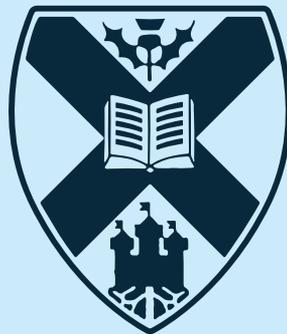


# UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH JOURNAL



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WINTER 2021

# Forthcoming UEGA Events

For full details on all events, and to order tickets, please visit our website at:  
[www.uega.co.uk/events](http://www.uega.co.uk/events)

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## UEGA AGM 2022 - £16.50

Due to be held in the **Raeburn Room, Old College,**  
**Edinburgh EH8 9YL** on **Thursday 10 February 2022** at **12.00 noon.**

In order to provide as much protection as possible, an individually boxed sandwich lunch will be available after the event, priced at **£16.50.**

## Annual Reception and Dinner - £50

Due to be held in the **Playfair Library Hall, Old College,**  
**Edinburgh EH8 9YL** on **Wednesday 23 March 2022** from **6.30 pm.**

The Drinks Reception will begin at **6.30 pm** and, in order to provide as much protection for our guests as possible, a served-to-table dinner will take place from **7.00 pm.**

The menu will include:

**Starter:** Scottish salmon 3 ways, baby leaf salad, and dill vinaigrette (GF) (WF)

**Main:** Ballotine of chicken with pearl barley, bacon & brie fondant potatoes, thyme jus, and baby spring vegetables

**Dessert:** Chocolate genache & orange tartlet, lemon curd, and mint cream (V)

Tea & filter coffee with shortbread will be served after dinner.

Please let us know of any dietary requirements.

Our after-dinner guest speaker will be the current University Rector,  
**Debora Kayembe**, a human rights lawyer and political activist.

Dress code: lounge suits. Tickets are priced at **£50.**

## Visit to Abbotsford House - £20

Meet at the Visitor Centre, Abbotsford House, Melrose, on **Friday 24 June** at **2.00 pm** for a guided tour of the Regency Garden and the home of Sir Walter Scott.

Members can walk through the nearby woods or along the Tweed, and refreshments and food are available at the Ochiltree Café.

For directions, timetables, and general information, please visit:

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

# *University of Edinburgh Journal*

Volume 50, Number 2 – Winter 2021

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The Editor gratefully acknowledges the receipt of the following journals:

*Bulletin, the University of Edinburgh Staff Magazine*  
*Edit, the University of Edinburgh Alumni Magazine*  
*EDUCT News, the Edinburgh University Club of Toronto Newsletter*

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# From the Editor

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## Living, Working, and Studying with COVID-19, *The Almanac*, and Unremembered Alumni

With the University still in the grip of restrictions of COVID-19, it is good to see that many regular activities are resuming, while having to follow the Government's guidelines on how life can be lived. The Graduates' Association is having to do the same. The office is open regularly, but Joan Meikle, Assistant Secretary, is normally the only person occupying it. Most Committee meetings have been conducted using Zoom, but the last two Executive meetings have been held person-to-person in one of our rooms, which are spacious enough to allow for adequate social distancing for small gatherings, and the wearing of face-coverings all during the meetings. The *Journal* team, however, have continued to work



from their homes, and Editorial Committee meetings have all been conducted by Zoom. Access to office files and reference books in the office is very limited, and many of our authors have found themselves hampered by access restrictions to libraries, archives, and other sources of information. It is very gratifying that so many people have wanted to fulfil their promises of articles and have been able to do. They have managed to produce a series of very interesting and readable articles which I am sure you will enjoy as much as we have enjoyed editing them. This is a very full issue of the *Journal*, and more articles have already been promised for the next issue, Summer 2022.

I am particularly pleased to include an article by Ellen MacRae, President of the Students' Association (EUSA), which describes some of the problems being faced by many students, problems caused by the pandemic and having to be overcome. Many of you will have received the letter on which her article is based, as an appeal for contributions to The Edinburgh Fund, on which students can apply to draw to help with travel and other expenses that they cannot otherwise meet. The Graduates' Association is not part of the University's regular philanthropic funding system, but the *Journal*, and now *The Almanac*, is able sometimes to draw attention to special needs and appeals, and these articles add to the *Journal* archive on life in the University. As always, other articles by and/or about Edinburgh alumni cover the wide range of interests that the University has always addressed. Articles by Brian Stanley, David Munro, and Yvonne Lewis focus on Edinburgh alumni whose achievements are often forgotten. Jack Kellet completes his article on visiting Iona, and John Ross Sutherland explores the revived popularity of sea songs and shanties.

The first issue of *The Almanac* was published in early October and has, I hope, been read by all our members, either online or as a specially requested printed copy. We are most grateful for its splendid appearance created by John Ross Sutherland, Assistant Editor, which adds greatly to its readability. The next issue will appear in February and will include a reminder about the Annual General Meeting of the Graduates' Association which will be held on **Thursday 10 February at 12.00 noon** and of the Annual Reception and Buffet, which has been arranged for **Wednesday 23 March** as a person-to-person event in the Playfair Library, Old College which, as I am sure you remember, is a huge and well-ventilated space with a high vaulted ceiling and with plenty of opportunity for social distancing for dining as well for conversation. Our guest speaker is to be Debora Kayembe, our 54<sup>th</sup> Rector, the third woman to hold the post and the first person of colour to do so. Debora was to have addressed the Association at the St Andrew's Night Dinner in November, which had to be cancelled, and we are looking forward to hearing her address in March. I am hoping too that she will agree to our publishing the text of her address in the Summer *Journal*, and I hope too that many of you will want to come, meet, and hear her.

Peter B Freshwater, Editor

# University & Alumni Notes

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## *The Almanac*: the Graduates' Association Newsletter

We are delighted to report that first issue of the Graduates' Association's new newsletter *The Almanac*, appeared at the beginning of October, and is mounted on the Association's website at [www.uega.co.uk](http://www.uega.co.uk). Its approaching appearance was announced in the Summer issue of the *Journal*, and a notification of its actual appearance was sent in October to every member for whom the Editorial team and the Association office had an e-mail address. Reports from members reveal that, because of the e-mail heading and content that appeared, some copies of the announcement may have been diverted away from some members' current Inboxes into their Junk, Spam, or Clutter mailboxes along with the myriad commercial and charity subscription list e-mails. We are checking to see how we can revise the heading next time. Printouts have been sent to the few members who have asked for them. In this issue, readers can find all the AGM administrative papers that used to be published with the *Journal*, including Events, Donations, New Members, and the Honours List. We have also added some new sections for our readers to enjoy, including Letters to the Editor, Notices, Forthcoming in the *Journal*, and a profile of one of our committee members, Lady Lucinda L Mackay. The Editor encourages readers to contribute to future issues of *The Almanac* in the form of Letters to the

Editor, Notices, or to contribute to a future issue of the *University of Edinburgh Journal*. The next issue of *The Almanac* will appear in February next year. For more information, please contact us at: [gradassoc@ed.ac.uk](mailto:gradassoc@ed.ac.uk)

## Graduates' Association Events

For a variety of reasons, technical and editorial, the proposed series of online lectures for members on the history of the University unfortunately came to nought. Sadly too, the planned St Andrew's Night Dinner at the end of November had to be cancelled. The next event, which we hope will again be a person-to-person one will be the **Annual General Meeting** on **Thursday 10 February** at 12.00 in the Raeburn Room, Old College followed by a light lunch for those members who wish to stay and who have purchased tickets in advance. Details can be found in *The Almanac*, No 1. The next again event is the **Annual Reception and Buffet** on **Wednesday 23 March** in the Playfair Library, Old College, at which our guest speaker will be the Rector, Debora Kayembe. This is a ticketed event for which details will appear in *The Almanac*, No. 2 in February and on our website at: [www.uega.co.uk/events](http://www.uega.co.uk/events)

## London Blue Plaque for Dr James Samuel Risien Russell

One of Britain's first black British medical consultants, pioneering neurologist James Samuel Risien Russell, who worked at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery (NHNN), has been commemorated with an English Heritage London blue plaque. The plaque marks 44 Wimpole Street, the impressive house which served as J S Risien Russell's home and private practice from 1902 until his death in March 1939.



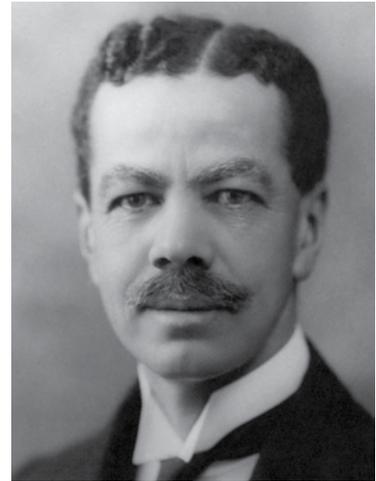
Dr Rebecca Preston, Blue Plaques Historian at English Heritage, commented:

An extremely talented physician, J S Risien Russell furthered our understanding of many conditions of the nervous system and mental health issues. We are delighted to recognise him with a blue plaque on the building where he lived and worked for nearly 40 years.

Born in Demerara (later British Guiana, now Guyana) in 1863 to engineer and sugar magnate the Hon. William Russell and his wife, who was of African descent, and of whom little is known, Risien Russell graduated from the University of Edinburgh as a Doctor of Medicine in 1883. In 1888, he was appointed senior house physician at NHNN, part of University College Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

(UCLH). The hospital, in Queen Square, London, was the world's first specialist neurological hospital. He rose to the hospital's management board in 1903. Risien Russell thus played an active role in developing the discipline of neurology around the turn of the century. He also became professor of medical jurisprudence and subsequently professor of medicine at University College London, serving as president of the neurology section of the Royal Society of Medicine after 1907.

Russell had strong and far-sighted opinions on the desirability of treating many people suffering from mental illnesses outside of institutions and confinement and chaired the National Society for Lunacy Law Reform in the 1920s. Unafraid of controversy, in 1924, he pronounced that no-one was 'absolutely sane'. Towards the end of his career, he often acted as an expert witness in the High Court upon psychiatric issues and was revered as a mental specialist, particularly for obscure or difficult cases. From 1908 to 1918, Russell also served as a captain in the Royal Army Medical Corps and developed a special interest in shell shock.



In the late 1920s, Risien Russell retired to concentrate on private practice, conducted from his address in Wimpole Street and, as a result of his skilled diagnosis and management of diseases of the nervous system, was hugely successful. He died 'very suddenly', aged 75, on 20 March 1939 in his consulting rooms, between appointments.

Arthur Torrington CBE, Director, Windrush Foundation, said:

Like Dr James Samuel Risien Russell, I was also born in British Guiana. I first knew of his life and times only ten years ago, when his story was brought to my attention. Not long afterwards a colleague and I completed a project about Dr Russell's contribution to World War One and Neurology. The plaque is a direct result of a nomination by Dr John Henderson, a Canadian physician, with supporting information from me. We all felt that Dr Russell's contribution to Britain deserved an English Heritage blue plaque and we applaud English Heritage for their recognition of Dr James Samuel Risien Russell.

Dr Chris Turner, UCLH consultant neurologist and Divisional Clinical Director at NHNN, said:

We are delighted that NHNN alumnus, Dr James Samuel Risien Russell, has been recognised with an English Heritage London blue plaque. His life has been a great inspiration to many and we are pleased more people will learn about his life. In addition to this, UCLH are also planning local

recognition of Dr Risien Russell in collaboration with the BAME network at the National Hospital.

(Reprinted by kind permission of the University College London Hospitals Media Unit and of Arthur Torrington CBE, Director of the Windrush Foundation)

## Robert Blomfield Archive of Edinburgh Photographs

As we go to press, we learn that the Robert Blomfield Archive of Edinburgh Street Photographs is to come to Edinburgh University Library on indefinite deposit, to be made as widely accessible as possible. During his medical student and working days in Edinburgh in the late 1960s, Blomfield took over a thousand photographs of everyday life in the City and the University. He died in December 2020 at the age of 85. An acclaimed exhibition of some of the collection was displayed in the City Art Centre in 2018, and a second exhibition is planned in the Main University Library in May next year.

## George Mackay Brown Centenary: A Dream of Snow

As a Christmas treat, and to mark the centenary of the birth of George Mackay Brown, the Centre for Research Collections in the University Library has launched a splendid seasonal virtual exhibition, *A Dream of Snow: Christmas as Seen by George Mackay Brown*. Dr Paul Barnaby, Acquisition and Scottish Literary Collections Curator, writes:

The Orkney writer George Mackay Brown (1921–1996) was fascinated by the Christmas story, retelling it time and again in his poems, short stories, and plays. To celebrate the writer's centenary, we have selected items from our major collection of George Mackay Brown books and manuscripts, which cover the whole festive season from Advent through to Epiphany. To join us on a journey through twelve days of Christmas as seen by one of Scotland's greatest writers, please visit: <https://exhibitions.ed.ac.uk/exhibitions/a-dream-of-snow>

The exhibition is introduced by Brown's most recent biographer, Dr Linden Bicket, and curated by Dr Barnaby.

Like many modern Scottish writers, George Mackay Brown was an alumnus of Edinburgh University, coming to the University to study English literature as a mature student after having studied already at Newbattle Abbey College. The Friends of Edinburgh University Library, who over the years have contributed greatly to the acquisition of his books and papers, are planning a George Mackay Brown event of their own next year as part of their 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations.

# The Edinburgh Fund: Meeting Students' Post-COVID Needs

by Ellen MacRae

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**I**t is important that students feel confident and safe studying in Edinburgh. It is to be hoped that this academic year brings back in-person lectures, sports matches, clubs, societies, and international experiences, and that alumni support its new and returning students in this pivotal year.

With students returning to Edinburgh this semester, there is a buzz about the place. The Meadows are busy, desk space in the libraries is in demand, and Teviot is creaking back into life. These are the first steps. Now we need to ensure that students make up for lost time. They need to be provided with all the opportunities that the pandemic took away. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds have the most urgent need. They often do not have the support or connections that other students may have to get the most out of university and to help them after they graduate. They need access to the wide-ranging extracurricular activities at the University to give them the best chance of a successful life and career.

Many alumni already support the University with regular gifts, and for these, the University and the Students' Association is very grateful. However, extra special gifts are needed now to support a variety of important programmes through the Edinburgh Fund that directly benefit students, particularly those most in need. These gifts could enable a student, who otherwise couldn't afford it, to have their first international experience. For students who have previously never left the UK,

an overseas experience can really boost confidence. A whole cohort of language students has missed out on their year abroad, which is such an invaluable part of their degrees. Opportunities to make friends and connections across the globe is something that is unique and powerful.

These experiences help students understand their own potential and develop skills to set them up for life; but crucially, when their student experience has been so fractured, they help our students forge strong relationships with each other, something that has never been more important. Alumni may have had life-changing opportunities to go abroad to work, study, or volunteer while at Edinburgh, and want to help other students have similar experiences; or perhaps were involved in a community action group, club, or society that you want current students to experience the same joy from.

Three personal stories illustrate this, one of which is my own:

During the fourth year of my Biomedical Sciences degree, I got my first taste of scientific research. By getting involved with societies, I had some real highlights, such as busking in Princes Street Gardens with the Clarinet Society, achieving my Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award, and trying scuba diving. I was doing my research project at The Queen's Medical Research Institute (QMRI) in March 2020. Because of the pandemic, I couldn't continue with it. My flatmates had to move out. Edinburgh shut down as a city. I, like many other students, felt extremely isolated. Completing my degree in June 2020 felt anti-climactic. I didn't have the graduation ceremony in the McEwan Hall that I had always dreamed of. It was a messy and dark end to my time as a student. I missed out on so much. I don't want any more students to feel this way. I am passionate about supporting students, and my priority this year is to do as much for them as I can.



Emily, a member of the Edinburgh University Trampoline Club, had an idea that was brought to life by an alumni-funded Student Experience Grant. With donations from alumni, she was able to set up an outreach project for young people in Edinburgh with disabilities. For Emily, this experience was transformative: 'Before, I was a bit shy and not very confident in talking, even to other students. All of a sudden I came out of my shell.' Emily found working with these young people a delight. The majority of the participants were autistic, and it opened her eyes and shaped her views to the challenges of inclusivity in a sport like trampolining. More gifts can help students like Emily bring innovative ideas to life. They can develop projects that help change lives in local and international communities through Student Experience Grants.

One of the programmes supported by alumni donations to the Edinburgh Fund is the highly rated Insights programme. Through this programme, students from low-income backgrounds meet alumni working in a range of fields and learn about varied career pathways. Before the pandemic, Molly travelled to New York on this programme and spent a week visiting different workplaces. In her own words:

Something that has always worried me is the fear of not being good enough. I am from a small town where university is definitely not the most common option. When you arrive at university, you're suddenly surrounded by thousands of other people who seem to be bringing so much more to the competitive job market than you might be able to. Comparing yourself to those who have had international experiences or placements, attended better schools, or even just have more confidence than you, can make you feel like there is little hope.

The Insights programme has helped me with this inner challenge immensely. I have learned so much about the career opportunities that are out there and am so much more confident in my abilities to reach my goals. Getting the chance to talk to professionals who were in my position only ten years ago made me think 'what's stopping me from doing this?' I no longer think about life after university with worry or angst, but excitement and optimism.

I am on the project board and personally involved in the Insights programme. I have seen for myself the positive influence it has on students like Molly. The team has worked hard to continue running the programme online during the pandemic, but they can't wait for it to be back in person. Exposure into careers is invaluable, especially in today's job market, and their goal is that all students from low-income backgrounds have the opportunity to benefit, regardless of their finances. These can be hugely formative experiences, but students need support to participate. With gifts from alumni today, these experiences can be offered to many more students.

Edinburgh offers many amazing experiences, but not all students have the financial means to take up all that is on offer. The people who would most benefit

from these opportunities are often the students who don't have family support of connections to draw on. The reality is that many of these activities and programmes come at a cost that some of our students cannot afford. The University can be proud of having doubled the number of students from the lowest-income postcodes in the past five years. Many of them receive scholarship support so that they can afford to study at Edinburgh; but they need further support to take advantage of all that the city and the University have to offer. Gifts today can help very greatly.

Gifts to the Edinburgh Fund can help to make sure that these students don't miss out. They will be used wherever the need and demand are greatest within priority programmes for students. If a donor prefers, their gift can be to a specific area that they feel passionate about. Whatever and however alumni give, they will help students from lower-income backgrounds not to be left behind. These students will be able to experience the life at the University of Edinburgh that they always expected, immersed in the city and enjoying the camaraderie of student groups and societies. These experiences will shape them the most and create friendships and memories to last a lifetime.

If you would like to make such a gift, thank you very much. Please visit:

**[www.ed.ac.uk/student-experience-appeal](http://www.ed.ac.uk/student-experience-appeal)**

Or write to:

**Freepost UNIVERSITY REPLY**

(no address or stamp needed and it will make its way to us)

Alternatively, you can use a stamp and send to:

**Development and Alumni, Charles Stewart House  
9-11 Chambers Street, Edinburgh EH1 1HT**

Please include your full name and address with your donation so the University can send you a thank you letter and donation receipt.

## About the Author

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**E**llen MacRae is President of the Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA). She was re-elected in March 2021 and is EUSA's first returning President. She graduated from the University in 2020 and, after her tenure at EUSA, plans to pursue a career in the field of genomic and reproductive health.

## Images:

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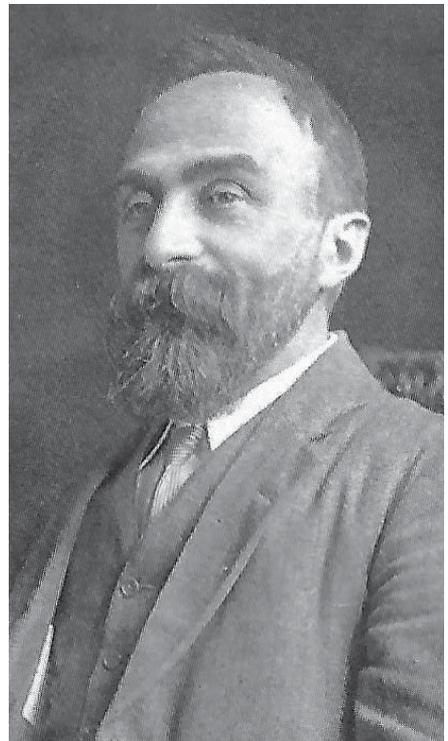
**Page 90:** Photograph of Ellen MacRae.  
Photography by Andrew Perry, June 2021.

# William Speirs Bruce – Remembered not Forgotten

by Dr David M Munro MBE

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October 28, 2021 marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death, aged 54, of the distinguished Scottish naturalist, oceanographer and polar explorer William Speirs Bruce (1867–1921). A veteran of 13 polar expeditions, Bruce was perhaps best known for his leadership of the 1902–04 Scottish National Antarctic Expedition which made the first systematic oceanographical exploration of the Weddell Sea. Despite nearly three decades of his life exploring northern and southern polar regions, Bruce has often been described in publications and lecture titles as the ‘forgotten polar hero’. This article, in outlining his many achievements, explains how William Speirs Bruce is far from forgotten, arguing that his name has been, and continues to be, widely recognised.



## The Early Years of a Naturalist

Born in Kensington, London, on 1 August 1867, William Bruce was the fourth child of Samuel Noble Bruce and his wife Mary Lloyd. A successful general practitioner, Samuel Bruce, though described as somewhat tyrannical, brought his family of eight children up in comparatively comfortable middle-class surroundings, encouraging them to take an interest in life and nature. Bruce's grandfather, the Rev William Bruce, provided his early education which included frequent visits to Kensington Gardens and various London museums where he was inspired to take an interest in natural history and science.

William Bruce's formal education did not begin, however, until the age of 12 years when he was sent to the Norfolk County School, a progressive boarding school situated on a wooded hill overlooking the Wensum valley near the small market town of North Elmham. With an emphasis on experiential learning by engaging in hands-on projects, this was ideal training for a future explorer.

Samuel Bruce was determined to see his son take up a medical career and, after leaving North Elmham in 1885, William Bruce was eventually enrolled to study medicine at University College London. Before his studies began, however, Bruce was sent by his father to take part in summer courses in natural science held in Edinburgh under the eminent and inspiring scholar Patrick Geddes. This was to be a life-changer for William Bruce who abandoned his father's plans for study in London and enrolled in the medical school at the University of Edinburgh. In his free time, Bruce gained invaluable experience in working on specimens and data brought back to Edinburgh by the *Challenger* Expedition (1872–76). Thereafter, Edinburgh was to be his home and natural history his great passion.

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## The Baptism of a Polar Explorer

Immersed in the scientific collections of the *Challenger* Expedition, William Bruce must have imagined a time when he might conduct his own oceanographic research, but how could this be achieved? The opportunity arose in 1892 when the Dundee whaler Robert Kinnes fitted out four whaling ships to head south to Antarctica in search of new whaling waters. Persuaded by the geographer Hugh Robert Mill to take on board young naturalists as surgeons, Kinnes was pointed in the direction of Edinburgh medical student William Speirs Bruce, 'a shy, modest fellow, with an overmastering passion for collecting specimens of Natural History'.<sup>1</sup> Named after the lead ship, the 1892–93 *Baleana* Expedition was later to be described by Bruce as where 'I first received my polar baptism and first learnt what the Polar regions were'.<sup>2</sup>

Bruce was accompanied by his university friend William Gordon Burn Murdoch who wrote and illustrated an account of the voyage, published in 1894, to which

was appended an epilogue by William Bruce. In it, Bruce argued that ‘A rush to the South Pole is not what we urge; but a systematic exploration of the whole of the South Polar region’.<sup>3</sup> A year later, the Sixth International Geographical Congress meeting in London agreed that Antarctica was the last great place on earth to be explored. Thus began the ‘Heroic Age’ of Antarctic exploration.

Though keen to return to Antarctica, William Bruce found himself drawn to the Arctic, thanks to recommendations made once again by Hugh Mill. In 1896, he was invited to join the Jackson-Harmsworth Expedition to Franz Josef Land and, a year later, he met two influential men who were to change his life and propel him to the front rank of polar exploration. Bruce was offered a second opportunity to visit the Arctic, travelling to Novaya Zemlya as a naturalist on a hunting and pleasure cruise organised by the wealthy Paisley textile manufacturer Andrew Coats. Anchoring in the Norwegian port of Tromsø on the return journey, they found berthed in the harbour another luxurious steam yacht, the *Princesse Alice II*, bound for Spitsbergen. This well-appointed research vessel had been purpose-built for oceanographical work in Arctic waters by HSH Prince Albert I of Monaco who invited William Bruce to join him, an invitation that was gratefully accepted. The following summer, Bruce returned once more to the Arctic with the Prince of Monaco, his notebook full of survey notes and sketches including drawings of the latest in oceanographical equipment. Bruce now also found himself travelling with some of the most noted marine scientists in Europe.



## The *Scotia* Expedition (1902–04)

Having failed to gain a place on the British Antarctic *Discovery* Expedition (1901–03) led by Robert Falcon Scott, William Bruce—already a veteran of five polar expeditions—decided to mount and lead an exclusively Scottish expedition to the Antarctic.

Clearly laid out in the prospectus sent to potential subscribers, the objects of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition were to set up a wintering station and to fit out a ship to carry on deep sea and other scientific research. Ultimately, the total cost of the expedition would amount to £36,405, with the Coats family of Paisley contributing £30,000.

Bruce acquired a Norwegian whaler named *Hekla* which was taken to Troon in Ayrshire to be refitted in the yard of the Ailsa Shipbuilding Company under the direction of the noted naval architect G L Wilson. Ice-strengthened and equipped with two laboratories and a dark room, the ship, under its new name *SY Scotia*, was ready to sail southwards on 2 November 1902. In selecting his scientific team, Bruce looked for specific skills, youth, and enthusiasm, while, in choosing his crew, he sought out men with experience in polar seas.

Stopping to establish a meteorological station in the Falkland Isles, the *Scotia* continued southwards but was prevented by ice from reaching the Antarctic coast line. The expedition retreated to the mountainous and uninhabited South Orkneys where a base was established on Laurie Island. As winter drew to a close in late November 1903, the *Scotia* sailed via the Falkland Islands to Buenos Aires where the ship was reprovisioned with help from Dr Francisco Moreno, Director of the La Plata Museum. Returning to Laurie Island with three Argentine scientists, Bruce sailed on into the eastern part of the Weddell Sea after leaving these men on the island to continue manning the scientific station along with two members of the Scottish party. After discovering a new stretch of the Antarctic coastline, which they named Coats Land, the *Scotia* returned home to a hero's welcome at Millport on Great Cumbrae, bringing to an end a 33,000-mile voyage of discovery.

Although modest about his scientific achievements, Bruce had successfully carried out the first systematic charting of the Weddell Sea in addition to erecting the first permanent scientific research base in Antarctica. Renamed Orcadas and still operated today by the government of Argentina, it is the oldest scientific base with continuous records in Antarctica.

Bruce never got round to writing a popular account of the *Scotia* Expedition, leaving that task to three of his colleagues, who penned *The Voyage of the Scotia*, published in 1906. This book was reprinted several times, most recently by Mercat Press in 2002.<sup>4</sup> For Bruce, it was more important to press on with the immense task of compiling the Scientific Reports of the *Scotia* Expedition. In addition to numerous scientific papers written by Bruce and his colleagues, Bruce is

remembered in Antarctica where a few place-names are called after him, but were never named by him.

In the years that followed the *Scotia* Expedition, William Bruce returned to Spitsbergen, first to carry out a topographical survey of Prince Charles Foreland in 1906 and 1907 and, thereafter, on five occasions between 1909 and 1920 to undertake prospecting on behalf of the Scottish Spitsbergen Syndicate.



## The Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory

In more than a decade of polar exploration, William Bruce had amassed a significant volume of scientific data as well as huge collections of geological, zoological, and biological specimens. These were all housed in a building just next to Surgeons' Hall in Nicolson Street, Edinburgh, where Bruce spent countless hours cataloguing his collections and mounting displays. Used as his base for the *Scotia* Expedition, the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory, as it came to be known, was officially opened in January 1907 by HSH Prince Albert I of Monaco.

A century later in 2007, HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco visited Edinburgh to unveil a plaque mounted at the entrance to the new Quincentennial Hall of the Royal College of Surgeons, built on the site of Bruce's Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory. The revived links between Scotland and Monaco continued with the author of this article being invited, two years later, to join the Scientific and Technical Committee of the newly-formed Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation. This eventually led to the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Foundation and the University of Edinburgh in June 2015, bringing financial support to several environmental projects conceived by the School of GeoSciences.

In many ways, Bruce's Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory was an attempt to revive the city of Edinburgh's pre-eminent position as the centre of oceanography, a status that had been established, for a short while at least, by the famous *Challenger* Expedition. His ultimate hope was to create a National Oceanographical Institute comparable to those established in Monaco and Paris by Prince Albert of Monaco.

Although a committee was formed in 1914 to move this idea forward, the Great War made this proposition difficult and nothing came of it.

At the end of the day, Bruce suffered from ill health and was unable to continue financing his laboratory, obliging him to close its doors in 1919 and disperse his library and collections to scientific institutions throughout Scotland. Amongst these is a sizeable collection of books, documents, and photographs held in the Special Collections to be found in the Library of the University of Edinburgh. The William Speirs Bruce Collection was made more accessible in 2001 when Geoff Swinney of the National Museums of Scotland compiled an invaluable preliminary catalogue.<sup>5</sup> Material from this collection and other archives was subsequently used to tell the story of Bruce's scientific achievements in a variety of formats, not least being a major three-month exhibition mounted in 2003 in the Royal Museum entitled *The First Polar Hero—William Speirs Bruce*. Curated by Geoff Swinney, this exhibition was visited by 38,000 people.

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## The *Scotia* reborn

William Bruce had every hope that his sailing yacht *Scotia* would be adopted as a research and training vessel for young seamen and budding naturalists. In this, he was to be sadly disappointed and, with no offers of finance forthcoming, he sold the ship in Dundee where it was destined to sail north to Greenland waters as a whaler.

Following the tragic sinking of the *Titanic* in 1912, the *SY Scotia* was acquired by the Board of Trade who deployed it on ice patrol in the North Atlantic. For at least a few seasons, fitted with an early wireless, it once again carried out scientific observations of ice and weather conditions at sea.

The outbreak of World War I in 1914 finally sealed the fate of Bruce's beloved *Scotia*, which was relegated to carrying coal from Wales to France. In 1916, the ship caught fire shortly after leaving Cardiff. It ran aground and burned out on the beach of the small island of Sully opposite Swanbridge on the coast of the Bristol Channel.

Finally destroyed on a small tidal island in the Bristol Channel, the *Scotia*, however, arose phoenix-like in the form of a series of research vessels with the same name operated by the Marine Laboratory of the Fishery Board for Scotland in Aberdeen, now operated by Marine Scotland. Hydrographic and plankton surveys were carried out in the North Atlantic from a steam trawler acquired by the Scottish Home Department in 1948 and named *Scotia*. This vessel was captained by Ellum Alastair Bruce, the son of William Speirs Bruce.

The *Scotia* served the Marine Laboratory until 1971 when it was replaced by a diesel-electric trawler, also named *Scotia*, which carried out research into water circulation patterns, fish stocks, and the monitoring of nutrients and contaminants

in the sea. Today, another *Scotia* with state-of-the-art equipment plies the sea keeping the scientific tradition of William Bruce and the first *SY Scotia* very much alive.<sup>6</sup>

Over on the west coast near Oban, Bruce's links with the Scottish Marine Station founded by Sir John Murray are still commemorated today at the Scottish Association of Marine Science laboratories at Dunstaffnage. Tracing its origins back to a small research and teaching vessel known as *The Ark*, anchored first in Granton Harbour and later at Millport on Great Cumbrae, the marine station moved to Oban in 1969, with a new facility opening at Dunstaffnage in 1978. In 2004, an extensive modern laboratory was opened here incorporating a conference hall dedicated to the memory of William Bruce. From coast to coast the pioneering oceanographic studies carried out by William Speirs Bruce a century earlier are well remembered by a growing body of modern marine scientists.



## The *Scotia* Centenary

To mark the centenary of the voyage of the *Scotia*, a two-year programme of events was rolled out by the Royal Scottish Geographical Society in association with other organisations in Scotland and beyond. The aim of the *Scotia* Centenary Programme was not only to present William Bruce to a wider audience but also to focus attention on Antarctica. With the latter in mind, the RSGS mounted a scientific expedition to South Georgia in the South Atlantic in 2002–03. A team of ten scientists studied the impact of past climate change on the environment of this isolated island with a view to predicting the impacts of rapid climate change in the future.

A programme of ‘Music for the *Scotia* Centenary’ was created on the premise that music was not only very much part of the original *Scotia* Expedition but also,

like expeditions in general, dependent on teamwork. In addition to bagpipe tunes composed by Ian MacInnes of BBC Radio Scotland's *Pipeline* programme and *The Scotia Suite of Scottish Country Dances*, created by the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society,<sup>7</sup> an orchestral work, *South*, was composed by Gordon Macpherson and performed on tour by the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland, conducted by Nicolae Moldoveanu.

Amongst a host of other activities, the Royal Scottish Geographical Society initiated an education programme for schools in Scotland. Education packs were circulated to all primary and secondary schools and an art competition encouraged pupils to draw on the voyage of the *Scotia* for inspiration.

With her special interest in Antarctica, Royal Scottish Geographical Society Vice-President, HRH The Princess Royal provided invaluable support as Patron of the *Scotia* Centenary Programme, as did HSH Prince Albert of Monaco, the great-great-grandson of the 'sailor prince' HSH Prince Albert I. An opportunity also arose to reconnect with Argentina where William Bruce had received such a warm reception in December 1903. Support was given by the society to an exhibition mounted in the Maritime Museum in Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego, celebrating the collaboration between William Bruce and Dr Francisco Moreno. Curated by Ciencias y Artes Patagonia, this exhibition went on to tour Argentina while preparations were made to establish a permanent exhibition on the voyage of the *Scotia* in the Maritime Museum in Ushuaia.



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## Conclusion—to Know the Unknown

In assessing why William Bruce has been labelled a 'forgotten polar hero', it is perhaps unfair to compare him with the likes of Scott, Shackleton, and Amundsen. These men were adventurers primarily interested in being the first to plant a flag at the North or South Pole and were able self-publicists who courted the press in order to promote their expeditions. Bruce, on the other hand, was a scientific explorer,

not interested in grabbing the headlines or writing a best-seller. He was too modest and self-effacing. Science was all that mattered. In a lecture to St Mungo's College of Medicine in Glasgow delivered in 1904, Bruce stated that he was 'not a pole hunter', and that he believed 'in an effort to get to know the unknown wherever and whatever it is and thus add to the wealth of human knowledge'.<sup>8</sup>

As he approached the end of his life, William Bruce suffered from depression. He was undoubtedly saddened by his inability to create a sustainable National Oceanographic Institute in 1914, by the loss of the *Scotia* in 1916, by the closure of the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory in 1919, and by the failure of his marriage. Perhaps if he had witnessed the many and varied ways in which he eventually came to be recognised, he might not have felt so depressed. Within two years of his death, the first of three biographies<sup>9</sup> had been published and the regular award of a medal—the W S Bruce Medal—had been initiated for notable contributions to science where knowledge has been gained through a personal visit to polar regions.

Bruce would be pleased to see how far marine science and polar studies have advanced in Scotland since he was in the field in both the Arctic and Antarctic. His invaluable and inspirational scientific legacy has been, and continues to be, recognised as demonstrated in this article. Far from being forgotten, the name William Speirs Bruce will always be remembered from pole to pole and many places in between.

## About the Author

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A graduate of the University of Edinburgh in both Ecology (1973) and Geography (1983), David Munro was co-ordinator of the 2002–04 Scotia Centenary Programme while Director and Secretary of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society (1996–2008). He is currently a member of the Scientific and Technical Committee of the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation.

## Notes

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## Images:

**Page 93:** Portrait of W S Bruce by Lafayette published in *A Naturalist at the Poles* (1923) by R N Rudmose Brown.

**Page 95:** A painting of the SY *Scotia* in the Weddell Sea by marine artist Tom Robertson. From the collection of Dr David M Munro.

**Page 97:** William Bruce in his Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory in Nicolson Street, Edinburgh, published in *A Naturalist at the Poles* (1923) by R N Rudmose Brown.

**Page 99:** The signing, in the Yacht Club of Monaco, of a memorandum of understanding between the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation and the University of Edinburgh. *Seated:* Sir Timothy O'Shea, Principal of the University of Edinburgh (left) and HE Mr Bernard Fautrier, Vice-President of the Foundation; *Standing:* HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco. Photo: David Munro.

**Page 100:** Piper Gilbert Kerr serenades an Emperor Penguin with an icebound SY *Scotia* in the background. Known widely as 'The Piper and the Penguin' this image inspired one of the most popular of the seven Scottish country dances created in 2002 as part of the *Music for the Scotia Centenary*. Source: The William Speirs Bruce Collection, courtesy of Special Collections, Main Library University of Edinburgh.

# Edinburgh and China: The History of Medical, Educational, and Missionary Connections

by Prof Brian Stanley

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**A**t almost every University of Edinburgh Graduation Ceremony, one cannot fail to be impressed by the serried ranks of graduating students from China. This tradition began as long ago as 1 August 1855, when Wong Fun (Huang Kuan in pinyin), whose birthplace was near the modern city of Zhuhai in Guangdong province, graduated MD. The graduation address was delivered by Professor James Young Simpson, the pioneer of obstetric anaesthesia. Simpson declared that Wong Fun was not simply the University's first Chinese student, but also, in his belief, the first such to graduate from any European university.<sup>1</sup> He had first matriculated in the Faculty of Medicine on 30 October 1851, alongside Alexander Groves Duff of Calcutta, eldest son of Alexander Duff, the first Scottish missionary to India.<sup>2</sup> The missionary connection was appropriate, as Wong Fun himself owed his presence in Edinburgh to the Protestant missionary movement.

Wong Fun (1828–78) was one of a small group of Chinese in Canton (now Guangzhou) whom Dr Peter Parker, commonly described as the first American medical missionary to China, had in 1836–7 begun to instruct in techniques of Western medicine.<sup>3</sup> In 1846, another American missionary, Samuel Robbins Brown, had returned from China to the United States on grounds of his wife's ill health, taking with him three of Parker's protégés, one of them being Wong Fun, in order

to further their education. One of the three promptly went back to China, but Wong Fun and Yung Wing enrolled in Monson Academy in Massachusetts, the first American school to enrol Chinese students. They were supported by three sponsors, two of them Scottish merchants in Hong Kong, A A Campbell, and Andrew Shortrede who was a wealthy printer. Yung Wing subsequently proceeded to study medicine at Yale, but Wong Fun elected to study at the University of Edinburgh, attracted by the promise of continued funding from his benefactors.<sup>4</sup> When that funding came to an end in 1852, his support was taken over by the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society, a body established in 1841. In 1851, the Society resolved to devote part of its funds to assisting students with their medical training with a view to becoming ‘medical missionaries’—a novel concept at the time. Wong Fun was the second student to be supported in this way, and, in 1856, he sailed for China as an agent of the London Missionary Society (LMS). He worked first in Hong Kong and then in Canton. His employment by the Society came to a formal end in 1860, owing to a dispute about the finances of the Kam-li-Fau Hospital in Canton.<sup>5</sup>

Wong Fun was the first Western-educated doctor to practise medicine in China, as well as being the first Chinese to be a Christian medical missionary to his own people. He later became deputy director of the Canton Medical School, which Peter Parker had founded. This evolved into Lingnan University Medical College, and eventually into today’s Sun Yat-sen College of Medical Science. In 2007, Principal Timothy O’Shea of the University of Edinburgh presented Wong Fun’s examination transcripts and a copy of his MD research dissertation, ‘On Functional Disorders of the Stomach’ to the city of Zhuhai. In return, the municipal government presented the University with a bronze statue of Wong Fun, which stands outside Abden House, the home of the Confucius Institute for Scotland.<sup>6</sup>



*Dr Dugald Christie*

The connections between the University of Edinburgh and China were thus forged in the mid-nineteenth century on the basis of Edinburgh’s unrivalled reputation as a pioneer of professional medical education, coupled with the keen interest that Scottish Protestant Christians took in overseas missions, especially to Asia. These twin foundations became the basis of a tradition that endured until the Communist revolution of 1949, and still leaves its traces today.

Whereas Wong Fun’s links were largely with south China, as the nineteenth century proceeded and the doors of the Qing empire were prised apart by Western

imperial power, the nodes of the Edinburgh-China network moved gradually northwards, especially after the United Presbyterian Church opened its Manchuria mission in 1872. Probably the first Edinburgh-trained doctor to work in northeast China, James Watson, who graduated in 1863, was not a missionary but a physician employed by the British consulate and Imperial Maritime Customs Service in Yingkou from 1865 to 1885.<sup>7</sup>

In 1883, one of the most distinguished of Edinburgh's missionary graduates in medicine, Dr Dugald Christie (1855–1936), began work in the Manchurian capital of Mukden (now Shenyang). Two years later, he erected a temporary hospital, followed in 1887 by a permanent building. It would grow under his tutelage into a teaching hospital and one of China's premier medical colleges. Like Wong Fun, Christie's medical studies in Edinburgh from 1877 to 1881 were supported by the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society. Christie was a Gaelic speaker, born in Glencoe, and found Gaelic pronunciation useful when he began studying Chinese.<sup>8</sup> His long missionary career in Manchuria lasted until his retirement in 1923, and was punctuated by extraordinary crises: the Boxer Rising of 1900, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5, the devastating famine that ensued, and, during the winter of 1910–11, the horrors of an epidemic of pneumonic plague. 'The terror of the visitation', starkly wrote his wife Elizabeth, 'lay in the fact that none recovered: 43,942 cases, 43,942 deaths.'<sup>9</sup> In 1912, Christie opened the Mukden Medical College, which offered a five-year medical training course based on the Edinburgh curriculum, demanding the same standards as in Edinburgh. Christie became the first principal; the five-year course became six years, and then seven years. On 29 May 1934, the University Court of the University of Edinburgh recognised the college's medical degree as qualifying for its postgraduate studies in medicine; it was the first college outside of Great Britain to be granted this privilege.<sup>10</sup> Even from his retirement in Edinburgh, Christie continued to take a keen interest in the College and in the turbulent politics of China during the Nationalist period. He was a personal friend of Zhang Xueliang, ruler of much of northern China following the assassination in June 1928 of his father,



*Dr Agnes Cowan*

the warlord Zhang Zuolin. In October that year, Christie wrote a circular letter to the supporters of the College, welcoming Zhang Xueling's accession to the governorship of Manchuria, and confidently predicting that China was heading for 'a better day' and Manchuria for a 'peaceful future'.<sup>11</sup> Such predictions would prove wide of the mark, but Christie's achievement remains a remarkable one. A commemorative bust set up by public subscription in Mukden in 1925, was defaced and removed by the Japanese in the Second World War but restored and replaced in the 1990s.<sup>12</sup>

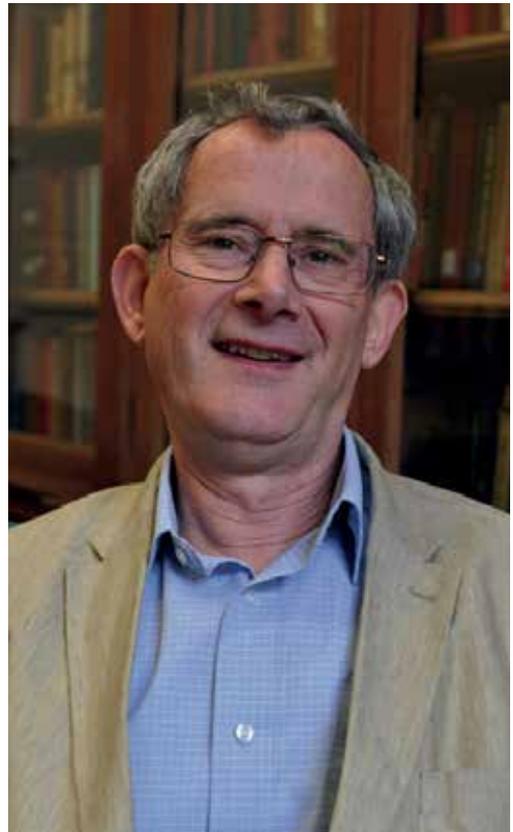
Scottish missionary doctors in China were not all men. One of the first women to graduate in medicine from the University of Edinburgh was Agnes Marshall Cowan (1880–1940), who graduated MBChB in 1906.<sup>13</sup> After some years working first at Leith Hospital and then in the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, she was moved by the reports of the pneumonic plague in Manchuria to volunteer as a medical missionary to north China. By 1915, she had joined Christie on the staff of Mukden Medical College. Apart from war-time service in Scotland with the Royal Army Medical Corps in the notoriously dangerous 'Devil's Porridge' munitions factory at Gretna from 1917 to 1919, she remained at Mukden long enough to experience first-hand the Japanese occupation of Manchuria from 1931. She returned home in poor health in 1939. Cowan was made a member of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecology in 1934.<sup>14</sup>



*Modern statue of Dr Wong Fun*

Female missionary doctors such as Agnes Cowan were relatively few in Republican and Nationalist China. Nurses were more numerous, but none of them were Edinburgh graduates, for the reason that the University offered no diplomas or degrees in nursing studies until the late 1950s. However, some Edinburgh women graduates did become missionary teachers in China, and one of these will feature later in this article. Missionaries made major humanitarian contributions to Chinese society, not simply in medicine and relief work, but also in secondary and higher education. No article on the missionary links between Edinburgh and China can fail to mention Eric Liddell. Liddell was born in China in 1902, at Tianjin, where his Scottish parents worked with the LMS, the same society that sent Wong Fun back to China as a medical missionary. After secondary schooling at Eltham College in southeast London, a school founded to educate the sons of missionaries, Eric matriculated in the University of Edinburgh in 1920 to study pure science. It is intriguing to note that the next alphabetical entry in the matriculation book is for a Chinese student, Yuen-Chou Lin, born in Chongqing, and with a home address in Sichuan province. Lin had already spent three years in the Government Agricultural College in Peking and had come to study in the agriculture department of the Faculty of Science.<sup>15</sup> Did Liddell get to know him? We cannot tell.

Would Eric Liddell be remembered as a University of Edinburgh alumnus if he had not been a celebrated Olympic athlete and the subject of a movie, *Chariots of Fire*? Probably not. His missionary service from 1925, first as a teacher at the Anglo-Chinese College in Tianjin, and then as a rural evangelist among illiterate people in Siao-chang, the village where he was born, though undoubtedly dedicated, was typical of many others. He receives only one brief mention in the 640-page history of the LMS from 1895 to 1945.<sup>16</sup> There are several biographies, one of the best being Duncan Hamilton's *For the Glory*.<sup>17</sup> Rather than rehearsing the well-known narrative of Liddell's life, it may be appropriate to include in this brief article a moving account of his final days spent in the Japanese internment camp at Weixian (Weihsien), Shandong province. Hidden in the personal papers



Prof Brian Stanley

of a Scottish missionary nurse, Annie Buchan, is a poignant description of Liddell in the final months of his life devoting his vanishing energies to caring for internees in a worse condition even than himself. Liddell helped to make the briquettes of coal dust mixed with earth that the internees used in an attempt to keep themselves warm. Despite the cost to his own fragile health—he had a brain tumour—he also carried the coal, chopped wood, carried water buckets to the dormitories, and queued for food on behalf of those who were too weak to do it for themselves. ‘His failing was that he never refused, and loosing [sic] weight and strength, people accepted it’, writes Buchan: ‘He was quiet. He lived his Christianity’.<sup>18</sup> Buchan was on night duty in the camp hospital when Liddell was brought in and was at his bedside when he died on 21 February 1945.<sup>19</sup> In 1991, the University of Edinburgh erected a memorial tablet commemorating Liddell at the site of the internment camp, now located within the city of Weifang.

Eric Liddell rightly has his place in the gallery of Edinburgh graduates who have devoted their lives to the service of the Chinese people, but there are others, even quieter than he, who have simply been forgotten. One such was Helen Barbara Kennedy Maclean, a teacher sent by the United Free Church of Scotland to Manchuria in 1921. Nell Maclean, as she was known, was born in 1894 in the Highlands, at Muir of Ord in Ross-shire. Her academic career studying for an Arts degree at the University of Edinburgh from 1913 to 1916 was undistinguished; she had to re-take her examination in Moral Philosophy after failing her first attempt.<sup>20</sup> After language study in Beijing, her missionary career in Manchuria was spent teaching at two mission schools, first at Kaiyuan, and, from 1923, at Shenyang. A Chinese colleague on the teaching staff at Kaiyuan, Wang Su Fen—whom Maclean always referred to by her Anglicised name of Fragrant Tree—would become a lifelong friend. Fragrant Tree followed her to the Shenyang school, where Maclean, in 1925, found herself with the responsibility of being principal during the Restore Educational Rights movement, a time of major student unrest directed against foreign-run Christian educational institutions. When the pupils staged a walk-out from their classes to join an anti-foreign demonstration, Maclean took the advice of Fragrant Tree to smile as they returned to school: ‘They’ll forget everything else but will remember you smiled’.<sup>21</sup> Maclean also served at this time as joint secretary of the Manchuria Mission Council, in which capacity she had to write to the mission authorities in Edinburgh complaining at the shortage of women doctors in the Mukden women’s hospital—even a schoolmistress could not escape some responsibility for the medical work of the mission.<sup>22</sup>

Maclean supported the transfer of educational leadership to Chinese hands and insisted, on her return from furlough in 1928, that the school appoint a Chinese principal. On her next furlough in 1933, she brought Fragrant Tree back with her to Britain, to meet her family and pursue studies at the Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham. Maclean lived through the Japanese occupation of Manchuria, when

Japanese insistence on imposing Shinto worship on the school led to its closure in 1941. She was placed under house arrest, then interned in Japan. After an exchange of prisoners of war in 1942, she was able to return to Scotland, before being sent by the Church of Scotland to Ghana in 1944. In 1945, she went back to China to be reunited with Fragrant Tree and witness the re-opening of the school. She observed first-hand the Communist take-over of Manchuria in 1948, and saw her school taken over as a training institution for young Communists. Unlike some of her missionary colleagues, her impression of the Communists was not entirely negative, commenting that ‘if cleanliness is next to godliness, then the communist should be godly’. Along with all other missionaries, she had to leave China after the Communist Revolution. After a period of service in Jamaica, she retired to the Highlands, where in 1963, Fragrant Tree joined her. She cared for Maclean in her final illness in 1984 and remained in Scotland until her death.<sup>23</sup>

Nell Maclean’s autobiography records an Edinburgh alumna’s encounters with the turbulent history of twentieth-century China, but also chronicles an enduring intercultural friendship that survived this protracted turbulence. New chapters in the history of the University of Edinburgh’s connection with China are still being written. In conclusion, we may recall that the current Principal of the University, Peter Mathieson, arrived in Edinburgh in 2018 from Hong Kong, where he had served since 2014 as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong, having previously been Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry in the University of Bristol. The University of Hong Kong traces its origins to an antecedent institution, the Hong Kong Medical College for Chinese, opened in 1887 through the joint initiative of the Scottish parasitologist Dr Patrick Manson and Dr Ho Shan Kai (Kai Ho), a physician, barrister, and son of a pastor in the LMS mission; until 1915 the Medical College was based mainly in the LMS’s Alice Memorial Hospital.<sup>24</sup> Kai Ho (like Manson) was an Aberdeen alumnus, not an Edinburgh one, but he must have heard of Wong Fun, the one-time LMS medical missionary, and may even have met him. 2018 thus opened a new chapter in the Edinburgh-China story that began in 1851. It will not be the final chapter.

## About the Author

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**B**rian Stanley has been Professor of World Christianity in the School of Divinity since 2009. He is a historian of Christian missions and world Christianity, and his most recent book is *Christianity in the Twentieth Century: A World History* (Princeton University Press, 2018).

## Notes

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21. CRC, CSWC 14, 1.2, Papers of Helen B. K. Maclean, unpublished MS, 'Manchurian Memories and Fragrant Tree', p. 62.
22. NLS, MS7979, Fol. 18. Helen B. K. Maclean, Joint Secretary, United Free Church of Scotland

Manchuria Mission Council, to Miss [Ella] Lee, 22 April 1925.

23. 'Manchurian Memories and Fragrant Tree', p. 150. This paragraph draws on Maclean's manuscript and the archivist's commentary on Maclean's papers provided by Caroline Brown in 2001.

24. Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, ii, p. 464; Peter Cunich, 'Making Space for Higher Education in Colonial Hong Kong, 1887-1913', in *Harbin to Hanoi: The Colonial Built Environment in Asia, 1840 to 1940*, ed. by Laura Victoir and Victor Zatsepine (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013), pp.181-205 (pp. 196-97).

### Images:

**Page 104:** Dr Dugald Christie, taken from his biography: [Elizabeth Hastie Christie], *Dugald Christie of Manchuria: Pioneer and Medical Missionary: The Story of a Life with a Purpose*. London. James Clarke & Company, Limited, n.d. [1932].

**Page 105:** Dr Agnes Cowan, taken from the Devil's Porridge Museum at Gretna, <<https://www.devilsporridge.org.uk/agnesmarshallcowan>> [accessed 21 December 2021]

**Page 106:** Statue of Dr Wong Fun at the Confucius Institute for Scotland, University of Edinburgh. Photography by Peter B Freshwater.

**Page 107:** Picture of Prof Brian Stanley. Photograph taken by Dr Alexander Chow.

# Again Iona? Part 2: A Time for Concern

by Rev Jack Kellet

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## Better than the Devil

**H**igh up on the stonework inside the Cathedral, centrally placed on the choir stalls’ side of the nave, where worshippers would not normally see it, a small, distorted face had been carved during the Middle Ages. In recent years I have heard guides point up to it and tell visitors it represents the Devil; but I think that the saintly Ralph Morton, Deputy Leader of the Iona Community, had it right when he told us trainee ministers that it was a tormented soul, particularly observable from the pulpit in order to remind preachers that, however fixed or casual the faces of the people in the congregation looking up, many would be coping with real burdens—Burns’ ‘shattered dreams, the grief and pain’—burdens that they were hoping to keep private, but that might actually destroy them. (Incidentally, on a family holiday not long after the death of Ralph—still a mentor to me—we could not help but notice the splendid new ceiling and lighting over the nave. Someone whispered to me that Ralph’s family had done this, quietly, as a thanksgiving.)

## The Agony of Prayer

As all praying people know well—though you would not realise it from the over-sentimentalist references to prayer in much of today’s popular media—prayer is not always a pleasant and instantly pacifying experience. A sermon from the Abbey Church pulpit by Iona Community Founder George MacLeod—when long ago I was among the young, naive, idealistic seekers in the congregation—a sermon that has stood me in good stead into my nineties, was on The Agony of Prayer (Luke 22. 39ff). It was with sweat and tears that Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemene as he faced up to what absolute faithfulness would be demanded of him on the morrow, and what the people in absolute power would do to him.

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## Prayer as ‘Wrestling’ with God

Religious Education used to be an essential feature of traditional Scottish Education, and prayer was part of the curriculum. But although I do not remember anything being taught in Primary School about the agony in Gethsemene—probably it was thought too disturbing for children’s minds; perhaps it was thought too Catholic for Protestant schools!—but I do recall Miss Goodfellow in Abbeyhill Primary School taking her fifty pupils through the stories of Jacob in the Old Testament. The lesson about the wrestling all night long with God was particularly memorable (Genesis 33. 24) and the class learned the paraphrase ‘O God of Bethel’ off by heart.

The Scottish Education Department would know perfectly well that children under twelve years old could not fully understand the experience being described, but no doubt they hoped that the words being drummed into our minds would in later years help us to cope with the temptations and consequences that come to us all.

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## Iona’s ‘Bethel’ (House of God) Today

To be inside Iona’s Bethel is to find oneself in wonder at its beauty, to be in awe, to start asking the question ‘Why?’, and to begin to think ‘out of the box’. The obvious questions—‘What is this place? Who built and re-built it?’—can give way to Jacob’s experience: ‘Why is my life as it is? What is it for?’ In past centuries, study of the Old Testament and then the New Testament led learned and loving disciples of Jesus to the wisdom that children and adults really had to learn important questions for good living. In the Scottish Catechism of 1646, the first question listed was ‘What is man’s chief end?’ Being inside Iona Cathedral gives visitors a rare impulse to do that for themselves nowadays, if they so choose. However, to be confronted on approaching the Cathedral by a physical barrier and

then a demand for a significant entry fee, instead of by an unhindered welcome to an inheritance provided for them, is to be tempted to stay outside and settle for a note about its history and an admiration of the scene.

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## The Kelleys' Last Visit(s)

For a few years, age never coming by itself, my wife and I felt we were not up to holidaying on Iona. But when we learned at the respective ages of 86 and 83 that we could take a Strathmore Travel coach tour to Oban with a day trip to the Island, we decided to make the best of the two hours or more allowed. Now, we each had a stick to help us along but discovered that, in our absence, the road from the jetty had become a steep brae! Then, when we got close to the Abbey, we were surprised to see that most of the ferry-boat's passengers in front had not gone in to the complex but were standing or strolling round, staring at the buildings and the marvellous scenery. We were horrified to see and to realise the reason: that, except for members of Historic Scotland and possibly The National Trust, all visitors had to pay an admission charge to get through the gate.

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## The Need and the Love for Money

Aside from the fact that we ourselves had given and raised money for many years in order to help complete the re-building of the Abbey, the whole notion of charging for entry to anyone was abhorrent to both of us. Indeed I recalled, *inter alia*, helping to dig the essential water supply as a volunteer, instead of earning much needed money elsewhere for my family. Ena, visibly upset, wanted us to get away,



right away; but I insisted on going in to acquaint the middle-aged lady in the office with some facts that might be new to her and to Historic Scotland. Apart altogether from the amount of the charge, £7.50 or so each for ‘concessions’, the wee chapel we wanted to pray in had been built to be free to anyone, as we knew well because we had helped to pay for it not many years before. After thinking about it for about a minute, the lady gave the soldier’s explanation or excuse about having to do her duty, but then kindly, and unable to cope with the real point, said that we could both get in for the price of one! Very loth, but time being short, I gave the donation and persuaded Ena that we should go in and do what we came for.

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## The Need and the Love for Action, after Seeing and Judging

The teenage training from the Christian Workers League has never left me. In the mid-1940s, The Iona Community had learned how effective the Jocist-Jeune Ouvriers Chretiens Movement<sup>1</sup> had proved itself to be among young working-class boys brought up outwith the church, and so planted an (independent) root in the Canongate, then one of Edinburgh’s most overcrowded and poorly housed communities. We were not just to accept but to investigate the terrible conditions people were having to live in. First, each member had to see and list the real facts, the ‘chiels that winna ding’. Second, to meet together and judge what was wrong, according to the Bible’s teaching. Third, the essential follow-up, to act. Ever since my wife and I had met in CWL, this three-stage technique has become like a backbone, as we do our best to live responsibly. So, when we got home from that distressing experience at the Abbey, I wrote immediately with some detail to *The Scotsman* and to Historic Scotland’s Head Office.

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## Feedback - and a ‘Result’!

*The Scotsman* published a number of letters in support, even sharing our sense of horror, as did other responses which came direct and cited their own disappointing experiences. The best reaction was from a former Leader of the Community who had confirmed with the Chairman of the Cathedral Trustees—a body I did not know that had been reconstructed after the take-over—that the agreement to permit access for worship at any time was still (meant to be) in force.

Historic Scotland took quite a time and the reply came significantly, and disappointingly, from a ‘commercial’ director with business sense prevailing and spiritual responsibility insignificant: the notice board would still announce admission charges for all.

## Checking-up in 2017

Another 'last visit' by coach party became possible the next year. When I said to the young lady in charge that we already knew the Abbey well and had come up specially to pray in the Columba Chapel, she positively beamed in welcome, asked if I was the Mr Kellet who had written to *The Scotsman*, said there would be no charge, and produced the necessary signs to hang round our collars and prevent any questioning inside; but we felt very uncomfortable throughout.

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## Giving Up in 2018

Still alive, to our surprise, the following summer, we paid another brief but important 'last visit'. As we peched our way up towards the Abbey, Ena said 'I'm not going through that embarrassment again.' I went ahead in the hope that an amendment had now been added to the charges for entry at the gate, but there had been no such clarification. So, we turned away and made use of the bare chapel in the Reilig Odhrain. Not the same at all. It is an absolute scandal that Iona Cathedral is not kept open and free of charge for all who wish to enter and benefit from what it has to offer. This is why it was built, and then rebuilt by public subscription. Some other countries, and other parts of our own, manage to finance the maintenance of their cathedrals more appropriately.

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## Jesus Entering the Temple in Jerusalem

The well-known story of Jesus entering the Temple to pray and becoming so angry that He overturned the tables of the gatekeeping 'money changers' is so important that all four Gospels tell it. St Mark records (Mark 11. 11) that Jesus had looked around beforehand and that it was 'a den of robbers': the system of piety had become corrupt and the poor were being taken advantage of. St John tells us (John 2. 15) that Jesus went to the length of making a whip of cords and drove out those 'at their business'. (The Establishment, the political opportunists, and the social media of the time no doubt had words for such behaviour then, too!) But where this has relevance for the Iona situation is that all four accounts emphasise that the principal consideration was that their Temple was a house of prayer 'for all nations' (Mark 11. 17). John cites the then thousand-year old Psalm 69. 9 as the ultimate authority: 'zeal for thine house will consume me'.

## ‘Heaven on Earth’ Again—but with Other Matters for Concern

My wife and I have had two more ‘last’ visits to the ever-inspiring Iona. In 2019, we celebrated my 90<sup>th</sup> birthday there and, in 2020, my wife’s 88<sup>th</sup>. On both occasions, we managed to stay in the very comfortable Argyll Hotel, right in the village among people, facing the Sound, and including time for Sunday worship in the Cathedral. In 2020, our daughter Lorna made it possible by driving us up and right on to the Island. We were able to spend more time at the North End and at the Bay at the Back of the Ocean, as well as just staring in wonder at the sea and across to Ben More on Mull.

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### The Concerns

There were, however, two matters to which I should draw attention, both particularly disappointing because they concern Sunday worship in the Cathedral. In 2019, it had been very pleasant for the two now unknown fossils to be welcomed by a member of the resident staff and then to be mentioned by name in the intimations; but the minister conducting the service before the Communion had not mastered the elementary drill of having herself heard in the nearby choir stalls and did not allow time for newcomers to find the pages before hymns and prayers commenced.

Then, very sadly, July 2020 was COVID-time. The Iona Community’s modernisation of the Abbey building had had to be abandoned so that there were no workers or resident community about. No Sunday service, of course. The Cathedral was open, however, but was derelict, untended and filthy. No-one had taken in a brush and shovel. The surrounding grass was nearly knee-high. Worship, even in private? There and then, Samuel Johnson would never have been inspired to write ‘that man is little to be envied [...] whose piety has not grown warmer among the ruins of Iona.’

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### Youth Work on Iona

The domination of Iona life by some thirty noisy city teenagers crammed into the village every week over the summer in the immediate post-war years was great for us but not for the villagers! Camping at the North End brought the first relief. And in my joining year of 1961, the Rome Express we had sawn down in sections was re-sited and cobbled together as the non-intrusive, if temporary, youth camp at a distance, just beside the football field. George MacLeod then added to his never-ceasing fund-raising for the rebuilding of the Abbey, the urgent need for a permanent youth centre. An international competition for the most appropriate design brought in some surprising suggestions, including one underground! The

money duly came in from the public at home and abroad, and there was great rejoicing in August 1988 when Mrs Leah Tutu, wife of Bishop Desmond Tutu, flew in by helicopter to open the new springboard for the Community's youth work on the Island. (Disappointingly, but perhaps inevitably, the front-page news in the then widely read *Scotsman* gave its headlines to the tiny but noisy demo by Pastor Jack Glass against 'Popery', with pictures.)

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## Changed Days and Years

Sadly, as the church's influence in society waned over recent years, and the one-time surplus of ministers (with 'stickit' ministers waiting long for a call) has been replaced by a severe shortage, so the numbers of youth groups in post-war housing schemes and Youth Fellowships in middle-class congregations ceased to be a feature of Scottish life. Now, The Iona Community is a community-in-dispersion, of course, so engaging with young people has never stopped being a priority for members all over the world, but the numbers coming together to experience life and worship on the Island have inevitably dropped considerably. The new Youth Centre came to be used more often by adult guests for Community programmes and the neglect of fabric maintenance by today's (middle-class) membership is clear evidence of the Community's changed priorities today.

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## The Recent Pause

With the need to modernise the Abbey's living conditions to meet modern expectations, The Iona Community launched a campaign to raise the heart-stopping sum required, £3.7 million. Work was actually started seven years ago; and now, almost incredibly, and certainly a testament to the sustained effectiveness of The Community's pioneering life and priorities, the target has almost been reached. For some years, programmes and accommodation for visitors have not been fully available, and the MacLeod Centre became home for the tradesmen on the site. Covid put paid to the renovations, as to Cathedral Services, of course, but the Abbey re-opened in September 2020 and the future for youth work with church and non-church seekers and learners, Covid permitting, is full of promise again.

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## The Reality Today

Wonderful it is to place on record that former summer volunteers are out there, away from the Island they love, some four hundred on the network,

gathering and Zooming to learn and support one another in order to implement the Gospel's call for peace and justice in God's world, while high-quality field staff on the Mull adventure base at Camas have continued without interruption to provide for small numbers of young people, often from difficult backgrounds, with a taste and preparation for a New Testament 'life more abundant'. It's just a pity that the Community's early priority of active mission to mainline working-class teenagers in Scotland seems quite to have disappeared today, just like the once characteristic involvement of working-class adults in its life and work.

## The Good News

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To complete the Good News, over the past two years The Iona Community has worked hard to strengthen and simplify all its governance structures, including the role of Leader, in order that it might be equipped to continue and develop priorities like the inspirational youth work that was characteristic of its founding. My objection to the worldly policy of appointing members of staff with hierarchical titles still stands, but Ruth Harvey, elected Leader by the Community in 2020, has been nourished on both the physical and the spiritual milk of Iona from her infancy and throughout her inspiring work-experiences in human group relationships. So, we are again on a springboard for the great gifts of Faith, Hope and Love, to bloom and blow out fresh seeds from Iona—truly A Place to Love for all sorts of reasons. Hallelujah!

## About the Author

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Jack and Ena Kellet met in 1947 at The Iona Community's Christian Workers' League in Edinburgh's Canongate and it was on Iona in 1955 that they realised he was meant to be a minister. After six years at Edinburgh University, Jack helped rebuild and lead worship in the Abbey. In 1969, the Kellets joined the first twelve families in the new housing scheme of Dundee: Menzieshill. From 1969 to 1994, they served in the historic parish of South Leith.

## Notes

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1. Begun in Belgium, the movement produced new singable versions of the Psalms in London and helped develop Liberation Theology in South America, while we pestered the Secretary of State for Scotland to introduce day-release classes for apprentices.

### Images:

**Page 141:** Image of Iona Cathedral. Photograph courtesy of the author.

# Continental Connections to Edinburgh: Charles Mackie, John Mitchell, and the Republic of Letters in the Early 1700s

by Yvonne Lewis

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Almost everything we know of the lifelong friendship between Charles Mackie (1688–1770) and John Mitchell (ca1681–1751) is contained in a set of nearly forty letters in Edinburgh University Library.<sup>1</sup> Written by Mitchell to Mackie between 1717 and 1746, they record the changes in the lives and situations of both men; mentioning their respective travels, changes in employment, alongside births, deaths, and marriages amongst family and friends. Mitchell is a lively, amusing, and informative correspondent with a wide network of correspondents, of whom Mackie is one. From the remaining letters on Mitchell's side of the correspondence, we can follow their parallel career paths and lives. The letters read as if they are already firm friends in 1717 when the correspondence begins, and they continue in a similar vein over the following thirty years.

Mitchell and Mackie may have met first as students in Edinburgh, but probably soon afterwards in Leiden.<sup>2</sup> Mitchell is better known as a physician, librarian, and amanuensis,<sup>3</sup> while Mackie studied history and went on to become the first professor of history at Edinburgh University. Mitchell's first letter to Mackie, then in Leyden, is sent on the 29 September 1717 from Aix la Chapelle (Aachen). Mitchell was preparing to set out on a small group tour of the continent. He awaited the arrival of Mr Hamilton before the group set off for Cologne, Düsseldorf, and

then Hanover. In his letter, he gave Mackie advice on the sights which Mackie must see on his own forthcoming tour of the Low Countries. At Antwerp, there were the churches, especially that of the Jesuits, and the English Nunnery. Cabinets of pictures, statues, rarities, and curiosities of several well-known gentlemen shouldn't be missed, as each had something unique for the traveller to see. Mitchell's advised tour itinerary carries on through various Belgium towns, ending up in Maastricht and Aix La Chapelle. As he wrote, Mitchell sent a few books back to Leiden with Mr. Gordon, which he asked Mackie to put in his trunk. He included a 'copy of Ader de Morbis Evangelicis' and asked Mackie to compare it with that of another edition in his trunk; if the texts are the same, Mackie should keep one of the copies for himself. In each letter, sent over the decades, Mitchell sends his regards to various friends and acquaintances in common, including the Erskines, Melvilles, Hamiltons, Maules, Cunningham, and Johnson.

Mackie's reply of late October 1717 reached Mitchell in Hanover, now in the company of Mr Hinde and Mr Hamilton. Further letters written during 1717–1720 describe the route south to Padua, and the return north to Paris, presumably still for Mackie's benefit. Travelling in open post wagons, they had arrived in Hanover via Duisburg, Münster, Osnabruck, and Düsseldorf. En route, Mitchell managed to buy more books which, he informs Mackie, were sent back to Leiden (a list had originally been included in his letter but has since been lost). Time had also been taken to visit the Hanoverian royal palace, and the 'fine gardens' at Herrenhausen. Mitchell asks to be remembered to various friends in Leiden and elsewhere. During 1717–1720, Mitchell is on the move around Europe, while the envelope addresses show Mackie remaining in Leiden.

From Düsseldorf, Mitchell and his party head to Berlin to see the royal palace and armoury, and a 'well filled' royal library which is open to visitors. Turning south, they travel through Halle and Leipzig, then to Dresden where they visit 'the finest orangery in the world' and the 'King's House in Old Dresden, where all his China is'. Doubling back slightly, they returned to Leipzig, then Nuremberg (Nürnberg), where they visited the imperial library. The Library Keeper, Mr Walfer, a 'man of Learning and speaks good Latin', showed them the treasures of his collection. Mitchell lists for Mackie several sights to see and the entrance fees which are to be paid. He has no doubt that curiosity will lead Mackie to the:

[...] great and select Library of the Learned Thomasius MD where with Mr Seiller I had the opportunity of seeing more curious and rare Books than ever I saw before. He has 4 large Rooms, and so filled that you can hardly stir in them.

The same learned gentleman's medal collection is barely worth a mention before Mitchell moves on to describe the journey southwards to Augsburg and Munich.

The onward journey into Italy has had to be reconstructed from a footnote in one of his letters. They are to take the ‘long route’ to Padua via Innsbruck, over the Brenner Pass, through Verona and Vicenza with Italian ‘voituriers [who] cheat like old Nick’. Mitchell, Hinde, and Hamilton all sign the visitor’s book at Padua University on 30 December 1717.<sup>4</sup> Six months later they are in Rome looking forward to the sleepy heat of the Italian summer. Mitchell asks Mackie for news of books which have ‘seen daylight’ since he left Holland. The booksellers of Rome are not able to find the books he seeks on behalf of others, so he sends his apologies to his old tutor Dr



Boerhaave. From Rome they intended to travel northwards via Livorno to the towns of northern Italy. In 1720, Mitchell returned to London via Paris, where he quitted Mr Hinde’s company and found summer employment with a ‘Devonshire gentleman’. At around the same time Mackie moved to the University of Edinburgh, where the rest of the letters are addressed to him as ‘Professor of History’.

Arriving back in London when the South Sea Bubble burst, Mitchell reported that ‘a vast number of great estates are intirely ruined [...] beyond recovery’, a situation which possibly forced him to take on a series of temporary positions for the rest of the 1720s and into the 1730s. Mitchell moved between London and Leiden as tutor to various young gentlemen, while Mackie established his academic career in Edinburgh, married, and started a family. Letters between the two during the 1720s and early 1730s compared lists of professors and the comparative regulations governing Edinburgh and Leiden universities. They provided each other with news of books which had just been printed, as well as those being edited for the press. News was shared of titles for which subscribers were being sought to share the costs of production. Mackie sent Mitchell a copy of Euripides, whilst Mitchell replied that ‘your volumes of Fabricius are purchased long ago’, and presumably on their way to Mackie. Mitchell also complained that the prohibition on trade with France had raised the price of paper by 10 per cent and prevented the publication of Mr Cunningham’s edition of Horace. While he waited for paper prices to drop, Cunningham was working on editions of other classical texts, including Virgil.

On holiday in Scarborough in the summer of 1724, Mitchell asks for news of the recent discovery of ‘new pieces of Buchanan [which] has lately been found in

Ex Libris Bibliothecae  
PHARMACOPŒA  
COLLEGIII REGII  
M. MEDICORUM Regii  
EDIMBURGENSIUM.

90. Mitchell. D. in. 9. 1. 1709.



Medic. Edimb.  
EDIMBURGI.

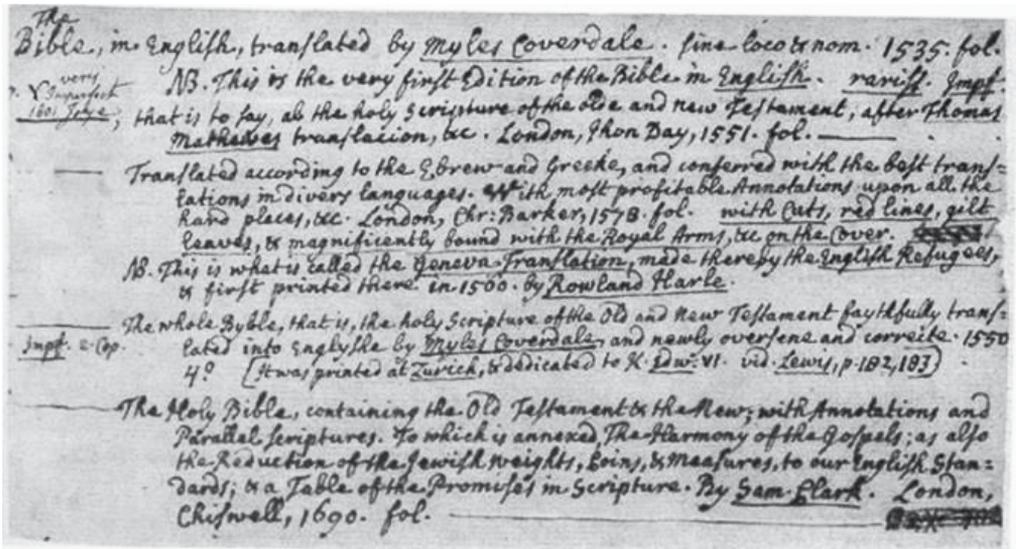
the Library of the University of Edinburgh'. He also teased Mackie about recent gossip he had heard that Mackie was about to marry. If not true, he exhorted Mackie to come and 'view our Yorkshire Beauties and Heiresses, and I dare say you may find a lost Rib among them'. While in Yorkshire, Mitchell accidentally came across a 'wonder and prodigy of nature': Mr Smith, the baker in Grape Lane, York, though uneducated, had a remarkably complete collection of English coins, from which he allowed Mitchell to send three Scots coins to be given to the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh. Later in the year, while over-wintering in London, Mitchell's time was spent catching up on literary matters and frequenting the coffee houses, which often amounted to one and the same thing.

Summer 1725 saw Mitchell escorting Lord Cardross, son of the Earl of Buchan, to what he considered the literary desert of Utrecht, a town Mitchell considers so much less lively than Leiden. From Utrecht, he complains bitterly to Mackie that:

I am utterly almost a stranger to all that is doing in the Learned World; for van de Water is giving over his business, and therefore drops all his correspondence, and allows no new books to be sent to him; and there is no other Bookseller of note here.

Before long Mitchell was busier, and reporting that 'our presses are always sweating under the burden of small and great works; but the most being translations either into French or Dutch, or being trifles, I shall not give you any trouble about these'. He was concerned to report to Mackie details of several new editions of classical texts which were being reprinted, as well as several new botanical books being printed in the Netherlands. The following summer he had the pleasure of congratulating Mackie upon his recent marriage as well as being 'exceeding glad that the Belles Lettres meet with so good entertainment with you'. Despite claiming to know little of what was going on in the literary world, Mitchell listed several works in the press and went on to discuss the various professors at Utrecht.

Completing his duties to Lord Cardross, Mitchell returned to London by late 1728 and immersed himself once again in the 'Republick of Letters' and a winter season busy with auctions and sales. He continued to keep an eye open for copies of Sir Isaac Newton's *Chronological Tables* which Mackie wanted to compare his own chronological work against. Through Mackie, he hears news of the fate of Sir Robert Sibbald's 'Books & papers' and seeks his advice on 'these four pieces you mention of his [...] and if they be esteemed by you as well done, I should chuse to have them'. In the literary world 'La Roche has begun a sequel of his *Memoirs of Literature*, under the title of Historia Literaria, which comes out quarterly'. Mitchell endeavoured to keep up with the reviewing journals but could not manage them all. Proposals for the printing of Stephanus's magnificent new *Thesaurus* were being circulated and Mitchell passed some copies on to Mackie.



Social news is intertwined with literary news in Mitchell's letters. He discusses many who were active in raising funds for the aid of the Scots Protestants in 'Kieydan' (Lithuania). Pastors from their congregation had been collecting funds throughout Europe. Contributors included many bishops, judges, and members of the aristocracy and gentry. In between fund-raising and business about books, Mitchell is commissioned to buy a dinner table with the specific dimensions of '4 foot 2 by 4 foot 7 inches' on Mackie's behalf. Several trips were required in order to meet with the recommended London cabinet maker, who also provided two smaller tables for Mr Erskine.

Sometimes news was addressed direct to Mackie; at other times intermediaries took letters between London and Edinburgh. One such courier was 'the bearer of this, Mr Andrew Mitchell, eldest son to Sir John Mitchell of Westshore in Shetland. [...] a grave, sober, and worthy young gentleman'. He travels with Mitchell's recommendation and a request for Mackie to aid in introducing him to Edinburgh society, to the Advocates in particular, and to their own very good friends, the Earl of Leven, Lord Milton, and Mr Erskine. By reply he asks Mackie to be 'so kind as to let me know how you liked the specimen of Horace ingraved on Copper-plates'. From November 1731, Mitchell asks that all letters addressed to him should be sent to 'Mrs Harris's in Bolton Street, Piccadilly, next door to Sir Richard Ellys, as I desired my Cusin Keir to inform you [...]'. Mitchell's cousin, William Keir, one of the executors of his will, was another regular courier of letters from London.

Sometimes books were also sent between the two households, Mitchell reporting that 'On Friday last I received the Books which you was so good as to send me, viz. Mr Dunlop's sermons and Aristotle de Poetica'. In return he responds that 'You have sent me good sound Divinity; I send you some old Italian plays, which long continued in Manuscript, & were printed but lately. They are Cardinal Delfino, and

the sentiments are esteemed to be very good'. The package went to Edinburgh with 'Provost Campbell's servant' and Mitchell's request for Mackie's opinion of the work. He also asked if Mackie would:

Be so good in your next as to let me know to what perfection and fineness the Linnen, but especially the Cambrick, is brought to at Edinburgh; for I hear there is a manufacture of the last lately set up there by French people from about Bordeaux.

Sadly, there is a gap in the letters, here in the mid-1730s, so that we lose the thread of their lives for a few years and pick them up again with a flurry of correspondence between 1737 and 1741.

From the later group of letters, we learn that Mitchell and his neighbour, Sir Richard Ellys had been on a joint trip to Paris in the summer of 1734. They saw the Royal Library and arranged for the copper engraving and printing of a portrait of the civil war patriot Sir John Hampden from the original painting; Hampden was Ellys's great-grandfather. Mitchell then acted as a distributor of the print, several copies of which were sent to Scotland with William Keir to be delivered to Mackie. Mitchell was also a middleman between Mackie and various London scholars when Mackie became more serious about having his Chronological Tables printed as a teaching aid for his students. Ellys was a potential financial backer, but 'he has been so much out of order, that he has not as yet looked upon it, having it safely laid up in a Drawer'. Mitchell also showed the Chronological Tables to John Ward, of Gresham College, for his opinion on their usefulness. Mitchell asked for detailed instructions from Mackie about how he would like the Chronological Tables to appear in print, and whether he would be allowed to approach any of the London booksellers on Mackie's behalf.

Mackie's reply of six months later revealed that he had been too busy with family matters to consider printing layouts. All three of his children had been seriously ill with smallpox, and the eldest sadly had not survived. He and his wife had been busy ensuring that the two remaining children were successful in their long, slow battle to return to full health. The letter, from his villa at Lasswade, also contained detailed layout instructions for the Chronological Tables. He would like to see it in print, but Mackie has two specific conditions. One, that it be anonymous, and bear a preface from John Ward if he would be so kind as to oblige. 'At ye same time I must beg, if you have so much leisure, you'd take ye trouble of being the last Corrector of ye press, because it is obvious a thing of this nature must be done with utmost exactness'. Ward and Mitchell agreed, though they were still waiting for Mackie to allow printing to proceed in 1743 as Mitchell asks if 'the Principal [...] may have prevailed upon you to review your Tabb. Chronologicæ and oblige the world with them very soon'.

In the meantime, Mitchell and Mackie were discussing matters relating to the history of printing. Mitchell was keen to support the work of his acquaintance Mr Ames, ‘a worthy ingenious man’, in his forthcoming work on typography. Mitchell sought Mackie’s aid north of the border in ascertaining the earliest date of printing in Scotland on Ames’s behalf. All three of them had received news from Mr Ruddiman who ‘has already found out that that art was there as early as 1509’. They were seeking to secure copies of other books printed in Scotland before 1600, or to obtain accurate descriptions of them for Ames. Mackie went on to provide an account of the Aberdeen Breviary, which Mitchell reported had ‘mightily pleased’ Ames, who declared the account to be ‘larger & more particular than any notices he had of it before’. In the same letter of March 1744, Mitchell had been enquiring after Mackie’s brother-in-law, Hugh Hamilton, at the Admiralty and at the Jamaica coffee house. Last reported alive and in Jamaica, Mitchell has found recommended ways of the family getting a letter to their missing relative.

In his final letter of spring 1746, Mitchell is seriously considering moving back to Edinburgh. He enquired from Mackie about college rooms, or others nearby, for himself and his library. Though owed money in both Scotland and England, he had almost written off the English debts as unlikely ever to be paid. Surviving on ‘a bare hundred a year, or very little more’, he expected to live out his final years among friends in Edinburgh. According to the *Scots Magazine*,<sup>5</sup> ‘Mitchell died on 26<sup>th</sup> October 1751 in his seventieth year and is buried at Brucehill near Edinburgh’. Brucehill, now known as Belmont, is on the south side of Corstorphine Hill. The terms of Mitchell’s will saw a selection of his manuscript books bequeathed to Charles Mackie and James Keir, and his Magna Charta to Edinburgh University Library.<sup>6</sup> The rest of his library was to be sold by public auction. A catalogue was ordered to be printed and the sale advertised at least a month in advance in both Edinburgh and London.<sup>7</sup> Mitchell’s own copy of *Pharmacopoea Collegii Regii Medicorum Edimbergensium* (Edinburgh, 1699) is one of only three surviving copies and is now in the Library of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. Mackie carried on in the Chair of History until his retirement in 1765.

## About the Author

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**Y**vonne Lewis is a historian and librarian most of whose work has been on National Trust libraries and private collections. She is currently a Council member of The Bibliographical Society (London).

## Notes

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1. Edinburgh University Library, Laing Papers, La.II.90/1.1-43.

2. R W Innes Smith, *English-speaking students of medicine at the University of Leiden*, (London, 1932), 160.

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### Images:

**Page 122:** Image of Yvonne Lewis, Birkhamsted Imaging Centre Ltd.

**Page 123:** Scan of the inside front cover of John Mitchell's copy of *Pharmacopoea Collegii Regii Medicorum Edimbergensium* (Edinburgh, 1699). Courtesy of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh.

**Page 125:** Scan of a version of a catalogue written by John Mitchell, which is now at Blickling Hall, Norfolk. It was cut and pasted into the current volumes some time in the nineteenth century. Copyright of The National Trust.

# A Brief History of Sea Shanties

by J R Sutherland

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Who's the bloody nightingale among yer? Aw ye men or aw ye cawpses? If there's a ruddy shantyman among yer lot of hobos, fer Gawd's sake strike a light, will yer?!<sup>1</sup>

Sea shanties are traceable from the mid-1400s<sup>2</sup> and are most commonly associated with the Age of Sail, which ran from the mid-Fifteenth to the mid-Eighteenth century, and the Golden Age of Sail, which ran from the mid-Nineteenth to the early Twentieth century. During this time, the size and complexity of sailing ships, and the dominance of these vessels in exploration, trade, and warfare, reached its zenith before the proliferation of steam power. Few strong written references to sea shanties exist before the first half of the Eighteenth century, but it is clear that songs of life aboard ship and ashore existed before this time, and were widespread by the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861.

The merchant sailors that crewed the tall ships<sup>3</sup> often lived dangerous and short lives. Many of them signed up to serve aboard only to escape abject poverty and starvation, or to support families when no other work was available. Others were pressed into service against their will by gangs with little concern for their fate. Still more were the sons of sailors, coastal mariners, and fishermen, who chose the life and brought essential experience to the role.<sup>4</sup> Regardless of their provenance,

these men were forced to live in cramped and spartan conditions for months or years while working at brutally labour-intensive tasks. They frequently bunked with disease-ridden vermin, were often malnourished, and endured the hardships of poor weather and the threat of piracy while at sea. Sailors who refused to report for duty after signing on could be thrown in jail—most commonly hard labour camps—for twelve weeks or more. In fact, a survey of the prison population of the time showed that nearly three quarters were sailors who refused to embark in unseaworthy or undermanned ships.<sup>5</sup> Even on well-equipped and skilfully run vessels, a mistake could be costly in lives and time. Discipline on board was strictly maintained and the punishments doled out by the officers of a ship could be cruel, including a reduction in vital rations, lashes before the mast delivered by the infamous cat o' nine tails, being tarred and feathered, or even keel-hauling. The best outcome of the latter resulted in severe injury, but more commonly death. Mutiny aboard ship, if unsuccessful, was punished by hanging from a yardarm.

Sea shanties are, at their most basic level, working songs that were vital in co-ordinating tasks, promoting team spirit and cohesion, and keeping morale high. Beyond this, the shanties allowed jack tars to express and process the emotional and psychological impact of their gruelling lives, often containing descriptions of home and hearth, scathing caricatures of officers or higher-ups, salacious stories, and very black humour. Given that it was unusual for women to go to sea aboard these merchant vessels, the shanty tradition was largely the domain of men. However, in some Caribbean and other coastal communities, where the inhabitants relied on the water, women often participated on an even basis with rowing, hauling nets, fishing, and the hunting of whales and seals. In these places, both genders learned and sung shanties equally.<sup>6</sup>

Shanties are a heterogeneous group of songs with diverse origins; some came to sea from the shore, others can be traced back to African American work songs and spirituals, theatre and music hall songs, and ancient British and Irish ballads from the more recognisable folk tradition. Some suggest that they originated in Caribbean coastal ports where Black and White sailors would meet to drink and carouse. Others trace the songs to French explorers and traders on the great rivers of America. Links have also been made with the songs of both slaves and the Kroomen of modern-day Liberia, who worked on board Royal Navy ships and were instrumental in cracking down on the Atlantic slave trade as part of the West African Squadron.<sup>7</sup> Some older sources can also be found; in 1493, a Dominican friar, Felix Fabri, left an account of his journey to Palestine: 'there are [some] called mariners who sing when work is going on, because work at sea is heavy, and is only carried on by a concert between one who sings out orders and the labourers who sing in response'.<sup>8</sup> Regardless, shanties were predominantly an English language phenomenon, but foreign language versions—especially French, German, Dutch, Norwegian, Swedish, and Russian—were certainly created. These were most

often pre-existing popular folk songs which were adapted, pre-existing shipboard working songs that were reworked to fit the shanty paradigm, and traditional English language shanties which have been translated, often retaining the original chorus for the sake of rhythm and metre.

The shanties were a vital part of shipboard operations and it was often said that ‘when the men sing right, the ship goes right’.<sup>9</sup> Herman Melville, author of *Moby Dick*, spent five years as a sailor at sea in the 1840s, and wrote the following in his semi-autobiographical novel, *Redburn* (1849):

I soon got used to this singing, for the sailors never touched a rope without it. Sometimes, when no one happened to strike up, and the pulling, whatever it might be, did not seem to be getting forward very well, the mate would always say, ‘Come men, can’t any of you sing? Sing now and raise the dead...’ It is a great thing in a sailor to know how to sing well, for he gets a great name by it from the officers, and a good deal of popularity among his shipmates. Some sea captains, before shipping a man, always ask him whether he can sing out at a rope.<sup>10</sup>

Shanties, while being used as an aid to labour, were normally sung acapella without the accompaniment of any instruments. The word, which can only be traced to around 1869, is thought to be derived from the French ‘chanter’ or to sing, but some have argued that a more direct etymology can be established with the old English word ‘chant’ often associated with Gregorian monks.<sup>11</sup> The spelling with an ‘sh’ is now standard; however, instances of ‘chanty’ are common and have been recorded, most frequently, in American source material.

Despite subject matter and intended purpose, all shanties share the same basic characteristics. The key to these working songs lies in both their simplicity and steady rhythm. Different shanties had different rhythms for different tasks and are intentionally designed to create this strong beat, which makes them both catchy and memorable. Furthermore, their simplicity makes them relatively easy to sing; shanties generally span a small vocal range, meaning that the sea-dog need not be a master musician to carry the tune.<sup>12</sup> Lastly, shanties rely on a ‘call’ and ‘response’ format to establish rhythm and synchronise the movements and efforts of crewmembers. It was said that having a good shantyman aboard—the crewmember who would lead the singing of a shanty and provide the ‘call’—was worth a few extra hands. They even warranted special privileges, such as lighter duties or additional rations, especially in the form of an extra drop of Nelson’s blood.<sup>13</sup> The songs sung by these men fall into two major varieties: heaving shanties and hauling shanties.

Similar to marching songs, a heaving shanty—often called a capstan or pumping shanty by collectors such as Joanna Colcord (1885–1960)<sup>14</sup>—was sung to accompany work of a regular, rhythmical nature, such as operating the central

winch mechanism, a capstan or windlass, to load cargo, set sails, or heave anchor. The main aim of the heaving shanty was to hold the attention of the crew, to maintain a general tempo, and to provide entertainment for the men during the task. Virtually any ballad could be adapted for this purpose, provided it could be delivered at the required speed, and the more lascivious or mucky the content of the song, the better entertained the mariners. Some prime examples of heaving shanties include *Santiana*, *Randy Dandy-O*, and *South Australia*.

A hauling, or pulling, shanty required a more specialised format to accompany the spasmodic and irregular work involved with, for example, raising the spars, or yards, on which the sails were tied. For work of this kind, in addition to entertaining the deepwatermen, it was necessary to ensure that they all pulled together at the same time with a sufficient gap to allow them to regain their grip and take a breath before the next onslaught. This is where the ‘call’ and ‘response’ format really shone; the shantyman would sing a solo verse and the rest of the crew would join in for the chorus, allowing them all to match each other’s movements and maximise the efficiency of the task. Consider this extract from *Boney*, a jaunty and exaggerated account of the life and exploits of Napoleon Bonaparte:

**Shantyman:** Boney was a warrior,

**Crew:** Way, hey, *ya!*

**Shantyman:** A warrior, a terrier

**Crew:** Jean François!

This halyard, or short-haul, shanty was one of the most popular hauling songs. The shantyman would sing the solo verse lines and the crew would respond with the refrain, all pulling on the ropes with the final syllable of each responding line. Another, more recognisable example of a hauling shanty is *Drunken Sailor*, which employs a syllabic progression of four major stresses, allowing the sailors to rapidly pull together during the shorter hauling task for which this shanty was used.

Beyond these major categories of heaving and hauling, shanties can be divided in to a rich variety of sub-classes which more specifically outline their intended purpose. However, many shanties have been adapted to a multitude of purposes and fall within more than one category. The most basic sub-category of shanty is ‘singing out’ or ‘calling out’. This lyricless precursor to shanties, used well into the 1900s, simply employs guttural cries or wild yelps, or plain rhythmic phrases such as the familiar ‘yo-ho!’ These breaks in the voice were known as ‘hitches’ and served no real purpose other than to encourage the men and give them a brief pause before coming in again on a task.<sup>15</sup> Singing out is also the most common form of shanty singing that can be found on vessels crewed by non-English speaking sailors, and often the cries were said to mimic the sounds of the ocean, wildlife, or

the ambient noise of the ship itself. William Saunders in his book, *Sailor Songs and Songs of the Sea* (1928), uses singing out to explain the development of shanties as a result of the grunting of sailors during their work:

How the sea shanty originated is not difficult to discover. It has undoubtedly grown out of the natural inclination one feels in hauling, or in otherwise performing any rhythmical operation, to keep time with one's voice, feet or hands, in parallel rhythmical sound.<sup>16</sup>

Capstan shanties were intended for use while sailors worked the capstan or windlass. This mechanism was central to many operations aboard the tall ships. Depending on the age of the ship, the design of the capstan could change significantly, but the basic idea behind the apparatus was an upright barrel shape with indentations around the uppermost circular edge. Into these indentations the sailors would insert capstan bars like the spokes of a wheel. The leathernecks would then take positions around the capstan at the bars and heave against them in a slow and smooth motion, rotating the barrel along its centre axis, and thus the attached



geared machinery, in order to wind in or let out rope or chain, or perform other tasks. Smoothness and co-ordination were key to ensure the greatest efficiency for all involved in this task; a shanty with a smoother and more mellifluous progression was, therefore, needed. Some of the best examples of capstan shanties include *Rio Grande*, *Fire Down Below*, and *Whip Jamboree*.

While often considered synonymous with capstan shanties, recognised authorities, such as Stan Hugill (1906–1992), prefer to differentiate pumping shanties from capstan shanties. Pumping shanties generally utilised a more staccato rhythm to accompany the jerky task of operating the rocker bars which pumped out the bowels of the ship. One of the most famous examples is *A’Rovin* (also known as *Maid of Amsterdam*), but it was often said that ‘any old song could be sung at a pump, so long as it has a good rousing chorus’.<sup>17</sup>

Stamp and go, or walkaway, shanties were used for two specific purposes. The first was to set the sails when the ship was ‘tacking’, or bringing its bow through the wind, or ‘wearing’, or bringing its stern through the wind. This process was undertaken frequently around the Equator and in the Doldrums, where variable light airs and calms were commonplace. Tacking and wearing was done in order to take full advantage of any potential gust of wind in these treacherous waters. The second purpose of the stamp and go shanty was to aid the use of the captain’s Devil’s instrument<sup>18</sup> to defoul the ship and scrape barnacles and weed growth from the hull. The best examples of this shanty sub-type are *Heiland Laddie* and *Roll the Old Chariot Along*.

Arguably the largest sub-class of shanties were designed specifically for use while setting sails on the movable yards; the ropes that moved these spars were called the halyards, giving the shanties their designation. Halyard shanties, often including long- and short-haul songs, hold some of the best examples of the exaggerated pronunciation that is found in sea shanties. Words were often sung in a skewed fashion, such as ‘Rio’ as ‘Rye-oh’, ‘early’ as ‘ear-lye’, and ‘Russian’ as ‘Rushye-an’.<sup>19</sup> This was done to create better metre for the song’s rhythm, but above all, contributed to the volume and clarity of each shanty, which must be heard above the wind, rain, waves, and the rattling of ropes, chains, and sheets. G E Clark writes in his book, *Seven Years of a Sailor’s Life* (1867), of a hearty and rousing anecdote, how a:

[...] cheerful chanty [sic] was roared out and heard above the howl of the gale [...] the vessel’s head was often buried in the solid seas and the men, soaking and sweating, yelled out hoarsely *Paddy on the Railway* and *We’re Homeward Bound* while they tugged at the braces, and wound the long, hard cable in, inch by inch.<sup>20</sup>

Some sails, including the upper top sails and upper top gallant sails, were attached to yards which moved up and down the mast. Setting these was a long and arduous

task because of the sheer length of rope and amount of canvas involved; long and rambling halyard shanties were used for this, such as *Blow the Man Down*. Stan Hugill gives an indication of the pace at which the shellbacks worked while hauling at the sheet lines: ‘Two pulls in each refrain was the usual custom, although sometimes if the shanty was a fast one, a drag on one word of the refrain was sufficient’.<sup>21</sup> Halyard shanties were also used to ‘bend’ the sails. Ships which spent a prolonged period of time docked were often stripped of their canvas, and bending was the process of redressing, or attaching, the sails to the naked yards at the outset of a voyage, or changing from fair-weather canvas to storm sheets when nearing a Trade Wind zone. Some of the finest examples of halyard shanties include *John Kanaka*, *Ye Blood-Red Roses*, *Haul Away, Joe!* and *Ranzo*, but undoubtedly the most recognisable is the darkly comic *Hanging Johnny*. Probably written to mimic the bo’sun’s use of ‘hang!’ to encourage the crew, *Hanging Johnny* tells the tale of a hangman who hangs his relatives before, at the end of the song, declaring ‘I never hanged nobody!’

Distinct from halyard shanties, bowline and bunt shanties were also involved in sail-oriented tasks. Bowline shanties, such as *Johnny Boker*, were used intermittently to increase the efficiency of the deployed sails by tightening the lines that held them fast on deck. It was not unusual for only a few inches to be gained by this process, but doing so could increase the drawing power of the sails, and therefore the speed of the vessel. Bunt shanties were used on ships with larger and deeper sails when furling them on yards. Few examples of this type of shanty survive, and the best of which is *Paddy Doyle’s Boots*.<sup>22</sup> This shanty assisted in the strenuous efforts to gather up the canvas, which was regularly soaked through or frozen solid. In fact, the position of a man during bunting was a measure of his status and skill at sea; the most accomplished matelots were placed at the centre of the yard where there was more canvas to gather as the corners of the sail, or the clews, were folded inwards and tied.

It is widely held that the sons of Neptune were a very superstitious bunch, and the ceremonies held aboard ship to preserve good and exorcise bad luck were observed almost religiously. There are a few shanties that specifically supported these ceremonies. The first of which is *Poor Old Man* (also known as *Dead Horse*). When a sailor signed aboard a vessel, he was typically given a month’s wages in advance to support his family and to buy tools, oilcloths, and other equipment to assist him in the voyage to come. More often than not, however, this money went to boarding masters who furnished credit to the sailors in the form of booze, women, and dice. Making this payment meant that a hearty sea-dog would spend the first month of his voyage working for nothing, which they referred to as ‘paying for a dead horse’.<sup>23</sup> At the end of the first month at sea, the sailors would craft an effigy of a horse from old canvas and wood, hoist it up the main mast, and the youngest first-tripper amongst the crew would cut it down and fling it overboard into the

drink. As they undertook this ritual, they sung *Poor Old Man*, and the next day they would be full of good cheer and merriment, knowing the following months or years would bring pay.

As an appropriate counterpoint to *Poor Old Man*, the crew of salts would sing the paying off shanty at the final pumping out of a ship after a long voyage, or at the making fast of a vessel in her final port. This shanty was *Leave Her, Johnny, Leave Her*, and provided a cathartic opportunity to express much of the frustration and hardship endured by the crew while at sea. The song often included complaints about the food, the meanness of the owners, or the brutality of a violent or ill-fated boat. These more honest themes were rarely included as prominently in the shanties while at sea since the Old Man, or captain, could get nasty with many sea miles yet to sail.<sup>24</sup> On the last day, the sailors let out all of these bad feelings in order to properly celebrate and enjoy the next day, which would be pay day.

Specific regional shanties, useful only in certain straits or during certain tasks, were not uncommon; a fine example of this is the little-known Scottish 'dreg' song. During the Eighteenth century, dreg songs were used on the south coast of the Firth of Forth by three-man boats dredging for oysters. Two men would row and another would operate the dredge, comprised of a metal frame with a net attached and dragged along the sea floor. In order to remain effective, the dredge boat needed to maintain a constant speed; too slow and the nets would fail to open or the frame would catch on the sea floor, too fast and the frame could bounce and pass over the oysters entirely. To keep the requisite speed, the fishermen developed a song form with an asymmetric rhythm. This beat was comprised of a five-syllable call and a three-syllable response. The call matched the effort of the oars being pulled through the water, and the response was the same time needed to bring the oars



around again. The dreg songs were almost always improvised to fit the weather and water conditions of the day and provide the appropriate rhythm. A famous local adage ran: ‘The oysters are a gentle ken, they’ll not tak unless ye sing.’ Very few have been recorded or written down; a handful of scribbled pages from only a dozen singers and a single wax cylinder recording, taken by the collector James Madison Carpenter, have survived.<sup>25</sup> The songs were so successful that the Forth oyster industry virtually collapsed from overfishing in the late Nineteenth century, but recent reports have suggested that, as of 2010, oysters are again colonising the firth.

Forebitters are a large category of sea shanty which most closely resemble what these seagoing working ditties have become in the modern day, recreational or occupational songs which entertain and tell stories. These songs were sung at the forecastle ‘afore the bits of the ship’,<sup>26</sup> and were intended for storytelling and entertainment. These shanties were more lyrical, frequently accompanied by music, and included more flourishes of language and the use of grace notes than other categories. Many forebitters were adaptations of traditional folk songs, theatre tunes, or original pieces composed by the crew. Despite popular belief, shanties as working songs were not permitted aboard Royal Navy vessels. Captain Edward Riou of the *HMS Amazon* wrote that ‘all good officers aimed to work their ship with a minimum of noise [...]’.<sup>27</sup> The exception to this rule was a fiddler or flautist to assist the crew while heaving against the capstan. However, the Royal Navy did not completely forbid shanties. Forebitters were permitted in the evenings, once all work was done, and during the tedium of blockade duty. A prime example is the well-known *Spanish Ladies*, which was written around 1796 aboard *HMS Nellie* and gained popularity during the Peninsular War (1807–14) when British soldiers were being transported home by sea without their Spanish wives and lovers. Other notable forebitter examples include *Ten Thousand Miles Away*, *Rolling Down to Old Maui*, and *Barrett’s Privateers*.

The end of the Age of Sail, and the arrival of steam power, was heralded by the maiden voyage of the first sea-going steam ship, Richard Wright’s *Experiment*, which sailed from Leeds to Yarmouth in July 1813. Sailing ships continued to be economical well into the 1900s, but increased monetary pressures, combined with purpose-built canal routes, such as the Suez Canal which was designed more for steam vessels than tall ships, soon pushed sailing ships from widespread use. Steam ships were faster, required smaller crews, and were not so reliant on good weather patterns, strong currents, or Trade Winds. Steam-powered vessels provided more opportunities for machinery to take over many of the manual tasks previously undertaken by a larger crew, and propellers and paddles negated the use of sails. Ultimately, the need for manpower was vastly diminished and, as a result, so too was the necessity for the working sea shanty. Captain W B Whall (1837–c1925), who studied music at Oxford and is credited as one of the great collectors of shanties, witnessed the end of the sea-song tradition with the proliferation of

steam. He wrote in his book, *Sea Song Shanties* (1910), that ‘[...] since 1872, I have not heard a shanty or song worth the name. Steam spoilt them.’<sup>28</sup>

By the dawn of the Nineteenth century, shanties fell almost completely out of widespread use. Modern-day knowledge of this rich and varied collection of working songs is owed to the efforts of a handful of historians, musicians, and collectors including Captain Whall, Joanna Colcord, Hamish Henderson (1919–2002), Cecil James Sharp (1859–1924), and, most importantly, the last working shantyman, Stan Hugill. Sharp, for example, travelled the length and breadth of the British Isles, interviewing old and retired bully boys, noting down music and lyrics as he went. He published these collection in, amongst others, *English Folk-Chanties: with Piano Forte Accompaniment, Introduction and Notes* (1914).<sup>29</sup>

The tall ships and jack tars may have disappeared from the waves, but the songs they sang are perhaps more fashionable now than ever before. It is the simplicity, steady rhythm, and adaptability of sea shanties that best explains their lasting popularity. They have influenced some of the most recognisable musicians of the last century; The Beatles, The Pogues, The Dubliners, The Corries, Bob Dylan, and Sting, amongst many others, have all recorded their own versions of classic sea songs.<sup>30</sup> And this is to say nothing of the specialised and dedicated groups actively reworking and preserving these salty ditties, such as the Fisherman’s Friends and the Longest Johns. Shanties can be found throughout modern culture in films and television shows like *Jaws* (1975), *Master and Commander* (2003) based on Patrick O’Brian’s Aubrey-Maturin series, *Black Sails* (2014–17), and *SpongeBob SquarePants* (1999–Present). There is even an award-winning *Assassin’s Creed* video game that has vastly increased the popularity of shanties in younger generations. The most significant recent example of modern-day shanty use, however, is the rise to fame of postman Nathan Evans when he published his cover of *Wellerman* on TikTok in December 2020. By the following February, it had received over 6.5 million views.<sup>31</sup> It has even been suggested that a revival of the Age of Sail could be just over the horizon with growing pressures to vastly reduce global reliance on fossil fuels.<sup>32</sup>

Since November 2019, the world has wrestled with the COVID-19 pandemic, and continues to do so. In a time of widespread loss, uncertainty, and hardship, songs which bring people together in a feeling of camaraderie, which speak of hard times and overcoming adversity, and which bring humour to the darker themes of life, can be a welcome salve. There is a reason these briny tunes have endured, beyond the efforts of collectors and musicians. Many of them include stories of solidarity, fortitude, and optimism, inspiring generations of sailors to stand before the mast and sail the seven seas in spite of the myriad dangers and torments they could face. Perhaps there is yet some wisdom to be found in these salty sea shanties, and something that can help us all endure.

## About the Author

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JR Sutherland studied English Literature at the University, graduating MA (Hons) in 2010 and MSc by Research in 2012. He currently works as Assistant Editor for the *Journal*, as an Illustrator for the Aberdeen-based DS Design Studio Ltd, and offers his editorial services freelance. He loves to work to sea shanties.

## Notes

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1. Stan Hugill, *Sea Shanties* (London: Barrie & Jenkins Ltd, 1980), p. 2.
2. Ben Johnson, 'Sea Shanties', Historic UK, <<https://historic-uk.com/CultureUK/Sea-Shanties/>> [accessed on 24 November 2021].
3. A tall ship is a traditionally-rigged sailing vessel. An excellent breakdown of the various types of ship and rigging can be found at <<https://www.sailboston.com/2016/12/tall-ships-explained/>> [accessed on 24 November 2021].
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8. Roderick Swanston, 'When were Sea Shanties Invented?', Classical Music, <<https://www.classical-music.com/features/articles/when-were-sea-shanties-invented/>> [accessed on 24 November 2021].
9. Stan Hugill, p. 2.
10. Karen Dolby, *Sea Shanties: The Lyrics and History of Sailor Songs* (Croydon: Michael O'Mara Books Ltd, 2021), pp. 10–11.
11. Ben Johnson, 'Sea Shanties'.
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13. Legend has it that after Nelson's death at Trafalgar in 1805, his body was preserved in a cask of rum. Holes were drilled in the cask and the sailors drank the contents on the long journey home. The term can also refer to a sailor's spirit or bravery, <<https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/blog/curatorial/rum-deal-origins-nelsons-blood>> [accessed on 24 November 2021].
14. Stephen Winick, 'A Deep Dive into Sea Shanties'.
15. Stan Hugill, p. 20.
16. 'A History of Sea Shanties', Royal Museums Greenwich, <<https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/topics/sea-shanty-facts-history-meaning>> [accessed on 24 November 2021].
17. Stan Hugill, p. 22.
18. A 'Devil's instrument' is a contraption used by the crew of a ship to scrape barnacles and weed growth from the hull of the ship to prevent rotting and improve sailing speed.

Generally consisting of two or four planks bridled together and dragged under the ship from the deck. According to Stan Hugill, every captain had their own design for the Devil's instrument. Stan Hugill, p. 24.

19. Stan Hugill, p. 20.

20. G E Clark, *Seven Years of a Sailor's Life* (Adams & Co, 1867), p. 132.

21. Stan Hugill, p. 19.

22. Ibid, p. 26.

23. Ibid, p. 32.

24. Ibid, p. 34.

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26. Kate Jamieson, 'A Brief History of Sea Shanties', <<https://www.historyextra.com/period/victorian/a-brief-history-of-sea-shanties/>> [accessed on 24 November 2021].

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28. Roderick Swanston, 'When were Sea Shanties Invented?'

29. Ben Johnson, 'Sea Shanties'.

30. Karen Dolby, p. 16.

31. Ibid, p. 9.

32. Andrew Willner, 'New Age of Sail Looks to Slash Massive Maritime Carbon Emissions', Mongabay, <<https://news.mongabay.com/2021/03/new-age-of-sail-looks-to-slash-massive-maritime-carbon-emissions/>> [accessed 24 November 2021].

#### Images:

**Page 133:** An original print of seamen working at a capstan, published ca. 1900. Artist unknown. <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Capstan.jpg>> [accessed on 24 November 2021]

**Page 136:** 'Saturday Night at Sea' from *Songs, Naval and National* by Thomas Dibdin, published in London, 1841. Illustration by George Cruickshank. <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Saturday\\_night\\_at\\_sea.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Saturday_night_at_sea.jpg)> [accessed 24 November 2021]

# SUISS Contributions to the *Journal*

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**T**hough 2021 was by no means a normal year for SUISS, the summer school's spirit prevailed, thanks to our wonderful students and committed staff. There were hikes up Arthur's Seat, author readings, cinepoem competitions, late-night conversations about literature at our 'virtual pub', and so much more.



We introduced an online course that ran parallel to the residential course option, which was surprisingly successful. So much so, that we have decided to continue offering both online and residential course options for 2022. Not only have we found that the online course appeals to people who would not normally be able to travel to Edinburgh, it also allows us some flexibility in the face of all the uncertainty caused by the pandemic.

The selections of work published in this edition of the *University of Edinburgh Journal* include students from both the SUISS residential and online course. Alumna Lisa Degens writes, 'Strings sway in the wind - all things interconnected, people talk, and the lines pull taught', encapsulating the summer school exchange experience.

# Imagine Him Happy

by Lopa Jena Kaul

Can't stop my legs as they move of their own accord. Down and down I go. My descent would have ended in a flash if only I didn't have eyes, ears, a nose. I see flowers as I go down. I smell the wet grass mingled with splotches of wet earth. The dew tickles my fingertips as I touch everything I can on my path. I hear birds chirping, bees buzzing, the occasional hop of a rabbit. But I also taste the metallic tang in the air as I bring my bloody hands to wipe the sweat off my face. I sigh as I reach the rock, bigger than any rock nature would have made if she had been kind.

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# Thank You

by Emma May

No words are enough to thank you  
for being there for me at my worst  
without, I wouldn't have made it through  
you never hesitate to put me first

For me, you ignored your own needs  
you left everything behind  
I was broken, down on my knees  
when you offered me your hand

Abandoned, alone and scared  
you came and held me in your arms  
you showed me that you cared  
and I felt your big heart's warmth

You stayed with me until the end  
you caught me when I fell  
thank you for holding my hand  
every time I go through hell

# Tighten

by Lisa Degens

Strings  
sway in the  
wind -  
all things  
interconnected,  
people talk  
and the lines  
pull taught - friends  
fight and the  
thread slowly  
becomes undone.

I am but an observer,  
watching the strings,  
seeing them  
tightening  
around me, falling  
apart,  
slowly constructing,  
fabricating patterns,  
in all their  
vibrant brilliance.

I walk among them,  
gazing in wonder,  
paying no mind to  
my surroundings.  
Slowly constricting,  
they weave a noose around  
my neck.

# Young Purveyor

by Hao Wang

It was time for me to buy food for family  
My grandma led me to a vegetable market  
in a heart of the Dragon Hill.  
A market.

I said hello to every stall owner  
prancing forward  
and made every serious inquires  
How much is the sunlight and moonlight  
and how much is the cool breathe

My grandma followed me  
and giggled  
at her early 60s.

## About the Authors

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**L**isa Degens is a Masters student studying English Language and Linguistics at Leiden University, the Netherlands, as well as a prose editor at *The Global Youth Review*. She has a great adoration of nature, and spends her free time thinking of ways to help the environment.

**L**opa Jena Kaul is a writer and editor with a penchant for daydreaming about what she should be writing instead of actually writing it. Instead of liking something like your average person, her current obsession (until she ends up hating it) is 60s dystopic science-fiction.

**E**mma May is a young poet and author. She was born in 2001 in Switzerland and studies English and French. Her poems discuss personal topics, such as love, mental health, and epilepsy. You can follow her on Instagram @\_.emma\_.may.

**H**ao Wang joined the Creative Writing course at SUISS in 2019, and now lives in China. Wang graduated from Hangzhou Normal University with a Master's degree in Comparative Literature and Intercultural Studies. He is an amateur poet and photographer.

# Reviews

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Nick Haynes, Clive B Fenton. *Building Knowledge: An Architectural History of the University of Edinburgh*. Historic Environment Scotland in association with the University of Edinburgh, 2017. Pp 280. Hardback, illustrated. ISBN 9781849172462. £25.00.

Reviewed by Stephen G Hillier

Every university has an architectural epicentre. Edinburgh's is the fabulous Old College. Planned by Robert Adam in 1785 and brought to fruition by William Henry Playfair in 1827, this neoclassical triumph is one of the most iconic university buildings in the UK. Its crowning glory is Robert Rowand Anderson's magnificent dome topped by the statue of a torch racer, symbolising the transmission of knowledge from each generation to the next.

This hefty tome provides a history of the University of Edinburgh, viewed through the lens of its ever expanding buildings estate—before and after Old College. Countless buildings have been erected or acquired by the University since its establishment in 1583. Design and function have varied, impacted by

reformation, enlightenment, empire, war, politics, people, pandemics, and more. Some were architectural gems; others more mundane. But collectively they provide an institutional signature, writ large in a handsome volume that befits coffee table and library shelf alike.

Immediately when Old College was complete, it overflowed with students and staff, meaning yet more academic space was required. We learn that Music was the first academic discipline to gain newly built accommodation outside the Old College (Reid Music Hall, 1859), followed by Medicine (1890). Then came the splendid McEwan Graduation Hall (1894). Sadly, these were the first and last buildings of epic Italianate proportions to grace the evolving central campus.

Dispersal of students and staff from Old College to adjacent Georgian tenements provided a short-term fix for overcrowding during the early twentieth century. But purpose-designed buildings were also required, including a ground-breaking Science campus at West Mains Farm, 2-miles south of the city centre. These were not the elaborate confections of Adam, Playfair, or Anderson but more prosaic examples of ‘1930s neoclassicism’, designed by architects briefed to be ‘of extreme practicality and economy’. Collectively, the five new academic blocks erected between 1921 and 1932, plus a new student union (Common Room, 1939), established the pre-War ‘colony’ that would evolve into the scientific—if not architectural—epicentre that is the King’s Buildings campus today.

Back in town, development of George Square in the vicinity of Old College and the Medical School was a post-War priority. Several pages are devoted to the ‘Battle for George Square’, which eventually brought the plan to fruition in the early 1960s. After decades of wrangling with City planners and conservationists etc., the Medical School extension to the north of the square was completed, and the foundation stone for a new Arts faculty building laid on the footprint of 40 George Square (David Hume Tower, DHT). There followed a decade of demolition and development along the east and south aspects of the Square, resulting in the Appleton Tower, DHT, William Ferguson Building, the George Square Lecture Theatre, and last but not least, the Main Library.

The architectural merits of these striking modernist structures remain controversial. Individually, their styles connote plate-glass university over ancient academy. But they are what they are, and Spence’s highly acclaimed Library stands as the architectural hub of the George Square campus, complementing the ‘sleek 14-storey tower, of reinforced concrete’ that is the DHT, and the imposing ‘nine-storey slab block’ of the Appleton Tower. The King’s Buildings campus got its own tower in the form of the 10-storey Darwin Building (1967), ‘which in an uncompromising modernist idiom responded to the ancient towerhouses at Craigmillar and Liberton that crown the neighbouring hills.’

Many more new buildings, extensions, and acquisitions were completed across the University during the late 60s and early 70s, providing the extra halls of residence,

sports facilities, chaplaincy, student unions, health centres etc., called for by The Robbins Higher Education Report (1963). Few of these mainly modernist designs merit special mention. One that does is the Plexiglas dome over the 1973 Potterrow Student Amenity Centre, which ‘was devised as an architectural mediation between the domes of Old College and the McEwan Hall’. [*Not a lot of people know that.*]

The King’s Buildings campus received its largest purpose-designed facility in the form of the James Clerk-Maxwell building: ‘a very heavy reinforced concrete structure borne on a raft foundation’. Begun in 1971 but not completed until 1977, this was just one of many projects interrupted by the financial crisis of 1973 and the economic recession that followed.

The final chapter finds expansion continuing into the third millennium through the erection of buildings designed to provide multidisciplinary academic spaces, incubator facilities, and the like, in the spirit of ‘contextual modernism’. The award-winning Informatics Forum (2005)—barely a stone’s throw from Old College—is a particularly fine example. Others include the Queen’s Medical Research institute (2006) at Little France, and the Roslin Institute at Easter Bush (2011).

The allotted timeline ends in 2017, with a global university comprising five major campuses hosting over 350 core buildings scattered across the city and beyond, providing for over 40,000 students from all corners of the world. [*Then, three years later, COVID-19 struck. One can hardly imagine how architectural and educational futures will be affected by the pandemic.*]

This book provides a fascinating read and a valuable academic resource. I wholeheartedly recommend it.

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Alister Farquhar Matheson, *Scotland’s Northwest Frontier: A Forgotten British Borderland*. Kibworth Beauchamp: Troubador Publishing, 2014. Pp viii, 592. Paperback. ISBN 9781783064427. £15.00.

Reviewed by Ann Matheson

Alister Farquhar Matheson has done the north-west of Scotland, the land of his forebears, a service in his major chronicle of its past history. For centuries, it was an international frontier in its own right, separated from the rest of Britain by history, culture, and language, and generally viewed from the centre as impenetrable and uncontrollable. The author’s primary interest is in the ‘Land of the Three Sea Lochs’, the parishes of Glenshiel, Kintail, and Lochalsh, which surround the point at which Loch Duich, Loch Long, and Loch Alsh intersect, and where, in c. 1220, Alexander II built a protective fortress on the Isle of St Donan. Today, Eilean

Donan Castle is more famous for appearances in films and on shortbread tins, and Wester Ross's peaceful scenery draws tourists, mountaineers, and landscape photographers. The author orients us, though, to a very different insight into the area's earlier turbulent history and the significance of its seaways in medieval times, situated on the western sea route in the border zone between Scotland and Norway, with connections to the Mediterranean, Ireland, Scandinavia, and the Baltic.

The book has four sections: an introduction to the North-West; a detailed account of shifts in power from 1200 to 1800 against the background of Scottish and British history; a meticulous analysis of the frontier coast of the 'Land of the Three Sea Lochs' up to Culloden and the fracturing of clan and territory; and the 'long adjustment' in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Useful appendices are provided; and supplementary maps are available at: <https://matheson40444826.wordpress.com/>. Sections 2 and 3 form the substance of the book.

In the first section, the author skilfully guides the reader through the thirteenth-century colonisation by Gaels from Argyll, and the struggle in the next century for the independence of Scotland, which left three distinct cultural areas of Lowlands, Highlands, and Islands, although the east Highlands gradually became more Lowland in language and outlook while Gaelic remained dominant in the West. As the Earls of Ross declined in the fifteenth century, the power of the Lordship of the Isles advanced to its zenith, only to be curbed by the Stewart kings and ended by James IV in 1493, leading to a power vacuum and Linn nan Creach, the sixteenth-century age of 'raids and forays', a period of lawlessness and vying for power. In the seventeenth century, Wars of the Covenant religious sympathies were influential, with the northeast clans (MacKay, Ross, and Munro) for the most part Protestant and Presbyterian, and those in the north-west mainly Episcopalian (MacRae, Matheson, most MacKenzies) and Catholic (Chisholm and most MacDonalds). By the century's end, Presbyterianism had gained predominance, and the next century brought the Union with England and a new orientation for the whole of Scotland.

In the second section, the author provides the most detailed available study of the 'Land of the Three Sea Lochs'. He examines its pivotal position in relation to the three medieval cultures of Island, Highland, and Lowland, and demonstrates how its location between mountainous country on the east and seas on the west gave rise to its frontier mentality but, at the same time, preserved its singular way of life. The interactions, changing allegiances, and power struggles of the principal clans (MacKenzie, MacDonald, Matheson, and MacRae) are charted in masterly detail as their fortunes oscillated through the centuries. Anticipating likely power shifts and securing advantageous alliances materially influenced clan fortunes. Marriage was a means of gaining (or losing) ownership of land and, with land, authority. The final section covers the 'long adjustment' to the present through emigration, famine, clearances, and World Wars to cultural and economic regeneration in the

latter half of the twentieth century. The influential factors in this renaissance are well covered, although mention might have been made of the European Union, and the cultural confidence inspired by Gaelic bands like Runrig.

The author writes in a lively accessible style which brings these remote events and personalities vividly to life. For those who wish to know more about the North-West and the 'Land of the Three Lochs', the book offers an informed and captivating account of its history and influence in its frontier era. Indeed, now that Arctic seas are opening up from global warming, perhaps this seaway may one day reclaim its importance in sea communications once more on a route to the North and to Asia.

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John Gibson Lockhart, *Some Passages in the Life of Mr Adam Blair, Minister of the Gospel at Cross-Meikle*; edited by T C Richardson. (The Edinburgh Critical Edition of the Works of John Gibson Lockhart.) Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020. Pp. liii, 237. Hardback. ISBN 9781474456098. £80.00.

Reviewed by Ian Campbell

This handsome volume heralds a new series from EUP, whose earlier version of *Adam Blair* was a familiar sight in the 1960s and 1970s, beautifully produced. The new *Adam Blair* is beautifully produced, too, though in a much more sober style as befits a first critical edition of a whole series under the general editorship of Professor Thomas Richardson who first encountered *Adam Blair* during a postgraduate year in the English Department at Edinburgh, and has spent decades during his vacations in the National Library working on the Lockhart papers (and on Hogg).

Lockhart was a prominent figure in Edinburgh literary circles before he left for London in 1825 to edit the *Quarterly Review* but, as son-in-law of Sir Walter Scott, his Edinburgh connections remained strong, and his biography of his father-in-law became a classic. His earlier Edinburgh years had been prolific and he published widely, including an entertaining and often satirical picture of Scotland in *Peter's Letters*, and a stream of articles in *Blackwood's Magazine* where he worked alongside John Wilson ("Christopher North") and made the journal popular far beyond Edinburgh. Trenchant, witty, fearlessly critical of contemporary writing, often scandalous: not for nothing was Lockhart dubbed 'the Scorpion'.

*Adam Blair*, however, is something serious and substantial, the only one of Lockhart's four novels to have survived into modern consciousness, though this critical edition will remedy this. The plot arises from a real-life story known to Lockhart and his family, revolving round a minister whose sexual life contravenes

his own values and society's, and who finds forgiveness in his parish. In the novel, Adam, a widower, becomes drawn to a friend of his late wife, and their growing attraction to one another culminates in clandestine passion and sexual encounter. In a bitter climax, Adam Blair, sick with self-loathing and guilt, resigns from his church appointment and retires with his daughter to a life of peasant farming.

Lockhart's novel is interesting and bold in several ways, in exploring the private life of ministers whose public face had to be one of unblinking rectitude, in treating at length the implications of widowerhood, and in a close examination of the community's estimation of a much-admired minister after his resignation. Like the church authorities, Cross-Meikle parish takes a much more understanding (and forgiving) view of Adam's yielding to temptation and the eventual return of Adam to his former pulpit at the earnest request of both parish and church authorities is given reinforcement by the real-life case which gave Lockhart the germ of his plot, where the errant minister was also accepted back into his parish, and his pulpit.

One of the virtues of this critical edition is that Lockhart revised the novel considerably for a second edition, and we are allowed, by footnote and critical commentary, to see the changes and improvements. There are very full notes, an editorial apparatus which scrupulously sheds light on difficulties, and even a glossary. Textual notes are also very full. As the second edition grows from the first, we are allowed to see a novel, which was a bold experiment, change and mature; and all this while Lockhart pursued an incredible output of critical work and reviewing.

*Adam Blair* deserves to be better known, and this edition will begin that process. It also will allow its author to step out of the shadow of his father-in-law into a fuller sense of his impish, well-informed, critically astute career. This first volume represents decades of work for its editor, but the edition as a whole promises a real new chapter in understanding the early nineteenth century literary landscapes of Edinburgh and Scotland.

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John Mullan, *The Artful Dickens*. London: Bloomsbury, 2020. Pp ix, 431. ISBN 9761408866818. £16.99

Reviewed by Ian Campbell

John Mullan, Lord Northcliffe Professor of Modern English Literature at University College London, has here produced a book which quite excellently combines scholarship with approachability and very good organisation. Dickens' output was so prodigious that even those who read him often and copiously will find it hard to trace through his output—fiction and miscellaneous prose—the themes and recurrent ideas which this book identifies and develops lucidly, persuasively,

and with scholarly backing at the end for those who wish to know more about sources and further arguments.

The book handles its enormous material by choosing and elucidating a number of themes, of which here are a few: Fantasising, Smelling, Changing Tenses, Haunting, Laughing, and working back and forth through Dickens' work showing how the themes emerge, grow, change, and work with Dickens' plots to illuminate character, incident, and social commentary. The use of themes is in no sense mechanical, but allows the reader to see growing connections as Dickens' work matures and endlessly finds new ways to illuminate his own society. Themes that the reader will perhaps have noticed as recurrent—drowning, use of coincidence, foreseeing—are teased out as the book moves forward and backward through the novels. There are really illuminating discussions of writing strategies, notably prolepsis and changing tenses generally. Late in the book, when the reader may have wondered about the silence about sex (though the institution of marriage is present throughout), comes a really lucid discussion of Dickens' innovative ways of handling a difficult subject; and of his silences, too, reflecting not only the diffidence of his age in discussing it openly, but also the possible reflection of his own difficult personal situation, should his personal life be too much open to public scrutiny. The last chapter is 'Breaking the Rules' which Dickens, as a great and original artist, did with apparent ease and in ways of which subsequent novelists have made full use.

To find a book which surveys an enormous field with such confidence, and with due acknowledgement to those who have already been there, and which leaves the reader with a new appreciation of the innovations in artistry and technique which Dickens displayed, was one of the pleasures of 2020. And it sends the reader back to Dickens with new appetite.

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Ross Macfarlane QC, *Edward Kane and the Parlour Maid Murderer*. Edinburgh: Scotland Street Press, 2020. Pp 329. Hardback, illustrated. ISBN 9781910895481. £19.99.

Reviewed by Peter B Freshwater

Readers of the *Scotsman* who, in recent years, have enjoyed Ross Macfarlane's serialised Christmas novellas, and more recently his Saint Valentine's Day one, are delighted by the appearance of his first full-length novel, *Edward Kane and the Parlour Maid Murderer*. Set in the legal world of mid-nineteenth-century Edinburgh, the young Edward Kane, Advocate who has yet to make his mark on the world, witnesses but cannot bear to watch a public execution outside the Edinburgh

Tolbooth. He then is called in by the formidable Dean of the Faculty of Advocates to defend a young man charged with the murder of a parlour maid in a wealthy New Town household. Kane has not yet seen a criminal trial, let alone having taken part in one. The accused has already been found guilty by the Press, the household, and public opinion, and refuses to plead either way. Kane lives in cramped rented accommodation in the Old Town with his Cockney manservant Mr Horse, who is quite capable of getting his master out of trouble by introducing would-be troublemakers to his 'Auntie Betty'. Horse gained his nickname from having served in Wellington's army at Waterloo and is as vital an ally to Edward Kane as Bunter is to Lord Peter Wimsey and, even more so, as Lugg is to Albert Campion.

Macfarlane's picture of the Edinburgh legal world is almost satirical but entirely credible. His characters of Victorian Edinburgh again are almost caricatures of traditional stereotypes but are portrayed with a freshness which is most entertaining. They are verbal versions of Benjamin Crombie's portrayals of Edinburgh's *Modern Athenians*. Can, for instance, Macfarlane's Dean of Faculty, Robert Lennox, be based on Adam Anderson, Lord Anderson, who was Dean of Faculty in 1850? The intelligent illustrations by Lesley-Anne Barnes Macfarlane wisely do not attempt to include recognisable people but point to inanimate details that feature in the story, including an anonymous silhouette figure of a police officer. The reader's imagination does the rest. The plot moves at a measured pace (perhaps at times almost too measured), but the storyline twists and turns with the best of them.

There is evidently something about Edinburgh law degrees that produces fine *tartan noir*, and Ross Macfarlane QC joins an already star-studded galaxy. This is crime writing that can, and should, be read, re-read and, like fine wine, savoured.

## About the Reviewers

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**Ian Campbell** is Professor Emeritus of Scottish and Victorian Literature at the University, and former Reviews Editor for the *Journal*.

**Peter Freshwater** is Former Deputy Librarian at the University and Editor of the *Journal*.

**Stephen G Hillier OBE** is former Vice Principal for International Affairs at the University, Vice President of UEGA, and current Convener of the *Journal's* Editorial Committee.

**Ann Matheson**, an Edinburgh graduate, was elected Rector from 2018 to 2021.

# Obituaries

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The following deaths of members of the University community have been intimated to the *Journal*. Further details, in some cases, may be found in *The Scotsman*, *The BMJ*, *The Veterinary Record*, and other newspapers and journals. The annual list of deceased graduates is issued by the General Council in the Annex to the Billet at: [www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/publication/annex-billet](http://www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/publication/annex-billet)

The *University of Edinburgh Journal* cannot be held responsible for information received by other sources as we only publish data received and that, to our knowledge, is correct. If you have any supplementary information, please contact the Editor. We will do our best to publish additional information with a future issue of the *Journal*.

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Ian Hayden Arthurson MBChB 1962 Dip Anaes

19 April 1939 - 30 October 2020, aged 81

Hayden Arthurson was born and brought up in Liberton, Edinburgh, and was educated at George Watson's College before reading Medicine at the University of Edinburgh. He undertook pre-Registration training in Medicine and Surgery at London's West Middlesex Hospital. This was followed by six months in Anaesthetics, from which he obtained a diploma, and then six months in Canada as a locum in general practice. Returning

to Edinburgh, he became a partner at the Ladywell East Medical Centre in Corstorphine. His work here included acting as medical cover for Heart of Midlothian Football Club and at Saughton Jail. Retiring from general practice in 1999, he went on to work with the Benefits Agency and also carried out medicals for the Army at Colinton Barracks. A keen hillwalker, he joined the University Mountaineering Club and the Ptarmigan Club, and later became a Munroist after finally climbing Sgurr Nan Kerrara in 2010.

### Arthur David Bethune MBChB 1945

30 April 1923 – 15 October 2021

Arthur Bethune was born in Edinburgh and educated at George Watson's College where he won a bursary that allowed him to study Medicine at the University of Edinburgh. After accelerated study during the war and graduation, he worked as House Physician at Edinburgh's Western General and was assistant GP in Lockerbie. He assisted the renowned Dr McLeod in North Uist by visiting patients on foot, horseback, and by boat, and was House Surgeon in Dumfries Royal Infirmary, and then at Cresswell Maternity Hospital. Following this, he spent time in general practice in Creetown, was Senior Officer at Edinburgh's Astley Ainslie Hospital, and then worked as a GP in rural Leicestershire. He spent the years from 1949 in general practice in Newcastleton in the Scottish Borders, retiring in 1985. He became an elder of the Newcastleton Congregational Church and was a Scout Leader, receiving the Chief Scout's Award. In the early 2000s, he was asked to write some short articles for the *Copshaw Chatter*, eventually producing over 33 monthly articles under the title 'A Doctor Remembers'. These articles were published as a book under the same title in 2013, the proceeds of which have helped to support first responders.

### Elizabeth Violet Blackadder DBE

24 September 1931 – 24 August 2021, aged 89

Dame Elizabeth Blackadder was born in Falkirk and, during the early years of the war, she was educated at Dunoon, finishing her schooling at Falkirk High School. She went on to study Fine Art as a joint degree, under David Talbot Rice at Edinburgh and William Geddes at Edinburgh College of Art. She spent a postgraduate year in Italy between 1955 and 1956. In 1958, she enrolled at Moray House to undertake teacher training and, in 1962, was appointed to a post at Edinburgh College of Art where she remained until 1986. She was awarded the RSA Guthrie Award in 1962, and was elected ARSA in 1963, ARA in 1971, RSA in 1972, RA in 1976, and RGI in 1984. She was appointed OBE in 1982, Her Majesty's Painter and Limner in 2002, and was made DBE in 2003. She received honorary degrees from Heriot-Watt (1988), and the Universities of Edinburgh (1990), Aberdeen (1990), Strathclyde (1998), Glasgow (2001), Stirling (2002), and St Andrews (2003).

### Robert Blomfield

16 March 1938 – 14 December 2020, aged 82

Robert Blomfield was born in Leeds and grew up in Sheffield before moving to Scotland in 1956 to study medicine at the University of Edinburgh. While studying, he travelled

throughout Europe and developed his love of photography, first born from use of his father's Leica and Contax cameras and encouragement from his headteacher at Repton school in Derbyshire. Some of his most remarkable works come between 1957 and 1967 while he was a medical student and then junior doctor in Edinburgh and London; they were exhibited by Edinburgh's City Art Centre in 2018. He published a collection of his photographs with Bluecoat Press in 2020 entitled *Robert Blomfield: Edinburgh 1957–1966*.

John William Morrison Cameron MA 1953 BD 1956

July 1931 – 15 October 2021, aged 90

The Reverend John Cameron was born in Edinburgh in July 1931 and graduated from Edinburgh University. During his long career in the Church of Scotland, he was Parish Minister of Cockburnspath with Oldhamstocks, Pollokshields, Glencairn, and Liberton Kirks, and served a term as Moderator of the Presbytery of Edinburgh. He was also President of Braid Rotary Club and of the Edinburgh Gilbert & Sullivan Society, and served terms as a Director of the Calton Youth Ministry Trust and of the St Andrew Animal Fund. He was a frequent contributor to Radio Forth.

Robert 'Bob' Crowe Davis BSc PhD

9 April 1950 – 7 March 2021, aged 70

Robert Davis's early years were spent in Croydon and then Motherwell, where he was educated at Calder Primary and Dalziel High Schools. He was a talented footballer, playing defence for his school's 1<sup>st</sup> XI, and reached the final of the U18 Scottish Schools Cup. He went on to study chemistry at the University of Edinburgh; he was an active member of the University's Football Club. He was captain of the 1<sup>st</sup> XI in 1980, and was picked to represent Scottish Universities in international games. In 1984, he moved to Brussels to take up a post as manager in what was to become Exxon Mobil's Solvents New Business Development department. With the company, he had postings in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and Houston, Texas. He rose to the position of Global Technology Vice President, pioneering growth into China and streamlining business with Europe and the US, and took retirement in 2010.

Ian Findlay CBE BSc 1983

17 March 1961 – 5 March 2021, aged 59

Ian Findlay grew up in Comrie and attended Crieff's Morrison Academy before studying ecology and wildlife management at the University of Edinburgh. After graduation, he spent a year as a countryside ranger for the National Trust for Scotland at Inverewe and Ben Lawers. He went on to take up a similar post with Clackmannanshire Council and, in 1989, he joined Scottish National Heritage as peatland team officer in Caithness and Sutherland. He rose to the position of area officer for Inverness-shire and remained in the Highlands until 2000, latterly seconded to Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) as an adviser. He then became head of conservation operations for the

Scottish Wildlife Trust. In 2003, he was made chief officer for Paths for All, the Scottish charity dedicated to promoting active communities and supporting participation in the outdoors. He remained in this post for 18 years and was made CBE in 2019 for services to healthy lifestyles and outdoor activities. He also served as director of Scottish Native Woods and Scottish Environment LINK, and the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Countryside Trust.

### Jean Ritchie Guild MA 1948

1927 - 4 June 2021, aged 93

Jean Guild was born in Newington, Edinburgh, in 1927 and graduated from Edinburgh University in 1948. She joined the Library staff on or shortly after graduation, as an assistant to the Deputy Librarian, Dr James Corson, a role that she continued informally during first his retirement and then hers. For many years, she held the post of Reference Librarian in the Main Library, during which her skills and experience of research in the Library's expanding post-war collections were greatly appreciated by generations of academic staff and postgraduate students, especially in the Faculty of Arts. Latterly she was responsible for publicity, Library publications, visitors' programmes, and relations with the community outwith the University. She retired in September 1983 as a Senior Assistant Librarian after 34 years of library service. She was a founder member of the Friends of the University Library and was invited to become the first Editor of the Friends' *Newsletter* which later became *The Piper*. She was especially interested in the history of the University, which she brought to her work for the Graduates' Association, first as a contributor to, and member of the Editorial Committee of, the *University of Edinburgh Journal* and later taking over as Assistant Editor and then as Editor, following the sudden death of her predecessor of many years, William A Stevens. She was an avid reader and gardener, both of which loves became hampered in retirement by her failing sight leading to the total blindness which overtook her last years.

### Alice Catherine Hodgkinson MSc 2018

4 May 1993 - July 2021, aged 28

Alice Hodgkinson was born in Nottingham. After graduating at Edinburgh University in 2018 with a degree in Cognition in Science and Society she moved to Shanghai to work as an English teacher, moving to Japan in 2020 to work with the Shane Group of English Schools. She was reported missing from her home in Kanagawa, near Yokohama on 1 July 2021, and her body was found eight days later.

### Benjamin 'Ben' Robert Malcolm BSc PhD DSc 1972

1926 - 10 December 2020, aged 94

Ben Malcolm was born in Preston, Lancashire in 1926. He was a Senior Lecturer, and later an Honorary Fellow, in Molecular Biology at the University of Edinburgh.

Theodora di Marco

14 October 1925 – 17 August 2021, aged 95

Theodora di Marco was born in Edinburgh. She played the viola and, along with her twin sister Norma, she helped to establish the Edinburgh Chamber Orchestra. After graduating from the University of Edinburgh, she taught with her sister in private schools in Switzerland and Oxford. In 1953, she became a nun, joining the closed order of the Carmelite Sisters of Charity in Edinburgh's St Peter's Convent. In 1983, she moved to London after the convent closed as a result of diminishing numbers of nuns. The sisters soon developed a reputation as salonistas, hosting regular evening soirees at their Pembridge Road townhouse. The gatherings regularly included musical accompaniment, food, and wine, and the salon habitués included a wide range of friends and guests—sometimes including strangers invited on impulse. She also enjoyed going on occasional travel-writing excursions around Europe with her sister.

Francis 'Frank' Myrle McGurk MBChB 1955 BSc FRCP

26 January 1932 – 24 June 2021, aged 89

Francis McGurk was born in Edinburgh and was educated at St Joseph's College, Dumfries, before studying Medicine at the University of Edinburgh. Following a brief spell in neurology, his chosen field became radiotherapy, with a speciality in head and neck cancers. He was first based at the then Leith Hospital and went on to the Western General Hospital. He later took up posts at Belvidere Hospital and Beatson Oncology Centre, Glasgow. He retired from the NHS in 1997 and spent the next six years working in a regional hospital in Thunder Bay, Ontario, and then in St John's Newfoundland. He was heavily involved with Uddingston Cricket Club as a coach, umpire, kit man, cheerleader, and driver.

Charles Gordon Millan MA 1968 PhD 1974

25 September 1946 – 30 August 2021, aged 74

Gordon Millan was born in Kirkcaldy and attended the High School there. After the death of his father, the family moved to Bristol, but he returned to study French and Latin at Edinburgh. His doctoral research was on the poet Pierre Louÿs, with Prof Carl Barbier as his supervisor, and he brought to completion the edition of the poems of Stéphane Mallarmé begun by his teacher. Millan would become an expert on Mallarmé and his literary contemporaries, publishing the first biography of the poet in English, as well as (in French) volumes of studies, editions, and collections of essays, a stream ceasing only with his death. In recognition of his contribution, he was honoured in 2004 by the French state as an *Officier* in the prestigious order of the *Palmes Académiques*. Millan's teaching career was spent at the University of Strathclyde, where he became Professor of French, Head of Modern Languages, Acting Dean of Arts and Social Sciences, and from where he promoted the cause of modern languages in Scotland, both in school and university. [Contributed by Alasdair MacDonald]

## Alexander 'Sandy' Douglas Moffat TD WS

13 July 2021

Alexander Moffat studied law at the University of Edinburgh. After working for some well-known Edinburgh law firms, he established Alexander Moffat & Co where he practised for the next 35 years. A Territorial Army officer, during the 1980s, he served as Battery Commander 207 (Scottish) Air Defence Battery Royal Artillery (Volunteers), maintaining his battery in readiness to support the British Army of the Rhine. He was also responsible for the firing of Royal Salutes at Edinburgh and Stirling Castles. Later, during a time when the amalgamation of already reduced Scottish Infantry Regiments was taking place, Moffat argued before Scotland's Court of Session on behalf of the trustees of the King's Own Scottish Borderers (KSOB). Despite the judgement falling against him, the KSOB were satisfied that their defence was presented and undertaken soundly by an officer of the Royal Artillery.

## David W J Morrell MA LLB

26 July 1933 - 16 November 2021, aged 88

David Morrell was educated at George Watson's College before studying History at Edinburgh University. He went on to study Law at Edinburgh while working as an apprentice solicitor at Shepherd and Wedderburn. In 1957, he began a career in higher education, working at Newcastle and Exeter Universities, and the University of Essex. In 1966, he was appointed to Strathclyde University as Academic Registrar and later as Registrar and Secretary of the University. On retirement from the University in 1989, he was invited by the Secretary of State for Scotland to take up an appointment as Lay Observer for Scotland, and subsequently became the country's first Legal Services Ombudsman. In 1990, he was invited to join the Board of Governors of Paisley College of Technology, subsequently serving as Vice Chairman and, in 1996, was appointed Chairman of Paisley University Court. He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by Paisley University in 2005. [Contributed by Fiona Stewart]

## Robert Morton

24 December 1939 - 1 October 2021, aged 81

Robert Morton was born in Portadown, County Armagh, and worked with mentally handicapped children before studying social work at Queen's University, Belfast, and later earning another qualification in social work from the London School of Economics. He was co-founder of the Ulster Music Society and published several collections of songs, including *Folk Songs Sung in Ulster* (1970), and a book on Fermanagh singer John Maguire entitled *Come Day, Go Day, God Send Sunday* (1973). He later moved to Edinburgh to pursue an unfinished PhD. Morton was a founding member of the Boys of Lough, manager for more than 40 years of the Battlefield Band, and proprietor of Temple Records. He championed Scottish folk and Celtic music in general, serving for three years as director of the former Edinburgh Folk Festival and as chairman of the Scottish Record Industry Association. He was inducted into the Scots Trad Hall of Fame for services to traditional music.

Nicholas John Richard Radcliffe

27 April 1952 – 15 January 2021, aged 68

Nicholas Radcliffe was born in Wells, Somerset, and was educated locally before studying phonetics and broadcast journalism at the University of Edinburgh. He took a position with STV, and was the first journalist on site in March of 1978, when the Penmanshiel tunnel on the East Coast main line collapsed. He was also on duty on 6 July 1988 at the time of the Piper Alpha oil rig disaster. In the early 1990s, he left STV and set up his own company, Black Bear, which produced corporate and safety videos, and trained companies in crisis management and media relations. During this time, he joined the 7644 Squadron, RAuxAF, a specialist media group which worked with the RAF and NATO during humanitarian crises and conflicts.

Joyce Elizabeth Richardson MBChB 1957 FRCPE MRCP FRCPG FRCPSG DCH

1932 – 3 June 2021, aged 88

Joyce Richardson was born in Morningside, Edinburgh, in 1932. After graduating from Edinburgh University in 1957, she served successively as a House Officer in the Royal Edinburgh Hospital for Sick Children, a Senior Registrar in the Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital, and as a Consultant Medical Paediatrician at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Glasgow, and the Lomond Healthcare NHS Trust. She was also interested in diabetes and was a member of the British Diabetic Association as well as the British Paediatric Association; she published a number of scientific papers on paediatrics and diabetes. She was also interested in the history of her craft and was a keen member of the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Edinburgh. She was a loyal and faithful member of the Graduates' Association; she served as its Honorary Secretary for ten years and as a member of the Editorial Committee of the *University of Edinburgh Journal*.

Ian Robertson PhD

5 December 1938 – 2 August 2021, aged 82

Ian Robertson was born in Udaipur, Rajasthan, where his father was a surgeon at a mission station. He read Botany at the University of Edinburgh and spent the next ten years working with Moral Re-Armament (MRA), now known as Initiatives for Change. His work took him to India, where he worked with Rajmohan Gandhi, grandson of the Mahatma. In 1977, he travelled to Zimbabwe, then still named Rhodesia, where the MRA was active in the struggle for a peaceful transition of power. Here, he accepted a post as lecturer at the University of Rhodesia, where he taught Plant Physiology and Molecular Biology, and where he worked on disease-free, drought-resistant, and high-yielding varieties of traditional crops, such as cassava. He set up a small business, Agri-Biotech, to employ former students and provide high quality planting materials and methods. When the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, at a time of national harvest failure in Zimbabwe, asked for 4.7 million cuttings of his virus-free sweet potato varieties, he worked with his team for three months to successfully fulfil the request.

## Alan Steel

22 February 1947 – 15 September 2021, aged 74

Alan Steel graduated from the University of Edinburgh with a degree in Geography before undertaking actuarial training with Scottish Widows. Deciding against a career there, he founded the very successful Alan Steel Asset Management in 1975. He commented on a number of high profile financial scandals before they reached the attention of the wider media or general public, including the Equitable Life scandal, the poor performance of endowment mortgages, and the diminishing returns offered by the once-successful with-profits bonds. For 27 years, he wrote a popular personal finance column which was published in *The Scotsman*, and became a regular commenter in all UK financial press and media outlets. Steel provided quiet financial assistance for a number of institutions and events in and around his hometown of Linlithgow, and delivered the keynote address at the Linlithgow Marches and the Bo'ness Fair.

## John Watt Wightman CVO CBE RD WS LLB 1960

20 November 1933 – 19 September 2021, aged 87

John Wightman was born in Leith and went on to school at Daniel Stewart's College, Edinburgh, where he was both Dux and Head Boy. He went on to study for an MA at the University of St Andrews, where he was president of the Student Representative Council, and graduated in 1955. He joined the Tay Division of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve in 1951, and undertook his National Service aboard *HMS Ocean* from 1955 to 1957. In 1956, he was promoted to Sub Lieutenant and saw active service in Cyprus and at the Suez Canal. He returned to Scotland to study law at the University and undertook apprenticeship with Macandrew, Wright and Murray. He went on to join his father as a partner of the firm Morton, Smart, MacDonald and Milligan WS (later Morton Fraser) in 1961, retiring in 1998. He joined the Forth Division of the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve in the late 1960s, rising through the ranks to command several ships, including *HMS Killiecrankie*, taking command of the Forth Division between 1976 and 1980. He was the highest ranking officer in the, by then, Royal Navy Reserve, being promoted to Commodore in 1982, and retired from the RNR in 1985. He was secretary of the Society of Scottish Artists from 1960 to 1968, and served as Solicitor to the Queen in Scotland from 1983 to 1999.



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