

## Clive Peckar, FRCS, FRCOphth



withdrawn from the market. We would like to remind our readers that there are many excellent hydrophilic IOLs, currently being used worldwide with a long track record of clarity and biocompatibility.

On the subject of IOL design and biocompatibility, I was very happy and honoured to attend the recent surprise party for David Apple, during the AAO in Chicago, to honour David's 25 years as head of his laboratory. All cataract surgeons owe a huge debt to David for the groundbreaking research he and his "Apple Korps" have carried out, over the last 25 years. The understanding of the mechanics of IOL haptics, the biocompatibility of IOL materials and the mechanism of lens epithelial cell migration, all of which have led directly to the development of modern IOLs, would never have been possible without his unique contribution. It was a real pleasure to see David well and strong to enjoy this celebration with all his friends and colleagues.

As this is my last editorial of 2005 I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our readers Best Wishes for a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year. Next year will be the Tenth Anniversary of *EuroTimes* and I would personally like to thank all the staff at our offices in Dublin for all their hard work in publishing this magazine and organising our Scientific Meetings .

The content of *EuroTimes* has expanded greatly over the last five years and this year has seen us publish in-depth issues on phakic IOLs, glaucoma, and 'dry eye & allergy'. This issue brings our readers up-to-date on the new and exciting treatments emerging for macular disease. This issue also celebrates the new collaboration between the ESCRS and the European Society of Retina Specialists (EURETINA). Although the Societies remain independent EURETINA and its annual meeting will be administered by the ESCRS from its offices in Dublin. We welcome the guest editorial in this issue by Bill Alyward (Moorfields Eye Hospital in London) as the first of many contributions to the magazine from our vitreo-retinal colleagues.

In our October edition of *EuroTimes* we highlighted the winning cataract poster, from our Lisbon meeting, which dealt with the mechanism and pathology of calcification in 'Hydroview' IOLs. In this report we did not point out that all the IOLs studied were these specific lenses which, together with some other materials, have already been

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When Lord Kelvin, President of the Royal Society, stated in 1895 that "Heavier-than-air flying machines are impossible.", he could hardly have believed that his prediction would be proven wrong a mere 8 years later at Kittyhawk. Similarly, the idea of a special edition of *EuroTimes* devoted to Treatments for Macular Disease would have been laughable even a decade ago, and yet here it is, an edition containing 19 articles on the subject. The range and novelty of the treatment options described is encouraging, particularly in the field of age related macular degeneration, a disease for which good treatments have been sadly lacking in the past.

We are privileged to be working during a period when so many exciting therapies are emerging for such a common, devastating and debilitating condition. Many of these therapies are the fruit of years of research based on countering choroidal neovascularisation, mainly by antagonising VEGF. Some of the results of early trials, particularly for ranibizumab, are very encouraging.

Another interesting concept described in this issue is that of combination treatment. Our colleagues in oncology have long understood, and exploited, the value

of a cocktail of drugs acting synergistically to produce an effect greater than the sum of its parts. In the same way, the best results in ARMD are likely to be achieved using a multi-pronged attack. PDT combined with triamcinolone or squalamine lactate is therefore a logical approach, with promising initial results, as described in this issue. Excellent results have also been produced with surgery, with evidence of improving techniques and reducing complications. Retinal rotation is becoming more refined, with shorter operating times, and new approaches, such as RPE translocation, are being investigated.

However, there is much work left to do in macular therapeutics. Promising benefits found in uncontrolled series often diminish, or disappear in randomised trials. We must remember that patient satisfaction is a vital part of assessment of success in macular treatment, and that there is a difference between a treatment effect and an effective treatment. Patients may benefit from a therapy which reduces the risk of severe visual loss, but what most of them really want is to be able to read again. The sheer wealth of treatments becoming available will make selection of therapy challenging, hence a need for clear guidelines. Most of the new drugs will be expensive, and their use will present a challenge to health care systems in all countries.

The concentration of retinal articles in this issue also marks the important announcement of a new association between the ESCRS and EURETINA, the European Society of Retinal Specialists. EURETINA was founded in 2000, but has grown rapidly, with over 800 delegates attending the Barcelona meeting in May. This strategic alliance will bring many benefits to both organisations, and cements the position of EURETINA as the premiere retinal society in Europe.