

BSDB Newsletter

Summer 1991

No. 23



BioEssays

BSDB Newsletter

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Developmental Biology on the front page! The sex-change gene-swap performed by Goodfellow, Lovell-Badge and colleagues became headline news in May - remarkable for an experiment in basic biology that is without immediate consequences in medical practice. True, the conjunction of sex and gene manipulation made this a uniquely newsworthy "story" - but even so, the prominence it achieved testifies to the interest and concern that surrounds current developmental biology.

As professional biologists we have a responsibility to ensure that public debate of such work is informed and accurate. Media coverage of the sex-change mouse appeared on the day of formal publication, and the report I read seemed pretty accurate - a sure sign of a good press release. Too often, though, the press coverage of science is not to our liking, with too much hype and an emphasis on personalities. It is easy to ridicule the colleague who is thus "misrepresented" in the media - and this

deters attempts to foster public interest. This is a pity. We shall only retain the trust of the community that supports our work if we encourage widespread understanding and discussion. We must present our case, and our motives, as honestly as we can. And we must be prepared to listen to public criticism of those arguments.

The Society has as usual sponsored two meetings during the last year. A joint meeting with the John Innes Institute last autumn was our deliberate attempt to 'cross' the plant and animal communities. At that meeting I discovered some of the good developmental biology that was missing by ignoring plants. It was a shame that so few animal biologists chose to attend. At the joint Spring meeting in Leeds the BSDB and the BSCB for the first time ran integrated symposia, on cellular and developmental aspects of neurobiology. We chose to give that meeting a sharp focus, but we don't want to be accused of catering for a narrow spectrum of interests. The topics for the next spring symposia at Sussex

are diverse enough to appeal to a broad church - "Transcription Factors" (BSCB) and "Gastrulation" (BSDB). Not forgetting the genetic emphasis of the autumn meeting at Lancaster.

This year sees the first BSDB sponsored training course in developmental biology, to be held at Oxford in September. Such courses are expensive to run, but Claudio Stern and Peter Holland, besides organizing an excellent programme, have raised substantial external funding. This, in addition to BSDB bursaries, will make the course accessible to most qualified applicants. Demand greatly exceeded the number of places available this year, but if funding can be secured, we hope that the course may be repeated in future years.

Nigel Holder retired as Meetings Secretary at the AGM, and Jim Smith came to the end of his term as Publications Officer. David Hames also stood down from the committee, basking in the virtue of having organized the Leeds meeting. All three have given more of their time to the Society than they could really spare, and we thank them for it. As our membership list grows longer, and our meetings

larger, the jobs of the officers become more time consuming. At some point the Society may have to consider the appointment of a paid administrative assistant, but I hope that time can be deferred as long as possible. We would rather spend your money on travel grants for students. One thing that you can do to make their jobs easier is to deal efficiently with those niggling little reminders for updating subscriptions, addresses and the like. Its no fun, stuffing newsletters into envelopes that get returned from dead addresses!

The new Meetings Secretary is Rosa Beddington, at the AFRC Centre for Genome Research in Edinburgh. The society "Mac" passes to Philip Ingham (ICRF Developmental Biology Unit, Oxford) who takes on responsibility for the Newsletter and conference publications. New representatives on the committee are Enrico Coen (flower morphogenesis), Malcolm Maden, (vertebrate development) and David Shepherd, (developmental neurobiology). Emily Gale (Kings, London) will represent the interests of graduate students. Our thanks to all of them.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

REPTILE DEVELOPMENT

"Branta Books" offer volumes 14 and 15 of the "Biology of Reptilia" at £20 per volume, a reduction of ~50% on the original price. The two volumes, edited by Carl Gans et al., and published by John Wiley in 1985, provide a compre-

hensive account of reptile development. The offer is limited to individuals only. For further details please contact Dr. Frank Billet, 2, Bellemoor Road, Shirley, Southampton SO1 5JW

EDBO

From its earliest days, the European Developmental Biology Organisation (EDBO) has embraced all European countries. For those Eastern European countries that have currency problems, it has been agreed that EDBO annual subscriptions should be paid in the country's own currency and used in that country to support developmental biology workshops and conferences. This applies both to those countries that already had or now have a developmental biology organisation that could affiliate to EDBO (Yugosla-

via, Poland, USSR) as well as to those countries in which no appropriate organisation yet exists, but where individual members are co-ordinated through an "intermediar" (Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Rumania). For the August 1991 EDBO Congress in Jerusalem, EDBO are contributing \$4000 towards the expenses of participants from Eastern Europe.

Anne McLaren

Future BSDB Meetings

AUTUMN 1991, Lancaster: Genetic and Developmental Consequences of Insertional Mutagenesis

The Autumn 1991 meeting is a joint meeting with the Genetical Society. The meeting is being held in Lancaster on Wednesday 18th and Thursday 19th September and the topic is Genetic and Developmental Consequences

of Insertional Mutagenesis. The programme for the meeting is below. The booking form, together with information for delegates can be found in the 'Centre Section' of the Newsletter.

Tuesday 17 September

14.00-18.00 Arrival at Lancaster and registration
18.00-19.00 Wine Reception
19.00 Dinner

Wednesday 18 September

Use of transposable elements to study development in plants

Chairman: C. Martin (John Innes Institute, Norwich)

09.00 - 09.40 Enrico Coen (John Innes Institute, Norwich)
Transposons as tools for studying development in *Antirrhinum*

09.40 - 10.20 Caroline Dean (Cambridge Laboratory, JI Centre, Norwich)

Establishment of an efficient heterologous transposon system in *Arabidopsis thaliana* based on the maize transposable elements *Ac* and *Df*.

10.20-11.20 Coffee and Trade Exhibition

11.20 - 12.00 Kenneth Feldman (University of Arizona, Tucson)

Use of T-DNA insertion mutants in *Arabidopsis* to study plant development

12.00 - 12.40 Jonathan Jones (Sainsbury Laboratory, JI Centre, Norwich)

Properties and uses of the maize transposon *Activator* (*Ac*) in tobacco and tomato

12.45 - 14.00 Lunch

Use of P-elements to study *Drosophila* development

Chairman: David Finnegan (University of Edinburgh)

14.00 -14.40 Cahir O'Kane (University of Warwick, Coventry)

RAMBO - temperature-inducible cell ablation in *Drosophila*

14.40 - 15.20 Mark Krasnow (Stanford University Medical Centre, Palo Alto)

Whole animal cell sorting to study *Drosophila* development

15.20 - 16.00 Tea and Trade Exhibition

16.00 - 16.40 Kevin O'Hare (Imperial College, London)

Suppressors of transposable element induced mutations as a way of identifying proteins involved in gene expression

16.40 - 17.20 Kim Kaiser (University of Glasgow)

Site-selected transposon mutagenesis: a reverse genetics approach for *Drosophila melanogaster*

18.30 Dinner

Thursday 19th September

Use of insertional mutagenesis to study mammalian development

Chairman: Mary Bownes (University of Edinburgh)

09.00 - 09.40 Rosa Beddington (Centre for Genome Research, Edinburgh)

Transgenic reporter genes to study early mammalian development

09.40 - 10.20 David Melton (Edinburgh)

The use of gene targeting to study mammalian gene expression and human disease

10.20 - 11.20 Coffee and Trade Exhibition

11.20 - 12.00 Frank Grosveld (NIMR, Mill Hill)
The regulation of the globin domain

12.00 -12.40 John Mullins (Centre for Genome Research, Edinburgh)
Transgenic approaches to the study of the cardiovascular system

12.45 Lunch and end of meeting

SPRING 1992, Sussex: Gastrulation

The 1992 Spring Symposium will be a joint meeting with the **British Society for Cell Biology**. The meeting is being held at Sussex University from **Wednesday 8th April to Friday 10th April**. The main BSDB symposium will be on **Gastrulation** and is organised by Claudio Stern. Speakers will include Lewis Wolpert, Chuck Ettensohn, William Jeffery, J.P. Trinkhaus, Hilde Bortier, Luc Vakaet, Rosa Beddington, Chris Wylie, David McClay, Salome Waelsch, Maria Leptin, Nigel Brown, Rudolf Raff, Jane Dodd, Jonathan Slack, Jim Smith, Kirstie Lawson, Claudio Stern, John Gurdon, Tom Fleming, Anne Warner, Chuck Kimmel,

Robert Ho, Eric Wieschaus.

The main **BSCB symposium**, organised by Peter Rigby and Robb Krumlauf, will be on **Transcription Factors**. In addition, there will be alternative BSDB sessions on Nematode Development (Ian Hope), Teleost Development (Nigel Holder & Peter Thorogood), and BSCB sessions on Cytoskeleton and Tumour Suppressor Genes. A joint BSDB/BSCB session on Signal Transduction is also planned. Provisional speakers for the latter include: Galione (Oxford), Otte (Utrecht), Green (NIMR), Runyan (Iowa), Muller (Heidelberg), Bernstein (Toronto)

AUTUMN 1992, Kingston Polytechnic: The Developmental Basis of Inherited Disorders

The Autumn 1992 Autumn meeting will be held at Kingston Polytechnic from the 10th-12th September. The topic will be The Developmental Basis of Inherited Disorders and the meeting is being organised by Audrey Muggleton-Harris in collaboration with David Whittingham. This meeting will also be used as an opportunity for the BSDB to extend their thanks to Anne McLaren for all she has done for the Society over the years. Speakers at the meeting will include: Readhead (Caltech), Patton (St. George's, London), Johnson

(Cambridge), West (Edinburgh), Hastie (Edinburgh), Tuddenham (Harrow), Rastan (Harrow), Williamson (St. Mary's, London), Winter (Harrow), Griffin (UCL, London), Cattanaach (Harwell), Brown (St. George's, London), Monk (MDU, London), Hooper (Edinburgh), Scrambler (St. Mary's, London), Surani (Cambridge), Goodfellow (ICRF, London), Bolton (King's, London), Whittingham (St. George's, London), Muggleton-Harris (St. George's, London).

OTHER MEETINGS OF INTEREST

WELLCOME / CRC INSTITUTE INAUGURAL SYMPOSIUM

The new Wellcome/CRC Institute for Cancer and Developmental Biology is to mark its opening with a two day Symposium on July 8th & 9th. Speakers are: B. Alberts, D. Baltimore, A. Coleman, M. Dexter, R. Hynes, A. Klug, D. Melton, C. Nüsslein-

Volhard and J. Rossant. There is no registration fee, but prospective participants should write for further details to:

The Chairman, Wellcome/ CRC Institute,
Tennis Court Road, Cambridge, CB2 1QR
Fax: 0223 334089

SOCIETY FOR EXPERIMENTAL BIOLOGY SYMPOSIUM: MOLECULAR BIOLOGY OF MUSCLE

The symposium will be held in the Medical School, Birmingham University, from the 9th to the 12th of September, 1991. The aim of the Symposium is to present and discuss current research relevant to the field of molecular biology of muscle. It will cover a broad range of areas related to the general topic with a special emphasis on striated muscle. The four major sessions will be:

- (1) Transcriptional control of muscle genes
- (2) Myogenic determination
- (3) Development, differentiation and plasticity
- (4) Muscle genes - comparative animal aspects

Invited speakers include:

H. Arnold, P. Amati, P. Barton, H. Blau, H. Ben David, M. Buckingham, Y. Edwards, D. Fischman, M. Fisman, B. Nadal Ginard, G.

Goldspink, S. Haushka, S. Izumo, L. Kedes, M. Mahdavi, D. MacLennan, Y. Nabeshima, M. Nameroff, E. Olsen, B. Paterson, J. C. Perriard, S. Salmons, L. Sastre, K. Schwartz, M. Shani, J. Sparrow, F. Stockdale, W. Wright, D. Yaffe

Registration

Participation will be limited to the first 250 registrants. The closing date for registration is April 30th. Registration forms and further information can be obtained from:

Dr. Alicia J. El Haj,
Animal Molecular Biology Convener,
School of Biological Science,
The University of Birmingham,
Edgbaston,
Birmingham, B15 2TT

THE BIOLOGICAL COUNCIL 7TH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM ON BIOTECHNOLOGY: DNA FINGERPRINTING / PROFILING

A Symposium covering a wide range of subjects, especially the applications of DNA fingerprinting will be held at the Edward Lewis Lecture Theatre, University College and Middlesex School of Medicine, London on the 12th and 13th of December 1991.

Registration

The registration fee is £65 (£20 for senior

graduate students).

Further details and registration forms can be obtained from:

Mrs B. Cavilla,
c/o Institute of Biology,
20, Queensberry Place,
London, SW7 2DZ

CENTRE SECTION

This 'Centre Section' is designed to be removed without damaging the rest of the Newsletter. It contains a form for subscribing to **Development** (below), a membership application form, together with Information for delegates and a booking form for the Lancaster meeting.

Development

Members of the BSDB are entitled to a £10 reduction in the subscription price to **Development**. The cost to non-members is £75 but for members it is only £65. This figure includes two casebound Supplements, one being the proceedings of the forthcoming John Innes symposium on the Molecular and Cellular basis of Pattern Formation and the other being on Developmental Neurobiology, based on the Spring 1991 Symposium in Leeds.

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To: **Development**
Portland Press,
P.O. Box 32,
Commerce Way,
COLCHESTER,
Essex CO2 8HP.
UK.

Please enter my subscription to **Development** for 1991. I undertake not to pass my subscription copies on to a library. I enclose a cheque for £65 made payable to Portland Press Ltd.

Signature.....

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

Other COB Journals, including BioEssays, the Journal of Cell Science and the Journal of Experimental Biology, are also available at reduced rates. JCS is £65, JEB is £55 and BioEssays is only £37. To subscribe, write to the above address with your cheque and a signed undertaking that you will not pass your individual copy on to a library.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Full Name
Title Degree(s)
Professional Address
.....
.....
.....
Post Code
Research interests
.....
.....

I wish to apply for ordinary (£10)/student (£5) membership of the Society (Delete as applicable)

Applications must be supported by two members of the Society, who should sign below:

.....
.....

Please return this form, together with the completed Banker's Order form below to the Secretary: Dr Peter Thorogood, Institute of Dental Surgery, Eastman Dental Hospital, 256 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8LD.

For Society's Use

Received	Acknowledged
Subscription	Mailing list
Elected	Informed

To: The Manager
..... (Bank)
.....
..... (Address)

Please pay to the British Society for Developmental Biology
Account No. 00867675
Barclays Bank Ltd, Oxford Circus Branch (20-64-88)
15 Great Portland St
LONDON W1N 6BX

the sum of £ (pounds) on 1st October, 1990 and on the same day each succeeding year unless this instruction is altered in writing by me.

Signature Account No.
Name Date
Address
.....
.....

REGISTRATION/BOOKING FORM

GENETIC AND DEVELOPMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF INSERTIONAL MUTAGENESIS

A JOINT MEETING OF THE BRITISH SOCIETY FOR DEVELOPMENTAL BIOLOGY
AND THE GENETICAL SOCIETY

UNIVERSITY OF LANCASTER 17-19 SEPTEMBER 1991

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____

REGISTRATION/ACCOMODATION (Please tick relevant boxes)

The registration fee includes attendance at all talks, coffe/tea and biscuits and the wine reception. There is no registration fee for graduate students provided that proof of student status is returned with this form. A small number of rooms will be available for those wishing to stay on in Lancaster on Thursday 19th.

	Tue 17th	Wed 18th	Thu 19th	TOTAL
Registration Fee (Non members) £30	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Registration Fee (Members) £15	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Bed & Breakfast £12.35 per night	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Lunch £5.35	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Evening Meal £8.10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
			TOTAL	

I am a bona fide graduate student (proof of student status eg supervisor's statement enclosed)

tick box ☐

Please indicate any special dietary/mobility requirements: _____

**BOOKING FORMS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY PAYMENT IN FULL,
TO ARRIVE NO LATER THAN MONDAY 26TH AUGUST 1991.**

I enclose a cheque for £_____ made payable to "Dr. A. Shirras Re: BSDB Autumn 91 Conference". I understand that if I cancel my booking, full reimbursement may not be possible.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please complete and return to:

Dr. A. Shirras,
Division of Biological Sciences,
University of Lancaster,
Lancaster LA1 4YQ U.K.

ADVICE TO DELEGATES

The conference will take place on the campus of Lancaster University, approximately 3 miles south of Lancaster city centre on the A6.

Travel Lancaster is situated on the main London Euston to Glasgow railway and is also served by Intercity services from other major centres. A taxi service is situated at the station or a direct bus to the University may be taken from the bus station which is a 10 minute walk from the rail station.

The campus is situated 2 miles north of junction 33 of the M6. Ample car parking is available on the campus.

Accommodation All accommodation is in single rooms in one of the University Colleges which will have its own bar, TV room and lounge area. A small number of rooms will be available for delegates wishing to stay at the University on Thursday 19 September. Those wishing to stay on 19 September are requested to return their booking forms as soon as possible.

Lancaster The city of Lancaster has a selection of pubs and a few, inexpensive restaurants. There is a regular bus service from the campus to the city centre. Items of historical interest include the Castle and nearby 15th century priory, the Ashton memorial, the Maritime Museum on St. George's Quay, the City Museum and the 17th century Judges' Lodging. The Duke's playhouse offers theatre and films and there are two commercial cinemas. To the north of the city, at Carnforth, is Steamtown which houses a collection of British and European steam locomotives. Lancaster is also close to the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales.

Travel Funds Junior members of the society may apply for contributions towards the cost of attending the meeting via the Treasurer (Dr. Liz Jones, University of Warwick).

Booking The booking form must be returned with appropriate remittance by **26 August 1991**. Further details concerning registration and a map of the campus will be sent with confirmation of booking.

BOOK REVIEWS

From Gene to Animal. An Introduction to the molecular biology of animal development. Second edition, December 1990

Cambridge University Press 417 pages £45.00 (hardback); £14.95 (paperback)

The second edition of De Pomerai's book is, as the author himself acknowledges, largely a new book with a rather extensive and up-to-date bibliography in a fast moving field. The book is divided into five chapters; the first two give a general introduction to gene expression during development, while the other three review specific systems including erythroid differentiation and hormonal regulation of gene expression (chapter 3) and development in *C. elegans* and *Drosophila* (chapters 4 & 5). These last two chapters, which include a review of the homoeotic genes in different species, occupy more than half the text. Like its predecessor, this book serves the important function of combining development and molecular biology, and assumes a certain familiarity with both disciplines of the reader.

Because of the many books available which cover molecular genetics and biology, it was appropriate to condense the first three general chapters of the previous edition into the brief overview given in Chapter 1, and take the opportunity of discussing more extensively gene expression in developing systems. In the second chapter, the author deals with gene activity from oogenesis to mesodermal induction and discusses the strategies utilised to originate different cell types during early development, setting the basis for further analysis of these issues in the subsequent chapters. However, no introduction is given to the problems of axial specification and the molecular basis of positional signalling, and any consideration on how gene switches are involved in the organisation of the body plan is left to the final chapter. Although the knowledge of gene function in mammalian development is more limited than in lower animals, I feel that the impor-

tant role played by transgenic techniques in understanding the regulation of mammalian genes should have had a place in this section, rather than being only briefly mentioned at other points. The chapters reviewing specific systems are very informative and as up-to-date as possible. The attempt to convey so much information in a relatively short space, however, sometimes makes the text a little dense and not clearly organised, and consequently difficult to digest.

The book suffers from a shortage of tables and figures with good explanatory legends, and prints of figures taken from the previous edition are sometimes hardly legible. More illustrations and the insertion of summary paragraphs would have helped the reader to go through the increased amount of information and focus better on the questions discussed in each subsection.

Overall, although I found this book very informative, its somewhat dry style failed to elicit much excitement in the progress made towards our understanding of molecular developmental biology or in its future. From this point of view this new edition is less successful than the first. If this book was intended as an introductory undergraduate text in the molecular biology of animal development, it should have given an overview of a wider range of topics in less detail. Although parts of the book will be useful to undergraduates, my feeling is that it will find its niche more among postgraduates and researchers interested in a condensed and rich source of information and bibliography of the specific topics chosen by the author for detailed review.

Patrizia Ferretti
Eastman Dental Hospital, London.

Frontiers in Oral Physiology, volume 8. "Aspects of Oral Molecular Biology" (ed. D.B. Ferguson)

S. Karger AG, Basel 1991. 144 pages, 24 figures, 6 tables £67.40 (hardback)

Even five years ago, this book could not have been produced since the potential of molecular biology techniques for dental research has been recognised and exploited relatively slowly. However, awareness has accelerated recently - driven largely by clinical need - in the detection, diagnosis and treatment of oral disease. Oral cancers collectively are equal to cervical cancer as the fourth most common group of neoplasias and, unlike most other common cancers, are now on the increase with a faster growing incidence in women than in men due to the changing social acceptance of smoking and drinking amongst women. Furthermore, the oral cavity is the location for two of the most common human diseases, dental caries and periodontitis; in the Western world, with increasing oral hygiene, it is not so much dental caries that presents a problem but rather the loss of otherwise intact teeth due to gum disease.

In this context, a volume on the application of molecular technologies to the biology of the oral cavity is to be welcomed. The relevance of this volume to Society members lies in the developmental themes of four of the eight individually authored chapters which deal with the genetic control of dentition, the genetics and protein composition of enamel and the molecular aspects of tooth development. These four chapters provide a complementary cluster of reviews on the tooth, a developmental system which has featured prominently in research on cell / tissue interactions and extracellular matrix. A fifth chapter, on the molecular strategies of detection and diagnosis currently being developed by oral microbiologists, is of general interest and particularly valuable because it puts into perspective the real scale of the problems (for example, the dental

plaque may contain between 300 and 400 different bacterial taxa, making identification of the 10% which may be associated with disease a formidable task). The remaining three chapters - on mucins and salivary proteins generally - whilst of no direct interest to the developmental biologist, provide a comprehensive overview of this very complex array of proteins, many of unknown function, found in saliva.

This book is not designed for undergraduates. It is written by dental researchers for dental researchers and is presumably intended as a timely reference work, bringing together the results of work applying common technologies to diverse problems. One's overall impression is that much "hard-core" molecular biology remains to be done and that the field is in its infancy. At £67.40 for 144 pages, the book is highly priced and most purchases are likely to be institutional rather than personal. Moreover, there has been a clear delay in publication; it was difficult to find many post 1988 references which for a book published in 1991 is unacceptable. Nevertheless, it does provide a first and useful overview of this emerging field and will almost certainly prove to be a useful source book. When any successors are produced, we can expect a much broader coverage, since there are so many other aspects of Oral Biology currently being tackled at the molecular level, such as the development of prognostic indicators for oral cancer, the molecular basis of morphogenesis and dysmorphogenesis, and the differentiation of the range of epithelial domains found within the mouth and oral cavity.

Peter Thorogood
Eastman Dental Hospital, London

MEETING REPORT

BSDB/BSCB/BRA Joint Symposium Leeds, April 1991

It is now more than a couple of years since my brain drained across the English Channel to work in my chosen field of developmental neurobiology, long enough in fact, to begin to miss that type of scientific meeting which is so cosy and British in character. And so it came about that I found myself in my native North of England, in not too miserable-weather, attending the annual Spring Symposium of the Societies, conveniently entitled "Developmental Nerve Cell Biology".

The meeting more or less fulfilled my expectations of a fairly relaxed atmosphere, with good reporting of good science from a proven group of British scientists, with the help of many reliable friends from across the Atlantic, mainland Europe and indeed the rest of the world. Plenary lectures and main sessions were, in general, excellent. The first plenary, given by the wonderfully individual Chuck Kimmel on the control of neural development in Zebra fish was indeed a treat, getting the meeting off to a very good start. The second, given by Peter Goodfellow on sex determination, took me completely by surprise, both in terms of its attention capturing scientific content and its fringe theatre style of delivery, which was probably the most controversial part of the whole meeting. As I was asked to give an account of my personal impressions of the meeting, I will take the liberty of telling you that I do not belong to that camp which wished the table had collapsed or that which took offence at "the only thing that happens (when something goes wrong with sex determination) is that you turn into a woman" line. Rob Krumlauf, who spoke about homeobox genes and patterning of the vertebrate head and nervous system, was no match for the previous two in terms of comedy, but those looking for good,

interesting and important science were not disappointed.

The developmental nerve cell biology main sessions which ran during the mornings, in parallel with sessions on non-neurobiological themes (genetic disease, transcription factors, the biology of leukocyte recognition, intracellular movement and PCR workshop) covered a number of interesting themes from early developmental events, through neuronal morphogenesis, growth cone movements and axon guidance to synaptogenesis, neuronal survival and regeneration. I particularly enjoyed the talks by Steve Heidemann, Muming Poo and Friedrich Bonhoeffer, for their novel approach to important questions (how do growth cones move, how are they guided and what happens during synaptogenesis). Most of the talks during these sessions I found really useful and felt that the speakers were well chosen.

Neurobiologists were spoilt for choice during the afternoon parallel sessions and painful decisions had to be made about which talks to miss out. It is of course a happy situation to have to complain that there were too many interesting speakers rather than too few. I heard later that my major errors were in missing Nick Cowen in the neuronal cytoskeleton session and Kai Zinn in "interaction at the neuronal cell membrane".

The local organisation was efficient, helpful and friendly. The university accommodation was good value and although some people were housed some distance away from the conference centre, the buses provided to ferry participants to and from the talks and social events made this no problem at all.

I have a major complaint about the attitude towards poster presentations. It was stated in the pre-meeting blurb that posters were

encouraged and so I duly submitted an abstract and took along a poster, having guessed the size and keeping my fingers crossed that I would be allotted a presentation space as I received no acknowledgement of receipt of my abstract or details about size and times of poster sessions. Actually, there were no real poster sessions, that is no allotted times (other than lunch and coffee breaks) during which presenters were required to stand by their posters in order that they might answer questions and speak to those interested in their work. Consequently, many people who took along posters, other than those who won the poster prizes, felt

that their efforts had been a waste of time (me included). If it was felt that posters should not take up time during the day, then perhaps combining a poster session with an evening's social activity such as the beer tasting would have been a solution. In this complaints section, I should add that an author index at the back of the abstract book would have been a great help.

In conclusion, I found the meeting as a whole stimulating and enjoyable. There was a good selection of high quality speakers, a lively audience, and, I'm sure, lots of exchange of ideas. Well worth while!

Editor's comment:

The committee have noted the criticisms about the poor organisation of the poster session. We apologise to all those who contributed a poster and assure prospective contributors to future Symposia that every effort will be taken to ensure that this does not occur again.

Joanne Taylor
ETH Zurich
Switzerland.

DEVELOPMENT

TRAVELLING FELLOWSHIPS

The journal is pleased to announce a new travelling fellowship program that is in keeping with the Company of Biologists' commitment to support research scientists.

In 1991 **DEVELOPMENT** is offering

FIVE TRAVELLING FELLOWSHIPS

OF UP TO \$1500 EACH

Graduate and postdoctoral students are invited to apply to the Editors in 1991 for funds to assist travel, and expenses involved in visits to other laboratories.

Applications, which should be accompanied by a curriculum vitae, an account of the work to be done, and a full breakdown of the costs involved, should include a letter of recommendation from the head of the laboratory in which the applicant is presently working and from the head of the laboratory in which the work will be done.

Applications should be sent to C.C. Wylie

The Editors in awarding the Fellowships will be guided by the excellence of the candidates, and the importance, and innovative quality of the work to be done.

BSDB Committee members and other useful addresses

The main function of the BSDB Committee is to organize our meetings, from deciding on appropriate topics to arranging organizers and venues. If you have any ideas as to what will make a good meeting, or a good venue, don't hesitate to let a committee member know. The Officers of the Society have specific functions. Mike Akam (Chairman) keeps us all in order; Peter Thorogood (Secretary) deals with the membership list; Liz Jones (treasurer) handles subscriptions and awards travel grants; Rosa Beddington (Meetings Secretary) does most of the work in arranging meetings and deciding on venues; Philip Ingham (Publications Secretary) assembles this Newsletter and helps edit the Symposium volume. These Officers will be happy to answer any questions relating to their subjects.

Chairman

Michael Akam (1989-1994)
Wellcome / CRC Institute,
Tennis Court Road,
Cambridge, CB2 1QR
Tel. 0223 334088

Secretary

Peter Thorogood (1988-1993)
Institute of Dental Surgery
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256 Grays Inn Road
London WC1X 8LD
Tel: 071 837 3646 ext 2071

Treasurer

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Meetings Secretary

Rosa Beddington (1990-1995)
AFRC Centre for Genome Research
Kings Buildings
West mains Road
Edinburgh EH9 3JQ
Tel: 031668 4541

Publications Secretary

Philip Ingham (1987-1992)
ICRF Developmental Biology Unit
Department of Zoology,
South Parks Road,
Oxford OX1 3PS
Tel: 0865 59977

Graduate Representative:

Emily Gale (1991-1996)
Anatomy and Human Biology Group,
King's College,
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London WC2R 2LS
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Tel: 0603 52571

Jane Davies (1987-1992)
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