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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

The whole of the UK is in countdown mode to 7 May, and I have to keep reminding myself that the obsession with major changes looming on that date is not about our own leadership processes, since the last days of my presidential term are on almost the same schedule! We hold the Society AGM during our Annual Conference (in Liverpool ACC, 5–8 May) and that's when I will formally hand over to the next President, Professor Jamie Hacker Hughes. At the AGM on 6 May we also announce the outcome of our own elections for the next President Elect (i.e. who will serve as President in 2016/17) and it is the point at which other new members of the Board of Trustees take up their roles, including our new Honorary General Secretary, Dr Carole Allan.

Of course the transition within the Society is less disruptive than any potential general election outcome, since our Presidential Team work very closely with each other as well as with the staff of the Society to ensure a degree of continuity. Jamie and I have worked together for a year now (along of course with Richard Mallows, our Vice President until May), which gives more of a sense of a rolling three-year agenda for each member of the team. I have focused over the last two years on developing and beginning to implement the Society's new strategic plan as well as seeing through a review of our governance processes (begun by Richard), and Jamie is already well into the Member Network Review which he has been leading and will need to see through to implementation in the coming year(s).

The outcome of the general election is likely to be hugely important for us as psychologists, given that the various parties are all campaigning on issues that centrally affect various aspects of our profession and the people

we work with. Funding and policies for education (from pre-school to postgraduate) and science, for health including mental health services, for the criminal justice system and employment legislation are all key battlegrounds for the parties and areas that psychologists are heavily involved in and so likely to be affected by proposed changes. It is incredibly important that we campaign to ensure that those who we work to support, often the least able to speak

for themselves, have services not just protected but improved, and that our research is supported to uncover new and more effective ways of changing society for the better. Often this involves working with other professions and disciplines to enable voices to be heard and expertise to be listened to, and I've been really heartened to see the increased media profile for issues with clear psychological relevance in recent weeks (such as through the 'We Need To Talk' coalition, or the new BPS Impact web portal (www.bps.org.uk/impact) explaining some of the amazing outcomes of UK psychological research). Psychologists are

also of course involved in the electoral process itself through offering an understanding of some of the many factors affecting voters' decision-making processes, as well as in the work on opinion polling and analysis of voting intentions, and in these areas as well the expertise of our colleagues is gaining greater visibility.

As I look back on my presidential year, apart from the frustrations about not having been able to get things changed that I'd hoped to, especially those issues and processes that so many of us have wanted to see improve for so long, I think the most positive aspects will be memories of the many individual members I have met. I'm delighted how often members talk to me about their phenomenal enthusiasm for their engagement with various parts of the profession, the discipline and the Society, and about how keen they are for all these aspects to



The outcome of the general election is likely to be hugely important for us as psychologists



Spearman Medal 2015

Dr Iroise Dumontheil

A psychologist who has investigated a region of the brain at the crossroads of executive control and social cognition has been awarded the Society's Spearman Medal.

The Medal is given each year to a psychologist who has published outstanding work within eight years of completing a PhD. This year's winner is Dr Iroise Dumontheil, from the Department of Psychological Sciences at Birkbeck, University of London.

Dr Dumontheil's research examines social cognition and executive functions in adulthood and their development during adolescence. She is particularly interested in the role played by the rostral prefrontal cortex, the most anterior part of the brain, located just behind the forehead, which supports both social functions, such as understanding other people's intentions ('mindreading'), and complex executive functions, such as remembering to do something later. She has been using in her research behavioural methods, such as asking people to perform tasks on a computer, but also neuroimaging and the study of common genetic variants.

Dr Dumontheil obtained her doctorate from University Paris VI, although she did some of the research at UCL's Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience. She has since worked mainly in Britain, with

postdoctoral positions at the Medical Research Council's Cognition and Brain Science Unit in Cambridge and UCL, except for a year spent at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm.

Her research continues to focus on the development of the brain in adolescence, but she is also interested in whether psychology and cognitive neuroscience research can inform education, and whether appropriate training intervention (such as mindfulness meditation training) can improve people's ability to regulate their emotions and focus their attention.



Dr Iroise Dumontheil

Dr Dumontheil said: 'I am extremely pleased and honoured to have been awarded the Spearman Medal. I feel very lucky to have been able to do my doctoral and postdoctoral research in great research departments and would like to thank my supervisors and mentors over the years: Professors Alain Berthoz, Paul Burgess, John Duncan and Torkel Klingberg, and in particular Professor Sarah-Jayne Blakemore who nominated me for this award.

'As a lecturer at Birkbeck, I am currently involved in a project, investigating the effect of mobile phones on adolescent cognition (with a team at Imperial College) and whether training children to 'stop and think' may help their performance in maths and science (with other researchers at Birkbeck and the Institute of Education).'

flourish and develop. At times when things get tough – when progress seems slow or people show their rather more difficult sides – it's that enthusiasm that has kept me going.

In conversation with the partner of a colleague of mine it was so good to hear of her commitment to both the discipline and profession and her great interest in the Society and its work, despite her not being actively involved in any of its formal structures. I'm aware that sometimes we don't engage enough with those members who aren't part of the representative structures of the Society and perhaps it's time we reminded ourselves about how important the Society pages of this publication are for that wider group – thank you, Joyce, for reminding me of this through our conversations and perhaps we can find ways to do more to use these pages to boost our dialogue with such members.

It is of course the combined force of all our members that gives the Society its power and influence, and so it was particularly gratifying to finally reach our

long-awaited target of 50,000 members, and rather fittingly in the 50th anniversary year of the granting of our Royal Charter. We'll be celebrating both at the Annual Conference in Liverpool. It's also been good to see some of our international ambitions being realised, with the first accreditation visits to international universities offering psychology degrees in association with UK institutions. Extending both our membership reach and the support we can give to build professional capacity in psychology makes such an endeavour really worthwhile, and the membership staff and accrediting teams have done a great job over the last year to make this possible.

While there's a long way to go with the implementation of the Strategic Plan, I think that it was a major step forward to have agreed on our priority areas:

1. Promote the advancement of the knowledge base of psychology and its practice through support for research, education and professional training.
2. Develop the psychological knowledge

and professional skills of our members.

3. Maximise the impact of psychology on public policy.
4. Increase the visibility of psychology and raise public awareness of its contribution to society.
5. Attract new members and broaden our membership base.
6. Develop our organisation to support change.

The first five are about what we want to do, but we may get nowhere with them unless we ensure the final one is achieved, and I remain very committed in my vice presidential year to work with the staff of the Society and the Trustees to ensure that the organisation is structured, managed and resourced appropriately. I'll also ensure that progress is monitored and reported on regularly, both to the Board of Trustees and to members.

So as I sign off, determined to keep pushing for improvements through working with the new Presidential Team, I'd like to thank you all for your support over the last year.



Psychobiology – where mind meets matter

Members of the Society's Psychobiology Section introduce the field and their network

Psychology is the science of mind, but in any real sense a mind cannot exist without a body in which to reside. Studying relations between mind and body can greatly inform our understanding of psychology – which is where psychobiology comes in. Psychobiology describes the interaction between biological systems and behaviour. Psychobiologists research how cognition (what we are thinking) and mood (how we are feeling) combine with biological events. Striving to understand how psychological and biological connections shape the human experience provides psychobiology with a unique perspective in psychology.

Psychobiology research covers topics such as how psychological stressors like exams can lead to heart palpitations, or how foods, such as oily fish, or drugs, such as alcohol, can impact on the brain and behaviour. To give a more detailed example, a recent psychobiology study showed how sexual risk takers, defined as individuals for whom one of their last two

sexual intercourse partners was someone they had just met for the first time, showed a greater increase in the stress hormone cortisol during a laboratory stress test (Harrison et al., 2014). In this case, observing interaction between a psychological variable (sexual risk taking) and a biological one (the cortisol stress response) furthers the psychological understanding of behaviour pertinent to sexual health. It appears that sexual risk takers have some awareness of the dangers posed by their behaviour.

The same team has recently developed a novel 'real-life' stress-inducing procedure based on skydiving. They have shown that repeated exposure to this potentially life-threatening stressor does not lead to a reduction in the physiological stress response indicated by cortisol as is often seen in stressors administered in the laboratory (Hare et al., 2013). This finding indicates that it is still necessary to mount a biological response to a potentially life-threatening stressor, no matter how many times we have encountered it.



www.bps.org.uk/events/conferences/psychobiology-section-annual-scientific-meeting-2015 for further details). As well as academic papers on varied topics from mindfulness (e.g. Lomas et al., 2014) to underwater helicopter evacuation (Robinson et al., 2008) and from herbal supplements (Jackson et al., 2012) to swearing and pain tolerance (Stephens & Umland, 2011), the enduring and popular highlights of our Annual Scientific Meetings are the evening lectures provided by eminent guest speakers from the world of psychobiology.

In 2014 the best-selling author, TV presenter and academic Sir Colin Blakemore (University of London) gave a talk entitled 'What's so special about the human brain?'. Colin provided fascinating insights into the similarities and differences between the brains of humans and animals. In 2013 Professor Sophie Scott (UCL) gave an entertaining and thought-provoking talk on the neuroscience of laughter. Sophie's public profile is well illustrated by her appearance on BBC Radio 4's *The Life Scientific* (tinyurl.com/pmg2tox). She explained the important social role of laughter, whereby if one person is laughing then others are likely to join in, and also that laughter is not unique to humans because rats have been shown to laugh in response to being tickled.

Professor David Nutt presented a fascinating evening lecture in 2013 arguing that banned drugs such as cannabis, Ecstasy and LSD could be put to good therapeutic uses if only politicians were willing to sanction it. The talk, which was strongly evidence-based,

THE BPS PSYCHOBIOLOGY SECTION CONTRIBUTORS

Richard Stephens Senior Psychology Lecturer at Keele University and Chair of the Psychobiology Section

Michael Smith Senior Lecturer in Psychobiology and Health Psychology at Northumbria University and Treasurer of the Psychobiology Section

Sarita Robinson Senior Psychology Lecturer at University of Central Lancashire and Committee Member of the Psychobiology Section

Trudi Edginton a cognitive neuroscientist at University of Westminster and Committee Member of the Psychobiology Section

Philippa Jackson Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Northumbria University and is Webmaster of the Psychobiology Section

Great science, great view

The academic discipline of psychobiology is represented within the Society by the Psychobiology Section (see the Section website at www.bps.org.uk/psychobiology). The Section provides a forum for discussion and collaboration in research on psychobiological topics via our flagship event, the Psychobiology Section Annual Scientific Meeting, and by regular symposia at other psychology meetings such as the BPS Annual Conference. In so doing the Psychobiology Section fulfils the learned society function of the BPS for this area of psychology.

Our Annual Scientific Meeting is held in the first week of September each year, and for several years it has been held in the beautiful surroundings of the Low Wood Hotel on the shores of Lake Windermere in the Lake District. The meeting is open to anybody with an interest in psychobiology and provides a great opportunity to showcase research findings and for researchers to benefit from insights and suggestions from experienced investigators (see



provided food for thought and lively discussion – staples of the Psychobiology Annual Scientific Meeting. Professor Nutt has since presented these views on Channel 4 television and was the winner of the 2013 John Maddox Prize in recognition of courage in promoting science and evidence on a matter of public interest, despite facing difficulty and hostility in doing so.

Regular attendees will attest to how well the Psychobiology Section Annual Scientific Meeting facilitates networking and developing collaborative research with enthusiastic and friendly colleagues, as well as allowing delegates to keep up to date with the latest developments in psychobiology.

Young doctors

The Psychobiology Section is committed to supporting young scientists. Final-year undergraduate students whose third-year project involved research in any area of psychobiology are encouraged to enter the annual Undergraduate Project Prize sponsored by Salimetrics (it's easy and free to enter – details at www.bps.org.uk/psychobiology/undergradprize – deadline is 10 July 2015). The winner receives complimentary registration and accommodation for the Annual Scientific Meeting and they are asked to present their research to the meeting. This may seem a daunting prospect, but it is a very friendly and supportive meeting and all winners have reported finding the experience extremely positive and beneficial. For example, winner Jennifer Fisk commented: 'The Psychobiology

cohort were very complimentary and have certainly helped to increase my confidence regarding research and presenting in the future.' Over recent years the winning undergraduate submissions have covered topics such as noradrenergic modulation of arousal in rats, state aggression manipulation and pain tolerance, socio-sexual orientation and olfactory sensitivity to human pheromones, and the effects of acute flavanol consumption on dark adaptation and high frequency sound detection.

Postgraduate students can apply for two free places at the Annual Scientific Meeting. Sponsored by the Psychobiology Section, these cover registration and accommodation costs for students, which would usually total £300 for the full three-day meeting (for details, see www.bps.org.uk/psychobiology/postgrad). In addition, there is a special postgraduate package allowing attendance on the afternoon of Thursday 3 September and morning of Friday 4 September including student workshop, poster presentation, keynote speaker, scientific talks and 'meet the experts lunch' at the discounted rate of £62.40. This is a first-rate opportunity for postgraduate students to develop confidence in the art of academic presenting and networking.

Catch us on tour

As well as its own Annual Scientific Meeting, the Psychobiology Section hosts a symposium each year at other academic conferences. In 2014 the Section organised, jointly with the Cognitive Section, a symposium at the Society's Annual Conference in Birmingham. The title of the symposium was 'New Directions in Cognitive Neuroscience' and the keynote speaker was Professor John Aggleton of Cardiff University. John is considered among the most eminent cognitive neuroscientists in the world, and is a Fellow of the Royal Society. He has made an outstanding contribution to our understanding of the neural basis of memory. John's keynote was on the topic of 'memory beyond the hippocampus'. He referred to anatomical, behavioural and clinical evidence to suggest that conceptualisations of memory should not place the hippocampus at the top of a neuroanatomical hierarchy, but should instead view memory as being mediated by a vast extended-hippocampal network. The talk outlined a number of very impressive studies conducted by John and his colleagues, and highlighted John's clear passion for both the cognitive neuroscience of memory and history, as John drew some very witty parallels

between the neuroanatomy of memory and key historical events.

In 2015, thanks to the support of a BPS International Conference Symposium Scheme grant, the Psychobiology Section is hosting a symposium at the European Congress of Psychology at University of Milano-Bicocca, Milan, Italy, 7–10 July 2015. The title of the symposium will be 'The Psychobiology of Stress', and some of our most talented stress researchers will be presenting their latest findings.

To old friends and new acquaintances

So that's been a very quick introduction to psychobiology and the work of the Psychobiology Section. Please check out the website for details of how to become a member of the Section (it costs just £10 per year for Society members) and how to register for the next Psychobiology Section Annual Scientific Meeting. We have some fantastic guest speakers lined up, not least Professor Michael Maier (London School of Psychiatry), curator of the Corsellis Brain Collection – one of the largest collections of its kind in the world, comprising more than 6000 specimens, including cases of Parkinson's disease, Creutzfeldt Jacob disease and depression.

Each year at the Annual Scientific Meeting we look forward to welcoming old friends and making new acquaintances. Our meeting slogan does not exaggerate – on the shores of Lake Windermere the science really is as good as the view.

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Young people's mental health plan welcomed

The Society has welcomed the announcement of a five-year plan for a complete overhaul of mental health services for children and young people in England contained in a new report *Future in Mind: Promoting, Protecting and Improving Our Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing*. The report by the Department of Health's Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Taskforce found that many young people are not able to access the help they need.

Chair of the Division of Clinical Psychology's Faculty of Children and Young People Julia Faulconbridge, the Society's representative on the taskforce, said: 'The taskforce successfully engaged children, young people and parents throughout and harnessed the knowledge and drive of a wide range of people who have frontline experience of

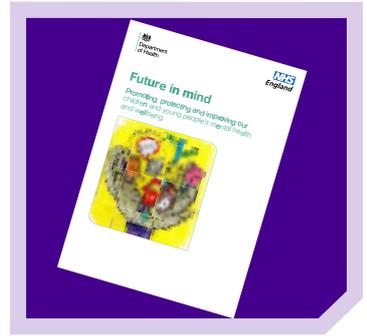
working in the field. The Society commends the accurate and succinct account of the current problems in mental health provision for children, young people and families. The evidence from our members shows that these have now reached crisis point. The report contains a powerful summary of the social, psychological and economic costs of the current lack of provision, and the arguments for change are very welcome.'

Among the report's many recommendations, the Society particularly welcomes:

- | *Promoting resilience, prevention and early intervention.* In addition to the strengthening of specialist provision where needed, the report places a significant emphasis on the reintroduction and enhancement of provision for prevention and early intervention, which has been consistently highlighted by our membership as having been lost over recent years.
- | *Remodelling of provision to fit the needs of children, young people and parents with integrated commissioning and provision across all settings.* This will improve the quality and quantity of provision, removing waste caused by uncoordinated services, reducing gaps and increasing the chances that children and young people are seen in the right place first time. This means that priority needs to be given to high-quality assessment and formulation at an early stage in the pathways to ensure the best starting point for intervention, using the evidence base and what is available in the locality.
- | *Creating a public awareness campaign with a focus on*

reducing stigma.

- | *Emphasis on both the existing evidence base and the need to expand this.* Academic and applied psychologists have always been at the forefront of research to increase understanding of child development and the wider social and economic impacts on children and families. They have consistently led on the strategies for enhancing children's resilience and life chances and on ways in which they can be helped when problems arise.
- | *Recognising the importance of schools.* The school environment can be harmful to young people, but it can become the place where they gain most support. Schools are very complex environments, and significant work needs to be undertaken in training and support provision to enable them all to take on a whole-school approach to psychological wellbeing. Schools are working daily with children and young people with severe and complex mental health problems as well as those in the early stages of difficulties. It is vital that there is access to rapid high-quality psychological assessment and that students are then given the most appropriate, evidence-based provision in or out of school in an integrated pathway that includes their families.
- | *The recognition that current age of transition around the 18th birthday is damaging to many young people in need of services.* It is inappropriate in both developmental and social terms. The Society supports the call for



flexibility and would support the development of services covering young people aged up to 25 according to their needs.

- | *An increased focus on the needs of children and young people with physical health problems and how physical and psychological health are connected.* This cannot just be addressed through service provision but needs to be tackled by reducing inequality and disadvantage at a societal level rather than just trying to ameliorate their damaging effects.

Julia continued: 'The problems described in the report have been recognised by families and those working with them for many years and have now reached crisis point. Therefore the Society supports the taskforce's recommendations and hopes that these are implemented carefully by the next government with energy and commitment. The recent announcement of additional funding is a welcome step towards this.'

'In addition, the Faculty will be launching a set of papers in October this year entitled "What does good look like in psychological services for children, young people and families?". These will lay out the evidence and recommendations for the provision of good multidisciplinary psychological services across all settings in which children young people and parents are seen to act as a guide to commissioners and service providers in the transformation process.'

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Become an Associate Fellow

The title Associate Fellow (AFBPsS) is awarded by the Society in recognition of several years' experience and contribution to the field of psychology. Becoming an Associate Fellow is a valuable way for members to demonstrate years of experience, competence and reputation in the field of psychology. Only Associate Fellows can use the designation AFBPsS. This professional title tells employers, clients and peers across all sectors, nationally and internationally, that an individual has contributed to the field of psychology through the application of specialist knowledge.

The Associate Fellow award is available to members who have satisfied

one of the following conditions since first becoming eligible for Graduate membership:

- I Achieved eligibility for full membership of one of the Society's Divisions and been successfully engaged in the professional application of a specialised knowledge of psychology for at least two calendar years full-time (or its part-time equivalent); or
- I Possess a research qualification in psychology and been engaged in the application, discovery, development or dissemination of psychological knowledge or practice for an aggregate of at least four years full-time (or part-

time equivalent); or

- I Published psychological works or exercised specialised psychological knowledge of a standard not less than in 1 or 2 above.

If you would like to become an Associate Fellow, you can find the application form and further information about the award at www.bps.org.uk/associatefellow. Applicants must normally be engaged in work of a psychological nature at the time of the application. If you have any questions please contact the Membership Team on 0116 252 9911, or e-mail membership@bps.org.uk.

Doctoral Award

Research on the psychological stress experienced by sport performers and on autism and social cognition has won two early-career researchers this year's Award for Outstanding Doctoral Research Contributions to Psychology. Dr Rachel Arnold, who completed a PhD at Loughborough University, and Dr Lauren Marsh, who completed a PhD at the University of Nottingham, share the honour.

This annual award is made by the Society's Research Board to recognise outstanding contributions to psychological knowledge made in the course of completing a doctorate in psychology. Candidates are judged on the basis of one or two published articles reporting the research they carried out for their degree.

Each of the winners will receive a £500 prize and be invited to deliver a lecture based on their research at the Society's Annual Conference next year.

Dr Rachel Arnold's first paper synthesised more than 20 years of psychology research to identify and classify the many different organisational stressors that sport performers encounter. Her second paper developed and validated a new indicator to measure those demands: the Organizational Stressor Indicator for Sports Performers (OSI-SP).

Dr Arnold is now a lecturer in Sport and Performance Psychology at the University of Bath.

Dr Lauren Marsh's first paper provided evidence that children with autism, unlike neurotypical children, do not copy unnecessary actions when asked to complete a task by copying an adult. The second looks at mechanisms in the brain that allow us to understand rational and irrational actions by other people.

Dr Marsh is currently working as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Bristol in the Bristol Cognitive Development Centre. She is conducting research into how children think about ownership and possession and how this relates to their developing sense of self.

Professor Dorothy Miell, Society President, said: 'We were delighted to make awards to two such strong candidates. In both cases their work not only evidences outstanding research skills but also has clear applications and value for groups in society. The Society is delighted to see such strong examples of excellent work being done by the next generation of researchers in psychology. I wish them all the best for their future careers.'

AFTER THE REFERENDUM

Professor Steve Reicher's talk on the psychology of the Scottish Referendum at the British Psychological Society Division of Occupational Psychology 2015 Annual Conference had to be cancelled due to bad weather in Scotland through the night of 8 January 2015. DOP-Scotland's Dr Renée Bleau subsequently visited the University of St Andrews to hear his analysis, and you can view the video at tinyurl.com/p65c42o.

Professor Reicher has published widely in the field of social psychology, with some of his work being highly relevant for the field of occupational psychology. He is a recent co-author (2011) with S.A. Haslam and M.J. Platow, of *The New Psychology of Leadership: Identity Influence and Power*, and in 2001 co-authored, with Nick Hopkins, *Self and Nation*. His comments before the referendum appeared in our June issue: tinyurl.com/nrvxz47

Society vacancies

Research Board

Postdoctoral Representative

See advert p.387

Contact *Liz Beech* liz.beech@bps.org.uk

Closing date 5 June 2015

Qualifications Office

Assessors for the Qualification in Educational Psychology (Scotland) (Stage 2)

See advert p.405

Contact *Nigel Atter* nigatt@bps.org.uk, 0116 252 9904

Closing date 23 June 2015