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Chris Leek,  
Chair, British Mensa

## from the British representative on ExComm...

*As American Mensa Chairman, Elissa Rudolph, highlighted last month, the MIL ExComm consists of the internationally elected ExComm members, plus the Chairmen of the larger national Mensas*

*(currently American and British Mensa, though with its strong and consistent growth, I anticipate it will not be long before German Mensa joins the group).*

Mensa International plays a key role in coordinating development and activities across the world – helping develop emerging Mensa groups into autonomous Full National Mensas. As Chairman of British Mensa, it has been my privilege to help in that process. I have served on the Mensa International Board of Directors (IBD) since 1998, including serving as International Chairman (2003-2007), and on ExComm since 1999.

Mensa was founded in Oxford, England, in 1946. As such, British Mensa is the longest established group, and its history holds some useful lessons to help new groups. However, the reverse also applies – and I often find thoughts and ideas of much younger groups of great help in developing British Mensa.

When I joined Mensa I was joining an international society and I want to remain a member of an international society – not a ‘Little Englander’ or ‘Little American’ or ‘Little Anything Else’. Mensa International Limited (MIL) was dominated for too long by delegates of the two ‘big’ Mensa groups and it sometimes felt like a battleground between them. These days I feel it is particularly pleasing to see how much more involved the other groups have become in making clear what *they* want. The days when ExComm effectively ran Mensa International, consulting the rest of the Board of Directors only at the annual face-to-face meeting, are thankfully long gone. Today in the electronic age of communication information is shared more rapidly and can reach further; and there is also an understanding by IBD that they set the policy and the ExComm implements it.

In recent years some fundamental changes were made to the operational structure of Mensa International, streamlining and bringing an outdated administration into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Finances were stabilised, admin within the organisation greatly improved, cost-effective name protection introduced, and a solid platform

established to build on. I am keen to see Mensa International continue growing and developing and, under MIL Chairman Willem Bouwens and the current ExComm team, I see that happening. There are many positive initiatives currently in progress and membership is growing.

As Chairman of a national Mensa group my role is twofold: to ensure the interests of my national group are considered, and to offer experiences, gained from running a large National Mensa, to MIL (helps avoid reinventing the wheel). Each member of ExComm brings his or her own set of skills to their roles. My particular areas of expertise within Mensa International are within the field of Contracts, Name Protection, Licensing, and also IQ Testing, though the range of challenges a role on ExComm brings means that volunteers on the committee are constantly faced with brand new challenges - part of the fun of the role, though we are fortunate to have many talented volunteers to help us with those challenges.

As part of my role on ExComm, I try to raise awareness of Mensa International throughout the different national groups, with the

*(cont. on p02)*



(cont. from p01)

aim of getting more people involved in the running of the society and, of course, encouraging members to interact with fellow Mensans across the globe. That includes promoting participation in international programmes such as SIGHT, and support for gifted children. I am also pleased with the recent innovation of EMAG (European Mensa Annual Gathering), run collaboratively by European National Mensas and bringing together Mensans from many countries. A shared interest and participation in such programmes is part of what makes Mensa International valuable to Mensans worldwide.

In March Mensa International launched a brand new International website that has proved very popular, with some 3700+ members signed on within a fortnight of launch. A major step forward, helping enable members from across the world to connect and benefit from contact with fellow Mensans. If you haven't yet logged on to the new site at [www.mensa.org](http://www.mensa.org) then I recommend doing so, and seeing all the changes.

Mensa has played a significant role in my life; I met my wife Kirsty through Mensa, and we have two sons who are also members, as well as many other

relatives within the society. I have often heard members say Mensa is their family – in my case, my family is also Mensa!

In conclusion, to paraphrase something the Chairman of Mensa Spain once said, “We have 1,000 members, Mensa International has 100,000 – if you don't look outside your own borders you lose 99% of the Mensa experience”.

Whichever Mensa group you are part of, and wherever in the world, please reflect on the sentiment behind this.

*Chris Leek  
Chairman, British Mensa*

## EMAG 2010: Prague

**July 28 - August 1**

Old Town Conference Centre  
Novotnehoslavka (next to the Charles Bridge).

[www.mensa-emag.eu](http://www.mensa-emag.eu).



**October 15 - 17**

## Australian Mensa Conference

on beautiful Sydney Harbour

[amc2010@mensa.org.au](mailto:amc2010@mensa.org.au)

<http://mensa.org.au/AMC2010>



## How many words is your picture worth?

We are looking for:

# The Photographer of the Year

Mensa embraces all cultures, countries, religions, languages, races and great minds. There is one special place where all of these converge – the art of photography. A true meeting place of minds, a common language we can all share.

This is the sixth year that the Mensa Convergence Project has sought entries from around the Mensan world for the International Photo Cup competition, and it is anticipated that this year participation will increase to embrace all national and emerging mensa chapters as well as Direct International Members, so the winner will indeed merit the title “Mensa International Photographer of the Year 2010.”

Winners and finalists from the last five competitions have been displayed in several exhibitions globally.

The theme for this year’s competition is “**Water**”.

Each participating national Mensa will hold a national competition, sending the top three place winners to the International Convergence Committee. Final selection will be made by an external board of judges comprised of experts in the field. Entry is free, but you must be a financial member of Mensa for the year 2010.

**Contact your national Mensa for a copy of the rules**

For more information see [www.mensa.org](http://www.mensa.org) or email: [mensaphotocomp@gmail.com](mailto:mensaphotocomp@gmail.com)



Last year’s winning entry,  
*Hospitality*  
entered by Sorine Gejl, Denmark

**International Board of Directors (IBD) Meeting 2010**

Thursday October 21 - Sunday October 24

<http://ibd2010.mensa.org.nz> [ibd2010.mensa.org.nz](http://ibd2010.mensa.org.nz)



### international calendar

**July 16 - 25 Mensa Youth-SIG Camp** in Catalunya, Spain. Contact <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=92025890346&ref=ts>

**July 28 - August 1, 2010 EMAG in Prague.** <http://emag.mensa.cz>

**September 17-19, British Mensa Annual Gathering** in Chester, England, [diane@mensa.org.uk](mailto:diane@mensa.org.uk)

**October 15-17: Australian Mensa Annual Conference in Sydney, Australia** enquiries: [amc2010@mensa.org.au](mailto:amc2010@mensa.org.au)

### CRYPTIC WORDSQUARE

(c) Therese Moodie-Bloom 2007

Each of the following cryptic clues has a solution of five letters.

- Stress takes top off lock
- Be a street animal
- Keen queen embraces maturity
- Appears to have a thousand in four points
- Rage about egghead consent

Arrange your five five-letter solutions in a 5 x 5 grid to form a wordsquare (ie 1Across = 1Down etc)

(Answer below)

**October 21-24: International Board of Directors meeting in Auckland, New Zealand**  
Enquiries: [ibd2010@mensa.org.nz](mailto:ibd2010@mensa.org.nz)

### international directory

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Answers to Wordsquare: beast eager agree seems tress