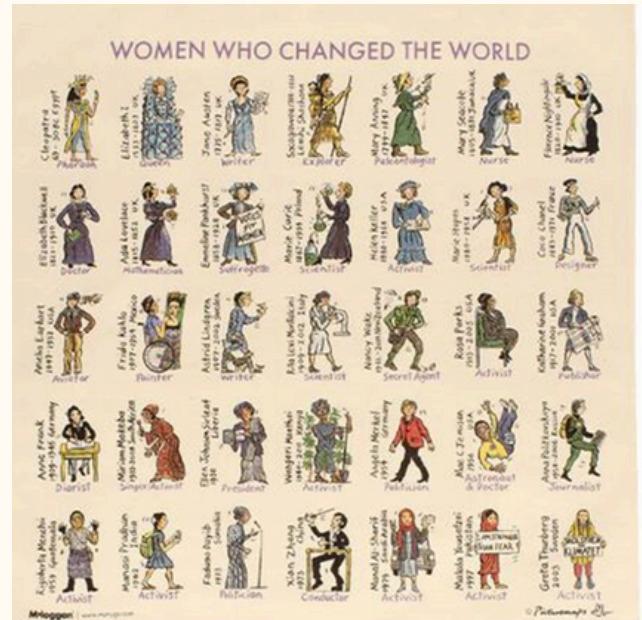


PROFESSOR CINDY CHEW

Tail Lights

1st October 2023. As autumn leaves fall softly and rustle to the ground, this popped up on my Twitter feed: 52 years ago, the very first CT scan was performed on a person. Godfrey Hounsfield was apparently intrigued by the notion of using cosmic rays to find hidden structures without “opening the box” or entering ancient Egyptian pyramids. This brought to my mind the beautiful bag Elliot (MedChir President, 2022/23) gifted me on behalf of MedChir at the Alumni Ball 2023. Why? Because the first woman featured on the bag is Cleopatra. I loved it so much I ordered a few more for Professor Judy Yee MD in New York City. She was chuffed and Twitter lit up with requests on where to buy them! (Supporting the local economy and all that....!)

As we continue striving towards gender equality, I thought I'd share the wonderful event Elliot and the MedChir team pulled together for International Women's Day, showcasing 4 amazing women Professors. It was a scintillating evening where we were privileged to hear and learn about their very different careers and experiences culminating in Professorships in Medicine. No mean feat by any standards! (Let me know if you would like to attend another evening like this and I'll see what we can do).



Professor Rona Mackie / Lady Black – another woman who changed the world! (disappointingly, not pictured on the bag) – regrettably could not join us on the night. As the first woman appointed to an established Chair at the University of Glasgow, Professor Mackie is a trailblazer, achieving and continuing to achieve so much in her career and life. As one of the founding members of The Academy of Medical Sciences, not only has she been at the forefront of groundbreaking medical research, but has also enabled others to continue advancing cutting edge medicine as well as establishing one of the most successful medical mentoring programmes. I hope you enjoy reading our little chat and draw as much inspiration from it as I did meeting her! Her vitality and formidability is something that we should all aspire to!

A CONVERSATION WITH PROFESSOR RONA MACKIE BLACK

Medical Reminiscences

NB as has been said in different contexts, recollections may differ but the following are my memories

Tell us a little of your time as a student at Glasgow University.

I was a medical student at Glasgow University from 1957-1963. My memory is that the proportion of women in the year was restricted to 1/3 of the 160 students in the year. The six year course allowed us time for long student vacations which I used to the full; travelling one year to work as a clinical clerk in Copenhagen and another year with the National Union of Students when 20 of us went as a student delegation to Russia visiting Moscow Leningrad and Kiev. Fascinating insights into Russian medicine and state control.

I enjoyed a full student life being involved in the students union. At that time there were separate unions for men and women: Queen Margaret for women and the Union for men. We mixed very comfortably after 5pm and student union debates were a highlight. It was a golden age of student politics and student debates with gifted orators such as Donald Dewar, John Smith, Neil McCormick and Jimmy Gordon sharpening their skills.



Tell us a little of your career and why you chose the specialty you did.

I chose dermatology and in particular work on malignant melanoma because of a patient I encountered doing my surgical pre registration house officer post. Mr X was a Pakistani seaman who had been admitted because of secondary melanoma erupting in nodules all over his left leg from toe to thigh but with no obvious spread beyond the inguinal ligament. Mr X spoke no English and interpreters were not available. It was very clear that the surgeons in charge of the ward did not know how to manage the problem or how to communicate with the patient. This took me to general study of melanoma and its treatment, to tumour immunology and to patient support and communication.

Can you share some of highlights of your career?

60 years on we know a lot more about appropriate treatment of melanoma and staging procedures. We are now much more aware of the need for patient support and information with support groups for most skin diseases eg Melanoma Action, the Psoriasis Association and the national Eczema Society; all groups who offer accurate information to patients and also raise funds for research.

From 1978-2000 I was professor of dermatology and established an internationally recognised department which attracted trainees from overseas - Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

A CONVERSATION WITH PROFESSOR RONA MACKIE BLACK

Medical Reminiscences


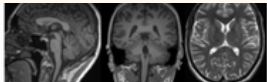
What would you say to your medical student self?

I would continue to encourage myself to take full advantage of the freedom of student years and travel widely. You will never be so free again.






What would you say to the medical students today?

The current situation for students is very different. I would however encourage them to try to take part in university wide events and societies and not confine themselves to medical school activities. Clerkships and electives overseas give valuable insight into the organisation of medical care elsewhere.

And enjoy yourselves!

1802  1822  *Educating & Inspiring Students for 220 years*

Women Professors in Medicine
Monday 6 March 2023, 6 – 7:15pm
University of Glasgow Campus (tbc)

MedChir is super excited to host Prof Rona Mackie, Prof Rhea Liang, Prof Jill Morrison, Prof Lindsey Pope and Prof Susan Moug for an informal, in-person evening "fire-side chat"!

Read their inspiring life stories and register with the QR codes.

