

BRITISH SOCIETY FOR DEVELOPMENTAL BIOLOGY

NEWSLETTER - 2

I. We start this second Newsletter with what I hope will be the first in an occasional series of articles of general interest.

The British Society for Developmental Biology by Professor D.R. Newth, Department of Zoology, University of Glasgow.

The BSDB had its origin in a small, London based group that constituted itself the Embryologists' Club. Thirteen of us met for the first time on 19th February, 1948 at King's College, London, elected a committee to run our affairs and discussed a paper. The committee comprised Elizabeth A. Fraser (chairman), A. Fisk (secretary), Margaret Tribe (treasurer), Frances E. Ince and D.R. Newth. The others present at the first meeting were M. Abercrombie, A. d'A. Bellairs, P. Ford, P.D.F. Murray, M. Ruth Morgan (Ruth Bellairs), G.E. Newell, R.J. O'Connor, P.M. Vicary. The paper was on "The amniochorion of reptiles" and was given by Tribe and Fisk. The committee met for the first time on 2nd March. It invited J.P. Hill to become president, and in due course, he accepted. It decided that the aims of the club were to be to hold informal discussions on problems of embryology, to provide opportunities for meeting embryologists from other countries and the creation of a register of research material available in the U.K. The next club meeting was to be a symposium on the limitations of amphibian material in experimental embryology. It was held on 4th June and the speakers were M. Abercrombie, P. Ford, D.R. Newth and R.J. O'Connor.

Although the club continued to hold symposium meetings at which several papers were read, many of its meetings saw only a single paper read and discussed. This more intimate pattern has pleasures and advantages which large scientific societies almost always lose.

For the next fifteen years the club was the only body solely concerned with developmental biology in the U.K. Indeed it narrowly escaped being officially adopted by UNESCO, whose officials confused it with the Institut International d'Embryologie. Only the frantic disclaimers of the secretary averted heaven knows what descent of international largesse on a body resolutely modest in its ambitions. Nevertheless for a club with an annual subscription of 12½p. and offering life membership for 150p. it did remarkably well. It could not afford to invite overseas speakers, but it was quick to take advantage of the presence in London on other business of colleagues and friends from abroad. E.A. Fraser was followed in turn by W.J. Hamilton, M. Abercrombie and D.R. Newth as chairman, M. Tribe by R.J. O'Connor and E.W. Baxter as treasurer, and A. Fisk by Elizabeth Deuchar as secretary. Membership grew to reach nearly 100, and meetings became more ambitious, less parochial and more successful.

However, two main limitations of the club's activities came increasingly to be felt. Its scientific scope, despite its efforts to be eclectic, remained centred upon the embryology of metazoan animals. Sincere attempts to involve developmental botanists, inspired by G.R. de Beer and M. Abercrombie, did not really succeed, and we did only little better with the rapidly growing field of molecular biology. It also remained London based although it came to depend more and more upon the support of developmental biologists from elsewhere.

For these reasons on 25th September, 1963, Deuchar and Newth proposed the transformation of the club into a national society. At a committee

meeting on 25th October the other committee members (E.W. Baxter, K. Backhouse, Ruth Bellairs, F.S. Billett, A.S.G. Curtis, A. Fisk and L. Wolpert) agreed to recommend such a step to a special general meeting to be held on 1st January, 1964. This meeting approved, and the Society for Developmental Biology was conceived. Birth was planned for 20th June, 1964, and to take place, significantly, outside London. The first meeting of the new Society was held in Oxford, and had as its first paper one by J.B. Gurdon on "The cytoplasmic regulation of nuclear activity in amphibian development".

Oxford was followed, in succession, by Mill Hill, Cambridge, Glasgow, Sussex, Bristol, Aberdeen, U.C.L., East Anglia, Bangor, Southampton, Glasgow, Oxford, London, Edinburgh and Newcastle, while the new Society found its feet. These meetings included joint ones with the Genetical Society, the Society for Experimental Biology and the Society for Cell Biology. After sixteen meetings a further change in name was called for. Sometime after the formation of the SDB the American Society of the same name was founded. To avoid confusion, the newcomer was invited to concede priority and change its name. It declined, and so, with such grace as we could muster, SDB became BSDB at the end of 1969. At this time H. Gruneberg replaced D.R. Newth as chairman, F.S. Billett had already taken over from E.M. Deuchar as secretary and J. McKenzie replaced A. Fisk as treasurer.

The later history of the Society should perhaps be recorded only when BSDB has come of age.

D.R.N.

II. General Matters

BSDB Travel Awards to Young Scientists

There has been an understandably enthusiastic response to the travel award scheme. Since its announcement in the last Newsletter, eighteen awards have been made to a total of about £450, and several applications are still outstanding. Anticipating that several more applications will be made for the symposium meeting in September, this will rather strain the Society's resources. It was therefore decided at the last Committee Meeting that highest priority should be threefold:

- (a) for postgraduates and postdoctoral workers
- (b) BSDB members
- (c) to attend BSDB meetings.

The Cambridge Meeting

Although it is not a function of this Newsletter to give post-mortems on the Society's meetings, a note of thanks should definitely be extended to Martin Johnson and co-organizers for a beautifully organized meeting in March. One innovation stands out in the memory which one hopes will become a permanent feature of our meetings - a barrel of beer, served during an evening poster session. A master stroke this, as it forced the more sybaritic members into the same room as the posters.

Membership of the BSDB

There is a feeling current amongst the Committee that there must be more than 400 people (our current membership) interested in developmental biology. May I therefore extend a plea to all members to circulate details of the Society to colleagues, and generally to pursue a more aggressive membership policy.

Vacancies on the BSDB Committee

There are two vacancies on the Committee of the Society, which have to be filled before September. Would members please send seconded nominations which have been signed by the nominated candidate (to indicate their willingness to stand if elected) to Michael Balls, Dept. of Human Morphology, University of Nottingham, Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham NG7 2UH. Nominations should arrive before 30th June, 1980.

Payment of Subscriptions to the BSDB

From 1st October, 1980, the subscription rises to £4 per annum (£2 for graduate students). It is far easier for the Secretary/Treasurer if these are paid by bankers order for U.K. members, or in biennial or triennial lump sums for foreign members.

All members have received a bankers order from Mike Balls. However, only about one third have been returned. Would everybody please ensure that bankers order forms are returned to Mike Balls, so that they can be circulated to banks well in advance of next October.

Contribution to the Newsletter

The idea of the Newsletter being a general forum for the Society got off to an inauspicious start. Ideas and suggestions flooded in at a pace which could be counted on the fingers of one hand after a severe attack of frostbite. Somewhat disappointing was the absence of suggestions for future meetings and symposium topics (see below for a specific call for ideas).

One useful role for the Newsletter would be to give advance notice of meetings in related disciplines, held by other biological societies. Would members please bring this possibility to the attention of colleagues in related disciplines such as biochemistry, genetics, cell biology and zoology.

III. Forthcoming Meetings

BSDB Symposium Meeting - September, 1980

The programme and booking form for this symposium accompany this Newsletter. Interested non-members should write to Mike Balls for more of these.

1980 Annual General Meeting

This will be held at 12.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 10th September, at the University of Southampton, during the Symposium Meeting.

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the 15th Annual General Meeting (circulated).
3. Matters arising from the Minutes.
4. Secretary-treasurer's report.
5. Future meetings.
6. Officers and committees.
7. European Developmental Biology Organization.
8. Any other business.

Michael Balls,
Secretary/Treasurer.
21st April, 1980

BSDB Warwick Meeting - Spring, 1981

The organizer of the next general meeting at Warwick University is Hugh Woodland. Three major topics have been decided upon:

- (a) The organization of the egg.
- (b) Lampbrush chromosomes.
- (c) Transcription in oocytes, eggs and early embryos.

Members who are interested in contributing to this meeting should contact Hugh Woodland (Dept. of Biology, University of Warwick, Coventry, CU4 7A7).

BSDB Symposium Meeting - Autumn, 1982

A decision will have to be made in Southampton this Autumn on the subject of our next Symposium meeting. Would members please submit ideas to Chris Wylie, for consideration at the next Committee Meeting.

American Society of Zoologists Symposium - December, 1980

"Principles and problems of pattern formation in animals" organised by:

Susan Bryant,
Center for Pathobiology,
University of California,
Irvine,
Ca. 92717.

Nigel Holder,
Dept. of Anatomy,
King's College,
Strand,
London WC2 R2LS.

The Division of Developmental Biology of the American Society of Zoologists is sponsoring this major symposium on pattern formation at its annual meeting in Seattle, December, 1980. Lewis Wolpert will give a general introduction, and sessions devoted to the following topics will be presented: Development and Regeneration in Hydra (Tsutomu Sugiyami, Harry MacWilliams, Hans Bode); Patterning in single cells (Gary Grimes, Gerold Schubiger); Development and Regeneration of insect appendages (Peter Bryant, Gines Morata, Vernon French); Development and Regeneration in Vertebrates (Jonathan Cooke, Cheryl Tickle, Laurie Hen, Nigel Holder, Malcolm Maden); Neuronal Specificity (R. Kevin Hunt, Denis Summerbell, Jack Diamond).

All interested developmental biologists are encouraged to attend, and to present their work at the accompanying contributed paper sessions. Please contact the organizers for further information.

British Society for Cell Biology

Will hold a meeting on 'Differentiation In Vitro' at the University of Edinburgh on 24-26 September, 1980, when invited papers will be given by M. Balls (Nottingham), J.H. Burnett (Edinburgh), R. Clayton (Edinburgh), D.A. Ede (Glasgow), G. Eguchi (Kyoto), G.G. Henshaw (Birmingham), K.W. Jones (Edinburgh), I.R. Konigsberg (Virginia), J.W. Lash (Philadelphia), N.A. Mitchison (London), D.H. Northcote (Cambridge), R.A. Rifkind (New York), N. Sunderland (Norwich), M. Van Montagu (Gent), W. Wolpert (London) and M.M. Yeoman (Edinburgh). Further details and registration forms can be obtained from the Local Secretary, Department of Botany, University of Edinburgh, King's Buildings, Edinburgh EH9 3VH (tel. 031 667 1081 Ext. 3320).

European Developmental Biology Organisation - Future Conferences
Symposia and Meetings

Second International Symposium on Microtubules and Microtubule Inhibitors, organised by the Janssen Research Foundation in Beerse (near Antwerp), Belgium: August 26-29, 1980. M. De Brabander or J. De Mey, Laboratory of Oncology, Janssen Pharmaceutica, B-2340 Beerse, Belgium.

Second International Congress on Cell Biology. Berlin (West): August 31 - September, 1980. Advance Programme, Registration Forms and further information from E.C.B.O. Secretariat, c/o German Cancer Research Center, P.O. Box 101949, D-6900 Heidelberg, West Germany.

XIV International Embryological Conference, Patras, Greece. September 12-17, 1980. Dr. Harry Pataryas, Congress Secretary, Department of Biology, University of Athens, Panepistimioupolis 621, Athens, Greece.

9th International Congress of International Society of Developmental Biologists: Basel, Switzerland: August 28 - September 1, 1981. Embryonic Development: Cells and Genes.

Transformation of Visual Cells: Edinburgh, Scotland: Autumn, 1980. Dr. Ruth Clayton, Institute of Animal Genetics, University of Edinburgh, King's Buildings, West Main's Road, Edinburgh EH9 3JN.

Cell Adhesion in Sea Urchins - Bermuda Biological Station: 1981 - date to be decided. Dr. D. McClay, Department of Zoology, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, U.S.A.

Ninth International Research Group in Developmental Biology: Hubrecht Laboratory, International Embryological Institute, Utrecht, Netherlands: January 12 - February 17, 1981. Deputy Director, Hubrecht Laboratory, Uppsalalaan 8, 3584 CT Utrecht.

August 29th, 1980: Dutch Society for Developmental Biology: Utrecht: Early Amphibian Development: a paradigm for morphogenesis. Dr. J. Faber, Hubrecht Laboratorium, Uppsalalaan 8, 3584 CT Utrecht.

November 14, 1980: Dutch Society for Developmental Biology: Utrecht: Cell and Tissue Culture in Developmental Biology. Dr. M.R. Dohmen, Zoological Laboratory, University of Utrecht, Padualaan 8, Utrecht.

C.C.W.
