



# YORK MEDICAL SOCIETY

## MINUTES OF MEETING OF YORK MEDICAL SOCIETY Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021

1. Presidents welcome
2. Minutes of the previous meeting
3. Apologies: None
4. New members: None
5. Resignations: Shona Gilleghan, Sam Borin, Paul O'Higgins
6. Deaths: Dr Owen Wetherell, Mrs Diana Price, Dr R F Stark
7. Guest speakers: – Prof. James Drife – Born in Yorkshire: Bob Edwards and IVF

This meeting was all held virtually on Zoom, with Sarah Anderson co-ordinating the IT.

Jim spoke about Professor Robert Edwards the founder of IVF and therefore all infertility services. His work gained him a Nobel Prize and subsequently a knighthood.

Robert came from humble beginnings in Yorkshire, attained a Zoology degree and a PhD from the Institute of Animal Genetics and became fascinated by cell division, chromosome pairing and replication. Knowledge of this was then in its infancy. His career progressed, eventually ending in Cambridge.

Robert's interest moved from animals to humans. He mapped out the maturation of eggs within the ovary.

He was working in a time when there was no medical appetite or interest in infertility problems; it was post war and most funding went towards contraception research.

Joining forces with Patrick Steptoe who was an Obstetrician and Gynaecologist from Oldham and the first to develop laparoscopic procedures in the UK; they shared an interest in infertility. The 3<sup>rd</sup>, and often unrecognised, member of their team was embryologist Jean Purdy.

Their paper, published in 1967, suggesting the usefulness of invitro fertilisation, was slated by the BMJ and the press due to ethical concerns. Further funding was turned down.

“7 years in the wilderness” followed with only the hopes of infertile women and some philanthropic funding keeping the research going.

The project finally succeeded on 28<sup>th</sup> July 1978 when the first IVF baby was born, Louise Brown.

From this point, worldwide infertility research and treatment escalated.

In 1980, the 3 opened Bourn Hall as the first infertility centre, which has subsequently assisted in the conception of 10,000 babies.

Robert latterly developed dementia in 2007 and died 2013.

8. Vote of Thanks: David Pring gave the vote of thanks

9. Any other business:

10. Date of Next Meetings:

Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> January – YMS New Year Dinner

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January – Prof Edgar Jones – *Demob Happy – The Reality for the Returning Soldier*

Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February – Miss Catherine Boffa – *Current Trends in Transplant Surgery*

Meeting attended by 56

Minutes taken by Judith Evans