

*In this issue:*

---

Embracing the new spirit of Scotland

---

Changing the future of food research

---

Aberdeen's jewel in the crown

---

On-song for vital research

---

Making memories



VOICE



## Embracing the *'new' spirit* of Scotland



Image: Porter's Gin, the first gin distilled in Aberdeen for more than 100 years

Scottish gin has proved a national success story and at the heart of this is a drink co-created by Aberdeen alumni and named after a University professor.

**W**hile Scotland has long been famed for its whisky, it is now producing 70 per cent of the gin consumed within the UK and the international market for its craft-distilling is booming.

Former University of Aberdeen students Ben Iravani and Josh Rennie were quick to recognise the gap in the market after developing a passion for the spirit while working in a city centre cocktail bar.

The pair came together after Ben graduated with a degree in engineering and opened his own bar Orchid, with the support of University academics and entrepreneurs Andy Porter and Dr Keith Charlton, co-founders of the successful biotechnology spin-out company Haptogen.

Friends from childhood, law graduate Josh began work in Orchid after five years in China and the pair joined forces with bartender Alex Lawrence, who had already developed a flair for cocktail making and was intent on bringing his own spirits to the mix.

Ben explains: "Alex and I had already come up with an idea for 'project gin' but my time was consumed with running the bar and Alex was travelling internationally to compete in bartending competitions so it didn't get off the ground.

"Josh joining us gave us a shared passion and the impetus to really begin distilling but we faced one major stumbling block – to experiment with the delicate flavours we all believed necessary to create a world-class product, we needed a piece of equipment called a rotary evaporator, a scientific tool that can distil at much lower temperatures.

"This is where our University connections once again provided the driver in converting our pipe dream into a reality. As scientists as well as Orchid's financial backers, Professor Porter and Dr Charlton were intrigued by our ideas to create a 'distinguishing gin' by combining traditional technology with innovative new methods.

"They helped us source the various parts required to build our own rotavap. This looked like something out of Frankenstein's lair, a far cry from the nice shiny equipment that we have today, but was vital to our early distilling days."

Josh quickly took on the role of the project's distiller and botanical researcher and Ben says he was "soon turning up daily with bags of unusual herbs, plants, fruits and spices", which he had procured from various sources, often utilising his Chinese connections to source them directly from farmers.

"We spent a lot of time distilling these at different temperatures and pressures to see how they would react, and what kind of flavour extraction we could achieve with each distillate. Before long, we'd created a distillate 'library' which included hundreds of different botanicals," Ben adds.



Image: Porter's Gin team: L/R Alex Lawrence, Ben Iravani, and Josh Rennie

"We were grateful for the scientific expertise of Professor Porter and Dr Charlton in showing us how to record accurately our experiments in order to recreate our desired flavours. By using low temperatures we were able to take a different profile of the botanicals and the result was a unique and delicious flavour profile in our gin which works in both classic cocktails and also stands out in the traditional G&T."

For Josh, patience and determination were the keys to developing the right flavour and while the process of gin making is a far cry from his studies in law, he says taking a methodical approach and using the analytical skills he developed were essential.

"Making a good gin takes time, patience and a lot of experimentation," he adds. "Fractions of millilitres became important, and the most frustrating moments came when an extra microlitre - yes, micro - of pink peppercorn turned a promising gin into a disaster.

"But it is incredibly exciting to be a part of the gin movement and to have researched, created and now produced a flavoursome, top-end product."

Porter's Gin – named after Professor Porter – launched in December 2015 and its first cask, a run of around 3,300 bottles, sold out within the month.

Ben says: "It was a crazy, hectic time but an amazing experience. The response to Porter's – the first gin distilled in Aberdeen for more than 100 years – was fantastic.

"We've since been Gold Medal winners at the International Wines and Spirits competition for the London Dry Gin category, which is an amazing accolade, and Porter's is in demand all around the world.

"The years I spent at the University have undoubtedly contributed to its success. I gained life skills that have definitely helped in business and made friends and contacts without whom 'project gin' would never have happened."

**" This is where our University connections once again provided the driver in converting our pipe dream into a reality... "**

## Sharing Aberdeen's 'jewel in the crown' with the world



Image: Bees and their hives, from the Aberdeen Bestiary (c 1200)



The University is home to many historical and cultural 'treasures' but the jewel in the crown is its 800-year-old bestiary which once graced the library of King Henry VIII. Having been in the University for almost four centuries, it is one of the finest surviving examples of a medieval illuminated manuscript.

**R**endered in rich gold and magnificent colour, it is a work of extraordinary artistry and craftsmanship in which tales of animals are used to illustrate essential moral beliefs.

Details in the illustrations, which are so fine that they were probably first painted with just a few hairs of a squirrel's tail, have survived 800 years of use and now audiences around the world can enjoy their splendour with the launch of a new website featuring a fully digitised version of each page.

The site [www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary), showcases digitally enhanced photography which has shown up detail that was not previously visible to the naked eye, revealing new insights about its original use. Professor Jane Geddes explains: "The Aberdeen Bestiary was created in England in around 1200 and first documented in the Royal Library at Westminster Palace in 1542.

"The Bestiary first came to Aberdeen in 1625 when it was bequeathed to the

University's Marischal College by Thomas Reid, who served as Latin secretary to King James VI and I and is said to have been given the book by his friend Patrick Young, son of the Royal Librarian to the King.

"It has long been debated whether the Bestiary was commissioned for a high-status client or seized during King Henry's reign from a dissolved monastic library.

"These questions have been difficult to answer but the quality of photography is revealing hidden clues within the pages which were previously impossible to see." Professor Geddes, an art historian, has identified marks and annotations that were not previously visible and these, she says, point to it having been handpicked by scouts of King Henry VIII when they scoured monasteries for valuables, rather than it being commissioned in the first place for a royal or high-ranking client. Instead Professor Geddes believes it was a tool for teaching – a purpose once again restored with improved availability of the resource online.

She continues: "The Aberdeen Bestiary is one of the most lavish ever produced but it was never fully completed and so the edges of the pages were not finished and tidied up. This means that the tiny notes from those who created it still remain in the margins providing invaluable clues about its creation and provenance. "Some were visible to the naked eye but digitisation, supported by donors through the Development Trust, has revealed many more which simply looked like imperfections in the parchment.

"When we examine these in detail we can see clear evidence that it was produced in a busy scriptorium. There are sketches in the margin, newly visible with enhanced photography, which show the artist practising with models.

"Many images also have prick marks all around them. This technique called 'pouncing' was a way to transfer an image to another document. Often they damaged the illumination on the reverse of the page and this shows that when it was produced, the need to make copies was more important than keeping the book pristine. Stress marks and finger prints which can now be seen on the book for the first time also point to a teaching purpose in its creation.

"On many of the words there are tiny marks which would have provided a guide to the correct pronunciation when the book was being read aloud," Professor Geddes adds. "This shows the book was designed for an audience, probably of teacher and pupils, and used to provide a Christian moral message through both its Latin words and striking illustrations.

"We've also been able to see for the first time that most pages have dirty finger marks in the bottom corner, from turning the folio. But at least one has repeated dirty thumb marks in the centre of the top margin, created by turning the book around for public viewing.

"This all suggests that it was a book created for the enjoyment of many rather than to be held as a private treasure for the wealthy elite, meaning that it was most likely seized by Henry VIII during the dissolution of the monasteries rather than created for one of his ancestors."

Already the online bestiary has been receiving positive feedback from around the world. Andrew MacGregor, Deputy Archivist at the University, said he was delighted to be able to bring the 800-year-old 'University treasure' full circle to once again make it a tool for learning.

"The Aberdeen Bestiary is the jewel in the crown of the University's holdings and attracts global interest. We've already been contacted by researchers, other institutions and even school teachers who are using the bestiary and its imagery.

"All the pages have been photographed at high resolution so viewers can zoom in to minute details. It allows you to examine the precise brush strokes of the artist. The quality of paint and gold leaf and with its vivid colours and graceful outlines is spectacularly beautiful.

"The wonderful new website allows the book to be virtually examined in high definition and 'handled' as it was during its working life."

**"Digitisation, supported by donors through the Development Trust, has revealed details previously invisible to the naked eye."**



# CHANGING THE FUTURE OF FOOD RESEARCH

When the founder of Aberdeen's Rowett Institute, John Boyd Orr, outlined the need "not just to provide a diet which will keep people alive, but a diet which will keep people in health", he can little have imagined that a century on his words would continue to hold such relevance.

Today the challenge to ensure that the global population can be adequately fed must also be balanced against a growing obesity crisis but not only do Boyd Orr's wise words remain at the heart of this battle, the Institute he founded continues to be a world-leader in nutritional research across the research spectrum.

This position was showcased with an official opening of its new state-of-the-art building in January by her Royal Highness the Duchess of Rothesay, also known as the Duchess of Cornwall.

The Rowett now boasts some of Europe's leading research facilities, including a hotel-standard human nutrition unit, and the Duchess was shown how new resources are providing a further boost to the Institute's pioneering studies.

She was introduced to research programmes connected to food security, an issue of great concern to Boyd Orr during the 1920s, 30s and 40s, but now approached from a new perspective.

Work on the brain circuitry which controls appetite is another key tenet of Rowett research with scientists dedicated to uncovering the specific brain circuits that control energy balance in order to facilitate the creation of new medications.



Image: Bust of John Boyd Orr



Image: The Duchess of Cornwall opening the Rowett Institute



These include research on the potential for high-protein plants that can be grown in Scotland to provide healthy and sustainable ingredients for the food and drink industry, and generate new opportunities for growers.

Other fields of work in keeping with Boyd Orr's philosophy of a 'diet to keep people in health' were also showcased.

Her Royal Highness was told about Rowett research into wholegrains and heart disease which has shown that eating three portions per day can have a positive effect on blood pressure, helping to prevent deaths from heart attacks and strokes.

While the Rowett founder's primary concern was with undernourishment, today the focus is also on over eating and what drives people across the globe to make poor diet choices.

The Duchess was informed of work dedicated to our relationship with sugar and measures which could be implemented to break our 'addiction' to the white stuff. She was also shown the influence Rowett research has had on the creation of a range of meals produced by supermarket Marks and Spencer, which contain a high protein content to help us to feel 'fuller for longer'.

Work on the brain circuitry which controls appetite is another key tenet of Rowett research with scientists dedicated to uncovering the specific brain circuits that control energy balance in order to facilitate the creation of new medications for obesity and type 2 diabetes.

The Institute is also home to a world-leading centre for the study of gut microbiology and Her Royal Highness was told how research carried out in Aberdeen has resulted in improved dietary advice in relation to weight-loss diets and led to the discovery of new bacteria that can be used as probiotics.

Underpinning many of the key findings and breakthroughs made by Rowett researchers are volunteers who take part in studies ranging from the addition of vegetable extracts to meat to stop the absorption of 'bad fats' to the benefits of eating the right breakfast.

Her Royal Highness was given a tour of the state-of-the-art facilities enjoyed by those who give up their time to further nutritional research.

The unit is fully equipped to measure key indicators such as body fat and resting metabolic rate that are important measures of the effect of dietary intervention trials, boasts an industry-standard kitchen for the preparation of food and hotel-style accommodation to allow volunteers to stay overnight.

Rowett Institute Director, Professor Peter Morgan tells *Voice* that he believes Boyd Orr would be very proud to see the progress made today and the wonderful new facilities in which this vital research is taking place.

"Throughout its long history the Institute has proved both adaptable and forward looking and has addressed the key nutrition issues of the time," he adds.

"Creating a world-class facility to match our global reputation has been paramount to continuing the success of the Institution and we now have a building to match our global ambition.

"We were delighted to welcome the University's Chancellor, the Duchess of Rothesay, to officially open the new Institute and to mark the start of a new chapter which will continue to deliver breakthroughs in nutritional science and enable us to play a crucial role in tackling the global health challenges of obesity, ageing and food security."

**"Creating a world-class facility to match our global reputation has been paramount to continuing the success of the Institution..."**

# Putting *Aberdeen* on the Global Map for Cancer Research

Aberdeen is aiming to become a world-class centre for cancer research with the launch of a £4.5million fundraising campaign.

The University, which already has an established track record in the fight against many forms of the disease, is seeking to attract the world's brightest minds to lead pioneering research work.

It has already gained the support of Scottish charity Friends of Anchor which has committed to raise £1million for the project to celebrate its 20th year.

The centre will build on, and take to the next stage, the oncology research already underway at the University in areas including breast cancer, urological cancer and cervical cancer and aims to increase activity in other key areas such as lung, prostate and colorectal cancers.

It will also enable Aberdeen to develop further as a hub for vital clinical trials and to further enhance understanding of the role played by diet and nutrition and early-life and environmental factors in the development of the disease.

Professor Steve Heys, Head of the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition at the University and a breast cancer surgeon is spearheading plans for the oncology research team. He says:

"The University has internationally renowned expertise in many areas of cancer research but this will enable us to take it to a new level and create opportunities for new drugs to be used here for the first time.

"The vision is to establish Aberdeen as a centre for world-class oncology research, capable of attracting and retaining the very best academic and clinical staff, which will lead not only to excellent patient care in the area but to pioneering research and high levels of participation in clinical trials which will have a global impact."

Plans for the centre will be implemented over the next five years and Professor Heys says that although "very ambitious" other areas of University research have demonstrated that Aberdeen can be a world-leader.

"In medical mycology – which addresses the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of fungal diseases - Aberdeen has succeeded in creating a truly world-leading research team from a modest starting point, so why not in oncology too? "Now is the time to pursue this ambition, to put Aberdeen 'on the global map' for cancer research and to deliver profound and lasting improvements for patient care in the north-east of Scotland.

"But we can only achieve this with support and we are delighted to receive such generous backing from the charity Friends of Anchor. Their commitment to raise £1million in support of the project demonstrates the ever-growing need for this type of research and Aberdeen is ideally placed to make this happen with research, education and clinical facilities located side-by-side at Foresterhill - Europe's largest health campus."

The fundraising campaign will be led by the University's Development Trust and its director, Liz Bowie, says the University community will play a crucial role in helping to make the ambitious plans become a reality.



Image: Professor Steve Heys, Head of the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition

"The Aberdeen oncology centre is only in its infancy but we are absolutely delighted to have the magnificent support of such a well-known charity as Friends of Anchor. The fact that they recognise the importance of our research in the fight against cancer greatly helps us to ensure that more people beat this indiscriminate disease," she adds.

"Cancer has an impact on so many lives and this is our opportunity to really make a difference to the future of research and treatment in north-east Scotland and beyond. Donations, however large or small, will play a key role in bringing this ambitious project to fruition and we look forward to hearing about the many different ways the University community and our alumni will play their own part in making it happen."

To support our cancer and women's health fundraising campaign contact **Cara Baird** on +44 (0) 1224 273278, email [c.baird@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:c.baird@abdn.ac.uk) or visit [www.abdn.ac.uk/giving](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/giving)

## Building on the legacy of an Aberdeen 'great'

When Professor Sir Dugald Baird was appointed Regius Professor of Midwifery in Aberdeen, his pioneering vision transformed reproductive health care services in the city.

Eighty years on, the University is taking inspiration from his 'far-sighted and innovative programmes' with plans for the new Aberdeen Centre for Women's Health.

The research centre will support the work of the Baird Family Hospital which will be located at Foresterhill, and offer maternity, gynaecology, breast screening and breast surgery, neonatal, and reproductive medicine services. The new hospital will also house an operating theatre suite along with state-of-the-art research and teaching facilities.

Professor Siladitya Bhattacharya, who is leading the project, says creation of the Centre offers a "unique opportunity to embed today's pioneering clinical research alongside medical care."

"Dugald Baird established the University's strong reputation in this field and Aberdeen has gone from strength to strength leading important research into fertility, family planning, maternal health, cervical and breast cancer screening, postmenopausal health and osteoporosis.

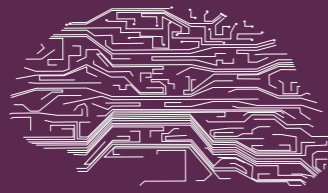
"Baird recognised that women's health plays a vital role in the future health of their children.

"The mission of the Centre will be to develop innovative ways of understanding disease and to identify effective ways of caring for women and their babies not only across north-east Scotland but across the globe."

"Dugald Baird established the University's strong reputation in this field and Aberdeen has gone from strength to strength."

Image: Dr Andrea Woolner, Clinician and Researcher in Obstetrics and Gynaecology

# On-song for vital research



Singing is said to have many health benefits and researchers from Aberdeen joined a chorus of scientists and clinicians to examine how it can help those with Parkinson's disease. Every hour, someone in the UK is told they have Parkinson's and the neurodegenerative condition affects more than 6.3million people across the globe.

Researchers from the University teamed up with Guy's and St Thomas's Hospital and St Helier Hospital in London to review the benefits of singing for those with Parkinson's disease.

They found strong evidence that it can lead to marked improvements, particularly with speech.

Dr Maxwell Barnish, a public health and clinical epidemiology researcher, led the study for the University. "This is a very promising field," he says.

"Treatment has traditionally focused on drugs which have improved movement, but have had little impact on many other symptoms of Parkinson's and often have serious side effects.

"We assessed for the first time whether any notable benefit can be seen in allied health services such as speech and language therapy as evidence for many current techniques is not particularly strong.

"We found strong evidence to support the idea that singing helps the speech of people with Parkinson's but also identified that further high-quality research into this area is needed to draw clinicians' attention to the therapeutic possibilities that singing offers.

"We hope that our review will now encourage that to take place."

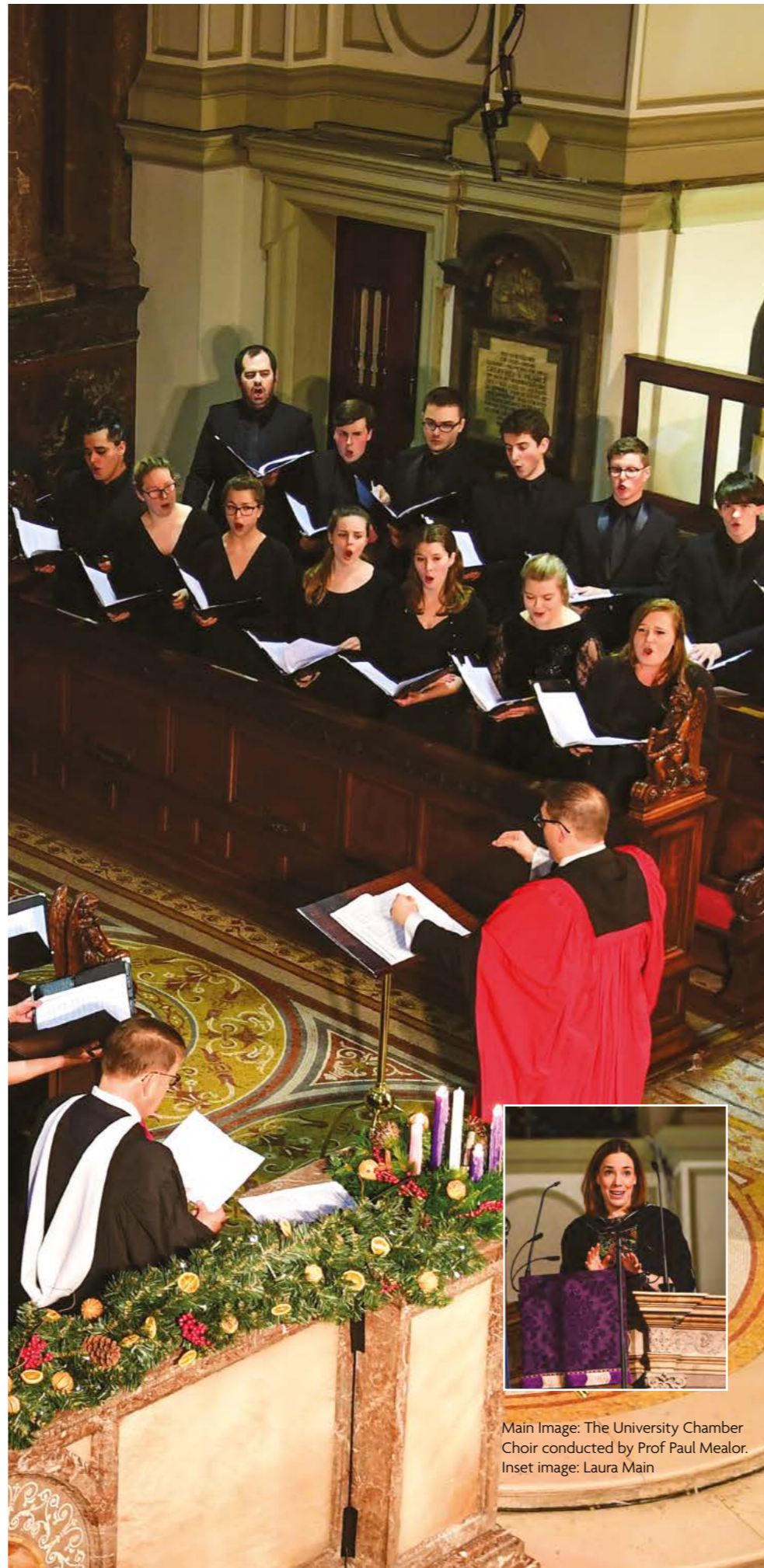
The findings of the team also point to the need for those working in the field to 'think outside the box' to look beyond clinical-based therapy.

Investigator Rachel Atkinson, an adult neurological specialist speech and language therapist at St Helier Hospital in London, adds: "You only have to turn on your TV to learn about the potential benefits of choirs for more than just the singing these days. This review is greatly beneficial in highlighting the need for further research in this area."

Dr Barnish continues: "For singing approaches to be successful, strong links with community-based performing arts organisations must be forged by language therapists and healthcare providers.

"Where such partnerships already exist, the benefits for the people involved and society are clear to see. However, this field requires significantly more time to be invested if the maximum benefit is going to be harnessed."

If you would like to support University music or research please contact Kelly M Anderson, on +44 (0) 1224 273057, email [kellymanderson@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:kellymanderson@abdn.ac.uk) or visit [www.abdn.ac.uk/giving](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/giving)



Main Image: The University Chamber Choir conducted by Prof Paul Mealor.  
Inset image: Laura Main

Being in good voice has delivered other benefits at the University with a special concert for alumni raising more than £11,000 to support dementia research and Aberdeen's Chamber Choir climbing the classical charts with an album which received the royal seal of approval.



Image: The Prince of Wales with the Chamber Choir in Ballater

The University community dug deep in aid of Aberdeen's pioneering research into dementia after hearing about the work as part of the annual carol service held in London, where the Chamber Choir also performed.

The celebration, sponsored by HSBC, was led by Aberdeen alumnus Rev Canon Stephen Evans, and featured British actor and presenter Sir Tony Robinson and 'Call the Midwife' actress and Aberdeen alumna, Laura Main.

Liz Bowie, Director of Development & Alumni Relations at the University of Aberdeen, says support for the event, which will be held again in December 2017, was 'overwhelming'.

"We enjoyed an amazing performance from the talented Chamber Choir and were delighted by the generosity shown in supporting vital dementia research."

Laura Main adds: "It was a huge honour to be invited back by my old university to do a reading at their carol service, in aid of the ground-breaking work which the University of Aberdeen does towards the fight against Alzheimer's disease. I'm really proud to be able to help in a very small way to raise vital funds to continue that research as the University makes strong progress in the quest to overcome this global epidemic."

The Chamber Choir proved another fundraising success when they launched their first album on the University's record label, *Vox Regis*.

*The Immortal Memory*, a collection of the work of Robert Burns cleverly reimagined for choral voices by University

composers including Paul Mealor, Thomas LaVoy, John Hudson, and Phillip Cooke, premiered in the Aberdeenshire village of Ballater, close to Balmoral, which was hit by terrible flooding in 2016.

Sales from the album will be donated to regeneration projects in the village supported by the Prince of Wales, who lent his support to the project together with the Duchess of Rothesay.

The album quickly climbed the Classical Music charts reaching the number three spot and Professor Mealor says: "Burns is admired the world over for his poetry and songs but despite his enduring popularity, this does not seem to extend into the choral tradition.

"This was a wonderful opportunity for a new interpretation of his much-loved work and the response was staggering. To reach third place in the classical charts was a real honour for everyone involved in this wonderful project."

The 2017 Celebration of Carols will be held on December 21 and will raise funds for cancer research at the University.

**"It was a huge honour to be invited back by my old university to do a reading at their carol service, in aid of the ground-breaking work which the University of Aberdeen does towards the fight against dementia."**



## Supporting talent to transform the future

An international scholarship programme launched in memory of the University's founder is matching the most promising young minds from around the world with ground-breaking research projects.

From studies into new treatments for neurodegenerative disease and the use of vitamin A to control diabetes and stroke, to climate change in the Andes and the rise of far right parties in Europe, the scholarships are as diverse as they are innovative.

Named in honour of the University's founder, Bishop William Elphinstone, and introduced in 2014 to commemorate the 500th anniversary of his death, the awards offer high-achieving students the chance to honour his memory in commitment to excellence and "the pursuit of truth in the service of others".



Image: Bishop William Elphinstone



Image: Barry Nourice

### ► Barry Nourice: PhD Student

In awarding an Elphinstone Scholarship to Barry Nourice the University is 'contributing to an important chapter of Seychelles history'.

Barry, 36, is the principal technologist of the Soil and Plant Diagnostic Laboratory of Seychelles Agricultural Agency (SAA) where he is putting the skills developed in his PhD study into practice to address one of the major issues facing his home nation.

Barry explains: "The Seychelles coastal agriculture areas, which produce around 70% of our high value crops, are threatened by increasing sodium salt concentration in irrigation water, due to sea water intrusion. This is known as salinization. This is having negative impacts on the farming communities and presents a real threat to future food security.

"Our laboratory is the only one of this nature on the islands and the knowledge I am able to transfer back is really helping to advance the analytical work we can do there.

"The last major soil survey in the Seychelles was conducted in 1963. The research I am doing for my PhD will provide a baseline for all future study into the environment and agriculture, not only for salinity management, but for all factors that may affect soil fertility and soil based food production in my country.

"In this way, the University of Aberdeen is making a major contribution to Seychelles history."

Barry first came to Aberdeen to study for his Master's degree in 2013 but had his heart set on the Granite City for a decade before this. He now splits his time between Aberdeen and the Seychelles and says his work is already reaping rewards back home.

"Aberdeen is a leading centre for soil science and I am pleased to be working with prominent scientists and experts in the field of soil and plant science to find ways to mitigate the problems and to find long-term solutions.

"As soon as I arrived I felt very much at home, which came as a very pleasant surprise to me. The people and culture are welcoming in the same way that I am used to back home. Aberdeen is a small city and the Seychelles in a small country and so the people are closely connected to each other. I love it here."

Barry hopes that his PhD could be the beginning of a long-term working partnership between his country and the University.

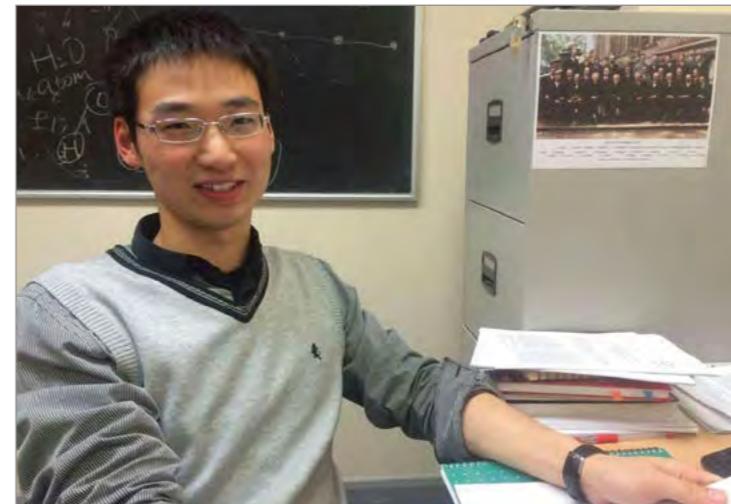


Image: Zonghua Liu

### ► Zonghua Liu: PhD Student

Despite his roots in the land-locked Ji Ning City in China, Zonghua Liu is assisting in the development of technology which could provide a key indicator of the health of our seas.

Zonghua began a PhD funded by an Elphinstone Scholarship in 2014 and is utilising his skills in computing and engineering to develop technology which can automatically identify and classify plankton.

While plankton – the sea's smallest living creatures – are often overlooked, they can reveal significant clues about the health of marine eco systems.

Zonghua is working with Professor John Watson who developed a revolutionary 3D holographic camera which can record these tiny building blocks of life in a non-intrusive and non-destructive way.

The recorded images allow scientists to study the population and distribution of plankton as an indicator of the overall health of the marine environment but identifying and classifying them is a lengthy process.

"We are using technology to significantly speed this up," says Zonghua. "Plankton may be small but they have a big global impact. They are at the centre of the food web, and responsible for most of the air we breathe. These microscopic plants and animals are eaten by fish in our seas, which are eaten by bigger creatures, and eventually eaten by humans.

"Understanding more about them is essential in understanding the health of our seas and I'm delighted to be part of research which could further this." But a love of the sea has not just developed in his research, Zonghua says living by the coast has proved a surprise draw of Aberdeen.

"I knew of the University's strong reputation through my Masters' teachers but I hadn't expected the beauty of the region. I love the sense of space you get from living by the sea and it is quite a contrast to where I come from but in other ways I've been made to feel very at home.

"The University and its Confucius Institute organise many Chinese events, such as New Year celebrations, and it has been fantastic to be part of these as well as to experience the many other cultures on campus."

## Sir Thomas Sutherland HSBC Scholarship

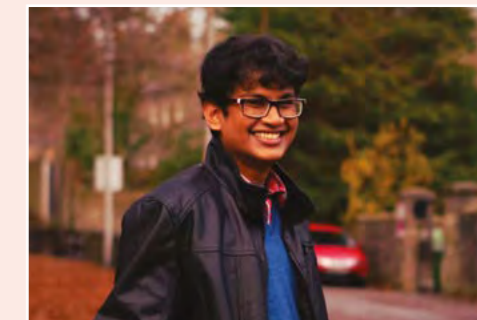


Image: Haniel Rameshbabu

Another 'Aberdeen great' whose legacy continues to inspire the current generation of students is Sir Thomas Sutherland.

Following his education at the University, Sutherland joined the London office of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company (P&O) and was soon promoted to manage the firm's Asian operation where, in order to help finance the burgeoning trade between China and Europe, he established The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, later to become HSBC.

The Sir Thomas Sutherland HSBC Scholarship was established in his honour in 2016 and the first recipient is Haniel Rameshbabu from Chennai in India. Just as Sutherland must have encountered a huge culture shock as he headed east for the first time, Haniel's journey to Scotland was the first time he had left his home country.

Despite his initial concerns about not knowing anyone, Haniel settled in quickly and has grown to love the city and University, not least he says because of the orderly way in which people cross the streets!

"Aberdeen has offered me a great opportunity and it is wonderful to experience a new place. I had to rely on maps for the first few weeks as I found my way around campus but I've now settled in, though I am still amazed at the respect pedestrians show when crossing roads and that public transport goes right through the campus!

"I will do my best to make use of the wonderful education system and learn as much as possible. I am already benefitting from great teachers and being part of new cultures – I've even started learning Hebrew to broaden my horizons."



# Changing lives through education

A Master of Laws degree from the University opened doors for Timipre Wolo she never thought possible. Now Timi, who graduated in the class of 2009, is using her own success to motivate and support young people in her home country of Nigeria.

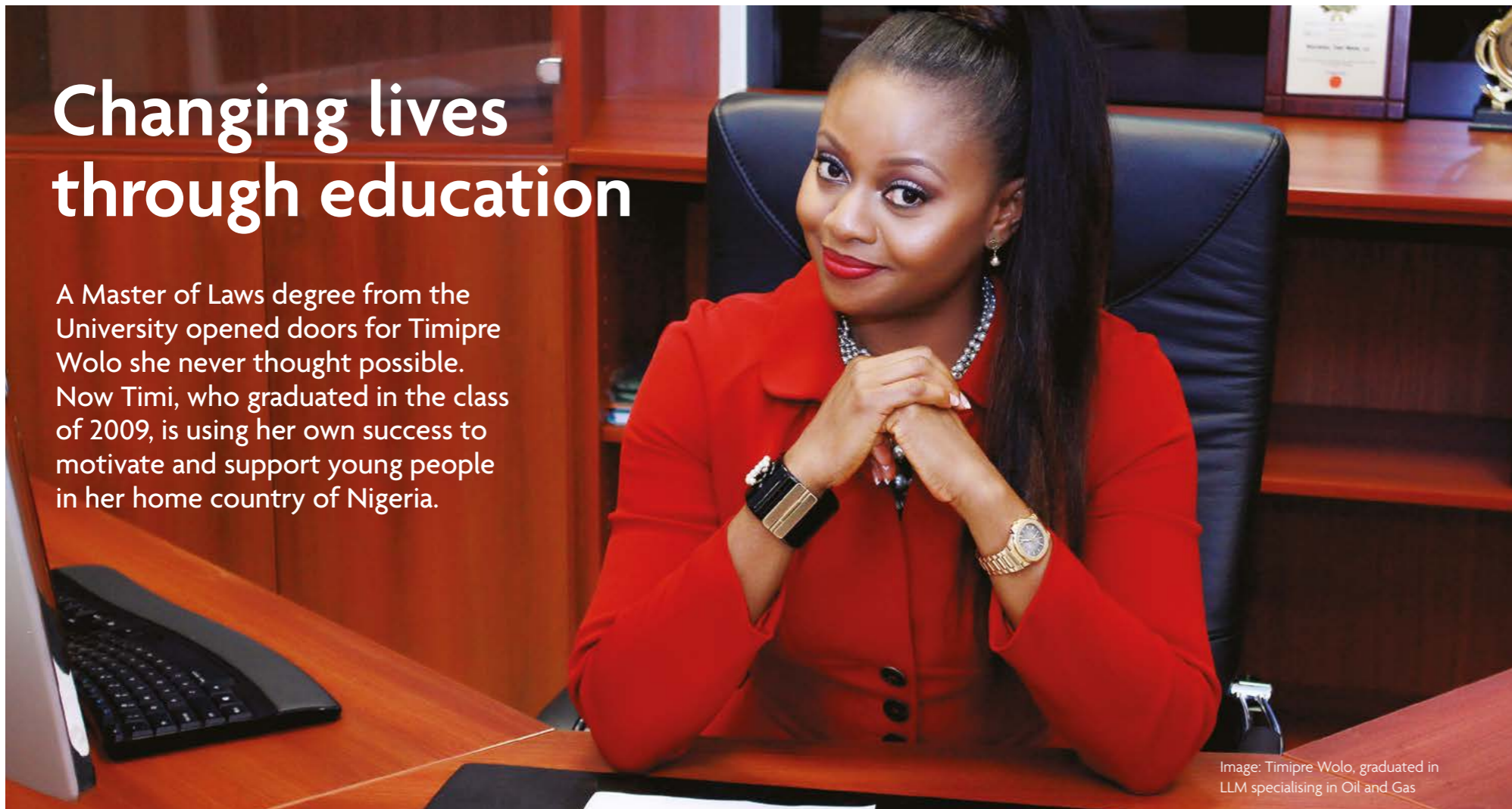


Image: Timipre Wolo, graduated in LLM specialising in Oil and Gas

**T**imi explains: “Coming to Aberdeen to study completely changed my viewpoint and rather than blaming the government for everything, I wanted to take responsibility for change. I realised that for us to transform the status quo in Nigeria, each and every one of us has a role to play.”

This is a mantra Timi has adopted in every aspect of her life, combining a successful legal career with a long list of charity endeavours which are changing the lives of the young people they support. Timi drew her inspiration from the fear that her own education would end when she lost her mother aged just 12.

“My mum was a huge advocate for education and when she died, my biggest fear was not being able to complete my education. I developed a lot of empathy and I never want to see anyone in the same position I was.

“I can relate to young people – especially young girls – who have lost one or both of their parents.”

Completing an LLM specialising in oil and gas at the University enabled Timi to secure a job after graduation in the Legal Department of the Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF), Nigeria’s foremost government agency responsible for capacity development in the country’s oil and gas industry.

“There was only one senior oil and gas lawyer working there at the time and so I was given opportunities I might not have been given if I hadn’t studied oil and gas law,” she adds. “I was given responsibility for the Industry Collaboration Unit of the Fund which enabled me to champion a number of important youth initiatives. Working at PTDF was more like a calling than a job and going to the local areas, making a difference and seeing the transformation was amazing.”

Timi spearheaded a project which enabled those from less privileged backgrounds to access full scholarships to study abroad, championed the first ever helicopter pilot training programme for

local youths and initiated a job-creation partnership between the Fund and the private sector. In 2016, she took this passion further establishing an NGO, the Centre for Gender Equality, Education and Empowerment (CGEEE), which addresses issues relating to illiteracy and poverty amongst women and girls across Africa.

Her endeavours have earned her a host of awards but Timi says it is the gratification of seeing how projects she has initiated can change lives which drives her forwards.

In 2017 she set up her own company TFN Energy Limited, with a fund to support the work of her Centre.

“No amount of money can replace the feeling of making a difference and my business has this at its heart.

“Education is a vital tool for sustainable development and shows that anything is achievable irrespective of your station at birth. The University helped me to achieve my goals and now I firmly believe in using what I have learned to help others.”

**“ Education is a vital tool for sustainable development and shows that anything is achievable irrespective of your station at birth. The University helped me to achieve my goals and now I firmly believe in using what I have learned to help others. ”**

## Energising alumni connections



A growing network of alumni chapters around the world are bringing Aberdeen graduates together to build vital connections and reminisce about their time in the Granite City.

Since our last edition of *Voice* magazine, the University has celebrated the launch of its first branch in China with the Beijing Chapter opening in September, bringing the total number across the globe to seven. The network now extends from New York and Boston to Lagos, Jakarta, Bangkok and Beijing, with plans to continue expansion to ensure members of the ‘Aberdeen family’ can continue to keep in touch long after their studies

Katrina Allan, Alumni Relations Manager says: “The University seeks to help students feel connected as part of the Aberdeen family from the moment they apply and we want to ensure this sense of belonging continues beyond graduation, wherever our alumni are in the world.

“Each of our chapters has been met with a wonderful response from our alumni and this was certainly the case in Beijing at our September launch.”

David XU who chairs the new Beijing Chapter and graduated from the University with an MBA in 2003 adds: “The Beijing Chapter will offer us the opportunity to bring Aberdeen alumni together and for us collectively to forge links with key people, organisations and industries.

“We are celebrating and building the connections between Aberdeen and China and are confident the Beijing Chapter will prove as successful as those in New York and Jakarta.”

The Bangkok Chapter, which opened in April 2016, is also energising alumni connections in the region and is the first Aberdeen Chapter to benefit from having its own building to bring people together and host events. Its chairman, Dr Piti Eiamchamroonlarp, spotted the potential for future collaboration between Aberdeen and Bangkok on his Viva day, which he also describes as his proudest day at the University.

“In a discussion with my supervisor, we spotted several unique opportunities especially those relating to energy law and policies and we met again in Bangkok, three months later, for the opening of the Chapter where I was delighted to be elected chairman.

“It has provided great opportunities for us as alumni to stay more connected and this has brought me much joy - talking about our good days in the Granite City.” The Chapter has also allowed alumni, particularly those in the energy business to exchange ideas useful for career progression and Piti says they are keen to extend these networking opportunities to those working in other fields. He continues: “Luckily, from day one we’ve benefitted from own physical space at Roundabout Cafe located at the heart of Bangkok. It has greatly extended the range of events we are able to offer and we are looking forward to expanding our activity in the current year and welcoming new, and perhaps familiar, faces to the Chapter.”

Want to find out more about Alumni Chapters? Contact the Alumni Relations team on [alumni@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@abdn.ac.uk)



# Making memories

## It's an honour

When broadcaster and presenter Nicky Campbell, an alumnus of the University, received his honorary degree at the 2016 winter ceremonies, he described how 'every crevice of Aberdeen's sparkling granite' echoed with memories and laughter. The experience of life at University is rarely forgotten and the friendships forged can last a lifetime. As we share a selection of the memories made at our 2016 graduation ceremonies, the University's alumni team would love to hear what the University means to you. For Dr Campbell, Aberdeen is the place he became part of an inseparable trio with Game of Thrones actor Iain Glen and journalist and radio presenter Alan Robb, who passed away six years ago. He described to new graduates in the Elphinstone Hall how every corner of the campus still echoes with "the drama, the challenges, the lives, the loves, the lager, and most of all the laughter" they all shared.



A TOTAL OF  
**2810**  
STUDENTS  
GRADUATED  
FROM THE  
UNIVERSITY  
IN 2016

## Chenjing Gao

Graduation is a special day for everyone, marking the culmination of years of hard work and challenges conquered. But for one summer 2016 graduate, it represented the achievement of a long-held dream and helped to banish memories of a time in her childhood when the goal of achieving a degree seemed impossible.

Chenjing Gao received a Master of Arts in Accountancy-Finance – an achievement that seemed unlikely when she was forced to give up school and work full-time to support her family in China at the age of just 14.

Even more remarkable is that the 31-year-old completed her studies on time despite being just weeks away from giving birth to her first child when she handed in her dissertation.

"The University is a symbol of personal accomplishment. I always knew I wanted a degree and that dream sustained me through difficult times.

"For me, Aberdeen is the best place to study and settle. I wouldn't have been able to get through it without the support from the Business School staff – they really looked after me – and the strength that comes from wanting to do better for your child."

Chenjing now hopes to use her experience in Aberdeen to help other students from China to navigate the process of applying to Scottish universities, though first she intends to make the most of her time as a mother.



## Judy Murray

Judy Murray netted an honorary degree in recognition of her commitment to the promotion of tennis. For her, the award reflected the acknowledgement of the importance of growing skills from the grass roots upwards and providing an environment in which people can reach their full potential.



## Moonlight Prowl

The organising committee of a charity walk which raised more than £800,000 to support Aberdeen breast cancer research received the Benefactor to the University award at the 2016 winter graduations. For the Moonlight Prowl team, the University represents a keystone in the fight against the disease and they said they were honoured to accept the award on behalf of the hundreds of volunteers and walkers who made the 13-mile event possible over a 10 year period.

**TELL US YOUR STORY** by emailing [alumni@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@abdn.ac.uk) or **SHARE YOUR MEMORIES** on our Alumni Facebook and Twitter pages using - **#aberdeenunimemories**

# News From Our Campus

## Aberdeen University Air Squadron - A brief history

The University's alumni team has put together a brief history of the Aberdeen Air Squadron with the assistance of Rob Christie from the AUAS Former Members Association.

The Squadron was created in 1940 as part of the expansion of the RAF Reserve to prepare undergraduate men volunteering for aircrew duties for call-up to war service.

In addition to student recruits, a number of University staff members also served as instructors including Professor Edward M. Wright, a Bletchley code breaker who was at the time the head of the University's Maths Department and later became Principal, and Dr Potter, one of his Maths Department staff.

The Squadron is now amalgamated into the East of Scotland UAS, based at RAF Leuchars but the alumni team and AUAS would love to hear tales of bravery, courage and misdemeanour connected to the Squadron.

If you have your own story to share, please call 01224 274566 or email [jjohnston@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:jjohnston@abdn.ac.uk)  
To read more about the AUAS visit [www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni/blog](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni/blog)



Image: Aberdeen Air Squadron members

## Expanding our global footprint

The University opened its first international campus in Qatar at the end of April, making it the first UK university to have a dedicated campus in the Gulf State offering mainstream degrees. The University will initially offer two undergraduate courses - Business Management and Accountancy and Finance - which are expected to attract around 120 students in the 2017-18 academic year.



Image: The opening of the Qatar campus

Over the next four years the campus is expected to expand to include additional undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Other plans to expand the University's global reach are also progressing with work on a campus in Korea - to specialise in offering courses in energy-related disciplines - well underway. Discussions are also at an advanced stage for a number of other key global locations.

Aberdeen has also formed a strategic alliance with Curtin University in Perth, Western Australia to deliver high-impact research and innovative teaching programmes and is part of a new community of European universities united by a shared commitment to advancing social good and helping solve global challenges, known as Aurora.

## Ringing the changes at King's



Image: New entrance at King's Campus

A new main entrance and the restoration of the Chapel's historic clock chimes mean that the University can now signal its presence in keeping with its 500-year heritage.

The previously unassuming King Street entrance has been transformed with the removal of the narrow gates and construction of more imposing granite walls and new signs - which are proving a hit with selfie-lovers visiting for the first time.

The Chapel clock, which fell silent more than a decade ago, has also been restored to its former glory and once again rings out across campus on the striking of the hour.



### Planning your big day?

**DID YOU KNOW THAT AS ALUMNI YOU ARE ENTITLED TO GET MARRIED IN THE STUNNING KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL?**

You will also receive an additional 20% discount if you use our services for the reception. Please email [weddings@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:weddings@abdn.ac.uk)

## Steven SeaGull

Protecting your lunch from seagulls is a skill quickly learned by all those who come to Aberdeen but in April a giant bird, nicknamed Steven SeaGull, caused great amusement as it raided the High Street store and tucked into crisps from unsuspecting visitors.

The stunt was to raise awareness for Run Balmoral, where participants tackled a 10k and 5k course around beautiful Royal Deeside, with the majority raising funds to support University research into dementia. 'Steven' and the many other competitors are expected to raise more than £9,000.

To find out more about how to support University charities please email [giving@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:giving@abdn.ac.uk)



Image: Steven SeaGull

## Alumni achievements

Keep up with the achievements of your fellow alumni by following our alumni blog:

[www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni/blog](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni/blog)

Recent highlights include 2013 Hispanic Studies graduate Blair Bowman, who founded World Whisky Day, being recognised as one of the JCI Scotland's 'Ten Outstanding Young Persons' for Entrepreneurial Accomplishments, and Veronique Forbes, who came to Aberdeen on a Commonwealth Scholarship in 2009 being awarded a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowship.

The alumni relations team would love to hear about your achievements. To be included in our next update, please email [alumni@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@abdn.ac.uk)

## Hillhead changes



The Hillhead Halls are a key part of student life and a place where lasting friendships and memories are made for the hundreds of freshers arriving each year. A recent upgrade has transformed the complex and provided a central area which is a far cry from the Watering Hole many will remember. A bar and food area remains at its heart but there are now many other spaces to relax, socialise and cook together. Students can even demonstrate the tasty meals they are rustling up through a special video link.

## Death notices and obituaries

Each and every one of our alumni has contributed to the University of Aberdeen's prestigious history and promising future and as an institution we wish to mark their passing. If you would like to inform us of the death of an alumnus/alumna, please email [alumni@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@abdn.ac.uk).

We can no longer print obituaries but if you would like to submit an online notice please include the following: (1) date and place of death; (2) a brief summary of career; (3) interests, passions, hobbies, publications, honours, military service, or other distinctions the alumnus/alumna would have liked to see mentioned; (4) the names of surviving spouse or partner, if any (including maiden name), children, parents, and siblings.

Obituaries can be viewed at [www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni/connected/obituaries](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni/connected/obituaries)

## The University's General Council

**Did you know that as a graduate of the University of Aberdeen you are a member of the General Council?**

As a member of the General Council you have a right to: review and comment to the University Court on all questions affecting the well-being and prosperity of the University; elect the University's Chancellor; elect 21 members of the Business Committee, which manages the affairs of the General Council, and from which four General Council Assessors are selected to serve on the University of Aberdeen Court.

The General Council holds two statutory meetings annually, one in May and one in December and any member of the General Council may attend.

To register your interest in the General Council, or for any other alumni query, please email [alumni@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@abdn.ac.uk)

# Events News

**2017 is set to be another busy year for events on campus and beyond.**

In September the University will again be the Scottish hub for Explorathon – an event showcasing the best innovation and research being pioneered by universities to school pupils and the public across Europe, on a single night.

Aberdeen will also host events as part of the Festival of Social Sciences and Being Human festival. The University is exploring new ways to bring the events to audiences who cannot attend in person through its social media channels.

In addition to promoting important research to the public, the University will welcome high-profile speakers at its flagship May Festival, to the annual Carnegie Lecture and for a host of other initiatives throughout the year.

To find out more and to see the full calendar of planned events visit [www.abdn.ac.uk/events](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/events)

The University's alumni team also manages a programme of events and reunions for graduates of the institution. Details can be found at [www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni)



Image: Science workshop at the May Festival



## Cooking the Books exhibition

Food plays a central role in cultures around the world and this summer the University will showcase some of the most unusual 'delights' detailed in its extensive Special Collections. On the menu are cookery books from the late 18th and early 19th century with weird and wonderful recipes for appetisers such as acorn bread and viper broth, main courses of ragooed larks and venison pasty, and puddings described as "Quaking" and "Transparent". Interest in home baking has enjoyed a resurgence in recent years but few might attempt to decorate a cake with a fountain and swans as outlined by Joseph Bell, former confectioner to the Prince of Wales, in his 'Treatise on Confectionary' written in 1817.

Another unusual exhibit is a miniature cookbook measuring just a few centimetres in size but packed with recipes for pies, cakes and jellies. There are some cautionary culinary tales too. Launcelot Sturgeon's 1822 essay warns of over-eating as a consequence of irresistible sauces whilst Friedrich Accum describes the sad demise of a lady who ate poisonous pickles during a visit to the hairdresser in his 'Treatise on Adulterations of Food' (1820). The exhibition wouldn't be complete, of course, without a homage to Aberdeen's very own signature dish - the humble 'rowie'.

**Cooking the Books runs from June 5 to August 20 2017 at the Gallery in the Sir Duncan Rice Library.**

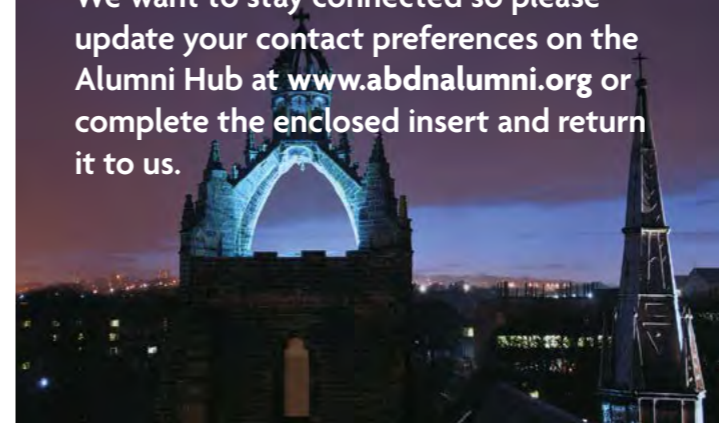
Image: Illustration by Arthur Rackham from a 1907 publication of 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland'

## We want to stay in touch!

The rules for keeping and using personal information are changing.

From 2018, we may be unable to contact you with news of the University, our events and your alumni benefits if you do not let us know how you'd like to hear from us.

We want to stay connected so please update your contact preferences on the Alumni Hub at [www.abdnalumni.org](http://www.abdnalumni.org) or complete the enclosed insert and return it to us.



## GET CONNECTED

We're sociable and like to communicate with our alumni wherever they are.

**Our Facebook page** is updated daily with news and images from the campus

**Connect with us on LinkedIn** to network with fellow alumni in our Law and Energy groups

**Engage with us on Twitter** for brief news snippets about your University

For our Chinese alumni, join us on Wechat, Sina Weibo, and QQ group

关注我们的中文社交媒体获取更多阿伯丁大学新闻消息 - 微信公众号: Uniofaberdeen, 新浪微博@英国阿伯丁大学, QQ交流群: 337363061

Or simply email us at [alumni@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@abdn.ac.uk) or visit the alumni hub to update your details at [www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni)



# 50% OFF

CAPPED

**Enjoy your ASV Student Lifestyle Membership for a whole year after you graduate for just £23\* a month.**

Sign up before 30<sup>th</sup> September to enjoy this amazing deal! Even better, University of Aberdeen Alumni will receive a 15% discount on their ASV Lifestyle, Aquatics, Athletics and Squash memberships – **FOR LIFE!**



01224 438900 | Linksfield Road, Aberdeen AB24 5RU

[asvabdn](https://twitter.com/asvabdn) [aberdeensportsvillage](https://www.facebook.com/aberdeensportsvillage)

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

University of Aberdeen 2017 graduates only\*



## SUPPORT RESEARCH EXCELLENCE IN WOMEN'S HEALTH

Building on the legacy of Professor Sir Dugald Baird, the University of Aberdeen is aiming to help people live healthier, happier and longer lives by vastly enhancing our research capability in the area of women's health.

*However, we need your help.*

A lack of integrated healthcare provision can cause significant risks to women's health and the health of their children at any stage from fertility to pregnancy to childcare, motherhood and beyond. With the launch of a major fundraising campaign, we are aiming to ensure that fewer women and their children are put at risk.

*You can help us both vastly improve care and minimise the risks by supporting our research.*

The new purpose-built Baird Family Hospital will provide fantastic opportunities and facilities to help us advance our pioneering research. Your support will enable us to have a global research impact by attracting and retaining the very best academic and clinical staff, ultimately leading to excellent patient care in the area of women's health.

Please support this hugely important research. For more information contact Cara Baird on +44 (0) 1224 273278 or email [c.baird@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:c.baird@abdn.ac.uk). To give online today visit [www.abdn.ac.uk/giving](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/giving).

*Thank you.*