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VOICE



A word from the Principal

Welcome to the Summer 2018 edition of Voice magazine.

As I prepare for my retirement this summer, I have the opportunity to reflect on what has been a hugely enjoyable nine years as Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Aberdeen.

I am very proud to be leaving the University in good shape, and our recent performance in the Complete University Guide - where we recorded the biggest rise of any of last year's top 50 universities and moved into the top 30 of the main league table for the first time - is testament to this.

This achievement would not have been possible without the commitment to excellence and professionalism of our staff, which is a hallmark of the University of Aberdeen experience that our graduates carry into their lives and careers.

During my time as Principal and Vice-Chancellor I have come to appreciate the huge contribution made by you, our alumni community, not only to the University itself, but to the wider world.

Recent research showed the University as being the best in Scotland and among the top 20 in the world for producing top-flight company chief executives. Across a range of disciplines, our graduates are making a real and valuable impact in the world, and many of these achievements are reflected in this latest edition of Voice.

From entrepreneurship to sporting success, campaigning and fundraising, our alumni are a continual source of pride for the University, and we value your continued support locally, nationally, and internationally.

With that, I would like to wish you all the very best in the future as I bid a fond farewell to the University and welcome our new Principal, Professor George Boyne, who joins us from Cardiff University.

As a native Aberdonian his appointment is very much a homecoming for Professor Boyne, and I'm sure you will join me in wishing him well in his new role.

Professor Sir Ian Diamond, FBA, FRSE, FAcSS
Principal and Vice-Chancellor

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CALLING TIME ON POOR PUB ACCESS



Over the last eight years I have campaigned on my own to get this through, and I'm pleased that eventually my hard work and persistence has paid off.

Mark Cooper, Image by Mchael Boyd/boydpics.com

For University of Aberdeen graduate Mark Cooper, a night out on the town has long brought added complications that most people never have to contend with.

As a wheelchair user, 33-year-old Mark's social life has been regularly dictated by the availability - or otherwise - of accessible disabled facilities in pubs and clubs.

But instead of accepting this situation as the status quo, he has campaigned to bring about a change in the law that now requires publicans to declare how accessible their premises are for disabled users in their application for a drinks license.

For Mark, who started his Barred! campaign in 2009, it has been a long road to reach his destination.

Even though the Scottish Government changed the law in 2010, it only came into effect on March 30th this year.

"The initial campaign period only lasted 13 months before the law was passed, but it was held up because the government had other priorities," he explained. "Over the last eight years I have campaigned on my own to get this through, and I'm pleased that eventually my hard work and persistence has paid off."

As well as focusing licensees' minds on the importance of providing disabled access, the amendment to the Criminal Justice and Licensing Act now helps people like Mark find accessible venues more easily.

Mark's background as a Politics and International Relations graduate provided a firm grounding in parliamentary procedure, which along with his tenacious personality stood him in good stead when it came to campaigning for change.

He now hopes the new rules will help others who may find themselves in a similar situation to the one he found himself in back in 2009, when a night out in Edinburgh was disrupted when he discovered the only toilets in a pub were down a flight of stairs.

That incident, he explained, was the spur he needed to finally take action on a problem that had dogged him all the way back to his days as a student.

Now that the law has been enacted, he can take pride in a job well done while continuing to campaign for better access.

"My hope is that when the law is more established, disabled students can just go out like any other student would, without having to be so concerned about access issues.

"Now that license applications have to include information on disabled access, my hope is that people will be able to go online and find all of the relevant information they need, such as which pubs and clubs have floor-level access, or a large print menu.

"Ultimately that is what I want the change to be - I want people to have access to this information, so all they need to do is choose where to go, instead of having that uncertainty in the first place."



Top L/R: Sandy McKinnon, Laura Poppe and Stuart Ross

Making a meal of it

Aberdeen has seen an explosion of independent cafés and restaurants in recent years and University of Aberdeen graduates have played a key role in the city's culinary renaissance, setting up their own businesses to cater for the growing appetite for fresh food with a difference. Here we find out more about their journeys to food heaven...

Foodstory

A near-catastrophic business deal, a last-ditch crowdfunding appeal and a large helping of enthusiasm have all been key ingredients in the success of Foodstory - Aberdeen's first veggie/vegan focused café.

For owners Sandy McKinnon and Lara Bishop, business ideas grow as organically as the produce they serve up at the quirky Thistle Street establishment, and a new creative space and wholefood shop on the upper level are testament to this.

Sandy's decision to come to the University of Aberdeen to study management and entrepreneurship came as no surprise to his parents, who watched him run his own ferry company from his toy box as a child growing up on the Isle of Lewis.

As a member of the Students' Association and founder of the student radio station, Sandy's entrepreneurial streak found its outlet at the University, and not only through his chosen course, as he explains:

"I had heard rumours that there was going to be a radio station and I got it up and running, handing it over after a year.

"I've always been interested in film and radio and we even did a Dr Who podcast, which at one point was the number one Dr Who podcast in the world!"

Despite his interest in the world of entertainment, Sandy wanted to run his own business and after graduation in 2008 he took the first steps on his Foodstory journey.

As is the case in all good stories, there have been a few twists and turns and Sandy's first taste of running his own business was a bitter one.

The money he and best friend Lara saved to buy the business was lost due to a misleading investment opportunity, and their remaining savings were used to buy premises that turned out to be sublet, leaving them with nothing more than a name.

Despite these setbacks, the optimistic duo set up a crowdfunding campaign and within little more than a month had managed to raise the money needed to make the business their own.

The result is a vibrant, unique, quirky café that is bursting with a mixture of diners looking to sample the huge range of organic, locally-sourced and largely (but not exclusively) vegan dishes cooked fresh every day.

"We dreamt of building a space where anyone could come in and feel part of a community through art and music," Sandy said. "It hasn't been an easy journey but we've held true to our love of bringing people together and we're delighted with what we've achieved."

Grub

An empty coffee shop and the rumbling stomach of hungry student Stuart Ross provided the inspiration behind Grub - the popular eatery with three outlets across Aberdeen and plans for more.

As an economics and finance student at the University, Stuart was always looking beyond graduation for ways to kick-start his career as an entrepreneur.

"The degree programme I completed provided me with the basic skills and knowledge that I needed to start my own business - I just wasn't sure what that would be!

"I used to walk past an empty café every day on the way to uni and began to imagine how I could bring it back to life."

That empty café in Old Aberdeen would prove to be the first Grub restaurant, situated in a prime location to cater for students on their way to and from lectures.

"As a hungry student, I craved wholesome food at an affordable price and I consider this our core principle at Grub," Stuart said.

"I loved my time at uni, and although I had to brave the bitter Aberdeen wind on the walk to lectures, it gave me the opportunity to dream!"

Bagels & Stuff

Laura Poppe took an unconventional route to running her own business when she embarked upon a sociology degree.

While working hard on her studies, Laura kept up her part-time job at Highland Cuisine in Inverurie, where she worked as an events manager after completing her degree. 15 years later, Laura and co-founder Louise Divarquez decided to make the leap into running their own business, opening an artisan café in Aberdeen's upmarket West End.

With a name that leaves no doubt as to its offering, Bagels and Stuff is a welcoming café that offers the perfect bagel in a friendly atmosphere. Reflecting on her journey, Laura said: "We knew running our own business would be risky, especially in a difficult economic climate, but we are not afraid of hard work and haven't looked back since.

"We love running our business and see customers from all walks of life - from students, to retired regulars, to the hungry school crowd - I guess you could say I'm still studying sociology from behind the counter!"



STARS ALIGN FOR CELEBRATION OF CAROLS

L/R: Professor Paul Mealor, Iain Glen, Sir Tony Robinson and Fiona Kennedy OBE. Image by Karen Hatch

A cacophony of thunderous applause from the audience at St Marylebone's Parish Church in London marked the finale to the University of Aberdeen's fourth Celebration of Carols event, which featured a star-studded line-up including actor, writer and broadcaster Sir Tony Robinson, Game of Thrones actor Iain Glen and singer, songwriter and broadcaster Fiona Kennedy OBE.

As the University's flagship alumni engagement event, the annual fundraiser brings together alumni and friends of the University each Christmas for a celebration of song at St Marylebone's courtesy of the University's world-class chamber choir, conducted by renowned Royal composer and Chair in Composition at the University, Professor Paul Mealor.

The concert has gone from strength to strength since it was first performed in 2014, at the invitation of University alumnus the Revd Canon Stephen Evans, Rector of the Church. In 2016, the event was recorded and broadcast by Classic FM as part of its Christmas schedule, and featured readings from University alumna Laura Main, star of popular BBC drama Call The Midwife, and Sir Tony.

The Blackadder star's involvement led directly to a collaboration with Professor Mealor that resulted in the production of a joint composition entitled The Three Ships, a Christmas story which offers a unique interpretation of the traditional nativity.

"It all came out of just one conversation," Sir Tony explained. "I was blown away by Paul's interpretation of 'In the Bleak Midwinter' at the 2016 concert, and afterwards we were chatting about how there are few pieces that challenge us to engage in the drama of the nativity. I thought if we could create something that fills that gap - that addresses modern day issues but gives us the opportunity to sing the carols we all love, and be dazzled by the performance of great musicians - then that would be something really special!"



The Aberdeen University Drama Society was my introduction to acting, and by the time I left I had just about enough belief to try and give the profession a go.

IAIN GLEN

The result was a piece that draws together some of the nativity's underlying ideas, often overlooked in favour of the miraculous nature of the story.

Contemporary issues such as division, the plight of refugees, media spin and fake news are all explored as part of *The Three Ships*, which received its debut performance at St Machar's Cathedral in Aberdeen before the London event on December 21st last year.

In addition to Sir Tony's involvement, the University was delighted to welcome back former student and honorary graduate Iain Glen, who accepted an invitation to play the role of Herod. The popular actor, who has starred as Ser Jorah Mormont in every season of hit television phenomenon *Game of Thrones*, credits his time in Aberdeen as the beginning of his successful career.

"The Aberdeen University Drama Society was my introduction to acting, and by the time I left I had just about enough belief to try and give the profession a go," he said.

Two show-stealing performances in Aberdeen and London paid testament to his talent, with the culmination of the piece marked by his masterly delivery of an extended silver-tongued monologue which drew unmistakable parallels with the spin-obsessed world of 21st Century politics.

With Fiona Kennedy's trademark professional delivery of her share of the narration and Sir Tony handling the rest of the oratory duties, the outstanding quality of the spoken sections was matched by the performance of the Chamber Choir, who under the supervision of Professor Meador, treated the University's alumni family to a variety of festive classics.

These included traditional carols such as 'O Little Town of Bethlehem', a hair-raising capella update of 'Silent Night', and a jazzy riff on 'We Three Kings of Orient Are' before the grand finale, an up-tempo and raucous take on the eponymous 'The Three Ships' that provided a fitting end to a memorable event that helped raise vital funds for ground-breaking research into cancer and dementia.

We are delighted to announce that the Celebration of Carols will return to Aberdeen and London in December this year. More information will be available in the coming weeks. Visit www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni/events

Come heels or HIGH WATER

Dr Heather Morgan, Lecturer in Applied Health Sciences & Aberdeen graduate, knows all too well the hazards of wearing high heels. Despite the overwhelming research showing the damage they do, she - like so many others - refuses to give them up. Along with her colleague Dr Max Barnish, she carried out a review of all the studies into high heels to produce a paper that would become the University's biggest media story of the year. Here she tells the story behind her study.

"As I strode down the road in my favourite black, high-heeled ankle boots, I felt like I had the world at my feet. I adored the 'clack clack clack' they made on the pavement and the extra height and confidence they gave me.

Seconds later there was a terrible crack and I collapsed in a heap - my heel had caught in a pothole, shattering my ankle.

After two operations, three months in bed and a year of physiotherapy, I learned to walk again. However, I was left with nerve damage and two metal plates in my ankle, held in place by 11 screws. Worse, I was told that I wouldn't, indeed shouldn't, wear high heels again. You wouldn't think I'd need persuading but look in my wardrobe and the heels are still there. Not platforms or skyscraper stilettos, but there are heels, some of them four inches high.

Why? Women's fascination with heels is a professional interest of mine, in my work as a social scientist and health researcher. Six years after my agonising fall, I have completed, with my colleague Max Barnish, the first major systematic research, combining health and social factors, into the impact of heels (anything from two inches to four inches) reviewing all the studies done on the subject.

The conclusion of our paper, published in the BMC Public Health Journal, was clear - heels are terrible and beautiful things and they seem to have a hold on wearers that no one can fathom.

Snapped ankles aside, there's a strong link between high heels and everyday musculoskeletal conditions; back pain, bunions and sprains. The longer and more frequently heels are worn, and the higher and narrower they are, the worse they are for your health. Some injuries caused by them, like mine, require hospital treatment.

Yet I, and millions like me, can't give them up. At 5ft 9 it's not that I need them, I just love the way they make me feel. Wearers put up with the risk and discomfort because they make us feel more confident, more beautiful.

There is a fetishisation of feet, shoes and high heels. In heteronormative studies, men shown photos of women can say if they are wearing heels, even if their feet are not in the frame. They also think these women are more attractive.

Some of these studies have found that men are twice as likely to smile at a woman in heels and are also more likely to help her if, for example, she asks a question, or drops something.

However, heels are both controlling and empowering. Not convinced? Historically, it was men who wore heels. They were a symbol of power, of wealth.

Men eventually stopped wearing them because they simply weren't comfortable. Women adopted them in an attempt to gain this power.

The doctors who rebuilt my ankle said they didn't know if I'd walk properly again, or be able to drive. They weren't sure how much nerve damage there would be either. But I've been lucky. I did the physiotherapy religiously and, apart from some loss of sensation, I am fully mobile again.

Given the nature of our study, we expected there would be some media interest but weren't prepared for just how popular it would be. The story was covered everywhere from the UK to the UAE, the Philippines to the US, with Max and I appearing on outlets ranging from BBC Radio Devon to the 'big screen' in the Sky News studio with Kay Burley. In terms of media coverage it was the University's biggest story of 2017.

Whilst we can't directly claim to have contributed in any way, it was interesting to see that our study was covered widely in the Philippines media in the weeks leading up to the government implementing a ban on enforcing female workers to wear heels.

High heels will continue to inspire impassioned debate. I think it is because we associate heels with sex, and sex sells. When I went into the office the day after the research was published, all my colleagues, unsurprisingly, were looking at my feet. I was wearing heels and people asked: 'How can you wear those when you've just said they're bad for you?' I can only explain that I know the risks - better than most, I should say - and I'm making an informed choice. And I've just bought a really lovely new black suede pair, and I am not going to give them up!"



High heels will continue to inspire impassioned debate. I think it is because we associate heels with sex, and sex sells.

RETURN TO GLORY FOR HISTORIC PAINTINGS

A set of centuries-old artworks that have remained hidden from view for decades are being returned to their former glory through a £60,000 restoration project.



L/R: David and Goliath painting pre-restoration, and being restored by Brian McLaughlin at The WASPS Factory, Glasgow

The King's Paintings, otherwise known as the 'Black Paintings' - so-called because of centuries of wear and tear that have obscured the original artwork - are five large paintings that are believed to date back to the 1600s, when they achieved national political significance.

Each painting features an Old Testament scene, including David and Goliath, David and Abigail, The Judgement of Solomon, Solomon and the Queen of Sheba and Jephthah and his Daughter.

Research carried out by Professor John Morrison and Dr Mary Pryor from the University's History of Art Department suggests they were painted as confrontational warnings directed at King Charles II by the Scottish Covenanters during a time of significant political unrest.

The paintings are thought to have found a home at the University of Aberdeen in the 1800s; however, it is unclear where they came from, and how the University came to possess them.

All five paintings were initially stored at King's College Chapel and were moved to Elphinstone Hall in the early 2000s, where they have remained hidden save for a few brief public appearances.

Now, thanks to a £60,000 donation from alumna Anne Harper, the paintings are being fully restored and reframed, which along with the purchase of a new lighting system will allow them to be hung in the Sir Duncan Rice Library.

Anne's desire to see the paintings restored to their former glory goes back to her days as an English student. "I first knew about the paintings when I was an undergraduate from 1969 to 1973 when they were hung in King's College Chapel.

"I later found out that they had been moved to Elphinstone Hall, where they were completely hidden behind curtains.

"At a dinner in Elphinstone Hall I tried to show the paintings to a group of visiting art historians, by lifting a corner of the curtain and using a table lamp.

"That's when I thought there had to be a better way for people to be able to see them."

A breakthrough came when the former Head Librarian at the Sir Duncan Rice Library, Diane Bruxvoort, offered to display them in the library, prompting Anne to make her generous donation. With two of the paintings being readied for display this year and the rest to follow, it is hoped that all five artworks will be on show in 2019.

"These paintings will make a stunning addition to the Library, and I'm looking forward to seeing them returned to their former glory," Anne said.

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Brightest minds to shine at new science teaching hub



Artist's impressions of University of Aberdeen new science teaching hub

Attracting the brightest minds from across the world is at the heart of plans for a new science teaching hub at the University of Aberdeen.

At a cost of £35m, the new building will feature cutting-edge laboratory facilities and flexible teaching space designed for collaboration between students from different disciplines. It will provide the main teaching space for students studying chemistry, physiology, biomedical sciences, geosciences and biological sciences.

The facilities will also support the University's current public engagement and widening access activities, two areas that have grown increasingly important in recent years as the University aims to encourage more schoolchildren into science subjects.

A site has been identified at the University's Old Aberdeen campus for the building - just off St Machar Drive near the Fraser Noble building, Student Hub and Sir Duncan Rice Library.

An official public consultation period got underway last year, during which the University released the first images of the building to an overwhelmingly positive response from students and the local community. It is hoped that the building will be available for teaching in 2021, subject to planning approval.

University Principal, Professor Sir Ian Diamond, said it will transform the learning experience for thousands of students.

"We are extremely excited about the new science teaching hub and the benefits it will bring to the University.

"Overall it will lead to a first-class learning environment for our students and will help us continue to attract the brightest minds from all over the world

to come and study and live in the north-east of Scotland."

Vice-Principal Professor Phil Hannaford, who leads the project, added: "One of the main features of the new building is the highly flexible space which will encourage cross-disciplinary teaching.

"Not only will our own students benefit, but the flexible space will also enhance our public engagement and widening access activities such as school visits and workshops, helping to encourage more children into science subjects.

"Society's biggest problems will only be solved by scientists from different disciplines working together, and these new open-plan laboratories will provide an environment where science students from different disciplines can be taught together in a collaborative setting, similar to the situation often found in their subsequent careers."

LEARNING SCOTLAND'S STORY HERE, ANYWHERE...

Telling the story of Scots who left their homeland for a new life has been the focus of Professor Marjory Harper's academic career, and is now a key element of a unique new degree that is being offered by the University of Aberdeen.



Professor Marjory Harper, University of Aberdeen

As the first online degree of its type, the University's MLitt in Scottish Heritage has been devised to offer those with an interest in Scotland's heritage, history and culture the opportunity to study towards a qualification in the subject.

With the growth in popularity of online learning, the University now offers a range of flexible degrees that can be studied anywhere in the world, and students from Australia, Canada, the US and Switzerland are among the first cohort to study towards the MLitt in Scottish Heritage.

One of the four core courses in the programme is The Scottish Diaspora, and some of the initial intake of students are either emigrants themselves, or descendants of those who left Scotland for a new life.

As programme co-ordinator, Professor Harper was initially concerned that it might be difficult for students spread around the world to form a bond in an online setting.

However, she has been delighted at their eagerness to collaborate. "One of the challenges in setting up an online programme is to address the potential for students feeling isolated," she explained.

"But the students have been brilliant in engaging with each other and creating their own community, especially on the discussion boards.

"A group of them have planned to visit Aberdeen from as far afield as Canada and Australia, to meet each other and some of us involved in delivering the programme, which is really exciting.

"I've also been helped enormously by colleagues in our eLearning team who have been instrumental in helping me shape the course into a form that looks great in online delivery."

Professor Harper has written a number of books on emigration and the diaspora, and her latest, 'Testimonies of Transition', is an oral history of the diaspora in the 20th century.

The popularity of the subject has grown in recent years, but Professor Harper points out that the course is only one component in a programme that embraces the much wider concept of Scotland's heritage.

"History is an important part of the programme, but by no means the only part," she said.

"Because it's a course in Scottish Heritage, we have the flexibility to incorporate other disciplines such as History of Art - which includes photography and built heritage - and philosophy and literature.

"And because it's delivered online it has an inbuilt flexibility that is attractive to those who wish to combine their studies with employment or other responsibilities. Its flexibility is its strength."

For more information on the online MLitt in Scottish Heritage visit www.abdn.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-taught

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES IN QATAR



Her Excellency Dr Sheika Aisha bint Faleh bin Nasser Al-Thani

A commitment to creating educational opportunities for women lies at the heart of the University of Aberdeen's first international campus in Qatar, a fact underlined by Her Excellency Dr Sheikha Aisha bint Faleh bin Nasser Al-Thani when she visited Aberdeen to speak at the University's annual International Women's Day Conference earlier this year.

As Chairperson and founder of the Al-Faleh Educational Group, the University's partner in the project, Shiekha Aisha is behind an initiative to provide more higher education opportunities for Qatari nationals.

Following its opening last year, 120 students have enrolled to study business degrees at the campus in Doha, the majority of whom are female.

The importance of providing such opportunities was outlined by Shiekha Aisha on her first ever visit to Aberdeen, where as well as opening the University's new Centre for Women's Health Research, she spoke under the theme of this year's International Women's Day, 'Press for Progress'.

Addressing the audience at the University's King's College Conference Centre, she said: "Education is one of the most powerful tools for the empowerment of women and a catalyst for economic and social change.

"I do believe that providing education for girls and women has helped level the playing field, but across the globe a distinct gender gap still exists at all levels of education."



Education is one of the most powerful tools for the empowerment of women and a catalyst for economic and social change.

Having overseen educational reforms in Qatar, Sheika Aisha has played a key role in enhancing opportunities for women in the Gulf state. However, providing better access to education is one element of an approach she believes societies should adopt to maximise their potential, as she explained in her speech.

"Women represent an important source of energy for the economy, and women's employment should be a crucial element in macroeconomic policy," she said.

"Special policies should be created to create employment opportunities for women and create institutional mechanisms that promote success.

"A system of infrastructural support for working women should be promoted and implemented, such as family policies including flexible hours, parental leave and the establishment of nurseries in the workplace.

"In addition, women should have access to professional development in areas that are most effective in a knowledge-based economy."

Elements of this vision are in evidence at the University's Doha campus, where the second phase of the project includes the planned construction of a new larger campus capable of including a range of other schools, including medical sciences and engineering.

Professor Richard Wells, the University's Vice-Principal for Internationalisation, has played a key role in establishing the University's first overseas campus.

He said: "Sheikha Aisha's drive and enthusiasm for education has been an inspiration to me, and I look forward to continuing the journey together as we move towards the next phase of our plans for the University of Aberdeen in Qatar."

TRANSFORMING HEALTHCARE SAVING LIVES

Medical Research at the University of Aberdeen

Since our medical school first opened its doors in 1497, the University has been a global innovator in the fields of medicine and medical science. From the discovery of insulin to the construction of the world's first whole-body MRI scanner, our research has led where others have followed.

Over the centuries, the University's reputation for the highest quality research has attracted exceptional talent to Aberdeen. Today, as the University builds for its future, medicine remains at the heart of our ambitious plans. At our Foresterhill medical campus, our community of researchers continues to put us on the global map.

Giving - on all scales, large and small - has always played a vital role in the success of medical research at Aberdeen. Right now we are developing five programmes designed to confront some of the world's most pressing problems, and your valued support, through the University of Aberdeen Development Trust, will play a vital role in accelerating progress, helping Aberdeen continue to transform and save lives through medical research.

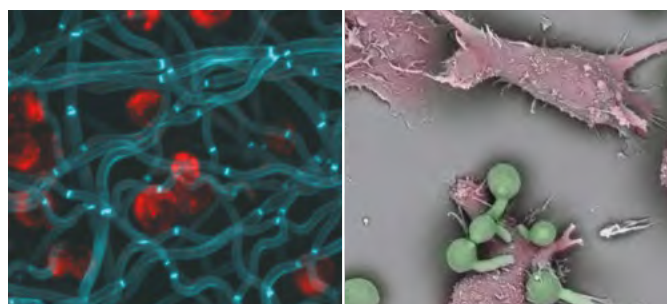
Tackling Cancer > We plan to establish a leading Cancer Research Programme here in Aberdeen, which will support the NHS in transforming the lives of thousands of people living with cancer. Developing this programme in the heart of one of Europe's largest healthcare campuses will enable our researchers to work closely with clinical staff and patients, ensuring our research meets their needs. Our scientists are at the leading edge in a range of cancer specialisms and we aim to accelerate this vital research to improve how cancer is diagnosed, treated and prevented.

Fighting Fungal Superbugs > In the UK, fungal infections cause more deaths than MRSA and E. coli, while globally they kill more people than malaria. Aberdeen is recognised as a world leader in the fight against fungal superbugs. Our work will combine the development of novel treatments and diagnostics with the training of a new generation of medical professionals, including those from the worst-affected regions of the world. This will provide the medical skills and treatments that are so desperately needed to fight deadly infections in sub-Saharan Africa, South America and Southeast Asia.

Transforming Medical Teaching > Everyone deserves good healthcare. However, failures do occur, often from poor communication or inefficient systems. Improved and targeted training of medical staff will help address these challenges, but only if based on rigorous research. The University is recognised as an international leader in medical education research, and our insights have influenced healthcare policy globally. Now we plan to grow our team, with the ambition of helping produce the best doctors - and the safest healthcare - across the globe. Through our new 'GP-enhanced' medical degree, our Gateway 2 Medicine scholarships and our targeted research, we will also help to counter the urgent UK-wide shortage of GPs and support those from less privileged backgrounds to study medicine.

Relieving the Burden of Osteoarthritis > Treatments for osteoarthritis are so limited that often major surgery is the only option. Our innovative research is seeking to avoid this with plans to revolutionise the treatment of osteoarthritis in two ways. Firstly, by identifying the many types of osteoarthritis and how to diagnose them at the earliest possible stage; and secondly, by developing and testing drugs and therapies specific to each type of the disease. In doing this we aim to usher in a new era in the treatment of osteoarthritis.

A New Approach to Women's Health > Here in Aberdeen we are pioneering a new approach to women's healthcare, focusing on areas which have the greatest impact on women's lives, such as fertility, miscarriage, post-menopausal health and female cancers. Whereas most research and healthcare addresses these areas in isolation, our approach is holistic, identifying the best ways to deliver effective and personalised care throughout a woman's life. Our aim is to develop a world-class research centre, located within NHS Grampian's new Baird Family Hospital.





IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR MEDICAL RESEARCH OR WAYS TO SUPPORT US, WE WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO HEAR FROM YOU.

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ABERDEEN'S MEDICAL PHYSICS EXPERTISE CREATES FAMILY TIES



Elina Stamatelatos, Medical Physics student, who has followed in her father's footsteps

For half a century the University of Aberdeen's Medical Physics department has built up a global reputation for excellence. The birthplace of the first full body MRI scanner, today it leads a pan-European project to develop the next generation of Fast Field Cycling MRI machines, attracting students from around the world.

The department will celebrate its 50th anniversary with a special reunion event that takes place at the University later this year, featuring a range of speakers from past and present.

Among those invited is former student Ion Stamatelatos from Greece, who graduated in 1984. He has such warm memories of his time in Aberdeen that it helped encourage his daughter Elina to follow in his footsteps 34 years later.

"The fact my father had done this programme and his positive response gave me confidence that my choice was correct," she said.

"There is a tradition in medical physics at Aberdeen, so for a student who chooses to study medical physics it is a perfect choice.

"The course was very intense and I had to work hard, but the knowledge I have gained makes it well worth the effort."

Elina's father Ion, who is currently head of a nuclear research reactor lab in Athens, said the early 80's was an exciting time to be a medical physics student in Aberdeen, corresponding with the University's development of the first full body MRI scanner to be put into clinical use.

"The most exciting research was being produced in Aberdeen at that time," he said. "It was a great privilege to have the opportunity to attend lectures by pioneers such as Professor Mallard, Dr Hutchinson, Dr Evans, Dr Ettinger and Dr Sharp to mention just a few.

"But it was not only hard work. I did a lot of hiking trips and enjoyed the Scottish countryside a lot. I also learned at a first-hand the unpredictability of the Scottish weather! I will always remember the warmth and hospitality of the home of Dr Noel Evans and his wife Mrs Catherine Evans during my stay in Aberdeen.

"However, there is no doubt that the highlight was meeting my wife Anthi, during the Aberdeen Youth Festival in the summer of 1984. So, Elina is connected to Aberdeen from two sides!"

The Medical Physics department reunion event will take place at the University on Friday November 2, 2018. Organisers are keen to hear from former staff and students who want to come along. To register please email bmp50@abdn.ac.uk

Volunteering

Organising a reunion is just one of the many ways that our volunteers help alumni stay connected with the University, and with each other. We currently have a variety of diverse volunteering roles available, including:

Opportunity Provider > help open up opportunities for our students. Provide a work placement or mentor a current student.

Profile Raiser > help raise the profile of the University by allowing us to showcase you. Appear in Voice magazine, speak at one of our events, or be profiled in our prospectus.

Recruitment Ambassador > help encourage the next generation of students to study at the University. Attend a recruitment event, visit your old school, or provide a short video testimonial about your time here.

Advisory Ambassador > become an Advisory Ambassador and sit on one of our committees or boards. These include the Business Committee of the General Council or one of our many advisory boards.

Student Experience Ambassador > help our students have the best experience they can by providing additional support to those that require it. Mentor students who have joined us through the clearing programme or provide support to those who are having a challenging time.

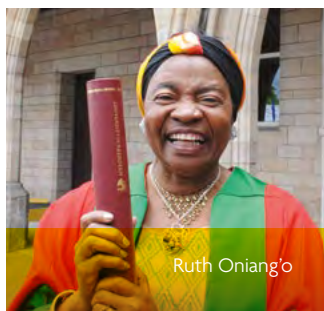
Network Ambassador > help us maintain and build lasting relationships with our alumni around the world. Set up a Chapter or an informal group and socialise with alumni in your area.

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A VOLUNTEER FOR THE UNIVERSITY?

Email: alumni@abdn.ac.uk

Thank you to all of you that have already volunteered your time!

Honorary Graduates Summer 2018



Ruth Oniang'o

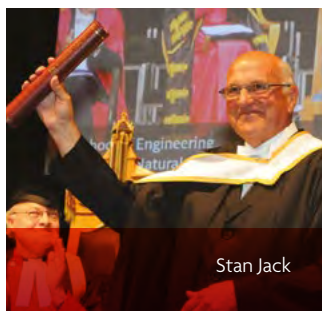
Ruth Oniang'o

A decades-long commitment to minimising poverty and hunger in Africa is a guiding mission for Professor Ruth Oniang'o, who received the honorary degree of Doctor of Science this summer.

As a leading academic voice in matters of healthcare, agricultural research, and food and nutrition security, her tireless work has helped generate decisions that have had global impact and seen her act as Africa's 'voice' at international conferences including the World Food Summit.

As Kenya's first ever Professor in Nutrition, she helped create the Rural Outreach Program, a not-for-profit initiative recognised by the United Nations that has transformed the lives of many poor families by helping them grow nutritious foods that are disease-resistant and climate-resilient.

Addressing her fellow graduates, she encouraged them to be "positive and confident", and to "strive to go beyond your call of duty if you wish to make an impact in people's lives."



Stan Jack

Stan Jack

Old Aberdeen welcomed back a 'weel kent' face as former Sacrist Stan Jack was awarded the honorary degree of Master of the University in recognition of his 16 years' service.

Stan, who retired last year, joined the University in 2001 after a 30-year career with Grampian Police.

As Sacrist, Stan estimates that he's gowned between 25-30,000 students at 256 graduation ceremonies, not to mention the countless couples he has helped tie the knot at King's College as part of his wide range of duties.

In his graduation address, Stan paid tribute to his former work colleagues and had some words of encouragement for today's graduates.

"There's much you could say about life but I always think you cannot ask more of anyone than to be the best they can be," he said.

"Whatever challenges you face after today whether in education, in work, in sport or in your personal lives, if you can say to yourself I have been the best I can be you will succeed."



Sheena Blackhall

Sheena Blackhall

A tireless devotion to the Doric dialect saw Sheena Blackhall receive the honorary degree of Master of the University.

As one of the north-east of Scotland's leading literary figures and a champion of the dialect that is synonymous with the area, Sheena is a renowned poet, novelist, illustrator and singer, who has published numerous novellas, short story collections, and poetry pamphlets.

A Deeside native and Aberdeen graduate, Sheena is the first Makar for Aberdeen and North-East Scotland, and a Fellow in Creative Writing in Scots at the Elphinstone Institute, the University's centre for the study of Ethnology, Folklore, and Ethnomusicology.

Performing in Doric to her fellow graduates, Sheena sang a chorus from 'The Auldest Aberdonian' by Harry Gordon, followed by one of her own poems, 'Allt Darrarie...Burn of the Stunning Noise'.

Paying tribute to her in Doric as he gave her laureation address, Dr Tom McKean, Director of the University's Elphinstone Institute, said: "She represents the best o north-east identity an dis it wi style, confidence, perception, an grace."

ABERDEEN FAMILY SAYS GOODBYE TO DAME TESSA JOWELL

The University has paid tribute to alumna and honorary graduate Dame Tessa Jowell, who passed away in May this year following a year-long battle with brain cancer.

Educated at St Margaret's School for Girls in Aberdeen, Dame Tessa graduated with an MA from the University in 1968. Her father had been a consultant and Reader in Medicine at the University and her brother, the late Dr James Palmer, was a fellow Aberdeen graduate.

Paying tribute to her legacy as a leading politician and charitable campaigner, Professor Sir Ian Diamond, Principal, said the University community was "deeply saddened" to have lost one of its most highly regarded graduates. "Her connections with the University were strong, and we would echo many of the statements made regarding her approachability, helpfulness and humanity," he said. "We are immensely proud of her association with the University and were greatly honoured when she accepted an honorary degree in 2016."



Dame Tessa Jowell



Making memories at Summer Graduations 2018



Christian Hristov

Making the most of his time at university has been a guiding principle for economics graduate Christian Hristov.

As a University athlete and sports bursar, some of Christian's most memorable experiences have come on the track, including medal success in this year's Scottish University Championships, where he won two bronze medals in the 60m and 200m sprint events, and a gold in the 4x200m relay.

Balancing the demands of training, competition, work and study hasn't been easy, but Christian, who was born and raised in Rome to Bulgarian parents, wouldn't have had it any other way.

"I've been told that I work and train too much, but I think it's important to stretch yourself to achieve.

"My message to current students is work very hard for what you truly want and always have faith, be positive and believe."





Julie Mortimer

As a mum of two and a full-time carer to her disabled daughter, teaching graduate Julie Mortimer has overcome significant challenges to fulfil her ambition of becoming a primary school teacher.

As a distance learning student, Julie has balanced the demands of her course with a full-time job and her responsibilities as a carer to nine-year-old daughter Naomi.

But despite these challenges, Julie is now looking forward to starting life as a teacher at a school near her home in Kirriemuir, Angus.

“My passion, drive and determination has helped me achieve my goal, and it was an exhilarating feeling to complete the course,” she said.

“Next month I will be celebrating my 40th birthday. They say that life begins at 40, and I’m now looking forward to the next chapter of my life as a primary school teacher.”



Lyn Ajanaku

From the Seychelles to London and then to Inch in Aberdeenshire, Lyn Ajanaku has journeyed far in life.

The mother-of-two, who arrived at the University of Aberdeen as a mature student, marked another step on that journey when she graduated with a law degree in June.

Now looking forward to a new career in dispute resolution, she described sharing her graduation experience with her family as “an amazing feeling.”

News from our campus



Aberdeen Welcomes New Principal

The University of Aberdeen has appointed Professor George Boyne as its new Principal and Vice-Chancellor, from August 2018.

Professor Boyne, who leaves his position as Pro Vice-Chancellor at Cardiff University to succeed Sir Ian Diamond, is a world-leading expert on the performance of public sector organisations with an eminent track record as a University leader.

Originally from Aberdeen, Professor Boyne is a double graduate of the University and has spent the majority of his academic career in Wales.

Describing his appointment as a “great honour”, Professor Boyne said: “The University has had an outstanding record of academic achievement for over 500 years and is recognised as a prized educational, social and economic asset for the city of Aberdeen and the whole of Scotland.

“I am looking forward to leading the University in its ambitions to be inclusive, inter-disciplinary and international in reach and quality across the full range of its teaching and research.”

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 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. The General Council holds two meetings annually (in May and December) which any member can attend.

To register your interest in the General Council, or for any other alumni query, please email alumni@abdn.ac.uk

Stay in touch... Action Required!

Do we have your up-to-date email address? If we do, have you confirmed we can still contact you on it?

If the answer to either of these is 'no', please help us stay in touch with you via email by going to www.abdn.ac.uk/stayintouch

Thank You



Cancer research cycle raises more than £25k

A team of cyclists from the University of Aberdeen completed the North Coast 500, raising more than £25,000 to support cancer research in the process.

The team was joined by record breaking round-the-world cyclist Mark Beaumont on the trip around Scotland's northern coastline.



They completed the journey in nine days and even stopped to hold cancer research and information evenings along the route. The funds will go towards the University's drive to raise £4.5million to recruit a new world-class cancer research team in Aberdeen.

Professor Steve Heys, who led the team, said: “It has been a fantastic experience and a stern challenge. We've seen some of the very best scenery Scotland has to offer and raised important funds to support cancer research that will benefit the whole region.”

Alumni Blog

Keep up with the achievements of your fellow alumni by following our alumni blog. Visit www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni/blog

We would love to hear about your achievements for our next update. If you would like to be included please email alumni@abdn.ac.uk

Medical students scale Three Peaks Challenge



Thirteen Aberdeen medical students took on the foot-blistering challenge of scaling the three highest peaks in Scotland, England and Wales within 24 hours to support cancer research.

The National Three Peaks Challenge saw the team from Aberdeen Medical Society climb more than 10,000ft up Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon, as part of the University's ongoing effort to raise £4.5million to establish a world-leading cancer research team.

Graduates shine in the Gold Coast

This summer's Commonwealth Games in Australia's Gold Coast brought its fair share of dramatic moments, several of which came courtesy of University of Aberdeen alumni.

Cycling star Neil Fachie MBE helped win Team Scotland's first gold medal of the Games in the Men's Para-Sport Blind & Visually Impaired (B&VI) Tandem 1000m Time Trial, picking up another gold in the Men's B&VI Sprint event.

There was medal success for sharpshooter Neil Stirton, who won silver in the Men's 50m Rifle Prone.

Meanwhile, track star Zoey Clark narrowly missed out on a medal, as Team Scotland's Women's 4x400m Relay team came in fourth place, despite breaking the Scottish record. It was a similar story for Karen Darke MBE, who came fourth in the Paratriathlon.

Kelsey Stewart, who holds a Sports Bursary from the University and trains



Zoey Clark (far left) and Kelsey Stewart (3rd from left) flying the flag for Team Scotland at this year's Commonwealth Games

at Aberdeen Sports Village, narrowly missed out on competing in the 4x400m Relay Final. Despite her disappointment, the 20-year-old Exercise and Health Science student said the experience was invaluable to her development as an athlete.

"This experience is going to make me a stronger athlete and I am really excited for the future," she said.

"I was really grateful for the support of the University in the lead up to the Games and I feel really lucky to be part of such a great sports bursary scheme."

50% OFF

 UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

Graduating from the University of Aberdeen in 2018? ASV will honour your Student Lifestyle Membership cost of £23 per month* for 12 months after you graduate!

With access to the gym, over 100 exercise classes, Olympic standard 25m & 50m pools, diving, sauna, steam room, squash and track - you have until the 30th September to sign up to 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!**

Aberdeen Sports Village 

Linksfield Road, Aberdeen AB24 5RU
01224 438900 | info@aberdeensportsvillage.com

 [aberdeensportsvillage](https://www.facebook.com/aberdeensportsvillage)   [asvabd](https://www.instagram.com/asvabd)

www.aberdeensportsvillage.com

University of Aberdeen 2018 graduates only*

Upcoming EVENTS

OCTOBER 2018

- Interfaith Kirking event



JANUARY 2019

- Statutory Meeting of the General Council

APRIL 2019

- Run Balmoral
- New York Tartan Day Parade



SEPTEMBER 2018

- > **20 September** - Ladies' Lunch
- Alumni Gin tasting event in London



NOVEMBER 2018

- > **5 November** - Bonfire Night reception
- > **11 November** - Remembrance Sunday Service
- Alumni reception in Germany
- Alumni gathering in Brussels

DECEMBER 2018

- > **17 & 18 December** - Celebration of Carols in Aberdeen
- > **19 December** - Celebration of Carols in London

FEBRUARY 2019

- Founders' Day Service



MAY 2019

- May Festival
- Statutory Meeting of the General Council
- Donor Discovery Day

MARCH 2019

- Incorporated Trades Service
- Corporate Scholars' Reception

FOR MORE INFORMATION
ON OUR UPCOMING
EVENTS, KEEP AN EYE ON
[www.abdn.ac.uk/
alumni/events](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni/events)

- Date to be confirmed - check www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni/events for updates

Ancient Egypt on tour

The University of Aberdeen's collection of 6,000 Egyptian archaeology items is the second largest collection in Scotland, spanning all periods of Egyptian archaeology. A new exhibition, 'Egypt: Land of the Pharaohs', is currently underway in Canada. Here we discover more about this exciting collection...

Last year, treasures from the University's museum collections took centre stage in a major exhibition at the Lokschuppen Exhibition Centre in Rosenheim, near Munich.

'Pharaoh: Life in Ancient Egypt' was one of the most successful exhibitions ever held at the Lokschuppen, with over 170,000 visits to what is widely considered as one of the most important visitor attractions in southern Germany.

Now a major international travelling exhibition, its first stop is the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria, Canada, where it is on display until the end of 2018.

As in Germany, the exhibition features almost 150 items from the University's

stunning collection, including major highlights such as the 4,000 year old wooden coffin of royal official Nakht and a statue of the scribe Rahotep.

Some of the most important material was collected by Robert Wilson (1787-1871) who graduated in Medicine from Marischal College, and another Aberdeen doctor, James Grant (1840-1896), whose reputation as a physician in Cairo led the Khedive of Egypt to grant him the honorific title of 'Bey'.

Other material was acquired through the University's support of the work of the Egypt Exploration Society and the British School of Archaeology in Egypt.

Head of Museums and Special Collections at the University, Neil Curtis, said: "The loan to Rosenheim was the largest loan of museum items in our history, and it is testament to the quality of the University's collection that so many items were borrowed, even though the resulting logistics have been complex!"

Many of the same items are now on display in Canada, including the wooden coffin of Nakht which dates to the Middle Kingdom (2000-1700 BC) and was discovered in Beni Hasan, Middle Egypt, by Professor John Garstang in the 1900s.

"The exterior of Nakht's coffin mimics a palace, creating a dignified house for eternity," Neil explained. "From the inside, Nakht can peer through a pair of eyes to see each dawn and join in the sun god's regeneration.

"Before being out on display, the coffin was conserved by Jens Klocke, a specialist conservator based in Hildesheim. Having been damaged by wet rot, it was very fragile, but it has been stabilised and made fit to begin its international journey."

Following its stint at the Royal British Columbia Museum, the exhibition is scheduled to move to the Cincinnati Museum Center in the US in 2019, with other North American venues being planned.

"The University's museum collections are renowned worldwide, and this exhibition continues to enhance our reputation for making remarkable items accessible to the public," Neil said. "We are now looking forward to it attracting many hundreds of thousands of visits while on its North American tour over the next few years."



ROYAL BRITISH COLUMBIA MUSEUM \$3 OFF *ADULT ADMISSION

Present this coupon to receive \$3 off adult admission to the Royal BC Museums feature exhibition Egypt: The Time of Pharaohs.

* Valid for \$3 off adult admission. One (1) coupon per person. Must be presented at time of purchase. In person purchases only. Not valid online. Not valid for IMAX Theatre. Not valid with any other offer. Not valid for membership. Expires December 31, 2018.



TOGETHER WE CAN SAVE LIVES THROUGH CANCER RESEARCH – IN ABERDEEN AND AROUND THE WORLD.

The University of Aberdeen plans to develop a world-class Cancer Research Programme. Our scientists are already at the leading edge in a range of different cancer specialisms. But we want to do so much more. Our £4.5 million fundraising appeal will accelerate vital research to improve how cancer is diagnosed and treated – and, critically, how it can be prevented.

Now we need your help.

Together we can transform cancer research in North East Scotland and, in doing so, enhance the excellent care that cancer patients already receive from our outstanding NHS teams.

Naomi's Story

Cancer can be a word filled with fear, dread and deep sadness. Nobody knows that more than Naomi Robertson-Murray. Having lost her mum to cancer when she was a teenager, Naomi herself was diagnosed with breast cancer in October 2016. Thankfully, after months of treatment Naomi received the fantastic news that she is cancer-free. The mum of four-year old Layla and her husband Neil have now committed to raising funds for our Cancer Research Programme.

Naomi said “It was a huge relief for me when I got the news I was cancer-free. I want more people who have cancer to have that feeling, which is why I am fundraising for the University’s Cancer Research Programme. It will be a great thing to have in Aberdeen.”

Please join Naomi in supporting our Cancer Research Programme.

For more information, to arrange a tour of our research facilities, or to discuss how you would like to support our cancer research, please visit www.abdn.ac.uk/giving/cancer, telephone Cara Baird on +44 (0)1224 273278 or email c.baird@abdn.ac.uk. To give online today visit www.abdn.ac.uk/giving/cancer.

Thank you.