



## Message from the President



Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to this edition of the College newsletter. As 2013 draws to a close we are looking back over recent events and looking forwards to things to come in the new year. Our Annual Montgomery Lecture has just taken place in the RCSI. A great number of us gathered to hear Nancy Newman from Emory University in Atlanta talk us through the innovative changes she and her team are pioneering in their unit. The talk gave us much to think about particularly as we seek to drive improvements in education and training. I was particularly pleased to welcome some of our colleagues from Neurology to Nancy's talk, which followed on from the equally successful RAMI meeting held earlier that day.

Congratulations to all the trainees who presented interesting papers and sincere thanks to all the Consultants and Ophthalmologists who participated in a very interactive meeting.

I recently attended a presentation on a new programme to support doctors called Practitioner Health Matters. Dr Ida Delargy, previously the Chairperson of the Sick Doctor scheme and Clinical Director of the new programme outlined the planned structures to support doctors with mental health and addiction problems. The new programme is in its infancy and I shall look forward to sharing further details with you in the future and to the College supporting its development.

As the Christmas season is upon us and as 2013 concludes may I wish a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year to you and your families.

*With best wishes*  
MARIE HICKEY DWYER

## International AMD & Retina Congress, Dublin 25-26 October

### Latest Innovations in the Fight against Retinal Diseases presented at International Congress in Dublin



*Pictured at the recent 13th International AMD & Retina Congress in Dublin were (L-R) Professor Borja Corcostegui, President of The Ocular Microsurgery Institute of Barcelona, Barcelona, Dr Giuseppe Guarnaccia, President of the European School for Advanced Studies in Ophthalmology, Marie Hickey-Dwyer, President of the ICO, Dr Neil Bressler, Chief of the Retina Division at John Hopkins University Hospital, Baltimore and Professor Francesco Bandello, President of the European Retina Society and Chair of the International Retina Congress Scientific Committee.*

The 13th International AMD and Retina Conference, organised by ESASO (European School for Advanced Studies in Ophthalmology) was held in The Convention Centre, Dublin on the 25th and 26th October. ICO President Marie Hickey Dwyer welcomed delegates to Dublin during the Opening Ceremony. Over 1200 international eye doctors and

surgeons from 45 countries came to Ireland for the two day meeting. Marie was co-chair of the Congress Scientific Committee.

The annual meeting examines research, prevention and therapy of retinal diseases, with a particular emphasis on age-related macular degeneration (AMD). Disorders of the

*Continued on page 2* ➔



Published by  
**Irish College of Ophthalmologists**  
121 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2.  
Tel 01 402 2777 · info@eyedoctors.ie  
www.eyedoctors.ie

If you would like to make any suggestions for future issues of the College Newsletter please contact **Siobhan on** siobhan.kelly@eyedoctors.ie

➔ *Continued from page 1*

macula in the retina are an issue of pressing importance; 25 to 30 million people worldwide suffer from this affliction, with a half a million new cases diagnosed every year.

Speaking about the significance of the international symposium coming to Dublin this year, Maire said, "The ICO was delighted that ESASO chose Dublin for the Congress which welcomed both national and international eye doctors to Ireland, including Irish eye doctors who are specialising abroad. International collaboration and intelligence sharing among eye doctors is paramount to facilitating discussions on the latest therapeutic advancements with the ultimate aim to deliver optimal patient care. The Congress has made, and continues to make a significant contribution to the expanding body of knowledge on the diagnosis and successful treatment of retinal disease."

Ground-breaking approaches to the management of patients with vision impairment, including the use of stem cells, retinal transplantation, gene therapy and artificial vision were also discussed. The Scientific Committee developed an engaging programme that included 26 plenary sessions, six panel discussions and 17 case studies and meet-the-expert sessions delivered by distinguished speakers from around the world.

Marie was invited to speak on RTE Radio 1 Drivetime Show to discuss



*Professor Francesco Bandello, President of the European Retina Society and Chair of the International Retina Congress Scientific Committee.*



*Pictured at the AMD Congress Marie Hickey Dwyer, Barry Quill, Emer Henry & Mark Cahill.*

the significance of the meeting and the key issues currently affecting the speciality in Ireland. She highlighted the significant breakthroughs in the treatment of eye diseases in recent years, in the form of Anti-VEGF injections for age-related macular degeneration and diabetic eye diseases, and how this has meant eye doctors in Ireland are treating five times the number of cases than three years ago. She also used the opportunity to speak of the importance of people taking care of their eye health and the significance lifestyle factors

can have on protecting vision, especially for the at-risk groups.

The event attracted considerable national media coverage, including an article in The Irish Times Health Supplement and multiple features in the Irish medical trade press, profiling the College and highlighting the issues facing the speciality. It was also an opportunity to focus on the advances in ophthalmic treatments in recent years and the current and the challenges facing the eye care sector here in Ireland to a national and international audience.



*Pictured at the AMD Congress Paul Connell & Carl Farrelly.*

# Glaucoma Meeting Galway

Eye doctors gathered in Galway on Friday the 27th and Saturday 28th September for a Glaucoma Symposium. The meeting included key presentations by international experts Dr Alan Robin, from the USA and Dr Paul Harasymowycz, from Canada. Dr John Traynor and Dr Eammon O'Donoghue co-chaired the meeting, which was supported by the National Council of the Blind.

Pat Logan gave a presentation entitled 'Field Defects and Driving License' from her work as a member of the Visual Guidelines Group. The introduction of new visual standards for driving as part of the 'Medical Fitness to Drive' Guidelines came into effect on 19 January this year. The new guidelines, relating to car and motorcycle drivers (known as Group 1 licence holders) provide a national framework on standards in traffic medicine in Ireland and reflect recent developments in medicines, such as improvements in diagnosis and treatment of medical conditions.

A new Glaucoma SIM App was launched at the meeting. This App allows patients to view the effects that glaucoma could have on sight over time. It is available from the Apple Store for the iPhone, iPod touch and iPad - Search for 'Glaucoma SIM'. This App has been developed by MSD in association with Moorfields Eye Hospital and the International Glaucoma Association and supported by the ICO.

During the meeting the winners of the ICO Educational Bursary were announced. The bursary, sponsored by MSD, comprises two €3000 prizes to support the recipients to attend a training course or international meeting with the overall goal of benefiting both patients and the health service in Ireland. Thomas Dronney, registrar at Mid-Western Regional Hospital, Limerick and Joanne Kearney, Letterkenny General Hospital were awarded the grants. Joanne and Thomas will outline how they are using the grant in a future issue of the newsletter.



*Pictured at the Glaucoma Symposium in Galway were Caroline Oliver, Yvonne Delaney, Conor Murphy, Pat Logan and John Coffey.*



*Pictured at the Glaucoma Symposium in Galway were Paddy Condon, Dharm Pandeya, Behrooz Golchin and Caroline Oliver.*



*Pictured at the Glaucoma Symposium in Galway were Aoife Doyle, Fatima Hamroush, John Coffey and Alison Blake.*

# Medical neutrality and full, unimpeded access for doctors needed in Syria

## ICO member joins coalition of influential international doctors to highlight Syrian healthcare crisis

**I**n a recent feature on news website *thejournal.ie* Dr Fatima Hamroush, who served as Libya's health minister from 2011 to 2012, urged the international community to respond to the escalating medical crisis in Syria.

Fatima highlighted the growing struggles of the Syrian people, with civilians unable to access healthcare due to the systematic targeting of medical professionals and facilities. Healthcare workers are currently unable to access the area's most in need and it is estimated that half of the Syrian population will require humanitarian aid by the end of 2013.

Fatima explained that almost 57 per cent of Syrian hospitals have been either destroyed or greatly damaged, while almost 500 healthcare workers have been reported imprisoned. Makeshift clinics have become full trauma centres struggling to cope with the injured and sick, while being targeted by the fighting sides.

As a doctor, Fatima spoke of her empathy with her medical colleagues in Syria and also her recognition of the suffering and helplessness of the international and local medical professionals. During her tenure as Minister for Health in Libya, she witnessed directly the consequences of restrictions on health workers during a crisis. Although Libya's eastern border was unrestricted during the conflict, allowing many medical aid organisations to enter Libya just a few weeks into the uprising, the damage in human terms caused by hostilities was extensive.



*Fatima Hamroush.*

The international community is aware that Syria's conflict is ongoing. Borders are heavily restricted for international aid agencies and the UN has had to halve the number of its aid workers in the country due to recurrent attacks on them as well as having to contend with a lack of resources. After almost three years of conflict, the Syrian population has become vulnerable to outbreaks of infectious disease such as dysentery, cholera and hepatitis, and with the lack of medical pharmaceuticals, there has been an alarming increase in cases of acute diarrhoea. Children born since the conflict began have not been vaccinated. The Syrian health system is at breaking point with patients battling cancers,

diabetes, heart disease and renal failure, unable to access essential medical care.

There is an urgent need for the international community to respond and react to the needs of the Syrian people and the medical professionals. While a political solution still needs to be resolved to end the conflict, international governments can meanwhile press for the protection of health workers in addition to granting access to the United Nations, the Red Crescent and other humanitarian organisations into Syrian borders.

In the *journal.ie* article, Fatima spoke of the urgent need for all parties involved to respect medical neutrality and refrain from attacking hospitals, medical facilities, health professionals and patients.

She is member of a recently formed coalition of 55 international influential doctors who have signed 'An open letter to The Lancet', warning that Syria's healthcare system is at breaking point because of attacks on hospitals and humanitarian organisations. In their collective effort to get this urgent healthcare aid crisis addressed by the international community, the doctors launched the initiative calling on all parties of the conflict to cease targeting medical facilities and urging the UN Security Council and governments with influence to do all they can to enable access. The doctors' initiative also calls on the UN to scale up its operations to ensure a response that is more commensurate with the need, including in opposition areas which are currently neglected and in dire need of aid.

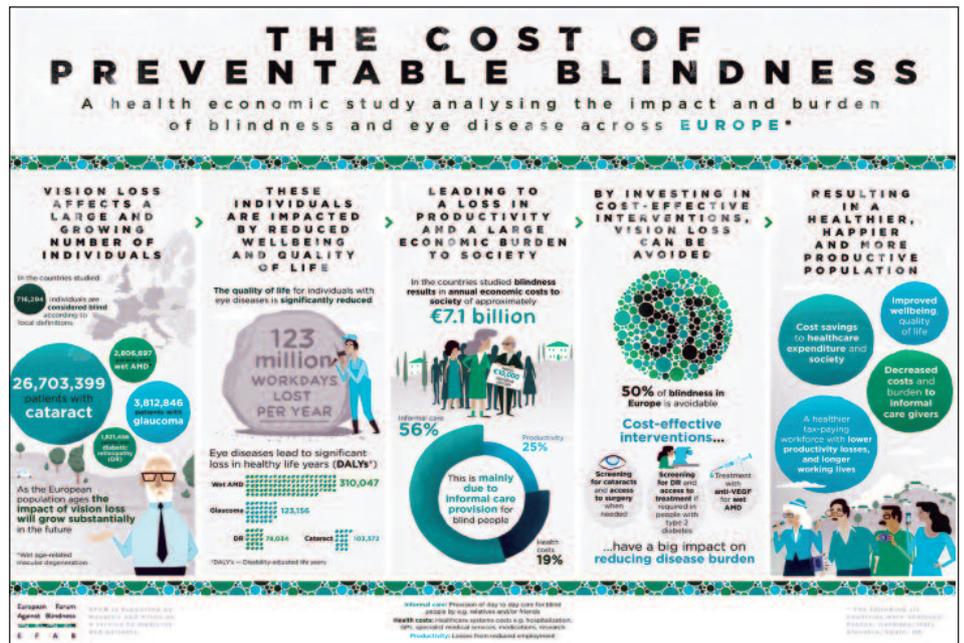
# Ireland included in Phase 2 of International Study on the Cost of Blindness and Value of Preventing Blindness

Ireland will be included in the second phase of an international cost of blindness study, which is being implemented by Deloitte and supported by Novartis. The study has to date, analysed the economic impact and burden of four eye diseases and blindness in six countries (Germany, France, Italy, UK, Spain and Slovakia) and the cost-effectiveness of interventions to prevent eye disease and blindness.

The results were presented at the European Parliament in early October. These results are broadly the same as our own Cost of Blindness Irish data but the National Coalition for Vision Health expert group has acknowledged that it will add greater weight to the evidence already collated in Ireland to be included in an international study. The results will be available next year.

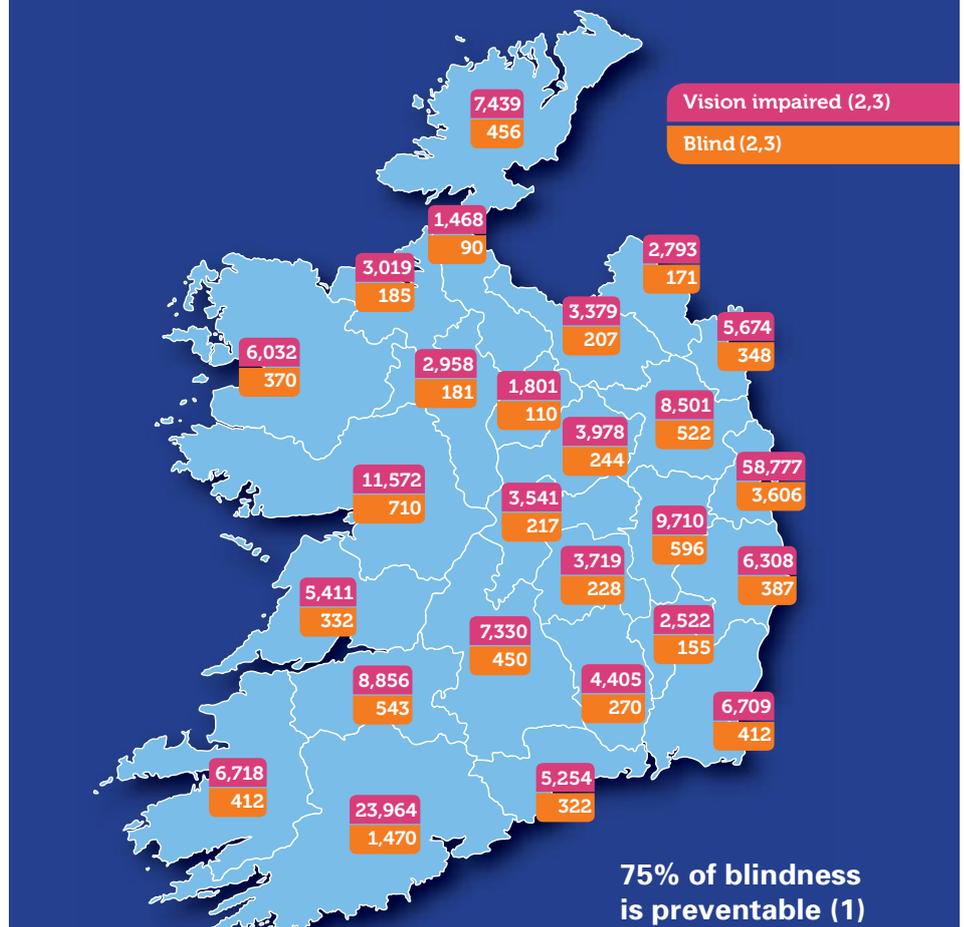
While answering a Parliamentary Question in September from Deputy Bernard Durkin regarding the Cochlear Ear Campaign, Health Minister James Reilly signified the importance of the prevention message is being received in Government circles by responding, "I must make choices about this very sensitive issue, which is a priority for me, and other matters such as screening for diabetic retinopathy, which can cause irreversible blindness if not detected early. There are no easy choices, but this issue will be one of my top priorities. I look forward to the opportunity of having that priority expressed in the national service plan."

When asked if adequate funding has been made available for vision care to fulfil the commitment to WHO to eradicate preventable blindness by 2020, the response from the Government was that they remain committed to provide and develop vision services and supports through health prevention, screening and intervention policies and programmes, all of which contribute will eliminate avoidable blindness in Ireland.



## National Coalition for Vision Health

The number of people who are blind or vision impaired in Ireland is expected to increase to almost 272,000 by 2020 (1). Vision impairment and blindness is expected to cost more than €2.5 billion per year by 2020 (1). Research has shown that the majority of these cases (75%) can be medically managed to prevent sight loss moving to total blindness (1). By engaging with and supporting a National Vision Strategy we could potentially help save the sight of 35,373 people in Ireland by 2020 (4).



# THE COST OF BLINDNESS IN IRELAND

Between 2008 and 2013 approximately 3.3 billion euro, or approximately 30%, had been taken out of the Health Service Executive budget. Yet against this backdrop Irish Hospital Consultants were treating more patients and addressing some of the worst waiting times. This has been driven by new policies that have finally helped increase consultant effectiveness on the ground as scarce resources were better deployed. We are at a crunch time however, with most of the “ready to find” savings exhausted, the impact on services is being felt. More than ever we need to apply our skills in evidence based assessment and implementation to fiscal as well as clinical needs.

It is essential that medical consultants are at the forefront of accurate data collection in their fields with a proper assessment of not only clinical impact but the cost of treatments for disease. This fact, greater than any other, highlights our need for a national integrated information technology (IT) system so that data can reliably and readily be accessed before any shift in care models or patient distribution can be implemented.

Our Government has signed up to the World Health Organisation’s Vision 20/20 commitment to reduce blindness due to preventable causes by 75% by 2020. A report on progress is due in six years. To assess the current and projected extent of the problem in not just human terms but also financial terms we (at the Irish College of Ophthalmologists, National Council for the Blind and Fighting Blindness) sought to assess the cost of blindness and vision impairment in Ireland to understand the extent of the problem. The full report was commissioned by the NCBI and produced by Novartis



David Keegan

Ireland in conjunction with the J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics of the National University of Ireland, Galway with clinical input

from Mr David Keegan. Through access to registers, hospital data and existing Irish, UK and Australian epidemiological data we have been able to A) assess the numbers of blind and vision impaired people in Ireland and B) calculate the direct and indirect costs associated with blindness in Ireland.

In 2010, it was estimated that there were 12,995 blind individuals in the ROI. If current trends continue, this is projected to increase to 17,997 by 2020 (Table 1b).

By determining the direct and indirect costs (explanation in Table 2) associated with treating, managing and caring for blind individuals we were able to calculate the total and individual financial cost of being

*Table 1a: The definitions of Blind, Moderate and Mild Vision Impairment.*

Blindness	is defined as best vision less than 6/60 (<10% vision) in the better-seeing eye.
Moderate VI	is defined as BCVA less than 6/18 but better than or equal to 6/60 (10 - 30% vision) in the better-seeing eye.
Mild VI	is defined as BCVA less than 6/12 but better than or equal to 6/18 (30 - 50% vision) in the better-seeing eye.

*Table 1b: Current and projected numbers of Blind and Vision Impaired Individuals in Ireland*

	2010	2015	2020
<b>Mild VI</b>	157,156 3.42%	171,514 3.42%	187,928 3.49%
<b>Moderate VI</b>	54,681 1.19%	59,989 1.20%	66,070 1.23%
<b>Blind</b>	12,995 0.28%	15,270 0.30%	17,997 0.33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>224,832</b> <b>4.90%</b>	<b>246,773</b> <b>4.92%</b>	<b>271,996</b> <b>5.06%</b>

*Table 1b: An outline of the current numbers on the National Council for the Blind database who are registered as blind, moderate or mildly vision impaired (% population affected).*

# Clinical and Financial Merits in Implementing Evidence Based Assessment and Accurate Data Collection

blind. A terribly cold exercise to be involved in initially but the value to our patients is undoubted (a fact relayed back to us by patients since we started to promote the study's findings).

The report estimated the financial cost of blindness to be €276 million (average cost of €21,289 per blind individual per year) in 2010. The average cost of vision impairment is €1,717. The total financial cost will increase to €367 million by 2020 if current trends continue. Indirect costs (productivity loss, informal care and deadweight welfare loss) were found to be the main cost drivers of the financial cost of blindness, representing 98.04% of this cost in 2010.

## The Cost of Blindness in Ireland

The total economic cost of blindness (financial cost and the cost of lost wellbeing) is estimated to have been €810 million (average cost of €62,270 per blind individual per year) in 2010 and predicted to rise to €1.1 billion by 2020 based on current trends.

In presenting our data to a fiscally straightened administration we have limited our arguments to the financial (real money) cost of blindness and vision impairment and placed less emphasis on the economic cost.

It is remarkable to note that less than 2% of the total financial cost of blindness is borne by the health service with the rest a direct impact on the Departments of Finance and Social Protection. There is an excessive reliance and cost associated with informal care which impacts both financially and personally on much of society however, it does show that family, friends and neighbours still care in Ireland and are actively involved in patient support.

This is very important once one considers the financial benefit of implementing a care programme such as the recently launched screening and treatment programme for diabetic retinopathy. We are duty bound to demonstrate the benefit to society as a whole of the clinical programme. When the impact of the Irish Diabetic Retinopathy Screening Programme is cost assessed (using the positive impact of the introduction of the Scottish screening programme for comparison: 50% reduction in rates of blindness due to diabetes) the net cost per diabetic patient over a 5 year programme is approximately €145. With an estimated reduction in blind and vision impaired individuals of 235 and 1,900 respectively (that is nearly 2,000 maintaining their driving licence). It is a staggering goal to have within our reach, to prevent blindness in 235 people and keep up to 2000 people driving and independent. We expect this to reduce to cost neutral and even cost saving in the

subsequent 5 years as we continue to impact on blindness rates.

This approach clearly demonstrates that there are both clinical and financial merits in implementing this evidence based retinopathy programme and provides a good model for all medical specialties. A considered analysis of the financial impact of ill health will aid the appropriate request and placement of resources to most efficiently and thoughtfully deal with our healthcare needs. The implementation of an integrated, reliable national IT system and electronic record is a crucial first step.

David Keegan is the ICO representative on the National Diabetic Retinal Screening Programme Quality Assurance Group. This article was written for *The Consultant Magazine* which is currently available

*Table 2: Explanation of costs assessed in this study.*

### **Direct Costs (health care costs) include:**

Hospital expenditure  
Expenditure on general ophthalmic services  
Treatment of depression (Depression is 16% more prevalent in vision impaired populations)  
Cost of treating injurious falls.

### **Indirect Costs:**

These are the overall impacts of blindness on the economy  
Lost productivity due to blindness  
Informal care to the blind  
Deadweight welfare loss

### **Financial Costs include:**

The sum of the total direct and indirect costs  
is the current cost of "treating" blindness and the related costs to society

### **Economic Cost include:**

The financial cost of blindness plus the intangible cost of disease burden (DALYs) due to blindness  
This captures (in a monetary value) the financial cost of blindness and the cost of the reduced quality of life that blind people experience

# Fighting Blindness Retina Conference

Anna Moran, External Affairs Manager for Fighting Blindness reports on Retina 2013

International leaders in retinal research gathered together in early November at the annual Retina Conference, hosted by patient-led charity Fighting Blindness. More than 200 scientists, clinicians, students and patients connected during the two day event at Croke Park, Dublin, to hear about some of the latest developments into conditions that cause degenerative sight loss, including age-related macular degeneration, retinitis pigmentosa, Stargardt disease and diabetic retinopathy. Fighting Blindness has been holding research meetings for fourteen years, valuing the opportunity for researchers and clinicians to learn from one another by sharing the latest developments in the field and to form links and collaborations that will accelerate the global fight to cure blindness.

The Retina Conference is a unique event each year, fulfilling two complimentary briefs. The first day consists of the scientific programme, featuring a breakfast briefing for early stage researchers, followed by the high level curriculum of international research from our guest speakers. On the second day, the same scientists address an audience of individuals

and families who are affected by the conditions being explored in their laboratories. This element of the conference provides an exclusive opportunity for scientists, researchers, clinicians and patients to meet together in the same space to discuss current research and the future treatment options that will certainly arise from the excellent work and its progress.

During the public engagement day it was very positive also to discuss the work of the National Coalition for Vision Health, a group co-chaired by Fighting Blindness, who recently launched a framework to adopt a strategic approach to vision health in Ireland, which we are calling on the government to implement. David Keegan, board member of Fighting Blindness and member of the Vision Coalition, was part of the expert panel who engaged with the public on the day. David participated in the break-out sessions which gave patients and interested members of the public the opportunity to ask questions and speak directly with the medical professionals and researchers about specific eye diseases, including age related macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy, retinitis pigmentos and other rare inherited diseases.

David also gave an overview talk on the Cost of Blindness Study during a session entitled 'A Strategy for Vision in Ireland'. The relevance of the



*Pictured at the Retina Conference 2013 hosted by Fighting Blindness were Maria Meehan, Anna Moran & Paul Kenna.*

public engagement day cannot be underestimated as a way to ensure that the members and friends of Fighting Blindness, those who are living with sight limiting conditions, are informed and have the opportunity to be involved in the issues that relate to the progress of the medical research that will enable the development of treatments for unmet medical needs. The charity believes that patients should absolutely be part of any discussion around health policies that will affect them, and so we work hard to facilitate discussions that will achieve that.

A distinguished panel of Irish and international researchers presented their work during this year's scientific programme. Highlights included Prof James Bainbridge, a surgeon-scientist at Moorfields Eye Hospital and University College London, where he is engaged in a programme of translational research to develop innovative gene and cell therapies for diseases of the retina. In 2007 Prof Bainbridge performed the world's first gene therapy for inherited blindness, demonstrating proof-of-concept, and he also led Europe's first clinical trial of human embryonic stem cells, a first-in-human study to test the potential of retinal cell transplantation in macular degeneration. Prof Bainbridge delivered detail of the rapid progress that has been made in retinal cell transplantation techniques, which has led to striking results and positive tolerance in the short term. This study confirms the potential opportunity to use this method to address blinding retinal degenerations.



*Pictured at the Retina Conference 2013 hosted by Fighting Blindness were Prof Joe Carroll, Prof John Flannery, Mr David Keegan*

Prof Rafael Simó, from the Vall d'Hebron Institute of Research in Barcelona, delivered an engaging talk on neurodegeneration as an early event in the pathogenesis of diabetic retinopathy, and the therapeutic implications of this. Prof Simó updated the audience on the mechanisms involved in neurodegeneration, as well as the link between neurodegeneration and microangiopathy, giving some new perspectives based on identifying those patients with retinal neurodegeneration.

Professor John Flannery from the University of California at Berkeley, USA, presented the work of his lab on optogenetic therapies for late-stage retinal degeneration. The premise of optogenetics lies in restoring light responsiveness to a cell type known as retinal ganglion cells. Although blindness occurs following the loss of photoreceptor cells, much of the architecture of the retina remains intact. Retinal ganglion cells are the longest surviving cells in most hereditary retinal disorders making them a useful investigative starting point. Prof Flannery's team introduced a light channel by gene therapy to these cells, initially in mice and more recently in dogs. They have shown that it can restore several light responses of the visual system. While still at an early stage, this work may be of huge benefit to individuals for whom all of the photoreceptor cells have fully degenerated.

A very interesting presentation was given by Wing Commander Professor Robert Scott, who is a consultant ophthalmologist at the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine, Birmingham. Wg Cdr Scott has helped treat the soldiers with eye injuries brought back to the UK from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Especially intriguing was his work with artificial vision for the war-blinded.

We were delighted to welcome an increased number of clinicians to the conference this year, reflecting on the progress of much retinal research towards and into clinical trials and prospects for patients. We are delighted to work with the Irish

College of Ophthalmologists who see the value of the meeting for their members and generously award CPD points for participation.

Full details of the recent conference are available at [www.retina.ie](http://www.retina.ie) including videos of some of the talks from the scientific programme.

## AMD Awareness Week



*Pictured at the launch of AMD Awareness Week 2013 were Tony Ward, former Irish rugby player, Tony Ward, Fighting Blindness, Eddie Guilmartin, Irish Wheelchair Basketball League Referee, Doreen Curran, Novartis, Brenda McAnespie, former Monaghan ladies footballer, Elaine Howley, NCBI, Carol Chubb, ex-Irish International Basketball Player Carol Chubb, Tim Fulcher, ICO and Turlough O'Connor, former Irish Association Footballer and Manager.*

Sports stars came out in force to raise awareness of AMD at this year's Awareness Week launch event in Croke Park on All-Ireland Football Final Sunday, 22 September. Former Dublin footballer Barney Rock, ex-Irish International basketball player Coral Chubb, former Bohemian's star Turlough O'Connor and former rugby ace Tony Ward were among the ambassadors to support the awareness initiative in its 4th consecutive year. Invited guests and

stakeholders wore special glasses simulating early signs and symptoms of AMD for the first 10 minutes of the Dublin V Mayo All Ireland Football Final.

During AMD week the mobile testing unit crossed the country offering free AMD tests to the public. Thank you to all ICO members who supported the free testing and who attended to all those referred on for further examination from the testing sites.



*Pictured at the launch event for AMD Awareness Week on All Ireland Football Final Day in Croke Park were AMD Patient Mr Dan Murphy, Anna Moran, Fighting Blindness, Siobhan Kelly, Elaine Howley, NCBI and broadcaster Mary Kennedy.*

# Ray Niland Remembered

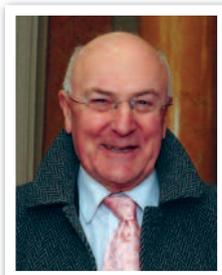
It was with great sadness that our members bid farewell to our friend and colleague, Ray Niland. An enormous loss to his family, friends and his community, Ray achieved many great things during his life on a professional, personal and sporting level. His outstanding contribution to his medical professional life was mirrored by his dedication and passion for sport. Ray will be fondly remembered as an outstanding sportsman.

A gifted and versatile sportsman, Ray played minor football and junior hurling for Westmeath in 1963. He was on Galway's U-21 side two years, won a Connacht club medal with Fr Griffin's and played with Castlebar Mitchels before lining out corner back with the Mayo League side of 1968. He was moved to left half-back on the Connacht final team of 1969 and back to the corner for the semi-final against Kerry which Mayo lost narrowly. Some of his notable sporting career highlights include his Mayo teams win against Down in the National Football League final of 1970 where Ray was positioned corner back.

Ray, who lived the early years of his life at Westport Quay, spent some years in Athlone where his father established a branch of the family grocery business, and where he played football with the Westmeath minors. He was also a prominent member of the Patrician College, Ballyfin, hurling team that lost the All-Ireland Colleges SHC final to St Finbarr's. That same year, 1963, Ray scored three goals in the All-Ireland Home final against Antrim but ended up on the losing side.

While studying medicine at UCG, Ray won Sigerson in his first year, beating UCC in the final.

A touching story featured some years back in The Mayo News, written by Edwin Mc Greal, accounting the time when 36 years after winning his National League medal with Mayo, the jersey Ray wore that day was restored to him. The jersey had been in the possession of Down's Jim Milligan



who had swapped with Ray after the final and wanted to return it to his old adversary.

Throughout the league campaign of 1969/70, Ray's performance won praise from around the country, and the Irish Independent selected him Sports Star of the Week

for his outstanding display against Derry in the semi-final. Among the many people who praised his ability was Johnny Carey, captain of the winning league team who described Ray as a "a highly intelligent corner back, who could foresee moves and was equally skilful with both feet".

In his early medical professional life, Ray worked as consultant ophthalmic surgeon in Birmingham and at the Midland Eye Hospital in the UK before taking up his post at Limerick Regional Hospital. In Limerick Ray's special interest was glaucoma. He was always a very calming influence on his colleagues and a pleasure to work with. He was involved in the training of many junior doctors over the years, many of whom have gone onto to work as surgeons and in the community both here and abroad. Ray was a patient teacher and an apprenticeship with him was of lifelong value to his trainees. His last three years in practice were in Barrington's Hospital in Limerick where he built up a new network of ophthalmology colleagues. He was never reluctant to embrace new techniques and was an extremely competent surgeon.

Ray was married to Pat Ryan and they had four children. Continuing the tradition of the family's obvious passion and great sporting ability, Ray and Pat's son Conor played tennis professionally at Wimbledon and in the US, and their daughter Gina is a former Irish number one tennis player. Ray had the opportunity to recall some of the highlights of his Gaelic games career two years ago, as he was interviewed regularly on national radio when Conor competed in the Wimbledon men's singles lawn tennis championships.

## AAO Launch New look 'ONE Network'

### Reminder to Members of Access to Online Library

Based on feedback from BAAO members and ONE Network subscribers, the ONE Network has recently been redesigned by the American Academy to better meet the needs of visitors to the online library facility.

The recent updates will now mean that when members log on to use the ONE Network, they will be able to access a greater extent of new content, such as a library of 3,000 free clinical images, basic skills courses, master class videos and self-assessments. The upgraded facility will also find content easily and quickly using a powerful new search engine and customise a visitors learning experience with the "My ONE Network" tool. The new version also allows members to view clinical content on any mobile device.

The ICO would like to remind members that they have access to the ONE Network funded directly by the College. Each ICO member will have received personal login details for the ONE Network directly from the AAO but if you have any queries or have forgotten your username or password or need instructions on logging in you can contact the ICO directly or email [oneintl@aao.org](mailto:oneintl@aao.org).

# Adare Retina Meeting

The fifth Adare Retinal Meeting, coordinated by Marie Hickey-Dwyer was held on Thursday, 10th October 2013 at the Adare Manor Golf Club in Co Limerick.

The programme included presentations on Retinal Vein Occlusions, Interpretation of Electrophysiological Tests and Genetic Eye Disease, Auto fluorescence Imaging and Wide Field Photography; Treatment Dilemmas and Diabetic Retinopathy Screening.

Prof. Philip Cleary gave a presentation on 'Supplements in Age Related Macular Degeneration' and Dr Brian Sweeney, Consultant Neurologist, Cork University Hospital presented the 'Interface between Ophthalmology and Neurology in Multiple Sclerosis'.



*Pictured at the Adare Retina meeting were Geraldine Comer, Fiona Moriarty and Anne Early.*



*Pictured at the Adare Retina meeting were Tom Stumpf, Sylvia Jungkim and Mark James.*



*Pictured at the Adare Retina meeting were Kevin Tempny & John Traynor.*



*Pictured at the Adare Retina meeting were Kevin Kennelly and Aidan Murray.*



*Pictured at the Adare Retina meeting were Alison Blake and Deirdre Townley.*



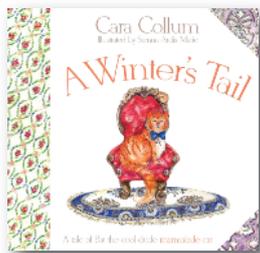
Pictured at the launch of 'A Winters Tale' is author Cara Collum with her husband Louis Collum, and their daughters Amanda & Karen.



Ian Flitcroft's book launch in The Winding Stair.

## 'A Winter's Tail'

Congratulations to Cara Collum, wife of Professor Louis Collum, who recently launched her beautifully illustrated debut children's book entitled 'A Winter's Tail'. The book, aimed at 0-7 year olds, tells the story of



the mayhem created at Christmas by Bat, a cool dude marmalade cat and Alfie, a sleek brown

mouse. Described as a 'charming rhyming verse, which will captivate young readers from the start, ideal for preschool and bedtime reading', the book was creatively illustrated by Sienna Ardis-Marie, a bright new Irish talent.

The book is available from Dubray Books and as an eBook on Amazon and iBooks. A portion of all sales from the book will be donated to the Jack and Jill Foundation, making it not only a delightful gift for young children but also a great chance to make a contribution to a most worthy children's charity.

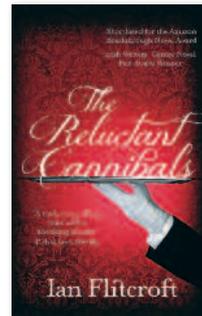
## The Reluctant Cannibals

With more than 30 scientific peer-reviewed papers and contributions to four multi-author books, Temple Street Eye Surgeon Ian Flitcroft, has branched

into in the world of fiction with his debut novel 'The Reluctant Cannibals'.

The book has been described as 'a quirky and witty novel set in the evocative setting of Oxford University, the novel is a darkly humorous exploration of how a complete devotion to food can have unforeseen and shocking consequences'.

Published by Legend Press, 'The Reluctant Cannibals' was formally launched at The Winding Stair Bookshop in early October.



'The Reluctant Cannibals' was one of the winners of the Irish Writers' Centre Novel Fair in 2012 and in 2013 was shortlisted for the Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award and for the People's Book Prize 2013. Ian was also a finalist in Food and Wine magazine's restaurant critic competition in 2012 and a semi-finalist in the Jeffrey Archer Flash Fiction competition in 2013. The book has received praise from multiple

book review websites such as thebookbag, goodreads and Bookwilde, all recommending the book.

Ian is currently putting the finishing touches to his second novel and has a growing collection of food related short stories covering a range of topics from a lobster in love with a young girl, an oyster's perspective on being eaten, to the girl who died because she didn't eat enough cup-cakes. He has also managed to find time to write an award winning popular science blog entitled 'Journey by Starlight' [www.journeybystarlight.com](http://www.journeybystarlight.com). The blog has been developed into a science book for young adults in the style of a graphic novel with illustrations by the hugely talented Britt Spencer. 'Journey by Starlight – A time traveller's guide to life, the universe and everything' was published in the USA by One Peace Books in March 2013.

Congratulations to Ian and Cara on their books – that's two for Santa's list!!

## Wedding Bells

Congratulations to *Juliah Tbranai ophthalmology trainee and her husband Dermot O'Shea who were married in Malaysia on 22nd October.*

