

# First words



The nation continues to muddle by during these times of financial austerity. On 8 March 2011 the BBC News reported that UK consumer spending in February was down but that there had been an increase in spending on, perhaps surprisingly, shoes, and,

perhaps less surprisingly, alcohol... suggesting people are increasingly walking to the pub to drown their sorrows. And writing this on the day of the Budget, I see that Mr Osborne will collude with this trend by freezing alcohol duty and making a paltry attempt to reduce fuel costs.

Political pundits are suggesting it is the business community that's likely to be the major beneficiary of the Budget. As a way to rebuild economic growth in this country, the Government believes that the solutions are to be found from organisations and the people within. But to enable organisations to survive and prosper, they need the best possible working environments and cultures in which their staff can safely and happily carry out their jobs.

It's about being creative, resourceful and innovative. And this pretty much applies to what we do as workplace counsellors. We operate in workplace settings and at the heart of what we do is empowering our clients to find solutions to their problems.

I'm really pleased with the articles in this issue. I met Derek Mowbray at the Health and Wellbeing @ Work conference recently and he introduced me to the concept of 'corporate depression'. As workplace counsellors we're only too aware of the organisation as an entity in its own right, with its own anomalies, idiosyncrasies and behaviours. Derek's article looks at the solution from the point of view of resilience (p2).

In the last issue, we featured an article about cognitive analytic therapy (CAT). This time, I'm delighted to introduce Rosemary Parkinson, who has provided us with a detailed case study in a workplace setting to help illustrate CAT in action (p10).

Chris Athanasiades maintains the organisational flavour with a thorough charting of the development in the UK of employee assistance programmes (EAPs). Chris also advocates the need for EAPs to continue to evolve and offer more creative people solutions for their organisational masters.

To help us improve the experience of life at work, we sometimes need to understand how and why

things go wrong. Regular contributor Peter Jenkins has a timely update on issues surrounding negligence and duty of care (p22).

Offering a further solution from within organisations, it is with great pleasure that I can introduce Arizona-based Dr James Petersen (p25) who has written about his Stress Management Questionnaire (SMQ). He's offering *Counselling at Work* readers a free trial use of his SMQ, so please do take him up on this.

This issue features a new 'Interview' series, where we profile some of the key people in our industry... check out who we have lined up this time (p28).

Kevin Friery shortly ends his term of office as Chair of BACP Workplace and I'd like to take this opportunity to salute and thank him for his massive contribution to the division. We're all hoping he'll continue to offer his considerable talent and expertise in some future capacity (p30).

Taking over from Kevin will be Jean Crispin, currently Deputy Chair, and director of staff counselling at the University of Bristol. I know I can speak on behalf of the executive committee when I say how pleased we are that she's taken on this role. We'll update you further in the next issue when we also hope to reveal a few new names on the executive committee.

Regular readers will be aware of the recent debate surrounding the difference between being a 'workplace counsellor' and 'counselling in the workplace', particularly involving the relationship with the organisation. The executive committee is keen to debate this further and have written a discussion document (p32) that they hope, with the benefit of your feedback, will develop into a clearer position for the division and for BACP. The article explains how you can add your voice to the discussion.

Finally – and purely in the spirit of reflecting mass consumer trends – I must grab my shoes, pop down to the local for a wee dram and offer a toast, *in absentia*, to both Kevin and Jean. And, of course, a further toast to the contributors in this issue, and to all you loyal readers.

Cheers!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style. Below the name, there is a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line that extends to the right, serving as a decorative flourish or underline.

**Rick Hughes, Editor**

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