Merry Christmas from the LBC1921 Research Team

The LBC1921 Research Team with the Chancellor’s Award
Front row, left to right: Susan Shenkin, Alison Pattie and Martha Whiteman.
Back row, left to right: Ian Deary, Brian McGurn and Alan Gow.

2003 update
We hope this newsletter finds you well at this busy time of the year. We have produced this update to keep you informed of our activities over the past year, and to let you know our plans for the future.

Worldwide coverage
The LBC1921 study has resulted in many publications in some of the top international scientific journals, as well as national and international newspaper coverage. One of the study directors, Professor Ian Deary, attended conferences both in the UK and further afield. These informed the world’s research community about some of the important findings to which you have contributed. One of the conferences was in Australia, where the details of the project were warmly received. On the back page we have attached some of the newspaper articles that reported the study, including one from Australia.
**Royal approval**

Another signal that the study is well-regarded is that Professor Deary received the *Chancellor’s Award of the University of Edinburgh* for his work on ageing, especially the LBC1921. This was a crystal bowl and scroll (see photo) presented by Prince Philip at Holyrood Palace.

**Continuing the study**

As you know, we are trying to answer the question of why some people keep their mental abilities so sharp in old age. The data that you have already provided helped us to answer parts of this important question. However, the information about the LBC1921 group is unique, and there is still much work that can be done. Some of you might already have been contacted by Alison Pattie, asking you to take part in the next stage of the project. This involves some tests similar to ones you may already have taken part in, as well as some new ones. If you have already taken part in this, we would like to thank you warmly for your continued support of the project. For those who have yet to be contacted, we will be doing this early in the New Year, when we will give you more details of the study.

**New faces**

Whilst you may recognise most of the faces in the picture on the first page, there is one new addition to the team. Alan Gow has joined our team as a PhD Research Student, and has already set to work analysing some of the rich data you have provided us with from previous questionnaires. Some of the findings so far are very interesting and, concern matters such as personality and what makes for satisfaction with life. In addition, Alan would like to ask you to provide some new information. To do this, he will be sending out a questionnaire next year. Most of the questions will ask you to reflect on earlier parts of your life, as there is some evidence to suggest factors from earlier in your life might affect later mental skills. We should therefore be very grateful if you would be able to complete these, so that we can continue to add new information to the study.

**Many thanks again**

We would once again like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued enthusiasm and participation in the LBC1921 project. It is always a pleasure to meet with you, and we look forward to seeing many of you in 2004.

We wish you a Merry Christmas, and send best wishes for the New Year.

Yours sincerely,

*Professor Ian J. Deary, Dr John M. Starr and Professor Lawrence J. Whalley, Study Directors*

*Dr Martha Whiteman, Research Fellow*
*Mrs Alison Pattie, Research Associate*
*Dr Susan Shenkin, Simpson’s 1921 Study*
*Mr Alan Gow, PhD Research Student*
*Dr Brian McGurn, Research Fellow*

Would you like to talk to us? We are here:
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Unearthed: a copperplate clue to staying young

Adele Horin

Why some elderly people remain intellectually healthy is a mystery scientists are keen to unravel. But they have always lacked reliable data to measure how cognition changes with age. The clue came along. Those tested in 1932 by University of Edinburgh psychologist Niall Deary were tracked down and asked to take the same test at age 79. The result? The elderly test candidates scored quite a bit better than they did at age 11. And the healthy brains behind the high scores in 1932 and 1939 were not special cases. The clue: they were non-smokers. Those who scored the best at age 11 never smoked, whereas those who smoked slightly more were at the bottom. The change, of course, was slight, but the effect was small, he said. The message is that there are factors that are changing with age and they are health-related. People who have a healthy lifestyle may have a change in brain function, he said. The data has been linked to other studies of mental ability differences in the elderly, and the data has been linked to scientific literature. The data has been linked to other studies of mental ability differences in the elderly, and the data has been linked to scientific literature. The data has been linked to other studies of mental ability differences in the elderly, and the data has been linked to scientific literature. The data has been linked to other studies of mental ability differences in the elderly, and the data has been linked to scientific literature. The data has been linked to other studies of mental ability differences in the elderly, and the data has been linked to scientific literature. The data has been linked to other studies of mental ability differences in the elderly, and the data has been linked to scientific literature. The data has been linked to other studies of mental ability differences in the elderly, and the data has been linked to scientific literature. The data has been linked to other studies of mental ability differences in the elderly, and the data has been linked to scientific literature. The data has been linked to other studies of mental ability differences in the elderly, and the data has been linked to scientific literature. The data has been linked to other studies of mental ability differences in the elderly, and the data has been linked to scientific literature. The data has been linked to other studies of mental ability differences in the elderly, and the data has been linked to scientific literature.
The Evening News reported the Chancellor’s Award to Ian Deary, and your part in his research.

City professors honoured by Duke at awards ceremony

TWO professors from Edinburgh University have been honoured by the Duke of Edinburgh for their work.

Professor Ian Deary was presented with his award by the Duke, who is chancellor of Edinburgh University.

The renowned professor was chosen in recognition of his work unveiling how memory and intelligence change as people get older. His best-known research involved contacting several hundred Scottish octogenarians who had all completed the same national IQ test in June 1932 in school when they were aged 11.

The professor re-examined them some 70 years later and compared their performances as adults with the results they achieved as schoolchildren.

His aim was to find out what factors influence mental abilities over a lifetime and what helps people retain memory and thinking skills in old age.

He was one of two city academics to be given the new Chancellor’s Awards, which recognise innovation, relevance, creativity and personal dedication.

The other honoured expert was Professor Peter Ghazal for his work using genetic advances to help predict which people are more at risk of which diseases. Professor Ghazal founded the Scottish Centre for Genomic Technology and Informatics where experts compile genetic profiles of patients to enable doctors to tell at a glance if a patient is prone to particular diseases such as cancer.

The academics were presented with their awards by the Duke of Edinburgh at a dinner held at the Palace of Holyroodhouse on Monday.