

SURGO

JUNE 25'

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EST. 1935

SURGO MEETS...

Dr Christine McAlpine : First Woman President, MedChir Society

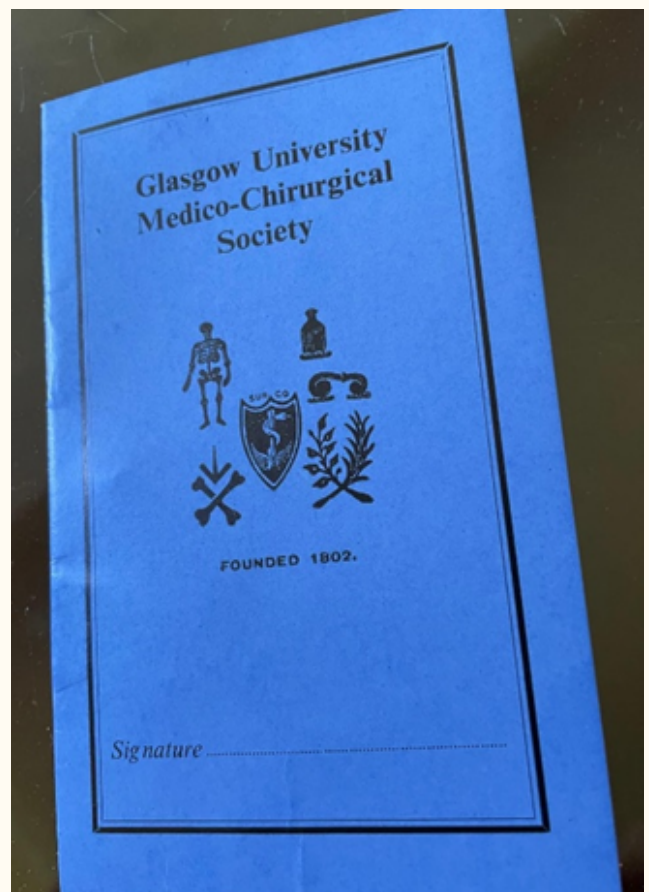
In this issue, we speak to Dr Christine McAlpine or “Christine Corbett” as she was known back in the days of Glasgow Medical School. Dr McAlpine broke through the ceiling and entered the history books as the first woman President elected to lead MedChir Society. Radiologists Brian Mucci and John Shand were on her committee while Sam Galbraith was her Honorary President (1945- 2014;

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/obituaries/obituary-sam-galbraith-brain-surgeon-and-politician-1528621>;

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/aug/19/sam-galbraith>).

1) Dr McAlpine, since it is graduation season, please tell us a little of your career after you qualified MBChB and why you chose the specialty you did.

Up to my retirement 3 months ago, I was a Consultant Geriatrician and Stroke Physician. I find Geriatric Medicine interesting and a nice mix when compared to a single-organ-based specialty. I became interested in Stroke Medicine when it became a specialty in the 1990s. I really enjoyed the mix of acute and rehabilitation aspects of managing patients in the Stroke service.





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2) Can you share some of your career highlights?

I have always enjoyed being a doctor! Locally, I was for many years the clinical lead for the NHS GGC Stroke Managed Clinical Network, which was a varied and interesting role. I was, over the course of my career, the Geriatric Medicine Advisor to the Chief Medical Officer of Scotland and Chair of the British Geriatrics Society (Scotland). I had a long and fruitful collaboration with Healthcare Improvement Scotland and the Scottish Stroke Care Audit. I was co-Chair of the Scottish Care of Older People Audit until my retirement – and I am still on the committee to improve care of this group of people in Scotland. I was able to maintain an interest in research via the Scottish Stroke Research Network and had various roles in the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow. I have been fortunate to have had a very enjoyable career.

3) Tell us a little of your time as a student at Glasgow University, especially about your time in MedChir?

We celebrated the 45th reunion of our graduation just last week! I thoroughly enjoyed being a medical student in Glasgow and my time in MedChir. Take a look at the pristine MedChir membership book I found recently. The MedChir afforded me the opportunity to meet students from other year groups – it was good fun! I enjoyed working with Sam Galbraith and we were kept busy organising all the educational activities and lectures, at least once a month! Before each event, a couple of committee members would head to the Ubiquitous Chip with that evening's speakers for dinner – those were the days! Outside of Medicine, I was part of the University of Glasgow Cecilian Society – still running today! – where I played the clarinet with the orchestra. As a “Western Infirmary” girl, I was sad to see it demolished, but I am very impressed with the new buildings appearing.

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4) What would you say to your medical student self if you had the chance?

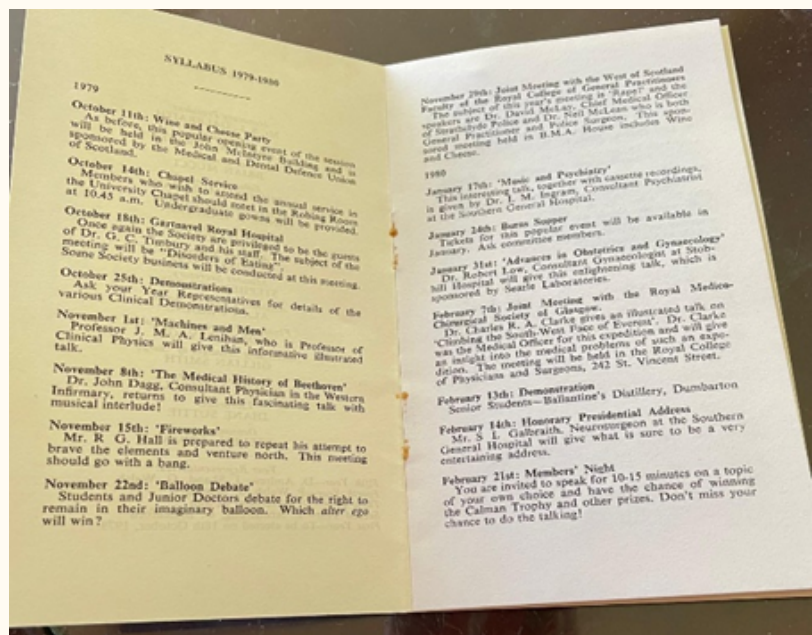
“Believe that you can do things” and “Read up on Imposter Syndrome”. I think women in particular are more prone to this.

5) What would you say to medical students today?

I would tell them something which was said to me as a student: “You are usually more content regretting the things you did, than the thing you didn't do.”

Take any opportunity you are offered. I generally did that when I was a student and most times I was glad for the experiences they brought.

There were a few opportunities I didn't take and I regretted later - for example I regret not taking the opportunity of intercalating to do a BSc. I wasn't sure I wanted to do a science degree in the middle of my medical training. Now, with hindsight, it would have been a very good thing. But I think I have always been a 'glass half full' person, which I hope has stood me in good stead over the years!



DAANYAAL ASHRAF

Reflecting On The Year

With this being the final edition of Surgo for the year, and my final one as Editor-In-Chief, it's important to look back and reflect. This year has been very important for Surgo as we have finally managed to gain accreditation as an official publication. There has also been more of an online presence and push, in the digital age that we live in this is very important. While this is key to the advancement is Surgo going forward, it is important not to forget the origins of the journal. That is why we have continued to print and distribute physical copies of Surgo as well, to maintain the core essence of the brand. As a team, we have managed to deliver various topics, ranging from study skills to mental health. All of these had a key focus: students and their livelihood. Moving forward, this is something we want to build on and continue promoting, a better environment and a safe space for students to voice their opinions and concerns.

We also want this to be a place to highlight students' achievements, both academic and extracurricular. And on that note, from the entire Surgo team and our various co-authors, we are signing off for this year. - Daanyaal Ashraf, Surgo Editor-In-Chief
2024/25



JUNE 2025

Your production team



*Daanyaal
Ashraf,
Editor in Chief*



*Himani Kumar,
Assistant Editor*



*Denver Correia,
Secretary*



*Mark Kerr,
Arts Director*



*Chloe Danno,
Production
Director*



*Bronwyn Le
Moal, Financial
Director*

We Need You



We want to feature **YOUR** work in the next issue of Surgo.

Our magazine is now accessible through an online publication platform meaning that all contributions are citable (and give a big CV boost!).

Email your articles to **surgo_uofg@yahoo.com**

DAANYAAL ASHRAF

The Medical Student Journey

Everyone talks about the end goal, becoming a doctor, but not enough is said about the torturous road that gets you there. Through the sleepless nights, plaguing imposter syndrome, friendships forged in lecture halls and hospital corridors, and the small moments that remind you why you chose this career in the first place.

The journey through medical school is anything but linear; there are ups and many downs. It begins with wide-eyed enthusiasm, often mixed with a hefty dose of anxiety. You step into your first lecture hall expecting answers, and instead find more questions. How does anyone remember the Krebs cycle? What is the difference between all these types of shock? Why does every patient in the textbooks seem like a trick question?

As the years pass, the theory builds and gives way to practice. You swap the library for the wards, and textbooks for actual patients. It is a very overwhelming and humbling transition as you realise that the real world does not always follow the textbooks. Through many bedside teaching sessions and countless CAPS sign-offs, you slowly build practical skills on top of the bank of human anatomy knowledge acquired through the first few years.

Throughout all this, there is growth in both knowledge and character as you build both a strong professional and personal portfolio to help your career as a doctor flourish



Now this journey is not complete without its fair share of setbacks. Exam failures, burnout, self-doubt, or the universal experience of impostor syndrome. These challenges are something every medical student faces at various points in their journey.

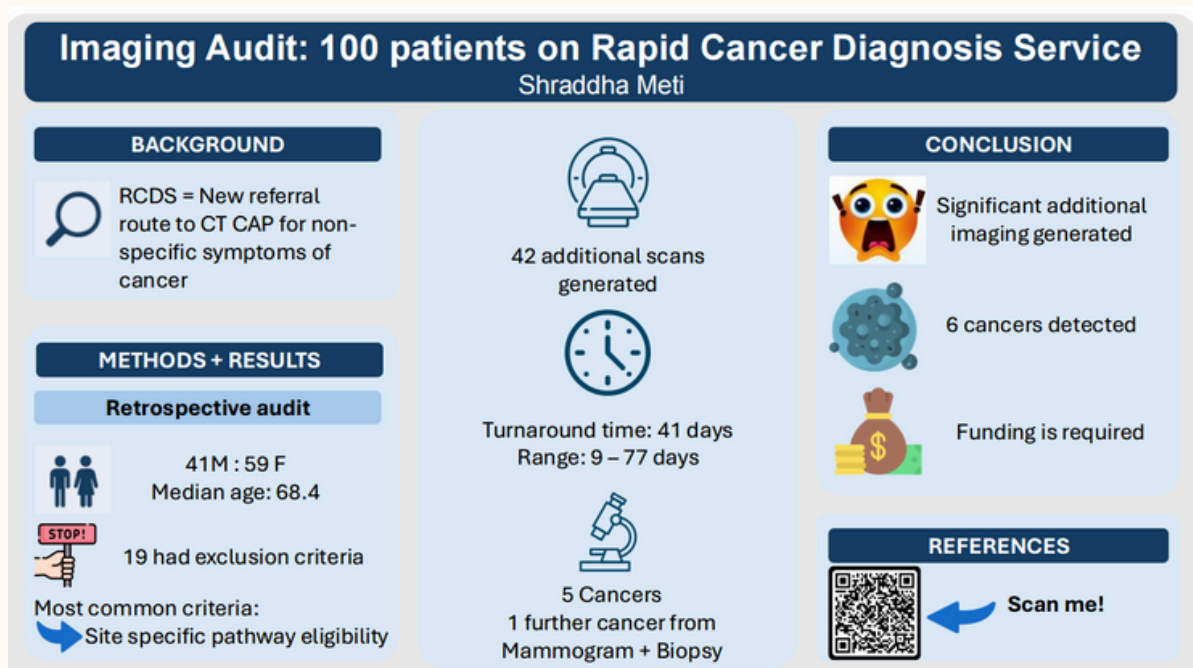
This all culminates in the final year, where you complete your final exam and the journey comes to an end, and the next step can truly begin.

Overall, medical school is a journey that prepares you with the skills and knowledge required to be a doctor in both a practical sense and a more personal sense. Through the relationships built and challenges overcome, it is a stepping stone that better prepares you for the journey ahead in the healthcare environment.

COMPETITION TIME

Visual Abstracts

Competition Winner – Shraddha Meti



What is a visual abstract?

A visual abstract is a novel way of presenting research. It is a small graphic that gives a brief overview of the research question, methods, and conclusions of the project. In essence, it is an eye-catching summary of the research you have carried out.

What do I need to submit?

- Your written abstract (introduction, methods, results, conclusion (250 words))
- Your visual abstract
- The name of one project supervisor
- The date of submission to the competition

Good luck!

RIYA PHILIP, DR NOY BASU, DR CAMILLE HUSSER

The Student-Staff Sustainability Partnership

The Student-Staff Sustainability Partnership aims to bring together like-minded people from across the medical school to promote the concept of planetary health and share resources that allow us to advance our understanding of OneHealth, sustainability, and how we as healthcare professionals can apply them into practice.

From community facing events such as volunteering at the Glasgow Science Festival where we had a stand exploring the environmental impacts of the NHS, to the annual completion of the Planetary Health Report Card, and even sharing international workshop opportunities such as the U21 2025 SDG Workshop in Ireland - through the Partnership, students have gained many opportunities to be involved.

Planetary Health Report Card

The Planetary Health Report Card was created in 2019 as a tool for students around the world to audit their university's performance in implementing planetary health into the curriculum and practices. From 2020, students at the University of Glasgow have undertaken this project annually.

32 metrics, divided into 5 domains (Curriculum, Interdisciplinary Research, Community Outreach & Advocacy, Support for Student-Led Initiatives and Campus Sustainability), were used to calculate an overall grade.

Areas of improvement were targeted using information collated from the report through staff-student liaisons.

Since its adoption, the University's overall score has improved from 40.5% to 58.71%. Since 2021, improvements have been made in all domains:

Curriculum: The role of Planetary Health Vertical Theme Lead as a member of staff was created and appointed. Students across all the years were given more lectures that mapped to the metrics in the PHRC.

Research: The University of Glasgow has joined the Global Consortium on Climate and Health Education.




Community Outreach: The University of Glasgow hosted courses for the community during COP26. We have also partnered with Glasgow City Council to launch GALLANT - Glasgow as a Living Lab Accelerating Novel Transformation, which aims to co-produce sustainable solutions (with many health co-benefits) with a variety of communities

Support for Student-Led Initiatives: Many student-run societies have started to host activities that aim to encourage sustainability, which receive great support from the University.

Campus Sustainability: The University has now fully divested from fossil fuels. The medical school has also introduced guidelines to make its lab spaces more environmentally friendly.

RIYA PHILIP, DR NOY BASU, DR CAMILLE HUSSER

The Student-Staff Sustainability Partnership

	Overall	Curriculum	Research	Community Outreach & Advocacy	Support for Student-led Initiatives	Campus Sustainability
2020-2021						
University of Glasgow	C-	D	C+	F+	B-	C
2021-2022						
University of Glasgow 	C	C-	B	D+	C	B-
2022-2023						
University of Glasgow School of Medicine 	C+	C+	B	D+	A-	C+
2023-2024						
University of Glasgow 	C+	B-	B	D	B	B-

It is evident that there is steady progress as scores improve year after year. This shows that faculty take on board the feedback and work towards achieving a better score. The PHRC team has also grown since 2021, showing that more students wish to be involved in sustainability efforts. While there is more work to be done, it is obvious that there is a need for continuous auditing, and the Planetary Health Report Card offers an opportunity to highlight areas for improvement.

A poster that audited the medical school's sustainability efforts based on data from the PHRC was also presented internationally at the MS4SF Climate Health Equity Day Conference 2025 in Washington D.C.

U21 2025 SDG Workshop

The U21 2025 SDG Workshop was held at University College Dublin and participating students hailed from University College Dublin, Lund University, University of Glasgow and University of Nottingham from a variety of disciplines, including public health, medicine, biomedical science, human nutrition, agribusiness and veterinary science. From the University of Glasgow, our delegation included one student from Nursing, one from Veterinary Medicine, one from Vet Bioscience and three from Medicine. This diverse group was intentionally chosen to represent the concept of OneHealth - the overarching theme of the workshop.

RIYA PHILIP, DR NOY BASU, DR CAMILLE HUSSER

The Student-Staff Sustainability Partnership

The WHO states that “One Health is an integrated, unifying approach that aims to sustainably balance and optimize the health of people, animals and ecosystems. It recognizes that the health of humans, domestic and wild animals, plants, and the wider environment (including ecosystems) are closely linked and interdependent.”⁽¹⁾

On Day 1, Lecturers from UCD gave talks covering a wide range of topics to illustrate how many solutions require interdisciplinary cooperation under the umbrella of OneHealth. These talks were:

- Cervical cancer elimination by Professor Patricia Fitzpatrick
- Global HIV epidemic: Achievements and Current Challenges in Treatment, Prevention and Cure by Dr Virginie Gautier
- Disability as an Issue in the University Sector - Insights from U21 Partners, by Associate Professor Deirdre O'Connor and Professor Paul Harpur
- A One Health mindset by Dr. Gerald Barry
- One Health and Sustainable Development by Professor Patrick Paul Walsh
- Biodiversity and Human Health by Associate Professor Barry McMahon
- Educating Public Health Leaders of the Future: A Global Health Perspective by Associate Professor Mary Codd

As our delegation included students from a diverse range of degrees, we each brought forth our expertise in different subject areas. This was especially useful during Day 2 of the workshop, where the students were given case studies where the concept of OneHealth needed to be considered in order to assess the problem and devise solutions.

A real-life example that was given of “Operation Cat Drop.”⁽²⁾ In the 1950s, Borneo asked the World Health Organisation to help them with malaria control. The World Health Organisation sprayed dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) - an insecticide used to kill malaria-carrying mosquitoes. It was then noticed that the population of rats had increased and infestations were leading to diseases passed from them.

The issue was that DDT was poisonous to cats. With the native cat population declining, the population of rats increased, and so did the diseases from them. Operation Cat Drop was planned to parachute cats into Borneo to increase the cat population there.

It was fascinating to be able to hear and understand how the concept of OneHealth applied in the real world. The workshop taught us how we had to consider the interconnectedness of the environment to public health.

References:

1. One health [Internet]. [cited 2025 Jun 20]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/health-topics/one-health>
2. Campbell N, Powers E, Cabrera L, Cabrera D. Cats, Rats, and Roofs: The Perils of Ignoring Relationships.

DOMINIQUE FORSON

Life Beyond Medical School

Medicine has a funny way of taking over your life. When I got accepted, I was full of excitement and ambition for the journey ahead. But as the course progressed, I noticed a quiet contradiction—medicine demands so much of you, yet leaves little space for anything else. I found myself losing touch with who I was outside of lectures, placements, and revision. I needed a way to reset—something to manage stress, stay organised, and reclaim some control over my time.

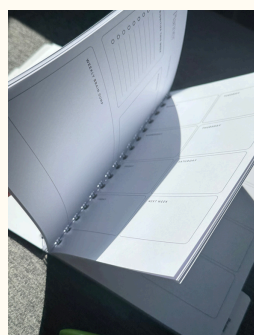
The Start of Something Small

It began with a simple planner I designed for myself—minimal, structured, and low-pressure. It helped, and the process of creating it became an outlet. Soon, I was making more products, sharing them with friends and family, then selling online and at local markets. La Vida Facil, my small stationery brand, was born.

Learning Outside the Lecture Hall

Running a small business while studying medicine isn't easy, but it taught me more than I expected. I learned to manage time more efficiently, communicate with suppliers and customers, solve logistical problems, and develop digital marketing skills. These are transferable skills that I know will serve me throughout my medical career, especially in a healthcare system that increasingly values innovation and adaptability.

There's also a financial upside. The hidden costs of studying medicine—from travel to placements to exam fees—add up. This side hustle helps fill the gaps.



More than anything, it became a form of self-care. Designing products, packing orders, and connecting with customers offered a creative space that helped balance the pressure of clinical life.

The Value of a Plan B

I've thoroughly enjoyed my time at medical school so far. But I've also learned the importance of having something else—something that reminds me that I'm more than just this degree. While La Vida Facil will likely remain as a passion project, it's taught me that having a side hustle isn't necessarily a distraction in the negative sense. And who knows? If the medicine gig doesn't work out, I might just have a future running a very organised little stationery store.

You can check out La Vida Facil on Etsy or follow along at @lavidafacil_.

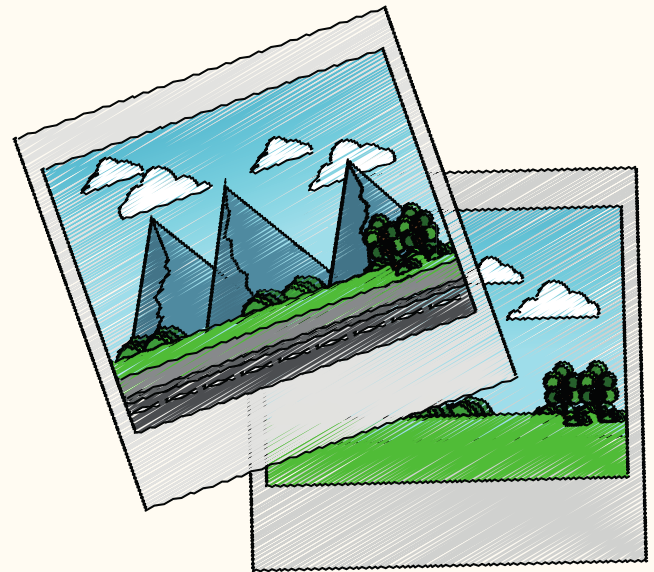
COMPETITION TIME

Surgo Vision Competition

"A picture is worth a thousand words" - Confucius

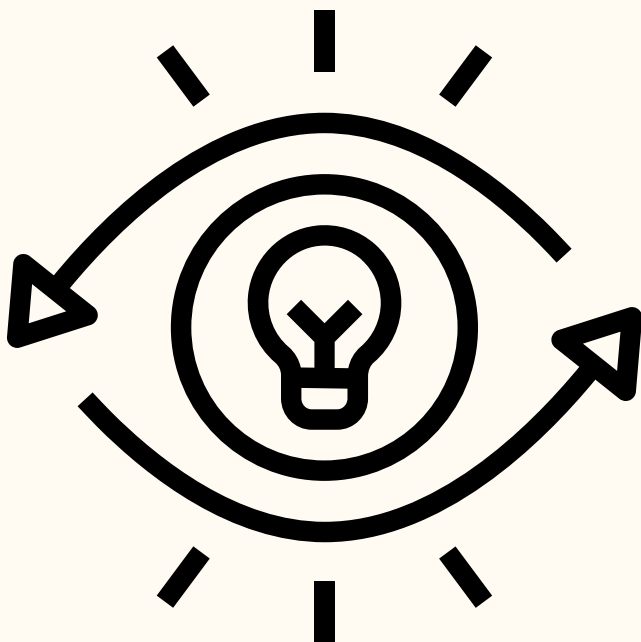
To encourage intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, observational and diagnostic skills, the ability to empathize with patients, and promote a general sense of well-being, Surgo will publish up to 5 images submitted by medical students in each issue.

Images can be in the form of a painting, cartoon, photograph, still life drawing, doodle ... the list is endless - limited only by your imagination.



Selection criteria:

1. The image must be an original piece, submitted via email to the Editor in Chief, Surgo (format - JPEG or TIFF)
2. It should be certified as original and be accompanied by a short description of what it represents/means to you / why it should be published.
3. The best 5 will be selected for publication in Surgo by Professor Cindy Chew.
4. Each successful submission is awarded £20.
5. At the end of the year, all published images are eligible to compete for the Best Medical Vision prize - up to £100.



It's okay not to be okay

University brings change and challenge which can sometimes be difficult to adapt to. It is perfectly normal to feel overwhelmed at university but, if you're feeling down, or just want someone to talk to it's important to reach out and get help. The University's counseling and psychological services offer a range of self-help resources. More information can be found at:

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/counseling/self-help>

Recommended apps and websites

Calm: Calm is one of the top-rated apps for sleep and meditation. Getting a good night's sleep helps lower stress and anxiety as well as boosting your mood:
<https://www.calm.com>

Headspace: Meditation is an effective way to improve focus, reduce stress, and increase sleep quality. If you are new to meditation, the Headspace app is a great way to start with numerous different guided meditations taking you step by step through the meditation process:
<https://www.headspace.com/headspace-meditation-app>

Living life to the full: Work through free online courses aimed at reducing stress, and improving mood and resilience. Living life to the full is a great resource:
<https://lltff.com>

Useful Numbers

Breathing Space - 0800 83 85 87 -

Monday-Thursday 6pm to 2am

Friday 6pm-Monday 6am

A free, confidential, phone and web-chat service for anyone in Scotland over the age of 16 experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety

Glasgow Students' Nightline - 0141 334 9516

Monday-Friday 7pm-7am

A confidential telephone, text, and online listening and information service run by trained students for the students of Glasgow University, Glasgow Caledonian University, and Strathclyde University.

Glasgow & Clyde Rape Crisis - 08088 00 00 14

11am-2pm Monday - Friday

Provides support for women and girls who have experienced rape, sexual assault or sexual abuse.

Samaritans - 116 123

24hrs

A helpline offering emotional support for anyone feeling down, distressed or struggling to cope



PROFESSOR CINDY CHEW

Tail Lights

I hope everyone has enjoyed the wonderful Spring weather, this academic year and is now looking forward to the Summer holidays! (Not too long to go now till you too are done, MB4!)

What a busy few months it has been for you. MedChir Revue in May was of course a highlight in the calendar. A fantastic array of talent was on display – from high culture opera to artistic sports people. Wonderful to see the (it-must-be-a-record-breaking-number-of) judges unanimously award the top prize to the terrific Otago Street Boys (final years William Heeley, Rueben Heaton and William Strachan). Bravo and totally well deserved!

It is great to see some of your audits being submitted as Visual Abstracts. Keep them coming! Remember: submissions accepted for publication receive £20 and is legitimate CV fodder (citable DOI)!

Students presenting their work at conferences is always impressive. Everyone was blown away by one of our 3rd year students competing against Radiology Residents at the Scottish Radiological Society Spring Meeting for the SRS Dr Sarah Jenkins QI Prize. It was a close run thing and she was just pipped to the post. You can read Shraddha's visual abstract in this issue of Surgo and the other works here: <https://www.radiology.co.uk/spring-2025-qi-presentations>.



Graduation is in a couple of weeks while 335 MB5's are heading to Crieff for their Graduation Ball. Epsilon 2025 is a significant cohort for many reasons. As a 25-year old Epsilonian myself, I am extra proud of this group of graduands. Not only are they the first cohort to officially sit the GMC Medical Licencing Assessment, they also did this after starting their medical school journey during the COVID pandemic. What a fantastic achievement! Super well done everyone! YOU ARE THE OG! Remember you have resilience in spades – the world is your oyster: go make your mark!

PROFESSOR CINDY CHEW

Tail Lights

Dr Christine McAlpine is the subject of this issue's interview. Be inspired by her incredible journey from being the first woman president of MedChir Society to Consultant Stroke Physician at Glasgow Royal Infirmary today.



Until the next Tail Lights, have a fabulous summer and see you all in the Autumn! Remember to send in your holiday pictures as Surgo Vision or turn your audits into Visual Abstracts!

