



THE ALUMNI MAGAZINE + BILLET & GENERAL COUNCIL PAPERS

# edit

## I MADE IT UP

MARGARET ATWOOD  
ON CRAFTING A  
LITERARY CAREER

# Inspiration can be your legacy

“A university and a gallery have much in common.  
**Challenging. Beautiful. Visionary.**  
 Designed to inspire the hearts and minds  
 of the leaders and creators of tomorrow.”

Pat Fisher, **Principal Curator**,  
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## FOREWORD

Welcome to the winter edition of *Edit*. Edinburgh and Scotland have a place in the hearts of countless people throughout the world, and the leading poet and author Margaret Atwood is no exception. She spoke to *Edit* as she received an honorary degree from the University of Edinburgh, and her interview on pages 6-7 is a characteristic blend of humour and insight, taking in the power of access to higher education to bring about social change, and including a mention of Irn-Bru. Anniversaries crop up throughout this edition of your magazine. A ceremony launching a major refurbishment of Old College also celebrated the laying of the foundation stone 225 years ago. We open the cabinet doors of one of the world's leading herbariums, which, jointly founded by the University in the 19th century, has been in its current home for 50 years. We also examine the University's unique relationship with China as the Confucius Institute for Scotland passes its 10th birthday. *Edit* itself moves with the times, and as we publish our latest printed magazine, we have a new suite of digital offerings, all of which include additional multimedia content. See pages 4-7 for how to get the most from *Edit* in 2015.



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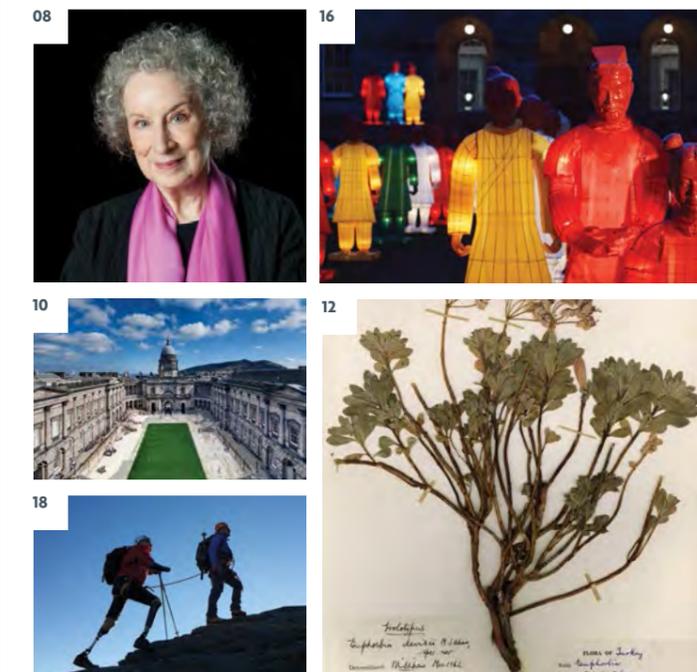
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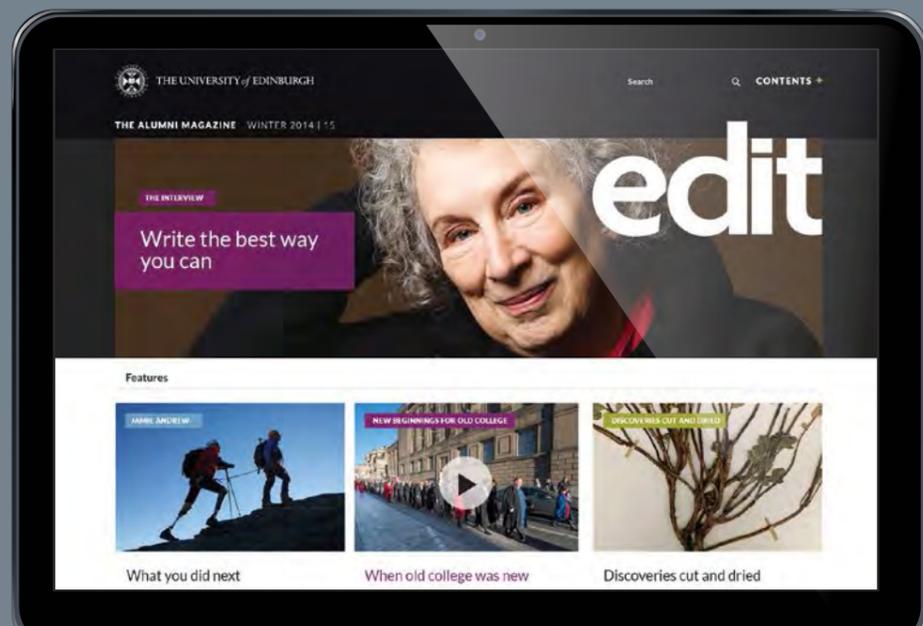
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# CHOOSE YOUR DIGITAL EDIT

VISIT  
[WWW.EDIT.ED.AC.UK](http://WWW.EDIT.ED.AC.UK)

*Edit's* digital offering has been expanded and enhanced with the publication of the winter 2014/15 magazine. You can now enjoy additional multimedia content and read the whole of *Edit* in the way that suits your technology and your preferences.



## READ (AND WATCH) ALL ABOUT IT

VISIT OR DOWNLOAD THE NEW DIGITAL EDITIONS OF *EDIT* FOR MULTIMEDIA EXTRAS WITH MANY OF THE ARTICLES IN THE PRINT MAGAZINE.

Video content includes:

Interview with Margaret Atwood, talking about links between Scotland and Canada.



Video of the procession to commemorate the foundation of Old College and launch its refurbishment.



Video of Confucius Institute's "China at the Mound" celebrations.

Interview with botanical artists Fiona Strickland and Robert McNeill.



Plus: Full-screen versions of photographs.



## RESPONSIVE WEB EDITION

The web-based edition of the magazine, at [edit.ed.ac.uk](http://edit.ed.ac.uk), now includes every section of *Edit*, from Update to The Last Word and *Billet*.

first digital edition in summer 2014, the web-based magazine will be updated between print editions with new feature articles.

This responsive browser-based format, which includes video with many of the articles, can be viewed across any platform from smartphone to desktop computer. Building on our

Past editions of the magazine will be available and all articles will be searchable.



## IPAD, ANDROID AND KINDLE

The winter edition of *Edit* is available as an interactive app for tablet and smartphone, across iOS, Android and Kindle formats, accessed from the App Store, Google Play and Amazon. As with the web-based magazine, the apps contain video with our feature articles, and the whole of the printed magazine's content is included. We will publish two editions of the apps each year, one in summer, one in winter.

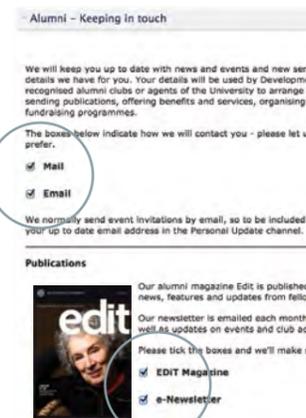


## ENLIGHTENED

Our monthly *Enlightened* newsletter is packed with news about your fellow graduates and the University, and information about alumni benefits.

## DON'T MISS OUT

From January 2015 we will send one printed edition of *Edit* to all alumni each year. Our summer edition of *Edit* will be in digital format only, with additional features added to the web-based version throughout the year. To enjoy the year-round benefit of *Edit*, *Enlightened* and all alumni services, make sure we have your details and that your preferences are up to date.



## LET US KNOW YOUR PREFERENCES

Alumni have access to services and benefits through the secure MyEd portal. For recent graduates, who will have used MyEd while studying at the University, your student login details will have been converted automatically into alumni access. For those who did not use MyEd as a student, you can register for MyEd by emailing our Information Services helpline: [IS.Helpline@ed.ac.uk](mailto:IS.Helpline@ed.ac.uk).

Through MyEd, you can access a wide range of alumni services, from information about alumni events to careers support. You can also update your preferences, such as whether you receive the printed version of *Edit* and whether you receive the monthly *Enlightened* email.

# UPDATE

FOR ALL THE LATEST ALUMNI NEWS, VISIT  
[WWW.ED.AC.UK/ALUMNI](http://WWW.ED.AC.UK/ALUMNI)



Jane Barlow



Jane Barlow



Neil Hanna



Gayle Lindgren



05

## TEVIOT CELEBRATES 125TH BIRTHDAY

Students, staff and alumni marked the 125th anniversary in November of the world's oldest purpose-built Student Union building, Teviot Row House.

A weekend of events celebrated the history of Teviot, which was opened in 1889. There was a Prohibition-themed jazz night in the Library Bar, and a comedy and music extravaganza featuring Craig Hill, student comedians Joe McArdle and Becky Price, the Improverts and Hector's Heroes Ceilidh Band.

The weekend concluded with a students v alumni University Challenge quiz, hosted by BBC Scotland's Political Editor, Brian Taylor. The narrowly defeated alumni team were Ruth Davidson (MA General Arts 1999), Nicholas Grier (LLB Law 1982), Stephen Jardine (MA History 1985) and George McGavin (BSc Zoology 1975).

## 01 ENERGY MINISTER AMBER RUDD LAUNCHES 'BREATHTAKING' OCEAN SIMULATOR

The University's marine energy testing facility, FloWave, has been opened by Amber Rudd (MA History 1986), Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Department of Energy and Climate Change.

The FloWave Ocean Energy Research Facility, at the King's Buildings campus, is a 25-metre circular pool that can recreate both waves and currents found at sea, enabling the testing of energy devices such as tidal generators and floating offshore wind platforms.

"It's completely breathtaking," said Ms Rudd at the opening ceremony. "It's just remarkable to see what can be done here. It's going to have a fantastic application for renewable companies wanting to test what can be done with tidal energy."

The £10.5 million FloWave facility has been funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research

Council, the University and Scottish Enterprise. It can simulate waves up to 28 metres high and currents of 12 knots in the two-metre deep tank, using 2.4 million litres of water.

Testing devices at scale in the unique facility can enable research milestones to be achieved in much shorter times than in open water, helping bring clean energy products to market more quickly and cheaply.

Ms Rudd added: "Renewable energy is such an important part of what this country does, and what we need to do. It's a really exciting day – I think we're seeing the start of something pretty extraordinary."

Ms Rudd, MP for Hastings & Rye since 2010, reflected on her time at Edinburgh, saying: "It feels fantastic to be back here, a city that I've never stopped loving. Being back in this official capacity makes it very special indeed."

[Watch FloWave in action at edit.ed.ac.uk](http://www.ed.ac.uk)

## 02 SHINY NEW COAT FOR GOLDEN BOY

The iconic "Golden Boy" statue that tops the dome of Old College has been regilded.

The dome was shrouded in scaffolding throughout the autumn, as the statue was prepared and gilded on site.

It is the first time in almost 30 years that the weather-beaten statue has been recoated. Stonework and leading close to the statue were restored at the same time.

The life-sized bronze figure created by John Hutchison has marked the city's skyline since 1888. It is believed to be modelled on a well-known Edinburgh character, Anthony Hall, who was a boxer and athlete and later became a life model. The restoration took 2,500 small squares of 23.5-carat gold leaf to complete.

[Watch the restoration work at edit.ed.ac.uk](http://www.ed.ac.uk)

She added: "I have lots of fond memories of Edinburgh. I was particularly interested in getting involved in acting, and one of the most extraordinary things I did with a friend was to put on a grown-up version of *The Sound of Music*. It was slightly hammed up, but extraordinarily good fun. Edinburgh was a wonderful place to try things out."

Ms Rudd joined an investment bank after graduating, before entering the venture capital industry, where she helped start-up firms find commercial opportunities.

She said that experience has helped her in her political career. "Understanding what businesses need to create employment has been absolutely critical to the work that I do now."

## 03 NORTH AMERICAN OFFICE OPENS

The University has strengthened its links with North America by opening a liaison office in New York City.

The new base will aid collaboration between the University and its partners in education, business and government across Canada and the USA. It will also help strengthen ties with Edinburgh alumni in North America and provide a point of contact for prospective students.

The office, at Rockefeller Plaza, is the University's fourth overseas base, joining the India Office, China Office and the Office of The Americas, which works across Latin America.

Joanna Storrar, Executive Director of the North American Office, said: "Every day our deepening connections enable us to pursue opportunities – for applying our research, attracting financial support, recruiting new students, developing student internships – that we simply would not have from a distance. There is no substitute for being here."

The University hosted a series of events to mark the opening of the office in New York City, and has launched two new scholarships to support outstanding students from North America.

The John Witherspoon Masters Scholarships – each worth up to \$35,000 – will be open to postgraduate masters students in any field for 2015/16.

[Watch a video on our North American links at edit.ed.ac.uk](http://www.ed.ac.uk)

## 04 AS IT HAPPENED 30 YEARS AGO

The University Library is publishing digitised editions of the *Student* newspaper from exactly 30 years ago, week by week.

The newspaper is being published on the library's blog, in a one-year pilot that began with the 3 October 1984 edition.

"I can almost smell the glue that we used to put the paper together," said Michael Devlin (MA Arts General 1985), who was editor of the *Student* in October 1984, in a comment posted to the Library's blog.

The cover of the first digitised edition features Ian MacGregor (MA English Language & Literature 1985), now Editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, and Alastair Dalton (MA History 1987), now a journalist with the *Scotsman*. The *Student* was founded in 1887 by Robert Louis Stevenson.

[libraryblogs.is.ed.ac.uk/thestudent](http://libraryblogs.is.ed.ac.uk/thestudent)

## 05 FIRBUSH REVISITED

Dr Sonia Wakelin (BSc 1995, MBChB 1997, PhD 2006), has made a very special trip to the University's Firbush Point outdoor centre on the banks of Loch Tay – with her young family, 20 years after her first visit as an undergraduate.

Dr Wakelin stayed at Firbush in the 1990s, when her head of department, Professor Danny McQueen, arranged a reading party trip. Now a surgeon in Portsmouth, Dr Wakelin returns to Scotland regularly, and wanted her three children to enjoy the outdoor activities on offer.

"The experience is hard to beat, and the children loved it," she says.

Firbush, which is run by the Centre for Sport and Exercise, offers preferential rates for alumni. An expansion is planned for its 50th anniversary in 2017.

[www.ed.ac.uk/sport-exercise/firbush](http://www.ed.ac.uk/sport-exercise/firbush)

# THE INTERVIEW



## 'WRITE THE BEST WAY YOU CAN'

Margaret Atwood received an honorary degree at the University's General Council event in Toronto. The Booker Prize winning Canadian author spoke to *Barbara Laing* about Edinburgh, writing, learning and teaching at university, and the advice she never took.

CBC Still Photo Collection/Farhang Ghajar

Canadians like to help you in your constant struggle to keep from getting too puffed up.



**Q** You regularly visit Edinburgh for the International Book Festival. What have been your favourite experiences of the city?

**A** We actually lived in Edinburgh in 1978–9 – my partner Graeme Gibson was the Canadian/Scotland exchange writer that year – so we see old friends, including Aileen Christianson of the University of Edinburgh, who helped with the research for *Alias Grace* – one of the murder victims was Scottish. We also see friends we have made since that time, Ian Rankin [MA English Language & Literature 1982] among them. We always pay a visit to the Café Royal with its wonderful old tile murals. Edinburgh is a great city for vintage clothing shops, which we explored when I was there in 2006 as the first Muriel Spark Fellow. So far I have avoided the deep fried Mars bar, though I have tried Irn-Bru.

**Q** Place is important in your writing. Do you find you write differently when in different parts of the world? You've lived in Europe, but is Canada where you need to be?

**A** It's not where you're writing, it's where you're writing about. Being in a place very different from the one you are writing about often helps improve focus. Scotland is good to write in because it's not too hot. Drizzle helps.

**Q** What are your fondest memories of your student experiences at the University of Toronto, and later at Harvard?

**A** As an undergraduate I did a lot of multi-tasking because few were interested in the arts in the late 1950s. Sometimes I wrote for the "arty" magazine under different names. Skit writing, acting, set painting, illustrating, poster design. At Harvard it was different: more pressure. In both places I had many excellent teachers. And the libraries were very important to me.

**Q** Northrop Frye is noted as an influence in your early academic career. What were the highlights of working with him?

**A** Not much as an undergraduate – I took only half a course with him – but I knew him later. A very smart person, extremely well read and also funny.

**Q** Do you consider his advice (to go on to Harvard) to have been a seminal moment?

**A** The alternative would have been to run away to France, drink Absinthe if I could find any, smoke cigarettes in a garret (hopeless, they make me cough), wear black turtlenecks, get TB, and expire early while composing deathless masterpieces, sort of like *La Bohème*. So, in a word, yes.

**Q** What other seminal moments did you have in your university days?

**A** Maybe when my senior adviser advised me to drop all this writing and academic stuff and find a good husband instead. Think maybe that was seminal.

**Q** You took up academic posts in the 60s and 70s. Did you enjoy the nurturing and teaching aspects of these roles while you researched, wrote and published? Did you learn anything from your students?

**A** I really did not have much interest in being nurturing and so forth. One doesn't in one's 20s and early 30s; usually you are

still very anxious at that age ("How will it all turn out?"). I stopped teaching full time as soon as I was self-supporting through writing. As is true for everyone who teaches, however, I enjoyed some of my students very much (when they were smart and talked back). I had fun teaching, but I did not much enjoy some of the more rancorous features of departmental politics.

**Q** Mentioning your name in conversation causes sharp intakes of breath followed by outpourings about favourite reads. Do you have a sense of what your writing has done for so many people? Is this inspiring when moving into new projects?

**A** That's lovely, but I think it's a feature of living a long time. At my age John Keats had been dead for 50 years. It's better not to think too much about "the reader" when you are writing. You have to assume there will be one, but if you start anticipating the strange letters, you may freeze.

**Q** How did it feel when you won the Booker Prize? How did you celebrate? Did it

make the next writing project more or less of a challenge?

**A** Ha ha! It had been a cliff-hanger for some time. Every time I didn't win it, I could expect headlines in the gloating Canadian press – Atwood Fails to Win Booker! – as if winning it were like winning a race. Whereas with literary prizes the recipient is inert. It's a bit more like Best Pumpkin in the garden show. So I have to admit it was much like a relief. At least I wouldn't have to go through the Fails to Win stuff again, though of course there was immediately a piece about why I shouldn't have won it. Canadians like to help you in your constant struggle to keep from getting too puffed up. I celebrated with family, had a dram. My next project was *Oryx and Crake*, which had a whole new set of challenges. As Monty Python used to say, something completely different.

**Q** Is access to education an important issue in your view? And do you believe social change can be brought about through higher education?

**A** We could talk about the role of universities through the ages – they've been both radical and

conservative, as you know. But we can say that opening the doors to – for instance – women and minorities has influenced social change, as it has changed the face of the knowledge-bearers in our society, and thus changed the nature of what sort of knowledge we consider worth investigating, and what sorts of judgments and evaluations we have made.

**Q** Going back to finding your feet in the publishing world, do you have any advice for our alumni who may have similar ambitions?

**A** There wasn't much of a "publishing world" in Canada in 1961, not for young Canadian writers. So we made one up. I suppose my advice would go something like: publishing is in flux. Don't assume that today's realities are the only ones there are. There's always another way to do it. But that's the delivery system. The writing should be the real concern. Write your book the best way you can. That's step number one. ■

Opening the doors to – for instance – women and minorities has influenced social change.



MORE ONLINE  
www.edit.ed.ac.uk



01 Procession, November 2014 02 Laying the foundation stone, November 1789 03 Robert Adam's plan for Old College 04 Old College today

# WHEN OLD COLLEGE WAS NEW

It is 225 years since the foundation stone was laid for Old College. Architectural historian *John Lowrey* tells the turbulent story of the beginnings of this iconic building, and heralds a new chapter.



02



01

Douglas Robertson

## IN HISTORIC FOOTSTEPS

A re-creation of the historic procession of 1789 that marked the foundation of Old College took place in November.

More than 100 senior figures from the University, the Scottish Judiciary, the Faculty of Advocates and the Court of the Lord Lyon were among those in the procession. It began at Parliament Square and continued along George IV Bridge and Chambers Street, before arriving at the main entrance to Old College.

The event culminated in the unveiling of an engraved flagstone commemorating the 225th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone. The forthcoming redevelopment of Edinburgh Law School was also announced, and a fundraising campaign launched. Work will begin early in 2015 and is expected to last five years.

[www.ed.ac.uk/development-alumni/law-campaign](http://www.ed.ac.uk/development-alumni/law-campaign)

The College, for Adam, was the start of a *via triumphalis* that introduced the Enlightenment city.



On 16 November 1789 the foundation stone of Old College was laid by the Grand Master Mason of Scotland, in the presence of a crowd of 30,000. This optimistic scene of academic, civic and masonic pomp and cooperation marked the start of a huge, and hugely difficult, project that had been dear to the heart of the veteran principal, William Robertson, for many years.

The disparity, as he saw it, between the fame and success of the University and the ramshackle collection of buildings that housed it was an affront and even a threat, as the University went through an unprecedented period of expansion.

In the time capsule that was immured in the foundation stone was a copy of the design by Robert Adam that would solve this problem and create the grandest and most coherent example of scholastic architecture in Britain.

Adam had been desperate to secure this commission, but there was an irony in his involvement with the University. This is the architect who had left Scotland as "a narrow place" to seek greater opportunities in London.

Adam's architectural vision was on a monumental, even urban scale, but in London he lost out to his great rival, William Chambers, in the commission for Somerset House, the greatest public work in Britain of the time.

The rebuilding of the University of Edinburgh is Adam's Somerset House and its significance lies in its status not only as a major piece of neoclassical architecture but also as a piece of urban design.

The context was the expansion of Edinburgh in the second half of the 18th century. This started with the construction of the North Bridge in 1765, as a prelude to James Craig's first New Town. And in 1784, the city decided to expand in the other direction, with the construction of the South Bridge, which would cut through the eastern end of the University's property and helped to force a decision on its rebuilding.

Adam intervened in the South Bridge project and ensured that it was aligned with the North Bridge, providing a long, axial route into the city from the south, and he produced grand, essentially Roman,

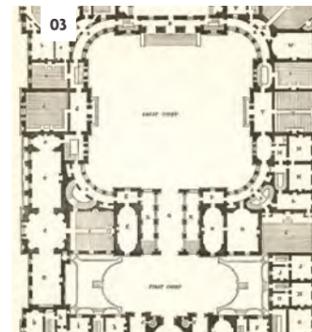
tenemented architecture to line this new route. This was to be introduced at the southern end by "the New College", later to be known as "the College" and eventually, from the early 20th century, as Old College.

Here, the impressive entrance is based on a giant Roman triumphal arch. The College, for Adam, was the start of a *via triumphalis*, a monumental urban ensemble that introduced the great Enlightenment city and culminated in his Register House at the north end of the route, inspired by another Roman model, the Pantheon.

His college design encompassed a double courtyard: a smaller one just inside the entrance, with professorial housing and a new chapel, and beyond that, in the main courtyard, the major teaching spaces, the museum, the library and a "great hall".

This courtyard was characterised by projecting pavilions on the centres of the north and south façades and open quadrant colonnades forming part of a continuous corridor around the edge of the building.

It would have been Adam's tour



03

de force but it came late in his career and within three years of the foundation ceremony, he had died, with only a small amount of the building completed. By 1794 his brother and successor James and Principal William Robertson had also died.

The finances of the building fell apart from the mid-1790s when the long wars with France began. It was only after 1815, when Napoleon was defeated, that the project was restarted with an architectural competition. The winner was William Henry Playfair.

He inherited the bulk of the eastern block on South Bridge. At the



04

opposite end, in the north-west corner, Adam's anatomy theatre was built and it survives today as the only teaching space from the original design. In establishing these two key areas, Adam had made it unlikely that any cost cutting would reduce the college's overall size.

However, Playfair did have to cut down the ambition of Adam's design. Playfair retained the key idea of open quadrants and projecting pavilions, but doubled their number to four in an enlarged single court. He also took the brave decision to demolish the façade of the one pavilion that had been built, because its intricate Adam design would have been expensive to produce four times.

Instead a more monumental design was used that is probably more appropriate in the larger space.

Playfair's most obvious contribution to Old College is his stupendous upper library hall. Here, he entirely changed Adam's design and produced a simpler and hugely impressive space that combines Roman classicism in the coffered barrel vault of the ceiling with a giant Greek Ionic order in the columns at each end, signaling the new taste in what was by now being called the "Athens of the North".

The current investment in estate by the University, thankfully on a more secure footing than in Adam's or Playfair's time, includes substantial work on Old College.

In 2010/11 a major archaeological dig was carried out, to investigate the remains of the original University buildings. There were hopes of finding the remains of Kirk o' Field, the site of Lord Darnley's 1567 murder, in the south-west corner of the quad. It is not there, but on the east side archaeologists did find the chemical store of the famous 18th century chemistry professor Joseph

Black, much to the alarm of the University's health and safety department.

That work was the prelude to the remodeling of the quad to make it once again a place of collegiality rather than a car park.

Perhaps even more important is the work about to start on the refurbishment of the School of Law, on the north side of the quad. This includes a substantial remodelling of the library, with new octagonal book stacks, taking their cue from the old anatomy theatre at the west end of building.

The School of Law is the only academic school still based in Old College and it is in roughly the position allocated to it by Robert Adam in 1789. That presence is important and the refurbishment shows a commitment by the University to retain in Old College the teaching function for which it was originally designed. ■

*John Lowrey is a senior lecturer in architectural history at Edinburgh School of Architecture & Landscape Architecture.*

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# DISCOVERIES CUT AND DRIED



*Holotypus*  
*Euphorbia davisii* M.S.Khan,  
 spec. nov.  
 Determinavit M.S.Khan Mar. 1962

FLORA OF Turkey  
 NAME *Euphorbia*  
 LOCALITY Nil. Antalya

*Bekia Blanca* 249  
 Coast of Patagonia  
 early in Oct: 1832  
 C. Darwin  
 Prof. Hooker  
*Leria mutans* var. *integrifolia*  
*L. integrifolia* (Cf. Pl. n. 3)  
 Collected by Charles Darwin  
 Voyage of the Beagle 1831-1836  
*Chrysalis integrifolia* (Vell.)  
 Burkart  
 Det. J.M. Porter 17 June 1981

The University of Edinburgh is one of the founding institutions that created the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh herbarium – a globally important collection of plant specimens that today includes nearly two-thirds of the world’s species. Edinburgh botanists helped create this unique resource and now continue its pioneering work. *Silke Currie opens the cabinet doors.*

For at least 500 years, the ambition to study biodiversity has taken botanists on expeditions to collect and preserve plants. Their dried discoveries are stored in herbaria, systematically organised plant collections that are used for scientific research.

“[A herbarium] is a dictionary, a library, an encyclopaedia. It’s all those things in one,” says University of Edinburgh PhD student Alan Elliott, who works at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) herbarium. “As well as having all the specimens, you have got the experts here as well. It is very much living.”

With more than 3 million dried specimens, the RBGE herbarium

has nearly two-thirds of the world’s flora species, making it a globally important research facility. Scientists travel to Edinburgh from across the world to study its contents, and specimens are sent out on loan to countries far and wide. Every week new species are discovered among its plants, both the historical specimens and those collected recently. Specimens are also used for DNA research, including evolutionary studies, and RBGE scientists are among those pioneering new DNA sequencing methods.

“We are a very active, large international herbarium,” says curator Dr David Harris. “There is an active number of people who study the

plants based here, people coming in and specimens being requested.”

In 2014, the RBGE herbarium celebrated 50 years in its current, purpose-built home on Inverleith Row. Its origin, however, dates back to 1840, when the collections of the University of Edinburgh and the Botanical Society of Edinburgh were combined. Modern herbaria, which typically combine several collections previously held by private individuals, are an invention of the 19th century.

The RBGE herbarium has been continually growing ever since its creation. Over the years, numerous private collections and permanent loans from other British universities

have been added, including historic collections from George Forrest, John Hutton Balfour and George Walker Arnott. The latter includes specimens collected by Charles Darwin, who studied at the University of Edinburgh between 1825 and 1827, during his Beagle voyage. Collections created since the early 20th century have been mostly acquired by RBGE staff and reflect modern research interests. Around 11,000 specimens are added to the collection each year.

One of RBGE’s most distinguished plant collectors was Peter Hadland Davis (1918–1992), who was both a student and a professor at the University of Edinburgh. His monumental lifetime achievement is the *Flora of Turkey and the East Aegean Islands*, a 10-volume book series, describing the entire plant world of its title. Davis took part in numerous field trips around the world and went on at least 10 expeditions to Turkey, resulting in an outstanding collection of Turkish plants at the RBGE herbarium.

Celebrated for his extraordinary achievements, he received a plethora of awards, including the Royal

Society of Edinburgh Neill Medal, the Gold Medal of the Linnean Society and the Certificate of Merit from the Turkish Minister of State.

Two of Davis’s fellow travellers, the internationally renowned botanists Ian Hedge (BSc Botany 1951) and Dr James Ratter, still work at RBGE today.

“Peter was a great botanist,” Mr Hedge says. “Over his life time, he collected more than 70,000 specimens, which in a global context is enormous.”

Davis’s passion for plants was evoked by an apprenticeship at Ingwersen’s Alpine Plant Nursery in East Grinstead, West Sussex, in 1937, at the age of 19. The following year, he went on a self-initiated amateur expedition to western Anatolia, Turkey, to explore the local flora. Deeply fascinated by the countryside and plant diversity, Davis decided to become a botanist. He committed to an enormous undertaking: to collect and describe the entire native plant life of Turkey.

The outbreak of the Second World War put his plans on hold and he

It gives you a whole different perspective on your research.

ALAN ELLIOTT  
 PHD STUDENT

served in the armed forces until 1945, but immediately after the war, he took the first step towards his dream of becoming a plant collector. He joined the University of Edinburgh to study botany and graduated with first class honours in 1949. The University appointed him lecturer of botany, even before completion of his PhD on the Taxonomy of Middle East Flora in 1952. Moving through the academic ranks, he eventually held a Personal Chair in Plant Taxonomy from 1979.

Supported by six research assistants, Davis and his collaborators completed the *Flora of Turkey* over 20 years. “Part of his success was in the assistants he had,” Dr Ratter remembers. “The first two were absolutely exceptional – James Cullen and Mark Coode. They did a magnificent job, though with a considerable amount of arguing with Peter! He tended to have rather romantic ideas about things and they used to bring him down to earth.”

Davis’s colleagues have fond memories. “He had a considerable

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DISCOVERIES CUT AND DRIED  
 CONTINUED



Papaver, June poppy  
by Fiona Strickland



Abies koreana  
by Robert McNeill



sense of humour," Dr Ratter recalls. "He'd tell a joke and then giggle for a long time after it – with his mouth making all sorts of performances. It's a pity it's not on film."

Both Mr Hedge and Dr Ratter also recall that Davis was a challenging character. "He was an impatient person in some ways [and] he was very insistent," Dr Ratter says. "He always wanted things to be done instantly."

Mr Hedge, who contributed significant accounts to the *Flora*, accompanied Davis on an adventurous seven-month expedition to Turkey in 1957.

"He really was obsessed with collecting – we collected in huge quantities," Mr Hedge says. "It was tough going: I got jaundice and lost a stone."

Davis's legacy is kept alive by the Turkish botanists his work inspired and the ongoing research his estate facilitates at RBGE. "When the first volume of *Flora of Turkey* was published in 1965, only three Turkish botanists contributed," Mr Hedge says. "But now, there are scores and scores of very confident Turkish botanists. And what contributed to that? The *Flora of Turkey*."

When Davis died in 1992, he left

one-third of his estate to fund research at RBGE, and the remainder founded the Davis Expedition Fund, to provide University of Edinburgh students with travelling grants for field trips to non-European countries.

Dr Greg Kenicer (BSc Biological Sciences 1998, PhD Cell & Molecular Biology 2007), Head of Education at RBGE, says: "All the trips that students go on under the Davis fund are invaluable to them. It just lets them see how research is done."

Alan Elliott, who secured two Davis grants for field studies in Nepal as part of his PhD studies, explains: "Peter Davis believed that students needed to experience field work. Looking at dead bits of plant is all well and good, but you don't get a handle on how they grow and where they grow from reading – you need to experience that."

The aim of Mr Elliott's recent expeditions was to collect plants for the RBGE Flora of Nepal project and his own research on the evolution of plants in the Himalayas. "I came back with a much better understanding of the mountains and the sheer diversity of plants," he says. "It gives you a whole different perspective on your research."

His latest trip was reminiscent of Davis's demanding expeditions of decades earlier. Mr Elliott's team crossed the Himalayas into the Trans-Himalayas, travelling mostly on foot. "We did about 200km in the 21 days," Mr Elliott says.

Expedition days start around 6am in the "drying tent". The team has to assess each morning whether previously collected plants are sufficiently dry or require further pressing. They then start walking for the day, collecting interesting plants along the trail.

Before collecting a plant, Mr Elliott takes photographs and assigns it a number. He notes GPS coordinates and details about the specimen's habitat in his field book. The plant goes into a field press and the Flora of Nepal database is updated. On returning to camp, Mr Elliott's team transfers all collections into secure presses to dry on kerosene stoves. As is common on such trips, many of the specimens are dried and pressed between the pages of local newspapers.

Back at the RBGE herbarium, Mr Elliott is currently analysing the collected specimens. "The expedition was a success for me," he says. Among

his findings is a new species of clematis.

The contents of the RBGE herbarium are currently being digitised, which is an enormous undertaking. Specimens are photographed in very high resolution, enabling researchers to see details as if they were using a hand lens. Curator David Harris says: "We have already got a quarter of a million specimens digitalised, with very high quality images available on our website for anyone in the world to see."

It is thanks to the work of Peter Davis and those following in his footsteps that there will be quite so much to see. ■



*Silke Currie (MSc Biomedical Sciences 2010) is studying for a PhD at the University of Edinburgh/MRC Centre for Inflammation Research. She has previously served as Editor in Chief of the University science magazine EuSci.*



## IN A FRESH LIGHT

After fulfilling teaching careers, Edinburgh College of Art graduates Fiona Strickland and Robert McNeill reinvented themselves as award-winning botanical artists. Silke Currie speaks to them about their forthcoming joint project in collaboration with the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh herbarium.

**Silke Currie:** What intrigues you about portraying plants?

**Fiona Strickland:** It's a visual intrigue that excites you as an artist. The aspect of discovering a plant when you find it particularly beautiful, be it in bud or in decay, has to do with the visual elements, the colour, tone and line. That is essential to the way we enjoy portraying plants.

**SC:** Could you describe your approaches to botanical art?

**FS:** We work in different ways in terms of recording the object. One may be to have the object in front of you and the other to take photographs, notes, and drawings. We build up transparent watercolor washes and build up layers, so that each layer has an effect on the layer above or below, so we have really strong, intense color.

**Robert McNeill:** I'm very interested in light, and the way the plant is engulfed in light. I like to explore the possibilities of light and shade in terms of shadows, whether they

interfere with the flow of a particular leaf or stem, and explore the possibilities of showing the form and how the light interplays with it.

**FS:** [My paintings] differ from traditional botanical art in that they have a different viewpoint and the scale may be different. They are totally unexpected in terms of what people would have as a preconceived idea of botanical art.

**SC:** Tell us about your upcoming project.

**FS:** We'll be working through the seasons, recording plants at different times as well as in different environments. [The project] will take notice of the traditional way of working in botanical art, in that it will record all aspects of the plant. The herbarium will be interesting to use in terms of research. We intend to make a film, do drawings, paintings and documenting notes, take lots of photographs [and] work at the herbarium. We are really excited about it. We are not going to be working on the same piece

of work, but we'll be working in similar environments. I may be more interested in aspects of colour, scale or structure, whereas Robert might be more interested in the effects of light and form.

**RMcN:** We have ideas about how the [project] will be shown. We want to show the process of gathering the information and recording it, as well as having some final pieces of work. We want to get away from the traditional ways of showing.

**FS:** We've had a little experiment and went on expedition. We made lots of drawings in the field and measurements and we took some films. It was great to look back at the films. The viewer can relate to the piece of work and see the environment in which it was created.



To see this interview in full and to learn more about Fiona Strickland's and Robert McNeill's art, visit [www.edit.ed.ac.uk](http://www.edit.ed.ac.uk)

# THOUGHT WITHOUT LEARNING IS PERILOUS\*

\*Confucius

The University of Edinburgh has a uniquely strong relationship with China. *Edd McCracken* explores the continuing work to deepen mutual understanding between our two cultures.



Propaganda Poster Art Centre, Shanghai



## NI HAO AND HAPPY BIRTHDAY

### 10-YEAR CELEBRATIONS

A pop-up Chinese tea house helped transform the Mound in central Edinburgh as the University's Confucius Institute for Scotland joined celebrations to mark 10 years of the global Confucius Institute project, in late September.

There were stage performances throughout the day showcasing Chinese pop and classical music and dance, and storytelling by the award-winning Rickshaw Theatre. Members of the public enjoyed Tai Chi sessions, learnt basic Chinese phrases, and left messages of hope on a traditional wishing tree.

Visitors could try their hand at Chinese calligraphy, play traditional string and wind instruments, or sample a range of Chinese teas. With two larger-than-life panda mascots on hand, the event was difficult to miss.

The Confucius Institute for Scotland was opened in 2007 at Arden House, next to the Pollock Halls student accommodation. It is one of more than 500 Confucius Institutes across the world, established by Hanban, the Chinese government department responsible for promoting Chinese culture and language overseas. It has been named as among the best such Institutes in the world six times since its establishment.



Lefley Martin

What we're trying to achieve is for people to get a sense of why China does things the way it does.

PROFESSOR NATASCHA GENTZ  
DIRECTOR OF THE CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE FOR SCOTLAND



January is not Edinburgh's kindest month. After the Christmas lights and Hogmanay fireworks, the season can appear a little grey. Last January, however, the University's Old College quadrangle held the winter gloom at bay thanks to a uniquely Chinese intervention.

More than 70 lanterns in the shape of China's famous Terracotta Warriors illuminated the quad. Standing in formation and most measuring more than two metres high, the figures cast yellow, blue, green and red light onto Old College's walls.

Designed by artist Xia Nan for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the exhibition marked the Chinese New Year in Edinburgh. Images of the luminous army were beamed around the world, including back to China.

More than 30,000 visitors came to see the magical display in its 10-day run. It was the most popular event ever held in the quadrangle.

"What was beautiful about the event was that it was contemporary, cutting edge art but using a classical topic," says Professor Natascha Gentz, Director of the Confucius Institute for Scotland in the University of Edinburgh and one of the key figures in the lanterns' installation. "You had both sides of China in one exhibition."

This was not the first time China has been at the heart of the University. It is a relationship and story that stretches back centuries.

In 1855 Huang Kuan graduated in medicine from the University. He was the first Chinese student to study in the West, and took new medical techniques back to Asia. Since then the relationship between Edinburgh and China has weathered huge political change, but continues to be pioneering.

In 2007 Scotland's first Confucius Institute opened at the University. It has since been named Confucius

Institute of the Year six times by Hanban, the Chinese cultural agency that oversees more than 500 institutes globally.

Academic and research partnerships and exchanges, particularly in the areas of science, engineering and medicine, are flourishing.

"It is a very important relationship," says Professor James Smith, Vice-Principal International. "You can play a role in all sorts of things through a relationship with China. It is significant geopolitically and increasingly economically. Of all the regions in the world, China is one of the most important."

With the world's economic health tethered to that of China's, and the scenes of protest on the streets of Hong Kong in autumn 2014, China is a country that demands to be understood. The University is playing a role in this dialogue. "What we're trying to achieve is for people to get a sense of why China does

things the way it does," explains Professor Gentz. "In the press or public speeches there is very quickly a condemnation. But if you study China, spend time in China, you can see its internal reasons, the challenges it has, and why it reacts this way. This does not mean one has to agree with everything, but there is no point in lecturing China.

"I would want people to be more knowledgeable about China. We want people to engage with China. So that's what we're trying to do with these events."

Events such as the hugely successful exhibition of modern Chinese poster art. More than 5,000 people visited the University's Adam House in June and July to see colourful populist images from 1913 to 1997. It was the largest such exhibition shown outside of China.

The images came from the Propaganda Poster Art Centre in Shanghai. Once an underground

gallery, the centre is now partially funded by the Chinese government.

Low cost and accessibility made posters a ubiquitous art form in 20th century China. The Edinburgh exhibition was a pictorial history of a tumultuous age, from glamorous women advertising perfume in the republican 1930s to the ever-present Little Red Book and beaming face of Chairman Mao after the Communist Party's triumph in the 1940s.

"When we think about propaganda posters we have a very clear image of things like the Cultural Revolution posters, which are very stereotyped and violent," says Professor Gentz. "But there is a broad range and diversity of posters, which is why we put this exhibition on."

Nearly 160 years after Huang Kuan made his arduous trip to Scotland, the University is home to more than 2,000 Chinese students. In 2013/14, more students joined the University from China than from the USA.

"The first day I was really surprised," says Liming Jiang, a fourth-year PhD student from Shanghai and member of the Edinburgh Chinese Scholar and Student Association. "I was walking across the Meadows and I saw a lot of Chinese students – a lot of familiar faces."

Mr Jiang's tale is a familiar one. He came to Edinburgh following the recommendations of his professors at Tongji University in Shanghai and visiting Edinburgh academics.

"For Chinese students London and Edinburgh are the two cities they are interested in," he says. "It's definitely a welcoming place. The Chinese students really like Scottish culture. Scots are very hospitable, and Edinburgh is a wonderful place to study. I appreciate every day that I am here." ■

# WHAT YOU DID NEXT



**JAMIE ANDREW**  
BENG ELECTRONICS &  
ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING 1991

I had survived, and I owed it to us both to give this a second chance.

**JAMIE ANDREW**  
BENG ELECTRONICS &  
ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING 1991

Jamie Andrew, like many climbers, was prevented from climbing the Matterhorn in the summer of 2014 by the weather. The pyramid-like mountain on the Swiss-Italian border remained white throughout August, covered in snow and ice, when normally it would be mostly bare rock.

Mr Andrew, no doubt like many climbers, made the best of the situation. He climbed the nearby Weissmies, which at 4023m is itself an impressive mountain.

The story so far is nothing unique. But Jamie Andrew is not like other climbers. He has no feet, and no hands. All four were amputated after a climbing accident 15 years ago that left his close friend and climbing partner dead and Mr Andrew severely frostbitten.

In January 1999 Mr Andrew and Jamie Fisher (BSc Geography 1994), both experienced mountaineers, took time out from a skiing holiday with a group of friends to climb the North Face of Les Droites in the Mont Blanc mountain range. As they completed their ascent, an unexpected storm blew in that was to pin them to a knife-like ridge of rock for five days.

The helicopter rescue that eventually plucked the pair from the mountain was one of the most daring and dramatic in Alpine history and made headlines around the world. But it came too late for Mr Fisher, and only just in time for Mr Andrew.

The disaster of early 1999, however, became for Mr Andrew the beginning of a remarkable journey, in which he came to terms with the loss of a close friend and the loss of his limbs. Today he is again a mountaineer, who has raised many thousands of pounds for charity. He is also a motivational speaker who travels the world with a story that has a universal message about overcoming challenges.

He traces the turning point in the aftermath of the accident to a moment in hospital, soon after his amputations.

"I was struggling with grief for Jamie," he recalls. "I was very angry and I was suffering from guilt – all sorts of emotions. Through thinking about things and talking with the people close to me, I realised I had to get through that. I was the lucky one here, I had survived and Jamie hadn't, and I owed it to us both to give this a second chance.



"I promised myself that this was the low point of my life, and every day I was going to improve somehow."

In his award-winning book, *Life and Limb*, published in 2004, Mr Andrew recounts the process of tackling the everyday challenges of being a quadruple amputee, from practicalities such as feeding himself – the solution was a spoon strapped to his stump with a simple Velcro strap – to taking his first steps on prosthetic limbs, within weeks of his accident.

In the summer of 2000, only 18 months after the disaster, he was again making headlines by reaching the top of Ben Nevis, Britain's highest mountain, raising £15,000 along the way for the RAF Mountain Rescue Association.

Charity fundraising has been a feature of Mr Andrew's story. He has worked with the British Red Cross and the John Muir Trust, among others, and is a patron of Disability Snowsports UK and Ordinary to Extraordinary. He is a trustee of the Edinburgh College Development Trust.

He has notched up phenomenal feats of athleticism and climbing, including running the London Marathon and reaching the summit of Kilimanjaro. But when asked about the high points of the past 15 years, he names events that have nothing to do with mountains or endurance sports.

"It sounds a cliché but the biggest achievement has been having my kids," he says. Mr Andrew married Anna Wyatt in 2000, and the couple have three children.

Having known Mr Andrew since before his accident, Ms Wyatt has always understood the draw of the mountains, but Mr Andrew is clear that he is not putting himself in the path of danger with his ongoing adventures. "Mountaineers are good risk managers," he says. "My ultimate aim is not to get to the top of the mountain: my ultimate aim is to get back down safely again. Now that I'm

married with kids, I draw that line of acceptable risk lower than I used to."

Having grown up in Glasgow, Mr Andrew chose the University of Edinburgh partly because of its well-known mountaineering club, of which he and Jamie Fisher both held the office of President. "That's when my climbing really took off," he says.

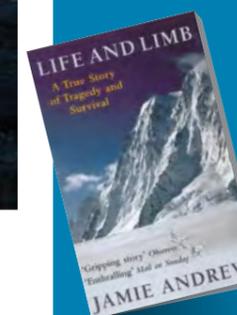
After an engineering degree, he enjoyed a successful career in industrial rope access, helping the likes of electricians and painters do their work in dramatic settings. "It's very exciting," he says. "There are no words to describe what it's like to be hanging off the Forth Bridge, or off an oil rig in the North Sea, or off Edinburgh Castle."

The thrill is fresh in his voice. So does he yearn for both professional and climbing ambitions that were taken from him in 1999? His answer is arresting.

"You could offer me my hands and feet back right now and I would say no without hesitation. My life is complete the way it is. I'm not searching for something that I've lost. I've come to terms with it."

## ONWARDS AND UPWARDS

LIFE AND LIMB



The story of Jamie Andrew's and Jamie Fisher's ordeal in the Alps in January 1999 is told in Mr Andrew's book *Life and Limb* (Piatkus 2004), which has recently become available as an e-book on Amazon. The book has been shortlisted for the Boardman Tasker Prize for Mountain Literature and has won the Banff Mountain Book Festival Prize for Mountain Literature. The story featured in the TV documentary series *I Shouldn't Be Alive* in 2011.

RETURN TO THE MOUNTAINS

In June 2000 Mr Andrew scaled Ben Nevis, Britain's highest mountain, raising more than £15,000 for charity. A year later he returned to Chamonix in the Alps to climb the Cosmiques Arete on L'Aiguille du Midi. In 2002 he made an attempt on Mont Blanc but turned back just 300m below the summit as the weather worsened. In January 2004, he made an all-disabled ascent of Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa at 5,895m, raising money for a leprosy centre on the foothills of the mountain. In April 2014 Channel 5 screened a documentary about Mr Andrew's attempt on the Matterhorn in the summer of 2013. In a single day of climbing, he came within 250m of the summit, and he intends to return with bivouac equipment in order to complete the climb over two days.

OTHER SPORTS

In 2002 Mr Andrew ran the London Marathon, raising more than £22,000 for charity. Since his accident he also taken part in skiing, snowboarding, paragliding, sailing and caving. In 2007 he completed the gruelling North Sea Yacht race in a team of three men who between them had three hands and three feet, raising more than £10,000 for the charity 500 Miles.

SPEAKING

Mr Andrew's main occupation is motivational speaking, which sees him travel the globe visiting schools, businesses and conferences. He is a regular presenter on leadership programmes at the Institute for Management Development at Lausanne, Switzerland.

# EDINBURGH EXPERIENCE

From artists to zoologists, 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.

## HAMISH LONG BSC CHEMISTRY 1963, PHD CHEMISTRY 1966

“Studying at Edinburgh was hard work but enjoyable. Notable experiences included running the Charities Car Competition, canoeing down the Tweed from Stobo to Berwick and learning judo and fencing.

On the academic side, meeting and dining with Max Perutz and Dorothy Crowfoot Hodgkins (both Nobel prize-winners) was a highlight, thanks to my wonderful PhD supervisor, Dr Marjorie Harding.

Summer jobs included working as crewman/barman on a little cruise ship (in reality a converted tug), the *Second Snark*. This involved cruises to all the islands in the Forth and to the Forth Road Bridge, including the day it opened.

My PhD was gained in the X-ray crystallography department. There was no computer and at first punched cards had to be taken to Glasgow University for processing on its primitive computer, DEUCE.

Later we had access to the ATLAS computers in Manchester and Harwell. This involved sitting in Buccleuch Place in the evenings, punching out programs and data on seven-hole tape on flexiwriters and posting it to the appropriate organisation. Results came back four days later – usually with ‘parity errors’!

Through ChemSoc I had my first real game of golf and learned to skittle at the Sheep Heid Inn.

I taught in East Lothian for a number of years until I was appointed to the Scottish Examination Board as an Assistant Examination Officer in 1973. There followed a number of posts, culminating in my period as Chief Executive from 1990 until the government wound up the SEB in 1997.

I was, for a number of years, treasurer and membership secretary for the International Association for



Educational Assessment. This gave wonderful opportunities to build a global network of organisations, and involved travel, for example to Africa, China, India and the Antipodes.

Since retirement I have taken up various hobbies, the most rewarding

of which have been learning to play the clarsach and church bell ringing. The golf, alas, has not improved.

There is no doubt that my studies at Edinburgh opened up a world of opportunity for which I am truly grateful.”



## ANDREA GARDINER MBCHB MEDICINE 2000

“I chose Edinburgh because I love Scotland, and it has an excellent reputation for teaching medicine. I had a wonderful few years in the city. It is such a unique, ancient city with many quaint haunts.

Being a country girl I enjoyed the fact it is not too big, and the friendliness of the people I met there.

I volunteered with the North Leith Parish Church Girls’ Brigade, which enabled me to mix with and get to know some Edinburgh natives (not just students). I remain firmly

in touch with my flatmates from student days, who have become life-long friends.

After leaving University I completed GP training in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. Two years in Shetland were a particular highlight. I loved the people and the life there.

In 2005 I set off for Ecuador, where I have been working for charity ever since. We set up Project Ecuador, a charity based in Scotland. I work in a village health centre, and run a child sponsorship scheme and a craft

project. My Ecuadorean husband builds houses for the poor.

I love helping children to go to school so that they can access some of the wonderful opportunities my world-class education has brought me. Maybe one day one of our graduates will have the chance to visit the marvellous city of Edinburgh!

I have written my story in a memoir, *Guinea Pig For Breakfast* [Grosvenor House 2012].”

If you'd like to share your experiences, we'd love to hear from you at [www.ed.ac.uk/alumni/yournews](http://www.ed.ac.uk/alumni/yournews)

## GEORGIE BELL BSC GEOGRAPHY 2010

“I arrived in Edinburgh in September 2006. My parents had read that you should send your children to university alone, so loaded me on to the train at King’s Cross, London, with six suitcases and wished me ‘bon voyage’.

While changing trains half way through the journey I managed to offload half my bags onto the platform, ran back on for the other half and the train took off – leaving me bagless and on the wrong train. As if I wasn’t scared enough! As with all bad stories, though, that won me a few rounds during Freshers’ Week.

In my first year I got a job behind the bar at the Opal Lounge nightclub on George Street. As a result, I was not only able to support myself during university but I also entered the world that fuelled my current career. I made incredible friends who were also bartending and studying – girls that I am still best friends with today.

In third year, while doing a course on the geography of wine, I realised that there was a connection between the alcohol industry and geography, and thus based my dissertation on whisky and regional identity on Islay. I was finally able to combine my two loves – the spirits industry and geography.

My dissertation helped me apply for work and I got a job at the Scotch Malt Whisky Society. After two years I became their first Global Brand Ambassador. I decided to further my education within this field and gained a diploma in distillation through the Institute of Brewing and Distilling.

In January 2014 I joined Diageo as their Luxury Malts Ambassador, focusing on the global launch of Mortlach Single Malt Scotch Whisky. I am now travelling the world launching Mortlach, and am very lucky to say that I’ve landed my dream job.”



## SHELAGH MCGUIRE (NEE KERR) MA ECONOMIC SCIENCE 1955

“Having lived in Edinburgh during the war, I was determined to return. I was the only female student, with nine men, in the honours Economics class and was fortunate to have some excellent teachers, particularly Alexander Gray (Economics) and John MacMurray (Moral Philosophy).

I intended to become a social worker with children, and my economics degree included the right subjects. After four years in Edinburgh I attended the London School of Economics and obtained a Certificate in Child Care.

During my time at Edinburgh I was involved in many organisations – the Students’ Representative Council, the Debates Committee, the Women’s Union and the Women’s Athletic Club (in which



I was President). Sport featured a good deal, particularly cricket and lacrosse, of which I was captain of the Scottish Universities team.

My career included work as a Child Care Officer, as a lecturer in social work and as director of a voluntary adoption society. I have also been a Children’s Panel member and a marriage guidance counsellor.

I met my husband, Bill (PhD Biochemistry 1956), at the Women’s Union in George Square. Both our sons are Edinburgh graduates.”

## OLIVER ELLIS MA ENGLISH LITERATURE 1988

“I chose Edinburgh because it offered courses I was interested in and the flexibility to mix and match between them. Also, the city is a spectacular place to be, with the streets steeped in stories.

There are so many memories – walking to the National Library of Scotland in January wearing what were then described as camel shoes and having the wet from the pavement seep through the soles and into my socks; walking around Calton Hill and Arthur’s Seat and watching the sun go down; my and my tutor’s delight in the cut and thrust of our debate during our tutorials.

After graduating I started in children’s publishing, then moved into the world of TV and during the next 23 years I gradually specialised in kids’ TV. Part of that time was working with the famous



UK animation studio, Cosgrove Hall Films, makers of *Dangermouse*, *Count Duckula* and *Wind in the Willows*.

Now I run my own company, Hoho Entertainment, based in London. We produce our own shows and sell them worldwide as well as the rights for products such as books, toys, DVDs, apps, and games. I am very proud of our CG animated preschool series *Cloudbabies*. It was a real labour of love and we made it all in the UK which is a big achievement. It airs on CBeebies and is selling nicely abroad.”

# SNAPSHOT

Photography by Paul Dodds

## BUILDING MEMORIES

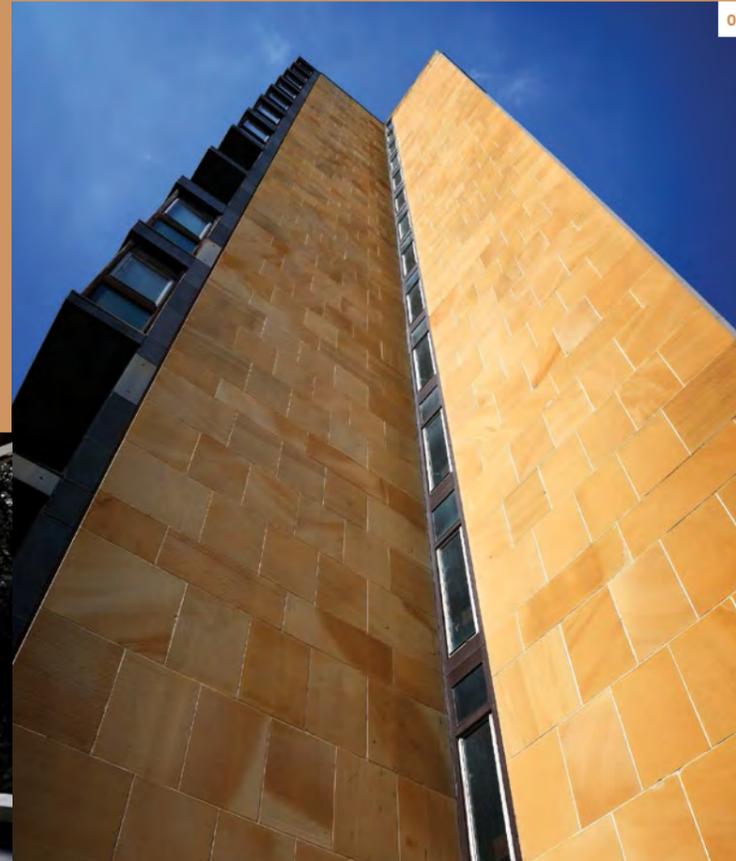
The University's buildings are at the heart of the architectural heritage for which the city of Edinburgh is famous. For those who have studied at the University and spent time moving among its buildings, both ancient and modern, the impact on the city's environment and skyline is clear. Recent and planned major refurbishments, as well as investment in new construction projects, reflect the University's ambitious approach to its estate as the needs of students and staff evolve. The photographs on these pages focus on the aesthetic richness of the Central Area campus, casting familiar locations in a new light and taking an unexpected perspective on more recent additions.



01



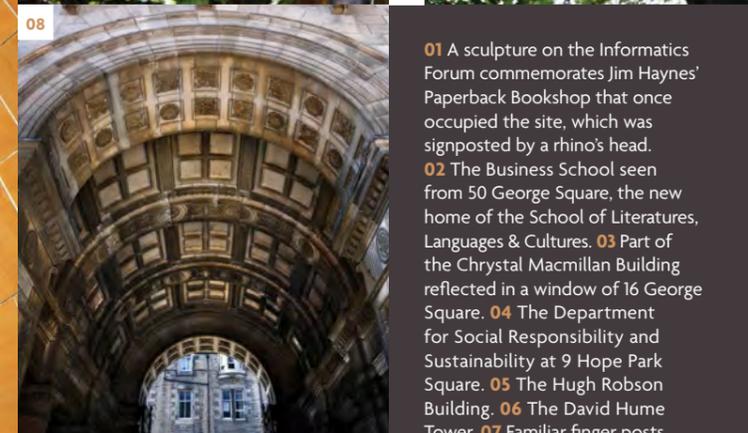
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### ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY BOOK

The University is working with Historic Scotland to produce a book showcasing the finest buildings across the University's campuses, spanning its entire history. The book will include the stories behind the buildings and the people who use them. It is due to be published in 2016.



10



09



11

**01** A sculpture on the Informatics Forum commemorates Jim Haynes' Paperback Bookshop that once occupied the site, which was signposted by a rhino's head. **02** The Business School seen from 50 George Square, the new home of the School of Literatures, Languages & Cultures. **03** Part of the Chrystal Macmillan Building reflected in a window of 16 George Square. **04** The Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability at 9 Hope Park Square. **05** The Hugh Robson Building. **06** The David Hume Tower. **07** Familiar finger posts. **08** Stonework in the entrance to the Old Medical School, Teviot Place. **09** St Albert's Catholic Chaplaincy in George Square won two 2013 Edinburgh Architectural Association Awards, including best use of wood in a building. **10** The former New North Free Church, which has been home to the student-run Bedlam Theatre since 1980. **11** A stone balustrade in the Old College Quadrangle, part of a project completed in 2011 that transformed the square in line with plans dating to 1789.

# ARTS REVIEW

@ If you'd like to contribute to Arts Review, email your suggestions to [editor.edit@ed.ac.uk](mailto:editor.edit@ed.ac.uk)

# SCIENCE DIGEST

@ If you'd like to contribute to Science Digest, email your suggestions to [editor.edit@ed.ac.uk](mailto:editor.edit@ed.ac.uk)

The arts have always featured prominently in our alumni activities. Here we showcase a selection of your recent endeavours.

The work of alumni contributes to Edinburgh's outstanding reputation in science, technology, engineering and medicine. Here is a typically eclectic range of highlights.

## 60 SECONDS TREVOR JONES



**BORN:** 1970, Lavington, British Columbia, Canada

**EDUCATION:** MA Fine Art 2008

**CURRENT HOME:** Edinburgh

**CURRENT ROLES:** Executive Director, Art in Healthcare; exhibiting artist; part-time drawing and painting tutor at Leith School of Art.

**FAVOURITE READ:** BBC News app on my mobile.

**FAVOURITE LISTENING:** Spotify browse – currently along the lines of Radiohead, Muse, Ed Sheeran, George Ezra.

**FAVOURITE VIEWING:** I can't wait for the next series of *Sherlock*.

**WHAT MOST INSPIRES YOU:** My dad. He's a retired mechanic who worked in the logging industry. He is a born problem solver and to this day he has this calm and unwavering approach to sorting things out.

**GREATEST INFLUENCE:** Travel has had an enormous influence on me. I'd add my university education as a very close second.

Trevor Jones is Executive Director of Art in Healthcare (AiH). Since its establishment in 1991 AiH has built one of the largest collections of original Scottish art in the country, amounting to more than 1,400 works, which it makes available in hospitals and other healthcare settings for the benefit of patients, staff and visitors. AiH has a growing outreach and art workshop programme, a thriving internship programme and a sponsorship scheme. It offers an art consultancy and collection management service.

When I was deciding on my dissertation topic I consciously chose something that not only was interesting to me but also could potentially provide employment. I discovered that the connection between creativity and health and wellbeing was something the healthcare sector was beginning to take seriously. I was offered the job with AiH a month before graduation, so it paid off.

TREVOR JONES  
MA FINE ART 2008



## DIVINE DESIGN

A stained glass window designed by Emma Lindsay (BA Architectural Glass 2007) has been installed at Canterbury Cathedral.

Her competition-winning design was chosen for its "beauty and timeless appeal". It was dedicated during a ceremony in the summer and is expected to adorn the cathedral's Great Cloister for centuries to come.

Miss Lindsay says: "My design, *Gathering*, is inspired by the image of a wheat field in a gentle breeze

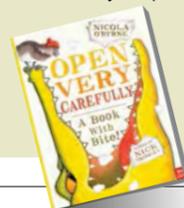
and incorporates autumnal colour including oranges, golden yellows, pink and peach tones. The imagery of wheat is intended to honour the heritage of the Garfield Weston Foundation who have been generous supporters of Canterbury Cathedral and to whom the window is dedicated. It also refers to the original purpose of the cloisters and is a theme which has a profound spiritual significance in Christianity."

Miss Lindsay has won several awards for her work, including the Ashton Hill Award from the Worshipful Company of Glass Painters in 2008 and the McCarrison Society Art Prize in 2011.

## BOOKSHELF

Nicola O'Byrne (BA Visual Communication Illustration 2010) has won the Picture Book category of the Waterstones Children's Book Prize 2014 with her book *Open Very Carefully* (Nosy Crow). The book, with words by Nick Bromley, was highly commended in the UKLA Book Award and was longlisted for the Kate Greenaway Medal. The second book in a two-book deal, *Use Your Imagination*, was published in August 2014.

**Open Very Carefully,** illustrated by Nicola O'Byrne (Nosy Crow 2013)



*Be the First to Like This: New Scottish Poetry* is an anthology of diverse work from Scotland's new generation of poets. It features 40 poets including Claire Askew (MA English Literature 2008, MSc Creative Writing 2009, PhD 2014), Janette Ayachi (MSc Creative Writing 2006), Aiko Harman (Creative Writing MSc 2009), Dorothy Lawrenson (MA Fine Art & Painting 2004) and Samantha Walton (PhD English Literature 2013).

**Be the First to Like This: New Scottish Poetry,** includes work by various recent alumni (Vagabond Voices 2014)

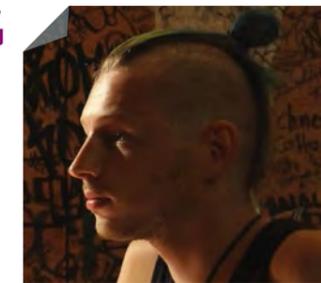


## UNCOVERING EBOLA'S SECRETS

Edinburgh researchers are at the forefront of international efforts to understand the Ebola virus that is causing devastation in West Africa.

Professor Andrew Rambaut (BSc Zoology 1993) and PhD student Gytis Dudas, photographed, (BSc Biological Sciences 2011), have helped analyse genome sequences of viruses from the current outbreak. Working with colleagues in the US, Sierra Leone and Nigeria, the phylogeneticists helped analyse 99 Ebola genomes from 78 patients in Sierra Leone.

They discovered that the Ebola virus in West Africa arrived there from



Central Africa some time in the past decade and made a single species jump from an animal – probably a bat – to a human.

It was this species jump in Guinea that started the current spread from person to person, crossing into Sierra Leone in May 2014.

The results were published in the journal *Science*, and offer a vital insight into a disease about which very little is understood.

## 60 SECONDS TOM GRIFFITHS



**BORN:** 1982; grew up in Wales

**EDUCATION:** MSc Informatics 2004

**CURRENT HOME:** New York City

**CURRENT ROLE:** Co-founder and Chief Product Officer of FanDuel, the global leader in daily fantasy sports.

**FAVOURITE READ:** *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey.

**FAVOURITE LISTENING:** Live jazz in a New York jazz bar.

**FAVOURITE VIEWING:** Stand-up comedy: Louis CK, Andy Zaltzman, anything at New York's Upright Citizens Brigade.

**WHAT MOST INSPIRES YOU:** The founding stories of the great tech companies (Google, Apple, Facebook) and the widespread impact these companies have on millions of people around the world.

**GREATEST INFLUENCE:** My family, my co-founders, the idealised image of the capitalist philanthropist (Carnegie, Gates, Benioff).

Tom Griffiths is the Chief Product Officer and co-founder of FanDuel, the world's biggest daily fantasy sports service. He oversees all products and operations across mobile and desktop platforms, from the company's headquarters in New York City. Mr Griffiths has been pivotal in FanDuel's growth from a tiny start-up in 2009 to a sports entertainment enterprise that will generate more than \$50 million in revenue in 2014. He co-founded the company with support from Launch.Ed, the University's award-winning service for student and graduate entrepreneurs. In August 2014 the company raised \$70 million in a funding round led by Shamrock Capital, NBC Sports Ventures and KKR. FanDuel has 106 staff in Edinburgh and New York.

## SCIENTISTS' NAMES ON THE MAP

The streets of the King's Buildings campus have been given names honouring pioneering Edinburgh alumni and teachers.

Twelve scientists, including inventor of the vacuum flask Sir James Dewar and lighthouse designer Robert Stevenson, have had roads named in their honour. Charlotte Auerbach, who helped advance the understanding of genetics, is among those celebrated, as is Marion Ross, a pioneer in X-rays and superconductivity.

Giving names to King's Buildings roads – they previously had none – is intended to make it easier for new students and staff to get to know the area.

## DEALING WITH DATA DELUGE

Google's Research Director, Professor Fernando Pereira (PhD Artificial Intelligence 1982), helped launch the Centre for Doctoral Training in Data Science at the University's School of Informatics in November.

Professor Pereira gave a talk on the challenges of computational semantics at the launch event.

The Centre for Doctoral Training is funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, the University and 34 external partners, including Apple, Google and Microsoft. It aims to help create a new generation of data scientists, and includes new studentships. The first 11 students joined the Centre in September.

We're in a very exciting stage of FanDuel's growth. However, to get here has taken years of long hours, tough decisions, and determination from everyone on the team. This is the third startup I have helped to build and one lesson that is constantly repeated is the value of structured trial and error. We constantly test new ideas and throw away more than we use. These trial and error cycles can be tough, so a support structure like Launch.ed can really help.

TOM GRIFFITHS  
MSC INFORMATICS 2004



# THE HISTORY MAKERS

## CHEMISTRY IN MOTION

Edinburgh's leading chemists both past and present are household names among the scientific community. The likes of Joseph Black are historic giants of the field, and today our researchers and teachers continue to lead the way, both in their science and in public engagement.

Professor Andrew Miller (BSc 1958, PhD 1962) unveils a plaque at the naming ceremony.



### LABS NAMED IN HONOUR OF CHRISTINA MILLER

In October 2014 the Chemistry teaching laboratories, which were opened in 2000, were renamed the Christina Miller Building. Dr Christina "Chrissie" Miller (1899–2001) studied and worked at the School of Chemistry from 1921 to 1961, and in 1949 was the first female chemist to be elected to the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Her research was highly regarded, but she is most fondly remembered by alumni and colleagues for her commitment to teaching and training future chemists. The building's naming ceremony was followed by an alumni dinner at the Royal Society of Edinburgh.



### ATHENA SWAN GOLD 2012–

In 2012 Edinburgh's School of Chemistry became only the second academic institution to receive an Athena Swan Gold Award for advancing the careers of women in science, engineering, technology, mathematics and medicine (STEMM). Also in 2012 Professor Polly Arnold, Crum Brown Chair of Chemistry, won the Royal Society Rosalind Franklin Award and used it to investigate women's under-representation in STEMM subjects, producing a film and book, *A Chemical Imbalance*.

Douglas Robertson



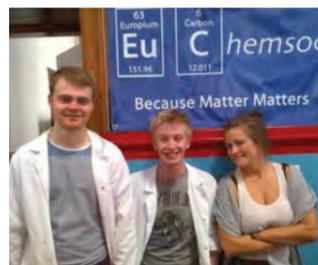
### JOSEPH BLACK (1728–1799)

Joseph Black was educated at home by his Scottish mother, and began his university studies at Glasgow, moving to Edinburgh to graduate in medicine. In 1755 he outlined to the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh the experimental approach that became a foundation of a revolution in chemistry. Among Black's landmark achievements were the invention of the analytical balance, while he was a student, and his discoveries of carbon dioxide and latent heat – the energy needed to melt ice or boil water. Black was a luminary of the Scottish Enlightenment. Adam Smith, the political economist, loved nothing more than to get Black and James Hutton, the geologist, together at the Oyster Club and listen to them talk.



### JAMES CRAWFORD (1682–1731)

Teaching of chemistry at Edinburgh began more than three centuries ago when Leith-born James Crawford was appointed to the Chair of Physick and Chymistry in 1713. At that time, chemistry was considered an offshoot of medicine ("physick"), but notes of Crawford's lectures show that he was among the early proponents of chemistry being considered a branch of science in its own right. In his first lecture he says he will "shew by what methods and upon what principles, I judge a System of Chymie is to be raised, that it may deserve a place among the Sciences". His appointment and his work, with limited resources, played an important role in the recognition of the subject.



### CHEMSOC EST 1785

Edinburgh University Chemistry Society is the oldest chemistry society in the world. Official records date back to 1874, but in preparations for the apparent 60th anniversary of its foundation, it was discovered that a "list of members of the Chemical Society" was drawn up by Joseph Black in 1785. ChemSoc today plays an important role in the life of the School of Chemistry, organising lectures and social and sporting events, and with a membership that includes most staff and students.



### ALEXANDER CRUM BROWN (1838–1922)

Alexander Crum Brown's most prominent legacy is the system of representing chemical compounds in diagrammatic form that is still used today, with atomic symbols enclosed in circles and lines drawn between atoms to represent chemical bonds. Crum Brown grew up in Edinburgh, and joined the University as an arts student, before a second degree in medicine. He went on to study chemistry in Germany. He took a lectureship at Edinburgh before being appointed Chair of Chemistry in 1869. He had a lifelong interest in weaving, knitting and knots, and his famous, pioneering model showing the crystal structure of Sodium Chloride, held in the School of Chemistry Collection, is made from knitting needles and balls of wool.



### SIR JAMES WALKER (1864–1935)

James Walker oversaw the dramatic expansion of chemistry at Edinburgh – despite his plans being interrupted by the First World War. Walker's enthusiasm was fired by the teaching of Alexander Crum Brown, for whom he worked as a research assistant after graduating, and whom he succeeded as Chair of Chemistry in 1908. Walker was planning a new home for chemistry when war broke out. During the war Walker and his colleagues undertook exceptionally successful production of TNT for the government. Expansion plans then resumed, resulting eventually in the opening of the laboratories at King's Buildings in 1924. Walker's vision included possible future expansion of labs, including a second storey, which has subsequently happened.



### CHRISTINA MILLER (1899–2001)

Christina "Chrissie" Cruickshank Miller was one of the first five women elected to the Royal Society of Edinburgh, in 1949. In 1920 Miller graduated from the University of Edinburgh with a BSc with special distinction, having won the class medal, and was awarded the Vans Dunlop Scholarship which allowed her to undertake research for her PhD. She worked under Professor Sir James Walker, and went on to produce the first sample of pure phosphorus trioxide in 1928. By showing it emitted no light, she proved it did not cause the glow of phosphorus. This was described as "the greatest advance in knowledge of the topic in the last 20 years". She was awarded the Keith Prize by the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1929.

### LESLEY YELLOWLEES BSC 1975, PHD 1983

Lesley Yellowlees, Vice-Principal, Head of the College of Science and Engineering, and Professor of Inorganic Electrochemistry, became the first female President of the Royal Society of Chemistry in 2012. She was the University's first female Vice-Principal. Her interests include public engagement and the promotion of women in science, and she makes regular appearances at international conferences on gender equality. She is named in the BBC's 2014 list of the world's most influential 100 women "trying to change the world". Her research specialism is spectroelectrochemistry, focusing on optimising the structure of dyes for use in solar cells. She was appointed CBE in the 2014 New Year Honours.



### ELEANOR CAMPBELL BSC 1982, PHD 1985

Professor Eleanor Campbell is Head of the School of Chemistry. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society, having been appointed in 2010 for her experimental research. She is also a Fellow of both the Royal Society of Chemistry and the Institute of Physics. Her recent work includes the development of nanoelectromechanical devices using carbon nanotubes.

# ALUMNI NETWORK

It might seem easier than ever to track down your old friends, but for all the people you can find online, your old flatmate might not be among them. The University's Project Postcard comes to the rescue.



Each summer thousands of new graduates leave the McEwan Hall and say fond farewells to each other, vowing to stay in touch. Many will keep those promises, but over the years countless Edinburgh alumni have lost contact with those who were once among their closest friends.

In July 2014, the University sent 25,000 blank postcards to alumni, with an invitation to write a message to a long-lost friend and the promise that we would do our best to forward the postcards to those former classmates or flatmates. The results paint a colourful picture of undimmed, happy memories

and loyal affections for fellow alumni, despite gaps in communication that in many cases span decades.

"It's been a very exciting project to work on," says Tessa Birley, Development Officer. "We have passed on lovely messages from people from all over the world."



Examples of friends who have been put back in touch with each other through Project Postcard include Alan Rowland (BSc 1956), of Edinburgh, who wrote to Michael "Bill" Stone (BSc 1956), now living in Edmonton, Canada. The two veterinary medicine graduates are now planning a transatlantic reunion.

Mr Stone writes: "We have now been in email contact – Alan is hoping to visit a former colleague from the Vet School who lives in Saskatoon in the spring. If so, hopefully we will be able to get together."

Udita Banerjee (MSc Electronics 2013), living in India, has resumed contact with both Yamin Zuo (MSc Electronics 2013), living in China, and Gillian "Gladys" Purves (BED Physical Education 2012), living in Falkirk, Scotland.

Ms Banerjee says: "Both Yamin and Gladys got their postcards. I think it was a fabulous idea to do this – it really gave meaning to our relationships."

Ronald Gardiner (MA 1956, BSc 1958, PhD 1962), Professor Emeritus at Queensland University of



The Royal (Dick) Veterinary College annual ball in the Assembly Rooms in February 1956. Circled are Alan Rowland (standing), who is also pictured top right, and Bill Stone (seated), who is pictured bottom right.

Technology, sought out his old friend Jim Blackie (BSc 1959, MSc 1962).

His postcard having reached its recipient, Professor Gardiner writes: "I was truly delighted to receive back an email from Jim Blackie – our first communication in over 50 years. His message included his phone number so I rang him immediately, and had a long and very enjoyable blether."

## CAN YOU HELP?

Sadly we have not been able to trace all the intended recipients of the postcards returned to the University. Perhaps you know the whereabouts of one or more of the following alumni and

could encourage them to contact us: Eleanor Cornwall (French 1968), Lucy Stringer (French 1993), Thomas Greenwood (Social Anthropology 1993), George Robertson (Medicine 1943 & 1957), Ariel Meirav (Philosophy 1997), Helen Cameron (Spanish 1984).



# THE TWO OF US

Many a lasting relationship is forged during university days, and we want to hear how you met your partner or best friend. Here is a range of memorable on-campus moments that led to lifetimes together.



The right chemistry

**Mary MacLean**  
(nee Forrester)  
MA (Ord) 1941

**Alistair MacLean**  
BSc Chemistry 1939,  
PhD 1941

### HOP TO HAPPINESS

"I studied an MA (Ord) degree with two years of chemistry included. I lived very near King's Buildings and had enough leisure time to enjoy Edinburgh and its environs.

I attended the opening ball at the King's Buildings Common Room, and also the last graduation ball before the war, at what to us were the most glamorous Assembly Rooms.

There were lots of 'hops', even after the war started. It was the waltzes, foxtrot and some of the funny dances – the bumpsie daisy, Lambeth walk and so on.

We girls who were close friends were all short of money, but on Friday mornings we would indulge in a cup of coffee if we still had 3d after saving bus fares by walking.

Alistair was in the last year of his PhD and I was in the final year of my degree when we met at a hop at the King's Buildings Common Room. Three months later we were engaged and we graduated on the same day in 1941.

We were married in 1943. After the war, and after a spell in Ghana (then the Gold Coast), we were so lucky to return to Edinburgh.

Two of our three children studied at Edinburgh: Donald took a BSc Engineering and Margaret studied MA Geography and then a year of sport management at Cramond. Two of our grandchildren also studied at Edinburgh.

Last year we celebrated 70 years of happy marriage with family and friends. Six months later Alistair slept peacefully away."

MARY MACLEAN



A slow start

**Inglis Lamont**  
MBCChB 1955

**Margaret Lamont**  
(nee Robb)  
MBCChB 1955, MD 1991

### WHAT A HOOT

"The steamer hooted and made me turn round in surprise. There was Margaret, and half way from Wemyss Bay to Rothesay we spoke to each other briefly for the first time.

That was in our third year. Thanks to shyness and 'other interests' it was not until late in our fifth year (of a six-year medical course) that I asked her to go out with me.

A happy start to married life was our time in Germany, my National Service posting. Indeed we have enjoyed all the seven places where work and retirement have taken us. Thanks to medicine more modern than we studied, life is still fun, and we are determined to reach our diamond wedding in 2017.

Our children all followed us to the University of Edinburgh (one doctor out of four). Sad to say, no sign that any grandchild will come north of the border to study."

INGLIS LAMONT



Low-brow beginning

**Vasiliki Papadopoulos**  
MSc Philosophy 2003

**Keith Thomas Kacsuta**  
MSc Social Research 2003

### TRAVELLING COMPANIONS

"Keith and I were masters students living in Churchill House in 2002/3. Our mutual friend, Graham Steel, introduced us one evening in December 2002.

The three of us spent the evening eating, chatting and listening to music. Given that we lived in the same building, I expected to see Keith soon afterwards but we only ran into each other months later. He asked me to join him and his friends to watch the most low-brow of movies at the time – *Jackass*. I obliged and a month later we started dating.

Upon graduation we returned to our respective countries – mine Canada, his the USA – and we decided to keep in touch. We realised this was not conducive to being in a relationship, so Keith moved to Canada in 2004. We got married in 2007 in Santorini, Greece, and in 2012 had a beautiful baby boy, Andreas Kacsuta.

We can thank Edinburgh for our life together and its happiness."

VASILIKI PAPADOPOULOS

# LANDMARK



Studying in the unique city of Edinburgh is an unforgettable experience. In each edition we share your memories of an iconic campus or city landmark and its role in your student days.



## CALTON HILL

Calton Hill is five landmarks in one: the hill itself, with its ancient volcanic origins, giving stunning views over the city; the famously unfinished National Monument modelled on the acropolis of Athens, the telescope-shaped Nelson's Monument; the City Observatory; and the much photographed Dugald Stewart Monument, otherwise known as the pepper pot. Your contributions reflect the varied memories this unique place evokes.

## I REMEMBER...



**Julia Weber**  
MSc Genomics  
and Pathway  
Biology 2011

"Calton Hill takes a very prominent place in my memories of the year I spent studying in Edinburgh. I used to climb up the hill with all the friends who came to visit me. I used to live down at Portobello, my lab was at the Royal Infirmary and I regularly danced at the Pleasance. You can see all of these places and the major landmarks like the castle and Holyrood from Calton Hill, so I always saw it as a good place to do the introduction to the city. Today, when I come to visit, I usually arrive at Waverley, get out of the train or airport bus, get some food and head up the hill for a picnic before I set out to visit friends and enjoy my time. One memory that stands out from the hundreds of times that I walked up Calton Hill was the Beltane Festival in 2011. I was there with a very special friend, and another friend had come along from Stirling to join in the fun. I remember

the crazy number of people on the hill and the excitement of the whole thing. We took turns sitting on each other's shoulders to have a better view of the display and the parade. I have videos and photos from that night and I love how happy everyone looks and how beautiful it was."



**Nean Allman**  
BSc Geology 1964

"I remember the start of Charities Week and a torchlight procession from the castle esplanade to Calton Hill, watching the fireworks display and joining in the chant, 'We want a blue one!'. Ever since, at every fireworks display I watch, I gain an immense amount of pleasure from spotting the blue ones."



**Gillian Chu**  
MA English 2006

"A couple of friends who were studying at Oxford came over for the weekend, and I played host by taking them around Edinburgh for sightseeing. Calton Hill was more of an accidental stop, but its commanding view of the entire city paired with

the striking monument kept us lounging around for the entire afternoon, chilling on the turf while watching friendly golden retrievers run by."



**Michael Burton**  
PhD Astronomy  
1987

"As an astronomer, and a graduate from Edinburgh's astronomy department based at the Royal Observatory, you might think that Calton Hill would have memories for me about astronomy, being where it all started back in the days when Edinburgh was still dark at night, and as the first home of the Royal Observatory. But no, Calton Hill to me brings back memories of running, being both the start and finish of the famous Edinburgh 7 Hills race. The race heads off from Calton to Castle Hill, then Corstorphine, Craiglockhart, a hop over the Braids and Blackford Hill (and past my old office), a race through the backstreets to Pollock, and then the lung burster up the direct face of Arthur's Seat, followed by a mad flight down past Holyrood and back up to Calton Hill again. It has a special place for me as I broke

the course record in this race way back in 1986, just before writing up my PhD and wrapping up my three years in Edinburgh."



**Alison Hardie**  
MA Chinese 1979

"In the 1970s Calton Hill had a reputation as somewhere a bit dodgy (at least in the very unadventurous circles in which I moved). Last summer I met up in York with a Chinese art historian who was about to take his students on a visit to Edinburgh and enthused about the wonderful view from Calton Hill, obviously expecting me to agree. I had to admit, very shame-facedly, that I'd never been up Calton Hill, and promised that I would repair the omission the next time I was in Edinburgh. Later in the summer I was there on a beautiful day and duly kept my promise. The view fully lived up to my Chinese colleague's rapturous description. I'll be back!"



Please send us your memories of the King's Buildings campus, to:  
[editor.edit@ed.ac.uk](mailto:editor.edit@ed.ac.uk)

# THE LAST WORD

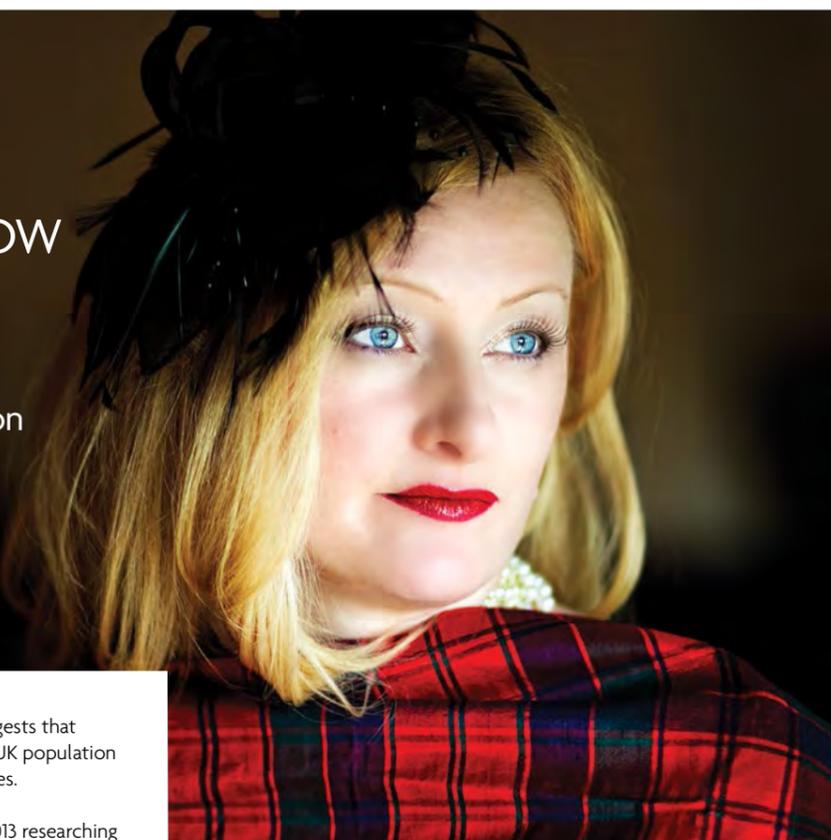
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## AILIE REID

### WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST FELLOW

Ailie Reid is a classical singer and singing teacher who has dyslexia. As part of her PhD studies at the Reid School of Music, she has won a prestigious travel fellowship to research the effectiveness of various music teaching methods for dyslexic students.



I am a graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music and have been singing, or training singers, since I was eight. I have toured with opera companies, sung for royalty and performed on BBC television and radio.

I have a wonderful career, despite my dyslexia. Or should that be because of it?

From an early age I encountered difficulties, and many in education told me to stop there and then. But I continued, and succeeded with the help of friends, family and kind teachers.

Recently I attended a course at the University of Edinburgh for dyslexic students. I spoke to a number of students, almost all with harrowing stories of trying to learn music and most ending in disillusionment. A number said they simply couldn't get to grips with music reading or comprehension and felt it was just too hard a battle.

My research is not only for these people but for the many students I teach and witness struggling endlessly, quietly and in private. They don't need sympathy, just a chance to help themselves with clear workable strategies and patience.

Current evidence suggests that 10-15 per cent of the UK population has dyslexic tendencies.

I started my PhD in 2013 researching strategies to assist dyslexic classical singers, with funding from the Radcliffe Trust, which supports music education. This year I was lucky enough to receive a Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Travelling Fellowship. I will travel to Finland, Switzerland, Hungary, Japan, the USA and Canada to research the music methods of Kodaly, Suzuki, Orff and Dalcroze, and their capacity to enable dyslexic singers' self-regulating strategies when rehearsing and performing a classical piece.

The British Dyslexia Association held a conference focused on music teaching in February 2014, and I am witnessing changes in music education methods as people become more aware of special educational needs, but more must be done to make people aware not only of the difficulties of dyslexic musicians but also how to aid them.

Through my fellowship I have been studying at the original institutes where the various music methods were established. The workshops and conferences have been inspiring but also drew me to conclude that

more research into teaching and metacognitive methods for dyslexic students must be carried out.

I have witnessed some wonderful teaching, including from Professor Toshio Takahashi, a master flute player and teacher at the Suzuki School in Japan, helping a physically disabled child to conduct, which brought me to tears.

Then there was the master singers course at the Kodaly Institute in Hungary, with teachers such as Katalin Halmai and Janos Klezli working with movement and the bel canto technique to fine tune voices, and the Dalcroze masters in Geneva such as Helena Nicolet, helping people to connect with their music with enjoyment and real comprehension.

But there are still teachers and repetiteurs out there who do not believe dyslexia should have any impact on how they teach. So many times I have heard a teacher or singer say, "I can't help"; "I don't

Current evidence suggests that 10–15 per cent of the UK population has dyslexic tendencies.

understand"; "It's not my job"; or "It's too difficult". I hope with my research to tackle some of these problems and give real help to singers, teachers and all those working in the field. I hope to publish my initial findings in a paper in 2015. I also hope to run workshops and eventually to publish a book. ■

*Ailie Reid is keeping a blog of her travels and research, where you can leave comments and contact her. She is available for singing lessons – dyslexic students particularly welcome.*

[www.dyslexicopera.com](http://www.dyslexicopera.com)

# BILLET

The General Council of the University of Edinburgh

BILLET  
CONTINUED



## REPORT

By Professor Charles Swainson  
Convener of the Business  
Committee of the General Council

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](http://www.general-council.ed.ac.uk)

I am pleased to report on the activities of your Business Committee since writing prior to the June 2014 Half-Yearly meeting. The June visit to Toronto was another successful away meeting and we are grateful to our Secretary, Mike Mitchell, your Public Affairs Standing Committee and colleagues in Development and Alumni who made all the arrangements.

The University held a stimulating debate on the question of independence and devolution in Scotland. Vice-Principal Professor Charlie Jeffery gave his research-driven insights into factors that might motivate the "don't knows", thus stimulating a lively debate and comments from Canadian colleagues including discussion of the experience in Quebec. A very good afternoon was followed by Honorary Graduations in the Art Gallery of Ontario, conferred on Garrett Herman, a bibliophile with a considerable Charles Darwin collection, and Beverly McLachlin, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada.

A gala dinner was hosted by the University in the TIFF Bell Lightbox. There was an additional Honorary Graduate, the well-known author Margaret Atwood, who gave a witty and delightful speech after dinner. The University also signed a formal

agreement with the University of Toronto to increase cooperation between two great institutions, both ranked 17 on a recent world ranking of universities.

Your General Council Half-Yearly Meeting was held in the University of Toronto. The Principal gave an account of the international developments in our University, the aspiration to increase overseas students to 50 per cent and the corresponding increase in resources needed to support these students. He outlined new approaches to enhancing the student experience and encouraging every student to be a researcher. Professor Steve Hillier, Vice-Principal International, gave a comprehensive account of the international reach of the University, much of it achieved during his tenure. It was a good time to hear how far your University has progressed in international terms, and how much effort your Principal and others have put into that.

Your Standing Committees have concluded their activities for the 2013-14 session. Your Academic Standing Committee discussed new approaches to enhancing student learning with Professor Ian Pirie, Assistant Principal Learning and Development.

Your Constitutional Standing Committee completed its work on

a private paper, Scotland's Future Constitutional Arrangements, which was sent to the University Court in July. It set out the views of your Business Committee on the issues to be managed with constitutional change. Now that we have a clear majority in favour of remaining in the United Kingdom, we will need to consider the risks in any proposed devolution settlement. The UK Prime Minister and leaders of the other political parties were clear in their commitment to early proposals for further devolution of powers to the Scottish Parliament, including taxation, and these will impact on the higher education sector.

Your Finance and Services Standing Committee met with the former Director of HR, Sheila Gupta, and discussed the University's commitment to staff development and appraisal and how this relates to the teaching and research aims in the Strategic Plan.

We have welcomed new members to the Committee this session: Philip Mawer, a former Parliamentary Ombudsman and Students' Association President; Sarah Morgan, an entrepreneur; Sam Trett, a former Sports Union President; David Houston, and Dorothy Macleod. The Convener of your Public Affairs Standing Committee, Simon Fairclough, has completed his co-opted term. Mr Fairclough helped

the Committee through a period of transition, and I am delighted that Matt McPherson, a former Students' Association President, will be the next Convener. Bruce Ritson has left also, after a distinguished time leading the Academic Affairs Standing Committee, and he will be replaced very ably by Stuart Macpherson, a former Postgraduate Dean. We bade farewell after 13 years to Ann Sutherland who has been a great supporter of the General Council. Luise Locke and Libby Morris also retired and I am grateful for their support of the Business Committee despite busy professional lives.

Videos of previous Principal's and Convener's Reports, and a selection of after-lunch addresses, can be viewed at [www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/media](http://www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/media)



## BILLET NEWS

### THE GENERAL COUNCIL LUNCH, 14 FEBRUARY 2015

AS USUAL, FOLLOWING THE HALF-YEARLY MEETING ON SATURDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2015, 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. WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING OUR AFTER-LUNCH SPEAKER, LUCY LUMSDEN, HEAD OF COMEDY AT SKY ENTERTAINMENT.

Ms Lumsden featured in the Winter 2013/14 issue of *Edit* in an interview with Joanne Morrison. She graduated in 1991 with an MA in History. She quickly gravitated to the world of comedy, working for the BBC for 11 years, where she commissioned some of Britain's best comedy programmes, which have become household names. She moved to Sky in 2009, becoming its first Head of Comedy. We have no doubt that Lucy's talk will be fascinating.

If you would like to attend the General Council Lunch, please book online by following the link at [www.general-council@ed.ac.uk/whats-happening](http://www.general-council@ed.ac.uk/whats-happening) or complete and return the form below no later than Friday 6 February 2015.

Tickets at £20 include pre-lunch wine reception and a buffet lunch in the Playfair Library Hall. Table wines will be available to purchase.



#### The General Council Meeting, 14 February 2015

The General Council February 2015 Half-Yearly Meeting will this year take place in 7 Bristo Square, as a result of the refurbishment of the School of Law. Further details and papers appear on page 36.

### PRIORITIES FOR THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE 2014/15

Following input from members, Court Assessors and Edinburgh University Students' Association, the Business Committee decided upon the priorities it and its Standing Committees should address this session. The overall theme is "the Impact on the Learning Environment of Growth and Internationalisation".

#### GROWTH

We wish to continue our investigations into the University's enhancements of the learning environment and the student experience. While efforts so far have been admirable in intent, further progress is required. We wish to be reassured that provision of both infrastructure and student support services is being planned for and delivered.

Social responsibility and public engagement have been important for this University since its foundation. We wish to review progress and encourage new initiatives, in particular with the local community. The University has been very active in the field of sustainability, which cuts through a wide range of strategic interests, especially with regard to future growth through varied channels.

#### INTERNATIONALISATION

The University is ever more international in both its presence and its ambition. We wish to increase our understanding of this direction of travel, the drivers and the opportunities. There should be clear plans in place to accommodate these changes.

Finally, the Business Committee will continue to evaluate the impact of any political changes on higher education, and will maintain its close association with the University's development and alumni engagement efforts.

### THE FEBRUARY 2015 GENERAL COUNCIL LUNCH

Playfair Library Hall, Old College, on Saturday 14 February 2015, 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, 9-16 Chambers Street, Edinburgh EH1 1HT, Scotland, UK, or, alternatively, you may order online at [www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/whats-happening](http://www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/whats-happening)

Closing date for applications: Friday 6 February 2015.



# BILLET NEWS

# ELECTIONS

## ALUMNI WEEKEND 5-7 JUNE 2015

Join us in Edinburgh on 5-7 June 2015 for Alumni Weekend 2015. With three days of events and activities, it's an opportunity to reconnect and reminisce while taking advantage of exclusive events and a unique atmosphere. Whether you want to relive your student days, visit old haunts or find out what is happening at the University today, Alumni Weekend 2015 has something for everyone.



Graham Clark

You'll have the chance to gain exclusive insights into the impact of our current research, as well as connect with fellow alumni, current students and academic colleagues. Highlights include our popular alumni ceilidh, and an afternoon tea party in our beautiful and historic Old College Quad. For more information please visit [www.ed.ac.uk/alumni/alumni-weekend-2015](http://www.ed.ac.uk/alumni/alumni-weekend-2015), and look out for updates.

## THE GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING, 10.30AM, 6 JUNE 2015



Dave Morris

The June 2015 General Council Half-Yearly Meeting will be held at 10.30am on 6 June 2015 at the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation, High School Yards, Edinburgh. The meeting will feature a talk by Dr Andy Kerr, Director of the Centre, which provides a hub for innovation and skills to support the development of low carbon societies. It fosters collaborative working between policy, community and business leaders to deliver solutions for a low carbon future and is supported and hosted by the University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh Napier University and Heriot-Watt University.

Dr Kerr obtained his doctorate in climate change from the University of Edinburgh, examining the stability of the Antarctic ice sheet. He has extensive experience in government and the private sector, as well as academia, in the fields of emerging international carbon and biofuel markets, emissions trading schemes, and developing national and regional policy frameworks that support the reduction in our dependence on fossil fuels and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. He was involved in the Royal Society of Edinburgh inquiry "Facing up to Climate Change: Breaking the barriers to a low carbon Scotland", and the Scottish government's Climate Change Delivery Plan.

## LUNCH AND RECEPTION, 12.30PM, 6 JUNE 2015

After the meeting we will move on to the the Playfair Library Hall for a Reception and Lunch at 12.30pm. Our after-lunch speaker will be announced shortly. Further information will appear on our website at: [www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/whats-happening](http://www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/whats-happening)

## GENERAL COUNCIL ELECTION, FEBRUARY 2015

### CANDIDATES FOR TWO GENERAL COUNCIL ASSESSORS TO COURT

The following nominations have been received for the election of two General Council Assessors to Court to serve from 1 August 2015 to 31 July 2019. The names of the candidates appear in random order, as drawn by ballot. This is also the order in which they will appear on the voting screen and ballot paper.



Alan David Gillespie Brown  
MBChB, 1963  
Proposed by Charles Patrick Swainson  
MBChB 1971  
Seconded by Kirsteen Joan MacGregor  
MA 1981, Dip Ed 1982, MBA 2001

After eight years on the Business Committee and four as Convener I have extensive experience of working constructively with the University; this has given me a detailed understanding of the opportunities and challenges it faces. It is a privilege supporting the University in other ways since being appointed a Regent in 2012. Since retiring from my medical consultant post in obstetrics and gynaecology I continue GMC examining and medico-legal/consultancy work, and am a Board member of the Pleasance Theatre Trust. I have a strong commitment to the University so wish to use my knowledge and insight by serving it further.



Stuart James Ritchie Walker  
MA 1968, BSc 1968  
Proposed by Christine Elizabeth Reid  
LLB 1969

### CANDIDATES FOR FIVE MEMBERS OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Seconded by Charles Michael Arber Lugton  
MA 1973, PGD 2005

As immediate past President of the Graduates' Association and currently a member of the General Council Business Committee, with experience of Public Affairs and Academic Standing Committees, I have had the opportunity to engage with graduates both at home and abroad and reflect some of their concerns to the University. My career as a guidance teacher uniquely involved me with student aspirations and the concerted effort which goes into encouraging the ablest students to apply successfully to higher education. Already a charities' trustee I wish to contribute effectively to the working of the Court and the governance of the University.



Alan McDougall Johnston  
MBA 1989  
Proposed by Charles Patrick Swainson  
MBChB 1971  
Seconded by Matthew Jack McPherson, MA 2011

A scientist with a postgraduate business degree, I was fortunate to retire early from an international career in medicines research and am now engaged in non-executive positions in companies, educational institutions, charities and trusts. As Convener of the Business Committee (2004-2008) and currently General Council Assessor to Court (2011-2015), I am much engaged in and committed to our University's strategic priorities as a world-leading centre of excellence, with particular focus on enhancement of the student experience and continued internationalisation. I would greatly value the chance to contribute energetically in a second and final term as Court Assessor.

### CANDIDATES FOR FIVE MEMBERS OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

The following nominations have been received for the election of five members of the Business Committee to serve from 1 August 2015 to 31 July 2019. The names of the candidates appear in alphabetical order.



Kirsteen Joan MacGregor  
MA 1981, Dip Ed 1982, MBA 2001  
Proposed by Charles Patrick Swainson, MBChB 1971  
Seconded by Alan David Gillespie Brown, MBChB 1963

It has been a pleasure and privilege to serve on the Business Committee at this time of unprecedented change, expansion and achievement for the University of Edinburgh. A second term would give time to develop and consolidate my work; particularly on international initiatives which support the University's world-class economic and cultural impact.



Sophie Elizabeth Marshall  
MA 2012  
Proposed by Samuel Joseph Trett  
MA 2011, MBA 2013  
Seconded by Sophie McCallum  
MA 2009, MSc 2012

Having managed university roles in EUSA and Equal Access programmes, I currently work with Police Scotland. The University must face the challenges of the future, including improving the student experience and tackling the increasing fees culture. The Business Committee can be more representative of the diverse community it serves.



Edward Bruce Ritson  
MBChB 1961, MD 1967  
Proposed by Ann McIntyre Smyth  
BSc 1970, PhD 1974, MPhil  
Seconded by Charles Patrick Swainson  
MBChB 1971

Formerly consultant and senior lecturer in psychiatry at Edinburgh. Member of Business Committee of General Council 2010-2014, Convener Academic Standing Committee from 2012. This experience revealed the diversity and excellence of the University and highlighted for me the challenge of ensuring that the student experience is personally rewarding and enriching.

### STATEMENT ON ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

As only three valid nominations were received by the deadline of 5pm on Wednesday 26 November 2014 for the five available Business Committee positions no election will be required. Accordingly the three candidates; Ms Kirsteen Joan MacGregor, Dr Edward Bruce Ritson and Ms Sophie Elizabeth Marshall, will be deemed to have been successful and their appointment will be announced at the Half-Yearly Meeting on 14 February 2015.

The two remaining casual vacancies will be duly filled by co-option by the Business Committee.

### Secretary to the General Council

### VOTING IN THE GENERAL COUNCIL ELECTION

This is the opportunity for you to participate in the governance of the University by voting for members of the Business Committee of the General Council, who are responsible for much of its work, and for Court Assessors.

In February 2012 the General Council introduced online voting on a secure website, the Elections channel of the MyEd Alumni Portal, which will be open from Tuesday 6 January 2015 until 1700 GMT Wednesday 11 February 2015. In order to vote you must register via the EASE registration process as explained below by 1700 GMT on Tuesday 10 February 2015 at the latest.

Voting Papers are only enclosed where members have specifically requested them previously, no later than 30 November 2014, and should be completed and returned in the enclosed addressed envelope to the

Secretary of the General Council. Details of all candidates appear opposite. Anyone still wishing to vote by post may do so for subsequent elections by requesting a postal vote from the General Council Office before 30 November in the year prior to any election.

To be able to vote online you need to be a member of the General Council eligible to vote in this election and registered through EASE as a MyEd Alumni Portal user. Those who registered for previous elections do not need to do so again; simply use the same user name and password. If you have already used the Portal as a student, you should still be able to use your student username and password to access the Alumni Portal. If you are a new user you will need to contact the support service. To do this send an email to the Information Services helpline at [IS.Help@ed.ac.uk](mailto:IS.Help@ed.ac.uk) requesting access to MyEd and giving your full name, date of and degree awarded at first graduation from Edinburgh. A username and initial password will then be sent to you.

If you experience problems at any point when registering for, or accessing, the Alumni Portal, please contact Information Services at the above address, identifying yourself by matriculation number (if known), full name, year and degree awarded at first graduation from Edinburgh.

# BILLET GENERAL COUNCIL PAPERS

## GENERAL COUNCIL HALF-YEARLY MEETING ON SATURDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2014

10.30AM: THE LECTURE THEATRE, 7 BRISTO SQUARE, EDINBURGH

**10am to 10.30am:** Coffee, tea and biscuits in the Foyer, 7 Bristo Square

**10.30am:** General Council Meeting in the Lecture Theatre, 7 Bristo Square

**After the meeting:** Lunch in the Playfair Library Hall (see page 33 for details)

Members are invited to submit questions to the meeting by email to [generalcouncilquestions@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:generalcouncilquestions@hotmail.co.uk) either in advance or live during the meeting. The meeting will be web-cast and may be viewed live at: [www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/media](http://www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/media)

### AGENDA FOR THE GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING

- 1 Results of the Elections for two General Council Assessors to Court and five Members of the General Council Business Committee
- 2 Minutes of the Meeting of the General Council held in the University of Toronto on Saturday 21 June 2014 (PAPER A)
- 3 Matters arising
- 4 Report of the Business Committee
- 5 Motion (PAPER B)
- 6 Motion (PAPER C)
- 7 Dates of future meetings of the General Council
- 8 Notice of forthcoming Elections
- 9 Presentation by Professor Sir Timothy O'Shea, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, of the Annual Report to the University
- 10 Any other competent business
- 11 Adjournment

### PRESENT

MR PETER McCOLL  
Rector, in the Chair

MS TRACEY SLAVEN  
Director of Planning

PROFESSOR SIR TIMOTHY O'SHEA  
Principal and Vice-Chancellor

PROFESSOR STEVE HILLIER  
Vice Principal International

DR MICHAEL MITCHELL  
Secretary of the General Council

PROFESSOR CHARLES SWAINSON  
Convener of the Business Committee

40P AND 4V = 53 OTHER MEMBERS  
(P = Physical; V = Virtual)

### PAPER A

MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE UNIVERSITY OF  
TORONTO ON SATURDAY  
21 JUNE 2014

1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL  
HELD IN OLD COLLEGE,

EDINBURGH, ON 15  
FEBRUARY 2014

The Minutes of the Meeting held  
on 15 February 2014 were approved.

### 2 MATTERS ARISING

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

### 3 REPORT OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

The Convener welcomed everyone  
to Toronto, home to one of the  
other great universities of the  
world. He reminded everyone  
that the General Council took  
every second summer meeting  
to a location outside Edinburgh,  
where it received a welcome  
from local alumni, with past  
destinations including London,  
Paris, Washington DC, Hong Kong  
and Berlin.

He reminded members of the  
General Council's statutory role  
of enquiring into and offering  
advice on any matter that  
may affect the prosperity and  
wellbeing of the University. The  
Business Committee discharged  
this function through meeting  
regularly with University staff and  
students, through the elected  
General Council Assessors on the  
University Court, and by reporting  
back regularly to General Council  
Half-Yearly Meetings. In recent  
years the Business Committee  
had set priorities. This year  
these focused on supporting the  
University with improving the  
quality of teaching, the student  
experience and research at  
Edinburgh, sustaining communities  
within and outside the University,  
supporting the Development  
& Alumni Engagement Strategy  
and reviewing progress on  
implementation of the University's  
Strategic Plan. In particular this  
past year the Business Committee  
had also been considering the  
impact of possible Scottish  
independence following the  
referendum in September.

These priorities had been pursued  
by the four Standing Committees,  
with Academic Standing  
Committee following up progress  
on the student experience with  
Vice-Principal Sue Rigby, other  
University staff and the President  
of the Students' Association,  
and the Convener was pleased  
to report continuing progress  
in this area with major new

initiatives to enhance teaching  
and learning as well as the wider  
student experience. The Public  
Affairs Standing Committee had  
assisted in the development  
of a new website which had a  
more modern look and included  
a blogging facility to encourage  
members to participate in General  
Council business. He mentioned  
the challenge of meeting the  
international ambitions of the  
University, and invited ideas from  
members on how best to involve  
more alumni worldwide in the  
work of the General Council,  
as well as how to improve  
communications.

The Constitutional Standing  
Committee had examined the  
impacts of possible independence  
following the referendum  
later in the year, looking at the  
opportunities and risks in a  
very balanced way. A summary  
statement would be presented to  
Court on completion, but would  
not be made public.

The Finance & Services Standing  
Committee had examined the  
published Annual Reports &  
Financial Statements with the  
Director of Finance and also  
looked at the capital building  
programme. It welcomed the  
University's investment in  
improved facilities for  
teaching, research and student  
accommodation. The Business  
Committee had received its usual  
presentation on the Development  
Trust's published accounts and the  
Convener was pleased to note that  
donations continued to grow, and  
he reminded members that they  
could support needy students by  
contributing to the various bursary  
schemes. These were very valuable  
and enabled many students to  
attend the University who would  
not otherwise be able to do so.

The Convener was delighted  
to report that recent elections  
had attracted a good number of  
candidates, including some who  
had graduated in the previous  
10 years, which was particularly

welcome. He concluded by  
emphasising how important it  
was for members to support the  
University in any way they could,  
especially in times of uncertainty.

The report of the Business  
Committee was approved.

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

### 4 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

The next Half-Yearly Meeting  
would take place on Saturday,  
14 February 2015, in 7 Bristo  
Square, Edinburgh. Any Motions  
for discussion at this meeting  
should be received at the  
General Council Office by the 26  
November 2014. The following  
Statutory Half-Yearly Meeting  
would be held on Saturday 6 June  
2015, in the Edinburgh Centre  
for Carbon Innovation, and any  
Motions for discussion at this  
meeting should be received at  
the General Council Office by  
Wednesday 18 March 2015.

### 5 NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS

There would be elections for  
two General Council Assessors to  
Court and five Members of the  
Business Committee in February  
2015. Nominations on forms  
available from the General Council  
Office and on the website should  
be received in the General Council  
Office by the 26 November 2014.

### 6 PRESENTATIONS BY PROFESSOR SIR TIMOTHY O'SHEA, PRINCIPAL AND VICE-CHANCELLOR, AND PROFESSOR STEVE HILLIER, VICE-PRINCIPAL INTERNATIONAL

Vice-Principal Steve Hillier  
presented the internationalisation  
work of the University, which  
was truly global, meaning it was  
international in student mix, in  
staff and in impact. Both learning

and research needed to be multi-  
disciplinary and increasingly  
international. Our University  
had been international since its  
foundation; for example, the first  
professors of Medicine had come  
from Leiden. Currently about 40  
per cent of students came from  
outside the UK. There were very  
close connections with Canada  
and across North America, with  
both institutions and individuals.  
That very week the University had  
entered into a formal collaboration  
with its hosts, the University  
of Toronto. Having a formal  
Internationalisation Strategy, with  
an associated Vice-Principal, under  
the banner of Edinburgh Global,  
had been important.

The main foci had been the  
international student experience,  
international staff, academic  
and institutional partnering and  
global outreach and influence.  
Communications, especially web  
based, were vital. The support  
of students had also been very  
helpful, particularly through  
the Student's Association,  
EUSA. Students commenting on  
the University through social  
media had also been helpful,  
albeit sometimes challenging.  
Outstanding academics such as  
Professor Peter Higgs and Professor  
Sir Ian Wilmut had had a huge  
impact. Alumni also contributed  
greatly to the University's profile;  
for example Sir Chris Hoy, our  
great Olympian, and Professor  
Lesley Yellowlees, currently  
President of the Royal Society of  
Chemistry.

The numbers of taught  
postgraduates had been increasing,  
particularly international, which  
had more than doubled. Online  
learning had also expanded in both  
scope and levels of participation,  
with numbers up fivefold in formal  
programmes. Global Academies  
had been highly successful,  
starting with Global Health,  
and involving multidisciplinary  
courses and external partnerships.  
Other active Academies  
were Global Development,

# BILLET GENERAL COUNCIL PAPERS

Environment and Society, and Justice. Increasingly international research collaborations led to increased numbers of international research publications with very high impacts. New partnerships continually evolved, with countries such as South Korea. A network of international representative offices had been built up in China, India, Latin America and, very soon, North America.

These were often mirrored by activities within the University in Edinburgh, for example the Confucius Institute, the Centre for Canadian Studies and the Centre for South Asian Studies. The success of this strategy was measurable with improvements being seen in our global rankings and in our global impact and, not least, making a difference to people's lives and the world at large.

The Principal began his presentation by thanking a number of people and commending the success of the events in Toronto. He also thanked the University of Toronto and looked forward to further collaborations. The University had many successes to be proud of including very high student application numbers which led to very high calibre students, research income, high performance computing and the Nobel Prize presented to Professor Peter Higgs.

Not everything was optimal, including some aspects of the student experience. Cross disciplinary working could be improved and the physical and IT infrastructure required constant updating. The curriculum was overloaded, and assessment and prompt feedback should be improved. Students now needed different skills, including entrepreneurship, cross disciplinary thinking, greater language, research and quantitative reasoning skills.

Online distance learning was increasingly widespread; nearly all

Schools offered formal courses. One undergraduate course, *Our Changing World*, had been built from lectures into a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) which then fed back into a formal online course. MOOCs had become very important to the University, which had the most successful programme outside the USA in both numbers involved and breadth of courses.

Another aspiration was to increase the number of students studying abroad at some point in their degree, and offering courses to improve students' language skills helped to encourage this. This would also improve their status as truly global citizens. As well as foreign languages the language of statistics and numbers should be a fundamental skill and teaching was being expanded through different channels.

Sport was important at the University, both competitively and recreationally, and helped attract students as well as bringing obvious benefits for their wellbeing. Voluntary work was incredibly widespread and was mostly organised by the students. Innovative Learning Week, also driven by the students, had been very successful. Project work or research involvement was also increasingly important. The Principal concluded with the aspiration of a seamless path from undergraduate entry to research, picking up all the essential skills along the way, preparing graduates to be truly global citizens with 21st century skill sets.

*The full text of the Principal's and Professor Hillier's remarks, and the record of the discussion that followed the presentation, are contained in the Annex to the Billet.*

## 7 ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

There was no other competent business.

## 8 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.

## PAPER B MOTION SECRETARY OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

### BACKGROUND

The Secretary, Dr Mike Michael, had previously been a member of the Business Committee, including Convener of the Public Affairs Standing Committee and Chair of the Media Group, which successfully introduced live webcasting to Half-Yearly Meetings when his appointment as Secretary of the General Council was approved by the General Council at its Half-Yearly Meeting on 12 February 2011.

Dr Mitchell will have completed his first four-year term of office in February 2015 and is eligible to serve for one more term. The Business Committee recommend that he be reappointed for a further four-year term.

### MOTION

That the General Council appoints Dr Michael J Mitchell, BSc, PhD, as Secretary of the General Council for a second period of four years from the date of this meeting, 14 February 2015.

## PAPER C MOTION CHANGES TO THE PUBLICATION OF BILLET WITHIN EDIT

### BACKGROUND

The University wishes to change the way *Edit* is published, with one printed version each year and one electronic magazine version. This is for two reasons. Firstly, there is a significant increase in the circulation of *Edit* due to the success of the University in increasing graduates and alumni. This has put upward pressure on the cost of *Edit*, which is compounded by increases in print and mailing costs. Secondly, there is a need to move forward and embrace digital publication and create an excellent electronic magazine.

This has implications for *Billet* within *Edit*. It is proposed that *Billet* within *Edit* will also have a once yearly printed version, on the same schedule as the current winter *Edit* and *Billet* within *Edit*. This will preserve universal access to the minutes of the General Council Meetings as well as the Election papers and the business papers for the February Half-Yearly Meeting. There will then be an electronic version of *Billet* in May to be sent out by email to all members for whom we have an email address and which will also be available on the General Council website. In order to continue to service the needs of interested members who do not have access to email and/or internet there will remain the possibility, for at least a certain period, to request a printed version of the summer *Billet*.

If you feel that it is necessary to have a printed copy of *Billet* in summer 2015, we would ask you to inform us of this wish. We will then send a printed copy of *Billet* to you in the summer.

The *Annex to Billet*, containing supporting papers for the Agenda, including communications from the University Court, full Standing Committee reports, a transcript of the Principal's presentation, and the Business Committee's report to the meeting on 15 February 2014, is available on the website at: [www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/media](http://www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/media). General Council members may also request it by post from: Mrs Mary Scott, General Council Office, Charles Stewart House, 9-16 Chambers Street, Edinburgh EH1 1HT. Tel. 0131 650 2152; Email: [general.council@ed.ac.uk](mailto:general.council@ed.ac.uk); or pick a copy up at the location of the Council Meeting from half-an-hour beforehand.

 Previous copies of *Billet* can be found under the Publications tab at [www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/media](http://www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/media)

### MOTION

The Business Committee asks approval for *Billet* to be sent out once a year in January in print to all members and to be made available to members once a year in May in electronic format only. A print version of the electronic format will be sent out to those who request this, for a certain period, with the duration of this being at the discretion of the Committee.

### OFFICERS:

**Chairman:** HRH The Princess Royal  
**Secretary:** Michael J Mitchell, BSc, PhD 2015  
**Registrar:** Sarah Smith, University Secretary ex-officio

### GENERAL COUNCIL ASSESSORS ON THE UNIVERSITY COURT:

Alan M Johnston, MBA, CSci, CChem, FRSC, CBiol, FIBiol 2015  
Ann M Smyth, BSc, PhD, MPhil 2015  
Doreen Davidson, BA, AIPD 2017

### BUSINESS COMMITTEE:

Convener: Charles Swainson, MBChB, FRCPE, FRCSE, FFPHM 2016  
Vice-Convener: Frances D Dow, CBE, MA, DPhil 2016

F Convener of Finance and Services Standing Committee:  
Kirsty MacGregor, MA, MBA DipEd 2015  
A Convener of Academic Standing Committee:  
Stuart Macpherson 2016  
C Convener of Constitutional Standing Committee:  
Gordon D Cairns, LLB 2016  
P Convener of Public Affairs Standing Committee:  
Matthew McPherson, MA 2017

### MEMBERS:

'A' denotes a member of the Academic Standing Committee, 'C' a member of the Constitutional Standing Committee, 'F' a member of the Finance and Services Standing Committee, and 'P' a member of the Public Affairs Standing Committee:

### CHANCELLOR'S ASSESSOR:

Sheriff Principal Edward F Bowen, CBE, TD, QC ex-officio

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F Waverley Cameron, BSc, SM 2015  
C Michael Lugton, MA 2015  
A Ritchie Walker, MA, BSc, DipEd 2015  
F Hamish McKenzie, MA 2016  
C David M Munro, MBE, BSc, PhD 2016  
P John Clifford, MSc 2017  
A Anne W. Paterson, BSc, Dip. Social Study, AIMSW, CCE 2017  
C Scott Peter, MA, PGDE 2017  
C Ian Stevens, MA, ACA 2017  
A Dorothy Macleod, BSc, MBA 2018  
A Sarah Morgan, BSc, MSc 2018  
F David Houston, BSc, MBA, PhD, FSITM 2018  
P Sir Philip Mawer, D Litt, LLD (Hon), MA, DPA, Hon FIFA 2018  
P Samuel Trett, MBA, MA 2018

ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY: Mary T Scott, BA



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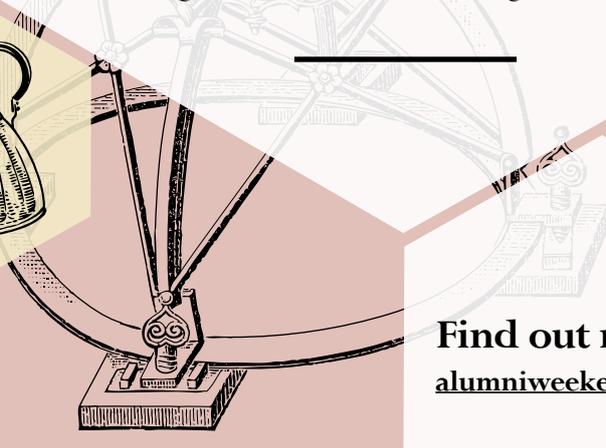
**Something to  
think about  
this summer**



# Reconnect at Alumni Weekend

**Friday 5 - Sunday 7 June 2015**

Rediscover the bold new thinking and lively debates you experienced at university. Our Alumni Weekend offers an inspiring weekend of talks, lectures, exhibitions and tours. Of course, you'll also enjoy opportunities to catch up with fellow alumni at events including our ceilidh and Old College Quad tea party.



**Find out more at  
[alumniweekend.ed.ac.uk](http://alumniweekend.ed.ac.uk)**



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