My Life with Eggs: Forty Years On
A personal history of the IFRG 1975 – 2015
Nick French

“... and at least gives someone else a chance to be the last to leave the bar”
Glenn Baggott 2012
Thanks to the organisers....
Why Am I Giving This Talk?

- 1980
- 6th Meeting of IRG
- University of Bath
- Dr Ron Board organiser
- My first paper

WATER LOSS IN WILDFOWL EGGS.
N.A. French

Measurements of water loss were obtained from infertile eggs of 21 species of wildfowl, and the calculated water vapour conductances (G_H2O, in units of mg.day-1.torr-1) for these species were reported. The mean G_H2O for all 21 species is 14.53 ± 9.82 mg.day-1.torr-1. The observed G_H2O coefficient of conductance (K) and the allometric relationship between G_H2O and fresh egg weight did not differ significantly from previous studies.

The humidity of the nest was estimated from measurements of G_H2O in the literature of 54 species of wildfowl, assuming a 15% weight loss during incubation. Nest relative humidities (%) at 37°C were found to vary between 0% to 60%, with a mean of 38%
Why am I Giving This Talk?
Why am I Giving This Talk?

Lincoln 2005: “Eggs and Me: A Personal History of the IFRG”
Birth of the IRG

Harry Lundy (Roslin)

Proposed forming Incubation Research Group (IRG) in 1975

First meeting at University of Bath in 1976
1976 Meeting of IRG

- University of Bath
- Organiser Dr Ron Board
- 22 delegates
- 10 Papers
1976 Meeting of IRG

- Frost damage to Mallard Eggs
- Gas permeability & heart rate
- Water & Ca\(^+\) across chorioallantois
- Incubation temperature, behaviour & physiology
- Monitoring the nest environment
- Water vapour conductance of poultry eggs
- The avian eggshell: a mediating boundary
- Egg storage & early embryo development
- Changes in eggshell during incubation
- Hatch of Quail eggs on different tray liners
1976 Meeting of IRG

- Ken Laughlin (3 papers) - PRC
- Christine Mather - PRC
- Ken Simkiss - Reading
- Paul Howey - Bath
- Gill Bond - Bath
- Steve Tullett - Bath
- E Ockleford – Cambridge
- D Cooper - Houghton
The Dutch Connection

- A H J Visschedijk attends 1976 IRG Meeting
The Dutch Connection

- A H J Visschedijk attends 1976 IRG Meeting
- Dutch representation at all IRG & IFRG meetings since
- Marleen 2001
Meanwhile.......
It Gets Personal!

Join University of Bath in 1979 as Postgraduate Student under the supervision of Dr Ron Board.

Ron and I organise the 1980 meeting of IRG at Bath.
First Appearances

Dr Glenn Baggott
1982 RVC, London

Poster: “Effects of cooling on acid base balance”
First Appearances

Dr Charles Deeming
1983 Bath

Paper: “Biology of Unturned Eggs”
Milestones

In 1986 abstracts from IRG published in International Hatchery Practice for first time
More Milestones

In 1995 the IRG expands to become the Incubation and Fertility Research Group at the suggestion of Graham Wishart.
More Milestones

In 1995 the IRG expands to become the Incubation and Fertility Research Group at the suggestion of Graham Wishart.

Murray Bakst first attends 1999
More Milestones

In 1998 the IFRG becomes associated with the World’s Poultry Science Association as the European Branches’ Working Group 6.

Provides WPSA funding for invited speakers.
More Milestones

In 1999, the IFRG has its first non-UK meeting in Tours, France

*International Conference on Bird Reproduction*
More Milestones

In 2000 abstracts also published in Avian and Poultry Biology Reviews
More Milestones

Glenn Baggott develops the IFRG Website
- 246 hits / month
More Milestones

- Edinburgh
- Bath
- Edinburgh
- London
- Martin Mere
- Bath
- Edinburgh
- London
- Bath
- Tarporley
- Slimbridge
- London
- Reading
- Fordingbridge
- Newport
- Slimbridge
- London
- Ayr
- Warwick
- Warwick
- Warwick
- Ayr
- Warwick
- Tours, France
- Oxford
- Lincoln
- Lincoln
- Lincoln
- Lincoln
- Edinburgh
- London
- Norwich
- 2010 …..
More Milestones

- 2010 – IFRG becomes non-UK based
- Return to Tours, France
More Milestones

2011 – first organise IFRG meeting to co-ordinate with the Workshop on "Fundamental Physiology and Perinatal Development"
IFRG Has Changed

1980's
- Germany
- Israel
- Mauritius
- Netherlands
- UK
- USA

1990's
- Belgium
- Czech
- Denmark
- Egypt
- France
- Germany
- Israel
- Italy
- Morocco
- Netherlands
- S Africa
- Singapore
- Sweden
- Turkey
- UAE
- UK
- USA

2000's
- Australia
- Belgium
- Canada
- Czech
- Egypt
- France
- Germany
- Israel
- Italy
- Morocco
- Netherlands
- S Africa
- Singapore
- Sweden
- Turkey
- UAE
- UK
- USA

2010's
- Australia
- Brazil
- Canada
- Czech
- Egypt
- France
- Germany
- Iran
- Israel
- Italy
- Netherlands
- Poland
- S Africa
- Sweden
- Turkey
- UK
- USA
Number of IFRG Papers

\[ y = 0.4561x - 895.11 \]
Number of papers with “incubat*” or “hatch*” in title

Year


# of Papers

0 5 10 15 20 25 30
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Institutions

- Tel-Aviv
- Royal Vet College
- Milan
- Abertay
- Ankara
- Lincoln
- Berlin
- Piza
- INRA
- Birkbeck
- Hatch Tech/Wageningen/Spelderholt
- B.U.T./Aviagen
- Scottish Ag College
- Leuven

# Papers
Prizes

Most information over 25 years

*Dr Charles Deeming*
Prizes

Most surreal paper 1982

“Eggs and Art”
Dr Colin Dawes
Prizes

Most eye-opening paper

“Sex Toys for Falcons”

*Dr Nick Fox*
Prizes

Most eye-opening paper

“Sex Toys for Falcons”

Dr Nick Fox
AFTER 32 YEARS ATTENDING IFRG.....
Pisa 2012
How can we stop Nick drinking all the beer?
BUT DESPITE MY ABSENCE....
Lunteren, 2014
What Does Our History Tell Us?

- Incubation and fertility research are topics of growing interest, both academically and commercially.
- A group that combines the academic and commercial aspects can be very successful.
- Pretty locations attract more delegates.
- Enthusiasm makes good meetings.
- The next generation needs to take the IFGR forward.
The Future?

... it is your to make
Thank You