

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

I propose that, once a year, the President of the Australian Institute of Parapsychology (which produces the *Australian Journal of Parapsychology*) should publish a note on recent parapsychological matters in Australia. The current President is Dr. Michael Thalbourne.

First of all, let us consider the matters in which the President is most closely involved. He and his colleague, Dr. Lance Storm, are still the only qualified parapsychologists in Australia, working as they do in the Anomalistic Psychology Research Unit at the University of Adelaide. It is therefore not surprising that much of the country's parapsychological work is carried out by these men, including the editing of the AIPR's journal, but also experimentation of various kinds, sometimes concerning the eliciting of psychic phenomena in the laboratory, sometimes about broader issues of the cognitions, attitudes, personality traits and so forth belonging to believers and to disbelievers in the paranormal. Recent studies of the *first* kind have included an experiment in which 200 people were tested in a study of the Chinese book of divination, the *I Ching*. Another study concerned the question of whether the vision-impaired, compared with sighted persons, were better at an "ESP" task. Examples of recent studies of the *second* kind are a study of whether people who have experienced the psychiatric condition called mania are more likely to believe in the paranormal and to have had mystical experience. There have also been several studies of both the *reporting* of real-life coincidences and the *evaluation* of such coincidences, and an Honours student, Tom Moore, is involved in this research.

Owing particularly to the efforts of Lance Storm and Robb Tilley, two online courses on parapsychology are being set up, in order to meet a perceived demand. The content of one course is relatively easy to absorb (i.e., a technical background is not required), while the content of the other course is somewhat more demanding (e.g., in assuming some acquaintance with experiments and statistics). More information about these courses may be obtained from the Institute's website www.aiprinc.org/index.asp

In parapsychology, it is frequently the case that funding is hard to come by. This year (as they do every second year) the Bial Foundation in Portugal is calling for applications for research on parapsychological topics, and this grant-awarding body is an important source of income for Australian parapsychologists. Thus, applications will be made, before the end of August.

Also worthy of note is a newly obtained Ph.D. in Western Australia, by Simon Harvey-Wilson on the topic of levitation. Hannah Jenkins is pursuing Ph.D. studies on the philosophy of parapsychology (she,

too is involved with the online course). We wish them both well in their subsequent careers.

Thus, it is clear that a good deal of parapsychological research has been going on within Australia in recent times. Such research appears to me to be expanding and indeed about to expand even further. We have a lot to look forward to, thanks to the initiative of individual persons as well as the ongoing activities of the AIPR.

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