

## Sixty years of reproduction

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1960 was a landmark year for a multitude of reasons. John F Kennedy was elected President of the USA, four young men from Liverpool first performed in West Germany under the stage name The Beatles, Elvis Presley's 'It's Now or Never' topped the charts, and the Society for the Study of Fertility formed *Journals of Reproduction and Fertility Ltd*, a company to publish this journal.

The *Journal of Reproduction and Fertility (JRF)* was born from the successful publication of proceedings of the early Society for the Study of Fertility, published as *Conference on Infertility* in 1947, *Proceedings of the Society for the Study of Fertility* from 1949 to 1953, and as *Studies on Fertility* until the launch of *JRF* in 1960. At the time, there was no other journal dedicated to the study of reproductive biology. *Journals of Reproduction and Fertility Ltd* launched a new journal *Reviews of Reproduction* in 1996, which merged with *JRF* in 2001 and changed the name to *Reproduction*.

A glimpse at that first issue published in February 1960 shows quite how much has changed in our field in the intervening 60 years. Whereas modern scientific investigation often comprises large interdisciplinary teams with multiple technological approaches, strikingly all articles in the very first issue were solo-author affairs reporting studies using stopwatches, tape measures and lots of manual counting (sperm or eggs). In contrast, the 2019–2020 issues of *Reproduction* include deep sequencing, high-resolution microscopy, knock-out models and massive database searches. Nonetheless major advances were made in the 60s indicating the ingenuity and dedication of the scientists of the day.

In the 1960s, the journal was run by a Council of Management of 11 men and 2 women, effectively the editorial board, all based in the United Kingdom. Although it is encouraging to see that senior female scientists took up management duties in 1960, times have changed! In 2020, the editorial board comprises 15 women and 17 men (excluding editors-in-chief and reviews editor) from the UK, Europe, North America,

the Middle East, Australasia and Asia, which better reflects the demographics of modern reproduction science. Since the inception of *JRF*, our field has seen striking advances in our understanding of hormonal cycles, ovulation, spermatogenesis and early embryonic development. We've witnessed the birth of IVF and cloning. We've seen how molecular biology, through Northern blotting to deep sequencing and miRNA, has revolutionised the way we measure biological mechanisms. We look forward to the developments to come in the next 60 years, which we might anticipate to include the integration of gene editing into human and animal reproductive technologies, the development of strategies to mitigate the transgenerational impact of the environmental pollutant *du jour*, and maybe even the successful development of a male contraceptive!

We cannot end this Editorial without thanking the last 60 years' worth of editors and reviewers, and of course the authors, who have made this journal the success that it is. Particular recognition is deserved for past Editors-in-Chief C R Austin, Sir Alan Parkes, D Bartlett, E C Amoroso, Barbara Weir, B Cook, C Finn, R Webb, J Carroll, T Fleming and K Sinclair.

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