



The British Psychological Society
Promoting excellence in psychology

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The Society has offices in Belfast, Cardiff, Glasgow and London, as well as the main office in Leicester. All enquiries should be addressed to the Leicester office (see inside front cover for address).

The British Psychological Society

was founded in 1901, and incorporated by Royal Charter in 1965. Its object is 'to promote the advancement and diffusion of a knowledge of psychology pure and applied and especially to promote the efficiency and usefulness of Members of the Society by setting up a high standard of professional education and knowledge'.
Extract from The Charter



President's column

Dorothy Miell

Contact Dorothy Miell via the Society's Leicester office, or e-mail: presidentmiell@bps.org.uk

We have been doing a lot to develop our international profile recently, with discussions at Trustees about new Memorandums of Understanding with sister organisations around the world, considering how we might support capacity building in countries seeking to develop psychology, and not least with the beginnings of our programme of accrediting undergraduate programmes offered abroad in association with UK universities. As a result I thought it might be interesting to have a column that looked at psychology internationally. When a conversation with a colleague (Robert Logie CPsychol, FBPsS, FRSE, Professor of Human Cognitive Neuroscience at the University of Edinburgh) revealed that he had just been appointed as the first UK-based Chair of the USA's Psychonomic Society, I thought it might be interesting to ask him to do a guest column here to say a little about psychology in the USA. Over to Bob:

I was a fan of Alistair Cooke's *Letter from America* presented on BBC Radio 4 until shortly before he died in 2004. As a USA-based British journalist he provided major insights for Radio 4 listeners over nearly six decades of political and cultural life in North America. Rarely did he touch on science, but he had a deep understanding of the thinking, memory and behavior of American citizens and society. While I have never lived in the USA nor matched Alistair Cooke's engaging prose style, in January this year I found myself as the first UK-based Chair of the US-based Psychonomic Society. In case you are wondering, the name is derived from the Greek *nomos* and *psyche* referring to 'laws of the mind'. In the spirit of an Alistair Cooke letter for a British readership, I offer here a brief historical and contemporary context for the Psychonomic Society, and a few

observations about academic psychology in the United States through the eyes of a British psychologist.

During the 1930s and late 1940s, in Cambridge, Massachusetts (MA), Burrhus Frederic Skinner was developing his

experiments on the psychology of learning without reference to mental states. Around the same time, in Cambridge, UK, Frederick Bartlett was laying some foundations for cognitive psychology, and in 1946 the Experimental Psychology Society (EPS) was established. Ten years later in Cambridge, MA, George Miller kick-started computational approaches to cognition in the USA, and identified 7 ± 2 as a limit on verbal short-

term memory. Then Chicago, 1959, saw the start of the Psychonomic Society. The UK and US societies had, and have, similar scope and goals. Both were experimental-psychology-focused breakaway groups from the more practitioner-oriented British Psychological Society (BPS) and American Psychological Association (APA), and both remain distinct but have friendly relationships with their larger siblings.

The Psychonomic Society has 2200 members, with 580 based outside North America. It runs six journals: *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review*; *Memory and Cognition*; *Attention, Perception and Psychophysics*; *Cognitive and Affective Behavioral Neuroscience*; *Learning and Behavior*; and *Behavior Research Methods*. There is a conference in November each year (19–22 November 2015, Chicago) with no registration fee. Its website (www.psychonomic.org) had a recent major overhaul, with content organised by another UK-



This month's column features guest Professor Robert Logie, the first UK-based Chair of the USA's Psychonomic Society



Society milestones

The Society has welcomed its 50,000th member: Mr George Kitsaras, Assistant Psychologist at Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust, who joined soon after his graduation and arrival in the UK.

George is currently taking a master's degree in clinical psychology at the University of Reading. He said: 'I was aware of the importance of BPS before coming to the UK. Joining was my first goal after my graduation back in Greece because many of my colleagues highly recommended it. One of the reasons I became a member is that I believe a career in psychology in the UK is linked with BPS membership due to the unique networking opportunities that the Society offers and its international prestige. Also the access to a wide range of journals and reductions on training opportunities are particularly valuable at this point in my career.'

George is looking forward to his prize of attendance at the

Society's 2015 annual conference in Liverpool (5–7 May). He also receives a year's free Society membership.

The milestone continues the yearly growth that has seen membership rise from over 10,000 in the early 1990s. Society President Professor Dorothy Miell said: 'All of our members – from those who have been loyal activists for years to those joining now – are the lifeblood of the Society. As a membership organisation our strength comes from the effect that each and every one of our members can make in their work promoting psychology – whether by teaching, practising or researching in so many different settings. We are proud to welcome each new member and to offer them support in their work.'

The Society has also celebrated another milestone, the 50th anniversary of the granting of our Royal Charter – the principal governing document, which established the objectives by which the Society still operates today. To mark the occasion, the President, Professor Dorothy Miell, has sent a message of Loyal Greeting to Her Majesty the Queen on behalf of all members.

The Charter has undergone a number of revisions over the course of the last 50 years – perhaps most notably in 1987, when we gained authority to run a Register of Chartered Psychologists. The current version can be read at www.bps.org.uk/what-we-do/bps/governance/royal-charter-statutes-rules/royal-charter-statutes-rules.



The Society's Royal Charter

based psychologist, Stephan Lewandowsky (Bristol). It has launched several new initiatives, including early career and graduate student travel awards, and an annual competition for a leading-edge workshop linked with a journal special issue and a conference symposium. The 12 members of the Governing Board will be presenting their research in Edinburgh on 17 July this year, followed by a jointly sponsored symposium at the European Society for Cognitive Psychology conference in Cyprus (17–20 September). In May 2016 there will be an international meeting in Granada, Spain.

'Love it or loathe it, there is no Research Excellence Framework in the USA, but there is no government block grant for research that depends on grants and contracts. Many university staff are on nine-month salaries each year for teaching only, and add on a 'summer salary' by teaching summer courses or by building three months' salary into research grants. There is no external examining or nationally regulated undergraduate curriculum for psychology, yet some teaching-intensive colleges have very

strong reputations for teaching quality; as do some research-intensive universities, although the latter often rely on postgraduates and postdocs to deliver the teaching. Postgraduate professional practitioner training is regulated by the APA.

'Student fees can amount to a small fortune, unless students obtain scholarships. In contrast, funding for postgraduates is common, often in return for teaching and research assistance. Student ratings are taken seriously but there is the inevitable tension between teaching quality and teaching popularity that crops up whenever students see themselves as paying customers rather than participants in learning. The wealthier (and some less wealthy) US universities build larger and smarter student facilities and university buildings to compete with rival institutions for attracting undergraduate students, and this elevates the fee levels. The 2014 film documentary *Ivory Tower* offers a critical perspective on spiralling university fees in the USA. It questions the cost/benefit balance, and raises the spectre of student

debt levels possibly leading to a collapse of the university system akin to the financial meltdown of 2008. Whether the danger is real or for dramatic effect in the film, there are serious lessons for the UK, and government budget constraints in both countries are a real concern.

'As in the UK, psychology in the USA has seen a vibrant diaspora into neuroscience, artificial intelligence, human factors, and education, among others. Rather than an identity crisis, the diversity could be seen as a sign of the growth and influence of psychology within other disciplines. There remains demand for the core of psychology, highlighted by its continued student popularity worldwide and the volume of high-quality peer-reviewed published research. UK psychology as a whole seemed to do quite well in the REF, and the 2014 meeting of the Psychonomic Society in Long Beach, California was the largest ever with 2450 delegates. So, to end this letter on a positive note, the discipline of psychology on both sides of the Atlantic is facing challenges but appears to be alive and well.'



New guidelines for expert witnesses

The Society has recently published new guidelines to represent best professional practice for psychologists acting as independent experts, or as professional witnesses on behalf of their employer. This is the fourth edition, replacing all prior versions.

The role of psychology in supporting various legal processes has expanded markedly in recent years, with a welcome increase in the influence of research from psychology. This has involved

an increasing number of members undertaking expert witness work, including those whose research or practice may not have routinely involved them in contact with the legal system. The new guidelines are therefore designed to be as clear and accessible as possible. They also reflect a number of revisions in the advice to psychologists, resulting from recent legal changes and increased levels of accountability of experts.

In light of such changes the guidelines place a greater stress on issues of ethical and professional conduct. The importance of maintaining professional standards of conduct, within often adversarial settings, is stressed. In line with the Society's role in promoting psychology, the need to ensure that psychology as a discipline and a profession is not brought into disrepute is stressed.

In support of Society members the Expert Witness

Advisory Group of the Society is also available to address ethical and professional issues raised from this area of work. Any ethical or professional concerns can be raised with the group and should be addressed to the Chair of the Expert Witness Advisory Group, at the Leicester office of the Society. A copy of the guidelines is available via tinyurl.com/oydxy3x.

*Professor David Crighton
Chair, Expert Witness
Advisory Group*

CAMHS service concerns

Senior mental health professionals working in child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) are reporting major concerns about reductions in service for children with mental health problems.

These concerns and others listed were revealed in a 2014 survey of clinical psychologists, members of the Division of Clinical Psychology's Faculty of Children Young People, and their Families. The picture that emerged was one of rising waiting times and a lack of age-appropriate services not prepared to intervene early, resulting in children and young people experiencing

difficulties that are more complex and difficult to treat when they are finally seen.

BPS President Elect Professor Jamie Hacker Hughes said: 'The Society welcomes the renewed focus from the NHS England and Department of Health task force report on prioritising CAMHS in England. Our representative on this task force emphasised the need for an overhaul. We stressed this further in the Society's response to the Health Select Committee inquiry into child and adolescent mental health and CAMHS. In particular, we do welcome the acknowledgment of both the scale of the problem and



the need for a radical rethink of how services for children and young people with mental health difficulties are conceptualised, commissioned and delivered.'

The Society survey confirmed significant unease about reductions in staffing, particularly of more highly skilled professionals. Some 62 per cent of services had decreased their overall staffing levels in the last three years, and 42 per cent reported further cuts were being planned. Other survey findings included that 71 per cent reported their service had tightened the acceptance criteria and raised the severity thresholds for being seen; quality of provision had decreased in 66 per cent of services; and 53 per cent had

seen a move to more diagnosis-led, medicalised approaches.

Professor Jamie Hacker Hughes said: 'We are seriously concerned that over half of respondents reported a move to more diagnosis-led, medicalised approaches, given the significant weight of evidence in favour of psychological interventions for the majority of child mental health issues. We welcome opportunities to build on existing work and relationships with other professional groups and hope the task force report will help contribute towards the much-needed implementation of essential service transformation for children and young people with mental health difficulties.'

SOCIETY NOTICES

- 'Introduction to ACT for long-term conditions' workshop See p.258
- Psychology in the Pub See p.282
- Annual Conference, 5 -7 May, Liverpool See p.i
- BPS conferences and events See p.308
- 2015 CPD workshops See pp.310-311
- North East of England Branch 'The perils and potential of talking about genes and achievement', 19 May, York See p.313
- Book Award - call for nominations See p.313
- William Inman Prize - call for nominations See p.315
- Psychology of Education Section annual conference, 23-24 October, Liverpool See p.315

Stirring stuff in Stirling

February, and it was time for psychologists from across Scotland to gather for BPS Scotland's Annual Scientific Meeting and Scottish Branch AGM. This year we gathered in Stirling to share news and views, meet old and make new friends and get up close and personal with cutting-edge research.

The new Special Group for Independent Practitioners started our day off with a vibrant Café Psychologique. Based on the World Café approach (www.theworldcafe.com/method.html) Barbara Douglas, Christine Hamilton and Carole Allan facilitated a session that gave us a feast of food for thought about what it means to be an independent practitioner and how the new Special Group can support us.

We continued the tradition of distinguished speakers at our Scientific Meeting: incoming Society President Professor Jamie Hacker Hughes, and Professor Nanette Mutrie.

Professor Hacker Hughes spoke about 'Military and veteran psychological health in the British Isles'. We heard that post-traumatic stress has a long history, appearing in text from ancient Mesopotamia through to Shakespeare plays and of course in modern times. Since World War 1, psychologists have been in the thick of the battle to understand shell shock, Gulf War syndrome, post-traumatic stress, successfully challenging purely medical models and treatments. Psychologists have developed better selection methods, and we were privileged to be joined by Professor Sidney Irvine, whose work 50 years ago on selection is still used today. Psychologists have worked on Morse code, time and motion, and cockpit design.

In a long list of psychological theory, research and practice, Professor Hacker Hughes highlighted our role in developing effective treatment for psychological casualties, using strategies based on Proximity (keeping people in the field), Immediacy (treat as quickly as possible), and Expectancy (that you will recover).

In future, Professor Hacker Hughes said we need to focus on the increasing diversity and ageing of veterans, and on the growing numbers with missing limbs (due to better body armour and helmets). We need parity of esteem across the armed forces and an armed forces network to build effective links with health, families and veteran organisations

to provide oversight, leadership and coordination of a range of services from health to housing. The Veterans Commission (unique to Scotland at the moment) is an excellent way to begin to achieve this.

Our second speaker was Professor Nanette Mutrie whose talk was 'That pedometer – it's an amazing wee device: Is self monitoring the best bet for physical activity behaviour change?'. It wasn't long before Professor Mutrie had us all on our feet, painfully aware of just how long we'd been sitting down. We started off with a jog through the evidence on inactivity: that is it's as risky for our health as smoking, if not riskier. As little as 14 hours sitting a week can have health implications – even if you do a lot of physical activity. We heard that we're walking less and less; the average Scot walked 73 miles less last year than they did a decade ago. And yet the physical and psychological benefits of walking are considerable. Countries round the world are focusing on walking: the Toronto Charter is a global call to action for increasing physical activity and active travel (walking, cycling, running) is much more common in Netherlands and Denmark. Pedometers are very effective in helping people make and sustain behaviour change, fitting well with the need to set goals and self-monitor.

Professor Mutrie told us about a programme for football fans (see Football Fans in Training resources at www.ffit.org.uk/page2/index.html). Men

are often hard to reach around weight loss, but by working with their love of football and club affiliation, Professor Mutrie developed a highly effective behaviour change programme that men joined and stuck with. Banter with their mates and being part of the club were major motivators for them.

It was another great day, and once again thanks to Morag Taylor (Chair of DCoPS) and Christine Hamilton (Chair of DOPS) for sponsoring the Scientific Meeting, and our illustrious speakers for inspiring us. Also thanks to Joan Fraser, the Regional Advisor to Scottish Branch who supported us to organise the event and also ensured that everything ran like clockwork on the day.

For BPS members in Scotland and the Scottish Branch, it's going to be a busy year. We've our annual undergraduate and the national postgraduate conferences, both in Glasgow this year. Our work supporting the development of a Scottish teaching qualification in psychology continues, and we will be supporting BPS national priorities round dementia end of life care, brain injury and offending, and behaviour change. The Branch is also actively engaged with the Mental Welfare Commission, the Scottish Health and Well Being Partnership and working with university psychology careers advisers. If you're a Scottish Branch member and want to get involved and do your bit, get in touch.

*Dr Sue Northrop
Chair, BPS Scottish Branch*

Dementia research funding

The Society has welcomed the UK government's commitment to dementia research that was announced recently by Prime Minister David Cameron. With some 850,000 people currently living with dementia in the UK, and that figure expected to rise to one million in the next decade, the challenge of dementia is significant.

Society President Professor Dorothy Miell said: 'The government's announcement of £300m to be spent on research into

dementia over the next five years is significant. This is a complex area of research. Whilst overall awareness of dementia has increased thanks to recent campaigns, funding for research is vital if we are going to be able to understand dementia fully in order that we can ultimately help to improve the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

'Psychology and neuroscience have played a significant role so far in our understanding of dementia, and this funding pledge will

be an opportunity for many members of the Society to continue to contribute to that important work.'

Professor Linda Clare, who is the Chair of the Society's Dementia Advisory Group, added: 'This investment for research is certainly good news. Alongside stepping up the research effort, it is vital to offer high-quality support for people living with dementia and their families. Psychologists are at the forefront of improving care and service provision.'