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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

Jamie Hacker Hughes

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I hope that you have all returned revived and refreshed from your summer holidays, if you managed to get away, that is, and I really hope that you did. Holidays and downtime are so good for decluttering the mind and taking time to try and get our priorities right for once. For those of you that have returned to mountains of e-mail, I have to tell you that I adopted the practice several years ago of leaving an 'out of office' message with the details of a colleague to be contacted if the message was urgent, with my date back at work (well, a day or two later if I'm entirely honest). If people specifically wanted me to read their particular e-mail and respond to it personally they were asked to send it again on my return; the message warned that all other messages would not be read. Then I set the auto-delete. I can't tell you what a difference it makes, and everyone who has adopted this system on my advice has told me that they have never looked back!

But now we are back, there's a heck of a lot to do. As far as the Society is concerned, the reordering of our Leicester offices is well under way and our review of our own structures is similarly in full swing. I'll keep you informed via my blog (www.bps.org.uk/blog/presidential), but we had a very healthy response to both individual and network consultations and the Society's member network review steering group, which I chair, assisted most ably by Helen Clark and her team, is busily working up a document to go to this month's meeting of the Board of Trustees with some initial thoughts and suggestions, following the review, on our future direction.

In September all the schools, colleges and universities restart, so that is our theme for this month. Please let me have details of any 'education and psychology' related events that you'd like to promote or would like to report on. Over my time as President I have already spent a lot of time visiting universities, schools and colleges encouraging them in all they are doing that relates to psychology. Our membership services team have also helped me considerably

by developing material that we can use when talking to schools – tailored to GCSE, IB and A-level students respectively – together with additional material that we can use when talking to college and university psychology societies. I'm going to a number of secondary schools this month and next, have already been to speak to some university psychology department

PsychSocs and am also busily encouraging new ones as they set themselves up. I've also attended conferences run by members of psychology departments both at home and abroad, and must single out this year's 30th anniversary PsyPAG in Glasgow for its excellence and professionalism.

Psychology teaching in schools and universities is so important, and I want us to do all that we can to encourage and support those who teach psychology, especially at pre-tertiary level. In that vein, we already have excellent relationships with the ATP (Association of Teachers of Psychology) and, as well as attending their events, I really want us to develop links with them and, for that matter, any other organisations that psychologists belong to such as the AEP (Association of Educational Psychologists), and other, non-education-related organisations such as the EPS (Experimental Psychology Society), ABIP (Association of Business and Industrial Psychologists) and others. There is so much that we can do along the lines of dual membership, reciprocal membership, and so on. In a nutshell, I would like every psychologist in the UK to be a member of the BPS.

To that end, I am launching a new campaign this month – 'Recruit a new member in September'. It's simple. Find a psychologist who you think or know doesn't belong to the BPS. Explain all the benefits of membership – the networking, the CPD, the conferences and events, the camaraderie, the reduced journals





Presidents' Award for Distinguished Contributions to Professional Knowledge

Professor Matthew Lambon Ralph

Professor Matthew Lambon Ralph from the Neuroscience and Aphasia Research Unit, School of Psychological Sciences, at the University of Manchester is to receive the Society's 2015 Presidents' Award for Distinguished Contributions to Psychological Knowledge.

Professor Lambon Ralph has been recognised for his body of research that brings together a range of disciplines and methodologies. He has:

- | pioneered the use of comparative case-series neuropsychology in the field of dementia and language problems after stroke;
- | conducted ground-breaking work using transcranial magnetic stimulation to probe semantic memory; and
- | developed new brain-imaging studies that have informed understanding of the relation between lesions and symptoms.



Professor Matthew Lambon Ralph

Committee was united in its decision to give this year's Presidents' Award for Distinguished Contributions to Psychological Research to Professor Lambon Ralph. We felt that his work has been most influential in advancing psychological knowledge and practice, and innovative in the way that it brings together approaches from different disciplines. I offer him my most sincere congratulations.'

Professor Lambon Ralph said: 'It is a great honour to receive this award from the Society. I hope that it highlights the positive symbiotic relationship that can be forged between psychological sciences and neuroscience – one which advances our understanding of cognitive processes and their neural bases and provides important insights about acquired language and memory problems following brain damage.'

The mid-career Presidents' Award is made annually to recognise the achievements of someone currently engaged in research of outstanding quality. The winner receives a commemorative certificate and is invited to give a lecture at the Society's Annual Conference – in this case in April 2016.

Professor Lambon Ralph was appointed to his current chair in cognitive neuroscience in 2001.

Society President Professor Jamie Hacker Hughes, said: 'The Awards

subscriptions and online literature researching resources – and persuade them to join! If we all recruited just one new person, we could have a 100,000 strong Society within weeks.

Members also, of course, get access to our BPS psychology library in Senate House in London, which I visited recently. It's very impressive and the staff there are really keen to develop and build on the special relationship that we have with them (see also p.742).

We're particularly pleased that so many undergraduates have joined our Society as student members over the past few months – but we know that there are a lot of students out there who are possibly yet to see the light. So, our team are planning a recruitment drive to coincide with the start of the new academic year later this month, and we will be in touch with our student reps very soon to work with them on this.

Our student reps get sent information about promoting Society membership to their fellow students, receive information on Society events taking place nearby, and are kept up to date with a regular

newsletter. They are our link between universities and our students. For any student members interested in becoming a rep, we'd love to have you. Please e-mail studentreps@bps.org.uk

For those of you working with or teaching psychology students in psychology or other departments in universities, you may have heard of our multi-membership scheme, where universities have signed up to buy student BPS memberships for whole cohorts of students. Eleven universities have already done just that and we'd like to see many more doing so. Has your university signed up yet? If so, fantastic, spread the word, but if not yet, then please have a think about it and talk to our membership team.

Outside schools, colleges and universities you will know that it's been a busy old time. Our counselling psychologists held their conference in Harrogate, our Psychology of Women

Section held their conference in Windsor, our forensic psychologists held their DFP conference in Manchester and EFPA held their ECP at the University of Milan, Bicocca.

Psychology and social justice became

a major issue over the summer too, not just through the ethics conference held at UEL, and the DCP's 'Beyond the Therapy Room' conference but through the 'Walk to Talk' social justice walk carried out by the large group of psychologists who walked from Leicester to London in August, and in coverage and debate in the national broadcast and print media. The ethics of psychological practice has also, of course, come under a harsh global spotlight with the publication of the Hoffman Report on the APA, and I, through the Board of Trustees, am taking steps to ensure, as far as possible, that our Society has all the procedures and policies in place to make sure that the BPS never finds itself in a similar position.

This month sees more conferences, the Developmental Psychology Section and Quantitative Methods Section, the Welsh Branch and the Division of Health Psychology and, to bring things round full circle, the Division of Educational and Child Psychology too, and quite possibly many more.

It's good to be back, it's good to have you back, and whether or not we study or work in education, that back-to-school feeling probably applies wherever we work. Have a very good September. There's lots to do.

"I would like every psychologist in the UK to be a member of the BPS"



Consent and looked-after children

Ella Rhodes reports from a discussion at the Society's Ethics Committee

The Society's Ethics Committee have hosted a discussion meeting on the tricky ethics of carrying out research involving looked-after children. Law Professor Jean McHale (Birmingham Law School) began the discussion with a talk on some of the legal difficulties around consent in this type of research.

Professor McHale said that consent from a legal perspective was a complex issue. For example, parental responsibility for some looked-after children can be vested in a local authority as well as a child's parents or guardians. In addition, the legal issues surrounding children and

consent draw on many different areas of English law. Researchers may be liable in criminal or civil law if consent is not given. Failure to obtain consent may also lead to infringements of the Human Rights Act 1998. The question of capacity to consent is derived from family law. In relation to persons over 16, the test for capacity today is to be found in the Mental Capacity Act 2005 .

The situation is even more problematic as there is no single statute regulating research in this country. The Health Research Authority has been placed under a statutory basis by the Care Act 2014 and there are various degrees of

regulation in relation to specific areas such as clinical trials concerning medicinal products, yet considerable regulatory uncertainties remain.

Medical sociologist Professor Helen Roberts (University College London) shared her experience of ethics in relation to research with looked-after children drawing both on her current work and her work as former Head of R&D at Barnardos – one of the few non-medical charities to have had a substantial R&D function. She described her practice colleagues as being 'better than the best' in terms of their commitment to ensuring the right services.



However, she said, at the time, there was little research into the long-term outcomes. The notion of setting up trials (for instance) to assess novel services was largely seen in a negative light both in academic social work and in the services themselves. 'The notion that we often simply don't know what is the right thing to do is one



Society President Professor Jamie Hacker Hughes visited Senate House Library, University of London in June to meet senior library managers. The collaboration between the Society and the Library dates back to 1947, since when a joint psychology collection has been developed that is one of the most important collections in Europe. Among the benefits of this enduring association are that Society members can join the Library free as reference readers or at a discount for a borrowing card (see tinyurl.com/shl-bps).



DAVID MANSSELL/REPORTER/DIGITAL.CO.UK

intrusive, seeing a particular group as too vulnerable to participate carried its own ethical dilemmas.

Other issues Roberts and her colleagues encountered were concerns around confidentiality. Roberts said that as part of the consent process, the young people were told that if they gave us cause for concern about their safety or someone else's, we would need to share it. One young person challenged this, feeling that since s/he was no longer 'looked after', this felt heavy-handed.

Roberts concluded: 'How can we arrive at a position that provides a level of protection but also allows an ethical and rigorous research to take place?'

Professor Pasco Fearon (UCL), who has been working with children receiving social care and third-sector services in a range of settings, said he had encountered multiple problems with gaining consent. One of the difficulties was that although children themselves found the idea of being involved with research very exciting, many professionals working with these children felt anxious and protective of them and would – through the best of intentions – block opportunities for children to get involved. Fearon suggested that professionals can sometimes lose sight of the fact that it might be interesting and empowering for service users to take part in research

that we all find difficult. What had more traction with colleagues was when we spoke of a more robust evaluative approach within a children's rights framework – that it's part of a child's and parent's right to know whether what's being offered is more likely to do harm than good.'

Roberts and her colleagues are currently doing a small study in one authority looking into care leavers' transitions in health, education and social care. She outlined some of the ethical concerns raised by colleagues. One was whether the study was intrusive, involving as it does speaking to what were seen as vulnerable young people at a stressful time. Roberts said that this raised the tension between a child's or a young person's right to participation and their right to protection. She added that since all social research has the potential to be

SOCIETY NOTICES

- Wessex Branch 4th Annual Military Conference 'Resilience Through Change', Basingstoke, 3 November 2015** See p.697
- 'Psychology Heaven and Hell' Research Digest blog 10th anniversary event, London, 9 December 2015** See p.712
- BPS Annual Conference, Nottingham, April 2016** See p.i
- British Academy/BPS Lecture, London, 17 September** See p.735
- BPS conferences and events** See p.744
- Division of Sport & Exercise Psychology conference, Leeds, December 2015**
See p.744
- CPD workshops 2015** See p.745
- 'History of Mental Health' conference, Leeds, 22–23 March 2016** See p.748
- Award for Outstanding Doctoral Research Contributions to Psychology 2015 – call for nominations** See p.749
- 'Childhood sexual abuse – Impact and interventions' event, Edinburgh, October 2015** See p.750
- Psychology in the Pub (South West of England Branch)** See p.750
- Spearman Medal 2016 – call for nominations** See p.751
- DCP Leadership and Management Faculty 'Beyond Health to Life' free event, Bristol, 30 September**
See p.754
- Award for Equality of Opportunity 2015 – call for nominations** See p.755
- 5th European Coaching Psychology Conference, London, December**
See p.756
- Division of Educational & Child Psychology Annual Conference and TEP Day, London, January 2016** See p.756
- History of Psychology Centre 'Stories of Psychology' symposium, London, 14 October 2015** See p.779

and to have a voice in that way.

His recent work involves gathering evidence for a new family intervention for foster families; however, Professor Fearon and his colleagues have encountered issues with gaining consent for these children. He said that parental responsibility for many children in care is often shared between the local authority and the child's parents, even when there is limited contact, as it is often legally simpler to keep parental responsibility as shared. This often means that consent is required from three or even four parties (foster carers, the local authority, and one or both parents) – in addition, of course, to the assent of the child.

Professor Fearon said that biological parents can have complicated feelings about these issues and sometimes have a difficult and complex relationship with the local authority. Also making contact

with these parents can often be very difficult for researchers, or that contact may be potentially de-stabilising of the child's care, when there has been no contact for some time. He asked whether this was a line that should never be crossed: 'When we have done our due diligence trying to contact biological parents, is there any scenario where not obtaining consent from parents would be permissible? Or do we have to accept that a child in this position would not be able to participate in the research?' He raised the possibility that this could be viewed as allowing children who are already vulnerable to become disenfranchised, at a double-disadvantage. He added that these sorts of difficulties are part of the reason why there are very few well-executed trials involving fostered or local authority children. This is a major problem for the field.

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