

QM YOU

MAGAZINE

FOR ALUMNI & FRIENDS OF
QUEEN MARGARET UNIVERSITY
Issue 89 | MARCH 2022



Craig Hill –
made at QMU

50 YEARS
of Drama &
Performing Arts

The big drama continues –
celebrating 50 years in the
creative industries

Tackling the gender
gap with QMU's first
Entrepreneur in Residence



**Queen Margaret
University**
EDINBURGH



Principal's Welcome

WE CANNOT DISPUTE that the last two years have been incredibly challenging for everyone in the university sector, but despite the ongoing disruption associated with COVID-19, Queen Margaret University has much to be proud of.

More than ever, we are aware of the incredible impact that our graduates are having on the world around them. They have risen to the challenges presented by the pandemic and are using their skills and experience to be a force for good. Their influence on the health service is clear to see and we are immensely proud to learn about the work that our graduates are doing in the NHS, amongst other areas, to help the country through the pandemic. On pages 20 and 21 you can read, first-hand, about the real-life experiences of a speech and language therapist, a nurse, and a home economics teacher, as they get to grips with their new roles and work to help others during the most difficult of times.

One of the most rewarding moments of the last year was our first outdoor graduation celebration. Despite the COVID restrictions, we were determined not to let another year go by without providing the Class of 2020 and 2021 with the opportunity to mark their graduation success. A traditional indoor ceremony was not possible, but due to a spectacular team effort, we were able to host an outdoor celebration which brought together new graduates with families, friends and staff. It was a truly joyous three-day occasion with warm sun, popping corks, swishing graduation robes, endless photo sessions, smiles and laughter. We have shared some of our photos with you on pages 18 and 19.

Having adapted our way of living, working and studying, we are acutely aware of the impact that the last two years has had on mental health. In this edition of the magazine, we introduce you to some of our special spaces on campus which we are using to help create a positive environment for students and staff to work and relax (see pages 5, 6 and 7). On page 29, you can also find out about our work in public health and our drive to be a 'healthy university'.

The pandemic has focused much of our country's attention on the health profession, but in QMYOU 88 and in this edition of the magazine, we celebrate 50 years of drama and performing arts. It has been a joy to hear about the career journeys of many of our graduates, and we are delighted that the instantly recognisable Scottish comedian Craig Hill has shared his story with us on pages 26 – 28. You can also read about Adam Park, who has risen up the ranks at Jungle Creations in London to manage some of the biggest brands on social media. We have more fascinating graduate career stories to share with you on our '50 Years of Drama and Performing Arts at QMU' webpages www.qmu.ac.uk/50-anniversary and social media posts.

In our interview with Craig Hill, the former acting student talked about finding his fit at QMU. We pride ourselves on creating a supportive atmosphere where everyone can feel comfortable. We are therefore delighted to have exceeded our initial expectations following our application for charter status of LGBT Youth Scotland. The achievement of a silver charter award from the national charity for LGBT+ young people is an important step in our drive to create an inclusive university (see page 28 for more details).

I hope you find inspiration from some of our news stories, features and interviews. If you are a graduate, please continue to stay in touch with the University through our Alumni Office on E: alumni@qmu.ac.uk, and if you are a member of the public or are already connected with the University, please consider talking to our Development team about different ways you can support our work.

With very best wishes
Sir Paul Grice FRSE, FAcSS

04 NEWS IN BRIEF	05-07 CULTIVATING WELLBEING	08-09 INNOVATION PARK	10-11 SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEUR -SHIP	12-14 SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEUR -SHIP	15 TRANSFORMING YOUNG LIVES
 ★ WINNER ★					
Climbing 23 places in the Good University Guide First University Hospice in East of Scotland	Creating cool places and spaces on campus	Plans for land around the campus	First Entrepreneur in Residence boosts female entrepreneurship	Prue Leith gets down to business Meet our entrepreneurs	A day with the Enhanced Learning Tutoring Initiative

CONTENTS

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16-17 OUTDOOR LEARNING HUB	18-19 GRADUATION CELEBRATIONS	20-21 SHAPING A BETTER WORLD	22-23 CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF DRAMA
			
Outdoor Hub will connect people in nature	First outdoor graduation events are a hit	Graduates making a difference during the pandemic	Showcasing our creative student talent
24-25 CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF DRAMA	26-28 CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF DRAMA	29 HEALTHY UNIVERSITY	30 POWER OF PHILANTHROPY
			
Graduate interview Into the jungle with Adam Park	Interview with comedian Craig Hill LGBT Charter Award	A holistic approach to enhancing student wellbeing	Papple Steading goes digital STV Children's Appeal

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Some of the articles featured in this magazine are available online at:
www.qmu.ac.uk/magazine

31 GRADUATES' ASSOCIATION	32 ALUMNI PODCASTS
	
President's Report	'Going Off Script With...' - podcasts 50 years of drama & performing arts

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NEWS IN BRIEF

QMU climbs 23 places in The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide

MOVING UP THE league tables is always rather satisfying, and so we're delighted that QMU has jumped up 23 places in The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2022; this places the University in the top 50% of universities in the UK.

Perhaps most notable is QMU's performance in the Teaching Quality and Student Experience categories, ranking 21st and 25th respectively out of 130 institutions in the UK.

Professor Richard Butt, QMU's Deputy Principal, said: "These results are a testament to the continuous delivery of high academic standards in the face of many challenges throughout the pandemic and the University's broader response to COVID." □

Students give QMU's accommodation the thumbs up

IT'S ALWAYS NICE to be a winner! However, awards mean so much more when based on our students' feedback - even better when these awards recognise the incredible work that's taken place during the pandemic.

That's why we're over the moon that our 'on-campus' student accommodation won the Best Booking Experience and Best Student Community prizes at the prestigious National Student Housing Awards. The University was also shortlisted in the 'Best Moving in Experience' and the headline 'Best University Halls' categories of this award scheme.

QMU's award for 'Best Student Community' is a testament to the exceptional work that Accommodation Services and the ResLife teams have put into delivering an inclusive programme of support, events, and activities, all of which have helped create a strong sense of community for students on campus. □



Winning app simplifies the pathways from college to university

FINDING OUT WHAT pathways exist to help students move through college and into degree level courses at university has not always been straightforward. In the past, students who were trying to work out what options were available to them were met with an array of confusing and complex progression routes.

Edinburgh College and Fife College teamed up with QMU to create the Pathways app which simplifies the routes that are available, helping young people and adult returners to education more easily navigate a suitable pathway into college and university courses.

The success of the app was recognised at the Herald Digital Transformation Awards 2021 with the partnership winning 'Best Use of Technology in Education' award. The Pathways app is helping more people from a diverse range of backgrounds to maximise their educational opportunities and fulfil their potential. □

St Columba's Hospice Care recognised as first University Hospice in east of Scotland

ST COLUMBA'S HOSPICE Care in Edinburgh has been officially recognised as the first University Hospice in the east of Scotland, following the announcement of a pioneering agreement with QMU.

St Columba's Hospice is one of only a handful of hospices in the country to achieve this prestigious status which will provide a stronger platform for teaching and research in the future.

Dr Erna Haraldsdottir, Director of Education and Research for St Columba's Hospice and Senior Lecturer at QMU, said: "The announcement comes as a result of years of collaborative working between the organisations and will also be hugely advantageous to students wishing to gain practical working experience within a palliative and end of life care setting."

The QMU and Hospice teams look forward to formally launching the University Hospice at an event to be held later in the year. □

Creating a healthy university community – Cool spaces and interesting places on campus makes happy, healthy people



We are lucky at QMU to have a wonderfully bright and modern environment in which to work, study, live and play. Initially, we designed our campus buildings to reflect the importance of learning as a social activity. We wanted to encourage students to interact with each other and collaborate on projects. So, we created a variety of learning spaces which allowed students from different academic disciplines to meet, make friends and work together. After all, learning is easier when it's sociable and fun, and it's important to gain experience of team work before going out into the workforce.

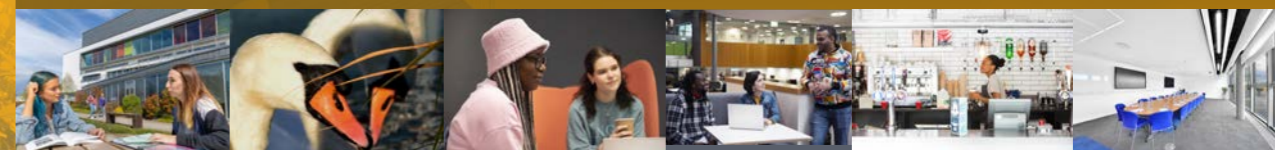
Then, along came the pandemic, which made us acutely aware of the things we all require in order to maintain good mental and physical health.

The Students' Union (SU) has worked with staff across the University to support students during the months of COVID restrictions. Now, more than ever, the SU and the University understand the impact that social connections and our physical environment have on how we feel, work and learn.

Through the pandemic, and as we continue to develop our beautiful campus, we have renewed our focus on cultivating a healthy, happy working environment which supports health and wellbeing.

Student President, Aasiyah Patankar, said: "Even small changes can make a difference, and by working together to take good care of our university community, our students and staff are better equipped to make a positive contribution to the world."

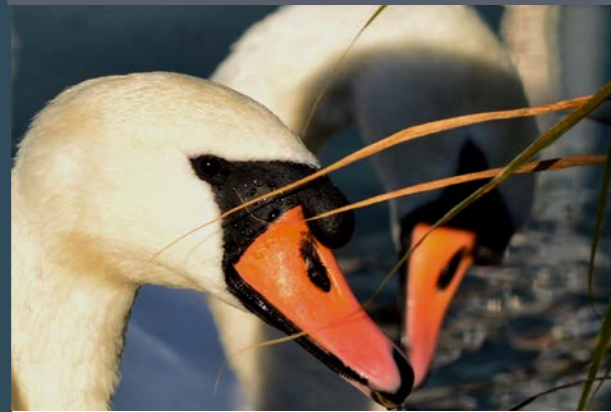
In this feature, Aasiyah introduces you to some of the cool and interesting spaces that have been created on campus.





Relaxing outdoors

During the pandemic we created more outdoor seating areas so that students could comfortably spend time enjoying our lovely grounds. Our picnic tables are also a hit with the local community who increasingly use the campus grounds for dog walking and relaxing with family and friends.



A haven for wildlife

Our outdoor space is a haven for wildlife. Our favourite residents are the swans who live on our pond. Recently, keeping up with their family affairs has been like following an episode of Love Island! We love watching the cygnets getting bigger, dad battering on the window of the food court, and mum leading the family through University Square as if they are off to catch the train!

Staying fit

We installed an outdoor gym to encourage students to exercise in the fresh air. It's free for anyone to use at any time.



VIPs – Very Important Pooches!

Dogs are a massive hit with most students, but firm favourites are Rocco and Dixie, a labradoodle and cavapoo, who regularly hang out at Maggie's and the Students' Union with their owner Kirsten, General Manager of the Students' Union. Rocco is a registered therapist and is usually up for a cuddle and always up for a dog biscuit!



Quiet places to hide away

QMU has somewhere for everyone – group work areas, busy open plan sociable spaces, IT seminar rooms, quiet rooms, individual study booths, and specialist labs and clinics. But some of us like to find our own special hideaways where we can slow the pace right down.

It's all a big drama in the black box

We love the energy that our drama, performance and creative industry students bring to the University, and our Black Box studio, with its impressive lighting rig, is where we can get a glimpse of the new emerging talent. Come and watch one of our live productions!



Cool vibes at The Nook

We serve great coffee at Maggie's and Starbucks, but recently, we've created a cool, new self-service coffee shop called The Nook. It's perfect for chilling with friends or just taking time out for yourself. It's fully equipped with ports for devices, allowing students and staff to work in a relaxed environment.



Chilling out at Maggie's

Maggie's, our Students' Union bar, is my personal favourite! With its cool, friendly vibe, it's the perfect place for students to relax and socialise with friends. During lockdown, the local community discovered Maggie's and it became the new place to hang out. It's now a sociable hub for students and staff, as well as local residents and their pooches.



Busy places for those who love sociable spaces

Our atrium is the main hub for students who want to work in a bright, airy, social space. They can work while chatting, eating and drinking or just checking their Instagram accounts!



Best seat in the house

Our attractive conference suite is located in one of the best areas of the University. It has views over the pond and access to break-out space and a baby grand piano! It's perfect for meetings, seminars, events and conferences and is available for hire – at a very reasonable cost, of course!



ResLife – being part of our friendly, supportive community

Staying in one of our 800 en-suite rooms in our award-winning student residences is one of the best ways to settle into life on campus. Our ResLife programme helps students living in residences to feel connected and part of a friendly, supportive community. ResLife students also have the exclusive use of our stylish accommodation lounge where they can relax and hang out with friends. Popcorn and film night anyone?



Exciting plans for an innovation park on land around the campus

It's been almost 20 years since we unveiled our plans for Scotland's first purpose-built university campus of the 21st century. Our subsequent move to our current campus marked the beginning of a long and successful collaboration with East Lothian Council, a relationship which has now unlocked £40m City Region Deal funding for the next phase of planned development in the land around the University grounds.



DIRECTOR OF CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT and Operations, Steve Scott, has been instrumental in driving forward these plans from the very beginning.

"Back then, staff and students were scattered across outdated campus buildings in Corstorphine and Leith that were no longer fit for purpose," said Steve. "We scouted many potential locations for a new campus to bring us all together before choosing our current location, a decision which reflected the existing amenities offered by the site and the opportunities it provided for future development. This was important, because we had ambitions from the outset to create a vibrant mixed community with the University at the heart of it.

"Over the past two decades, I've had the privilege of working with many talented colleagues and consultants to bring our Victorian founders' vision of a creative, fairer and healthier society into our ambitions for our new campus, and use of the

land around it. Our first major milestone was completing the first phase and relocating here as a university in 2007. Another highlight was recently receiving the green light and £28.6m from UK Government, £1.4m from Scottish Government and a further £10m from East Lothian Council to develop a flagship Innovation Hub on the land next door.

"The hub will be the anchor for Edinburgh Innovation Park which will be developed over time to create a nationally significant centre of knowledge exchange, innovation and high value business growth. We are also progressing plans in tandem for a new Commercial Zone providing vital amenities for the expanding community.

"East Lothian Council will begin work soon on completing the A1 junction to the site; we are appointing lead consultants to progress the hub and the wider design team will be in place by spring 2022. Our relationship with East Lothian Council will now be cemented in a formal joint venture partnership. We will start building the new hub in spring 2023 and it will take two years to complete.

"To play a part in delivering such a legacy for the University and bringing our plans to life has been challenging at times, but certainly never dull, and I'm looking forward to bringing forward this next phase." □



First Entrepreneur in Residence helps boost female entrepreneurship

At QMU, we have serious plans to lead Scotland's university sector in advancing female entrepreneurship, and we're investing time, energy and resource to make it happen!

RECENTLY, WE'VE TAKEN a giant leap forward in our commitment to developing entrepreneurship by appointing our first Entrepreneur in Residence. Carolyn Currie took up the post in August 2021 and it's been all go ever since!

Carolyn is CEO of Women's Enterprise Scotland. As a highly respected business leader and champion of female entrepreneurship, her work as QMU's Entrepreneur in Residence is encouraging more staff, students and graduates to develop their entrepreneurial skills.

Carolyn is also a key player in driving forward the University's goal to become a leading centre for excellence for female entrepreneurship, and to establish a Women's Business Centre within our planned Innovation Hub – part of the Edinburgh Innovation Park.



With our strengths in food and drink, and the creative, healthcare and business sectors, Carolyn and QMU aim to strengthen entrepreneurial activity in these fields. Through our ambitious plans to accelerate women's entrepreneurship at QMU and beyond, we are aiming to support Scotland's economic recovery from the pandemic.

What we love about Carolyn Currie

- She's a prominent champion of female entrepreneurship with an impressive track record in the banking industry.
- She's passionate about breaking down barriers and supporting more women to establish sustainable businesses.
- As CEO of Women's Enterprise Scotland, she's committed to addressing the gender imbalance which exists across the Scottish entrepreneurial landscape.
- As a mover and a shaker, she's well known and respected in the business community, political circles and public life.
- Through her workshops, events and interactions with people at QMU, she's strengthening the University's culture of entrepreneurship and supporting more staff, students and graduates to develop their entrepreneurial talents.
- Her inspiring and relevant programme of workshops is helping turn ideas into reality.
- Her infectious laugh, boundless energy, vast experience and positive attitude make her a tremendous asset and role model.

Know the facts about women-owned businesses

- Women-owned businesses in Scotland contribute £8.8bn to the Scottish economy every year and generate more than 230,000 jobs across Scotland, according to a 2018 Federation of Small Business report.
- The Rose Report on Female Entrepreneurship states that up to £250 billion of new value could be added to the UK economy if women started and scaled new businesses at the same rate as men.
- In response to the Rose Report, the UK Government announced its ambition to increase the number of female entrepreneurs by half by 2039, equivalent to nearly 600,000 additional female entrepreneurs.
- According to the Rose Report, fewer UK women choose to become entrepreneurs in the UK/Scotland than in some other countries such as Canada, Australia and the Netherlands: The UK lags behind many peer countries on gender parity – for every 10 male UK entrepreneurs, there are fewer than five female entrepreneurs.
- A recent RBS survey conducted during the pandemic stated that nearly three quarters (71%) of female entrepreneurs found managing their business stressful compared to half of men (55%). Female owners/entrepreneurs were 17% more likely to have struggled juggling business and family life since the pandemic began than men – 40% compared to 57% - suggesting

that women have shouldered more childcare, home schooling and household maintenance responsibility. Women are also more likely to be working in sectors that are hard hit by the crisis including hospitality and non-food retail. Supporting women to apply their expertise in starting a business now can help preserve vital skills and build back the economy.

Connecting QMU's Entrepreneur in Residence to QMU's history

QMU has a proud history of supporting educational and career opportunities for women dating back to 1875 when the institution was first established. Our founders, Christian Guthrie Wright and Louisa Stevenson, were the female trailblazers of their time - determined to help women advance academically, develop their skills and forge careers. Find out more about QMU's fascinating history at:



Why is driving forward female entrepreneurship so important?

Kim Stuart, Director of Research & Innovation and the Research and Knowledge Exchange Development Unit at QMU, explained: "We know that women do not lack ability or ambition, yet only one in three UK entrepreneurs is female: a gender gap equivalent to 1.1 million missing businesses. Female-led businesses are only 44% of the size of male-led businesses on average, in terms of their contribution to the economy, and male SMEs are five times more likely to scale up to £1million turnover than female SMEs. It is imperative that we tackle the gender divide and inspire, motivate and equip women to realise their potential by removing barriers and pro-actively nurturing talent."

Sir Paul Grice, QMU's Principal, is behind QMU's ambitious plans to lead the sector in female entrepreneurship. He said: "To aid economic recovery from the pandemic, it is critical we harness the talent pool which we know exists within our female population. Carolyn is at the heart of our plans to establish a Women's Business Centre which will unleash some of the untapped potential within our female population. As a catalyst for supporting female entrepreneurs, we want to encourage and equip women to bring their ideas to fruition and assist female-led businesses to scale up and reach their full potential."

QMU's Entrepreneurial Fact File

- Nearly two thirds of QMU's start-up companies are created by women.
- QMU was the first university in Scotland to have a Business Gateway located on campus.
- QMU's Business Innovation Zone (BIZ) currently supports 45 innovative student, graduate and staff start-ups and businesses.
- Since its inception, the University's BIZ has supported 100 entrepreneurial start-ups.

Get more detail on QMU's Entrepreneur in Residence at EIR webpages. □



Prue Leith gets down to business in support of female entrepreneurship

We enjoy a cosy fireside chat at QMU, and although there were lots of laughs, two of QMU's most impressive business leaders were debating the important issue of female entrepreneurship.

IN NOVEMBER, CAROLYN CURRIE, our Entrepreneur in Residence, kick-started QMU's drive to accelerate female entrepreneurship with a personal and insightful fireside chat with the Chancellor of the University, Dame Prue Leith.

Prue, who is also an entrepreneur, TV presenter, cook, restaurateur and writer, provided an entertaining and candid overview of her business highs and lows, and shone a light on the challenges often facing women in business, particularly in the hospitality and food sectors.

It was an entertaining event, enjoyed in-person by industry professionals, female business owners and QMU graduates, as well as by an online audience.

Carolyn said: "It was a privilege to talk to Dame Prue Leith about her hugely varied career as a cook, restaurateur, cook school owner, author, and TV host and critic. She hammered home the necessity of researching a business idea before investing, and showed us that a positive, 'can-do' attitude coupled with hard work, determination and resilience are important attributes for a successful career as an entrepreneur."



Carolyn Currie interviews Dame Prue Leith



QMU Principal meets entrepreneurs at Dame Prue Leith fireside chat

Meet the entrepreneurs made at QMU

STARTING OUT IN business is no mean feat, that's why QMU's Business Innovation Zone provides much needed support to students and graduates during the challenging early years of business development. By providing free working space, networking opportunities, workshops, and access to funding streams and award opportunities, we're giving new entrepreneurs the best chance of success.

This year, we are supporting 48 start-ups. Let's introduce you to some of our female entrepreneurs.



Lauren Leisk

Bringing winning solutions to the voice over industry



Tess Whittaker

VOICE OVER ARTIST and speech therapist, Tess Whittaker, has created an early-stage tech start-up to end frustration and time-wasting in the voice over industry.

She's been working with speech and language researchers at QMU to develop an innovative platform which allows content creators to quickly identify the perfect voice for their advert, book or film narration. The technology helps select the best voice for the project and removes the need for thousands of hours to be spent listening and sifting through voice recording auditions. It also provides a more level playing field for voice over artists to get their voices heard rather than auditions being discarded due to lack of time available for the selection process.

By streamlining the voice casting experience and improving the audition process The Voice Distillery provides a win-win for content creators and voice over artists. □

Fodilicious founder Lauren creates gut friendly food for people with intolerances

Lauren Leisk, a top performing Business Management graduate, founded specialist food company, Fodilicious. The company creates delicious free-from products using premium, natural ingredients which make it easier for those with food allergies and intolerances to enjoy a wide range of tasty food. Lauren's recipes follow the FODMAP diet which can be suitable for people with conditions such as IBS and bowel disorders, who often experience bloating and pain after eating.

Fodilicious has a growing number of loyal customers in the UK and as far afield as Australia. We can highly recommend her delicious cookie buttons (choose from coconut, ginger or cocoa crunch) which she developed with help from QMU's Scottish Centre for Food Development and Innovation.

With the support of QMU, Lauren has been successful in a wide range of business awards and funding schemes, with her pitching talents resulting in significant support from organisations including the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Santander Universities, Scottish Edge, Edinburgh Merchant Company and Scottish Institute for Enterprise (SIE).

www.fodilicious.com □

Fiona brings art into communities

Fiona Rich, an MSc Art Psychotherapy graduate, set up Spider Arts to provide people with opportunities for creative engagement. Her community arts education company works with local schools, community groups, charities and businesses offering a range of different workshops, projects and events that encourage participation in the arts. Through Spider Arts, Fiona is using creative ways to engage children, young people and families in the arts, improve health and wellbeing, and enhance communities.

With support from QMU and organisations such as Santander Universities, Spider Arts has developed some really inspirational arts projects such as 'Calmbulance', which saw a decommissioned ambulance transformed into a fully equipped mobile art therapy studio. The Calmbulance is assisting children in the community to access the mental health support they need and making sure they are not unfairly disadvantaged due to the pandemic, their economic status or lack of availability of services in their area. □

◀ Photo: Fiona Rich



Equipping a new generation of entrepreneurs to innovate in Scotland's food & drink sector

OVER THE LAST YEAR, QMU's Innovation and Enterprise Manager has had tremendous success in bringing together some of the best academic and industry experts to help students turn their business ideas into reality.

In autumn 2021, Miriam Smith, along with Catriona Liddle, Head of QMU's Scottish Centre for Food Development and Innovation (SCFDI), led the delivery of an ambitious new entrepreneurial initiative to equip the next generation of food & drink innovators for success in the industry.

Miriam developed the concept for THRIVE, which pooled the resources of QMU, Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) and Abertay University. The institutions used their wide-ranging food & drink expertise to deliver a series of workshops aimed at developing new talent to support sustainable growth in Scotland's food & drink sector. Launched by James Withers, CEO of Scotland Food & Drink, the event also aimed to create a renewed culture of innovation in the sector.

Interactive sessions, delivered by leading academics and industry specialists, helped students and graduates gain a clear understanding of what is required to enter the industry from idea generation to production, and how to run a sustainable business that grows and innovates. Participants also shared their ideas with a panel of industry experts from Food and Drink Federation Scotland, Santander and Business Gateway.

Twenty-five students participated in the workshops which covered topics such as market trends, product legislation, sustainable product and business development, the importance of good nutrition, making prototypes, product assessment, competitor analysis, creating and building a brand, as well as routes to market and marketing.

Careen Brand, programme participant, said: "THRIVE has been an invaluable online course, with inspiring guest speakers from industry together with the wealth of knowledge and tools provided by the hosts."

Find out more about THRIVE at [□](#)



Robin's Xtreme entrepreneurship experience puts him through his paces at Wembley



THANKS TO CONTINUED support of QMU by Santander Universities, graduate Robin Sherriff had an incredible opportunity to be part of the Santander X Entrepreneurship Awards 2021 at Wembley Stadium. Robin is the owner and founder of The Koji Kitchen, which produces novel and delightful Japanese fermented foods.

Robin explained: "I was lucky enough to be put forward by QMU for the whirlwind adventure that was the Santander X Entrepreneurship Awards 2021.

"After months of incredible mentoring and workshoping, the competition concluded in a trip to London to pitch alongside 80 other businesses for a suite of funding opportunities.

"Whilst I wasn't lucky enough to secure a victory and take home a sizeable prize, in many respects I feel like I had won by merely being given the opportunity to take part in such a prestigious and challenging event. The cohort that formed around the competition, and the business contacts I garnered during the process and the event, have already been critical in securing new retailers and other important business connections."

Robin concluded: "I am grateful that as a result of Queen Margaret's support, I was able to take my strange and nuanced project and share a stage with a range of other incredible businesses. It has certainly left me with the ability to pitch my business at any time, in any situation, and under any amount of pressure!"

Santander Universities continues to support QMU through internships, bursaries, and student exchange support, as well as through student and alumni business support. [□](#)

Graduate supports the entrepreneurs of the future

WE'RE DELIGHTED TO welcome QMU graduate Jamie Riddell and his wife Katherine to the QMU donor community.

Their latest business venture, Escaping Gravity, is a global SEO consultancy for challenger brands. They have teamed up with QMU to encourage innovation through supporting enterprising students and recent alumni.

The Escaping Gravity Entrepreneurship Competition offered QMU Business Innovation Zone (BIZ) members the chance to enhance their businesses using creative and innovative digital technology. 2021 winners included David Blomquist Media, Half/Cut Films, Spider Arts, Shadow Hill Studios Limited and Naka Media - each received £1,000 worth of funding.

Fiona Rich, Founder of Spider Arts, said: "We are absolutely delighted to have the support of Escaping Gravity to help us realise our vision of making creative digital media available in our mobile art therapy service, the Calmbulance."

Interested in finding out how you can support QMU? Contact Thomas Kelly, Head of Development and Alumni at [E: tkelly@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:tkelly@qmu.ac.uk). [□](#)



Rachel Milne (Class of 2021)

Making a positive difference to the lives of others is what QMU is all about. That's why we love hearing about the impact our Enhanced Learning Tutoring Initiative is having on young people throughout East Lothian and Midlothian.

QMU SPEARHEADED THE Enhanced Learning Tutoring Initiative in 2020 to support secondary school pupils who struggled to keep up with learning during the pandemic. Along with our partner, East Lothian Council, we've not only supported over 300 pupils, we've created employment for talented new graduates. The project expanded in 2021/22 academic year to include Midlothian.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Rachel Milne, a recent QMU Media Studies graduate, works as a tutor on the project. She tells us about the role and rewards of being part of this important widening-access initiative and how it is transforming young lives.

Why is the tutoring project so important?

Many pupils found it difficult to engage with their school's online learning provision, particularly those who struggle with concentration and/or have additional support needs. Pupils' routines have been massively disrupted and often their home environment is not conducive to learning. Many pupils have missed classes due to illness and self-isolation, while others have also struggled with motivation due to loneliness and isolation. It's critical we help students catch up with learning so they're not disadvantaged in the future.

How did you get involved?

I'm a leader with QMU's Peer Assisted Learning Scheme, so I have experience of supporting undergraduate students. I was keen to further develop my skills so was encouraged to apply.

How do you help pupils involved in the project?

I'm studying a full-time Masters in Comparative Literature at the University of Glasgow, so I work part-time providing online support to pupils who need help, particularly with National 5 and Higher English.

What's involved?

In the morning I do my planning and then run two online sessions per day for an hour each. I start sessions by discussing the student's mood and their general interests, see if they are happy to progress with our agreed lesson plan from the week before, or ask if there is anything

else that they'd prefer to work on during our session. I make sessions as engaging as possible, and at the end, we devise a plan for the following week. I keep teachers up-to-date with progress or any difficulties, and share ideas for future sessions.

What's been most rewarding?

Watching a student's confidence grow, both in terms of their academic progression but also in how they engage with me in their sessions. It's great to see them grasp a difficult concept, and to witness this having a positive impact on their self-esteem.

Best moment?

During an activity when a student told me how much more she's started to believe in herself and her own abilities.

What's most challenging?

Helping them feel less nervous at the beginning of the project. I try to create a comfortable and productive dynamic. It can be difficult, but it's satisfying when they really start enjoying the sessions.

What has the Enhanced Learning Tutoring Initiative meant to you?

Being part of this project has meant a lot! I've learned about myself and how I work with and interact with younger people. Being able to support pupils during such a difficult time has had a positive impact on my own self-esteem. I gain new skills during each session, and I'll continue to learn and grow throughout my time with the project.

Find out more about the Enhanced Learning Tutoring Initiative. [□](#)



Outdoor Learning Hub will bring people together in nature

Recent events including the pandemic and COP26 have made us acutely aware of the importance of the natural world to our existence as human beings. As a society, we need to connect with our environment and commit to educating children, adult learners and leaders about the importance of nature and our place within it.

THAT'S WHY QMU is creating an outdoor learning hub which will present outstanding opportunities for the local community, teachers and people across Scotland to come together in natural environments.

The new Outdoor Learning Hub will support sustainable access to the natural world for the University's staff and students, the local community and Scotland's teaching professionals.

Taking the form of an all-weather outdoor space, the Hub will be located within the University's campus grounds. It will be a space to connect people and support teachers and leaders in the evolving area of outdoor learning, with various courses leading to professional qualifications.

Patrick Boxall, Lecturer in Initial Teacher Education at QMU, is leading the project. He explained: "The natural world is central to our lives as human beings and has immeasurable positive impact on our health, wellbeing and the sustainability of our planet. As educators we need to see the outdoors as a place to nurture our wellbeing, for creative learning across the curriculum, community connection and leadership development. That's why we are embedding outdoor learning in our teacher education courses at both undergraduate level on our BA (Hons) Education Studies (Primary), and at postgraduate level on our PGDE Secondary (Home Economics)."

Patrick confirmed: "We are now extending this commitment to outdoor learning by creating the Outdoor Learning Hub. We are preparing different outdoor learning spaces and using digital platforms to extend the Hub's learning opportunities to students, educators, community groups and professional partners in Scotland and beyond. The Hub will become a place to connect people and communities, to enhance our wellbeing, and a space for creative learning, research and professional development."

The project is being delivered through collaboration with Architecture & Design Scotland, Scotland's design champion. Danny Hunter, Principal Architect at A&DS commented: "The project will create a centre for local and national engagement in outdoor learning practice, leadership, and professional development. It will equip current and future teachers, community educators and volunteer leaders with the knowledge and skillset to confidently use outdoor spaces and places to enhance the learner journey of young people across Scotland."

The Landscape Architecture team at Wardell Armstrong are working with the charity Learning Through Landscapes (LTL) on the design. Natalie Murray from Wardell Armstrong said: "Our aspiration is for the Hub to not only offer a great teaching and learning space, but for it also to become a platform for collaboration, campus experience and a place for the students to benefit from being close to nature."

For more information on the Outdoor Learning Hub visit: [\[link\]](#)



Congratulations QMU Graduates

Despite the odds,
we made it happen!



First outdoor graduation celebration is a hit.

The restrictions imposed by the pandemic have required QMU to demonstrate great agility in adapting to constant change. Absolutely nothing has been straightforward, but we've shown that almost anything is possible with great teamwork and a positive attitude.

After the disappointment of being unable to hold our traditional graduation ceremony in the Usher Hall in 2020, we were determined that another year would not pass without providing the graduating classes of 2020 and 2021 with the opportunity to mark their achievements.

Creating an entirely new format, which complied with ever-changing government restrictions and would meet the needs of student and their families, was never going to be easy. However, we adopted the attitude of 'just because something is difficult, doesn't mean we shouldn't do it!' When most other universities

had initially cancelled graduation, we set about working out how we could create a safe, celebratory outdoor event which, at the very least, would give students the chance to wear their gowns, have their graduation photos taken and celebrate their success with graduate friends, family and academics.

It was not without its challenges - at one point, we questioned whether we should or even could continue with our plans! But, with committed teamwork across our Events, Registry, Students' Union, Estates and Communications teams (and a whole lot more), we delivered nine graduation celebrations over three gloriously sunny days in July.

Sun split the skies each day, and our campus grounds looked incredible! When we saw the smiles and heard the laughter of students celebrating their success with their families, we knew we'd made the right decision. ☐



1. Blowing bubbles - our Dean of the School of Arts, Social Sciences and Management, Professor David Stevenson, never misses a chance to celebrate.



2. In what is now a time-honoured QMU graduation tradition, the Preston Lodge High School pipe band was on hand to kick things off in style!



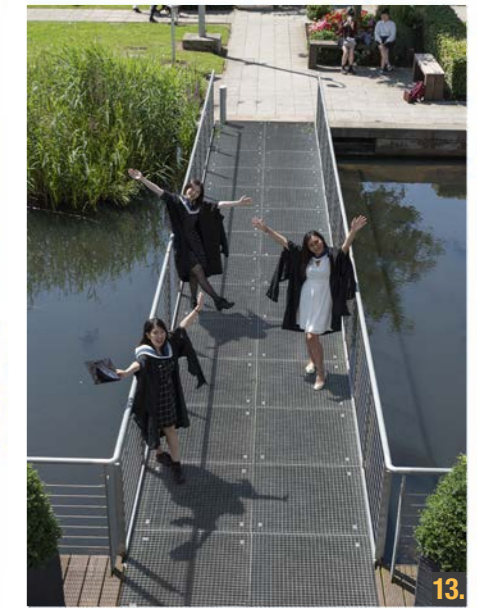
3. We raised a glass to celebrate the Class of 2021, and the Class of 2020.



4. QMUSU Student Vice-President, Sophie Cunningham and her mum stopped by our graduation wall for a photo memento.
5. "Mummy, you both look fabulous!" Adesewa Olagbami, MSc Global Health (with distinction), and Katlego Matsetse-Holtmann.
6. Anna Linda Gudmundsdottir, Diploma in Higher Education in Hearing Aid Audiology, flew in from Iceland to celebrate with classmates.
7. Zarah Bryce celebrates her newly acquired Diploma in Higher Education in Hearing Aid Audiology with husband Sean and baby.



8. It's all smiles at this table! Hannah Corcoran and family, Aisling McHugh, Georgia Wilson and Annie Halmshaw.
9. Revellers make the most of the sunshine in our outdoor hospitality area.
10. Emily Froud, BA Film & Media graduate, looking fabulous celebrating with her family.
11. Sir Paul Grice and Professor David Stevenson with Honorary Graduate Fergus Linehan, Director of the Edinburgh International Festival.
12. QMUSU Student President Aasiyah Patankar.



13. MSc Music Therapy graduates celebrate in the sun.
14. Former QMUSU President and Vice-President, Chiara Menozzi and Andy White, reunite with Students' Union VIPs (Very Important Pooches) Rocco and Dixie.
15. QMU Principal, Sir Paul Grice, celebrates with some of our Theatre and Film, and Film and Media graduates.
16. Anton Winters and Louise Duncan of graduate film production company, Naka Media.



Getting through the challenges of the pandemic and making a difference

IT IS HARD TO PUT into words just how proud we are of all of our graduates who go out into the world and make a difference. But over the last year, we've been quite overwhelmed by stories of graduates who have used the skills and experience they have gained at QMU to navigate the difficult pathway through the pandemic whilst helping individuals, organisations and our country in the recovery process.

In the spring of 2020, our School of Health Sciences worked at breakneck speed to prepare hundreds of healthcare students to take up roles in the NHS. Not only were our graduates filling vital professional positions in the NHS, often their presence helped free up more experienced NHS personnel to transfer into frontline roles, better equipping the NHS to deal with the increased pressure on essential services.

Time and time again, we hear students, from both our School of Health Sciences and other academic areas of the University, confirm how well prepared they felt for the challenges that lay ahead, despite the fact they entered the workforce at one of the most difficult times in history.

In this feature, some of our recent graduates give us a small insight into their experience of working throughout the pandemic.

Evelyn takes up speech and language therapist role at the Royal Berkshire Hospital

EVELYN DUINDAM BEGAN her first year working as an acute speech and language therapist at the peak of the pandemic, in the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading. She explained: "QMU's academics helped me prepare for this role, as well as supporting me in my application process, so I was able to become fully incorporated into the hospital's Speech and Language Therapy team."

"I assessed and supported many patients diagnosed with COVID, ranging from minor complications all the way to complex Intensive Care Unit step-downs where patients are moved from ICU to the general medical wards for further rehabilitation. I also conducted mental capacity assessments - all while wearing full PPE."

"It's been an incredibly challenging year but one that QMU prepared me well for. It's been demanding, emotional, rewarding and inspirational to be part of such an impressive, hard-working NHS team during a time where healthcare was at epicentre of the pandemic. I was lucky to be able to contribute to the NHS during such unprecedented times, wherein I assessed patients' swallows, speech, and communication. In particular, I had to adjust to working in full PPE when conducting both communication and speech assessments on noisy wards - not an easy or comfortable task!"

"I am really pleased that I made the choice to study Speech and Language Therapy as it's such a rewarding career, and I'm proud that I've been able to play a part in supporting the UK's recovery from COVID-19." □



Sarah begins her nursing career in London

SARAH HOLLIGAN SECURED a position as a nurse at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital in central London before reaching her 2020 graduation date. She explained: "We were amongst the group of healthcare students who were called upon to assist the NHS in dealing with the pandemic. Our final few months at university were accelerated as QMU's nursing team helped us quickly prepare to move swiftly into positions in the NHS."

Sarah is in a rotational post for 18 months



within the London trust, which started with six months on the oncology ward, followed by six months in gynaecology. Sarah is now in the Assisted Conception Unit where she will remain once she has completed her rotation.

The first part of the rotation was the most directly affected by the pandemic. The oncology ward became a COVID ward. The days were long, the work was very demanding, and the learning curve was steep. Anti-vaccine protesters were outside the hospital as difficult shifts ended. However, Sarah confirmed that the team spirit and support from her new workmates was remarkable.

Aside from patients and staff contracting COVID, Sarah also became unwell with the virus. She was off for several weeks but was keen to get back to work.

Sarah said: "The last year since graduating from QMU has been harder than I ever imagined, but I am extremely proud to be a nurse and to have graduated from QMU." □

Navigating the first year as secondary teacher during the pandemic

IT'S NOT JUST healthcare graduates who have had to navigate an unusual transition from university to professional life. How would you fancy trying to learn the ropes as a new secondary school teacher during lockdown?

Ryan Lee completed a BSc Nutrition at QMU before progressed to our PDGD Home Economics (Secondary). He said: "I was lucky to get a job straight away as a home economics teacher at Musselburgh Grammar School, but getting to grips with the first year of teaching and supporting young people's development during a pandemic has been a challenge."

"However, there are key elements that were instilled in me at QMU - resilience, rising to a challenge, working as part of a team and understanding the importance of developing strong communication skills - all of these things have definitely helped me throughout this last year or so. QMU also encouraged me to develop a positive, can-do attitude which helps you deal with anything."

"It's certainly a privilege to teach home economics in the 21st century - every day is different and it's great to see the impact that my subject is having on young people. It's a really enjoyable and rewarding career and when I see the young people progress with each lesson, I know I made the right choice to pursue a role as a teacher of home economics."

Professor Fiona Coutts, Dean of the School of Health Sciences at QMU, said: "It has been reassuring and inspiring to hear how our students have thrived under immense pressure, and worked so hard to help others during the very early stages of their careers. They have been taught well to achieve so much in exceptional circumstances. We are proud beyond belief! We look forward to hearing many more stories from our alumni about their developing careers and how they are making a difference to people and communities." □



Showcasing our creative student talent

50 YEARS
of Drama & Performing Arts



OVER THE LAST YEAR we have been sharing stories of our talented alumni to mark the 50th anniversary of drama and performing arts education at QMU. Despite the creative industries being one of the hardest hit sectors during the global pandemic, we continue to be inspired by the boundless creativity, passion and resilience of our drama and performance graduates who dedicate their working lives to the development of the sector. In this edition of the QMYOU, we continue to celebrate the talents and share the career paths of some of our incredible alumni. We also hope you can tune in to our first ever QMU Alumni Podcast 'Going Off Script With...' which provides a behind the scenes insight into the fascinating lives of some of our drama, performance and creative industry alumni (see page 32 for further details of our podcast series).



Last year, we were unable to hold our annual Costume Design and Construction Showcase, which always forms a highlight of the University calendar. However, in September 2021, we presented a digital exhibition that brought to life the individual talent and creativity of our students.



Our final year acting and performance students helped model costumes in an indoor and outdoor photoshoot. We're delighted to give you a glimpse of that showcase which offers an insight into the hard work that our 2021 costume design and construction students put into their unique creations.

Each costume is a visual delight - each one tells its own story and brings to life a unique character. The level of detail and care which has gone into every item takes the viewer on a journey, whether that is back in time or to the fantastical future. □

Welcome to the jungle – getting creative with Adam Park

50 YEARS
of Drama &
Performing Arts



Adam Park
Head of Social Programming
& Production

Jungle Creations Head of Social Programming & Production, Adam Park and Stefan Armitage, Head of Social Editorial

It's a jungle out there – but that hasn't stopped Adam Park rising up the ranks to create and manage content for some of the biggest brands on social. His work as Head of Social Programming & Production at Jungle Creations, a social first publisher based in London, has seen his ideas and creations followed by millions and seen by billions.

A self-confessed theatre kid, Adam studied BA (Hons) Theatre and Film at QMU between 2011 and 2015. He now uses his theatrical talents and his passion for social media to create ideas that help people thrive online and in the real world. Rather than just studying the current trends, Adam's agency is shaping, creating and breaking them.

From amateur dramatics in Rosyth, to working with Red Bull, Sony Music, Burger King and Oreo, Adam takes us through his journey.

What sparked your interest in the creative arts?

I was very much a theatre kid at high school and studied drama at an Advanced Higher level. I acted in local amateur productions and performed in shows at the Edinburgh Fringe.

I was also really engaged in digital media from a young age with a keen interest in photography and design. I grew up when social media was just taking off and spent most nights on my computer, learning how to design Bebo backgrounds and getting stuck into other internet legends gone by.

My oldest sister was studying animation at university so I had access to Adobe products and became confident using things like Photoshop and Premiere Pro, which fuelled my learning.

Why did you choose to apply to QMU and what attracted you to the Theatre and Film course?

Drama was the school subject I got most from and my teachers were keen for me to study acting but I was eager to find a course that combined film production with the aspects of acting I loved.

It was also important that the course offered practice-based learning and wasn't purely theoretical, as one of my biggest goals was to be hands-on and learn practical filmmaking skills.

I liked that the halls were only two minutes away from the University, a dream for 9am lectures!

What did you enjoy most about your course?

Definitely, the breadth of subjects the course offered, covering everything from contemporary British theatre to videography and screenwriting. As someone who wanted to experience all of what the creative arts had to offer, this was ideal for me. I discovered my strengths and potential career paths.

I also enjoyed the flexibility of being able to choose from a wide range of modules in year three and four, and build specialist skills. This was critical for the media production part of the course as the digital world was changing in real-time. When I started studying, online video was barely existent beyond a few blurry clips on YouTube, so it was exciting to see how my skills were transferable and relevant for many different industries.

What are your most memorable experiences of QMU?

I loved living in Edinburgh; it's the perfect city to be a student.

At the end of my third year, during the summer of 2014, I secured a place on the Santander Universities Internship Programme. For 12 weeks, I worked as a Media Intern with the Lothian Autistic Society. It was a brilliant opportunity to gain valuable work experience and was very rewarding to see my work help the charity communicate and promote the amazing work they do.

What did you do after graduation?

I freelanced for a while, filming football games, creating video ads for local businesses and editing jobs. The job market can be a bit slow after graduation and building a professional portfolio is sometimes tricky but you need to persevere.

At the beginning of 2017, I made the leap to London in search of full-time roles. I joined Jungle Creations as a Junior Video Editor and loved it from day one. I've worked in different positions within the company and I'm now Head of Social Programming & Production.

I'm fortunate to have worked with loads of big brands including Red Bull, Universal, Sony Music, Burger King and Oreo. I've also produced interviews with well-known celebrities including Gary Lineker, Tom Holland, Chris Pratt and Elizabeth Moss.

The biggest highlight has been working with the charity CALM, to produce a four-part series around exercise and its relationship with mental health. I've long admired the work they do and creating content with them, which received millions of views, was hugely fulfilling.

What does your role at Jungle Creations involve?

My main task is to optimise everything we do for social video, overseeing the content that goes out on our six media brands across different platforms to over 130 million followers.

From creative inception and editing to live posting for editorial and commercial content. I approve almost everything you see on a Jungle Creations brand.

What advice would you give to students?

Make the most of your free time with creative ventures. It may help you after graduation.

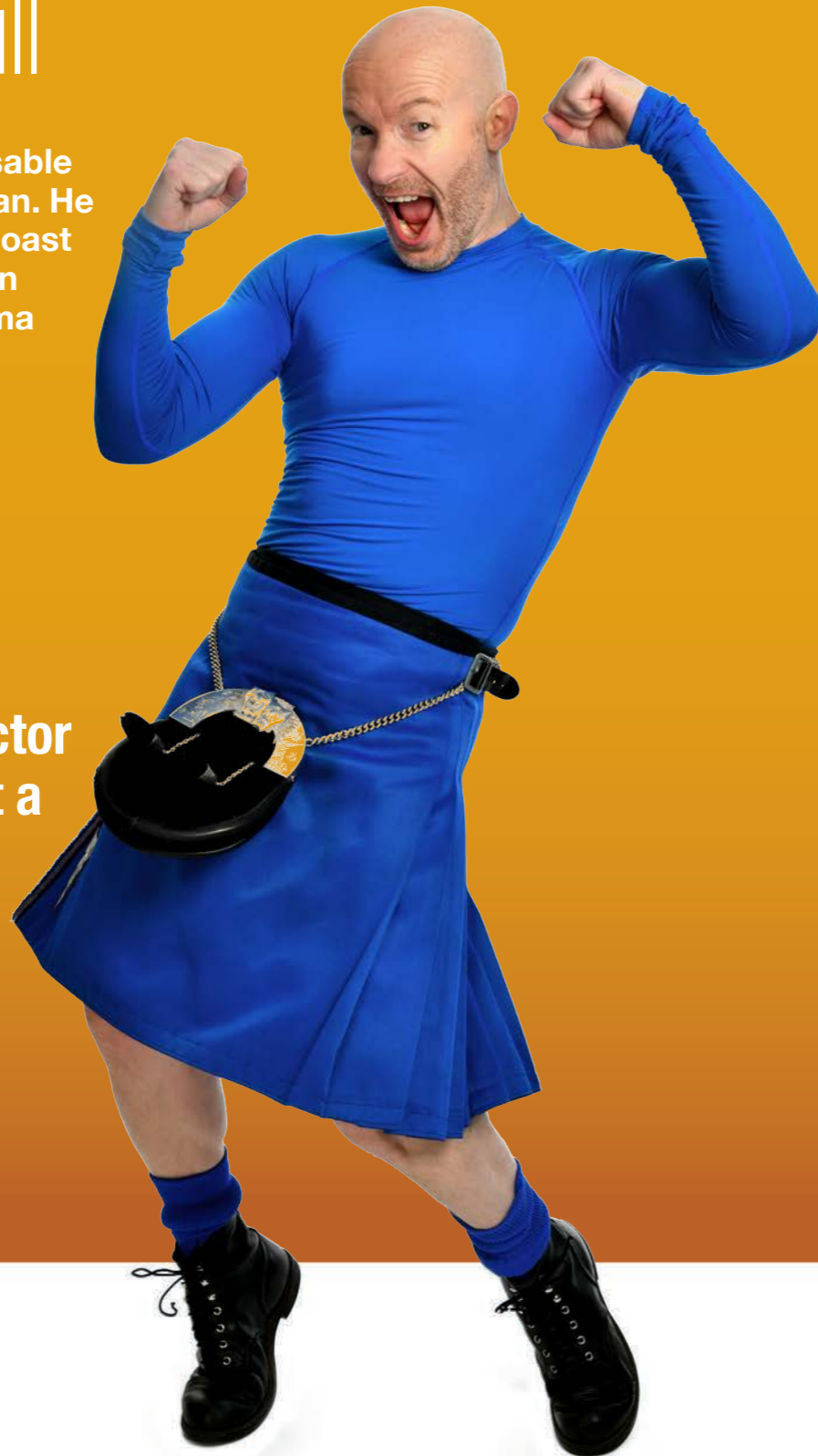
You're in a very cool spot in life where you have access to great resources and surrounded by talented people who want to create. □

Climbing Corstorphine Hill with Craig Hill

50 YEARS
of Drama &
Performing Arts

Craig Hill is instantly recognisable as the kilted Scottish comedian. He started his career as a West coast hairdresser, changed direction to become an East coast drama student, and then took centre stage as an internationally renowned comedian!

“I use all the skills I learned at QMC. Don’t you forget it; I’m an actor that does comedy, not a comedian.”



QMU’s Head of Development and Alumni, Thomas Kelly, talks to Craig about finding his fit at Queen Margaret, his journey into the world of comedy and the meticulous planning and hard work that has helped secure his rightful place as a household name.

Arriving after his short cycle from home, Craig makes a low-key entrance to the beautiful Scandinavian style café/bar on George Street in Edinburgh where he suggested we meet.

Our conversation kicks off with Craig revealing his passion for seeking out fabulous coffee houses and I discover he’s turned touring the world into an opportunity to become a bit of a travel blogger. He shows me his incredibly organised bookmarks on his phone, with each city he has visited around the world having its own folder with his recommended coffee shops, bars, and restaurants alongside many other things. I later discover it is this level of organisation that is his secret to a long successful comedy career – a discipline he learned at QMC.

Taking me back in time, Craig tells me about his youth as a goth with crimped hair. “I was a hairdresser which was pretty much just acting...well it was storytelling and they are interlinked. I’d have a right laugh with all the customers, but I knew it wasn’t a career for me.”

Craig had a passion for performing from a very young age. He gave up hairdressing when he was 20, enrolled at Langside College in Glasgow to study acting, which then led to an audition for Queen Margaret College. He enthuses: “I did my audition, loved it and got in! It was the beginning of the rest of my life.”

We talk about how Craig commuted to Queen Margaret College for the first six months of his course. He recalls: “I always remember that 902 bus from East Kilbride. It didn’t go up Corstorphine Hill, so each day I’d do that long, steep climb to the top of the brae to reach the Corstorphine campus.” He tries to continue but a little lightbulb moment happens, and he circles back.

Wide eyed, he says: “Actually, I’ve never thought of it like this, but I think climbing Corstorphine Hill was a big metaphor for my career. Each day you work hard, climb that hill, but boy it is worth it when you get to the top!” His trademark cheeky smile covers his face as he takes a moment to think nostalgically about his time in Corstorphine... it’s that or he’s just really proud of that metaphor!

Opening up about his experience, he says: “QMC was the most freeing place. I arrived on day one and I knew I had found my people. I actually came out as gay in my first week; I just knew this was a safe place where I could be me.” Hearing this, I realise I could easily be chatting to a current QMU student – Queen Margaret continues to be a space where people are free to be their true selves – no matter their sexuality, gender, faith or ethnicity.

“Right, so I graduated and I’m getting bits of acting work in theatre, wee films, some pantos plus a lot of theatre in education, to pay the bills. I also get a wee job in the Gilded Balloon Box Office. My pal, who was press officer, says to me, ‘Craig, I’ve booked you a slot to try out standup comedy as you make everyone laugh – oh and it’s in two days’ time!’” Craig is in full swing storytelling mode now. It’s just like watching him do standup and I’m enthralled.

“I was like ‘NO WAY’ but then I thought ‘WHY NO?’. I’ve always enjoyed doing things that scare me. And I totally believe in saying yes to everything. So, I got to thinking ‘What makes my friends laugh? I mean, who knew that Julie Andrews singing punk could start a career?’”

He continues: “The gig goes well, and I’m asked to do a slot at The Stand Comedy Club – gig two. Then my third gig is in Glasgow as part of the Comedy Store competition. I get through to the next round and bang, my fourth gig is on the stage in the King’s Theatre in Glasgow.” Craig’s eyes light up as he tells me more. “I’ve spent four years doing theatre in education, dreaming of performing on the King’s Theatre stage. But it’s taken me only four gigs to get on that very stage as a comedian – that’s when I thought, there’s something in this!”

“I then find myself doing London’s famous Comedy Store as gig number five. I remember sitting in the green room before the gig and everyone else was quite nervous. I thought to myself ‘Is comedy not meant to be fun?’ I got paid £150 for that gig, which was amazing as I was skint. So naturally I bought myself a pair of leather trousers!”

His comedy career really took off and he became a regular at the Edinburgh Fringe and on BBC comedy variety programmes. Today, Craig is a household name, well known as the kilted Scottish comedian that sells out venues across Scotland, the UK and Ireland. With shows in the likes of Paris, Barcelona, Amsterdam, New York, Sydney and Berlin, he’s spread his humour across the globe, and he’s graced the stage of some of the most prestigious venues including the Sydney Opera House and the London Palladium.

Craig quips: “To me, comedy is an acting job that lasted!”

Continued P28

“QMC was the most freeing place. I arrived on day one and I knew I had found my people.”

It's fascinating to discover his mindset and the mental preparation that goes into every show. He explains: "I get to the venue very early and I rehearse, rehearse, rehearse! I talk through all of my material. I take time to open up the folders in my head where all of my material sits and make sure I can access it." This takes me back to Craig's phone, with all of his food and drink recommendations stored away neatly in easily accessible folders – it's all linked.

He continues: "There is some improvising, but this took years to perfect. I'm a fast speaker, and this extended warm up before the show begins helps me get 'up-to-speed'. Audience interaction is everything for me and they keep me on my toes. I flourish under pressure, and I love the audience for that. But it's not just as easy as rocking up and chatting to the crowd. I use all the skills I learned at QMC. Don't you forget it – I'm an actor that does comedy, not a comedian."

"I have as much of a laugh as the audience do. I make a point of shaking every audience member's hand as they leave...not so much now with the pandemic. I honestly look forward to every gig I do. I hear people talking about how they dread doing a gig – I don't get it. When the lights go down, we could be anywhere. We aren't in a theatre or a venue in a city or town; we are in a moment...a moment of magic!"

Craig's phone alarm sounds, "That's my reminder. Look, it says 'Cook Gousto meal before meeting my pal at 6pm'. I bloody love that Gousto, I'm on meal 436!" This is a final insight into the discipline and organisation that Craig puts into his whole life, and I think it's safe to say that it's a key factor in his success.

I have one last question before he jumps on his bike for the short ride home: what advice would he offer students today?

"Don't be afraid to go off on a career tangent you didn't expect, as it might be the best thing that ever happens to you. Oh, and two other things: (1) Say yes to everything - it's always worth a try, and (2) If you are frightened of it, then it's probably going to be good for you."

A moment later, he cycles into the evening sun, en route to Gousto meal #436. □



NEW LGBT
CHARTER AWARDEE
QMU
EDINBURGH
SCHOOL OF ARTS, SOCIAL
SCIENCES AND MANAGEMENT

SILVER AWARD ★

A step forward for LGBT+ inclusivity on campus

QMU PRIDES ITSELF on its welcoming community environment – a place where people feel free to be themselves. As part of our drive to create an inclusive university, our School of Arts, Social Sciences and Management (ASSAM) led the charge towards achieving charter status with LGBT Youth Scotland, the national charity for LGBT+ young people.

ASSAM ramped up plans to promote LGBT+ students support - from making printed resources widely available, to joining the LGBT+ Student Society in the 2020 Edinburgh Pride march. But COVID restrictions forced the team back to the drawing board and the work continued with an online focus. A dedicated section of the website was created; and staff and students wrote blogs, signed a pledge to include gender pronouns in their email signatures, created a virtual Pride parade, and took part in awareness-raising campaigns such as Purple Friday. When a return to campus was possible, a collaboration with queer-led graduate video production company, Naka Media, resulted in a celebratory film about QMU's LGBT+ inclusive community.

Initially aiming to attain bronze status, ASSAM exceeded all expectations by achieving a silver award! This marks an important milestone in the University's commitment to social justice. □



Taking a holistic approach to creating a healthy university

Universities offer enormous potential for enhancing the wellbeing of students, staff and the wider community.



Karen Hicks

With our expertise in health sciences, it makes sense that QMU is taking a holistic approach to health – aspiring to create a learning environment and organisational culture that enhances the wellbeing and sustainability of its community.

Karen Hicks, Programme Leader for the new BSc (Hons) Public Health at QMU, gives an insight into our drive to create a 'Healthy University'.

Is there a sector wide movement to promote health and wellbeing?

I'm the QMU representative for the National Healthy Universities Network, which is informed by an international framework for universities which are active in health promotion. I also facilitate a Scottish Healthy Universities group. We share best practices about health promotion within universities. We look at the campus as whole and work out how to create an environment which encourages health and wellbeing.

Does the design of QMU's campus lend itself to good health?

It goes beyond the building design – it's equally about where the University is situated and the facilities around it. On my first visit to QMU, I arrived on public transport. Buses and trains come directly onto or next to the campus and National Cycling Route 1 runs through the campus. An almost full rack of pushbikes was a clear indication that sustainable travel was the norm and a trip around the campus perimeter unveiled a beautiful leafy landscape with swans, wildlife, water features, an allotment, and even an outdoor gym.

An attractive environment can have a positive impact on how we feel and perform, so I often walk in our beautiful grounds when I need to recharge – it's invigorating!

How about the indoor campus spaces?

The main academic building's atrium is bright, open and airy, so people don't feel contained. The space feels connected, and facilities are easily accessible. At the main entrance, there's a flag emphasising QMU's commitment to social justice – it's a strong public health message and clearly an institutional priority.

Do we have a University-wide approach to health?

Health-promoting universities are all about a holistic, whole university approach – every aspect of the environment, part of the curriculum, and every policy has a health lens on it. QMU is committed to a healthy university and there's lots of great work going on, including working with the Students' Union (QMUSU) to review the Student Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Why is this work important to QMU?

With an international reputation in health sciences we have a moral and ethical obligation to walk the talk when it comes to promoting good health and wellbeing on campus, not just when we are working in the community or on placement.

By committing to the Healthy University concept we will better support students and staff to reach their potential and become a force for good. □



Donors making a difference

The Papple Steading Digital Media Prize



PAPPLE STEADING

WE ARE DELIGHTED to welcome East Lothian's Papple Steading (founded by serial entrepreneur George Mackintosh) to the QMU donor community.

The Papple Steading Digital Media Prize brings together QMU students and recent alumni, from a range of disciplines, to create and produce engaging digital media which celebrates agricultural and food heritage in the Lothians.

In its first year, two multidisciplinary groups of students were awarded £4,500 each to produce digital content for the heritage centre at Papple Steading. The winners have produced two incredible short films - one explores the history of oats with local schoolchildren, and the other takes us back to the mid-1800's to hear from characters on the farm.

STV Children's Appeal and a local family trust

WHEN WE TALK ABOUT donors making an immediate impact, we have to mention the STV Children's Appeal and a local family trust.

During 2020, thanks to these donors, QMU launched the pioneering Enhanced Learning Tutoring Initiative. After such a successful project, further donations, totaling £280k, has extended the project and impact. With this, the project is currently supporting over 300 young people in S4-S6 in both East Lothian and Midlothian throughout the 21/22 school year.

Read more about the initiative and what it is like to be a tutor on page 15.

The Wooden Spoon Foundation

WE'D LIKE TO SAY a massive thank you to the Wooden Spoon Foundation for its incredible donation of £20,000 to support Scotland's first ever Frame Running equipment hub.

Frame Running allows people who are not able to run functionally, and may have limited or no ability to walk independently, to engage in an activity where they can propel themselves using a running bike. Research at QMU has been pivotal in bringing Frame Running to the forefront of parasports. This research has now allowed Frame Running to be included in European and World Para Athletics championships and to be added to the provisional list for the 2024 Paralympics in Paris.

Support from the Wooden Spoon Foundation will create an equipment hub that will support children and young people, with limited mobility to access frame equipment, become mobile and gain independence through sport. This, in turn, will help build the pathway for Scotland to continue to nurture leading international athletes in Frame Running.

Santander summer bursaries

ONCE AGAIN, SANTANDER has found new ways to support our students during the pandemic. The summer of 2021 was another difficult period - many seasonal jobs that would normally allow students to earn enough to return to study in September, had simply vanished.

Thanks to the support of Santander, we managed to offer a new summer bursary scheme, supporting those who were most negatively impacted by the pandemic and at risk of being unable to pay their bills and living costs during the summer period.

Beya Thomson, Public Sociology graduate and Summer Bursaries' recipient, said: "The Summer Bursary was a life saver for me and I'm so grateful for the help and support that it provided me with. I was really struggling with personal difficulties. My studies had to be extended due to the pandemic and, as a result, I had to finish my course work over the summer. The Summer Bursary helped me meet the needs of my three children and complete my honour's degree, achieving a 2:1! Without it, I would have been unable to graduate in 2021 and may never have completed my degree." □

I really hope you have enjoyed reading our 89th edition of QMYOU.

As always, we are overwhelmed by the support from our donors. Philanthropy continues to play an incredibly important part in changing the lives of our students and graduates, as well as helping the communities we serve.

Throughout the magazine we have seen examples of how our donors are helping to make an impact - from Jamie and Katherine Riddell, who established a new entrepreneurship prize (page 14), to our 'Be a Costumier' supporters, who helped make our digital costume showcase a reality (page 22 and 23). As we approach the end of this edition, I wanted to share news of our most recent donors and the initiatives that are making an incredible impact at QMU.

Speak soon

Thomas Kelly
Head of Development and Alumni
Class of 2011

Graduates' Association Update

By Lindsay M C Irvine, President

Despite another strange and challenging year, the Graduates' Association has continued to thrive.

Annual General Meeting

Last year, we held a Zoom AGM with a good attendance of 15 plus members and many apologies. Carol Brennan, former Director of the Consumer Dispute Resolution Centre at QMU, and Claire Seaman, Reader within QMU's School of Business, were both welcomed to the Committee. We look forward to gaining from their expertise. Claire is also now Membership Secretary as Sylvia Northcott decided it was time to relax a bit after many years in the role. We have had several new members join us in the last year, so please do encourage QMU friends to become part of the Association; it is open to all graduates of QMU, as well as current and retired staff.

Graduation and the Atholl Crescent Award 2021

The Atholl Crescent Award was offered within QMU's School of Health Sciences, and we were pleased to award it to Jacob Beckett, a Podiatry student. I was delighted to attend one of the many graduation events held on campus in July, and to meet graduates and staff from all areas of the University. There was sunshine on all three graduation days, and it was marvellous to see so many students with their families being able to celebrate this important milestone in the grounds of the University.

QMU events

I was pleased to lay a wreath on behalf of the Graduates' Association at the Universities' Joint Remembrance Day Service on 14th November in Old College, Edinburgh. This was my first official event since being elected President and it was lovely to be part of this small but moving commemorative occasion.

Socialising (during COVID-19)

Since our last QMYou update we have continued with very successful Zoom coffee get-togethers, although these finish in June and restart in October. As many members from other parts of the UK were keen to stay involved, we are now trialling alternate face-face and Zoom meetings. Keep a look out for the email details.

Our first face-to-face social gathering was in Le Bistrot on George IV Bridge in November and it was fabulous to see people again, with some new faces joining us. Once again, we were excited to have our Christmas lunch provided by QMU's hospitality students. We are planning to try out several venues for coffee over the next few months and are looking forward to our March dinner event. Finally, we are in the process of putting together some social events with suggestions including: Visit to the Japanese Garden in Dollar; Tour of Sculpture Gallery; and Visit to the Queen Charlotte Rooms.

Please send any ideas you may have for future GA social events to me at: E: president@qmuga.org.uk or Cecilia Young at E: social@qmuga.org.uk □



QMUGA Christmas Lunch 2021

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A QMU Alumni Conversations Podcast

'Going Off Script With...'



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OUR FIRST EVER QMU Alumni Podcast 'Going Off Script With...!' celebrates 50 years of Drama and Performing Arts teaching at QMU and is hosted by Professor David Stevenson, Dean of the School of Arts, Social Sciences and Management.

The series sees our alumni guests talk about their paths to success, from University days through to career highlights, with plenty of fun, insightful anecdotes in between. #50yearsQMU

Search 'QMU Alumni Podcast' from wherever you listen to your Podcasts or go to:

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