



## The British Psychological Society

Promoting excellence in psychology

# one on one



**We dip into the Society member database and pick out...**

**Elizabeth Bird**  
SW Lead Psychologist HMPS

### **One book I would recommend**

*The Milkman* by Anna Burns. It very subtly explores how socio-cultural dynamics can subdue personal identity and aspiration.

### **One rewarding thing about my job**

This year I have been a psychologist for 25 years. I can't imagine another job that would have been so stimulating and engaging. It has definitely been a vocation for me: I moan sometimes, but am never bored. I have worked with so many committed professionals who really care about their clients and put up with a very challenging environments.

### **One thing psychologists should be proud of**

Psychologists have the ability to bring about cultural change, using their knowledge, and more importantly, by gentle influence. We generally don't use position and power but guide people, organisations and societies to approach problems in a different way. I think to do this well we have to be amazingly patient and get alongside the people we come into contact with. This is often emotionally demanding and requires sophisticated interaction with others. Essential is developing insight on the hoof and showing authentic compassion. We don't always get it back in equal measure, which is what makes the work something we should be proud of.

### **One thing I would change**

If I could change anything at the moment it would be the nature of political discourse. It seems politicians and the media thrive on reducing situations to the extreme positions which are often overly simplistic. This encourages unhelpful conflict and competition. The world is facing some big challenges in the next 30 years around climate

change and the inevitable mass movement of people. I think both world and local politics need to focus on more long term and complex solutions to the management of resources and encourage joint endeavour. I would love interviewers to stop asking 'who is to blame' and saying 'so what have we learned, and what needs to happen now to make this right'. We need a greater focus on compromise and realism rather than 'winning' arguments.

### **One place**

I would like to go back to Tanzania before I die. I love the landscapes, the vibrancy of the people, the music and the big sky.

### **One piece of advice for aspiring psychologists**

Being a psychologist gives specialist knowledge and understanding, but it is not enough to just practice this to our 'clients'... we have to use this to support colleagues, even the difficult ones, and apply what we learn to get the job done.

### **One thing about the Society**

Over the years I have been ambivalent about the BPS. On the one hand I think it essential for ensuring we continue to grow and develop standards as a profession; on the other I think it struggles to 'move' flexibly and quickly enough to meet the needs of members and the dynamics of the world in which it sits. Having been a Divisional Chair in recent years I have a greater understanding of the multiplicity of demands and views on how it should be. So maybe plodding along steadily, promoting best practice psychology in all its forms, is good enough. Not being driven by the whims of members and the wider world, but holding fast to principles, is a good role to play. This year I decided not to renew my membership in the classic frame of mind 'what does the BPS do for me'. It lasted about three weeks, but it was like cutting loose a wise old relative. One who is slightly out of touch, a little annoying but ultimately has stood the test of time and has lots of insight to offer if only we would take the time to listen. It is the embodiment of over 100 years of experience and knowledge, and so I will continue to drop in for a cuppa and a chat.

### **coming soon...**

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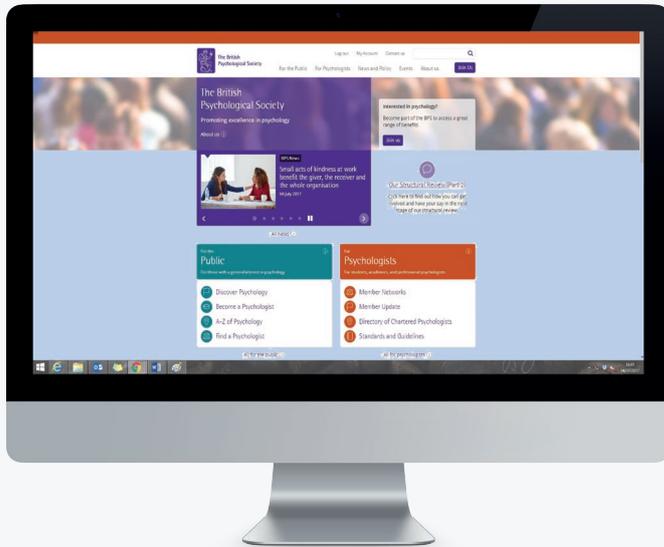
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## society notices

**Division of Forensic Psychology Annual Conference**  
Liverpool, 18-20 June *See p.20*  
**Funding for Study Visits** *See p.27*  
**BPS conferences and events** *See p.36*  
**Psychotherapy Section, Psychotherapy & Mindfulness Workshops & Reading Group Meetings**  
*See p.49*  
**Qualitative Methods and History & Philosophy Sections Joint Annual Conference** Cardiff, 3-5 July  
*See p.78*  
**BPS conferences and events** *See p.36*  
**Book Award** *See p.83*  
**Research Seminars** *See p.83*  
**BPS Annual Conference** Harrogate, 1-2 May  
*See outside back cover*

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## society vacancies

**Chief Editor, British Journal of Social Psychology** *See p.36*  
**Chair and members, Assessment, Diagnosis and Formulation: Guidance for Psychologists Task and Finish Group** *See p.46*

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).

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**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