

The Nuffield Foundation Newsletter

Autumn 2006

Issue

4

Supporting tomorrow's scientists

The Foundation is to expand two of its most successful grant schemes giving bursaries to budding young scientists.

The schemes enable sixth formers and undergraduates to work on real science projects during the summer vacation. The project placements are provided in partnership with institutions including universities, research institutes, industry, museums, and field centres around the UK.

Expanding the schemes

The schemes have proved so popular with both students and project providers that the Foundation is planning to increase the number of places available over the next five years. In 2007 at least 1,000 students will be offered bursaries. In addition to funding the extra placements, a new National Co-ordinator has been appointed for the School Bursaries scheme. We are also hoping to recruit funding partners who will help us to expand the schemes still further. [www](http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org)

School Bursary student Ingrid Burt and supervisor Alan Walker (Particle Physics Experiment Group at The University of Edinburgh University of Edinburgh), whose project at Top Station, Cairngorm involved the detection of very fast-moving particles (muons) to test aspects of Einstein's Theory of Relativity. Ingrid used the experimental results in her Advanced Highers project.



Image used with permission: Peter Reid (PP4SS, <http://www.scifun.ed.ac.uk/pp4ss.html>)

Welcome to the Nuffield Foundation Newsletter which highlights our current areas of grant making and focuses on the outcomes of the projects we fund.

Further details on all the stories marked with this icon [www](http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org) can be found on our website.

The Newsletter is published three times a year and you can obtain further copies or ask to be put on the mailing list by contacting the Foundation. If you have any comments on the Newsletter we would be delighted to hear from you.

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Reviewing the tax system

Nearly 30 years ago Nuffield funded the Meade Report - a landmark in the study of tax design. Now Nuffield and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) are funding a new review. The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) is bringing together leading experts in tax and public economics to identify what makes a good tax system in the 21st century and to come up with specific proposals for its reform in Britain.

The review will be led by Nobel Prize winner Professor Sir James Mirrlees, who will oversee teams of leading experts from around the world. A number of key issues of tax design will be explored, including income taxation, expenditure and saving, VAT, business taxation and the impact of globalisation, as well as the specific issue of small business taxation.

The review aims to be participative and interactive, drawing together expertise from a wide range of national and institutional perspectives and informed by events at which participants and others will be able to discuss the progress of the research. [www](#)

Translating Skills

Traditional language education may have declined in the UK, but there is still a demand for people who combine language with particular vocational skills. City College Birmingham identified one such need: for skilled translation from English into languages such as Urdu, Kurdish or Somali.

Translation work is largely freelance and unregulated and cannot easily be learned on the job. It also demands excellent written language and IT skills. Although several colleges offer courses to develop interpreting skills, there was no accredited course in the UK at introductory level.

With help from Nuffield Foundation's Open Door programme, City College has developed a new certificate course - Introduction to Translation Skills - to tackle this gap. The College now has a marketing strategy, screening procedure, syllabus, scheme of



Some of the students who successfully completed the Introduction to Translation Studies course in May 2006. From left to right, Mahamud Abubaker (English to Somali), Saima Bibi (Urdu to English), Tadesse Tukue (English to Tigrinya), Asma Awan (English to Urdu) with tutor Clarice Brierley.

work and an assessment model which could be adopted by language providers in other parts of the country. Accredited by the Institute of Linguists, the initial course ran from January to May this year. The next course is planned for January 2007. [www](#)

'Are you ready for a challenge?'

...has been the invitation sent out for the last 60 years from the Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust (NFST).

Introduced in 1947, these 'Travelling Scholarships' offered farmers the opportunity to investigate modern farming practice abroad with the aim of stimulating improved methods of food production in the UK. The scheme proved successful and

inspirational, with many Scholars taking a leading role in farming and rural industry.

The Trust has been independent from the Nuffield Foundation since the 1960s and Scholarships are now funded by the agricultural and food industry, charities and trusts with agricultural objectives, and past Scholars themselves. Australia, New Zealand, Canada, France and

Ireland have joined the Nuffield 'family' and almost 1500 Scholarships have been awarded worldwide since 1947.

"Undoubtedly the ongoing success of the scholarship scheme has greatly exceeded the hopes and expectations of the original Trustees" says John Stones, current Director of the Trust. "We have a lot to celebrate in 2007, our Diamond Jubilee year." [www](#)



NFST award holder Donald MacPherson on his visit to the USA.



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Children of Immigrants in Schools

There is nothing new about migration. Globalisation, however, brings with it increasing movement of populations across “national” boundaries, with major consequences for receiving societies as well as immigrant groups.

Education is a major site where new meets old, where opportunity structures for minority groups are framed and where new identities are forged. There is a large and underdeveloped research opportunity here and a growing demand from policy-makers for answers to pressing questions about the changing role of education in generating educational, social, civic and economic outcomes for different ethnic minority groups.

Recognising this, Nuffield has made a substantial contribution to an International Fellowships Program supported by the US National Science Foundation to generate capacity for cross-national comparative research in



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the area. Led by Professor Richard Alba, State University of New York at Albany, and co-ordinated by the US Social Science Research Council, the Program is organised around five comparative transatlantic research projects covering different aspects of education and immigration in different societies. The 5 European principal investigators are: Anthony Heath, Oxford; Roxane Silberman, Paris; Maurice

Crul, Amsterdam; Silvia Carrasco, Barcelona; Mikael Alexandersson, Goteborg. Nested within the projects are 10 US fellowships and 6 Nuffield-supported European fellowships.

Providing support of this kind at the European level is a new venture for the Foundation, marking our growing commitment to developing genuinely cross-national research capacity. [www](#)

Tax Appeals: A low-income perspective

People on low incomes can not afford legal representation in appeals to the Inland Revenue, yet unrepresented appellants face a number of barriers. These include the complexity of the tax system and of the appeals process; lack of clear guidance on how to prepare and present an appeal; absence of case management facilities; the risk of an onward appeal by the revenue authority and exposure to an adverse costs order; the fact that many perceive the tax appeal tribunals to be part of Government.

A new report from the Low Incomes Tax Reform Group considers how to reform the system of tax appeals to the best advantage of unrepresented



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taxpayers with limited means to pursue an appeal. This group is likely to form the majority of appellants before the tax tribunals.

This Nuffield-funded work draws on LITRG's contributions to the consultation led by the Department for Constitutional Affairs, a survey of the views of chartered tax advisers and detailed discussions with other experts in the field. It has resulted in 23 recommendations designed to answer the practical needs of unrepresented appellants. [www](#)

FROM THE ARCHIVE

LAW CENTRES

One of the key initiatives the Foundation supported as part of its focus on the law in practice in the early 1970s was the establishment of neighbourhood law centres. The centres were set up to deliver legal services to people who needed them, but had no idea how to get such help and certainly not at a price they could afford. A grant was made to the first centre in North Kensington and by 1978 there were enough centres for a federation to be established, again with support from the Foundation. Today there are 55 centres, spread across the United Kingdom. [www](#)



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Solitary Confinement

With the exception of the death penalty, solitary confinement is the most extreme penal practice legally imposed on prisoners. Under its Access to Justice programme the Foundation recently made a grant to Dr Sharon Shalev at the Mannheim Centre for Criminology, London School of Economics, for the production of a handbook on this practice.

The project aims to provide prison practitioners with a much needed comprehensive single point of reference on solitary confinement, and on professional, ethical and human rights guidelines and codes of practice relating to its use. [www](#)



Critical care decisions in fetal and neonatal medicine: ethical issues

On 16th November, the Nuffield Council on Bioethics is publishing a Report, Critical care decisions in fetal and neonatal medicine: ethical issues, which examines the ethical, social and legal dilemmas raised by fetal and neonatal medicine. The Report will make a number of recommendations for future policy and practice.

Modern medicine is increasingly successful at saving the lives of very premature or ill babies, and many will go on to lead healthy and fulfilling lives. However, sometimes a baby receiving critical care will not live longer than a few weeks or months or, if he or she does survive, may have a serious illness or develop disabilities. It can be difficult to predict exactly what the outcome will be for a particular child. This adds to the



complexity of the issues to consider and places emotional demands on the parents and healthcare professionals making decisions about the care of a baby. [www](#)

NCOB

Professor Sandy Thomas is stepping down as Director of the Nuffield Council on Bioethics (NCOB) at the end of November to take up a new post as head of the Foresight Unit at the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Office of Science and Innovation. [www](#)

SCIENCE TAKES OFF

Twenty First Century Science is a new approach to the 14 to 16 science curriculum, developed by the Nuffield Curriculum Centre and the University of York Science Education Group. Following a successful pilot over three years, an estimated 800 schools will be running the course this year. [www](#)

Keeping an eye on the law

While law is an increasingly important feature of modern life, we have a decreasing capacity to keep it under empirical examination. The final report of the Nuffield Inquiry on Empirical Research in Law is released this month, looking at UK capacity to undertake such research. We hope that its recommendations will lead funders, universities and researchers to take concrete steps to improve our capacity to study how law actually works in society. [www](#)



Correction:

issue No 3: Paying for long-term care. This project is a collaboration between the PSSRU at the London School of Economics and the Department of Health and Human Sciences at the University of Essex (not the Nuffield Community Care Research Unit at the University of Leicester, as printed).



William Morris, Lord Nuffield
1877-1963

The Nuffield Foundation is an endowed charitable trust established in 1943 by William Morris (Lord Nuffield) the founder of Morris Motors with the aim of advancing social well being. We fund research and practical experiment and the development of capacity to undertake them, working across education, science, social science and social policy. While most of the Foundation's expenditure is on responsive grant programmes we also undertake our own initiatives.

Full information on all our current activities and on how to apply for grants can be found at www.nuffieldfoundation.org

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