



LETTERS

Letters should be marked clearly 'Letter for publication in *The Psychologist*' and addressed to the editor at the Society office in Leicester. Please send by e-mail if possible: psychologist@bps.org.uk (include a postal address). Letters over 500 words are less likely to be published. The editor reserves the right to edit, shorten or publish extracts from letters. If major editing is necessary, this will be indicated. Space does not permit the publication of every letter received. Letters to the editor are not normally acknowledged.

Reversing the tide of hooliganism

MY June copy of *The Psychologist* arrived the same day as the first hooligan riots associated with Euro 2004 took place. Consequently, it was with considerable interest that I read Stott and Adang's article on the application of social psychology to the control of football hooliganism at Euro 2000. The authors are involved in important work that has several positive features, and much of what they stated in their article is sound.

However, Stott and Adang, in advocating their social identity approach and low-profile policing, have been a little hasty in dismissing what they termed 'accounts' of soccer hooliganism, especially my own work on the motivation of hooligans (Kerr, 1994), based on reversal theory (Apter, 2001). The need to have banning orders (over 2500 for Euro 2004), the fact that some known hooligans attempted to travel to Portugal despite being issued with a banning order, and the prosecution of 17 hooligans just weeks before the tournament, is evidence that hardcore hooligans, predisposed to creating disorder and engaging in 'aggro', are still at the heart of the problem.

Stott and Adang argued that more is needed to understand when and why groups of fans with no previous arrests for involvement in football-related disorder react, or do not react, to heavy-handed police control techniques.

While the authors also argued for the

RUI VEIRA/PAPPHOTOS

Responses are dependent on fans' perceptions

importance of a 'shared social identity' in understanding the processes involved, this is only part of the picture. Motivational changes can cause groups of fans to react against what they perceive as the illegitimate nature of police action (Kerr, 2004). Such actions can cause fans already likely to be highly aroused to become negativistic and rebellious, and engage in provocative and angry violent acts against the police.

Violent responses are dependent on fans' perceptions at a particular time, and what is perceived as illegitimate policing on one occasion may be perceived differently on another. This makes predicting when riots will occur very difficult. In the 2002 World Cup in Japan, the build-up and circumstances around the Argentina-England match in Sapporo

suggested that all the necessary ingredients for soccer-related violence were in place. The police were present in great numbers, backed up by promises of no tolerance and lengthy prison sentences, under a tough prison regime, for acts of hooliganism. Although other factors may have played a role, it seemed that high-level policing in Sapporo worked and the hooligan game became unbalanced to such a degree that no serious cases of hooliganism occurred (Kerr, 2004).

To ignore the dynamic and inconsistent nature of the individual and group motivation of all the 'players' concerned in football-related violence is to leave out a vital part of the jigsaw. I see no reason why including reversal theory explanations of disorderly behaviour should be incompatible with the social identity approach that Stott and Adang have advocated. Indeed, in combination, they may well add to an enhanced understanding of the problem.

John Kerr

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References

- Apter, M.J. (2001). *Motivational styles in everyday life: A guide to reversal theory*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Kerr, J.H. (1994). *Understanding soccer hooliganism*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Kerr, J.H. (2004). *Rethinking aggression and violence in sport*. London: Routledge.

SS PSYCHOLOGY – A CUMBERSOME SHIP?

THE second question in the interview with our new President (May 2004) alluded to a 'poisoned chalice'. There has clearly been some bother amongst the elected members that led to the resignation of the about-to-be President. If there is something going on, then we should be told.

This leads me to think that there are some internal politics within the Trustees that may be related to the fact that they

seem to be the same people all the time and they just change chairs. I suspect that the lack of new blood is a result of the trend of people volunteering less in many aspects of society. Personally, I would not volunteer because within the targets set in my local authority work there is not enough time to do the day job, let alone BPS work.

A second reason for not joining is my increasing irritation with minutes and

matters arising and amendments to the motion, and so on. This form of decision making and policy construction is too cumbersome in a world that requires very quick responses to a changing environment. Zander Wedderburn's concept of the great BPS ship that turns slowly should be exchanged for a more nimble craft.

Psychologists, of all people, should be able to devise a decision-making system fit for

the future that is not so dependent on the paradigms of the past. Virtual Trustees spring to mind. Micro-involvement of members, electronic opinion seeking. There are members more creative than me who could provide a lead that could act as a model to all organisations that complain about a lack of involvement amongst new members.

Jim Colwell
*27 Sycamore Road
Middlesbrough*

Cyril Burt's record

It was far from refreshing to read Stéphane Duckett's comments on the legacy of Sir Cyril Burt (Letters, May 2004). They reveal a lack of acquaintance with both primary and more recent secondary sources, and they help a general appreciation of what actually happened not a whit. In particular, there is plenty of material in Mackintosh (1995) that he clearly cannot have read, and which he surely should have read before making the claims he does.

Spearman was not Burt's mentor in any formal sense. They did correspond in detail before Burt's first paper was published in 1909, but then Burt went off to do his own factor analytic thing. Correspondence between Burt and Spearman in the 1930s, now in the Burt archive at Liverpool University, makes it clear that Spearman thought Burt had gone off in the wrong direction.

It was Burt's formulation that led to the first uses of multiple factor analysis in the UK or anywhere else. He was doing this for certain before 1916, evidenced by contemporaneous published sources. A mathematically more satisfactory derivation was provided by James Clerk Maxwell Garnett and published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society* in 1919. Burt and Garnett were sufficiently well acquainted for the latter to refer to the former's work extensively in his *Education and World Citizenship* (Cambridge University Press, 1921), where what is essentially Burt's formulation of factor analysis appears. This antedates Thurstone's account of multiple factor analysis by a decade or more, and indeed Spearman's somewhat grudging acceptance of the

presence of group factors in his later work.

It is impossible to tell whether Burt's claim that he was inspired by a paper by Pearson in his approach to multiple factor analysis is true, but the paper by Pearson exists and says what Burt claimed it said. What is more, Burt's formulation was a good practical approximation to Pearson's approach and essentially the same as what Thurstone later claimed as his own original contribution.

Jacques Lafitte was not a 'fictitious French psychologist'. I had the following story from Eysenck personally, and repeat it here in his own words from Mackintosh (1995): 'But Jacques was a fellow student of mine; he became a lecturer in Australia, wrote a book on personality (not a good one!), and died some time ago. I knew him well – indeed, I rescued his wife from suicide one day! If Hearnshaw had bothered to ask me, I would have told him how to find the

'unknown French psychologist', who was in fact British to the core, coming from an old Huguenot family.' This does not prove that Lafitte wrote what appeared under his name, but Eysenck had no reason to invent him afresh.

There is enough that is unsettling in the history of the Burt affair without the repetition of half-understood untruths. There is much to dislike and mistrust about the man from all I have learned about him, but surely it is better to draw lessons from what actually happened than from an over-simplified portrait of a pantomime villain slain by comic-book heroes.

Steve Blinkhorn
Psychometric Research & Development Ltd
St Albans

Reference
Mackintosh, N.J. (Ed.) (1995). *Cyril Burt: Fraud or framed?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

WHAT a pity that the arguments about the integrity of Sir Cyril Burt's

researches and reputation have resurfaced once again, and that only negative ones seem so far to have been reiterated. The two letters (March and May 2004) accept Burt's 'guilt' as a fait accompli and ignore Joynson (*The Burt Affair*, Routledge, 1989) and Fletcher (*Science, Ideology and the Media: The Cyril Burt Scandal*, Transaction Publishers, 1991), both of whom, concerned at the prejudices and inadequacies of the detractors, wrote lengthy, searching and robust exonerations, and the more recent and mellow Mackintosh (*Cyril Burt: Fraud or Framed?* OUP, 1995), as well as the numerous published statements praising Burt and protesting at the condemnatory goings-on.

Nothing in the two letters, which repeat long-exploded charges, therefore materially changes my own views. Despite his several inconsistencies and eccentricities, I conclude that on nearly any kind of cost-benefit analysis of the available evidence, Burt would win hands down – which makes it all the more surprising that a wholesale rout of his works should have been attempted and widely accepted by vocal opponents.

Posthumous condemnation cannot avoid appearing cheap, since the 'accused' are beyond defending themselves. To denounce someone of such enormous accomplishment and distinction as a 'scientific fraudster' on the basis of hotly disputed evidence, especially numerical inaccuracies emanating from an era of hand-held calculators, primitive technology, and the loss of major original data during the blitz at UCL and elsewhere, must be rash and untenable indeed.

Hannah Steinberg
19 Torriano Cottages
London NW5

JOHN Radford (Letters, July 2004) appears to have made the same conceptual mistake that Sir Cyril Burt made through much of his career, despite his claims to the contrary, namely assuming that because two events follow one another this implies causality: at no point did I state that Sir Cyril was in any way causally linked to the I1+. What I did say was that the establishment of the time, which in 1944, sought to introduce an educational system that had at its heart the pigeon-holing of children in such a way as to effectively deny a significant portion of them access to higher education, gave a knighthood in 1946 to a man whose entire career sought to categorise and classify children not through science but through prejudice, as events subsequently proved. The fact that his 'improbable' correlations (Dorfman, 1978) were not challenged at the time tells us much about the spirit of the age.

Stéphane Duckett
Royal Free Hospital
London

Reference
Dorfman, D. (1978). The Cyril Burt question: New findings. *Science*, 201, 1177–1186.

Thinking about magic

EUGENE Subbotsky puzzles over why young children can believe in fantastic entities such as Santa Claus and yet deny in verbal judgements that magic is real ('Magical thinking – Reality or illusion?', June 2004).

But there is no puzzle here at all. Many young children have been told by their parents and other apparently reliable adults that Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy actually exist. So, no surprise that Woolley *et al.*, working within an ethics-free zone, persuaded some three- and four-year-olds that the Candy Witch was also real. This age group is busy working out how the world works. Yes, some of their explanations appear illogical from the adult perspective, but only because we have considerably greater

general knowledge. If we take the trouble to understand the perspective of young children, some of these apparent anomalies are not incompatible at all. It is also instructive and fascinating to listen to young children's questions and speculations about possible explanations.

Finally, I appreciate that Eugene Subbotsky is not alone in referring to young children as 'preschoolers'. But can we please not define young children exclusively in terms of an educational next stage? Do articles about adolescents call this age group preworkers? Do features in *The Psychologist* about adult development in late middle age refer to preretirees? I think not.

Jennie Lindon
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Proving what works

I WOULD like to add some thoughts to John Marziller's article on outcome research in psychotherapy ('The myth of evidence-based psychotherapy', July 2004).

The precondition for reliable quantitative outcome research is consistency within each of the three conditions to be measured: symptom, intervention, outcome. Such consistency exists in some, but not all, cases of phobia, depression and bipolar disorder, where reasonably robust studies indicate efficacy well above chance for the relatively standardised interventions of, respectively, aversion therapy, Prozac and lithium salts.

However, these cases make up only a minority of the cases presented for relief of psychic distress. In the majority the three conditions are too disparate to be aggregated. On present knowledge, quantitative

outcome research is thus worse than meaningless – worse because it suggests a nonexistent reliability. The unintended consequence is funding for treatments whose causal connection with outcome is no more reliable than the actions of Skinner's superstitious pigeons were to their food supply.

The way forward for outcome research in psychotherapy is to use qualitative methods (e.g. discourse analysis) that seek to report fidelity to the individual case, with no striving for generalisation. In time a sufficient body of truthful case reporting may then accumulate to permit the emergence of genuinely evidence-based constructs.

J.P.A. Baird
The Court
Marine Gate
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Benefits of gardens

PAUL BOX (REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK)

I READ with interest the recent debate in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* and *Education Guardian Higher* about the BPS plans to design and display a garden at Chelsea Flower Show next year.

For most of my working life I have been a practitioner in the mental health field and I now lecture in health and social care. As an academic, I am engaged in scientific research in the use of gardening and nature as a therapeutic medium for vulnerable people. I have crossed paths with numerous other respected scholars, researchers and practitioners who are developing this field. I would therefore like to reassure Professor Wang (Letters, May 2004) that none of us would consider ourselves to have lost the plot and most of us are still 'hard pressed professional practitioners'. Nor have any of us 'lost our sense of corporate responsibilities' to our respective professions or to the public.

The purpose and philosophy of most clinical psychologists I have worked with has been to develop practice in innovative directions, based on research. Indeed I am pleased to say that it is evidence-based practice which has encouraged scientific research for the advancement of horticulture- and nature-related therapies. Far from 'trivial', the use of gardens has been found to have an intrinsic therapeutic

value in its own right and a direct influence on the human psyche and its processes and on social inclusion. In our essentially anthropocentric societies, reconnecting with nature can positively influence our often dysfunctional environments. This can help us to grow and to heal. Wilson's biophilia theory (1984) goes some way to explaining our human need to seek closeness with nature; and the garden is where we do so. It is for many the nearest bit of nature we can access and where we find restorative peace and relaxation. Far from a hobby, gardening for many is a necessity.

The BPS therefore should not fear, nor perceive any threat to its credibility and Charter. Professionals should feel unashamed to pursue this new development in their midst. Indeed, a little more controversially, in 1995 James Hillman wrote: 'Sometimes I wonder...how psychology ever got so off base. How did it cut itself off from reality? Where else in the world would a human soul be so divorced from the spirits of its surroundings? ... Psychology, so dedicated to awakening the human consciousness, needs to wake itself up to one of the most ancient truths; we cannot be studied or cured apart from the planet.'

Ambra Burls
Anglia Polytechnic University

Integration, not polemics

THE correspondence about applied behaviour analysis is intriguing because it raises an issue about the integration of perspectives that seems to be lacking as psychology has 'fractionated' into a multiplicity of specialisms. It is interesting to note the contrasting stances and polarisation evident in the letters following Keenan's article ('Autism in Northern Ireland: The tragedy and the shame', February 2004).

Psychologists of whatever persuasion, it seems, like to get into either/or camps, as

witnessed by perennial debates about research methods, personality, behaviour, etc., etc. This must be a part of being human in a social group; namely, the need to demonstrate 'my knowledge' is superior. However, it does mean an integrated overview of the evidence base for different arguments may not be available to entrants to psychology. It also means that argument may not be based on current information but on past prejudice and stereotype, as noted in some of the correspondence about behavioural approaches.

GROUPS FOR PEACE

IN the spring of 2003 various letters to *The Psychologist* raised the issue of psychologists' involvement with peace building and conflict resolution. They raised the question of whether psychology could make a significant contribution to the enhancement of peace and whether psychologists should find a means to promote such views, building on previous articles in *The Psychologist* by Ed Cairns (June 2001) and Andrew Silke (November 2001).

Since then two meetings have been convened in central London so that psychologists interested in promoting peace and the avoidance of conflict can meet and discuss their future within the BPS. Another is planned in the autumn. In October 2003 there was an informal discussion forum on the history of psychology's involvement with peace issues within the UK and USA and on possible ways forward. In March 2004 representatives of Scientists for Global Responsibility (www.sgr.org.uk) and MEDACT (www.medact.org) met to talk about the work of their organisations and the possible role for a group of psychologists within them. SGR perhaps reflects issues more pertinent to academic and research psychologists (such as ethical careers and research funding), while MEDACT is more for applied psychologists, as a high proportion of its work is health related.

The group has now adopted the working title Psychology Applied to Peace, Conflict and Reconciliation (PAPCAR). A Yahoo group has been established (groups.yahoo.com/group/papcar/), which allows circulation of interested people about relevant topics. PAPCAR is also keen in due course to form a Special Interest Group, and possibly a Section, within the BPS.

Catherine Dooley

Lorien

The Chase

East Horsley

Surrey

If you read an article in *The Psychologist* that you fundamentally disagree with, then the letters page is your first port of call: summarise your argument in under 500 words. But if you feel you have a substantial amount of conflicting evidence to cite and numerous points to make that simply cannot be contained within a letter, you can write a 'Counterpoint' article of up to 1500 words, within a month of the publication of the original article. However, it is best to contact the editor about your plans, on jonsut@bps.org.uk. We hope this format will build on the role of *The Psychologist* as a forum for discussion and debate.

While such polemic may help to support one's own social identity, it obfuscates argument. Who remains to effectively integrate perspectives at the forefront of psychology for the many people who will not go on to research but will use (if they can) their smattering of

psychological knowledge in the outside world? Please note this is an argument for integration, not generalism vs. specialism.

Perhaps this is something *The Psychologist* can do, once in a while, in order to root advances in the wider field?

Jim Wood

University of Exeter

NHS ethics committee

PSYCHOLOGISTS have made valued contributions to the workings of NHS local and multi-centre research ethics committees (RECs), advising on research design, ethical issues and the quality of psychological research proposals. However, many members of RECs, both academic and applied psychologists, have been informed that their role on these committees is no longer as an 'expert health professional' but as a 'lay member'. The individuals involved have expressed concerns that this might devalue the perception and utility of the psychological advice offered.

We are writing in order to clarify how this situation has arisen and also to reassure psychologists that NHS RECs

still value and depend upon their advice. A copy of this letter will also be sent to the chairs of NHS RECs, to encourage them to ensure that psychologists continue to be included as full members of their committees.

The issue arises because transposition of the European Directive on Clinical Trials of Medicinal Products into UK law required a definition of 'expert' in terms of 'healthcare professionals' (the term used by the Directive Article 2(k)). Our understanding is that this means, in legal terms, a doctor, dentist, nurse, pharmacist, ophthalmic optician, osteopath or chiropractor (all of whom require professional registration to practise as defined by individual legislation), together with allied health professionals registered under Article 5 of the Health Professions Order 2001.

Unfortunately, this does not include psychologists and hence, regrettably, the change in committee membership from 'expert' to 'lay'. Nevertheless, members of the Society will be

DEADLINE

Deadline for letters for possible publication in the October issue is **3 September**

aware that a public consultation is about to be undertaken by the Department of Health around the proposal that applied psychologists should be regulated by the Health Professions Council (HPC). If such a change in the legal professional status of psychologists were to happen

(i.e. become regulated via HPC), then of course there would ensue an automatic change in the implementing regulations, and the profession's nominal categorisation as members of RECs.

In the meantime, it is essential that members of the profession who are members of

RECs continue in their role. This can be pragmatically achieved if psychologists are considered as constituting lay members of the local REC, which is also the case for some other professional groups such as the chaplaincy. Although this is an expedient solution, we should also monitor the

important balance between expert members and true lay members not drawn from the health-related sector. In the longer term, assuming that the regulation of applied psychology comes under the auspices of HPC, this and other situations where the legitimacy has been questioned of psychologists serving on various NHS boards and committees (e.g. primary care trust and foundation hospital trust boards) will hopefully be resolved.

Whatever they are called legally, the special expertise and contribution of psychologists will continue to be valued.

Graham Turpin
Chair Elect, Division of Clinical Psychology
Terry Stacey
Director, Central Office for Research Ethics Committees

INFORMATION

■ I HAVE just graduated and joined the Society and am looking for **voluntary work experience** in absolutely any field of **clinical/forensic type psychology**. I am shortly doing an MSc in health psychology and work with people with learning disabilities. So, something in that field could be helpful; however, I am open to any offers within the **Milton Keynes** area.
Caroline Toes
Tel: 01908 632655;
e-mail: richardtoes@tiscali.co.uk

■ I AM a psychology graduate (2:1) currently working with young children. I would like to pursue a career in **educational psychology**. I would appreciate any relevant **voluntary work in the Preston/Lancashire** area from September 2004.
Abigail England
68 Hartley Down
Purley
Surrey CR8 4EB
E-mail: abigail_england@yahoo.co.uk;
tel: 0796 691 3553

■ I AM about to embark on my final year as a psychology undergraduate and wish to pursue a career in **clinical psychology**. I am looking for **voluntary work experience shadowing a psychologist** in any clinically relevant field in the **Tayside/Edinburgh/Glasgow/Aberdeen** area.
Shri Cameron
E-mail: cameronshaw@btopenworld.com; tel: 01382 770543

■ I AM a mature, final-year psychology undergraduate intending to start an MSc in **forensic psychology** in 2005. I am seeking **voluntary related experience** from October 2004,

preferably – although not necessarily – in the **Brighton/London** area.
Paul Jones
Flat 2, 65 Brunswick Place
Hove BN3 1NE
E-mail: paul.jones@excite.com;
tel: 0785 539 5064

■ I HAVE an MSc in occupational psychology from the University of Nottingham and related work experience in both market research and human resources, but am having a frustrating time breaking into the **occupational psychology** job market. I would greatly appreciate any advice or opportunities for **voluntary work** with an occupational psychologist in **London or the South East**.
Anna Wheeler
3a Cologne Road
Battersea
London SW11 2AH
Tel: 0783 336 5430;
e-mail: awheeler76@hotmail.com

■ I AM a psychology graduate keen to work with children. So far I have gained experience working with children with various learning disabilities and children with ASD. I am interested in all areas of **child psychology** in order to pinpoint which career path I should follow. Any advice and **voluntary opportunities** would be greatly appreciated.
Jessica Bool
The Old School
Great Saling
Near Braintree
Essex
E-mail: Jessbool@aol.com;
tel: 0773 996 2401, 01371 851189

■ AS president of Kent University's Psychological Society, I am looking for **speakers in any area of psychology** and related

fields to give talks in the forthcoming academic year 2004/5 for society meetings. Travel costs can be accommodated.

Rachel Avery
E-mail: rea4@kent.ac.uk;
tel: 0794 415 2580

■ FOR my PsychD research I am interested in exploring the experiences of researchers (psychologists/trainees/assistants/fellows, etc.) who have **interviewed survivors of sexual violence** for their research. I am particularly interested in **how conducting such research may personally or emotionally affect researchers**. If you may be willing to be interviewed, please contact me for more information. I can travel to interview you.
Heidi Ashley
Trainee Counselling Psychologist
University of Surrey
E-mail: psm1ha@surrey.ac.uk;
tel: 020 8944 6656, 0775 179 3124

■ I HAVE just graduated from the University of Ulster at Coleraine with a degree in social psychology (first class). In October I am beginning an MSc in applied psychology, focusing on clinical modules. I am seeking **voluntary clinical experience** in the Belfast/Carrickfergus area. I would be very grateful for any offers.
Emma Carroll
Tel: 00 353 41 68 53747; e-mail: Dilemmasdilemma@hotmail.com

■ I AM trying to find a **secondhand copy of the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS-III UK)**. Do you happen to have a copy that you are no longer using and would be happy to sell?
Lucy Brown-Wright
Tel: 020 8944 5310 or 0798 460 7558.

