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British  
Psychological  
Society

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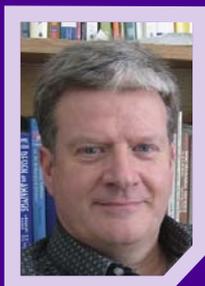
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The Society has offices in Belfast, Cardiff, Glasgow and London, as well as the main office in Leicester. All enquiries should be addressed to the Leicester office [see inside front cover for address].

#### 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

Gerry Mulhern

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or e-mail: [thepresident@bps.org.uk](mailto:thepresident@bps.org.uk)

As I write, I am returning from a meeting between a group of Society representatives and the Cabinet Office's Behavioural Insights Team (BIT). It is clear that there is great interest in behaviour change at the highest levels of government, and we were pleased to learn that the BIT is keen to work with the Society in ensuring a solid empirical basis for future behaviour change initiatives.

At the meeting I voiced general approval for the Society's offering practical support to government's attempts to build social capital through an understanding of behaviour and behaviour change. Constructive engagement with government is an important responsibility for a learned society, and I am keen to ensure that we maximise our impact in this regard. This is of course different from offering political cover. The Society will always wish to be guided by the evidence, which may or may not be politically convenient.

The BPS is a broad church and, as such, we should avoid adopting an overtly political stance, not least because, for any issue, a sizeable proportion of our membership would be likely to disagree. At times, however, I wonder if we have not gone too far as a Society in avoiding taking a firm position on issues of importance. Even on psychological matters, we have traditionally fought shy of taking a stance. I well remember, in the 1980s, Council's contortions over the Cyril Burt issue when we went to extraordinary lengths to arrive at the formal position that we did not consider it appropriate to adopt a corporate position on Sir Cyril!

By the same token, we must not allow ourselves to be used politically by being misrepresented by politicians. Recently, I received a letter from the Shadow Health Secretary, John Healey, informing me that, in a written parliamentary answer by the Care Minister, Paul Burstow, the Society was listed among 52 organisations as having indicated their support for the government's NHS reforms. The Society was far from alone in having had its position misrepresented, and I was pleased to clarify the situation in a press statement confirming that we had indicated no such

support, nor were we consulted before being named as having done so.

As a learned and professional body, though apolitical, we are nothing if not on the side of the vulnerable and disadvantaged, and of seeking to promote well-being through research, education and professional intervention. There is little point in, for example, our insisting on a strong ethical code for the protection of participants in research and recipients of psychological services while keeping schtum in the face of threats to human well-being, such as

the closure of hundreds of libraries up and down the land, or of a threat to public access to the socially and psychologically enhancing benefits of the nation's forests and woodlands. For some of us, political devolution, with the greater contiguity afforded between regional legislative bodies and

their electorates, may ensure that we are spared some of this erosion of our societal esteem, though this

is far from certain. The value placed on both dead and living trees is surely a benchmark for any enlightened society.

Meanwhile, City wine bars are stocking up with bubbly, and luxury goods retailers are rubbing their hands in anticipation of the vulgar stampede of bankers keen to unburden themselves of their unwarranted wonga. Is it inappropriately political to insist on an empirical basis for claims that such excesses are necessary in order to attract and retain the 'brightest and the best'? Or even to suggest that bonuses might be linked more obviously to performance? Without such evidence, we can just as plausibly assert that, far from the brightest and best, these disproportionate windfalls are instead attracting and retaining the greedy, the narcissistic and the mediocre. So, may I suggest, purely apolitically of course, that the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, and the regional equivalents, be amended to levy an additional percentage of tax on City bonuses to be ring-fenced to resource public libraries throughout the UK.



JOHN HARRIS/REPORTAGE.CO.UK

#### Tax City bonuses to resource public libraries?



# Search the Society's archives online

The Society's History of Psychology Centre (HoPC) has made its archive catalogue available online. The catalogue contains descriptions of special collections and records held within the Society's archives. Users can now, for the first time, search the entire catalogue online through the HoPC website.

The archive includes not only records of the Society's own history but also extensive collections of individual psychologists' working papers, as well as visual and sound archives. Most of the photographs in the visual archive are viewable in the online catalogue.

The catalogue website includes a 'Showcase' page that highlights some of the most significant collections in the archives



and an 'Image Gallery' facility highlighting some of the images contained in the visual archive.

Dr Alan Collins, Chair of the History of Psychology Centre Committee said: 'The online catalogue will make it easier for historians of psychology to locate important material in the Society's archives, which are already a major resource for anyone doing research on the history of psychology. And as the History of Psychology Centre is committed to

expanding the archives, they will increase in importance in the future. We also hope that anyone with access to valuable archive material will consider contributing it to HoPC so making the Centre one of the "first stops" for anyone seeking archival material relating to psychology and its history in Britain.'

**I The online catalogue is available via [www.bps.org.uk/hopc](http://www.bps.org.uk/hopc)**

## Mental health strategy welcomed

The Society has welcomed the publication of a new strategy for mental health services in England, 'No health without mental health' (see [tinyurl.com/6czojj6](http://tinyurl.com/6czojj6)).

The Society has been closely involved with the government in the development of these policies, which incorporates a focus on mental health and well-being as a central aim for healthy, happy, successful societies. Professor Peter Kinderman, Chair of the Division of Clinical Psychology, said: 'This strategy is a very positive and welcome step towards the kind of mental health service that psychologists have been calling for over many years. It stresses the importance of seeing people as human beings – people who experience distress and occasionally need help as we all do from time to time, but as real people with real lives. Psychosocial approaches are increasingly recognised as "gold-standard", and we welcome the emphasis on a psychological approach in government policies. This is particularly timely – many vulnerable people are facing severe pressures due to reduced income and retractions of a wide range of social services. All kinds of psychological difficulties are exacerbated by adverse social circumstances, so the next few years may well prove demanding. At the same time, pressures on local authority budgets will have a significant impact on services for children, people with disabilities and long-term conditions, people with mental health

problems and older people. Obviously, psychologists will strongly argue for sustained investment in the services that we know are vital for citizens and for well-functioning, productive and healthy societies. This includes ensuring that everyone has access to evidence-based psychological therapies. Too often, people with mental health problems are offered only drug treatment when care that included psychological therapies would produce a better outcome.'

Dr John Hanna, Policy Director of the Division of Clinical Psychology, said: 'The Coalition Government's commitment to expanding the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme, as announced in October's Comprehensive Spending Review and now repeated in "No health without mental health", is a robust response to our repeated calls to ensure that everybody who needs it has access to evidence-based psychological therapies. Mental health care must be given the same emphasis as physical health care.'

'Children and young people, older adults, people with longterm conditions and those with severe and enduring mental health difficulties should now have more opportunity to win their rights under the NHS Constitution and protect their psychological well-being and rebuild their lives through access to a full range of evidence-based treatments. This initiative must be personalised, inclusive and fair,

clinically effective and, over time, economical, lowering overall costs to the NHS. Psychologists are more than ready to take these initiatives forwards; to coordinate and lead, to train and supervise our psychological therapist colleagues, to research new approaches and to undertake the most complex and risky clinical work in these crucially important and long-overlooked sectors.'

### HPC RENEWALS

Practitioner psychologists registered with the Health Professions Council will receive their registration renewal forms in early March 2011. All registrants are required to pay their renewal fee and return their signed and completed renewal form to the HPC as soon as possible but no later than the 31 May 2011 to make sure their name stays on the Register.

To renew online, log on to the HPC website at [www.hpc-uk.org](http://www.hpc-uk.org) and click on the 'My Account' link in the bar at the top of the home page.

For further information about the HPC registration renewal process see [www.hpc-uk.org/registrants/renew/](http://www.hpc-uk.org/registrants/renew/) or contact the Registration Department via e-mail on [registration@hpc-uk.org](mailto:registration@hpc-uk.org) or on 0845 3004 472.



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## CONSULTATIONS NEWS

The start of 2011 was a busy time for consultations with seven responses being submitted by the Society. Brief details of three of these are shown below:

**Unfitness to Plead: A consultation paper (Law Commission)** The law on unfitness to plead or to be tried in criminal proceedings concerns whether or not an accused is able to stand trial and, if not, whether or not the accused is 'under a disability' that renders it inappropriate for him or her to be tried. These proposals rested on a view of the Pritchard test of fitness to plead as outdated and inconsistent with current practice. The Society accepted the aim of bringing the assessment of this issue in line with the Mental Capacity Act by including the concept of proportionality in decision making. However, decision making was found to have been poorly conceptualised and suggestions were made for how a more psychological perspective of this function might be included.

**An Information Revolution: A consultation on proposals (Department of Health)** These proposals were aimed at transforming the way information is accessed, collected, analysed and used within health and adult social care services. The Society supported the comprehensiveness and revolutionary nature of the proposals, as well as their intent. However, some concerns were raised, particularly those most relevant to psychologists providing health and social care and those involved in the provision of postgraduate training and research.

**Schizophrenia up to 18 Years of Age: Draft scope (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)** This draft scope defined what aspects of care the NICE guideline will cover and to whom it will apply. The Society welcomed the consideration of psychosocial interventions in addition to pharmacology but suggested that consideration be given to regarding the former as primary. It was recommended that the scope be broadened to cover childhood psychosis as a whole and to include secondary prevention. It was considered necessary to distinguish between a single, resolved episode of psychosis, an emergent pattern of intermittent psychosis, and an apparently established pattern of persistent psychosis.

The remaining consultations responded to in January are listed below. Full details of all consultations are available from our website (address provided below).

- I Assault Guideline – Professional Consultation (Sentencing Council)
- I Draft Guidance for Engagement and Consultation on Changes to Health Services (Welsh Assembly Government)
- I Consultation on a Fitter Future for All: An Obesity Prevention Framework for Northern Ireland 2011–2021 (Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Northern Ireland)
- I Health and Wellbeing in the Changing Urban Environment: A systems analysis approach – an interdisciplinary science plan (response to the International Council for Science – input via the Royal Society).

*The preparation and submission of the Society's responses to consultations is coordinated by the Consultations Response Team (CRT). All those holding at least graduate membership are eligible to contribute to responses, 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.).*

# Qualitative methods awards

## Undergraduate Qualitative Research Project Award

This new Qualitative Methods in Psychology Section award will be given annually to the final-level undergraduate student whose project is judged by the QMiP committee to be the best submitted for the competition in the year (see p.207). Eligible projects will make good use of qualitative research methods in an empirical study in any area of psychology.

## Outstanding Research by an Early Career Scholar

This annual Qualitative Methods in Psychology Section award is made to a scholar in the early stage of their career (within five years of graduation from the PhD), for a paper which either advances the field of qualitative research methods in psychology, or make good use of qualitative research methods to develop theory or practice in any area of psychology.

## Seminar Competition

Proposals are invited from members of the Qualitative Methods in Psychology Section for funding for an event such as a seminar or workshop on qualitative research methods. Any topic likely to be of interest to qualitative researchers in psychology is appropriate, though the main focus should be methodological rather than substantive.

**I For more information on the three award schemes and details of previous winners see the Section website: [www.bps.org.uk/qmip/section\\_prizes.cfm](http://www.bps.org.uk/qmip/section_prizes.cfm)**

# Good Samaritan

Jim McManus, a member of the British Psychological Society and Director of Public Health for Birmingham City Council, has been awarded the Good Samaritan Medal by the Catholic Church for his work in health care. The medal is the highest medal for health care the Church bestows and is given to 'those who serve the sick and suffering in an exceptional way'.

McManus is an adviser on health care to the Catholic Church and has undertaken

theological and policy work on health for the Church for some years. He was presented with the medal by Archbishop Zygmund Zimowski, the President of the Vatican's Health Department, at a surprise ceremony during a meeting at the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Healthcare Workers in Rome.



**Jim McManus**

McManus told *The Psychologist*: 'I'm so honoured – there are only four living people in the UK who have the medal, and previous recipients of the medal include Sir Alexander Fleming!'

# Treating children's behaviour

The British Psychological Society's Division of Educational Psychology and Division of Clinical Psychology have supported the call for a national review of the use of medication to treat children's behavioural issues.

Peter Kinderman, Chair of the Division of Clinical Psychology, said: 'We welcome the announcement from the government pledging an extra £400 million for the provision of psychological therapies – including the promise of better support for parents and children with behavioural problems.

However, we are concerned that the overall cuts to the public sector will place all of mental health care – including care for children – at risk.

'We know BPS members are involved in excellent work with Child and Mental Health Service teams, but child mental health is an area that is grossly under resourced, resulting in too few children and young people being able to get timely access to the appropriate therapy. Clearly, it is important to understand children's behavioural and psychological problems fully, and to invest in proper, expert, therapeutic approaches. We would be very concerned if children were being prescribed medication as a quick fix rather than accessing the full



assessments and psychological therapies which take may longer and cost more, but ultimately are likely to be better value in the long run. Within the BPS we are already working closely with our psychiatry colleagues to ensure better mental health across the board. If there is evidence of inappropriate use of drugs or medication then we're sure that our psychiatry colleagues would be equally concerned.'

Figures released by the Department of Health show that in 2009 the number of prescriptions issued to 16- to 18-year-olds to treat ADHD had risen by 51 per cent in just two years.

Kinderman concluded: 'Many children unfortunately have behavioural and emotional problems which of course demand appropriate care... Children for whom the diagnosis of ADHD is being considered should receive full multidisciplinary assessments, the option of receiving psychological and behavioural therapies, and their parents or carers should be offered parent-training and education programmes. Drugs should be considered as an option but this should

be part of an overall therapy programme. In the case of problems such as temporary sleep problems, mild social anxiety and shyness, I fail to see how medicalising these problems and contemplating the use of drugs is justified. These may indeed be problems, but they are problems that clearly deserve a more psychological response.'

# Pedalling psychology

Two Psychology lecturers are planning to cycle across two countries, calling at secondary schools and colleges in a bid to excite students about studying the subject.

Dr Tim Jones, from the University of Worcester, and Dr Paul Sander, from the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, are hoping to change the perception that psychology is 'all about sitting on a couch' by highlighting the many varied employment opportunities in the field.

'The traditional perception is that psychology is all solely about helping people and sitting on a couch,' said Dr Jones. 'We wanted to do something innovative to show that psychology is a diverse discipline and introduce students

to areas in psychology that may not be covered as part of their GCSEs or A-levels.'

'Alongside this, we want to demonstrate that learning does not

just take place in classrooms during class times but is much more of a lifestyle choice to open oneself up to new experiences and to benefit from them,' added Dr Sander.

Psychology is one of the most popular choices at A-level. Currently around 75 per cent of students studying psychology at university are female. Dr Jones and Dr Sander hope that through a number of activities they can encourage more boys to take up the subject.

The Pedalling Psychology challenge, funded by a British Psychological Society 'Sharing our science' grant

(see [www.bps.org.uk/shareourscience](http://www.bps.org.uk/shareourscience)), will see Jones and Sander cycle from Cardiff to Worcester, calling at two schools per day, over five days. They will set off on the journey on 14 March.



At each school they will run a number of practical activities. They will create videos and podcasts along the journey, which can be used in schools as teaching aids. They have also set up a website ([www.pedallingpsychology.com](http://www.pedallingpsychology.com)) and a Twitter account where people can follow their progress.

Schools wanting to get involved in the project are invited to contact Dr Jones at [t.jones@worc.ac.uk](mailto:t.jones@worc.ac.uk).

## SOCIETY NOTICES

- BPS Conferences** p.200
- Consciousness & Experiential Psychology Section annual conference** p.200
- Learning Centre courses and events** p.201–3
- Division of Neuropsychology post-qualification training day** p.205
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