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Giving Forward with Edinburgh

The following pages allow the campus community to say thank you for your support of the University and its students.

If you studied or taught at Edinburgh, your motivations for that support may include an element of ‘giving back’, influenced by recollections or gratitude. For the avoidance of doubt, giving back is always to be cherished, but it’s perhaps also time to introduce language which brings to the fore the impact your giving has on the future of society, as we look ahead together, based on the strong foundations of a shared past.

Universities such as Edinburgh are stable, long-term ‘anchor’ institutions within the local and global economy. That brings with it a heavy responsibility; Edinburgh has a pivotal role to play as an agent for positive future change in an unsettled and troubled world, whether it is through the impact of each graduating student on the communities they go on to serve and lead, or our research and policy programmes to address local and global issues in partnership with others.

The role of giving and philanthropy in accelerating, deepening and enhancing those deep-seated and lasting impacts has never been more important.

To give just three examples, in the following pages we summarise how your support is helping the University to respond to the world’s health challenges, how a scholarship scheme is providing extraordinary new opportunities for students from Africa, and how Edinburgh student and graduate entrepreneurs are fuelling the Scottish economy and supporting communities through social enterprise.

I hope you’ll continue and deepen your support on the basis that you look ahead alongside our students and researchers, and co-invest with the University to help them make a positive impact on the world.

So when you next feel moved to putting pen to paper with us again, I hope you’ll do so on the basis not just of giving back to Edinburgh, but also of giving forward with us.

Thank you again for your far-sighted support. It is enormously appreciated.

Chris Cox
Vice-Principal Philanthropy and Advancement and Executive Director of Development and Alumni

“Edinburgh has a pivotal role to play as an agent for positive future change in an unsettled and troubled world.”

CHRIS COX
The Quest for One Health

As the world faces growing health challenges, affecting both animals and humans, scientists at the University are discovering that collaboration is the key to finding solutions that have an impact locally and globally.

Nestled at the heart of the King’s Buildings, home to much of the University’s science and engineering research and teaching, there lies a small but tidy office on a narrow corridor. The setting could be any thriving university: animated students on their way from seminar to common room, every wall featuring a crowded noticeboard.

So far, so typical. And yet it is here, at the inconspicuous door of room 4.29 where a truly exceptional scientist can be found. One of the leading researchers in his field, Professor Sir Adrian Bird sits at his computer, looking out over the green fields beyond.

“It’s a pretty good view,” he says with a welcoming smile.

Indeed the world must look pretty rosy from Sir Adrian’s position. The University’s Buchanan Professor of Genetics, he has spent much of his academic career in Edinburgh – working up from his PhD in 1970 to become director of the Wellcome Trust Centre for Cell Biology. In recent years, he has received a host of accolades, including the award of the Shaw prize, with Huda Y Zoghbi, and election as a foreign associate of the US National Academy of Sciences this year.

It’s not bad for a man whose A-level results would, by his own admission, fail to fight off the competition for a place on an Edinburgh undergraduate degree programme today.

“I didn’t really get school,” he says, laughing. “It wasn’t until I reached university and was taught by people who had a genuine passion for their field that I understood what I could achieve.”

“Our ultimate aim is to establish a global foundation, which would provide researchers around the world with access to the expertise, training and information they require to tackle antimicrobial resistance wherever they are.”

DR TILL BACHMANN

With his mind engaged, Sir Adrian turned his focus to biology. He became internationally celebrated in 2007, when he led pioneering efforts to reverse a genetic form of autism, called Rett Syndrome. The rare disorder, which causes physical and intellectual disability in young girls, is caused by a mutation in the gene known as MECP2.

By developing a mouse model of the condition, Sir Adrian found that when the key gene was restored, the mice fully recovered. For the first time, he showed that the condition was, in mice, completely reversible.

“Rett Syndrome is now regarded as one of the genetic disorders we could cure, if only we could find the key. Although we are not there yet, there are numerous labs around the world working on it, with a hope that simply wasn’t there before,” he says.

Despite the lack of a therapeutic breakthrough since the excitement of his animal study, Sir Adrian is resolutely optimistic about the future of Edinburgh biology.

“Biology in Edinburgh has always been strong, but it is stronger than ever now,” he says. “It links increasingly with other disciplines that are themselves growing – physics, engineering, informatics – and so we grow ever stronger on the back of each other’s success.

“Science increasingly depends on people interacting through their skills and expertise, as well as crucially relying on their imagination. Edinburgh is good at that and our science is better as a result.”

Indeed, at Edinburgh the answer to tackling the challenges is coming through a shared understanding, a collective vision of progress and an agreed strategy for how to achieve it. These elements combine in the developing field of One Health science – the view that our greatest health challenges will be met most effectively by sharing expertise across all fields of medicine, veterinary and human.

This vision of a collaborative and interdisciplinary way of working received a significant endorsement earlier this year when the Wolfson Foundation generously pledged £2 million to support the creation of a brand new building for the School of Biological Sciences. The building will have collaborative space

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“Rett Syndrome is now regarded as one of the genetic disorders we could cure, if only we could find the key. Although we are not
The winning team are now seeking support to develop their innovation competition. The AMR Diagnostics Challenge brought together bilateral groups of UK and Indian PhD students, and use narrow-spectrum antibiotics that target specific infections quickly and with greater accuracy, we could develop broad-spectrum antibiotics as a catch-all. If we could diagnose its properties are,” says Dr Bachmann. “Therefore we use broad-spectrum antibiotics as a catch-all. If we could diagnose infections quickly and with greater accuracy, we could develop and use narrow-spectrum antibiotics that target specific bacteria, carrying less risk of building resistance.”

Like Sir Adrian, Dr Bachmann believes that collaboration is crucial and so has sought to build a global network of like-minded academics. In 2015, he hosted the University’s inaugural AMR Diagnostics Challenge Autumn School event specifically focused on tackling AMR.

“‘Our ultimate aim is to establish a global foundation, which would provide researchers around the world with access to the expertise, training and information they require to tackle AMR with diagnostics wherever they are,” says Dr Bachmann. “This would empower scientists to develop locally relevant solutions to their greatest problems, while maximising the benefits of global expertise.”

Although public awareness is increasing of the AMR challenge, it is typically less widely appreciated that the crisis holds as much concern for animal health as it does for humans. Currently, livestock account for the majority of total antibiotic usage, making farm animals another breeding ground for AMR.

“We need to view the problem in its fullness,” says Dr Bachmann. “Yes, we need better diagnostics and new therapeutics. But we also need to combat the root causes, the situations where antibiotics are currently overprescribed.”

Another One Health scientist whose work is focusing on the links between animal and human health is Professor Sue Welburn, the University’s Vice-Principal Global Access. She has dedicated her career to combatting sleeping sickness in Africa. A parasitic infection spread by the tsetse fly, from cattle to humans, the fatal condition attacks the central nervous system, causing severe neurological disorders. Médecins Sans Frontières currently estimates that 60 million people in Africa are at risk.

Since 2006, Professor Welburn has led the Stamp Out Sleeping Sickness (SOS) initiative, in conjunction with the Ugandan Ministry of Health. At its inception, the campaign sought to map areas where cattle carried the parasite capable of infecting humans, and offer treatment that would curb the spread. With improved diagnostics, and advanced modelling, Professor Welburn has demonstrated that it is possible to stop transmission with a drug that is extremely cost effective. To date, her work has reduced the number of human-infective cattle by 85 per cent where the project is based in Uganda. She is now seeking to scale up the programme to work in other areas of acute risk in Uganda.

The challenge, as is often the case in impoverished healthcare systems, is one of finance.

“The philanthropy we have received so far has made a huge and lasting difference,” explains Professor Welburn. “We have trained six Ugandan PhD students in Edinburgh, all of whom are now back in Uganda working for universities or government, managing infectious diseases in animals and people.

“In addition, under the SOS programme, we trained international students who now deliver better One Health outcomes for human and animal health in the developing world. The impact of the work these young people have undertaken for Uganda, and the difference that has made for their futures, is truly amazing.”

Back in Edinburgh, it is an exciting time for One Health. This year the scientific world marked the 30th anniversary of the birth of Dolly the Sheep. Created at the University’s Roslin Institute, Dolly represented exactly the kind of revolutionary science for stem cell research that is required for many of the One Health challenges we face today. What’s more, 2016 will also see the opening of a new Global Academy of Agriculture and Food Security, aimed at improving human and animal well-being, food security and sustainable development. Led by Professor Geoff Simm, it aims to equip future leaders with the skills and knowledge required to meet global challenges, through a range of world-leading interdisciplinary educational and research programmes.

These activities are united in their embodiment of the University’s mission to focus on matters of global importance, and to make a meaningful contribution to the world as a whole. In doing so, it will continue to attract the brightest students and academic minds, the pioneers of their generations who will change society for the better. In the view of Professor Sir Adrian Bird, at least, there is simply no alternative.

He says: ‘If you are not doing internationally competitive work, one has to ask oneself what is the point? There is no such thing as nationally important science, there is only world science. If you want to make a lasting and meaningful difference that is the stage on which you have to perform.’
African Aspirations

As the University welcomes a number of African students through a new scholarship scheme, they share their hopes and aspirations for their time at Edinburgh.

Since 2009, the MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program has committed more than $700 million to supporting the education and leadership development of more than 30,000 young people. This year, Edinburgh became the first university in Europe to collaborate with the foundation.

It’s a partnership which demonstrates a shared aim to provide positive social and economic change for promoting African students with great potential but few educational opportunities. To ensure these talented students get access to the education they deserve, the partnership will allocate $24 million to Edinburgh.

"I have an opportunity to interact with the entire world assembled in one place. I am looking forward to learning how other countries are tackling and solving similar challenges that face Ghana."

DORCAS MENSIAH

For Muhammad Musa, from Sudan, who studied Mechanical Engineering at the University of Khartoum, being awarded a MasterCard Foundation scholarship has offered him the chance to broaden his horizons.

He says: “It will be my first time living outside Sudan for such a long period and it will be my first time visiting Europe and the UK, so it will be a major change in my life. It will be an amazing experience.”

“I can’t believe that I got this scholarship. I’m thrilled. I’ve been trying to get a masters degree since the day I graduated but I had no luck of securing any funds. I had to turn down many offers from different universities, but now, getting this scholarship at such a top university is like a dream come true.”

A key aim of the scholarship is to encourage the students to give back to their home communities through volunteerism and community service. Muhammad, who is embarking on an MSc in Sustainable Energy Systems at Edinburgh, is keen to embrace this ethos.

“It’s my duty to develop Sudan,” he says. “I hope to be able to apply some of this knowledge in my home country. We suffer from power cuts and have many unused resources that could be developed for clean energy.”

Coming to an unfamiliar country and education system can be a daunting experience but Munini Musenbi, from Nairobi in Kenya, is relishing the opportunities and experiences that she believes Edinburgh will provide.

“I have been in an all-girls school my whole life,” she explains, “so coming to the University of Edinburgh will give me my first co-education experience. I am looking forward to a more application-based education at Edinburgh.”

Munini has particular interest in robotics and will study a bachelor’s degree in Mechanical Engineering.

Munini continues: “The knowledge and skills I will acquire will help me contribute to Kenya’s industrial economy. I hope to further my knowledge of robotics so that I can use my knowhow to develop robots that can be used in various industries in Kenya.”

As part of the scholarship programme, Munini and her fellow students will learn how to apply their skills by getting involved in extra-curricular course elements including summer schools and internships to build their abilities.

At home in Gwern, Zimbabwe, Brian Toperesu begins each morning by walking his five-year-old sister to crèche, passing locals as they make the regular journey to fetch clean water. Brian hopes that he can help improve the way of life in his neighbourhood.

“I believe that the MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program at Edinburgh will help me accomplish my dream for Africa – to pass the gift of education to the next generation,” he says. “We need to establish income-generating projects from which profits will educate and empower students deprived of opportunity by poverty.”

Brian is beginning a bachelor’s degree in Electrical & Electronic Engineering with Management. He has a clear vision of how technology can play a major part in opening up opportunities for his community and wider Africa.

He says: “Technology has rapidly become the central facet of education. We need to bridge the digital rift between Africa and the world. By so doing, I believe that no African will be left out of educational and technological innovation.”

Dorcas Mensah, from Ghana, is starting an MSc in Africa & International Development, and sees her education as the beginning of a new chapter in her life.

“This is the first time a member in my family has pursued a masters degree. For me, it means responsibility towards my community, family, my country and the world. I need to make good use of the opportunity to transform and impact lives and be a good representative of Ghana,” says Dorcas.

What’s more, she believes that Edinburgh’s international outlook can make a difference to her student experience and enhance her learning. She says: “Most importantly for me I have an opportunity to interact with the entire world assembled in one place. I am looking forward to learning how other countries are tackling and solving similar challenges that face Ghana.”

Dorcas, Muhammad, Munini and Brian join 12 fellow students on campus as part of the first cohort of the MasterCard Foundation Scholarship Program this year. Over the next seven years Edinburgh will welcome an additional 200 African scholars as part of the scheme. For many this will be truly life changing. Reflecting on her scholarship, Munini sums it up well. “This is a great opportunity that shows that where I come from doesn’t determine where I am going in life.”

$24 million donation from the MasterCard Foundation

About the scholarships:

More than 200 African students will be supported over eight years

Students will receive mentoring and counselling as well as internship opportunities and life skills coaching

Students commit to giving back to their home communities through volunteerism and community service

Students are expected to commit to an additional five years of employment or community service after graduation.

"I had to turn down many offers from different universities, but now, getting this scholarship at such a top university is like a dream come true!"

MUHAMMAD MUSA

SOME OF THIS YEAR’S MASTERCARD FOUNDATION SCHOLARS
PICTURED IN THE UNIVERSITY’S BUSINESS SCHOOL
© SAM SILLS/WHITEDOG PHOTOGRAPHY
Gifted Treasures

The University houses internationally important museum collections, spanning everything from artworks and books to musical instruments and meteorites. It actively acquires items for its collections for the purposes of teaching, research and public engagement, and also receives regular donations.

Gifted items are among the highlights of the University’s museums, not just because they are among the most spectacular and rare items, but sometimes because of their role in the history of the University and the story of how they arrived in its possession. Here we highlight nine donated artefacts that epitomise the variety of intriguing objects that can be found under the roofs of the University’s museums.

1. Heiskell Darwin Collection, donated 2012
In 2012 the University received a donation of works by and about Charles Darwin from the Heiskell Bibliographical Foundation. This includes some great rarities in excellent condition, including two fine copies of the first edition of On the Origin of Species (1859). The University already possessed a number of important early editions, so now has a collection of more than 100 volumes of lifetime editions of Darwin’s works.

Donor: The collection was that of Charles L. Heiskell, MD, from California, who died in 2006. It was given to the University by his daughter, who was seeking an appropriate home for the collection after his death.

2. The Grapes of Wrath first edition, donated 2015
A collection of John Steinbeck material, consisting of almost 150 items, including first, early and significant editions of his work, reprinted editions and biographical and bibliographical works, was donated to the University’s USA Development Trust by alumnus Robert P. Gray in 2015, and is on loan to the University’s Library Collections. Highlights include a copy of the first edition of Steinbeck’s first novel Cup of Gold, with the dustwrapper, published shortly before the American stockmarket crash of 1929, and first editions of The Grapes of Wrath, Of Mice and Men, and East of Eden.

Donor: Bob Gray, a leading figure in the California agriculture sector, served for 15 years on the San Francisco regional Selection Committee of the Marshall Scholarship Programme, under which the UK funds up to 40 US graduates each year to study at a UK university of their choice. Bob was a Marshall Scholar himself for his MA in English Language and Literature at the University of Edinburgh.

3. Head V by Peter Howson, donated 2016
This pastel work is by the Scottish artist Peter Howson, a leading figurative artist best known for works depicting working-class men and inspired by life on the streets of Glasgow, where he grew up.

Donor: Head V is part of the John Munro Collection, the most recent addition to the University’s Art Collection. It was bequeathed by Dr John Munro (1933–2013), who graduated MBChB from Edinburgh in 1960 and had a long and successful medical career. Munro loved art and amassed a large collection that included some of the most respected names in 20th century Scottish art. John and his wife Jeanie often collected from art college degree shows to offer opportunities for emerging Scottish artists, and even allowed young artists to use the attic of their home as a studio.

4. Going to the Fair by Pablo Picasso, donated 1989
Picasso’s Going to the Fair, in pastel and watercolour, is a key work of the University’s Art Collection. It is thought to have been completed in 1900, when the artist was just 19.

Donor: The work is part of the Hope Scott Collection. Hope Scott was the daughter of Henry Johnston Younger of the long-established brewing family. She was a keen art collector who befriended the Scottish abstract painter William Johnstone in 1969 and went on to collect many of his works – the Hope Scott Collection contains 59 Johnstone pieces. In addition, the collection contains pieces by some of the 20th century’s most illustrious names, including Picasso, Samuel Peploe, Pierre Bonnard and Max Ernst. In 1983 Scott gifted four paintings by Johnstone to mark the University’s quarter centenary. After her death in 1989, the remainder of the collection was donated to the University.
5. Hass clavichord, donated 1964
A clavichord made by Johann Hass of Hamburg in 1763 forms part of the Raymond Russell Collection of Early Keyboard Instruments, donated in 1964. The clavichord is highly decorated using rare and expensive materials, many of which would be illegal to use today. The keyboard is covered in tortoiseshell for the naturals (the normally ‘white’ keys), veneered over gold leaf for extra warmth and depth, and the sharp keys are topped with mother-of-pearl. The fronts of the keys are covered with ivory. Other materials used include kingwood, an especially valuable type of Brazilian rosewood, and vermillion, an expensive and highly toxic pigment. The interior of the lid has a landscape painting.

Donor: Raymond Russell (1922–1964) was a collector of early keyboard instruments and an accomplished player. The collection of 21 instruments is one of the world’s most important collections of its type.

6. Imilac meteorite, donated 1931
This Imilac meteorite, which landed in Ireland in the 1840s, is part of the Currie Collection, donated to the University in 1931. The meteorite is a stony-iron pallasite: part iron and part magnesium iron silicate. Much of the greenish silicate was burned away during its arrival on Earth, but the cross-section cut reveals this olivine inside the meteorite.

Donor: Alexander Monro secundus, Professor of Anatomy 1754–1798. He presented to the University his own collection of anatomical preparations, with that of his father Alexander Monro primus (Professor of Anatomy 1720–1754). The collections reflect a time when Edinburgh established itself as one of the leading places in the world to study anatomy and medicine.

7. Anatomical Figure of a Horse (1585), donated 1836
The outstanding sculpture by the Flemish artist Giovanni Bologna (‘Giambologna’, born Jean Boulogne), made in 1585, is a highlight of the University’s prestigious Torrie Collection. The horse is an écorché, showing the muscles of the animal in detail. The work indicates scientific as well as artistic intention, and the influence of Leonardo da Vinci.

Donor: Sir James Erskine, third Baronet of Torrie, was an accomplished soldier who served with Wellington. It was common for high-ranking military officers at that time to collect works of art, and Erskine built a fine collection for his London residence during the early 19th century. He bequeathed his collection to the University upon his death in 1826, a decision possibly influenced by his connections with William Playfair. The collection, of 79 pieces including many 17th century Dutch paintings, is an important teaching resource and focus of research. Works from the collection have been exhibited around the world, and are regularly on show in the University’s Talbot Rice Gallery.

8. Wax cast of a heart, donated 1798
A wax cast of a ‘heart of a young person’, made in the early 18th century, is part of the donation that founded the University’s Anatomical Museum in 1798. The heart would have been used to teach anatomy in the early 18th century. In the days before preserving fluids and the ability to freeze specimens, organs such as this were injected with wax. In this case, the wax was probably injected through the blood vessels, then the heart tissue chemically corroded to leave a perfect 3D cast of the organ.

Donor: Sir James Litill to the Toun and Kirk of Edinburgh. This collection, a catalogue of which is included in the document, were the first books in the University Library. The books cover both Catholic and Protestant theology and empirical scholarship, and include outstanding individual items such as the unique copy of the Sarum Breviary printed at Rouen in 1496, and the first book printed at St Andrews in 1552.

Donor: Sir James Litill (c1527–1580) was an advocate and commissary of Edinburgh. The younger son of an Edinburgh merchant and burgess, he was educated at the University of St Andrews and at Louvain, eventually returning to Edinburgh in 1550 to practise as a lawyer. His collection was handed by the Town Council, of which Clement’s brother William was a member, to the Tounis College in 1584, the year after students were first admitted.

Discover more about our gifted treasures at:
www.collections.ed.ac.uk
Getting the Right Idea

There is an enviable track record at Edinburgh of turning bright ideas into big business. Here we find out more about the advice and support available to the University’s budding entrepreneurs.

The breadth, diversity and innovative nature of research being conducted by people across the University means that our collective outputs have practical applications throughout many walks of life – and in many cases that research has the capability to be turned into successful commercial enterprises.

This is largely thanks to the work of Edinburgh Research & Innovation (ERI) – the specialist arm of the University that assists academics with what can be the challenging process of giving their expertise commercial appeal. However, the service is not just for staff – students can also benefit from the backing of LAUNCH.ed, the University initiative that helps all student entrepreneurs – postgraduate and undergraduate alike – transform their great ideas into real-world initiatives.

Each year LAUNCH.ed holds a competition and showcase event, and throughout the year offers students one-to-one appointments with business advisers, as well as workshops covering topics such as business planning, start-up finance, market research, and sales and marketing. Bootcamps are also available where students learn about market segmentation, customer development, business models, market research and pitching.

Many of the students seeking support from LAUNCH.ed also receive mentoring, from alumni or local business people willing to share their expertise, skills and contacts. This is an invaluable part of what LAUNCH.ed makes available to young entrepreneurs.

As for the quality of the ideas and their collective relevance to the world of business, the figures speak for themselves. Investment in University-founded companies continually hits record highs. A total of £429 million was invested over the past five years, demonstrating the fiscal impact that the company formation activities at the University are generating.

Success stories like Krotos Ltd are not just good news to the University’s budding entrepreneurs. Here we find out more about the advice and support available to the University’s budding entrepreneurs.

For Orfeas the last few years have been exciting times: “In 2014 I was awarded a University Research Fellowship by the Royal Society of Edinburgh. It was a life-changing experience that provides salary and business training for a year. The University is doing a great job supporting start-ups.”

Success stories like Krotos Ltd are not just good news for the University community; they’re also good news for the wider economy. New companies have contributed more than £160 million to the Scottish economy and helped to create 2,300 jobs, according to the independent consultancy BIGGAR Economics.

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Never Taken for Granted

The University’s Innovation Initiative Grant support the creativity and invention of our students and staff. Here we take a look at some recent projects and success stories.

In previous years Alex, Fiona and their students built sandpits and treehouses in the playground. However, this summer, IIG funding allowed the team to build one of Scotland’s first WikiHouses – an open-source initiative that enables people to download software and construct small light-weight buildings.

“We were delighted to be granted the funding,” says Alex. “We heard the news in March and got to work right away, as the best time to get students involved was before they graduated in June.

“The whole process took two weeks, and has been an incredible success. Students worked closely with the children and apprentices from BAM Construction. This was invaluable as they were working with contractors just as they would in real life, and had to make sure the kids – effectively the clients – were happy with the project. I really believe it’s these sorts of experiences that ensure our students complete their studies as well-rounded graduates, prepared for the professional world.”

The WikiHouse itself has become a valued asset for the playground’s artists-in-residence,” says Alex.

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The WikiHouse itself has become a valued asset for the playground. “The idea was that the process of making was more important than the product. However, just this week I’ve been told that a trade apprenticeship programme will refurnish the house and it will become a project room for the playground’s artists-in-residence,” says Alex.

“The grant offered to us this year has not only given our students an unparalleled experience, but has had a truly positive impact in the area.”

Another project recently awarded funding came to fruition during Edinburgh’s August festivals. “It meant everything to get that green light,” says Liesbeth Tip, PhD student in Clinical Psychology. “To know that the University was backing my idea meant I could take it even further than I imagined.”

Liesbeth’s IIG-funded HarmonyChoir project came to life through her love of music and awareness of the profound positive impact singing can have on wellbeing. “People with mental health issues often feel isolated and inferior,” she explains. “And while there are numerous community choirs and music therapy groups, I believed that blending the two could be really beneficial and help lessen the stigma around mental health.”

Liesbeth rallied a group of more than 50 people from various backgrounds and held a number of rehearsals before a sell-out show at the Just Festival. At the event, the choir sang uplifting songs, which were interspersed with talks on taboos surrounding mental health.

Professor Tina Harrison, who took part in the choir, says, “It was great to meet so many different people. Everyone was so enthusiastic, and everyone was equal – mental health was not mentioned when we rehearsed. Liesbeth has left a fantastic legacy and it has been incredible to see what she has achieved with a relatively small amount of money.”

“Although the choir was supposed to be short-lived, I’m delighted we are continuing with it and planning more performances,” she adds.

In the department of English Literature, Dr Michelle Keown’s IIG project coincides with the University’s first ever course on the graphic novel. “The graphic novel is a rapidly expanding field of academic study,” she explains, “and it’s wonderful to have funding to develop resources and activities to support this innovation to our teaching programme.”

The IIG funding will support two core activities. In February 2017, graphic novelist Simon Greeman will co-lead a seminar and workshop for Dr Keown’s graphic novel students, helping them to visualise their ideas and transform them into a comic strip to accompany an essay. He will also deliver a public lecture, discussing how and why he adapted Anthony Trollope’s 1879 novel John Caldike into a graphic narrative entitled Dispossession (2015).

The IIG funds will also be used to commission a graphic adaptation of History Project, a performance poem by Marshallse eco-activist Kathy Jentil-Kijiner. The poem explores the devastating impact of nuclear testing by the US on the environment and peoples of the Marshall Islands, located in the north Pacific Ocean.

“To develop the difficult themes that arise in the poem, we have commissioned Maori artist Munro Te Whata to illustrate it as a graphic narrative,” Dr Keown says. “The resulting comic will be a valuable resource for students, and will be available to a global audience on the open-access website we are creating.

“The graphic novel is one of the most exciting new literary genres to be taught in universities, and I am very proud that Edinburgh has been so forward-thinking in granting this award. These contributions make a huge difference, allowing dedicated students and academics in all disciplines to turn innovative ideas into reality.”
To better understand the impact of Innovation Initiative Grants, we decided to take a visual look at the last five years (2011–2015). The generosity of our donors has funded innovation, creativity and invention right across the University.

The aim for the next five years is to expand the programme and further enhance teaching, research and student life.

Total number of successful applications vs unsuccessful applications

368 Successful Applications
1,054 Unsuccessful Applications

Total funds awarded & required

£735,801 Total funds awarded
£932,922 Total funds required to fully fund successful applications
£4,190,615 Total funds required to fund all applications

Schools which received most grants

5 School of Engineering
8 School of Literatures, Languages & Cultures
29 Edinburgh College of Art
99 Edinburgh Medical School (including related research centres)
12 School of GeoSciences
105 Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies

Category of clubs & societies receiving most grants

2011 Campaigning & Awareness
2012 Artistic & Creative
2013 Advice & Community/Physical & Outdoor Activities
2014 Physical & Outdoor Activities
2015 Media & Broadcasting/Advice & Community

Total funds awarded by category

11% Art, Culture & Sport
12% Teaching & Training
16% Outreach & Community
18% Events & Workshops
43% Research

Read more about successful IIG projects at: www.ed.ac.uk/development-alumni/iig/featured-projects

GRAPHIC BY ROSS THOMPSON, ROSSTHOMPSONDESIGN.CO.UK
Fiona Walker was just 19 when she was diagnosed with glioblastoma, a type of cancer that affects the brain and spinal cord.

Her mother Claire explains: “Fiona was 18 and in her last half term at school when she started experiencing numbness in her leg. The symptoms got worse throughout the summer so we eventually took her to a neurology clinic. Nothing showed up on the first few scans but eventually they confirmed she had a tumour at the top of her spine.” The tumour spread quickly and 18 months later, Fiona passed away.

Brain tumours are now the biggest cancer killers of children and adults under 40. Only one in five patients survive beyond a year and fewer than one in 33 patients are alive after three years.

Despite years of research, treatment options are limited. Tumour cells are able to spread widely within the nervous system, which means that brain tumours tend to be diffuse. So it is nearly impossible to target a whole tumour with surgery or radiotherapy. New therapies are urgently needed.

Dr Steve Pollard has been researching brain cancers for more than 10 years. He says that with internationally recognised strengths in cancer research, genetics, stem cell biology and neuroscience – together with a significant new crop of young brain tumour researchers – the University is perfectly poised to make advances in the field.

His own research team focuses on stem cells in the nervous system. These give rise to the many different types of cells found in the brain and spinal cord during normal development and, in some regions, continuing into adulthood. Comparing normal stem cells to brain tumour cells can tell us a lot about how cancers develop and spread.

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“Brain tumours include more than 100 very different subcategories of disease, which makes them extremely challenging to understand and treat.”

Dr Steve Pollard explains. “They are also difficult to study because of the challenges of obtaining brain tissue at early stages of the disease.

“But we can now capture brain tumour cells in the lab from patient biopsies and keep these growing in the petri dish. We can then compare and contrast tumour cells with normal neural stem cells, to better understand the genetic mechanisms that drive cancer development and growth. This creates an opportunity to test new and existing medicines and drug combinations directly on patient-relevant tumour cells.”

Next year, the Royal Hospital for Sick Children and the Department for Clinical Neuroscience will relocate to the Royal Infirmary site at Little France, next to the University’s MRC Centre for Regenerative Medicine where world-leading brain tumour stem cell research takes place.

Combined with state-of-the-art brain imaging facilities and recent investments in the latest gene-sequencing and editing technologies, Dr Pollard says this will create the perfect climate for new collaborations.

He says: “Fostering closer interactions between scientists and clinicians will help maximise the use of precious tumour samples and biopsies. This can have immediate effect in helping provide patients with better diagnoses and prognosis indicators. It also opens up opportunities for additional collaborative research projects to tackle the disease.”

The Walker family have established the Fiona Walker Fund to take advantage of this momentum.

Claire Walker says: “Thanks to a substantial fundraising effort from family and friends, we’ve already supported University research in this area through the sponsorship of PhD students. We’re now raising additional funds in the hope that we can fuel new research ideas and collaborations.

“Fiona was such a party girl – full of character and always pushing at boundaries. She had good grades and a place at university to study product design. She was ready to fly and become her own person and have some independence. Then suddenly she was struck down. We just want to do whatever we can to try and improve the outlook for other families.”

Dr Pollard says: “The new fund will give researchers an opportunity to be bold and ambitious, to explore riskier projects and develop essential pilot data that will provide confidence to build larger programmes of research and attract further investment.”
The University’s research into ovarian cancer is also benefiting from the generous support of a family affected by the disease. The Nicola Murray Centre for Ovarian Cancer Research at the University has been established in memory of Nicola Murray, who died of ovarian cancer at the age of 34 just four months after being diagnosed. Her family set up a foundation after her death in 2010, which has raised more than £200,000 over the past six years and allowed the University to set up the research centre in her name.

Nicola had a particularly aggressive cancer caused by a rare genetic mutation. At the time, little was known about how the mutation could affect how her disease might be best treated. This lack of understanding spurred the family into action. Her sister, Caroline Turnbull, explains: “It was only a month or so after her diagnosis that Nicola realised her hopes of successful treatment were narrowed due to the lack of current research. She began planning ways in which we – her family and friends – could raise money to fund research so that no other young women should go through what was happening to her.”

If ovarian cancer is caught early, nine out of 10 women will survive beyond five years. But the symptoms are vague and often overlap with other more common conditions. Most women are not diagnosed until the cancer has already spread. The average survival is just three or four years.

Like brain cancers, experts believe that ovarian cancer is probably a collection of many different subtypes of disease. Each one is likely to be biologically different and therefore response to treatments will vary.

The new centre has been set up to probe these biological differences in the hope of improving diagnosis of ovarian cancer. Researchers believe that more detailed diagnoses will help them to tailor therapies to the individual patient and maximise the chances of a better outcome.

Professor Charlie Gourley leads the new centre. He says: “Our research is focused on sub-dividing types of ovarian cancer according to genetic changes. This information will give us new insights into how the tumours grow and why some respond well to particular medications whilst others do not. Eventually we hope to develop new treatments that can tackle even the most resistant forms of ovarian cancer.”

Professor Gourley says: “It is crucial that we invest in young researchers so that we can secure a brighter future for cancer research.”

With backing from families such as the Walkers and the Murrays, the University can continue to ensure that researchers are working to help improve the lives of cancer patients both now and in the future.
Helping the Pets of the Homeless

Staff and students at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies are helping to ensure the four-legged friends of homeless people are getting the treatment they need.

For many homeless people, owning a dog provides not only a sense of purpose and source of stability but also invaluable companionship that helps prevent feelings of isolation. Yet, ensuring that their animals receive the right veterinary care is not straightforward.

After the University received a generous bequest, which came with a specific instruction to support the pets of homeless people, Dr Andrew Gardiner, senior lecturer at the School, started visiting homeless hostels in Edinburgh in 2009 offering treatment and equipment for dogs. Since then, the service has gone from strength to strength with students showing a keen interest in getting involved.

This year, All4Paws clinics have started, which run every month at the Fort Kinnaird Community Centre in Leith and provide general health checks as well as microchipping, vaccinations and worming for the animals of the homeless and vulnerably-housed.

Set up by students Calla Harris and Biana Tamimi during the fourth year of their veterinary degree, the clinics are aimed at those living in homeless hostels, sleeping rough, using night shelters, sofa surfing, or in other temporary or supported accommodation.

Biana explains: “All4paws has been one of the most incredible things to get involved with. To be able to understand the human-animal bond that exists between someone living with next to nothing on the streets and their companion and best friend is really incredibly rewarding.”

“A client told me that several people told him that as he was homeless he shouldn’t have a dog, but the people that we have seen are really incredible owners. They are hyper-vigilant and know every detail about their animals as they are constantly with them. Equally, as well as companionship, looking after their animals gives them a real sense of purpose.

One of the aims of the clinic is to encourage clients to sign up for the Dogs Trust Hope Project Veterinary Scheme, which provides homeless people with assistance towards the costs of veterinary care. Any fourth-year student at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies can sign up to help with clinical examinations at the All4Paws clinics, where there are qualified vets on hand to supervise, while students from other years can also get involved in fundraising and outreach.

For Dr Gardiner, continuing to develop the service is welcome news. “While over the years we have probably seen hundreds of dogs at hostel-run clinics, there are only a small number of hostels that enable homeless people to stay with their animals,” he explains. “The All4Paws clinics means that the veterinary checks can be expanded to those who may not be able to access hostel accommodation. Also, because only one or two students are able to attend the hostel-run clinics due to space, All4Paws means that many more students can get involved providing them with great experience.”

“For many homeless people, owning a dog provides not only a sense of purpose and source of stability but also invaluable companionship that helps prevent feelings of isolation. Yet, ensuring that their animals receive the right veterinary care is not straightforward.”

“The strong community involvement also helps get students out of that student bubble and shows them that there is so much more to studying veterinary medicine than just getting the grades.”

STUDENT BIANA TAMIMI (LEFT) AND DR ANDREW GARDINER © CALLUM BENNETTS/MAVERICK PHOTO AGENCY LTD

“Owning a dog provides not only a sense of purpose and source of stability but also invaluable companionship that helps prevent feelings of isolation.”

“Calla continues: “The strong community involvement also helps get students out of that student bubble and shows them that there is so much more to studying veterinary medicine than just getting the grades.”

“Biana and Calla are also keen to pass on the mantle to current fourth-year students so that they can get involved as well, providing them with great experience.”
Going for Green

A scholarship is giving students with innovative solutions to environmental issues the chance to turn their ideas into a reality. This year’s winner is developing a way in which households could support – and benefit from – more effective use of renewable energy.

In the not-too-distant future, electric car drivers all over the UK could be selling back unused electricity stored in their cars’ batteries to the national grid at the end of each day, thanks to the vision of an enterprising business student. Such a development would help electricity suppliers to meet peak-time demand, and save on their household energy bills. Consumers could also benefit – and save money – by using some of that energy to commute, and re-selling the surplus on returning home. The University of Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation (ECCI) fosters collaborative working between policy, community and business leaders to support and deliver workable solutions for a low carbon future.

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The Toyota fund’s £20,000 prize will support Angus as he seeks to develop his concept into a viable business prospect.

Angus sees his idea as a way to gain added benefit from the growth in electric cars, with about 80,000 plug-in vehicles registered in the UK as of summer 2016, amid forecasts that they will account for 60 per cent of all vehicles by 2030.

He suggests that the scenario underlying his idea – in which households will typically charge their cars overnight, before using some of that energy to commute, and re-selling the surplus on returning home – could modernise the way electricity is consumed.

“The UK grid is based around power stations – this is last century technology. Now we have renewables – wind, wave and solar – but these can’t be stored,” explains Angus.

Although similar ventures are being investigated in industry, Angus believes his approach may be especially effective in Scotland, where the availability of renewable energies can far exceed suppliers’ storage capacity.

“I hope to create an online trading platform, using vehicles as batteries,” he says. “Most cars are parked at night, when they may still have 70 per cent of their charge – why not sell it back? The wider challenge is to use data analysis to understand where in the country power is being produced and where it is being channelled to, at any time.

“My idea is about moving from an old-fashioned system of how we buy and use electricity, towards the production of more renewable energy at a time of day that suits demand, and the consumer being involved in that; it is about trying to bridge the interface between available technology and requirements of the supply network.”

Angus was one of 10 finalists who pitched their concepts to a panel of business and technical experts at an event in June. ECCI fosters collaborative working between policy, community and business leaders to support and deliver workable solutions for a low carbon future.

Ultimately, judges were so impressed that they awarded scholarships to all 10 finalists, and named Angus as overall winner.

“I didn’t see the other competitors, nor learn about their ideas, until the final stage of the competition – some of the ideas were really clever and noble, so I was shocked and surprised to win. To be named overall winner was overwhelming,” he says.

There is low demand for power during the night, when most electric vehicles are charging, and big demand at peak times when vehicles are parked at home. We could use vehicles to soak up power during the day and sell half of that back to the grid in the evening.

For Angus the benefits of this type of backing are clear. He says: “There is peace of mind having my fees taken care of, and the pressure of giving up a job is made easier by having this support. Winning this scholarship has taken a big financial burden off me.”

Since graduating in structural engineering and architecture in 2008, Angus has been working as an engineer in the oil and gas industry. His experience has given him an insight into the energy business, which will underpin his postgraduate studies.

Angus’s crossover from engineering to business is in keeping with the environment at Edinburgh, which encourages interdisciplinary collaboration. The University has spearheaded research and development in low-carbon business ideas through its involvement with ECCI and in pioneering postgraduate programmes such as the Masters in Carbon Finance & Carbon Management.

The support for the University’s business students from the Postcode Lottery Green Challenge Scholarship builds on its successful partnerships with charitable foundations in scholarships and research funding.

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Annemieke Hoogenboom, County Director, People’s Postcode Lottery, was delighted for all the applicants.

“The overwhelming creativity, innovation and passion was outstanding,” she says. “The Green Challenge Scholarship opens opportunities for budding students from all over Great Britain to come together, share ideas and inspire each other.”
The Big Leap launched on 1 December 2015 with hopes of inspiring staff, students, graduates and friends to use their extra day in the 2016 Leap Year to do something extraordinary in support of numerous incredible projects and centres across the University.

What a Difference a Day Makes

Some unusual and adventurous fundraising has already taken place, including a record-breaking Bake Sale on ‘leap day’ itself, and an abseil from one of Edinburgh’s tallest buildings, the University’s David Hume Tower. Also, supporters have walked over burning embers or crawled through mud to help a cause close to their heart.

The areas supported by our Bigleapers include:

• The Free Legal Advice Centre, which supports members of the Edinburgh community
• The Muir Maxwell Epilepsy Centre, which investigates the causes of childhood epilepsy
• Access to Sport, which aims to make sport accessible to everyone
• The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, which is one of the world’s most innovative and influential centres for student education, veterinary care and animal welfare
• The Anne Rowling Regenerative Neurology Clinic, which is a clinical research facility focusing on neurological conditions, especially neurodegenerative diseases like multiple sclerosis, motor neurone disease and dementias
• Hope Park Counselling Centre, which is a practice and research centre that provides counselling to the local community and gives counsellors in training invaluable experience.

The Big Leap in pictures:

1. Staff and students with alumnus and former Great British Bake Off contestant Glenn Cosby at the Pleasance Gym Bake Sale station.
2. Bakers and buyers enjoying the incredible selection of cakes at the Bake Sale base at The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies.
3. The Big Leap team announce the record-breaking number of cakes sold – 18,195. The sale raised more than £9,000 for 37 causes.
4. Development and Alumni staff taking part in the Tough Mudder race in aid of the Free Legal Advice Centre.
5. The Tough Mudder ‘Hero Carry’.
6. The Sports Union stand at the Big Leap Launch event held at the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation in December 2015.
7. A dozen brave supporters raised more than £2,000 for various University centres by taking part in a fire walk in March.
8. The Rolling Haggis Zorbing Challenge was a huge success with eight participants hurtling down a specially designed hill at speeds of up to 30mph to raise awareness for various pioneering research centres including the Centre for Dementia Prevention and the Anne Rowling Regenerative Neurology Clinic.

For more information on using your extra 24 hours to make a difference visit: www.ed.ac.uk/big-leap
I like to think that not only did I choose Edinburgh, but also Edinburgh chose me. I was attracted to the institution because of its prestige. Its name conveys a sense of commitment to education; the ability to combine tradition with cutting-edge work. As an aspiring student in Chile, that inspired me – as did Scotland itself. Scotland is seen as a country with so much self-belief and conviction, something that is sadly lacking in the world today. It has a strong sense of duty towards sustainable and fair infrastructure and developments, two principles that are also my ideals. I was a young guy who wanted to change the world, so Edinburgh seemed like the best place to start.

My studies were financed through a scholarship provided by the Chilean government, which meant that after graduation I was committed to return to my country and use my education and new skills for its benefit. So I see my education as a kind of endowment for Chile and I’m motivated by the idea of doing something positive for my own community. On returning, I moved to the capital, Santiago, and set up my own independent architectural firm. My projects are based on the concept of merging architecture and nature, since I’ve had a great love of animals and the environment since my childhood when I took part in rodeos. So far I have taken industrial and residential projects, as well as collaborations on office and hotel buildings.

It was while setting up my business that I began to think about the University of Edinburgh and the impact it had on me. I became motivated by the idea of forming relationships with people who shared my experiences: that’s when I decided that I should volunteer for the University and set up the first Edinburgh alumni group in Chile.

Currently, we have 70 active members in the group, out of a total alumni cohort of 180, so that is very encouraging. The cornerstone of the group is friendship and sharing the warmth that we feel towards the University, and we hold several events throughout the year where we can get together to reminisce and make new connections. But I am convinced that we can use the group to benefit each one of us, not to mention the University and society in general. It’s a grand ethos but I believe we can become a respected voice for our professions and for Edinburgh. We are in a particularly strong position because of the sizable number of Chilean students wishing to study at Edinburgh, and the fact that the University chose Santiago as the location of one of its four Global Offices.

What I love about our group is its diversity – it’s definitely one of its main strengths. We have members from various backgrounds, professions and generations. Our events and meetings facilitate a kind of fraternal bridge where these different groups can meet and celebrate their shared connection with the University and Scotland. It’s effectively a space for our very best memories.

And my personal memories of Edinburgh are so important to me. It’s a period of my life I will always treasure. After all, my daughter, Antonia, was born there. I also remember my desire to learn, pursuing my dreams, and asking myself every day ‘what do I want to learn today?’ The city itself is so vibrant and I loved cycling around a place that was so enchanting.

If I were to go back to Edinburgh for just one day, I would probably spend it on my feet, starting at my former study base in Minto House on Chambers Street before walking to George Square Gardens and exploring all those buildings and places I loved as a student. Then I’d head down to Princes Street to admire the castle again before gathering friends for the chance to watch the sun set from Arthur’s Seat. That would be a day well spent.

"I was a young guy who wanted to change the world, so Edinburgh seemed like the best place to start."

GABRIEL GONZALEZ MANDIOLA
Access to education plays a pivotal role in creating opportunities and transforming lives. It provides the building blocks for the future and is essential in reducing inequality and enhancing economic and social mobility. In short, it’s an investment in our future. I’ve chosen to support student bursaries by leaving a legacy to the University in my will. It’s my way of helping future students access the opportunities they deserve.” Stewart Dick (Law 1966, Arts 1968)

You can find out more online by visiting: www.ed.ac.uk/legacy-giving

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