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Society for Reproduction and Fertility

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Chairman's thoughts

We are now nearing the end of our first period with our new publishers and business office and everything is beginning to settle down. The financial situation is now secure for a number of years, and Reproduction is progressing very well, with the introduction of Highwire making a huge difference to access to the papers. John Carroll and the team at Bioscientifica have more plans for the future, which will continue to progress the journal. Keith Jones has had an enormous task in sorting out the many facets of the financial situation we inherited, and through his very hard work we now have a much better perspective of the financial situation and the possibilities for the future. Meetings still exercise the minds of Council and Tony Michael's survey of the members gave some mixed responses. Next year we have the Biennial Joint Meeting of the UK Fertility Societies, Fertility 2005, and the programme is extremely good, covering all aspects of reproduction. While large meetings like this are important for SRF I still believe that it is very important the SRF support and sponsor smaller workshops targeted to specific areas of reproduction. The National Ovarian Workshop was a great success, and our support of the Testis Workshop was also well received. There are still many areas where workshops should be developed and SRF will look very sympathetically in providing the basic financial backing for any new workshop ideas. So please consider what you would like to see in the form of workshops and send you ideas to me or any member of Council.

There is still a need to harness the European perspective and I hope that in the future the joint European meetings will increase in popularity. The meeting in Ghent was scientifically excellent but attendance was disappointing. Council will be pursuing the European dimension in the near future.

In April next year a number of Council members will complete their terms of office. For some this will be a great relief as the strain of turning around the ailing financial situation of SSF and JRF Ltd has been quite difficult. Having achieved this major goal we will be handing over SRF in a healthy financial position, allowing the new Council to take the Society forward and re-establish SRF

as the central society for all those working in reproduction. It is your society and your views are always welcome.

Alan McNeilly, 2nd September 2004

From the General Secretary

Do you have ideas as to how you would like to see the SRF develop in the future? From the number and diversity of responses received to Tony Michael's recent e-survey on conferences, it would seem that many members do have particular views on how the Society should be organized. While it is not always possible to accommodate everyone's preferences, you will see from Tony's report that we propose to hold the 2006 SRF annual conference in London, in July. Although previously, members had indicated that the summer was not a good time for attending SRF conferences, it now seems now that opinions have changed and we hope to continue to provide a strong programme in forthcoming years.

If you feel even more inclined to have your say in how the Society should be managed, please do consider standing for election to Council at the next AGM in April 2005 (which will be held during the Fertility 2005 Conference at the University of Warwick). Alternatively, you may prefer to learn more about how the Society operates first, by sitting on one of our sub-committees (Publications, Meetings or Education and Development) where you could contribute to a more specific aspect of the Society's business. Meetings are usually held twice per year, therefore the commitment in terms of time is not too great. If you would like any more information about Council or the Sub-committees, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Finally, we will shortly be sending out subscription renewal forms. I would urge you to respond to these as soon as possible so that you can maintain continuity in your membership and continue to receive the benefits of being an SRF member (in particular, preferential registration fees for Fertility 2005!).

Best wishes

Amanda R. Pickard, General Secretary



Report from the Education and Development Committee

The remit of the Education and Development Committee is both to promote the SRF as a learned society and to provide a framework for intellectual investment in our membership. With this statement in mind, the SRF were proud to sponsor an exhibit at this year's **Royal Society Summer Science Exhibition**, which took place on 5-8th July 2004 at the Royal Society, Carlton House Terrace, London. This unique event offered an opportunity to discover the best of the UK's science and technology research and provided the chance for members of the public to meet and talk to the researchers as well as carry out 'experiments' while visiting the interactive exhibits.

The SRF sponsored Dr Katrien Van Look (Institute of Zoology, Zoological Society of London), Mr Gregory Paull (University of Exeter), Dr Eduardo Santos (University of Exeter), Prof Charles Tyler (University of Exeter) and Dr Peter Kille (Cardiff University) in the development, construction and presentation of an interactive exhibit entitled 'Fish 'n' Chips - zebrafish, genes and gender-bending chemicals'. The following report on the success of this event has been kindly provided by Dr Van Look.

Royal Society Summer Science Exhibition 2004

'Fish 'n' Chips – Zebrafish, Genes and Gender-Bending Chemicals: How Genetic Approaches are Unravelling Chemically-Induced Sexual Disruption in Fish'.

An annual exhibition of science has been held at the Royal Society since the 19th century. However, in the 21st century, the Summer Science Exhibition is the Royal Society's largest public event, showcasing some of the UK's science, engineering and technology research, to a broad range of visitors from parliament and government, industry and commerce, higher education and scientific research, schools and colleges, and members of the general public. With 25 hands-on, informative and interactive exhibits this year, the Royal Society hopes that this annual Exhibition will (1) promote interaction between scientists and the general public; (2) interest young students in science and provide an opportunity to find out more about science; and (3) display UK science to a broad audience.

Our exhibit was based on a BBSRC and NERC-funded research project in collaboration with the Universities of Exeter (Professor Charles Tyler) and Cardiff (Dr. Peter Kille). The Fish 'n' Chips project uses the zebrafish ('fish') and applies microarrays ('chips') to investigate the mechanisms by which a number of well-known endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) lead to alterations in reproduction. In parallel with the microarray work, we are measuring a number of other effects of EDCs on reproduction in the zebrafish (spermatogenesis and oogenesis, sperm motility, number of eggs spawned and their fertilisation and hatching success, and hormone responses). To illustrate how we measure sperm motility the exhibit had a hands-on display where visitors could move wind-up sperm and drive radio-controlled stunt vehicles around an arena to track and analyse their movement and speed. To explain the concept of

microarrays, visitors could run through interactive microarray computer programmes and examine a microarray under a bioscope. The exhibit also housed a large tank of zebrafish. Keen visitors to our exhibit entered a competition to win zoo tickets if they answered questions correctly based on the science we presented.

This year's Summer Science Exhibition attracted just over 4100 visitors with approximately 1000 of these being post-16 year old students and about 1100 general public. We certainly had a lot of enthusiasm from the students, who wildly drove the vehicles around the arena, and from the general public, who were calmer! We also had an unexpected visit from Prince Charles who was very interested in our research, especially in terms of its funding and possible policies it may influence. Exhibits were also on show at a number of evening soirées including, 'Science on Show' for teachers and educators, captains of industry, MPs/MEPs, the Society's Fellowship and other VIPs. The exhibition stand generated a lot of interest, positive feedback and some research opportunities which we are to follow up. It was an inspiring and fun week explaining our research to very interested people with wide-ranging backgrounds and knowledge of the topic. We sincerely thank the Society for Reproduction and Fertility for sponsoring our exhibit.

Katrien Van Look, Institute of Zoology, Zoological Society of London



School pupils were able to have a go at "Sperm Tracking", at the Fish and Chips stand at the Royal Society.

Travel Grants

Well done to the following members who have been awarded travel grants to present their data at international meetings. Special congratulations go to our student members - good luck with your presentations!

Travel grants awarded to: Dr Andrew Beard, Dr Ali Fouladi-Nashta, Dr Alireza Fazeli, Mrs Fataneh Ghafari, Miss Penelope Hawken, Ms Helen Jones, Miss Emma Lucas, Miss Lisa Mohamet, Ms Minerva Munoz-Gutierrez, Mr Nicholas Raine-Fenning, Dr Kurt Sales, Miss Nana Satake, Ms Niamh Scanlan-Blake, Mr Ioannis Sfontouris, Miss Sharon Stubbs, Miss Neera Sunak, Miss Anna Swales, Mr Paul Taylor, Prof Catherine Wilson, Dr John Rooke.

Lisa Thurston, (lthurston@rvc.ac.uk)



From the Programme Secretary

Fertility 2005

As noted on the enclosed flyer, and detailed on the SRF website, the next **SRF Annual Conference** will be held at the **University of Warwick** (Coventry, UK) on **3 – 6 April 2005** (inclusive). The **Fertility 2005** conference continues the programme of joint conferences with the BAS and BFS. Organisation of this joint meeting is being overseen by the “Joint Executive Committee” (the officers of all 3 Societies); financial aspects are controlled by the 3 Society Treasurers (operating as the “Joint Finance Committee”), while the “Joint Conference Management Committee” (comprising the BAS, BFS and SRF Programme Secretaries), shares responsibility for all other aspects of the conference, including the scientific programme and abstract handling. All 3 Committees are supported by staff at the Conference Secretariat: World Event Management.

The highlights of this joint conference will include:

- 3 International Symposia (*Genetics and Fertility; Gamete Interactions; Influences on Development*)
- specialist topic symposia (e.g. *surgical symposium on “endometriosis”*)
- SRF Distinguished Scientist Lecture 2005 (*R.M.Schultz, Pennsylvania*)
- two BFS Eponymous Lectures (*G.Schatten, Pittsburgh + TBC*)
- SRF New Investigator Lecture 2005
- SSR New Investigator Exchange Lecture 2005
- SRF Student Prize 2005 session
- BAS and BFS Prize sessions
- SRF postgradoc quiz night
- Welcome reception
- an informal Social Event (Buffer Dinner at the National Motorcycle Museum)
- annual Conference Dinner (including presentation of the 2005 SRF Marshall Medal to Paul Watson, RVC, London)

The conference will also include **election** of the SRF Postgradoc representative and the **SRF Annual General Meeting**. The new “SRF Postgradoc quiz”, to be held on Sunday evening immediately after the Welcome Reception, will provide an informal opportunity for younger members of the Society to meet members of the SRF Council and Committees. Fertility 2005 also sees the launch of a series of SRF-SSR exchange lectures for New Investigators.

Further details for the conference can be found on the enclosed flyer and at the conference website: <http://www.jointukfertility.com>. When you visit the conference website, you'll note that both abstract submission and registration are already available on-line. The deadline for **abstract submission** is **1 DECEMBER 2004**. Authors will be notified of abstract acceptance in mid January in advance of the “early-bird” registration deadline of **31 January 2005**.

In the recent SRF members' survey, the majority of respondents supported biennial joint BAS/BFS/SRF

conferences. Indeed, several respondents felt that all future SRF conferences should be organised jointly with sister Societies to ensure a critical mass of delegates. Understandably, such conferences require larger venues than needed for a stand-alone SRF conference, which inevitably increases prices. Within the UK, the University of Warwick offers outstanding facilities with excellent on-site accommodation. However, Warwick is not a cheap venue, and delegate prices have been set to ensure that the conference does not pose an unacceptable financial risk to any of the participating Societies. Given local peculiarities in the items that are included with the use of University accommodation, the Joint Finance and Joint Conference Management Committees have devised a variety of registration packages which include residential vs. non-residential options, full rate vs. concessionary rates, and options inclusive vs. exclusive of social events. Delegates are also able to register at daily rates, and to purchase tickets for individual social events, but the cheapest rates are offered to delegates attending the whole conference.

The creation of “registration packages” has made the conference *appear* more expensive than previous joint meetings. For example, the “all inclusive” residential price for a full/non-concessionary member of SRF is £610. However, allowing for inflation, this price is comparable to the combined registration + accommodation + social event price for Fertility 2000 and Fertility 2003. As defined on the conference website, the “all inclusive” residential price of £610 for Fertility 2005 (£505 for student/retired members) includes:

- parking at the University of Warwick
- 3 nights single en-suite accommodation (Sun/Mon/Tue) [*includes internet access*]
- breakfast on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday
- coffee, lunch and tea on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday
- the registration fee to attend all conference sessions from the opening ceremony on Monday morning to the closing ceremony/prize-giving session on Wednesday at 15:00h
- ticket for the Welcome Reception (Sunday)
- dinner on-site on the Sunday night
- ticket for buffet dinner at the National Motorcycle Museum (Monday) (including transport)*
- ticket for the Conference Dinner (Tuesday)*

(*Delegates selecting the residential package that excludes the social events will receive evening meals at the University on the Monday and Tuesday evenings. Non-residential delegates will have to make private arrangements for dinner on the Sunday evening following the Welcome Reception, and non-residential delegates opting not to attend the social events will also need to arrange their own evening meals on the Monday and Tuesday evenings.)

It has recently been pointed out that it may be easier for delegates to seek reimbursement of sums in excess of £500 (a) if payments are staggered or (b) if the costs can be divided between specific items, e.g. “registration”, “accommodation”, etc. These options are urgently being explored by the Secretariat, but even if this proves possible at this late stage, there can be no impact on the overall cost to a delegate choosing specific registrant



options for since the costs have already been set at the lowest possible levels.

Although I am happy to be contacted with regard to Fertility 2005, any member with specific queries relating to this conference should address their enquiries in the first instance to the Conference Secretariat: Stephanie Harris / Claire Gill at World Event Management (+44 [0]1274 854100; fertility2005@world-events.com).

Future SRF Conferences

In response to the replies submitted to the recent survey of SRF members, SRF Council have decided to organise the SRF Annual Conference for 2006 in **London** in early **July 2006**. Venues are currently being sourced for "**Fertility 2007**", with an invitation to host this next joint meeting at the University of **York**. Work is continuing on the business plan to hold the Annual Conference for 2008 as part of a joint conference in Italy in 2008.

Nominations / Symposium Suggestions

Informal nominations are now invited for the recipient of the **SRF Distinguished Scientist Award 2006**. I would also invite suggestions for **Symposia** (with nominations of up to 5 speakers accompanied by a list of topics on which they might speak) to be included in the Annual Conference for 2006, or possibly in Fertility 2007. In the first instance, initial suggestions will be considered by the SRF Meetings Committee who may seek additional information before making recommendations to the SRF Council or Joint Executive Committee as appropriate.

Tony Michael, 13th September 2004

Prof. Terry Robinson

Emeritus Professor Terry James Robinson, the Foundation Chair of Animal Husbandry at the University of Sydney from 1956 to 1984, died on the 2nd of September 2004 in Bathurst, Australia. Terry was a long-standing member of the Society and in 1980 was the inaugural Hammond Lecturer. A very appropriate Hammond Lecturer, as Hammond was Terry's PhD supervisor and Terry graduated to make significant contributions to our understanding of domestic livestock reproduction over the course of his long and distinguished career. An obituary will follow in our next Newsletter. Terry is survived by his and Helen's three children and their families. He was buried on the 13th of September in Kelso, NSW, Australia.

Animal Science Image Gallery

Do you wish you had better images to use in your teaching or outreach? Do you have images that you are willing to share?

Supported by a USDA Higher Education Challenge grant, we are creating an online gallery of images to assist teaching. While the USDA grant specifically underwrites images in nutrition and reproduction, the gallery can be expanded to include other subjects. Maintained in perpetuity by the National Agricultural Library, the images will be available at no cost as all other NAL holdings.

The gallery may be tested at http://cygnet.richmond.edu/image_gallery. The site is now accepting new images, and you may download images already on the site. We hereby solicit images you are willing to share. Each image (e.g., a photograph, an animation, a video, a Zip file, etc) and its description will be peer-reviewed to ensure quality. While the USDA grant focuses on Animal Science, we solicit images for all species, and especially for mammals and birds. We look forward to your submissions!

Harold D. Hafs, Rutgers University
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Parkes Foundation Small Grants Fund 2005

The Parkes Foundation Small Grants Fund helps to promote research into the biosocial sciences. Priority is given to the support of research which involves the integrated study of biological and social features of human populations. Relevant disciplines are anthropology, demography and population studies, ecology and environmental studies, nutrition, and population genetics.

Grants are directed particularly towards helping **graduate research students** meet their field work costs, but others may apply. Undergraduate projects, however, are not supported. Grants are small, usually not exceeding £600.

The application form, on which applications **must** be submitted, can be obtained from the Executive Secretary at the address below, by post or e-mail; detailed instructions will be sent with the form.

The closing date for applications is **31 January 2005**; applications will be considered by the Trustees and awards will be made in March/April 2005.

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