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British
Psychological
Society

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

The British Psychological Society

was founded in 1901, and incorporated by Royal Charter in 1965. Its object is 'to promote the advancement and diffusion of a knowledge of psychology pure and applied and especially to promote the efficiency and usefulness of Members of the Society by setting up a high standard of professional education and knowledge'.
Extract from The Charter



President's column

Gerry Mulhern

Contact Gerry Mulhern via the Society's Leicester office,
or e-mail: thepresident@bps.org.uk

This is the last President's column of 2010 and marks the half-way point of my incumbency. No better time to reflect on the first six months and to look ahead to the next six.

Inevitably, a great deal of time has been spent doing the things that Presidents have to do – chairing and attending a large number of meetings; firefighting; dealing with issues raised by members and non-members; reviewing Society governance systems; providing a succession of quotes and short written pieces; representing the Society at a selection of the plethora of invitations to the President; speaking at meetings of member networks; agreeing and signing off on Society responses to consultations; oh yes, and writing a monthly President's column which feels more fortnightly than monthly. Not surprisingly, it is a challenge to ensure that time is made available for strategic planning, agenda setting and implementation. More of this later.

As I write, I am on my way back from the Society's first General Assembly, a two-day meeting designed to breathe new life into the Representative Council, which was in a parlous state. Attendance at recent Council meetings had dipped to dangerously low levels, to such an extent in fact that the February meetings in 2008 and 2009 had to be cancelled due to the number of advance apologies for non-attendance. Something had to be done if Representative Council were to remain relevant, so the General Assembly was born.

The new assembly was seen as experimental and there was inevitable anxiety, and in some cases scepticism, as to the likely success of a two-day event incorporating a meeting of Representative Council, presentations by member networks, ad hoc meetings of cognate groups and individuals, dinner and an overnight stay. As it turned out, the assembly exceeded all expectations and anxieties dissolved in the most vibrant and positive atmosphere I have witnessed in many years of BPS meetings. My congratulations to all staff and members involved in making this event a great success. I am confident that the General Assembly will be an important feature of our governance for years to come.

Among many outcomes, the Assembly generated a rich list of issues for consideration by the Trustees. By the time you read this column, the President's Away Day for Trustees and the Senior Management Team will have met to consider these issues along with other matters on our strategic to-do list.

Looking back over the last six months, our most notable achievement has been the signing of the contract with our global journal publishing partner, Wiley-Blackwell. We have also consolidated our financial position following the economic crisis and our membership numbers continue to grow in spite of HPC regulation. Although some uncertainties remain over finances and recruitment of members, I am confident that the Society is better placed than at any time in its history to make great progress as a learned society and professional body.

More recently, few would have predicted the extent of the part-privatisation of undergraduate education by the government, following proposals for a massive cut to university teaching budgets and the raising of the top-up fees cap to £9000. Science funding is also set to shrink in real terms over the next four years, although the Society and fellow learned societies had some success in lobbying the government to avoid actual budget cuts. These challenges are likely to dominate much of the Society's strategy in the years to come.

On a more personal level, my commitment for the remainder of my term will be to encourage the Society to continue to modernise and adapt to the new post-HPC dispensation and to the changed economic climate in education and research. Our deliberations at the President's Away Day will begin the process of addressing these issues. And this is where you, the membership, come in. Please think about how you feel the Society might do things better. How might we modernise our governance and operations? How should we improve our international relations? How can we develop more fully as a modern learned society and professional body? How can we better support all sectors of our membership? I will be happy to receive your (concise and constructive) ideas by e-mail to thepresident@bps.org.uk.

It only remains for me to wish all members and staff a happy, relaxing and safe Christmas or Winter Solstice depending upon your beliefs.

"How can we better support all sectors of our membership?"

New Community Psychology Section

The Community Psychology Section held its inaugural meeting on Friday 8 October, at the Society's offices in London. Pam Maras, Honorary General Secretary, as chair of the proceedings, noted that the launch of this group heralded an exciting time for the Society. The establishment of the Community Psychology Section is testament to the dedication and tenacity of a group including Annie Mitchell, Jim Orford, Janet Bostock, David Fryer and Jacqui Akhurst, and was supported by a large number of Society members.

The values at the heart of community psychology include those of inclusivity, social justice and improvement of health and well-being. These cut across existing subdisciplines and member networks of the Society and encourage collaboration and partnership between different disciplines. The Section aims to provide a focus for researchers and practitioners interested in basing their work on these, through non-individual intervention.

The ethos of community psychology has never been more important than now, when it feels as if the world is in an

economic maelstrom, and rushed economically based decisions will have far-reaching impacts on the most vulnerable and socially excluded members of society. The Section, therefore, would like to engage in producing and gathering evidence, communicating the impact on psychosocial functioning of and developing community-based interventions to address such issues as: poverty; inequality; gendered violence; the construction of disability; insecure employment and unemployment; substance misuse and challenges to people's mental health. The Community Psychology Section will raise questions about how we might create a society based on greater egalitarianism, non-exploitation and respect for the environment in order to foster solidarity and interdependence.

An interim committee has been established for the first year of the Section. The membership of the interim committee demonstrates that the values of community psychology resonate with many researchers and practitioners in the

field, from a variety of backgrounds and interests. Already, in a short space of time, membership stands at over 150 and continues to grow. We would welcome more people to join us.

Hayley Lewis and Ho Law

I For information about the European Congress of Community to be held at York St John University in September 2011, please visit <http://bit.ly/dtkeTW>
For more information on the Section, please e-mail the interim chair, Jacqui Akhurst (J.Akhurst@yorksj.ac.uk). If you are interested in joining the Section please go to www.bps.org.uk/cps

SOCIETY NOTICES

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Improving work–life balance

In 2009, Almuth McDowall and Gail Kinman launched a working group on work–life balance supported by the Division of Occupational Psychology as part of their Science and Practice strategy. This group aims to raise awareness of work–life balance as a core issue for occupational and organisational psychologists, and to disseminate psychological evidence to organisations on how to manage the work–home interface more effectively. At the start of the UK's first Work–Life Week (27 September) we organised a breakfast meeting at the BPS London office aimed at academics, practitioners and HR managers with an interest in the field. Key findings from a recently commissioned literature review undertaken by our research intern, Constanze Eib, were presented, stimulating debate on several issues:

I Terminology and concepts. Although the term *work–life balance* is widely used, it fails to capture the breadth of relevant psychological research. The literature is dominated by a role–conflict paradigm whereby demands

from one domain (work or family) make it harder to participate actively in the other domain. When such conflict is high, people are likely to be less satisfied, wish to leave their organisation, perform less well and experience negative health outcomes.

I Protective factors or risk factors?

Individual difference factors that may initially appear to have a positive impact for employees and organisations (e.g. job commitment and involvement) can also be detrimental, whereby a highly involved employee may have fewer opportunities for recovery resulting in burnout over the longer term.

I How can research inform good practice?

An increasing number of organisations offer flexible working in an attempt to reduce work–life conflict.

Nonetheless, the impact of flexible working appears to be equivocal; interventions that are seen to be motivated purely by organisational interests may have neutral or even negative effect on employee well-

being. Recent evidence also highlights the importance of attempting not only to reduce work–life conflict, but also to increase opportunities for work–life facilitation or enrichment that is likely to have a positive impact on other life domains. As yet, however, there are no evidence-based interventions to guide practitioners in how to accomplish this. Better job design, together with fostering a workplace culture whereby all types of employee have a right to a life outside work, will help enhance work–life balance amongst the workforce as a whole.

The breakfast meeting stimulated a rich discussion demonstrating that psychological evidence is crucial in informing best practice for managing the work–home interface. We plan to continue our activities with a series of future events.

I If any reader would like further information on the working group, please contact gail.kinman@beds.ac.uk or A.mcdowall@surrey.ac.uk

Preserving our history – the work of the History of Psychology Centre

The primary function of the Society's History of Psychology Centre (HoPC) is 'to preserve the history of the Society and the heritage of UK psychology for future generations'. Though HoPC was formally created in 2002, the origins of the Society's desire to preserve this heritage and history can be traced back almost half a century earlier, to 1956, when John C. Kenna became the first Honorary Archivist. He held the post for 23 years, and was succeeded by two other Honorary Archivists – Sandy Lovie (1979–1998) and Graham Richards (1998–2002). Thanks to their work, the Society's archive collections have grown steadily, in size, scope and significance.

The archives were at first held at the University of Liverpool, but moved to Staffordshire University in 1998, where the Centre for History of Psychology was established. They were on the road again in 2002, when space was allocated in the basement of the Society's new London office in John Street and HoPC was created. Graham Richards was appointed Director and took up the post in September 2002. HoPC was tasked with achieving three broad objectives:

- | to provide an academic research and resource centre in the history of psychology
- | to promote the teaching of and research in the history of psychology
- | to organise lecture series, workshops and conferences.

From 2002 to 2006, under Graham Richards' directorship, HoPC hosted seminars at John Street, developed the archives with some important acquisitions, carried out some vital conservation work, created a centre that could be visited by academics and researchers, began an oral history project, and much else besides. It also set about cataloguing the collections, made possible by the appointment in July 2003 of Mike Maskill as the Society's first professional archivist. By 2006 all the major parts of the collection – about three quarters of all the material held at the time – had been sorted, arranged

and catalogued. But cataloguing is a never-ending task – the flow of the Society's administrative documents for archiving (board and committee minutes, and much more) is unceasing – and this work continues.

Though this period was a very productive one for HoPC, John Street was not to prove to be its long-term home. The Society had decided to look for premises in London that were more suitable for its broader needs. John Street was sold in early 2006, and the archive collections were moved into temporary storage. Graham Richards retired a few months later, so would not be available to see through any new plan for HoPC and its collections.

In the meantime new premises had been found in Tabernacle Street, but the Board of Trustees had come to the conclusion that the best way to safeguard the future of the collections and the activities of HoPC was in partnership with other institutions. It was also decided that responsibility for the Society's library should come under HoPC's wing. The result was that today's

HoPC has formal collaborative arrangements with:

- | Wellcome Library
- | Science Museum
- | Wellcome Centre for the History of Medicine at UCL
- | Senate House Library, University of London.

While HoPC itself maintains an office in Tabernacle Street, the major parts of the archives are now held in the Wellcome Library, Euston Road, London, where they are looked after according to the highest archiving standards. The Library provides a convenient central London location for researchers.

The collaboration with the Science Museum is over the Society's five-year sponsorship of the BPS Curator of Psychology at the Museum. Phil Loring was appointed and took up the new post in July 2009. Apart from ensuring the visibility of psychology in the Museum generally, he will be organising a series of public outreach events at the Dana Centre and a major psychology exhibition during the sponsorship term. This curatorship was modelled on the successful BPS Centenary Fellowship at the Museum from 1998 to 2001, the fruits of which included a permanent psychology exhibition curated by the Centenary Fellow, Geoff Bunn. (See box opposite for a summary of current psychology exhibits and events at the Science Museum.)

The history of psychology seminar series that began at John Street had been interrupted when HoPC moved out, but was revived in January 2007 in partnership with the Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine at UCL. Since then an annual programme of 10–12 seminars has been held at the Wellcome Centre, attracting an ever-increasing attendance. In early 2010 the Wellcome Centre's future became uncertain and the seminar series was suspended for a few months. The situation for the Centre is not yet fully resolved, but the research seminars series began again in the autumn. (See www.bps.org.uk/hopcseminars for the current programme.)

Senate House Library houses the Society's library collection, comprising a vast and growing collection of journals and a significant collection of books and



The Society's former offices in John Street, London – first home of the History of Psychology Centre

monographs. Society members may join the Library as reference readers free of charge.

Aside from collaborating with these major institutions, HoPC continues to work on ensuring that the Society's documentary history is preserved and catalogued, on maintaining and developing the visual and sound archives, and on running the Oral History Project. In much of its work over the years, HoPC has benefited from its close links with the Society's History & Philosophy of Psychology Section; this continues to be a productive relationship today.

One major project that is almost complete is making the archive catalogue fully available online (watch out for an announcement soon). And one of the most visible projects in the last few years has been the development of HoPC's website (www.bps.org.uk/hopc). The website carries a vast amount of information about the Society's history and about HoPC's activities. It is rich with links to other sources of data about psychology history and research, and features a large number of downloadable documents.

You will also find suggestions for various ways in which Society members can help HoPC's work. Most obvious is by donations of archive material (see www.bps.org.uk/donate) – working papers, photographs, books, and much else besides. More specifically, we are looking to fill the gaps in our collection of member network publications, or even to fill the gaps in our records of what has been published over the years. If you've ever been involved with member network publications, you may know something we don't, or have something we haven't got. Take a look at www.bps.org.uk/subspubs to find out. We are also trying to put together another complete set of the *Bulletin*, but are missing parts 15–36 (1952–1958) in good condition. Perhaps you could help our Oral History Project, either as an interviewer or interviewee (see www.bps.org.uk/ohp); or maybe you are a keen amateur photographer willing to take Annual Conference photos for the archive. You may be able to identify people in our 'mystery photographs' (www.bps.org.uk/whoarethey) or help us find 'lost' Presidential Addresses (www.bps.org.uk/presidents).

However you can help, please do... and if you can't, you're welcome anyway to use our resources in your work or research – there is much that HoPC would like to share with you.

*Peter Dillon-Hooper, Manager,
History of Psychology Centre*

PSYCHOLOGY AT THE SCIENCE MUSEUM

For almost a decade, London's Science Museum has had a permanent exhibit dedicated to psychology – 'Mind Your Head', created to mark the British Psychological Society's centenary in 2001. In June 2010 our 'Who am I?' gallery re-opened following a complete renovation. It features topics of interest not only to psychologists but to anyone – dreaming, intelligence, face recognition, and much else. Another major psychology exhibition, scheduled for 2014, is in the early planning stage.

Beyond presenting exhibitions with a focus on psychology, I want Museum visitors to be able to explore the psychological dimensions of science, technology and medicine more generally. This is a continually developing project. Many psychological objects on display throughout the museum can be found using our 'Psychology Trail' handout. On the last Wednesday of every month, at 'Lates', the Museum opens after hours for adults only, and I have enjoyed giving curator's talks at several of these themed evenings, including those on sex, toys, and genius. Lates attracts adults of all ages and has proved increasingly popular. Furthermore, professors of psychology frequently give lectures to the audiences at Lates, on everything from persuasion to dance.

I am always looking to acquire new objects for the Museum's collections. The goal is both to build on the strengths of the existing psychology and psychiatry collection and to fill in certain gaps. I am particularly interested in acquiring objects related to animal research – for example there is, surprisingly, no rat maze in the Museum's collection. If you've got one... let me know!

I'm also interested in apparatus and artefacts used in work with birds, fish, monkeys, and other laboratory animals.

Finally, the Museum's website is an important element in its mission to inform and inspire. The website enjoys over eight million visits every year, reaching a worldwide audience. As in the bricks-and-mortar museum, my job is to make sure that psychology's contribution to science, technology, and medicine is well represented



and acknowledged. One significant development has been our new 'Brought to Life' website (www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/broughttolife) on the history of medicine, which includes a major section on the history of mental health and illness, offering a vast array of interlinked resources – historical essays, descriptive articles, freely downloadable photographs of objects from the museum's collection, and much more.

For more on all the above, and much more besides (including discounted Science Museum membership for Society members), go to HoPC's Psychology at the Science Museum web page (www.bps.org.uk/SciMus). Or you can contact me directly on Philip.Loring@ScienceMuseum.org.uk or 020 7942 4235.

*Phil Loring, BPS Curator of Psychology,
Science Museum*

CONSULTATIONS ON PUBLIC POLICY

The Society responded to seven consultations during October. Once again, we would like to thank all contributors for ensuring that the voice of psychology reaches policy makers. Brief points from each response are below, full details at www.bps.org.uk/consult.

21st Century Welfare (Department for Work & Pensions) These proposals aim to maximise work incentives while protecting those most in need. The Society noted that the underlying, behaviourist rationale could reduce focus on the important role played by the welfare system during economic crisis and the socio-structural causes of entry into the welfare system. It could also reinforce negative stereotyping of claimants.

Children's Commissioner Review (Department for Education) In responding to this independent review of the office, role and functions of the Children's Commissioner for England, the Society considered that, while the ideology and rationale for the Commissioner is sound and necessary, the translation of this into direct impact and the active involvement of children and young people requires further development and support.

Skills for Sustainable Growth (Department for Business, Innovation & Skills [BIS]) The priorities of these proposals are the building of an internationally competitive skills base and a skills system that prepares people for work and then to progress. The Society recommended that any such system should prioritise needs, costs of delivery, return on expectations and transferability of outcomes.

Phasing out the Default Retirement Age (BIS) The government has decided to phase out the Default Retirement Age between April and October 2011. The Society views this as premature, since the costs, savings and potential benefits have not been fully explored, nor has a proper range of options been considered.

Generic Standards of Practice (Health Professions Council [HPC]) The HPC are proposing a number of changes to their generic standards of proficiency. The Society agreed with the removal of overlapping standards and the shortening of the generic standards but noted that much work will then be needed to revise profession-specific standards and that stakeholders must be allowed the time to fully engage with that process.

Implementation of Autism Strategy (Department of Health) This draft guidance focuses on the seven areas required by the Autism Act 2009. The Society recommended greater certainty and clarity about the responsibilities of local authorities and NHS bodies.

Psychosis with Substance Misuse (National Institute for Health & Clinical Excellence) This guideline advises on the assessment and management of adults and young people with psychosis and coexisting substance misuse. The Society's response highlighted the short-term nature of most treatments – a situation considered likely to bias economic modelling. It was noted that an integrated psychological approach does not yet exist.

The preparation and submission of the Society's responses to consultations on public policy is coordinated by the Policy Support Unit (PSU). All those holding at least graduate membership are eligible to contribute to responses, and all interest is warmly welcomed. Please contact the PSU for further information (psu@bps.org.uk; 0116 252 9926/9577

Disaster, crisis and trauma psychology

The Society's trustees have endorsed the proposal to form a Section on Disaster, Crisis and Trauma Psychology (Trauma Section for short), and the support of the membership is now being sought.

Professor William Yule, Emeritus Professor of Applied Child Psychology at the Institute of Psychiatry and an international expert in the field, has led the process. 'Over the past 20 years, global news coverage has drawn attention to disasters and crises across the world,' he told *The Psychologist*. 'In the UK, the government has evaluated the risks faced by the population from natural disasters, man-made disasters, civil unrest, terrorism and cyber attack. The Civil Contingency Act has created local "resilience" groups with the aim of mitigating risk and responding to any aftermath. Psychologists of all specialisms have important roles to play both in planning for disaster management and in mitigating effects of disasters and terrorism.'

By establishing a forum for the discussion of issues in trauma psychology, the Society aims to facilitate growth in this area of current need. The

Trauma Section would serve to:

- | promote cross-disciplinary research to understand reactions to crises;
- | help develop teaching in this area at both introductory and advanced professional levels;
- | facilitate discussion among psychologists of all specialisms, via meetings, symposia and websites;
- | maintain the Society's Database of Disaster Resources with the aim of helping members gain access to relevant resources in their work;
- | liaise actively with the European Federation for Psychological Associations Standing Committee on Disaster Crisis and Trauma Psychology; and
- | liaise closely with the Parliamentary Officer and the Policy Support Unit to ensure that psychological findings influence public policy.

Under the Society's rules, 1 per cent of the membership must support the formation of a new Section for it to be formed. Please visit www.bps.org.uk/traumasec to do so.

Society vacancies

Professional Practice Board

Expert Witness Advisory Group – Scotland Representative

For a statement of interest form:

Contact

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Closing date 22 December 2010