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EDITORIAL

Endings and beginnings

At the start of a new year it is timely to take stock, by looking back over the past 12 months, as well as to look forward. And this past year has been one of sad farewells here at Duck End Farm: first to Bob Edwards and latterly to Ruth Fowler Edwards, Bob's long-time companion, wife and collaborator, whose obituary appears in this issue. Both Bob and Ruth were daily presences at the office here, and their loss leaves a massive space in our lives. Both were dedicated to *RBM Online*, and we are determined to ensure that their legacy lives on in a flourishing journal. And there is much to look forward to! Our impact factor continues to rise, and is accompanied by rising submission and rejection rates – the latter always difficult for us as we strive to help authors improve the quality of content and presentation. In addition, we have sparked a number of controversial debates: on the patenting of early embryonic cell cycles (Cohen, 2013; Reijo Pera, 2013), on the extent to which the 'ART industry' is letting down its 'consumers' (Everywoman, 2013; Franklin and Johnson, 2013; Johnson and Franklin, 2013), on the issue of mitochondrial transfer (Baylis, 2013; Cohen and Alikani, 2013; Johnson, 2013), and on the role of evidence-based medicine in ART procedures (Braude and Khalaf, 2013; Fishel, 2013). Bob Edwards relished these sorts of debates, which very much follow in his tradition.

The past year has seen some more publishing innovations, with our podcast collection (<http://www.rbmojournal.com/content/RBMOTV>), the opportunity for authors to provide an explanatory AudioSlide to accompany each article on ScienceDirect to help promote their work and attract the interest of a wider audience (see, www.elsevier.com/audioslides), the publication of abstracts of papers that are accepted for review, and our Mini Reviews, commissioned from members of our distinguished editorial panel to ensure that authoritative opinions in fast-moving fields of enquiry are made speedily available to our readers. A very recent addition is the introduction of the CrossMark symbol against all papers. This provides access to a multi-publisher initiative that provides a standard way for readers to locate the authoritative version of a document in order to alert readers to changes if and when they occur. Clicking on the CrossMark icon will inform the reader of the current status of a document and may also provide additional

publication record information about the document (see for more info: <http://www.crossref.org/crossmark/>).

Symposia published over the year have covered the topics of evidence-based reproductive medicine (edited by Jacques Cohen and Yakoub Khalaf), implantation (edited by Andrew Sharkey and Nick Macklon), men and assisted reproduction (edited by Lorraine Culley and colleagues) and of course the special December issue *Futures in Reproduction* devoted to Bob Edwards' legacy. Our thanks to all the many distinguished contributors and editors for their magnificent contributions to the literature! In the coming year, we have confirmed plans for a symposium on quality management in the ART laboratory (edited by Jacques Cohen, David Mortimer and Thomas Pool). If any of our readers are interested in editing a symposium, please do get in touch.

We are grateful for the support, both financial and scientific, from Merck Serono S.A., notably for the Scientific Writing workshops linked to the 2013 meetings of ESHRE (July, London, UK) and the official IFFS workshop at the joint IFFS/ASRM meeting (October, Boston, USA), with the introduction of an interactive style actively encouraging the involvement all delegates with the expert faculty members. Workshops at affiliated society meetings in Marrakech, Morocco (MSRM, May), Tunis, Tunisia (ISIVF, September) and at Istanbul, Turkey (PGDIS, May) were well received. In addition, Reproyoung, a fledgling society of Scandinavian emerging scientists and clinical researchers, requested a workshop at their inaugural conference held in southern Sweden in October. In the coming year, we shall build further on these achievements, focusing our attention on reviewers as well as on prospective authors, with provisional arrangements for workshops in Antalya, Turkey (Alpha) and Barcelona, Spain (MSRM) being finalised currently. With these activities we are striving to provide a resource to reviewers as well as to would-be authors and readers, in order to acknowledge the changes in scientific publication technology, its benefits and pitfalls.

Finally, some thank yous. It has been another very busy year for *RBM Online*. Caroline Blackwell has, as ever, been the mainstay of the journal, keeping the editors on track,

and, as the public face of the journal, bearing the brunt of the media, mail and phone enquiries and fronting the *RBM Online* stand at the ESHRE and ASRM meetings. Our deepest thanks to Caroline for all her dedication! The submission rate continues to be healthy, a challenging task for her, for Catherine Field and Maria Murphy in the office here, to whom likewise our editorial deepest thanks. Some changes have eased our editorial task – notably the introduction of our panel of specialist Section Editors, the members of which handle each paper and the referees' reports, and make a recommendation to the three of us – we then make the final decision on each manuscript. Our grateful thanks to our Section Editors and our Editorial Boards, both current and emeritus, who constitute a veritable Who's Who of assisted reproduction. The members help us with advice and refereeing, and to all of them we express our thanks for their commitment to *RBM Online*. We welcome two new additions to the Editorial Board for 2014, Bruce Dunphy and Sheryl Vanderpoel. Our reviewers and authors are our life-blood and we thank all the past year's reviewers by name in the prelims. Thanks also to the staff at Elsevier, led by Greyling Peoples, for their continuing commitment to the efficient production and promotion of the journal. Finally, the editors would like to express their appreciation to Kamal Ahuja and the Board of Reproductive Healthcare Ltd for their continuing moral and financial support for the journal, and to Eddie Kuan, who left us this year after many years of support with the accounts. In his place we welcome David Hoskins.

We wish a productive and exciting 2014 to all those involved with *RBM Online* – our contributors, editors, reviewers and, of course, readers!

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