



RED TRIANGLE

2024

**The difference maker
leading community-based
conservation to save
endangered species**

More on pages 16-19.

Edinburgh Napier
UNIVERSITY



Alumni &
Friends
Magazine

RED TRIANGLE

2024

✓ 03

Welcome
from Principal
Andrea Nolan

✓ 04 - 05

Innovation
on the move

✓ 06 - 11

Bright minds
instigating
positive change

✓ 12 - 13

Game plan:
creating the next
generation of
modern coaches

✓ 14 - 15

Our Alumni
Awards winners

✓ 16 - 19

On the cover:
difference maker
Shivani Bhalla

✓ 20 - 21

Blue & green:
investigating new
ways to wellbeing

✓ 22 - 23

Spotlight on:
alumnus Anna
Meredith, composer
and producer

✓ 24 - 25

The power of
alumni networks

✓ 26 - 27

Nurturing the
journalists of
the future

✓ 28 - 29

Supporting the
next generation
of talent

✓ 30

Five minutes
with... Dr Abhishek
Agarwal

✓ 31

Keep connected

Produced by Edinburgh Napier University Alumni and Development Team.

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Welcome

Dear **Alumni and Friends,**

Welcome to the 2024 edition of Red Triangle!

It has been another year of exciting achievements and advancements for our community. We celebrated the progress of nearly 6,500 students as they became graduates of the University, including just over 1,200 international students who graduated in-country. In Edinburgh, one of the city's oldest pubs, Shakespeares, was cleverly rebranded as The Napier Graduate, attracting much positive attention and helping to make memorable – in a uniquely Napier way – this milestone for the Class of 2023.

Students from the pioneering Breaking Barriers programme also played a part in the University's graduation celebrations for the first time. Edinburgh Napier is a partner in this valuable programme that supports young people with learning disabilities into higher education and work. Programmes such as this demonstrate what's possible and bring to life what we mean by an inclusive community.

Graduation is a significant milestone for all and we now welcome these newest graduates to our global community of alumni. And this global dimension continues to grow. During the year, we welcomed over 2,000 new international students onto campus, which made it our biggest international intake ever.

This year's Red Triangle magazine showcases some of the ways this diverse community is having an impact. From contributing to wellbeing and developing innovative technologies to enhancing enterprise and delivering education for the modern world, you can read about projects to progress hydrogen-electric aircraft and driverless buses, blue and green therapies, and how scholarships open up possibilities for the next generation of talent.

Spread across the globe, our alumni are a dynamic community whose impact spans every sector, from the arts to health and science. We feel so strongly about the value of the achievements and contributions to society made by Edinburgh Napier students, staff, and alumni that 2023 saw us launch our first ever brand campaign to highlight the positive differences our community is making to the world. The campaign has met with great success, and I feel very proud of the way it has showcased the inspiring work happening at the University, and in our wider communities, each and every day.



This edition's cover star is Shivani Bhalla who has dedicated her life to pioneering community-led conservation. An inspirational woman working to empower others, she has garnered many awards. The magazine also features enterprising alumni many of whom found support from the University's Bright Red Triangle (BRT) community to realise their ambitions of creating businesses and companies that make a difference.

BRT has now grown to 850 registered members and continues to go from strength to strength (and please remember that this resource is here for all alumni, however long you may have been away from us). We are proud to have a particularly enterprising ecosystem that supports students, staff and alumni to make an impact through spinouts and start-ups and to be recognised as such. In 2023, Octopus Ventures ranked us a top 10 UK university and second in Scotland for generating successful spin-out companies.

Helping you to build your networks, reconnect with the University and celebrate all that we achieve together, is a critical part of our Alumni Team's work. Please reach out to the Team to share your news – we are always delighted to hear from you – and stay part of our connected community.

Wish best wishes

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

Andrea Nolan
Principal & Vice Chancellor

INNOVATION ON THE MOVE

Professor Pat Langdon, Head of Edinburgh Napier's Transport Research Institute (TRI), discusses transformative technologies shaping sustainable and inclusive transportation.



Professor Pat Langdon
Head of Edinburgh Napier's
Transport Research Institute (TRI)

Ambitious innovation in technology has the potential to transform the world of transportation and bring about significant improvements in sustainability and accessibility.

While new technology is pivotal, the human aspects of transportation – from user-centric design to community engagement and a people-first approach – are vital to creating an inclusive transport system. Empowering communities to actively participate in decision-making processes ensures that technological innovations align with the diverse needs of society.

Our Transport Research Institute (TRI) is leading a number of important initiatives in low-carbon transportation and new technology solutions for the future of transport, as well as looking at inclusion and sustainability in the context of transport innovation. In the last three years, TRI has been successful in obtaining over £1.6 million of Innovate UK and Transport Scotland funding for several flagship projects.





Self-Driving Buses

The CAVForth project sets out to transform the UK's public bus transportation system through the introduction of driverless buses. It is a world-leading project that aims to demonstrate autonomous technology in a real-world environment while improving safety and reducing energy consumption. Edinburgh Napier is a key partner along with Bristol Robotics Laboratory, Fusion Processing, Stagecoach and Transport Scotland.

Five driverless buses were launched as a pilot in May 2023, delivering a scheduled passenger service carrying up to 10,000 passengers per week along a 14-mile route between Edinburgh and Fife, across the Forth Road Bridge. In TRI, we are evaluating the passenger experience, exploring user acceptance, user behaviour, and trust in the service, to inform the roll out of future autonomous vehicle technology and services.

CAVForth is one of the most advanced autonomous public transport pilots anywhere in the world. It is demonstrating the technology needed for safe automated drive systems and proving its value. Self-driving vehicle technology will be a huge market in the future and our input is evaluating what it really means to put it into action, expanding our knowledge of the public's willingness to embrace innovation and accept it as part of their everyday lives. The project will make a significant contribution to global understanding of integrating new technologies into society.



Hydrogen-Electric Autonomous Region Transportation (HEART)

Alternative and affordable aviation solutions must be developed to advance the decarbonisation of the aviation industry, which is responsible for 2.5% of global CO₂ emissions. Project HEART (Hydrogen Electric and Automated Regional Transportation) seeks to tackle this challenge. It is a consortium of UK companies, SMEs and international experts responding to the UK Research and Innovation Future Flight Challenge by Innovate UK. Its aim is to develop an innovative, low-carbon proposal in regional aviation through the introduction of hydrogen-electric aircraft for short domestic flights.

Hydrogen-electric technologies present opportunities to deliver the same performance as conventional aircraft, but with zero carbon emissions. They can make a significant contribution to minimising climate change. Their introduction could revolutionise domestic travel in the UK, with possibilities to scale-up to wider usage.

Hydrogen-electric aircraft will be considerably smaller than conventional airplanes and fly shorter distances. Edinburgh Napier's role in the HEART consortium is to support, and challenge, the commercial partners to consider wider public and consumer issues. We are investigating people's perceptions of comfort and other user-specific aspects which may advance or hinder their understanding and acceptance of hydrogen-electric technology and automated aviation.

TRI is also researching new airport terminal design. To support the use of hydrogen-electric aircraft, terminals will need to generate or supply green hydrogen. Beyond the aircraft they must also address wider sustainability and inclusion issues for all passengers. Smaller zero-emission aircraft could use local airfields for point-to-point travel, which could deliver a much more pleasant and tailored flying experience, while being a more convenient and inclusive service. The new terminal design project aims to deliver a streamlined, inclusive passenger experience for regional airports.

The vital human perspective

Central to the success of new technologies and their implementation is public engagement and acceptance. TRI's expertise advances innovative solutions by assessing, monitoring and building understanding of their impact on the real-world human context.

This vital human perspective sees us working with not only innovative technology partners but with disability organisations, public sector and government organisations to look at the lived experience of all sectors of society, including those with disabilities and mobility issues. This way we can progress better societal integration of these new technologies, helping a seamlessly connected, accessible, and environmentally conscious transportation future become increasingly attainable for communities worldwide.

Find out more at www.napier.ac.uk/TRI24



Bright minds instigating positive change

How we support enterprising alumni and deliver entrepreneurial impact

Championing and supporting a broad entrepreneurial community of students, staff and alumni is a crucial part of the University's ethos. Bright Red Triangle, our hub for extracurricular innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurship practice, sees us creating a dynamic pipeline of future change makers.

BUILDING A FLOURISHING COMMUNITY OF ENTREPRENEURS

Nick Fannin, Head of Enterprise, has been providing business advice and mentoring support services to students and graduates since 2006. He is a key driver behind the development of the University's innovative and enterprising community.

"The hub is a place where bright minds can explore ideas and develop enterprise skills, as well as receiving support from launch to long-term growth and sustainability. We achieve this by supplying the tools needed to successfully start and run a business, but importantly, by also offering a place where exciting new collaborations can flourish and valuable relationships can be built within a wider entrepreneurial community. This is an essential part of delivering an environment in which entrepreneurs can thrive.

We've recently appointed Tech Founder, Nigel Chadwick, as Bright Red Triangle's (BRT) inaugural Entrepreneur in Residence. Nigel founded Stream Technologies, a pioneer in machine-to-machine communications and the Internet of Things. He brings extensive expertise and will help to build capability and capacity for our BRT community, supporting emerging entrepreneurs and scaling new ventures.

The entrepreneurial community at Edinburgh Napier is connected to a growing and evolving external ecosystem. We are very excited about our new partnership with Women's Enterprise Scotland, which will help us to provide relevant and appropriate support so that more women are empowered to start-up businesses and become the entrepreneurial leaders of the future. We are also a founding partner in Start For Future, a new international innovation programme, which brings together over 30 universities around the world and allows our community to reach global markets."



*Nick Fannin,
Head of Enterprise*

***Bright Red
Triangle has
supported
more than 700
innovators
since 2005***



Our entrepreneurial alumni making an impact

Many of our alumni have achieved outstanding entrepreneurial success, turning their business dreams into reality while delivering significant impact across a range of sectors. Pursuing entrepreneurial ambitions can be tough; here we showcase some alumni stories of dedication, passion and the sparks of inspiration that lead to real change.

Viana Maya, Founder, pRESPECT

"My social enterprise initiatives, pRESPECT Hub CIC and pRESPECT LTD, are aimed at reshaping career development and advocating for social justice. They are focused on empowering Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people to achieve their career goals. I also work in policy change, disrupting the employability sector and initiating system shifts through anti-racism activities.

When individuals are facing barriers to success, it can help if they know you have travelled a similar path, so I use my personal experience of reskilling to reboot my career to inspire others. Born into a tenacious family of African refugees, I migrated to the UK when I was four. My journey has been far from straightforward, encompassing periods of homelessness and health emergencies, but I managed to turn each obstacle into a stepping stone towards where I am now. In 2021 I won an Institute of Directors Award for Innovation, as well as receiving recognition from Edinburgh Napier through the 'Business for Good' Bright Red Triangle award.

pRESPECT is part of the change that needs to happen. Specialising in career coaching and tailored support for organisations to create inclusive environments, it aims to help those facing barriers to success realise their career aspirations, while making sure organisations have the frameworks to implement tangible actions.

I have always used education as a way to move forward. My experience at Edinburgh Napier was pivotal to my career. Participating in BRT and triumphing

in two pitches and awards, enabled me to invest in filming equipment and launch our educational YouTube channel amidst the pandemic. Balancing the demands of grassroots organisational work with academic commitments was challenging but the support I received was transformative. It was not just educational but life-changing, and I would wholeheartedly embrace the opportunity to experience it all over again."

Viana studied BSc (Hons) Web Design and Development, graduating in 2020.



Viana Maya



Bright minds

instigating positive change

John Keogh

**CEO and Founder,
The Outsider**

"The spark for my business came at an unlikely time. I'd just retired, after a long and varied career working in engineering, research and development, and procurement. On an incredibly rainy and freezing cold December afternoon I was Christmas shopping in Glasgow, when I saw a man begging in the middle of the street, soaked through to the skin, with his sleeping bag as his only protection. After buying him some food and chatting for a while, I went away wondering what more I could do, not just for him but for other unfortunate folks who find themselves, for whatever reason, sleeping rough.

As a wild swimmer, I use a waterproof changing robe and I started considering how that might convert into a sleeping bag as a way to keep someone warm and dry whilst they slept rough. And so began 'The Outsider' journey.

I've now created a Community Interest Company that reinvests its profits from the sale of high quality outdoor robes to fund the manufacture and distribution of The Outsider Sleeping Coat, which is given to individuals sleeping rough free of charge.

Essentially, we've designed a long, hooded, waterproof, wind-proof and fleece-lined coat that converts into a sleeping bag.

I've had many more chats with homeless folk since starting this business. What they often mention is that it's not just the benefits of the coat they value, but the fact that people buying Outsider products are supporting them, and that gives them hope."



John Keogh

All of The Outsider garments are manufactured in Scotland, and we are keen to minimise our environmental impact and be part of the circular economy. We're working towards Net-Zero omissions and recently launched a new range with a higher specification inner fleece and some changes to garment configuration to reduce the waste of raw materials."

John studied an MBA at Edinburgh Napier, graduating in 1999. He utilised support from Bright Red Triangle, including its hotdesking facilities in Fountainbridge, and greatly valued connections with like-minded individuals in the BRT network, which helped him to launch his business.





Damien O’Looney and Bing Li

Multiple business founders

Damien O’Looney and Bing Li are business trailblazers who met while studying Entrepreneurship and Marketing at Edinburgh Napier. Their entrepreneurial journey has been marked by numerous successful enterprises.

“We both left full-time jobs, moved with our two young children to China, and started out by founding UK-China Trading Ltd, a product sourcing business, in 2010. Building up a network of trusted factories and supply chain partners, we exported an array of products from them to clients across the UK, Europe and North America. We also set up the Jolly English School in China. On return to the UK we established the Appin Sports brand, Appin Property Lettings, UKCT PPE sales, Affordable Homes Coventry, Appin Holiday Lets, Appin Sports Ltd, and most recently the UKC Chem brand.

BRT was instrumental in bringing Bing and I together and gave us the knowledge and confidence we needed to try and run a business ourselves. It also built our skills in finance, marketing, planning and pitching, which are essential to the success of any venture.

Our vision is to grow a company we can feel really proud of, and despite all that we’ve achieved so far, we don’t feel we’re there yet – there is so much to improve on.



Damien O’Looney and Bing Li

And we’re always on the lookout for new opportunities that resonate with us; some don’t come to fruition, for example, most recently we almost went with a biotech company working in the stem cell area, but it just didn’t work out.

The good start we received at Edinburgh Napier means we are delighted to be able to give back and support other emerging entrepreneurs at the University. Our Appin Entrepreneurship Award seeks to help fledgling businesses get off the ground and support the development of entrepreneurial ideas within the University’s student and graduate community. Launched in 2022, the award has already recognised two brilliant innovators – Kael Begbie and his The Hoagiemán food business and alumnus Kitti Majorán and her EN-ABLE Academy. We are both very much looking forward to hearing about further new businesses being fostered at Bright Red Triangle.”

**Damien and Bing both studied
BA (Hons) Marketing Management with
Entrepreneurship, graduating in 2006.**



Bright minds instigating positive change

Kitti Majorán Co-founder, EN-ABLE Academy

"I was so delighted to be this year's winner of Edinburgh Napier University's Appin Entrepreneurship Award. Building a business is a very unusual journey and I feel fortunate to have had the University's support every step of the way.

As a non-native English speaker, my first business failed because I didn't have the marketing communications skills in English to promote it, despite speaking the language at a native level. I realised there was a gap between speaking a foreign language fluently and undertaking marketing in the same language effectively. I was born into a Hungarian-speaking community in Transylvania (Romania) and came to Scotland in 2013 to study, initially working as an English teacher after graduating. I undertook an MSc in International Marketing at Edinburgh Napier and it was like a missing piece of a puzzle being installed; I was finally able to use my English in a variety of different marketing contexts successfully. Plus, I'd learnt about the practicalities of building businesses and brands, which put me in a stronger position to launch a company.

EN-ABLE helps businesses run by non-native English speakers to build brands for international markets by blending branding strategies with language expertise, tech proficiency, and cutting-edge design competence.

Our success to date demonstrates that there is a real need for our support and I'm so proud we are making a difference for a range of entrepreneurs.

Winning the Appin Entrepreneurship Award was a major achievement for me. It boosted my confidence to go for bigger opportunities, and through the financial support I've been enabled to build a team and my client base and a strong brand that is attracting speaking and media opportunities from all over the world. I'm so grateful to Edinburgh Napier because studying here changed my life; I put my passion into action and built a thriving business from scratch."



Kitti Majorán

Kitti studied MSc International Marketing with Tourism and Events, graduating in 2021. The BRT team supported her to launch EN-ABLE providing essential advice, funding, and a workspace to get it off the ground.

Edinburgh Napier in UK Top Ten for entrepreneurial impact

In September 2023, Edinburgh Napier was named a Top 10 university in the UK, and second in Scotland, in the 'Gateways to growth: Entrepreneurial Impact Report 2023' from Octopus Ventures, one of Europe's largest venture capital businesses. The University was the third highest climbing institution in the UK, rising an impressive 33 places since the last report in 2020.

Rob Mathie

Founder, On the One

"Striking out on your own can be daunting but it does give you the chance to translate your values into a business that you can be passionate about. After working as an account director with a number of other cultural marketing agencies, I started On the One in 2018 when Diageo offered to be a founding client of the kind of agency I wanted to establish; one where I could translate the purpose-led work I cared deeply about into the blueprint for all of the agency's output across PR, partnerships and strategic comms.

On the One specialises in social impact campaigns. We help brands let their 'Actions Speak Louder' by joining the dots between culture, communities and causes.

It's about understanding the authentic role brands can play in using their resources to drive positive change. One example is our work with drinks giant Smirnoff which we connected with the LGBT Foundation. We used the brand's influence in nightlife to make safer spaces for the lives of LGBTQ+ people. The campaign won a prestigious Drum Award in the Best Charity Partnership category and a Best in Brand Purpose, which was a major highlight for us. Another example is our work with UN Women, helping them to use sport

to make the world a safer place for woman and girls, through events and brand collaborations.

I know a lot of my peers haven't used their degree in their current jobs, but I've found that the vocational, theoretical and diverse nature of mine still influences the work I do today. Now working with Edinburgh Napier students doing similar courses lets me see just how far the industry has come and how hungry Gen Z is to drive positive change through marketing. On the One and Edinburgh Napier have been working closely on the University's Conscious Brands work, through syllabus reviews, lectures and student mentoring. It has given me much hope for the impact the next generation will make!"

Rob studied BA (Hons) Communication Studies, graduating in 2001.



Rob Mathie

Nanik Ramchandani, an Edinburgh Napier industry specialist who is part of The Royal Society's Entrepreneur in Residency scheme, explains more:

"We are shaping a better world through the impact of our research and enterprise, and in particular, by developing technology for good. Edinburgh Napier has a track record of translating pioneering research into economically impactful spinouts. These are creating high-value jobs, including many in the cyber arena, as well as in emerging sectors of augmented reality and renewables. Two forthcoming spinouts, TrueDeploy and LastingAsset, are building solutions to solve some of the big digital challenges of our time – trust and transparency in software supply chains, and countering impersonation fraud, respectively.

I am passionate about supporting innovation and there is no question in my mind that start-ups play a significant role in solving the biggest problems of our time and are crucial for generating impact. The future of our planet and society is in the hands of today's bright young minds, so it's essential that we encourage our students and academics to translate their ideas and research into the commercial enterprises that can make a difference."

Could you be a mentor or commercial champion to help progress staff and student innovation?

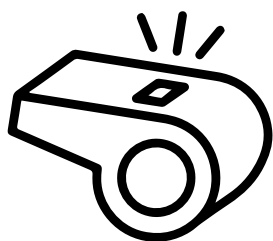
We would love to hear from alumni who could engage with our stage-gate process to progress staff and student innovation and business ideas from development into commercialisation.

Or if you are an accredited investor, or represent an investment group and have expertise in a particular field and are looking for an exciting opportunity, please do get in touch with us at the Research, Innovation and Enterprise office:

www.napier.ac.uk/innovationhub

GAME PLAN: CREATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF MODERN COACHES

Today's fast-paced and competitive world of sports requires high performing coaches primed with the skills to make an impact.



Edinburgh Napier has been a firm advocate of the development of sports coaching as a distinct and recognised profession for some time. "Coaching has been an evolving practice,

and one which has been rather less scientifically underpinned than it is now," explains Dr Susan Brown, Senior Lecturer and Lead for Partnerships and Enterprise, Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences. "At Edinburgh Napier we've been at the forefront of an evidence-based approach to the subject, developing academic pathways that support the advancement of the current and future coaching workforce in sports across Scotland and beyond."

Through research, teaching and work with national governing bodies, including Scottish Rugby, Cricket Scotland and Scottish Gymnastics, the University's strategy has been to improve performance and develop talent at all levels – from young athletes to coaches, and even including officials.

In 2001, Sport and Exercise Science was introduced as a degree programme at Edinburgh Napier, with sports coaching as one of its pathways. "With regard to coaching, our degree programmes have helped to shift the focus from being solely on the technical and tactical aspects of their sport, to becoming evidence-based practitioners who can analyse and understand the skill set of any athlete and help unlock their potential," comments Susan. "Modern coaches need skills in leadership, communication and team management along with empathy, and the ability to work with a wide range of people from Board level to young athletes. They also require knowledge of psychology, exercise science, and nutrition. What's important for impact is the ability to

apply critical thinking and problem solving to improve personal performance for every individual they coach."

Edinburgh Napier alumnus, Cedric English, is an Associate Professor in Sports, Exercise and Health Science. After spending many years as a professional cricket player and coach in South Africa, he returned to the University in 2010 to undertake a PhD while working as a coach with Scottish Cricket. "There was so much I needed to know in order to be an effective coach," he explains, "and my PhD studies also helped us as a team to recognise, in terms of pathways, where some of the pinch points are in sports qualifications. Initially, we established a postgraduate diploma, working primarily with Scottish Gymnastics and Scottish Rugby, looking at real world problems for their coaches and how we could help to solve these."

Cedric's research was focused on development and culture in sporting organisations aligned to athletes, coaches, and other practitioners in governing bodies. His work helped the Sports, Exercise and Health Science team to take a much more structured direction around the principle of sports coaching as a profession. Having created the highest level of education provision for coaching meeting the UK CC Level 4 accreditation through the PG Diploma, the team went on to develop a distinct BSc programme to provide undergraduate entry to sports coaching education.

"We've interrogated what our students gain from being with us, over and above the knowledge the degree supplies," explains Cedric. "A key question for us has been 'when our coaches leave our programme what do they have?'. Working with the top coaches in Scotland brings new things to the table all the time and puts us in an advantageous position. It means our education programmes can address the real world issues facing modern coaches and provide solutions."

In 2018, the Scottish Football Association (SFA) posted a call out to all Scottish universities asking for interest in working with them. "I saw this and just thought that's for us!" comments Susan. "We put quite a holistic bid together, utilising all our expertise in working with sports institutions and organisations and applying our understanding of what they need and value." The bid was successful, and the team went on to create a unique BSc (Hons) Football Coaching, Performance and Development, in partnership with the SFA, from which the first cohort of students will graduate in summer 2024.

"I'm very proud of this programme," comments Cedric, "because it not only develops knowledge and skills but provides students with a range of UEFA qualifications as well, which are some of the most recognised coaching qualifications in the sporting world. That provides amazing opportunities for our students. We talk about the sporting grapevine, which is extremely powerful, and these students are integrated within that because this programme is a partnership. We're seeing clubs come to the SFA and ask if they have coaches on the programme they can put forward, which is fantastic and I'm hoping we can grow this impact further."

Edinburgh Napier is the only university in Scotland offering a programme such as this. "Working with the SFA is a fantastic opportunity for us across the board," explains Susan. "The organisation has various strategies and Edinburgh Napier is the only named external organisation within the SFA's development strategy. This is recognition of what we can provide and how we are aligned to what sports organisations need in order to evolve." The University is also in the process of working on an SFA Innovation Hub – a Scotland first.



Cedric English
Associate Professor in Sports,
Exercise and Health Science



Dr Susan Brown
Senior Lecturer,
School of Applied Sciences

Learn more about the SFA Innovation Hub in partnership with Edinburgh Napier University
<https://footballinnovation.scot/About>

Sports coaching alumni snapshots

Edinburgh Napier has many high performing alumni in the sporting world. Here we highlight just a few who are leading the future development of sports coaches.

Samantha Hendrikson

Previously a gymnastics coach and lecturer in coaching at Edinburgh Napier, Sam is now Head of Sport at Scottish Gymnastics leading the future of this sport in Scotland.

Andrew Hall

Former Scotland international rugby union player and Head Rugby Coach at Hong Kong Rugby Union, Andrew currently runs an executive coaching business in Hong Kong supporting teams and individuals.

Maria Lyle

World and Paralympic medallist for sprinting, para-athlete Maria is a recent graduate from the BSc (Hons) Sports Coaching programme.

Graeme Jones

Internationally experienced within elite sport, Graeme is currently Performance Director at Scottish Football Association, responsible for improving performances across all levels.

Mark Robertson

Olympic medallist and Scottish international rugby star, Mark is Head of Physical Performance at Edinburgh Rugby.



OUR ALUMNI AWARDS WINNERS

We are immensely proud of the impact our alumni make across the world. Every year, our annual Alumni Awards seek to formally recognise individuals who are role models for our current students and an inspiration to the wider Edinburgh Napier community through the positive contribution they are making to society. Here we share the stories of our 2023 winners.

ISABEL DOSSER *Impact Award 2023*

Isabel Dosser is a firm believer that little things can make a big difference. Her idea for Dignity Boxes looked to help those struggling with the impact of poverty in a small but significant way.

"I was approaching retirement, after a wonderful career as a palliative care nurse specialist and then as a lecturer at Edinburgh Napier," Isabel explains. "But I wasn't quite ready to put my feet up. I don't think age should be a barrier to taking on new challenges if something really matters to you."

Having investigated the support provided by food banks, clothing banks and other support organisations, Isabel found that none of them focused particularly on the provision of toiletries. "It seemed to me that there was a real need for basic hygiene products to be made available to those experiencing hardship and deprivation." Dignity Boxes look to fill that gap. With toiletries donated from local supermarkets, Isabel created boxes filled with a range of products, such as shampoo, shower gel, soap, shaving





foam, deodorant and toothpaste. Placing the boxes where people could discreetly help themselves was co-ordinated through collaboration with various community-based organisations.

"Most of us can't imagine the choices faced by those struggling with poverty and the impact of not being able to maintain personal hygiene. I wanted Dignity Boxes to promote, in a small way, self-worth and dignity, by allowing those in need to take what they cannot afford or get access to, without having to ask or thank anyone."

What Isabel hadn't anticipated was finding herself at the helm of a new charity in her retirement. Having successfully launched Dignity Boxes, it was necessary to create a sustainable underpinning to the initiative: "I realised I would need to apply for registered charity status and assemble a board of directors if Dignity Boxes was to grow, and to make it possible to accept monetary donations."

Dignity Boxes is now in its sixth year and operates across Edinburgh and the Lothians. This remarkable achievement has come amidst personal challenges for Isabel – she was diagnosed with cancer during the pandemic. She commented: "Life is full of challenges, professionally and personally, but I am by nature a positive and pragmatic person. I am fortunate to be surrounded by supportive family and friends who have helped me through difficult times." With her treatment now complete, Isabel is focused on the rising demand for Dignity Boxes with the number of organisations asking for a box having increased dramatically since the cost-of-living crisis began.

Commenting on receiving the Impact Award, Isabel said: "I am very surprised but delighted to receive this award. I hope this recognition might encourage others to pursue their ideas to make a difference." Establishing a new initiative takes significant resilience and determination, but Isabel credits the support she received as the crucial element: "Firstly, Edinburgh Napier helped me to get Dignity Boxes off the ground, with collections on campus and promotion of the scheme. Then a range of people and organisations have provided advice and support, while donors and volunteers have been absolutely vital to its success."



DANIEL CREHAN

Rising Star Award 2023

Our Rising Star Award recognises the achievements of a recent graduate who is making a positive contribution to their community.

Daniel graduated in 2021 with a BA (Hons) in International Festival & Event Management with Marketing. As a Sales Manager at Yugo – a company that houses over 40,000 students each year across nine countries – Daniel has worked exceptionally hard to enrich the lives of those living in student accommodation in the UK and Ireland.

"I didn't expect my initial part-time Resident Assistant role in Edinburgh to lead to where I am today," Daniel explains. "I've had some incredible opportunities, and some challenges, during my time at Yugo so far. From exploring Europe and embarking on secondments in Spain, to more recent work in the USA, I have been fortunate to have had an extraordinary journey, which I know is not typical when starting out on a career."

Daniel has combined his role at Yugo with charity work. Supporting the Edinburgh Students' Charities Appeal (ESCA) – a long-established charity that helps student clubs, associated with any university or college in Edinburgh, to fundraise for many causes – Daniel has helped to guide the organisation through its post-pandemic recovery. "I became Chair of ESCA in 2021 and have been engaged in a lot of work to support organisations involved with us which struggled after the pandemic, including using our funding reserves to help keep them afloat. Long term, the focus is on ensuring ESCA remains at the heart of charitable activities in the city's vibrant student community. We want to help students grow the funds they raise for causes they care about through their various events, so we can continue to assist great charities to deliver real impact."

Daniel says he wasn't expecting to win this award and was delighted to even be nominated. He commented: "It is particularly special to receive it though, because I consider everything that I've accomplished so far to be a result of my time at the University. I greatly enjoy what I do in my paid and charitable roles and am just really looking forward to what's next!"



DIFFERENCE MAKER

Shivani Bhalla

The Edinburgh Napier graduate pioneering community-led conservation models to save endangered species.



*Shivani with members of the Ewaso Lions team.
Photo credit: Lucy Maina*

Shivani Bhalla is an award-winning wildlife conservationist and the Founder of Ewaso Lions. In 2023, the prestigious Whitley Fund for Nature presented her with its Gold Award, in recognition of her work to create sustainable solutions that address conservation challenges faced around the world.

"Ultimately, I want to inspire a global movement to empower local leaders to lead their own conservation efforts," explains Shivani. "Having local communities lead and make decisions for their land and wildlife will create solutions for long term impact."

In Africa, lions are more endangered than elephants or rhinos. They have disappeared from 92 percent of their historical range and only around 20,000 remain. The work of the Ewaso Lions team has helped to reverse their decline in northern Kenya, from just 11 animals before 2008 to more than 50 currently, a 15-year high.





Jeneria Lekilelei with Samburu warriors on patrol. Photo credit: Anthony Ochieng

Shivani explains how they've achieved this: "The greater Ewaso Nyiro ecosystem, in northern Kenya where we work, is a critical habitat for lions and other large carnivores. This region, which includes parts of Samburu, Laikipia, and Isiolo counties, supports the country's third largest lion population. Ewaso Lions has fostered joint conservation efforts with the local communities that live alongside the lions. Working intensively with the Samburu people, who are semi-nomadic, we have developed strategies for reducing conflict with carnivores, particularly regarding livestock predation. The Samburu measure wealth in livestock, typically cows and camels, which can be worth up to \$1,000 each. Protecting livestock is of paramount concern, and with habitat pressures bringing lions increasingly into contact and conflict with communities, inevitably the animals can be considered a threat, leading to them being shot, speared or poisoned."

Living with the Samburu community since 2002, Shivani's team are mostly Samburu people. They work with multiple demographics within their local communities, including warriors, elders, women and children. Utilising educational initiatives to illustrate the importance of wildlife for local livelihoods, the team's approach is rooted in traditional cultural practices and based on local knowledge. For example, its flagship Warrior Watch programme is built on the Samburu warriors' traditional protection role in their community.

"Jeneria Lekilelei – at the time a young Samburu warrior employed by Ewaso Lions, and now our Director of Community Conservation – initiated and devised this

"Enabling them to be active in conservation is fostering a peaceful coexistence between their communities and the surrounding wildlife."

Shivani Bhalla

programme," explains Shivani. "Through it, we train warriors in conservation, ecology and more, so they can act as ambassadors when responding to human-lion conflicts. They liaise with livestock owners, safeguarding livestock while ensuring the lions are protected, and use the time they spend patrolling

around their villages to incorporate data collection and lion monitoring duties."

Another trailblazing approach was developed by local women. "Our Mama Simba programme, which means Mothers of Lions, began with a focus on skills to create new income streams, but has now evolved completely to encompass drought management activities (such as digging waterholes), the removal of invasive species and the growing of grass, indigenous tree restoration, and cultural meetings. Women spend a significant amount of time in wildlife areas when fetching water, collecting firewood, and looking after livestock when warriors and elders are away. Enabling them to take an active role in conservation is further fostering a peaceful coexistence between their communities and the surrounding wildlife."

Ensuring that every generation is invested in the preservation of the lions, the Ewaso Lions' Kids Camp combines conservation education with safari encounters to offer experiences that stimulate young minds. It has seen numerous children transition into warriors dedicated to the cause of lion conservation since its inception in 2013.

So, what drove Shivani to dedicate her life to making a difference? "As a Kenyan, it is the huge sense of duty and responsibility I feel for my country. It is up to us to do what's required. For me, I want to do whatever I can to protect what is important to our economy, culture and heritage – and wildlife is such a big part of who we are.

"Fieldwork can be difficult and the conditions can be harsh. What keeps me going is the team: they are so inspirational and so dedicated. There is also this resilience in the landscape itself, in the people, wildlife and livestock, despite of, or because of the many challenges. Things do bounce back; I've seen recovery, it is possible. So, I'm pushed on by that."

"I want to do whatever I can to protect what is important to our economy, culture and heritage"

Shivani Bhalla



Shivani working with women on the Mama Simba programme
Photo credit: Anthony Ochieng

When Shivani moved to Samburu in 2002 to work for Save the Elephants, it was her intention to eventually pursue a Masters degree on cheetahs in the area. "I was working full time, and not wanting to leave home led me to Edinburgh Napier's distance learning programmes. I chose the University because the course content of the MSc in Wildlife Biology and Conservation was interesting and ideal for my aspirations."

When it came to her MSc project, Shivani searched for cheetahs in vain. "I'd found none, but I was seeing lions every day. Time was running out and my supervisor said I had to do something! So, despite knowing nothing about lions, I changed my focus to them. And that was the turning point. When I finished my thesis, there were still so many unanswered questions, that I was driven to learn more, and it lit the fire of how to protect this important species which was so under threat. I just thought, 'I've got to continue.'"

Shivani's commitment to lion conservation has earned her many awards. She has twice received the Whitley Award, as well as the Rabinowitz-Kaplan Prize, Africa's Young Women Conservation Biologist award, the Virginia McKenna Award for Compassionate Conservation, and been named an Emerging Explorer by National Geographic. Through Ewaso Lions, she has created a model where communities are invested in successful outcomes, predicated on a synergistic bond between people and predators. It's an approach which could be replicated around the world to positively impact conservation programmes regardless of the species requiring protection.

"I've absolutely no doubt that the global biodiversity crisis we're facing, and the challenges when it comes to conservation, can be addressed through community-led conservation. We know that can make a difference, which gives me a lot of hope for the future."

"I am also excited to have become an Associate Member of the University's Centre for Conservation & Restoration Science. Reconnecting with the University in this way will see me join forces with it to improve the natural world."

Find out more <https://ewasolions.org/>

BLUE & GREEN: INVESTIGATING NEW WAYS TO WELLBEING



As interest grows in nature-based interventions to improve human health and wellbeing, researchers at Edinburgh Napier are looking at the potential of innovative blue and green therapies and building understanding of how they can be beneficial.

The positive power of surfing

Dr Jamie Marshall is an Edinburgh Napier alumnus and a Research Fellow in the School of Applied Sciences. Focused on developing, supporting and evaluating community-based approaches to mental health and wellbeing, he is a leading investigator of surf therapy. Jamie undertook the world's first PhD explicitly exploring surf therapy's mechanisms and has looked at its impact for a range of populations, including military veterans in the USA and children in post-conflict countries such as Liberia and Sierra Leone.

He explains more: "Within the sport for development (SFD) model, action sports such as climbing, mountain biking, surfing, and skateboarding, have significant potential for impact. My interest is in surf therapy which combines supportive surfing instruction with one-to-one or group therapeutic interventions. Together, the blue space and the supported activity within it, can have transformative effects. My PhD looked to evidence how the positive effects actually occurred."

A key finding of Jamie's research was that surf therapy provided safe spaces for vulnerable people. This related to not just physical safe spaces but emotional safe spaces where

people felt free to be themselves and to talk about how they were feeling. "Surf therapy can have real impact," comments Jamie. "Through my work with various partner organisations, I've witnessed its effects on self-esteem, building confidence, and improving physical and mental wellness, across a broad spectrum of people, and how those positive elements translate into wider life benefits."

Dr Brendon Ferrier is Co-Founder and Academic Lead for the Surf Lab, an Edinburgh Napier partnership with the Lost Shore Surf Resort at Ratho, near Edinburgh. This £55m landmark development, due to open in summer 2024, includes the country's first inland surfing destination. Brendon commented: "Our partnership with Lost Shore will help us to better understand how we can harness, and optimise, the power of surfing to improve wellbeing. Among a wide variety of projects, the Surf Lab research group is currently designing and implementing a surf therapy programme for first responders and emergency healthcare workers – a group who face disproportionate stress and burnout. We aim to build understanding of surf therapy and to develop its potential to become a trusted and prescribed form of care that can support global mental health."



Mountain biking for better mental health

Trail therapy uses supported mountain biking to help individuals in their recovery from depression, anxiety and other mental health issues. This innovative approach harnesses the inherent attributes of mountain biking to connect participants with nature in a way that combines physical challenge, positive risk taking and skill development.

The Mountain Biking Centre of Scotland (MTBCOS) – the world's first open innovation centre for mountain biking – is hosted by Edinburgh Napier. In partnership with Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland it has pioneered work in the realm of mental health, investigating therapeutic techniques delivered by mental health professionals to accelerate recovery through trail therapy.

Dr Hollie Fountain, Dr Lesley Ingram-Sills, and Dr Tony Westbury, academics in Edinburgh Napier's Sport, Exercise & Health department, evaluated the impact of a recent trail therapy programme. Delivered across six Scottish locations, and supported by ride leaders, mental health first aiders, and volunteers, the programme engaged over 80 referred riders who were experiencing mental ill-health.

Hollie and Lesley commented: "Those involved highly valued taking part in therapy in an informal, non-clinical environment and benefitted from feeling part of a community. We found participants were enthusiastic to share their experiences and reflected on their involvement in an extremely positive way. The evaluation revealed that the unique challenges and settings posed by mountain biking contributed towards a holistic impact on participants overall wellbeing. This was underpinned by three main interrelated characteristics of trail therapy: the challenges – physical, psychosocial, and from the natural environment; the mountain biking experience itself; and the support provided around the activity."

Several of the participants commented on how mountain biking was a 'levelling activity', describing feeling equal to others on the programme without feeling 'exposed' or viewed as a 'patient'. This aspect has the potential to reduce the stigma around treatments for mental health, making trail therapy an ideal non-medical group intervention that could broaden the reach of mental health services.

Lesley added: "Trail therapy provides unique opportunities for therapeutic experiences which can help participants to grow in confidence, improve social interactions, establish skills of self-regulation, and accelerate their road to wellbeing, whilst having some fun on the journey to recovery."



"The unique challenges and settings contribute towards a holistic impact on overall wellbeing."

Spotlight on...

ANNA MEREDITH MBE

**ENU Alumnus and leading composer,
producer and performer**



Anna Meredith. Photo credit: Gem Harris

Anna Meredith is one of the most innovative artists in contemporary British music. She has achieved outstanding success with a hugely inventive, uniquely genre-defying approach that sees her shaping music into new forms. Straddling contemporary classical, avant pop, electronica and experimental rock, she is a ground-breaking composer, producer and performer.

Commissioned by prestigious organisations, including the Edinburgh International Festival and the London Symphony Orchestra, Anna was the first female composer to write for both the First and Last Nights of the BBC Proms, a world-renowned event which attracts a global audience of millions. The breadth of her work has seen her win awards as diverse as the Ivor Novello Composer Award for Innovation to the

Scottish Album of the Year (SAY Award). In 2019, and as a still relatively young composer, Anna received an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for services to music.

At school, she took up the clarinet and percussion, but it was studying at Edinburgh Napier that began her journey into composing: "I didn't really have any idea of composing as an active artform. I loved music and felt I had this instinctive connection to it, but when I came to the University to study music, I didn't know what I wanted to do. It was composition lessons with the brilliant Ken Dempster, who was so encouraging and broad-minded, that opened-up possibilities and where I gained a clearer idea of what I could do."

Anna went on to further study at York University and the Royal College of Music. Since graduating, she has forged a

"For me, it's about following what makes me excited and what I feel passionate about."

Anna Meredith MBE

highly personal path through the orchestral world. From her acclaimed Concerto for Beatboxer and Orchestra and piece for string quartet combined with the sounds of an MRI scanner, to her body-percussion piece for a full orchestra performed without instruments, her approach is one of musical exploration.

Alongside composer in residence roles and contemporary classical commissions, Anna has worked in film and TV, including scoring Bo Burnham's film *Eighth Grade* and the Netflix comedy *Living With Yourself* featuring Hollywood actor Paul Rudd. She's also devised a range of highly inventive sound installations, including one using four glass lifts to control the composition. "I do enjoy variety," she says. "It's good to be deep in writing and then to contrast that with playing and performance, and not think about writing at all. And working across film and TV, or installation, uses another part of my brain again. I think this change of gears is important to me."

Closest to her heart is working with her band, with whom she has produced two eclectic and highly acclaimed albums. "The band and album stuff is very special to me," she explains. "So many contemporary classical pieces are played only once. Creating something with greater permanence felt necessary, and making an album means you are not relying on just live opportunities, but it's a big undertaking and can take years of work. I think I'm proudest of the band because I made it happen; it took a long time to believe I could do this and to figure out how to play in the band, and what to do electronically – it was quite a journey but also a very authentic one."

Anna's process is intriguing. She explains how drawing underpins her composing: "I draw a timeline and shapes that represent the energy of the music – a sort of map of how the music develops and changes, where the key moments will come. Then I improvise around this visual structure." While highly inventive in her approach, she doesn't intentionally set out to bend the genre she's working in: "I always tend to approach the writing – no matter what I'm writing for – in the same way. Whether it's a film piece, an orchestral piece or an album track. For me, it's about following what makes me excited and what I feel passionate about. I don't think purposely blending genres would even work for me as a way to write or create music!"

She is without doubt a role model for others and has spent time hosting workshops to support those looking to enter



Anna Meredith MBE, at the Assembly Rooms as part of the 2024 Burns & Beyond festival

the industry: "I don't claim to know the right way to do it; I've been very lo-fi and DIY in much of my approach and have engaged in what's probably a long-winded way of doing stuff. But I have figured things out on my own terms, and that's the thing I'm really keen to impart to others. If I am a role model, that's great, but I wouldn't want it to seem like I have the answers. I think the most important thing is people feeling encouraged and supported to figure things out that feel authentic to them."

Taking an experimental approach requires confidence and some degree of personal bravery but most important is the spark of inspiration: "I definitely get inspired by other people's ideas. Or a great script or using new technology; these sorts of challenges are stimulating, and I have to figure out my way through them. I'm not interested in repeating myself. Finding something new to say or do is a driver. I want to evolve."

In 2022 Edinburgh Napier awarded Anna an Honorary Degree in recognition of her hugely significant contribution to music.

The power of alumni networks



Keeping connected with classmates sustains the positive aspects of communities cultivated during university days, making alumni networks particularly special and unique.



A testament to the enduring strength of shared experience, the ties that bind alumni together transcend both time and distance, with the connections made at university frequently becoming lifelong bonds. In 2023, three Edinburgh Napier alumni networks celebrated their ongoing spirit of camaraderie and the power of their networks when they came together for special reunions.

"We all recognise and deeply value our connection."

Emma Watson-Massey is Principal Teacher of Design & Technology at George Heriot's School, Edinburgh. She comments on the connections of the BSc (Hons) Industrial Design (Technology) Class of 1993 network.

"We've found that though we may not see one another for many years, the connection is always there. When the class has come together the conversation flows, the memories flood back, and we get so much pleasure from reminiscing. There are about 17 of us who graduated together in 1993. We had a 20-year reunion when we were all in our early 40s, and then we reconvened recently to celebrate 30 years.

I think our network is cemented through shared experiences, the growing and maturing together, and how we hit significant milestones around the same time in our lives. We have a shared understanding about them. And we enjoy small but significant reciprocal benefits we can provide to one another, particularly because we all value our connection. For example, I took my school pupils to the Ada Lovelace lecture classmate Sheila Lauchlan gave and arranged for pupils to visit the London design studio of another classmate. Opportunities like that present themselves because we're still networked."

You don't quite realise at the time, while you're at university and when you graduate, quite how fundamental the bonds are. We all really recognise it now and deeply value it.

"It's important that young graduates realise how essential networking can be to developing a career."

Sheila Lauchlan, also from the BSc (Hons) Industrial Design (Technology) Class of 1993, is a self-employed engineer and director of Edinburgh-based consultancy, Perfect Dimensions Ltd. A STEM ambassador, she is the Institution of Gas Engineers and Managers (IGEM) first female President.

"My work is absolutely built on networking and connections. I think it's important that young graduates realise how essential it can be to developing a career and to finding opportunities. While as a class we're not always in direct contact, all of us know we can use this network to ask for advice and tap into the wisdom of our classmates. And we find it so interesting to come together: learning what others are doing opens your mind to possibilities and opportunities.

Within the wider class I enjoy a more personal network with Emma and Ceinwen Campbell and our group is important to me. Long established friends see the potential in you that you might not see yourself. They encourage you to push forward, to take a chance; they are your cheerleaders and your back-up. It's great to have that support."



"Networks can change everything for you; don't neglect them, they can be so beneficial."

Eric Nguyen is a cybersecurity and digital forensics consultant. He talks about what it meant to reconnect the Class of 1993 BEng (Hons) Information Technology & Electronics.

"With just 10 of us in our class we were a tightly-knit group, but when we graduated it wasn't easy to stay connected – with no internet or social media, keeping track of changing addresses was hard and we lost touch for quite some time. I'd moved to Istanbul after graduating but returned to Edinburgh Napier to work as a research assistant, before leaving Scotland again to start a career which saw me based in various European countries. It was many years later, when I began an online Masters in Cybersecurity with Edinburgh Napier, that I decided to take steps to reconnect the class. I used LinkedIn, and as a group we managed to find the whole class except one.

We met up in Edinburgh and it was as if we hadn't been apart for all that time; the connection was immediate. Then last year we had a 30th reunion on campus, which Morven [ENU Alumni Relations Officer] organised for us. It was hugely enjoyable, revisiting our classrooms, reminiscing, and taking in campus developments.

But we're an example of what young graduates shouldn't do! Networks are so important: it doesn't necessarily seem so when you are younger, but they become much more so as you get older. They support you, give you an edge, and make a difference in many ways. My class network connected me to some relevant companies as my career transitioned, which was incredibly helpful.

So, I'd advise, be ready for life after Edinburgh Napier: set up your network before actually leaving and make a commitment to coming together again. Networks can change everything for you; opening doors, making links you couldn't do by yourself. Don't neglect them, they can be so beneficial and so enjoyable."

"Sharing expertise is powerful, for you and whoever you are sharing it with."

Woody Morris, a former journalist and TV presenter for Sky Sports and GMTV, who is now an entrepreneur, health and nutrition life coach and stand-up paddle board instructor, comments on the 30-year reunion of the HND Journalism Class of 1993.

"We were just so happy to see one another. There was lots of love in the room! While we did all do remarkably well – one of our classmates is the first female editor of the *Scottish Sun*, Gill Smith, while another is editor of *The Scotsman*, Neil McIntosh – our reunion was less about career success and far more about how each of us was, our family lives and wellbeing, than what we had become or done professionally.

We were all so chuffed to be on our course at Edinburgh Napier and working towards becoming journalists; as an HND it was very vocational and we had to just get on with what the role demands. There was no time for egos! When we graduated, we all went straight into jobs. So, coming back together to celebrate our time together at university was special.

As a group we are definitely open to helping one another. We celebrate the progress each of us has made across diverse roles and career paths, but it's also just about being connected regardless of our paths. It is really comforting to have long-standing connections who have shared your university experience and been there from early career days. I've reached out to others on many occasions for advice and support. I think you shouldn't feel afraid to do this. People like to be asked and it's great to feel you can help. Sharing expertise is powerful for you and whoever you are sharing it with."

NURTURING THE JOURNALISTS OF THE FUTURE

The Albert Morris scholarships at Edinburgh Napier

Albert Morris was a long-established Scottish journalist and idiosyncratic commentator, who was curious about life and a sharp observer of it. His wife, Teresa Morris, explains why she created scholarships in his memory to support journalism students at Edinburgh Napier:

"Albert left school at the age of 14 and did not have the opportunity to go to university. He had only one parent, his mother, who he had to help support. He was very interested in education, especially about learning English, grammar, spelling and Latin. It was his mother who enrolled him in Skerry's College in Edinburgh (it no longer exists) for shorthand and typing, and who got him an interview with *The Dispatch* newspaper, which is now *The Scotsman*. I also did not attend university, although I would have loved to. Coming as I did from a very poor family, I had to work from age 15 to help my mother, as my father was an invalid and we had the expense of his medicines to cover."

Since Albert died in 2018, aged 91, Teresa has established a trust which supports scholarships for journalism students. She believes Albert would want to support others facing difficulties, just as she wishes to: "It came very easily to me to start The Albert Morris Trust. The scholarships are a way for Albert's name to live on through the support of the thing he greatly loved and to help others to succeed."

Edinburgh Napier has one of the UK's longest-running and most respected journalism courses. Teresa has made available scholarships for

both undergraduate and postgraduate students at the University. "Helping people in their efforts to use and understand the beauty and power of the English language would really matter to Albert. For him the written word was so important. He was scrupulous in his writing and a great believer in telling the truth, but ultimately what he wanted was for people to enjoy his columns. His wonderful sense of humour always came through."

***"The scholarships
are a way for
Albert's name to
live on through
support of the
thing he loved!"***

Teresa Morris

"I am delighted that Bohdan Tymoshchuk is one of the first recipients of the scholarship at Edinburgh Napier: Albert's mother, Katherine, came to Britain as a baby; she and her grandparents were from Poltava, which is now in Ukraine. They came over with nothing and set up a newsagent in West Richmond Street, Edinburgh. As a young boy, Albert loved to read the comics and newspapers in their shop; that's where his interest in writing and publishing began."



Albert Morris at work at *The Scotsman*



Teresa Morris and Bohdan Tymoshchuk

***"Studying at
Napier means so
much to me.....
I have the
chance to build
my future"***

Bohdan Tymoshchuk

Bohdan Tymoshchuk, journalism student and Ukrainian refugee

Bohdan Tymoshchuk is one of the first recipients of an Albert Morris scholarship. He moved to Edinburgh in July 2022, after his home city, Mariupol, was completely destroyed during the Russian invasion of Ukraine earlier that year. He explains what receiving the Albert Morris scholarship has meant to him:

"As a refugee I had to leave all my belongings in a house that I do not know when I will return to," explains Bohdan. "I face financial difficulties but through the Albert Morris scholarship I can cover most of my living expenses and buy the necessary equipment for my journalistic studies, including tools for research and recording such as a tripod, microphone and additional light."

Bohdan describes the first days after moving to Edinburgh as challenging as he adjusted to a completely different country. "Though our minds and hearts remained with Ukraine, where the war had not stopped for a moment, the kindness and hospitality of the Scottish people helped my mother and I to feel at home. At that time, I could not imagine how my life

would change by being enabled to study at university, and through making friends among my course mates and with other Ukrainian refugees."

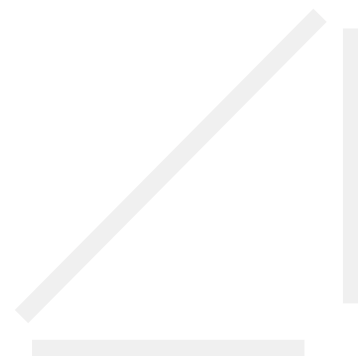
Through the Journalism programme at Edinburgh Napier, Bohdan is now progressing towards a career he feels deeply passionate about: "Studying at Edinburgh Napier means so much to me. Through the scholarship I have gained the opportunity to develop in journalism and have the chance to start a new life and build my future."

Bohdan aspires to become a respected journalist. His idol is the Ukrainian journalist Dmytro Komarov, who was primarily a travel journalist, but with the beginning of the war he began covering events from the front line, communicating the horror and grief of the Battle of Kyiv. "I know I have a long way to go but through the great support from the University, and from my friends and family, I feel I can now achieve my goal."

SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION OF TALENT

Your generosity empowers others on their journey to achievement and impact.

Edinburgh Napier alumni and friends are notably generous with their support and encouragement for today's students. That generosity opens doors and changes lives, empowering students to achieve their academic aspirations, realise their potential and make a difference in the world. We are hugely grateful for your support.



Boosting impact: our Development Trust

Our Development Trust is a vital part of the University's ambitions. It ensures we are completely transparent in how we manage the donations we receive. The Trust is a charity, independent from the University, and overseen by its own trustees. We are delighted that alumnus and donor, Jeremy Chittleburgh, has become its new Chair.

Raising funds and working with philanthropic partners, the Trust seeks to ensure that all students reach their potential at Edinburgh Napier, by providing scholarships, grants, prizes and funding to support them to succeed.



Fostering future potential: why I give

**Jeremy Chittleburgh, scholarship donor
and Chair of Development Trust**

"I am forever grateful for my Edinburgh Napier experience and how that allowed me to forge a successful career. It was a journey of being lucky enough to go to Edinburgh Napier, and then lucky enough to build on what I gained there to get onto the ladder of becoming an accountant, which has been my career ever since – although, I actually planned to be a biochemist! My school results scuppered that plan, but Edinburgh Napier – still a college at that time – offered a BSc Science with Industrial Studies, and through it I was able to continue my interest in science.

The degree also included aspects of management, which meant I engaged with sociology and psychology, and involved two six-month secondments. I greatly benefitted from these and on one of them where I worked in a research lab for six months, I came to the realisation that I didn't want to be a scientist! Heading towards graduation and unsure what to do, I was advised that with my strong maths skills and management knowledge, I could consider accountancy. It had never even entered my head! But I applied to lots of different accounting firms and gained a training contract with CT Accountants & Advisors, the firm I work with today.



Jeremy Chittleburgh and Judi Bergen

"I am forever grateful for my Edinburgh Napier experience."

Jeremy Chittleburgh

Many people think accountancy is just working with figures but it's not: I'm involved in extensive client management and working with people. My Edinburgh Napier experience allowed me to progress my career quite quickly: I was made a Partner at age 30. For me, that's the driving factor for supporting a scholarship, and that the University has kept its ethos of offering practical education and preparing graduates for the world of work. That was important to me 30 plus years ago and I'm glad it continues. Now, I'm in a fortunate position where I can support others to benefit from that ethos and to realise their potential through it.

I am delighted to be actively involved with Edinburgh Napier again and have recently been appointed Chair of the Development Trust. I look forward to working with my colleagues to build on the successes of the Trust to provide more support to the wider student community."

Judi Bergen is a recipient of an Edinburgh Napier ENCourage scholarship which are supported by friends and alumni of the University, such as donor Jeremy Chittleburgh.

"Receiving a scholarship has meant a lot to me, both in terms of the financial help and the encouragement to succeed academically. It has helped bridge the gap between rising costs and expenses and student loan income and allowed me to work less during term time, which in turn means I can focus more on my studies."

Judi won Edinburgh Napier's Edinburgh Festival Fringe Award, which is awarded annually to the student in year two of the Festival and Event Management programmes judged to have produced the best overall performance over the session. "I'm now in my 4th year. My studies have built my team leading, budgeting and scheduling skills, and I've particularly enjoyed learning about policy and its effect on events. I have a growing passion for the welfare of events staff and leading my own business would utilise both my work history and my management degree to its fullest. So, after graduating, one possibility is to start my own event crew/staffing company."

You make the difference

Currently, for every six students who apply for support we are only able to help one. If you could support the work of the Development Trust, we would love to hear from you.

Contact the Development team at **development@napier.ac.uk** and visit **www.napier.ac.uk/scholarships24** to learn more about the different ways you can provide support and the projects we are fundraising for.



Five minutes with...

Dr Abhishek Agarwal, Associate Professor in Strategy and Sustainability



Dr Abhishek Agarwal is lead for Edinburgh Napier's Business School's DBA and MBA programmes. He grew up in India but has studied around the world, undertaking a Masters in Aerospace Engineering in Ukraine and studying his MBA in Scotland, followed by his PhD in Circular Economy Strategy & Policy.

When did you join Edinburgh Napier and what were your aspirations?

I joined the University in 2021. I wanted to work for an organisation that truly meets the needs of industry and society. My aspiration was to help both early career and experienced professionals grow through real-world education and meaningful industry engagement.

What's the best part of your job?

The students. They are absolutely at the centre of it all. I really enjoy mentoring and coaching, and providing them with opportunities to connect with seasoned professionals through a variety of industry engagement activity.

Tell us about your experience with MBA programmes and why this qualification is still so relevant to the modern world.

I have been immersed in developing MBA programmes over the past decade; I sit on accreditation panels and externally examine MBAs across the UK. This qualification empowers graduates to help business and society to thrive while providing an accelerated leadership journey that opens up opportunities.

Could you explain a little about what being the lead for MBA consultancy projects involves?

It involves supporting organisations in understanding the strategic issues they are facing and aligning real projects with the MBA's academic requirements, and helping to better match students to projects. The critical part is overseeing project delivery to ensure relevant learning and real value for industry clients.

What would be your top piece of career or business advice?

Professional networking is crucial for a business leader. It can be enhanced by engaging with an executive coach or mentor, regardless of the stage of your career.

What are you watching?

I like to watch detective and political thrillers. I am watching *House of Cards* and *The Blacklist*, of course, when I find any time.

What are you listening to?

When it comes to music, I mostly listen to the choices of my teenage children! Apart from that, I like to listen to the *Financial Times* podcasts.

What would you like to learn?

I have developed a keen interest in Capital Markets recently. This is an area I would like to know more about.

What do you wish you were better at?

I'm finding this hard to admit, but learning to say 'No' more.

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

It is Scotland for me all the way. But if we're talking holidays, then The Caribbean is on the top of my wish list.

Tell us a surprising fact about yourself.

I'm Indian by birth, speak the Russian language, am married to a Chinese woman, and have two children who are very proud Scots.

Find out more about Edinburgh Napier's MBA programme and business research:

www.napier.ac.uk/abhishekagarwal

www.napier.ac.uk/mba-fulltime



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

KEEP IN TOUCH AND STAY CONNECTED



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 the University. Please make sure your contact details are up to date.

www.napier.ac.uk/connect



Support 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 makes a huge impact on the experiences and outcomes of current students.

www.napier.ac.uk/support-our-students



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.

www.napier.ac.uk/your-story



Attend an event

Keep connected with classmates and build your network through our exciting programme, which includes business networking opportunities, programme celebration events, class reunions, and alumni receptions across the globe! Get in touch if you would like to help organise a class reunion or a local alumni event.

www.napier.ac.uk/alumni-events



Access entrepreneurial 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!

www.napier.ac.uk/BRT24

ENU Alumni Network



180+
Countries



165,000

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