

Dame Honor B Fell FRS

Honor Fell was a remarkable pioneer and an outstanding woman in science. She developed tissue culture and organ culture in the 1920's and she established the founding principles of connective tissue research and matrix biology up to beyond her retirement in the 1980's and it is these same principles that have gone on to underpin tissue engineering and regenerative medicine to this day.



Her approach to science was always simple, direct and full of meticulous detail. She was above all an experimentalist, who perfected the skills of culturing living tissue in a sterile dish and analysing tissue structure, organisation, growth and function. Her chosen particular interest was in the culture of chick limb rudiments and she pioneered the understanding of cartilage development, long bone growth and endochondral ossification. Her elegant studies provide classic examples of the advance of knowledge through the application of sound scientific principles and her work undoubtedly has an immense legacy in the approaches we take and the questions we ask across all areas of biomedical research and particularly in matrix biology.

Honor Fell was awarded honorary life membership of the British Connective Tissue Society (now the British Society of Matrix Biology) at its inaugural AGM at York in 1982. The Society's most prestigious honour, The Fell Muir Award, was named in recognition of the contributions of 'the two great Dames' to the field, namely Honor Fell FRS and Helen Muir FRS.



In recognition of her contribution to science, a blue plaque was unveiled on 2nd March 2015 on the wall of her old school, the Wychwood School in Oxford – see the report on the Society of Biology website

By Tim Hardingham