

The Society was given a lecture on “Biomedical Sciences: Opportunities and Challenges in a Changing World” by Dr David Lynn, Head of Strategic Planning, the Wellcome Trust. It is the largest UK medical charity with assets of £13 billion and annual expenditure of over £600 M.

Henry Wellcome was an American pharmacist, born in 1853, who moved to London in 1880. There he established a pharmaceutical company in partnership with Edward Burroughs. The former had wide interests in the history, scientific, and social aspects of medicine. When Wellcome died in 1936, he left a fortune to found a charitable trust to support medical research and other studies related to medicine. His collection of medical memorabilia became the basis of the Wellcome Medical Museum. Much of the bequest went in death duties. However, his trustees were determined to fulfil his vision, and starting with a loan, and with prudent management, have built up the fund to its present size.

In 1996 the last of Burroughs Wellcome shares were sold to Glaxo Smith Kline and the Trust is now completely independent of the pharmaceutical industry. Funds are managed for long-term stability and growth...

Dr. Lynn gave several examples of recent research supported by the Trust, which was leading to the development of new standard treatments e.g. malaria, bulimia and cot death prevention. The Trust has also supported work on the international human genome project at the Sanger Institute at Hinxton, which has become a major centre for genetics.

Stem-cell research and its social and political implications have been widely promoted, as have also studies of virus pandemics and vaccine development. This has involved global research teams who also study the effects of environment and climate change on human health. Also animal health studies are being supported by the Wellcome Trust.

The Trust also supports education and public understanding of science. Examples are support of a centre for continuous learning for science teachers and publications highlighting controversial issues, with the aim of encouraging intelligent debate.

As it is independent of the government, the Wellcome Foundation can advise on any adverse effects of forthcoming legislation proposed by the EU and Westminster.

For information on future lectures please go to [www.cirensociety.org.uk](http://www.cirensociety.org.uk) or telephone Geoff Richards 01285 651972.