

Pointing a digit at digitised *JEEM*

It is with great pleasure that we announce the publication of the digital archive of the *Journal of Embryology and Experimental Morphology* (also known as *JEEM*) at the *Development* website (<http://dev.biologists.org/>), where it is freely available to all. As many of you will know, *JEEM* is *Development*'s predecessor, and it was from the pages of *JEEM* that *Development* came to be born in 1987, under the Editorship of Chris Wylie.

JEEM was first published in 1953 under the editorial supervision of Michael Abercrombie, who was joined by an illustrious international board of founding editors that included some of the great biologists of that time, such as Jean Brachet, Honor Fell, Johannes Holtfreter, Sven Hörstadius, Peter Medawar, David R. Newth, Sulo Toivonen, Conrad Hal (CH) Waddington and J. Z. Young. With sponsorship from the British Council, the biologists and embryologists of the editorial board held an inaugural meeting early in 1953, in which they discussed the progress of their field and made arrangements for the publication of *JEEM* by The Company of Biologists. Then, as now, the Wellcome Trust played a hand in shaping research in the, then emerging, discipline of developmental biology, by offering a guarantee to The Company of Biologists to offset any financial losses that it might incur in the first 2 years of the journal's life.

So why did this group of biologists come together to launch this new and influential journal? As A. M. Dalcq explained in his foreword at the time, the hope was that the peace and prosperity that was returning to Europe in these early post-war years would bring with it scientific progress at a pace 'that could well out run our former estimations'. Moreover, the time had come when 'the gross aspects of development had simply to be described [was] coming to an end'. New techniques were becoming available, and these forward-thinking embryologists and developmental biologists were keen to have a journal in which the exciting discoveries enabled by these new techniques could be reported. It was with great prescience that Dalcq observed that 'embryologists will now be confronted with an extraordinary extension of their field in depth, in space, and in time'. These words remain relevant to this day, and they continue to inform the mission of *Development*, as they did that of *JEEM*.

The findings published in *JEEM* came to influence many in the emerging field of developmental biology, and as Ken Zaret discusses in his essay on p. 2341, that influence spread beyond

Europe and beyond the realms of developmental biology. Many researchers will already have their particular favourite *JEEM* paper, perhaps one that shaped research in their field in a fundamental way. To help bring these scientific gems to the attention of the wider developmental community, examples of such papers have been identified by *Development*'s past and present Editors and Editorial Advisory Board members as being 'JEEM classics', and experts have been asked to comment on these papers and to describe how they shaped current thinking in the field. There is no shortage of such papers, of course, but over the following months we hope to give you a taste of the richly historic and influential research that was published in *JEEM* over the course of its 33-year life.

The first of these 'JEEM classic' essays, by Elaine Dzierzak and Alexander Medvinsky, is published on p. 2343 of this issue. In this essay, Elaine and Alexander explain how a paper by Françoise Dieterlen-Lievre published in *JEEM* in 1975 was the first to contradict the dogma of the day that the haematopoietic system of the avian adult originated extra-embryonically, from the blood islands of the yolk sac. The elegant chick-quail chimera experiments she reported in this paper were the first to suggest that the adult haematopoietic system in fact originates from the embryo itself, a finding that created a paradigm shift in haematopoietic research and that continues to be debated to this day.

We would like to close at this point on a note of thanks. The publication of the online *JEEM* archive is the culmination of several years of effort, and it would not have been possible without the help of our online publisher HighWire, nor without the generous support of the developmental community, many of whom helped us to fill the gaps in The Company of Biologists' collection of *JEEM* by generously donating their personal copies of the journal to us. In particular, we thank Julian Lewis, Peter Lawrence, Jonathan Bard, Cheryl Tickle and Mike Newth, whose father, David R. Newth, was one of the founders of the journal.

Jane Alfred (Executive Editor)
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