



RED TRIANGLE

2023

The difference maker
pioneering tech to tackle
head injuries in sport.
More on pages 14-17.

Edinburgh Napier
UNIVERSITY



Alumni &
Friends
Magazine

RED TRIANGLE

2023

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Welcome

Dear Alumni and Friends,

Welcome to the 2023 edition of Red Triangle! It has been another busy year and this magazine aims to keep you up to date with Edinburgh Napier's most exciting advances and achievements.

For a second consecutive year, we were delighted to win the top spot in Scotland in the 2022 People and Planet University League, which focuses on the environmental and ethical performance of UK universities. This national recognition speaks volumes about our commitment to an ambitious sustainability journey and the achievement of Net Zero by 2030. We have a strong history of enhancing environmental sustainability within and beyond the University and this magazine takes a deeper look at some of our activity in this area. Professor Peter Andras, Dean of our recently merged School of Computing, Engineering & the Built Environment, presents an overview of leading-edge research focused on creating a sustainable material world, while Professor Karen Diele talks about vital work to protect biodiversity and support conservation in the new Centre for Conservation and Restoration Science.

The magazine also features another of our 12 specialist centres, the Centre for Cardiovascular Health, headed by Professor Lis Neubeck. She explains its unique focus and patient-centred approach on pages 4-5. Creating high-quality knowledge that benefits society is our mission, and across a wide range of disciplines we have established expertise that is delivering life-changing research. We were delighted this was recognised in the recent UK-wide Research Excellence Framework (REF), which placed us as the top modern university in Scotland for research power and impact. This recognition is very welcome, but we won't rest on our laurels. We are committed to building our capacity, capability and environment further to drive innovation and inclusive solutions that benefit society.

For this edition, our cover star is Euan Bowen, an enterprising Product Design alumnus who has developed a ground-breaking device that helps spot potential head injuries in sport. He is an inspirational example of dedication to an innovative idea. I am continually awed by the achievements of our alumni and the contribution you make to your professions and communities. You also make an immense difference to the life of the University – through sharing your stories, supporting our students and



giving back in many, various ways. It is always humbling to profile how you help us to succeed and on pages 26-29 honorary graduate Alan Clements and alumnus Gill Scott talk about why giving back matters to them.

As alumni, friends, partners and colleagues, across the country and around the world, you are an essential part of our dynamic and diverse community – integral to who we are and how we succeed. I hope you continue to take as much pride in our achievements as we do in yours.

This magazine presents just a few highlights and to keep abreast of all our news throughout the year, please make sure your contact details are up to date. That way you will receive our monthly newsletter, as well as the latest events and updates from the Alumni Team.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrea Nolan'.

Andrea Nolan
Principal & Vice Chancellor

Heart matters

Professor Lis Neubeck, Head of Edinburgh Napier's Centre for Cardiovascular Health discusses innovative patient-centred solutions



"In my professional career I have seen first-hand the devastating impact cardiovascular disease (CVD) can have on individuals, and how that ripples out to affect communities and society as a whole. While death rates from CVD have been reducing over the past few decades, this disease is still a significant cause of preventable ill health and death in the UK. It is also one of the most serious health problems throughout the world, accounting for 32% of all global deaths[†]. A major contributor to disability, it plays a significant role in health inequalities too: we know, for example, that in the UK people living in the most deprived communities are almost twice as likely to die prematurely from CVD than those living in the most affluent areas. In Scotland alone, it affects 15% of the population, and costs the NHS around £800m per annum.

Edinburgh Napier's new Centre for Cardiovascular Health brings together internationally recognised research across the University, with a highly successful and innovative nursing and allied health workforce development programme. It is different to other cardiovascular research centres that exist across the UK, in that its approach is focused on improving patient-centred cardiovascular health and its implementation in practice. What this means, is that we look to tackle some of the key barriers to the effective deployment of care options that work for patients.

We are in a strong position to lead this work, having developed a unique combination of 'bench to bedside and beyond' research. It is vital that patient voices are not only heard but can also shape and guide the focus of clinical research. So, we are working with patient groups locally, nationally and internationally to put their voice at the heart of what we do, and we have patient co-applicants on grants and patients writing papers with us.

Additionally, as a leading educator, the Centre has a focus on workforce preparation and developing world-class healthcare professionals. Our education offer is informed by our research, so that the next generation of students and practitioners will think differently about how best to tackle the challenges of cardiovascular disease. We are creating advanced learning opportunities unique in Scotland through the Centre's state-of-the-art learning environment, where innovative technology, including virtual reality rooms, allow us to teach both in person and in an immersive environment remotely.

Through expertise in science, clinical work, computing, engineering, and community engagement, our work is informing policy and practice. From investigating the health of cardiac cells and understanding the ageing process to improving monitoring and management of common conditions such as high blood pressure and abnormal heart rhythms, we are advancing new treatments, technologies and techniques to tackle a range of challenges. For example, we are applying artificial intelligence and data-driven solutions to help us understand and manage CVD conditions; leading work on cancer pre-habilitation, to prevent the adverse effect of cancer drugs on the heart; developing innovative public health programmes to increase physical activity options; and leading policy on active transport, to name just a few of our projects with real world impact.

One key area of expertise is in identification and management of atrial fibrillation (AF). This common abnormal heart rhythm affects more than two million people in the UK. We validated smartphone-based electrocardiogram (ECG)* technology which informed work on AF screening; firstly in community pharmacies and subsequently in general practice. We demonstrated that AF could be readily identified through this technology, as well as its cost-effectiveness. This research has now been replicated by many others across the globe.

High blood pressure is known as the 'silent killer' because many people are unaware that they have it, but it's responsible for 50% of heart attacks and strokes. Our research has focused on facilitating blood pressure (BP) measurement at home, using technology to electronically share the readings with a nurse or doctor in primary care (telemonitoring). We revealed that BP telemonitoring led to better management of the condition and was trusted by both patients and healthcare professionals. Over 50% of GP practices have now adopted telemonitoring and it is being used by around 15,000 patients in Scotland.

Combining our cutting-edge research with our research-driven health education programmes will ensure that the Centre contributes to reducing the evidence-practice gap, that is between what's known from research evidence and actual clinical practice, and helps to improve cardiovascular health opportunities across Scotland and beyond."

[†] in 2019 (World Health Organisation figure)

*An ECG is a simple test that can be used to check your heart's rhythm and electrical activity.



Lis Neubeck

is Professor of Cardiovascular Health in the School of Health & Social Care and Head of the Centre for Cardiovascular Health. She is also the NHS Research Scotland Cardiovascular Clinical Network Lead and a Royal Society of Edinburgh Fellow. Her research focuses on innovative solutions to secondary prevention of cardiovascular disease, identification and management of atrial fibrillation, and use of new technologies to improve access to health care.

Find out more at www.napier.ac.uk/cardiovascular-health



SCIENCE AND SOLUTIONS TO COMBAT NATURE'S DECLINE

**How Edinburgh Napier's Centre
for Conservation and Restoration
Science is making an impact**



*"The loss of
one species can
unbalance a
complex web of
relationships and
impact whole
ecosystems."*



Diverse species in a mangrove ecosystem

Biodiversity – the variety of life in a particular habitat or ecosystem – is vital to our world, but scientists agree that it is declining faster than at any other time in human history. The new Global Biodiversity Framework, agreed at the United Nations Conference of the Parties for Biodiversity (COP15) in December 2022, includes targets to protect 30% of the planet for nature by the end of the decade and to restore 30% of the planet’s degraded terrestrial, inland water, coastal and marine ecosystems.

Edinburgh Napier’s Centre for Conservation and Restoration Science (CCRS), established in 2022, is playing its part in tackling this global challenge. Professor Karen Diele, Lead of CCRS, explains:

“Ecosystem and biodiversity science is long established at the University. Providing the science and solutions to combat nature’s decline is a complex task, and the CCRS is utilising the wealth of expertise existing across all of Edinburgh Napier’s academic schools, bringing together biologists, computer scientists and engineers, as well as expertise in social sciences, psychology, the creative industries and business, to deliver impact. For example, an interdisciplinary CCRS team led by Drs Leni le Goff and Patrick White is currently developing a project to help facilitate the use of smart autonomous robots for monitoring critically endangered otters. Collectively, we are working to bend the curve of biodiversity loss, to lessen its severity through innovative solutions, and to conserve and restore essential ecosystems around the world.”

Why biodiversity matters

Dr Jennifer Dodd, CCRS Co-Lead comments: “People might think, ‘Why does it matter if a plant or animal species is overexploited or faces extinction – it’s not essential to my daily life, is it?’ But it does matter; animals, plants and microorganisms depend upon each other, and we depend on them. The loss of one species can unbalance a complex web of relationships and impact whole ecosystems. It can be hard for society to realise how much of the natural world is being lost, and to understand that biodiversity decline will have a deeply degrading effect on all of our lives. There are tangible consequences of species loss – from food security issues and poorer crop pollination to decreased water purification. Each species that is compromised, or disappears, weakens our planet a little more and threatens our survival.”



A Gazi Bay community member helps to monitor the mangrove forest

"Edinburgh Napier research has established the world's first community-based mangrove and seagrass conservation projects funded by carbon credits."

Professor Mark Huxham

Protecting and restoring blue carbon ecosystems

Edinburgh Napier hosts world-leading expertise in the conservation and restoration of mangrove forests and seagrass meadows – vital coastal ecosystems that offer biologically rich habitats but also face a wide range of threats.

Professor Mark Huxham, an Environmental Biologist from CCRS, has worked with colleagues, including CCRS member Professor Rob Briers, on the protection and restoration of coastal ecosystems for over 25 years. An expert on the potential of mangroves and seagrass as nature-based climate change solutions, Mark explains more about the impact of Edinburgh Napier research in this area:

"Mangroves, salt marshes and seagrass meadows are ecological marvels. Over 150 countries around the world contain at least one of these natural carbon stores. Stopping their destruction could save half a gigatonne of CO₂ per year – more than the UK's entire annual emissions – but conserving these ecosystems depends on empowering local communities to lead the effort.

"Edinburgh Napier research has established the world's first community-based mangrove and seagrass conservation projects funded by carbon credits. Our work helped to set up Mikoko Pamoja, in partnership with the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute and local communities, which manages more than 100 hectares of mangrove forests on the south coast of Kenya. This project won the UN's Equator Prize, which recognises outstanding nature-based sustainable initiatives that reduce poverty. We followed this with the Vanga Blue Forest project, based on the same model, that is protecting a further 460 hectares of mangroves on Kenya's coastline while improving the livelihoods of 9,000 people in three local villages.

"We are now working to conserve seagrass meadows. Our research is building better understanding of their value in storing carbon and analysing how the loss of seagrass can increase coastal erosion. Coupled with our expertise in developing socially-just conservation and restoration, we are using our knowledge of seagrass to help communities around the world conserve it."

Technology-enhanced citizen science to support sustainable fisheries

The contribution of volunteers in science can be hugely important. The University has built up considerable expertise in the development and application of citizen science to assist smart data gathering.

Professor Karen Diele explains: "With CCRS colleagues from the School of Computing, Engineering & the Built Environment we have developed smart-phone and web-based apps to gather local ecological knowledge. For example, using the REMAR_CITIZEN app, co-created with computer scientist Dr Simon Wells and his students, fishers and the general public can record anywhere along Brazil's coastline where mangrove crabs are mating. Mangrove crabs are ecologically and economically very important in Brazil, providing food and livelihoods for tens thousands of low-income fishers and their families.

"To protect the crabs from being over harvested during their conspicuous mass-mating events, fishing is regulated, but a mismatch between capture bans and the actual occurrence of mating sparks conflict and law in compliance. With colleagues in Brazil, I helped to unravel that two geophysical cycles determine when the crabs will mate. Based on many years of fieldwork and data gathered by the mobile app, we developed a novel crab mating predictor tool used by the Brazilian government to improve the placement of their capture bans. The new legislation is now delivering significant benefits for the coastal poor in 12 federal states,



*The mangrove crab *Ucides cordatus**

halving the costs of policing capture bans, and helping to ensure that the crabs in Brazil's mangrove forests are fished sustainably.

"We're also using a similar citizen-science approach in our West of Scotland Herring Hunt (WOSHH) project, led by CCRS member Dr Michelle Frost and myself, in collaboration with local communities and trusts, funded by the William Grant Foundation. Our new 'Herring Hunt' web app, co-developed with undergraduate computing student Lewis Watson, supervised by Simon, is facilitating public reporting of sightings of herring. Supporting spring-spawning herring could help rebuild resilient populations in Scottish inshore waters, where these fish never recovered from stock collapse 50 years ago."

Evaluating the benefits of nature-based solutions

CCRS freshwater ecologist Dr Jennifer Dodd is assessing the effectiveness of the multi-partner award-winning Easter Beltie River Restoration project which has turned the artificially straightened Beltie Burn to a meandering stream. The project's aim was to (re)create a vibrant wetland system, to boost biodiversity and the region's resilience to flooding. To understand whether this 'nature-based solution' has begun to deliver, Jennifer is gathering hydrological, biogeochemical and ecological field evidence.

Safeguarding imperilled biodiversity

The projects highlighted here are just a snapshot of the range of biodiversity conservation and restoration work conducted by Edinburgh Napier's CCRS researchers. The new Centre will build our inter-and transdisciplinary science further, enabling the development of novel solutions to help safeguard imperilled biodiversity.

Find out more at
www.napier.ac.uk/CCRS

Wildlife biologist, conservationist and military veteran: Alumnus Kevin Marriott talks about his work

Kevin Marriott currently works as Technical Lead for XPRIZE Rainforest, a five-year, \$10 million competition to accelerate the innovation of autonomous technologies for biodiversity assessments. He graduated with an MSc in Wildlife Biology and Conservation in 2022, having previously worked in anti-poaching and conservation in Africa, and prior to that, spending 14 years in the British Army and Special Forces specialising in tactical and strategic radio communications and technical surveillance systems.

Kevin explains: "When I left the military, I co-founded a tech company providing technical expertise to UK government-sponsored counter-terrorism projects. Some of my assignments were in the field of anti-poaching and conservation in East Africa, and this brought me into contact with conservation NGOs there. I started assisting with wildlife protection and law enforcement operations, developing technical capabilities such as secure radio networks and IT systems, airborne and ground surveillance solutions, and wildlife telemetry systems, to provide support to some of Africa's most threatened protected areas. The real turning point that made me decide to transition to a

wildlife biologist was an incident involving a badly injured elephant caught in a snare set by poachers. It was a traumatic event and a seminal moment for me."

With a full-time job as the technical director of the Forgotten Parks Foundation and a hectic travel schedule, coupled with family life, studying was quite a challenge for Kevin. He undertook an online degree as the best way to fulfil his aspirations: "I really enjoyed the learning experience but it was a struggle! It's helped massively in my new role though, and I now have a rather unique blend of both conservation technology and biology knowledge."

At XPRIZE Rainforest, Kevin supports the technical operations and execution of the competition. His work is contributing to enhancing our understanding of rainforest ecosystems, providing new scientific insights in biodiversity and

accelerating the development of new, just and sustainable bio-economies. Kevin is also a member of the XPRIZE Biodiversity and Conservation Brain Trust, a think tank that identifies potential breakthroughs to global conservation challenges and creates high impact prize concepts to solve these challenges.



Amazon Rainforest in Anavilhanas National Park, Brazil

*An otter on the coast
of Mull, Scotland*



Ecologist and consultant: Alumnus Melanie Findlay explains her work

With the increasing focus on climate change and the importance of protecting habitats and conserving biodiversity, the demand for ecological consultants has increased significantly. Melanie Findlay gained her PhD from Edinburgh Napier in 2021, supervised by CCRS members Pat White and Rob Briers. Her research focused on the conservation of the Eurasian otter, looking at how to better optimise monitoring of this threatened species through camera trapping techniques and field evidence: "Now in my consultancy work, I need to stay abreast of fast-moving technological advances, such as those in the field of camera-trapping, so that we can gather the best possible data to inform impact assessments."

Melanie's consultancy, Findlay Ecology Services Ltd, works across Scotland and Northumberland. It provides expertise and advice on environmental issues relating to legislation and planning policy to industry, government agencies and other stakeholders: "We might act as the on-site ecological advisor for large scale engineering projects, undertake ecological assessments, provide expert advice on protected species and licensing, or implement vegetation and invasive species surveys. Our work focuses on identifying the habitats and

species that might be affected by a development project. We assess the likely impacts and advise on how best to avoid, mitigate or compensate for those impacts. This has seen us involved in numerous National Vegetation Classification surveys for large development projects, such as windfarm and forestry developments, whereby we identify habitats that should be considered during the design process; for instance, valuable grasslands or wetlands that need to be excluded from the planted area of forestry plantations."

Melanie credits her time at Edinburgh Napier as providing her with skills beyond ecological expertise: "My consultancy offers specialist expertise in protected species surveys, such as otter, water vole, badger and great crested newt, which builds on my PhD interests but what I did not fully anticipate was how my University experience would benefit me as a consultant. It helped to vastly improve my data handling, data presentation, writing skills and the way I think about and approach problems, and that has built my confidence to take on more challenging work."



OUR ALUMNI AWARDS WINNERS

We are immensely proud of the impact our Edinburgh Napier alumni make as they build businesses, contribute to their professions, support communities and deliver change. Each year we seek to formally recognise individuals who are making a difference and to share their stories to inspire both our current students and the wider ENU community. Here we celebrate our 2022 winners.

NATHALIE AGNEW

Alumnus of the Year 2022

Nathalie is the founder of Muckle Media, a multi-award-winning, creative PR agency. As an inspirational business leader, she has grown Muckle Media from a kitchen-table enterprise to a leading agency recognised for its excellence, while championing positive change in the sector.

Nathalie commented: "When I graduated in 2005 there were no job opportunities in PR in the Highlands, so I moved to London to take up a trainee job and worked for two of the biggest agencies there, Porter Novelli and Fleishman-Hillard. It was a great experience, supporting some of the world's biggest brands, but I wanted to return home. I couldn't see a role that excited me, so decided to set up on my own, and I established Muckle Media in 2012."

The meaning of the Scottish word 'muckle' is mighty or great, so it seems fitting that the agency has recently won top industry awards from the CIPR and PRCA recognising it as 'Large Consultancy of the Year' in relation to its business performance, innovation and approach to talent. Muckle Media is also Scotland's first PR agency to achieve





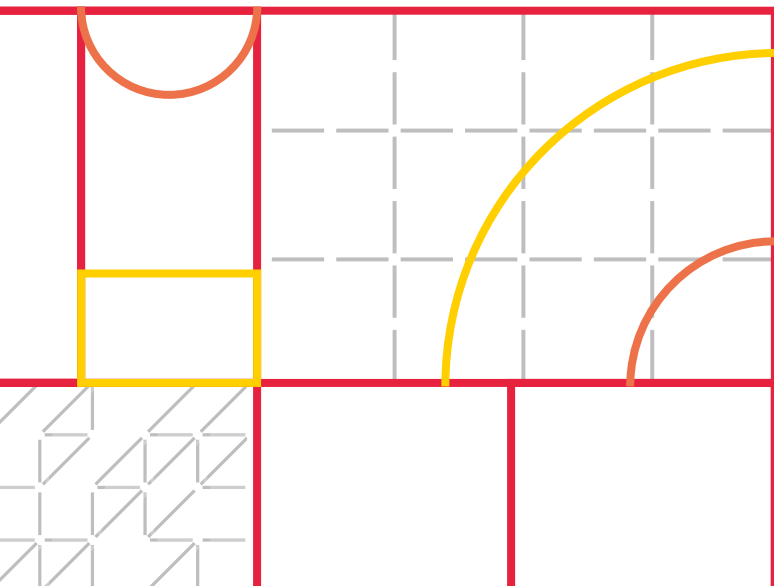
B-Corp status, a designation that recognises it is committed to continuously improving its social and environmental performance.

Nathalie explains more: "What underpins the ethos of Muckle Media is the desire to be a force for good in our industry. As an agency, we want to contribute to positive social change. The B-Corp certification means we must meet high standards of performance, accountability and transparency, and demonstrate that we care about people and the planet."

Championing routes that allow talent of any age to thrive is also a defining characteristic of Nathalie's approach: "I've seen the impact of inflexible working conditions and a lack of early paid work experience opportunities, and I want to change that. With a family of three young children, I understand particularly the challenges facing working parents. Muckle Media introduced initiatives such as our Returners to Communications programme which supported working parents, and a Kickstart trainee scheme to provide opportunities for young talent to access the industry. More broadly, I want to support any colleague, at any stage of their career, to realise their potential while having the flexibility to achieve a positive work/life balance: for example, one of my team is a part-time firefighter based on a farm, others work remotely, and some flex their working week to support family or to have time for passion projects."

The Alumnus of the Year award recognises the difference Nathalie is making as an industry leader.

"I was thrilled to receive this award. Studying at Edinburgh Napier provided a great base for my career and it is an honour to be considered a role model for the University's students and alumni. Edinburgh Napier has a great track record for developing young talent in subjects relevant to my industry and I'm delighted that my team includes some ENU graduates."



BJØRN HANSON

Young Alumnus of the Year 2022

Bjørn is a talented, entrepreneurial young film producer, dedicated to creating films that provide a platform to overlooked stories.

He has worked in the US and across Europe and is currently based at Black Camel Pictures – a Scottish production company in Glasgow. Bjørn commented: "It took me a while to figure out a career that matched my skillset with my interests. Once I realised that I wanted to produce film and television, everything sort of clicked for me. Producing allows me to apply my experiences in political science, marketing and advertising, to something creative that I care deeply about. Scotland has been the perfect place to develop my career and I am hugely grateful for all the training, support and encouragement I've received here."

At Black Camel, Bjørn produced the queer drama *Float* for BBC Scotland, which won the award for 'Best Series in a Short Format' at Series Mania 2022, one of the world's leading television festivals. *Float* was also nominated for 'Best Short Form' and 'Best Writer' at the Royal Television Society Scotland Awards 2022, winning the latter. Bjørn commented: "*Float* was a total joy to produce and I feel so lucky to have worked on such an important and timely Scottish story. That being said, it was also a really challenging production and I felt a lot of imposter syndrome as I struggled to understand and overcome the daunting amount of logistical, legal and creative work required to produce a microbudget television series during a pandemic! I had to rely on my training, trust my instincts and speak up for myself – all skills that I learned during my MA and MFA at Edinburgh Napier University."

"Taking everything I've learned from *Float* with me, I am continuing to develop my career with the wonderfully supportive team at Black Camel. I am now working on bigger and more complex projects, including Black Camel's hit series *Annika*. My goal is to produce my first high-end series in the next few years. I'm particularly interested in genre content (noir, horror, sci-fi) and would love to adapt a Scottish novel or play. Ultimately, I really just want to keep producing engaging work that gives a platform to unheard voices."

DIFFERENCE MAKER



HIT - a small wearable device featuring a unique impact sensor

Euan Bowen

The Edinburgh Napier graduate developing pioneering tech to tackle head injuries in sport

Euan Bowen is a young, Product Design graduate who has developed a ground-breaking device that helps spot potential head injuries in sport. Red Triangle went to find out more about what's driven Euan to make a difference.

"I'm an avid rugby player and my idea was born out of a close friend and teammate having to retire from rugby at a young age due to ongoing concussions. I discovered there was little monitoring technology available despite the severity of the issue across different sports, so I began researching and developing a product that could measure how much impact an athlete sustains to their head," explained Euan.

Concussion is a growing concern in professional sport. It's not always as obvious as being knocked out cold; sub-concussive head impacts may have no obvious symptoms, but sportsmen and women can be experiencing them regularly and they have the potential to cause long-term damage. Being able to 'see' head impacts when playing sport can help to show what the brain is being put through. Euan applied himself to devising a product to do just that, and in his third year of the BDes (Hons) Product Design course, developed HIT – a small wearable device featuring a unique impact sensor that detects the G-Force experienced. With its companion app, HIT uses a traffic light system to indicate the level of impact experienced throughout a game in real time. Red, amber and green warnings alert the user to the severity of the impact, providing a simple way to caution them regarding continuing to play and indicating when they should seek medical attention.





Naomi Freireich, endurance mountain biker and HIT ambassador



Four years on, HIT is now officially launched on the market. "I am delighted that HIT is now widely available. I never anticipated that my idea could blossom into a fully-fledged company with the potential to deliver positive change around head trauma in sport. It's been a massive team effort, with a variety of stakeholders making it possible to get to this point. Our hope is that HIT can educate, inform and influence participants, decision-makers and the sports industry generally, to become more brain health aware, as well as supporting more informed decisions about this issue."

HIT is an industry first. It's the only live impact severity detection system currently on the market and is gaining an excited and growing customer base. Starting off as a rugby product, Euan saw its potential within individual sports and in particular mountain biking and cycling where it was enthusiastically taken up, initially championed by Reece Wilson, the 2020 Downhill Mountain Bike World Cup Champion, followed by the 555 RAAW Gravity Racing downhill World Cup team using HIT tech for all their riders in the 2022 championship.

From exhibiting the prototype at his Degree Show in 2018, to officially launching HIT, Euan has found that developing a product is about a wider journey of discovery: "I set myself a key question when I started designing HIT: 'is there some way to identify this type of injury earlier in order to support recovery?' and while that has underpinned the development of HIT, I've since realised that it isn't just the aspiration to

"It isn't just the aspiration to make a great product that is driving me, but a desire to support long-term health."

Euan Bowen

make a great product that is driving me, but rather the desire to raise awareness, better understand the problem and support long-term health. It's about the bigger picture and working out how HIT can contribute. Now as a company, we've realised that beyond its usefulness for individual users, the

data HIT collects can be really important for medical and sports research purposes and for understanding traumatic brain injuries. So, we are working with research partners to contribute to the wider brain health ecosystem within sport."

The journeys of entrepreneurs can often be a zig-zagging process and Euan admits he had pushed back against following in the footsteps of his father who is also a product designer: "It's funny when I look at where I am now! I started off studying architecture but that was a false start. Product design encompasses so many possibilities – the fun parts of architecture, such as the creative thinking and the conception process – but with much greater scope for what you might produce. And at Edinburgh Napier there was this culture



HIT was initially developed for rugby players

of openness and freedom, and being empowered with the critical and practical skills while feeling liberated to take these in any direction you might want, which was really stimulating.”

Euan says he is indebted to the people who believed in him and supported the development of HIT. “When I was studying I worked part time at a local golf club. One of the members there read an article about my Degree Show project and approached me to find out what I was going to do with it. That was Andrew Wright, my first investor, who is now CEO of HIT! I’d been thinking about taking a job I had lined-up in Cardiff after graduating. Andrew changed my mind and together, along with other investors and supporters who came on board, I’ve been given an incredible opportunity to develop a product that I really think can make a difference.”

Find out more about HIT and the latest version, HIT+, which is available at www.hitrecognition.co.uk

Developing Difference Makers

Dr Richard Firth, Associate Professor, has led the Product Design programme at Edinburgh Napier since 2008.

“Today’s world requires designers to be more than makers; they need to be sociologists, ethnographers, economists, cultural ambassadors and entrepreneurs. Our role as teachers in this discipline is to help our students see their potential to make a difference in this fast-changing world.

Through the development of a set of skills that can be applied in many different ways and contexts, we look to create problem solvers who feel able to respond to whatever comes at them. Our culture encourages students to explore and to follow their interests but underpinned by an ethos that what they create must make things better for others.

On the Product Design course we foster creative and critical thinking skills that are developed through visualisation, practical making skills with both traditional tools and a range of materials, and knowledge of digital prototyping technologies. We find that hands-on model making is a powerful process for students, stimulating better insights and unleashing their creative energies, which helps them to develop the best solutions.

It’s interesting to see how our graduates become difference makers. I am delighted to witness Euan’s progress with HIT. We also recently celebrated the success of Erin Reid, who won recognition in the prestigious 2022 Converge Awards for her specialist period products for women who enjoy outdoor activities or who work in remote environments. Our graduates also initiate change and progress innovation in many areas beyond product design, such as leading work in service design, interaction design and creative entrepreneurship.

Edinburgh Napier’s approach is about enabling people to make their mark – big or small – and in whatever way that is right for them, be that through creating opportunities, connecting communities, delivering impact or developing a product. We aim to empower students to find solutions by realising that it’s possible for anyone to make a difference; they just need the confidence to be inventive.”

Creating a sustainable material world

We live in a material world. How society uses materials is fundamental to many aspects of our economic, social and cultural wellbeing and as the climate and ecological crisis deepens, the need to find more sustainable solutions is vital.

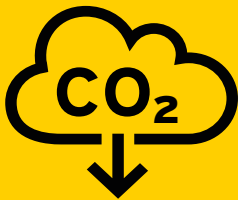
Bio-based materials and advanced material science offer ways to develop more renewable alternatives that lessen the impact on the environment, and at Edinburgh Napier we have a wide range of research being progressed in these areas.

Professor Peter Andras, Dean of the School of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment, explains: "The need for greater sustainability in all areas of society is widely acknowledged as one of the most urgent problems the world faces today. It is increasingly clear that how we create and use materials is a large factor in energy use, ecological impact and climate change. Materials sustainability is a very multidisciplinary area, and our practical cutting-edge research ranges from timber engineering and wood composites to advanced material science and nano-fibre applications. In addition, we are innovating recycling approaches and applying data analysis, artificial intelligence and smart city expertise to transform processes, practices and ways of living to more sustainable alternatives."



Sustainable construction: pioneering timber technology

The University's Centre for Sustainable Construction (CSC) is an innovation gateway that brings together different research groups that are delivering some of Scotland's leading built environment applied research. Pioneering work in timber engineering, wood science and sustainable solutions, has seen the CSC win the prestigious Queen's Anniversary Prize twice for its positive global impact on industry, society and the environment.



Low carbon building

Professor Robert Hairstans is Head of the Research Group for Offsite Construction and Innovative Structures within the CSC:

"Construction materials like concrete and steel have a huge carbon footprint. As infrastructure and housing demands continue to increase around the world, our internationally recognised work is building understanding of the potential of timber engineering and demonstrating how modern methods of construction and engineered wood products are ideal options to produce good quality, low carbon buildings and communities.

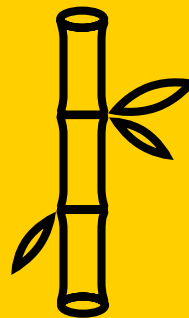
"Our research is progressing industrialised timber systems, mass timber products such as cross laminated timber, and offsite construction where the manufacturing and pre-assembling of large sections of a building takes place in a controlled factory environment. Offsite construction improves working conditions, uses less energy than traditional methods of construction and minimises waste. Edinburgh Napier has also joined forces with Trimble to create the first dedicated Trimble Technology Laboratory in Scotland. Trimble is a leading industrial technology company, based in the US, which is helping to transform industries such as construction, agriculture and transportation by harnessing technological innovation. This strategic partnership brings together digital technologies, academic research and industry-driven innovation, enabling us to expand our research in a range of areas, including 3D building design and digital fabrication, to shape the future delivery of a sustainable built environment."



Sustainable use of wood

Associate Professor, Dan Ridley-Ellis, is Head of the Research Group for Wood Science and Technology: "Wood is one of the few truly renewable materials that has the potential to contribute a significant amount of our material needs for construction, vital products for logistics, and essentials for agriculture. The properties of wood, which determine its suitability for different uses, depends not just on species, but heavily on forest management, climate and other growth conditions. The work of the wood science and technology group is about understanding these links to bring a better balance of the different values of forests and woodlands. Forests are not just about providing materials; rather the materials and applications should be about shaping the kind of forests we want. Recent work has focused on widening the range of productive species, while also ensuring the continuing safety of timber buildings through laboratory testing and leading European standardisation work on timber strength grading. The tricky questions of how to build safely for deconstruction and reuse are also being considered."

Renewable timber composites



Professor of Structural Engineering, Johnson Zhang, has pioneered several types of innovative bamboo-timber composite structural elements for buildings: "Bamboo with its fast growth, high tensile strength and the capacity to capture large amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, offers many environmental benefits

in comparison to conventional structural materials. My team has engineered bamboo-based composite beams and developed pre-stressing technology that can make high-strength, lightweight construction materials from this renewable resource. We're developing a full structural system including beam, column, floor panel and shear walls using composite materials and our research is enabling engineers to use multi-species bio-based composites for larger scale constructions, such as long-span or tall buildings."



Creating a sustainable material world



ALUMNI SNAPSHOT

Alumni **Clement Blanquet Du Chayla** and **Calum Stuart** were Edinburgh Napier BeX* Scholars and now work as Architectural Coordinators at Element5, a Canadian cross-laminated timber (CLT) manufacturer that specialises in the design, fabrication and assembly of modern mass timber structures. Clement studied Civil Engineering, while Calum studied Architectural Technology, Architectural and Building Sciences. Their work at Element5 is striving to make a positive contribution to communities, the environment and future generations through the creation of a more sustainable building industry.

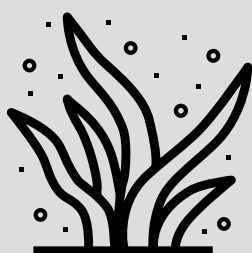
*beX (built environment exchange) is an innovative programme established by ENU to develop future talent in sustainable construction.



Low impact refugee shelters

Research at Edinburgh Napier has helped to both facilitate and accelerate the transition to sustainable sheltering. Over 70 million people are displaced in the world, fleeing persecution, conflicts and natural disasters. Evidence shows that well over 90% of refugees remain in shelters that become their (semi-) permanent homes despite being wholly inadequate and characterised by high environmental impacts. The team at Edinburgh Napier – funded by the Royal Academy of Engineering through the Global Challenges Research Fund – developed 'Makazi', a low-carbon shelter prototype made of lightweight fast-growing timber, with a pre-packed shell structure, that could be delivered through the humanitarian supply chain. Regional variants developed from the core Makazi concept have been tested in Jordan, Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa and the design is ideally placed to achieve substantial impact to benefit the lives of millions of people.

Smart materials for a sustainable future



Developing seaweed-derived nanocellulose

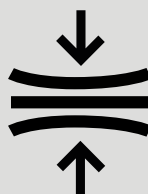
Dr Mark Dorris and the materials science team have well-established research into nanocellulose – a renewable,

environmentally-friendly and biodegradable material. Early work focused on intensively processing wood pulp to release the ultra-small, or 'nano' cellulose fibres – and using unique chemistry, the researchers significantly reduced the amount of energy needed to power the process. The team have since developed zero waste sustainable methods of extracting and chemically activating nanocellulose material from seaweed. This wonder material of the future is suited to a range of applications, from waterproof coatings and bioplastics to medical implants and controlled release drugs. The seaweed-derived nanocellulose works better in all applications so far studied than the existing tree-derived nanocellulose materials, and at a fraction of the cost or energy required. Mark explains more: "Due to its intrinsic properties, renewability and abundance, nanocellulose is a super versatile green material. It has the potential to be a replacement for resource intensive materials used in various industries such as construction, packaging, transportation, energy, sensors and biomedicine. At Mercel – an Edinburgh Napier spin-out company – we are striving to offer ways of switching from the dependency on fossil fuels to a sustainable seaweed resource. We are developing applications, such as bioplastics, water resistant coatings, super absorbent biopolymers and drug delivery systems, that will significantly reduce the energy consumption involved in the production of pharmaceutical, consumer and personal care products and will create a complete zero waste manufacturing cycle."



ALUMNI SNAPSHOT

Dr Amaka Onyianta, studied her PhD at Edinburgh Napier where she became a research fellow before moving to the Bristol Composite Institute (BCI), University of Bristol, as a Postdoctoral Research Associate. She remains an Honorary Research Fellow at BCI and works as a materials scientist at Renishaw Plc. Her research has focused on developing renewable materials and composites using sustainable modification processes. While working at Edinburgh Napier University, she innovated a green process for the production of seaweed-based cellulose nanofibril hydrogels that underpins the spin-out company Mercel.



Pioneering piezoelectric nano-structures

Professor of Manufacturing Engineering, Islam Shyha has leading expertise in advanced manufacturing, machining technology, composite materials and nanotechnology. One area of his work is focused on piezoelectric nanofibres and their contribution to sustainable energy supply: "Piezoelectric materials produce an electric current when mechanically excited. The nanofibre membranes we manufacture offer sustainable



Creating a sustainable material world

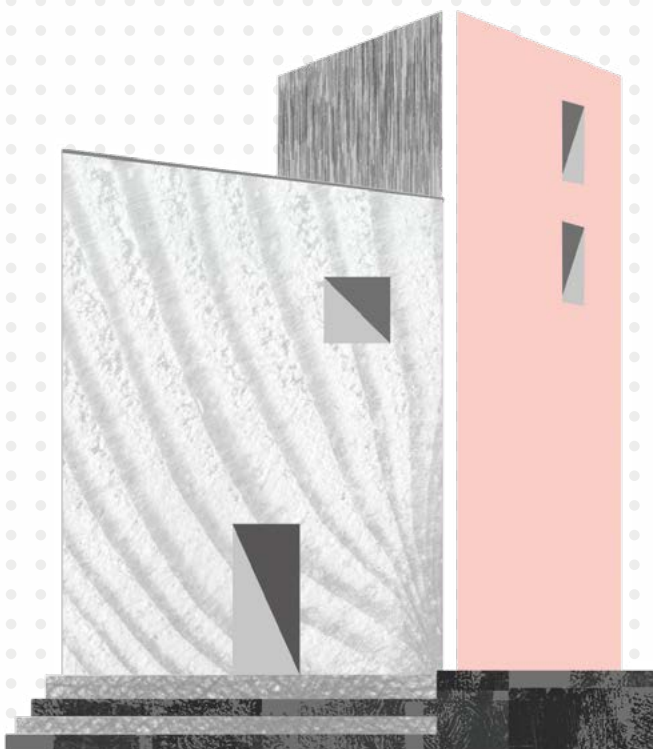


solutions for high-performance, low-power electronic devices required in numerous industry fields such as aerospace, automotive, and biomedical devices. We are also investigating how to produce ultra-high elastic piezoelectric nanostructures which would facilitate the building of innovative energy harvesting units that could have applications in sensors and medical instruments. A collaborative project with Alexandria University in Egypt, funded by The British Council, is also looking at how these novel energy harvesting units could boost the country's use of clean energy while helping lower-income populations in remote towns and villages to gain better access to electrical energy."

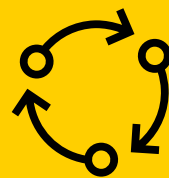


Sustainable electrochemical energy storage devices

Dr Libu Manjakkal is a researcher and lecturer, with a major research focus on functional materials for energy storage and sensing systems with applications across healthcare, electric vehicles, robotics and pollution monitoring: "My work has developed high-performance electrode technologies for energy storage devices and sensors and pioneered textile-based supercapacitors and sensors, including innovative wearable devices that can be powered by human sweat. This new type of flexible supercapacitor replaces the electrolytes found in conventional environmentally unfriendly batteries with sweat. My team is also investigating breakthrough energy storage technology that could deliver a new generation of flexible electronic devices, including energy autonomous sensing systems for wearables, prosthetics and robotics."



The next generation of sustainability expertise



Enabling future talent to deliver sustainable solutions

Dr Neil Shearer is a lecturer and programme leader for Materials

Engineering: "Future engineers will require a wide range of sustainability competences to support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that globally we need to achieve. Our role is to develop the next generation of engineering professionals capable of delivering forward-thinking materials solutions, and across all our engineering programmes, from Mechanical to Advanced Materials, we aim to equip our students with the tools and knowledge to carry out appropriate sustainable practices in their chosen field. From understanding the materials life cycle (from extraction to recycling or repurposing) and ethical sourcing, to developing smart design processes and new materials, we are enabling future talent to apply their skills to sustainable solutions. With sustainable engineering principles at their heart, our graduates can add value, developing products that use resources more efficiently, while ensuring solutions bring societal benefits and solve environmental challenges."

Developing a sustainable future for all

Professor Peter Andras: "At Edinburgh Napier we are advancing a materials ecology where innovative products and approaches offer sustainable solutions that can reduce the environmental and climate footprints of the materials used in industry and our day-to-day lives. This article provides just a snapshot of activity at the University with regard to next generation sustainable composite materials and sustainable construction, but other innovative work is also contributing to this agenda, from refocusing technology to designing robots from sustainable materials to recycling post-industrial waste in the textile industry. We know that many of our alumni are also leading efforts to develop sustainable approaches, tackle climate change and reduce waste. Across various industries and sectors, from new technologies and renewable energy to investment and circular economies, our alumni are making a difference and helping to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all."



ALUMNI SNAPSHOT

Alumnus **Maxime Biret** studied Energy & Environmental Engineering and is currently a H100 Fife Distribution Manager at Scottish Gas Network (SGN). He is working to deliver a world-first green hydrogen gas network in the heart of Fife, Scotland – the first of its kind to use a direct supply of clean power to produce hydrogen for domestic heating. When fully operational, the H100 Fife facility will serve 300 homes, providing critical evidence for a zero-carbon energy source and helping to inform the UK's long-term policy decisions for decarbonisation.

Research and Innovation Enterprise

Research and innovation play a crucial role in underpinning the University's ability to contribute to a sustainable material world. Our recently launched Edinburgh Napier Innovation Hub provides advice, knowledge and expertise, both internally and externally, to support the development of ideas, new businesses and spin-out companies – transforming research and ideas into real solutions for the benefit of society. Through strong partnerships with organisations of all sizes in Scotland, the UK and beyond, our Innovation Hub helps drive the conversion of novel research into impactful products and services.

Could you be part of this dynamic community? As a collaborator, mentor, commercial champion, panel advisor or investor? We would love to hear from you if you would like to contribute to our impact.

Find out more at:
innovationhub.napier.ac.uk

SHARE YOUR STORY



Do you work in climate change or sustainability?
We'd love to hear more about what you're doing.

Spotlight on...

NICK EARDLEY

ENU Alumnus and Chief Political Correspondent for the BBC



Nick Eardley is one of BBC TV's most prominent political correspondents. He has reported on big political events, from general and Scottish Parliament elections and the Brexit process, to the handling of the Covid pandemic.

In the unprecedented political turmoil of recent times, his work couldn't be more interesting or important: "Without doubt, it has been a remarkable period in UK politics and intense from a journalistic point of view, but I feel privileged to have this role. It has put me at the forefront of historic moments; a whole series of them recently, which has been quite incredible to report on. You would never normally expect the amount of change that has occurred at the highest levels in Government that we've experienced this year: three Prime Ministers in three months is utterly unprecedented!"

Based in the Millbank studio at Westminster, London, Nick's day frequently begins at 5.00am in preparation for reporting on BBC Breakfast and the Today programme. "Journalism is a fascinating and exciting industry. I love working at Westminster and for the BBC. It's very stimulating to be part of huge stories that are affecting millions of people's lives. As a reporter, you can be presenting the first draft of history. That's quite a responsibility. One of the most important and rewarding parts of my job is trying to understand what is going on behind the scenes. I go to Parliament and speak to politicians, ministers, civil servants and special advisors, to try and figure out what is happening and how the decisions being made at the top of government will impact civil society. I have to translate what I'm finding out into reporting that makes sense of events for a very wide audience."

Nick in the media tent preparing to report on the General Election, May 2021



"There can be a lot of pressure. Millions of people watch news bulletins, so your reporting must be precise."

Nick Eardley

Being a political correspondent means there is no average day: "As I report mainly for BBC's early programmes, I'm often responding to events as they are just developing. That's exciting but challenging, as you work to uncover what's going on. There can be a lot of pressure. Millions of people watch news bulletins, so your reporting must be precise. The demands of the role can make balancing work and family life tricky: when a big story breaks, it's like a switch is flicked. You just go immediately, driven by a sort of unique adrenaline experience that pushes you through the intensity of reporting on fast moving news."

Nick studied an MA in Journalism at Edinburgh Napier, graduating in 2011. He didn't set out to be a political correspondent or aspire to be on TV: "I was more interested in newspapers. I worked at The Scotsman while I was studying, doing sub-editing for the website, and I stayed on after graduating, later transferring to the news desk. I think it's hard to be prescriptive about a career pathway in journalism; there's quite a bit of luck involved and opportunities can open up which take you in directions you hadn't anticipated."

As online news was booming and becoming a more important part of newsrooms across the UK, Nick moved to London to join the BBC online team. Writing features about big news issues, he was still 'behind the scenes' until an opportunity arose to film a story he had been researching on high-speed, high-stakes gambling machines, known as fixed-odd betting terminals (FOBTs). "They are highly addictive: someone playing on a machine can lose £100 in a single play. A big source of income for bookmakers, FOBTs

weren't being regulated effectively to protect problem gamblers, who are much more vulnerable to them. Making the film was an important experience for me, my first real presenting role, and as a team we were really proud of bringing the issue to wider attention. Sometime later the Government did review FOBTs and brought in regulation."

Nick became a political correspondent for the news network in 2016 and in September 2022 was made a Chief Political Correspondent – a prestigious role with more editorial responsibility. "It also means that I have to get up super early!"

His time studying at Edinburgh Napier has made a difference: "It's very helpful to be in a place with others who are exploring a similar pathway. I gained the practical skills you need, including shorthand – very useful! But journalism is all about building relationships. You have to develop confidence. The MA definitely helped with that, while the friendships I made were really important. The role at The Scotsman came through a friend on the course. Hard work and perseverance are essential attributes to success, but contacts are crucial – they can open up stories, and opportunities. I'm still friends with colleagues from Napier and really value that."

STEPS TO SUCCESS



"Receiving a scholarship can change the course of a student's life forever. I know this because that is what happened for me."

Alan Clements

Honorary graduate and leading TV producer, Alan Clements, talks about why he gives back

Alan Clements is a dynamic, creative leader in television production and business management. He founded one of the most successful and largest independent TV production companies in Scotland and led business change at STV's production arm, transforming it into a multi-genre company supplying all the major UK networks. Currently, as Founder and Managing Director of Two Rivers Media, he drives programme making for the BBC, Channel 4 and, increasingly, the world.

In 2014, Edinburgh Napier awarded Alan an Honorary Degree for services to Journalism and Television in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the sector and his championing of homegrown talent.

"Receiving a scholarship can change the course of a student's life forever. I know this because that is what happened for me.

I was fortunate enough to be awarded a prestigious Thouron Fellowship, after gaining a first degree in Modern History and Politics, which allowed me to further my education at the Ivy League University of Pennsylvania for two years. Without that experience I don't believe I would have built the career I have. The culture in America was very different to the UK; its 'you can do anything' attitude profoundly shaped my mindset. It helped me to be open to opportunities and to not pre-judge things, including my own potential.



My first experience of the world of TV was as a runner – in a two-week role where I did literally run about doing any manner of task to assist the production process. However short-term and lowly that was, it was brilliant for meeting people, and the confidence I'd gained in the US enabled me to take advantage of that. The upshot: I was offered a researcher role on an important BBC Scotland political programme and my career in television really began.

I come from what was described back in the day as 'a hard-to-reach background' for the media industry, and that plays a role in why I'm keen to help young people who might struggle to pursue a career in the sector. The Clements Family Scholarship supports BA Journalism students who have financial hardship issues, however, what's really important in this industry is connections; so beyond financial support, I help students to see the industry from the inside and gain opportunities to make those valuable connections that can make a difference to their early career path.

I do a job I really love – being a producer is all about working with highly creative people to tell stories, be that through documentaries or dramas, in ways that will inspire and inform diverse audiences. While producing programmes comes with its challenges, it is a continually fascinating and stimulating role. Hard work and dedication does underpin my success, but I think if you've had the benefit of a university education, you know the difference it makes. So, enabling other young people to realise their academic ambitions and gifting my professional expertise is a privilege really, and I find it a very rewarding way to give back."

Douglas Simpson: What the Clements Family Scholarship has meant to me

"I'm from a small town in East Lothian and didn't have clear academic aspirations after high school, however, studying journalism at Edinburgh Napier appealed to me because of its focus on practical skills underpinned by theory.

Before receiving the Clements Family Scholarship, I had no money besides my SAAS, which barely covered my rent, and a little I'd saved up working on farms over the summer before first year. The scholarship was extremely helpful; it gave me some economic security and enabled me to stay in Edinburgh for my first year without having to worry about the cost of accommodation.

The scholarship also greatly influenced my academic aspirations, not just through the financial support but through meeting Alan and getting the opportunity of work



"Without the scholarship support I wouldn't have gained that experience or any contacts in the industry."

Douglas Simpson

experience with him. Originally, I wanted to write but after learning about the exciting work Alan is involved in, and getting to be a part of that for a week, I decided that I would love to get into TV production.

Alan was really supportive and his staff were so accommodating; they answered all my questions about the industry and let me observe and contribute to ongoing productions. I met and worked with some amazing people in an exciting and friendly environment. Without the scholarship support I wouldn't have gained that experience or any contacts in the industry.

My experience at Edinburgh Napier has definitely made me more ambitious about the future. I've completed work that I'm proud of and been greatly encouraged by the brilliant journalism staff. My time at university has been really enjoyable and I'm almost sad that it's ending, but I'm sure with the guidance I've received, from both Alan Clements and my lecturers, I'll move on to do exciting things."



To help create opportunities for students, please scan here

www.napier.ac.uk/scholarships23

EXPERT ADVICE

Alumnus and leading businesswoman, Gill Scott, talks about why she gives back

Gill Scott has over 30 years' experience in Financial Services and was most recently Director of HR and Internal Communications for Aegon UK, one of the UK's largest providers of pensions, investments and insurance. She held a series of management roles across the business, including customer services, training and development, change management and process improvement, and is a passionate advocate for wellbeing and helping others to be at their very best.

"I didn't set out to have a career in financial services, in fact the very opposite! I wanted to follow a creative path but was discouraged from attending art or music school, so I swung towards health instead, and went to study Pharmacology at Aberdeen University. That route was not for me! I dropped out and was unclear of the way forward, but a good friend studying at Edinburgh Napier encouraged me to apply for

the Business Studies course. It's funny, how looking back, you realise the seminal moments. Going to Edinburgh Napier was one of them. I loved it. It was a really encouraging environment and I found my lecturers both inspirational and influential; they had a profound impact on my mindset, and the course prepped me to go into the world and be a difference maker."

Now Gill has returned to the University to provide her expertise on the Business School's Advisory Board. "I was delighted when Christine Cross, Dean of the Business School, asked me if I would join the Board. I'm really excited to have the opportunity to input to the School's progress and to use my extensive business experience for the benefit of the University."

Gill retired from Aegon UK in summer 2022 and is now focusing her time on non-executive and consultancy roles. After a demanding career at the highest level, she's been able to take a little time to reflect on her success: "I'm not a natural finance person and I often felt unqualified to do some of my roles! What I've learnt though, is that it's how you apply your skills that matters. I've always been driven by my core values of wanting to champion others and



"I'm hoping my expertise can help to expand the talent pipeline from Edinburgh Napier and support its alignment with employers' needs."

Gill Scott



bring people together – I'm a huge relationship builder. I get so much enjoyment from it, and it underpins how I've managed and led major IT, people and business transformational change. I also realise that I did find a way to channel my creative side; I directed it into problem solving, finding new ways to tackle challenges."

Gill joined the Business School's Advisory Board in June. She explains her aspirations for giving back in this way: "I want to see the Business School realise its full potential. Edinburgh Napier is uniquely placed to make a real difference to this city and it's inspiring to play a role through the Board to help realise that ambition. The world of work has changed hugely in the past decade, and then we had the pandemic. Businesses want to work with universities that understand their needs: I want to help facilitate the building of those relationships and support the School to increase its reach. I'm hoping my expertise can help to expand the talent pipeline from Edinburgh Napier and support its alignment with employers' needs.

"I feel privileged to have enjoyed the career that I've had, and I can see there were 'sliding doors' moments where choices I made had significant positive impact on my life. I think that makes you want to give back, to try and make significant positive impact for others. Of course, being on the Advisory Board is a two-way process: it's hugely enjoyable being part of big conversations with the other advisors and really stimulating to learn from their experiences and expertise. And it's fantastic to be part of the Edinburgh Napier community again!"

Why join an advisory board?

Professor Christine Cross, Dean of the Business School, explains the importance of alumni to the School's Advisory Board.

"In the Business School we are passionate about creating an environment where our students can succeed. That means we must help every student to transition into a graduate with the skills, knowledge and aptitudes that business and industry require. To achieve that, we need a deep understanding of the fast-changing world of work, and that's where the Business School Advisory Board has such an important role to play.

The members – all leaders in their diverse fields from business, not-for-profit and academia – bring expertise and insight. It's brilliant to have access to that collective brainpower and it really invigorates the Business School. Recent conversations have focused on Graduate

Apprenticeships and the review of our undergraduate programme portfolio. The Board also challenges us: they pose difficult questions, push us out of our comfort zone and invite consideration of how we might do things differently. These kinds of conversation are extremely beneficial, stimulating new ideas and approaches.

A key ambition for the Business School is to achieve AACSB accreditation. This is an international accreditation awarded to the highest calibre schools and would put us in the top 5% of business schools globally. I see huge potential for Edinburgh Napier to achieve this through the wonderfully committed staff we have and their deep engagement in creating a positive student experience. The Advisory Board will also help us to realise this ambition; through their knowledge and input we can better evaluate developments across different industries and gain 'on the ground' insight, advice and understanding of the status of play in different sectors. And we will feed this into improving our programmes and ways of working.

Welcoming alumni onto the Advisory Board is always a pleasure, and I'm grateful that Gill agreed to join. Her in-depth business knowledge is very helpful and as an alumnus she also brings a deeply-rooted personal interest in seeing the University succeed. Her enthusiasm is very much matched by that of the other members, and it is so encouraging to see their strong desire to impart knowledge and build connections that support our mission. We are indebted to their contribution to help us find solutions to critical challenges and make a positive impact on society."





Five minutes with...

Pete Laird, Sport Exercise & Health Science lecturer and Head Coach of Edinburgh Napier Knights



Pete Laird is a lecturer in Sport and Exercise Science, with specific interests in teaching, coaching and performance analysis. Pete is also the Head Coach of the University's American Football team, the Edinburgh Napier Knights, as well as a coach for the Great Britain Student team.

When did you join ENU?

I joined the Sports Science course as its fifth member of staff in September 2001.

What's the best part of your job?

The interaction in the classroom and being part of the learning journey of the young people I teach. Watching our students develop and grow is a privilege I never grow tired of.

Tell us about the Edinburgh Napier Knights

American Football has been played at the University since 2004 and I took over as Head Coach in 2010. The Knights have a nationally recognised profile in the sport. In my time they have made six playoff appearances and won three Division titles. Many of our players have represented the University at international level, and Quarterback Cameron Dunn recently received a scholarship to play in the US. Uniquely, the Knights also run U13 Flag, U16 and U19 teams, which sees more than 120 young people coached by Edinburgh Napier students and alumni. All of this is underpinned by a fantastic group of volunteer staff who support the team.

Explain a little about the Team's slogan #oneteamcommitted

We aim to look after our team members during their transition into adult life, assisting where we can in their physical, sporting, and emotional development. We have a mantra of: Family first, Academics second, Football next, ensuring that our student athletes learn to prioritise the demands of university life. The Knights community also includes more than 300 ex-players who stay in touch through the Knights alumni association.

What would be your top piece of fitness advice?

Three 40-minute sessions of cardio-vascular exercise a week. Try to set a consistent time to make it habitual.

What are you watching?

I'm always looking for boxset recommendations. Currently, I'm juggling *House of Dragons*, *Squid Game*, *The Old Man*, and I've still not finished *The Wire*!

What are you listening to?

Podcasts are ideal for those 40-minute sessions on the treadmill! I'd recommend *Football Cliches*, *Old Firm Facts*, *Stramash (NFL Scotland)*, *Never Strays Far*, *Kermode & Mayo's Take*.

What would you like to learn?

I would love to be fluent in a language. Unfortunately, I'm incoherent in several!

What do you wish you were better at?

My horse-riding skills.

If you could be anywhere, where would you like to be?

On my wish list are Canada and Japan but sipping Margaritas by a pool somewhere warm would be great.

Tell us a surprising fact about yourself

I was once treated to an all-expenses paid weekend at a glamorous 5-star hotel, but it was a game weekend for the Knights. I refused to go until after we had finished playing!

Find out more about the Edinburgh Napier Knights:

 [@facebook.com/EdinburghNapierKnights](https://www.facebook.com/EdinburghNapierKnights)

 [@edinburghnapierknights](https://www.instagram.com/edinburghnapierknights)

 [@NapierKnights](https://twitter.com/NapierKnights)



EDINBURGH NAPIER IS HERE FOR YOU!

Keep in touch, connect, engage and collaborate

Keep in touch with ENU

We want to be sure you have access to all the benefits of being a member of the Edinburgh Napier alumni community. Staying connected means we can continue to share news, updates and opportunities, including our events and ways you could get involved with Edinburgh Napier. Please make sure your contact details are up to date.

Share your story

We love hearing your stories! Sharing your experiences, career journeys, advice, and the impact Edinburgh Napier has had on your life, can be highly inspirational for our current students and fellow graduates. Follow us on social media to learn more about what your fellow alumni are up to and get in touch with the Alumni team to share your story.

Connect online
alumni@napier.ac.uk



Support our students

We are deeply grateful to alumni who provide opportunities for our students. Could you speak to students to share industry expertise or career advice? Perhaps you could offer placement opportunities or internships? Or if you're looking for skilled candidates, maybe our graduates could fill your latest job opportunities? The support of alumni in this way makes a huge impact on the experiences and outcomes of current students.

Become an alumni champion

Our global network of Alumni Champions act as contacts for their local area and work with ENU's Alumni team to organise events and build our vibrant alumni network. New champions recently joined us in France, Italy, the USA and Singapore! Would you like to become a champion for your area? Get in touch to find out more.

Attend an event

Celebrate, connect and engage with colleagues through our exciting events programme, which includes business networking opportunities, programme celebration events, class reunions, alumni receptions across the globe, plus many more! Look out for details of the interesting events we have planned for this year and please get in touch if you would like to organise a class reunion or a local alumni event.

Access enterprise support

Bright Red Triangle (BRT) is the University's hub for enterprise. You have lifelong support from BRT and can attend events, access mentoring, receive business advice and funding or use the hub's hot desking space. If you're thinking of starting your own business, working freelance or looking to develop your enterprise skills, you can access invaluable advice, support, resources and more from BRT – all for free!

*Meet the Alumni Team: (L to R) Martina Birotti,
Morven Skirving, Ashleigh Thow, Miia MacDougall.*



To find out more visit:
**[www.napier.ac.uk/
red-triangle-2023](http://www.napier.ac.uk/red-triangle-2023)**

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