

# Einstein and a scientific milestone

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Sir, – I very much enjoyed Derek Scally’s splendid [article](#) on the young Einstein’s path to the general theory of relativity (“On the street where Einstein lived”, Berlin Letter, November 5th).

It’s worth adding that Einstein’s monumental efforts in November 1915 were merely the last part of a long struggle – having articulated the central principle of general relativity in 1907, it took him eight long years to reach a consistent mathematical formulation of the theory. Today the general theory of relativity lies at the heart of our understanding of the universe, from the big bang model to black holes. However, young scientists in Ireland who wish to engage in similar research of a fundamental nature face a major challenge. They soon find that almost no funding is available for scientific research that does not offer the promise of practical application. They also find that a track record in attracting such funding is an important factor when seeking an academic position. One hundred years on, it seems we have learned nothing of the importance of fundamental science. – Yours, etc,

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