

PROSPECTS IN
CELL BIOLOGY

PREFACE

This volume celebrates the 20th anniversary of the first appearance of *Journal of Cell Science*. It signals the survival and the good health of the journal. We believe that the occasion is an appropriate one on which to offer some brief comments on our scope and future.

The journal originated as the successor to the *Quarterly Journal of Microscopical Science*, a publication that itself had a distinguished history stretching back for over a century. The new journal was intended from the outset to be devoted to all aspects of cell organization: it was to be concerned with cell biology in the broadest sense. This remains our aim. As was to be expected, certain areas of the subject have from time to time figured more prominently than others in the journal's pages. Topics such as nuclear and chromosomal organization, cell recognition and adhesion, cell junctions, the analysis of malignancy – to name a few examples – have on occasion been notably well represented. We have always been pleased to find such tendencies developing, for they help to give the journal a distinctive character and lead to a flow of good papers in those areas. We should emphasize, however, that as editors we have never consciously set out to steer the journal in any particular limited direction: our aim has been simply to provide a medium for the publication of a wide range of important research on cells. We hope that the composition of our Editorial Board at any time sufficiently reflects what we see as being the scope of the journal.

We believe that there is still a place for a journal with such broad aims. This is not, of course, to say that we wish the journal to go on publishing only the sort of work in cell biology that it has done in the past. Time brings major shifts of emphasis in the directions that research takes, and we should be failing as editors if we did not try to ensure that the journal reflected these. We should certainly like to see more work on the molecular aspects of cell organization in our pages, though we would publish this in addition to, rather than at the expense of, work devoted to more complex levels of organization.

This volume is the fourth of a recently started series of Supplements to the journal. These Supplements, designed to reflect areas of major current interest in cell biology, represent one manifestation of our continued growth. The single volume of *Journal of Cell Science* published in 1966 amounted to just over 400 pages; in 1986 we shall publish close to 3000. We expect that future years will see further increases in size and frequency of publication. The journal has a major advantage in that it is not in any way associated with a commercial publisher. It is owned and managed by The Company of Biologists Limited, a non-profit-making organization run by professional biologists. The needs of the journal's contributors and readers and the role of the journal in the contemporary scientific scene are always the prime considerations of the Company, rather than the profitability of the journal in a financial sense. In the last few years, responding to a suggestion from the editors of

this journal, the Company has set up its own printing house, which now gives it total control over the printing quality and speed of production of its publications. We see this as likely to be a major factor in the future of *Journal of Cell Science*.

In deciding how we should celebrate our 20th anniversary, it seemed to us appropriate to look to the future as much as to the past. We invited the contributors to this volume to write not the usual sort of comprehensive review of their field, but an assessment of the present situation there and of what is likely to be done in the near future. Inevitably, space did not allow us to cover cell biology at all comprehensively. We hope, however, that the volume is representative enough of what is going on in the subject at the present time. We take it as a sign of the esteem in which the journal is held and as a good augury for the future that so many distinguished cell and molecular biologists have been willing to write for us on these lines. We are grateful to them for doing so. Collectively, they have produced a volume of much interest. If, in the years to come, the journal can publish material of comparable scope and importance, we shall be well satisfied.

The Editors

