

EDITORIAL

Journal of Cell Science – more than just a journal

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There are many great quotes that come to mind from the films of Monty Python, but a particularly good one is from the Life of Brian: “Apart from the sanitation, the medicine, education, wine, public order, irrigation, roads, the freshwater system and public health ... what have the Romans ever done for us?” The same could also be asked of JCS: what has the journal ever done for us?

People who know JCS well will know that we’re *more* than just a journal and that our *community* – the cell biology community – really is at the heart of everything we do. When we appoint new editors, think about topics for special issues or journal meetings, or launch new initiatives, we always have the best interests of our community in mind. Like our publisher, The Company of Biologists, we are run by scientists for scientists, and we exist to profit science, not shareholders. It’s no wonder that a very successful and well-known cell biologist (who will remain nameless) recently described JCS (and The Company of Biologists) as one of the most altruistic publishers they know of! This also explains our publisher’s strapline ‘Supporting biologists, inspiring biology’, which is in sharp contrast to the aims of profit-fuelled publishers, ‘Exploiting biologists, constraining biology’.

This Issue – the final one of 2023 – is a celebration of our community. On the cover, you’ll see the faces of the many scientists that we’ve highlighted in our ‘**First Person**’ interviews and ‘**Cell Scientists to Watch**’ series throughout the year as well as our Academic Editors and Guest Editors who contribute to the successful running of the journal. You’ll also see the faces of our administrators, production team, and in-house editors who work tirelessly behind the scenes in our office in Cambridge to ensure the smooth running of the journal.

Inside the Issue, you’ll find a selection of articles that, we hope, reflect our commitment to serving the cell biology community. Firstly, there are interviews with our newly appointed Editors – **Renata Basto** and **Kairbaan Hodivala-Dilke** – and you can also look back at our [previous interview with Megan King](#), our third new editor. The issue also contains interviews with the Presidents of three different cell biology societies – Sara Sigismund (President of the Italian Society for Cell Biology; doi:10.1242/jcs.261683), Florence Niedergang (President of the French Society for Cell Biology; doi:10.1242/jcs.261835), and Laura Machesky (President of the British Society of Cell Biology; doi:10.1242/jcs.261836) – all of whom are role models for our community. All of these interviews fall under the umbrella of our **Cell Scientists to Watch** series, which highlights cell biologists at different stages of their careers who are making important contributions to the field. Running parallel to this is our ‘**First Person**’ interview series, which helps early-career researchers promote themselves and their papers. This year alone we’ve published over 80 ‘First Person’ interviews. As a community

journal, we feel it’s important to hear about the challenges scientists from different fields, countries and career stages face both in and out of the lab. And there are always those final questions that throw up many surprises – “tell us something interesting about yourself that wouldn’t be on your CV” (for ‘First Person’ interviews), and “finally, could you tell us an interesting fact about yourself that people wouldn’t know by looking at your CV” (for ‘Cell Scientists to Watch’)?

In line with providing a sounding board, the issue contains several opinion-based articles that focus on some of the current challenges in the community. This includes articles on the importance of negative results (an Essay piece by Lu Gan; doi:10.1242/jcs.261594), on how to connect theory and experimental studies (a Perspective by David Bruckner and colleagues; doi:10.1242/jcs.261515), and on developing community checklists for publishing imaging data (a Perspective by Helena Jambor; doi:10.1242/jcs.261837). The issue also contains Essays on dismantling volunteerism in undergraduate research (doi:10.1242/jcs.261865) and the challenges of voicing our personal lives and perspectives in academic discourse (doi:10.1242/jcs.261864). The journal has always been a forum for scientific debates and discussion, so this issue also includes a Hypothesis article on an important emerging topic – the role of contact sites between membrane-less organelles and membranes (doi:10.1242/jcs.261413) as well as one of our much-loved ‘Cell Science at a Glance’ poster articles, on ‘The muscle stem cell niche’ (doi:10.1242/jcs.261200). We know that these articles are valuable educational resources for the community and look forward to distributing full-size copies of this and other poster articles ([the full collection of which is on our website](#)) at upcoming conferences. Of course, a ‘community-focussed’ issue wouldn’t be complete without some musings from Mole, who offers the final in a series of four thought-provoking perspectives on ‘**The System**’.

The issue also contains updates on some of our community sites and initiatives. You can find out more about preLights (<https://prelights.biologists.com/>) – the preprint highlights service run by ECRs in the biological community and supported by The Company of Biologists – and how the site is supporting the cell biology community (doi:10.1242/jcs.261826). There’s also an update on FocalPlane (<https://focalplane.biologists.com/>), our online community site for anyone who uses microscopy in their research. Since its launch in 2020, the site has gone from strength to strength and has recently implemented a number of upgrades, [as detailed in an Editorial](#). Finally, we’ve been delighted to see that our recently launched biodiversity initiative – **The Forest of Biologists** – has been embraced by the cell biology community (as [highlighted in an Editorial](#)). As part of this project, we’re planting a new tree for each Research and Review article published in JCS and, to acknowledge the efforts of our peer reviewers, we’re also helping to protect trees in an ancient woodland. A recent visit to the forest (see video at <https://youtu.be/CaZ-aalPiVU>) shows just how much of an impact this project – and your publications – is having. We’ll be continuing this project throughout 2024 and look forward to planting and protecting more trees on the community’s behalf.

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The end of the year is a good opportunity to look back on some of the highlights of the year. In May, we held our journal meeting on 'Imaging Cell Dynamics' at the beautiful Pestana Palace in Lisbon. The meeting was an overwhelming success and we received lots of positive feedback from the imaging community. Following on from the success of the meeting, we'll be publishing a special issue on the topic of 'Imaging Cell Architecture and Dynamics' and we invite you to submit your papers on this topic to this special issue (see details at <https://journals.biologists.com/jcs/pages/imaging>). This issue will be coordinated by two Guest Editors – Lucy Collinson (The Francis Crick Institute, UK) and Guillaume Jacquemet (University of Turku, Finland) – and we'll be accepting submissions until 1 March 2024. We're also proud to have awarded 20 JCS Travelling Fellowships this year. These awards, of up to £3000 each, help

support graduate students and post-doctoral researchers wishing to make collaborative visits to other laboratories for up to 3 months. In addition to this, we have provided sponsorship funds to ~20 national and international meetings, such as EMBO workshops, FASEB Summer Conferences, and Gordon Research Conferences on various topics; this is separate to the funds distributed by The Company of Biologists in the form of scientific meeting and sustainable conferencing grants (more information is at <https://www.biologists.com/grants/>).

There are many places to publish, but we hope that this end of year issue illustrates why it is better to publish with JCS (and our sister journals) and support our scientific community, via The Company of Biologists' initiatives, rather than increase the obscene profits of predatory and mega publishers. We hope you will join us in our mission of supporting biologists, inspiring biology.