

PROFESSOR CINDY CHEW

Tail Lights

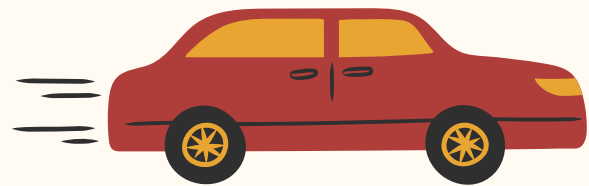
Welcome to your brand new iteration of the amazing **Surgo!** Well done to Eddie and Anna for bringing our journal into the 21st century.

The name of this column is courtesy of Prof. Sir. Graham Teasdale (Medchir honorary president 1981). Thanks GT!

"By providing a bright red light at the back end of the car, tail lights ensure that all drivers are aware of the cars' presence and they protect the car from being slammed from behind by other cars" - Google.

Expect interviews with interesting folk and maybe an opinionated rant or two!

My first piece is a chat with Billy Heeley (Medchir alumni rep 23/24) who spent a year piecing together the missing history of Medchir. Enjoy!



History of MedChir, a conversation with Cindy Chew and William Heeley

Founded in 1802, our MedChir Society is one of the oldest Medical Societies in the UK [we were pipped just a wee bit to the post in Scotland by Royal Medical Society, Edinburgh (1739) and Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society (1789)].

William "Billy" Heeley is former Vice-President of MedChir. He successfully discharged his duties in organising the infamous MedChir Ball at the magically transformed setting of The Engine Works.

It is perhaps inevitable, given our 220 year history, that some details might be lost to the sands of time. With the advent of "modern technology", the Society's record shifted from the physical form of a "minute book" to a digital format. As a result, information between 1980 and 2018 is tragically missing. Billy set himself the task of piecing back some of the missing history for us. Let's find out more.....

A CONVERSATION WITH CINDY CHEW AND WILLIAM HEELEY

History of Medchir

Billy, tell us a bit about your association with MedChir?

I have been a member of MedChir since Patrick Nicholas advertised it during Fresher's Week. I think MedChir – with its myriad social, sporting and educational events – is integral to being a medical student in Glasgow. I have loved every minute of it! I was the 1st year Rep, Publicity Rep, then Secretary, before being voted in as Vice-President last year.

What inspired you to “fill in the blanks” of MedChir records?

While holding the office of Secretary, it struck me that Glasgow Union's plaque of previous GU Presidents is on prominent display at the entrance. It got me thinking: What about MedChir? Where is our list of Presidents? In fact, where are our records pre-2019?

How did you go about it?

I spent an afternoon reading the old minute books held in the University's Archive; cross checked names from those minute books with published President's addresses from old copies of Surgo. Armed with a patchy list of past presidents, I then spent the next year and a bit Googling, searching social media, sending cold DM's and emails to every name on the list - asking for their help filling those gaps from their memories and knowledge.

What did you manage to find?

I found 214 (out of 220) names!

Wow! That is Impressive! Can you share some of the highlights? Were there any difficulties?

It was frustrating when I hit a wall and the trail turned cold when folk didn't respond to my request for assistance. It was, by equal measure, really fun when people DO reply and I get another line filled! I remember spending hours just reading up what past MedChir members went on to achieve in the decades after Medical School. People such as Prof Sir Ken Calman (who changed the face of post graduate medical training in UK and ex-CMO of Scotland) or another who operates an aesthetic clinic in Australia. The range was incredible and really inspiring.

Can you share any funny stories?

A few records that stood out for me include: MedChir Ball was held for many years in the QMU – on account of GU's stance in (not!) admitting women. The MedChir Ball itself was cancelled for a couple of years on account of “apathy” and debates were held on whether the serving of alcohol should be discontinued on account of the general “rowdiness” that ensued.

True story: I was at a GP placement with a doctor whose name I thought sounded familiar. It took me a while but I finally twigged: the name was on the President's list! That was a really funny “6 degrees of separation” moment for me. It was fascinating hearing him recount his days in MedChir and even better when he was able to help me fill a few more lines on the list!

**A CONVERSATION WITH CINDY CHEW AND WILLIAM
HEELEY**

History of Medchir

What is the point of all this work?

I think it is important to try and have as complete a record as possible of our history. If nothing else, it serves to show of how the cultural mores of medical students change over time. It is ironic and a real shame that we have records from over a hundred years ago but have somehow managed to lose the most recent decades. We have a responsibility to try and find that history and preserve it for those who come after us.

How do you feel about all this work you've done?

I am really proud of what I managed to achieve in what is really a drop in the ocean of time as far as MedChir's history is concerned. I feel very much that I too am now woven into the fabric of the history of our society.

What else do you think needs done?

It would be good if the missing history could be found and put together with the rest of the tapestry forming the history of MedChir. Does the minute book post-1980 exist? Truly magic if it could be found and returned to the University's Archives for safe keeping.