

## NEWS & EVENTS

### News

#### Society for Longitudinal and Life Course Studies (SLLS)

At the Longview October 2009 conference in Clare College, Cambridge, it was agreed to establish a learned society, the international Society for Longitudinal and Life Course Studies (SLLS). An Interim Committee was established to develop a constitution for the Society, make arrangements for the election of the first Executive Committee and plan the Society's first conference and first Annual General Meeting, where the Society will be formally established.

The election took place in March and attracted great interest, with two candidates each for the President and Secretary of the Society and one for Treasurer, and twenty five nominations for the six Ordinary Member places on the Committee. Details of candidates are available on the Society website:

[www.longstudies.longviewuk.com](http://www.longstudies.longviewuk.com)

The results of the election were:

President: **Heather Joshi**, *Institute of Education, UK*

Secretary: **Elizabeth Webb**, *Imperial College London, UK*

Treasurer: **Tom Jupp**, *Institute of Education, UK*

Ordinary Members: **Elizabeth Cooksey**, Ohio State University, USA; **Amanda Sacker**, University of Essex, UK; **David Blane**, Imperial College London, UK; **Ingrid Schoon**, Institute of Education, UK; **Walter Heinz**, University of Bremen, Germany; **Paul Boyle**, University of St. Andrews, UK.

The first meeting of the Executive Committee will take place on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2010.

#### Annual SLLS Conference

With the support of EUCCONET, The European Network for New Birth Cohort Studies, the Society's first conference will be held in Clare College Cambridge, with up to 150 participants expected. The conference will take place in the Gillespie Conference Centre, running from the evening of 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> September. A programme is being constructed comprising keynote speeches, individual papers and symposia and posters. There will also be opportunities for member convened meetings and official meetings such as the Society's first AGM and a meeting of the EUCCONET Executive Committee. The second Call for Papers took place on 5<sup>th</sup> April with the closing date for

submissions of 21<sup>st</sup> May 2010. A form for the electronic submission of abstracts is available at <http://www.longstudies.longviewuk.com>

The conference promises to be a historic event for the Society and for the field of life course and longitudinal research so make sure you apply in good time, with or without a proposal.

#### EUCCONET

The **European Child Cohort Network** is now up and running. It is a Research Networking Programme, financed by the [European Science Foundation](http://www.european-science-foundation.org), for five years until 2013, with a secretariat based at INED (National Demographic Institute), Paris. The Millennium Cohort Study and the French child cohort study (ELFE) are founder members. The aim is to create a specific forum for the longitudinal study of children so as to exchange best practices on the management and organisation of longitudinal studies, but also on the analysis of collected data and their impact. The Network already gathers scientists involved in major national child and birth cohort studies in Europe, including Norway, Denmark, Netherlands and Germany. British cohorts include ALSPAC (based in Bristol), Born in Bradford (BiB) and Growing Up in Scotland (GUS) as well as the Millennium Cohort. The Network's intention is to expand to anyone who can share or use knowledge on these subjects, within and beyond Europe. This includes the readers of the CLS Newsletter 'Kohort'

[www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/kohort.asp](http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/kohort.asp) The synergy thus created allows for further collaborations between the various teams.

The network is calling for Proposals, to fund the organisation of Scientific Meetings and Exchange Visits. The Scientific Meetings could be workshops or conferences, and exchange visits between research teams could last from one day to six months. The activities could be at any time over its five year duration to 2013, but the applications can be made as soon as possible. Details of how to apply are given below.

The first workshop considered the topic of consent in child cohort studies, and heard the cautionary tale of the political and ethical obstacles which led to the cancelling of the SESAM child

# NEWS & EVENTS

cohort study in Switzerland. The Steering Committee of the Programme has defined specific themes to be treated within the frame of Science Meetings in 2010. For each theme an Interest Group was created so that all people interested can participate and give their opinion on the organisation and the content of the event. Previous workshops this year were held on the Role of Fathers in Cohort Studies (Vienna, February 2010) and on data management in cohort studies (Bristol, March 2010).

Exchange visits between research teams can be quite flexibly defined, and can last between one day and six months. One example of such a visit has been by the survey managers of the Millennium Cohort to the Growing Up in Ireland team in Dublin, to share best practice in interviewing children. All applications will be evaluated by the Steering Committee.

The EUCCONET website is the portal of access to all the information concerning the network and its activities:

<http://euconet.site.ined.fr/>

To register your interest for an Interest Group or to propose other thematic workshop, follow: [http://euconet.site.ined.fr/fr/about\\_us/activities/science\\_meetings/](http://euconet.site.ined.fr/fr/about_us/activities/science_meetings/)

To have more information on the travel grants and submit an application, follow:

[http://euconet.site.ined.fr/fr/about\\_us/activities/travel\\_grants/](http://euconet.site.ined.fr/fr/about_us/activities/travel_grants/)

The website's Forum, on which readers might like to register, offers the opportunity to discuss any subjects related to longitudinal studies and to meet new partners!

<http://euconet.forumotion.com/>

## Understanding Society

Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), *Understanding Society*, the UK Household Longitudinal survey, is a major new research study designed to enhance our understanding of life in the UK and how it is changing. The largest study of its type in the world, *Understanding Society* is a hugely important resource because of its longitudinal design following the same sample of people across many years. The study has a target sample of 40,000 households and attempts to

interview all household members aged 10 and over annually.

Fieldwork for waves 1 and 2 of the main survey is being carried by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen). Wave 1 went into the field in January 2009. Wave 2 began in January 2010. The large sample size means that fieldwork for each wave is spread over a two year period. However each individual is interviewed at one year intervals giving an overlapping pattern of waves. The current data collection assumptions are that waves 1, 2 and 3 will be collected face-to-face, wave 4 will be collected by a mixture of modes, including at least face-to-face and telephone, and possibly web interviews

The content of the questionnaires has been designed to cover a broad range of topics in order to permit analysis of the relationship between outcomes, behaviours, preferences, the environments within which participants are located and the endowments and constraints which affect their life chances.

What is unique and special about *Understanding Society* is that it involves the collection of data on all members of sampled households and their interactions within the household. This has major advantages for important research areas such as consumption and income, where within-household sharing of resources is important, or demographic change, where the household itself is often the object of study. Observing multiple generations and all siblings allows examination of long-term transmission processes and isolates the effects of commonly shared family background characteristics.

The study consists of four distinct samples:

1. an Innovation Panel of around 1500 households (2400 adults), with fieldwork occurring 12 months before the other samples and used primarily for testing new questions and ways of asking questions as well as innovation in questionnaire design and incentive experiments. Wave 2 of the Innovation Panel trialled mixed-mode interviewing (face to face and telephone). Experiments for Wave 3 went into the field in April 2010.
2. a new random sample representative of the whole UK population large enough for the investigation of sub-populations
3. an ethnic minority boost facilitating minority group research

# NEWS & EVENTS

4. the incorporation of the existing BHPS sample for which 18 waves of data have already been collected to provide opportunities for early analysis of long durations.

The target of 40,000 households across the study's samples gives an opportunity to explore issues for which other longitudinal surveys are too small to support effective research. It will permit analysis of small subgroups, such as teenage parents or disabled people, and analysis at regional and sub-regional levels, allowing examination of the effects of geographical variation in policy, for example differences between the countries of the UK. A large sample size also allows high-resolution analysis of events in time, for example focussing on single-year age cohorts.

*Understanding Society* will make an important contribution to understanding some of the most pressing challenges facing UK society and similar societies around the world. For example, it will allow us to developing a better understanding of:

- The impact of personal characteristics and attitudes on future outcomes. These include cognitive abilities, personal plans and expectations.
- The formation of individual health-related behaviours (diet, tobacco and alcohol consumption, exercise) and impact on economic behaviour; and outcomes.
- The causes and long-term consequences of disadvantaging conditions such as unemployment, teenage pregnancy, ill-health, mental illness, truancy, drug taking and criminality.

It is expected that the first data from *Understanding Society* will be made available through the ESRC's Economic and Social Data Service for researchers to undertake their own analyses during 2010. The questionnaires are available at

<http://www.understandingsociety.org.uk/design/materials/questionnaires.aspx>

## Life Course Changes

On 31<sup>st</sup> March, **Heather Joshi** ended her term of office as Director of the Centre for Longitudinal Studies (CLS) at the Institute of Education. She is succeeded as CLS Director by her colleague Jane Elliot - formally director of the 1958 and 1970 birth

cohort studies. Heather will continue as Director of the Millennium Cohort Study.

On the same day, **John Bynner** retired from his post as Director of Longview. He is succeeded by Tom Schuller, former research director of the (UK) National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education and formerly Head of the OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI). John will continue as Executive Editor of *Longitudinal and Life Course Studies* and Longview Trustee, and will be a co-opted member of the SLLS Executive Committee.

Congratulations to **Heather Laurie** who was recently appointed Director of the Institute for Economic and Social Research (ISER) at the University of Essex, the home of the UK Longitudinal Household Study, *Understanding Society*. Heather was a founder member of the team that 20 years ago established the British Household Panel Study (BHPS) and replaces Stephen Jenkins who has directed ISER for the last three years.

## Neville Butler Memorial Prize 2010

The second of the annual Neville Butler Memorial Prize competitions took place this year, aimed at early career longitudinal researchers, who were invited to submit a paper reporting some post-doctoral longitudinal research they had done and plans for its dissemination. £5,000 is awarded to the winner, together with support for developing the paper for publication in *LLCS*, and UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)-supported training in research communication and dissemination skills. This year there were joint winners: Dr Mayada Elsabbagh from the Centre for Brain and Cognitive Development, Birkbeck College, London and Dr Luna Munoz, from the School of Psychology, University of Central Lancashire. The award ceremony took place on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2010 in the Houses of Parliament as part of the ESRC Festival of Social Sciences. The prize is sponsored by ESRC and managed by Longview.

## Neville Butler Memorial Lecture

This year's lecturer was Professor Sir Michael Rutter, who gave an excellent lecture attended by 150 people on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2010 in the London Institute of Education on the 'The Power and Potential of Longitudinal Research'. Apart from reviewing the scientific gains and pitfalls in

## NEWS & EVENTS

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undertaking longitudinal research, the lecture ranged across a range of longitudinal studies that Professor Rutter had been engaged in, from children growing up in Romanian and English orphanages to biogenetic studies of autism. The lecture is sponsored by the Longview-administered Neville Butler Memorial Fund with support from the Neville Butler Estate, and is organised jointly with the Centre for Longitudinal Studies.

### Research Reports

*The 'Digital Divide' and its relation to basic skills and employment.* John Bynner, Steve Reder, Samantha Parsons and Clare Strawn, 2010

This report supplies the findings from a comparative longitudinal research project using

data from matched samples of early 30s poor educational achievers in the UK National Child Development Study (London and South East England) and the Longitudinal Study of Adult Learners in Portland Oregon. From fitting the same Structural Equation Model to the data in both countries, conclusions are drawn about the direction of effects and their relative strengths, including the somewhat counter-intuitive finding that employment in both countries appears to be a stronger driver of basic skills enhancement than basic skills enhancement is a driver of improved chances of employment (Full details are available on the National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy website [http://www.nrdc.org.uk/publications\\_list.asp](http://www.nrdc.org.uk/publications_list.asp))

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### Events 2010

**Modern demographic methods in epidemiology** - Training course, **1-3 June**, St Andrews University, Edinburgh. <http://www.lscs.ac.uk/news.htm>

**ESHMS** - (European Society of Health and Medical Sociology) 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress, Ghent, Belgium, **26th-28th August**. Theme: 'Health and Well-Being in Radically Changing Societies'. <http://www.eshms.org/Eshmsnews-2010-10-10%20Ghent%20Belgium.htm>

**ALSPAC** - (Avon Longitudinal Survey of Parents and Children) Workshop. 'Longitudinal Data Analysis: Multilevel modelling and Structural Equation Modelling Approaches'. **20-21 September**. Bristol University, UK <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/alspac-social-sciences/workshops/longitudinaldataanalysis.html>

**SLLS** - (Society for Longitudinal and Life Course Studies) Inaugural Conference and General Meeting, Clare College, Cambridge, UK, **22-24 September**. Abstracts by 21 May. <http://www.longstudies.longviewuk.com/pages/conference.shtml>

**CELSE 2010** - (Conference of Epidemiological Longitudinal Studies in Europe) Paphos, Cyprus, **13th-15th October**. Abstracts by 13 May. <http://www.celse.eu/>

**LHRS Meeting** - (Life History Research Society) **14<sup>th</sup>- 17<sup>th</sup> October**, Montreal, Canada <http://crdh.concordia.ca/LifeHistory/>

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### Events 2011

**SRCD** - (Society for Research in Child Development) Biennial Meeting March 31<sup>st</sup> – April 2<sup>nd</sup>, Montreal, Canada. <http://www.srcd.org>  
Volunteer Reviewer website <http://www.srcd.org/submissions2011/volunteers>.



# Four Professorships

## Institute for Social and Economic Research University of Essex



The Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) is an internationally recognised interdisciplinary research institute; a multidisciplinary centre of quantitative social science research; and a producer of household panel data of the highest quality.

A flagship social science department within the University of Essex, we offer a stimulating and innovative research environment, an outstanding publication record and substantial funding to carry out our programme of leading edge longitudinal research.

Our research makes an impact not just in the academic and scientific community but in the wider world.

ISER runs one of the largest longitudinal household panel studies in the world and carries out research on behalf of a wide range of organisations including research councils, government departments and leading charitable foundations.

We are looking for experienced, talented and highly motivated academics who will build on our current success and have the vision to take ISER into the future. The successful candidates will develop new and innovative strands of research within our wide-ranging research agenda and provide research leadership to an outstanding team.

If you are a top flight academic looking to join a world class Institute and have an outstanding track record in Economics or one of the other disciplines relevant to our research portfolio, then we would like to hear from you.

To obtain further information please visit our website: <http://jobs.essex.ac.uk>

The closing date for applications is 23 May 2010

## The posts

We are making four key appointments, at least two of which will be in Economics with other candidates coming from a range of disciplinary backgrounds relevant to our research portfolio. The key areas of coverage for these posts are:

- Economic and social policy
- Family life, changing patterns of family formation and dissolution, and demographic change
- Health
- Analysis methods for longitudinal data

Two postholders will take over the Directorships of the main ESRC funded centres within ISER. In the case of the Research Centre on Micro-social Change (MiSoC) this will be within six months of appointment. For the UK Longitudinal Studies Centre (ULSC) the transition will be longer term. These are high profile positions offering the right candidates considerable scope for shaping the future social science research agenda within the UK.

These appointments represent a significant investment in the future of ISER and will enhance our capacity to produce world class research and continue to attract large scale funding.

## The people

The post-holders will provide leadership within our vibrant interdisciplinary research environment.

We seek individuals with a distinguished publication record; excellent and sustained performance in winning external research funding; and experience of providing the intellectual direction for research in a major area within ISER's research portfolio.

With a substantial established professional reputation related to your main area of academic interest, you must also have the ability to work collaboratively in a multidisciplinary environment.