Welcome to the tenth edition of the Neuroscience Ireland Newsletter.

Society News:

Neuroscience Ireland Presidency
Dr. Richard Roche steps down as President of Neuroscience Ireland at the end of the year. Richard has been a Council member since and served as the third President of Neuroscience Ireland from 2012-2014. During his tenure Richard has been central to several new initiatives, particularly in the area of advocacy for neuroscience research. He also was instrumental to setting up a new Society website, establishing a NI presence on social media and promoting the involvement of early career neuroscientists in the Society. Concurrently with his presidency of Neuroscience Ireland, he became the inaugural President of the Irish Brain Council of which Neuroscience Ireland is a member organisation. Richard performed his last official function when he opened the Hippocampus Symposium on Dec 15th at UCC at which 2014 Nobel prize winner John O’Keefe was the guest of honour and plenary speaker. Neuroscience Ireland is extremely grateful to Richard for his hard work on behalf of the society over a long period and his advocacy for neuroscience in general.

Prof. David Henshall is the incoming President of the Society. David has a PhD in Neuropharmacology from the University of Edinburgh and did postdoctoral work in the University of Pittsburgh, and the Robert S. Dow Neurobiology Laboratories, Oregon before moving to RCSI in 2004 where he is now Professor of Molecular Physiology & Neuroscience. David has served on the NI Council since 2009 and as Secretary for the past two years and so brings a wealth of experience to the role of President.

Neuroscience Ireland Council
Other changes to the officers of the Council are that Mary Clarke (RCSI) takes over from John Kelly (UCC) as vice-president, while John Kelly takes up a new role as Education Officer. Paul Young has stepped down from the Council having served as a UCC representative since 2010 and as Communications officer from 2013-2014. Stella Vlachou (DCU) is the incoming Communications Officer. New institutional representatives are Andrew Coogan (NUIM) and Andre Toulouse (UCC). The full membership of the incoming Council, which will serve from 2015 – 2017 is as follows:

President: David Henshall (RCSI)
Vice-president: Mary Clarke (RCSI)
Secretary: vacant
Treasurer: Sean Commins (NUIM)
Communications: Stella Vlachou (DCU)
Education: John Kelly (NUI Galway)

Institute representatives:
Kevin Mitchell (TCD)
Aine Kelly (TCD)
Hilary McMahon (UCD)
Keith Murphy (UCD)
Oliver Dolly (DCU)
Andrew Coogan NUIM
John Cryan (UCC)
Andre Toulouse (UCC)
Michelle Roche (NUIG)
Post-doctoral representative
John Kealy (NUIM)

Outgoing President of Neuroscience Ireland Dr. Richard Roche and his successor Prof. David Henshall.
Ciaran Regan – a pioneering and influential Irish Neuroscientist

It was with great sadness that the Irish neuroscience community learned of the passing of Prof. Ciaran Regan, University College Dublin, who died on the 24th October aged 64. Prof Regan’s chief area of research related to understanding the mechanisms that contribute to the formation of long-term memory and exploiting these mechanisms as novel drug targets. Based on his work on cell-adhesion molecules in the 1980s and 1990s, he was among the first to demonstrate that brain nerves physically change their connections when new memories are formed. His subsequent work built on this fundamental principle, allowing him to develop new treatments that increase and restore cognitive functions. Ciaran’s work produced over 170 scientific publications, patents, book chapters and books. Ciaran was a prolific supervisor and mentor, graduating 41 postgraduate research students through his laboratory. Ciaran was an incredible colleague and mentor and he leaves a legacy of dedicated neuroscientists who continue his mission to better understand the nervous system, its dysfunction and develop better neurotherapeutics.

A two day symposium which was due to be held in UCD on the 30th and 31st October to celebrate the career of Prof. Regan was postponed but will go ahead in 2015. Neuroscience Ireland extends our deepest condolences to Prof. Regan’s family, friends and colleagues.

Save the date!

The next Neuroscience Ireland Conference will be held on the 1st-2nd of September 2015 at Dublin City University (DCU). The Plenary Speaker of the 2015 Conference will be the 2013 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine Prof. Thomas Südhof. Preparations are currently in progress for an exciting programme.

Travel Bursaries

Neuroscience Ireland Travel Bursaries are awarded to post-graduate and post-doctoral members whose work has been accepted for presentation at an international conference. These bursaries are worth up to €300 each. The three winners for the most recent round of travel awards were:

Elizabeth Walshe • presented a poster at the International Society for Posture and Gait Research (ISPGR) World Congress 2014, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, June 29 - July 3. The title of the poster was "Falling Head Over Heels: Assessing the cognitive and electrophysiological processes underlying gait and falls."

Eileen Curran • presented at the World Congress of Epidemiology in Anchorage, Alaska, USA on 17-21 August. The title of her presentation was 'Effects of mode of delivery and maternal irritable bowel syndrome on childhood autism spectrum disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in a British cohort.'

Bláthnaid Hughes • presented a poster at the 9th FENS Forum of Neuroscience in Milan, Italy on July 5th -9th 2014. The title of her poster was ‘The Effects of Cannabidiol in models of Alzheimer’s Disease: A Study of Long-Term Potentiation.’

Signup to follow the NI blog on the NI website to get information about future calls.
Young Neuroscientists Symposium 2014

The Young Neuroscientists Symposium took place at the Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute on the 20th September. The event saw over 120 young researchers from across Ireland coming together to present their data and engage in discussion with their peers. Throughout the day, postgraduate students and postdoctoral researchers were given the opportunity to present their research through oral communications, poster presentations and a data blitz. The quality and range of the work on display is ample evidence that the future of neuroscience in Ireland is in safe hands.

Along with our young neuroscientists, there were keynote addresses on the day by Prof. Alan Sanfey (Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition and Behavior, Radboud University, Netherlands) and Prof. Michael Heneka (University of Bonn, Germany). The Early Career Investigator Award was given to Dr. Eva-Maria Jimenez-Mateos (Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland) for her work on microRNAs in epilepsy. A focussed workshop focussed on careers and wine reception completed the day, with discussions going on long into the evening. The Young Neuroscientists Symposium, was organised by members of the NI early-career researchers committee.

Dr. Eva-Maria Jimenez-Mateos (Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland) receiving the Neuroscience Ireland Early Career Investigator Award for her work on microRNAs in epilepsy from incoming NI President David Henshall at the Young Neuroscientists Symposium.

Dr. Keeley Baker (NUIM) presenting data on the development choline biosensors.

Dr. Olivia Bibollet-Bahena (TCD) presenting data on thalamocortical development in mice.
The Careers in Neuroscience Symposium 2014

The inaugural Careers in Neuroscience Symposium was held in NUI Galway on Wednesday, 26 November. Over 80 young neuroscientists from various national and international institutes attended to hear talks on career options in academia, industry, science journalism, entrepreneurship, alternative careers, as well as a workshop on funding and grants.

Several high-calibre and distinguished researchers including Prof. Maeve Caldwell, Prof. John Cryan, Prof. David Finn, Prof. Billy O’Connor, and Dr. Aideen Sullivan, imparted constructive career advice, shared their experience and presented their latest research findings. In addition, there was an invaluable industry perspective from Dr. Max Bianchi (Transpharmation Ireland) and Prof. Markus von Kienlin (Hoffman-La Roche). Through open discussions and social events, delegates were able to meet experts in an informal and friendly environment and network with other early career neuroscientists from different institutes.

The standard of oral and poster presentations from delegates was excellent and there were plenty of networking opportunities over lunch, a wine reception and social event.

There were over 100 attendees with 6 oral and 38 poster presentations. The prizewinners for best presentations were:

**Oral:**
- Dr. John Kealy, NUI Maynooth
- Emma Yhnell, Cardiff University

**Posters:**
- Kate McDonnell, NUI Galway
- Alan Hoban, UCC

The Careers in Neuroscience Symposium, which was organised by early-career researchers in the Galway Neuroscience Centre and UCC, was funded by Neuroscience Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and was held as a satellite meeting to NECTAR 2014 (Network for European CNS Transplantation and Restoration). Thanks to all attendees on behalf of the organising committee:
Symposium on “The Hippocampus in Health and Disease” held in UCC.

In recognition of the enormous contributions of Nobel Laureate John O’Keefe to neuroscience a symposium entitled “The Hippocampus in Health and Disease” took place in UCC on Monday 15th December. Professor O’Keefe who has been jointly awarded the 2014 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine delivered a lecture entitled ‘The Hippocampus as a Cognitive Map: an update’. The symposium brought together Irish researchers working on various aspects of hippocampal function. These speakers included Yvonne Nolan, John Cryan and Cora O’Neill from UCC, Shane O’Mara, Marina Lynch and Michael Rowan from TCD as well as David Henshall from RCSI.

Professor O’Keefe’s father was from New Market Co Cork, and his mother was from Co Mayo. Born in the United States, he has spent most of his research career at University College London. The symposium which was organised by Yvonne Nolan and John Cryan and was opened by outgoing Neuroscience Ireland President Richard Roche. Following the symposium Nobel Laureate John O’Keefe was conferred with an honorary doctorate from UCC.

Major international conference on brain disorders held in NUI Galway

A conference on neurodegenerative diseases took place in Galway from 27-28 November. The Annual Meeting of the Network of European Central Nervous System Transplantation & Restoration (NECTAR) is a major international gathering for researchers working on the development of cell and gene therapies for neurodegenerative diseases such as such as Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease and Huntington’s disease.

This conference has been held annually across Europe since its inauguration in Lund, Sweden in 1984, and this is the first time in its history that this prestigious international meeting has come to Ireland. The Chair of the local organising committee is Dr. Eilís Dowd, Senior Lecturer in Pharmacology & Therapeutics at NUI Galway and a member of the University’s NCBES Galway Neuroscience Centre. Speaking about the conference, Dr. Dowd said “It is a privilege to host this prestigious conference, and we expect that holding the conference in Galway will significantly enhance Ireland’s reputation in the field of cell and gene therapies for neurodegenerative disease”.

Eighteen international experts from across Europe, Australia and Canada spoke at the meeting. These included major international scientific speakers such as Prof. Colin Masters, University of Melbourne, Australia and Prof. Anders Björklund, Lund University, Sweden as well as policy makers (Dr. Mary Baker, Past President of the European Brain Council), patient advocates, experts in clinical trial design and industrial speakers.
Join Neuroscience Ireland

Membership runs from January to December and we encourage all Neuroscientists in Ireland to join the Society, as membership of Neuroscience Ireland confers the following benefits:

- Discounted registration for the Neuroscience Ireland conference
- Eligibility for Neuroscience Ireland travel bursaries
- Eligible to be nominated for Neuroscience Ireland Early Career Investigator award.
- Eligible to nominate candidates for the Neuroscience Ireland Early Career and Distinguished Investigator awards
- Receipt of Neuroscience Ireland newsletter/e-mail alerts

Also, members of Neuroscience Ireland are automatically members of the Federation of European Neuroscience Societies (FENS). This entitles Neuroscience Ireland members to many additional benefits including:

- Reduced registration for FENS meetings
- Free online access to the official FENS journal, EJN.
- Receipt of the FENS e-mailings (Job Market, EJN table of contents etc.).

NI website and blog

An ongoing objective of the Society is make the NI website and blog a communications hub for the Irish Neuroscience community. To bring this about we need NI members to:

1. sign up to follow the NI blog by clicking on the “+ Follow” button at the bottom right hand side of the website: http://neuroscienceireland.com/

2. provide information to post on the website – conferences, seminars, jobs, etc.