

Role Model Day

By Caitriona Lambert

We are happy to report that DIT held a very successful Role Model Day on Friday 5 May 2006 at their Bolton Street Campus. These Role Model Days are held for the benefit of second level students in order to help them to choose a career in SET and are based on a 'how-to' booklet compiled by WITS and published by the Dept. of Education and Science. The premise is based on sharing the day to day experiences of role models with the students and their career guidance teachers and in doing so, highlighting the great benefits that are to be found working in SET.

DIT originally planned to register 100 female senior cycle girls for the event, but in the end had to double this to 200 due to demand from schools.

The day was opened by the President of Engineers Ireland, Anne Butler and the Director and Dean of Engineering at DIT, Dr. Mike Murphy. Following this, the role model session was ably chaired by Engineering Faculty Member Cecilia Chan. The role models themselves varied from 4th year DIT Engineering Student Katie Hogan and Margie McCarthy from the STEPS Initiative, to Niamh Joyce who is an expert in explosives! Other Industry Representatives present as role models were software engineer Amanda McColville, Susan Spelman from Jacobs Engineering and Ana Fernandez from Vodafone.

Paula Kelly, another DIT Engineering Faculty member, closed the day. It must be said that the presence of so many female engineering faculty members and students really made a difference and went a long way towards encouraging female second level students to think seriously about attending DIT in the first place. There is already an organisation for female engineering students in place here called WAVES (Women – A Voice in Engineering Society) and they too played a huge part in the organisational success of the day. Feedback received by the faculty from the attending students was very positive and it is planned to make the RM Day at DIT an annual event.



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Anne Butler, President of Engineers Ireland, launching the role model event.

SHE Reports 2006

Women remain a minority among researchers in the EU, according to a report from the *European Commission Directorate-General for Research*. They published their findings in 'She Figures 2006—Women and Science Statistics and Indicators', which looks at the participation of women as graduates, researchers, academic staff, funding beneficiaries and scientific board members.

The report writes that: "Women made up only

29% of those employed as scientists and engineers in 2004, and the growth rate in their participation between men and women in this occupational group will widen."

The report also notes that women are vastly under-represented in research in the business and enterprise sector, with a mere 18 percent of researchers being female, even though this is the largest R&D sector in many countries.

Women are also conspicuously absent in the upper echelons, with females making up only 15 percent of those at the top academic grades in higher education and an underwhelming 5.8 percent at senior grades in engineering and technology. To download the full document, go to http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/pdf/she_figures_2006_en.pdf

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WITS BITS

WITS member, theoretical physicist and former **Rose of Tralee**, *Aoibhinn Ní Shuilleabháin* recently moved to London to start her post graduate career by looking at biological complexity. She will be looking at the maths behind the biology of gene pools, auditory systems and brain networking. We wish Aoibhinn well with her studies.

Former **WITS** committee member *Catriona Ward* has moved to Brussels to manage the Enterprise Office for EU R&D Liaison in particular around the 7th Framework programme. Catriona has kindly offered to attend any events for **WITS** in Brussels and to represent its viewpoint where necessary. She has already made contact with the European Platform of Women Scientists.

Family Announcements

In October, **Charlotte O'Kelly** of TechWorks had her first child, a boy named Alexander.. **Elaine Harris**, former Communications officer with **WITS**, had her third child recently. Congratulations to all.

**WE'RE ON THE
WEB**



Getting Wiser

WITS attended the launce of the Centre for Women in Science and Engineering Research (**WISER**), a new initiative based at Trinity College Dublin to promote the participation of women in science. Minister for Education Michael Martin made the official opening remarks as well as Jane Grimson, Trinity's first female engineering graduate and Trinity's Provost.

Funded by Science foundation Ireland, TCD has set up WISER to provide direct support to women researchers and academics in science and engineering, facilitate networking and monitor gender representation in science and engineering at the university.

Located in Research and Innovation Services on Westland Row, you can find out more on the website: www.tcd.ie/research_innovation/wiser/wiser.php or e-mail them directly at: wiser@tcd.ie

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Cynthia Longfield Exhibition - South Pacific Travels

Last September, a group of **WITS members** went to the Royal Irish Academy to view the small but richly endowed collection of diaries and photographs from the South Pacific travels of **Cynthia Longfield**, an Anglo-Irish expert in insects, and particularly dragonflies. Longfield set sail on the research vessel, the *St. George* in 1924 and spent almost 18 months collecting insects in the jungles of South America and remote Pacific Islands. It was there she met her mentor and love of her life, fellow entomologist **Cyril Collenette**, and while the two were devoted, she declined his offer of marriage. Longfield was an intrepid explorer, traveling extensively and collecting wildlife in Asia and Africa, and she forged a distinguished career based at the natural history museum in London before retiring to the family estate in Cork.

Women of Science Article

WITS member, Claire O'Connell recently published an article in the **Irish Times Saturday Magazine** (November 11, 2006) on *Women of Science*. The article marked National Science Week. Claire asked six women scientists about the families, friends and circumstances that encouraged them to enter the profession. The six women were:

Dr. Carol Gibbons, Science and Technology Adviser for the IDA; Aisling Judge, Young Scientist of the Year 2006; Dr. Mary Bourke, Planetary Scientist; Aoibhinn Ní Shúilleabháin, Theoretical Physicist; Prof. Catherine Godson, Cell Biologist; Sarah Flannery, Mathematician /Computer Scientist.



2007 Membership & Renewal Form



Membership is open to women and men throughout Ireland who work, have worked or who are studying in any area of science, engineering or technology

Please choose:

- a) New Member
b) Renewal for 2007
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Membership fees:

Individual €50 Concessions €20 (retired, unemployed and student members)

Surname:..... First Name:.....

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Do you want information send to home or work address

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Note: WITS send most communication electronically for cost reasons. This membership information will be stored electronically by WITS for administration and circulation but will not be disclosed or circulated in accordance with Data Protection legislation.

WITS is a voluntary organisation and needs the membership to work together to thrive. If you are willing to help out, what are your areas of interest?

WITS will run 3-4 events in 2007. Any particular areas/activities you feel WITS should cover?

Suggestions:.....

WITS are interested in hearing from members with training skills:

Training Skills (if any):.....

For Office use only:

a) New member b) Renewal for 2007 c) Corporate Member Yes No:

Cash/Cheque/PO Received Date:..... Processed by:.....

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Please return 2007 subscriptions and completed forms to: **WITS PO Box 3783, Dublin 4**

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