In July, the BFS celebrated its 40th anniversary, and marked the occasion with a reception at the Royal Society of Medicine. The date coincided with the first meeting of the founding Executive Committee (in July 1973), and this also coincided with the start of the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology (ESHRE) 2013 meeting in London, allowing colleagues from ESHRE to attend and join in the celebration.

To help mark the occasion, the BFS invited as many of the past members of the Executive Committee, Executive Officers, Eponymous Lecturers and Honorary Fellows as could be traced. Requests to attend were also invited from current members, who were then selected by ballot to take up the remaining places. In all, 70 people were present, including four Presidents, four Chairmen, five Honorary Secretaries, four Treasurers, five Honorary Fellows and eight Eponymous Lecturers (as recorded in the photographs on pages 2–3).

There were also representatives from many of our sister societies, and from the numerous organisations and charities that the BFS works with on a regular basis. Several of these have sent their best wishes to the BFS (see pages 6–7).

Richard Kennedy, the current BFS President, opened the evening by welcoming guests and outlining the role the BFS continues to play in shaping our professions. Then Allan Pacey, the current Chairman, gave a brief historical account of the first 40 years and some of the major milestones. The highlight of the evening, however, was an address by Victor Lewis, one of the founding members of the BFS and the first Honorary Secretary. He enlightened the audience about the formation of the Society, and the early days with Patrick Steptoe and colleagues.

The BFS has certainly grown from strength to strength. In 1973, the number of members was limited at just 75, but in 1983 it was agreed to make membership open to all, and now the number of members stands at just under 900. Moreover, the membership is now very multidisciplinary, as you can see from the breakdown shown in the chart on page 2, and the fact that the Executive Officers in recent years have included nurses and scientists as well as clinicians.

It seemed fitting to hold the reception at the Royal Society of Medicine, the site of the first meeting of the founding Executive Committee in July 1973. Sadly, we have no formal record of that meeting, and so can only guess at what was discussed. But we are grateful to those visionary individuals who decided to found us. We owe them a great deal.
Forty years of the BFS is a remarkable achievement. But it is perhaps important to recognise that it would not have existed for so long without the dedication and commitment of many people over the years.

Those elected to the Executive Committee, or who serve on the various Sub-committees, are usually in full time employment, and so give up their free time, holidays and study leave to work for the BFS in addition to their day-to-day jobs. Being involved with the BFS is not just CV fodder. It involves attending meetings, writing papers, and planning all kinds of activities on behalf of members.

Those who have been involved over the years will know how often they have burnt the midnight (or early morning) oil to keep on top of the many emails and documents that need to be read and answered. Meetings of the Executive Committee are all-day affairs (four times per year), and for those with responsibility for Subcommittees, there are even more.

Whilst the BFS now employs a professional secretariat (Bioscientifica) to handle the day-to-day matters of membership, conference organisation, the website and press activities, the pace of modern life means that other jobs are quick to fill the void. Indeed, it is hard to imagine how any organisation was able to function before email; the BFS is just the same.

As we enter our next 40 years, it is difficult to predict the challenges that we will face as a specialty, but I would like to think the BFS will remain as active as ever in helping to craft, shape, lobby, educate and inform. But that will only be possible with new blood and enthusiasm from our members.

If you would like to get involved, please let us know.

Allan Pacey  BFS Chairman

These photographs were taken at the reception to mark the 40th anniversary of the BFS, which was held at the Royal Society of Medicine, London, in July 2013

BFS HONORARY PRESIDENTS
(L–R) IAN COOKE, HOWARD JACOBS, RICHARD KENNEDY AND PETER BRINSDEN

BFS CHAIRMEN
(L–R) ALLAN PACEY, HOWARD JACOBS, IAN COOKE AND MARK HAMILTON
Fertility nursing – the past 40 years

Fertility nursing has evolved as a specialist role. This has taken place most significantly since in vitro fertilisation became an established treatment for infertility although, prior to this, some nurses were already working in the extremely small number of infertility clinics, which were mostly in the private sector.

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) Fertility Nurses Group (now Fertility Nursing Forum) was established in 1987, as the growing number of nurses in the field were undertaking extended roles in a clinically, scientifically and ethically controversial area which needed formal training programmes and guidance on nursing practice. Through the Fertility Nurses Group, nurses were also involved in briefing Members of Parliament during the passage of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill, as we strongly supported the need for regulation in the fertility sector. Our political role continues, and the RCN Fertility Nursing Forum recently argued for the retention of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority as an independent regulator.

Fertility nurses are the lynchpin in many clinics, where their roles include co-ordinating and managing services. Clinical practice has developed to encompass intrauterine insemination, sonography and embryo transfers, and a few nurses are undertaking oocyte retrievals. For the future, we need to build on the education and training programmes for fertility nursing and also extend our collaboration with nurses and midwives in primary care, women’s health, oncology and maternity services, to support patients with infertility and gamete donors through all the aspects and stages of the infertility treatment pathways.

The BFS has nurtured the development of the multidisciplinary teams that are so essential to the delivery of high standard fertility services, by embracing all the disciplines in the membership of the Society. Nurses have contributed to the Society in many ways, not least in executive roles and through the journal Human Fertility. We believe that this strong bond provides vital professional support and an example of multidisciplinary working at its most effective, to achieve what is at the heart of all we do – to aim to provide the highest possible standards of care in infertility services.

Jane Denton
During the past 40 years, the BFS has awarded Honorary Fellowship to 26 people who have made significant contributions to reproductive medicine. Here, we include short biographies of the individuals who have received this honour.

**Professor Alain Audebert**
Alain Audebert is a French laparoscopic surgeon from Bordeaux, who organised a joint meeting with the BFS and the French Fertility Society in 1980. He is a member of the Editorial Board of *Journal of Endometriosis and Pelvic Pain Disorders*.

**Professor Samuel Behrman (1920–2009)**
Born and educated in South Africa, Samuel Behrman later moved to Belfast, London and then the University of Michigan. He was one of the first to use laparoscopy in the USA and is internationally recognised for research in sperm cryopreservation, immunology of infertility and pelvic endoscopy.

**Professor Ivo Brosens**
Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the Catholic University of Leuven, Ivo Brosens’ interests include microsurgery and endometriosis. He was responsible for the first successful IVF baby in Belgium, and in 1977 organised a meeting of BFS members in Louvain.

**Professor Geoffrey Chamberlain**
Geoffrey Chamberlain was Professor of Obstetrics at St George’s Hospital Medical Centre. He is a former President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) and past Editor of *British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*.

**Dr Jean Cohen (1929–2007)**
A founder member of the BFS and past Chairman of the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology (ESHRE), Jean Cohen was a pioneer of IVF services in France. He served as a medical expert for new drugs appointed by the French Health Ministry and was a member of the International Federation of Fertility Societies (Iffs) Expert Group on fertility drugs and ovarian cancer.

**Professor Ian Cooke**
Originally from Australia, Ian Cooke worked in London and Aberdeen before taking the Chair of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the University of Sheffield from 1972 to 2000. He worked with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and was an inaugural member of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA). He was Chairman of the BFS from 1996 to 1999 and President from 2001 to 2004.

**Ms Elizabeth Corrigan**
Elizabeth Corrigan joined the BFS in 1987. In 1990, she became the first nurse representative on the BFS Executive Committee. She was also Chair of the Paramedical Group of ESHRE and continued to inspire fertility nurses throughout Europe whilst running a highly successful unit in Bristol.

**Mrs Jane Denton**
A founder member of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) Fertility Nurses Group, Jane Denton has been involved with the assessment of fertility nurses’ professional needs, publishing standards of care and setting up the first training courses and conferences. She was appointed to the HFEA in 1993 and awarded a Fellowship by the RCN in 2006 and a CBE in 2007.

**Dame Mary Donaldson (1921–2003)**
The first (and so far only) female Lord Mayor of London, Mary Donaldson had considerable experience in local government. She became Chair of the Interim Licensing Authority (the forerunner of the HFEA) from 1985 to 1991.

**Professor Robert Edwards (1925–2013)**
Robert Edwards worked with Patrick Steptoe on the development of IVF, for which he was awarded the Albert Lasker Clinical Medical Research Award in 2001 and the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 2010. He was the second President of the BFS from 1998 to 1992, a founder member of ESHRE and the founding Editor of *Human Reproduction*.

**Professor Johannes Evers**
Hans Evers is author of over 250 original articles on endometriosis, clinical infertility, reproductive surgery, and epidemiology of infertility. He is Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Human Reproduction*, and past Chairman of ESHRE, the Dutch National Committee on Research in Human Subjects and the World Endometriosis Society.

**Professor Hans Frangenheim (1920-2001)**
Hans Frangenheim was Head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in the Krankenanstalten in Konstanz, Germany, from 1950 to 1983, and was a major force in advancing the technique of laparoscopy and developing many of the technical advances. In 1958, he produced an influential colour film of gynaecologic laparoscopic surgery which had global influence. He was organiser of a BFS meeting in Konstanz in 1976.
Professor Roger Gosden
Roger Gosden worked with Robert Edwards and David Baird and developed the science of ovarian tissue cryopreservation and in vitro oocyte maturation. He was the inaugural Professor of Reproductive Biology at the University of Leeds in 1994 before moving to North America in 1998.

Professor Robert Harrison

Ms Jennifer Hunt
Founding Chair of the British Infertility Counselling Association (BICA), Jennifer Hunt has served on the Executive Committee of the BFS, the National Gamete Donation Trust, UK DonorLink’s Advisory Group, the National Accreditation Board for Infertility Counselling and the Project Group on Assisted Reproduction (Progar).

Professor Howard S Jacobs
Formerly Professor of Reproductive Endocrinology at the University College and Middlesex School of Medicine, Howard Jacobs is a previous Chairman and President of the BFS. He has also been President of the Endocrine Section of the Royal Society of Medicine and served for 15 years as a member of the Committee on the Safety of Medicines.

Professor Howard Jones Jnr
A surgeon at the John Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore, MD, USA, Howard Jones retired in 1978, and was responsible for establishing in 1980 the first IVF programme in the USA. He has been the recipient of many honours and awards, including a RCOG Fellowship ad Eundem in 1986.

Professor Henry Leese
Henry Leese worked at the University of York for many years at the forefront of embryo metabolism, and has transformed our understanding of the nutritional requirements of the early embryo. He oversaw the development of the BFS journal Human Fertility and remains Editor-in-Chief.

Professor Anne McLaren (1927–2007)
Anne McLaren was author of more than 300 papers in addition to classic textbooks on Mammalian Chimaeras (1976) and Germ Cells and Soma (1981). She was a member of the Warnock Committee, which produced the White Paper that played a major role in the passage of the 1987 Family Law Reform Act and the 1990 Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act. She served as BFS President between 1995 and 1999.

Professor Lilo Mettler
Past President of the German Society of Reproductive Medicine and Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Kiel University, Lilo Mettler has written over 700 papers, 20 books and 4 textbooks. She was awarded Honorary Fellowship of the IFFS in 2004.

Professor John Newton
John Newton was present at the very first BFS planning meeting and then served as Secretary from 1990 to 1995. As Secretary, he organised the campaign ‘every member to recruit a new member’ which doubled the Society’s size. Over the course of his career he worked with the WHO, the RCOG and the International Planned Parenthood Federation before retiring in 2012.

Sir George Pinker (1924–2007)
In March 1973 he became the youngest man to hold the post of Surgeon-Gynaecologist to the Queen, attending nine royal births. He was made a Commander of the Royal Victorian Order in 1983 and a Knight Commander upon his retirement in 1990. He gave his full backing to the emerging treatment of IVF and in 1987 was appointed BFS President.

Mr Herbert Erik Reiss (1922–2005)
A founding member of the BFS, who became Chairman in 1986, he was amongst the first in the UK to use and introduce amniocentesis, ultrasound and laparoscopy. He continued to contribute to the BFS and his field for many years after his retirement.

Professor Marcel Renaer (d. 2006)
Marcel Renaer was central to the development of research programmes in perinatal mortality, chronic pelvic pain, pre-eclampsia and gestational diabetes. His clinical and scientific acumen was internationally recognised by his election as an Honorary Fellow of the RCOG.

Professor Markku Seppala
Markku Seppala is a Finnish obstetrician and gynaecologist, whose research interests include ovarian and placental proteins closely related to fertility and infertility problems. He was organiser of the 3rd World Congress in IVF in Helsinki in 1984.

Professor Kurt Swolin
A Swedish obstetrician and gynaecologist from Gothenburg, Kurt Swolin was the first Honorary Fellow of the BFS, which was awarded at the first clinical meeting in March 1974. He received an RCOG Fellowship ad Eundem in 1988.

A full list of Honorary Fellows is maintained at www.fertility.org.uk/about/honorary.html, along with details of the nomination process.
Anniversary greetings

The BFS has received many congratulatory messages on its 40th anniversary, from friends and colleagues in other societies and organisations with whom we work so closely. Below is a summary of these, which are very gratifying.

“The British Infertility Counselling Association (BICA) is delighted to congratulate the BFS on 40 years of advancing policy, practice and research in the field of infertility and reproductive medicine. When the Society extended its membership to include non-medical personnel in the 1980s, it recognised the importance of a multidisciplinary approach to fertility issues, an approach that has gone from strength to strength over the years, culminating in the Society holding a pivotal place of influence and impact within the field. BICA has valued the on-going support of the BFS in numerous endeavours, not least the development of the Infertility Counselling Award (now BICA Accreditation). We have welcomed the opportunity to contribute to and collaborate about psychosocial aspects of reproductive medicine within the BFS’s productive committees and working groups. BICA looks forward to the continuation of this close association and wishes the BFS well as it progresses high quality science and practice well into the 21st century.’

Ruth Wilde, Chair, BICA

‘The BFS has played a vital role in providing professional leadership to the fertility sector over the years. The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) would like to extend its congratulations to the BFS in celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, and looks forward to continuing to work together on the challenges ahead.’

Peter Thompson, Chief Executive, HFEA

On behalf of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM), on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the BFS, I would like to congratulate the Society’s members and leadership, past and present, and express our appreciation for their achievements. In our lifetimes, we have seen revolutionary changes in our understanding of the fundamentals of reproductive science. And the expansion of medical techniques and treatments based on this understanding has enabled us to provide essential care to millions of patients, improving their health and lives. In addition, we note that our British colleagues have always been at the forefront in considering the ethical and social questions raised by innovations in reproductive medicine. Their work has informed our own thinking on these issues and influences medical, legal, and government professionals worldwide. The importance of the contributions made by British physicians and scientists to basic science and to medicine cannot be overstated. Your work has provided a foundation for researchers and clinicians across the globe.’

Linda Giudice, ASRM President

The photographs on these pages are taken from the archives and celebrate the 40-year history of the BFS.
The BFS Study Week took place in London on 10–14 June 2013. After a year of preparation and on-going commitment from members of the BFS Training Subcommittee, the delegates entered the Copthorne Tara Hotel, ready for what was to be an excellent week of presentations and workshops.

This year saw the launch of the Male Fertility 2-day course, as the culmination of the hard work of Kevin McEleny. Like all the other study days, it received exceptional feedback from the attendees, feedback that has secured it a well-earned place in the BFS Study Week for 2014.

It is amazing to reflect on where the BFS has come as a society, as it celebrates its 40th anniversary. The BFS now organises a Study Week that incorporates courses on pelvic ultrasound, embryo transfer and intrauterine insemination, running an effective fertility service and, now, male fertility. These courses have facilitated the education of the entire multidisciplinary team working within the field of reproductive medicine. As the current Chairperson of the Training Subcommittee, I am very proud to have played a small part in creating this legacy.

The Subcommittee is now preparing for the 2014 Study Week, once again in London. Any suggestions are welcomed from the membership regarding future developments/training needs.

In light of this, the BFS would like to thank members of the Training Subcommittee, past and present, for their hard work and commitment. Thanks are also due to the speakers and chairs, without whose time and expertise the study days would never happen. The BFS is extremely grateful to the sponsors for their continued support, and looks forward to inviting them to provide support in 2014 and well into the future.

Access to education and training is essential, and the BFS is delighted to be able to continue to develop the existing courses and to consider new training needs, to educate the next generation of health professionals working in the diverse and challenging field of reproductive medicine.

The BFS hopes that as many of you as possible will attend the 2014 Study Week in London. For details, please see www.fertility.org.uk/meetings.

Karen Woodcock
Chair, BFS Training Subcommittee
The ‘Steel City’ welcomes the BFS in 2014

Sixteen years since the BFS held its last annual meeting in Sheffield, the Society is set to return on 8–9 January 2014.

Following the tradition of holding the our stand alone meeting back-to-back with that of the Association of Clinical Embryologists, it will be held at the Mercure St Paul’s Hotel in the centre of Sheffield. This is an ideal venue, just 5 minutes’ walk from the railway station and adjacent to the fabulous Winter Gardens and the northern outpost of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The theme of the meeting is ‘Effective nutrition from conception to adulthood’ and the Meetings Subcommittee, ably chaired by Valentine Akande (Bristol), has assembled a comprehensive programme of speakers. These include Professor Robert Norman (Adelaide, Australia), who will give the HS Jacobs President’s Lecture.

As always, sessions will provide something of interest to the full breadth of our membership, with update sessions, poster presentations and free communications for those who have submitted an abstract. For further details, see www.fertility.org.uk/meetings/2014/annual2014.

We look forward to welcoming you to Sheffield in January – we hope you can join us.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2014

The 2014 AGM of the BFS will take place on Thursday 9 January 2014 at 13.10–14.00 in the Mercure Sheffield St Paul’s Hotel, 119 Norfolk Street, Sheffield S1 2JE.

All members are welcome to attend. This is a chance to consider the proposed strategies for the forthcoming year as well as to reflect on recent BFS activities. A full financial report will also be tabled. Any members wishing to have their apologies noted should contact the BFS office at bfs@bioscientifica.com by 24 December 2013.

Travel grant deadlines

Please remember to submit your applications for travel grants by the following dates.

Subfertility and Reproductive Endocrinology and Assisted Conception 1 January 2014

BFS Study Week (EFS, ET/UI, PU, MF) 1 April 2014

Fertility 2015 1 September 2014

BFS dates for your diary

Contact the BFS office for further information, unless indicated otherwise.

BFS Annual Meeting 2014
Sheffield, UK, 8–9 January 2014
www.fertility.org.uk/meetings/2014/annual2014

BFS Master Class in Reproductive Surgery 2014
Sheffield, UK, 10 January 2014
www.fertility.org.uk/meetings

Subfertility and Reproductive Endocrinology and Assisted Conception
London, UK, 31 March – 4 April 2014
www.rcog.org.uk/events/subfertility-and-reproductive-endocrinology-course-and-assisted-conception-theoretical-course (contact: Sarah Monro, smonro@rcog.org.uk)

BFS 2014 Study Week
London, UK
Pelvic Ultrasound Study Days 2–3 June 2014
Embryo Transfer and IUI Study Day 4 June 2014
Effective Fertility Services Study Days 5–6 June 2014
Male Fertility Study Days 5–6 June 2014
www.fertility.org.uk/meetings