alan Brown, Convener of the Business Committee, gave the report...
of the Business Committee. He welcomed all attendees both present and online, and in particular Sheriff Principal Edward Bowen, Chancellor’s Assessor, in the Chair for his first official meeting. The first General Council election with mainly online voting had just been completed successfully although further improvements to the procedures were anticipated. The Constitutional Arrangements and Regulations for Elections had been revised following approval by the Privy Council of the simplified Ordinance in October and were presented for approval at the meeting. All who had worked on this were thanked.

The highlight of the year was the installation of the new Chancellor in the refurbished Old College Quad and the Convener had given the vote of thanks. The General Council Prince Philip Fund was proving successful. It had received a most generous donation from the United States University of Edinburgh Development Trust to fund an endowed scholarship. Other substantial donations had been made and further donations were encouraged.

The Business Committee continued to examine major issues concerning the University, including tuition fees and the next University of Edinburgh Strategic Plan. It was indebted to all the University staff who presented to the Committee so willingly. It noted the demitting from office of the Rector, Mr lain Macwhirter, and thanked him for his support while welcoming his successor, Mr Peter McColl. The next Half-Yearly Meeting in Berlin at Humboldt University was anticipated and members were encouraged to attend and participate in the exciting programme of associated events planned for the weekend.

The report of the Business Committee was approved.

The full text of the Convener’s remarks are contained in the Annex to the Bilet.

5 MOTION

The revised ‘Constitutional Arrangements for the Working of the General Council of the University of Edinburgh and its Business Committee’ and The General Council of the University of Edinburgh Regulations for General Council Elections’ were unanimously approved.

6 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

The next Half-Yearly Meeting would take place on Saturday 16 June 2012 at Humboldt University, Berlin. Any motions for discussion at this meeting should be received in the General Council Office by 28 March 2012. The following Statutory Half-Yearly Meeting would be held on Saturday 9 February 2013 in Old College and any motions for discussion at this meeting should be received in the General Council Office by 21 November 2012.

7 NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS

There would be elections for one General Council Assessor to the University Court and five Members of the Business Committee in February 2013. Nominations on forms available from the General Council Office and on the website should be received in the General Council Office by 21 November 2012.

8 PRESENTATION BY THE PRINCIPAL OF THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY

The Principal thanked the General Council for its support. In particular he welcomed the introduction of the General Council Prince Philip Fund as an appropriate way to express thanks to HRH The Prince Philip, Due of Edinburgh, for all he had done, as well as setting an excellent example in providing more support for students. He began by noting the breadth of financial support from research councils, Government, charities, the European Union and industry sources, in total more than 100 grants, and highlighted the very successful commercialisation team at Edinburgh Research and Innovation who led a new investment fund and new company formation.

All benefactors were thanked. The current £350 million campaign was almost complete and had been a great success. Once again Edinburgh was in third place in the UK, only behind Oxford and Cambridge. Student support had benefited both from access bursaries and scholarships for excellence, as well as research, especially in areas less favoured by main funding sources. Students now numbered 29,000, 12,000 from Scotland, 7,000 from the rest of the UK and 10,000 international, 2,300 of whom were from North America, which was a significant achievement, and 1,600 from Chinese-speaking countries. Numbers from India were growing and Latin America had great potential.

Although there had been a slight drop in applications, which may reflect the perceived difficulty in gaining entry to Edinburgh, as well as special funding issues in Northern Ireland, these still vastly exceeded the number of places and international and EU applications had increased considerably. Credit was given to the efforts of Student Recruitment and Admissions and also to the very generous new bursary schemes. New appointments highlighted also reflected the strength of the University and many staff had received awards and honours.

The financial outcome was even better than expected. On a turnover of £651 million, a surplus of £42 million was recorded which would be reinvested in student support and the estate. The University was a major business with assets exceeding £1 billion and more than 11,000 staff. Major building completions included the veterinary teaching unit at Easter Bush and the new Roslin Institute. The Scottish Centre for Regenerative Medicine would open soon and the Main Library refurbishment continued. The very favourable three-year funding agreement with the Scottish Government provided a very secure platform for the coming years and a loan from the European Investment Bank at low interest rates would enable the building programme to be sustained.

World-leading research carried out throughout the University was wide ranging, including in particular gene-linked language learning, urinary tests for cancer, family history from DNA and risk taking in banking. The increasing importance and financial value of online learning was described and this was anticipated to grow substantially, including the two Masters programmes in Global Challenges and Surgical Sciences.

The relationship with EUSA, the students’ association, was very constructive. Their efforts in encouraging and organising volunteering were commended with international students highly active. A web-based initiative was very successful and growing and was a major contribution to community engagement.

The merger with Edinburgh College of Art had proceeded well. Unexpected benefits were emerging, such as the film orchestra, and the College’s fashion and degree shows were highly recommended. The employability of Edinburgh graduates was the best in the Russell Group, with 95 per cent in employment or further education six months post-graduation. Credit was due to the Careers Service, which had strong links with industry and continued to increase the number of vacancies...
advised and develop innovative web tools.

The Principal then presented the outcome of his recent ‘Horizon Scanning’ exercise to inform the new Strategic Plan. The difficulties in forecasting the future were illustrated by Moore’s Law, which predicted that computer power doubled every 18 months, which remained true, and Metcalfe’s prediction that the internet would be overloaded and collapse by the year 2000, which it clearly had not. Social computing was also highly fluid, for example, and changes happened regularly though often unpredictably. The University was well placed to accommodate change through its current strengths in computing and informatics. Mention was also made of Research Massification, the trend for research to require very large pieces of equipment such as the Large Hadron Collider or large multinational groups of researchers. The latter applied to social science as well. The University was already participating in such projects and the Global Academies were collaborating.

Next was Course and Learning Diversification, with courses being delivered in person, by distance learning or a hybrid, and methods of learning also changing, using IT, group work and participative learning. The University was developing along these lines, with strengths in Education, IT and the Institute for Academic Development.

The University needed the latest teaching methods, facilities and the highest quality staff to deliver the best standards of learning and teaching; students were becoming more demanding, as were the professional standards authorities. It scored well with the Quality Assurance Agency but must continually enhance the quality of what it was doing. Entrepreneurial education was also vital and Edinburgh had a wonderful Technology Transfer Office and supportive infrastructure including business incubators and a presence in science parks. Institutional identity should be clear and well communicated; Edinburgh was a major international comprehensive university, headquartered in Scotland but taking its staff, students and research projects from around the world. It was successful and growing. Institutional stratification clarified what the University was; part of the Russell Group of UK universities which were large, research intensive and long established, usually with medical schools.

It was also a member of Universitas 21, one of the European group with a medieval charter, and one of the League of European Research Universities. International demand was increasing despite investment in higher education in many countries, but Edinburgh was doing well against increasing competition. Institutional autonomy was increasingly helpful in the successful development of universities internationally, and had to be maintained, including internal autonomy with delegated authority.

The Principal concluded by stressing how positive most aspects were in terms of numbers and quality of staff and students. It was strong financially, internationally, in research and infrastructure and university partnerships. It had to be both large and very agile at the same time.

The full text of the Principal’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.

The Annex to the Billet, which contains supporting papers for the Agenda, including communications from the University Court, full Standing Committee reports, a transcript of the Principal’s presentation, and the Business Committee’s report to the meeting on 11 February 2012, is available at 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; general.council@ed.ac.uk; or a copy can be picked up at the location of the Council Meeting from 30 minutes beforehand.

9 ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

There was no other competent business.
At the University of Edinburgh, our alumni clubs and networks not only span the UK, but the world. Regular meet-ups and a variety of events are always on the go, such as drinks receptions, panel debates, whisky tastings and barbecues. You’ll also find more formal and exclusive invitations to events such as art exhibitions and one-off talks. All of which let you keep in touch or discover new, fellow alumni. That’s because no matter where you may be, the University of Edinburgh can be too. For further information about events near you, go to [www.ed.ac.uk/alumni](http://www.ed.ac.uk/alumni).

Wherever life takes you, the University of Edinburgh goes too.