

PR022

BOURN HALL CELEBRATES 30 YEARS OF FERTILITY TREATMENT

Louise Brown, the world's first 'test-tube' baby, joined IVF pioneer and Bourn Hall Clinic co-founder Robert Edwards to celebrate 30 years of IVF. Recent statistics show that more than three million IVF¹ babies have been born worldwide since the miraculous birth of Louise Brown on 25th July 1978.



Louise and Professor Edwards planted an Indian Bean tree in the grounds of Bourn Hall, the first clinic in the world to offer IVF to infertile couples. Accompanying them were Andrew Steptoe, son of the late Patrick Steptoe, Alistair Macdonald the first male baby and Bourn Hall 'babies' representing each of the years since Louise's birth in July 1978.

¹ European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology (ESHRE) 2006

A chance meeting at the Royal Society 1968 started the ground-breaking collaboration between Patrick Steptoe, a gynaecologic surgeon, and Robert Edwards, a Cambridge University physiologist. Often working in the face of considerable controversy and criticism, their tireless research made medical history by creating the first ever embryos *in vitro* and culminated in the birth of Louise Brown, the first baby to be conceived using in-vitro fertilisation, at Oldham Hospital in Manchester in 1978.

Despite this remarkable achievement, the NHS and academic establishments initially refused to support their work. Undeterred, Steptoe and Edwards bought Jacobean manor house Bourn Hall to house a clinic in which to continue their work to improve the techniques and develop the drugs which now offer hope to thousands of couples. Since the clinic opened, more than 10,000 babies have been conceived there through IVF.

Lesley Brown is now a grandmother. Louise and her husband Wesley Mullinder have a son Cameron born in 2006, and her daughter Natalie, also an IVF baby, has two children Casey and Chris. All conceived naturally.

Professor Edwards, who, at 82, feels incredibly lucky to have five daughters and 11 grandchildren, believes there is nothing more important in life than having children. He is proud to have helped so many couples achieve their dream.

For more information go to www.bourn-hall-clinic.co.uk

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About Bourn Hall Clinic

Bourn Hall Clinic, the world's first and best known assisted conception clinic, was established in 1980 by Patrick Steptoe and Robert Edwards, the pioneers of IVF. Through innovative thinking the clinic maintains a leading role in the field.

Bourn Hall Clinic is an operating division of Bourn Hall Limited, and is located at Bourn Hall, Bourn, Cambridge, CB23 2TN, UK

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