

Continuing last month's coverage, Associate Editors for conference reports KATE CAVANAGH and PAUL REDFORD present further highlights from the Centenary Annual Conference in Glasgow. The themes this month include the challenges of school exclusion and inclusion, the psychology of sex offenders, ADHD, and the rise of qualitative analysis in contemporary psychology. Further reports come from the History and Philosophy of Psychology Section, the Lesbian and Gay Psychology Section and the Division of Health Psychology programmes.



Past and present

SANDY LOVIE on a busy programme for the History and Philosophy of Psychology Section.

WHERE should I start, given that the History and Philosophy of Psychology Section (HPP Section) sponsored – directly, indirectly or jointly – over 30 papers at the conference? Well, at the beginning, naturally...

When Tommy MacKay slashed open the haggis at the Wednesday dinner after the usual address and savage cry, I thought that nothing would top that, but I was wrong. The massively well-attended keynote lecture by the Section's nominee Kurt Danziger (York University, Toronto) on history and metaphors of memory showed just how to capture an audience. His sweeping account of memory past and future revealed the depth of insight that a theoretical *and* historical perspective can offer even today's case-hardened experimentalist.

There was more to come: for instance, the prestigious Myers Lecture given by Geoff Bunn, who is a stalwart of the HPP Section, BPS Centenary Fellow at the Science Museum and a joint editor of the Society's centenary book on the history of British psychology. Bunn's topic was the importance of the award's namesake, Charles Myers, to 20th century British psychology, not least his vital role as institutional creator (of the National Institute for Industrial Psychology) and reformer (of the BPS itself).

The address from our Chair Graham Richards (Staffordshire University) also pointed to the value of history. He argued that only if we were more honest about the past and less exclusive about the nature of psychology, then the subdiscipline of the history of psychology could indeed become the kind of metapsychology that the discipline as a whole was crying out for. This was followed by a session on the centenary book with three of the contributors (Geoff Bunn, Martin Roiser and Alan Collins) either presenting aspects of their chapters or describing the genesis of the project.

After lunch on Thursday the Section mounted a tribute to the work of the internationally renowned philosopher Ullin Place. The three speakers attested to the continuing power of Place's work, with Harry Lewis (Leeds University) underlining

the significance of a 1950s paper of Place's ('Is consciousness a brain-process?') for his later adoption of a neo-Skinnerian form of behaviourism. This work was central to the two other papers in the symposium, with Thomas Dickins (London Guildhall) describing Place's operant-based account of language development, while David Palmer (Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts) argued that Skinnerian principles could still be extended to unobservable behaviour where a simple listing of stimulus, response and reinforcing contingencies had proved insufficient.

Our other Section-sponsored symposium was led by Paul Stenner (University College London) and tackled the difficult issue of theory in contemporary social psychology in the face of massive fragmentation in the discipline. Speakers offered a range of ways out, from critical theory – including insights from discourse analysis, postmodernism and feminism (Alexa Hepburn, Nottingham Trent University, and Peter Lunt, University College London) – to a new synthesis between emerging trends in biology, cultural studies and reflexive social processes (Richard Stevens, Open University). The most radical solution came from Steve Brown (Loughborough University), who aims to provide a total description of any social interaction by including both the human and the non-human (e.g. animal, object, material) elements making up the situation. The meeting proved lively!

The joint symposium with the Occupational Psychology Section started with papers on the early days of occupational psychology from Sylvia Shimmin (Lancaster University), and on the National Institute of Industrial Psychology from David Duncan (Social Audit Services) and Geoff Bunn; Duncan providing the sly anecdotes, Bunn a fascinating set of photographs illustrating the range of work undertaken by the Institute and its significance. The symposium ended with a timely warning on the rise of managerialism.

I will finish with the last paper sponsored by the Section, from our well-received invited speaker Trudy Dehue from the University of Groningen. Her treatment



Geoff Bunn

was in part historical and in part contemporary. First, Dehue examined the political basis of the original development

of the randomised trial design, exploring the liberal-welfare elite who, she claims, shaped this kind of social experimentation in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Second, she discussed the very public airing of the design in the Dutch parliament in the 1990s, where in a radical move to control heroin use in The Netherlands the minister for health initiated a randomised controlled trial supplying free heroin to users in return for their agreeing to certain conditions, including, for example, how the drug was to be dispensed. Dehue's fascinating account of the public examination of this hitherto esoteric technique points to the increasing penetration of social research into lay consciousness: a suitable motif to conclude my account.



In good health

KATE HAMILTON-WEST and **CHRISTINA CHRYSANTHOPOULOU** report
on *Division of Health Psychology* symposia.

THESE symposia offered a perspective on the state of the science of health psychology, setting current research and practice in the context of its developmental origins and exploring implications for the future direction of the field.

Outlining current advances in the area of psychoneuroimmunology, Phil Evans (University of Westminster) discussed neuroendocrine and immune mechanisms linking psychosocial stress to the onset and progression of physical illness. In particular, he highlighted the theoretical and clinical significance of identifying and studying the physiological correlates of typical chronic stressors.

Theresa Marteau (Guy's King's and St Thomas's Medical School, London) presented an overview of research arising from the increasing ability to predict future health status using DNA, stressing the importance of tailoring patient care to the individual's pre-existing emotional states, perceptions of risk and models of disease.

Mark Conner (University of Leeds) and Derek Rutter (University of Kent at Canterbury) discussed the role of social cognition models in predicting and changing health behaviours. Focusing particularly on the theory of planned behaviour, Conner presented recent meta-analytic evidence documenting the

effectiveness of the model in predicting health behaviours and discussed theoretical and research advances in understanding the link between intentions and behaviour.

Following a discussion of the principal requirements for the design and implementation of effective interventions, Rutter presented examples of successful theory-driven interventions aiming to enhance performance of protective behaviours such as cycle helmet use and screening for cancer.

Psychology also has an important role in understanding and treating coronary heart disease. Martha Whiteman (University of Edinburgh) began a symposium on this topic by presenting an overview of analyses from the Edinburgh Artery Study, demonstrating the importance of personality factors



(particularly hostility and dominance) in the aetiology of cardiovascular disease.

Andrew Steptoe (University College London) then reviewed research implicating psychophysiological mechanisms in the long-term development of the vascular disease underlying coronary heart disease and in the triggering of acute cardiac events in susceptible patients. He concluded that psychosocial factors, such as social isolation and job strain, can lead to modifications of physiological function that may promote cardiovascular pathology. Picking up this link, Doug Carroll (University of Birmingham) highlighted the importance of mood assessment following myocardial infarction, reporting evidence from a UK-based study that demonstrated a link between depression and anxiety and subsequent quality of life.

Finally, Bob Lewin (University of York)

discussed the effectiveness of psychotherapeutic approaches in cardiac rehabilitation, concluding that much of the disability manifested by patients with heart disease could be reduced using cognitive-behavioural techniques adapted from the management of chronic pain, such as goal setting, and addressing and challenging patients' specific disease-related misconceptions.

Overall, these symposia provided an insightful account of the role of

psychological processes in understanding organic diseases and improving health. Discussants Jane Wardle (University College London) and Christine Bundy (University of Manchester) provided an overview of the crucial steps that have been made towards the establishment and development of health psychology as a distinct scientific discipline and highlighted challenges facing health psychologists in the future.

Special emphasis was placed on

maximising interdisciplinary links both nationally and internationally, and on improving understanding of the physiological processes underlying health and illness. In order for health psychology to progress as a science with meaningful applications in policy and practice, both discussants stressed the need to assess the potential reach of psychological interventions and disseminate knowledge and findings more effectively to both users and policy makers.

Exclusive and inclusive schooling

The Division of Educational and Child Psychology addressed the dual challenges of school exclusion and inclusion.

A report by members of the DECP co-ordinated by KAIREN CULLEN.

APPROXIMATELY 0.17 per cent of the UK school population is permanently excluded from school. At present many of the excluded young people receive no formal education, although this will change in September 2002 as a result of new legislation. Carl Parsons (University College, Canterbury) highlighted how the vast majority of excluded students live in families existing on incomes below the minimum wage, and thus represent an area of pronounced social need rather than a cause for blame and punishment. Moreover, since the 1990s huge differentials in terms of race have been apparent in the school exclusion figures. According to Parsons, a better understanding of the reasons for exclusion is necessary.

The child, the family and the school all have an influence on exclusion, explained Sue Rendall (Tavistock Clinic). Early maternal separation or the serious illness of a parent increases the risk of young people displaying behaviour that leads to exclusion. Furthermore, problems with learning also increase risk. However, although young people at risk of exclusion tend to feel unsupported and to have low self-esteem regarding school-related achievement, this does not necessarily apply to other aspects of their lives. Positive and constructive problem solving by their families can reduce the likelihood of exclusion. The school's approach to dealing with disruptive behaviour also has an impact: controlling, authoritarian schools are more likely to reach for exclusion as a solution.

Delivering the Tim Jewell Memorial Lecture, Sonia Sharp (Birmingham City



Sonia Sharp

Council) outlined the main reasons for social exclusion (poverty, deprivation and disenfranchisement) and the challenges these create for schools. Sharp called upon educational psychologists to use their knowledge and research-based approaches in the promotion of inclusion by ensuring that all children and young people get the most from their school experience.

Richard Villa (Bayridge Consortium, USA) spoke on his approach to promoting inclusive practices in schools. Much of Villa's message was conveyed by a Native American symbol of the 'circle of courage', highlighting four components of life (generosity, mastery, independence and belonging). According to Villa, academic and school life all too often focus on mastery, whereas a more balanced approach is needed. Villa suggested that inclusive schools have to be welcoming, valuing and supportive of diverse academic and social learning for all students *and* offer shared environments and experiences.

Some schools do have schemes to promote inclusion. Jean Law and Elaine White (SEN and Psychology Learning Services, Chelmsford) described the Essex Schools' Award Scheme, providing a framework for schools to appraise their achievements against four key objectives: having effective policies and procedures in place for the management of positive behaviour; active promotion of pupil safety and well-being; valuing individuals by offering support; respect and recognition and promoting positive parental/carer involvement. Participating schools are rewarded for their reflective practices with additional access to the county's support services.

Law also described another ambitious project aimed at reducing student behaviour problems and involving 51 schools. Two multidisciplinary teams have developed effective strategies to support families and schools to support behaviour management. Activities involved working with individual children, whole classes and the whole school as well as parent support. Results have indicated a substantial reduction in disruptive incidents and exclusions, and teachers increasingly believe that behaviour management approaches can make a difference.

Norah Frederickson (University College London) outlined her research with parents, pupils and staff involved in an inclusion project in Buckinghamshire. The contrasting expectations and viewpoints between groups were highlighted and a number of questions central to the inclusion debate were raised: Who decides what constitutes successful inclusion? What are our criteria for success? What

prompts a successful inclusion experience? The results suggested a difference in expectation and description depending on the 'client group' involved (parents, pupils or staff), but raising awareness of these variations increased useful dialogue for and between all involved.

Increasing the co-operation between local special and mainstream schools in pupil support was the goal of the work of Jane Turner (Buckinghamshire Educational Psychology Service). Turner conducted a survey examining how teachers view successful inclusion, and found that teachers placed great importance on a child's ability to obey and follow rules and instructions and to socialise with peers.

Differences appeared between mainstream and special schools, in that the mainstream schools appeared to put more emphasis on rule obedience, while the special schools placed more reliance on the child's social skills. Teachers were also asked to define successful inclusion: special schools placed more emphasis on the happiness and the views of the child, while mainstream schools focused on discipline and compliance.

One group particularly at risk in the school environment comprises those who do not identify as heterosexual. They are at increased risk for school absenteeism, self-harm, being bullied, mental health problems and suicide. Kevin Farley,

Sydney Bayley and Andre Imich (SEN and Psychology Learning Services, Chelmsford) have been working to raise awareness of the particular needs of this section of the school community, researching the issue and producing an information sheet. The work of clarifying perceptions and increasing tolerance in this sensitive and complex area is fraught with difficulties, such as the need to navigate round legislation (section 28, Local Government Act 1988) that proscribes the positive promotion of homosexuality in schools. The presenters emphasised the necessity for core attitudes and principles at every level, and especially within the models provided by leaders.

Speaking out for social change

ADRIAN COYLE reports on the Lesbian and Gay Psychology Section Annual Conference.

LAST November Tommy MacKay used the President's column in *The Psychologist* to call for psychologists to speak out on public issues. Judging by the presentations at the conference of the Lesbian and Gay Psychology Section – which took place 30–31 March during the Centenary Conference – his words have been taken to heart by this subsystem.

The keynote conference address was given by Laura Brown, a leading figure in lesbian and gay psychology now working in private psychotherapeutic practice in Seattle. Her presentation was entitled 'Complexity and challenges: Lesbian, gay and bisexual psychology in the second stage'. After reviewing the history of this domain, she noted that lesbian, gay and bisexual psychology was now becoming assimilated into the psychological mainstream in the USA and risked losing or diluting its radicalism and its commitment to social change. She therefore urged her audience to recommit to these aims and to question what is taken for granted in our understanding of lesbian, gay and bisexual psychology. This was a call to continue to speak out on current matters of real-life concern to lesbians, gay men and bisexuals, and to do so in radical ways.

During the symposium 'A century of lesbian and gay psychology' (convened by Sue Wilkinson of Loughborough University and Laura Brown) speakers examined how the concerns and life challenges of lesbians and gay men have

been addressed by psychology. Bit by bit they built up a picture of mainstream disciplinary responses characterised by silencing, marginalisation, pathologisation and context-stripping. Consideration was given to the efforts of individuals and groups within and beyond psychology who dared to speak out and resist these processes. However, speakers challenged the idea that we have now reached

a position of routine validation, affirmation and constructive engagement with lesbian and gay concerns within psychology. Although this may seem to contradict Laura Brown's contention about the assimilation of lesbian, gay and bisexual psychology into the mainstream, this may reflect the different situations in the USA and Britain: all but one of the contributors to this symposium were UK-based.

The need for ongoing vigilance and action was a central concern in the symposium entitled 'Looking forward: The future for lesbian and gay youth'.

In his paper, Ian Rivers (College of Ripon and York St John) pointed to research that has identified a high level of harassment and victimisation experienced by non-heterosexual young people in educational environments. As this has been linked to serious problems in psychological and social well-being, he urged schools, colleges and universities to ensure that their educational settings are safe for non-heterosexual youth, with this project being informed by relevant psychological research.

Other papers in this symposium examined some longstanding concerns, such as sexual identity. For example, Allen Thomas (University of Texas) explored the impact of the internet on sexual identity and activity. In his study he found that the young gay men whom he interviewed used internet chatrooms to find sexual partners and to obtain emotional support and access to local gay communities. The standard research literature on the development of sexual identity among lesbian and gay young people may need to be updated in the light of such technological advances and the new resources that they have created.

One notable macro-theme across the conference papers was a concern with elaborating the standard definition of 'psychological' analysis to include the historical and sociopolitical contexts within which the phenomena under study are located and shaped. This was most clearly apparent in Victoria Clarke's presentation of her winning entry in the Section's

inaugural postgraduate prize. In her paper 'The psychology and politics of lesbian and gay parenting: Having our cake and eating it?' she noted how research on lesbian and gay parenting has been characterised by a tendency to normalise lesbian and gay families, presenting them as 'just like' heterosexual families.

Although this tendency can be seen as carrying some political benefits (such as helping lesbian and gay parents to win custody of their children conceived within heterosexual relationships), Clarke argued that it also carries certain costs. Chief among these is the difficulty of acknowledging that lesbian and gay parents can and do pioneer innovative ways of parenting that challenge oppressive gender norms and other social norms. She concluded that, in their writing and research about lesbian and gay parenting, psychologists should use both normalising and radical accounts in a strategic way, depending on their usefulness in fostering beneficial social change.

From these and other Section conference papers it was apparent that the Lesbian and Gay Psychology Section is speaking out on matters within its remit that are relevant to public policy and professional practice. The speakers were concerned with enriching psychological analyses of lesbian and gay issues and disseminating these in a socially beneficial way. What better model could there be for psychological practice as the Society embarks upon the second century of its existence?

Breaking and entering

SALLY WIGGINS reports on the established presence of qualitative analysis at the conference.

AT Society conferences a decade ago you might have heard the sound of qualitative research knocking trying to get in. This year there was no longer a need to 'frantically hammer at the door of psychology' (Adrian Coyle, University of Surrey) for qualitative research has finally established a place within social psychology. If you needed evidence, empirical or otherwise, it came in the form of a symposium on qualitative social psychology, convened by Jonathan Smith (Birkbeck College, London). Infused by clarity, depth and professional style, the speakers demonstrated that qualitative work need no longer be a preliminary to the 'main' study.

The discussed approaches (grounded theory, discourse analysis, narrative psychology and interpretative phenomenological analysis) resonated round two main issues: epistemology and ethics. The first of these concerns notions of truth and the status we give to knowledge about the world. Do things have an essential existence that is independent of our knowledge of them? If they don't, then this surely has an impact on our research (and ultimately on psychology as a discipline).

Carla Willig (City University) discussed



Adrian Coyle

two forms of discourse analysis that differ on precisely this issue of epistemology. Examining an account of a relationship break-up, Willig demonstrated how each approach could offer very different interpretations of the same account. On the one hand, feelings and emotions could be regarded as being made available through particular ways of talking. We can feel relieved or upset because we have certain words and discourses at our disposal for naming and expressing emotions. Alternatively, one could see the account as *using* emotional terms to do other things, such as denying responsibility for another's upset. How we interpret these accounts depends on our notion of 'truth(s)'.

While ethical considerations are also apparent in quantitative research, they were often seen as fundamental to qualitative

1958 and beyond

Michael Posner spoke on the remarkable development of the field of attention. **BENOIT A. BACON** reports.

MICHAEL Posner (University of Oregon) is synonymous with the study of attention. Over four decades he has remained a major player in the field, and there was a distinct hush as he took his place behind the lectern of the Clyde Auditorium to deliver his keynote address.

After paying respects to pioneers such as James, Sechenov and Donders, Posner jumped to 1958 and the publication of Donald Broadbent's *Perception and Communication*. Broadbent's major idea, Posner explained, was to view attention as the consequence of a physical device designed to regulate the flow of

information in the central nervous system. This paved the way for the study of attention as a major function of the brain.

Posner gave a concise, enlightening account of the major findings in the field, both his own and those of others. He discussed early studies with brain-damaged patients and explained how these led to more direct investigations using brainwave recordings, imaging techniques (PET scans and fMRI) and molecular genetics.

Sensitive to the wide interests of his audience, Posner related attention to important discoveries in various fields, including rehabilitation from brain injury, psychopathology and education, sharing

Broadbent's concern that psychological research should be applied to real problems.

Posner has been successful in identifying where in the brain the mechanisms supporting attention lie. He now wants to know how these mechanisms develop; he is therefore investigating the circuitry of attention in children. He concluded his address by expressing the firm belief that we now have the tools to understand brain functions, and that the consequences of this effort will influence all areas of psychological research, theory and application.

approaches throughout these papers. Karen Henwood and Nick Pidgeon's (University of East Anglia) paper on grounded theory emphasised the significance of participants' meanings. In this case, it was the meaning of forests, woods and trees within a Welsh community at the time of devolution proposals. The analysis identified how participants' accounts were embedded within theories of cultural identity and environmental beliefs. So ethical concerns do not just mean treating participants ethically, they also incorporate allowing priority to issues arising from participants' accounts over those that the researcher had identified in advance. The aim here is not to reduce or simplify, but to examine the

'folds, fragments and complexities of meaning' that can inform research.

The two themes of epistemology and ethics were also implicit in Michelle Crossley's (University of Manchester) paper on narrative psychology and the accounts of people with HIV, and in Jonathan Smith's paper on interpretative phenomenological analysis and testing for genetic diseases.

Eloquently unwrapped for discussion by Adrian Coyle, the symposium demonstrated the value and diversity of qualitative social psychology. The sound to be heard was no longer the attempts to hammer down the door of psychology, but the clearing away of the debris.

Community talk

CHRISTINE COUPLAND *on the stories behind personal and social change.*

AN invited lecture by Julian Rappaport (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) provided some useful insight into his 'community narrative' approach and its potential application for personal and social change.

Beginning with an interest in trying to understand how individuals create a personal and social identity in their stories of 'lived experience', Rappaport asked what can we learn from these stories to be helpful to other people with similar concerns.

As Rappaport suggested, dominant cultural narratives may be seen in how the media talk about certain marginalised groups (e.g. mental patients, prisoners). However, studying stories at an individual level highlights how shared narratives are not only appropriated by individuals, but also modified in the telling of a particular life story.

But there are few resources for modification in the life stories of marginalised people. There are 'stories you are stuck with', due to a lack of opportunities for making alternatives to the dominant narratives known. Nevertheless, Rappaport gave two examples of studies where new community narratives had been created challenging dominant stories about individuals and their context.

First, a Presbyterian community adapted a form of Christian narrative (a stained glass window) in order to celebrate an inclusive approach to the lesbian and gay community. This was contrary to the established practices of the wider

Presbyterian Church. In this way the members of a particular community, through an established medium of narrative of a wider community, constructed an alternative story about itself.

Second, Rappaport described the dominant narratives surrounding mental illness. One version included 'mentally ill people are a danger to themselves and others and should be kept off the streets'. A second professional narrative centred on a dependence on medication with encouragement towards individuality. In contrast to these dominant narratives, Rappaport presented the findings of a self-help group he studied who constructed an alternative narrative round the shared stories of the self-help community.

Rappaport found that optimistic stories were more prevalent in the self-help group compared with a non-self-help group. Although the number of hospital stays was the same for both groups, the self-help group reported shorter stays. Rappaport proposed that this may be due to a network of support for the self-help group members, who had the added resource of being able to resist the stories they were being given about themselves.

These brief examples have wider implications for the usefulness of studies of narrative. Marginalised people can create the circumstances to modify the dominant narratives about themselves through access to, and construction of, alternative versions. Rappaport espoused a persuasive argument: the study of narrative has potential for both personal and social change.

IN BRIEF

FEELING SLEEPY

Insomnia researchers have typically focused on delineating the content of pre-sleep cognitive activity and proving its role in the maintenance of insomnia. However, Allison Harvey and Christina Neitzert Semler (University of Oxford) found that participants instructed to suppress their thinking before going to sleep estimated that they took longer to get to sleep and their sleep quality was worse.

Meanwhile, Kevin Morgan (Loughborough University) examined insomnia in the 65+ age group. Late-life insomnia affects up to 25 per cent of the older population, is most prevalent in women and urban areas. It is associated with significantly elevated levels of trait anxiety. While depressed mood appears to be the strongest risk factor for late-life insomnia, physical ill health emerges as the most likely source of risk.

FLEXIBLE CAREER LADDER?

Despite strong support for flexible working among policy makers and large employers, those who use such working practices are not perceived to have strong career prospects, according to a survey of student attitudes by Diane Houston and Julie Waumsley (University of Kent). However, those who used flexible working practices in order to fulfil caring responsibilities are perceived more positively than those who do so for personal development or recreational purposes.

BLOOD PRESSURE

Brian Saxby (University of Newcastle) and colleagues compared cognitive function in elderly subjects with high or normal blood pressure. Older hypertensives show impairments in memory and executive function when compared with well-matched normotensive functions.

WORKING TOGETHER

Jane Prichard and colleagues at the University of Southampton sought to explore the effect of team-skills training on collaborative group performance in a higher-education setting. A group of students undertaking the training gained significantly higher student group grades and individual key skill ratings compared with the untrained group, and gave significantly lower workload ratings.

IN BRIEF**SWEET SMELL OF FAILURE**

The 'sweet smell of success' may have an opposite: the pairing of an odour with a failure context can negatively affect performance on subsequent tasks where the same odour is present (Simon Chu, University of Liverpool).

UNDER HOUSE ARREST

Electronic house arrest (EHA) is increasingly used in Britain today, but does it have the support of the general public? Sandie Taylor (Thames Valley University) and Lance Workman (University of Glamorgan) found that women demonstrated greater concern over the use of EHA than men did; non-religious participants and the 31–50 age group were more favourable. Cardiff respondents were more positive towards EHA than Londoners, who preferred prison as a means of combating crime.

GO LET IT OUT

Suppressing anger could just be storing up trouble for an 'emotional rebound'. Judith Hosie and colleagues at the University of Aberdeen found that participants instructed to inhibit their expressions of anger during the first of two anger-eliciting film clips both reported and showed more anger during the second one, relative to 'expressers'.

FIT FOR NOTHING?

Fitter children tend to do less well in intellectual ability, according to a study of 12-year-old children by Barbara McConnell and Andy Thompson (Queen's University of Belfast). Physical work capacity at a heart rate of 170 beats a minute was statistically and independently associated with intelligence, as measured by the British Ability Scales. Achieving a balance between physical activity and school performance should be seen as an important priority for the child, their parents and the school.

ABERFAN DISASTER

In a 30-year follow-up of the Aberfan disaster, a group of survivors were compared with a group from a nearby valley town not directly involved in the disaster (Louise Morgan and colleagues from the University of Wales, Cardiff). Fifty-two per cent of the survivor group ($N = 17$) met diagnostic criteria for lifetime PTSD, compared with 18 per cent of controls. Forty-two per cent of survivors were still suffering symptoms at the time of interview.

Sex offenders

SIAN WILLIAMS on cognitive biases in sex offenders and judgements of their behaviour.

THE identification and treatment of sex offenders has attracted considerable public concern and press interest in recent years. A frequently voiced demand is that the identities and whereabouts of convicted sex offenders be made public. This demand reflects a widely held belief that sex offenders cannot be fully treated. Research presented at the conference addressed some of the issues around this topic, including perceptions of offenders and their victims, and methods for assessing and treating sex offenders.

Research carried out by Elaine Vaughan (University of Central Lancashire) gave participants different rape scenarios to read, where the rapist was described as being either high or low social status and the victim age varied from 16 to 50 years old. After reading the scenario, participants were asked to rate how acceptable they thought the rape act was. The results showed that although the victim's age did not seem to affect acceptance ratings, the rapist's social status did. When the offender was described as having a high social status the act was deemed more acceptable.

More generalised attitudes about people can also influence the attribution of rape blame. Garcia Viki (University of Kent) has carried out research that suggests some people are more likely than others to attribute blame to the victim because they hold certain beliefs about the role of women in society. Viki measured 120 male participants on 'benevolent sexism' (paternalistic attitude towards women),

and found that when the victim and rapist were acquaintances, participants high in benevolent sexism attributed more blame to the victim than participants low in benevolent sexism. Viki argued that this could have ramifications for the ways in which victims are treated in the criminal justice system.

Current treatment programmes for sex offenders are based, in part, on the idea of the offender having different cognitions to other offenders and non-offenders: an attempt is made to normalise their belief systems. However, the validity of methods to assess these beliefs is brought into question since they rely heavily on honest responding by the offender. Research currently being carried out by Theresa Gannon (University of Sussex) is addressing this problem. Gannon presents two new techniques in an attempt to heighten the honesty of offenders' responding and so to evaluate whether offenders really do hold these belief distortions or whether they are simply



Garcia Viki

Taking the initiative

NICHOLAS FAY on influencing people but not winning friends.

MICHAEL Frese (University of Giessen, Germany) explored the implications of personal initiative (PI) in the workplace. Individuals high in PI tend to take a proactive attitude toward work and life. This helps employees overcome the barriers that they encounter.

Measures of PI go some way to predicting a person's career; higher PI scores are related to entrepreneurial

success. Conversely, the degree to which people adopt reactive strategies provides a good predictor of career failure. However, individuals with a high degree of PI tend to be less liked at work; hardly surprising considering their competitive nature.

So at an individual level, it pays to take a proactive approach to work. Just don't expect to win any popularity competitions.

offering *post hoc* justifications for their actions.

The first technique employs a 'bogus pipeline': a type of fake lie detector. Thirty sex offenders were asked to complete a standard cognitive distortion questionnaire. One week later half filled it out whilst hooked up to the bogus pipeline, the rest filled it out under normal conditions. The preliminary results do suggest a shift in offenders' responses when they believe their honesty is being scrutinised. Offenders appear to be endorsing fewer cognitive

distortions under the bogus pipeline condition suggesting that the responses are not reflecting a distorted belief system.

Research of this type is vitally important: until we can understand why sex offenders offend we have little hope of treating the problem. Identifying sex offenders in society and judging cases in an unbiased way is the first step; designing and utilising effective treatment programmes is the second. The research presented at the conference represents just some of the work being carried out to meet these ends.

Who am I? Who are you?

ASIFA MAJID finds some interesting contradictions in self research.

ACCORDING to research presented at the conference on the self, we're a contrary lot.

'I'm variable, yet I'm stable'

People think that they are more variable and complex than other people are. Tim Wildschut (University of Southampton) asked participants to indicate what percentage of their own and an acquaintance's behaviour falls into a series of mutually exclusive categories (e.g. seven categories ranging from very unkind to very kind). People rated their own behaviour as more evenly distributed across the categories than they did for an acquaintance, whose behaviours they tended to cluster into a small part of the scale. These findings support the idea that whereas I am varied, you are predictable.

In contrast to these intuitions, Constantine Sedikides (University of Southampton) showed that people are more stable than had been thought previously. According to the mood congruency principle, when someone is in a positive mood they will rate themselves positively; when they are in a negative mood they will rate themselves negatively. Sedikides showed that the mood congruency effect holds only for peripheral traits (those which are relatively low in personal descriptiveness and importance), not for central traits, which remain stable independent of mood. Furthermore, the mood congruency effect is weakened the longer the time lapse between the mood manipulation and the test of self. Therefore, Sedikides concluded that 'the tenacity of the self has been underestimated'.

'I'm prejudiced when I have high self-esteem; I'm prejudiced when I have low self-esteem' Favouring the

group that one belongs to over other groups is apparent in both real groups and also where group membership is arbitrarily assigned. Richard Gramzow (University of Southampton) presented two studies investigating the impact of self-esteem on the strength of ingroup favouritism.

Individuals with high trait self-esteem demonstrate high ingroup bias. This could be the result of the individual trying to maintain consistency with how they value themselves and how they value the group (they value themselves highly, therefore they value the group highly). Alternatively, state self-esteem seems to have the opposite relationship with the ingroup bias. When self-esteem was manipulated in a minimal group situation it was threatened self-esteem (i.e. low self-esteem) that led to higher rates of ingroup bias, while boosted self-esteem (i.e. high self-esteem) led to less ingroup bias. This could be the result of the individual trying to maintain their own self-esteem, when facing threat: by degrading the outgroup, they make themselves look better.

'I like myself; but do I know I like myself?' Just what is self-esteem, and how does it affect our affect? Not only are explicit and implicit self-esteem dissociable (explicit as measured by self-report, implicit as measured covertly), but they are only weakly correlated and seem to predict different kinds of behaviour. Aiden Gregg (University of Southampton) demonstrated that explicit self-esteem is positively associated with mental health, such that decreases in explicit self-esteem were found to be associated with increases on measures of psychopathology. However, there was no such relationship between psychopathology and implicit self-esteem.

IN BRIEF

CLINICAL TRAINING

Chris Hatton and colleagues from Lancaster University coded all application forms and referee report forms for year 2000 clinical psychology training courses in the UK. Academic qualifications, aspects of institutions where the applicant studied, the type and quantity of vocational experience, and referee characteristics, experience and ratings were all strongly associated with shortlisting and selection.

NEIGHBOURS

Neighbour disputes have rarely been the subject of academic inquiry. Elizabeth Stokoe (University College Worcester) and Jackie Abell (Lancaster University) explored the talk of participants in these conflicts, looking at how gendered categories, such as 'mother', and 'slag' are used. Interactions between neighbours and mediators, and television documentaries of filmed disputes showed that, whereas women neighbours are positioned as morally accountable parties in mediations, men are not.

DOMINANCE AND STYLE

Following up research into right-hemisphere dominance and cognitive style in marmosets, Lynn Wright and colleagues from the University of Abertay in Dundee found that left-handers took longer to move the first disk in the Tower of Hanoi task. The initial findings supported the hypothesis that left-hand dominance is associated with a more cautious cognitive style in novel problem-solving situations.

CLASS GAP

Social class variation in children's educational achievement and psychosocial adjustment widens during childhood and then levels off during adolescence, according to Amanda Sacker (University College London) and colleagues. Family contexts 'explain' much of the resource differentials at ages 7 and 11, but contextual mechanisms beyond the family become more important at 16 years.

BEACH SEGREGATION

Despite its formal abolition, segregation remains pervasive on beaches in South Africa. Using observation techniques from urban sociology, John Dixon (Lancaster University) showed that all but one of 2654 beach 'umbrella groups' were racially homogeneous, limiting intergroup contact.

ADHD across the lifespan

SIMON J. BIGNELL reports on a symposium convened by Susan Young (Institute of Psychiatry).

ATENTION deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is normally viewed as a childhood condition with problems of poor attention, hyperactivity and impulsiveness. Little attention has been given to the longer-term outcomes for these children.

Exploring the problems of diagnosing pre-school children with ADHD, Edmund Sonuga-Barke (University of Southampton) suggested that in many ways it might be better to use the term 'hard to manage' rather than ADHD. He explained that ADHD is often seen as a disorder of inhibition (inability to suppress or inhibit thoughts or behaviour). However, studies at Southampton challenge this idea and have shown ADHD children can wait even when waiting requires inhibition.

All children may look hyperactive at times, but a diagnosis cannot be based on isolated cases of behaviour, claimed Jody

Warner-Rodgers (Institute of Psychiatry). She explored ADHD in middle childhood and recommended caution when using the various collections of diagnostic and assessment tests available. These tests do not necessarily reflect the real world for this group of children; as they find it difficult to sustain attention, factors such as rate of stimuli and inspection time become crucial issues. She urges that clinicians take a deeper look the processes underlying the disorder, and also look at the knock-on effects of the main symptoms. After all, as Warner-Rodgers rightly states, 'ADHD kids are more than just a bundle of three symptoms'.

Adults with ADHD show high unemployment, more police contact and more drug and conduct problems when compared with the general population, claimed Susan Young. Her findings reported more interpersonal difficulties

in ADHD adults, but on balance these were no worse than in a comparison group of people with other psychiatric problems.

A 'fast internal clock' was one interesting account offered by Young for hyperactivity.

From the discussion of this symposium it seems as though the future will see more medication to target the core symptoms of ADHD. Optimistically, the service provision already exists and is well equipped, according to the final speaker Geoffrey Thorley (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service). What is needed, it would seem, is better organisation of many agencies such as the mental health service, education and paediatrics working together towards responding to this chronic condition.

Dr Benoit A. Bacon is a research fellow at the University of Glasgow

Simon Bignell is an undergraduate at the University of Sussex

Christina Chryssanthopoulou is a postgraduate at the University of Kent at Canterbury

Christine Coupland is a postgraduate at the University of Nottingham

Dr Adrian Coyle is a senior lecturer at the University of Surrey

Kairen Cullen is at the Enfield Educational Psychology Service

Dr Nicholas Fay is a research fellow at the University of Glasgow

Dr Sandy Lovie is a senior lecturer at the University of Liverpool

Kate Hamilton-West is a postgraduate at the University of Kent at Canterbury

Dr Asifa Majid is at the University of Glasgow

Sally Wiggins is a postgraduate at Loughborough University

Sian Williams is a postgraduate at the University of Sussex

Heading for trouble

Footballers may be at risk of neuropsychological impairment.

NICHOLAS FAY reports.

FOOTBALL is a contact sport, and as with other contact sports participants are susceptible to injury. But unlike participants in sports such as rugby, footballers also use their head. The ball is often travelling at high speed, so there is a likelihood of head injury (in some ways similar to boxing).

To determine the effect of this mild head trauma, Richard Stephens (Keele University) and colleagues compared the executive functioning of football players with that of rugby players (a comparable

contact sport) and players of other non-contact sports (e.g. swimmers).

As predicted, results demonstrated that footballers performed significantly worse than both contact and non-contact sport controls on a battery of tests of executive functioning such as the Wisconsin Card Sorting Task (WCST), suggesting some damage to the frontal lobe.

Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between the number of headers made per match and the number of errors made on the WCST, suggesting that the damage is cumulative.