

FOREWORD

The Centenary of Parasitology 1908–2008

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The Centenary of a journal is a special occasion and as we are the people in occupation of the editorial seat of *Parasitology* when the journal reached this milestone Les Chappell, Robin Gasser, Liz Painter and I bear the responsibility of marking the occasion in an appropriate way. The journal and its publisher Cambridge University Press have had a close association with the British Society for Parasitology (BSP) since the BSP was established in 1962. It was, therefore, appropriate that part of the celebration should involve the BSP and I am glad to be able to report that we have established two Parasitology Centenary Prizes for the best paper and the best poster for research students at each BSP Spring Meeting. These prizes were awarded for the first time at the 2009 Spring Meeting in Edinburgh.

As a school boy, following an interest in biology, and in a house where my father refused to allow in a television set until his three sons had left home for university, I and my two brothers read and listened to the wireless for our education and entertainment. The Reith Lectures, established in 1948 with the inaugural 'lecture' by Bertrand Russell, were an important annual event on the BBC 'Home Service' (Radio 4). In 1959 the Reith Lectures were given by (Sir) Peter Medawar on 'The future of man' and were recommended listening by one of my biology teachers. I recall little of these lectures beyond that they initiated an interest in immunology. Medawar, of course, in 1960 was awarded the Nobel Prize with McFarlane Burnett for their work on tissue grafts and transplantation. It was my good fortune as an undergraduate later to join the Zoology Department at University College when Medawar was Head of Department and, some years later after completing my Ph.D., he gave me a job at the

National Institute for Medical Research when he was Director.

In his address on receiving his Nobel Prize Medawar said (I paraphrase a little) 'Science grows like an organism. ... if we today see further than our predecessors, it is only because we stand on their shoulders. But this is an occasion on which I should prefer to remember, not the giants upon whose shoulders we stood, but the friends with whom we stood arm in arm'. He recognized an incremental process in science when advance builds on advance. Recently re-reading Medawar's words prompted the thought that we might mark the Centenary of *Parasitology* by asking some old parasitologist friends, with whom we have stood arm in arm, to reflect on how far the young parasitologists of today can see, standing on their broad shoulders, compared with the view when they set out as investigators in their chosen branch of parasitology a generation or more ago.

Hence we have asked colleagues who published some of their early work in *Parasitology* to write a personal reflective piece on how their branch of parasitology has progressed over the past 20 (in some cases many more) years. We had hoped that these contributions would not only be an interesting and exciting read in themselves but they might be instructive to young colleagues at the beginning of their research careers.

It gives me and my editor colleagues great pleasure to note that our authors in the following two dozen papers have done all we asked of them. This Centenary number of *Parasitology* is a unique collection of truly outstanding papers across the range of the branches of parasitology. We thank our friends for accepting our invitation to be part of this Centenary project.