

EDITORIAL

Ch-ch-ch-ch-changes...



Jim Smith
 Editor in Chief

I was delighted when the Company of Biologists asked me to take over from Chris Wylie as Editor in Chief of *Development*. At least, I think I was. Any doubt on this matter does not derive from uncertainty about the journal, or about the honour that was bestowed upon me. The doubt comes from whether I can carry on the superb work that Chris has done; *Development* was Chris's invention and he has made it the pre-eminent journal in its field.

As Chris described in the last issue of the journal, *Development* is younger than its volume numbers might imply; when he started working for the Company of Biologists Chris was, albeit briefly, editor-designate not of *Development* but of the *Journal of Embryology and Experimental Morphology*. *JEEM*, as we all called it, was a good journal, but it was just beginning to show its age, as if it was stuck somehow in the embryological past. You rarely saw a gel in *JEEM*. Chris got hold of *JEEM* by the scruff of its neck: he changed its name and page size, got rid of the hard cover, introduced cover pictures and championed colour inside the journal. But more important than all this, he changed the content, and thereby caught the enormous wave of excitement in developmental biology that has been reflected in the pages of *Development* ever since. Chris did this through enormously hard work, through a deep knowledge of and enthusiasm for developmental biology, and through a dynamic force of personality. In the last issue Chris described how he and I stayed up one night in Miami to set up the *Development* publicity stand. I wouldn't have done it for many other people! In these early days, Chris was aided by the existing *JEEM* editors, including Richard Gardner, Mike Gaze, Hugh Woodland and Peter Lawrence (who remains a *Development* editor) and by new colleagues such as Keith Roberts, Doug Melton and Richard Hynes. All these people went well out of their way to encourage their colleagues to submit to the journal and they set an example by sending their own best work to *Development*. The developmental biology community owes them all a debt of gratitude.

In creating *Development*, Chris made important changes to *JEEM*. But some things didn't need changing and they still provide compelling reasons for publishing in *Development*. The production quality was and is superb. Thanks here to Tom Galliers and his colleagues at the Company of Biologists. As well as this, remember that the Company of Biologists is a not-

for-profit company – witness the lack of page charges or colour reproduction fees to authors. Access to the content of the journal is also made free and unrestricted at the end of each year. Better still, publishing proceeds are ploughed back into the biological community – to the tune of £1.2 million over the past four years – in the form of travelling fellowships and funds for various societies and international meetings, as well as support for a variety of other new initiatives. You will find more information about the COB's charitable activities on our web site (www.biologists.org), and look out for the Company's logo at the next meeting you go to. *Development* really is your journal.

What of the future of *Development*? The journal will continue to publish developmental biology that is sound, interesting and important. We are not obsessed with sexiness: the key criterion is whether the work sheds new light on developmental mechanisms, and we welcome submissions from any field pertaining to this question, from fertilisation to physiology. We will continue to emphasise connections with disease through the *Development and Disease* section of the journal. Stu Orkin and Ken Chien have special responsibility for this part of the journal, but if you have a paper that you think would fit well into *D&D* feel free to submit to any of the editors. And on the subject of submission, I'd encourage the use of the online submission scheme. The appropriate editor will receive the paper within a day and will identify referees who can pick up the manuscript from a secure web site. It's fast, efficient and inexpensive.

Readers will note some changes at the front of *Development*, changes that are designed to make the journal even more useful to its readers and (to be honest) to encourage you to browse the whole journal rather than just download PDFs. These initiatives will be handled by our new Executive Editor, Dr Jane Alfred, who joins us from *Nature Reviews Genetics*. Now is the time to let us know what you would like to see in the journal to complement the primary research. You will also see from the front of the journal that Ruth Lehmann has joined *Development* as Deputy Editor in Chief. I am delighted about this, and look forward enormously to working with her.

Finally, I should like to pay tribute not only to Chris (who has probably squirmed enough), but also to the other editors who, over the past 17 years, have made *Development* such a success. Chris named them in his piece in the last issue of the journal, but I should like to give special mention to Tom Jessell, who is leaving the journal in March, and to Doug Melton, who has been with *Development* since it started in 1987. Doug has been a loyal champion of the journal and I should like to offer him my personal thanks for all he has done.

Jim Smith