

# 25 years of Cook Ireland



▲ An aerial view of the Cook Ireland facility in Limerick.

It's hard to believe that 25 years have passed since construction began on the Cook Ireland building in Limerick. The early days were hectic and sometimes chaotic, but gradually the pieces fell into place and the first products were shipped to Bloomington for inspection. The initial audits were nerve-racking events as the fledgling quality system was scrutinized by external regulatory authorities. The launch of the first Cook products designed in Limerick was a cause for great celebration in 2000 and included the Bakri® Balloon, Rainbow Endoscopic Cleaning Brush, and Echo Needle Knife. Cook Limerick was transformed in 2004 when the Shared Service Centre was established, and the influx of employees from across Europe and beyond added new cultures, vitality, and expertise. Our employees have shaped the Limerick site over 25 years and continue to ensure that nothing stands still and we continue to strive for improvement. I am delighted to share the Cook Limerick story as we celebrate our 25th birthday.

– **Bill Doherty**, executive vice president EMEA



▲ **Bill Doherty**

## Shay Lavelle

Manager, Global R&D  
Operations–Quality Processes

### How did you first learn about Cook?

I was only a few years out of college and working elsewhere when a recruitment agency gave me a call. I did not know much about Cook; that was back in 1996. I was not even familiar with the medical device industry. My then employer of five years was closing down operations, so the job at Cook came at the right time.

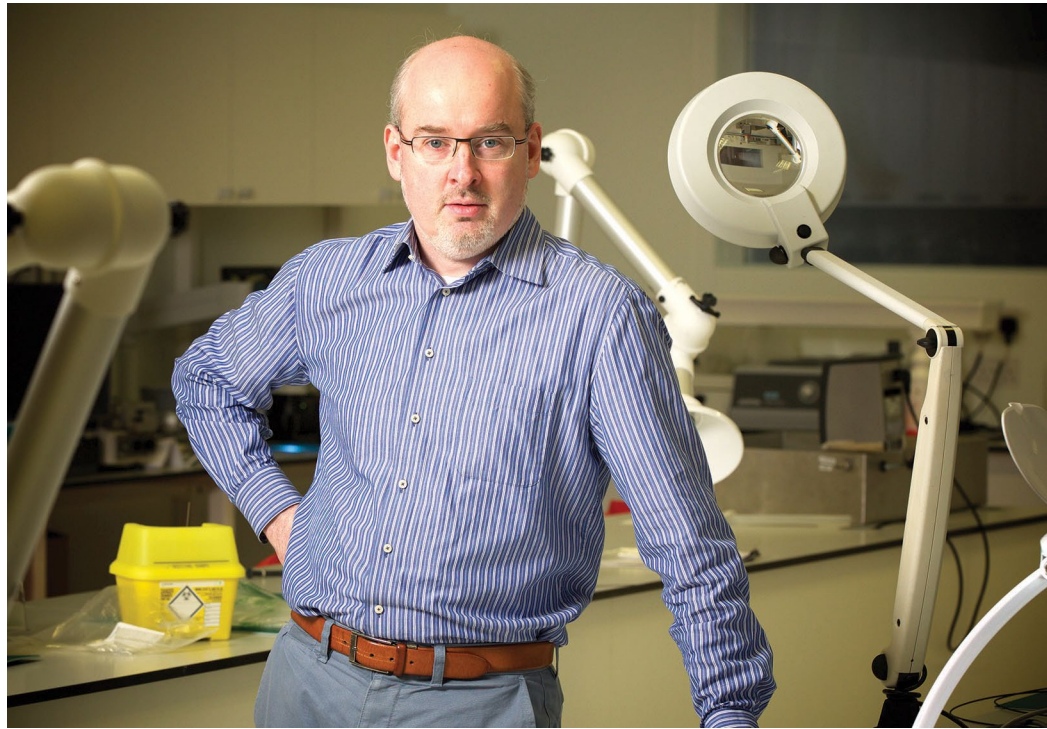
### What is your Cook story? What was the path that led to your current position and department?

When I started in 1996 there were four employees at Cook Ireland, so we were very much at infancy. I was hired as a Research and Development (R&D) engineer, but while we were still at startup, I had to wear many hats to help get operations up and running. The true R&D began a few years later, and a couple of years after that the first products to market emerged. In the year 2000, about four products were launched by our small R&D group; some of those products still exist today.

Thereafter, I spent a good number of years working in the Urology specialty developing products. As we grew, the team expanded, and I went on to lead the development of urological products as team leader.

An opportunity then arose to branch into a different side of R&D, the side we call R&D Operations—i.e., how the R&D department operates its function: systems, computerized methodologies, and processes to follow from concept development to product launch. These systems are crucial to successful product development.

In the last few years, I moved to the corporate structure to lead the



▲ Shay Lavelle is Manager, Global R&D Operations–Quality Processes at Cook Ireland.

management of R&D Operations across the entire Cook organization, rather than just at a local level. Our work aims to standardize the way all Cook companies operate from an R&D perspective. Traditionally each Cook company grew from its own roots, and therefore each entity developed its own products its own way (according to its local systems). As the company is now much larger, standardization of these processes and methodologies has huge corporate gains, allowing personnel to be shared across the entire organization while all speaking one “Cook language.”

### How has working at Cook shaped you as a person?

When I started, I was young (early 20s) and aware of little in the line of a working environment. My work at Cook soon exposed me to different cultures, travel, medical professionals, etc. This gave me a broader view of life and work, allowing me to see beyond my own office desk.

I have met many Cook employees over the years and have gained good popularity across the organization. In meeting people, I have seen differing opinions, some very logical and others buried in a specific mindset. I need time and effort to persuade these varied opinions in a common direction. That work is at the heart of my endeavors right now—i.e., standardizing methodologies across Cook. This work of managing global systems is not just in the development of the platform, which is an intricate task, but also the negotiation of proposing change.

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Change is good, but it has a cumbersome side to its implementation, because change is difficult and upsets the status quo. However, if we just do as we have always done, then we won't advance to the next level and thrive as a result. If we stay stuck in the past, then we could fizzle out as an organization. We always need to keep in line with the times and not become extinct.

For me the effort of negotiation—listening, feedback, concession, compromise, and reaching common ground—is as important as the art of developing systems. Having everyone believing and endorsing our efforts is a huge step towards success.

### **How has your life changed since you started working at Cook?**

Being in my early 20s when I started, I was not long out of college and had just a handful of years of experience in working. I married a few years later, purchased a new home, and then kids came along—and now they are young adults. Both of my parents have passed away, and so my personal life has changed a lot, but then 25 years is a long time. In saying that it does not seem like I have been with Cook for 25 years, it somewhat seems like yesterday since I joined. I guess that's a testament to the fact that the time has been enjoyable, and work does not seem like a chore, but rather a profession that is pleasant and worthwhile. There have been ups and downs, but that's part and parcel of all walks of life.

### **What has kept you at Cook for so long?**

I guess I never thought I'd be here in 25 years when I started, but the work was nicely varied and, being one of the first employees in a start-up company, I engaged in many aspects of the business. Working as

*"I have had the chance to meet the users of the products I have developed and also some of the patients whose lives these products have helped. One patient in particular was terminally ill, and the product I developed positively impacted her quality of life for her remaining days. She thanked me for helping her."*

*— Shay Lavelle, Manager, Global R&D Operations—Quality Processes at Cook Ireland*

an R&D engineer, I got to develop entire products that have made a difference in people's lives—that is a very resounding endorsement of engineering efforts. I have had the chance to meet the users of the products I have developed and also some of the patients whose lives these products have helped. One patient in particular was terminally ill, and the product I developed positively impacted her quality of life for her remaining days. She thanked me for helping her.

### **What has been a memorable moment during your time at Cook?**

I think the most memorable moment was probably the first product I released to market during my R&D time. Back then, we had no real systems or methodologies to follow; the raw material store was bare, and there was nothing in production. Getting that first product out there available for sale was like doing something completely original. My work colleagues developed a couple of products and released these around the same time, and we all rejoiced in those milestones. I have developed numerous other products since, but thinking of the first one, although it was not the

most successful in the market, always brings a smile to my face.

### **What advice would you give someone just starting out at Cook in Limerick?**

I think some of the younger workforce is a bit trigger happy right now to get a couple of years under their belts and move on. I say, give your career time, let it mature, and although the grass may seem greener over there, it's not necessarily barren where you are right now. Sometimes it feels like it's easier to give up or move on, rather than enduring the bad with the good. I think as people grow older and more mature, their outlook changes also. I think if younger people had that benefit of foresight, they might live better through the here and now, even when those tough times unfold.

### **What are you looking forward to in the next 25 years at Cook in Limerick?**

Well, in all likelihood, I should be retired inside of that timeframe, but I do have plenty of years before that. In the immediate future I am looking forward to seeing the fruits of my current work ripen. My current work is trying to standardize what we do across Cook from an R&D perspective. This effort is already done in terms of development and readiness—the next stage now is implementation. This step of implementation is a bigger hurdle than that of development, not in terms of intellectual effort but in the art of negotiation. And even after the implementation is complete, the challenge of sustaining such a system is a significant workload where ongoing enhancements are necessary. These enhancements will be driven by the need for efficiency and future changes in regulations that will apply to our industry. The times ahead will be busy.

## Terry Crotty

Marketing Material specialist

### How did you first learn about Cook?

I live nearby, so I was aware of it from friends when it opened.

### What is your Cook story? What was the path that led to your current position and department?

I started at Cook in 1997 working in reception. Then I moved to Accounts and finally Marketing, where I have been for the past 20 years.

### How has working at Cook shaped you as a person?

I have learned a lot from my experiences with Cook over the years. I have had opportunities to work on different projects, partake in courses, and work with colleagues from other countries.

### How has your life changed since you started working at Cook?

I have achieved a great working relationship with my colleagues due to my role in Marketing, but having made such good friends is the real bonus, as I have them as part of my personal life also.

### What has kept you at Cook for so long?

Enjoying my job and working for a company where everyone is appreciated and given support where needed. Working within a great team and seeing the progress we make, which we have achieved together and with our colleagues in the US and Denmark, has made my role even more enjoyable.

### What has been a memorable moment for you during your time at Cook?

One of my most memorable moments at Cook had to be the fun we had while partaking in and winning as part of a team called



▲ **Terry Crotty** (second from left) is a Marketing Material specialist for Cook Ireland. She is pictured with her family, from left: Husband **John**, Terry holding her granddaughter **Keira**, son **Shane**, son **Evan**, daughter **Sarah** (who is the twin sister of Shane and mother to Keira).

FitBitz, where **Pat, Ainara, Sarah**, and I showcased our sporting talents as part of a Cook competition.

### What advice would you give someone just starting out at Cook in Limerick?

My advice to any new starters would be to learn from people, as they are always willing to help; to do the available courses and trainings; and to join the Sports and Social Club, as this is a great, fun way to meet people from outside your department.

### What are you looking forward to in the next 25 years at Cook in Limerick?

Looking forward to getting back to normality and seeing colleagues after the challenging times we have all had in the past year.



▲ Pictured are the members of FitBitz. From left: friend and colleague **Ainara Borda**, **Terry**, daughter and colleague **Sarah**, and friend and colleague **Pat Madigan**.

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### Angela Moloney

Director of Ethics & Compliance for EMEA

#### How did you first learn about Cook?

In 1997 the company my dad worked for was commissioned to build the stainless-steel stairs in the Raw Material department. At the time, I was planning a move back to Limerick. My dad saw the Finance Accountant job advertised in a local newspaper for Cook Ireland, and he advised that I should apply for the role, stating that the company had just built a state-of-the-art facility near the university and were excellent to deal with.

#### What is your Cook story? What was the path that led to your current position and department?

I joined the management team in May 1998, after interviews with **Alice O'Dwyer, Bill Doherty, John Kamstra, and Rob Santa**. I was recruited to set up the Finance function for Cook Ireland. When I joined, there were 25 people on site. At that time, we were distributing product into Europe and starting to transfer manufacturing from the US to the Limerick site. As there were no finance systems in place, I had to quickly roll up my sleeves to set up systems and processes to manage the accounting and payroll records for the site.

From 1998 to 2003, the focus was on building manufacturing and distribution capacity in Limerick, which meant developing product costing systems (labor, material, and overhead) to manage product margins. In 2003 the decision was taken to create a European Shared Service center in Limerick to centrally manage customer orders. Accounts Receivable (customer invoicing and cash collection) was



▲ **Angela Moloney** is the director of Ethics & Compliance (E&C) for EMEA.

one of the first finance areas to be centralized into Limerick, and this was quickly followed by Accounts Payable (vendor invoices and payments), Travel and Expense (T&E) Management, and General Ledger Accounting (managing the profit and loss (P&L) and balance sheet) for all of the 14+ European countries where we sell directly. The Finance team in Limerick went from three people to over 30 people in the space of six months. It was certainly a unique time in the history of Cook Ireland.

At the same time, we were building our manufacturing capacity, taking our employee numbers to 800 in a few short years. My Finance team managed two businesses—Cook Ireland, which focused on manufacturing and Research & Development (R&D), and Cook Medical Europe Ltd, which focused on European and distributor sales and distribution. I was involved in many projects during this time, including decisions on choosing Navision and Concur as the European Finance and T&E systems, which were subsequently adopted as Global Finance systems. In 2012, I stepped up to the role of Finance director, Global Shared

Services; the European, North American, and APAC Shared Service Finance teams reported to me. One of my proudest achievements is mentoring and managing these global teams during my time in Finance.

In 2018, the opportunity to join the Ethics & Compliance (E&C) function as director, E&C, EMEA, brought about a significant gear shift. Moving from Finance after two great decades was a big decision. The proverb “what’s for you won’t go by you” is so true and three years in, I am delighted to have taken the leap into the world of E&C. This role meant a lot of learning for me, not only about External Applicable Standards, but also about how our company does business, especially in interactions with Health Care Professionals (HCPs).

I take the opportunity to thank **Carol Seaman** and **Heather Hurst** for taking a chance on me.

#### How has working at Cook shaped you as a person?

I have grown personally and professionally with Cook. I am who I am today because of Cook. From a



▲ Angela's husband, **Tony**, and their three children (from left: **Liam**, **Ciara**, and **Cathal**) in a corn field during their visit to Indiana.

professional perspective I have the opportunity to work with fantastic people every day. I have helped to build great teams, systems, and processes in my 23-year tenure. I continue to learn every day and know that I am valued and respected for the work that I do. Cook brings out the best in me (and sometimes the worst).

On a personal note, all of my important life events over the past 23 years have been intertwined with Cook—for example, getting married to my husband **Tony**, building our house, having our three children (**Liam**, **Ciara**, and **Cathal**), and watching them grow up. They are proud that their mom works for Cook Medical.

### How has your life changed since you started working at Cook?

To be honest, the minute I stepped inside the door on May 18, 1998, my life changed. There is a huge sense of belonging for me at Cook.

### What has kept you at Cook for so long?

I came to Cook as a young accountant, with the expectation of getting experience for two to three years and then moving on.

Looking back now, I can see that the experience I gained, especially in the first 10 years, being part of an innovative Irish leadership team with a “can do, let’s do” attitude and building the Irish manufacturing site and European Shared Service center, was immense. I know all involved are incredibly proud of this achievement. We worked hard and we certainly had fun along the way. Cook has afforded me many opportunities over the last few years. I have made life-long friends, traveled the world, and, most importantly, I continue to learn every day, which keeps me energized and motivated.

### What has been a memorable moment for you during your time at Cook?

My most memorable time at Cook is the opportunity I had in 2012 and 2014 to relocate to Bloomington for three months during the summer with my family. It was wonderful to experience life in Bloomington. Spending time every day with the US Finance teams at Acuff Road and Park 48 really helped build relationships with all team members. It also gave me a much better understanding of the US Finance Shared Services processes and systems. I will always be grateful to **Kelly**

**Fischer** and **John Kamstra** for giving me this opportunity. From a personal perspective, my family loved being in Bloomington. The kids did summer camps at the YMCA, we traveled to Indianapolis every Sunday morning to play hurling and football with the Indy Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) club, and we also got to experience a drive to Florida. These wonderful memories are all linked to being part of the Cook family.

### What advice would you give someone just starting out at Cook in Limerick?

Learn as much as you can and keep asking questions, not only about your role, but also about Cook. It is a unique company with a unique culture. Find a mentor who can guide and support you on your career path. Build key relationships. Be true to yourself. Be open to exploring opportunities within the company. I am living proof that you can move outside your area of expertise and contribute successfully to another area of the business.

### What are you looking forward to in the next 25 years at Cook in Limerick?

Wow, what a question! Over the next few years, dare I say, before I retire, I want to continue to add value in my role, continue to evolve the Ethics & Compliance program in EMEA, be a great mentor to the global Ethics & Compliance team, lead and support local and corporate business initiatives, and overall be the best that I can be by living the Cook values every day.

