

University plays leading role in trial to save lives in fight against killer TB

Innovative work at St Andrews University could revolutionise treatment for tuberculosis and save millions of lives.

A new trial, called MAMS-TB and undertaken by a Pan-African consortium, has just started and aims to halve treatment times for tuberculosis, one of the world's deadliest infectious diseases.

Each year, TB infects 8.7 million people and kills 1.4 million. While infection rates are still low in Scotland, TB is now a growing health risk in the UK.

A major part of the problem is that treatment takes six

months to complete, with patients required to take a combination of up to four different drugs every day.

Many of those who contract the disease do not complete the full treatment because of side effects, being unable to take time off work or afford travel to health care facilities. Partial treatment can result in longer, recurring infections.

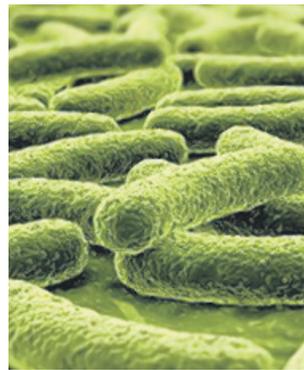
It is also leading to the emergence of dangerous new strains of TB resistant to the drugs used, the majority of which are more than 40 years old.

Stephen Gillespie, Profes-

sor of Medicine at St Andrews and a leading member of the consortium, said the MAMS trial was key to finding shorter treatment regimens to ensure as many people as possible completed their full course of treatment.

He added: "Tuberculosis is a disease of the poor and a disease that makes people poor; households can lose up to 30% of their household income when a family member contracts the disease."

MP Sir Menzies Campbell, who is chancellor of the university, hailed the work and said: "This trial could revolu-



Tuberculosis kills millions each year. tionise the way in which we develop treatments for tuberculosis."



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Top fiddler for TMSA's event at Falkland



ONE of the country's top fiddle players is to perform at Falkland Festival later this month.

Gemma Donald has been described by fellow Shetland fiddler Aly Bain as "one of the finest players in the country."

Her appearance is set to be one of the highlights of the festival, which is to host the Traditional Music and Song Association (TMSA) competitions, workshops and performances on the 28th and 29th.

Since winning the coveted Glenfiddich Fiddle Championship in 2006, Gemma is now in high demand as an adjudicator, having judged

for three years running at Shetland's Young Fiddler of the Year competition alongside Aly Bain and Bryan Gear.

Last year she was invited to adjudicate at the annual festival of the National Association of Accordion and Fiddle Clubs.

At the Peter Amber (the Dougie MacLean Festival) she has twice lifted the Amber Fiddle Award for composition.

Her debut album was released last December.

Falkland Festival gets under way next Monday, with most of the main events on Saturday, June 22, when a fancy dress parade, street fair, duck race and 'Teas and Twenties' take place.

Charity's big thank-you

The Christian Aid charity has thanked the people of St Andrews and the surrounding communities for their generosity during Christian Aid Week (May 12-18), when nearly £12,000 was donated.

The sum of £11,709 was raised during house-to-house collections in the district.

The figures from the communities in the area were: Balmullo £731, Boarhills £221, Cameron £798, Dunino £522, Leuchars & Drumoig £754, Strathkinness £971 and

St Andrews £7713.

When other activities are taken into account, the total sum raised locally during Christian Aid Week so far is £13,103.

Around 170 collectors were involved.

A spokesperson for the charity said the contributions showed local people cared deeply about world hunger by giving money to provide the tools that will help people living in poverty to get out of poverty.