

Hello goodbye

This short Editorial serves three purposes. The first is to welcome Olivier Pourquié as the new Editor-in-Chief of *Development*. Olivier will need no introduction to readers of the journal: everyone will know his brilliant work on the vertebrate segmentation clock and the identification and analysis of the signalling pathways that drive it. Until very recently, Olivier was a group leader at the Stowers Institute in Kansas City, Missouri, USA. He is now Director of the Institute of Genetics and Molecular and Cellular Biology (IGBMC) in Strasbourg, France, an appointment that reflects both Olivier's standing in the field of developmental biology, as well as his skills in leadership and decision making (both of which will serve him well as an editor of *Development*!). I cannot think of a better appointment, and I wish him well as *Development*'s third Editor-in-Chief.

I have served almost seven years as Editor-in-Chief, a short time compared with my predecessor Chris Wylie, but it may be that the field of developmental biology has changed as much in those seven years as in the preceding fifteen. The significance of cell biology, genomic and systems approaches, high-throughput sequencing, mathematical modelling and improved imaging technologies have all transformed developmental biology. Most of all, the field of stem cells (or applied developmental biology as I sometimes call it) has rightly assumed centre stage in our thinking. Executive Editor Jane Alfred and I, together with the other editors, have tried to address some of these areas by commissioning review articles and by recruiting new editors to encourage submissions in these fields. The content of the journal has changed in some respects, but it is a real challenge to change the direction of a journal without losing its core subject area, and of course there are many specialised journals with which we compete and which take the papers we'd like to publish. I wish Olivier well in addressing these challenges and in responding to some of the points raised in our recent community consultation. One of these issues concerns the opportunities presented by increasingly sophisticated web sites and online publication, and here readers might be pleased to hear that the Company of Biologists is helping *Development* by supporting the creation of a

new web presence for the journal. I look forward to seeing the results.

I end with some thanks. I am very grateful to the Company of Biologists and its staff for their support and hard work, and especially Jenny Ostler, who will be known to many of our authors as the person who responds to their requests for advice or information. I also thank my fellow editors, past and present, who put up with my various requests for change to the journal, however well or ill conceived they might have been. It would be invidious to name them all individually – they know who they are and so do most of my readers – but I would particularly like to thank Peter Lawrence. Peter is the journal's longest-serving editor (I make it 33 years), having been an editor of the *Journal of Embryology and Experimental Morphology* long before it transformed to the more fashionable single-word title. Peter has always cared about science and about the journal. Peter and I frequently discussed the direction of the journal, and the strategies we should follow. We did not always agree, but the conversations were always fun and informative, and I am enormously grateful to Peter for his help and support (and, indeed, for introducing me to developmental biology in 1976, through his lectures on the compartment hypothesis).

But most of all I should like to thank *Development*'s Executive Editor Jane Alfred. One of the strengths of *Development* is that its editors are working scientists who, among other things, know their fields and understand the points of view of our authors. But working scientists are not experts in publishing and there are many areas in which we need help, advice and strategic insights. In this I have been extraordinarily fortunate in working with Jane. Her knowledge of developmental biology is broad and deep, and her reputation as an editor has allowed her to commission many superb reviews. These, and her wisdom and her knowledge of publishing have all been key to the success of the journal. I thank Jane for her contributions to *Development* and wish her well in the next stage of the journal's evolution.

Jim Smith
London, UK, October 2009