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British
Psychological
Society

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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

Liz Campbell

Contact Liz Campbell via the Society's Leicester office, or e-mail: president@bps.org.uk

At the end of this month our Chief Executive, Tim Cornford, retires from his position with the Society. Tim has overseen a reorganisation of the office as well as providing leadership during what has been a time of uncertainty for staff. We wish him well in his retirement, and he departs with our best wishes. I would also like to record our thanks to our current Senior Management Team (Stephen White, Russell Hobbs and Mike Laffan) who are often hidden from view but keep everything working behind the scenes.

In planning for Tim's successor, we decided many months ago that we would retain a firm of recruitment consultants to find a pool of candidates for the position of Chief Executive. We also decided that we would seek someone who was a qualified psychologist for the role. I am very pleased to announce that Professor Ann Colley has been offered and has accepted the position of Chief Executive. She will be taking up the position from the beginning of September.

Ann is currently Professor of Psychology at the University of Leicester. She will also be known to many members of the Society because she has held a number of roles within the Society, including being a past President and also having been a recent Honorary General Secretary. We are very fortunate to have found someone with the key organisational and leadership skills that the post requires. I am very much looking forward to working with Ann in her new incarnation as a member of staff.

As ever, finances have loomed large on the recent Trustees' agenda. We need to ensure that the Society's main income streams keep pace with our projected expenditure and anticipated inflationary costs. The Board of Trustees has therefore written to members proposing that we increase the core annual subscription by a sum equivalent to the increase in the Retail Prices Index over the next three years. This proposal, and a couple of other linked proposals, requires a ballot of members. These ballot papers have been sent to you in the post. I would urge you to keep in mind the Society's need for financial stability to allow future planning when you are casting your vote.

"I am very much looking forward to working with Ann in her new incarnation"

If you have visited the Society's London offices in the last few months, you may have noticed that photographs of the 10 founding members of the Society have been mounted just outside the entrance to the ground floor offices. The preservation of the history of the BPS and the heritage of UK psychology is one of the aims of the Society's History of Psychology Centre. The main elements of our archive are in the process of being transferred to the Wellcome Library in London, with whom we have established a partnership. The Society Archivist, Mike Maskill, has a base in the London office. He is running an oral history project in which he arranges for eminent and key psychologists to be interviewed and these interviews stored as part of our audio archive. The interviews are carried out by volunteer members around the country. Mike would welcome more volunteers to carry out these interviews, especially volunteers based in Wales and South West

England. If you would be interested in this, please contact Mike directly (mike.maskill@bps.org.uk).

Over 22,000 people now subscribe to our Research Digest which is circulated by fortnightly e-mail and daily blog (www.researchdigest.org.uk/blog). If you have not already become acquainted with this service I would heartily recommend that you take a look at it and sign up. I have had many unsolicited comments from both members and non-members about how useful people have found the Digest. The Society is looking to extend this service to meet the needs of specialist groups within our membership.

Although the Society has been expanding over the years, we have not seen a parallel growth in the numbers of Fellows of the Society. The procedures for being nominated or applying for Fellowship have now been revised in order to make them more streamlined. We hope this will encourage more people to nominate others or themselves. Application packs are available via our website (www.bps.org.uk/assocfellow).

Since the end of May, positive and constructive discussions with the Department of Health and the Health Professions Council have been continuing about statutory regulation. We have not yet seen the final version of the proposed legislation, but will update the website as soon as we have further news to bring you.

Farewell from the Chief Executive

The President has referred in her column this month to my retirement and to the fact that the past three years have been eventful and full of uncertainty. They have also been three very enjoyable and demanding years.

Any professional group that finds itself subject to a challenging external agenda (particularly if that agenda is driven by government policies and priorities) also finds it a challenge to respond and adapt. I worked in education for 25 years before coming to

BPS! I have seen it as my job to structure and equip the office to help the Society respond to these external challenges as well as to the internal challenges of providing better services for members. I hope we have achieved something during this time, but I am also conscious that there is still much to do in modernising our administration, improving both our internal and external communications, streamlining our structures and bringing a new stability to our finances.

It's tempting to look back and highlight the big visible events such as the purchase and refurbishment of Tabernacle Street or the redesign of *The Psychologist*, both of which I think are success stories. But there are many more less visible aspects of the business that matter to members and to the general public who come to us for information. If your comments to me are anything to go by, we have improved the quality of services provided by the office in a number of ways.

This is a tribute to the loyalty and commitment of the staff so this brief farewell note is also a big thank you to them. It has been good to work with them all. It has been good to work with Society members as well. Obviously I have only met a small proportion of you, but I have been impressed with the energy and drive that many of you bring to the Society's enormous range of activities.

Farewell – and I hope the Society will continue to prosper and develop.

Tim Cornford

Memory and the law

The Society's Research Board has published a working party report, *Guidelines on Memory and the Law: Recommendations from the Scientific Study of Human Memory* (see www.bps.org.uk/memlaw).

Criminal and civil evidence is often entirely based on witness accounts that are in turn based on memory. However, solicitors, barristers, judges and jurors have only commonsense beliefs about memory to guide them in evaluating such accounts, and common sense about the human mind is, as we all know, about as likely to be wrong as it is to be right.

For example, one commonly held belief, very pervasive in our courts, is that the more detailed a memory the more likely it is to be correct. The evidence, however, runs completely counter to this and shows the more specific the details the more likely the errors. Another common belief is that gaps in a memory indicate an unreliable memory, when the evidence indicates that gaps are so common that they are virtually a hallmark of remembering. The memory description that contains no gaps, is fluent, follows a predictable course, and is in correct temporal order is the unusual memory; so unusual, indeed, that no memory researcher could take it at face value.

The law is also, apparently, unaware of how memory is open to error, distortion and the creation of wholly false memories; and, importantly, unaware of how this can occur with no deliberate intention on the part of a rememberer. Experiments

showing how easy it is to induce false memories in children and adults, and how suggestible memory is across most age groups, collectively indicate an error-prone system. Similarly, the evidence from the study of everyday autobiographical memories, trauma memories, and memories of very positive experiences, reveal records of the past that are fragmentary, time-compressed, person-specific and prone to source-monitoring errors such that it is often difficult for the individual rememberer to accurately locate the source of the knowledge they recall – was it experienced, imagined, observed or told? In this context forgetting is widespread, errors frequent, and even the occasional false memory not uncommon.

All of these lines of research point to representations of experiences in long-term memory that are fallible and that only partly represent our experiences. Even then, it is in terms of our own individual goals, motivations, and understandings: memory is more a personal summary of past experiences than it is a record of the past.

The guidelines in the Memory and the Law report are intended to help those who have to somehow try to make sense of accounts offered as memories in legal settings. Ten guidelines are listed, and nine of these derive directly from scientific research into human memory that has converged on the view of memory described above (the tenth makes a recommendation as to who can act as a

memory expert). The guidelines map on to sections in the report that describe the scientific research and that also provide recommended reading and references. There is also an important section on legal considerations written by our legal colleagues and later sections on witness interviews, vulnerable groups (children and older adults), memory for trauma, and identification parades. It is hoped that the report will provide a resource that people can draw upon for scientifically based, unbiased information about human memory. The guidelines are just that; they are not laws of the universe. But they are based on scientific findings, and should allow the law to make more informed decisions.

So what's the bottom line? What can memory research say to the law (and to others for that matter) about human memory? The answer is rather simple: never trust a memory without independent evidence.

Martin Conway
Chair, Memory and the Law Working Party

EVENTS DIARY

For a database of forthcoming events organised by the Society and other organisations, see www.bps.org.uk/diary.

To advertise your event, contact psadvent@bps.org.uk or +44 116 252 9552.

CONSULTATIONS ON PUBLIC POLICY

A total of eight responses were submitted during June. Brief information about four of these are provided below. Full details of these responses and of those submitted to the remaining four consultations are available from our website.

The **Department of Health's second consultation on the future regulation of health and adult social care** set out a useful structure for amalgamating regulatory bodies across health and adult social care. However, the section on specialist mental health services stipulated that regulation by the new Care Quality Commission would be required of services directed or under the supervision of a consultant psychiatrist – an assumption that is inconsistent with both New Ways of Working and the Mental Health Act, 2007. The Society's response strongly urged that this position be reconsidered and the section re-written in line with modern practice/service delivery.

In responding to the **Department for Children, Schools and Families' consultation on a strategy for 14–19 qualifications**, the Society recommended that psychology be included as part of the proposed new Science Diploma. While it was acknowledged that scope also exists for psychology to be present within the Humanities Diploma, it was urged that this should neither dilute the scientific nature of the subject nor result in the exclusion of psychology from the Science Diploma.

The **future of Senate House Library** is under review by the University of London. The Society's response to their consultation made it clear that our preference would be to maintain all current arrangements concerning the housing of the Society's official library at Senate House. In the event of change, however, three principles were recommended. These stipulated that:

- I the joint British Psychological Society/Senate House Psychology Library be treated as a single entity;
- I any decisions about change be jointly made by the Society and the University;
- I no unilateral changes be made without at least two years' notice.

The **Health Protection Agency's proposed children's environment and health strategy for the UK** was considered to provide a comprehensive overview of risks to children and young people, in terms of their physical environment, appropriate plans for meeting measurable environmental health targets, and for gathering appropriate evidence to inform future targets. However, the Society urged that plans for the evaluation of programmes involving behaviour change be made more explicit and that greater consideration be given to the psychosocial support needs of children, young people and their families in making and sustaining healthy choices with regards to their environment.

The preparation and submission of the Society's responses to consultations on public policy is coordinated by the Policy Support Unit (PSU). All members are eligible to contribute to responses and all interest is warmly welcomed. Please contact the PSU for further information (psu@bps.org.uk; 0116 252 9926/9577). Details of active and completed consultations are available at: www.bps.org.uk/consult.

M.B. Shapiro Award

Professor Stephen Morley from the Institute of Health Sciences at the University of Leeds is to receive the 2008 M.B. Shapiro Award from the Society's Division of Clinical Psychology (DCP). It is the Division's premier award and is made each year to a clinical psychologist who has achieved eminence in the profession.

Professor Morley's career has seen him work both as an academic and as a clinician in the National Health Service. His current research is primarily concerned with understanding and treating chronic pain.

He is the current chair of the Society's journals committee and is a past editor of the *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*. Professor Morley will give his award lecture at the DCP's Annual Conference (see www.dcpconference.co.uk).

Professor Morley says: 'It is a terrific honour to be nominated for the M.B. Shapiro Award. I am flattered and delighted to accept. Monte Shapiro was one of my clinical supervisors when I was a trainee – I think I must have been one of his last – and he was also my mentor in many ways.'

Ranald Macdonald

The Mathematical, Statistical and Computing Section of the British Psychological Society is honouring the contribution made by Ranald Macdonald to it and to the Society, by naming a postgraduate award after him.

Ranald, a very active and valued member of the Section, died of cancer on 19 November 2007. He was a long-standing committee member, and held a number of honorary positions. He regularly presented papers at the Section's Annual Scientific Meeting and for a number of years acted as the programme convenor. His ability to encourage participation, in particular research student contribution, ensured a lively, informative and accessible programme.

Ranald was also a member of the editorial board of the *British Journal of Mathematical and Statistical Psychology*, and gave important support to a number of editors of the journal, including acting as book reviews editor. He was always willing to do reviews of manuscripts and to suggest potential reviewers for manuscripts on more obscure topics. His reviews were always thorough and were

helpful to both the author and editor, even if he wasn't particularly in favour of the adopted approach.

As well as supporting others in their research, Ranald published a number of key articles in the field. These addressed some of the fundamental questions about principles underpinning quantitative psychological methods, whilst demonstrating a real depth of knowledge and passion for the area.

The Ranald Macdonald Postgraduate Award will be for the best Postgraduate thesis (MSc, MRes, MPhil, Professional Doctorate, DPhil or PhD) using mathematics or statistics in a novel way to investigate an aspect of psychology. It will comprise £150 and travel expenses (up to a maximum of £200) to the Section's Annual Scientific Meeting, where the winner will be expected to present an aspect of their work. This year the Annual Scientific Meeting will be held at University of Leicester on Saturday 6 December.

I See www.bps.org.uk/mscs/mscs_home.cfm for details of how to apply – deadline this year is 31 August

Clinical award

Dr Daniel Freeman from the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London, is to receive the 2008 May Davidson Award from the Society's Division of Clinical Psychology.

Dr Freeman has been a pioneer in the development of the psychological understanding and treatment of paranoia. He said: 'I'm absolutely delighted... It's further recognition of the contribution of UK clinical psychology to advancing the understanding and treatment of psychosis. It is now increasingly recognised that paranoid experiences are not confined to those with a severe mental illness but that there is a spectrum of severity in the general population. But even more importantly, inroads have been made into understanding the psychological causes of paranoia and into developing effective cognitive behavioural treatments. It is an exciting time to be working in the area as a clinical psychologist.'

As part of his award Dr Freeman will give a lecture at the Division's annual conference in December. (see www.dcpconference.co.uk).

The May Davidson Award is made by the Division of Clinical Psychology each year to a clinical psychologist who has made a significant contribution to the profession within 10 years of qualifying. May Davidson was a pioneer of clinical psychology in the early days of the National Health Service and died in 1982.

Clarification

A query has been raised with the Society about the report of the Conduct Committee decision in relation to Thomas Birkin (*The Psychologist*, August 2007). The report of the decision is correct in so far as it relates to the specific case, but it could be misconstrued in stating that chartered status is a prerequisite for the practice of psychology. The Society of course recognises that, in the current circumstances of voluntary regulation, any psychologist who is not a member of the Society can practice without having obtained chartered status.

For members of the Society, chartered status is the benchmark of having achieved the required competence for professional practice, and is the most secure way of demonstrating that competence. For this reason, the Society advises members, in the guidance on 'Descriptions' available in the section of the Society's website on Ethics and Professional Conduct, as follows: 'Graduate Members who believe they are fully qualified to practise psychology professionally without further training or supervised experience should apply for chartered status.'

Society vacancies

**British Psychological Society
President 2009/10**

See advert in the July issue (p.611)

Contact *Nichola Whitmore-Cooper* nicwhi@bps.org.uk, 0116 252 9521

NEWS FROM THE BOARDS

Professional Practice Board

3 June 2008

Board Chair Dr Carole Allan, a clinical psychologist working for NHS in Glasgow, has been appointed to become the new PPB Chair. Carole becomes Deputy Chair with immediate effect and takes up her appointment from April 2009.

Professional practice guidelines Subject to final proof reading, the following guidelines were approved by the Board: *Penile Plethysmography: Guidance for Psychologists*; *Private Practice: Guidance for Psychologists*; *Good Practice Guideline for Social Inclusion*; and *Working with Interpreters in Health Settings – Guidance for Psychologists*.

New Ways of Working for Applied Psychologists in Health and Social Care A series of seminars is being run over the summer. Senior members of PTCs, SHAs and training organisations have been invited to discuss how new ways of working can benefit services and their local communities.

PPB working parties Good progress has been made on a range of issues related to mental capacity, assessment of offenders and the Mental Health Act. The Steering Group of Psychologists as Expert Witnesses has held its inaugural meeting.

Publications & Communications Board

27 June 2008

Book publishing Wiley-Blackwell are proposing to develop a web-based portal of teaching and learning resources to support the BPS Blackwell publishing list.

Journals editor appointments The Board ratified the appointment of Professor Jolanda Jetten and Dr John Dixon as joint editors of the *British Journal of Social Psychology* from 1 January 2009. Professor Jan de Jonge was also ratified as editor of the *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* with effect from 1 September 2008. Both editorships are for a term of five years.

Journals online-only subscriptions After considering the results of an online survey, the Board decided not to offer online-only journals for £10, but to continue offering subscriptions (which include both print and online) to members at heavily discounted rates.

Proposal for an annual prize for media/public engagement This was supported by the Board and will be taken to the Board of Trustees as part of a package proposing a revision of how awards are presented and what the awards should be.

Special General Meeting

A Special General Meeting will be held on Friday 12 September 2008, 12 noon, at 30 Tabernacle Street, London EC2 to announce the result of the membership ballot to amend the schedule of subscriptions. No electoral voting or other business will take place at this meeting.

(Meetings of the Board of Trustees will take place on 12 September, 1 October and 5 December.)