

true blue

Newsletter of the Friends of St George's

Editorial

Remarkable indeed has been the recovery of St George's University – and the island of Grenada itself – from the ravages of Hurricane Ivan last year. Indeed, it is greatly to the credit of the University that the student community, despite being evacuated, hardly had their studies interrupted.

Now, as we state here, enrolment is up and the demand for places higher than ever.

Similarly, the UK clinical programme is thriving with just under 100 students in this country at the present time. They will benefit from the newly created UK clinical training centres, each with its own core hospital, which have been established by St George's. The purpose is to have a critical mass of students at each of the core hospitals and to ensure uniformity of teaching standards at all UK affiliated hospitals. It is a positive step forward.

New appointments

Vanessa Bourne has recently joined the Friends of St George's. Vanessa is a trustee of the Leonard Cheshire Foundation, the leading charity for disabled people in the UK, and Vice Chairman of its international committee. She is former Chairman of the Patients Association.



Chie Yamamoto (right), a recent graduate, talking to a prospective student at the London Open House

Changes provide opportunities says UK Dean Rodney Croft

Rodney Croft, St George's Dean of Clinical Studies in the UK, is positive about the opportunities now available for graduates from overseas medical schools to practice medicine in the UK.

Speaking at an 'open house' function held for prospective students in London recently, he said that "the corner was turned late last year when the General Medical Council informed me that candidates could take part one of the Professional and Linguistic Assessment Board – the PLAB – examination on qualification rather than graduation. As we know, the PLAB exam remains the only route into medical practice here for new graduates from overseas medical schools. However, the new ruling means that students can meet all the requirements in order to sit the PLAB exam months before they actually graduate.

"This now saves students a huge amount of wasted time before securing a job – a process that previously could take up to 18 months! Small wonder that many overseas

students turned to the US for a career in medicine where the registration exams have always been able to be taken before graduation. Now the situation in the UK has changed dramatically."

Rodney Croft said that he was also encouraged by the establishment of the new Foundation Year Programme which will be implemented nationally from August this year.

"The programme lasts for two years", he said, "and will equate to the current pre-registration house officer (PRHO) year with a seamless move into the second, post-registration year, equivalent to current Senior House Officer (SHO) training. Full registration with the GMC will probably occur by the end of the first year. In effect this is job security for two years – and offers a clearly defined path into UK medicine."

Rodney Croft said that he remained "unconvinced that the problem of the overall shortage of doctors in the UK has been resolved. One

only has to look at the impact of the European working time directive on junior doctor numbers and the figures repeatedly quoted by the British Medical Association."



But, he added, "at least I can conclude that there will be plenty of opportunities for graduates from overseas universities to begin their practice here and hopefully continue for the whole of their careers."

For further advice on how to register with the GMC and how and when to take the PLAB, contact Dr John Powell-Jackson at careerguidanceuk@sgu.edu.

Rodney Croft believes there are plenty of opportunities for graduates from overseas universities to practice medicine in the UK.

Enrolment at all-time high

St George's is back on the path of growth and progress following the disruption caused by Hurricane Ivan last September. Over 1,300 medical and veterinary students have returned to the campus from affiliated institutions in the US, where they continued their studies immediately after the hurricane struck.

The level of enrolment at the University is at an all-time high – a definite sign of the speedy recovery that has been made. Currently, just over 3,000 students are enrolled at the University – a doubling of student enrolment since 1999 when there were 1,452 students. More than one thousand students will be admitted during this academic year.

"I am very pleased with the number of students who have been admitted to St George's this year. It is encouraging to see so many students from all over the world studying at the University, which has reached record levels," says Margaret Lambert, Dean of Enrolment Planning.

Tributes paid at Friends' dinner

The Grenadian High Commissioner in London, Joslyn Whiteman, was guest of honour at a dinner given in London last December by the Friends of St George's. The High Commissioner shared his thoughts on the damage caused by Hurricane Ivan and the rebuilding of the island and expressed the determination of the Government and people of Grenada to recover from the disaster.

Friends attending the dinner included Baroness Hanham, Lord Soulsby of Swaffham Prior, Sir Kenneth Stuart and Lord Walton of Detchant, as well as Deans and Chairmen of the UK Clinical Faculty. They heard UK Dean Rodney Croft pay tribute to St George's Chancellor Charles Modica for "the empathetic, sympathetic and highly efficient way in which he and all his staff handled the crisis."

Issue SEVEN

May 2005



Friends of St George's

- Dr Peter Bourne • Mrs Vanessa Bourne • Sir Kenneth Calman • Mr Rodney Croft •
- Professor Sir Richard Doll • Mr David Jessop OBE • Baroness Hanham CBE • Baroness Howells of St Davids OBE •
- Sir Jim Lester DL • Professor Sir Malcolm Macnaughton • Lord Soulsby of Swaffham Prior •
- Sir Kenneth Stuart • Mr Jonathan Taylor • Dr Keith Taylor • Lord Walton of Detchant • Mr Bowen Wells •

St George's in the UK

First winner of Memorial Scholarship

Ruth Taggart has just started her MD at St George's as the first student to have been awarded the Peter Saunders Memorial Scholarship. The Scholarship, named after the late UK Dean of Clinical Studies, Peter Saunders, was inaugurated last year and is

worth approximately £85,000 in tuition fees over the four-year graduation course. Ruth was awarded the scholarship on the basis of her academic qualifications, financial need and the strength of her essay on the physicians role in society in the 21st century.

Ruth has a degree from the School of Pharmacy at Strathclyde University in Scotland and has worked as a senior clinical pharmacist for Lanarkshire NHS Trust. She has quickly adapted to university life at St George's. "During the first week there was a well-organised

matriculation week and we were made to feel very welcome by the orientation teams," she says.

"There is always something going on at the campus and I really enjoy the diversity at SGU – there are students from all over the world," Ruth says.

Studying at St George's will give Ruth the opportunity to practice medicine in both the UK and US. "I like the fact that we can prepare for both the UK PLAB exam, as well as the US Medical Licensing Examination," she explains. "The University has a good record of students doing well in both these

exams and I think it is fantastic to have the opportunity to practice medicine in both countries."

During the first term she will be studying histology, embryology, anatomy, clinical skills and biochemistry. "The lectures are similar to the ones I had back at home – although no one could prepare me for the sheer volume of work! There is no doubt that St George's would still be my first choice when selecting which medical school to attend," Ruth says.



Ruth Taggart

Camp Medicine

Three lucky UK students have won a trip to the premed and prevet summer camp at St George's in July. The ten-day Camp Medicine, now in its third year, provides an opportunity for students to experience first-hand what it is like to study medicine and veterinary medicine at St George's.

The students won their trip by taking part in a quiz organised by the University at Medsim and Vetsim – workshops at the University of Nottingham for students aiming for a career in medicine and veterinary medicine. St George's has been involved with the

workshops for several years and gives presentations on options for studying medicine outside the UK.

The Camp Medicine programme includes sessions on studying skills, clinical lab skills and medical instruction. Students take part in field trips and visit the wards and units of local hospitals and clinics. The prize includes a roundtrip airfare from the UK to Grenada and participation in the summer camp – with accommodation, meals, medical instruction and field trips all paid for by St George's.

Student profile: Linda Mohammed

Linda Mohammed, from London, completed her MD at St George's last summer. Shortly after graduation she took the first part of the PLAB exam and in December passed the second exam. She was then able to register with the General Medical Council and apply for Foundation Programme jobs (see interview with Rodney Croft). In August, she will start her first placement at West Suffolk Hospital in Bury St Edmunds and will then move to Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge.

Before moving to Grenada, Linda studied Biomedical Sciences at Kingston University. At the end of her degree, she heard about the St George's Millennium Scholarship. "I have always wanted to study medicine but was unable to find a university place in the UK. When I heard about the scholarship it seemed as a fantastic opportunity to study medicine at St George's," she says.

Linda spent the first two years in Grenada and St Vincent completing her

basic science training. "There were often renowned visiting professors who taught part of the course material. It was hard work but fortunately there are excellent support services. In the evenings study groups work in the library and the Department of Educational Services provides all kinds of study support – from how to complete multiple choice tests on time to advice on problems with the course material," Linda says.

She continues, "The True Blue campus is amazing and very well-equipped – there are internet facilities everywhere, a bank, a gym, cafes and even DVD rentals at the campus post office!"

Linda completed her clinical rotations at three hospitals in the UK as well as some electives in New York. She will be starting her first placement in August. "I am delighted that within five years of enrolling at St George's I have found a job as a doctor in the UK – this is just where I want to be," she concludes.



Linda Mohammed

For further information please contact:

Executive Director
UK Trust
St George's International
School of Medicine, Grenada
Victoria Chambers
16-18 Strutton Ground
London SW1P 2HP
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7222 5479
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7222 5480
e-mail: info@raittorr.co.uk

Registrar
St George's International
School of Medicine, Grenada
Kingdon's Yard
Parchment Street
Winchester
Hampshire
SO23 8AT
Tel: +44 (0) 1962 850 650
Fax: +44 (0) 1962 850 567
e-mail: shuntington@sgu.edu