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Nobel Prize winners visit Downing Street

British winners of the prestigious Nobel Prize have gathered at Downing Street to celebrate their achievements.

The Prime Minister and his wife hosted a dinner for some of the winners of the prize over the past three decades.

Guests included recent winner Venkatraman Ramakrishnan, a structural biologist at the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge, who received the 2009 Nobel Prize in Chemistry.

The PM said:



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<http://www.number10.gov.uk/Page22180>

“They see beyond the far horizons; they go where others never have; they explore and claim for us all new worlds of knowledge and hope. They have each proved in different ways Teilhard de Chardin’s faith that we can tame the winds, the waves and the wars - and then ‘for the second time in history, man will have discovered fire’.

“This small island has given the world parliamentary democracy, the industrial revolution, the defence of freedom when we were alone in the most perilous hours. Britain was where the first novel was written, the theory of gravity was first formulated, and penicillin was first created to save millions of lives. All of you, the pride of our country, are heirs of that legacy who have nobly enlarged it. You stand on the mountaintops of our time, of human aspiration and achievement.”

Other guests at the event included former Northern Ireland politicians John Hume and Lord Trimble, who shared the 1998 Nobel Peace Prize, and Amartya Kumar Sen, who won the 1998 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences for his work on welfare economics.

Scientists and former winners Tim Hunt, Martin Evans and John Walker were also present.