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The Cycle of Life

“The Cycle of Life” is the title of a stained glass window which was recently unveiled and presented by Sir Stewart Sutherland, Principal of the University, to the Chaplaincy Centre. The window has been made by users of Edinburgh University Settlement’s Mental Health Project, “Sleeping Stones,” and represents the culmination of three years’ dedicated creative work, under the direction of artist Gary Smith.

The window depicts the variety and harmony of the natural world, in brilliant jewel-like colours, and a rich diversity of images.

The University and the new Parliament

The University has seized a unique opportunity in establishing the Governance of Scotland Forum to provide a single point of entry to the remarkable range of expertise it can offer the new Scottish Parliament. The Parliament will be on the University’s campus. It will be housed temporarily in the Church of Scotland’s Assembly Hall, located in the middle of the University’s New College on the Mound, and the new Parliament building will be adjacent to the University premises at Holyrood.

As Scotland’s leading research university, Edinburgh is ready to support the work of the Parliament which will have a major impact on the way Scotland is governed. The Parliament will deal with a range of matters affecting people in Scotland—jobs, housing, health, education, local government, planning, social work, law, tourism and transport—areas in which many of the University’s academics already play a leading research role.

The Governance of Scotland Forum—which will encompass the whole range of the University’s activities, has already been commissioned by Scottish Power and The Royal Bank of Scotland to research the potential contribution which business can make in the devolved Scotland to good government, successful business, and a prosperous society.

20,000th Clearance

Pictured with Iris Sloan, Information Assistant at the Clearing House Student Employment Service, is 3rd year student Andrea MacMillan, who at the recent 20,000th clearance said: “It is so good to know that jobs that suit your timetable during term time,” said Tanya, “and which won’t distract from essays and lectures.”

Although one-off work has proved extremely popular with many, the University-run service also advertises regular part-time work and full-time work over the vacations. Established in 2005, over 3,500 students are currently registered with the service which has advertised in excess of 4,300 jobs since October 1997.

Dog’s Work

David Grant from BBC Television’s “Animal Hospital” and the Principal Sir Stewart Sutherland recently performed the topping-out ceremony for the Dick Vet’s new hospital for Small Animals at the Easter Bush Veterinary Centre. The Dick Vet, the University’s Faculty of Veterinary Medicine named after its founder William Dick, offers a veterinary service which is unsurpassed in the UK, not only to the people of Edinburgh and surrounding areas, but also to pet owners and vets who refer difficult cases from throughout the UK.

The new hospital will use the most modern techniques for treating small animals, train vets to meet the demands of veterinary medicine in the future, and search for new cures and treatment for small animals. It will be the largest of its kind in the UK with eight consulting rooms, four specialist treatment rooms, three general wards, and four operating theatres. It will also provide a dedicated ward for exotic animals and a wildlife ward, which will make it unique among hospitals run by the UK’s six veterinary schools.

The building has been the subject of a successful fundraising campaign, which has so far raised £4.5 million of the £5.7 million target. This includes a grant of just over £3 million by the European Regional Development Fund, through the Eastern Scotland Objective 2 programme, and contributions from The University, the Robertson Trust and other charitable and commercial sources, as well as from members of the public.

Picture Perfect

This picture, which appeared in Edit, Issue 13, recently won the Best Mono Picture prize at the 1998 British Association of Communications in Business Awards. Taken by Eichai Moll and Ross Gillespie of the University’s graphics and photography unit, Visual Resources, it was part of the photo-feature Where Ye Go on the University’s graduation ceremonies.

To celebrate this prestigious award, the photographers contacted the subject of the photograph, Dr Nam Seog Park, who graduated from the Department of Artificial Intelligence, and presented him with copies for his family. Dr Park, who was delighted by the news, now works in the United States.

A Warm Reception

The new, state-of-the-art Reception Centre at Pollock Halls has been officially opened by the Secretary to the University, Dr Martin Lowe, in a special ceremony attended by staff and invited guests. The new building, designed to provide top-level service for students and commercial visitors alike, incorporates the skillful conversion of the previously underused basement area in adjoining St Leonard’s Hall.

Dr Lowe paid tribute to all involved in the work, with a special thanks to builders Balfour Beatty, for their consideration of the students at Pollock Halls during the construction of the centre. Director of Accommodation Services, Terry Cole, said he saw the new reception as the physical manifestation of “a new era of excellence” for both students and visitors. All Accommodation Services staff and operations are now housed in the new premises at Pollock, drawing the entire service under one roof.

News
Charged Up

The University’s Department of Electronics and Electrical Engineering, in recognition of its success in building research partnerships with industry, has been Highly Commended in the Department of Trade and Industry President’s Partnership Prize.

This continues a run of success for the Department which in the 1996 Research Assessment Exercise was awarded the top 5* A rating, in 1995 won First Prize (Engineering) in the Office of Science and Technology Competition for Industry-Academia Collaboration, and which in 1994 was adjudged Excellent by the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council for the quality of its teaching.

The stream of success can be traced to three key factors: the combined intellectual abilities of its staff members; the creative environment which the succession of academic leaders have maintained within the Department allowing staff the individual freedom to make innovations in both teaching and research; and the culture of engineering professionalism and industrial awareness and partnership which pervades the Department.

Access Means Success

The University of Edinburgh/Stevenson College joint access course recently celebrated its 10th anniversary. The course is designed for adult learners who want to prepare for degree study, it offers an alternative to the more traditional Higher or A-level courses, and addresses directly some of the particular needs of adult learners making a fresh start.

Since it began, almost 500 students, mainly from the local community, have entered the University via the Access course, the majority taking degrees in Arts or Social Sciences, and others in Divinity or Law. Access contributes to widening participation in the University by encouraging, in particular, adults who missed out on educational opportunities in the past, and who might never have thought of going to university.

A Meeting of Minds

Mony House Institute of Education formally merged with the University of Edinburgh on 3 August 1998, establishing a new Faculty of Education and making the University the largest institution of Higher education in Scotland with nearly 20,000 full- and part-time students and over 6,000 full- and part-time members of staff.

Mony House has just celebrated the 350th anniversary of its location at Holyrood where the new Faculty of Education will, for the most part, be housed.

The Secretary of State for Scotland’s approval, in June, of the proposed merger was described by Professor Sir Stewart Sutherland, Principal of the University, as “good news not only for both institutions but, more importantly, for Edinburgh, Scottish education and the teaching profession. This is, in essence, a marriage of two strong partners. Together, we shall aim to build a national centre of excellence for Scotland in the professional education of teachers, to stand international comparison.”

Professor Gordon Kirk, former Principal of Mony House and now first-over Dean of the new Faculty of Education said, “The merger is absolutely essential if we are to make further progress in addressing the new needs of the teaching profession and the wider society at all levels, from pre-school to secondary, from primary to higher education. Teachers will need not just high quality initial training, but a continuing up-dating of their skills and knowledge base throughout their professional lives.”

(Professor Lindsay Paterson writes about the merged institution and its role in the new Scotland in “Now We Are One” on p 18)

OMNIANA

No.6

The first African graduate

JAMES HORTON was born in 1835 at Gloucester village, near Freetown, Sierra Leone, and belonged to the Ibo people of West Africa. He adopted the name Africanus, and took the name Beale after the headmaster of the Grammar School he attended in Freetown, from where he progressed to the Church Missionary Society’s Fourah Bay College. The high death rate among European doctors in West Africa determed the British government to train suitable Africans as Medical Officers and, after taking his MRCs at King’s College London, James Africanus Beale Horton matriculated at the University of Edinburgh on 19 October 1858 to study for an MD.

While in Edinburgh Horton lodged at 50 Raisakill Street. He graduated on 1 August 1859 and his thesis, entitled ‘The Medical Topography of the West Coast of Africa, with sketches of its botany,’ was published the same year. During his 20 years with the Army he served in most parts of British West Africa, not only as one of the first African doctors, but also as one of the first African regular Army officers, attaining the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. Also during this time, he engaged in medical research, and his political writings, looking ahead to self-government for the peoples and countries of West Africa, secured for him a place in the history of African nationalism. He retired from the Army in 1883 with the rank of Surgeon-Major and died three years later, at the early age of forty-eight.

The plaque is on the west side of the Adam Ferguson Building.
There was no great excitement when the body was first discovered. It had been found during excavation work beneath Old College. Fire prevention: they were installing a new sprinkler system, requiring the construction of a water-holding tank in the basements of the quad. As one undergraduate had been heard to mutter: ‘Waste of money. Long time since any heat was generated in this place.’

‘He meant intellectual heat, of course,’ Professor Sandy Gabas explained to Inspector John Rebus.

‘Of course,’ Rebus said. They were in one of the tunnels that ran beneath Old College, probably with James Thin’s bookshop somewhere above them. The skeleton had been found here, covered with a thin layer of earth and rocks. And though the story had generated only a couple of paragraphs on one of the Scotsman’s inside pages, there was interest among the university academics — along with a certain amount of bickering over territory...

... of course there had to be police involvement, too, at least until it could be established that there had been no foul play.

‘Not my sort of thing,’ Rebus said, kicking at a stone. Arc lamps had been set up by the workmen, and threw huge spiralling shadows over the vaults.

‘There are miles of these tunnels, you know,’ Gabas said. ‘Didn’t realise there were any here though.’ He paused, looked around. ‘This is the start.’

The skeleton had been exhumed, photographed, and removed to the pathology lab. As head of the Pathology Department, Gabas had no intention of letting anyone but himself examine the remains. He crouched down, one hand on the ground to help balance his huge frame.

‘One thing,’ he said. ‘Not much in the way of clothing. A few scraps of some blue material.’

‘Think the rest perished?’ Gabas shrugged. ‘Depends how long the poor devil was down here.’

‘Your best guess?’

‘A hundred, maybe two hundred years. The cloth’s gone for analysis.’ He glanced up at Rebus. ‘We probably won’t be able to narrow it down to a date and time.’

Rebus smiled. ‘Then let’s hope there’s no need for a murder inquiry.’

Gabas nodded. ‘Witness statements would be a problem.’ He paused. ‘Unless you have a ouija board handy.’

Rebus was pointing to a section of wall. ‘Is that it?’

‘That’s it,’ Gabas confirmed. The reason they were down here: the writing on the wall. Rebus held a torch close to the scratch marks. Even so, they were barely legible.

‘Someone had sharp eyes.’ Rebus said, kicking at a stone. Arc lamps had been set up by the workmen, and threw huge spiralling shadows over the vaults.

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‘Someone had sharp eyes.’

‘Wish I could take the credit,’ Gabas said. ‘But it was one of the workmen.’

‘You think the writing connects with the body?’ Rebus ran the torch over the wall, seeking more clues.

‘Judging by position, I’d have to say yes. The scratches are less than a foot from where the corpse’s hand was uncovered.’

Rebus looked again. Four capital letters, spelling out the word ACID.

‘What’s acid got to do with it?’

The two men were in the pathology lab. It hadn’t been thought necessary to transfer the skeleton to the mortuary — there’d be no post-mortem in the usual sense. The bones had yet to be cleaned, though samples of bone and soil had been sent to one of the specialist labs.

Professor Gabas shrugged at Rebus’s question. ‘Intriguing though, isn’t it? He pointed to the skull. ‘No signs of damage or injury. Ran his hand down the rib-cage. ‘No obvious breaks or fractures. Nothing consistent with a violent demise.’

‘Doesn’t mean he wasn’t killed.’

‘You’re thinking poison?’

‘Or acid, something that would strip the skin away.’

‘Hmm.’ Gabas sounded unconvinced.

‘What else could the message mean?’

Rebus smiled. ‘Then let’s hope there’s no need for a murder inquiry.’

Gabas nodded. ‘Witness statements would be a problem.’ He paused. ‘Unless you have a ouija board handy.’

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‘Wish I could take the credit,’ Gabas said. ‘But it was one of the workmen.’
The story, such as it was, had died. Ten days later, Rebus received an interim report, stating that as far as a solution was concerned, the Procurator-fiscal’s office might as well forget it. A press release was issued, and barely taken up by the media.

‘A little. The scrap of cloth yielded something. Its age for one thing. Best estimate is mid-nineteenth century. The material is cotton, maybe underwear of some kind. Long johns or whatever they wore back then.’

‘And the killer didn’t see it?’ Rebus asked as they walked from the High Court.

‘The McMurdo case?’ Gates guessed.

They waited. The world turned, and fresh cases filled their days. A stabbing, a suicide lap. Rebus had a few domesticities to sort out, a court case to attend. After giving his evidence, he bumped into Professor Gates.


‘Any progress with Pitstickle Man?’ Rebus asked as they walked from the High Court.

‘A little. The scrap of cloth yielded something. Its age for one thing. Best estimate is mid-nineteenth century. The material is cotton, maybe underwear of some kind. Long johns or whatever they wore back then.’

‘So he was buried in just his underpants?’

‘An educated guess, I believe. From the tooth, we’re talking about an age anywhere between mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth.’

‘So antidotal rather than absolute?’

‘Or someone from outside?’

‘An outsider who knew about those tunnels?’

‘Ah, but only the killer needed to know.’

‘If bechewed hid it. True.’

‘Maybe there was work going on. One of the workmen at the time?’

‘Buried in just his underpants?’

‘To make identification more difficult.’

‘They were outside now. The day was clear and sunny, the buildings radiant. Office workers were out hunting for lunch.’

‘The other clothing couldn’t just have disappeared?’ Rebus asked.

Gates shook his head. ‘We’d have found buttons, sometimes.’

‘Who made those scratches? The victim, right? Gates merely shrugged. ‘Let’s assume it was. What would he be trying to talk us?’

‘The identity of his killer?’

‘Rebus nodded. ‘But the body was buried.’ They’d stopped walking. Pedestrians around them, catching snatches of conversation, turned their heads to stare.

‘The body had to be buried after the scratches were made.’

‘You have a theory?’ Gates half-smiled. He guessed Rebus had been busy late into the night, thinking the case over.

‘The body’s left in the tunnel. Then the killer thinks better of it, and comes back to bury it. He doesn’t want it found. Maybe he removes the clothing at the same time.’

‘But is too delicate to remove everything?’

‘Rebus nodded. ‘Someone with a knowledge of poisons.’

‘Your phone call was spot on. There was building work going on at Old College for a good part of the late-1800s. She saw the look of disappointment on Rebus’s face. ‘Doesn’t help narrow things down, does it?’

‘Yes, but it’s a start.’

‘Let’s say one of their number dies, or seems to be dead. Maybe they can’t find a pulse. They see their whole careers crumbling, even before they’ve begun. So what do they do?’

‘Hide the body,’ Rebus stated. ‘Precisely.’

‘But what about the acid?’ Rebus asked.

‘So he was buried in just his underpants?’

‘A medical student,’ Gates continued. ‘He set up as a consulting pathologist around 1877. By 1880, he was far from his alma mater, working on a whaling ship.’ He leaned forward in his chair. ‘The writing on the wall, John. That capital I, fainter than the other letters. He pushed the photograph towards Rebus. ‘What if its not an I? What if it were meant to be the denominator for the D, the only letter that didn’t think it was deep enough, so tried again?’

‘Please,’ Rebus blinked. ‘ACD? He looked again at the graduation list. ‘Doyles, A.C.? His finger tapped the name.

‘Rebus nodded, leaning back now, hands together as if in prayer. ‘He covered up the mishap, hid the body, perhaps even buried it, never to dig it up again. Guilty conscience perhaps. Maybe he had his own way of dealing with that dark secret in later life. Maybe it never left him.’

‘Rebus sat at last. The sheet fell from his hand. ACD,’ he said. ‘Arthur Conan Doyle.’

Gates applauded silently. ‘Elementary, isn’t it? he said with the menace of a Dirigible.

© Ian Rankin 1998

Ian Rankin graduated MA from the University of Edinburgh in 1982. His first Rebus novel, Standing in the Shadows, was published in 1987. Ian Rankin is a past winner of the prestigious Crime Writer of the Year Award, as well as Ian Crime Writers’ Association Crime Book of the Year and the 2007 City Marathon Gold Medal for Fiction.
Eighteen months ago, reporting for the BBC from Zaire on the collapse of the Mobutu regime, Allan Little wrote a diary describing the atmosphere in Kinshasa during the crucial final days. Now those who helped to bring Laurent Kabila to power in the Democratic Republic of Congo are rising against him. Rebellion may be closing in on the capital once more, this time threatening to draw neighbouring countries into the conflict. The diary is both a reminder and a forewarning of events all too familiar in African politics.

**Wed 14 May 1997**

Rebellion enters the city first in disembodied form: it comes in the shape of hearsay, and rumour, and rising apprehension. It comes out of the dense, cramped, dark and noisy streets, where the soldiers are semi-rural and semi-rebels, who have been trained by the guerrillas. It comes out of the dense, cramped, dark and noisy streets, where the soldiers are semi-rural and semi-rebels, who have been trained by the guerrillas.

The rebel advance is out there, moving stealthily and quietly, and it is all too obvious for being unspoken and unheard, a silent night-hunter closing in on its prey. We know the rebels are coming to take the city, and we know that when they descend it will be decisive and immediate, but we don’t know how far they are, or how imminent their strike. We wait in the shadow of the city, gripped by a surging fear of a new and different war.

Shops and offices are closing early. The people want to get home as quickly as they can. They are afraid of the rebel advance, it’s true. But they are much more afraid of what their own troops will do when the end draws near. The army hasn’t been paid properly in months. It is their habit to sack the city and plunder, and we try to separate fact from fiction, legitimate, balanced concern from mounting paranoia.

**Thursday 15 May**

At 12.30 we hear from two sources simultaneously that the army has been routed and is in retreat from Nsele towards the airport. Nsele is only 30 to 40 miles from town. The airport road is crazy now, swarming with pumped-up Zairean troops, heading into town.

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**Friday 16 May**

Mobutu has left for Gbadolite, his home village in the jungle in northern Zaire, he and his entourage sneaking out of the city unnoticed at the crack of dawn. It’s over. He won’t be back. Our sources tell us in confidence that the generals want to him last night and told him they could not defend the city and that the only obstacle to a peaceful transition to rebel control was his continued presence here.

But now the hiatus. The dictator’s departure has left a dangerous power vacuum. But there is hope. General Maina, the army chief of staff, summons the BBC to his offices. His staff brief us. “The General’s view is that he cannot contemplate sacrificing an entire city for the future of one man. Those days are over.” It is his way of signalling that he is prepared to do a deal with Kabila’s men. “I am surprised that since the rebels got within mobile phone range of the city there have been clandestine channels of communication between them and General Maina’s people. It is an act of extraordinary courage.”

News from the airport as night falls. Defensive positions there have collapsed. The army – both the rank and file and the presidential guard – have abandoned their positions and are heading into the city.
My friend and BBC colleague George Alagiah wakes me with a phone call at three in the morning, and his news chills me to the marrow. General Muhoho has been assassinated by hand grenade/mbukulu separatists. The regime has turned in on itself, fragmenting in its dying hours; I am instantly awake and shivering. I feel the familiar unease in the pit of my stomach and that cold, pulse-quivering chill spread from my feet through my legs, stomach, and chest. My throat tightens. General Muhoho was our hope of a peaceful handover. He was the man who raised his life to open a channel of communication with the rebels and who, it seems, paid the last price.

The streets are ringing with small arms fire - single, maddening shots echoing through the empty city, and the deep, dug-a-dug-a-dug of heavy machine gun noise, rolling across the roof tops through the still, heavy night air. From the Intercontinental Hotel, which sits on the south bank of the river, a group of print journalists report that Congolese Mbukulu has arrived to organise an escape and those of his entourage. The manager is wisely avoiding by finding small boats to ferry them to Brazzaville in neighbouring Congo. The rebel alliance has audaciously block booked three floors of the Intercon - not only do they know they're coming - they know when they will be here.

One rumour stands up. The delphic reference - earlier in the week - to cremation. In his last hours in the city, President Mobutu had the remains of an old friend disinterred from their grave at Camp Tshikuba, and cremated, so that he could take them into exile with him. They were the remains of the late president of Rwanda, President Ndayi, who was assassinated on April 6, 1994. His death immediately triggered the genocide in which up to a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were murdered. The genocidal regime lost the war and fled to eastern Zaire, and the protection of Mobutu. Sew Seko. It has come full circle. The shock waves from that assassination have at last toppled another great African tyrant.

Allan Little graduated MA from the University of Edinburgh in 1982. He is currently BBC correspondent in Moscow.

The long march from the east is over, and the war is won. Today I walked with the rebels to the corrupt centre of the mbukulu empire. A single file column of exhausted men - earnest and disciplined - headed their way up the hill to Camp Tshikuba. They had come from Malawi, far away on the shores of Lake Tanganyika and they have progressed through the heart of the huge country at the pace at which a man can march. They scarcely fired a shot. The dedication to which mbukulu's regime has reduced the country has finally worked to its benefit - the army was rotten to the core, and could not put up a fight. Kinshasa was spared the bloodbath it feared. This was not a war. It was a people's uprising. From the impenetrable vastness of the rainforest, and along the tributaries of the river, hope has marched into this city on bare feet and weary legs.

And now there is retribution. In a suburban street, seven members of the old secret intelligence service have been set upon by the mob and killed. Their bodies, piled together, have been doused with petrol and are burning. "I and the public knew what all schoolchildren knew. Thieves to whom we give is done to in return." While the reek of burning flesh filled the air, the crowds sang songs of freedom and liberation through the smoke.
In July 1935 Robert Atkinson and John Ainslie embarked on an ornithological quest for the rare Leach's Fork-tailed Petrel. Their 12-year journey took them from their base in Oxford to many of the remote and often deserted islands off the North-West coast of Scotland. Robert Atkinson's photographic account of that journey is now in the archives of the University's School of Scottish Studies.

After dark on 23 July 1938, Robert Atkinson, unaccompanied on this occasion by John Ainslie, was landed on the island of St Kilda by the steamer Dunara Castle. He was greeted on the jetty by Neil Gillies and Finlay MacQueen, 'the oldest inhabitant', who, together with Mrs John Gillies Sr, Neil's mother, had, as in every year since 1930 when the St Kildans were evacuated at their own request from the island, returned from the mainland for a few summer weeks. On 9 August, all four left the island on the steamer Hebrides.

In his account of the journey 'Island Going', he wrote of that morning: "There was the same flat mazy calm and fresh dew-drenched dawn, opening to hot glare from a sky of unbroken lightest blue, hardly coloured. We carted all our gear down to the jetty and sat about. It was like waiting for a train."

*Published by Birlinn Ltd, 1995.*

ST KILDA, SUMMER 1938

With thanks to Dr Margaret MacKay and Ian MacKenzie of the School of Scottish Studies for their help and kind permission to reproduce these photographs.
The integration of Moray House Institute into the University as its Faculty of Education creates the largest University in Scotland. That alone would make it an event worth noting. But there are deeper reasons to mark the change - reasons to do with the impact it could have on the University, on Scottish education, and on Scottish culture.

To start with, though, what does Moray House bring? It adds some 1,500 undergraduates to the University's existing 13,000; 1,600 postgraduates to the University's 4,000; and 350 staff to the University's 6,000. And it adds an annual budget of £17 million to the University's £230 million.

The spread of academic expertise largely complements the University's. Moray House's main educational role is the preparation of students for teaching in schools. It already takes large numbers of graduates from courses at the University onto its postgraduate certificates in secondary education, primary education and community education. It has undergraduate degrees which prepare students for primary teaching and for community education. There are degrees for teaching technological subjects and for teaching computing. And Moray House is the only place in Scotland that offers training to be a physical education teacher.

There are also undergraduates in sport science, leisure studies, teaching English to speakers of other languages, and social work. Most of this does not exist anywhere else in the University, and so all these courses are additions to what the University does, in some cases augmenting provision that already is available at other levels (for example, the University's highly rated postgraduate course in social work).

There is more overlap at taught postgraduate level: for example, work is in hand to integrate the two masters degrees in education. But Moray House is, again, distinctive because of the kinds of students it attracts, mainly professionals studying part-time.

The staff teaching these courses have a broad range of expertise in a physical education teacher. There are also undergraduate degrees in sport science, leisure studies, teaching English to speakers of other languages, and social work. Most of this does not exist anywhere else in the University, and so all these courses are additions to what the University does, in some cases augmenting provision that already is available at other levels (for example, the University's highly rated postgraduate course in social work).

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The staff teaching these courses have a broad range of expertise in areas of disability, community education, sport, leisure studies, and educational policy. Bringing this experience together with existing expertise in the University, the merger will allow some significant new areas of research to develop - for example, into further and higher education, into educational testing, and into computer-assisted learning.

But if the merger were merely a matter of tacking on a few thousand students and a few hundred staff, then it would be of limited interest beyond the University's walls. There are five particular ways in which the merged institution can make an impact externally, each recovering aspects of Scottish educational traditions whose desuetude has weakened the quality of the Scottish educational system as a whole.
The first is to place learning to teach at the heart of all learning. This was the traditional Scottish way of doing higher education. In the 19th century, and still quite commonly until the 1930s, it was taken for granted that learning to be a good physical, say, would entail learning also to be good at communicating ideas about physics. That is one reason why such intellectually distinguished graduates of the University as James Clerk Maxwell were effective at popularising scientific ideas: they wrote well, they took seriously a duty to talk to an audience beyond the specialist laboratory, and they engaged in debate about public affairs. It is also a reason why, in Scotland, the major professions have always received most of their education in the universities: doctors, lawyers, ministers and engineers have been part of the University for a long time. Teaching has been the notable exception.

The merger is an opportunity to recover the parts of these traditions that are relevant to modern concerns. Knowledge is tested in debate, and the best way of ensuring an effective contribution to debate is to learn something about how to teach. As a result of the merger, many students in a variety of faculties might soon have the opportunity to learn some elementary principles of pedagogy and educational philosophy through introductory classes in educational studies. Correspondingly, students taking undergraduate teaching degrees at Monay House will learn from the contact with subject specialists which attending such introductory classes could encourage.

A consequence of this first point is the second: the merger allows the University to strengthen its links with Scottish education returns to Scotland some of the cultural capital which it acquires through its international networks. The link with schools and community education which the merger offers will help this process. For example, it has been proposed that new postgraduate courses, could be offered to school teachers to enable them to upgrade their specialist knowledge, say in science, information technology, language or cultural studies. That, too, is a return to an old Scottish tradition. It is a modern version of the recurrent contact which the parish school teacher had with the local university, a feature of Scottish school education in the 19th century which was probably an important reason why it gained then the reputation for academic excellence.

Bringing educators into the institution is the third opportunity which the merger offers to the University. Through its part-time postgraduate courses, Monay House already contributes significantly to developing a learning society. In Scottish historical terms, that is better known as the democratic intellect - the proposition that an educational institution contributes most to social development when it encourages its students to take the knowledge and skills they have acquired into the wider community.

Whatever the merits of providing courses for young people straight from school - and there are many - the problem is that these people mostly disappear thereafter. The dialogue which a university can have with society is then attenuated. Dialogue is guaranteed when large proportions of course members are working in professional jobs, and being as established members of communities. They tend to write their course essays on topics which concern them in their professional lives, they can undertake the research for their dissertation in order to contribute to the body of professional knowledge which they and their colleagues need, and they can retain links with their tutors and dissertation supervisors after they have graduated.

An educational institution contributes most to social development when it encourages its students to take the knowledge and skills they have acquired into the wider community.
Although January 1998 saw celebrations of the birthday of HAL, the famous fictional computer from the film '2001', we have yet to see such a computer. What we need, the futurologists say, is a computer that can understand and take account of how people think and act, and can shape its own actions accordingly.

"When you look to biology, it has solved a lot of problems," says Michael Fourman. He heads up the Division of Informatics at the University of Edinburgh, where an army of academics in subjects ranging from psychology and human cognition to mathematics and computer engineering endeavour to make artificial systems that will interact naturally with people and society.

For those who are out of the loop, informatics sounds like one of those vaguely familiar terms that we might have possibly heard of. "Has something to do with automation?" or "Is it a new sort of maths?" Well, yes and no.

Research into the field of informatics will yield some tangible gadgets that could become commonplace in your children's or grandchildren's homes. However, the bulk of the fruit to be born in this area will change the way we do things, rather than altering the things we do them with. Professor Fourman explains it in the context of setting a university exam timetable.

"It's like using evolution to solve all of the logistical problems such as making sure the exam room is large enough and making sure no student has more than one exam on any given day," he said. "We can solve this by evolving what are initially quite bad solutions and allowing them to mate. We'll toss out the bad solutions and allow the goods ones to preen, and you do that through several generations until you get a good timetable."

The idea of formulating exam schedules may sound like the making of student nightmares, but to the administrators who undertake this daunting task each term, a computer programme that works through these problems on its own is a dream come true. At home, the University of Edinburgh's Division of Informatics is probably one of the best-kept secrets around. This is notwithstanding that it has gone on to win support from the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, America's chief funder of AI research.

Settling in to a Chair of AI this term is Johanna Moore, a sprightly American who left her tenured post at the University of Pittsburgh to take up a job within the Division of Informatics. Like all of her new colleagues, she's an 'edge person'; that is, she works at the boundaries of overlapping disciplines.

"I can knock on every door here and people will know interesting things about..." Kristy Dorsey meets three new recruits to the University for whom conversing with computers is something to be shared with colleagues.
Research into the field of informatics will yield some tangible gadgets that could become commonplace in your children’s or grandchildren’s homes.

Professor Webber said: “But this would be done in a way without the machine interrupting. It would just give you the information you need, but the results would be much more informative.”

For Professor Steedman, his new post as a Chair of Cognitive Science is something of a homecoming. He was part of the original team that more than 10 years ago set up the University’s first cognitive science programme, the forerunner to today’s Division of Informatics.

The Watford native got his Masters Degree from Edinburgh in 1968 and, after periods at Sussex, Warwick and then again at Edinburgh, he left to go to the University of Pennsylvania – where they had a strong team of people working in informatics – and he returns now for similar reasons.

Professor Steedman said: “Having studied syntax and intonation for the past several years, much of my work will be focused on improving speech recognition and synthesised speech from computers.

“One of the reasons synthesised speech sounds so bad is because the intonation is wrong,” Professor Steedman said. “If you get the intonation right, it will still sound like a machine, but at least it will sound like a machine that knows what it is talking about.

“At the moment, most speech recognition throws away the intonation. That actually makes the task of translating speech into text, which is already quite difficult, even harder.”

Professor Moore reasons without the previous work of Mark Steedman and his peers, she wouldn’t be at the University today because the Division of Informatics would not exist as an inter-disciplinary environment. Now with a hand in the re-organisation, part of her job and that of the other new recruits will be to take that integration one step further.

“We don’t want to break the world up into divisions where people worry only about AI, or cognitive sciences or natural language,” she said. “What we are trying to do is get more interaction among different people, because we think new things will happen that way.

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Whatever we do will encourage new research projects, and it won’t help anyone else. But people will be free to move around as research needs change.”

Kristy Dorsey is a freelance journalist.

To do this, it needs to understand language and the way people use it. The computer must be able to interpret, rather than taking everything at its literal and logical face value. To create such a programme, the designers need an in-depth understanding of how humans communicate and what thought processes are going on behind the spoken words. The input of cognitive linguists and psychologists is essential.

Professor Webber, who has taken a Chair of Intelligent Systems admits it is often difficult to explain to people exactly what it is that she does. She recalls a conversation she had some years ago with her accountant: “He said, ‘What is it that you’re working on that is going to affect my life ten years from now?’ I told him I would call him back.”

One of the things she is interested in which could affect anyone’s life – although few of us would ever realise it – is the application of artificial intelligence in medicine. Professor Webber would like to see the creation of a programme that analyses specific situations and gives consistent medical advice, particularly in the hectic atmosphere of an emergency room. Many of the obstacles here are similar to those presented by the challenge of creating an intelligent tutor, in that you need to span the bridge between human language and computer, and the machine needs to work towards multiple goals simultaneously.

“The computer can be used to make consistent decisions about the application of medical care,” Professor Webber said. “But this would be done in a way without the machine interrupting. It would just give you the information you need, but the results would be much more informative.”

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On a wing & a prayer

UNIVERSITY CHAPLAIN AND MEMBER OF THE TARTAN ARMY, IAIN WHYTE, LIKE HIS FELLOW FOOTSOLDIERS, JUST CAN'T BREAK FAITH WITH THE SCOTLAND TEAM.

The price charged by FIFA were steep. “They’re no feart the coos get them,” would have been the comment of my late mother-in-law. Suspicious colleagues in the University have quizzed me about whether she influence provided me with tickets. Not so. For once, the Scottish Football Association gave priority to loyal fans in the allocation of the one entry permits and this was my reward for travelling to Belarus last June.

For Scotland fans the script is always that of hope deferred and then dashed.
Carlos, olá Carla" - and we did! There was an incredible atmosphere of friendship and I saw no example of sourness between the different fans. Crowd segregation was irrelevant and the swapping of emblems, drinking and dancing together was unaffected by the result of the match. It sounds too good to be true, but it wasn’t. And this infectious spirit was caught by other groups anxious to be in on the biggest party in the world. The Mexicans were keen to be... I asked. Stupid question. In broad Glaswegian and with equally broad grins they chorused “Aye, we’re all Nigerians!”

What of the game itself? The magnificence of the Stade de France made it seem a bit unreal. Two soft goals conceded by Scotland was an all too familiar... and I tried my best pastoral technique in assuring her that it was, for the moment, time to celebrate. But not for long.

Once again we had the bitter sweet medicine of a glorious defeat. Hearts went out to captain Colin Hendry and to the luckless Tom Boyd as the Tartan Army marched back to the city to celebrate. Yes, celebrate! We found a quiet bistro where stood a middle-aged Brazilian couple who insisted on buying us beers with the genuine air of comforters. They were on their way home after a European holiday and, interestingly, were the only ones of their countryfolk who expressed doubt that the golden trophy would be on its way to Rio in a month’s time.

For Scotland fans the script is always that of hope deferred and then dashed. Qualifying for eight World Cup Finals is a better record than Holland holds, but there the similarity ends. Eight times we have failed to make the second round, a fact unparalleled by any other finalists. Even if now we wear more realistic than the madness of Ally’s Army. In ’78 we still harbour thoughts about our station.

Scots punters must be the best mathematicians in the world. Everyone always knows all the permutations before each final game - “If A beats B by two goals and C then wins through...” is a familiar chant at or inside the ground. But, of course, it never happens. We went out on goal averages in ’74, ’78 and ’90, but mostly we just go out because the other teams get results and we don’t. This time, it took a good North African team to bury our hopes comprehensively.

But, true to the spirit of this World Cup, the defeated Scots fans turned to console their devastated Moroccan friends when they, in turn, learned that Norway had ousted them by an incredible defeat of Brazil in injury time.

With the exit of the team once again we could only cherish some of the great moments of the later rounds. Who can forget Dennis Bergkamp’s last minute winner against Argentina, for my money the outstanding goal of the tournament? Nigeria’s power and talent failed to deliver, but new boys Croatia did so in style and Suker won the Golden Boot. The Latvians, Danes, were desperately unlucky. England were probably victims of their own over-confidence, but France were not. Despite the tragedy of Ronaldo and the embarrassing sight of seeing old lions humiliated (a fate Brazil shared with Germany), it was heroes such as Zidane and Thuram who managed to uplift the nation and counter, for the time being, the racist propaganda that has been such an ugly feature in its political and public life. And that can’t be bad.

What is it that drives intelligent and rational people to travel to see Scotland play in an all too predictable exercise in masochism? I asked myself that question last year on the Minsk/Warsaw night train as we left Belarus. And I asked it again on the Eurostar when some of the footsoldiers were planning their return to France the next week. I have no answer. But I’m already looking for an excuse to go to Sarajevo or Tallinn in the closing stages of the qualifiers for Euro 2000.

Perhaps the last word should go to a bemused citizen of Bordeaux after the Norway game. “You Scots,” he said, “you party when you lose, you party when you draw, what in the world do you do when you win?” One day, we (and he) might just find out. And that’s real faith.

The Reverend Iain Whyte is Chaplain to the University
I particularly enjoyed officers and gentlemen in the latest issue of Edit, and its account of the true further adventures of Bonnie Dundee’s men.

About a year ago I came across W.E. Aytoun’s Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers, which I bought as it was peripheral to my researches on a book I have just finished co-writing with American author, C. Bruce Hunter. Aytoun’s poem The Island of the Scots romanticizes Dundee’s officers’ last battle in true Victorian fashion.

The book I was researching deals with the strange secret history of the Knights Templar in Scotland, and especially the Lothian area, from their introduction by David I in 1228, through their involvement at Bannockburn, to their eventual influence on Freemasonry. A covert survival of Templars in Scotland - long after their official dissolution by the Pope in 1312 - seems to have been supported by a network of Scots noble families.

It was interesting to note, for example, that the preferred leader of Dundee’s men in France was the Earl of Dunfermline, Alexander Seton, a family rich with Templar connections. Vacquit Dundee himself was allegedly found guilty after his death at Killiecrankie to being wearing Templar emblems. Aytoun’s book of poems was dedicated to Alexander Montgomery, Earl of Eglinton, a family closely connected to the Setons.

What seems to have happened is that the Templar legacy in Scotland - and in particular a tradition to say that they appeared at the head of a reserve division at a crucial stage at Bannockburn, winning the day for the Scots - became bound up with the posthumous Wallace myths which have such a strong grip on the Scottish imagination even to this day. In Jacobite times, this legacy informed the actions of key members of the aristocracy such as Dunfermline. The same 18th century political upheavals gave birth to a Freemasonic movement which has a strong Scottish, and Tomist, aspect in its mysterious traditions.

What does all this tell us? Perhaps only that there is much still to be discovered about Scottish history. When I was at Edinburgh I had to spend a lot of my time up to my elbows in dull law books; but I hope that, with Scotland’s new Parliament just around the corner, students from all faculties have as much access as possible to learning about Scottish history. Who was it that said a nation with no past has no future?

Andrew C. Ferguson LJ 1894, DLJLP 1895
Glenrothes, Fife

James Robertson’s interesting article (Edit, issue 14), prompted by a passage from W.E. Aytoun’s The Island of the Scots, sent me to look up Aytoun and his four immediate successors in the Regius Chair of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres (later English Literature) down to my own time at University.

All five are noticed in Chambers Biographical Dictionary, and I was intrigued to discover that not only did they cover among them precisely a century (1845-1945) but their individual terms of office fell into exactly completed decades within that period. They were: W.E. Aytoun 1845-65
David Masson 1865-95
George Saintsbury 1895-1915
Herbert Grierson 1915-35
J. Dover Wilson 1935-45

Surely this must be a unique coincidence?

Professor Emeritus Henry M. Knox, MA 1938, Edinburgh

I am writing to congratulate you on the latest issue of Edit. For me you have at last got it right with little snippets of information followed by longer articles. I spent ages looking to read it all! Thank goodness you have given up the arty approach of overlays, underlays and type in an unreadable colour.

Bill Fyfe Hendrie, MA 1962, DipLP 1965

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Elizabeth Talbot Rice, London

THAT’S BETTER!

I am writing to you in congratulations you on the latest issue of Edit. For me you have at last got it right with little snippets of information followed by longer articles of general interest. And I could read it all! Thank goodness you have given up the arty approach of overlays, underlays and type in an unreadable colour.

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Write to Edit; win a prize

EDIT WANTS to hear your views on the issues raised by contributors. The writer of the most distinctive letter to the next issue will win a prize for their efforts. All letters are welcome and should be addressed to Anne McKelvie, Editor, Edit, Communications & Public Affairs, The University of Edinburgh Centre, 7-11 Nicolson Street, Edinburgh EH8 9BE.

Email: A.McKelvie@ed.ac.uk
Towards the end of centuries and even more towards the end of a millennium, societies tend to become preoccupied with change and possibilities for the future. Nursing began its Project 2000 - the move of the traditional hospital-based Colleges of Nursing into the Higher Education sector - in the early 1980s. In 1986, the Project 2000 Report delivered a claim for a new practice. It created a new education programme for nursing with the aim of producing practitioners who could work in either hospital or community settings.

However, more important perhaps for nursing in the 21st century, are the changes that have come about in the last two decades of this century. There are now two different worlds to nurse in - the hospital and the community. It is clear that the two worlds have different demands and possibilities.

The role of nursing in the health care system of the 21st century is likely to differ. It is crucial that we educate nurses who can plan and effect care in a changing social context, and with an ageing population. The shift in emphasis in health care provision to the community is likely to produce a nursing profession in which a more generalised idea of care and nursing practice is more important than specialisation. The education process will have to yield nurses with analytic skills and a capacity to adapt; the graduate nurse with a firm grounding in the ways of community care will be in the lead in this scenario.

When Edinburgh's Department of Nursing started out in 1956 there was a clear job to do, namely, to establish academic nursing. Now, with Project 2000 launched and the outcome yet to be declared, the established departments need to look to the second phase of the enterprise - to work out where the next cutting edge is and to start to have a clearer picture of what the graduate nurse should be about. The 1956 model held new ground to plough - that ground is now littered with degree and diploma courses. If an all graduate nursing profession is still on the agenda in 2000, it will have to be on a much smaller scale and with a clearer view of the place of the graduate in the evidence based community dominant, primary care led, consumerist scenario of the future.

The current approach to education in nursing seems to be producing the same kind of hierarchy of academic and professional qualifications that we were trying to get away from through Project 2000. There is a danger of producing a catch-up climate in which no-one is ever satisfied with the credentials that they have because some brighter, newer, shiner model has just appeared on the horizon. A more collegial approach might be preferable, with a skill mix which allows nurses with different backgrounds and qualifications to work together in multi-skilled teams to effect patient care.

Any 21st century shift in emphasis to the community should allow nursing to exploit what it already knows, for while some of the challenges of the closing decades of this century are new, many have been seen before. For example, HIV/AIDS resulted in a moral panic which was arguably new, but nursing's response was similar to those made to earlier infectious diseases, such as TB, syphilis and plague.

We are indeed coming full circle, for hospitals were not always regarded as safe places to be in. It has been said that it was not until well into the 19th century that hospital patients could be reasonably certain of dying from the diseases with which they were admitted.

As Florence Nightingale wrote to Henry Bonham Carter in 1867, "My view, you know, is that the ultimate destination of all nursing is the nursing of the sick in their own homes...Its look to the abolition of all hospitals and workhouse infirmaries. But no use to talk about the year 2000."

Kath Melia is Professor of Nursing Studies at the University of Edinburgh.