



Society for Reproduction and Fertility

59.5 Chair's Report 2017 59th SRF AGM, ACC Liverpool, 5th January 2018

The year just ended – 2017- – was another busy and productive year for the Society. Many of the initiatives arising from the 2015-16 strategic review were finalised and taken forward with the launch of new funding schemes that have allowed the Society to target financial support to our Early Career Researchers (ECR's) as well as to Society members returning to their research careers after periods of parental leave. There was also an expansion of the Society's generous bursary schemes which supported large numbers of SRF members attending the very successful Fertility 2017 conference at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre as well as the Fourth World Congress in Reproductive Biology (WCRB2017) in Okinawa.

The past year saw continued growth in membership numbers now surpassing 400 for the first time in several years. Not only has the number of registered members of the Society risen by 47% over just 2 years (from 288 at the end of 2015 to 423 members at the end of 2017), but the proportion of members from outside the UK has also risen such that the Society feels increasingly international in both its membership and its outlook.

The last year saw an evolution of the close working relationship between the SRF and its sister societies in the UK. Quite apart from moving to annual joint meetings organised in a formal partnership with the Association for Clinical Embryologists (ACE) and with the British Fertility Society (BFS), in 2017, the SRF Council agreed to work more closely not just with colleagues from ACE and the BFS but also with the Association of Biomedical Andrologists (ABA), the British Andrology Society (BAS), the British Infertility Councillor's Association (BICA) and the Senior Infertility Nurses Group (SING). This coalition is currently working under the provisional title of the "Associated Fertility Societies UK", and further developments are expected over the course of 2018. It is hoped that by collaborating with sister societies representing different specialities in the field, we'll be able to achieve more by speaking with a common voice on issues of interest to our members as well as to the scientific and clinical communities that we each seek to support and represent.

The success of the Society over the past year has been due in no small part to the fantastic working relationships that the Council now enjoy both with our publisher, Bioscientifica, and with the (not so) new secretariat, the Conference Collective Ltd. (CCL) who continue to think of innovative and exciting ways to better support members. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Jacinta and Michelle at CCL for working so hard to understand the Society and to help Council, and specifically the SRF Officers, to advance the SRF mission. I'd like also to thank Kathryn and Lindsay for working so relentlessly at Bioscientifica to maximise the profitability of the Society's journal, *Reproduction*, without which we wouldn't be able to provide the levels of financial support that Council and its committees can make available to members.

As this is my final report as SRF Chair, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those colleagues and friends that I have worked with over my term of office. I'd like to thank all members of SRF Council, past and present, ordinary members and Early Career Rep's alike, for their hard work and dedication. Through their commitment and motivation, we have been able to make big strides in the way that the Society operates and to increase the ways in which we are able to deliver on the SRF mission: to promote research in reproduction and disseminate information to the public at large.

I would like to thank Kevin Sinclair, the outgoing Editor-in-Chief of *Reproduction*, who has done a brilliant job steering the journal through the next phase of its development, ensuring that the journal continues to be recognised as one of the leading publications in our field while returning healthy financial surpluses that underpin many of the Society's activities. Thanks also to Ramiro Alberio as he completes a very positive and productive term as Reviews Editor. I think it is testimony to how well Kevin and Ramiro have worked

together over the past 5 years that we now need three (rather than just two) people to replace them. I welcome Chris Price and Greg Fitzharris as the new Co-Editors in Chief for *Reproduction* and Trudee Fair as the new Reviews Editor for the journal. Kevin and Ramiro have raised the bar Council has every confidence that you will be able to nudge it even higher as the journal continues to go from strength to strength.

As I close this report, my most special thanks are reserved for the Officers with whom it has been such an honour and privilege to work during my term in the Chair. Thanks to Bob Robinson and Cheryl Ashworth for being such supportive Vice-Chairs, sharing the load of Chair and focusing on membership and public engagement issues. Thanks to Adam Watkins and Andy Childs for their commitment and enthusiasm as the General Secretary of the Society, including their hard work in chairing the Education and Engagement Committee. Thanks to Tom Fleming and Richard Lea for ensuring that the financial reserves of the Society were put to work in such a way that we could afford to generate and spend considerable funds each year (and yet still stay on the right side of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs). And finally, particularly sincere thanks and my lifelong admiration to Franchesca Houghton who has served as the SRF Programme Secretary throughout my term of office. Franchesca holds the unenviable record of having had to organise the largest number of conferences on behalf of the Society. In addition to having to chair the Meetings Committee and to organise stand-alone SRF conferences, Franchesca has had to collaborate with 7 other societies (5 of which have been based outside of the UK) to plan 3 different joint Fertility conferences (in Birmingham, Edinburgh and Liverpool) as well as 2 World Congresses in Reproductive Biology (in Edinburgh and Okinawa). Our annual conference, now incorporated into the joint Fertility meetings, is seen by many as our "shop window": the place where the Society's support for research into reproductive biology and medicine is most visible, and Franchesca has done a simply incredible job in managing to negotiate complex political considerations and logistics to deliver the most impressive series of conferences that have shown the work of SRF members in its very best light. Thank you Franchesca, and thank you to everyone that has made my time on Council so enjoyable. This role has not always been easy or undemanding, but it has been absolute honour to serve as your Chair for the past four and a half years.



Tony Michael (Chair, SRF)

11 December 2017