

Alumni Weekend 2015

The TCD Alumni Weekend 2015 attracted about 150 medical graduates, mostly classes celebrating their anniversaries, from around the world. We were especially delighted to see two graduates from 1955 – Dr Christopher Whitfield and Dr James Marshall and Dr George Cudworth, who graduated in 1959. All three graduates attended the Tercentenary celebrations in 2011 and we were delighted to see them back in Trinity.



A Medical Alumni Symposium included talks by Professor Owen Smith, Regius Professor of Medicine, Professor of Haematology Trinity College Dublin, Department of Paediatric Haematology and Oncology, Our Lady's Children's Hospital Crumlin; Dr Siobhan Pittock, Vice-Chair in the Department of Paediatric and Adolescent Medicine at Mayo Clinic; Chair of Practice for Mayo Clinic Children's Center, Rochester, Minnesota, USA; Dr Sophia Varadkar, Consultant Paediatric Neurologist and Honorary Senior Lecturer; Specialty Lead for the Epilepsy Unit and Children's Epilepsy Surgery Service; Great Ormond St Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust & University College London Institute of Child Health, UK; Professor Max Fehily, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon, Spire Manchester Hospital, UK; Dr David Orr, Clinical Senior Lecturer in Surgery and Paediatrics, TCD, Consultant Plastic Surgeon at St James's Hospital and Our Lady's Children's Hospital Crumlin (chair); Professor Paul Browne, Professor of Haematology, Consultant Haematologist and Director of the National Adult Stem Cell Transplant Programme at St. James's Hospital Dublin, Head of School of Medicine, who made an opening address.

A Trinity Graduate Shares Nobel Prize in Medicine 2015



Dr William Campbell in Trinity in 2012 on the day of being conferred with the honorary degree

The Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2015 was divided, one half jointly to William C. Campbell and Satoshi Ōmura “for their discoveries concerning a novel therapy against infections caused by roundworm parasites” and the other half to Youyou Tu “for her discoveries concerning a novel therapy against malaria”. Dr William Campbell, former Director of Parasitology at Merck who was centrally involved in developing Ivermectin, the cure against

river blindness, was conferred with a Doctor in Science (Sc.D.) by Trinity in 2012. In 1987 he spearheaded the decision by Merck to distribute Ivermectin free to millions of people in what became one of the first and foremost examples of a public/private partnership in international health. Annually 25 million people are treated under this scheme preventing new cases of river blindness. He was also involved in the development of several drugs used in human and veterinary medicine. Originally from Donegal, he is a graduate of Trinity with first class honours in Zoology. On retirement from the pharmaceutical industry, he became a Fellow of the Research Institute for Scientists Emeriti at Drew University.

A Parting Gift

Available on RTÉ Player, RTÉ documentary “A Parting Gift” follows 1st year medical students at Trinity as their education is enriched by direct contact with the remains of those who donate their bodies to medical science and education. In the Anatomy Department, the Body Donation Programme is overseen by Joint Chief Technical Officers Siobhan Ward and Philomena McAteer. Their job is to look after each new donor,

as well as their bereaved families. Siobhan started in Anatomy in 1977 followed shortly after by Philomena in 1981. There were about 120 medical and dental students using the dissection room in those early days whereas now there are 600 students using the dissection theatre weekly. Siobhan and Philomena have seen many changes in the attitudes to Body Donation and have worked at fostering an environment of openness and transparency in this area. In 2010 they completed a M.Sc. in Bereavement Studies which enabled them to create a more

supportive and holistic setting for donors, donor families and students. Siobhan’s and Philomena’s compassion makes them the stars of the documentary.



Siobhan Ward and Philomena McAteer

Nano Medicine Project Wins Major European Award

A project led by two Trinity College Dublin researchers – Professor of Molecular and Translational Medicine, Yuri Volkov, of the School of Medicine and AMBER Investigator, and Dr Adriele Prina-Mello, Department of Clinical Medicine, School of Medicine, and AMBER Investigator – has won the FutureFlash! Best Project competition at Europe’s largest nanotechnology Convention the EuroNanoForum 2015, in which they competed against over 1000 projects in this field. The winning project called NAMDIATREAM involves the development of nanotechnology-based tools to enable early detection and imaging



Professor Yuri Volkov and Dr Adriele Prina-Mello holding the Future Flash

of molecular biomarkers of the most common cancer types and of cancer which has spread. Trinity led the large consortium NAMDIATREAM of 22 partners in 9 countries. Almost a third of total funding of €12m went to Ireland with the lead-partners Trinity taking €1.8m and an additional €2m shared by three other Irish partners: UCD and SMEs Cellix and Radisens Diagnostics.

SFI Investigator Award to Professor Michael Rowan

Professor Michael Rowan of the School of Medicine and Trinity College Institute of Neuroscience is among five Trinity researchers who secured €4.7 million for major research projects out of 23 Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) awards. His project is entitled “Alzheimer’s Disease Patient-Derived Synaptic Plasticity-Disrupting Soluble Protein Assemblies”. The SFI Investigator Programme, with an international peer-review selection, aims to generate impact for Ireland, both societal and economic, through supporting world-class scientific research.

The Gene that Affects Alcohol Responses

Scientists have now established that the gene *Rsu1* is pivotal in affecting naïve and acquired preferences to alcohol, and that holds true from humans to flies. Behavioural, genetic and biochemical experiments all supported the findings, which were reported in the leading international journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the*

United States of America. The research was conducted by an international consortium led by Professor Adrian Rothenfluh of University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas. The group included Dr Arun Bokde, Assistant Professor in the School of Medicine and the Trinity College Institute of Neuroscience (a member of the IMAGEN Consortium).



Professor Michael Rowan

Smoking and Tuberculosis

TB is an infectious disease that kills 1.5 million people each year, and smoking is the biggest driver of the global TB epidemic. Scientists at Trinity and St James's Hospital have unlocked the mechanism underlying the connection between smoking and TB. This discovery will considerably strengthen anti-smoking efforts to control TB and uncovers new therapy and vaccine options for TB. Their research was published in *The American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*. The research team, led by Dr Seonadh O'Leary, found that the white blood cells located in the lungs of smokers and ex-

smokers, which are responsible for fighting infections, showed a weakened response to the TB infection. In the smoker's lungs, these cells malfunction, and fail to make the chemical messengers that would normally fight the TB bacteria. The researchers found that these cells suppress the lungs' immunity after infection, which gives the TB bacteria a chance to take over. The research was funded by the Health Research Board (HRB) and The Royal City of Dublin Hospital Trust. Joseph Keane, Professor of Medicine at the School of Medicine and St James's Hospital, is HRB Clinician Scientist, and the senior author of the study.

Professor Orla Hardiman Becomes Member of the RIA



Professor Orla Hardiman was recently admitted as member of the Royal Irish Academy (RIA) – the highest academic honour in Ireland. Orla Hardiman is Professor of Neurology and Academic Director of the Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute; she is also Consultant Neurologist at Beaumont Hospital. She leads a multidisciplinary group of over 30 researchers investigating the epidemiology and causes of, and new treatments for, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. Professor Hardiman has a strong international reputation and is an effective and committed advocate for patients with neurodegenerative conditions.

Honorary Doctorate to Dr Stanley Quek

Stanley Quek M.B., M.A., (1970), Executive Chairman, Region Development Pte Ltd, was conferred with a Doctor in Laws. For over 30 years, he has assisted Irish universities in developing collaborations and recruiting students from Singapore to study Medicine and Dentistry in Ireland. This has been of great benefit to the whole island of Ireland, not just Trinity, as it has enabled all medical schools to strengthen links in Asia.



Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine

A new Academic Unit of Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine in the School of Medicine was officially opened with the inaugural lecture of Cathal Moran, Professor of Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine. The lecture 'To Replace, Repair or Regenerate?' examined the potential of regenerative medicine in Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine. Professor Cathal Moran is a Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon at Sports Surgery Clinic, Santry. He has also recently been appointed Honorary Professor at Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and a Professorial Fellow of Trinity. The new Academic Orthopaedic Unit at Trinity is only the second such academic unit in Ireland. In addition to its base in Orthopaedic Surgery, this is also the first ever Chair of Sports Medicine at an Irish university. The venture between Sports Surgery Clinic and Trinity College Dublin also represents the first time the clinical component of a Chair in a surgical discipline has been hosted by a private hospital. In his inaugural lecture Professor Moran discussed how the concepts and goals of regenerative medicine are as enduring as humankind, from the ancient Prometheus myth that epitomizes inherent healing powers to most recent Nobel Prizes in Physiology and Medicine that recognises the ground breaking decoding of cell fate decisions.



Provost Dr Patrick Prendergast, Professor Cathal Moran and Mr Ray Moran, Medical Director of Sports Surgery Clinic

In Memoriam – Peter Gatenby, Hon FTCD



Peter Bronte Gatenby, M.B. (1946), M.D. (1949), F.R.C.P.I., F.R.C.P. Lond., Hon F.R.C.P. Ed., Hon F.A.C.P., Hon F.T.C.D., Trinity's first full-time professor of clinical medicine, passed away in August 2015. Related to the famous Bronte sisters on his paternal grandmother's side, Peter was born in Dublin in 1923. From a distinguished Trinity family – his father James Bronte Gatenby was professor of zoology and comparative anatomy at Trinity – Peter qualified in medicine at Trinity in 1946. Following graduation Dr Gatenby worked as a house doctor in Baggot Street Hospital and a year later moved to the UK. Having worked as a regional medical officer in Wimbledon and other hospitals, he returned

to Ireland in 1953. From then on to 1974, Dr Gatenby worked as a consulting physician in Stevens' Hospital and a consultant general physician at both the Meath and the Rotunda Hospitals. Peter was appointed as Trinity's first full-time professor of clinical medicine in 1960. In 1974 Dr Gatenby became Medical Director for the United Nations, where he worked until his retirement in 1987. From 1975 to 1978 Dr Gatenby held the Regius Professor of Physic (1637) at Trinity, among the oldest chairs of medicine in Europe. Apart from research papers, Dr Gatenby also wrote "The School of Physic: Trinity College Dublin: a Retrospective View" (1994) and "History of the Meath Hospital" (1996). In 2002, in recognition of Professor Gatenby's selfless commitment the School of Medicine established the Peter Gatenby Award given to the student contributing most to the welfare and academic and social development of the Faculty of Health Sciences. Peter Gatenby was predeceased by his wife Yvette, who died in 2006, and their daughter Odette. He is survived by his son Robin and daughter-in-law Kathleen Lyons, who are both Trinity medical graduates, and their children. He will be fondly remembered for his contribution to the development of medicine in Trinity and Ireland and for his gentle personality, interest in people and for his dedication to patients and students alike.

Dr Sam Lam's Support for Chinese Studies

Dr Sam Lam, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O. (1963), an alumnus from Hong Kong, through a major philanthropic donation enabled Trinity to develop a M.Phil. in Chinese Studies, which is one of the programmes of the recently established Trinity Centre for Asian Studies.



Sam and Ellen Lam with Provost, Dr Patrick Prendergast in Hong Kong

Save the Dates

2 December 2015

Christmas Commons

22 December 2015

Christmas Homecoming

26-28 August 2016

Alumni Weekend at TCD

For more information please visit

www.tcd.ie/alumni/events

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Benefactor – Professor Donald G. Weir

Professor Donald G. Weir, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O. (1958), M.D., F.T.C.D., F.R.C.P.I., F.R.C.P., F.A.C.P., a dedicated Trinity academic, caring clinician, a scientist of international renown, has been honoured as a Benefactor through the Centuries. Since the mid-60's, Professor Weir has given quietly and generously to Trinity and St James's Hospital gifts totalling €1.5 million. His name was inscribed on the roll of honour at the grand entrance to the Dining Hall.



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