HIGHER ANIMATED
BIG-SCREEN SUCCESS FOR EDINBURGH FILMMAKERS

OTHER WORLDLY PURSUITS
OUR ASTROBIOLOGISTS PONDER WHAT’S OUT THERE

ALSO INSIDE MUSIC STUDENTS STEAL THE SHOW | TEVIOT: YOUR MEMORIES | FOCUS ON INNOVATIVE LEARNING
How did you make it?

We know that hard work and passion were among the key elements that led to your graduation from the University of Edinburgh, but you may also have needed financial assistance to help you on your way.

Perhaps you received a scholarship or bursary, or something less formal such as help with fees, transport, food, accommodation or childcare.

As a single parent and a mature student, a bursary helped me a great deal financially. I was able to spend quality time with my family while ensuring that I was able to obtain a good degree in order to get a decent job.

Elaine Sneddon, BA (Community Education) 2009

We’d love to hear about your Edinburgh experience. Contact us at:

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Foreword

Welcome to the Summer 2013 issue of Edit. You’ll know that Edinburgh is noted for its range and breadth of teaching and research. In this edition we explore this diversity: strengthening international recognition for genetic research (p16); influencing the world with inventions and ideas (p26); working together with the community (p12); and getting creative in the animation studio (p22). Edinburgh’s staff and students excel – and so do our alumni. Next time you travel through London’s King’s Cross station you can marvel at its stunning modernisation knowing that the architect is an Edinburgh alumnus (p18); when you hear about successes in tackling global health problems you can be proud that an Edinburgh graduate has played a major part (p8); and when you pick up New Scientist magazine you’ll appreciate that one of its news editors (and an Edit contributor) Jessica Griggs developed her love of science here (p10). Wherever you are, we hope that we inspire you to reconnect with Edinburgh – you can do this by attending the Alumni Weekend in June, sending us your favourite student memories or connecting with us online.

Kirsty MacDonald, Executive Director of Development and Alumni Engagement

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: www.hookson.com
Printing: J Thomson Colour Printers
Cover photograph: © Jiamin Liu/Edinburgh College of Art

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Edit is published twice a year. The views expressed in its columns are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent those of the University of Edinburgh. The magazine is printed on environmentally friendly, carbon-balanced paper that has been accredited by the Forestry Stewardship Council.

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This publication is available in alternative formats on request.

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ACHIEVEMENT CELEBRATED

Five public figures were awarded honorary degrees by the University at a Celebration of Achievement ceremony earlier this year.

Film producer Lord Puttman, rugby star Scott Hastings, jazz musician Tommy Smith, Homelands World Cup President Mal Young, and Chair of CBI Scotland Nischana McNab were each awarded a Doctor honoris causa in McEwan Hall.

In 2011 Ms Mobarak (pictured) became the first Asian and only the second woman to hold the chair of CBI Scotland, the country’s top business lobby group.

Born in Pakistan but raised in Scotland since she was five, she is the co-founder of Glasgow-based All Computer Technologies.

CENTRE TO BENEFIT EPILEPSY PATIENTS

Children with epilepsy will benefit from a new Edinburgh research centre investigating causes, consequences and improved treatment of the condition.

The Mur Maxwell Epilepsy Centre was officially opened by HRH The Princess Royal, the University’s Chancellor earlier this year.

The £9 million centre – supported by the Mur Maxwell Trust – works to improve the lives of children with epilepsy and their families.

A team of scientists will focus on developing medical and educational treatments for children with epilepsy, and seek to better understand the psychosocial impact of the condition. They will also investigate the influence that a mother’s health and lifestyle can have on the likelihood of her children developing epilepsy.

MEDIEVAL KNIGHT’S SKELETON UNERNEATHED

AN EDINBURGH ARCHAEOLOGY ALUMNIUS HAS UNERNEATHED THE REMAINS OF A MEDIEVAL KNIGHT AT THE UNIVERSITY’S SECOND HIGHSCHOOL YARDS SITE.

The knight’s skeleton was among dozens of discoveries uncovered by archaeologist Ross Murray (MA Hons Archaeology 2000) and his team.

Covering the remains was a slab of elaborately decorated sandstone. The stone’s markings, which included a sword and a cross, are consistent with those typically found on a nobleman’s gravestone. The team also uncovered the foundations of Blackfriars Monastery, revealing for the first time the exact location of the 13th-century building, which was destroyed during the Protestant Reformation in 1558.

“My parents moved to Edinburgh when I was a child,” said Mr Murray. “The fact that he is buried in what would be the grounds of the chuchyard tells you that he is rich.”

A further eight skeletons were found separately, in the confines of an ancient wall, which may be the remnants of a family crypt. The discoveries were made at the construction site of the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation. The new centre, billed to be the world’s most sustainable historical building, will open in summer.

IMPLANTS TO TARGET CANCER TUMOURS

Sensors the size of an eyelash could be used to monitor cancer patients’ tumours in real-time and in great detail.

The devices would be implanted into tumours, where they could “spy” on a cancerous growth’s activity. They would also allow doctors to target radiotherapy and chemotherapy treatments more effectively, improving patients’ chances of recovery.

A team led by the University in collaboration with Heriot-Watt University, will develop the miniature chips in a five-year project to prove the technology, which they hope to follow with clinical trials.

Professor Alan Murray, of the School of Engineering says: “Our aim is, in the long term, to help alleviate suffering and to improve the outlook for many cancer patients.”

PREHISTORIC PREDATOR IDENTIFIED

A team of experts led by Edinburgh scientists has identified prehistoric remains as a new species of marine super-predator, distantly related to modern-day crocodiles.

The researchers confirmed that the partial skeleton, discovered more than a century ago, belongs to a type of crocodile that was similar to a dolphin. The animal’s serrated teeth and large gaping jaw meant it would have been suited to feeding on large-bodied prey.

The newly confirmed species will help scientists better understand how marine reptiles were evolving about 165 million years ago.

An amateur palaeontologist found the specimen in a clay pit near Peterborough in the early 1900s, and it has since been held by the Hunterian Museum at the University of Glasgow.

INNOVATIVE LEARNING INSPIRES AND INFORMS

STUDENTS FROM ALL DISCIPLINES HAD THE CHANCE RECENTLY TO PARTICIPATE IN SOME UNCONVENTIONAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES DURING THE UNIVERSITY’S SECOND INNOVATIVE LEARNING WEEK.

For one week, traditional modes of teaching such as lectures and tutorials were replaced with a dynamic programme of events designed to give students extra opportunities to develop skills, prepare for employment and meet new people.

More than 200 events took place, and activities ranged from hands-on workshops to careers skills seminars and employment-based projects. Students had the chance to learn sign language, discover Edinburgh’s philosophical history on foot, sketch dogs competing for a Best in Show award (pictured) and use maths to perform magic.

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**GETTING CREATIVE WITH COMPUTING**

Kate Ho is managing director of the Technology Production Company Interface 3, whose work ranges from building apps and mobile games to designing immersive digital experiences.

Her work has focused on designing experiences for multitouch interface technologies, in particular interactive tables such as the Microsoft Surface and SMART Tables, and the iPad.

Since she became managing director of Interface 3, the company has won the Touch Finance Competition, and SMART Technologies’ Microsoft Surface and SMART Tables, and the iPad.

Interface 3 also runs coding workshops for primary school children and makes storybooks to be used at Edinburgh’s Royal Hospital for Sick Children.

**IN SEARCH OF WILD PLACES**

Sally Eaton is a research assistant at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) and recently worked as a presenter on Wild Things, Channel 4’s programme about British wildlife.

The ecologist and ichnologist has two degrees from Edinburgh, a BSc (Hons) in Biological Sciences (Ecology) 2003, and an MSc in Biodiversity & Taxonomy of Plants 2009.

Ms Eaton grew up in the Forest of Bowland in Lancashire, where she discovered a love of wild places.

She is a trustee of the British Lichen Society and the Species Recovery Trust and is also Chair of the Education and Promotions Committee of the British Lichen Society.

Ms Eaton runs courses, walks and public engagement events alongside her teaching and supervision roles at RBGE.

**RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ON AGENDA**

Dr Andrew Bennett (PhD Politics 2002) has been appointed ambassador for Canada’s Office of Religious Freedom.

Announcing the appointment earlier this year, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper said “Around the world, violations of religious freedom are widespread and they are increasing. Dr Bennett is a man of principle and deep convictions and he will encourage the protection of religious minorities around the world so all can practise their faith without fear of violence and repression.”

Dr Bennett is Dean of Augustine College, a Christian liberal arts college in Ottawa. Before his appointment at Augustine College, he worked for Canadian Deputy Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, the Export Development Corporation and the Privy Council Office.

**PHOTOGRAPHER CAPTURES THE MOOD**

Jane Stockdale is making her mark as a photographer, with clients as varied as Nokia, Arcade Fire, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, T in the Park, O2 and Oxfam.

Originally from Banchory, Aberdeenshire, Ms Stockdale has concentrated on documentary and music photography since graduating from Edinburgh College of Art (BA Hons Visual Communication: Graphic Design 2003).

Her diverse assignments have seen her document a range of events and causes, including the UN effort to halt the smuggling of weapons in Lebanon, diamond mining in Botswana and the England football team in training.

Earlier this year she shot a comedy sketch featuring model Kate Moss and actor David Walliams for Comic Relief.

Ms Stockdale’s photographs have been published in a variety of UK and international magazines and newspapers. Her first book, I predict a riot (Koenig Books), a record of the G20 demonstrations that took place in London four years ago, was published in 2011.

**ACADEMIC TAKES UP TOP POST**

Professor Premalakshmi De Silva has been appointed the first Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Colombo in Sri Lanka.

Professor De Silva (PhD Social Anthropology 2003) took up the post earlier in the year. Prior to the appointment he was Head of the Department of Sociology.

Throughout his academic career Professor De Silva has won prestigious international awards and fellowships, including the Sir Robert and Sir Raymond Firth Fellowship of the Royal Anthropological Institute in the UK, and the Sir Ernest Cassel Educational Trust Merit Award.

He has served as President of the Sociological Association of Sri Lanka and, since 2008, as the Senior Student Counsellor of the University of Colombo.
How did you become interested in science? When I was about six my father bought me a microscope as a birthday present. I was one of those annoying little kids who was always asking why and how. I grew up in Zimbabwe and I’d pick leaves from different trees and pick flowers and wonder why they looked different and what’s the point. With science there’s always another question you want to find out why and then you investigate, and that opens up more questions and then you’re making some progress. There’s this never-ending puzzle and something about that really appeals to me.

Did studying neuroscience at Edinburgh nurture that inquisitiveness? How the subject was introduced – being taught by people who were so engaged and wanted to pass on their knowledge and who were at the cutting edge – really captured my imagination and my interest. That feeling of being on the frontiers of discovery was just so exciting. Even now I can look back and say my time at Edinburgh was probably some of the best years of my life, and I’ve had some quite exciting times.

Did any academics in particular stand out? Aubrey Manning was an inspiration, just amazing, and Gareth Leng – I have a lifelong fascination with a hormone called oxytocin and that’s entirely due to him. And Richard Morris was a fantastic, inspiring neuroscience professor. That’s just a selection – I was fortunate that there were so many fantastic people who taught me.

You played an instrumental role in managing the world’s largest public–private clinical trial aimed at developing an HIV prevention gel for women. Can you tell me about that project? We know that condoms are effective in preventing HIV transmission, but in some circumstances it’s difficult for a woman to keep negotiating condom use with her husband or regular partner. The idea behind a microbicide is that a woman can choose to disclose that she’s using the gel but she doesn’t have to keep negotiating use every time, because she’s in control. And not only that, but she could also have the chance to have children. It’s a field that’s still under a lot of research: a definitive microbicide hasn’t been developed yet, but there has been quite a lot of promising advance. It does take time to develop a new therapy from the lab to the bench to trialling it actually being used. There’s the stage now where they’re being tested in the field. I am hopeful.

You’ve taken on advisory posts at world-renowned organisations like the United Nations – did your experiences in the field prompt that move into more consultative roles? I wanted to have the experience of working in an organisation where you’re really trying to make these advances be adopted into policy – focusing on how can we help, how can we make it happen, getting involved in changing laws. Now I’m working as an independent consultant and work with different organisations, with UN agencies and with governments in Eastern Africa, helping them develop implementation plans for HIV prevention.

Do you enjoy the multidisciplinary challenges you face as a Yale World Fellow? I have the chance to engage with other fellows who are in different disciplines and from around the world – from Pakistan, Israel, as far away as Japan. We develop special projects to work on a problem and then try to come up with solutions, perhaps by holding a forum to bring together stakeholders from different areas. I can tap into their ideas and apply them to my own field. It’s a really enriching experience.

What progress would you say has been made in Africa with the fight against HIV? When I first started this work it was pretty much a death sentence in Africa if you were diagnosed with HIV, and now I’m seeing more and more that people are living with HIV and disclosing that they have it, which is a sign that the stigma is reducing. It hasn’t gone away but I’ve definitely seen that shift – it is reducing and part of that is the availability of antiretroviral drugs. There are fewer new infections each year and that’s massive progress.

A deep connection to her homeland led Zimbabwe’s Dr Precious Lunga into HIV prevention research. Now working at the heart of the international effort to improve health in low-resource settings, she credits Edinburgh with nurturing her lifelong fascination with science. She talks to Cate MacKenzie.
Astrobiology is a subject area that far it can be pushed. For the past 3.5 billion years, and how it has managed to persist into these questions will also shine light on the origins of life on this planet, how and where it will bring together physicists, astronomers, biologists, chemists, engineers and geologists to ponder astronomers, biologists, chemists, engineers and geologists to ponder. The UKCA's flagship facility, the Boulby International Subsurface Astrobiology Laboratory, is located more than a kilometre below ground in a rock salt mine in Yorkshire and is the world's first permanent laboratory of its kind. Its network of tunnels carved out of ancient salt deposits -- conditions similar to the salty pools of Mars -- are home to an isolated microbiology that has uniquely evolved to survive there. By collecting microbes and extracting and analysing their DNA, Edinburgh scientists can determine their species and adaptations to the extremes of living deep underground.

"Space explorers require instruments that are small and robust and that can survive in physically difficult environments. These are exactly the same conditions required by the mining industry," he says. "We're trying to work out how to translate the technology required for planetary exploration to improve mining safety and mineral extraction on Earth."

Back above ground at the UKCA, these investigations are complemented by the development of the unique Planetary Simulation Facility, which creates a range of climatic and hydrological conditions similar to those on Mars. The facility's computers can control pressure, temperature and UV illumination, and water can flow in and out of its chamber. "It will allow us to create salty environments to see how that would have affected life on Mars, if it was ever there," explains Professor Cockell.

The UKCA's diversity of experimental apparatus and research capabilities as well as its multidisciplinary member body, make it an attractive collaborative partner. The Centre has links to the universities of Oxford and Bath, and Imperial College, to name just a few partner institutions, and it played host to experts from all over Britain at the recent UK Astrobiology Conference. It is also affiliated to the NASA Astrobiology Institute. This highly collaborative environment enables Edinburgh to attract the brightest stars -- students and staff -- from around the world.

For Dr. Fox-Powell, a PhD student who moved to Edinburgh recently after completing a masters degree in molecular microbiology, the launch of the UKCA was a major draw. "Cementing factors for his decision to come to Edinburgh were the fertile interdisciplinary environment and cutting-edge facilities. Astrobiology is such a growing field, and it seemed that the set-up of a dedicated UK-based centre was a real landmark event," Mr Fox-Powell says. "Astrobiology thrives on interdisciplinary collaboration, and being here means we can benefit from the University's diverse facilities and scientists. It's a very exciting place to work."

"I thought it was a great opportunity to teach and learn about astrobiology, and I couldn't do that within the normal university system," explains Professor Charles Cockell, whose 15-minute lectures went to thousands of people. "MOOCs are still relatively experimental and I think they fit into Edinburgh's enthusiasm for developing innovative ways of learning."

The course attracted people of all ages from regions around the world, including Albania, Bahrain, Georgia and Hong Kong.
STRIKING THE RIGHT NOTE

Mixing performing arts outreach, community development and conflict resolution, the University’s Music in the Community course is typical of a deeply creative approach to the art form since music was first taught at Edinburgh in 1839. By Edd McCracken

Just the act of singing together can cross all barriers and create a new community within a group of disparate people.

Birds are singing in the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh glasshouse. Oyster catchers, gannets and peacocks are assembled beneath the palm trees, and University of Edinburgh music lecturer Dee Isaacs is in their midst, conducting this feathered chorus like a latter-day Mary Poppins. Their haunting song hovers in the space between the panes like a mist. They sing, “Once upon a time there was a story” harmonising words written by Serbian poet Vasko Popa. Ms Isaacs brings the musical phrase to an end and the birds remove their beaks, bills and plumage – the singing flock is transformed into a chattering group of 10-year-old pupils from Edinburgh’s Gilmerton Primary School. The group is rehearsing for its promenade performance of “Conference of the Birds”, a thousand-year-old Persian poem set to music by Ms Isaacs, lead academic on the University’s Music in the Community course.

What started life in 1991 as a module is now an undergraduate course open to third- and fourth-year students and bringing together myriad disciplines, including performing arts outreach, community development, creative arts therapies and conflict resolution, all glued together by music. “Music and community says it all,” says Ms Isaacs, who last year won the University’s Principal’s Medal for services to the community. “Just the act of singing together can cross all barriers and create a new community within a group of disparate people. It’s a powerful thing.”

Exciting Possibilities

The children from Gilmerton would be following in some illustrious footsteps [see panel, overleaf]. Music began at Edinburgh in 1839 as a result of a bequest from General John Reid (1721–1807). His will stipulated the establishment of a chair in the theory and practice of music, which eventually led to the creation of the Faculty of Music in 1893. The BMus it offered was the first of its kind in the UK, and the standard for all that followed.

The Reid School of Music continues to innovate. It investigates everything from engaging with the local community via its numerous outward-facing courses to links with the University’s Medicine, Mathematics, Psychology, French, Film and Physics departments, the School restless challenges the limits of music’s power. Nowhere more so than in Music in the Community. Students on the course bring music to people in places that might otherwise be silent – the young offenders in HM Prison Edinburgh, groups of adults who have suffered head injuries, and Gambian school pupils, who learn by note not by music.

Every year the programme culminates in a large-scale production. This year, it was the 30 pupils of Gilmerton Primary School, assisted by 20 students and several professional artists, who were at the centre of this freshly forged musical community. Afterwards, a number of pupils indicated to Ms Isaacs they wanted to study music at university. “I thought that was wonderful,” she says.

The children from Gilmerton would be following in some illustrious footsteps [see panel, overleaf]. Music began at Edinburgh in 1839 as a result of a bequest from General John Reid (1721–1807). His will stipulated the establishment of a chair in the theory and practice of music, which eventually led to the creation of the Faculty of Music in 1893. The BMus it offered was the first of its kind in the UK, and the standard for all that followed.
STRIKING THE RIGHT NOTE

CONTINUED

STRIKING THE RIGHT NOTE

from neuroscience and cognition to acoustics and live music.

“We have a very broad view of what music is,” says Professor Peter Nelson, Head of School. “Music is an utterly fundamental human activity. It’s not an aesthetic add-on. We want to introduce undergraduates to the whole breadth of the subject, which isn’t to say that people don’t go off and become wonderful performers. But they come out with that wholeness. They leave knowing about the possibilities of music.”

One such possibility is to explain why music flows through the ways in which individuals, societies and nations interact and express themselves. This question presupposes Professor Simon Frith, the Tovey Chair of Music.

“Making music together, whether playing, listening or dancing, seems to be one way in which we express relationships with other people that are pleasurable,” he says. “We know of no society that doesn’t have music. So studying music is very interesting.”

Professor Frith’s current research involves developing a historical sociology of British music culture since 1950, a fitting pursuit for The Times’ first ever rock critic and the founding Chair of the Mercury Music Prize. In its newly published first volume, The History of Live Music in Britain, Professor Frith credits jazz as being “by far the most revolutionary moment after the war was not rock’n’roll,” and the real foundation for today’s live music scene.

While Professor Frith is fascinated by how music affects the connections we make with each other, Professor Raymond MacDonald is interested in how music changes our internal connections. Put simply, he wants to know what music does to our brains.

“Whether you’re listening to music in the car, a bar, in an opera house, or if you’re singing in the bath, music is universal and can affect us in profound ways,” he says. “Music can touch us deeply, which is something as a psychologist, as well as a musician, that drives my research.”

Professor MacDonald has investigated how listening to music can reduce pain perceptions. For example, by listening to music after a minor operation, patients can reduce their anxiety.

And if this is so, then the health, social and psychological benefits of playing music are available to all too. Professor MacDonald provides workshops for adults with learning difficulties. They learn the Japanese game of Kanaji, and over several months he has noted that better rhythm perception has developed in tandem with greater communication skills.

Like everyone else within the School, music’s possibilities excite him. “We need to break down some of the barriers that stop people taking up music,” he says. “I hope the work I do can contribute to that. I hope the work of the School contributes to that. I can sound evangelical about the importance of music, but I hope it is rooted in evidence.”

Professor MacDonald is interested in how music affects the connections we make with each other, Professor MacDonald’s research involves developing a historical sociology of British music culture since 1950.

The Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments ranks among the world’s most important collections of musical heritage. To read about our vision to conserve and make accessible this collection, visit www.ed.ac.uk/bh6v1

The Reid Memorial Concert Hall opened in 1897.

Edinburgh’s music academics and alumni include conductors, opera stars, pop artists, writers and music technology experts. We chart just some of their achievements over the past two centuries.

1807 General John Reid, a passionate flautist and composer, dies. He leaves money to the University, where he studied law, to establish a chair in the theory and practice of music. He also asks that an annual concert be organised at which the music of his time be played. The University responds by establishing the Reid Chair and overseeing the School sees it as Reid Professor. Under his tutelage the School sees a string of early careers develop of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra’s Chief Conductor Donald Runnicles (BMus Music 1976) and the celebrated composer Dr James MacMillan (BMus 1981). Professor Donaldson is officially established as Reid Professor. Under his tutelage the School sees a string of early careers develop of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra’s Chief Conductor Donald Runnicles (BMus Music 1976) and the celebrated composer Dr James MacMillan (BMus 1981). 1839 The first Reid Professor, John Thomson, takes up his post.

1840 Sidney Newman succeeds Tovey. He oversaw the foundation of the Edinburgh University String Orchestra and the restoration of St Cecilia’s Hall as its base.

1845 John Donaldson becomes the next chair and expands music at the University significantly. Lectures, including some for women, begin. He experiments with musical acoustics.

1845 The Musical Society, which acts as an umbrella organisation for the large orchestra and choir, is founded by Sir Herbert Oakeley.

1867 The Reid Orchestra is established under Donald Francis Tovey. It’s the only professional orchestra in Edinburgh until the 1970s.

1883 The Edinburgh University String Orchestra is founded.

1917 The Reid Chair and oversight of the School of Music.

1945 The University Singers group is founded.

1970 Kenneth Leighton takes up the Reid Chair and oversees the student careers of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra’s Chief Conductor Donald Runnicles (BMus Music 1976) and the celebrated composer Dr James MacMillan (BMus 1981). 1989 Nigel Osborne takes over as Reid Professor. Under his tutelage the School sees a string of early careers develop of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra’s Chief Conductor Donald Runnicles (BMus Music 1976) and the celebrated composer Dr James MacMillan (BMus 1981).

1991 Dee Haas (BMus Hons 1970) wins the Principal’s Medal for Service to the Community.

1993 The Faculty of Music is officially established under Frederick Narks. His programme for BMUs is the first of its kind in the UK.

1995 The Edinburgh University String Orchestra joins the staff as the Reid Professor. Under his tutelage the School sees a string of early careers develop of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra’s Chief Conductor Donald Runnicles (BMus Music 1976) and the celebrated composer Dr James MacMillan (BMus 1981).

2006 Professor Simon Frith, founding Chair of the Mercury Music Prize, joins the staff as the second Tovey Chair of Music.

2012 Dai Vaughan (BMus Hons 1970) wins the Principal’s Medal for Service to the Community.

2013 STAY CONNECTED

The Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments ranks among the world’s most important collections of musical heritage. To read about our vision to conserve and make accessible this collection, visit www.ed.ac.uk/bh6v1
Discovery of a gene that may yield insights into how humans evolved from apes shows how genetics research at Edinburgh is making strides. Now a Scottish hub for the University’s molecular scientists is in sight, writes Chris Small.

It’s about bringing people together – having a central space will stop people thinking in terms of which area they work in. Over time, they’ll feel they work in one institute rather than component parts.

A n international study involving scientists from the University recently uncovered a gene that may shine a light on how humans evolved from apes. The gene, miR-941, appears to be a vital component in human brain development.

The discovery represents the first time a new gene was identified only by humans and not by apes has been identified as having a specific function within the human body. Fundamental to the breakthrough was the research contribution of Dr Martin Taylor, who led the study at the Medical Research Council Institute of Genetics & Molecular Medicine (IGMM). Dr Taylor explains, which may be important in changing the development of the human brain.

“Initially, we were very surprised by the results. The gene, miR-941, is found in the human genome, and our best guess is that it is conserved in many species, including apes. But the unexpected thing was that the gene seems to be uniquely active in the brain. It suggests that there has been a change in the human lineage in the past 5 million years.”

The discovery is significant because it opens up the possibility of understanding the development of the human brain. The results of the research are set to be published in the journal Nature.

The miR-941 finding is an indication of the quality and ambition of genetics work currently being undertaken at the University. It is also typical of the achievements that have been made by Edinburgh graduates in the field for decades (see panel, right). It comes in the wake of the formation of the MRC IGMM, which brings together the MRC Human Genetics Unit, the Molecular Medicine Centre and Edinburgh Cancer Research Centre. The aim of the merger was to concentrate the expertise of more than 500 scientists with interests in the development and disease and to translate these findings into clinical benefits.

The Really important aspect of this work is that it shows that something that was previously not functional at all in the genome has acquired a function,” he says. “We know genes must have come from somewhere, and we have 20 odd-thousand genes in the genome. But pretty much every instance has come from copying another gene or part of a gene. The human genome has invented something entirely new, and found a use for it. That’s something which has never been convincingly demonstrated in the human lineage before.”

The miR-941 finding is a signal of the importance of collaboration in genetics research. It also underlines the importance of working as a team and working with other teams.

The backing of the MRC – which this year celebrates its centenary with a series of lectures, a festival, an exhibition and live research events – is testament to the enabling effect the MRC has had on genetics research in Edinburgh for decades.

Professor Nicholas Hastie, Director of the MRC Human Genetics Unit and the IGMM, believes support from the MRC has been absolutely central to the quality of research that has emanated from Edinburgh. "The really important aspect of this year is that this year celebrates its centenary with a series of lectures, a festival, an exhibition and live research events – is testament to the enabling effect the MRC has had on genetics research in Edinburgh for decades. The MRC was instrumental in setting up Adrian Bird’s world-leading research which led to an understanding of the role of DNA methylation and the whole field of epigenetics," he says. "Adrian started these studies with Professor Sir Ed Southern – the Director of the MRC Mammalian Genome Unit – who played a pioneering role in developing techniques that have underpinned much of the key developments in genetics and biology."

He adds: “The MRC, through providing core support to the Human Genetics Unit and programme grants, has also funded a series of pioneering genetic studies led by alumni. These include David Porteous’ work identifying key genes involved in psychiatric disorders and normal brain development and function. Wendy Bickmore’s seminal work in understanding the structure of the nucleus and how chromosome folding and position in the nucleus are vital for gene expression. The achievements of David Fitzpatrick in detecting the genetic bases of a number of human paediatric disorders, and Martin Taylor’s research identifying miR-941.”

Dr Taylor (PhD 2002) believes the IGMM will strengthen the qualities he observed as a student and values now as a member of staff. “The collaborative, collegiate environment at the Institute was really one of the main motivations to come back. Nowhere else that I’ve been has the cross-talk and interaction. I think that’s what marks us out.”

As part of the MRC’s centenary celebrations Professor Nicholas Hastie will deliver a keynote talk, “Genetics: the new fortune telling?”, on 27 June at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. Visit www.centenary.mrc.ac.uk
Edinburgh has been the starting point for the careers of so many alumni. But what was your next move after leaving the University – and how did you achieve success? In this edition we profile a trailblazing science teacher and a celebrated architect.

“I LOVED WATCHING THE CHILDREN ENJOYING LEARNING,”

DR AUDREY CAMERON, PGCE 2004

Dr Audrey Cameron’s career is testament to her tenacity, hard graft and intellectual curiosity.

Profoundly deaf since birth, she has a raft of academic experiences and qualifications. After studying at the University of Strathclyde she became the first deaf person in Scotland to obtain a PhD.

Since 2007 she has been a member of the British Sign Language (BSL) Glossary Team, based at the Scottish Sensory Centre at the University of Strathclyde. She became a teacher of Higher-grade chemistry in 2006, in mainstream schools, using the services of interpreters in the classroom.

“Dr Cameron became a teacher of Higher-grade chemistry in mainstream schools, using the services of interpreters in the classroom. She explains: ‘I wanted to teach deaf children and to be able to teach in Scotland in the future. I heard that Moray House has strong links to deaf education so I thought the University would be a great place to study.’”

“Taking part in the end-of-year celebration day alongside other new teachers was a particular highlight, she says. Dr Cameron explains: ‘There are many places on the internet where you can now find subject-specific signs in BSL. The Scottish Sensory Centre BSL Glossary’s unique feature is that we also have definitions in BSL and often lab movies or examples to add additional background knowledge to the definition.

“Our target audience is deaf young people at school who use BSL and who want to learn independently using the internet. We’re also pleased to know that many teachers, communication support workers, interpreters and parents are using the glossary too.’”

“The team is composed of 16 deaf scientists and linguists who work together to develop new signs. Thus far, 850 have been made, for biology, chemistry and physics. ‘We’re very proud of this but we know we still have a long way to go to have sufficient signs for the schools’ science curricula,’ Dr Cameron says.

“In a career marked by talent and determination, she counts her PhD and PGCE, and ‘watching my students developing in my classroom’ among her proudest achievements.”

“ARCHITECTURE CAN IMPROVE PEOPLE’S LIVES.”

JOHN MCAUSLAN, MA (HONS)/DIP ARCHITECTURE 1977, 1978

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“In a career marked by talent and determination, she counts her PhD and PGCE, and ‘watching my students developing in my classroom’ among her proudest achievements.”

Architect John McAslan has always had big ideas about how to improve people’s lives. And over his varied career those ideas put into practice have seen him accumulate more than 75 international design accolades, including RIBA National and International Awards.

Living and studying in 1970s Edinburgh was formative, he says. “Edinburgh was my first choice to read architecture and I hugely enjoyed my experiences there. I loved exploring the city and developing my relationships and was fortunate to continue my school pursuits – representing the University First XV and athletics team.”

After graduating, Mr McAslan trained in Boston, US, with Cambridge Seven Associates, before joining Richard Rogers and Partners in 1980. Since establishing his own practice in 1996, Mr McAslan’s major infrastructure and design projects have ranged from the Delhi Metro to Moscow, St Andrews, Honoree and the Scottish Sensory Centre BSL Glossary.”

In 1998 the practice took on one of the US’s most daunting architectural challenges – the $677 million redevelopment of Kings Cross station in London. The aim was to modernise the station for the 47 million passengers who use it every year and in doing so to re-establish the sense of its original Victorian scale and grandeur.

The redesigned site is officially opened by Boris Johnson, Mayor of London, in March 2022, and its most striking feature is the vast white fluted structure spanning the station’s western range.

Mr McAslan explains: “The site presents clearly the Western Corridor, one of Europe’s largest single-span station structures and the heart of the development – but the overall project is far more complex, an extraordinary, collaborative effort that has delivered an internationally significant transport interchange, fit for the 21st century and beyond!”

Appointed CBE in the 2012 New Year Honours for his now iconic architecture, Mr McAslan cites his involvement with earthquake-ravaged Haiti, with his firm’s assistance Unit as a high point of his career. The work involved leading a multidisciplinary team, including local artists, to resurrect the iconic Iron Market in Port-au-Prince. The market has now returned to daily use and forms the cornerstone of a new city centre cultural quarter development strategy. Following completion of the project last year, Mr McAslan was appointed honorary Consul to the Republic of Haiti in London.

The Port-au-Prince experience encapsulates his architectural principles: “My work is informed by a fundamental belief that architecture can drastically improve people’s lives and that intelligent, considered design can help the positive development of communities,” he says.

Architect John McAslan has received countless awards.

If you’d like to share your experiences, we’d love to hear from you. Visit us at www.ed.ac.uk/ouralumni

FOR MORE ALUMNI PROFILES, PLEASE VISIT ed.ac.uk/ouralumni
LIZZIE FANE MA (HONS) HISTORY OF ART & ITALIAN 2008

“I spent my third year abroad, studying at the University of Florence. I was thrilled – I hadn’t realised that when I studied a language going abroad for a year would be central to the experience. I worked as an au pair near Milan and as an interpreter for an English journalist. I was also the sightseeing chapter editor for Time Out’s guide to Florence and Tuscany.

“In Florence I started developing the interest I had from school for students rather than them having to set up bank accounts, which can be a real pain for them. The site is a hub for a certain type of student who likes travelling and languages, and I’m very proud of it.”

RICHARD M MARSHALL COMPUTER SCIENCE Bsc (HONS) 1983, Phd 1987

“I picked Edinburgh Informatics because it was, and still is, world class and has a strong practical element backed up by theory. As both an undergraduate and postgraduate student there was a strong sense of involvement in the department.

“I was lucky to spend my summers working in the department as part of Professor Malcolm Atkinson’s Persistent Heap project, which pre-dates many of the things now happening in storage and database management.

“Back in 1980 the concept of entrepreneurship was unknown in the UK and the term start-up had yet to be coined. However, two members of staff – John Grey and Irene Buchanan – had recently returned from time at CalTech and brought back with them both the then-new concepts of VLSI (Very Large Scale Integration) design and start-up culture. They were both hugely influential in my career path that has been spent mainly working in different start-ups. I’ve had more than the statistical proportion of successes, which is great.

“My decision to come to Edinburgh was mainly due to the strong reputation of the maths department and my PhD supervisor, but I was also won over by the beautiful and atmospheric city.

“I’m now employed as the University’s first Mathematics Engagement Officer. I spend my time giving public lectures and workshops [for example, to school groups or at science festivals], helping researchers to publicise their amazing work, and teaching undergraduates.

“The city of Edinburgh is a fantastic place for mathematics engagement, with so many cultural activities going on all the time and lots of people who are passionate about communicating science.”

JULIA COLLINS PHD MATHEMATICS & STATISTICS 2011

“Most of my memories revolve around times spent with friends. It’s also where I met my wife. Probably the highlight, though, was my medical elective. A good friend and I got to spend three months travelling around the world getting into adventures. I spent the first month working with a vet in a game reserve in South Africa, in fact the first thing I gave an injection to was a cheetah. Then we went off to New Zealand, working in A&E and then on attachment with a brilliant surgeon in Tonga who, at the time, was the only one on this particular island. He had to operate on whatever came through the door and it was great to see him at work.

“I met Dr Andy Flapan, with whom I still work, and he made up a project for me where I had to wake up all my friends in the middle of the night with an alarm clock, make them do a maths test and see what happened to their EEGS. Dr Flapan made cardiology seem like a lot of fun (he still does) and we got some nice data, resulting in my first publication. I think that experience probably set me along my current career path today.

“Now I’m working as a British Heart Foundation Clinical Lecturer in Cardiology, where I get to spend 60 per cent of my time working as a doctor completing my training and the rest doing research.

“We’ve got access to state-of-the-art imaging techniques which allow us to get beautiful images of the heart and study the processes leading to heart disease in much greater detail than previously possible. There are a lot of exciting projects going on.”

IAN SPRINGFORD PGD ARCHITECTURE 1995

“I grew up in Edinburgh and always assumed I’d leave and study elsewhere. When the time came, however, I couldn’t find a better city in which to study architecture. The mix of medieval Old and classical New Town along with the dramatic topography of the city make it a fascinating place to study and work in. Edinburgh College of Art also had fantastic facilities and a great reputation within the profession.

“I remember having to pull far too many all-nighters to complete nerve-wracking presentations, but I enjoyed it tremendously. I’ve recently had the opportunity to see the programme from the other side as a visiting critic.

“After graduating, I began working with Reaic and Hall Architects in Edinburgh before setting up my own practice in 2000. We’ve been very fortunate and had the opportunity to work on a wide variety of projects all over the country. We’ve recently finished a 187-bedroom, four-star hotel in London. We’re currently working on the re-cladding and refurbishment of an office building in Irvine and new affordable housing and a church in Edinburgh. We’ve also got a few interesting projects in development which we hope will come to fruition soon.”

If you’d like to share your experiences, we’d love to hear from you. Visit us at www.ed.ac.uk/ournalumni
StAy COnneCteD

Many now-flourishing animation careers were seeded at Edinburgh and our graduates have proved themselves to be enthusiastic about interacting with current students, returning to deliver guest lectures and discuss their work at the Edinburgh International Film Festival and community events. If you’re interested in engaging with our current student body, contact us at alumni@ed.ac.uk.

HIGHLY ANIMATED

A new generation of artistic talent is being recognised thanks to the success of Edinburgh’s BA Animation programme. Recent alumni accolades include a BAFTA in Scotland New Talent Award for Animation/Best New Work (Kate Charter for Hannah and the Moon) and a BAFTA for Best Short Animation (Will Anderson and Ainslie Henderson for The Making of Longbird). These successes come as Edinburgh graduates make a wider mark in the film and TV industries, and on the festival circuit. Edinburgh boasts the largest animation programme in Scotland, and central to its success is an insistence on valuing artistic collaboration. The 10 Films 10 Days 2 Cities project, where third-year animators partnered with Bulgarian film students to produce a new film every day for 10 days, with soundtracks provided by MSc Composition for Film students, is just one example of the ethos.

IMAGES HERE SHOWCASE THE VARIED AND STUNNING RESULTS TO HAVE COME OUT OF OUR ANIMATION STUDIO RECENTLY, AND CAPTURE ALL THE BEHIND-THE-SCENES MAGIC.
Whether for work or play, the arts have always featured prominently in our alumni activities. We showcase some of your artistic endeavours and feature a handful of favourite cultural escapes.

My first impressions of Edinburgh were that it was beautiful, buzzy and friendly. We used to have great picnics on Arthur’s Seat and the Crags. Obviously with an interest in painting I sought that there was the Festival and the Bedlam Theatre. Going from the Bedlam and directing fresher’s plays to eventually working with actors like Chiwetel Ejiofor [in Dancing on the Edge] has been fantastic.

Edinburgh Animators Celebrate BAFTA Win

SAM HOARE
MA HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCE 2009

Edinburgh College of Art Alumni Will Anderson and Ainslie Henderson have won a BAFTA for their short animation The Making of Longbird. The witty and intelligent 15-minute film, directed by Mr Anderson [left] and co-written by Mr Henderson, charts the fractious relationship between Mr Anderson and the eponymous cartoon character, a cut-out paper bird with its own strange backstory and turbulent career.

Mr Anderson graduated from Edinburgh College of Art in 2009 after studying animation at college and working with friends on it. “It started as a personal project but once we got into post-production it was clear that it could be a feature length film. We shot it over a six-month period and then spent another six months editing,” Mr Anderson said. “We were really pleased and surprised when we won the award.”

The film is packed with insights into the nature of a cinema and creativity, and a warmly cartoonish central character begging to sit in a sequel. “It looks like a documentary, but it blurs that line between fantasy and reality and becomes a work of fiction,” says Mr Anderson. “I got the idea from studying animation at college and working with friends on it.”

Mr Anderson graduated with a BA Animation in 2011, while Mr Henderson received the same degree the following year.

Diverse Designs Hit the Catwalk

McEwan Hall served as a spectacular backdrop recently for Edinburgh College of Art’s annual Fashion Show. The event showcased a diverse range of work, inspired by lost Persian tribes, luxury yachts, the colour blue and 1990s children’s TV shows. Twenty collections from students were featured, including that of Heather Archibald, whose pieces [above] explored the visual and physical interaction of water and fabric.

Eternal Light

Sally Jubb Photography

The event showcased a diverse range of work, including that of Almnae Ingrid Sawers (MA Mathematics 1989). It features the duos recitals of six recent British works for soprano saxophone and piano, with the composers differing responses to popular music a theme throughout.

EPHRAIM'S CUP

natasha.myers@ed.ac.uk

My girlfriend [actress Romola Garai] is a great picnics on arthur’s friendly. We used to have great picnics on Arthur’s Seat and the Crags. Obviously with an interest in painting I sought that there was the Festival and the Bedlam Theatre. Going from the Bedlam and directing fresher’s plays to eventually working with actors like Chiwetel Ejiofor [in Dancing on the Edge] has been fantastic.

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My girlfriend [actress Romola Garai] is a...
**THE HISTORY MAKERS**

**SPARKS OF GENIUS**

From chemists to computer scientists, Edinburgh’s academics and alumni have had a profound influence on the world since 1583. As part of our new series, we examine the School of Engineering’s impact on science and technology through examples of achievement across the ages.

**[HENRY CHARLES] FLEEMING JENKIN (1833–1883)**

Fleeming Jenkin was the inventor of the telephange – better known as the cable car – and the first Regius Chair of Engineering at Edinburgh. He was also a key player in drawing up the proposals for methods of electrical measurement, later recognised as international electrical standards.

Jenkin benefited from an itinerant early life and education, which took him from Kent to Jedburgh, then on to his native Edinburgh. By the time of his appointment Jenkin’s eclectic talents and skills – as an electrician, economist, lecturer, linguist, critic and artist – were well established. In the post he was able to draw on his mix of scientific expertise, practical insight and business prowess.

Jenkin was a friend of celebrated Scots author Robert Louis Stevenson. Scots author Robert Louis Stevenson. Jenkin was a friend of celebrated Scots author Robert Louis Stevenson. In his Memoir of Fleeming Jenkin, Stevenson describes Jenkin’s childhood, student experiences and accession to the Regius Chair, and praises his range of professional achievements.

**JOHN RENNIE (1761–1821)**

One of the great engineers of his era, recognised for his pioneering work on canals, aqueducts and bridges.

Rennie studied at Edinburgh from 1780 to 1783. Works he became renowned for include the Caledonian Canal and London’s Waterloo and Southwark bridges.

**WILLIAM RANKINE (1820–1872)**

Studied natural history and philosophy at Edinburgh from 1836 and became a pivotal figure in developing the science of thermodynamics.

One of the University’s award-winning buildings (pictured above left) is named after him.

**SIR FRANCIS McWILLIAMS (1761–1821)**

Sir Francis McWilliams was remembered in the form of the Alexander Graham Bell Building at the King’s Buildings campus.

**SIR JAMES ALFRED EWING (1855–1935)**

An Engineering graduate, he worked on a cable laying expedition to Brazil with Fleeming Jenkin and was later appointed Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University. During the First World War he managed the department partly responsible for the decryption of intercepted German naval messages. He ensured science and engineering could thrive by establishing the King’s Buildings campus.

**AZAR BESHARAT MOAYERI**

Gaining her BSc from Edinburgh, Ms Moayeri (pictured opposite, on her graduation day) became the University’s first female graduate of Chemical Engineering.

Returning to her native Iran, she was the first female engineer hired at the National Petrochemical Company. After the Iranian revolution, the family left Iran and settled in Canada where she launched her successful natural hair removal business.

**DID YOU KNOW...?**

**ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL**

Inventor of the telephone, attended the University in 1864. His contribution to engineering is remembered in the form of the Alexander Graham Bell Building at the King’s Buildings campus.

**STEPHEN SALTER**

Emeritus Professor of Engineering Design, was responsible in 1974 for inventing the eponymous Salten Duck, a device that converted wave energy into electricity.

**PROFESSOR HAROLD HASS**

Chair of Mobile Communications at the School of Engineering’s Institute for Digital Communications, is the pioneer of “Li-Fi”, a new way of using LED lighting that can transmit data wirelessly.

In 2011–12 the School of Engineering was awarded £26.88 million of new research grants and contracts.

Over the past 30 years the School of Engineering has produced 47 spin-out and start-up companies.

In June 1922 100° Edinburgh degrees of BSc in Engineering were recorded compared with 7 in 1905.
IDEAS EXCHANGE

Creative and experimental learning is a vital part of the Edinburgh student experience. In 2013 we’re providing enhanced opportunities for deep learning – for both students and staff – through a variety of intellectual encounters. Here’s an example.

IDEAS EXCHANGE

“Students get very excited by doing something they feel is relevant, and one indication is that we now have a group of students continuing on with what they developed during the week.”

Professor Klein explains.

“The experience of encouraging and facilitating that kind of learning was really fantastic. Events like this meant that we were engaging much more with the local community both in the third sector and the commercial sector, and those relationships then feed in to all kinds of further possibilities of collaboration.”

E dinburgh Informatics students recently received a taste of “real world” challenges faced by local organisations and community groups during the unique Smart Data Hack. The week-long event allowed students to use data made available by the University, corporate sponsors, so these events participants are now working with the University, private businesses and non-profit organisations to develop IT products, such as apps and websites. Participants formed teams and were mentored by service students and working professionals. They then presented their projects to a judging panel.

Event coordinator Professor of Language Technology Ewan Klein (above right) says the hugely successful event allowed students to exchange ideas, network, engage with the community and learn technical skills. The event also provided them with insight into the working world that lay ahead after graduation.

“We had some really positive feedback,” Professor Klein says. “Students get very excited by doing something they feel is relevant, and one indication is that we now have a group of students continuing on with what they developed during the week.”

Taking a break from conventional teaching methods had enormous benefits for students and staff alike, Professor Klein explains.

“One month means already highly motivated and very bright but this gives them an opportunity to learn things that they can apply more readily. It just releases so much untapped potential.”

Alastair MacLean

BSc (Hons) Geology & Physical Geography 1997

Louise Maclean

(nee Nicol)

BSc (Hons) Geology & Physical Geography 1996

GROWING UP TOGETHER

“We met at a Geology Society social event in 1995. Finding myself a girlfriend who was in the year above was a bit of a stroke of genius in terms of help with class work – Louise was a very good, and patient, tutor! We managed to survive both studying and living apart in different cities for around four of the five first years we were together. We now live in Aberdeen, where we work in the oil industry, and we have two children. Having met Louise when I was 20 I feel I have grown up with her.”

Alastair MacLean

Bruce Mackenzie

MA French & German 1966

Iso Mackenzie

(nee Moore)

MA French & German 1966

HOLD THE LIFT!

“It was day one of Fresher’s Week. I was in the lift on the ground floor of the David Hume Tower and as I was the only one in the lift, I asked the servitor to wait until someone else arrived. That someone turned out to be Bruce! During a short chat, we established that we would look out for each other at the Freshers’ disco that evening. We did meet up and found that we were totally relaxed in each other’s company. Looking back, I would say it was then I realised Bruce was someone special. The height of our time at university would have to be getting engaged on graduation day – 3 July 1966.”

ISO MACKENZIE

Bruno Mackenzie

(nee Moore)

At a magical moment

“I'm the spring of 1974, I was enrolled in American History. I had met a fellow American the previous semester and on the first day of class in January, I introduced myself to a friend of his – John – who was spending the year in Edinburgh, initially to take law classes, but by that time had dropped law and was auditing other classes. John went to the lecture with us that day. At one point the professor put a slide up on the screen and announced that it was Jefferson’s home. My future husband called out, ‘Sir, I believe that’s the Raleigh Tavern’. I glanced nervously at him in the darkened auditorium. Nobody ever contradicted the lecturer! There was a brief silence, and then from the podium, ‘I believe you are correct’. At that moment I knew I was in love. We’ve been together ever since.”

JANE BACHNER KING

Jane Bachner King

BA Arts 1974

John King

(visiting student)

9 March 1995, I was working for IBM in New York. I met a Texas boy, John King, who was working in a local marketing company. We married in 1960 and 52 years and three boys later we’re still together.”

IAN DUNCAN

IAN DUNCAN

BDS 1960

(spouse’s name not supplied)

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT?

“In February 1959 I saw a doctor who sent me right away to the students’ ward. As I was admitted without clothes, I was issued with hospital pyjamas. Without any ceremony, the staff nurse had me take down these pyjamas and administered an injection into my rump… I wonder could it have been love at first sight? In the ward was a fata morgana who reckoned I had no chance of a date with the staff nurse as she was going with someone who had a car. Always one who liked a challenge I took it up and after a bit of manoeuvring got that date. Later she got her RNs. I got my BDS, we married in 1960 and 52 years and three boys later we’re still together.”

IAN DUNCAN

THE TWO OF US

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

Nicholas Coates  MA Arts (Ordinary)  1971
“The Union for my first two years was all male and I attended the final all-male black-tie dinner. The guest was Jo Grimmond, he was both entertaining and highly blue.”

Zwing Cui  MSC Education  2012
“My dad came to Edinburgh all the way from Guangzhou in China for my graduation ceremony and we had lunch together at the Library Bar.”

Stuart Swanson  MA Arts (Ordinary)  1974
“It was known as the Men’s Union, but that ended when some female members of the SRC ventured for a pint in the downstairs bar. Service was refused and the ladies were requested to go to the first floor bar if they could find members to sign them in. They declined, saying they might play pool. All the lights were switched off and the long-serving manager declared that the building was closed for the rest of the evening.”

Kirsty Hughes  BHS  2007
“I watched the US election there with friends, and in 2010 we had the evening reception of our wedding there.”

TEVIOT STUDENT UNION

Teviot student union opened 124 years ago, the result of a long struggle to create a space for students to meet and study. The world’s oldest purpose-built union, it boasts a suitably colourful history. It has witnessed the impact on student life of two world wars, hosted the Union Palais — in the 1950s the most popular dance held anywhere in Edinburgh — and in 1971 belatedly accepted women as members. A city-centre hub for societies, debates, dinners and performances, Teviot can rightly claim to live up to its founders’ aim of being the focus for the collective life of students in Edinburgh.

I REMEMBER WHEN...

Dr Ian Cottrell  BSc (Hons)  Chemistry  1965, PhD Organic Chemistry 1969
“Setting in the library in front of the fire on snowy Edinburgh days, a civilised way to study.”

Dr Lydia Michael  MSC Reproductive Biology  1998, PhD Biomedical Sciences  2003, MBA  2007
“The Greek nights, organised by the Hellenic Society, lots of salsa dancing nights, some fringe performances and having lunch with friends many times a week. Fish and chips! Loved it.”

H

sidesteps a wonderful thing. I’m currently on the return leg of a trip to give a climate change talk at a big science conference — the European Geophysical Union (EGU) — in Vienna. Almost a decade ago I made the decision that, wherever possible, these trips would be made in a low-carbon way. I haven’t been on a plane since.

However, after these past five days of travel by clackety rails and lumpy seas, it’s now clear that a much speedier and lower carbon option would have been to attend and present at the conference online. The over-10,000 attendees of the conference were teeming with the usual multitude of academics and students dodging poster tubes, but alongside this traditional format was a system [called PICO] that allowed virtual participation via the internet. Though some of the “research bohemia” is inevitably missed as a virtual participant, it’s a route that opens up attendance to so many more people and has the potential for big carbon savings.

As academics, attending international conferences is a standard part of the job with most of us having cut our presentation teeth at jiffery doctoral students at annual meetings like the EGU. The skills and networks that grow from this practice are certainly important yet; with advances in technology and the huge challenge of climate change, it seems high time that virtual meetings and presentations came more to the fore as well.

In other facets of academia the benefits of virtual meeting and learning technology are being more successfully reaped. Participation in online learning is growing apace across the world and higher education is a lead player in this. At the University of Edinburgh our inaugural set of free-access online courses (Massive Open Online Courses, or MOOCs) attracted 300,000 registrations. Together with a growing portfolio of online honours and masters courses, the virtual student body at Edinburgh is now fast outgrowing its face-to-face counterpart.

This revolution in the way we teach and learn could do wonderful things. It could link us with great students anywhere in the world whose circumstances would, in the past, never have allowed them to study with us. Students with families to look after, jobs to hold down and insurmountable visa restrictions could now more easily become part of the global community that is the University of Edinburgh. The environmental benefits may also be far reaching, with distance-learning students avoiding some or all of the carbon-intensive travel between Edinburgh and home.

Based on the success of our existing online distance-learning courses, and internationalisation initiatives such as the Global Academy, Edinburgh is well set to ride the online learning wave. This is an opportunity to realise the kind of “sustainable growth” that most businesses and governments can only dream of — growth that is both economically and environmentally sustainable.

The only certainty when predicting the future is that it will be different to what you expect, and in the field of climate change this is something we know only too well. Nevertheless, a future in which online learning becomes a core part of higher education provision seems a good bet. As for academics, and our embracing more actively the technological substitutes for conference globetrotting, the revolution may have a rather more sedate pace. For myself at least, the first question I’ll ask next time a conference invite comes in will be: do you do virtual?"
I am pleased to present the report of your Business Committee for the period since February 2013.

Your Secretary has completed agreed Guidelines for Consultation between the University and the General Council, which have been approved by Court. The document is available on the General Council website.

We bade farewell to Dr Kim Waldron at the Half-Yearly Meeting in February and your Business Committee hosted a leaving reception in March. We wish her all the best for the future.

We were delighted to welcome Sarah Smith as the new University Secretary in March and look forward to working closely with her and her team.

June’s meeting will be the last Half-Yearly Meeting for retiring Committee members Jane Kille, Ruthven Gemmell, Neil Hynd (Public Affairs Convener), Ian Sutherland (previously Academic Convener) and Sheldis Henderson. I thank them all for their contribution and am appreciative of the time committee members give freely when they take on this commitment.

Your Business Committee benefits from regular updates from the Director of Communications, Marketing and External Affairs, Dr Ian Cott, and many members subscribe to the University’s daily news feed. The range and number of noteworthy events and research is staggering and gives an excellent insight into the daily life of your University. The work of your Standing Committees has been guided by the Effectiveness Review, and by the priorities agreed at the start of this session.

Gordon Cams and your Constitutional Standing Committee have produced new information for those wishing to stand for election either to the Business Committee or as a General Council Assessor. This makes the commitment clear and clarifies the way in which we operate to support the University. They are working on revising information for new members of the Committee so that their induction is improved. They have begun to consider whether our election procedures for a future Chancellor should be updated.

Bruce Riton and your Academic Standing Committee are engaging into the new support for both home and international students. The University is investing heavily in single point of access services and a universal Personal Tutor scheme and we want to ensure that these are providing their intended benefits.

Your Committee responded to the publication of the Scottish Government’s report on carbon capture & storage. Your Committee is supporting one of these: an alumni weekend in Edinburgh at the time of the Half-Yearly Meeting this June. Details of events are available on the Development & Alumni and General Council websites, so please book up and come along to meet your friends and colleagues.

I look forward to working with you in 2013 as we move into the new support for both home and international students.

Director of Communications, Your Business Committee
A recent presentation from Professor Sue Rigby, Vice-Principal Learning & Teaching, was undertaken to determine their impact. A number of promising initiatives have been put in place. In addition to the new Personal Sustainability section, we continue to monitor developments in the logistics of staging elections and election procedures. The General Council will once again host an exciting festival reception and exhibition viewing this summer at the Talbot Rice Gallery. The event will showcase the exhibition Transmitted Live: Nam June Park Resounds, which celebrates the 50th anniversary of Korean artist Nam June Park’s first solo exhibition, Exposition of Music – Electronic Television (Wuppertal 1963).

Paik (1932–2006) is widely known as the “father of video art”, and his innovative art and visionary ideas, including video sculptures, installations, performances, videotapes and television productions, continue to inspire artists the world over. A trained musician, he treated technology as a material part of his work.

Transmitted Live will be enhanced by a series of performance art events selected by the curators at the Nam June Park Art Center in Korea, as well as a series of events, including workshops, public lectures and a conference.

For further information, visit www.ed.ac.uk/talbot-rice

Tickets are £6, including a glass of wine or soft drink, and may be purchased 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 EH8 9HT, 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: Friday 16 August 2013

**NEW-LOOK WEBSITE SURE TO BE A HIT**

The General Council website is undergoing a revamp. The new-look site will go live sometime in the summer. It will contain all the usual features, including information on forthcoming meetings and events, reports, photos and videos from previous occasions, information and reports and other documents from the work of the Business Committee; and elections information and guidance. Members will also find details about how to contribute to the General Council Prince Philip Fund, which provides scholarships and bursaries.

In addition to this information, the site will also feature an exciting new blog, which will provide members with the opportunity to engage in online discussion by posting their views. The blog will be written by a guest author and address current developments affecting the University, its contribution to major world issues, and education in general.

Have a look and join in the discussion at www.general-council.ed.ac.uk

**KOREAN ARTIST IN THE SPOTLIGHT**

**FESTIVAL RECEPTION AND EXHIBITION VIEWING: TRANSMITTED LIVE: NAM JUNE PARK RESOUNDS**

**TALBOT RICE GALLERY**

22 AUGUST 2013

The General Council will once again host an exciting festival reception and exhibition viewing this summer at the Talbot Rice Gallery. The event will showcase the exhibition Transmitted Live: Nam June Park Resounds, which celebrates the 50th anniversary of Korean artist Nam June Park’s first solo exhibition, Exposition of Music – Electronic Television (Wuppertal 1963).

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**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:** Gordon Cairns

**EDUCATION:** Royal High School, Edinburgh; University of Edinburgh (LLB, 1979)

**HOME TOWN:** Buckshaw, Fife

**CURRENT HOME:** Lasswade, Midlothian

**CURRENT JOB:** Solicitor (partner in private client department at Gillespie Macandrew)

**FAVOURITE STUDENT MEMORY:** The fried egg rolls served in the Chambers Street student canteen.

**MOST MEMORABLE STAFF MEMBER:** Sir Gerald Gordon, for his lectures on the criminal law of Scotland.

**FAVOURITE SOCIAL VENUE:** The carlins where they served the fried egg rolls!

**MOST VALUABLE LESSON:** Never to ask anyone to do anything that I wasn’t prepared to do myself, and to realise that it was important to work hard to be the best that I could be.

**WHAT CAREER PATH I WANTED TO TAKE:** Having qualified in 1979 and faced with doing my legal apprenticeship I found myself in Dunbar in a small practice, where I was given real clients to deal with from very early on. I found my niche and passion for dealing with individuals of all ages and their varying needs. I joined an Edinburgh practice and opened their first branch office in Penicuik in 1983, and became a partner a year later. My own firm merged with Gillespie Macandrew in 2004.

**SUMMARY:** I’m married to Fiona, a physiotherapist, and have two children: Matthew, 23, and Victoria, 21. I enjoy theatre, playing golf, travel and wining and dining with friends.

**FAVOURITE SOCIAL VENUE:** Festival reception and exhibition viewing: Transmitted Live: Nam June Park Resounds, which celebrates the 50th anniversary of Korean artist Nam June Park’s first solo exhibition, Exposition of Music – Electronic Television (Wuppertal 1963).

**FAVOURITE STUDENT MEMORY:** The fried egg rolls served in the Chambers Street student canteen.

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**SUMMARY:** I’m married to Fiona, a physiotherapist, and have two children: Matthew, 23, and Victoria, 21. I enjoy theatre, playing golf, travel and wining and dining with friends.
NAME: Charles Swainson

EDUCATION: St Edwards School, Cheltenham, University of Edinburgh (MBChB, 1971)

HOME TOWN: Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

CURRENT HOME: Edinburgh

CURRENT JOB: Retired renal physician and medical director, now Treasurer for the College of Physicians and the Scottish Government, and President of the Scottish Wine Society

FAVOURITE STUDENT MEMORY: When the Men’s Union granted equality to women, a group of women students entered the bar on a Friday evening. The noise and cat-calling was deafening and the flood of beer that poured from the balcony was too much, and the women fled. But they had made a point and the two separate unions merged soon afterwards.

MOST VALUABLE LESSON: Henry Matthew, a fearsome physician in the Royal Infirmary, taught me the value of listening to people and that diagnosis comes straight from the patient.

“A wonderful career as a renal physician and medical director, I retired two years ago and now enjoy part-time work for the College of Physicians and the Scottish Government. As an Edinburgh student I was active in DramSoc, the Music Society, FilmSoc and best of all the Mountaineering Club, which kick-started my quest for Munros and a lifelong love of mountains. My passion now is wine, and as President of the Scottish Wine Society I enjoy regular events, including the Society’s annual visit to Burgundy, which raises funds for hospices. Skiing and golf are also firm favourites. I was a late starter with both but I’m making up for lost time.

“Neither my mother nor father had been to university so I was delighted to come to Edinburgh. I’ve lived and worked in London, the US and Edinburgh and had five terrific years in New Zealand. This university gave me my beautiful wife, Marie, and the city educated my son, Andrew, it is a university and city I love for its northern austerity, intellectual and cultural depth and all it has given me. The opportunity to be elected to the Business Committee, and now to be the Convener, seems a good way to be involved, to give the University what I can, and to help ensure this University gets to be the best in the world.”

OFFICERS:
Chairman: HRH The Princess Royal
Secretary: Michael Mitchell, BSc, PhD
Registrar: Sarah Smith, University Secretary

GENERAL COUNCIL ASSOCIATES ON THE UNIVERSITY COURT:
A Margaret Taft, BSc 2013
Alan M Johnston, MVR, CICh, CCHEM, FRSC, CChem, FIBio 2015
Ann M Smyth, BSc, PhD, FPhtl 2015

CHANCELLOR’S ASSOCIATES:
Sheriff Principal Edward F Brown, OBE, TD, QC

BUSINESS COMMITTEE:
Convener: Charles Swainson, MBChB, FRCP, FRCSE, FFPHM
Vice-Convener: Frances Dיוov, OBE, MA, SNPh
Convener of Public Affairs Standing Committee: Neil R Hynd, LVO, FRSA, FIA, Scot, BArch
Convener of Academic Standing Committee: Bruce Ritson, OBE, MD, FRCS, FRCsych
Convener of Finance and Services Standing Committee: Kirsty MacGregor, MA, MBA, DipEd
Convener of Constitutional Standing Committee: Gordon D Cairns, LLB

MEMBERS:
X denotes a member of the Academic Standing Committee,
C a member of the Constitutional Standing Committee,
T a member of the Finance and Services Standing Committee, and
P a member of the Public Affairs Standing Committee.

AGENDA FOR THE GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING
1 Minutes of the Meeting of the General Council held in Old College, Edinburgh, on 9 February 2013 (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 Professor David Argyle, Head of the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies
7 Any other competent business
8 Adjournment

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL HELD IN EDINBURGH ON 9 FEBRUARY 2013

The Chairman announced that the one General Council Assessor to the University Court elected to serve for a period of four years from 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2017 was Ms Doreen Davidson, and the five new members of the Business Committee elected to serve for a period of four years from 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2017 were Mr John Clifford, Mr Matthew McPheron, Ms Anne Paterson, Mr Scott Peter and Mr Ian Stevens.

RESULT OF THE ELECTIONS OF ONE ASSessor TO THE UNIVERSITY COURT AND FIVE MEMBERS OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

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

MATTERS ARISING

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REPORT OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Professor Charles Swainson, Convener

BACK TO TOP
of the Business Committee, gave the report of the Business Committee. He welcomed all attendees, in particular, Mr Dar Alan Brown, the previous Convenor, congratulating him on his appointment as a University of Edinburgh Regent. The work of the Business Committee and its Standing Committees was highlighted.

Constitutional, under Mr Gordon Cairns, was working through the new members of the Business Committee, and its Standing Committees were fit for purpose, and secondly, that any motions of working could be clarified or improved upon, including various channels of communication. The recommendations were being implemented.

The work of the Standing Committees was highlighted. Public Affairs, under its Convener Mr Neil Hynd, had helped organise the hugely successful meeting in Berlin the previous June. The visit to the Humboldt University had been much appreciated and it had been fascinating to listen again to Dame Stella Rimington as she talked about her professional activities in Berlin. Currently it was involved with the redevelopment of the General Council’s website as well as with all future events and meetings. The new website would list more interactive as part of an effort to engage better with all members wherever they might be located.

Constitutional, under Mr Gordon Cairns, was working through many of the recommendations of the Effectiveness Review. This included improving the quality of information provided to candidates for election as well as to new members of the Business Committee when they joined. They had also been involved in Guidelines for Consultation between the Business Committee, the General Council and the University. It set out the reasonable expectations of the Business Committee and of the University on the types of issues on which General Council might wish to comment. Students were over 31,000, with most of the recent increase in international students and students from the EU actually up for Edinburgh, at nearly 1,000. There were also many diverse bursary schemes. Women were in the majority, accounting for 58 per cent of students. Humanities & Social Science was by far the largest College, but even the smallest, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, had more than 4,000 students, which was more than some other entire universities. The proportion from overseas from 1900 to 2000 had remained stable at 19 per cent, but had now grown to about 37 per cent, most growth occurring in the previous 10 years. The most frequent European country of origin was Germany, followed by Bulgaria. Poland and Lithuania had all grown quite significantly. Universities in Mainland China was next, with Asia as a whole very important.

The undergraduate/postgraduate mix overall was two thirds to one third and a greater proportion of postgraduates was desirable.

Research funding stood at £250 million, a spectacular success, with just over half from the UK Research Councils. Cyclics contributed £12 million and industry £6.5 million, but many get online masters course in Equine Languages & Cultures was planned at a cost of £33 million. Many members of the University had received honours and awards. This included the very important Students’ Association Teaching Awards. The London Olympic Games had been very successful with the University doing very well in the London Olympic programme.

The Edinburgh Campaign had been very successful and the University had increased its activities as a result. The University had more than 4,000 students, which was more than some other entire universities. It had been increasing significantly in recent years.

The University’s reputation. The University continued to grow in both attractiveness of this university and overall the University was doing very well. It had grown and remained stable at 19 per cent, most growth occurring in the previous 10 years. The most frequent European country of origin was Germany, followed by Bulgaria. Poland and Lithuania had all grown significantly. Universities in Mainland China was next, with Asia as a whole very important. The undergraduate/postgraduate mix overall was two thirds to one third and a greater proportion of postgraduates was desirable.

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The University’s reputation. The University continued to grow in both attractiveness of this university and overall the University was doing very well. It had grown and remained stable at 19 per cent, most growth occurring in the previous 10 years. The higher rate of income growth reflected the outstanding success in gaining research income. This growth was consistent and continued. The Edinburgh Campaign had reached its £50 million objective. Even with the current relatively generous provision of bursaries and scholarships more were needed and in this respect the General Council Prime Minister Fund had been supported. New Eric Liddell Scholarships for students going to and coming from China had been announced.

The quality of both the international staff and students continued to be enhanced, with exceptional work being undertaken at the University on including the environment, world health, security and food supply.

In conclusion, thanks were given to the General Council, in particular the Court Assessors, who had been very important and active part of the lay members of the Court. There was no other competent business. The motion by the Convenor of the Business Committee that, for the purpose of considering matters which may be transmitted by this University by post from: Mrs Mary Scott, general council members may also request it to be picked up at the location of the Council Meeting from 30 minutes beforehand. The motion was agreed.

Rev Dr Harriet Harris closed the meeting with a benediction.

The full text of the Principal’s remarks, as well as the record of the discussion that followed the presentation, are contained in the Annex to the Billet. The presentation can also be viewed at www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/video_gallery_meetings.htm.
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To find out more about leaving a gift to the University in your will, please contact Mairi Rosko on +44 (0)131 651 1411 or mairi.rosko@ed.ac.uk

www.edinburghcampaign.ed.ac.uk

Katy, Cancer Nurse at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, with Milly