LAUGHING MATTERS
SKY HEAD OF COMEDY
LUCY LUMSDEN ON THE FUNNY BUSINESS

ROAD TO REFERENDUM
HOW OUR EXPERTS ARE SHAPING THE DEBATE

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

Kirsty MacDonald, Executive Director of Development and Alumni Engagement

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

SAVE THE DATE
19 - 21 June 2014
Toronto, Canada

The University of Edinburgh is coming to Canada
2014 alumni weekend abroad

Join us in Toronto from 19 to 21 June 2014 for a spectacular weekend of talks, tours and tartan.
As well as the General Council half-yearly meeting, the weekend will include a programme of distinguished speakers, social gatherings, city tours and a very special honorary degree ceremony.
Email alumni@ed.ac.uk if you are interested in getting involved or would like to receive regular updates.
ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR: PROFESSOR LESLEY YELLOWLEES

Professor Lesley Yellowlees has been named Alumnus of the Year, in recognition of her contribution to science, engineering and technology, and promoting women and public engagement.

Professor Yellowlees (pictured) is Vice-Principal and Head of the College of Science, Engineering and Technology, and promoting women and public engagement.

FOLLOWING THE AWARD OF A NOBEL PRIZE IN PHYSICS TO EMERITUS PROFESSOR PETER HIGGS, the University is to further enhance its research and innovation in the subject.

The University appointed Bria Mason (MA Celtic 2009) as Gaelic Officer in February 2013. Among the first athletes confirmed for Team Scotland, three of whom have been chosen include first-year undergraduate squash player Alan Clyne (BEd Physical Education 2008) and agile hurdler Eilidh Child (pictured). Current students to look out for both medal hopefuls for Glasgow include first-year undergraduate Physiology Caitlin McClatchey (BSc Physiology 2013) and postgraduate Caitlin McClyne (BEd Physical Education 2008) who both followed the sport performance programme at Edinburgh, and are both medallists for Glasgow.

Gaelic language and culture have been taught at the University of Edinburgh for over 100 years. The language plan will be taught as a standalone course as well as an optional language for students taking other subjects.

YOU SAIFZAI AMONG HONORARY GRADUATES

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

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

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

The Scottish Government has pledged support for a new building for the Higgs Centre for Theoretical Physics, which will be built at King’s Buildings. The Centre now received a £100,000 pledge from Edinburgh alumnus Professor Walter Nimmo (MBChB 1971, MD 1972). The Centre was established in 2012, with funding for new academic staff, PhD students and a programme of international visitors and workshops.

For more information, visit www.ed.ac.uk/physics/higgscentre

FOR ALL THE LATEST UNIVERSITY NEWS, VISIT WWW.ED.AC.UK/NEWS

FOR GAMES

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

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

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

The University appointed Bri McAslan (MA Celtic 2009) as Gaelic Officer in February 2013.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.ED.AC.UK/ ABOUT/ GC15

FOR GAMES

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

The Scottish Government has pledged support for a new building (pictured) to house the Higgs Centre for Theoretical Physics, which will be built at King’s Buildings. The Centre will create an environment in which British and international visitors and workshops.

The Scottish Government has pledged support for a new building for the Higgs Centre for Theoretical Physics, which will be built at King’s Buildings. The Centre has received a £100,000 pledge from Edinburgh alumnus Professor Walter Nimmo (MBChB 1971, MD 1972). The Centre was established in 2012, with funding for new academic staff, PhD students and a programme of international visitors and workshops.

The UK Treasury, meanwhile, has announced a £157 million investment to create a Higgs Centre for Innovation, which will provide support for start-up businesses and new partnerships. This Centre will be built at the Science & Technology Facilities Council’s UK Astronomy Technology Centre, alongside the University’s Institute for Astronomy on the Royal Observatory Edinburgh campus.

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

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

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.PH.ED.AC.UK/HIGGS
I had the confidence and contacts to set up Blue Ventures,” says Dr Harris. “It was because of the support that went to Eucare that Edinburgh is unique in the support and opportunities it gives people. It has worked in several tropical countries, and has permanent grants. Blue Ventures, established in 2002, now employs about 90 expedition to Madagascar, funded by University expedition research Coral Awareness and Research Expeditions), and in 2001 took his first As an undergraduate Dr Harris set up Eucare (Edinburgh University operates and how it represents the famous team. The way the team pinnacle of fast jet display flying. “The Red Arrows represent the His selection for the Red Arrows – in Afghanistan in Tornado aircraft. He joined the RAF in 2003 and will fly with the nine-aircraft team for three years. In April the Red Arrows begin their 50th season. Flt Lt Campbell, from Peebles, said: “The Red Arrows represent the Constitution Funding Council. Education Secretary Michael Russell said Professor Brown’s “extensive experience will help to forge innovative partnerships between the further and higher education sectors, and beyond.” From 2002 to 2009 Professor Brown (pictured) served as the first Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. She steps down from her University post and as General Secretary of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, to take up her new duties. Professor Brown graduated from Edinburgh in Economics and Politics in 1983, winning the OP Hearlsey Prize. She completed a PhD in 1991 and received an honorary doctorate in 2010. The film, narrated by the journalist and broadcaster Sheena McDonald (MA English Language and Literature, 1976), was premiered at the Playfair Library at an event attended by participants, families and invited guests, and introduced by the University’s Principal, Professor Sir Timothy O’Neill. A second launch event took place at the Caledonian Club in London. All of those featured in the film received some form of financial assistance to support their studies, and in their interviews they explain the impact this had on their time at Edinburgh, and their subsequent careers. The interviewees cover a wide range of experiences, from current Medicine student Megan McGregor, to Jann Brown (MA History 1984), who is Finance Director of oil and gas giant Cairn Energy. The reverend John Hardy is the earliest graduate in the film, having received an honorary doctorate in 1978), who is Finance Director of oil and gas giant Cairn Energy. The interviewees cover a wide range of experiences, from current Medicine student Megan McGregor, to Jann Brown (MA History 1984), who is Finance Director of oil and gas giant Cairn Energy. The reverend John Hardy is the earliest graduate in the film, having received an honorary doctorate in 1978), who is Finance Director of oil and gas giant Cairn Energy.
LUCY LUMSDEN

THE INTERVIEW

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

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


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

Q What are your main memories of your student experience?

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

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

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

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

A Yes and no. I realised quite quickly that it was great to have an arts MA, but it was the student theatre that ultimately influenced the direction of my career. When I graduated I started with some grand ideas about being an illustrator. I did the artwork for Daunt Books in London. I then volunteered at the National Film and TV School, as production manager on a graduation film. I blogged my way through it. I really didn’t have a clue. It was from that job that I got the call from The Comic Strip to go and work with my good friend, producer Nira Park.

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

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

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

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

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

A We had a standing start to work to introduce British comedy to a broadcaster known for news, sports, movies and US content. But I felt trusted to get on with it by my boss Stuart Murphy. It meant I could be more choosy about who we wanted to work with and the creative freedom we felt we could give them. It was about placing risk in the hands of the experts. Sky is fast moving and has a really dynamic atmosphere which spurs you on. I’m thrilled with the success we’ve had with shows like Stella, Miranda, A Young Director’s Notebook, Spy and Trollied.

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

A I created an anthology series for Sky for Christmas 2012 called Little Crackers. It was a series of short autobiographical films featuring comedy stars, including Stephen Fry, Dawn French, Chris O’Dowd, Kathy Burke, Victoria Wood, Bill Bailey and many others. The success of it felt like a complete accident at the time, and I was thrilled that Chris O’Dowd’s series Moone Boy came out of it. They’ve just finished filming the third series.

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

A Comedy, like music, has an immense range to it and certain styles come in and out of vogue. But in my role you have to always be looking out for the thing that is going to surprise. With a massive number of TV channels and social media, audiences can tune into anything when and where they want. Is this a new era for comedy or are the same formulas working?

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

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

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

The failure of the first referendum on Scottish devolution in 1979 caused acrimony, bitterness and disillusion among its supporters. In 2014, however, students and staff at the University of Edinburgh find themselves at the centre of history in the making, as Scotland decides whether to become an independent country.

James Tumbull’s famous cartoon in the Glasgow Herald the day after the result, depicting the Scottish lion covering in the cage with the door wide open mumbling “I’m feart”, captured the mood of despondency and recrimination in the Yes camp.

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

The outcome was far from inevitable and would indeed have seemed a pipe dream to the disappointed campaigners of 20 years earlier. Soon after that first referendum both the SNP and Labour, the two pro-devolution parties, were mired in profound factional difficulties. The SNP threatened to split apart as a war raged between different groups for the soul of the party while the threat of the militant tendency paralysed Labour for several years.

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

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

This view hardened when in 1987 the hated community charge or poll tax was imposed on Scotland before England, suggesting that the Scots were being treated as tax guinea pigs. Charles Kennedy MP at the time described Margaret Thatcher as “the greatest of all Scottish nationalists” because she had managed to unite the nation against most of her policies.

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

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

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

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

But during the years that followed, Labour, a party that could win a UK election outright and was sympathetic to devolution, committed itself to the proposal for a Scottish Parliament with tax-varying powers. Its landslide victory in 1997 was followed swiftly by the promise of a referendum on Scottish devolution later that year.

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

Twelve years later, however, in May 2011, the SNP won what was previously thought to be impossible, namely an overall majority in the Scottish Parliament. One immediate result was the promise by the First Minister, Alex Salmond, to hold a referendum on Scottish independence within the five-year term of his administration. This will now take place in September 2014.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Edinburgh academics are planning a central role in shaping the debate over Scotland’s future.

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

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

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

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

Professor Tom Devine is the author or editor of more than 30 books on Scottish history, and in 2012 won the Royal Society of Edinburgh’s Sir Walter Scott Prize for his contribution to the history of Scottish history. He is Director of the Scottish Centre for Diaspora Studies.
Louise Oswald was the wife of Neil Platt, whose battle against motor neurone disease was documented in the award-winning film *I Am Breathing*. The documentary, directed by two Edinburgh College of Art staff, has been viewed in cinemas around the world, and has changed the lives of many sufferers and their families. Here, Louise tells us how humour, boundless energy and great, talented friends have enabled Neil’s legacy to continue.

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

It was due to this group of friends that we met again in 2003 when we were both living and working in London. They were the same friends that we had needed physical help round in the excitement of our baby boy, Oscar, when he arrived in August 2007. They were also the friends who helped me nurse Neil and keep his sense of humour alive after the diagnosis of motor neurone disease when Oscar was only five months old.

I remember when the first symptom appeared. Neil came home complaining of a limp. There was no pain and he explained it as his foot “kind of slapping itself on the ground” when he walked. At this point, I have to admit, I was more concerned about baby issues than Neil’s father had died of motor neurone disease (MND) at 51 and his grandfather at 60. Unlike me, Neil knew that the cause of his discomfort could be a lot more serious than an old pair of shoes.

Neil Platt and his son Oscar with filmmaker Morag McKinnon

Neil Platt and his son Oscar with filmmakers Morag McKinnon and Emma Davie. They are both film directors and ECA teachers – Emma is Head of Film and Television and Morag is a tutor in directing.

None of us knew at this point quite how involved we would all become in what would evolve into the film *I Am Breathing*. Louise has now completed the book inspired by Neil’s words, and is currently seeking a publisher.

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

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

Time was something that Neil knew he didn’t have, and once we started filming, he realised that he would need to be nearer family, and that we would need a house that could accommodate disability. All of these things led us to a rented bungalow in Harrogate, North Yorkshire. We moved there in April 2008. Neil was already using a walking stick and quickly needed crutches. By June we had a wheelchair in the house and by July he could no longer walk at all.

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

Around September 2008, shortly after Oscar’s first birthday party, Neil could no longer wheel himself in his chair, and had started using ventilation, he put a call out on the blog for anyone who had any media contacts to get in touch with ideas of how we could raise more awareness of MND, also known as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) and Lou Gehrig’s disease. It was this blog post that caught the attention of our good ECA friends Morag McKinnon and Emma Davie. They are both film directors and ECA teachers – Emma is Head of Film and Television and Morag is a tutor in directing.

None of us knew at this point quite how involved we would all become in what would evolve into the film *I Am Breathing*. One of the most common questions I am asked by audiences is “How intrusive was it to have the cameras there at such a difficult time of your lives?” I have come to look forward to answering this question, because I have so many reasons why the word “intrusive” didn’t figure at all in the making of the film.

Neil Platt’s blog ‘The Plattitude’ continues to offer support to sufferers and their families. www.iambreathing.com/plattitude

Neil and Louise on their wedding day

Image of Neil and Louise on their wedding day

Image of Neil and Louise on their wedding day

Image of Neil and Louise on their wedding day

Image of Neil and Louise on their wedding day
I promised I would turn our story into something beautiful, so that people would want to listen rather than look away.

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

After Neil died, he left us all with the responsibility of having his words heard. Morag and Emma really took this on board when developing the film. I promised him that I would write a book about our story and the film. I promised him that I would rather than look away.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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ONE WOMAN’S FIGHT TO HELP ON THE FRONT LINE

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

The local staff proudly identified themselves as ‘Scottish women’ in honour of the hospital’s name.

Of the many cruel ironies of the First World War was the name it acquired while it was happening: the war to end all wars. Sadly, instead of bringing conflict, it birthed a new kind – mechanical, relentless, death on an industrial scale. The screaming howitzers of the Somme were the terrible heralding of the modern age of warfare. The war sucked in all of society; tore up ancient empires and order. It reached across the globe and the century. Even after 100 years, no one is a bystander.

Yet amid the mangle of barbed wire and the choke of chlorine gas, the war birthed something more human. And where there was narrow gates. And where there waslessen suffering and improve her society, she passed through many narrow gates. And where there was no gate she made one.

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

She initially studied under the medical students. It can also be seen in every woman standing ward, or debating chamber. Inglis’s achievements can be seen in every woman standing.

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

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

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

Then, in 1914, war broke out. Europe tumbled into conflict. The continent’s men heeded their countries’ calls. Inglis and many other women did likewise. She contacted the War Office offering to set up medical units run by women to treat the casualties. She was reportedly told by an official: “My good lady, go home and sit still.”

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

On 1 November 1914 the first auxiliary hospital was established in Royaumont Abbey, 20 miles north of Paris. Two hundred beds were expertly organised amid the 10th century cloisters. It set a template that Inglis repeated 14 times across Europe during the war, from Malta and Greece in the south, to Russia in the north and Romania in the east.

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

Cancer may have claimed her life, but her legacy proved indomitable. Upon Tyne.

A decade on, a glimmer of Inglis’s achievements can be seen in every woman standing resolute in the face of adversity. But it is in a war zone, hospital ward, or debating chamber. It can also be seen in every ambitious student graduating in the McEwen Hall, merrily making from her father. Inglis set up her own rival medical school, the Scottish Association for the Medical Education for Women.

By the end of the war, in Inglis’s hospitals 10,000 women treated thousands of men. The local staff proudly identified themselves as “Scottish women” in honour of the hospitals’ name. The units suffered a significantly lower rate of death from disease than other auxiliary hospitals. Scottish Women’s Hospitals were one of the most successful medical initiatives of the war.

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

“WE ALWAYS DISCUSSED THE ILLS OF THE WORLD.”
EMMA GRANVILLE, MA ENGLISH LITERATURE 2000

The seeds of a remarkable project were sown when Emma Granville met Sam Hodgson in 1999, when they were both first-year students.

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

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

Guba, which in siSwati means “a place to do things”, is an organisation aiming to alleviate extreme poverty and the effects of the highest HIV infection rate in the world.

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

In Swaziland, 31 per cent of adults are infected with HIV. For Ms Granville, “It’s very common when we go to people’s homesteads that there are at least eight children under five, teenagers, and a grandparent, usually a ‘gogo’, or grandmother”, says Ms Granville.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The device can analyse light from a star to decipher all sorts of information – from what it is made of to how fast it is moving. In the 1990s, including during his Edinburgh PhD, Professor Watson pioneered the use of fibre optics in astronomy, which enabled the spectroscopic analysis of many stars simultaneously, previously it had been possible to analyse only one star at a time.

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“THEY DON’T TAKE THEMSELVES TOO SERIOUSLY, AND I THINK THAT’S A GOOD MESSAGE FOR ALL SCIENTISTS.”
FRED WATSON, PHD PHYSICS 1987

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

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

When he speaks to EDT, Professor Watson’s day has already included three radio interviews, and he is preparing to sing at a “Science in the Pub” event. It’s a fairly typical day, he says.

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

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

www.ed.ac.uk/alumni/yournews

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


www.gubaswaziland.org www.facebook.com/gubaswaziland www.permaculture.co.uk
From artists to academics, many graduates view their time at Edinburgh as the formative years of their professional lives. Here are a few of your experiences and updates on recent achievements and successes.

**KIRSTY DUNCAN**
**PHD GEOGRAPHY 1993**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Before my masters, I had a career in copyright licensing and property and copyright. I was working with companies that were trading in it, and I saw there was a potential opportunity. I thought the only way really to understand copyright was to understand the law that underpins it.

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

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

Many big companies seem to value learning beyond work. The degree also showed I could operate in new environments. The degree was amazing – pretty much every continent, ‘we’ve got fond memories.’"

**GRACE LEE**
**MSC NEUROSCIENCE 2005**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**JULIAN JAMES WAGSTAFF**
**PHD MUSICAL COMPOSITION 2008**

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

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

Antarctica and my studies at Edinburgh hugely shaped my career. The science began to lend itself to a story that could be much more widely communicated. After attending a science communication course during my PhD I started to write some of the results up as stories for newspapers. Today I work in the science department at the BBC making TV documentaries. It involves researching stories, writing scripts, interviewing scientists and traveling the world to film these stories. The Rise of the Continents, with Professor Iain Stewart on BBC2, was an amazing series to work on.

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

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

"Before my masters, I had a career in copyright licensing and was living in Australia.

I made while a student continue to stand me in good stead as a professional musician today.

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STAY CONNECTED

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

www.ed.ac.uk/alumni/services

SNAPSHOT

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

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

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

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


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

Coolooli’s Artisanal Chocolate Alphabet is a hand-illustrated game where the player has to make words from random chocolate letters travelling on a conveyor belt. Emily Thomsforde, a computational linguistics PhD graduate, and her husband Jamie Montgomerie, a computer science graduate, spent six months creating the app. Players follow the story of a student who takes a job in a chocolate factory, which, in the narrative of the game, is sited on Edinburgh’s Candlemaker Row. 

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

**BAFTA TRIUMPH FOR GAME-MAKING COUPLE**

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THE HISTORY MAKERS

LONG ARM OF THE LAW SCHOOL

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

LORD RUTHERFURD OF CROSSHILL
(BORN ANDREW GREENFIELD) (1791–1834)

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

Lord Rutherford was a campaigner for legal reform in Scotland — he proposed the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 and was instrumental in amending the law of entail in 1848. He was appointed a Senator of the College of Justice and Privy Councilor in 1851.

There is a bust of Lord Rutherford in the Playfair Library.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
(1850-1894)

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

He showed no enthusiasm for the profession, and switched his studies to law. He qualified in 1875, but never practised — during his summer vacations as a student he travelled around Europe.

Before he graduated he had decided his calling was as a writer.

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

DAME MARGARET HENDERSON KIDD
(1900–1989) LLB 1922

Dame Margaret Henderson Kidd achieved many firsts for women lawyers. When she was called to the Faculty of Advocates in 1923, she became its first female member. In 1948 she was the first woman appointed King’s Counsel, and in 1960 she was appointed Scotland’s first female sheriff, for Dumfries and Galloway. Dame Margaret was the first female advocate to appear before the House of Lords and before a select committee of the House of Commons.

In 1949 she said: “Much excellent work is being done by many able women solicitors in town and county districts throughout Scotland. The general public know too little of the service which they give.”

LORD RALPH (ILAIN)
SUTHERLAND
MA LLB 1953

Lord Sutherland was appointed Solicitor General for Scotland in 1837, becoming Lord Advocate in 1839 and Whig MP for Crosshill later. He was appointed Senator of the College of Justice and Privy Councilor in 1848. He was appointed a Senator of the College of Justice and Privy Councilor in 1851.

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

JUSTICE JULIA SEBUTINDE
LLM 1990

Justice Julia Sebutinde is the first African woman to sit on the International Court of Justice, having been appointed in 2010. She grew up and studied in Uganda, where she returned after gaining her masters at the University of Edinburgh in 1989. She was appointed Judge of the High Court in Uganda in 1996, and in 2005 to the Special Court on Sierra Leone. She is Chancellor of the International Health Sciences University in Kampala.

KATHERINE GRAINGER
LLB 1997

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

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

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

She completed a PhD in Law at King’s College London in July 2011.

WINTER 2013/4

CLASS OF 1953 REUNION

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

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

WWW.ED.AC.UK

EDIT MAGAZINE
IDEAS EXCHANGE

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

WHAT THE STUDENTS SAY...

CHELSEA MARTIN

LAW YEAR 2 AND ALASDAIR KEANE

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS YEAR 2

Chelsea and Alasdair spent two weeks at the University of Virginia on the inaugural Study America visits, fully funded for students who joined Edinburgh via Widening Participation programmes. Chelsea says: “I’m not sure what it was about the trip, but we just all feel more confident now. It’s also piqued my interest in going abroad later, rather than staying at home.” Alasdair, as an International Relations student, a first-year student at the University.

We want to ensure students have a really enriched experience at the University,” says Isabel Majewsky, Acting Deputy Director of the University’s International Office.

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

There are three main strands to the Go Abroad campaign: new opportunities for travelling abroad to study, work or volunteer; access to funding; and encourage students and staff to increase participation in existing and new opportunities. There is also a new Go Abroad website, described as a “one-stop shop” for students and staff, bringing all international exchange opportunities into one portal.

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

Alasdair ‘seeks to build on our tradition of mobility, by inspiring and increasing participation and the range of opportunities available for our students,” says Mr Majewsky.

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

Mr Majewsky says: “Yes, we have an academically brilliant standard. But we also have the fantastic opportunity for students to get a whole new understanding of how the world works and yourself within it.”

FLASH OF LEG

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

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

We look back in gratitude on 55 years, a wonderful, varied and interesting life, including 17 years at a Christian hospital in India, six years in London, and 20 years back in Edinburgh. We have four children, 11 grandchildren, four great grandchildren and still counting.”

WILLIAM CUTTING

DOWNHILL FROM THE START

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

We went to Whistler in 2002 and ended up staying a year. He was a snowboard instructor, and I sold lift tickets – we had the best year of our lives! I am eternally grateful to him for introducing me to skiing, which is now a passion for both of us.”

KIRSTY WHITE

THE COFFIN CONNECTION

“I met one of my best friends, Nick Toth, at Pollock’s Halls first public ceilidh of the 2009–10 academic year. I went alone and sat down among a group of dateless lads (including Nick), figuring one of them would jump right in.

“First lady” of the EUSSC was not a part of the festivities, but he was a bit embarrassed that the ‘first lady’ of the EUSSC was not a snow bunny. Coming from Colorado, where there is more than one quirk mountain town that hosts coffin races, I eventually turned to the topic of the kind of events that might be part of an Olympic Games for undertakers.

Good friends I made on the Creative Writing masters have crucial roles in our project. This has been my dream project, and it’s been a great pleasure to work with all these great people we met at the University.”

SINDHU RAJASEKARAN

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 lifelong together.

If you met your partner or best friend at Edinburgh and would like to share your story, email us at editor@ed.ac.uk

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STAY CONNECTED

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

If you met your partner or best friend at Edinburgh and would like to share your story, email us at editor@ed.ac.uk

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THE MEADOWS

The Meadows are a storied part of the Edinburgh cityscape. Today they play host to countless gatherings and events, from impromptu picnics to the new Meadows Marathon, while in the past they have been dug up to grow vegetables for the war effort, and even served as a arena for plague victims in the 18th century. Both a thoroughfare and a retreat, the Meadows have a special place in the heart of many students. Here we share your memories.

I REMEMBER...

Shaun Murphy
BSc Civil Engineering 1972
“Pan – from the 12-hour pedal car race around the Meadows during Charity Week. First-year Civils came second and won cases of beer, better than the first prize of a bottle of whisky!”

Treva Goodhead
MA Politics 1995
“First year had me walking across the Links and Meadows every day from Warnerman Park Terrace. While every day had something new, my favourite one was when the morning fog sat waist high. Totally clear at eye level, but couldn’t see your feet. Only happened to me once, but made such an impression.”

Charlton Leung
MA Business Studies & Accounting 2004
“As a first-year student living at Warnerman Park Crescent, my friend and I had just completed an all-nighter for an essay at 5.30am and we decided to celebrate by going out for a few holes of golf at the Meadows just as the sun was coming up. The tranquility of the still sleeping city was beautiful.”

Wendy Barrett
MA English Literature & Language 1985
“Walking through the Meadows after my finals and the blossom falling like snow.”

Sarah Glanville
MA Latin Studies 2012
“Playing on Bruntsfield Links in November 2010 late at night after deep snow had fallen. We were the only people there in fresh snow and it was beautiful.”

Dr Anthony R. Dickinson
PG Diploma Neuroscience 1988
“Hiking to and from the George Square library, knowing that the many plague victims were left here in what is now the Meadows: to drown or otherwise decompose when it was a lake, so many years ago.”

Carol Brown
BSc Mathematics 1980
“Studying for first year exams in Warnerman Park Crescent and when needing a break going to the swing park I could see from the windows. When having a reminiscent go down the slide one kid said ‘there’s a mum playing! I felt so old at 19’.”

James Jarvis
PhD Biochemistry 1999
“For me the Meadows was the rendezvous for Hare & Hounds runs. We would run on the inside of the terram to reduce the impact, leaving a trod through the trees. Monday night was particularly special as we would do a few laps slowly to keep everyone together before heading back to have pasta at someone’s flat.”

Madeline Lefebvre
MA Arts 1972
“My best memory was going into the Meadows with friends after a party nearby and listening and singing along to my classmate Jeremy Rossiter and his guitar. We sat there until the sun came up – good friends, good memories.”

Spencer Hamill
BSc Mathematics 1970
“Most mornings in 1967–8 I walked from my student digs in Warnerman Park Road across the Meadows to 9 o'clock lectures in Drummond Street or Chambers Street. I shared a room with a fellow second-year Maths student who owned a car, and he would occasionally, on the rare days he attended lectures, give me a lift. He died, aged 50, on 8 May 1998 after suffering a bad asthma attack. We both played the guitar and I still have his words to Tom Paxton’s Talking Pop Art he wrote down for me a few months before he died.”

E dinburgh Chemists has an encouragingly high number of female students and academics: 30 per cent of our professors are women, whereas the UK average is 11 per cent. While we are still a long way from equal, we wanted to see if there was anything in particular we had done right. To make A Chemical Imbalance I hired a journalist and two filmmakers, all Edinburgh alumni, to help investigate. We sent questionnaires to Edinburgh’s current chemists and alumni of all ages, and to many other UK chemists, through social media.

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

But analysis of the data did not reveal a magic bullet. In fact, that would suggest there was a simple solution – which of course would mean we’d have solved the equality problem by now. We are unsurprised by continued calls for inquiries that produce familiar patterns of issues. We are calling for action now, before the hard work of the generation above us is lost through complacency. Here are our four action points to drive progress towards equality in the workplace.

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

— Mentor our people and make sure the best are applying. The thing that marks out Edinburgh as different, and the point that came up repeatedly in interviews, is the effect that mentoring can have. While I understand that everyone’s busy and academics are mostly introverts, communicating with our young talents is crucial. The saying goes that women wait until they’re 120 per cent ready but men wait until 80 per cent. If our youngsters perceive themselves to be good enough, even if it’s not true, we’ve already lost them. And many hiring panels could also benefit from mentoring.

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

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

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The General Council of the University of Edinburgh

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

THE GENERAL COUNCIL HAS RELAUNCHED ITS WEBSITE. TO SEE OUR NEW LOOK AND JOIN IN THE DISCUSSION, VISIT WWW.GENERAL-COUNCIL.ED.AC.UK

PAIK EXHIBITION A FESTIVAL TREAT

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

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

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

A fascinating insight to the work of the artist was given by Ms Fisher after which guests were able to roam the gallery and enjoy a reception with friends.
LUNCH WITH A LEGAL THEME
As usual, following the Half-Yearly Meeting on Saturday 15 February 2014, members of the General Council, alumni, partners, family and friends are cordially invited to the General Council Lunch in the Playfair Library Hall, Old College. Sheriff Principal Edward Bowen CBE, Chancellor’s Assessor and eminent lawyer, has kindly accepted our invitation to speak after lunch and we are confident that his talk will be fascinating. Sheriff Principal Bowen has a long and distinguished career behind him, including as Advocate Depute, Sheriff of Tayside Central and Fife and Queen’s Counsel, before being appointed Sheriff Principal of Glasgow and Strathkelvin and then transferring to the Sheriffdom of Lothian and Borders in 2005, retiring from that office in May 2011. He has also served in numerous other capacities, including President of the Scottish Bar Guild and its legal education committee.

If you would like to attend the next General Council Lunch, please book online by following the links at www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/whats-happening, or complete and return the form adjacent no later than Friday 7 February 2014. Tickets at £20 include pre-lunch wine reception and buffet lunch in the Playfair Library Hall. Table wines will be available to purchase.

THE FEBRUARY 2014 GENERAL COUNCIL LUNCH
Playfair Library Hall, Old College, on Saturday 15 February 2014, 12.30pm for 1pm.
Please send me ____________________ tickets (£20 each)
A cheque for £__________________ is enclosed payable to the University of Edinburgh.
Name
Address
Postcode
Name(s) of guest(s)
Dietary requirements/preferences
Please return to Mrs Mary Scott, Assistant to the Secretary of the General Council, University of Edinburgh, Charles Stewart House, 9–11 Chambers Street, Edinburgh EH1 1HT, Scotland, UK. Alternatively, you may order online at www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/whats-happening.
Closing date for applications: Friday 7 February 2014.
AGENDA FOR THE GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING

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

PRESENT

MR PETER McCOLL
Secretary of the General Council
PROFESSOR CHARLES SWANSON
Convenor of the Business Committee
MR SARAH SMITH
University Secretary and Registrar of the General Council
PROFESSOR DAVID ARGOLE
Head of the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies

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

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

MATTERS ARISING

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

REPORT OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

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

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

The Constitutional Standing Committee had produced new information for those wishing to stand for election and had refreshed the information available for those who were elected thus improving induction. The commitment expected had been clarified and the way in which we operated to support your university. They had considered further whether our election procedures for a future Chancellor should be updated and no further changes were proposed. New procedures for publicising the election had already been introduced.

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

The Finance and Services Standing Committee had reviewed the excellent previous financial year as described in the Report and Financial Statement to 31 July 2012 (available on the University website) with the Director of Finance, Phil McNaull. He had described the emphasis on the University becoming less dependent on Government Teaching Grants and seeking an increased income base as possible. The Public Affairs Standing Committee had been working on a redevelopment of the General Council website. Development & Alumni was a key partner in this and other related work. The new Executive Director of Development & Alumni, Kirsty MacDonald, had been welcomed to the Business Committee in January and gave an excellent introduction to the new strategies for alumni engagement.

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

The Convener thanked a number of retiring Committee Members for their contribution; Jane Kille, Ruthwen Geminell, Ian Sutherland, Neil Hynd and Shields Henderson. Ian Sutherland had been a member of the Business Committee since 2001. Neil Hynd had been Convener of the Public Affairs Standing Committee since 2004-8, serving a total of 10 years as a member of the University Court. Between them they had given over 23 years to service on the Committee. The Convener also thanked the retiring General Council Assessor, Mrs Margaret Tait, who had made an outstanding contribution to the General Council and the University for an astonishing 27 years. Mrs Tait had been elected to the Business Committee in 1986, had served on various committees, had been Convener of Public Affairs Standing Committee 1990-1992, Vice Convener 1992-94, and then Convener of the Business Committee 1996-2000, and had then been elected to the University Court, where she served 2001-2003. She championed the causes of the disadvantaged and had always held the torch aloft for students in particular. The University community had much to thank her for.

The report of the Business Committee was approved.

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

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

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

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

NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS

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

PRESENTATION BY PROFESSOR DAVID ARGOLE, HEAD OF THE ROYAL (DICK) SCHOOL OF VETERINARY STUDIES

Professor Argyle highlighted the three main strands to the work of the Veterinary School; education, research and clinical work, all important and interrelated. The history of the School was
The presentation was closed with a stimulating and wide ranging question session.

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

Any Other Competent Business

There was no other competent business.

Adjournment

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

Rev Dr Harriet Harris closed the meeting with a benediction.
Your legacy, whatever its shape or size, is vital to the University of Edinburgh.

To find out more about making a gift to the University of Edinburgh in your will, please contact Morag Murison on +44 (0)131 650 9637 or morag.murison@ed.ac.uk

We are happy to arrange a chat or simply send you an information pack. Alternatively, visit www.ed.ac.uk/legacy-giving