





Ken Brown

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*The Society's* new website should be up and running this autumn. But why do we need a new website? The current version is looking dated, is difficult to navigate and manage and does not fully comply with UK accessibility guidelines. In addition, contributors to the site want the ability to manage their own content; and with the site growing to 1000-plus pages, the task of keeping the content up to date has become difficult for the office. For the first couple of months contributors will continue to submit changes as usual. Once any issues arising during this period have been resolved, all contributors will be invited to attend training to allow them to update their own website content. The Leicester office will not be responsible for approving content; this will be the responsibility of whoever has been assigned by a group or department to oversee its pages. The office will be informed when new content has been added so that they can run random style and consistency checks, and identify any potential training issues. A BPS Website Bulletin will keep members informed of new features.

Another electronic service to members will accompany the Society's continuing professional development (CPD) initiative. This is a very important step forward. Protection of the public must be a top priority for any responsible profession. But CPD also benefits both employers, in ensuring a well-trained workforce, and practitioners, who can update their skills and keep abreast of new developments. It will be necessary to submit an annual log of CPD to the Society in order to continue as a Chartered Psychologist and to retain a practising certificate. This will consist not just of a list of events attended and time spent, but also of reflections on how CPD relates to practice and learning. Individuals will also list their developmental needs and prepare a plan to deal with them. The aim is not to be punitive but to facilitate professional development; it is hoped that help and advice will be available to members whose logs initially fail to reach satisfactory standards. Divisions will monitor their own members; non-Division members will be asked to choose a Division most closely linked to their area of practice. One interesting idea, still requiring discussion, is that Branches could be involved in cross-Society moderation to equalise standards. We hope that an electronic recording system will be available this October to compile a log of CPD over 2004–2005, with the first submissions beginning in October 2005. I reviewed the very user-friendly system at this year's Annual Conference. Paper versions of the CPD log may also be acceptable initially, but the clear message is 'no handwritten material, please'.

The Society joined the Science Council in January 2004, and in June I attended its AGM. The Council received its Royal Charter in October 2003 and is the coordinating body for learned and professional societies in the scientific and mathematical field, with over 20 member organisations. The Society is one of the full members of the Council, defined as organisations with more than 3000 members, excluding students and overseas members. The Science Council will provide opportunities for psychologists to influence government on science policy and funding. Specialist groups (e.g. science in society, science in education, science in health, science in the environment), to which psychologists can make important contributions, have been set up within the Council. It is important for the Society to forward sufficient nominations of active and influential members to strengthen the voice of psychology in these groups. Our professional Divisions will play a crucial role in this, but it is vital that we attract more of the academic community into the Society (a point I made in my July column) so that the science base of our discipline is represented in these groups. Moreover, the fact that the Council can confer chartered status on scientists and teachers of science may be a bonus for academic members of the Society.

My eye was caught by a couple of recent reports on the importance to one's health of having both a sense of a meaningful life and a good education. The first was a study in the *European Psychologist* showing that Israeli teachers, nurses and managers report consistently lower levels of burnout than their American counterparts, despite the many unique stressors of life in Israel. The suggested explanation for these counterintuitive results was that, for Israelis, life has a greater sense of significance: they are more acutely aware of death and consequently of the meaningfulness of their own lives. Secondly, an article in the *Times Higher* looked at the possible health effects of education and asked 'Why should educated people with good stable jobs have a higher risk of dropping dead than people with a bit more education and slightly higher-status jobs?' A Swedish sociologist, Robert Erikson, was said to have shown that 'people with a PhD had longer life expectancy than people with a masters degree or professional education' and that they in turn 'could expect longer lives than graduates with a bachelors, and so on down the hierarchy'. One suggested explanation was that 'education... may improve health both because it leads to higher positions in the [social] hierarchy and because it is likely to arm people with what they need to exert more control over their lives and to participate fully in society'. Now that should boost doctoral applications in our universities!

*“it is vital that we attract more of the academic community into the Society”*



News of interest to our readers should be sent to *The Psychologist* on [psychologist@bps.org.uk](mailto:psychologist@bps.org.uk) or at the Leicester office. We also welcome lively, informative and evidence-based analysis of current events (up to 1500 words). Contact the editor first on [jonsut@bps.org.uk](mailto:jonsut@bps.org.uk).

**PHD SUPERVISOR TRAINING**

TRAINING is now available for those about to supervise doctoral students for the first time. The one-day workshops are being organised around the UK by the ESRC and the Academy of Learned Societies for the Social Sciences, of which the BPS is a member. Two have already been held, in Reading and Leicester, and five more are planned.

□ For more information e-mail [admin@the-academy.org.uk](mailto:admin@the-academy.org.uk).

**FERRIER LECTURE**

THIS year's Ferrier Lecture will be given by Professor Alan Cowey (University of Oxford) under the title 'Magnetic brain stimulation: What can it tell us about brain function?'. The lecture will be given on Tuesday 9 November at 6pm at the Royal Society in London. Admission is free and no booking is needed.

□ For more information see [www.royalsoc.ac.uk/events](http://www.royalsoc.ac.uk/events).

**APS CONFERENCE**

THE Australian Psychological Society is holding its 39th Annual Conference 'Psychological Science in Action' at the Sydney Convention Centre from 29 September to 3 October 2004.

□ For registration and programme details see [tinyurl.com/2orw2](http://tinyurl.com/2orw2).

**WINSTON CHURCHILL TRAVELLING FELLOWSHIPS**

OPEN to all British citizens, with no age limit and no special qualifications, this scheme offers people a 'chance in a lifetime' to undertake study projects overseas related to their employment or personal interest.

The categories of award in 2005 of particular interest to psychologists are 'Work-based learning' and 'Juvenile crime'.

□ For more details visit the *Winston Churchill Memorial Trust website* [www.wcmt.org.uk](http://www.wcmt.org.uk) or telephone 020 7584 9315.

# Introducing Psyonline

**A TEAM of A-level psychology teachers has developed a new website to support their colleagues and students. The site, at [psyonline.edgehill.ac.uk](http://psyonline.edgehill.ac.uk), was funded by the DFES under their Building Bridges programme. The team believes that the way it was developed could be a model for similar projects at a higher level.**

Society member Christine Davis (Head of Psychology, Arnold School, Blackpool) said: 'There are over 240 million Google search results for key terms from the AQA syllabus A, so we faced quite a task selecting up to 10 sites for each area. The students helped to formulate criteria: sites had

to be non-commercial, from accepted academic sources, activity-based, well designed, not reliant on links to other sources or new work, etc. Sites were graded and only the most user-friendly sites were included. But this process is an ongoing one – student recommendations are sought and sites are monitored for the number of times they are accessed.'

The site also includes information on careers, media resources, specimen exam answers, study tips and discussion groups. Student experience of the site is being monitored by a questionnaire, and the data will be mapped on to examination results at AS-level.

Christine Davis continued: 'We are applying to the DFES for continuation funding to support further development of the project and to disseminate the availability of the site. We would be delighted to receive feedback from members as we continue to develop the site throughout the next academic year.'

□ *The site also links to the Society's Research Digest, at [www.bps.org.uk/publications/rd.cfm](http://www.bps.org.uk/publications/rd.cfm). If you can help us to promote this free service to A-level and undergraduate teachers and students, for example by putting up a poster or a link on your own website, please e-mail the Digest editor Christian Jarrett on [chrber@bps.org.uk](mailto:chrber@bps.org.uk).*

DUNCAN PHILLIPS/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

## Boost for research into services mental health

**DEFENCE Minister Ivor Caplin has announced the award of a contract to King's College London to establish a Department of Defence Mental Health.**

This academic department of excellence for defence mental health research and education will be established in partnership with the Defence Medical Services (DMS). This arrangement will enable DMS staff to undertake training and research projects within the

Department of War Studies and the Institute of Psychiatry at King's College. The Ministry of Defence sees the establishment of the DDMH as part of its continued commitment to improving mental health services for the military. Postgraduate MSc courses are due to start later this year.

Announcing the award of the contract, Ivor Caplin said: 'This department will become a centre of excellence for the study of service mental health

conditions, enabling us to develop a better understanding of their causes, treatment and prevention.' Professor Simon Wessley, Co-Director at King's College London's Centre for Military Health Research, said: 'This exciting new initiative gives us the opportunity to improve our understanding of mental health problems amongst service personnel. We look forward to the challenge of working with the MoD in this important area.'

# MPs debate future of educational psychology

A report from **SANDRA DUNSMUIR** and **JANE TURNER** of the Division of Educational and Child Psychology.

**I**N June an adjournment debate took place in the House of Commons about the role and training of educational psychologists. Parliamentary time to discuss these issues had been secured by effective lobbying of MPs by members of the Division of Educational and Child Psychology and the Association of Educational Psychologists.

What prompted the lobbying for a debate was concern about the fate of the proposal for a new entry route for educational psychologists consisting of graduate basis for registration plus three years of higher education/employer involvement. The proposal had been widely welcomed in a public consultation arranged by the Department for Education and Skills in 2001. Since then, interested parties, including the BPS, the AEP, the DfES and employers, have been discussing the practicalities of the new arrangements, and two implementation studies, commissioned by the DfES, were undertaken by the DECP.

Provisional accreditation and procedures for implementation have been prepared by the BPS and are ready for a September 2005 start – if funding is agreed. But according to the DfES the allocation of the necessary funding could not be guaranteed in this autumn's government spending review. The resulting continued uncertainty is causing concern for psychology graduates considering a career in educational psychology. Should they undertake teacher training?

David Heath, Liberal Democrat MP for Somerton and Frome, opened the debate. He spoke of a 'small but important profession' that is central to government educational strategy. He then raised the issue of the high level of support for the proposed changes to the training of educational psychologists, in which the removal of the requirement for qualified teacher status and experience would reduce the minimum length of training from eight years to six. These changes have been advocated by the BPS since 1997; Mr



**Training educational psychologists – Changes await government funding**

Heath alerted the government about the need for a firm date for implementation, as 'one cannot immediately switch on the tap from one training module to the other'.

The response from Stephen Twigg, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Skills, acknowledged the vital contribution of educational psychologists and their central role within the government's proposed developments in the special educational needs strategy. While he recognised the force of the argument about the early need for certainty in the transition from one training regime to another, he was unable to say more than that the 'significant additional expenditure' needed to implement the new route would be considered 'in the light of our overall priorities for education and children's services'. But he did indicate that the long-term position would be decided 'within the next few months'.

□ *The full transcript of the debate is in Hansard for 8 June 2004 and will be reproduced in Debate, the DECP newsletter. The two implementation study reports can be seen on the DfES website ([tinyurl.com/2mxhm](http://tinyurl.com/2mxhm)).*

## WEBSITES

[tinyurl.com/22ud4](http://tinyurl.com/22ud4)

Psychology assessment archive

[www.goodhope.org.uk/jargon\\_dictionary.asp](http://www.goodhope.org.uk/jargon_dictionary.asp)

Useful NHS abbreviations and jargon dictionary from the Good Hope Hospital, Sutton Coldfield

[www.croga.org](http://www.croga.org)

Information and self-help for people worried about their use of illegal images on the internet

If you come across a website that you think would be of interest to our readers, let us know on [psychologist@bps.org.uk](mailto:psychologist@bps.org.uk).

## Research network launched

**T**HE Mental Health Research Network was officially launched at a conference in London in June. It will be headed by Professor Til Wykes of the Institute of Psychiatry.

The Network is set to support vital large-scale research throughout England and hopes to raise the standard of mental health and social care research. In addition, it will act as a central point of information and reference, connecting service users and carers to researchers and mental health professionals.

□ *See the interview with Til Wykes in the May 2004 issue of The Psychologist, where she talks about the MHRN.*

## NATIONAL HONOURS

Two Society members received honours in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. Professor Hadyn Ellis of University College Wales becomes a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) for services to higher education, and Professor Annette Karmiloff-Smith of the Institute of Child Health becomes a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) for services to developmental cognitive neuroscience.