



UNIVERSITY  
OF ABERDEEN

# VOICE

CONVERSATION & NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

AUTUMN/WINTER 2014

## **PASSING ON THE BATON**

Zoey Clark picks it up

## **DIFFERENT DANCING**

Cha-cha-changing the future

## **COME HERE, GO ANYWHERE**

But where do they go?

## **TRANSFORMING THE CAMPUS**

Our big investment

## **REMEMBERING**

The University's contribution  
to the First World War



## FEATURES

- 1** A word from the Principal

---

- 2/3** Passing on the baton

---

- 4/5** Cha-cha-changing the future

---

- 6/7** Making a splash

---

- 8/9** Transforming the campus

---

- 10/11** Image of the future

---

- 12/13** Remembering the University's First World War

---

- 14/17** Celebrating Success

---

- 18/19** Technology Family

---

- 20/21** Try, try, try again

---

- 22/23** Festival fun

---

- 24/25** Memory lane for sweethearts

---

- 26/29** News round-up

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## VOICE

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**An international family –  
and a unique student experience**

# A word from the Principal

I write this at the end of a remarkable summer for Scotland, and a year at the University in which we have made great strides in our priorities.

We now know what the people of Scotland have decided for their future constitutional arrangements, although it is too early to know the full implications for Scotland's higher education sector.

What is certain, however, is that, as our global positioning and reputation grows – the most recent QS and Times Higher Education world rankings saw Aberdeen rise further up the league table – the mission of this great University remains to be ranked among the world's top institutions of learning and research, providing an unrivalled student experience and research which makes a difference in the world.

Two topics I would like to draw special attention to are our strategy for internationalisation, and our commitment to continually seeking ways to improve the experience our students gain, both of which benefit hugely from the support and involvement of our wider University family.

We are working to embed a culture of internationalisation across all our activities – and in so doing enhance our reputation as a global University. Our international students and alumni benefit our whole community, and confirm the global outlook not only of our University but of our city and region. But this is only part of the story, because we all need to be 'international'. Broadening horizons is an important priority for us, and global citizenship an attribute we want all our students to gain. This is why we are increasing opportunities for travel, exchanges and work placements, so that all students gain a global outlook from the start of their studies.

To help grow further the diversity of our community here on campus we have introduced a number of special support initiatives for students arriving from overseas. We are also keen that bright students from anywhere in the world take advantage of a new opportunity to apply for one of 100 Elphinstone Research Scholarships, commemorating the legacy of our founder who died 500 years ago this year.

Underpinning all that we do is to constantly look at how we can make the student experience ever better, and fundamental to that is listening and working with our student community to take forward their ideas on how we can enhance their time at Aberdeen.

Great teaching flourishes in an environment of research and discovery, and we will hear before Christmas how the quality and impact of our research programmes have been assessed in the recent UK Research Excellence Framework. Our submission was a strong one, reflecting well the breadth and depth of research activity at the University.

New developments this year include bringing forward the start of the academic year in September. This allows winter exams to be



Principal with  
honorary  
graduate  
Michael Loggie

finished by Christmas, so that students get a more stress-free break over the festive period. All students now have a personal tutor to provide pastoral support and can create their own curriculum online. Meanwhile our Careers Service is working with employers on many opportunities to aid employability.

Nowhere is our transformation more visible than on campus. The Aberdeen Aquatics Centre has further enhanced the Aberdeen Sports Village and we are now firmly ranked by students in the top 10 for sports facilities. Student accommodation has undergone extensive refurbishment at Hillhead village and we are working with students to take forward an £8 million renovation of the Butchart building to completely transform this building to create a popular Student Union in the time-honoured tradition.

The Butchart renovation is part of the next 10-year £300m programme of investment in our campus, which you can read more about in this issue of Voice. By 2025 we will have invested more than half a billion pounds over 20 years in our built environment.

Supporting all our achievement is the warmth and support of our wider University family, including the invaluable benefits of philanthropy which are absolutely key to achieving our ambition for the future.

Our community grows in strength, underpinned by our commitment to equality and diversity. A wonderful example of this is Project SEARCH, a new collaborative project which is succeeding in increasing the number of people with learning disabilities entering employment. With the graduation of our first group of trainees, the Project SEARCH Aberdeen team has been recognised at national and European level, and within the higher education sector, for what it has achieved in changing lives.

On a sad note we have lost some dear members of our University family over the year. Students and staff were deeply saddened by the loss of our Rector, Dr Maitland Mackie, who died in June, shortly after the death of his wife Dr Halldis Mackie. We also lost former Principal, Professor George McNicol, who steered the University through challenging times in the 1980s and undoubtedly helped lay the foundation for the success and reputation of the University today.

Looking to the future, I am determined that we participate fully in the conversations which will lead to a re-energised Scotland and United Kingdom, recognised for a powerful higher education sector at the heart of tackling global challenges. Here at Aberdeen we are in a great place with great people to address and influence this agenda.

Our University family, spread as it is across the globe, will continue to be our most precious and unique asset and absolutely key to achieving our ambitions.

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

# Passing on the baton



Zoey Clark (picture courtesy of Bobby Gavin)

**“I was in the tunnel, just about to step into the arena. As they announced the Scottish team I could hear the roar of the fans shouting and screaming. Suddenly I felt butterflies in my stomach. It was like nothing I’d ever heard before in my entire life.”**



**Z**oey Clark describes the moments before she ran for her country in the 4x400m relay at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games this summer.

The 2nd year Chemical Engineering student ran the final leg for her team, and although Scotland narrowly missed out on a place in the final, it was clearly an experience that will stay with her for the rest of her life.

“It was definitely a once in a lifetime event. Regardless of how many events I go to in the future, I don’t think I’ll ever experience anything like that.

“At the start I was completely focussed and in my own zone, but as soon as I overtook another athlete and I heard that scream from the Scottish fans it was a bit overwhelming, and it pushed me on maybe a little bit too quickly too soon. It definitely affects you, no doubt about that.

“Just being part of Team Scotland at a Glasgow games was an amazing experience. It was a bit of a blur to be honest, but what I’ll take away from it is the feeling of team spirit, of roaring on the other athletes and a feeling of all being in it together.”

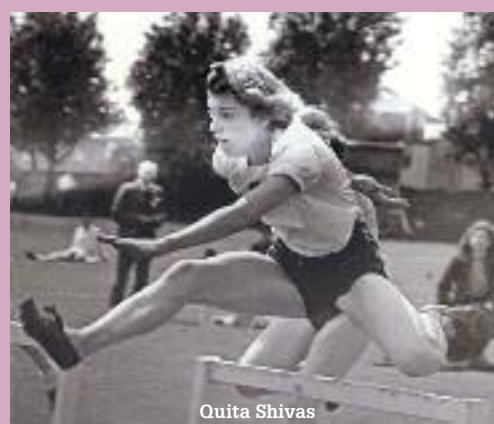
Zoey, who receives the John Robertson Sports Scholarship,

cites the support of her coach Eddie McKenna and the opening of the Aberdeen Sports Village in 2009 as significant factors in her development.

Reaching the finals of any major sporting event is a massive achievement for any athlete, but to do it whilst still in full-time study makes it even more remarkable.

“It’s not easy. I have to be very organised. But in that sense it almost helps because I’ve got the discipline. If I know I’ve got a limited time, I make the most of it, and I’m more productive. It works well for me.”

Zoey’s story is not dissimilar to a student athlete who attended the University more than 60 years ago this year. Quita Shivas’ sporting legacy is now supporting student athletes of the future.



**Quita Shivas** began her athletics career on the University of Aberdeen’s King’s College playing fields, proving her prowess nationally and internationally in the late 1940s.

While studying for her Bachelor of Medicine, (MChB) she emerged as an outstanding natural sprinter and hurdler and won numerous international honours.

In 1950, Quita became British Women’s Amateur Athletic Association 60m champion and a year later, she topped her student athletics career with a gold medal in the 100yds at the World Student Games in Luxembourg in 1951.

A year after graduating she received the ultimate sporting honour by being picked to represent Great Britain at the Helsinki Olympics in 1952, becoming the country’s first

woman doctor to run in the world’s greatest sporting event. A letter from HRH the Duke of Edinburgh confirmed her place in Helsinki, where she narrowly missed out in her heat,

coming third to the eventual bronze medal winner Shirley Strickland from Australia.

Following the Olympics Quita retired from athletics and concentrated on her medical career as an anaesthetist, settling in Melrose with her husband Stuart Barber and daughter Judith.

Earlier this year Judith planted a tree at the edge of King’s College playing fields in her memory and also established the Quita Shivas Athletics Scholarship through the University of Aberdeen Development Trust. It is hoped that this award will inspire the recipient to reach their full potential in athletics and maybe one day also represent their country at the world’s ultimate sporting event.

If you would like to support talented students through sports scholarships contact the Development Trust at [giving@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:giving@abdn.ac.uk).



Kristina Rihanoff and Robin Windsor in action on the dancefloor



Charles Bain and Professor Matteo Zanda

## MAKING THE DIFFERENCE

The fundraising effort spearheaded by Charles Bain is enabling the University's Neuroscience Imaging Team to be at the forefront of the fight against dementia.

The team has made significant progress in utilising brain imaging techniques to detect the early signs of diseases leading to the condition in older people.

Led by Professor Matteo Zanda, researchers use experimental diagnostics for early detection of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. Professor Zanda said the money raised had enabled the purchase of equipment which has significantly speeded up the process of identifying key changes in the brain using tracers.

The *Funny Memories* night led to the purchase of a Mass Spectrometer, used in Positron Emission Tomography (PET) imaging for the analysis of tracers, which are radioactive diagnostic molecules, and an HPLC which is used for the identification, isolation and purification of tracers.

*Different Dancing Memories* contributed to the cost of a FASTLAB, a new generation reactor which is more efficient and capable of accommodating new tracers as they are developed.

Professor Zanda said: "I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Charles Bain and all those who have supported his fundraising effort.

"The equipment purchased as a result has significantly advanced the work we are doing in trying to understand Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia."

If you would like to find out more about supporting research at the University of Aberdeen visit the Development Trust's website at [www.abdn.ac.uk/giving](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/giving) or email [giving@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:giving@abdn.ac.uk)

Judges at Different Dancing memories



Competing couples with the professional dancers

# Cha-cha-changing the future of dementia research

Company Director Charles Bain never went to university and says the only degree he has is 'in common sense', so if someone had suggested to him five years ago that he'd become a dedicated fundraiser for academic research, he admits he'd probably have laughed.

Fast forward to 2014 and Charles has raised more than £100,000 for the University of Aberdeen and enabled the purchase of three vital pieces of research equipment.

He can now utter phrases such as 'Positron Emission Tomography' off the tip of his tongue and knows not only why these tracers are significant, but how much equipment to detect them costs. Charles has dedicated the last five years to organising spectacular fundraising nights in support of dementia research and brain imaging, an area in which Aberdeen has led the way since John Mallard first developed the MRI scanner. His efforts and donations to the University of Aberdeen Development Trust have led to the purchase of three pieces of equipment vital to making breakthroughs in the early detection of Alzheimer's disease.

But while his events have become legendary for their great entertainment, it was the painful experience of losing several close relatives to dementia which drove him to want to 'make a difference'.

Charles explains that his fundraising journey began when his father was diagnosed with dementia in 2006. "It was devastating but I was determined to keep him at home as long as possible – even fitting him with a tracking device so we could find him if he wandered off.

"By 2008, he had deteriorated to the stage where residential care was required, however I still wanted to take him out and about. He was unable to get into my car and I was shocked to find the care home he was in had no bus transport available to them.

"It was then that my fundraising journey began. I committed in 2010 to raising the funds to purchase a bus to be shared between Voluntary Services Aberdeen (VSA) and the care home my father was staying in, so we staged the first fundraising event *Magic Memories*, raising £19,000."

Alzheimer's disease was to take an even greater toll on the family, with Charles's father and father-in-law, Roy Chadwick, both succumbing to the disease within three weeks of one another in 2011. "It was a really traumatic experience. We saw how they both deteriorated but could do nothing for them.

"It is like losing someone twice, first mentally and then physically. I felt I had to do something. Millions of pounds is spent on cancer research and rightly so, but dementia also affects huge numbers of

people. I feel dementia is where cancer research was 25 years ago."

It was at this point that Charles met Professor Matteo Zanda, Chair in Medical Technologies at the University of Aberdeen.

"I asked him what would make a difference to his research and he told me an HPLC / Mass Spectrometer system, two combined pieces of equipment costing up to £50,000.

"We then staged a *Funny Memories* night, with the highlight a ventriloquist and his 'human puppet'. That proved a great success and we raised £44,000 on the night, which was increased to £50,000 by the main sponsor, Apache North Sea."

Not content to leave the fundraising there, Charles went 'bigger and better' two years later, staging a Strictly Come Dancing themed event, with professional dancers Kristina Rihanoff and Robin Windsor acting as judges for six couples persuaded to take to the floor. This was once again supported by main sponsor Apache North Sea as well as Hunting Energy Services, Domino Pizza and C Euro Communications Ltd.

"It was a huge commitment for the six couples who took part with months of rehearsals leading up to the night – but what a night it was!

"We called it *Different Dancing Memories* and made a video explaining what the charity night was supporting so people understood how they were contributing to leading research being carried out in Aberdeen.

"In total we raised £51,213 which will make a major contribution through the University's Development Trust towards the purchase of a modern radiochemistry reactor for producing tracers called a FASTLAB, which will further advance the work of Professor Zanda and his team.

"My view is that if you are doing a job and you have the best tools then you should get the best results.

"I know that Aberdeen is leading the way in brain imaging research and I'm proud to be able to support that. Dementia touches so many lives and it is important to support research in this critical area.

"I never imagined I'd be here, fundraising in this way but the experience of my own family taught me that we need to make a difference and we need to do it now.

"I've had huge support from everyone around me and I've made wonderful new friends on this journey. To be able to see that the work everyone has put in is furthering vital research gives a real sense of satisfaction."

**C**ome Here. Go Anywhere. But where do our graduates go? Over the last 25 years, the University's Lighthouse Field Station has provided training opportunities for hundreds of undergraduate and postgraduate students in marine mammal and seabird research. Professor Paul Thompson, who established the field station, said: *"Our long-term studies of Scottish dolphin, seal and fulmar populations have underpinned numerous international collaborations and our graduates have developed careers that have taken them across the world's oceans."*

■ shows the locations of some of the Lighthouse's other graduates.

**Ben Wilson (PhD 1995)** **Inverness**  
 Ben was the first PhD student at the Lighthouse, starting the dolphin photo-ID studies that still underpin its research. Post-docs in Canada at the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University also took him to Alaska to study sea lions. After returning to Scotland, subsequent work on the environmental impacts of marine renewables has led to his appointment as Professor of Energy at UHI.



**Kim Parsons (PhD 2002)** **Seattle**  
 Studying at Aberdeen on a scholarship from her native Canada, Kim returned to North America, and investigates the population structure of Pacific killer whales to support the NMML Cetacean Assessment Ecology Program.



**John Durban (BSc 1998, PhD 2002)** **San Diego, California**  
 After a PhD studying bottlenose dolphins in the Moray Firth and the Bahamas, John has been based in the US, conducting research in killer whale ecology in Pacific and Antarctic waters at NOAA NE Fisheries Science Center.



**Jason Baker (PhD 2006)** **Oregon**  
 Jason carried out his PhD on Hawaiian monk seal ecology via part-time study, whilst heading NOAA's Pacific Islands protected species assessment program. He continues to support the monk seal conservation program, alongside field studies of northern fur seals, and is a member of the US Marine Mammal Commission's Committee of Scientific Advisors.




**Sofie Van Parijs (PhD 1998)** **Woods Hole**  
 Following her PhD on the acoustics and mating strategies of Scottish harbour seals, Sofie studied inshore dolphin acoustics at James Cook University in Australia, and then arctic seals around Svalbard with the Norwegian Polar Institute. She now leads the passive acoustics research group at NOAA NE Fisheries Science Center in Woods Hole, working on ocean noise and cetacean acoustics.



**Fernando Trujillo (PhD 2000)** **Bogota, Columbia**  
 Fernando chose Aberdeen as a base from which to do his PhD on the conservation biology of river dolphins in the Amazon and Orinoco rivers. He is Director of Science for Fundacion Omache, a conservation charity based in Bogota.



**Lucy Quinn (PhD 2014)** **Bird Island, South Georgia**  
 Lucy's PhD on the wintering distribution of fulmars took her to Orkney, Ireland and Iceland. She recently headed south to Bird Island, where she will spend the next two Antarctic summers working as a seabird ecologist for British Antarctic Survey.







# Making a splash across the world



**Simon Enderby (BSc 1996)**  
**Malaysia** Simon was one of the first honours students to carry out his project at the Lighthouse, tracking radio-tagged harbour seals in the Moray Firth. A keen interest in diving took him to Malaysia, where he has built a successful career as an underwater cameraman.



**Sarah Marley (BSc 2007)**  
**Curtin, Australia** Sarah's honours project was carried out alongside our long-term dolphin photo-ID study in the Moray Firth. After a MSc at St Andrews, she volunteered on field projects in Australia, and now works within the Centre for Marine Science and Technology at Curtin University.



**Saskia Wischniewski (BSc 2013)**  
**Cork, Ireland** After her honours project on fulmar reproductive behaviour in Orkney, Saskia carried out fieldwork on islands in the North Sea and New Caledonia. She is now carrying out a Research Masters in seabird ecology at the University of Cork, Ireland.



**Tess Gridley (MSc 2005)**  
**Namibia** Following her MSc project at the Lighthouse and a PhD in St Andrews, Tess has continued to use the methods learned during her masters to study a variety of small cetaceans in Tanzania, South Africa and Namibia.






# Transforming our campus

Diving area in Aberdeen Aquatics Centre

**I**n 2014, the University will mark the quincentenary of the death of its founder, Bishop Elphinstone.

His vision for a 'university that would be open to all and dedicated to the pursuit of truth in the service of others' led to the birth of King's College.

Life at University was rather different at the time of our founder and by 1514, when there were 42 residents, students lived strictly disciplined lives as part of a collegiate foundation.

They lived, ate and studied within the University's

protective walls and King's had its own kitchen, brewery, well and vegetable garden. Today the Chapel and Crown Tower remain the focal point of the King's Campus, but an ambitious plan to continue the transformation of the campus is underway.

By 2024, the University of Aberdeen will have invested half a billion pounds reinventing its two campuses to ensure that while its historic buildings are preserved for generations to come, students enjoy a 21st century learning experience, within the charm of an ancient university. In the last 10

years £273 million has been spent creating new iconic buildings including the Sir Duncan Rice Library, the Suttie Centre at Foresterhill and the Aberdeen Aquatics Centre, all of which received significant philanthropic support.

A further £228 million will be invested over the next decade to create a campus which will rank among the world's best and fundraising will once again play a significant part.

Plans include a new science centre which will house the Aberdeen Institute of Energy, and other buildings will be redeveloped to take on a

new life serving today's University and local community. Included in the package are a performance venue, a new students union, and an interfaith centre to meet the spiritual needs of a growing multicultural community of students and staff.

The Rowett Institute will move to a brand new building on the Foresterhill campus in 2015. The move will enable scientists to be housed together in modern, purpose-designed facilities close to other health research facilities, and ensure that the Institute remains at the forefront of world class research in health and nutrition.



**A further  
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In line for major refurbishment are historic landmarks within the medieval heart of Old Aberdeen. While retaining its iconic façade, the New King's Building is earmarked to be transformed internally to provide modern, spacious and flexible teaching and learning spaces.

The ten-year programme is designed to bring cohesion to a campus which has grown organically over the last half-century, to create a more functional medieval core, and enhance the perimeter of the campus to strengthen the identity of the University.

Professor Sir Ian Diamond, Principal and Vice-Chancellor said: "The next phase of our campus transformation is absolutely vital if we are to compete with the best universities in the world, and put North-east Scotland on the global map. We will create an environment in which every member of the university family can flourish, which engages our local communities with opportunity and learning, and which attracts ambitious students and outstanding researchers from across the world to join this very special community of excellence."

## Aberdeen Aquatics Centre

The world-class Aquatics Centre at Aberdeen Sports Village, a partnership between the University, Aberdeen City Council and sportscotland, officially opened its doors to the public in May.

Boasting a 50m, 10-lane training pool and 25m pool with diving facilities, the Olympic-standard £22 million centre is one of the best facilities of its kind. It is one of only ten facilities in the UK with full diving facilities and platforms up to ten metres and was supported through the University of Aberdeen Development Trust by various companies and individuals including Saltire Energy and FirstGroup.

The Aquatics Centre will run learn-to-swim and learn-to-dive programmes and public swimming sessions, as well as providing a training facility for elite athletes.

## The Rowett Institute

Artist's impression of new Rowett building



In spring 2015, the Rowett Institute will move to a state-of-the-art new building on the Foresterhill health campus.

The new Rowett Institute will be a glass-fronted building spread over five floors covering a total of more than 10,000 square metres (107,639 sq ft) and will be equipped with state-of-the-art laboratory facilities and write-up areas.

A key aspect of the facility will be its specialist Human Nutrition Unit which will enable volunteers who take part in dietary trials and studies to do so in modern and comfortable surroundings, yet at the same time provide a facility set up to undertake scientifically rigorous studies.

The new Institute will retain key elements of the Institute's long history with some of the best-known features of the Bucksburn site incorporated into the new design, including three stained glass windows from the Reid Library depicting research at the Rowett throughout the years, the 'Health and Plenty' windows from Strathcona House, and Nobel Prize objects.

# Image of the future

**Thirty four years ago a team of physicists at the University of Aberdeen had the pioneering spirit and foresight to develop cutting-edge imaging technology that broke new medical ground.**

**Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is now one of modern medicine's most important diagnostic tools and is applied all over the world.**

**Fast forward, and today a team at the institution are once again spearheading an innovative imaging project – and this time it could transform how cancer and heart disease are diagnosed and treated in the future.**

**A**cknowledged as one of Britain's most respected cardiologists, Professor Michael Frenneaux is Regius Professor of Medicine at the University of Aberdeen and a consultant cardiologist with NHS Grampian.

He, and clinical senior lecturer in cardiology Dr Dana Dawson, an expert in imaging the heart using cardiac MRI, have teamed up with physicists Professor David Lurie and Professor Tom Redpath, and chemist Professor Matteo Zanda to work with a group of chemists at the University of York led by Professor Simon Duckett.

They are investigating a potential breakthrough in imaging technology that would allow doctors to follow the journey of any organic molecule within the body for the first time. Tracking the fate of these molecules could transform our understanding of the basic biological processes occurring in cancer and cardiovascular disease, and lead to diagnosis and treatments that are tailored to treat individual patients.

"Hydrogen and carbon are the keys to this project," explains Professor Frenneaux. "Carbon is the backbone of every single organic molecule in our body, the very building blocks of life, and hydrogen is ubiquitously present as a key component of organic molecules.

"If we can identify a way of using carbon and hydrogen in organic molecules as the vehicles within imaging, we open the door to the possibility of being able to image and quantify any molecule that exists within the human body, in vivo. For us, that's the holy grail."

Conventional MRI scanning exploits hydrogen atoms in water molecules, which are the main components of the human body, and a technique called polarisation. This involves applying a magnetic field to tissue, which then aligns all the hydrogen atoms within that tissue, in one direction. When you turn the magnetic field off they flip into a random state.

The time it takes for them to do that is called relaxation time, and it is this timeframe that you code to produce pictures of the tissue.

Professor Frenneaux continues: "MRI scans give information on anatomy and the characteristics of tissues. The new method using organic hydrogen and carbon and a new technology called 'hyperpolarisation' that we are pioneering would go one step further by allowing us to choose a molecule that we know is pertinent in cases of a particular disease, and follow the journey it makes in our body – including how it metabolises and how quickly this happens.

"In cases of heart disease and cancer we know key molecules in these diseases have abnormal metabolisms that can affect their treatment. This imaging method would not only allow us to discover the basic biology of what happens to molecules in a diseased state, but also enable us to tailor therapies according to the particular disturbances occurring in a particular patient. This personalised method of diagnosis and treatment has the potential to truly transform how we deal with diseases in the future."

The collaborative team working on the project is drawing from Aberdeen's strong history of imaging expertise to deal with its complexities.

Professor Frenneaux adds: "Unfortunately hydrogen and carbon polarise in a magnetic field rather poorly, and this is the main hurdle we are working on together as a multidisciplinary team to overcome.

"There are three layers to our efforts – taking hydrocarbon molecules and tweaking their chemistry to make them more amenable to polarisation, adapting the physics involved in MR and the development of new equipment to support this method. Our preliminary findings are exciting. We have reason to believe that the technique may be more effective if we do the MRI at lower strengths – and this is just one area of imaging where the University of Aberdeen has a proven history of expertise.

"This project is a perfect example of taking the body of quality research which has been generated over decades by experts in Aberdeen, moving forward with, and further building on it, to develop cutting-edge technology that we hope will become the University's future legacy."

The University of Aberdeen Development Trust is raising funds for this project. Alumni wishing to support it should contact Jane Mackie on +44 (0) 1224 274113 or email [j.mackie@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:j.mackie@abdn.ac.uk)

Professor Michael Frenneaux



**Studies underway at Aberdeen to develop new insights and treatments for diseases of the heart and circulation, the most common cause of death in the UK claiming 160,000 lives annually, include:**

- ♥ Research into the benefits of **nitrate** – a compound found in beetroot and green leafy vegetables – in the treatment of people with heart failure, a condition with a high mortality rate, and one that is hard to treat.

Studies by scientists at Aberdeen are investigating how nitrate can improve the ability of muscles in the body – including the heart – to produce energy using less oxygen. The findings could prove a vital treatment option for this condition in which oxygen delivery is reduced.

- ♥ Investigations into how the drug **Perhexiline**, established as an anti-anginal drug in the 1970s, works.

Whilst the drug is highly effective, currently the major disadvantage of using it is the need to monitor blood levels and adjust dosage in order to avoid serious side effects including damage to the liver and nerves. This is because the enzyme that breaks down the drug differs markedly from one patient to another.

Work in Aberdeen shows dramatic beneficial effects of the drug in Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy, a condition involving a marked thickening of the heart muscle and the most common cause of sudden death in young people affecting one in 500 people.

This has led to the US Food and Drug Administration granting Perhexiline orphan drug status as the only drug for the effective therapy for symptoms in this condition.

As a further development, researchers in Aberdeen have modified the chemical structure of the drug to create a molecule which is metabolised more predictably, thereby potentially avoiding the need for blood monitoring and dose adjustment.

- ♥ A new study led by Aberdeen is screening 5,000 people over the age of 60 to understand the underlying factors which cause **heart failure**.

In 60% of cases heart failure is related to a problem with the heart pumping. Their focus is on the 40% of cases where the cause is the heart not relaxing properly. The reason for this type of failure is not yet known, and there are currently no treatments available. This research will aim to understand how this type of heart failure could be diagnosed, with the hope of developing new drugs in the future to tackle it.



As the world commemorates the centenary of the First World War, the University will mark the contribution of its own community to the conflict.

A total of 341 University staff, students and alumni were killed in the Great War and its impact was felt across campus by friends and colleagues.

Yet, despite the increasing realities of war, the University remained open, the Court and Senate making provisions for students and staff and acting on guidance from the War Office.

The Military Education Committee oversaw matters relating to the medical unit of the Officers' Training Corps (OTC) and various departments were engaged in research and production in connection with the war.

Assistance was also provided by the Aberdeen University War Work Party which was established in the Materia Medica Department at Marischal College, under the direction of Professor J.T. Cash. It produced thousands of war dressings, garments and hospital comforts, and by June 1917 its average weekly output was noted as being 3,400 dressings and 420 garments.

An important figure, and one who played a pivotal role in steering the University through the war years, was Sir George Adam Smith (1856-1942), Principal from 1909-1935. He was very supportive of U Company and the OTC, and tried unsuccessfully to instigate the formation of an infantry OTC, in addition to the

medical unit, at the University during the war.

Two of his three sons were killed in the First World War, a loss compounded by the fact that he had the solemn duty of reading the names of those killed at the annual chapel service.

Student life continued as normal as much as possible. The majority of the student societies were able to continue during the war years, but sporting and social activities were initially curtailed and student politics was suspended, although Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, was appointed Rector of the University in November 1914.

The sudden increase in the proportion of female students, as men either volunteered or were called up for armed service, meant that women soon outnumbered their male counterparts, particularly in the faculty of Arts. Women began to have a more prominent role in student affairs, increasing their representation on the Students Representative Council, and taking over the running of the student magazine *Alma Mater*. Students also supported the war effort in various ways: in addition to joining the University War Work Party, many undertook fundraising activities such as selling flags in aid of the Belgian Refugee Fund while others served meals to soldiers at the railway station or worked on farms during the summer vacation.

To bring to life the stories of those who served, the University has created an online, publically available and searchable database

# Remembering the University's contribution to the First World War

containing the war records of some 2,852 members of the University community from the Great War.

The *Roll of Honour* provides personal insights into the characters behind the names with tributes and photographs included in many records.

The records reveal the youngest member of the University community to die in action was just 18 years old and the oldest was 66.

Other remarkable stories include that of Sir Alexander Ogston (1844-1929), Regius Professor of Surgery who, despite the fact he was 70 when the war broke out, was quick to volunteer his services.

In addition to the *Roll of Honour*, the University has also created a free online course called *Nutrition and War* which explores the crucial role nutrition has for individual soldiers, armies and civilian populations in times of conflict. The course uses videos, lectures, imagery, poems and music to examine the importance of food provision in determining the outcomes of war and is free and open to all.

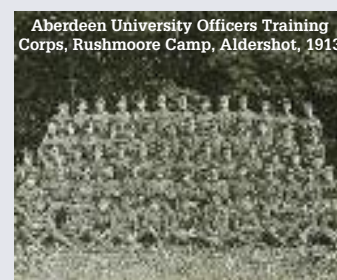
## A permanent memorial

The declaration of the Armistice on the 11 November 1918 was met with great celebrations on campus, and a torchlight procession was held that evening. As the war came to an end, serving students gradually returned to their alma mater.

A permanent war memorial in memory of those who died was commissioned for the Chapel. The wooden panels bearing the names of the fallen were designed by Dr William Kelly and constructed in 1929. A stained glass memorial window designed by Douglas Strachan was also installed to symbolise 'man's spiritual effort against aggression'.



4th Battalion of Gordon Highlanders (Territorial Force), University Company, Aberdeen, July 1910



Aberdeen University Officers Training Corps, Rushmoore Camp, Aldershot, 1913



Sir Alexander Ogston resting between his duties as operating surgeon at the British Red Cross Hospital in Italy, September 1917



Sir George Adam Smith, Principal of the University of Aberdeen, 1909-1935

To access the Roll of Honour visit

[www.abdn.ac.uk/library/roll-of-honour](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/roll-of-honour)

The War and Nutrition online course can be joined by visiting

[www.abdn.ac.uk/medical/nutritionandwar/](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/medical/nutritionandwar/)

Details of other public events to commemorate the First World

War can be found at [www.abdn.ac.uk/firstworldwar](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/firstworldwar)

**H**er Royal Highness The Duchess of Rothesay conferred her first degrees on summer graduands this July in her role as Chancellor of the University.

Her presence added to the jubilant celebrations as new graduates soaked up their success as well as the Aberdeen sunshine.

Over five days, the University marked the achievements of its students as well as those awarded honorary degrees for outstanding contributions to their fields.

For graduates and their families, the ceremonies marked the culmination of years' of hard work. Behind the beaming smiles lay stories of great determination, outstanding achievement, perseverance and triumph over adversity.

For **Paul Donald**, receiving his Bachelor of Music degree marked the end of a journey which saw him battle a life-threatening illness and establish his own charity to support others with the condition.

Vocalist Paul wasn't sure he would survive, let alone complete his studies, after months confined to a hospital bed in the grip of Anorexia Nervosa and its complications.

His weight plummeted to six and a half stone and he was warned his vital organs were failing but he still didn't believe he could have the disease 'because he was male'.

When he finally accepted that he needed help, he found that many support services were aimed only at women.

# Celebrating success

It was then that he decided to set up his own charity, Men and Boys Eating and Exercise Disorders Service (MBEEDS) Scotland.

Juggling the demands of the charity with his final year studies helped Paul to find the strength to overcome his illness and he began to flourish.

He said of receiving his degree: "Dreams really can come true and I am living proof that no matter what happens, if you get back up and fight every time you will succeed."

Gaining a second degree opened up a world of opportunity for mature student **Zoe McKellar**, who gained First Class Honours in her BSc in Geology and Petroleum Geology. After working in retail and administration, she felt her career had stalled and decided to return to university. It was a decision Zoe would never regret as she threw herself into student life, becoming a member of the Geology Society and serving as a class representative and volunteer for the Students' Association. She also received a Halliburton Specialist Scholarship through the Development Trust, which supported her studies.

Zoe is now embarking on a PhD at Aberdeen and said: "I've loved student life in Aberdeen and have made an

amazing group of friends through my work with the Students' Association. I am so glad I took the plunge and returned to university."

Graduation day was a family affair for twins **Cara and Aisling Duncan** – who graduated in the same degree of zoology with the same classification. It was also a time for triple celebrations for the **Mo family**, as parents Simon and Sui Mo watched their son Stephen receive his Honour's degree in Accountancy and Finance at a Tuesday ceremony, and then returned the next day to cheer as twins Andrew and Jacky were awarded Masters' degrees in Chemical Engineering. Both Andrew and Jacky had benefitted from Suncor Energy Scholarships during their studies.

These were just some of the hundreds of unique and inspiring tales beneath the caps and gowns.

University Principal Professor Sir Ian Diamond offered his congratulations to all those who received their degrees this summer. He said: "For every student, obtaining a degree is a personal journey with many obstacles to overcome. Graduations are a moment for the University community and their families to come together and applaud their achievements in reaching the end of an important

chapter of their lives. We were delighted to welcome the Duchess of Rothesay to this wonderful occasion, joining us for the first time in her role as Chancellor.

"The University is proud to have supported its recent graduates through this journey and we wish them every success as they embark on their new careers."







Paul Donald



Piper taking a break from performing



Zoe McKellar



The Mo family



Cara and Aisling Duncan



In procession

# Keeping it in the family

**W**hen **Oyinkan Tasié** decided to embark on a PhD in law, Aberdeen was the natural choice – his parents met at the University and both are alumni of the institution.

His father, Prof (Sir) Godwin O.M. Tasié, obtained a PhD in Church History in 1969 and his mother, Dr (Mrs) Tolulope I.N. Tasié (nee Ibiam) graduated in medicine a year later.

Oyinkan said: “My parents relished their time in Aberdeen and have recounted their experience to us many times.”

During his time as an Aberdeen student, Oyinkan got married and had two children but had to live apart from his family to complete his studies. He said he was kept going through difficult times by the ‘tremendous support’ of his PhD supervisors.

Despite the separation, Oyinkan loved life in Aberdeen, the hospitality of the people and the region’s landscape, including the city’s stunning beach.

“I made it a point of duty to ensure that I took my wife and two children, Tamunoemi, aged three and Chituru, aged 16 months, to the beach when we all came down for my graduation.”

Being based in Aberdeen also provided an opportunity for his mother to return to her alma mater.

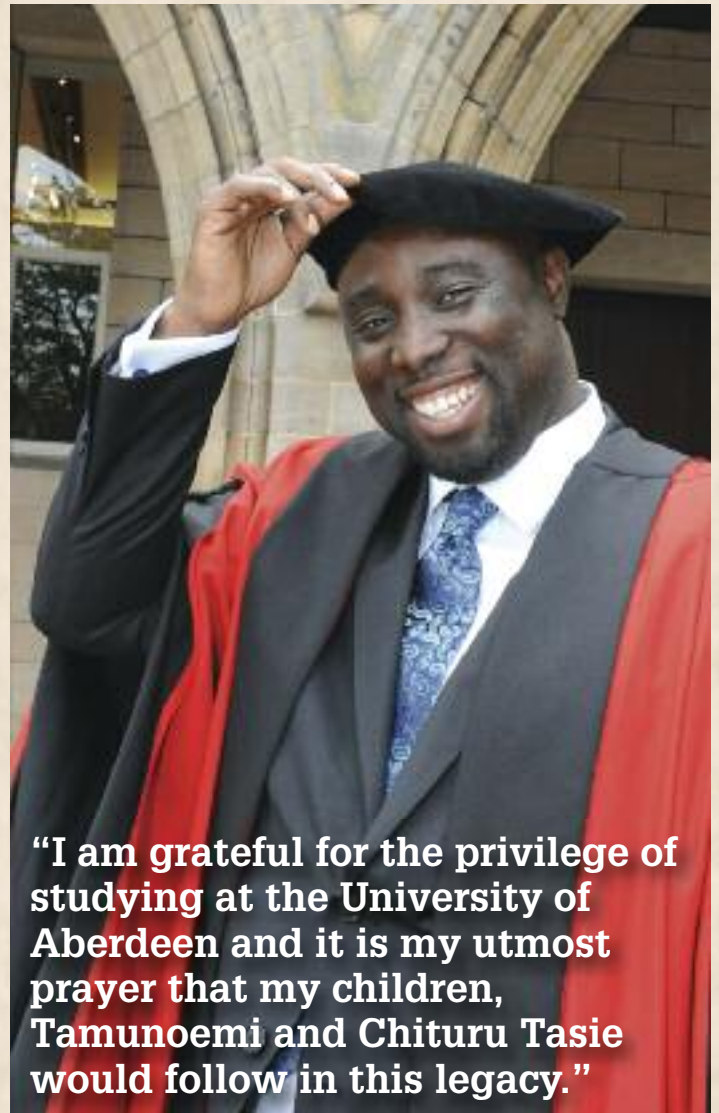
“We went on an extensive tour of the University and she was quick to point out the new infrastructure.” he said.

“She has kept contact with the medical class of 1970 and has participated in a few reunions since graduation but had not really toured Aberdeen until her visit with me. It was pleasant to imagine Aberdeen in the 1960s through her eyes.

“Interestingly, my father lived with the Hamiltons on Clifton Road in the late 1960s. They still live there and we visited with them. They were very happy and pleased to see us, further evidence of the hospitality of Aberdonians.”

The Tasié family are now based in the United States where Oyinkan’s wife, Dr. Saweda Liverpool-Tasié, is an Assistant Professor of International Development at Michigan State University, but Oyinkan hopes he will return to Aberdeen in the future.

“I am grateful for the privilege of studying at the University of Aberdeen and it is my utmost prayer that my children, Tamunoemi and Chituru Tasié would follow in this legacy and obtain a degree from the University of Aberdeen.”



**“I am grateful for the privilege of studying at the University of Aberdeen and it is my utmost prayer that my children, Tamunoemi and Chituru Tasié would follow in this legacy.”**



**Hundreds of photographs** were taken during graduations, capturing celebrations during this special time. To see if you or your classmates feature in our albums please visit our Graduation Gallery [www.abdn.ac.uk/graduation/gallery](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/graduation/gallery).

In addition to photographs taken during the ceremonies, the Alumni Relations team were on hand with their props for the ‘photo booth’. These fun snaps can be seen by visiting the Facebook page [www.facebook.com/AberdeenUniversityAlumni](http://www.facebook.com/AberdeenUniversityAlumni).

# Honoured at Summer Grads



Iris Paterson, Roxanne and Beryl Botman, representing Honorary graduate the late Russel Botman, and the Duchess of Rothesay

**A**lso honoured at the summer graduation ceremonies was a face who will be familiar to generations of Aberdeen students who will recall her warm smile as they started out on life away from home for the first time.

**Iris Paterson**, known affectionately to many as 'Mrs P' was presented with a long-service award by Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Rothesay.

The spritely great-grandmother celebrated 50 years at the University having first arrived in 1964 to join the staff of Crombie Hall as a 'house table maid'.

In that time, she has provided support to hundreds of nervous new students and seen them transformed into confident graduates embarking on new careers.

She has also witnessed huge change from formal dinners with grace read in Latin, through the swinging sixties when Aberdeen was joining the revolution with the first co-educational hall of residence in Scotland.

But there were to be no distractions for the first-year innocents entrusted by worried parents to the care of Mrs P and her colleagues. The hall might be co-ed but the bedroom blocks at Crombie-Johnston were strictly

segregated, and robust rules aimed to ensure that new arrivals concentrated on their studies and future careers, all nutritionally fuelled by Mrs P and the flock of table maids serving 500 meals a day "and always with a choice."

Today Mrs P is part of a large team of support staff based at The Hub, previously the Central Refectory and now a one-stop shop for student needs from careers advice, information on finances, accommodation, other kinds of support and lots more – including a tempting array of scrumptious self-service food outlets from pizza and ice-cream to healthy salad bar and vegan choices, catering not only for tastes but for special diets and the different faiths and practices of a modern, multicultural community.

"We're one big family here", says Mrs P. We come from all over the world, bringing all our backgrounds, different experiences, different ambitions. And here we come together to share this wonderful experience. I just love being a part of that, helping these young folk to remember these days with fondness and friendship for the rest of their lives.

"I'll never retire," she insists. "People ask me, and I just tell them 'I love my boys and girls'. It's as simple as that. I'd miss them too much."

“In the process they may also allow new ways of being a family or doing work”



Professor Natasha Mauthner



# How are digital technologies reshaping work and family lives?

With the advancement and growth of digital technologies, workers and families are using new devices and applications to refashion their everyday work and domestic lives.

Researchers from the University of Aberdeen have spent the last 18 months investigating just how people are using smartphones, tablets and desk-based computers, as well as Facebook, Twitter and email, for personal and work related activities, and how this is changing family life.

**Professor Natasha Mauthner**, from the University's Business School, received funding from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) for the project *Creativity Greenhouse: Digital Epiphanies* and has been carrying out the research alongside Dr Karolina Kazimierczak, a Lecturer also based in the Business School. The project is now nearing completion, and they are hoping that the results of their study will provide greater insights into these issues.

Professor Mauthner said: "Telling people that you are doing research on the ways in which digital technologies are reshaping our work and family lives definitely guarantees a lively conversation – it is something so many of us can relate to.

"When we started out on

our project we noticed that research around technology and work-family life tends to assume that there is something called 'technology' that is doing something to our work and family lives, and that people's use of it is either good or bad, efficient or wasteful, a help or a hindrance in managing work, life and the boundary between these.

"What our detailed work with the families is helping us to understand is that while digital devices and applications may be new, they do not come in from the outside, as it were, and radically alter or disturb existing patterns or ways of being a family, doing work or integrating these spheres. Rather, they become incorporated into existing practices. And in the process they may also allow new ways of being a family or doing work. For example, children can now use an Xbox to forge and sustain friendships. But at the same time it may be that other family and work practices will decline. One example of this is how telephone conversations are being increasingly replaced by email, Skype and various instant messaging services for work and personal-related communication.

"What our research also suggests is that by taking a close look at how our participants use specific devices and applications it also becomes clear that work and family are not necessarily separate spheres of life."

To look at this in detail, the researchers spent time participating in the daily lives of a number of families to observe how they have integrated various digital devices and applications into their everyday practices.

Professor Mauthner added: "We visited each family three to four times over a period of several months. We used different types of activities in each visit, partly because we wanted to engage both parents and their children in our research.

"We recorded our participation in their lives by generating sound recordings, photographs and videos of our interactions with them. These different methods helped us understand the part that modern technologies are playing in these families' lives.

"For example, one of the mothers we've been working with showed us how digital photography has become an integral part of her practice as a painter and in the process is allowing her to make new forms of artwork. Another example is a teenage boy who gave us insights into how game consoles are not necessarily the time-wasting devices they are sometimes depicted to be, but rather are used by youngsters, as one means amongst many, to form and consolidate their friendships."

To share progress made on the project so far, the team

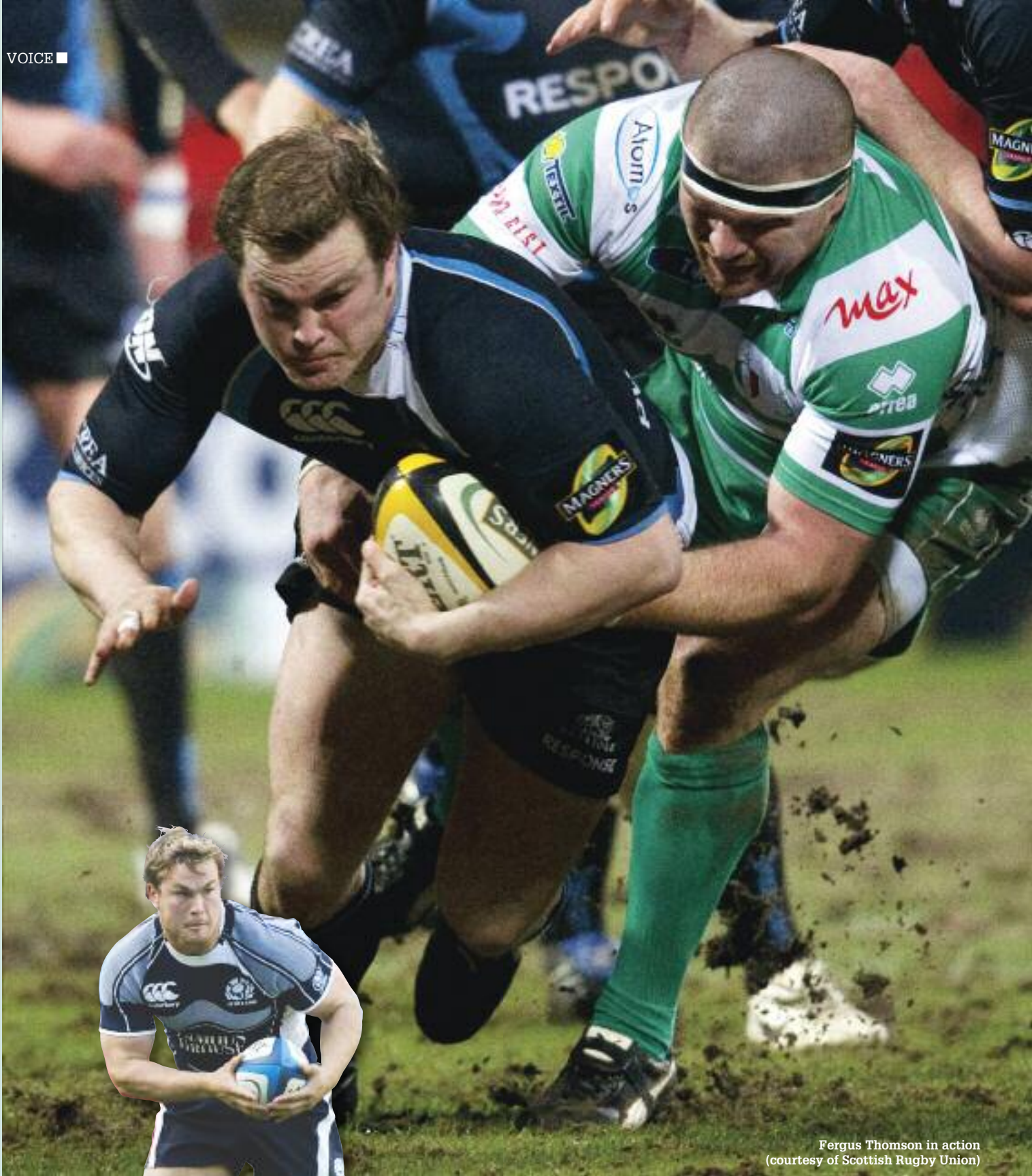
hosted an event at the University's May Festival.

"We were really pleased to be able to take part in the May Festival as the whole weekend was a great family-oriented occasion and of course, family is at the heart of our project.

"It was also great for us to hear what people think of the study, and how they feel technology may be affecting their own work and family lives. For example, one of the participants was a father who told us about an event he attended at his child's school where a police officer came to talk about cybercrime, cyberbullying and the protection of children online. Contrary to common perception, the officer's advice to parents was to treat technology as an integral part of family life, for example by placing computers in shared family spaces and keeping them accessible to all rather than necessarily password protecting them.

"This resonated very much with the approach we are taking in our own study where we are viewing technology as embedded in the fabric of everyday life, rather than something that is separate from and interfering – in positive or negative ways – with everyday life."

For more information about *Creativity Greenhouse: Digital Epiphanies*, visit the project website: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/business/research/epiphanies/index.php>



Fergus Thomson in action  
(courtesy of Scottish Rugby Union)



With so few universities offering the course, graduates are in high demand, and so Fergus and most of his classmates were employed as soon as they'd graduated.

# Try, try and try again

**Rugby star Fergus Thomson returned to his farming roots for career inspiration after injury ended his playing career.**

Already an established player for Glasgow Warriors, Fergus Thomson was preparing to represent Scotland at the 2011 Rugby World Cup in New Zealand when his dreams were side-lined by a shoulder injury.

Sadly, it was a recurring injury that would effectively end his professional career, and in April 2012, after winning eight caps for Scotland, he was forced to hang up his boots for good.

“It was a massive disappointment at the time, but I guess it had to end sometime.” says Fergus philosophically.

Looking at a life without professional rugby, Fergus faced the daunting prospect of finding a new career but eventually found the answer by returning to his farming roots.

“I grew up on a farm in Fife, so I’ve always had an interest and an understanding of agriculture. I had done work experience in that area previously, and I quite fancied the rural surveying route.”

A desire to remain in Scotland attracted Fergus to a Masters course in Land Economy & Rural Surveying at the University of Aberdeen, the only institution in the country that teaches the discipline.

“The course was Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors accredited and I want to become a chartered surveyor. Also, Aberdeen is the only university in Scotland that offers the course, so it was an easy choice.

“It’s a really varied career and that was reflected in the course which gave me a sound grounding in all elements – evaluations, agriculture, planning forestry and more. There was a good mix of theory and practical coursework.”

With so few universities offering the course, graduates are in high demand, and so Fergus and most of his classmates were employed as soon as they’d graduated.

“I received two job offers and opted for a graduate surveyor position with Davidson & Robertson, based in Edinburgh.

“I really enjoy it as it is so varied. I do everything from valuations, general management of land and estates to rural residential property management. And I also do sales and purchases and a bit of compulsory purchase work. The variation of work is great. There’s a really broad spectrum and no two days are the same. You get out and about to speak to farmers and other people involved in the industry.



Since completing the course Fergus has become a father for the first time and has been able to reflect on the end of his rugby career.

“It was unfortunate but I made a lot of great friends and travelled a lot, and got to do something I dreamed of doing as a child. I played against New Zealand at the World Cup in 2007, so I’ve played at the highest level. I was very lucky from that point of view.”

“For now though I’m really enjoying my work, and excited to see where it’s going to take me.”

# Festival fun for all the family

The University's May Festival returned for its second year welcoming thousands of visitors to the campus for a weekend of fun-packed activities for all the family.

Building on the success of the inaugural festival last year, the 2014 event attracted an audience of 9,500 for a programme which included more than 120 events spanning popular themes including literature, music, Gaelic, science, sport, environment and the First World War.

The May Festival also offered visitors the opportunity to gain insight into cutting edge research going on at the University.

Highlights from the 2014 festival included events with trailblazing journalist Kate Adie, Great British Bake Off star, James Morton, and frontman of the Charlatans, Tim Burgess.

Audiences were also treated to one of the first public readings of bestselling author Tony Parsons' latest novel *The Murder Bag*.

Thanks to continuing sponsorship from Saudi Aramco, Talisman Sinopec Energy UK, and Marathon Oil, many events in the programme were free of charge, including all those in the dedicated Children's and Schools' festivals which ran alongside the main programme.

The May Festival welcomed more than 1,500 young visitors to campus who enjoyed tea with Vikings, a campfire in Cruickshank Gardens, diddi dance and a host of other activities.

Stilt walkers, life size puppets and unicyclists added to the festival flavour on campus, and even the occasional rain shower couldn't dampen spirits.

The Homecoming Festival Finale event was a fitting end to the weekend with The Red Hot Chilli Pipers bringing the festival to a close.

The May Festival will return in 2015 for another fun-packed weekend running from May 29 to 31. Keep an eye out for announcements on the 2015 programme at [www.abdn.ac.uk/mayfestival](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/mayfestival)







The University hosts a range of public events throughout the year ranging from music, film and culture to science and technology. To find out more visit [www.abdn.ac.uk/events](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/events). A programme of events for alumni, friends and supporters of the University will also run with full listings available at [www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni/events](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni/events).

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**International Women's Day Conference**  
 6 March 2015, Venue: King's Conference Centre  
 International Women's Day has been celebrated across the world since the early 1900s. As part of this worldwide celebration, the University of Aberdeen is hosting an International Women's Day Conference on Friday 6th March. The programme will include high-profile speakers and invited guests and the event will be hosted by Professor Neva Haites OBE FMedSci FRSE, Vice Principal for Development and Equality & Diversity at the University of Aberdeen.

**May Festival 2015**  
 The 2015 May Festival will run from 29th - 31st May and will once again include a packed programme of events for all the family. There will be something for all ages and tastes so keep an eye out for announcements regarding the 2015 line-up at [www.abdn.ac.uk/mayfestival](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/mayfestival)

### EXHIBITIONS

**King's Museum: The exhibition Victorian Time: Spirit of the Age** will run until December 19. It will then be replaced by an exhibition exploring Northern Picts, which will run from Tuesday 20 January until Sunday 31 May. For more details visit [www.abdn.ac.uk/museums](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/museums)

**Sir Duncan Rice Library Gallery:** An exhibition celebrating the life of the University's Founder, Bishop Elphinstone, will open in October to coincide with the quincentenary of his death. For details visit [www.abdn.ac.uk/library](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library)

### ALUMNI EVENTS

**Carol Service, Wednesday 3rd December 2014**  
**St Marylebone Parish Church, London**  
 The University is to hold its inaugural London based Carol Service this year. The Nine Lessons and Carols Service will include music by the University's own Chamber Choir conducted by Professor Paul Mealor, providing an opportunity to celebrate this wonderful time of year with our ever expanding family of alumni and supporters in London and the South of England.



# Trip down memory lane for University sweethearts

A delayed rugby match on a University of Aberdeen sports trip to Glasgow was the beginning of a love story that would span seven decades and is still going strong.

Ron Taylor was a young engineering student at the University of Aberdeen when he spotted Nancy Walker playing for the University's ladies hockey team and he was instantly smitten.

Their courtship began and with the exception of a spell of forced separation during the war, the pair were inseparable and became engaged.

In June 1944, the day after graduating with a BSc Engineering, Ron found himself setting off on his travels with the army. However, Nancy and their forthcoming nuptials were never far from his thoughts and while away on duty, the young soldier purchased exquisite silk in India for his bride-to-be's wedding dress.

Meanwhile back in the North-east, Nancy who had graduated the previous year, took up teaching posts at Fyvie Primary School and then at Millbren School.

The couple were married on 5th January 1948 on Ron's return home from serving as a Royal Engineers Officer, where he had been seconded for three years to the Royal Bombay Sappers of the Indian Army.

Ron and Nancy then went on to live in Nairobi, Kenya and had their three children, Rod, Keith and Murray.

In 1961, the family returned to Britain and set up home in Teesside.

As the University of Aberdeen holds special memories for the pair, Rod and his wife Rosemary, arranged a trip for Ron and Nancy to come to the North-east where they were able to return to their roots and visit the University and King's College Chapel where they were married.

For Nancy and Ron, who are now both in their nineties, the trip allowed them to return to their old haunts, bringing back many fond memories.

Both were keen members of various sports teams during their



student days, with Nancy representing the University as part of the 1st XI Ladies Hockey team while Ron was a member of the University's 1st XV Rugby team. Over the years they have both retained their love for sport, and this was incorporated into their trip.

Ron commented: "While on our trip to the University we very much enjoyed a tour of the Aberdeen Sports Village, conducted by student President for Sport, Marc McCorkell.

"We were utterly amazed and quite overwhelmed at the extent of the facilities of the Sports Village from the layout of the pitches and running tracks to the Aquatics Centre with its pool depth changing capability. We are sure that Aberdeen is bound to produce athletes of Olympic-standard in the coming years!"

During their visit to King's College Chapel, Assistant to the University Chaplain, Rev Marylee Anderson, blessed the couple's marriage and they were also able to see the record of their marriage, which has been kept by the Chaplaincy. The visit to the Chapel proved very emotional for Ron and Nancy, and they were deeply grateful to the Chaplaincy for arranging



to replicate the vows they made over 66 years ago.

The visit to the North-east also gave the couple the opportunity to visit other places around the area, including Robert Gordon's College, where Ron was a pupil and where they had an interesting talk with the Headmaster on 'Gordon's past and present' as well as viewing sections of the College.

They also revisited the areas where they grew up – Kinellar in Nancy's case and Aberdeen's Angusfield Avenue where Ron's family home was.

Nancy and Ron's trip down memory lane was a Christmas gift from Rod and Rosemary and it was indeed a very special gift.

Nancy said: "It has been a number of years since we visited the North-east but it was nice to have the opportunity to come back, and especially this time as we are able to show Rod and Rosemary where our lives together began. It has been fantastic seeing the campus where we spent our student days and where we were married."

## Student v Alumni

The oldest and youngest participants of the day  
Graham Morrice, 79 (MBChB 1959) wearing his  
original 1955 jersey and Alasdair Maclean,  
19 (MEng Chemical Engineering)



The University staged its first Student v Alumni Sports Day in September which saw past students take on present students in a range of different events. Teams lined up to take each other on in football, netball, hockey, tennis, lacrosse, fencing and water polo. The student teams won by a narrow margin of 4 sports to 3, but all games were played in good spirit and it was clear that taking part meant much more than the result.

Marc McCorkell, student President for Sport said: "We know for many students that sport played an important part in their student experience and they hold many fond memories of representing the University.

"The sports day was a chance for them to relive their own student days and to pass on the benefit of their experiences to our current students and catch up with old friends. Although the King's playing fields retain their traditional look, for some of our alumni it was the first time they have seen the new state-of-the-art Aquatics Centre, which extended the Aberdeen Sports Village. The day was a huge success and we are grateful to all those who took part. We hope to make this an annual fixture on the University calendar."

To see all of the pictures from the day please visit the alumni Facebook page. Anyone interested in taking part in future Student v Alumni Sports Days should contact the Alumni Relations Office for more details: [alumni@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@abdn.ac.uk)

# News round-up

## Alumni connecting around the world

Each year we organise alumni events around the world and recent highlights have ranged from a cheese and wine tasting in Edinburgh to a sunset sail in Boston.

Some get-togethers take on a more formal structure such as the London event 'Demystifying the Referendum' with Lord Sewel and David Torrance, and a session at Baxters in Moray where Professor Alex Johnstone sought to reveal the truth about aphrodisiac food – appropriately timed for Valentine's Day.

Other highlights included a private tour of the Museum of Modern Art for New York alumni and a behind-the-scenes tour of the Capitol Building for those in Washington. Informal alumni gatherings and networking events were staged in Lagos, Abuja and Beijing.

To find out about events taking place in your area, please visit the website at [www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni/events](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni/events).

### Alumni Chapters - pilot programme is live!

To tailor events and activities to suit the needs of the alumni community in different areas, the University has launched a pilot programme of Alumni Chapters, starting in the US with an aim to grow the programme globally.

We were delighted to see over 60 alumni attend the launch of the New York and Boston Alumni Chapters at the River Club in New York in May 2014. Dean for North America, Professor Bill Naphy, said: "The Chapters are an excellent way to energise alumni in a given area and they provide an excellent focus for University relations with our large and ever-growing alumni community in North America. I look forward to visiting these Chapters in the Fall and to welcoming new Chapters as they develop."

To find out how you can connect with one of the Chapters or for more information about setting up a Chapter in your area please visit [www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni/chapters](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni/chapters)

## Keep in touch with your classmates

Reunions are a great way of meeting up with old friends to reminisce about your days at the University of Aberdeen, be it year groups, classes, halls, clubs or societies.

The Alumni Relations team is on hand to provide a range of support and advice to make organising your reunion easier. For more information on how to organise a reunion, view upcoming reunions or to find out about class giving please visit [www.abdn.ac.uk/reunions](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/reunions). Alternatively please contact us on +44(0)1224 273234 or email [alumni@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@abdn.ac.uk).

### Medics' reunion spans seven decades

A war-time medical class, which has come together regularly for the last seven decades, celebrated its last official reunion in September.

The reunion of the 1943 medics is the longest-running reunion at the University of Aberdeen and in its heyday former students travelled from all corners of the globe to attend.

Organiser Bill Todd credits the closeness of the friendships formed by the students, who studied between 1938 and 1943, to the extra burdens imposed by the war.

"It wasn't an easy time to be a student but we knew we were much better off than the general population and we were grateful for that." he said.

[Continued >](#)

Dr Alex Spence, Dr Mary Fraser and Dr Bill Todd with the Principal





“Because of the war, we were all members of the OTC and performed many duties together. We suffered the hardships of rationing and the lack of food together and it gave us a sense of unity.

“We were also very aware that if we failed any of our exams, we would be drafted into the services so it was a real incentive to study hard and make sure you got through.

“All this meant we had to provide support to one another and as a result we got to know one another very well. Fortunately, that year group was full of lots of nice people and it has been an honour to know them over the years.”

Around 100 students graduated in medicine in 1943, including 20 women, and the first reunion was held in 1948. After this, the group met every five years until the mid-1990s when it was decided the reunion should become an annual event.

In their heyday, the reunions were regularly attended by up to 80 members of the class, with many travelling from as far afield as New Zealand and Canada.

Bill said the University’s alumni relations team had provided tremendous support in keeping the event running for so many years.

“Without the help provided by the University, and the Aberdeen Treetops Hotel which has hosted our reunions, we’d never have managed to keep going for so long. We have had a fabulous time meeting up but we are now in our nineties and we felt that this year should probably be our last, although we will continue to keep in touch in other ways.”

## Football ties still strong

Seventy-four former Aberdeen University footballers, together with wives and partners, attended a reunion in Perthshire in August. The assembled gathering included ex-players from the 1st XI, 2nd XI and Strollers covering 1964-77. The event was the first get-together since the group last met in Aberdeen in 1988, but the camaraderie forged during student days was very much in evidence.



## In memoriam

### Dr Maitland Mackie

The University community gathered to pay tribute to Rector, Dr Maitland Mackie, who died on May 31, 2014.



Dr Mackie and his family had a long association with the University. He graduated with a BSc in Agriculture in 1958 and MA Hons Economics in 1971 and was chairman of the Aberdeen Students’ Charities Campaign during his time as a student. He was awarded an honorary degree in 1996. Dr Mackie, a trustee of the University’s Development Trust, continued to be a champion of the student body, leading to his election as Rector in 2011, having previously served as a member of the University Court.

He worked tirelessly to promote enhancements to the student experience at Aberdeen and was passionate about the University he loved. Dr Mackie was an extremely popular Rector and generous supporter of the University, who will be remembered with great fondness by our community.

### Professor George McNicol



The University was saddened to learn of the death of former Principal, Professor George McNicol, who passed away on July 28, 2014.

Professor McNicol was an eminent professor of medicine who served as Principal from 1981-1991, following a

successful career at the University of Leeds. As Principal, Professor McNicol was at the helm of the University during challenging times for the higher education sector, and the UK as a whole. His work in steering the organisation through those challenging times undoubtedly helped lay the foundation for the success and reputation of the University today.

## Volunteering

The University hosted its first 'Back on Campus' event this year, bringing together alumni and current students. First to pass on the benefit of their experience were alumni working in International Development and Media and Creative Industries and other sessions in other disciplines are planned for 2014/15. Alumni are also inspiring current students by sharing their experiences in online profiles. If you would like more information or to get involved visit [www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni/involved](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni/involved) or contact Julie Bakewell [j.bakewell@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:j.bakewell@abdn.ac.uk)

## Benefits and services

As a graduate of the University you can take advantage of a host of benefits and services. This includes a 20% discount on postgraduate fees for all alumni who have graduated with a degree from the University or studied for a period as an International Exchange, Study Abroad or Erasmus student at the University of Aberdeen. The Alumni Discount Scheme applies to both home and overseas students, and applies to the self-funding element of the postgraduate tuition fee.

Other benefits and discounts are available through the free Alumni Privilege Card. As a holder of this card you will be entitled to a wide selection of benefits specifically chosen for our graduates, from discounts on accommodation and holiday bookings to discounted membership at Aberdeen Sports Village and much more. To find out more and to request a card visit [www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni/benefits-services](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni/benefits-services)

## The General Council

Did you know that as a graduate of the University of Aberdeen you are a member of the General Council? To learn more about the General Council and its activities, please visit [www.abdn.ac.uk/general-council](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/general-council)

Elections to fill two vacancies on the University Court for General Council Assessors took place during June. Five candidates contested the election and the result saw Mr Colin Duncan re-elected for a second term of office on Court and Professor Nuala Booth, a former member of staff in Life Sciences and Medicine, elected.

From October 1 2014, Mr Eric Crockart the current Vice-Convener of the Business Committee of the General Council will succeed Mr Colin Duncan as Convenor.



Dr Findlay Walker

## Findlay Walker Scholarships

The University of Aberdeen Foundation, our U.S. fundraising Board, has launched a new scholarship programme for U.S. students named in memory of Dr. J. Findlay Walker who served on the Board for many years. The Findlay Walker Scholarships will enable students from the United States who demonstrate outstanding academic ability and want to study any subject, to come to the University of Aberdeen. Findlay was a devoted friend and family man and a dedicated champion of his University. To support the Scholarships contact U.S. Administrator Nancy Bikson at [nancy.bikson@chapel-york.com](mailto:nancy.bikson@chapel-york.com).

## Joining the online learning community

The University of Aberdeen has joined an innovative online learning community that enables people to undertake free short courses over the internet.

The institution has established a partnership with FutureLearn – the first UK-led platform for leading education providers to come together to provide quality, higher education courses to anyone, which can be accessed from anywhere in the world using a range of different devices. The University of Aberdeen will launch two online courses – known as MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) on [futurelearn.com](http://futurelearn.com), focusing on the big issues in society such as food and nutrition, international development and sustainability. The free courses run for six to eight weeks and students are expected to put in up to six hours of study per week. Aberdeen courses will be available on [www.futurelearn.com](http://www.futurelearn.com)

# Keep in touch

To make sure that you continue to receive the **VOICE** magazine and to help us keep you updated with all of the news, events and services available to you, please provide us with your up to date contact details (postal and email).

The easiest way to do this is by registering or updating your details online at:

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

Alternatively please contact the Alumni Relations Office by post or email:  
[alumni@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@abdn.ac.uk)



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# Looking Forward Giving Back



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*Thank you.*