



A New Child

Dr Paul Filmore, Chairman, chairman@scimednet.org

Dear Member,

As I look through an early copy of Paradigm Explorer, I am heartened that we have together achieved a correct balance between approachability and respectability. The new fresh modern look complements, I feel, the scientific journal appearance. I have confidence that this publication will help in continuing to establish our image as a dynamic, cutting edge organization.

My thanks go to David and Kim at Kingfisher Press for the design, and to David and the editorial team for the content. A fantastic job!

Talking of children, I must mention the imminent arrival of our Office Manager Chiara's baby. Our thoughts are with Chiara and her family. Associated with this, we will be providing maternity cover for Chiara for the next six months, so if you hear a different voice on the end of the office telephone, you will know why.

On other matters, we are in need of overspill office space on occasions, for use by volunteer members. If you have a room, ideally in or near London, that could be used on an ad hoc basis, we would be very interested in hearing from you. The SMN has also a considerable paper archive which we need some help to digitise, and somewhere to store. Storage is also needed for 12 boxes of books from the late Peter Hewitt's library, and a steadily increasing number of boxes of review books. If you are able to help in any way, do please email Chiara@scimednet.org as soon as possible.

It takes effort and time to conceive and produce a child, such as this our new-

formatted journal, to go out from us into the world; part of our *raison d'être*. We are glad of your continuing support in these our SMN endeavours. As Kahlil Gibran says on children:

You are the bows from which your children

as living arrows are sent forth.

The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite,

and He bends you with His might

that His arrows may go swift and far.

Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;

For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so He loves also the bow that is stable.

Warmest wishes to you all,
Paul

Introducing Paradigm Explorer

David Lorimer

After considerable discussion at board level, we have taken the decision to change the name of Network Review, as intimated in an electronic newsletter earlier in the year. We have chosen the title Paradigm Explorer to reflect the content more accurately and the underlying commitment of the Network towards the articulation and communication of a spiritual and ecological worldview.

As many readers will know, the term 'paradigm' was popularised by Thomas Kuhn in his seminal book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* in 1962. Although the notion of a paradigm has been criticised, I still regard it as a useful term to denote the pattern of metaphysical assumptions underlying scientific thinking, as first explored by E.A. Burtt in 1925 in his book *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science*. In the 1990s, this work was followed up by Willis Harman and the Institute of Noetic Sciences.

The work of the Network lies at the interface between science and the rapidly evolving fields of consciousness and spirituality. As indicated in my reviews below of *The Oxford Handbook of Psychology and Spirituality* and *Transcendent Mind*, leading thinkers and practitioners are already moving beyond a mechanistic, reductionist and materialistic approach to consciousness and

postulating a spiritual universe infused with consciousness. This involves new ontologies, epistemologies, methodologies and ethics. Another phrase frequently used in the history of the Network is Wider Horizons, indicating that there is much to discover beyond our immediate sight, and which in the 1970s and 1980s was a week-long course for young people on topics largely absent from conventional education.

The Network remains committed to balancing open-mindedness with rigour, and it is interesting to look back on early newsletters - the name *Network Review* only came in in the 1990s. The first newsletter sent out in January 1974 stated that the immediate aim was to build up a network of qualified scientists and doctors 'who have adopted or are inclined towards the non-materialist interpretation of the universe and who have a sympathetic personal interest in studies of and research into parapsychological, parapsychological and spiritual matters.' The newsletter went on to say that the method of compiling an ever-growing body of facts, each related to and depending on those already established, leads to the development of a great scientific system of immense value and entirely valid and coherent within its own terms. However, new discoveries unrelated to what is already known in a scientific way tend to be ignored, so scientific research should be focused to an increased extent on various areas where true advances in basic understanding of the human situation can be made. Then these results should be communicated within the scientific community. The newsletter continued: 'it may be useful at this point to refine further our

definition, still tentative, of the kind of material we are looking for to recommend to others. So far we have described it as follows:

- Evidence (not proof) of planning by or purpose of some dynamic mind other than that of any incarnate person connected with the research.
- Evidence of the existence of energies, laws and forms of life that cannot be directly apprehended by our normal physical senses.
- Evidence that the physical structure of living or inanimate things is dependent for its maintenance and growth on a more basic nonphysical field.
- Well-attested instances of higher sense perception (also ESP)
- Well-attested cases of mind functioning independently of the body (including out of the body experiences).
- Evidence of the continuity of life after the death of the body.
- More than usually conclusive cases of healing through paranormal agencies.'

Although a great deal of evidence of this kind has accumulated over the last 40 years, we are still in the early phases of a paradigm shift and there is very considerable resistance to this process, as witnessed by the polemical agenda of explicitly sceptical groups with respect particularly to parapsychology and complementary medicine. We welcome contributions to this creative process of exploration of frontiers and expansion of horizons.