President’s column
Carole Allan

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Over the last few years the global media has drawn attention to disasters and crises across the world. Last month saw the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on the United States, and in August we had the sight of rioting and looting on the streets of London and other cities. How do we as a learned Society and professional body respond in the face of such events? I would like to concentrate on one aspect of our response.

Last year Professor Bill Yule, Emeritus Professor of Applied Child Psychology at the Institute of Psychiatry, and an international expert in the field, proposed the formation of a Section on Disaster, Crisis and Trauma Psychology (Trauma Psychology for short). The Society’s Trustees have endorsed the proposal and the next stage is to get the support of the membership. Under the Society’s rules, 1 per cent of the membership must support the formation of a new Section for it to be formed.

Why have a Section? Like Bill Yule, and I am drawing extensively from his original proposal, I think that psychologists of all specialisms have important roles to play both in planning for disaster management and in mitigating the effects of disasters and terrorism. By establishing a forum for trauma psychology, the section would aim to:

1. Promote cross-disciplinary research to understand reactions to crisis and provide evidence-based interventions;
2. Help develop teaching in this area at both introductory and advanced professional levels;
3. Facilitate discussion among psychologists of all specialisms, via meetings, symposia and websites;
4. Maintain the Society’s Database of Disaster Resources with the aim of helping members gain access to relevant resources in their work;
5. Liaise actively with the European Federation of Psychologists’ Associations Standing Committee on Disaster Crisis and Trauma Psychology; and
6. Liaise closely with policy makers and the Consultation Response Team to ensure that psychological findings influence public policy.

To promote disaster and crisis psychology a working party had been established in 2007 by the Professional Practice Board. In 2008 the group published the Database of Disaster Resources (downloadable free via tinyurl.com/3hrk88h), which included details of key research findings. A resource for members with relevant expertise in the area has also been developed and will be made available on the Society’s website.

The European Federation of Psychologists’ Associations (EFPA), of which the BPS is a member, has a Standing Committee on Disaster, Crisis and Trauma Psychology which has developed close links with the European Union and the European Commission. The Society took the lead role with EFPA in making recommendations to the European Commission on Psychological Assistance to Victims of Terrorism. The report was presented at the European Parliament in December 2008 by Bill Yule and Liz Campbell (former President of the BPS).

Bill Yule is currently Chair of the Foundation for Children and War, was an adviser to UNICEF in Bosnia. The manuals written with the Foundation for Children and War have been used in many countries in recent years. He was also a member for the Guideline Development Group for the National Institute of Clinical Excellence’s guidelines for the treatment of PTSD.

Bill also responded to the 2010 Humanitarian Assistance Guidance consultation with the support of the BPS Consultation

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Extract from The Charter

The British Psychological Society
was founded in 1901, and incorporated by Royal Charter in 1965. Its object is ‘to promote the efficiency and usefulness of Members of the Society by setting up a high standard of professional education and knowledge’.

Ground Zero in New York
The Society is 110

Reaching our 110th anniversary this month is a milestone in the Society's history. It would have been difficult for our founders back in 1901 to imagine such growth of the Society, and the influence that psychology now has in all areas of life.

Whilst celebrating psychology's achievements we also look to future developments for the discipline and the Society. We continue to support and promote psychology through our many Member Networks. The academic base of psychology has flourished with the boom in the popularity of the subject. The professional practice of psychology continues to be enhanced through the scrutiny applied to training and qualifications by our members contributing their time to our Boards and committees, and through the greater understanding and acceptance of psychology by the public.

The continued prosperity of psychology depends upon our collective efforts to demonstrate the excellence and relevance of our research, our professionalism, the variety and breadth of our practice and our ability to work with other disciplines and professions.

Award for Excellence in Psychology Education

Professor John Pearce

The existence of a Facebook group called 'John Pearce is a Legend' gives an idea why Professor John Pearce from Cardiff University has won the Society’s Award for Excellence in Psychology Education in 2011.

This award, which confers life membership of the Society and an invitation to give a paper at Annual Conference, is made each year to someone who has made an unusually significant contribution to education and training in psychology in the United Kingdom. That contribution can be made in pre-degree teaching, teaching at first and higher degree level, the training of professional applied psychologists, the teaching of psychology to other professions or adult and continuing education.

Professor John Pearce is extremely popular with both undergraduates and postgraduates. His unique style of lecturing makes the complex world of behavioural neuroscience - not always a popular topic among undergraduates - both fascinating and easily accessible. So much so that more than half the Cardiff psychology student population enrolls in this module each year.

As one of his students says: 'He makes you feel comfortable with the work and will explain it so it is fully understandable. He has definitely made me feel more positive about the degree, just knowing that there is someone there that I can talk to if I need to is really encouraging. He also makes me feel that paying the expensive tuition fee is worth it.'

A second student adds: 'I've been lucky enough to experience his invaluable help first-hand. The support he has given me during tutorials, private meetings and in his research lab have provided me with the best possible basis from which to make an informed decision about my future career.'

Nor does Professor Pearce's commitment end at graduation: with the help of his nurturing, 11 of his 14 PhD students have progressed to lectureships or postdoctoral fellowships in departments around the country and as far afield as Istanbul.

One of the challenges universities face is engaging students in activities outside core modules - encouraging them to take an interest that goes beyond what is likely to come up in examination questions. Professor Pearce's contribution to this is his 'International Seminar Series', which sees guests invited to Cardiff to talk about their research. These events are attended by undergraduates, postgraduates and staff alike.

Professor Pearce had made a further contribution to teaching through the publication of his textbook Animal Learning and Cognition: An Introduction, which is a recommended text on university courses in Canada and the USA, as well as in Britain. And he has also had an impact on education: Professor Pearce was a scientific contributor to the BBC series Animal Minds.

Throughout this varied work runs the spirit identified by another of his students: 'His lectures are interesting, informative and very well structured. He includes personal aspects in the lectures and comedy to make it light-hearted... His enthusiasm means that we students are enthused to work for his modules and his coursework because we want to show him that the effort he is putting in is paying off.'

Jonathan Calder

Response Team. As part of their work the team follow through by reviewing final published reports to note any change, and contact the lead author of the response to let them know of any areas where the points made in the response have been taken into account. Their feedback was that the BPS was the only body whose comments were published reports to note any change, and contact the lead author of the response to let www.bbps.org.uk/traumasec.

Section being created, and perhaps becoming a member, please register your vote via www.bps.org.uk/traumasec.

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NEWS FROM BPS JOURNALS

BPS members get free access to nearly 600 years of research

The archive for all of the BPS Journals has now been published online on Wiley Online Library. Across the journals, this equates to over 580 years worth of research, spanning the histories of each of the journals.

The archive contains some of the most groundbreaking articles in psychology, published by some of the world’s most influential authors over the decades. All members of the BPS have free access to the archives online as a benefit of membership. To read this research, simply go to www.bps.org.uk/resources, click on ‘All BPS journals’ (sign-in needed), scroll down to choose your preferred journal and then click ‘All issues’ on the left-hand menu when within the journal’s Wiley Online Library page.

BPS Flagship Events – Istanbul reception

Our journals enjoyed a fantastic reception at the 12th European Congress of Psychology in Istanbul in July. Organised by Wiley-Blackwell, the reception offered attendees the opportunity to meet the BPS Publishing Team and learn more about the journals. Professor Pam Maras, Honorary General Secretary welcomed everyone to the reception and spoke about the journals’ achievements and influence over the last few decades before inviting everyone to join us in raising a toast to the journals.

Lifetime achievement

Professor Colwyn Trevarthen has received this year’s Lifetime Achievement Award for Distinguished Contributions to Psychological Knowledge. He is currently Professor (Emeritus) of Child Psychology and Psychobiology in the Psychology Department at University of Edinburgh.

This award is made each year by the Society’s Research Board. Winners are psychologists who have an outstanding record of personal achievements and have made significant contributions to the advancement of psychological knowledge. The award consists of Life Membership of the Society, £1,000 to be spent on further research and a commemorative certificate, which is presented at the Society’s Annual Conference.

As a graduate student with the Nobel Laureate Roger Sperry, Colwyn Trevarthen made a strong entrance to the international research scene with a publication in Science in 1962. His career, spanning 50 years of research, has seen him making substantial contributions in three areas of the psychology of action: neuroscience, infant development and musicality.

In 1968 Trevarthen identified complementary visual systems that direct movements in different action spaces: a ‘focal’ stream for recognition of objects at the centre of interest, and an ‘ambient’ stream for sensori-motor guidance and orientation in body-related space. This terminology has since been replaced by ‘ventral’ and ‘dorsal’ referring to anatomical systems in the brain, but the movement-based model has had an enormous impact on behavioural and neurological science, on evolutionary psychology, and on applied research in computational and environmental psychology and has become the cornerstone of major theories of visual perception and of our understanding of visually guided motor behaviours.

Trevarthen’s work on infant intersubjectivity, inspired by high-speed film studies with Jacques Paillard in Marseille on bimanual coordination, and the science of embryonic brain development, began with a remarkable team in the Harvard Centre for Cognitive Studies in the 1960s headed by Jerome Bruner and including Berry Brazelton and Martin Richards. Trevarthen’s descriptions from field of young infants’ intentions, developing interests and special sensitivities to persons, and his radical claim that they manifested a ‘primary’ intersubjectivity in the first months of life, have withstood the test of time and have been supported by recent evidence from neuroscience. His work with Lynne Murray, who developed the ‘blank face’ and ‘video replay’ tests, demonstrated early contingent emotional regulation of proto-conversations, and with Penelope Hubley he proposed in the late 70s that a secondary intersubjectivity or person-person-object awareness emerging at nine months starts cultural learning of practical tasks and tools, and of meaning in language.

Professor Trevarthen’s third great contribution has been made through his exploration of musical rhythms in human communication. With musician and acoustician Stephen Malloch, his theory of ‘communicative musicality’ suggests that narrative-making rhythmic behaviour is innate and guides shared experience in early life. Their proposal that the communicative motives of infants are akin to those of improvising musicians and all communal musical making has practical significance for both teaching and therapy.

Colwyn Trevarthen has been an influential and controversial figure on the British psychological scene, inspiring generations of students, scientists and childcare practitioners around the world. This award is a fitting recognition of his achievements and services.

Professor Trevarthen commented: ‘I am delighted and honoured to receive this generous recognition of my work, and a little surprised too, as I have favoured new ideas, and that does not always work. Of course, I owe a great deal to my students and collaborators...’

Jonathan Calder
Test user qualifications made public

Since 5 September 2011 members of the public have, for the first time, been able to check independently if someone holds the British Psychological Society’s qualifications in test use. The Society has made its Register of Qualifications in Test Use (RQTU) freely available online at www.psychtesting.org.uk.

Another change sees qualified test users on the RQTU required to revalidate their qualifications with the Society every six years by affirming that they have maintained their competence. They may be asked to provide written evidence to support this. This change aims to ensure that the RQTU lists only competent and current test users.

Test users have a profile on the new online RQTU listing their levels of qualification. They will be able to add to this profile as they undertake further assessments of their competence. The cap on the number of personality measures in which occupational test users can be affirmed as competent was also lifted on 5 September.

Psychological tests are used in all walks of life to assess ability, personality and behaviour. A test can be used as part of the selection process for job interviews and to assess children in schools, people with mental health problems and offenders in prison. The BPS Psychological Testing Centre is the first point of contact for anyone who uses, takes or develops tests. Find out more at the Psychological Testing Centre website www.psychtesting.org.uk; telephone: 0116 252 9530, e-mail: enquiry@psychtesting.org.uk

SOCIETY NOTICES

Psychology Education Board Lifetime Achievement Award – call for nominations See p.717
Annual Conference 2012 See centre p.1
Spearman Medal – call for nominations See p.763
BPS conferences See p.769
BPS Learning Centre courses and events See p.770
Award for Outstanding Doctoral Research Contributions to Psychology – call for nominations See p.772

Consultations news

Making an impact

In August we took advantage of a slightly quieter period to search for recent policy outcomes, then evaluations were carried out for any impact made by the Society’s responses to the initial consultations. Although not every recommendation the Society makes is taken up by consulting bodies, it is encouraging to note that our responses have helped shape policy in the following areas:

Substance Misuse Service & System Improvement (Welsh Assembly Government) Several of the points made by the Society have been acted upon, including: improving the clarity of the guidance; an undertaking that the final guidance will reflect the specialist expertise and clinical leadership provided by CAMHS; and an undertaking to explore the feasibility of developing a nationally commissioned service for inpatient detoxification.

Parole Board Rules Amendments (Ministry of Justice) The MoJ has informed us that our advice about avoiding coaching of witnesses has been noted and addressed, as has our advice regarding complex cases where a prisoner may be disadvantaged by remote participation. In addition, all other concerns raised will be taken into account during the evaluation of a pilot test later in 2011.

Conduct Disorders in Children and Young People (NICE) Many of the Society’s recommendations were taken up, including: CAMHS services will be taken in to account when formulating their recommendations; substance misuse will be considered where this is centrally related to conduct disorders; variation in prevalence rates will be considered in more detail.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Strategy (Department of Health) The points we raised regarding anxiety and depression, socio-economic deprivation, stigma, more integrated mental and physical health care for all people with COPD, and the particular relevance of CBT, have all been taken into account.

Psychological Support Measures for Cancer (Department of Health) Several points from the Society’s response were taken into consideration in the final measures, including the following: the Level 4 practitioner specifications now include counselling psychologists in addition to clinical psychologists; and the Level 3 induction programme is now specifically required to meet British Psychosocial Oncology Society and SIGOPAC requirements.

Consultation responses

Six responses were submitted during August, involving 15 members of 13 member network groups; these were:
I Walking & Cycling: Call for Evidence (NICE)
I Modern Workplaces (Department for Business, Innovation & Skills)
I Performance management & Capability (Department for Education)
I NHS Innovation Review (Department of Health)
I Adoption Agency Inspections (Ofsted)
I Fostering Services & Agency Inspections (Ofsted)

Full details of these and all consultations, including downloadable copies of consultation papers and the Society’s responses, are available at www.bps.org.uk/consult.

The preparation and submission of the Society’s responses to consultations on public policy is co-ordinated by the Consultation Response Team (CRT). All those holding at least graduate membership are eligible to contribute and all interest is warmly welcomed: please contact the CRT for further information (consult@bps.org.uk; 0116 252 9508) or visit our website (www.bps.org.uk/consult).

Society vacancies

Professional Practice Board
Chair 2011/14
See advert p.738
Contact Nigel Atter, PPB Policy Adviser Nigel. Atter@bps.org.uk, 0116 252 9901
Closing date Friday 14 October 2011

read discuss contribute at www.thepsychologist.org.uk
HISTORY OF PSYCHOLOGY PRIZE

Would you like to win £75 and the opportunity to present a conference paper?

The Lovie Prize is awarded to the student who sends in the best 3000-word, unpublished essay on a history of psychology topic. Student is defined as undergraduate or a postgraduate student from any country, but not exceeding two years post undergraduate graduation.

Send your entries to Geoff Bunn (G.Bunn@mmu.ac.uk) or Peter Lamont (peter.lamont@ed.ac.uk) by 31 January 2012.

PhD award

The BPS Social Psychology Section committee has awarded the Section’s prize for best PhD thesis to Dr David Novelli of the University of Sussex. The award was given on the basis if his thesis ‘The social psychology of spatiality and crowding’ and a paper describing one of the studies from the thesis, which was published last year in the British Journal of Social Psychology (see abstract at tinyurl.com/4xnzh85 – but Society members can get free full-text access to all BPS journals via www.bps.org.uk/resources).

In his nomination statement, Novelli’s supervisor John Drury stated that David had developed a simple but extremely powerful experiment, the results of which provided a new theoretical basis for coherently and elegantly accounting for otherwise fragmentary and contradictory findings on the topic of ‘personal space’ and crowding.

The Social Psychology Section committee felt that David’s paper was an outstanding and innovative piece of research, and recognised that his work has the potential to open doors to a whole new tradition of research in the discipline.

As part of his prize, David gave the PhD award lecture at the Section’s annual conference at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge University in September.