



Queen's University
Belfast



Bulletin

Special
2017
Edition



Centre for Cancer Research and Cell Biology,
School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences,
Queen's University Belfast,
97 Lisburn Road, Belfast, BT9 7AE
T: +44 (0) 28 9097 2760
W: www.qub.ac.uk/ccrcb

THE IMPACT OF GIVING



Thank you from our cancer researchers

Improving outcomes and the quality of life for people with cancer lies at the heart of everything we do within the Centre for Cancer Research and Cell Biology (CCRCB) at Queen's. Our main objective is to drive forward evidence-based, innovative research and clinical trials in high incidence cancers including gastro-intestinal, pancreatic, prostate, breast and ovarian and blood cancers. We are developing biomarkers and new therapies that enable our Centre to be at the forefront of personalised cancer medicine, ensuring that each patient gets the treatment that is best suited for them as an individual.

Much of our work is funded through grants from research councils and industry. However, we receive valuable additional funding from philanthropic sources such as local charities and through individuals and patient families

who are working with the Queen's Foundation to support research directly within CCRCB.

We value very highly the gifts, large and small, that we receive through the Foundation. These funds have provided support for a number of PhD studentships, post-doctoral roles, travel scholarships, summer student placements and specific research in all of our main focus disease areas. Unrestricted donations provide vital seed funding for early research projects where we need to gather test data and demonstrate initial findings before we apply for grant funding.

Outlined overleaf are just a few examples of how your gifts have impacted on our research. My colleagues and I greatly appreciate every individual donation. We hope that you will continue to support us as together we can make a difference.



*Professor David Waugh
Director, CCRCB*

THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING TO SUPPORT OUR RESEARCH



Professor Joe O'Sullivan with the McGirr family

Everything we do is centred on caring for people affected by cancer and trying to enhance and prolong life. Individual cancer medicine is altering the course of treatment in ways we could have only imagined a few years ago. I am especially grateful to the family of the late John McGirr, Omagh who have fundraised in John's name for several years, raising more than £65,000 for prostate cancer research.

My clinical colleagues and I greatly appreciate every pound donated to support our research in CCRCB. I am extremely thankful to my many patients, their families and friends who have fundraised for us or made individual gifts.

For those of us working in prostate cancer research, these gifts have enabled post-doctoral and PhD research in new treatments for aggressive forms of the disease as well as the appointment of

research nurses to work in the clinics and recruit patients on to clinical trials.

Thank you for choosing to support our research. We will continue to use your donations to carry out the best possible research to benefit people with cancer both here in Northern Ireland and beyond.

*Professor Joe O'Sullivan, Clinical Director, Northern Ireland Cancer Centre
Professor of Radiation Oncology, CCRCB*

DEVELOPING NEW TREATMENTS FOR OVARIAN CANCER RESEARCH

One of the biggest issues in ovarian cancer research is the lack of pre-clinical cell line models to facilitate the development of new treatments in the laboratory. In recent years, we have been fortunate to receive several thousand pounds in philanthropic gifts that have enabled us to invest in a central pre-clinical cell line resource.

This kind of research activity would not usually be supported by conventional grants. Specifically, we have been able to recruit a technician who is focused on the collection of patient tumour samples from the Belfast City Hospital. Cells are extracted from these samples to generate new cell lines that can be used for laboratory research. The cell lines have facilitated the development of new drugs which are being taken into clinical trials. They have also helped us to identify those patients for whom chemotherapy may not be the best course of treatment.

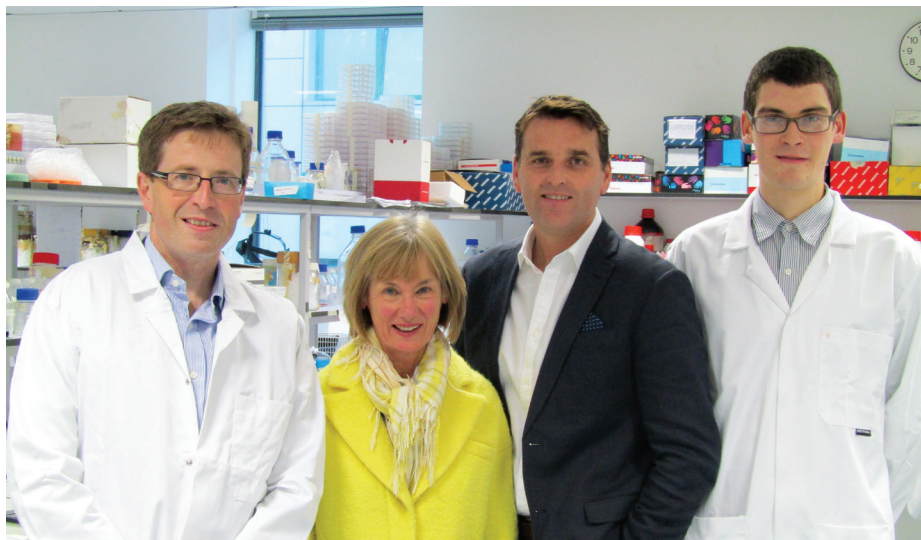


Professor Richard Kennedy (left), McClay Professor of Experimental Medicine with donors to ovarian cancer research, Karen Armstrong and Barry Brewster

IMPROVING OUTCOMES IN PANCREATIC CANCER

We are extremely grateful to the friends and family of the late John Martin and to other individuals impacted by pancreatic cancer, for supporting our research over the last 18 months. Using these donations and leveraging further funds from Northern Ireland Health and Social Care (HSCNI), we have been able to fund a PhD studentship, taken up by talented chemistry graduate Adam Leach. Adam is working on the development of therapeutic nanomedicines for the treatment of this devastating disease.

The level of interest and support in our work from families touched by this disease is inspiring us to ensure that we produce high-quality research that will impact on our understanding of this cancer and how it can be treated.



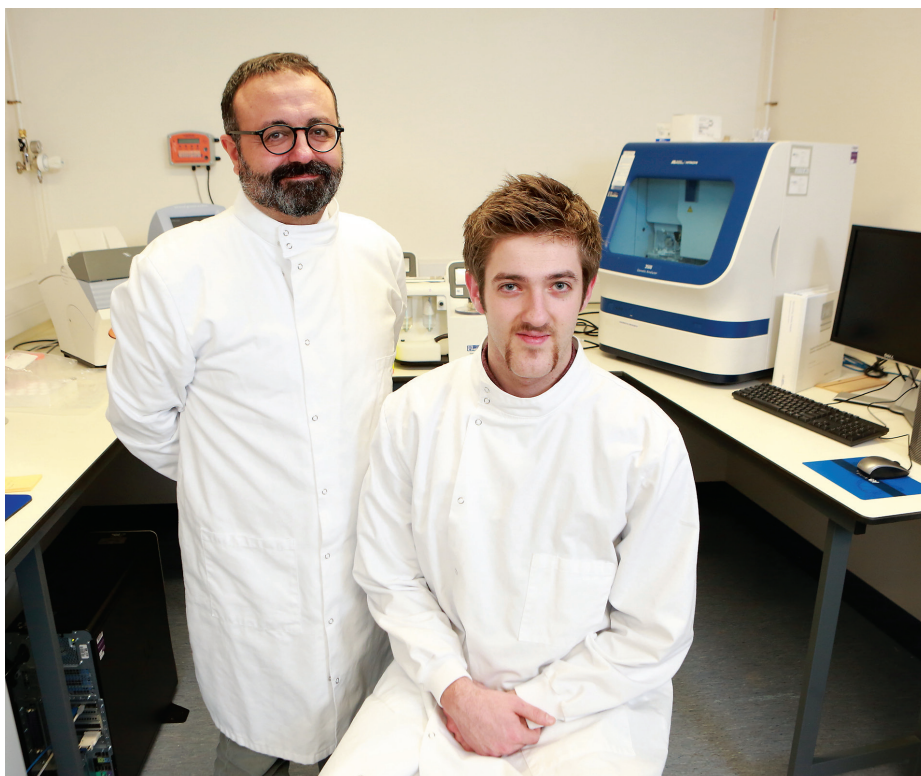
Professor Chris Scott (left) with Sharon Martin, Paul Martin and Adam Leach

SUPPORTING BOWEL CANCER RESEARCH

Over 40,000 people are diagnosed with bowel (colorectal) cancer each year, making it the UK's fourth most common cancer. Therefore we were delighted when The Seán Crummey Memorial Fund was established to support bowel cancer research. The Fund commemorates Seán Crummey, the voice behind the popular television and radio show *The Folks on the Hill*. Seán's family and friends have raised over £70,000 for CCRCB. This has funded a three-year PhD studentship for Matthew Alderdice to carry out research in bowel cancer.

Matthew's backing from the Fund contributed to the cost of his training on the latest state-of-the-art research equipment and licensed his usage of specialist machines each time he carried out an experiment. It also funded a modest monthly stipend and travel to conferences where he had the opportunity to share his research and seek out potential collaborators in the same field.

The Seán Crummey Memorial Fund clearly made a huge impact on Matthew's life, enabling him to use exciting technologies in search of solutions to bowel cancer and giving him a CV that will certainly stand out. More importantly, funding such as this has the potential to impact on the lives of countless other people.



Dr Matthew Alderdice (right) with Professor Manuel Salto-Tellez who supervised his PhD

"It was really good to know where my funding came from and how hard-earned that support was. It certainly made me think about getting the most out of my research and gave me additional – very personal – motivation."

Matthew Alderdice

THE ENTWISTLE FAMILY TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIP

Dr Philip Dunne, Senior Research Fellow in CCRCB, was awarded the Entwistle Family Travel Scholarship in September 2016. Thanks to the generosity of Queen's alumnus, Dr Andrew Entwistle, Philip is now spending several months working in a world-renowned laboratory in Turin, Italy.

The scholarship has enabled Philip to drive forward his research in bowel cancer and learn new investigation techniques. He is working with the internationally distinguished research group in the University of Turin, led by Assistant Professor Federica Di Nicolantonio.

Welcoming the opportunity to travel, Philip said: "I am very grateful to Dr Entwistle for funding this scholarship. It will have a significant effect on my career prospects by providing me with international collaborative experience, essential in cancer research."



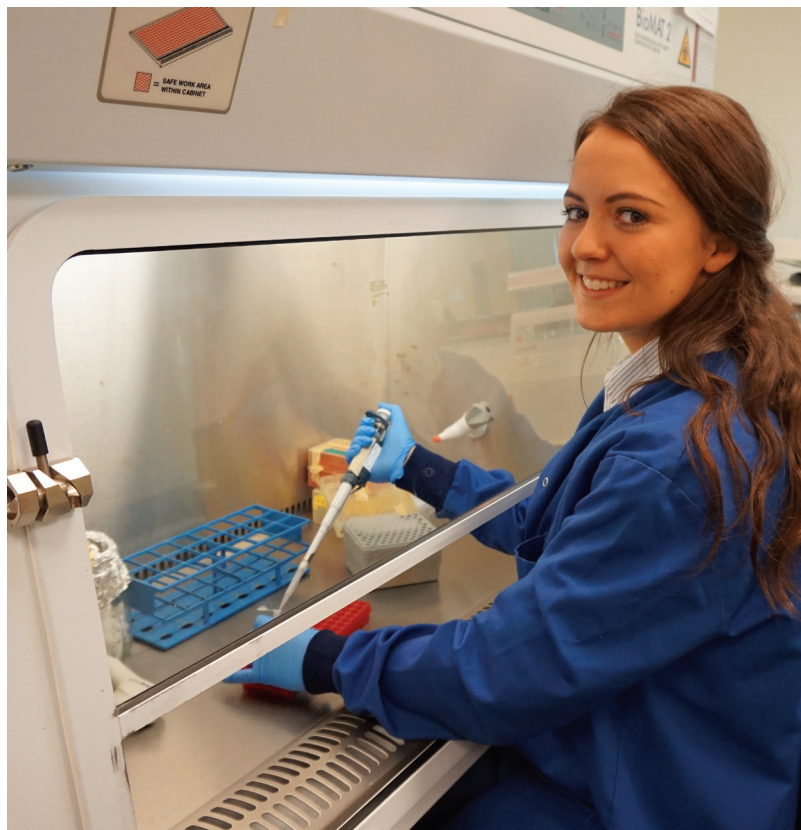
Dr Philip Dunne

THE MATHEWS FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP

"As part of my MRes in Translational Medicine, I am undertaking a 38-week project in cancer research, looking at the identification and validation of predictive markers for poor outcome in triple negative breast cancers, following DNA damaging chemotherapy treatment."

"Taking a year out to do a Masters degree after completing three years as a medical student is a fantastic opportunity, which most other students cannot avail of. I am fortunate to be able to carry out my own research for a year, and am especially privileged to be in the receipt of the Mathews Family Scholarship. Without this support I may not have been able to fund this research year. I am very grateful for the generous scholarship provided."

Sinead Donnelly



Sinead at work in the laboratory

INNOVATIONS IN BREAST CANCER RESEARCH

We were delighted to receive significant philanthropic support to help drive forward our breast cancer research programmes in CCRCB. The contribution from people such as Ivor and Cecilia Broomfield and the Holstein Society Northern Ireland who donated over £13,000, and the friends and family of Sandra Campbell, who have been fundraising for our research for a significant period of time and who have raised more than £50,000, cannot be overestimated. We depend on unrestricted gifts at all levels to provide us with the funds for innovative start-up projects.

We have also benefited from the generosity of the Darren Clarke Foundation which facilitated the setting up of three Heather Clarke PhD Scholarships. These scholarships have had an impact not only on our research outputs, but also on the lives of the students who received them.



Darren Clarke Scholarship recipients: (L-R) Jekaterina Vohhodina, Rebecca Steele and Amy Templeman

"The PhD funding provided by the Darren Clarke Foundation has had a profound impact on my life. The opportunity to study at Queen's University Belfast has allowed me to gain invaluable knowledge in cancer biology in a world-leading institution within a cutting-edge laboratory, an opportunity I simply would not have been afforded without the generous support of the Darren Clarke Foundation."

Dr Jekaterina Vohhodina

"The Heather Clarke Scholarship has given me the opportunity to present my research at international cancer research conferences and discuss my work with world-leading cancer researchers. Having lost my own mother to breast cancer many years ago, the PhD scholarship has enabled me to increase my understanding and ultimately advance research into a disease area that affects the lives of many women."

Rebecca Steele



Dr Kienan Savage (centre) with Cecilia and Ivor Broomfield

Breast cancer research in CCRCB focuses on a subgroup of breast cancers called 'Triple Negative Breast Cancers' (TNBCs) – so called because they lack three key receptors, making them very difficult to treat. Current chemotherapy treatments for TNBCs are limited and only work for some patients, whilst others either do not respond at all, or develop resistance after treatment.



Michelle Napier and Dr Kienan Savage

We are trying to identify the likely cancer causing genes in TNBCs, so that we can develop novel treatment approaches. The Darren Clarke Foundation funding has allowed us to identify an enzyme, which appears to be important in promoting the growth and spread of breast cancers, including TNBCs. Our ongoing efforts now include the development of inhibitory drugs which can be used as part of novel chemotherapy approaches.

MORE EFFECTIVE RADIOTHERAPY TREATMENT FOR LUNG CANCER

Radiotherapy is often used to treat lung cancer when surgery is not possible or not appropriate. At Queen's, our research has already contributed to several improvements in radiotherapy treatment, such as more accurate radiotherapy delivery with the use of a scanning technique called a PET/CT.

In an effort to further improve the effectiveness of lung cancer radiotherapy, we are investigating the combination of radiotherapy with novel drugs. These drugs inhibit the repair of DNA damage by radiotherapy.

Thanks to the support we have received, we have been able to test these novel drugs in combination with radiotherapy in lung cancer models. The results so far are very promising and we have shown that the drug and radiotherapy combination increases cancer cell kill in the tumour



Dr Gerry Hanna with donors to lung cancer research, Damien and Helen McGlone

but not in the normal lung tissue. Queen's is now leading a UK national study seeking to test this radiotherapy drug combination in patients with lung cancer.

We are most grateful for the support and encouragement that you and the Queen's Foundation have given us.

Dr Gerry Hanna, Senior Lecturer CCRCB, Consultant Clinical Oncologist

DRIVING FORWARD PROSTATE CANCER RESEARCH – THE PORTER SCHOLARSHIP AND THE GRACEY FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP

Generous donors have recently funded a PhD student in prostate cancer research and a postdoctoral research fellow. Our aim is to develop more effective treatments for advanced prostate cancer.

Dr Chee Wee Ong, the Porter Scholar, is working on novel biomarkers in localised prostate cancer. These markers will help clinicians predict which prostate cancers will behave in an aggressive manner and which will grow slowly. This is extremely important as prostate cancer treatment options have dramatically increased in recent years with some patients being managed simply by close surveillance of their prostate cancer. Active treatment options include surgery, radiotherapy, hormonal therapy, chemotherapy – each of which has the potential for specific side effects. The research that Chee Wee is involved in has the potential to direct the right treatment to the right patient at the right time.

PhD student, Charles Haughey, the Gracey Family Scholar, is focused on developing prostate cancer models that are more representative of human cancer. These models are critical to enable us to test novel drug and radiation therapies prior to beginning early phase clinical studies involving patients. This is a complex research field and Charles is closely aligned with expert collaborators at the University of Toronto and with Professor Norman Maitland's laboratory at the University of York.



Helen Surgenor with the late Harold Porter who established the Porter Scholarship



William and Deirdre Gracey who set up the Gracey Family Scholarship with Vice-Chancellor, Professor Patrick Johnston (centre)

THANK YOU FOR FUNDRAISING FOR US

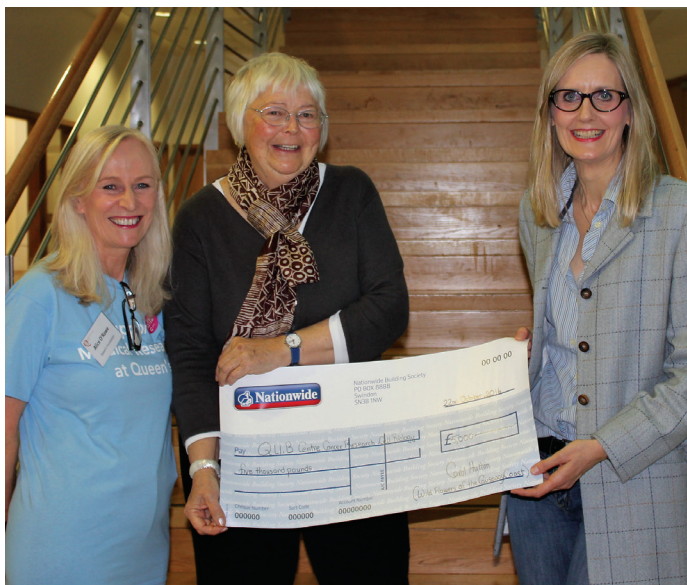
Thank you so much to everyone who has made an individual donation at any level to cancer research and to the many families who are currently fundraising for our research. We have had people running in the Belfast and New York Marathons, competing in the Great North Run and undertaking many other challenges. Dedicated individuals have organised coffee mornings, brunches, gala dinners, golf tournaments and numerous other events.

We have also benefited from donations in lieu of flowers for people who sadly died from cancer and from a number of generous legacy gifts to our cancer research programmes. We thank you for your continued support at every level. It is very much appreciated and enables our researchers to continue their innovative research.

Helen Surgenor, Head of Health Fundraising



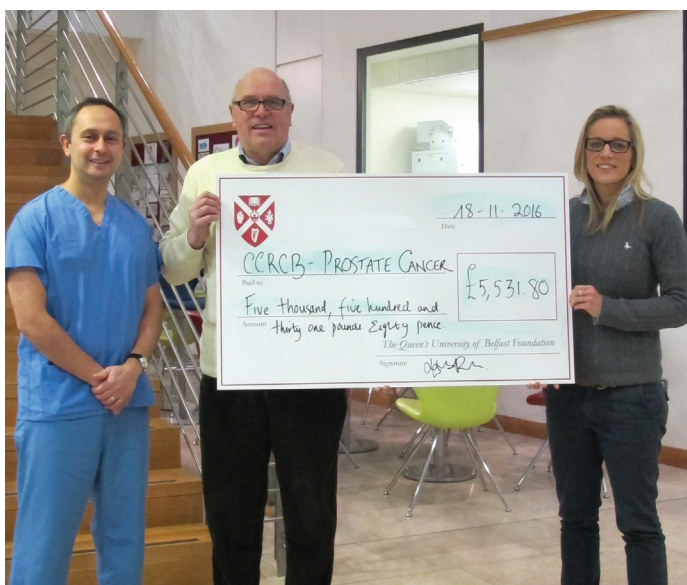
Professor Chris Scott and Margaret McGowan



(L-R) Alice O'Rawe, the late Carol Hutton and Ruth Boyd, Cancer Research UK Senior Nurse



Wilfred Keys and friends with Dr Kienan Savage (centre)



Dr Suneil Jain (left) with Arnie and Lynsey Patterson



Dr Kienan Savage with the Henderson family and Rachel Ketola

SUPPORT CANCER RESEARCH AT QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

If you would like to support the ongoing research in CCRCB, cheques should be made payable to "Queen's Foundation – cancer research" and sent to:

The Health Fundraising Team
Development and Alumni Relations Office
Queen's University Belfast
Belfast BT7 1NN

100% of your donation will be used for the research area of your choice. As we are a registered charity (NIC102044), we can claim Gift Aid on a donation from anyone who is a UK tax payer, increasing the value of the donation by 25%. You will receive a thank you letter acknowledging your support.

For those of you who would like to fundraise for us, we have developed an online fundraising guide. The simple guide provides tips on planning and promoting a fundraising event, using JustGiving and it includes poster / flyer templates and a sponsorship form.

Check it out online at darq.qub.ac.uk/FundraisingGuide



If you are not already a donor to CCRCB and would like to find out more, please contact any member of the Health Fundraising team (full contact details below).

Helen Surgenor (Head of Health Fundraising)
h.barnes@qub.ac.uk / tel: 028 9097 1568

Alice O'Rawe (Development Manager, Health)
alice.orawe@qub.ac.uk / tel: 028 9097 5233

Rachel Ketola (Development Manager, Health)
r.ketola@qub.ac.uk / tel: 028 9097 5073



"When one of our patients received world-class care at the Cancer Centre at Belfast City Hospital, he decided to leave a significant legacy to Queen's. His generous bequest will enable our researchers to develop individualised treatments that will have higher cure rates, longer survival times, fewer side effects and provide a better quality of life."

Professor Richard Wilson,
Consultant Oncologist and Director
of the NI Cancer Trials Centre (NICTC)

LEAVE A LEGACY

Help support the pursuit of world-class education and life-changing research

If you would like to speak to someone about leaving a gift in your will, please contact Susan Wilson, Legacy Manager
Development and Alumni Relations Office,
Queen's University

T: +44 (0) 28 9097 3162
E: susan.wilson@qub.ac.uk

www.queensfoundation.com



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We are exceptional