

Newsletter of the Birkbeck Department of Psychological Sciences



MAIN EVENTS

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**Professor Edward Melhuish,
Professor of Human Development,
recognised in Queen's birthday
honours, made an officer of the
Order of the British Empire (OBE)
for his services to social science.**



Professor Melhuish, who holds positions at Birkbeck and the University of Oxford, is an established figure in the study of social and communicative development from birth to adulthood, including the effect of environmental factors, in a number of longitudinal studies.

During his career, he has been influential in government policy, such as in the areas of early education and care, parenting, child poverty and disadvantage, and child development and social policy. His research has impacted on a national scale, including influencing the 1989 and 2005 Children Acts, the 2006 Childcare Bill, plus the government's decision in 2013 to roll out free part-time early education to all of the 40% most disadvantaged children in the country from the age of two upwards. He has consulted, and been science advisor for, a number of government departments, multinational children's organisations and charities. He also acted as director of the National National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS). involving the evaluation of more than 20,000 children and families and a longitudinal follow-up of 8,000 children in poor communities.

Professor Melhuish (contd)

Currently, Professor Melhuish's research focuses on evaluating interventions such as early childhood education and care (ECEC), parental support, and early intervention strategies.

Regarding being recognised in the Queen's birthday honours, Professor Melhuish stated: *"I feel privileged to be acknowledged in this way. The recognition reflects decades of work integrating research on child development into projects that can inform social policy. It also reflects contributions by many of my collaborators in the Institute for the Study of Children, Families & Social Issues."*

Professor Mike Oaksford, Head of the Department of Psychological Sciences at Birkbeck said: *"Massive congratulations to Prof Ted Melhuish on the award of an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list. This is a much deserved reward for Ted's ongoing work integrating pure and applied research on the influence of pre-school years on development and educational attainment."*

"The work was funded under the Sure Start programme and has been hugely influential in shaping Government policy. It was also one of the Department of Psychological Sciences 100% rated research impact statements in REF2014."

Dr. Tim Smith hosted a Sci/Film "Science of Magic" event (10/06/16) with Dr. Gustav Kuhn (Goldsmiths) and a screening of the Christopher Nolan film *The Prestige*. The event, cofunded by the School of Science and a Wellcome Trust ISSF public engagement grant brought together psychologists with magicians who were treated to a demonstration of "real" magic and a discussion of the psychological tricks that magician's use to fool the mind.

In June, **Professor Ted Melhuish** gave seminars to Australian government politicians and officials at Parliament House Sydney, and Parliament House Melbourne on “ Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) and the Welfare of Nations”. The talks led to newspaper articles in the Sydney Morning Herald, The Age, the Australian, Courier and Mail, and the Sun Herald.

Professor Jacqueline Barnes, *director of the Institute for the Study of Children, Families & Social Issues at Birkbeck, University of London*, was quoted in an article by Charlotte Goddard in *Nursery World* 2-15 May 2016 pp.36-37 on the Early Years Pupil premium titled ‘EYPP interventions depend on quality interactions for maximum impact – and settings taking a holistic approach are training staff in shared thinking and language skills’ as follows:

‘Don’t spend EYPP funding on making the lavatories better or nice new toys – focus on developing staff, looking at language and behaviour, and understanding how children learn,’ says Professor Jacqueline Barnes, *‘In particular, quality will be enhanced through a focus on communication and language, and self-regulation in children.’*

Interactions involving sustained shared thinking, where adults and children work together in an intellectual way to solve a problem or clarify a concept, are particularly effective in developing critical thinking and extending learning. ‘It is about sustaining dialogue and talking in a more engaging and stimulating way,’ says Professor Barnes.’

GRANTS, AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Clare Press	The paradoxical influences of prediction on perception: Do actions silence perception?	Leverhulme Trust	205,756
Marie Smith	The social side of face perception: insights from atypical development.	Leverhulme Trust	177,298
Teea Gliga	Neuroscience in the playground: bringing together psychology, education and technology to investigate human curiosity.	British Academy	14,232
Iroise Dumontheil	Secondary School Cohort Study of Mobile Phone Use and Neurocognitive and Behavioural Outcomes.	NIHR	20,089
Emily Jones	Causal routes to autism: inhibition/excitation balance and social brain development in human infants	ISSF	39,985

Kate Hughes, PhD student, co-supervised by Annette Karmiloff-Smith and Emma Meaburn, obtained an ISSF Wellcome Trust Grant to encourage public engagement for the holding of an event for the parents and participants in her doctoral research on Down syndrome.

Chris Brand was awarded his PhD entitled "*The effect of probability anchors on moral decision making*" Examiners: David Lagnado (UCL) and Shira Eqayam (de Monfort)

Professor Rick Cooper examined a PhD thesis by Dilhan Thilakarathne entitled *Exploring Computational Models to Study the Role of Human Awareness and Control in Behavioural Choices* at VU University, Amsterdam.

Professor Ted Melhuish examined the PhD Thesis of Susan Woolfenden entitled "*Inequity in developmental vulnerability, its determinants and the role of access to early identification*" at the University of New South Wales, Australia.

Dr Iroise Dumontheil was an external examiner of the DPhil thesis of Chii Fen Hiu, supervised by Dr Jennifer Lau, at Oxford University on 24 May.

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- Barnes, J.** (2016). Short-term health and social care benefits of the Family Nurse Partnership lack evidence in the UK context but there is promise for child developmental outcomes. *Evidence-Based Medicine*. Online First May 10 as doi:10.1136/ebmed-2016-110422
- Cooper, R. P. & Marsh, V.** (2016). Set-shifting as a component process of goal-directed problem-solving. *Psychological Research*, 80(2), 307-323.
- Delvoye, M. & **Tasker, F.** (2016). Narrating Self-Identity in Bisexual Motherhood. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 12, 5-23, DOI: 10.1080/1550428X.2015.1038675
- Dumontheil, I.** (2016). Adolescent brain development. *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*, 10, 39-44.
- Dumontheil, I.***, Wolf, L.* , Blakemore, S.-J. (2016). Audience effects on the neural correlates of relational reasoning in adolescence. *Neuropsychologia*, 87, 85-95. (* indicates shared first authorship)
- Haartsen, R., **Jones, E.J.H., & Johnson, M.H.** (2016). Human Brain Development Over the Early Years. *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*.
- Jones, E.J.H.**, Venema, K., Earl, R., Lowy, R., Barnes, K., Estes, A., Dawson, G., & Webb, S.J. (2016). Reduced engagement with social stimuli in 6-month-old infants with later Autism Spectrum Disorder: A longitudinal prospective study of infants at high familial risk. *Journal of Neurodevelopmental Disorders*, 8.1:1.

- Melhuish, E.** (2016). Offre de services de qualité pour la petite enfance: Examen par les pairs en matière de protection sociale et d'inclusion sociale 2015-2016: Résumé, République tchèque. Brussels: European Commission.
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- Oaksford, M., & Hall, S.** (2016). On the source of human irrationality. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 20, 336-344. doi: 10.1016/j.tics.2016.03.002
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- Taylor, M. J., Lichtenstein, P., Larsson, H., Anckarsäter, H., Greven, C. U. & **Ronald**, A. (2016). Is there a female protective effect against ADHD? Evidence from two representative twin samples. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 55 ,504-512.

Dr. Clare Press gave an invited seminar talk to the Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience, UCL, 3rd May, on '*the influence of atypical action on perceptual and socio-communicative difficulties in autism*'. She also gave an invited talk to the Department of Psychology, University of Birmingham, 14th June, on '*domain-specificity of perception-action mapping mechanisms*'.

Professor Mike Oaksford gave an invited keynote talk titled "*Learning in dynamic conditional inference*" at the DFG Workshop on Probabilities, Pragmatics and Rationality. in Berlin, Germany, 26th May 2016.

Dr. Iroise Dumontheil gave research talks entitled *What is special about the manipulation of social information* on 27 April at the British Psychological Society annual conference in Nottingham, at the occasion of the award of her Spearman Medal; and *Is cognitive control development in childhood and adolescence relevant to education?* on 25 June at the SIG22 Neuroscience and Education conference in Amsterdam.

Dr. Iroise Dumontheil also gave more general talks on *The Teenage Brain* on 9 June to parents at Parliament Hill school in London, and she took part in the Birkbeck Science Week discussion

Dr. Anne Miles (with, Evans REC, Koh D-M, Goh V, Padhani A, Punwani S, Rockall A, Halligan S, Navani N, Janes S, Bridgewater J, Oliver A, Morris S, Mallett S, Teague J, Duggan M, Beare S, Taylor S.) gave an Oral presentation, entitled: *Predictors of patient preferences for whole body magnetic resonance imaging compared with standard staging pathways for the investigation of symptoms of suspected colorectal or lung cancer* at the Society for Medical Decision Making 16th Biennial European Conference June 2016.

Dr. Tim Smith gave an invited seminar at Kansas State University (25/04/16) entitled "*Here's Looking at you kid: Optimising signal-to-noise ratios in tots TV can create adult-like viewing behaviour in infants*". He also gave an invited seminar at the Yale Child Study Center (31/05/16) entitled "*Tracking typical and atypical development of attention control over the first year of life.*" and delivered a keynote seminar to the Pre-School Learning Alliance annual meeting in Westminster entitled "*Toddlers, TV and touchscreens - for or against?*" on his work investigating the influence of toddler touchscreen use on cognitive development.

Dr. Tim Smith attended a Science & Film dinner organised by the Wellcome Trust (29/05/16) which brought together representatives from the film and TV industry with academics from a broad range of disciplines to discuss the future directions of collaborative projects in this area, and attended the Vision Science Society (VSS) annual meeting (St Petersburg, USA; 14/05/16), as well as the International Congress for Infant Studies (ICIS) annual meeting (New Orleans, USA; 30/05/16) and the Society for the Cognitive Studies of the the Moving Image (SCSMI) annual meeting (Ithaca, New York, USA; 3/06/16).

Dr. Emily Jones gave a keynote lecture entitled 'Brain Development and Developmental Disorders' to the Camden SEND conference (June 2016).

Professor Rick Cooper gave a public talk to the Philosophy for All group entitled "*On theory development in Cognitive Science*" at Kant's Cave in the Cock Tavern, Somers Town, on May 4th.

Dr. Fiona Tasker gave a series of talks:

Tasker, F. *Bisexual parenting: Creating new narratives & maps of family relationships*. New Frontiers of Family: The Psychological Implications of Emerging Family Forms, UWE Bristol UK 7th June, 2016 (UK)

Tasker, F. *Researching Bisexual parenting*. British Sociological Association Families & Relationships Study Group Day: Looking Back & Looking Forward to Future LGBT Parenting Research Agendas, University of Manchester, Manchester UK, 6th May 2016

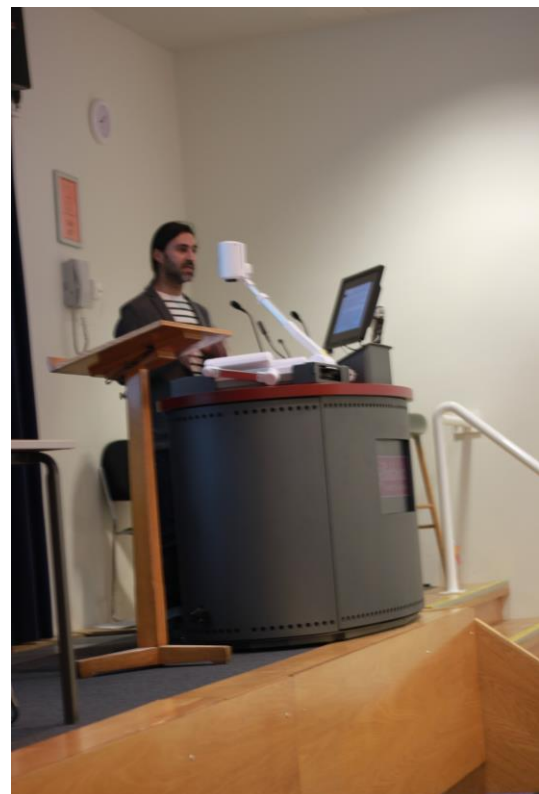
Smith, V. & Tasker, F. *Beyond Prevalence and Risk: Understanding Chemsex Trends Among Gay Men Living in London*. The European Chemsex Forum Conference, London UK, 6-8 April 2016.

The New Frontiers of Family seminar at Birkbeck 'Beyond the non-nuclear family: Non-nuclear family planning' was a huge success with over 75 delegates attending the meeting held in the basement of the Clore building on 20th April 2016. The four New Frontiers of Family seminars in the BPS sponsored series were organized by Dr. Fiona Tasker with co-organizers Dr. Naomi Moller (Open University), Prof. Victoria Clarke (University of the West of England) and Dr. Nikki Hayfield (University of the West of England). Dr. Pedro Costa (Honorary Research Associate at Birkbeck) gave a presentation entitled '*Risk and Resilience in Planned Lesbian and Gay Families*'. Thanks go to colleagues at Birkbeck Naomi Adams, Kim Davies and Harish Patel for their help with organization, publicity and photographs for the event.

**Fiona Tasker with NFF co-organizers
Naomi Moller (OU) and Nikki Hayfield (UWE)**



**Pedro Costa, HRA at Birkbeck, giving
his presentation at the NFF**



Professor Jacqueline Barnes gave two invited talks:

'Delivery of Family Nurse Partnership in England to Families with language other than English' to the New South Wales Healthy Families, Healthy Children (Sustained Health Home Visiting) Steering Committee. Sydney, Australia, April 12th, 2016, and *'Perceptions of support for bereaved children'* to the Child bereavement seminar, Brake – The Road Safety Charity. Manchester, June 30th 2016.

Professor Annette Karmiloff-Smith gave several invited talks: At NIH, Bethesda, Washington on *Regression in autism spectrum Disorders and in and typical development: the importance of timing and of cross-syndrome comparisons.*

On *What can babies tell us about Alzheimers dementia in adults?* At the San Diego Dart Centre for computational research

On *What's the latest on child language research* at Igert Centre, University of Connecticut

On *The Impact of touchscreen on early child development: Is it really all bad news?* at the Oislington Centre Nursery World congress and at Leunus, and in (her best!) Spanish at the Barcelona celebration of the career of Liliana Tolchinsky-Landsman.

Dr. Alex Shepherd gave a talk on *Tracking the migraine cycle* at the 14th Oxford Symposium on Headache, April 15-16. She also attended the 20th Anglo-Dutch Migraine, May 5-6.

The 11th International Conference on Child and Adolescent Psychopathology will be held at University of Roehampton on 18 - 20 July 2016. Registration is still open and keynote speakers include **Dr Angelica Ronald** from our department.

<http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/Research-Centres/Centre-for-Applied-Research-and-Assessment-in-Child-and-Adolescent-Wellbeing/Child-and-Adolescent-Psychopathology-Conference/>

As part of an International Doctorate in the Department of Psychology, University of Cadiz, Spain, **Rosa Maria Ruiz**, has spent the summer term as an Associate Research Fellow in the Institute for the Study of Children, Families and Social issues. She was worked with **Professor Jacqueline Barnes** on new analysis of the Families, Children and Child Care Study data, investigating the relevance of maternal and paternal personality and infant temperament for children's behavioural and emotional problems. She will also be attending the International Conference on Child and Adolescent Psychopathology at University of Roehampton making a presentation: 'Childhood temperament and family stress as predictors of risk behaviour at age 8: the moderation role of child sex'.

Forthcoming Meetings

The BASIS Network will be hosting its Annual General Meeting on the 5th September. The meeting will feature the latest research on early ASD from across Europe. Speakers include Dr Terje Falck-Ytter (Uppsala/KI), Prof. Herbert Roeyers (University of Ghent), Prof. Andrew Pickles (KCL), Prof Clare Elwell (UCL), Dr Przemek Tomalski (U Warsaw) and many others!

For further information and to register, please contact Emily Jones (e.jones@bbk.ac.uk) or Teea Gliga (t.gliga@bbk.ac.uk).



Dr. Pedro Alexandre Costa (Faculty of Psychology and Education - University of Porto (FPCE-UP)) visited the Department October-December 2015 and will return again to visit Birkbeck in April 2016. Pedro has conducted a pioneering research in Portugal on lesbian and gay parenting. During Pedro's visit to Birkbeck, Dr. Fiona Tasker will be collaborating with him on a research project entitled "Mapping Family Relationships: A cross-cultural comparison of child and adolescent well-being in gay and lesbian adoptive families in Portugal and in the United Kingdom" funded by the Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (FCT) in Portugal.

Jan-Ole Harald Gmelin (Department of Developmental Psychology, University of Groningen) is visiting the department October 2015- January 2016) on an Erasmus+ training placement. During Pedro's visit to Birkbeck, Dr. Fiona Tasker will be collaborating with him on a research project entitled "Young Gay Men's Identity Formation in Germany".

Forthcoming Conference

Abstract submissions and registration are now open for the 11th International Conference on Child and Adolescent Psychopathology, held in Roehampton University, London on 18 - 20 July 2016. Dr Angelica Ronald will be giving a keynote talk on why autism often co-occurs with other conditions.

Dr. Belinda Brooks-Gordon hosted and took part in a number of events leading up to the EU referendum. Belinda says: 'As the vote was an enormous threat to university and science funding it was vital that I worked on behalf of Birkbeck for colleagues to preserve their access to science funding, EU students, and free movement for research staff.'

In a number of high profile debates Belinda made the case for the importance of Science and Europe:

1) Alongside Labour MP Gavin Shuker for #Remain she debated Douglas Carswell (UKIP) and Bernard Jenkin (Con)

<http://www.itv.com/news/anglia/2016-06-09/anglia-late-edition-eu-referendum-debate/>



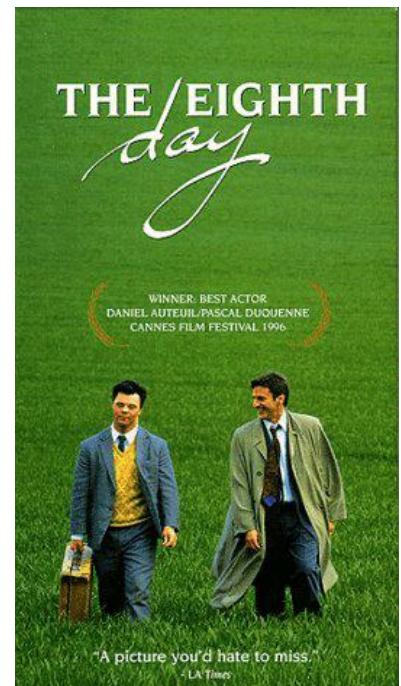
The Dept. of Psych Sciences isn't just about brain imaging, Reaction Time, and questionnaires. We have lots of fun and interesting films and discussions too!

Professor Annette Karmiloff-Smith of the Birkbeck wing of the LonDownS Consortium and Dr. Teea Gliga of the Birkbeck Institute for the Moving Image hosted a French film (*Le Huitième Jour*) for Birkbeck staff and the general public, to celebrate **World Down Syndrome Day**. Teea introduced the film, and Annette presented her team's current research at Birkbeck on infants and toddlers with Down syndrome, aimed at elucidating early risk and protective factors for subsequent Alzheimer's dementia in this genetically high-risk population. The screening was followed by a lively Q & A with the audience.

Georges has Down syndrome, and is living at a mental institution from which he escapes after his mother dies and stops visiting.

Harry is a busy, unhappy businessman, going through a separation from his wife and children.

An unusually profound friendship develops between the two men as they travel together.



The Dept. of Psych Sciences isn't just about brain imaging, Reaction Time, and questionnaires. We have lots of fun and we move a lot!

NEWS OF THE LEANING TOWER OF PISA AT 32 TORRINGTON SQUARE



PHD students and postdocs from CBCD at 32 Torrington Square have now moved four times in the Bloomsbury area since last August. They are now happily rehoused at the British Medical Association on Tavistock Square, carrying the colours red/white/blue

