



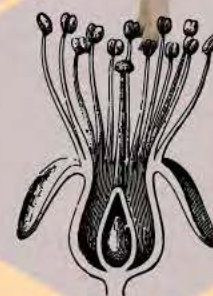
THE UNIVERSITY  
of EDINBURGH



# EDINBURGH friends

2014

# 6



## Inside

Supporting students

Developing cancer research

Google's investment in Edinburgh

Sporting scholarships





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Would you like to share your own story about why you support the University?  
Email the editor at: [Brian.Campbell@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Brian.Campbell@ed.ac.uk)

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**"I would like to thank everyone who has supported the University of Edinburgh in the past year. This magazine is testament to your loyalty, encouragement and vision."**

**PROFESSOR CHARLIE JEFFREY**  
SENIOR VICE PRINCIPAL

## Note to Friends

**Philanthropy is at the heart of the success of the University of Edinburgh, and *Edinburgh Friends* once again illustrates the impact that donations of time, money and resources have had on this year's developments and successes. Since assuming the role of Senior Vice Principal earlier this year, I have been deeply impressed and encouraged by the loyalty of alumni and friends who choose to support us.**

This magazine really highlights the great strides the University has taken in ensuring that the brightest minds from around the world continue to be able to study here at Edinburgh, and it is particularly heartening to read about the support offered by corporate sponsors such as KAL and Google. Their support is giving students and researchers not only financial assistance but also unique access to industry expertise and resources - experience that will ensure our graduates retain a competitive edge when entering the job market.

Research, of course, remains an area of which the University can be extremely proud. The interdisciplinary approach adopted by colleagues across the spectrum of subject areas is making a difference on a global scale. Work on cancer research and the ageing brain is changing how the world studies and reacts to diseases.

The support of alumni donations is vital and I am delighted to note that in the 2013-2014 academic year we received a record number of gifts from those who have studied at Edinburgh. These funds are channelled directly to where the University requires them most urgently - supporting our students, enhancing resources and improving the University environment.

Edinburgh Friends also recognises those who support the University in a non-financial way. The work of our volunteers - whether they hold a reunion, become a career mentor to our students, or administer the running of an international alumni club - is essential in enhancing the University's reputation, both at home and abroad.

Indeed, I would like to thank everyone who has supported the University of Edinburgh in the past year. This magazine is testament to your loyalty, encouragement and vision.

**Professor Charlie Jeffrey**  
Senior Vice Principal



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**“It was a very big deal to get the scholarship... it was a great boost to my self-confidence.”**

IVANA ZEKTO,  
KAL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Above: Ivana Zekto.

## SUPPORTING STUDENTS

# PIN money

Running a business that depends on cash, Aravinda Korala knows a sound investment when he sees one – which is why he supports students in the School of Informatics.

If you don't believe the past is a foreign country, just ask Dr Aravinda Korala. It doesn't seem that long ago when he enrolled as a student at the University of Edinburgh, but he remembers how different things were at his branch of the RBS on Forrest Hill.

It makes Aravinda feel good to know he's giving something back, but his motives are not just about altruism. "It's about self-interest as well," he says. "I want to make sure that the students at the University of Edinburgh would consider us as a long-term career. If our self-

**The bursaries are about students who have a financial need and that's particularly nice to be able to help out... for students it seems to make quite a difference.**

DR ARAVINDA KORALA, CEO OF KAL

"You didn't have to sign anything. They'd say, 'Oh, hello, Aravinda, is it your usual £10?' They were allowed to authorise a transaction just because the teller recognised me. It was brilliant."

That was in 1979 and since then, the financial world has moved on a bit – not least because of the inroads made by Korala's own company. Soon after completing his undergraduate studies and obtaining a PhD in 1986, the Sri Lankan-born entrepreneur set up KAL and helped it become the world's leading ATM software provider. Today, with bases in 12 countries, the company creates software for cash machines, self-service kiosks and bank branches the world over.

"We use the word 'ATM' as a short-hand term, but really what we're talking about is self-service machines," says Aravinda at the KAL headquarters in Edinburgh. "It's a wider industry than just cash dispensing."

He points to the ATM machines in Japan that accept cash deposits and recycle the same cash for the next customer's withdrawals. He explains how in Spain, the ATMs use a pass-book system and can turn the page of each book. And he says that in the USA, an ATM can read a hand-written cheque and recognise whether it has been signed or not. "When you put it together, the complexity is pretty amazing," he says.

Being involved in such a forward-looking industry, Korala knows how important it is to cultivate the next generation of tech-savvy employees. That's one of his reasons for supporting students in the School of Informatics, the University's pioneering department dedicated to the study of computational systems. KAL has two schemes. One offers scholarships of £1000 a year to two undergraduates with an impressive academic record. The other gives bursaries to students for whom finance is an issue.

interest and theirs work together, then that's great. Having said that, the bursaries are about students who have a financial need and that's particularly nice to be able to help out. It's not a huge amount of money but for students it seems to make quite a difference."

As one of the current recipients of a KAL scholarship, Ivana Zekto says these kind of awards do wonders for a student's morale. She's studying for a BSc in cognitive science and was delighted to be singled out. "It was a very big deal to get the scholarship," says the 21-year-old from Croatia. "I was completely new to computer science, I'd never done any programming before, and I was very worried that I would be doing really poorly, so it was a great boost to my self-confidence."

As well as computer science and maths, her course includes social sciences and linguistics. She is currently weighing up whether she should continue her academic career or find employment. "Edinburgh recently opened the Centre for Doctoral Training in Data Science, which is an area I'm interested in, so we're very fortunate," she says. "And KAL has been absolutely amazing. They invite everyone who receives their bursaries to come to the company for one afternoon every year and see what they do. It's genuinely just them being really nice and helping students who do well."

**As for anyone considering setting up a scholarship or bursary, Ivana can't recommend it enough. "It makes a huge difference psychologically," she says. "For some big companies, it wouldn't be a very big deal to give £1000 or £2000 a year to talented students, but for the students it would make a huge difference."**



# Smells like team spirit

The breakthroughs being made by Professor Margaret Frame and her colleagues at the Edinburgh Cancer Research Centre are down to the support they're given and their willingness to collaborate.

When I congratulate Professor Margaret Frame on being given the Chancellor's Award for Research, I sense her wince. She received the accolade from The Princess Royal, Chancellor of the University, at a recent gala dinner in the Palace of Holyroodhouse in recognition of her achievements as Director of the Edinburgh Cancer Research Centre. But the idea she should be singled out for her "innovation, relevance, creativity and personal dedication" only makes her embarrassed.

You could put this down to modesty but it's also because the true strength of the University of Edinburgh's work lies in its team effort. She knows the reason the organisation is a world leader in cancer research is that it is collaborative and cross-disciplinary.

introduction of the breast cancer drug lapatinib and discovered two molecules that help destroy cancer cells.

"One of my colleagues, Professor Charlie Gourley, discovered that many people had particular mutations running in their families," says Frame. "Now there is a treatment for these people that there wasn't before. That's been an important Edinburgh-led piece of clinical observational science."

Responsible for two large research teams, Professor Frame has a personal interest in molecular biology and is investigating the role played by particular genes and proteins in causing cancer. "We're trying to figure out the mechanisms by which these proteins work

**It takes creativity from teams, and multiple teams, working on a shared goal which is to eradicate cancer.**

PROFESSOR MARGARET FRAME, SCIENCE DIRECTOR OF THE EDINBURGH CANCER RESEARCH UK CENTRE

Look at the range of her collaborators and you'll see she's not exaggerating. The Edinburgh Cancer Research Centre draws on the skills of engineers, chemists, mathematicians, statisticians and physicists, as well as experts in microscopy, biometrics and laser optics. Working with clinical director Professor David Cameron, Professor Frame maintains a direct connection between the science of cancer and its clinical treatment. "The key thing is to have interpersonal relationships where you all want to solve a bigger problem," she says. "You can educate each other."

It's this kind of teamwork at which Edinburgh excels. Being successful in today's world means being multi-disciplinary. "The next big breakthroughs will come from technological advances," she says. "It won't be cancer researchers or cancer doctors who provide it, it will be people in other disciplines. Multidisciplinary teams bring different things to the problem and Edinburgh is extremely good at that."

The results speak for themselves. Professor Frame's colleagues have made headway in improving treatment for people with breast cancer, using aspirin to reduce the risk of bowel cancer and developing ways of tackling the most common type of brain tumour. Here in Edinburgh, they have pioneered a more precise form of chemotherapy to treat tumours, conducted the clinical trial that paved the way for the

and then how to inhibit their activity so as to stop cancer cells in their tracks," she says. "Every group has unique aspects: for example, we're innovating imaging technologies to visualise cancer processes deep in cancer tissue."

None of this comes cheap. Professor Frame's work depends on the support of Cancer Research UK and the European Research Council, both of which provide over £2m, as well as many other charitable donations. "Without funding, we wouldn't be doing cancer research," she says. "We've got to the point where one in two people diagnosed with cancer now survive. Thirty-five years on from when I started cancer research, twice as many people survive. There's a huge change in the statistics and that is all down to research."

She believes we are on the cusp of a new era of cancer treatment that will focus on personalised medicine. Within 20 or 30 years, she foresees each patient having their tumour genetically profiled and their treatment decided accordingly. Although such breakthroughs are measured in decades rather than years, it's work that gives Professor Frame tremendous satisfaction. "It's the most rewarding job in the world," she says. "Nothing is ever boring. You've got a chance of knowing something about an important disease before anyone else does. It's fascinating and inspiring. And in Edinburgh, the people are co-operative, friendly and want to do it."

"Multidisciplinary teams bring different things to the problem and Edinburgh is extremely good at that."

PROFESSOR MARGARET FRAME

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Above: Professor Margaret Frame.





Above: Professor Joanna Wardlaw.

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## RESEARCHING THE AGEING MIND

# Altered imaging

Thanks to new technology, brain scanning is one of the most dynamic fields in medical research. And thanks to Joanna Wardlaw, the University of Edinburgh continues to set the pace.

Strange to think it, but when Professor Joanna Wardlaw contemplated applying to university, she swithered between art and science. As it turned out, she plumped for medicine at the University of Edinburgh and got the best of both worlds. Now, as one of the world's leading neuroradiologists and clinical scientists, she gets to contemplate the staggering beauty of the human brain every day.

"People can go on accumulating this damage in their brain without really realising it's happening," she says. "You might just feel you're slowing down a bit and that it's normal to slow down when you're older. With very detailed scanning, you can unpick how good the flow to the brain is, see structural abnormalities and look at the subtleties of how well the fibre connections are working."

In radiology you've got art all around you with these wonderfully detailed images of blood and organ structure.

PROFESSOR JOANNA WARDLAW, DIRECTOR OF THE BRAIN RESEARCH IMAGING CENTRE

Art's loss is the health system's gain. Professor Wardlaw's story begins in 1990 when she worked with a cardiologist who was exploring the then controversial idea of using drugs to get rid of blood clots in the heart. If the principle turned out to be true for the heart, she wondered, could it also be true for the brain? After all, when someone has a stroke, it's generally because a blood vessel has blocked an artery in much the same way.

Her first research project was to see if the same clot-busting drugs could be used to treat stroke patients. Today, thanks to her pioneering work, every one of us has a much better chance of recovery from a stroke. "A couple of years ago, we finished the largest ever trial, with just over 3,000 patients, and we were able to show reasonably conclusively that the drug is very beneficial," she says when we meet in the Clinical Research Imaging Centre next to Edinburgh's Royal Infirmary. "If you get the drug within four-and-a-half hours, you are much more likely to live independent of help in activities like being able to brush your teeth, play your guitar, go to the shop or make your bed."

Now, as director of the Brain Research Imaging Centre, which she set up in 1998, Professor Wardlaw is at the forefront of research into the prevention and cure of strokes. For the past decade, she's been paying particular attention to the sizeable sub-set of patients, many of them elderly, whose strokes can lead to cognitive impairment and dementia, even though they often go unnoticed.

To take her research to the next level, she is raising funds for an MRI scanner which will be installed at Edinburgh's Royal Infirmary in 2015. Every development in computer technology has brought improvements in imaging quality, speed and analytical capacity, opening up exciting possibilities for medical researchers and patients alike. The new machine promises to be no different.

"As well as giving us powerful statistical information, the replacement scanner will provide information that is useful to the individual patient," she says. "Our work goes from pure science, trying to understand these complicated pathological processes, through to translating our knowledge into something that improves services for patients on a day to day basis. That is one of the areas where Edinburgh has particular strengths."

Generous support for the £1.8m scanner has come from the Wellcome Trust, the Edinburgh and Lothians Health Foundation and others, but there are still opportunities to support the project - every donation is welcome and none is too small.

"For our first research scanner at the Western General Hospital, some of the most important donations were relatively small but they came from really enthusiastic individuals," says Professor Wardlaw, who is supported by the Row Fogo Trust. "Even relatively modest donations are morale-boosting. They make everyone involved feel they're doing something worthwhile."



# Sporting chances

## SUPPORTING SPORTING ACHIEVEMENT

Donors to the University's sporting scholarships are making a real difference to the prospects of elite athletes, as the Glasgow Commonwealth Games proved.



See more online at  
[friends.ed.ac.uk](http://friends.ed.ac.uk)

Above: Sarah Adlington, Gold medallist for judo at Glasgow 2014 and Conor Bond, President of the Edinburgh University Sports Union.



Sarah Adlington's gold medal for judo at Glasgow 2014 was doubly sweet. She had undergone shoulder surgery in March and was by no means certain to compete, let alone triumph.

"The road to the Games was pretty rocky," says the second-year student, who is taking a BSc in Sport and Recreation Management. "When we first looked at the dates we always knew it would be tight as there are often dips in recovery from injury."

"Fortunately I was ready in time. The main thing was to get back fighting fit, make the team selection and then do as much preparation as I could to make sure I was the best I could be on that day, even though I wasn't going to be at my personal best. To come away with a gold medal at the end of that was absolutely amazing."

Sarah's next huge target is the Rio Olympics in 2016, with a myriad of other competitions before then, in the UK and all over the world.

In the face of such challenges, the financial support that the University can offer its most promising sportsmen and sportswomen is even more welcome.

Last semester Sarah, who was born in Shrewsbury but has lived in Scotland for almost 10 years, received an Eric Liddell High Performance Scholarship, named after the University's first Olympic hero, the legendary runner.

Liddell, whose story features in the film *Chariots of Fire*, won gold in the 400m and bronze in the 200m at the Paris Games in 1924 while studying pure science. He famously refused to race in his favourite event, the 100m, on religious grounds as it was held on a Sunday.

Two of the University's most distinguished Olympians, the cyclist Sir Chris Hoy and the rower Dr Katherine Grainger, are among those who have raised funds for the Eric Liddell Scholarships since they were set up two years ago.

Sarah is also on the University's flagship support scheme, the Individual Performance Programme (IPP). This is offered on a one-year renewable basis and is open to any University student who is competing at junior international standard or above.

IPP exploits the University's top class training and competition facilities, pioneering sports conditioning and sports medicine expertise, commitment to performance sport development and close links to Scotland's elite sport network. It offers everything from gym membership at the exceptional Pleasance sports complex to nutrition advice, sports psychology consultancy, flexible study options, promotional opportunities and cash assistance for sports related costs.

"Obviously no athlete does their amateur sport for money but any financial support you can get takes a little pressure off living expenses, which means you can concentrate that bit more on what you're trying to achieve in your study and in your sport," Adlington says.

**It has taken a while for her Commonwealth gold to sink in. "I realised the other day that it was something that was never going to go away whatever I did in my life, university wise or sporting wise – I'm always going to be a Commonwealth champion."**

As if to underline this, her name is gilded onto the wooden placard in the Sports Hall of Fame at the University's Centre for Sports and Exercise on the Pleasance, where Sarah does some of her training.

Two other current University students from the Glasgow Games are up there – Andy Burns, a bronze, also for judo, and Corrie Scott, who won a swimming bronze.

**Various other sports scholarships are also on offer, including the Katherine Grainger Scholarship, worth £1,250 a year to current students for the duration of their study, the Stockton Family Scholarship and the Macaskill Family Scholarship.**

Conor Bond, president of the University's Sports Union, says such awards are crucial. "They mean there is no financial barrier to someone competing in their sport internationally or in the UK because they significantly reduce living costs. Programmes like IPP also do a whole lot more as well, in terms of training and expertise."

However, while elite sport at the University is clearly flourishing – in all, 17 current students made it to the Glasgow Games, with many alumni also present as competitors and coaches – plenty of activity is going on, and enjoyment being had, at lower levels as well.

Conor says a policy of "something for everyone" is driving up student involvement to unprecedented numbers across the 64 clubs. These range from athletics and archery to boxing, cheerleading, cycling, skydiving, motorsports, underwater hockey, windsurfing, wakeboarding, weightlifting and dozens more.

"Participation is going through the roof. We had about 6,000 members in 2012/13 and that's now up above 7,000. Next year we are looking to push 8,000. It's fantastic to see so many more students getting involved in sport and being physically active," he says.

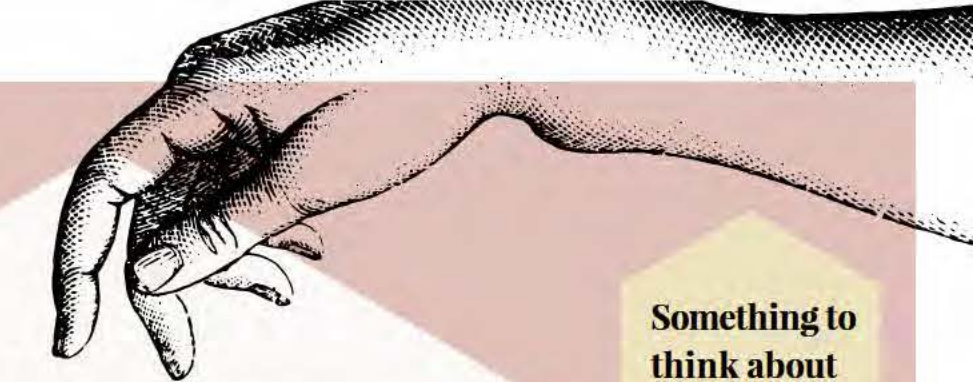
"We pride ourselves on being able to cater for everyone most of the time, whether that's an international athlete or someone who just wants to come along and try something new. Sometimes we see a strain on facilities and resources but on the whole we cope."

Katherine Grainger was once one of those who tried something new. She took up rowing at the University and went on to win one Olympic gold, three silvers and six world championships, becoming the most successful female British rower to date.

For Sarah, the two sides of sport at the University are dovetailing well.

"A lot of what I'm learning this year about sports sponsorship, sports marketing and events management relates directly to what I see in competition around the world. I've been to a vast array of events from world championships to the Commonwealth Games and that will help me in my studies this semester and hopefully into the next one."

For now, however, competition remains the priority. "If Rio had come and gone and I hadn't done everything I could to get there and win a medal then I'd only be disappointed in myself. It's encouraging to realise that the University's supporters are helping create the conditions for success."



**Something to think about this summer**

## Reconnect at Alumni Weekend

Friday 5 – Sunday 7 June 2015

In June 2013, the University of Edinburgh did something it had not done in a long time. All alumni – no matter where they lived in the world – were invited back to their alma mater for a weekend of discussion, nostalgia, music and dance. The Alumni Weekend was born and the University was delighted to welcome so many graduates of all ages and disciplines back to campus. Now, after a successful weekend in Toronto in 2014, the event is coming home again.

"The 2013 Alumni Weekend really was a special event for the University," says Kirsty MacDonald, Executive Director of Development and Alumni Engagement. "I was struck by the warmth of feeling that the alumni brought with them. The atmosphere was thick with a sense of nostalgia and pride that I believe only an institution like Edinburgh can inspire."

Events included academic lectures and panel discussions, a night of comedy in Teviot and a lively ceilidh at Pollock Halls. The 2015 Weekend promises all this and more. "It's a unique opportunity to reconnect with University life," says Kirsty. "So this year's programme will include all the things that alumni loved in 2013 and additional events to

highlight the very best developments and work going on here. Graduates travel from all over the world for this event, so it is important for us to let them know about the world-leading work that could very well have an effect in the areas where they live.

"Of course, there will also be plenty of opportunities to socialise. The Alumni Weekend certainly has the fun factor and we really do encourage alumni to organise their own reunions to coincide with the weekend of events."

Specialist talks, tours and exhibitions are also planned, while a tea party on the Old College lawn will add a touch of summer refinement to proceedings. There will also be the chance to meet current students and talk to staff from the Alumni office. The University would also like to extend the invitation to non-alumni who have supported the University, whether it be through financial donations or by offering time and expertise.

"I'm already looking forward to welcoming our alumni and supporters back to Edinburgh," says Kirsty. "Edinburgh will always be a place they can call home."

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

**Ensure you receive regular updates. Send your details to [alumni@ed.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@ed.ac.uk)**







# Having a field day

At the School of GeoSciences, the University is investigating what shapes our world and the environments in which we live. Researchers and students are trying to understand the interactions between the Earth's geology, atmosphere, oceans, biosphere and human responses and roles, in order to help answer some of today's most important questions and challenges. Today, of course, that work is more relevant than ever.

Understanding the world means seeing it, so spending time in the field is an integral and valuable part of every GeoSciences student's degree. During the course of their studies, students carry out fieldwork both in Scotland and abroad – from Wales to Iceland, from the Cairngorms to the Pyrenees, and from Amsterdam to Inchnadamph.

"During these trips, our students have an opportunity to learn vital skills," says Professor Sandy Tudhope, Head of the School of GeoSciences. "They explore new places and find out about the world first-hand. It is also an opportunity for sharing memorable experiences with fellow students, and for making friendships that last a lifetime."

This emphasis on first-hand experience is reflected in the creation of the GeoSciences Undergraduate Fieldwork Fund, which uses donations to award fieldwork bursaries to those students who are most in need of financial assistance. These are usually students from less affluent backgrounds in the more expensive fieldwork years.

"As a School, we feel strongly that no student should have to struggle financially in order to take part in course-related fieldwork", says Sandy. "We work hard to keep costs as low as possible for our students, whilst at the same time making sure that they experience the highest-quality field courses."

Above: Students carry out research in the field (left); students in the School of GeoSciences (centre); Helen Quinn (right).

Vivienne Cochrane, a 1965 Geography graduate, is one of several alumni who have already been inspired to help. In fact her class decided to support the Fund collectively, after holding a reunion back in Edinburgh. "I chose to study Geography because of my fascination with the world around me and my love of exploring new places," she says. "I was unaware at the time that my fellow Geography students would become far more important to me than anything I studied. From the start we became friends.

"Many field trips brought us closer together as a class. Not only did we work hard, we also had great fun. We are still friends 50 years on."

This friendship has led to £1,000 being donated to the Fieldwork Fund, bringing the first year total for the fund to an impressive £13,000. Altogether, the School has so far been able to make 35 awards. Despite this encouraging support, more funds are needed. "At present, we can only support a small number of students," says Sandy Tudhope. "A huge thank you goes to those who have already supported the fund. It's now our hope that more alumni and friends will get behind us and ensure that all of our current and future students continue to get the invaluable skills and experiences that field trips can provide."

## Why I Give

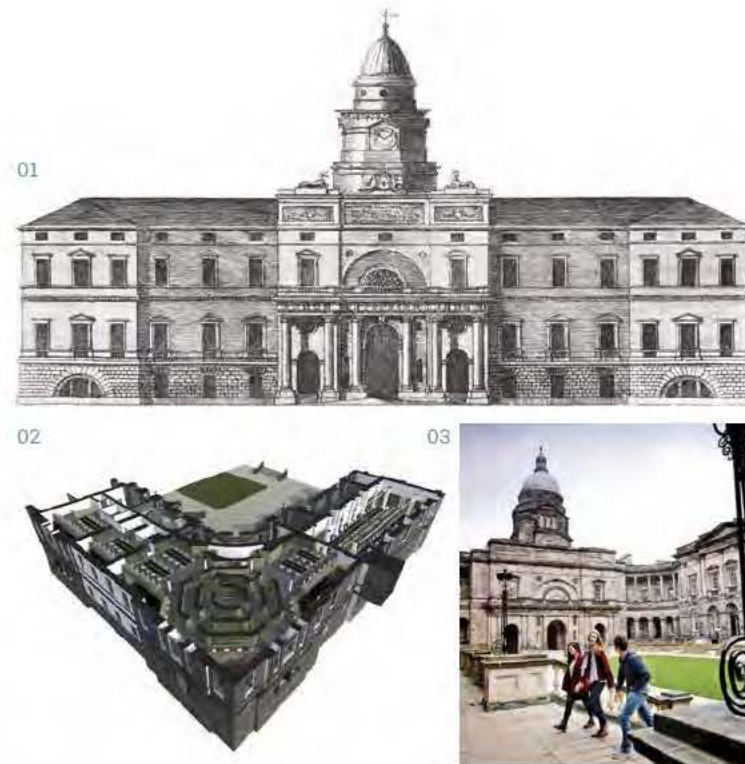
Helen Quinn (Geology and Physical Geography 2001, PhD 2006) works as an assistant producer for the BBC. Here she explains why she decided to donate to the Geosciences Undergraduate Fieldwork Fund.

"Fieldwork formed a very big part of my enthusiasm for the degree I completed at Edinburgh. Almost from the minute I arrived at the School of GeoSciences, I was very lucky to go on numerous trips. My favourite memories are of the Scottish trips, particularly the second year field trip to Torridon, since the beauty of the place blew my mind. By learning traditional geological sciences in such stunning landscapes I got hooked on fieldwork, eventually staying at Edinburgh to complete my PhD. This resulted in spending a season in my ultimate fieldwork destination – Antarctica.

Antarctica and my studies at Edinburgh hugely shaped the career I have today. The science that I was writing up as an academic paper based on the work I had done on the frozen continent, began to lend itself to a story that could be much more widely communicated. Everything I do now spiralled from this love of writing science for a wider audience."



# Investing in the Heart of the University



The heart of the University is Old College, a beautiful classical-style building, topped on its east side by an elegant dome, and which has housed Edinburgh Law School since the late 18th Century when the current building was constructed. What began as two rooms on the north side of the quad - one housing "Civil Law", one housing "Scotch Law" - has steadily expanded to include the entire north side of Old College; in all, some 1300 students and 90 academics now study and teach law at Old College.

However, due to increasing demands on the facilities - within the past five years alone, Edinburgh Law School has increased its postgraduate intake by 100%, for example - the University has launched an ambitious £35 million redevelopment plan to renovate the interior of its Old College premises in order to make better use of the space while enhancing the overall student experience. This campaign, the University is seeking £2 million in philanthropic support to achieve its vision.

The Old College Law Campaign will aim to fund the following:

- A new Law Library at Old College with outstanding digital resources and more study spaces
- An enhanced scholarship and bursary programme to attract the most talented and promising lawyers, judges and scholars, and to ensure that deserving and talented students - no matter their financial situation - will be able to study law at Old College
- An extension of Edinburgh Law School's pro-bono work, providing free access to justice for the local community - work which is student-led, but supervised by volunteer solicitors

These are exciting times for Edinburgh Law School: in addition to the redevelopment plan and the influx of new postgraduates, in just five years the School has doubled its research income, significantly increased its academic staff and has been judged the 28th best law school in the world.



## The Dean's African Scholarship Fund

The Dean's African Tercentenary Scholarship fund is ending as the last recipient, Shelagh Rule of South Africa, completes her LLM, or taught masters in law, this academic year. However, re-establishing the fund is part of the Old College Law Campaign with the old fund now being revived as The Old College Law Campaign African LLM/ MSc Scholarship Fund.

The new fund will intend to do what its predecessor did: give qualified African graduates the opportunity to study in Edinburgh by providing full international fees, as well as a living stipend, in order to undertake a one-year LLM. The total cost of the Scholarship is currently £22,850.

The Scholarship has been credited with enhancing the diversity of the Law School as well as strengthening the School's historic links with the African continent; indeed, Edinburgh has strong links with Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland going back to 1964, when law students from those countries studied for two years in Edinburgh as part of their law degree. The scheme - which continued in various forms until 1986 - had been devised by Dr Robert Leslie of Edinburgh Law School, with support from the British government and African officials.

Lord Coulsfield (LLB, 1960)- an Edinburgh graduate and a judge who has visited Botswana on several occasions and served as an appeals judge there from 2004 to 2008 - was deeply impressed with many aspects of Botswana's legal system and was interested to learn on an earlier visit to the country that a large number of High Court judges were Edinburgh graduates.

"Although at the time when Botswana became independent, there was an ample supply of qualified lawyers to staff the legal profession," says Lord Coulsfield, "it was felt that there was a need for assistance from lawyers of experience and standing to deal with appeals. I am

convinced that it is in the interests of Botswana, and other African countries - and also beneficial to the Scottish legal and educational systems - to maintain and develop the sort of relationship which has been seen in the past."

Lord and Lady Coulsfield have previously supported the original fund, with Lord Coulsfield recently writing that "this is a project which deserves to be generously supported," and they continue to support The Old College Law Campaign African LLM/ MSc Scholarship Fund.

Bill Gilmore, Emeritus Professor of Law at Edinburgh and the former dean and head of Edinburgh Law School, also hopes to see the Scholarship continue as before. "Thanks to the generosity of Lord and Lady Coulsfield, among other donors, the School of Law has since been able to welcome a series of gifted African students. I had the opportunity to work closely with the first holder of this award, Mr Dambe from Botswana, and can attest to the way in which he rose to meet the challenges and took full advantage of the opportunities presented by studying for a year in one of the great European seats of legal scholarship," Gilmore said. "I very much hope that this initiative to bring the best and the brightest legal talent from Africa to the Old College can be continued into the future."

Baboki Dambe, the Scholarship recipient Gilmore referenced (he earned his LLM in 2010 with distinction), says that Edinburgh is the "perfect home away from home". "My LLM Dissertation focused on the shortfalls of the Botswana Arbitration Act, with a view of suggesting reforms that are necessary to elevate it to international standards of commercial arbitration," he told Edinburgh Friends. "I remain positive that the reform will be done soon and hope to be part of (making reform possible)."

Above: 01 Image of Old College supplied by Conservation Scotland. 02 Architect's plans for redevelopment of Old College. 03 Old College Quad pictured today. 04 Artist's impression of the new reception area. 05 Graphic cross section of the redeveloped areas. p17, Lord and Lady Coulsfield at the 2014 Chancellor's Dinner and Awards.



# Pet Project

A LEGACY TO HER ALMA MATER

Veterinary surgeon Jane Shipsey got so much from her six years at the University of Edinburgh that she jumped at the chance to give something back.



See more online at  
[friends.ed.ac.uk](http://friends.ed.ac.uk)

Above: Jane Shipsey with Cinder.



It's a busy Friday morning in Newcastle's PDSA Pet Aid Hospital. The waiting room is filled with vexed owners reassuring their animals in hushed tones. In the surgery, a vet is tending to the wounded hind leg of a sedated dog while mentally blocking out the barks coming from the canine recovery room next door. A nearby white board itemises the cat spays, hip operations and fracture repairs they've got lined up for the day.

In the centre of the room, Jane Shipsey is posing for the camera with her colleague's dog Cinder. The veterinary surgeon has been working for the PDSA since 2000 – and here at the hospital for 18 months – and it's a job she loves. Beaming a big smile, she looks like she's in her element, but she knows she wouldn't be here at all if it weren't for the skills she mastered in her six years of study at the University of Edinburgh.

*"Academically, it's a very strong university," says Shipsey, who graduated from the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies in 1993. "The Dick Vet is world renowned and has a great history and sense of belonging. We see a lot of vets from Edinburgh here and they're very impressive."*

Her skills proved more valuable still when she recently won a competition through the Worldwide Veterinary Service to go on an 11-day working holiday to India. Prowling leopards and charging elephants notwithstanding, she and her friend Sarah Archard, a fellow Edinburgh graduate, had a fantastic time visiting tea plantations and tiger reserves in between neutering stray dogs in remote villages and helping treat cattle and goats. "We were able to spend two weeks reminiscing about our time at the Dick Vet and at the University of Edinburgh, while also doing a lot of veterinary work in rural India," she says.

Her lifelong friendship with Archard is just one of the many things she has to thank Edinburgh for. It was here she met her husband Dean Shipsey, a medical professional, as well as the mutual friend who introduced them and with whom they still holiday every autumn. A keen sportswoman, she has fond memories of travelling with the hockey team to Madrid and Amsterdam.

*"Going to university showed me that life wasn't just about work. There were other opportunities to be had. It's not just about your academic achievement, it's about meeting people, communicating, doing things you haven't done before," says Jane Shipney.*

It was for these reasons she chose to include the University in her will. After they had children, she and her husband thought it best to prepare for all eventualities. When their solicitor asked if she'd like to include anybody else in her will, she remembered all the good times she'd had courtesy of the University and the Sports Union.

"I thought, well actually, I do want to give something back," she says. "At the same time, I decided to set up a direct debit for the Edinburgh Fund which helped with a lot of funding for overseas tours when I did sport at university. I felt I had a lot of opportunities at Edinburgh and I wanted students to still have those opportunities and for it not to be based on circumstances."

*Giving a legacy is a way of supporting future generations of students whether or not you are in a position to donate during your lifetime. Your will can stipulate whether the gift should be directed to a specific cause or allocated by the University to an area of particular need. "I want the university to be able to make sure that university life is full," says Shipsey who, working for a charity herself, knows how important legacies can be. "It makes me feel good that I'm giving something back because I gained a lot from university life. I'm a jobbing veterinary surgeon working in a clinic in Newcastle, but I can still contribute and feel like my contribution is worthwhile."*



## Private Giving, Public Good

*There is no doubt that the University of Edinburgh has achieved its status of international importance thanks in part to the generosity of hundreds of supporters over the years. Donations of money, property, books and works of art have helped the University to develop in many ways – and gifts of time and expertise continue the theme of enabling it to contribute to development on a global scale. Now a new book looks at the stories behind some of the University's supporters, and at how their generosity has enabled the development of one of the world's great academic institutions.*

Private Giving, Public Good, written by staff members Professor Mary Bownes and Jean Grier, is a 200 page study of the philanthropic history of the University, complemented by a delightful array of illustrations taken from both the University's archives and private collections. "I spoke to alumni and donors and it became clear that people wanted to understand how the University has benefited from financial support since its establishment," says Mary who is Vice-Principal for Community Development. "As I investigated, I saw that these philanthropic gifts have made a huge difference to the University since it was founded. I also realised that those who give their time and expertise were crucial, so I came up with the idea of trying to articulate this in a book."

From the rickety old University library that sat on the current site of Old College, to the development of one of the best bursary schemes

in the world, the book contains engaging studies of the projects that made a difference to the University. "I didn't want the book to be a list of gifts," says Mary. "It's very much a thematic approach and I hope readers will find this slightly different way of looking at our history as fascinating as Jean and I did when we were writing it."

"It was amazing to read about some of the people who supported the establishment of Edinburgh and to realise that philanthropy here began so long ago. The other thing is the huge breadth of the impact – it really touches all disciplines and all parts of the University and its staff and students."

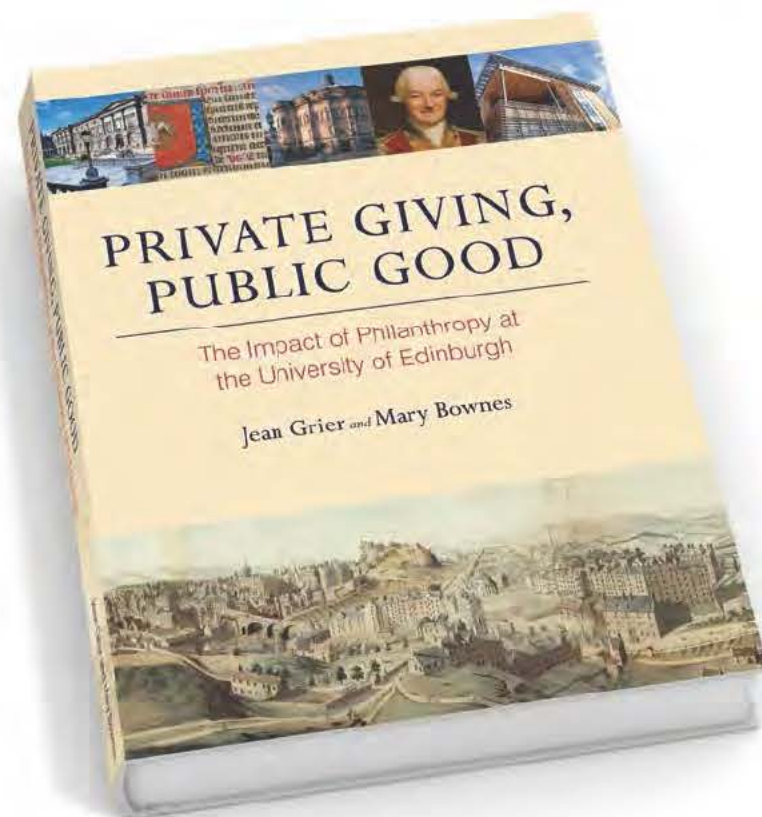
"I really hope people will see that supporting the University can make a huge difference to individuals, to the creation of knowledge and enabling research which subsequently impacts on society."



The following extract tells the story of the beginnings of the iconic Old College:

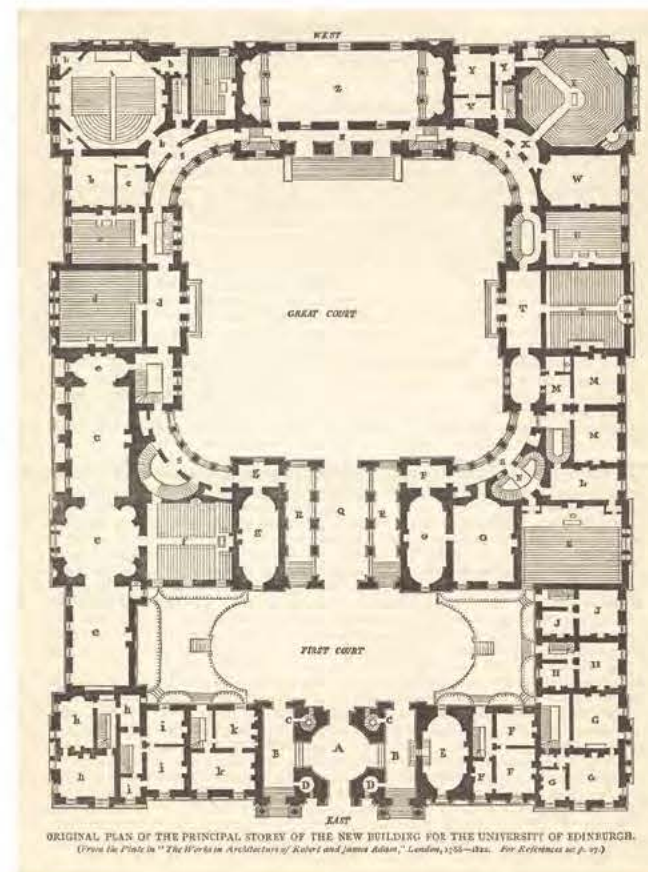
From chapter 3: Building the University

Robert Adam had drawn up grand plans for the southern approach to the city, including preliminary designs for the new University buildings, and he was subsequently appointed to design the college building. The project, seen to be of national rather than merely civic importance, was put in the hands of trustees representing the great and good in Scottish public life, who were to oversee the enterprise and raise the necessary funds by public appeal. The Lord Provost, Thomas Elder, and the Principal of the University, William Robertson, were closely involved in day-to-day administration, as were their successors. Adam's plans (apparently drawn around 1789 but not published until 1791) show a fine building with a double quadrangle, the whole intended to house a chapel, hall, museum, teaching rooms, library and residential accommodation for the Principal and many of the professors. The University's students by now numbered around 1,000 but there was to be no provision for accommodation for them 'as the students live promiscuously with the other inhabitants [of the city]'.  
 After a lengthy gestation period, building work seemed to start quite suddenly; Principal Robertson convened a special meeting of the Senatus in October 1789 and announced that the foundation stone would be laid the following month. The Lord Provost explained to the same meeting that the town council had been encouraged by the 'prospect of a liberal contribution from the public, and of aid from Government.' The trustees, who included Henry Dundas, the Duke of Buccleuch and the Lord Provost, resolved to advertise in London newspapers for subscriptions. They appear to have been confident that this appeal would receive wide public support; a total of £40,000 was needed. Initially all went well. Some £15,000 was raised in the next year or two. Lists of the moneys already raised were published. The city promised £400 per annum, the Writers to the Signet 200 guineas, the Faculty of Advocates and the Royal Society 100 guineas each, all these for five years. The Royal College of Physicians gave £150 and the College of Surgeons £105. Several Scottish peers gave £100 or more, and many other titled people gave sums of £50 to £100. Individuals, doctors and surgeons gave generously, as did several of the professors and many ministers of the Kirk. A few donors gave in kind – 5—bags of lime; a log of mahogany at Leith; two Highland oxen to be sold by the Deacon of the Fleshers; 40,000 slates free of charge apart from the cost of transport from the quarry at Easdale.



Private Giving, Public Good: The Impact of Philanthropy at the University of Edinburgh by Jean Grier and Mary Bownes is available to purchase from the University Visitor Centre on Charles Street and online at:

[giftshop.ed.ac.uk](http://giftshop.ed.ac.uk)



Above, top left: William Playfair's design for the first floor of Old College; top right: view of Old College in 1840; bottom: view of Old College and South Bridge in 1887, shortly before the addition of the dome.



## LIBRARIES, MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

# Object lessons

The Centre for Special Collections in the University Library holds an astonishing array of rare materials. A staff member and former bursary student explains how donations have enabled an improved exhibition space to open up these treasures to a wider public.

Those lucky enough to have visited The World History of Rashid al-Din 1314: A Masterpiece of Islamic Painting, which ran for three months until the end of October, will have been struck by the remarkable quality of the exhibits and the clarity of their display.

Seventeen leaves from this manuscript, with its beautiful colour illustrations and fine Arabic script, were on view in the purpose-built exhibitions space that has been established on the ground floor of the Main Library. Subtle lighting and informative captions enhanced the collection, on display to mark the 700th year of its production in modern day Iran.'

Alongside were objects from the same period and region, such as candlesticks and ceramics, to give historical and artistic context.

Like numerous other items in the Centre for Research Collections (CRC) – not just books and manuscripts but everything from artworks to scientific and musical instruments, many of world significance – Rashid al-Din's landmark work can usually be consulted on the sixth floor of the same building, by appointment.

It is considered one of the most important surviving medieval manuscripts from East or West – and perhaps the first attempt at a history of the world.

However, as Emma Smith, Exhibitions Officer at the CRC explains, the event brought this unique history into the reach of many more people, both inside and outside the University community. And widening access in this way is one of the centre's main aims.

*"It is the most valuable paper-based object that the Collections own. It is stunning and doesn't often get an outing because of its very high value."*

Situated to the left inside the Main Library entrance at George Square, the Exhibition Gallery opened a few years ago with funds

from the Friends of Edinburgh University Library. Today it hosts three exhibitions a year, the blockbuster coinciding with the Fringe Festival.

The next, which runs until 7th March 2015, brings together paintings by Sir William Gillies, former Head of Paintings at ECA, and ceramics by his largely overlooked sister Emma Gillies, a significant and prolific artist in her own right.

In her last year as an undergraduate at the University, Emma Smith, who achieved a First Class MA in Fine Art in 2014, volunteered at the CRC.

That led to an eight-week paid internship. "The role was to put together an exhibition for the Main Library exhibition space for the winter period. Before this, there were only two exhibitions a year and the Exhibition Gallery was closed during winter. We now have three exhibitions a year and only close during installations."

*Emma was granted a bursary for each of her five years of study. "For me in particular as an art student, it was of huge benefit because you need to spend a lot on materials. So I primarily used that money to help me realise my fine art practice – which was sculpture."*

The exhibition that came out of her internship, Collect.Ed, was based on the theme of "cabinets of curiosity", featuring about 200 rarely seen items from the CRC, including shells, quartz crystals, cranium casts, meteorites and fossilised raindrops.

"As part of the preparation process we discovered some uncatalogued shell specimens that were collected by Charles Darwin," Emma says.

Her internship was part of the Employ.ed on Campus scheme run by the University's career service.

**When the opportunity came to volunteer and subsequently work at the department, I knew it was a special place and I grabbed it with both hands.**

EMMA SMITH, EXHIBITIONS OFFICER AT THE CENTRE FOR RESEARCH COLLECTIONS

"It confirmed to me that I wanted to work with collections in a museum environment but also gave me unprecedented access to the wonderful collections held by the University and the inspiring staff that work with them.

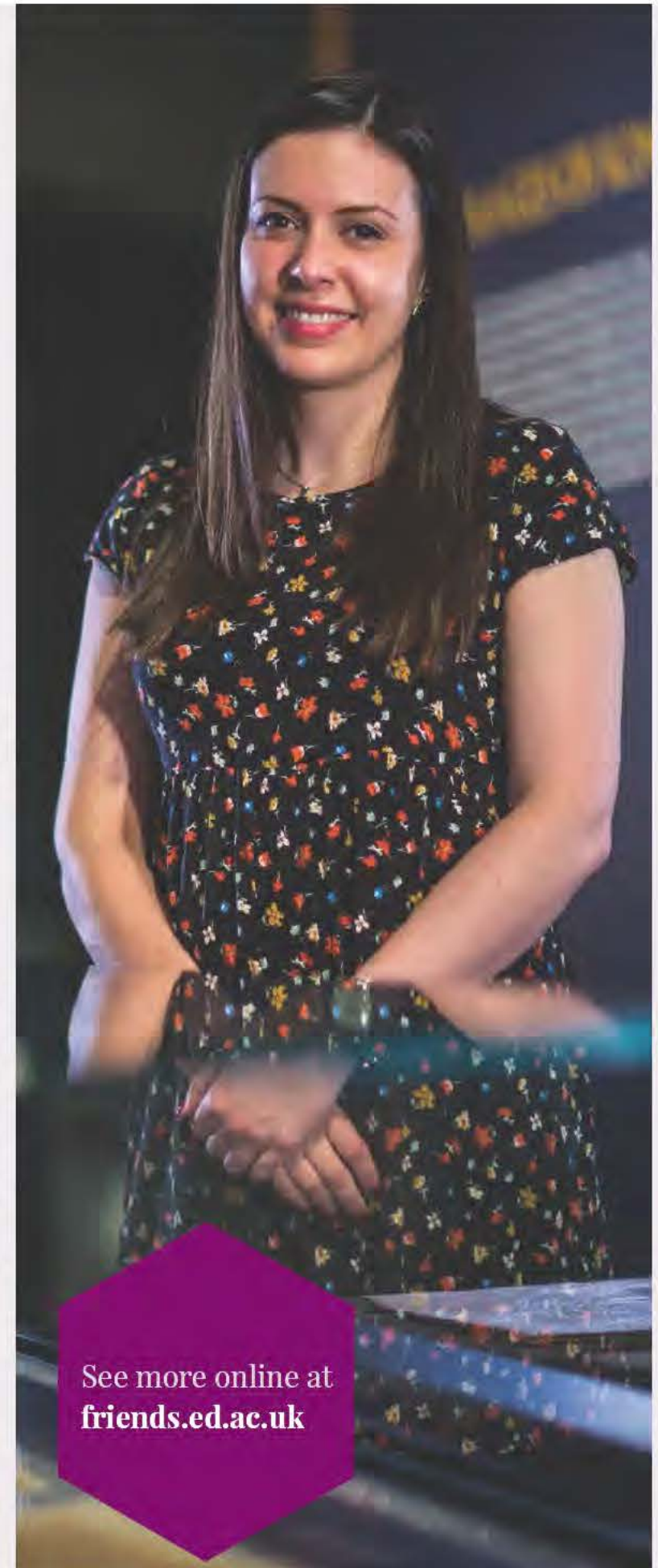
*"It prepared me tremendously for my current role. I had no idea it would lead to it – the job became available at an appropriate time for me to apply, so it's been a real progression and I've been exceptionally fortunate to have this job, having been such a recent graduate."*

"I felt very privileged to be a student at the University and I really enjoyed my time here. When the opportunity came to volunteer and subsequently work at the department, I knew it was a special place and I grabbed it with both hands."

As the University is obviously the CRC's first customer, outreach is increasingly important, Emma says. "Beyond that, we also have scholars from all around the world coming to consult our material, so it's highly significant."

Donations are vital to the CRC, Emma says, and money raised by the Friends of the Edinburgh University Library still partly funds the exhibitions programme.

*"Without that we would be very limited as to what we can do. We would not be as accessible to the public, so it's fantastic, and we gratefully appreciate the support of the donors."*



See more online at [friends.ed.ac.uk](http://friends.ed.ac.uk)

Above: Emma Smith, Exhibitions Officer at the Centre for Research Collections.





# Supporting the Dick Vet

## Reunion gives back

George Gunn grew up with "nothing", he says. The son of a shepherd in Shetland, he came to Edinburgh to study at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, living off £120 government grants that he received each term - money he credits for allowing him to stay at University and finish his education. So it's maybe not surprising that George - organiser of his class's forty-year reunion - suggested that the Class of 1973 have more than an enjoyable reunion weekend, but also give something back to its alma mater.

When 22 graduates from the class met up in Edinburgh in September 2013, George funded the costs of the reunion, which included a welcome reception, meals and campus tours; he only asked his former classmates - some of whom travelled from as far away as North America and South Africa to attend - to make a donation to the place

that had "changed our lives". They were happy to do so, and the Vet 1973 Reunion Fund was born.

One of those students started in September 2014, and the second student will enrol at the school in September 2015.

"I count myself very lucky to be born in a country that allowed me to have an education, says George. "I'm passionate about how much disadvantaged young people can benefit from having an education, and I now feel very privileged to be in a position where I'm able to give back. The bursary fund allows me to fulfil this desire."

The Fund will provide two new Access Bursaries for aspiring undergraduate veterinary students to study at the University of Edinburgh.

## Richard's tribute to his grandfather

As a young man, Charles Davidson worked as a pit blacksmith but he dreamt of becoming a veterinarian. In 1923 he got the chance, enrolling at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies at the University of Edinburgh and graduating with a degree five years later. But despite being an outstanding student, the degree was an ungraded one: Charles wasn't able to sit his final exams due to a severe bout of rheumatic fever.

These early difficulties didn't prevent a long, successful career, and after graduating, Charles went into private practice in Cheshire before joining the Dick Vet staff in 1933, where he helped found the department of clinical veterinary medicine. He remained on staff until his retirement in 1965.

In honour of Charles' impressive career, his grandson, Richard Davidson, has made a donation of four pieces of imaging equipment

- including an ultraportable laptop and an ultrasound scanner - to the Dick Vet Equine Hospital. In recognition, the Dick Vet has now named a classroom in its teaching building the "Charles Davidson Seminar Room".

"My late grandfather was the first generation of the family to attend university and set a precedent for my father and my siblings," says Richard, also an alumnus of the University of Edinburgh (BCom, 1990). "It was also quite an achievement to get to, and to complete, university, as you'll be able to tell from his story. I'm not sure how he'd feel about having the room named after him. Maybe a bit shy about the attention!"

Photos, left: the 1973 reunion group gather in the Playfair Library; centre: a student in the Dick Vet Equine Hospital; right above: Richard Davidson and family members in the Charles Davidson Seminar Room; right below, the Class of 1973.



# Cutting-edge support

The University of Edinburgh ranks among the world's top centres for Computer Science and Engineering, a status that is underscored by US giant Google's financial support in the form of several research awards.

Jakub Konečný, one of three people at the University who have received a Google European Doctoral Fellowship, worth \$180,000 over three years, is immersed in Optimization Algorithms.

The 23-year-old Slovakian is busy solving such problems as how to generate recommendations on YouTube.

"The area I'm working in is something between mathematics, statistics and computer science," he says. "It is strongly related to Machine Learning, which is part of the area of artificial intelligence – which, in short, tries to describe how computers should learn new things based on available data.

"I had a good idea of what I wanted to do – not just Machine Learning but the mathematics behind it – and was lucky enough that one of the leading experts in this field, Peter Richtárik, was here at Edinburgh University."

Typical Machine Learning, he explains, is about how you model a real problem in mathematical terms, which usually ends up as an optimization problem.

"The goal is to find the parameters within which a learning model works best. I'm working on this, especially how to do so in a large-scale setting. For instance, with YouTube recommendations, the function is described in terms of a huge table, where some columns represent YouTube users, and others represent videos – it's roughly a billion times a billion.

"This is very large problem that needs to be solved every time you want to see a video."

Jakub can draw on Archer (Academic Research Computing High End Resource), the UK's biggest supercomputer, which was launched at the University earlier in 2014 and holds more than 70,000 cores.

Google has also awarded four Faculty Research Awards to Edinburgh. One is to Vittorio Ferrari, who is originally from Switzerland and is a Reader at the University's School of Informatics. He also leads the CALVIN research group on visual learning.

Vittorio received \$73,000 for his project "Learning physical part models from YouTube videos".

The model is used on any given new image to answer questions such as: is there a tiger (or cat, or person etc.) in this image? Where is it exactly? What is its body pose? Which action is it performing?

A computer vision program first needs to be trained for this task. Traditionally, this has been done with photographs but that is difficult as they do not show a range of articulations. "You need many photographs and many correspondences between points in different photographs," Ferrari says.

"There are a number of applications for visual recognition. For instance you could determine the spatial configuration of a person's body parts or you could use it to animate an avatar, as in computer graphics in movies, where you see some creature or animal mimicking the movements of the actor.

"Or you might want to find all the images of your cat jumping from the sofa, or all the scenes where James Bond is shooting someone."

The Google Faculty Research Award enables Vittorio to extend this line of work towards large-scale scenarios, he says. "Being in contact with the company also gives me access to their wonderful facilities.

"The University is the top place in Europe for informatics, especially the artificial intelligence group of people," he adds.

David Harper, Head of EMEA University Relations at Google, says the award schemes help build and sustain strong relationships between the company and the academic community, especially in computer science, computer engineering and related fields.

"Google was born in Stanford's Computer Science department and the company has always maintained and valued strong relations with universities and research institutes.

"We run a variety of programmes that provide funding and resources to the academic and external research community. Google, in turn, learns from the community through exposure to a broader set of ideas and approaches."

Google Faculty Research Awards are structured as unrestricted gifts to the University.

"In the best cases, the transfer of know-how from university to Google, and vice versa, can transform both research and practice in the field of computer science," David says.

How does Google rate Edinburgh as a global centre for Computer Science and Engineering?

"It clearly ranks highly," David says. "In the March 2014 round, the University of Edinburgh received four of our Faculty Research Awards. Only four other universities around the world secured at least that many, and they were all in the US."

Another of those recipients is Christophe Dubach, also from Switzerland, who did a PhD in Informatics at the University after graduating from EPFL in Lausanne.

"I'm interested in how we can make computer programs more efficient both in terms of performance and energy.

"Energy is now driving the design of new hardware and, as a result, a wide range of specialised devices have appeared. Using cars as an analogy, some might be great for competing on a racing track while others might be best suited for the city. The real question is how to create programming abstraction that can be used to write programs in a hardware-agnostic way," Christophe says.

"One way to make this happen in the software world is to look at algorithmic patterns, which basically help programmers express their problems independently of the hardware."

Christophe says the Google Faculty Research Award (worth \$53,573) will allow him to widen his research in this direction and support more members in his team.

"I really like being in Edinburgh because of the city but also the quality of the people at the University. It's very exciting to be among so many top scientists."



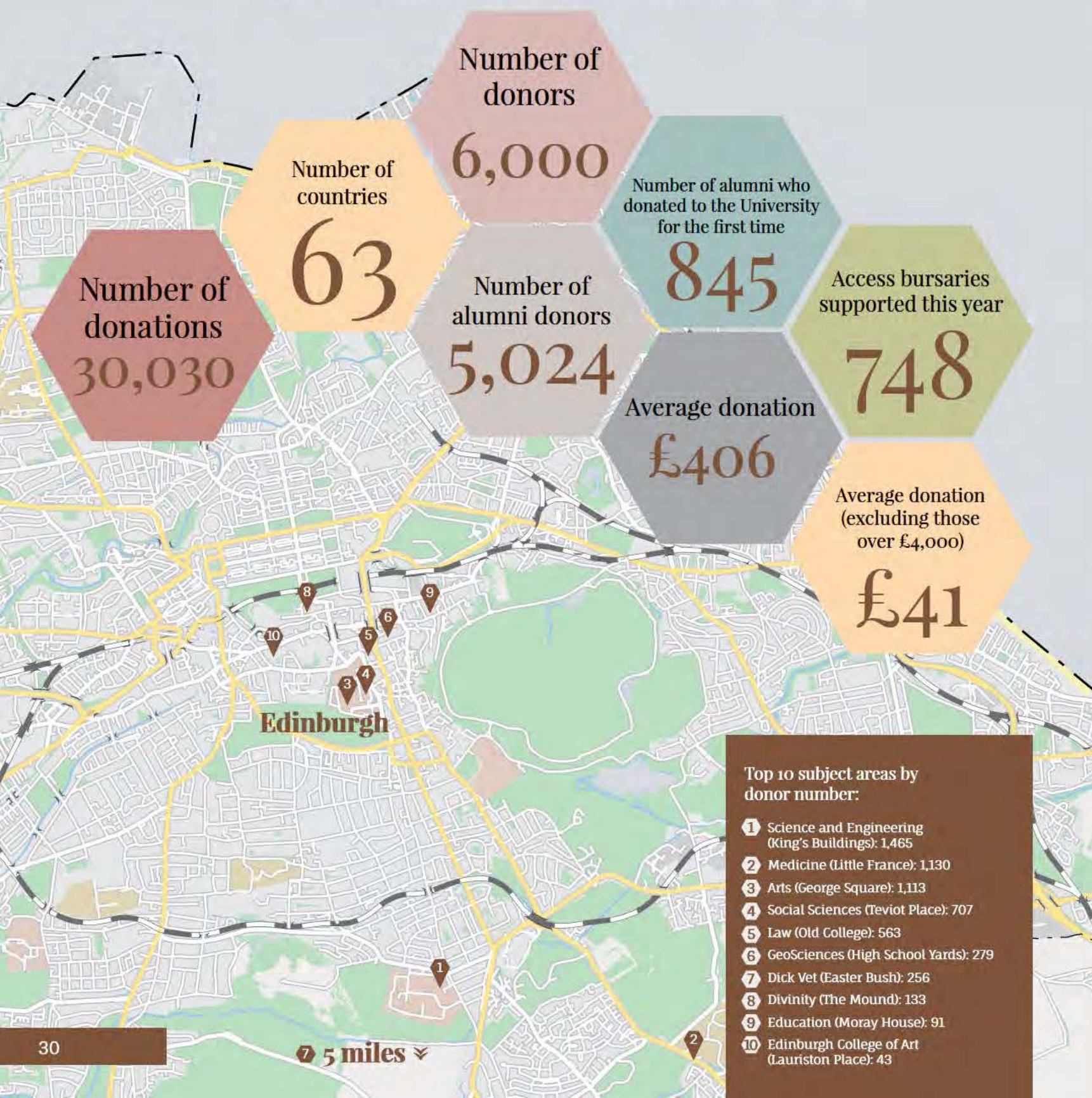
See more online at [friends.ed.ac.uk](http://friends.ed.ac.uk)

Left to right: Vittorio Ferrari, Jakub Konečný and Christophe Dubach.



# Making an Impact

This year, the University of Edinburgh received donations from 6,000 alumni and friends – the first time the number has exceeded 5,000.



Alumni donations are also channelled into the Innovative Initiative Grant scheme, which supports unique and challenging projects being carried out by students and staff across the University. The projects supported are ambitious:

## Inspiring Tomorrow

An Innovation Initiative Grant of £1550 saw students across year groups come together to collaborate on a creative engineering challenge during Innovative Learning Week. In multidisciplinary teams, the students designed and fabricated the structural components of a miniature all-terrain vehicle using 3-D printing and laser cutting technologies. With School of Engineering staff providing support, the teams assembled their "biobots" and wrote software that allowed defined tasks to be performed. The week-long endeavour culminated in a demonstration of the biobots at TEDx, where the audience picked a group from Edinburgh College of Art as the winning team.



## Saving the World

Supported by a £5000 grant, a team of Environmental Geoscience students conducted an investigation into the impact of convective storms upon small mountain glaciers. They travelled to the valleys surrounding Leh, Ladakh, India, whose communities depend upon glacial melt water for drinking and agriculture. Using well-preserved geomorphic records and repeat photography, the students discovered that while the effects of the storms on glacial lake outburst floods were not a significant concern in Ladakh, the glaciers in the area are shrinking at an unprecedented rate.



## Edinburgh Global Impact

A grant of £2100 enabled two MSc students to research the social impact of health-based applications for mobile phone technology (mHealth) in rural Kenya. Collaborating with the international technology and development non-profit organisation, Medic Mobile, the pair conducted 18 focus groups and numerous interviews with community health workers. Through this, the students gathered valuable insight into how mobile phones were being used to record real-time patient data, send SMS immunisation reminders, and enrol pregnant mothers into care. This research is crucial for influencing the design of specific mHealth projects that cater to the needs and concerns of the community health workers.



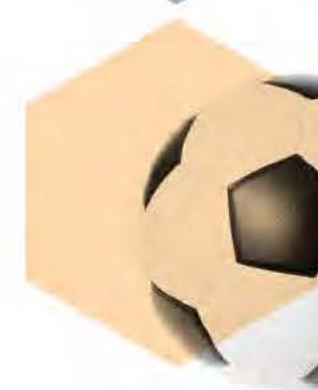
## Saving Lives

Dr Patrick Thomson, a Post-Doctoral Research Associate in Organic Chemistry, wanted to encourage participation in an existing Open Source Drug Discovery program that aims to develop a new cure for Malaria. The OSDDMalaria project is a community of scientists who coordinate research on neglected tropical disease through the Synaptic Leap website. A grant of £716 provided Dr Thomson with the resources needed to undertake research in his spare time, thus encouraging others to participate in addressing this research gap. Conducted in an open manner, his raw data is publicly available.



## Local Responsibility

The Edinburgh University Association Football Club prides itself on reaching out to members of the society beyond the university environment. One way they achieve this is through organising an Easter camp for local children aged between seven and fourteen. Despite the willingness of club volunteers to share their expertise, the success of previous camps led to an increased level in interest, meaning it became more difficult to cover the costs of the programme. However, with the help of an £800 Innovation Initiative Grant, the club was delighted to be able to deliver a fun and instructive footballing experience for children at the University's Peffermill pitch.







Above: Aarti Ketan Mehta-Kroll (left) with friends in Edinburgh.

## VOLUNTEERING

# A gift in time

Aarti Ketan Mehta-Kroll has lived around the world, but stays connected to Edinburgh through volunteering. Educated in Mumbai, California and Edinburgh (MSc, Social Research, 2010), she works as an academic advisor at Florida International University in Miami. Here, Aarti reflects on her time at Edinburgh and why she volunteers her expertise to the eMentoring programme.

### Why did you choose Edinburgh, and what are some of your favourite memories of the University?

I was drawn to Edinburgh because of the MSc in Social Research program. The opportunity to receive training in research methods while studying abroad was too good to resist. It was one of the best decisions I ever made....I have fond memories of our potluck dinners, meetings at the corner pub and late nights in the computer lab trying to crack our stats assignment.

### Tell us about some of your experiences since leaving the University? How have you chosen to support the University?

About a year after I completed my degree, I moved to Berlin, where my fiancé and I got married. I knew few people in the city so I was thrilled to learn that an alumni chapter was being formed. Through the alumni club, I made friends who directed me to resources that helped me make the most of my two years in Berlin. By the time I left, I'd visited some of the city's lesser known historical sites, written for an online travel journal and did an educational presentation for elementary school children in German. When my husband and I decided to move to Miami, I was overwhelmed by the support I received from the Alumni Office. Some of the senior team members who had gotten to know me during their visits to Berlin gave me career advice. Alumni Relations Manager, Rachelle Norry, with whom I worked in Berlin, generously served as a jobs reference.

### What advice would you give to someone who is thinking of volunteering time to the University?

I'm currently signed up for the eMentoring program created by the Edinburgh Alumni Association and the Careers Service. In my experience, students don't often appreciate the importance of networking and staying connected to their alma mater...I encourage my fellow alums to get involved and stay in touch so that we can continue to reap the rewards of being graduates of this incredible institution while paving the way for the success of future generations.

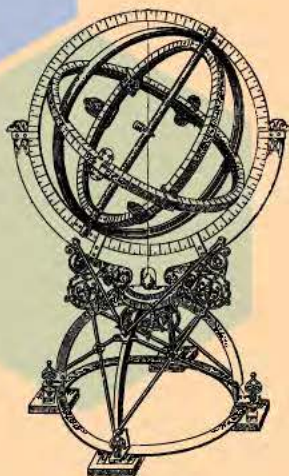
### More About eMentoring

- A confidential service that allows alumni to share wisdom and career insights
- Available to all alumni and to all 3rd year, 4th year and postgraduate students as a service
- Users can filter searches based on occupation, sector, employer or location
- A request is made by the advice-seeker to the mentor to begin an email conversation
- For more information, visit: [www.ed.ac.uk/alumni](http://www.ed.ac.uk/alumni)





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# Simon Miles, Geography 1962

Simon Miles has given time and money to the University of Edinburgh, most notably as a founding director of the Edinburgh University Club of Toronto (EDUCT), an alumni group in Canada's largest city where Simon has spent much of his life. Here he shares Edinburgh memories and more about EDUCT.



What Edinburgh left me with most immediately was a further reinforcement of a deeply felt urge to see the world. ...I make my living now as a consultant in public policy and international development, and have been able to operate as an independent consultant for about 37 years.

By the time I had established myself professionally, I had developed a sense of obligation to help my alma mater. Having worked in over 60 countries, I had also seen the world and the incredible suffering of so many. It made me realise how fortunate I have been.

In 2002, I became part of the founding board of EDUCT - the Edinburgh University Club of Toronto and from 2006 to 2008 I served as its President. We have the Internet and face-to-face meetings, but most importantly, we have really committed alumni active on the board. We have seen our membership grow to about 140 paying members and we have another list of about 170 who wish to keep in touch. The enormous range of backgrounds that members come from makes for a very interesting bunch of people. They also represent an enormous resource, especially for young graduates starting out in their careers, but also for those looking for ideas, assistance or companionship. We have a very active programme of activities and an excellent newsletter. That latter bit is something I have to add, being its editor!

My greatest pleasure, I have to confess, is in having seen the success of the EDUCT Geography Centenary Fund. We started raising money for the Fund at the time of a visit to Toronto by the then Head of the Institute of Geography, Professor Charles Withers. We had planned it to be a small fund of around \$10,000 but with lots of encouragement and donations from alumni across the world, the fund now has an endowment of over £50,000. It supports postgraduate research of Geography students and contributes to the support of the J. Wreford Watson Lecture. Encouragingly, it has been supported by alumni from Geography and many other disciplines. It is heartening to realise the number of students who have benefitted from its support.

I had every intention of becoming a farmer and had already been accepted at the Royal Agricultural College. Edinburgh appealed to me because it was a relatively large university, offering every conceivable subject...and my insatiable curiosity led me to place a high priority on being able to try other subjects. Fortunately, my father sent me off to Edinburgh with a very important message: "I don't expect you to come back with a degree, I expect you to come back with an education".

Above: Simon Miles (left) with Will Self, who delivered the EDUCT-supported J. Wreford Watson Lecture, in Old College, in 2012.



Interested in  
supporting a project?

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