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EDITORIAL

Chris Burns

University of Strathclyde

It's that time again. Brew the coffee and stop doing anything serious; you've got some light reading to do. Another issue is upon us, and hopefully you're enjoying them so far. As well as the usual funnies, you may get a quiet chuckle out of the conference review from Las Vegas - I dare you to guess the principal theme (hint : it wasn't Elvis Impersonation, Secret Military Aircraft-Spotting or Alien Abduction). This is not to belittle the 'conf. itself - it was the real deal, and massive to boot - but regrettably good taste forbids me from making the comedic best of what immediately sprang to mind when I saw it. You'll see what I mean soon enough, and provided your humour glands haven't run dry, will enjoy the possibilities. Lest anyone get offended, I want it on record that this is purely jealous bile spouting forth - hands up everyone who's had an expenses-paid trip to Vegas, then ? Perusal of our

detailed files (i.e. PsyPAG Quarterly December 1999) shows that this may be the same bloke who went to Detroit last year.....we need this guy's secret.
Fast.

We also regret to inform readers the One Of Our Editors Is Missing !!!!!
Mariola Krupska from the U. of Leicester has unfortunately decided that she can't continue to be a PG, and has turned in her notice to us. The rest of the Editorial team wish her luck in whatever she's up to now, and wouldn't be averse to hearing from her now and again.....

SHAMELESS PSYPAG PLUGGING :

You may want to take note of a couple of the bigger events on the PsyPAG calendar.

Editors Richard & Lynne want you to know :

The next PsyPAG conference will be held on the 23-25th of July in Sheffield. This is plenty of warning so that there can be no excuses when the conference comes around. Last year's conference in Glasgow set high standards though we hope to improve on them and make sure we host a really good conference. We intend to send information to all departments shortly, and we will put information on the web for your perusal. More information will also appear in coming editions of the Quarterly. (If you don't know, Sheffield is Richard & Lynne's alma mater and they're keen to show it off to visitors.)

And :

Anthoula Lioni The Welsh Branch Rep has also given us some info. on the PsyPag Winter Workshop 2001 (it's in February). It seems they have some nice toys to play with down her way, and want to tell us all about it. If you're in any way neuro-inclined, this is a day out you won't want to miss (Quick experiment - find a neuro person in your department, stand well back, and say "fMRI". Watch as they begin dribbling helplessly.) Even if you're not a neuro- or psychophysiological researcher, there's a semi-philosophical side too that should be of considerable general interest. And anyway, I've never been to Wales.

You'll find details inside, plus, you should check out <<http://all.at/psypag>> - our resident I33t hax0r script-kiddie Ed Symes has put the registration form on the web for you to print. Don't say we're not good to you people.....

Organizational Tips for Psychology Postgraduates

Mark Griffiths

Nottingham Trent University

One of the key components to effective time-management is good organizational skills. There are lots of things that you can do to make your life that little bit easier as a postgraduate - particularly if you create a working infrastructure. This article will briefly show you some of the things you can do.

Creating an organizational infrastructure

Create a journal filing system - The one thing that you will amass during your time as a postgraduate is journal articles. It is very important for you to create your own retrieval system so that you can find them easily at any later point. A popular strategy is to organize papers by topic although many papers cover more than one topic. One of the easiest ways to organize your papers is to chronologically number each paper as it comes in. Write a few basic details about the paper on an index card (author, title of paper, journal, volume and page numbers, and general topic(s)) and then file them alphabetically by author. If you are more computer literate, you may want to use a computer package such as Endnote that allows for quick searching by keyword.

Create a meaningful computer filing system - A common mistake, particularly when you are just starting your research is to save your work under very generic titles such as 'study', 'data', 'paper' etc. Although this is manageable when you only have a few files, years later when you try to look for it you may have real trouble. The golden rule here is to be as specific as possible (for instance, I have file names such as 'VG Hunt 2' which instantly tells me "second videogame study with my collaborator Nigel Hunt"). Also use directories and folders to your advantage. For instance you could use one folder per study or group your writings by topic area.

Keep relevant material together - Keep all your work concerning each particular study in one folder or box file including all data analysis, printouts, graphs etc. as this will again make retrieval processes much easier.

Literature management

Read overviews to begin with - When you first start researching a particular area it is best to begin with either an accessible book about the area or a comprehensive literature review rather than articles about empirical studies. Overviews give you a much better grip on the whole area and allow you to follow up references more systematically. Reading nothing but empirically

based articles when you first begin area will leave you with a very disjointed view of the research area in question.

Briefly summarize articles as you read them - If you briefly summarize journal articles as they come in, reviewing and retrieving them at a later date becomes much easier. Writing just a few sentences on your index cards straight after reading is probably the best option but this needs to be done almost immediately otherwise there is a tendency to forget what you have just read.

Photocopy the title page - Quite often you will come across an article that you think might be useful for later. Instead of photocopying the whole article and then finding that it really wasn't that useful, it is better (and ultimately cheaper) just to photocopy the first page. This should provide all the information that you are likely to need for following the article up if you discover that the article is important for your research (e.g. abstract details, full reference etc.).

Self-management and organization

Give yourself deadlines - Research is nearly always a long process so you need to timetable both long-term and short-term goals (action plans, task deadlines etc.). Although supervisors may impose deadlines of one sort or another, you too can give yourself task deadlines which will help structure (and chart) your progress.

Write up as you go along - Writing up studies that are not fresh in your mind is very hard to do so it is well worth getting into the habit of writing up the research methodology and results as you go along. By getting into this habit, it will make the final write-up both shorter (in time) and easier.

Work to your strengths - It is quite obvious that we all work in different ways. Some of us are "early birds" who like to start work at the crack of dawn whereas others are "night-owls" who prefer to burn the midnight oil. Try to discover your own working patterns and organize your workload around this. Some people break their day into menial tasks (such as data inputting) and deeper tasks (such as thinking and reading). If you know what period of the day you are at most receptive, then this should make your working practices easier to cope with

Keep an "idea book" - As you develop your research you will generate more and more possible ideas for future research. It will be almost impossible to pursue all of them immediately and very easy to forget if you don't write them all down as you go along. Store these thoughts in an "ideas book".

CONFERENCE REVIEW

Annual Health Psychology Conference

University of Kent, Canterbury, September 2000

Reviewed by Annette Heywood

University of Sheffield

I have just returned from the Annual Health Psychology Conference, held this year at the University of Kent at Canterbury, between September 6th to 8th. As a first year post graduate student, this was my first conference and, as such, I was rather pleased, (and a little smug), to be able to attend without the added pressure of presenting either a poster or paper.

I arrived very late on Tuesday, 5th September, after a long drive from Sheffield, and met up with fellow Sheffielders the next morning at registration. We were given a full programme of roundtable discussions, symposia, workshops, individual papers and over 107 poster presentations, covering a wide variety of research interests, which offered something for everyone.

As my research interest is in the area of women's health and well being, with emphasis on postnatal depression and pre-menstrual syndrome, I was particularly looking forward to papers being presented on the second conference day. Jaynie Rance's longitudinal study into the role of the hopelessness theory of depression in predicting postnatal depression began the afternoon session. Paula Nicolson followed with a qualitative piece of research examining the worrying overlap of the psychosocial symptoms of postnatal depression and those of domestic abuse. Deborah Biggerstaff continued the theme with her talk on women's perceptions of health and their help seeking behaviour in the postpartum period.

I attended as many talks as possible, (in order to pick up tips for future presentations!), and was very impressed by the postgraduate papers, many of which featured the theory of planned behaviour. Nicola Payne's presentation focussed on whether working life helped or hindered exercise intentions, and the gap between intention and behaviour. She concluded by emphasising the need to take into account the environmental context, such as employment, when looking at intentions to exercise. Amanda Ravis reported on how she has successfully managed to integrate Gibbons and Gerrard's prototype/willingness model of adolescent health risk behaviours, with Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour, in order to predict young people's binge drinking behaviour.

In addition to academic furtherance, however, one is compelled to mention the social events programme, which began on Wednesday evening with a guided walk around the beautiful city of Canterbury, and a meal in one of its many restaurants. This was a chance to get to know our fellow delegates in a less formal setting, and was followed by a late bar on campus, (enough said!). On Thursday, after the conference dinner, we danced the night away at the Ceilidh. My only criticism being the lack of bodies on the dancefloor, (this should have been compulsory!). Late bar again, (sufficient to say there were a few bleary eyes at breakfast the following morning!). Talks resumed bright and early, (9.30am), on Friday morning, with Liz Steadman's lively presentation on the usefulness of implementation intentions in bridging the

intention-behaviour gap, with regard to a long-term medication regime. I could not help but wonder how she managed to be so alert after the festivities previously mentioned.

The conference ended with invited keynote speaker Sheldon Cohen, (Carnegie-Mellon University Pittsburgh), who had the difficult task of engaging an 'academic', (is there such a word?), and parted out audience. This he admirably achieved, with his stimulating presentation on social stress, social networks and susceptibility to the common cold, (although his rather graphic description of mucus harvesting was, at this stage, too much for my delicate constitution!). After lunch, (managing to mentally block out the mucus harvesting), I returned home to Sheffield. I must say that I was quite disappointed not to have given a talk or presented a poster in such a non threatening, supportive and friendly atmosphere. Oh well, there's always next year, (where I will remind myself of these words, as I quake outside the lecture hall, cigarette in hand, half an hour before I present my talk, wishing I was somewhere else!!)

Approximation in Statistics - a Cautionary Tale

Chris Lerwill

Colchester Institute

An example that I encountered recently brought home to me the dangers of approximation during calculation in statistical calculation. I was asked for advice on data analysis and interpretation by a post-graduate student. Presented with the statistical analysis, I was, for a while, non-plussed. The analysis had produced a negative result which should have been impossible. On checking the calculations which had contributed to the final calculation, I could find no errors. I noticed, however, that at various stages approximations of the calculations had been made. On further investigation an unexpected potential problem emerged.

The particular example involved the use of the Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric one-way analysis of variance test, a test frequently used in psychological investigations where analysis of the ranked scores of more than two groups is appropriate.

The Kruskal-Wallis test requires use of the formula (based on Siegel, S. and Castellan, N. (1988), *Non-parametric Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd edition. McGraw-Hill):

$$KW = \frac{\left(\frac{12}{N(N+1)} \times \sum nR^2 \right) - 3(N+1)}{N(N+1)}$$

where N = the total sample size, n = the sample size of each group, R = the mean rank of each group.

This can be considered as three terms. The first term, a multiplier, $12/N(N+1)$, will produce a very small number, which may seem rather insignificant; the second term, the sum of squared rank totals multiplied by the sample sizes of each group, will produce a large number; the third term, $3(N+1)$, will be a relatively low whole number. It is the effect that these three terms have on one another that can produce the problem. The first term will be less than 1 and produce (on a calculator or computer) a string of decimal places. One is then tempted to reduce this, often 'infinite', string of digits to a manageable size. The question that arises is, how much reduction (i.e. approximation) should one employ. This first term although very small, is a multiplier. Multiplication not only multiplies the two terms but also any errors incorporated by approximation. The extent of the effect of approximation in this term is surprising.

The example which alerted me to this produced the following entries into the Kruskal-Wallis formula

$$KW = \frac{12}{33 \times 34} \times [10(16.35)^2 + 15(20.3666(6rec))^2 + 8(11.5)^2] - 3 \times 34$$

The second term then produces 9953.241666(6rec) with no approximation.

Continuing with the calculation :

$$KW = \frac{12}{1122} \times 9953.241666(6rec) - 102$$

$$= 0.01069518716577(\text{inf.seq.}) \times 9953.241666(6rec) - 102$$

The calculation now contains both an infinite sequence and a recurring sequence (also infinite). Further calculation, in any reasonable world, must therefore include some degree of approximation. This then poses the problems - (a) at which stage is it appropriate to approximate, and (b) how much approximation should we employ?

Nowadays we are probably going to use either a 'pocket' calculator or a computer-based spreadsheet for our calculations. It is appropriate, therefore, to be aware of the degree of approximation that these aids are using, in addition to any manual approximation that we may incorporate. Three

'pocket' calculators that I have checked differ in the relevant aspects. The number of digits accepted or produced varies. In my case, either 8 or 10. Whether or not approximation occurs in the final digit also varies. When using computer-based spreadsheets one needs to be aware that, if a calculation has been entered in formulaic form, the full calculation is retained although what appears on screen will depend on the setting for 'decimal places', and the selected column width.

In the above example, this produces (using up to 10 digits):

$$\begin{aligned} \text{KW} &= 0.010695187 \times 9953.241667 - 102 \\ &= 106.4517809 - 102 = 4.45178088 \end{aligned}$$

This is the most accurate final value obtainable using a pocket calculator. A computer-based spreadsheet which retains the full values throughout produces a final value of 4.451782531. The difference between these is obviously of little significance (a difference of only 0.0000370906%).

We now consider the effect of approximation at various stages of the calculation in this particular example. Reduction of the products of the squaring of the rank means to two decimal places produces an error of less than 0.5%. Reduction to one decimal place produces an error of approximately 8.8% - this could obviously produce a major problem in ultimate interpretation. Reduction to a whole number produces an error of over 57% !

Reduction of the recurring rank mean value to two decimal places produces an error of less than 0.5%. Reduction of the rank means to one decimal place again produces an error of approximately 8.8%.

Although errors produced by reduction to two decimal places at any particular stage of 'term 2' calculation are unlikely to produce a significant error in the final value, it must be appreciated that the errors may be compounded if approximation occurs at more than one stage in the calculation. When we consider the effect of 'term 1' on the final value we may encounter a more serious situation.

Leaving all other elements at the most accurate level achievable, approximation of 'term 1' can produce the following errors in the final value. Reduction of 'term 1' to four decimal places produces an error of approximately 1.1%; reduction to three decimal places produces an error of over 68% ! Reduction to two decimal places produces an error of over 155%.

In the example used here these approximations produce KW values of 4.4996... when 'term 1' is reduced to four decimal places, 7.4856... with reduction to three decimal places, and -2.4675... with reduction to two decimal places.

This rather tedious example illustrates the need to take care in deciding how much approximation is sensible in various parts of a calculation.

For the Kruskal-Wallis test, the value obtained is referred to the chi-squared distribution. In this case, the 5% value of chi-square for 2 degrees of freedom is 5.99. The values obtained above could therefore lead to conclusions of 'significant', 'close to significant' or 'highly insignificant' depending on the degree of approximation incorporated. It is also possible to obtain a conclusion of 'highly significant' by a combination of approximations. One inevitably recalls "Lies, damned lies, and statistics".

This analysis leads to the following recommendations:

Check the degree of specificity given in the tabulated values for the relevant statistic. Ensure that any approximations are to at least one more decimal place than the tabulated value of the statistic. In the case of calculations which involve values of less than 1, it is not the number of decimal places which is important but the number of 'significant figures' which should be considered. 'Significant figures' start with the first non-zero digit.

In view of the above, one wonders how many analyses of studies have led to inappropriate conclusions. Could such errors of interpretation have occurred in published work?

Dr Phallus' Film Analysis

The Star Wars Trilogy - A Psychoanalytical Interpretation

When confronted with the title "The Star Wars Trilogy", the discerning Freudian viewer knows that he is in for a treat. "Star Wars" refers, of course, to the impossibly distant goals we set ourselves and the extent to which we project our hopes, desires and failings on to those around us, whilst at the same time struggling with the inner conflict that rules us all. "Trilogy", meanwhile, is the most obvious sign that what follows will be psychoanalytic; the number three is closely associated with the male genitals, and indeed is often used via dream-work to represent the male genitals in our unconscious.

The Freudian viewer is not disappointed by these early indications of psychoanalytic influence. The central characters of the trilogy serve as an almost model study of many of the essential tenets of psychoanalytic theory. Much of this interplay concerns the siblings Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia. The effect on each of having been deprived a father figure (they are brought up apart, not aware that they share a father in Darth Vader) plays itself out with painful inevitability.

Such an effect is more readily observable in Luke Skywalker, who, having additionally been deprived of a mother figure, pursues throughout the trilogy an ultimately futile internal battle. Luke longs to find surrogate mothering in the strong, hairy arms of Chewbacca ('evidence' is unnecessary here – you can see it in his eyes, and that is sufficient for the more astute Freudian.) His longing is perhaps understandable – Chewbacca's soft, murmuring voice is a taunting imitation of "motherese", he is undeniably cuddly, and most pertinently is pilot of the womb-like space ship the Millennium Falcon (womb-like because, obviously, being wider than it is tall it cannot be a phallic symbol and must thus pertain to female sexuality). Luke's longing, alas, can go no further than the occasional furtive glance –we know that were he to seek comfort and attempt to suckle from Chewbacca he would be torn limb from limb. Thus does Skywalker symbolise the anguish of conditional love suffered by all offspring. So strong is his desire to return to the womb, Skywalker actually freezes nearly to death on the ice planet Hoth to unconsciously force Han Solo to cut open the stomach of a camel-like animal and force Luke inside in an attempt to keep him warm. Presumably, Skywalker's mother was more attractive than a camel, but, given the appearance of Vader when he removes his mask in the final film, not much.

Luke's Oedipus complex is given more thorough consideration. He fears castration from the father figure he belatedly confronts, and with good reason; Lord Vader's phallus of energy, the light sabre, is more than capable of performing such castration, and in the second film of the trilogy Luke actually loses his hand to the light sabre. Indeed, in the original script of the trilogy, write and eminent Freudian George Lucas has Vader remove Luke's nadsgers rather than his hand, but chose in the final edit to make his imagery more subtle.

Princess Leia, the yin to Skywalker's yang, is a perfect study of the bitter irony of femininity. The lack of a formative father figure – and therefore the lack of a figure towards whom to feel inferior and reach a state of subjugation via penis envy – has caused her to sublimate her unfulfilled Electra complex, invert it, and reach a state of moral inferiority and subjugation via penis envy.

The use of sexual symbolism throughout the trilogy cannot be overestimated; all characters (with the exception of Jabba the Hutt) and the vast majority of vehicles and space-craft seen are longer than they are wide, and thus undeniable phallic symbols. The uniform worn by all the Empire's forces (with the obvious exception of the stormtrooper uniform), on the other hand, makes the wearer look like a tit, and thus ensures that female symbolism is also represented.

So many Freudian facets make up the star wars trilogy that all cannot be presented here is a brief consideration of some of the major themes. The psychoanalytic enthusiast is encouraged to spend time studying the whole trilogy. He can be assured that it will be time well spent. One final point worthy of note, however: it is gratifying to recognise that the Jedi - a band of a chosen few, the final force of all that is true and proper, roaming the galaxy righting wrongs with powers that mere mortals cannot imagine and an

impeccable dress sense - are a clear representation of us guardians of psychoanalysis. You don't need to see my credentials. These aren't the frauds you're looking for. Move along.

BOOK REVIEW

Bruce Bolam

University of the West of England

Marks, D.F.; Murray, M.; Evans, B. & Willig, C. (2000) *Health Psychology: Theory, Research & Practice*. London, Sage.

This is an outstanding introductory text on health psychology for final year undergraduates, MSc. and beginning Ph.D. students that I hope will be taken up both by independent readers and as a standard for course reading lists. The reason for this hearty recommendation is that this is a book that covers all the basics well, then goes beyond this to make a valuable contribution to the field in its own right. It does this by emphasising the significance of the social context in the understanding of health psychology. This is a strong recurring theme throughout the book but is most clearly made in the first section of the book. Entitled health psychology in context, this consists of chapters considering the advantages of interdisciplinarity and the grounding of the subject; the significance of intra- and inter-national variations in health alongside gender and ethnicity; and finally cross-cultural images of health. In doing so this text goes well beyond the scope of many books on the market and indeed in much mainstream health psychological research in general and I commend the authors efforts in this regard.

A further related advantage to this is in the even handed treatment of both quantitative and qualitative research, and cognitivist and constructivist perspectives. The authors manage a tricky job of marrying together research traditions that are often opposed in a way that avoids platitudinous remarks about eclecticism. This is particularly valuable given often heavily quantitative, cognitivist slant of the discipline as a whole in Britain.

The second section comprises of chapters on the more conventional topics of health-related behaviours and stress but again frames these issues in an original and contextually sensitive way. The final section on health promotion and disease prevention is a mixed bag of chapters on people's beliefs about illness; interpersonal health communications; compliance; immunization and screening; and finally health promotion. Each of these topics is dealt with in a thorough and imaginative way that is always prepared to be critical of overly restrictive conceptualisations of the subject. In discussing illness perceptions for example, there is equal coverage of both conventional psychological cognitive research and on more sociologically orientated qualitative work concerning discourse, narrative and social representations. Similarly, although

the usefulness of mainstream compliance and health promotional research is acknowledged, this is placed in the context of alternative perspectives of empowerment and the danger of hegemonic health promotional discourses.

The whole book is written in an accessible and engaging way that helps the reader avoid that 'car manual' feeling that makes reading so many standard textbooks a chore. Effective summaries at the beginning and end of each chapter are provided and there are even ideas for future research included that potentially provide useful ideas for the planning of undergraduate dissertations or MSc. work. Finally, there is a useful and quite comprehensive glossary of terms provided that helps reduce confusion from the use of specialist jargon. Overall, I strongly recommend this text to any new students of health psychology and any reader who catches themselves questioning some of the unexamined assumptions of other introductory texts in the area.

Postgraduate Research in Psychology at the University of Sheffield

Richard Cooke and Lynne Barker

University of Sheffield

The department of psychology was constructed in the 1970's and is specifically designed for teaching and research in psychology. There are extensive facilities for research into the main branches of the subject including vision, social psychology, neuroscience and, psychophysiology. In addition there is a purpose built lab used to conduct experiments with infants as well as an fMRI scanner used to study brain architecture. The department also incorporates the Institute of Work Psychology (IWP) which is housed in a separate building and incorporates Occupational Psychology and employment related research areas. The Clinical Psychology building is also situated close to the main Psychology department. Finally, many reserachers within the department are working on projects in collaboration with local hospital departments, notably Neurology and Anaesthesia.

The department effectively studies all (!!) aspects of psychology. However, some special interests include:

Theory of Mind

Dyslexia

Artificial Intelligence (including Connectionist networks)

Research into Social Attitudes

Depth Perception

Basal Ganglia as a switching mechanism.

Implicit Learning

plus many other interesting areas...

During term-time there are weekly seminars presented by invited speakers and members of the department. Each year postgrads present their research findings at postgraduate conferences are held within the department. Here is a brief summary of the research conducted by postgrads in our department:

HECTOR GABREL ACOSTA MESA - pcp99hga@shef.ac.uk

Hector is working in the field of Structural Equation Modelling, and has now entered the second year of his PhD. He is concentrating on understanding the functional organisation of the human brain using functional neuro-imaging which measures regional cerebral blood flow (rCBF), which allows researchers to study the relationships among interregional neural connections. This information can be used to assess the functional interaction among neural regions to establish functional models that can explain cognitive theories. Hector applies Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), a mathematical technique to assess models that define

relations among variables in terms of the analysis of covariance, to clarify the functional organisation of neural regions involved in the development of a specific task.

VICKI ARANAZ - v.j.aranaz@shef.ac.uk

Vicki is in the process of writing up her PhD. Her research focuses on visual perception, more specifically, the role of vertical disparities in the perception of egocentric distance, i.e. the distance from an observer to the object they are viewing. She has been testing a model of vertical disparity processing devised by Porrill et al. (1999, Nature 397, 63-66). When this model is presented with a stereoscopic stimulus containing inconsistent vertical disparity information about viewing distance, estimates recorded from one Robust Ideal Observer (RIO) bifurcate at a critical value of stimulus inconsistency, but only if the field of view is sufficiently large. A similar phenomenon is observed in estimates from human observers.

LYNNE BARKER - l.a.barker@shef.ac.uk

Lynne has now completed 10 months of her first year. Her research is investigating putative implicit processing (notably learning) deficits in patients with frontal lobe damage. Frontal lobe pathology often results in wide-ranging deficits (impulsivity, perseveration, socially inappropriate behaviours, lack of empathy and insight) that impact greatly on the successful rehabilitation of this patient group. She is testing the hypothesis that an inability to encode or decode non-verbal, non-conscious information may be a contributing factor to disorders of executive function. At the moment Lynne is developing four experimental tasks that measure different aspects of implicit learning, and will be carrying out these experiments with traumatically brain injured patients and post-acute neurological patients in the near future.

STUART BOOTH - s.booth@shef.ac.uk

Stuart is also in the process of writing up his thesis. His research focuses on the ways humans combine information presented in multiple modalities, e.g. how we process sound and images when we watch television. Different senses frequently provide us with data

resulting from the same object. These different sources of information can result in potentially complex interactions between modalities. For example, one sensory modality may bias or dominate another in the production of stimulus judgements such as location, size, shape or timing (Welch and Warren, 1980). For such effects to occur we must attribute proximal stimuli occurring in different modalities to the same underlying distal object. Stuart's research seeks to understand the processes underlying such multisensory integration and the effects alterations to task constraints have upon it.

ANDREW BROWN - pcp99adb@shef.ac.uk

Andy has just started the second year of his PhD investigating the "theory of mind" abilities of stroke patients with right-hemisphere brain damage. He is looking specifically at patients with damage to the parietal cortex, and considering the degree to which spatial memory deficits play a role in the recent finding that right-hemisphere damage patients experience difficulties passing "false belief" tasks. In false belief tasks patients are required to appreciate that the viewpoint of another person may differ from their own viewpoint.

MARC BUEHNER - marc.buehner@shef.ac.uk

Mark is interested in how humans come to understand the causal structure of the world around them, i.e. how certain events produce other events. His research examines lower level processes such as perception and action as well as higher level processes such as inference and judgement. In addition he also studies the organisation of action and event schemas. Mark has recently begun the second year of his PhD.

MIKE BYWATERS - m.bywaters@shef.ac.uk

Mike is now in the second year of his PhD. His research is concerned with both the cognitive and clinical areas of psychology, specifically looking at intrusive imagery in depression, using cognitive and psychophysiological techniques. He is trying to use the cognitive evidence related to imagery generation, maintenance and working/long-term memory to generate novel

predictions regarding imagery and affect. He is also looking at the differential psychophysiological and subjective responses of high and low depression groups to forming imagery of slides from a range of positions in Lang's two-factor affective space. Hopefully this research will add affective dimensions to cognitive theories of imagery, and also extend cognitive theories of imagery and mood to further inform the literature on depression.

RICHARD COOKE - r.cooke@shef.ac.uk

Richard is looking at how people's thoughts are related to their actions and, he is now in the second year of his PhD research. Specifically, he is investigating Fazio's (1990) MODE model which suggests that sometimes people rely on readily accessible thoughts to make a decision and on other occasions they utilise more deliberative reasoning to decide how to behave. Richard has found that there is evidence for these dual-processing modes and will move on to investigate how these processes effect people's decisions with regard to their voting behaviour.

NICANDRO CRUZ-RAMIREZ - n.cruz@shef.ac.uk

Nic has recently started his second year of PhD research. His research focuses on a graphical model called Bayesian Networks which is very effective in representing and analysing uncertainty, knowledge, and beliefs contained implicitly in the data. This graphical visualisation permits one to recognise in a very intuitive and easy way the possible causal relationships existing among the variables that contribute to a specific problem. The main goal is to develop an algorithm for constructing a Bayesian Network from data based on an information theoretic approach.

CATHERINE HANNA - c.hanna@shef.ac.uk

Catherine's thesis is based on the integration of aspects from cognition, anaesthesia and psychopharmacology research, and Catherine is now in the second year of her PhD. Learning during anaesthesia has implications both for clinical practice and for theoretical accounts for

learning and memory. The central aims of her research are to identify under what circumstances learning during general anaesthesia may be facilitated and to identify the nature of the learning involved.

ANDRES HAYE - a.haye@sheffield.ac.uk

Andres is now in the second year of his PhD and his research explores the social psychology of groups. Within this area, he is investigating the cognitive properties of groups, e.g. the way in which groups perform information processing. In particular, this research focuses on the dynamic interrelations between memory processes at the individual level and the distribution of knowledge at the group level. The specific memory processes being studied are the ones involved in attitude stability, the stability of evaluative knowledge over time and across contexts, as well as its resistance to persuasion. In these terms, the initial hypothesis guiding the research is that variations in the distribution of knowledge among group members will predict the observed differences in attitude stability.

ANNETTE HAYWOOD - a.haywood@shef.ac.uk

Annette has just started the second year of her PhD. She is examining whether there is an association between post natal depressive symptoms and subsequent premenstrual emotional problems. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that many women date the onset of premenstrual symptoms to the birth of a child, but this has yet to be systematically evaluated. There is also considerable overlap in common psychosocial vulnerability factors thought to have predictive capacity for each experience, (i.e. perfectionism, perceived adequacy of social support, lack of assertiveness, need for approval and certain parental factors). In addition, both types of problems involve accommodating to changes in the sense of self, both long-term, (in the case of new mothers), or short-term, (premenstrually).

SOPHIE HEASON - s.heason@shef.ac.uk

Sophie is interested in the psychological effect of vitiligo, a skin pigment disorder. She has collated over 600 questionnaires from people with vitiligo, and is investigating the relationship

between coping strategies, anxiety, depression and impact of the disease. Having recently started the second year of her PhD, Sophie also aims to carry out qualitative research investigating the process of coming to terms with disfigurement.

MARK HUMPHRIES - pcp98mdh@shef.ac.uk

Mark is now in the third year of his PhD. His research focuses on the basal ganglia, a collection of sub-cortical brain nuclei that are implicated in motor behaviour and learning. Specifically, he is investigating the role of the basal ganglia in action selection. Using a computer model he has shown that the basal ganglia is capable of acting as a central switching device that chooses between possible actions. Mark has extended this work by studying the affect on switching of embedding the basal ganglia model into a thalamocortical loop.

MYLES JONES - pcp98moj@shef.ac.uk

Myles' is now in the third year of his PhD and his research involves using a blood-oxygen - level-dependent (BOLD) functional MRI (fMRI) to utilise the endogenous paramagnetic contrast agent deoxyhaemoglobin, allowing researchers to study how different structures in the brain are effected by changes in oxygenated blood. The BOLD signal results from a complex interplay of blood flow ,volume and cerebral oxygen extraction. To elucidate the relation between these variables he utilises the techniques optical imaging spectroscopy (OIS) and Laser Doppler Flowmetry (LDF) in rodent somatosensory cortex. OIS provides time series of blood volume and oxygenation. LDF gives estimates of flow changes. Comparing flow, volume and saturation during neural activity and metabolically neutral haemodynamic stimuli (hypercapnia) has allowed Myles to challenge models of oxygen delivery to the brain.

EIRINI MAVRITSAKI - e.mavritsaki@shef.ac.uk

Eirini has now entered the second year of her PhD. At the moment she is attempting to understand and model classical conditioning of the rabbit nictitating membrane response (NMR). Because the rabbit NMR is relatively simple, its conditioning is studied to provide information on the neural mechanisms of learning. A model of the circuitry underlying this conditioning is important in providing detailed links between electrophysiological data and behavioural observations. In order to obtain more accurate estimates for the model parameters, measurements will be taken in the laboratory of Dr Christopher Yeo (UCL).

FERNANDO MONTES-GONZALEZ - f.montes@shef.ac.uk

Fernando has just begun his third year of PhD research. Fernando is working on the Basal Ganglia under the following assumptions. The existence in the brain of mechanisms in living creatures, that make them choose appropriated action to survive. The vertebrate mammalian brain shares common structures like the basal ganglia, where an anomaly can cause disorders such as Parkinson's disease. His research is devoted to understand an embodied implementation of the basal ganglia in a robot, which is proposed to demonstrate an overall behaviour similar to foraging caged rats.

ASH PATEL - h.patel@shef.ac.uk

Ash is now in the third year of her PhD, looking at children's eyewitness testimony. Specifically she is researching how well adults and children can recall colour information. She has examined the extent to which colour is encoded without intention, i.e. under incidental conditions. One of the specific aims of her thesis was to directly compare the colour recall and recognition performance of different age groups of children with adults. An important finding was that in some situations children as young as four years old are as accurate as adults at recalling and recognising the colours of objects they have seen. Another interesting finding is that there appears to be a specific problem with recalling the colour of clothing people are wearing.

AMANDA RIVIS - a.j.rivis@shef.ac.uk

Amanda has begun the second year of her PhD, researching the role of social influence processes in young people's health-risk (e.g. drinking, smoking) and health-promoting (e.g. diet, exercise) behaviours. In particular, she will attempt to answer two questions: (a) How should social influences on young people's health behaviour be conceptualised? and (b) Do these social influences have a causal impact on young people's health behaviours? She has found that prototypes (the images young people have of the typical 'drinker' or 'smoker') are an important source of social influence in young people's 'binge' drinking behaviour. Amanda will also be examining whether health images unconsciously influence young people's health-related decisions, and whether there are individual differences in social influence.

ASTRI ROBINSON - pcp99ajr@shef.ac.uk

Astri is a cross-sessional student coming up to the end of the first year of her PhD. She is investigating the development of visual recognition memory over the first two years of life. Her research is concerned with the processing of contextual and spatial relationship information. She uses empirical methods to investigate theories about the roles and maturation of specific anatomical structures which are generated by the field of neuroscience. She is also involved in the development of more ecologically valid manipulations of the classic Visual Paired comparison procedure.

JACQUIE ROSS - pcp99jlr@shef.ac.uk

Jacquie has just started the second year of her PhD and is looking at the eyewitness testimony of children. As eyewitnesses children are often intimidated, bribed and threatened to keep secrets about a variety of events. Child abuse is particularly shrouded in secrets. This series of studies aims to overcome limitations of the previous research and identify at what age children spontaneously reveal different types of secrets, and how their understanding of them develops. This work has implications for child protection, children's court testimony and the design of empirical research.

CAROLINE SHEVELAN - pcp96cms@shef.ac.uk

Caroline has entered the 4th year of her PhD which she is now doing full-time after two years of part-time research. Her research is looking at young children's use of spatial representations. Before the age of five children have difficulty using maps by looking at the relationships between objects. Instead they look at an object on a map and then look for that same object in the space which is represented. This is a problem for the children when there is more than one example of a particular object. Her research has looked at task factors affecting young children's use of spatial representations, as well as tracing the development of children's use of representations between the ages of three and six. The final study just completed has examined whether children who have difficulty using maps (i.e., below the age of five) can be trained to use them or whether children must reach a certain level of cognitive maturity before they are able to use a map successfully.

TOM STAFFORD - t.stafford@shef.ac.uk

Tom has entered the second year of his Mphil. His research is investigating how the winning response from a number of competitors is selected and then effected; of many possible actions only one is acted out. Situations where competing actions interfere with each other are popular foci for experimental psychologists. Using the Stroop task as a test-case, he has appropriated and then further developed computational models based on the previously formulated cognitive architecture for attention and upon the known neuroanatomy of the basal ganglia. It seems the basal ganglia is excellently wired up to perform action selection - acting as a central response switching device.

Finally, a brief summary of the work conducted in the IWP is provided.

KERRIE UNSWORTH - k.unsworth@shef.ac.uk

Kerrie is studying the processes and predictors of individual innovation and creativity amongst design engineers at two large aerospace companies. She has performed structural equation modelling on surveys from 327 employees, and analysed (grounded theory and IPA) 70 interviews and 15 diary studies.

Other people at IWP:

NICK TURNER - nick.turner@shef.ac.uk (safety culture and initiative)

KAMAL BIRDI - k.birdi@shef.ac.uk (training and learning)

KATE CHARLES - pcp96kec (development of teams)

CRAIG HARTLEY - c.i.hartley@shef.ac.uk (suggestion schemes)

ROBIN HORTON - robin.horton@shef.ac.uk (intranets)

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

As usual the PsyPAG editorial team would like to invite you all to submit articles etc. for publication. Just in case you've forgotten, we welcome most things that are generally related to the world of psychology: conference reviews, advice for other postgrads, research issues, profile of your department, funnies..... etc. etc.. So please, if there is anything you would like to share with us.....

Telling it like it is: Advice from the BPS Media Training Day

Sally Wiggins

Loughborough University

It is a fact of life that – mercifully – we aren't the only ones interested in psychology. You have been blessed with a subject matter that is spoken and written about within newspapers, radio programmes, TV and magazines. Ultimately, people will be curious about what we 'find', even if it is a rather obscure and specific topic. The downside of all this, of course, is that as academics we often forget what its like to talk to non-academics about our work. Could you describe your study in three simple sentences? What is the point of your research? Scary questions, indeed. Thank goodness, then, for the BPS Media Training Day. This is a one-day intensive course, run by the Director of Information for the BPS, a previous editor of the *Psychologist*, a BBC Radio presenter, and a former medical/health correspondent for the Guardian. An amazing amount of experience and talent packed up in one small dose. As the Psy-PAG/Postgraduate rep for the BPS Social Section, I was privileged enough to attend this training day, and wanted to share some of the advice with you here. (See also the references for other useful

articles/books). So, here's some advice and tips on how to deal with various media-type encounters...

Writing for Newspapers – how journalists make a living

The following applies to both the journalist or yourself – whoever is writing the article. It may be that you're writing a press release, or have been asked to write a short piece to go into the paper itself. In either case, this will be about current, new and presumably topical research – so we're living for the moment here, and you need to get your message across clearly, and quickly! Here's some top tips:

- Remember the 5 'W's – What, who, where, when, and why. These are the key (and often only) facts that readers want to know. Get them out in the first paragraph – any longer, and they may end up being cut due to lack of (precious) news space.
- Of the above, the 2 most important are WHAT (did you find; what's the study about) and SO WHAT? (i.e. WHY) How does this affect the person reading the paper? Why is this research important?
- Use specific facts – don't be vague or general. It's easier to picture a particular event or situation if you give it a little detail. Keep this in line with the important, basic points of the study. The readers don't want to hear about multiple regressions any more than you like using them (I'm presuming, of course, that you don't...).
- Avoid jargon or technical language – aim to write for GCSE level (or below).
- Use quotes if you can – journalists will love you for this, as they rely on what you say for the content of their article.
- Use active sentence structures (i.e. subject-verb-object: 'I did this'). These are shorter, simpler and much easier to understand than passive structures (i.e. 'this was done by myself').
- Avoid using negatives – as with passive sentences, these aren't so easy to understand quickly.

Certainly the news editor won't have the time to unravel complex sentence structures.

Magazines – not just a glossy face

It's not just newspapers that can pick up on new research. Magazines have a huge readership, and can write much longer articles – so you can get more of your point across, without the time pressures of the news media. Some of the tips above apply here, though here's some more specific notes to keep in mind when dealing with articles for magazines:

- Magazine editors are usually desperate for ideas, so the best way to start is to send them a press release detailing your research. There are a few points you'll need to keep in mind:

- Send it to a specific person – e.g. the health editor – and use their name on the envelope. This will ensure that it will be delivered and opened, and not left on a general pile of bumf in the post room.

- Study the magazine to gauge your target audience, then write as if you were talking to the kind of person who would read the magazine. What will they want to know? What kind of language would they understand? A good idea is to actually ask someone who *does* read the magazine, or a similar type.

- Describe your research in a maximum of two paragraphs. Any more and the editor probably won't have time to read it – or you haven't explained it clearly enough. Ask the editor if someone would be interested in writing an article on the topic.

- Don't ring up a magazine. This is not news, so it's not that urgent. Writing to them gives you all the information they need to know, and can deal with in their own time.

- Don't get disheartened if they don't want to write anything at this stage. Your details will possibly be put in a database, and they may contact you if they're writing on your topic at a later date. Remember, they'll be keen to keep ideas and contacts so it won't be wasted effort.

Interviews – what to do if the media wants to speak to you

You may receive a phone call (or email/letter) from a media representative asking to speak to you about your research, or about your topic of study. This will usually be prompted by a media release – possibly from a conference – or if your name is on a database due to previous contacts you've had with the paper/magazine. The first thing to do is not to panic. Especially if the call is unexpected, the best thing you can do is (if you want to speak to them) ask them for their name and number, and give them a time when you'll call them back. This will then give you a chance to prepare yourself and decide what you want to say. Basically, you need to use the same rationale as set out in the first section above – on 'writing for newspapers'. Ask yourself: what have I done? What did I find? What does this mean? (So what?). Write down your answers, and have a couple of quotes ready.

Alternatively, this may be for a radio or TV programme, though you will probably be given some notice before the interview itself. In this case, here are some key questions you'll need to ask to make sure you're comfortable with the situation:

- What programme is the interview for? If it's news, then your contribution is likely to be shorter than for a documentary style programme.

- What is the audience like? What kinds of things does the programme usually cover?
- How is your interview going to be used? What other contributions are going to be used? For example, you may be put into a debate about an issue, so you need to know what the implications are of what you'll be saying.
- Will it be live or pre-recorded? In most situations, pre-recorded is probably the best option, allowing you to have a say in what gets shown in the programme.
- Will you be on your own or will others be there? This makes a difference if you know (and are arch-enemies with) the people to be interviewed alongside you.
- Where will the interview take place? Face-to-face is preferable, though often (e.g. for newspapers) phone is the only alternative. Make sure you're comfortable with the setting.
- Don't relax! Especially at the end of the interview, when you think its all over, you may be asked 'one more thing..'. This could be the fatal moment when you admit that you slightly jiggged some of the stats or weren't too sure about the stability of your theory. Never let your guard down!

If you'd like to know more about dealing with the media, see the recommended texts below (especially White et al, 1993), but this should be enough to get you thinking about what you would do when dealing with the media. Above all, see it as an opportunity, not a threat. This is your chance – should you take it – to put things across in your own words. You never know, even your family may finally understand what you've been working on all this time...

USEFUL REFERENCES

Griffiths, M. (1998) *Writing for non-refereed publication outlets – part 1: Professional journals and newsletters*. Psy-PAG Quarterly Newsletter, December 1998, Issue 29.

Griffiths, M. (1999) *Writing for non-refereed publication outlets – part 2: Newspapers and magazines*. Psy-PAG Quarterly Newsletter, March 1999, Issue 30.

Harcourt, D. (1999) *Dealing with the media: lessons learnt from the BPS*. Psy-PAG Quarterly Newsletter, March 1999, Issue 30.

Hardy, A. (1998) *Dealing with the media at PsyPAG '98*. Psy-PAG Quarterly Newsletter, September 1998. Issue 28.

White, S., Evans, P., Mihill, C. and Tysoe, M. (1993) *Hitting the Headlines: a practical guide to the media*. Leicester: BPS Books

CONFERENCE REVIEW

Developmental Section Conference

Department of Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol,

September 2000

Claire Fox

University of Keele

This year the conference organisers were overwhelmed with submissions, all of a high quality, which made the selection process extremely difficult. Additionally, sacrificing some afternoon coffee breaks was required to permit four parallel sessions to take place over two and-a-half days. Morning coffee was also supplemented by some poster presentations.

Josef Perner kicked off the conference on the Thursday by asking the question, 'How much of a theory of mind do you need to be conscious?' The presentation was clear and well presented so I was able to concentrate for a whole hour, and understand some of what was said! (I am not a ToM person). Many of the papers were on the subject of autism and theory of mind. However, for myself and those others who find the concept difficult to grasp, there were a variety of other papers to look at. I am interested in children's peer relationships, particularly bullying and victimisation in schools, so I was pleased to see a variety of papers on this particular topic. As Smith (2000) recently said, "[The field] may not rival 'theory of mind' in the popularity

stakes at developmental psychology conferences, but it has become a noted presence".

At the wine reception I met up with some fellow postgraduates who I had met briefly at the PsyPAG conference in June. Paul, Catherine, Anna and I had a lovely meal at a pizza place, followed by a bit of a boogie at the student's union.

Unfortunately, I was poorly all day Friday (sob sob) and had to stay in bed all day. Please note – it was not a hangover! Fortunately, at 4 o'clock I felt better and managed to make it to another wine reception, which was held at 'Explore@Bristol'. This new exhibition centre holds various displays and interactive demonstrations, with one of the aims being to encourage children's interest in science. For those with some energy left (this did not include me!) there was a band and a late bar at the Folk House.

I awoke on Saturday morning feeling much better, though slightly nervous at the prospect of giving my paper. Three other papers on social or emotional competence were also to be presented during my session. David Warden (University of Strathclyde) started the session by talking about "Assessing and promoting children's pro-social competence". He examined the social competencies of children who were peer nominated as either pro-social, anti-social, victims of bullying or neutral. David then implemented a peer interactions intervention (led by teachers) aimed at promoting social competence. There were various findings; however, what I was most interested in was that victims of bullying were found to have poorer social-problem solving skills compared to neutral and pro-social children. This is in contrast to David Perry's finding (through personal communication) that victimised children are not broadly deficient in social-information processing. They can generate competent solutions to social problems and recognise that competent solutions are more likely to succeed than incompetent ones. It is thought that the problem with these children is that when faced with difficult social situations, they are prone to experience debilitating emotional arousal, which interferes with their behaviour.

After coffee, Mike Eslea (University of Central Lancashire) looked at 'The nature and extent of bullying experienced by traveller children'. Fear of bullying is one reason given by traveller children for not attending school. Mike found that the level of victimisation was no higher than other figures. However, he found that the bullying experienced was more likely to be physical, as opposed to verbal. Other findings here included (i) children did not count name-calling as bullying; (ii) girls who were bullied told someone more often than boys and (iii) those who had told someone felt the situation had been resolved. Also, children were happy with the support they received. I found this latter finding to be particularly encouraging as previous studies have found that for many children it is a 'silent nightmare' (Smith, 1991). It seems that many children do not tell their parents because they are embarrassed. They may blame themselves or worry about how it will be tackled. Perhaps, things have changed? This research suggests that teachers / parents are dealing with bullying appropriately. Perhaps after over a decade

of research in this country, together with increased campaigning and publicity, bullying is no longer such a silent nightmare for those involved. As Smith (2000,p349) recently stated, "This is research that has had a social impact – there has been a radical change in schools in attitudes to, and actions taken on, bullying in the last decade (Smith & Brain,2000)".

In the afternoon I attended the symposium on 'Teasing, bullying and social understanding'. The talk by Reddy and Williams (University of Portsmouth) on 'the positive functions of teasing' generated a lot of discussion, especially with respect to definitions, and how to distinguish between teasing and bullying. During the talk I started thinking about the motives for the behaviour, the consequences, and the relationship between the 'bully' and 'victim' (teaser – teased). Both bullying and teasing can be performed for some sort of reaction. However, while teasing is primarily intended to encourage a laugh or a smile, bullying is performed to make someone cry or look angry. However, the motives of the bully / teaser require understanding on the part of the 'victim'. This can depend on the relationship between the two parties. If the action causes distress, then I think it should be seen as bullying behaviour. Clearly, it is important to try and understand the situation from the victim's point of view. As Ross (1996) states, children's appraisals must be accepted at face value: if they say it is terrible, then it is terrible. Also in the symposium, Cutting, Hughes and Dunn (Institute of Psychiatry, London) presented their finding that social understanding (as assessed by ToM tests) predicted self-report of bullying problems (being bullied and seeing others bullied). The speaker asked, 'What other costs are there for understanding people?' The explanation favoured for this unusual finding was that these children are oversensitive, and support was given for this explanation. It was found that these children are also more sensitive to teacher criticism.

Claire Monks (Goldsmiths College, London) presented some of her research focusing on bullying and victimisation of children under the age of 8. Claire found that bullying moves from being indirect to more direct as children get older. Also, the victim status becomes more stable. It seems that young bullies target many children, before finding those who are most vulnerable. Also, young bullies (in contrast to older bullies) have poor social-cognitive skills. Claire suggested that it is only the bullies with good social-cognitive skills who can continue with the behaviour without being detected. This day ended with the conference dinner at the Council House.

Early on Sunday morning I attended the symposium on 'Cognitive processing in childhood anxiety'. Hadwin and Dineen (University of Southampton) assessed 50 children aged 7 to 9 years and found that social concern (anxiety) and depression were related to a hostile interpretation bias. However, depression seemed to account for this relationship, more than anxiety. Also, they found that this is a very personalised view of the world. In other words, children who score high on anxiety and depression do not believe that others will make the same interpretation bias. Also, social concern was related to more support seeking strategies, and fewer adaptive strategies. Banerjee and Henderson (University of Sussex) also focused on socially anxious children. Robin Banerjee described socially anxious

individuals as those who want to make a good impression, but they doubt their ability to do so. It was found that social anxiety was linked to poorer performance on a task involving an understanding of a faux pas and another task which required an understanding of self-presentational behaviour. These two studies are important because an understanding of the cognitive biases associated with social anxiety can inform practitioners to know how to respond effectively to help these individuals.

Finally, Andy Field (University of Sussex) asked 'Who's afraid of the big bad wolf?' His study provided support for Rachman's theory of fear acquisition. Andy gave a comical description of the Little Albert experiment, which inevitably involved a discussion of ethics. Nowadays, in order to study direct conditioning, Andy said that researchers have to wait for something traumatic to happen (e.g. a lightning strike), before pouncing 'like vultures' to assess fear in people. Andy was interested in the role of information in fear acquisition. Information was given to children about two monsters (one nice, the other a child eater!). He found that the verbal information given did change fear-related beliefs, only when the adults gave the information. Andy stated that either peers did not present the information very convincingly, or children look for those older for information.

I arrived home on Sunday evening feeling shattered, but buzzing with ideas for my thesis. The standard of presentations was very high and I was pleased that my nerves did not get the better of me during my talk. I met up with fellow postgraduates who I had met at the PsyPAG conference, and even talked to senior academics in my field, without making a fool of myself! I would strongly recommend this conference to other postgraduates in the field of developmental psychology. The section is committed to encouraging PGs to attend the conference, and this can be seen in the reduced conference fee (£5 for student presenters), and some bursaries for travel and accommodation. Preparations are already underway for the conference in the year 2001. If anyone would like any information nearer the time I can be contacted via E-mail - c.l.fox@keele.ac.uk. As a member of the BPS, students can also become members of the Developmental Section for a small fee. The benefits of this are the newsletter, which contains interesting articles, book reviews, and information about other conferences / workshops, and a reduced fee at the Developmental Section annual conference.

SELECT REFERENCES

Ross, D. M. (1996). *Childhood bullying and teasing: What school personnel, other professionals and parents can do*. USA: American Counselling Association.

Smith, P. K. (1991). The silent nightmare: Bullying and victimisation in school peer groups. *The Psychologist*, 4, 243-248.

Smith, P. K. (2000). Why I study bullying in schools. *The Psychologist*, 13(7), 348-349.

Smith, P. K., & Brain, P. (2000). Bullying in schools: Lessons from two decades of research. *Aggressive Behavior*, 26, 1-9.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

4 - 5 December 2000 *Division of Occupational Psychology Affiliate Support Group - Developing Skills Workshop.*

Topic: An Introduction to Strategy (Dec. 4th) and An Introduction to Marketing *NEW* (Dec. 5th). Location: Aston Business School, Aston University, Birmingham B4 7ET Contact: Mrs Gwen Ward, ASG Workshops, The British Psychological Society, 48 Princess Road East, Leicester LE1 7DR Phone: 0116 2529517 Fax: 0116 247 0787 EMail: gwewar@bps.org.uk

11 December 2000 *DCP Oxford Branch One-Day CPD Workshop.*

Topic: Clinical applications of mindfulness training. Location: Northampton General Hospital Contact: Dr Jane Duff, Dept of Clinical Psychology, National Spinal Injuries Centre, Stoke Mandeville Hospital, Mandeville Road, Aylesbury, Bucks HP21 8AL Phone: 01296 315825

18 December 2000 *BPS Press Committee Media Training Day.*

Topic: The day will include: news writing, snapshots of the media, media releases, and interview techniques. Location: Institute of Education, London. Contact: Natalie Kennedy, The British Psychological Society, St. Andrews House, 48 Princess Road East, Leicester, LE1 7DR, UK. Phone: 0116 252 9581

19 - 20 December 2000 *London Conference 2000*

Topic: Main theme: Psychology & New Technology. Location: Institute of Education, Bedford Way, London. Contact: Conference Office, St. Andrews House, 48 Princess Road East, Leicester, LE1 7DR, UK. Phone: 0116 252 9555. Fax: 0116 255 7123 EMail: conferences@bps.org.uk Comment - This is a BPS conference; application details can be found at www.bps.org.uk, and generally require adherence to BPS guidelines.

7 - 11 February 2001 *Australia's 1st Forensic Psychology Conference.*

Topic: Australia's 1st Forensic Psychology Conference. Location: The Wentworth Hotel, Sydney, Australia. Contact: The Conference Co-ordinator, The Australian Psychological Society Ltd, PO Box 126, Carlton South Vic 3053, Australia. Phone: 61 3 8662 3300.

Fax: 61 3 9663 6177. E-mail: confer@psychsociety.com.au.

WEB: www.psychsociety.com.au/news/forensic_2.htm Comment - Unfortunately, students (only) wishing to *present* will be out of luck by the time

you read this (deadline was Nov. 5th). Otherwise, the website is extremely comprehensive and worth viewing.

12 - 16 March 2001. *Division of Neuropsychology Child Clinical Psychology Course Part II* Course Convenor & Organiser: Dr Arleta Starza-Smith, Consultant Clinical Psychologist in Paediatric Neuropsychology, Paediatric Neuropsychology Service, University Hospital, Queen's Medical Centre, Floor E, East Block, Nottingham NG7 2UH. Telephone: 0115 924 9924 ext. 42803. Location: Charney Manor, Charney Bassett, Oxfordshire. Contact: Mrs Rita Mechen, Administrator for the Child Clinical Neuropsychology Course, 5 Wick Close, Headington, Oxford OX3 9HB. Phone: 01865 451222. Mobile: 07977 87829 EMail: RitaMechen@compuserve.com Comment: In this case it is important and relevant to have attended the first part of the Course (Part I was held on 20-24 November 2000).

27 March 2001. *BPS Press Committee Media Training Day.*

Topic: The day will include: News writing, snapshots of the media, media releases, and interview techniques. Location: (pre-Annual Conference) in Glasgow. Contact: Natalie Kennedy, The British Psychological Society, St. Andrews House, 48 Princess Road East, Leicester, LE1 7DR, UK. Phone: 0116 252 9581.

28 - 31 March 2001. *Centenary Annual Conference 2001.*

Topic: Psychology: The state of the science. Location: Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre, Glasgow. Contact: Conference Office, St. Andrews House, 48 Princess Road East, Leicester, LE1 7DR, UK. Phone: 0116 252 9555. Fax: 0116 255 7123. EMail: conferences@bps.org.uk Comment - See also www.secc.co.uk, although this site is primarily for the conference centre and not the conference itself.

30 - 31 March 2001. *Lesbian & Gay Psychology Section Annual Conference*

Topic: Lesbian & Gay Psychology: Reviewing the Past, Envisioning the Future. Location: Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre, Glasgow. Contact: Adrian Coyle, Dept of Psychology, University of Surrey, Guildford GU2 7XH. Phone: 01483 876896. EMail: A.Coyle@surrey.ac.uk.

Comment - The submission date for this one has also passed - (Sept. 1st, 2000).

28 May - 2 June 2001. *Sport & Exercise Section Tenth World Congress of Sport Psychology.* Topic: Sport & Exercise Section Tenth World Congress of Sport Psychology. Location: Skiathos Island, Greece. Contact: Dr Athanasios Papaioannou, Congress Director. EMail: sportpsy@users.duth.gr

27 - 29 June 2001. *International Approaches to Ethical Issues in Psychology.*

Topic: Ethics. Location: University of Hertfordshire. Contact: Nigel Foreman, Department of Psychology, Middlesex University, Queensway, Enfield, London, EN3 4SF. Phone: 020 8411 2617. Fax: 020 8411 5343. EMail: n.foreman@mdx.ac.uk. Comment - A website should be forthcoming for this conference. Check the BPS on-line conference pages for details.

1 - 6 July 2001. *VIIIth European Congress of Psychology.*

Topic: VIIIth European Congress of Psychology 2001. Location: The Barbican Centre, London. Contact: Congress Secretariat, Conference Associates & Services International Ltd, 50 Vineyard Path, London SW14 8ET, Phone: 020 8939 6390. Fax: 020 8878 1051. E-mail: ecop2001@bps.org.uk. WEB: www.bps.org.uk/ecop/home.htm

1 - 5 August 2001. *6th Conference of the European Association of Psychological Assessment* Topic: Psychological assessment. Location: Aachen Technical University, Aachen, Germany WEB: www.eapa.rwth-aachen.de Comment - Webpage may not yet be active; worth checking regularly if you're interested. Details have otherwise to be finalised.

Welsh Branch student conference

The student conference of the Welsh Branch of the BPS will take place on the 4th and 5th of April 2001 at the University of Wales in Bangor, School of Psychology. Papers presented at the conference will be published in the BPS Monitor. Please send your abstracts to Anthoula Lioni, Psychology, UWB, Brigantia Building, Penrallt Rd, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2AS. The abstracts should follow the BPS guidelines for submission. Deadline for submissions 30, January 2001. For further information please contact a.lioni@bangor.ac.uk

Welsh Branch bursaries and hardship funds.

A number of bursaries are available from the Welsh Branch to postgraduate students presenting papers at home or international conferences. The applicants should be currently studying at a Welsh institution. A number of hardship funds is also available. For further information please contact a.lioni@bangor.ac.uk

BPS Centenary Annual Conference

Glasgow SECC, March 28-31

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY ALERT!! Next year's huge BPS Annual conference will include an extra special programme of events, organised by the Social Section. As well as inviting abstracts from wonderfully intelligent researchers such as yourselves, symposia will be running throughout the conference on some of the major themes in social psychology. So, even if you're not keen on doing a presentation, its worth going for the star-spotting opportunities and the sheer excitement of so many 'established' academics in one place. Confirmed symposia/speakers are as follows:

The Many Facets of the Self

(Constantine Sedikides, Aiden Gregg, Tim Wildschut, Constantine Sedikides, Kathy Carnelley, Richard Gramzow, John Skowronski).

Intergroup Relations

(Dominic Abrams, Dominic Abrams, Miles Hewstone, Rupert Brown, Mike Hogg, Russell Spears, Richard Crisp, Karen Long)

Attitudes and Behaviour

(Tony Manstead, Icek Ajzen, Mark Conner, Dianne Parker, Tony Manstead, Paschal Sheeran, Steve Sutton)

Qualitative Social Psychology

(Jonathan Smith, Adrian Coyle, Jonathan Smith, Karen Henwood, Nick Pidgeon, Michele Crossley, Carla Willig)

New Directions in Social Psychology

(Steve Reicher, Alex Haslam, Geoff Haddock, Bas Verplanken, Margaret Wetherell)

Marie Jahoda's Contribution to Social Psychology (provisional title)

(David Fryer, Christian Fleck, Ian Parker, Alois Wacker)

Social Section Invited Speaker: Julian Rappaport

So, are you tempted yet? Its only £40 to register if you're a student (and BPS member – though you can join now and still get the reduced rate). Those who went to this year's Psy-PAG conference will know what a fantastic setting Glasgow is for a conference, and we're in for a wild time with a ceilidh, fireworks, and a casino night (and that's just a hint at what's happening). See the BPS (& Psy-PAG) web-site (<http://www.bps.org.uk>) for more info, or the latest issue of 'The Psychologist'. It'll put the Social back into Social Psychology!!

CONFERENCE REVIEW

The 11th International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking

in

(wait for it....)

Las Vegas, Nevada

Richard Wood

Nottingham Trent University

(Currently at McGill University in Montreal)

(Editorial Note : Join me in a couple of minutes' contemplation that the furthest conference I've ever been to was in Wimbledon. Clearly, either (i) I'm in the wrong field; (ii) simply, there is no justice, or (iii) Richard has bribed / blackmailed someone with some clout.)

We set off from Gatwick for the eleven hour flight to Houston, missed the connection and only just got on the next flight; it was booked solid. Las Vegas is one popular place. Arriving at Las Vegas at night was strange. It's like a glittering jewel in the middle of nothing, except the desert. As you approach Vegas you can see all the different hotels like pieces on a monopoly board. Each hotel has a theme, so Luxor is a black pyramid with a neon light shining from the center (apparently visible from space!) New York New York has its own Statue of Liberty, and a roller coaster around the top, and so on.....what more can I say? Researching the psychology of gambling does have some advantages and attending a conference in Las Vegas was one of them. The conference itself was organized by The University of Nevada and held at The MGM Grand Hotel. It used to be the biggest hotel in the world but they just opened The Bellagio, also in Vegas, which is slightly bigger. Even so it has over 5000 rooms and a huge casino with a lion enclosure in it. I kid you not! The conference centre is connected to the hotel by air conditioned walkways and is very modern and luxurious.

I expected Las Vegas to be tacky, a bit like a larger version of Blackpool, but I was pleasantly surprised. It's certainly a bizarre place and completely over the top, but it is very well built and maintained. The Casinos make some serious money, and they make sure they keep the place in good shape. Walking along The Strip is a surreal experience. For one thing it is very, very hot. It rains so little in Vegas that the streets don't even have drains for the rainwater. Also, what looks like a short five minute walk to the next hotel/casino takes forever. This is because the hotels are so big that they look closer than they actually are. The only way to navigate them is by ducking into every air-conditioned building en route. Luckily there are plenty of opportunities to do this. Once inside a casino you are confronted with literally thousands of flashing and whining slot machines. There is a continuous ringing noise from machines that are paying out, and the whole experience is hypnotic. Then there are rows and rows of roulette wheels, poker tables, craps tables and so on. Bunny-Girl style waitresses keep bringing the drinks, and they're cheap as well (the drinks, that is). Essentially Las Vegas is like a huge theme park for adults. I don't really gamble (I don't see the point) but there is still plenty to do and see. Apparently these days half the visitors to Las Vegas don't gamble either but come for the shows and the sights.

Anyway, I suppose I'd better tell you about the conference. It's *the* conference to go to in the gambling scene. It is held once every four years

and all the big names I had ever read or heard about were there. That's one of the big bonuses of attending these events, you get to meet all the main people in your field. I gave two papers - one was about predicting gambling behaviours in adolescents from their attitudes; the other was about the implications of web-based lotteries. Both of them seemed to go down well and I got to talk to lots of interesting people researching similar topics all over the world. Before I started going to conferences I thought they'd be boring, and when people talked about 'networking' it sounded like a slimy thing to undertake. What I have actually found is that conferences are usually quite interesting and most of the so called 'networking' is nothing more than talking to like minded people in bar, clubs and over meals. These places are where the best ideas appear to be generated!

I made some good friends and acquaintances at that conference and I must say I was sad to leave. However, the positive side of it was that I was offered a job as a Post Doc at McGill University in Montreal, which was nice! Now, this was very timely for me. I was coming to the end of my PhD and had been looking for research and teaching work in the UK. Thus far things hadn't been too inspiring. The study of gambling in the UK is still very much in its infancy and many conventional university psychology departments take far too narrow a focus for examining such a social phenomena as gambling. In my experience, British academic psychology is often more about publishing in the journals with the most kudos, than it is about advancing psychological knowledge per se. This can be very frustrating for researchers who work in applied areas of psychology, such as gambling. (Editorial Note : Richard's grumbli- sorry, opinions are his own here.)

Canada, by comparison, seems a much more enlightened and progressive kind of place. There are many more opportunities for studying the psychology of gambling (in particular), supported by generous government and industry research grants. So now as I write this I am in Montreal at McGill University's International Youth Gambling Research and Treatment Clinic, working as a Post Doc for two years. What's more I'm having a great time, and people are actually interested in my ideas. So what's the moral of all this then? Well I would say get out there to those international conferences; you can meet some great people, and end up having all kinds of adventures.