

## EDITORIAL

### A time of change



**Chris Wylie**  
 Editor in Chief 1987-2002

framework that links evolution, development and medicine to an extent that only the most optimistic could have imagined in 1987. The first paper, in the first issue, of *Development* (Smith, 1987) showed that an unidentified factor in a tissue culture medium induced animal caps from *Xenopus* embryos to form mesoderm. It seems hard to imagine we didn't know this in 1987, because now all the major signaling molecules that are involved in this process have been identified; their cDNAs or genomic sequences have been characterized; their downstream signaling pathways are known, as are many of their target genes; their functions have been analyzed in large numbers of experimental systems; and the developmental consequences of mutations that affect these molecules have been discovered in humans.

Times have also changed for an editor since the first issue of *Development* hit the presses. Then, manuscripts arrived in huge packages, sometimes after weeks at sea, often with the photographs, which had been patiently glued to bits of card, lying around loose and unnumbered at the bottoms of the envelopes. Letters and manuscripts were mailed out to reviewers, and the reviews then mailed back to authors, often resulting in long correspondences that took weeks (actually, this bit hasn't changed much!). The FedEx bills were enormous, as was the mess in the editorial office. Next, the FAX machine appeared, resulting in huge untidy piles of paper awaiting the arrival of the editors wherever they travelled, often to the horror of their hosts. And finally, the electronic revolution came, which has allowed manuscripts to be received, reviewed, discussed, returned, re-submitted, re-reviewed and sent for publication, without any of the parties concerned ever seeing a piece of paper.

The publishing process has changed beyond recognition.

At the beginning of next year, *Development's* Editorial team will change. Jim Smith will take over as Editor in Chief.

Looking back over my own fifteen years as Editor in Chief, the amount of change has been staggering. *Development's* short life began in 1987 when it was relaunched from the *Journal of Embryology and Experimental Morphology*. Since then, the field has seen the unification of many, if not all, model systems, into a

The first few issues of *Development* were hand-set, and only later did the initial (unusable) dinosaurs of electronic typesetting appear, followed mercifully quickly by desk-top publishing. Throughout, *Development* has been blessed with a small group of dedicated, flexible and highly professional staff at the publishing house, who have struggled with the most outlandish editorial demands (I think the flip-art movie in the zebrafish issue marked the nadir of our relationship, and some of the discussions over page numbers have become the stuff of legends), have reacted manfully to adversity (the famous 'missing 40 pages' from the second issue is a good example) and have retained their sense of humor throughout.

But one thing that has not changed is the aim of the journal. At its reincarnation from *JEEM*, *Development* was established to publish interesting and important mechanistic papers on developmental biology, using molecular and genetic, as well as the more traditional experimental techniques. It still does this, which testifies to the scientific good taste of its editors and the high quality of its reviewing process. These are the essential factors that produce a good journal. My personal thanks go to Walter Gehring, Corey Goodman, Iva Greenwald, Richard Hynes, Tom Jessell, Peter Lawrence, Mike Levine, Andrew Lumsden, Doug Melton, Keith Roberts, Janet Rossant, Gerry Rubin and Ben Scheres, and a host of outstanding reviewers, for doing such a great job.

It is particularly satisfying that Jim Smith has agreed to become the next Editor in Chief of *Development*, for two reasons. First, Jim has the honor of having authored the first paper published in *Development*, as well as the first front cover. Second, he has always been a staunch supporter of the journal. One of my fondest memories is of the first time I asked for a publicity stand for *Development* to be put up at a conference – a Miami Winter Symposium. When it arrived, late in the evening before the meeting started, it turned out to be a vast, complicated, and disassembled contraption with no instructions, and no tools. Jim dropped everything to help me spend most of the night putting the thing together, and then manned it with me for most of the meeting, pointing out vigorously to passers-by the advantages of publishing in *Development*. I predict that he will have just the same attitude as Editor in Chief.

**Chris Wylie**  
 Editor in Chief

#### Reference

**Smith, J. C.** (1987). A mesoderm-inducing factor is produced by a *Xenopus* cell line. *Development* **99**, 3-14.