A brief history of the beginning of PsyPAG

A personal history of the Psych-Postgrads Mailing List

*The PsyPAG Quarterly:* A retrospective

A journey like no other... the PhD, PsyPAG and support that lasts forever

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Editor’s Column
Emma Norris

IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE to introduce the 95th edition of The PsyPAG Quarterly, celebrating PsyPAG’s 30th anniversary! We’ve curated a range of articles looking back over PsyPAG’s development and importantly, looking forward to what’s next! I’d like to give a huge thank you to all of our alumni contributors. It has been great to read such glowing accounts of life as part of the PsyPAG committee across its lifespan. A special thanks also to Kate Williams, PsyPAG’s Alumni Chair, for helping us to source contributors.

Some highlights include contributions from founding PsyPAG members Professor Jane Ussher and Associate Professor Richard Kemp, as well as ‘Where are they now?’ contributions from key PsyPAG alumni. A head-to-head discussion with organisers of the 1983 BPS Postgraduate Conference (prior to PsyPAG’s establishment in 1985) and our 2015 conference chair makes for an interesting read. I give a brief history of The PsyPAG Quarterly in a retrospective piece and we also have interviews with and reflections from alumni on their PsyPAG experiences. As ever in The PsyPAG Quarterly we also include a brief selection of new contributions from current postgraduates. For a friendly and constructive peer-reviewing experience, please consider submitting your work to us!

We are excited to announce that this special 30th anniversary issue of The PsyPAG Quarterly also coincides with two other upcoming developments. Firstly, we are working closely with the BPS on develop our Quarterly archiving project. This will allow individual articles from past issues to be searchable and downloadable: giving you an even greater incentive to write for us! Secondly, to commemorate this special anniversary year, we are developing a resource book entitled The PsyPAG Guide for Psychology Postgraduates: Surviving postgraduate study. This will be distributed free of charge to UK psychology departments, containing a range of articles on practical, social and emotional guidance during postgraduate study. A huge thank you goes to the BPS for supporting our work on these projects. Both are due to be completed for the start of the 2015/2016 academic year. Please keep your eyes peeled on social media for further announcements.

I am sad to say that this is my fourth and final issue as The PsyPAG Quarterly Lead Editor. I would like to thank all of my co-editors over the last two years. We have seen a huge increase in the number and quality of submissions, thanks in part to our increasing use of social media (@PsyPAGQuarterly). Please continue to contact the team with article ideas you have via the details in the box below. As ever, research or discussion pieces, interviews, reviews and more are all very welcome.

Happy reading! See you in Glasgow for our 30th anniversary conference 22–24 July 2015.

Wishing PsyPAG continued success for the next 30 years and beyond!

Emma Norris
On behalf of The PsyPAG Quarterly Editorial Team

The PsyPAG Quarterly Editorial Team
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Hello and a very warm welcome to the summer 2015 edition of The PsyPAG Quarterly. It has been a very busy time recently, leading up to our special 30th anniversary conference next month. We are looking forward to many of you joining us at the University of Glasgow, from Wednesday 22 July to Friday 24 July 2015, to present your work, network and join in the celebrations. The 2015 conference organising team have been working really hard and have arranged a jam packed programme which will see postgraduate psychology students from around the UK present their work to their peers, from many different areas of psychology. A number of fantastic social events have also been organised including a Civic Reception in the iconic City Chambers Building, located in George Square, and a traditional conference dinner and Scottish Ceilidh, which will be held in Glasgow University Union.

We also have three high profile keynote speakers confirmed including Professor Richard Wiseman (University of Hertfordshire), Dr Rachael Jack (University of Glasgow), and Professor Padraic Monaghan (Lancaster University). In addition to this, we have a number of PsyPAG alumni joining us for the social events and we are also lucky enough to have some contributing to the programme through running a variety of workshops. The editor of The Psychologist, Dr Jon Sutton, and Dr Christian Jarrett, Editor of the Society’s ‘Research Digest’ will also be running a workshop and other special guests attending the conference include Jamie Hacker Hughes, the President of the BPS and Professor Daryl O’Connor, the Chair of the Research Board.

If you have not yet done so and would like to present and/or attend, abstract submission is open until Friday 12 June and there’s time to register until Friday 26 June. We have already received a fantastic number and range of high quality submissions from postgraduates studying in all areas of psychology, ensuring it’s going to be a great meeting. For the latest information about the conference and to register visit http://psypag.psy.gla.ac.uk/.

To also stay up-to-date with any conference developments and latest news leading up to and during the conference please follow our dedicated conference Twitter feed (@PsyPAG2015) and Facebook (facebook.com/PsyPAGAnnualConference).

Once again this year we will be awarding the following three awards: Master’s; Rising Researcher; and Division of Academics, Researchers and Technicians in Psychology (DART-P)/PsyPAG Teaching Award. The deadline for the awards that PsyPAG offer has now passed and our winners will be presented with their certificates during our conference, with some also presenting their award winning research. Prizes will also be awarded for the best oral and poster presentations during the conference itself too.

PsyPAG continues to offer a range of popular bursaries to help support professional development, including attendance at conferences (both international and domestic), workshop/training events, and study visits. Stand-alone travel bursaries which can help towards travel costs to certain events are also offered. Additionally, PsyPAG’s research grant bursary, up to the amount of £300, was launched last September and has proved very popular. This fund can be used to assist you in conducting research as part of your postgraduate studies. For example, this fund may help with paying participants in exchange for taking part in your research or helping with your travel costs when collecting...
data away from your university. For more information about each of these and to apply visit our website:
http://www.psypag.co.uk/bursaries-2/

PsyPAG’s News Officer, Jessica Littlefair, has also produced our Spring newsletter which was distributed to psychology postgraduates across the UK. We introduced the newsletter last year as a resource to keep postgraduates up-to-date with the work of the PsyPAG committee as well as our latest news and activities (i.e. free workshops, annual conference) and other support available. We hope you have been receiving our newsletters, however, if for some reason you have not been and would like to be added to our contact list, please contact me at chair@psypag.co.uk. I would also be keen to receive any feedback that you have about our newsletter or any other support that we offer, so please don’t hesitate to share your views with me. The PsyPAG newsletter is also located on our website: http://www.psypag.co.uk/news/ as is an electronic copy of The PsyPAG Quarterly and back issues http://www.psypag.co.uk/the-quarterly/

Last month PsyPAG’s Treasurer, Martin Toye and I, hosted a stand at the Annual Conference of the BPS in Liverpool. During this time we were pleased to meet many psychology postgraduates from around the UK and share information about the events and support PsyPAG have available. Thank you to those of you who we spoke to, it was great meeting many more postgraduates and continuing to spread the word of the support PsyPAG can offer.

I am also delighted to announce that in honour of our 30th anniversary conference this year, we are continuing to work on a PsyPAG publication which will include advice and guidance for postgraduate students. We intend to launch this in the autumn, in time for the beginning of the next academic year, so keep a look out for news and developments relating to this. We are also currently working with the BPS to archive all previous editions of The PsyPAG Quarterly online.

I would like to say a massive thank you to the PsyPAG committee for their hard work and commitment to helping UK psychology postgraduate and to the BPS Research Board for their continued support.

I hope you all have a wonderful summer and have a well-earned break from your studies.

Laura Neale
PsyPAG Chair
Email: chair@psypag.co.uk
Twitter: @PsyPAG
22nd - 24th July 2015

Open to all current postgraduate (MSc/PhD) psychology students. UK/international bursaries available.

Please visit http://psypag.psy.gla.ac.uk/ to register and submit an abstract.
The Early History of PsyPAG is closely tied to the story of the closure of Bedford College and the postgraduate psychology conference held there in 1985. Bedford College, University of London, had a proud history, having been established in 1849 to provide women with access to higher education. The college occupied beautiful grounds and buildings in the heart of Regent’s Park, central London. However, by the 1980s, when our story begins, the college was in decline and had become the target of cuts demanded of the University by the Thatcher Government. Eventually in 1985, Bedford College left the Regent’s Park site and merged with Royal Holloway College in Egham to form Royal Holloway and Bedford New College. As the merger progressed departments were slowly moved out to Egham. Psychology was one of the last departments to leave, so it was in a rapidly emptying college that the 1985 Postgraduate Psychology conference was held.

Richard had joined the Psychology department at Bedford college in November 1981 as a part-time PhD student and research assistant to Chris McManus (now at UCL), and Jane joined the department a few months later to commence her PhD under the supervision of John Nicholson (RHBNC). Prior to the establishment of PsyPAG, psychology postgraduate conferences were very informally organised, with no national committee to provide finance or advise conference organisers. At a meeting held at the end of each conference someone would volunteer to organise the next one, and in this way the conferences happened every one or two years in a rather haphazard but largely successful manner. In 1981 the conference had been at Durham University where Richard had acted as an undergraduate assistant, and in 1984 Jane attended the conference at Nottingham. Jane returned from that conference to announce that she had offered to organise the 1985 conference at Bedford College. Given most departments had by now moved out of the college, there was no shortage of space. However, by 1984 Jane was the only full-time PhD student at Bedford College, and Richard had moved to take up an RA position at North East London Polytechnic (now UEL), so we asked for help from friends at University College, and recruited Simon Baron-Cohen (now Cambridge), Fergus Bolger (now Durham), and Lynn Clemence to help us organise the conference.

The conference was a great success, attended by delegates from around the country, many of whom are now psychology professors, or senior researchers, across the globe. As each conference was largely financially independent, we relied on the generous support from the wonderful Head of Department at Bedford College, Professor Brian Foss, to underwrite the conference, and when we realised we were going to make a profit (largely due to academic publishers paying generous fees to exhibit at the conference) we used the excess to pay students from the College of Music to accompany us at the conference dinner. We also bought a lot of wine, which meant that the dinner (and after-dinner disco) was a very enjoyable affair. Surprisingly it all worked out well and we were left with a small surplus to hand over to the next conference. However, we became aware that this wasn’t a sensible way to arrange the finances of these conferences. It was clear that we needed a central organisation to both manage the accounts and to
act as a repository of knowledge about how to put on a conference.

Another spur to the creation of PsyPAG was our feelings of frustration with the BPS. At this time there was no student representation within the BPS, and we felt that we were being ignored. We were also very angry about something the BPS were doing, but 30 years later we can’t remember exactly what it was that induced such feelings of indignation! Our anger may have been related to the first moves towards chartering and registration for psychologists. Prior to the 1980s there was no registration process for psychologists, and anyone was free to describe themselves as a psychologist regardless of their training. This was clearly problematic, and change was needed, but there was some concern that the BPS might not be the most appropriate body to take on the role of registration authority while also seeking to represent members’ interests. All this was occurring in a period of some political activism among the student body spurred on by what many of us saw as unprecedented attacks on the higher education system by Margaret Thatcher and then Education secretary, Sir Keith Joseph. It was in this charged atmosphere that the group who became the first PsyPAG committee met at the end of the Bedford College conference; meeting in a half empty college which was being closed down by a government who we saw as antagonistic towards higher education and faced by a professional body who we thought were not interested in hearing our voice. It is probably also worth noting that we had our first PsyPAG meeting in the college bar – which had been recently renovated in a very plush manner, by the new owners of the building, which was about to become a private college.

Rather than merely choosing the venue for the next conference, the meeting decided to elect an action committee to represent the views of PhD students to the BPS and to support future conference organisers. And perhaps to bring down the government too!

The group that emerged from this meeting of conference delegates was originally called The Gang of Five (in a rather inappropriate reference to Chinese politics – or perhaps Enid Blyton). The group was comprised of Jane Ussher, Richard Kemp, David Panther (University of Sheffield), Fergus Bolger (UCL) and Katrina Ure (Bedford College). After the conference we realised that The Gang of Five probably wasn’t a good name, so adopted the title ‘Postgraduate Affairs Group’. We liked the sound of the acronym ‘PAG’ so resisted the very obvious need to add another ‘P’ for ‘Psychology’ to the title. Our next action was to write a rather angry, and probably imper- tinent, letter to the BPS demanding representation for PhD students. To their great credit the BPS immediately welcomed us and offered funding for meetings and allowed us to join various committees, initially in an observer role and later as full members. We had seen ourselves as young radicals attacking the establishment, but the BPS recognised that PhD students were the future of the profession and gave enthusiastic support to this newly-established group.

By the following year we had identified a series of roles within the PAG and formally elected people to these positions. Jane, who had been de-facto chair of the PAG stood down after one year, as she moved on to clinical psychology training. If memory serves us, Richard and David stayed on for one more year and it was during this second year that the committee decided that PAG really wasn’t a very sensible name for a group which sought to represent psychologists, and adopted the more appropriate title of PsyPAG.

One decision we made early on in the group’s existence was that membership of PsyPAG should be free and open to anyone undertaking a postgraduate qualification in psychology. We wanted all postgraduate students to be automatic members and to be able to stand for committee positions and attend our conferences. It’s great to see that this philosophy still holds today.
It is hard to believe that this all happened 30 years ago. An interesting side note is that involvement with the nascent PsyPAG seems to have had an interesting effect on its members’ lives, with Richard, Jane and David all moving to Australia in later years. Richard is at the University of New South Wales, in Sydney, and Jane is at the University of Western Sydney. After completing his PhD David left academia and moved into health management and in that role moved to Australia a few years ago. So far, only Fergus seems to have been able to resist the lure of the southern hemisphere.

We wish all PsyPAG members all the best for their 30 year celebration and we hope that the 2015 conference is as much fun as that 1985 conference.

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**Discussion paper:**

**BPS Postgraduate Conference and PsyPAG Conference organisers: Then and Now**

Emma Norris

As we eagerly await our 30th anniversary conference in Glasgow, we wanted to see how far the event has come over the years. Lead Editor Emma Norris interviewed the Lead organisers of the 1983 BPS Postgraduate Conference (renamed as PsyPAG for the 1985 conference, see Kemp & Ussher article), Sue Northrop (@SueNorthrop) and this year’s conference, Niamh Friel, to understand their experiences of the event.

**What is your current job role?**

**Sue:** Founder of Dementia Friendly East Lothian, a community-led initiative to make communities great places to live, work in or visit if you or someone you care for is affected by dementia.

**Niamh:** I have just finished my PhD at the University of Glasgow. Since finishing I have been working in the department as a research assistant.

**How and when did you get involved in PsyPAG? What was/is your role(s)?**

**Sue:** At the time of the conference in 1983, the event was billed as the ‘BPS Postgraduate conference’ (Editor’s Note: the first officially branded PsyPAG conference was in 1985, see Kemp & Ussher article). We were three postgrads at the University of St Andrews. I think until then the Society organised it. We wanted a conference which allowed postgrads to give papers in a constructive and peer led environment where we could learn and share together. Lots of folk found traditional academic challenge unhelpful.

**Niamh:** I got involved in PsyPAG at the start of my third year of my PhD. I got involved because I knew the Scottish Branch were looking for a new postgraduate rep and I was interested in taking on this role. I am currently the Scottish Branch rep, and also 2015 conference chair. To be honest I wish I had got involved in PsyPAG earlier in my PhD. I have had some really excellent opportunities through PsyPAG and met some really good friends.

**What did the conference involve, for example, who/how many people attended, number of sessions, workshops, etc.?**

**Sue:** The conference was held at the University of St Andrews. In the same format as current PsyPAG conferences, we ran sessions over three days from Wednesday to Friday. Sessions were mostly organised into Developmental, Social and Cognitive disciplines, reflecting the research priorities of the time.

**Niamh:** The work for this year’s conference is on-going. We predict around 150 students will attend the conference and also some alumni. There are four symposia already sponsored, but there will be more. We also currently have seven workshops planned.

**Were/Are there any speakers or attendees of particular note?**

**Sue:** A number of postgraduate speakers have gone on to become leading psychologists. These include Professor Ian Stuart-Hamilton, now Professor at Faculty of Life Sciences and Education at the University of South Wales, who presented on ‘Phonic Skills and Reading’ and Professor Alan Pickering, now Professor of Psychology at Goldsmiths University, who presented ‘An interference simulation study’.

**Niamh:** This year we are pleased to have three keynote speakers: Dr Rachael Jack;
Professor Richard Wiseman; and Professor Padraic Monaghan. In addition several members of the BPS are being invited to run workshops and attend events. Some PsyPAG alumni will be joining us.

*Any positives gained from organising the conference?*

**Sue:** It was a great event. We were really pleased with its quality and how many people travelled up to Scotland. It’s great to see how much its grown today! I’ve been an active member of the BPS ever since: I was chair of SCPEO and am now chair of the Scottish Branch.

**Niamh:** Organising the conference at Glasgow has been an excellent experience. I have had the opportunity to develop many skills through this. It’s also been really good fun and allowed me to become more involved in PsyPAG. The conference organising team here in Glasgow are fantastic, so it’s not been too stressful, yet!

*What memories do you have of your PsyPAG experience?*

**Sue:** Very happy, very positive! I can remember a lot of it really well.

**Niamh:** I have really enjoyed my time in PsyPAG and it has really added to my PhD experience. I have made so many good friends through PsyPAG and also had the opportunity to develop networks. I have definitely learned a lot through my PsyPAG roles. I think the PsyPAG conferences are probably the most memorable part of PsyPAG and, therefore, I am glad I have had the opportunity to be involved in the organisation of this year’s conference.

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Discussion paper:
A personal history of the Psych–Postgrads Mailing List
Jeremy Miles

A key way that PsyPAG touches the lives of psychology postgraduates is by the Psychology JISC-list https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=psych-postgrads. This provides a forum for research and statistical questions among postgraduate researchers. In this commemorative 30th anniversary special, creator of the JISC-list Dr Jeremy Miles reflects on his experiences leading to the development and maintenance of this invaluable resource.

In 1992 I got a job as a research assistant at what was then Derbyshire College of Higher Education (it became the University of Derby later that year), and discovered email. Email was not a joy to use in those days. You got to your email by telnet – you’d connect to a Unix server somewhere, and had text only access – everything was done with the keyboard. The backspace didn’t work when you were editing an email (you typed control-H instead). If someone sent you a large attachment, you couldn’t log in any more, and had to work out a way to delete your email. Obviously sending huge emails to your friends was a hilarious prank.

I also discovered mailing lists – these were usually run by software called ListServ, and hence they’re often called Listservs (in those days, the main rival was another software called Majordomo – ListServ is still around, but I haven’t seen Majordomo for a while). I found a mailing list called PsycGrad, which was run from the University of Ottawa (in 1998, it was taken over by the APA). This is taken from the description of the list:

‘Graduate students in psychology from around the world communicate daily through The PSYCGRAD Project. One of the main purposes of this project is to provide a network through which graduate students in the field of psychology can communicate freely, professionally, and efficiently.’

I joined that list, but found that it had an awful lot of emails and was very focused on North American issues so most of those emails weren’t interesting. (Remember, I’m accessing email through a Unix server, every email has to be individually deleted, there were no servers – but there was also no spam.) You can access the archives at https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/bit.listserv.psycgrad, if you’re interested.

In 1993, I went to a conference on technology in teaching and interactive learning. The conference was so technologically advanced that it had a CD-ROM as its logo (I still have the t-shirt.) Some people thought that CDs were a bit too advanced, and so they used video discs for their interactive learning. A particular highlight of the conference was when a presenter played the Jurassic Park trailer, using a CD-ROM and projecting it onto a screen. The audience was in awe, they gasped, and then they burst into applause.

The reason I go into this is because at that conference was a presentation by some people called Mailbase. Mailbase was based at Newcastle University, and they had setup up a system for running email lists, for UK academics. (They didn’t use Listserv software, they wrote their own.) What we needed (I thought) was a UK-based version of the PsycGrad list. In the UK we say postgraduate, where in the US they say graduate (and we were not limited to eight characters as they
were) so psych-postgrads seemed like the obvious name. When I got home, with quite a lot of hand-holding from the people at Mailbase, I set that up and we were off.

The early archives of that list no longer exist (in those days hard disks were expensive, and so they only kept archives for around six months). It started with a small number of moderately enthusiastic users, who used it to mainly complain about their supervisors. My opinion, in those days, was that it should be maintained as an independent list, separate from any sort of organisation or individual university – so that people could feel free to criticise those organisations.

In 1996, I was appointed as a lecturer at Derby University. I was pretty easily distracted, by things like setting up an email list (I set up a few more as well, most of which died almost immediately, but one continues – psych-methods, and I am the owner of teaching-statistics too), so I didn’t finish my PhD until 1999. I thought that the owner of the list should be a fully-fledged postgraduate and that as a lecturer, I’d crossed over to ‘the other side’, so I sent a message to the list saying that I wanted to step down as owner, and asking for a volunteer to take over.

The obvious thing to do was to merge the list with PsyPAG. Although I originally wanted the list to be independent, so that people could (for example) openly complain about the PsyPAG committee, no one ever did use the list for that – showing that current and former PsyPAG committee members are a fine group of individuals.¹ In addition, the usefulness of a mailing list increases as the number of members increases. By becoming the ‘official’ means of communication for PsyPAG many more people joined the list and it became more useful. The final advantage of having PsyPAG ‘own’ the list is that we can ensure that there is always someone to run the list. Postgraduates (hopefully) don’t stay postgraduates forever, and the rules say that the owner must be a UK-based academic. Turnover would be a threat to the list if there wasn’t a stable organisation looking after it.

I stay as a member of the list, and occasionally reply to emails (usually about statistics enquiries).

When I started the list, I wouldn’t have liked a person like me being on the list. It’s not a list for professors to listen in to what postgraduate students have to say. I try to be aware that my opinions might be biased by having been a member of staff at two different universities in the UK and one in the US (Derby, York, and the Pardee-RAND Graduate School) and so when the occasional issue comes up where a staff member might take a different perspective (which rarely happens), I keep quiet. I try to remember to send an email to the list every few years (when I assume there has been 100 per cent turnover) explaining who I am, and saying that if people think I shouldn’t be on the list, I’d be happy to leave it. I’m also aware that I can ‘pull rank’ on the list: on the rare occasions that I think someone has said something that isn’t quite right, I don’t try to correct them. The idea of the list was that people should be able to say what they want to, without fear that someone will admonish them.

Correspondence
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Jeremy Miles is a senior behavioral (without a U) scientist at the RAND Corporation, and Professor of Quantitative Methods in Social Science at the Pardee RAND Graduate School, both of which are in Santa Monica, California. He will be surprised if you have heard of the Pardee RAND Graduate School, because it is possibly the smallest university in the world. But if you are interested in it, he’ll be happy to tell you more.

¹ I trust the cheque is in the post.
Discussion paper:

The PsyPAG Quarterly: A retrospective

Emma Norris

The PsyPAG Quarterly has been the voice of the psychological postgraduate community since PsyPAG’s conception. We publish a range of articles from ‘Research in Brief’ giving an overview of postgraduate research, ‘Discussion’ pieces giving summaries or debates in a research field to ‘Conference Reviews’ and more (see Quarterly Submission Guidelines in this issue). This enables postgraduates to go through a peer-review process and publish their work in a national publication. As part of this commemorative 30th anniversary issue, we take a look back at our publication’s past.

Issue 1: Eager beginnings
Despite our best efforts, we’ve not been able to hunt down a copy of The PsyPAG Quarterly's infamous first issue so far!

Issue 22: ‘Pop’ psychology
This issue took the phrase ‘Pop’ psychology to a whole new meaning in this issue. Tongue-in-cheek ‘What your favourite member says about you’ pieces were included for both Take That and Spice Girls.
Issue 55: June 2005
A revamped *The PsyPAG Quarterly* flew into postgraduate psychology departments across the UK. See David Moore’s piece in this issue for more detail on the changes made to *The PsyPAG Quarterly* and PsyPAG itself during this period.

Issue 71: June 2009
Editors Naomi Andrew, Cherie Armour, Kyle Brown and Lesley Jacobs launched *The PsyPAG Quarterly* format most similar to the one we know and love.
Issue 88: September 2013
Editor Daniel Jolley led the first special issue in The PsyPAG Quarterly’s history, focusing on ‘The psychology of conspiracy theories’. Special issues allow editors to share their passion for a topic by curating a series of research and debate articles. Since then, we’ve published a Developmental special led by Martin Toye and a Health Psychology issue led by myself. The ability to curate such full issues from a range of authors across the UK has been largely assisted by our calls for articles on Twitter (@PsyPAGQuarterly).

Our upcoming December 2015 issue will be a Social Psychology special to commemorate the 20th anniversary of stereotype threat research. Please email or tweet us at the contact details below with your submission ideas.

Upcoming projects
The PsyPAG Quarterly Editorial Team are very excited to be leading two major projects this year. Firstly, we are developing a ‘PsyPAG PhD Guide’ to be distributed to psychology postgraduate departments across the UK. This will feature articles giving step-by-step support tailored to psychology PhD students. Secondly, we are in the process of archiving all of our past issues with help from the BPS. This will enable all past issues to be searchable online: providing greater opportunities for your contributions to be found. Yet another reason for you to write for us!

We want to hear from you!
What do you think of The PsyPAG Quarterly as it stands today? As always, we would love your opinions on how we can improve. Please email us at quarterly@psypag.co.uk.

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I AM DELIGHTED to be writing again for The PsyPAG Quarterly. I would like to start with a little biographical sketch and how I became involved with PsyPAG. I first encountered PsyPAG in 2005 when I had just started my PhD at Sheffield Hallam University, when an email was sent around my department about a statistics workshop at Oxford University. Very nervous about travelling across the country I nearly turned back at the train station but I continued on, and this was one of the best decisions I ever made. Not only did I learn a great deal about conducting and reporting statistical analyses that day I felt wonderfully welcome at the event and once the sessions were over retired for a drink with the rest of the delegates. Little did I know that the table I was sitting at contained seven members of the then PsyPAG committee who spent some of our time espousing the virtues of PsyPAG’s wider activities and by the tim e the last train left Oxford I had decided to attend that summer’s annual conference at Exeter University.

At this conference I was blessed to witness postgraduate students passionate and knowledgeable about every aspect of their research. They presented ideas I had never considered before but became instantly interested in. I then gave my first presentation on the final morning to a rather sleep deprived and slightly poorly audience who were still able to provide some excellent tips on my research. In my experience the phenomenon of excellent, engaging and passionate presentations from postgraduates at the PsyPAG conference, other conferences or in The PsyPAG Quarterly is at the heart of what makes these events so important. It was at this conference that I volunteered to join the PsyPAG committee as an Editor of The PsyPAG Quarterly.

And so my PsyPAG journey truly began. At the time that I joined the committee the organisation was in a period of expansion. It was realised that without a critical mass of participation that PsyPAG could neither share its message with the breadth of the postgraduate community nor could it lobby on postgraduate issues. The committee, therefore, went through a period of rebranding with redesign of the cover art and article formatting for The PsyPAG Quarterly to give a friendlier and more attractive look. The whole committee also spent time trying to promote the activities of PsyPAG and thinking about how to increase the organisation’s presence within departments throughout the country. During this time the size of the PsyPAG committee quadrupled and activity both in and out of meetings began to grow.

After only a few months of being on the committee, the then Chair announced that he would be stepping down in the sum m er. After some discussion I was convinced to stand for this role and assumed it at the conference at the University of Reading. Although we had been successful in increasing the size of the committee, PsyPAG’s activities were not well known outside of personal communications made by committee members. We had, however, found ourselves at the start of the social
media revolution. At that time a group was established on Facebook named ‘I used to be on the PsyPAG committee’ with the aim of allowing members past and present to remain in touch. However, this quickly became a place that people who had attended a PsyPAG event joined to talk about these events. It later became a broader focus where postgraduates interested in PsyPAG could come to hear about the committee’s activities (this group later became renamed to simply ‘PsyPAG’).

With this new social media we found ourselves able to contact more people more quickly than ever before. This not only allowed the committee the ability to disseminate its existing activities more efficiently but also allowed us to react to the needs of postgraduates. This was only possible because of an amazing and highly motivated group of people at the heart of the organisation at that time who worked tirelessly to promote PsyPAG and to generate exiting new ideas and events for us all to work on. This expanded reach and the motivation of those on the committee also allowed us to expand the number of workshops which we would run each year, from typically one and the annual conference to between four and six on a wide range of topics. Through this process we were also able to forge stronger links with sections of the BPS and external bodies to run joint workshops, for example, the highly successful and well attended statistics workshops with the Maths and Stats Section of the BPS.

This increase in the size of active PsyPAG membership and ability to advertise our activities saw an unprecedented increased in the size and scope of the annual conference. When I joined at the 20th anniversary (2005) between 50 to 70 people attended the conference. However, by Manchester 2008 when I stepped down, this had grown to an attendance of 252 people. With this growing attendance came greater chances to network and a greater ability to attract bigger name keynote speakers of both national and international. This also led to these experts seeing the newly-revamped The PsyPAG Quarterly as a place to share their experience and advice with the postgraduate community. Finally this growth in size led to one unforeseen circumstance and benefit for PsyPAG and postgraduates. Running as many as six times the number of events and being approached for countless more bursaries than ever before had led to a need for greater funding for these activities. The BPS were helpful in increasing the annual stipend that PsyPAG received for the first time in many years during this period. However, the real revolution came with the attraction of external sources of money. PsyPAG were able to attract money from publishers, equipment manufacturers and external bodies to support the events we ran: allowing us to keep events free or very cheap for all postgraduates.

Another impact of PsyPAG’s expansion was that we are able to represent the views of postgraduates on a wider range of issues both within the BPS and with other policy makers. The first major policy decision that we were able to have impact upon was that of postgraduate funding through the ESRC. During a restructure to how the research councils administer their grants and their funding focus, the BPS were asked to produce a document stating the views from psychology. The BPS requested that PsyPAG collate the response to the student side to this survey and prepare answers to a number of items about research student funding. After conducting a survey of the views of postgraduates we were able to provide a detailed response for the BPS and ESRC which was used verbatim. This not only affected how the ESRC funded postgraduate research but has also led to a greater focus on this issue from other bodies.

Likely the largest administrative issue that the PsyPAG committee(s) of 2005–2008 as well as those preceding and following this was the proposed change in the statutory regulation of psychology as is now overseen by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). When I joined the committee the
issue of ‘statutory regulations’ was still in its infancy. We discussed in excited tones the idea that we would be able to be a part of the establishment of the ‘Psychological Professionals Council’: what the scope might be, how this would be regulated within the BPS and what would the role of postgraduates would be in this new body. After about a year of lobbying it became apparent to us all that this ‘PPC’ was unlikely to see the light of day and we began the negotiating all over again on these topics. One of major topics which we were able to influence ideas on was on postgraduate’s access to vulnerable populations. In early proposition from the HCPC no one without the chartered or regulated status would be able to work with clinical populations therefore limiting the scope of postgraduate research. Through the BPS, we lobbied for a more lenient view of these populations and ultimately this issue was dropped. At this time, PsyPAG also promoted the introduction of postgraduate ‘lunch with the keynote’ events at a number of BPS Section conferences, enabling postgraduates to spend lunch talking about their research with leading researchers in their field.

Another major change that happened right at the end of the time in PsyPAG was the creation of the PsyPAG Alumni. This has provided a home for us old folks who have moved on from the committee and gives the current committees a way to contact us to with updates. The Alumni is still growing and if you are a PsyPAG alumni or you know someone who is, please point them towards the alumni webpage (https://psypag.wordpress.com/committee/alumni/).

This leads me to my final reflection on my time involved with the PsyPAG committee which is that I have never really stopped being a part of PsyPAG. As much as I have been asked to write about how we changed PsyPAG from 2005–2008 the biggest change was how PsyPAG changed me. For all of the great services that PsyPAG did for postgraduates in expanding our academic horizons with conferences or workshops or for representing our rights; the greatest service of PsyPAG for me was in the social support and unending friendships it has brought me. I said at the beginning of this article that I nearly turned back at the train station on my way to Oxford, in truth I did not think I was really up to being a PhD student. However, the support from those in PsyPAG helped me to develop my confidence. My friends convinced me more than once to complete my studies when I wanted to give up. I was hence ultimately happy standing in front of 252 people giving my farewell address. This was an important role at a special time in my life but also has continued to give me valuable friendship and support from people who I care deeply for. I have spoken at their departments and had them do likewise; they have been colleagues, collaborators, co-authors and advisers on grant applications but most of all, at every event that I have seen them since they have been my very good friends.

To leave you with my life post-PsyPAG; The day after the Manchester meeting where I stepped down I drove to Bath to start a post at the Centre for Pain Research at the University of Bath. Here I spent almost five years working on a grant examining the way in which pain interrupts attentional performance. I have since taken up a Lectureship at Liverpool John Moores University where I work within a lab examining the role of somatosensation in cognitive processes and somatosensation in Autism Spectrum Disorders. I also have one PhD student who has recently submitted her PhD and by the time you read this hopefully she will have successfully defended her Viva, I also now have four other PhD students and two Master’s students and am now greatly interested in the role of PhD students again, albeit from the other side of the fence.

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Discussion paper:

Where are they now?
Kate Williams

With PsyPAG roles lasting two years, many members have been involved in the organisation during its 30 year history. In this special issue, Alumni Officer, Kate Williams, caught up with our alumni to find out their involvement in PsyPAG and their career progression since.

Associate Professor Richard Kemp
Associate Professor and Director of Master of Psychology (Forensic) Programme,
University of New South Wales, Sydney,
one of PsyPAG’s founding members.

After completing my first degree at Durham University I took a research position at Bedford College, University of London, where with Jane Ussher and colleagues we founded PsyPAG following a postgraduate conference in 1985. When the Thatcher government closed Bedford College and sold the beautiful Regent’s Park site (you may be able to detect some residual bitterness over this) I followed my supervisor, Chris McManus, to the UCL where I eventually completed my part-time PhD while supporting myself with a variety of research and teaching positions. The research positions provided valuable experience of managing big applied research projects which have become a feature of my academic career, and the teaching jobs eventually led to temporary lecturing positions at North East London Polytechnic (now the University of East London) and the Polytechnic of Central London (now the University of Westminster). The University of Westminster job became permanent and I taught there until 1999 when I moved to the University of Leicester to take up a position running the distance learning programme in forensic psychology. By 2001 my wife and I decided it was time to move away from the city so I was looking for alternative positions in the UK when I came across an advert for a post in forensic psychology at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. It was a good move – the UNSW is a great university with a fantastic psychology department, and Sydney is one of the best cities in the world to live in. I live next to the beach and it takes me 10 minutes to ride into work. I still miss warm beer and Regent’s Park in the summer, but otherwise I am very happy in Australia.
Professor Jane Ussher
Professor of Women’s Health Psychology,
University of Western Sydney,
one of PsyPAG’s founding members.

In 1985 when I was co-organiser of the psychology postgraduate conference at Bedford College, out of which PsyPAG developed, I was in the second year of my PhD. PsyPAG was a significant part of my academic development. It opened up a whole world of colleagues, friends, and academic networks which I still have today. It showed me that righteous anger about postgraduate issues could be turned into constructive action – that we could be heard and achieve results. Sitting on BPS committees as a postgraduate rep I learnt how such organisations work, and went on to serve on BPS committees as a full member for many years. I was also part of the group that lobbied to form the BPS Psychology of Women Section in 1988 – learning from the PsyPAG experience.

After my PhD I trained as a clinical psychologist, and then took up academic positions at Sussex University, and the UCL. I left the UK in 1997 to take up a position at the University of Western Sydney, where I remain today, as Professor of Women’s Health Psychology. In addition to loving living in Sydney, I’m still passionate about research on women’s health, the focus of my PhD, but have extended my interests to gendered health, including sexual changes after cancer. I’ve supervised over 20 PhD students to completion over the years, and have nine ongoing students, so see PhD concerns from a different perspective these days. Sounding very middle aged, I say ‘this is the best time of your lives – working full-time on only one project’. I thoroughly enjoyed being a PhD student, and PsyPAG played a key part in that process. Richard Kemp, my PsyPAG co-organiser (or co-conspirator) is still a very good friend. I can’t believe it was 30 years ago – it feels like yesterday!
I was involved with PsyPAG while I was a PhD student at the University of Leeds (1994–1997). I was both Social Psychology Section representative and one of the co-editors of *The PsyPAG Quarterly* with Maddy Arden, Vicky Scaife and Kevin Tansley.

There was more than one nomination for the post of Social Psychology Section representative meaning that I had to make a case for myself (with zero notice) in front of everyone at the annual general meeting in Glasgow. It was terrifying – I even had to leave the room while everyone voted. Fortunately, I won and I think it was pretty good preparation for future academic life.

We had a lot of fun putting together *The PsyPAG Quarterly*, although we were always short of articles and ended up writing lots of stuff ourselves at short notice. Again, not bad preparation for future life as an academic! I always enjoyed the committee meetings – I still have many friends from those – and

I will never forget the meeting at the University of Newcastle, which was hosted in an oak-panelled room.

I am now Professor of Health Psychology at the University of Manchester and can scarcely believe that all this happened 20 years ago!
Dr Jon Sutton  
*Managing Editor of The Psychologist.*

A PhD is usually thought of as a pretty lonely endeavour. As a postgraduate student, you dive into a topic of your own choosing, learning more and more about less and less until you know absolutely everything about nothing. Dress it up how you like – in dance (http://gonzolabs.org/dance/) or in simple words (http://upgoeryourphd.tumblr.com) – it’s still three years devoted to answering a single question, usually with a single word. In my case, ‘Bullying: social inadequacy or skilled manipulation?’ Answer: both.

Being a lone wolf is no fun, and wouldn’t make for a good thesis. And other postgrads in your own department will only have limited reserves of patience, as you talk methods for the umpteenth time. That’s why PsyPAG is great… I met loads of postgrads from other unis, many of whom I am still in touch with 20 years later (special mentions to Jeremy Horwood, Kate Cavanagh, Paul Redford and Mark Weatherell). Conferences were memorable… I think my first was in Plymouth, and one in Derby was particularly wild.

Less than two years after my PhD I took a job editing *The Psychologist* for the British Psychological Society. When I go to PsyPAG conferences in that capacity, I am truly stunned by what a different breed today’s psychology postgrads seem to be... so much more professional and driven than I remember myself and my peers being back in ’95! I think they should be giving me advice rather than the other way round, so I will limit myself to ‘have some fun’: don’t take yourself or your work too seriously, get to some conferences, and use PsyPAG to help you build a network that will sustain and cheer you through the solitary PhD and on into your career.
Dr Robin Kramer  
*Post-doctoral Research Fellow, University of York.*

During my PhD, I was the Psychobiology Section representative (2009–2012), and I also co-organised the PsyPAG conference that was held at Bangor University in 2011. It was a great success, and I particularly remember how much everyone enjoyed our conference dinner and ceilidh! I think being part of PsyPAG benefitted me most in terms of meeting others at similar stages in their academic careers, and then staying in touch later on when it became even more useful to be able to tap their knowledge, opinions and experiences.

I am currently a post-doc at the University of York, working on the computational modelling of face recognition. I’ve worked as a post-doc for three years now and it’s definitely helped to me grow as a researcher.

I have a few pieces of advice for post-graduate students: (1) present at as many conferences as you can – two to three per year if possible; (2) write up your work as journal articles as you go along, and publish these if possible, though even getting reviews will prove beneficial; and (3) learn how to programme in one of the many computer languages on offer – this will help you to become a more employable and independent researcher.
Julie Freeborn CPsychol
Chartered and Occupational Psychologist.

One of the few Master’s students, I nonetheless stretched out my involvement as PsyPAG’s Information Officer between 2004 and 2008. At my very first meeting, there were six people in attendance. I started handbooks and the first Facebook page, ran stands, organised events and media training, as well as running bursaries and being a first point of contact. By my last meeting we had nearly 30 attending each meeting and PsyPAG was gaining a more credible reputation within BPS circles. Most of the people I worked with were very hardworking and committed, not to mention great fun to hang out with in the evenings after a meeting. It was very much a work hard and play hard dynamic and I am still in touch with many.

These days, I am a Chartered and Occupational Psychologist working for the Kade Consultancy in Halifax with clients throughout the UK. I am supervising two colleagues towards Chartership and we mainly work in training, assessments and coaching. I am Chair of the North East Branch of the BPS where I have started running ‘Psychology in the Pub’ events and increasing our internet profile. I am also part of the 2014–2015 DOP Leadership Development Programme.
Dr Mark Wetherell

*Reader in Psychobiology and Health Psychology, Northumbria University.*

I went to my first PsyPAG conference as an MSc student in Derby in 1998 and presented a poster of my BSc project on the common cold and cognitive performance. I was coming to the end of my MSc and waiting to hear about a PhD studentship (the only one I had applied for), so I was a little uncertain about what the future would hold. In a fit of optimism I stood for the role of Psychobiology rep. I think I was unopposed, in any case I got the committee position and I can honestly say that it set me up for my career. I attended my first Psychobiology Section conference in September and shortly afterwards was awarded my PhD studentship. I served as Psychobiology rep throughout my PhD and as PsyPag Chair between 1999 and 2001 and during this time I attended every PsyPAG and Psychobiology conference. I went on to be Newsletter Editor, Secretary, and then Chair of the Psychobiology Section and have missed only one Psychobiology conference in this time. Following several years of post-doc jobs, I was told about a job opportunity by somebody I met at my first Psychobiology conference in 1998. I am now a Reader in Psychobiology and Health Psychology and have collaborations with several people who I met through the Psychobiology Section. I have great memories of PsyPAG and can honestly say if it were not for my involvement, I wouldn’t be sat here now.
Where are they now?

**Dr James Jackson**  
**Associate Principal Lecturer,**  
**Leeds Trinity University.**

These days, I am more teaching-orientated – and weighed down with more admin roles than I know what to do with. It was 10 years ago now and I can’t even remember how I came across PsyPAG in the first place. But I do remember being packed off to the annual conference by my supervisor. Three fantastic days later, I was *The PsyPAG Quarterly* Editor (for three years in the end) and I had met many wonderful people. Undertaking a PhD can be hard – and I always saw the other PsyPAG members as my peers. The meetings, the conferences – all reinforced my desire to get that PhD finished. Make use of PsyPAG for future networking – everyone around you will make something of themselves – and gain the continued support of people who understand EXACTLY what you are going through. You can help them too. In fact, you should. Looking back, it was more valuable than words can say.

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Psychology people in profile:
Dr Laura Neale
Kate Doran

Our Chair, Dr Laura Neale, graduated from Northumbria University in 2008 with a BSc (Hons) in Psychology. She then went on to study for an MSc in Occupational Psychology at the same institution, which she completed in 2009. Last year she was awarded her doctorate by Northumbria University and is now Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Sunderland. In March, Kate Doran caught up with Laura to interview her for this special The PsyPAG Quarterly alumni issue.

Thanks very much for your time, Laura. To begin, can you tell me about your career in Psychology to date?

I studied Psychology at A-level and really enjoyed it. I found it was one of the subject areas that I was most successful in. I therefore looked into studying it at university and really liked the diverse range of topics which were covered during the degree. I also liked that I would not be restricted to just working within the field of Psychology at the end of the degree, as at that point in time I was particularly interested in becoming a primary school teacher.

However, during the final year of my degree I decided to look into the different postgraduate options available in the area of Psychology as I had developed a great love for the discipline at that point in time. From all of the options available, Occupational Psychology particularly appealed to me as I had a natural interest in well-being at work and trying to improve this, after experiencing from a close family member the detrimental impact the workplace can have. I met with the programme leader who told me what I would be studying and the career paths of previous students. I decided that this was something I wanted to do, rather than study for a teaching qualification which had previously been my plan. I remember it being quite a simple decision at the time and I have certainly not regretted taking this route since.

After leaving university with my MSc I worked within the Organisational Development team of a North East Council and then went on to work as a Research Assistant at Northumbria University in March 2010. I wanted to gain real world experience in a range of contexts. My interest in both teaching and research remained, though, and I was given my first contract as a part-time lecturer during my PhD. This was extremely important to me as it enabled me to build my confidence so that I am now able to deliver lectures to over 250 people and actually enjoy it! I recently completed my PhD at Northumbria University, which combined the fields of sleep research and occupational psychology. After submitting my PhD thesis last year, I worked briefly in industry within Learning and Development. The skills I developed in teaching at university have been useful for me whilst working in industry. For example, my previous role involved training and the design and delivery of specialist sessions, that is, mental health at work, to large groups of the senior management team. In November 2014, I started my current role as a Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Sunderland. I am also currently enrolled upon the Stage 2 qualification in Occupational Psychology with the British Psychological Society. My career is an evolving process!
What are you enjoying particularly about your current academic role?
Although my current role is challenging, I am particularly benefitting from the broad range of teaching experience that I am receiving. I am sure that the skills I am building will be valuable to me for the rest of my career and I really enjoy the diverse range of tasks involved in my current role.

How did you first hear about PsyPAG?
Whilst studying for my PhD I shared an office with the previous PsyPAG Chair (2010–2012), Sarah Goldie (née Wood). Sarah introduced me to PsyPAG and invited me to assist with organising the 2012 PsyPAG conference at Northumbria University. I thoroughly enjoyed this experience and was elected to the committee at the 2012 Annual General Meeting, held during the conference.

What did you particularly enjoy about your initial PsyPAG conference organising experience?
I mainly enjoyed meeting many other post-graduates from around the UK who were experiencing similar things to me and/or were able to offer their stories and support. A number of the people I met during the conference I have continued to work with whilst being a member of the PsyPAG committee and I now consider them to be good friends.

What roles have you have held within the PsyPAG committee?
I was a member of the 27th annual PsyPAG conference organising committee, held at Northumbria University in 2012, and was previously the PsyPAG Division of Occupational Psychology Representative (2012–2013). I was elected Chair at the 28th annual PsyPAG conference held at Lancaster.
Kate Doran

in 2013 and will be stepping down at the next AGM which will be held during the conference at Glasgow University (22–24 July 2015).

**What changes have you contributed to during your time in PsyPAG?**

There have been numerous changes during my time in PsyPAG. Most of the ones to which I have directly contributed have been administrative. Their aim has been to further improve the support we offer and, in service of this main aim, to assist the PsyPAG committee in the successful completion of tasks, mainly achieved via remote working. For example, I now have a monthly telephone call with both the Vice Chair and the Treasurer to catch up and discuss anything of importance or of particular relevance that month. Although this is an extra demand of the role for all, these chats enable us to be more productive and achieve more by discussing what is most important for that month and anticipating anything else that may be on the horizon. I find this to be a more efficient use of our time and it ensures we are all up-to-date, which can sometimes be a challenge when the majority of the work we do is done remotely. Other activities of note are in response to improvements in technology as we are currently working with the BPS to archive previous editions of *The PsyPAG Quarterly*. And, as a result of changing economic demands, a new research grant bursary was introduced last year to assist our members in conducting their postgraduate research.

**What led to the development of this research grant bursary?**

We noticed difficulties that our members were facing in being able to secure financial support to help with the costs of their research, such as paying participants. It may be that these difficulties have always existed but the recent apparent reduction in organisations offering such support and in research funding appeared to be particularly

relevant to our members. This was a clear way in which we could offer much needed support. We introduced the research grant bursary in September 2014 and have already received a large response, confirming the demand that we believed existed.

**What are you most proud of in your time as PsyPAG Chair?**

The PsyPAG committee have achieved so much over the last couple of years that it is impossible for me to name just one thing. Overall, I am personally very proud to have been able to contribute to a voluntary organisation that has been growing and offering support to UK psychology postgraduates for three decades! During my time as PsyPAG Chair I have also been privileged to be in a position to oversee all of the fantastic activities that have been carried out by the PsyPAG committee members that I have worked with over the last couple of years. It makes me particularly proud, knowing that all work carried out has been possible due to the hard work and continued dedication of the PsyPAG committee who are all volunteers and have many demands on their time, being postgraduates themselves. I am also honoured to be the Chair at the opening of the 30th annual conference this year; at that point PsyPAG will have officially had more conferences than I’ve had birthdays!

**How has PsyPAG helped you with your career?**

I have certainly developed many transferable skills as a result of my roles within PsyPAG, including elements of leadership, time management, delegation to name a few as well as making great professional connections, all of which assist me in my current role. Although in all honesty I value the great memories and friendships I have made along the way the most. The social support, from other PsyPAG committee members, particularly contributed to successfully completing my PhD, which has truly been invaluable.
What do you think PsyPAG should focus on in the next 10 years?

The focus should always be on prioritising psychology postgraduates and tailoring the support that PsyPAG offers to what is most needed at that point in time. It’s difficult however to know what will be most needed in these ever changing times! Although the continued popularity of the support PsyPAG offers such as funding to support research or conference/event attendance to friendly advice, social support, The PsyPAG Quarterly publication, the PsyPAG awards to the annual conference and associated networking opportunities, etc., is testament to the relevance of the work PsyPAG carries out to postgraduates. I’m sure there will always be a place for these types of activities and many new initiatives in the future, such as the PsyPAG publication which is currently being developed and is intended to be officially launched later in 2015.

What structures and processes have you experienced as particularly valuable in enabling you, as Chair, with your committee, to ensure that PsyPAG offers the most relevant support to psychology postgraduates?

The importance of social media has become particularly relevant during my time as Chair. We have found that this is a great way that we can quickly, easily and frequently connect with our members, psychology postgraduates. This means that real time updates and news are shared and that we keep on top of any latest developments. Our presence on both Twitter and Facebook is continuing to grow at a fast pace, demonstrating how we are continually increasing our reach and the support we are able to offer.

Where can we find out more about PsyPAG publications?

More information about The PsyPAG Quarterly, including back issues and submission guidelines, can be found online at the PsyPAG website: www.psypag.co.uk/the-quarterly/ and for all updates and news follow the dedicated Quarterly twitter feed: @PsyPAGQuarterly.

What would you say to anyone thinking about becoming involved in PsyPAG?

I would encourage all psychology postgraduates to get involved with PsyPAG, particularly those with a passion for supporting others and wanting to meet fellow postgraduates. Thanks to my involvement with PsyPAG I have made friends for life and know psychologists throughout the UK, working in many different areas of psychology. The social support has been priceless for me and I am looking forward to my continued involvement in the future as a member of PsyPAG Alumni!

What are you imagining you might get up to as a PsyPAG alumna?

I hope to continue to offer PsyPAG support by promoting the activities and schemes that are available via PsyPAG throughout my career. It would also be great to get involved in an alumni event or two, in the future.

Thanks, Laura. I look forward to seeing you at one of those alumni events!

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A journey like no other... the PhD, PsyPAG and support that lasts forever

Angel Chater

Dr Angel Chater was a PsyPAG committee member for the MPTB 2004–2006 and the DHP 2006–2008.

The PhD journey is one with many high and lows, often described as a rollercoaster in those final written words when putting your acknowledgements together... it certainly was for me. At times, you feel elated, motivated with the sheer excitement from the new knowledge that you seek and by the end of the journey you find. Yet, the walls you hit are tough to get over, and although your supervisors can guide you around the obstacles that you will inevitably come across, and your friends and family can be a comforting shoulder when it all gets too much or will feed you when you haven’t merged from a pile of journal articles and the laptop for days... the people who truly get that PhD journey, who are on their own rollercoaster, are other postgraduates. PsyPAG provides the opportunity to meet these like-minded individuals and I can honestly say that I would not have finished my PhD without the relationships I formed through this postgraduate network.

I remember my first PsyPAG experience so vividly, as you so often do for something that makes such a significant impact on your life. My story began in Manchester, July 2004.

I had been persuaded to go to the PsyPAG conference by two of my colleagues, who were The PsyPAG Quarterly editors at the time. I was just over a year into my PhD and knew nothing of the group, but thought it would be a good place to present my work in progress. Naturally, my nerves before my presentation were high. But the room was full of friendly faces... people like me and I soon felt at ease. The coffee break that followed was full of interest in my research, sharing of ideas and a meeting of kindred spirits. It was electric. I felt empowered and inspired, but most notably, I felt understood! The relationships that forged from this day on are some of the strongest I have now in my academic life. The most significant being a fellow PhD student, Glen. We had similar responsibilities outside of the PhD, most notably... young children. We talked for hours that first day, and all of a sudden, this lonely process of the PhD became less lonely.

The following day, we somehow found ourselves at the AGM, standing for seats on
the PsyPAG committee. Successfully voted in, this was my first experience of committee membership. I chose to stand as the British Psychological Society’s (BPS) Membership and Professional Training Board (MPTB) postgraduate representative (2004–2006). I wanted to be the Health Psychology rep, but at the time it was taken, however, I moved to this role a few years later (2006–2008). The MPTB meetings were held at the BPS offices... my excitement for visiting the London home of our professional body was extreme to say the least, but I was a PhD student and was representing other PhD and postgraduate students and it was empowering. The board was responsible for accreditation of programmes and professional training, and what I learnt from these meetings proved invaluable for my later appointment as an MSc Course Director taking the course I was responsible for through accreditation myself. Before I had attended these meetings I honestly had no clue. I wouldn’t have been able to tell you what an agenda should consist of and had never ever come across the term ‘minutes’. My naivety grew into confidence, and the skill of being able to articulate information in a professional manner to a group of (quite senior) peers was one I developed over time.

But the meetings that really had an impact on my journey were the PsyPAG committee meetings. We would meet four times a year, and each of us would host a meeting at our relevant universities. I can’t even remember where that first meeting was... there were so many over the years that they began to blur in to one. What was consistent was the business that was discussed through the meetings, postgraduate psychology students, teaming up to support the wider community. The meeting host would then usher us to their chosen waterhole where we would almost always continue our discussions around postgraduate affairs. We would all have dinner together, accompanied perhaps by a glass of wine or two before we retired back to our accommodation, which at times was pretty ropey (and on occasion had been double booked!). There, we would sit up till the early hours of the morning talking statistics and drawing our structural equation model or theoretical framework that we were testing on napkins or scraps of paper we had to hand. It was truly wonderful.

The conferences were the most memorable. I would look forward to them for months. Exeter, 2005; Reading, 2006; London, 2007; Manchester, 2008; Cardiff, 2009, again they all blur into one. But what was consistent was the amazing experiences within... inspiring work, passionate postgrads, random bars and clubs, dancing, overcrowding of hotel rooms for after parties, spilt wine, Jack (!) and just being able to talk about stats with people who knew what they were talking about, such as Gillian, the Maths and Stats queen! You never stopped learning, even at three in the morning!

Exeter cemented another lifelong friendship with Dave, the unwitting postgrad that Glen and I enlisted in the TV room of the student halls we were staying in and pleaded with him to join the committee. He stood for election and was voted in as an editor of The PsyPAG Quarterly and a year later became our Chair... and what a wonderful Chair he made. The BPS were going through a significant state of change during this time, with statutory regulation through the HCPC (then HCP) looming. Some saw this as a good thing, others saw it as the beginning of the end for the BPS. We just saw it as a situation where we needed to support the training and professional recognition of current and future postgraduates. There was a risk to students who were collecting data with clinical populations if they were not able to be registered and we needed to ensure that this type of research could still continue under the new regulations.

In 2005, I had dropped my studies to part-time as I had successfully secured a Lectureship and the workload, coupled with my young family (my daughter who then was 10 and my son who was 3), slowed my
research down somewhat. As our PsyPAG shared experiences and friendships grew, so too did the support they provided.

One of the biggest walls I hit during my PhD was through my write-up stage. It was a personal wall rather than an academic one, but it nearly broke me on so many levels. In June 2006, when I was just months away from submission, my mum died. I knew that she had been ill, and I was desperate to finish my PhD so that she could see me graduate, but that was not meant to be and instead she joined my dad to watch me complete my journey from above. I can honestly say that if it was not for the support that I received from my peers through PsyPAG, I would not have completed my studies. I just wanted to give up. I hated my thesis and the time that it had taken away from my mum and my young family and I just wanted to have a life again. I had spent the majority of my 20s with my head in the books. Nights were the worst. I would try to work on the PhD when the children had gone to bed but my motivation to finish had disappeared with my mum and I started to suffer with insomnia. But luckily for me, another PsyPAGer, Melissa, was also a night owl (as many of us postgrads are), and was also nearing submission with walls of her own. This was around the time that Facebook had entered our world, and my dear friend and I had many 4.00 a.m. email exchanges to motivate one another. I can’t tell you how important it was for me to have someone who truly understood that stage of the PhD, and that difficult step of letting go. Just a four-word message here and there saying ‘You can do it’ or ‘nearly there’ just gave you enough steam to carrying on.

And this support doesn’t just end with the PhD. My PsyPAG family developed as we shared the PhD experience together. Although there may have been a year or two difference in the stages that we were at, we all understand the pressures of academia. And now, as academics, we share other experiences... the anxieties of journal submissions, the excitement of conference presentations and that dreaded rejection of grant applications. And once again, we can support each other in this crazy world we have chosen to live in. Teary telephone calls on the long commute home, excited group messages of our achievements and recognition, mutual respect for the intellect those in our day to day lives just cannot comprehend and a bed in those welcoming postgrad homes up and down the country (she says days away from visiting her Irish PsyPAG comrade and national treasure to take up the role of external examiner). And not forgetting the reunions... the chance to embrace the friendships that PsyPAG helped build all those years ago!

PsyPAG has truly shaped my academic life and my career to date. My early experiences on the MPTB helped me to develop MSc programmes and no doubt shaped me as a Course Director, Programme Lead and Senior Lecturer. And my time on the Health Psychology committee as a postgrad rep developed my network in the discipline that I have chosen to specialise in. I have yet to leave that committee since my PsyPAG days, engaging in roles such as the Consultation and Specialist Knowledge Co-ordinator and Chair of the Publicity and Liaison Sub-Committee and I have developed equally rewarding friendships with my Health Psychology peers.

If you are reading this and wondering what PsyPAG can do for you, the opportunities are vast. I hope my story can encourage you to become involved in the network, attend the conferences, join the committee, write for The PsyPAG Quarterly and build the relationships which I hope will last you a lifetime. There is no other support network quite like it for postgraduate psychology students. As an alumni I have watched the group grow from strength to strength, with postgraduates leading the way that share that same passion we had all those years ago.

To leave you with my life post-PsyPAG; I submitted my PhD in 2006, viva’d and graduated in 2007. I stayed on the committee slightly longer than my PhD as my peers just wouldn’t let me leave! I already mentioned
that I had become a Lecturer at the University of Bedfordshire (UoB) during my PhD in 2005, in 2007 I began to work part-time alongside my Lectureship as a Health Psychologist to Specialist Obesity Services at the Luton and Dunstable Hospital while also now serving on the BPS Division of Health Psychology committee. My Lectureship progressed to a Senior Lecturer in 2008 where I became the Course Director of the MSc in Health Psychology and Programme Director of the BSc Health Psychology. I also developed a cross-faculty MSc in Nutrition, Physical Activity and Health Promotion, another in Dance Science and by the time I left the UoB I was co-ordinating seven units (modules). In 2012, I was offered a Lectureship in Health Psychology and Behavioural Medicine at the UCL, an institution I thought I could only dream of working in.

I now train pharmacists and other health professionals in communication skills and behaviour change, while also conducting research in the areas of positive psychology, motivational interviewing and health behaviour change interventions. I have six PhD students of my own and have seen a further two through to completion. All of whom I encourage to be active members of PsyPAG!

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PsyPAG Book – Coming Soon!
*The PsyPAG Guide for Psychology Postgraduates: Surviving postgraduate study*

To celebrate PsyPAG’s 30th anniversary, we are launching a book in October 2015. This will provide a variety of guidance articles to help students navigate all stages of postgraduate study, from Master’s to PhD. A breadth of topics will be included, such as practical issues in finding conference funding and planning work, to emotional issues such as managing your supervisor and dealing with ‘imposter syndrome’. As with *The PsyPAG Quarterly*, this will be distributed to UK PhD postgraduate psychology departments free of charge.

This guide will be a go-to resource for both new and continuing postgraduate students, as well as showcasing the work of PsyPAG and *The PsyPAG Quarterly*.

For enquiries, please contact Editor Emma Norris at: e.norris.11@ucl.ac.uk
Psychology people in profile:

Dr Erica Lucas
Kate Doran

Dr Erica Lucas was heavily involved in PsyPAG during the late 1990s. During her time with PsyPAG, she was a Section Rep, The PsyPAG Quarterly Editor and Conference Organiser. She is currently Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Staffordshire University, in the School of Psychology, Sports and Exercise. She did both her undergraduate Psychology degree and her PhD at Derby University. Her PhD was on relevance and rationalisation processes in the Wason Selection Task. She has worked as a lecturer at Derby University and as a Senior Lecturer at Nottingham Trent University before moving to Staffordshire University early January 2007. In March, Kate Doran caught up with Erica to interview her for this special alumni issue.

Thanks very much for your time, Erica. It's great that we've been able to carve out some space in your busy schedule for us to talk.
You're welcome, Kate.

To begin, tell me about your current role in Psychology.
My normal role here at Staffordshire University, is as Senior Lecturer. However, last academic year I did a maternity cover for the role of Academic Group Leader for Postgraduate, Partnerships and Distance Learning and for this year I have kept part of that job (looking after Partnerships in Psychology) alongside my senior lecturer role. My main contribution to teaching here at Staffordshire University is to cognitive psychology and quantitative methods. My management role involves the line management of staff, overseeing the partnership provision we have (which involves a lot of meetings!) and helping out where needed on day-to-day running of the undergraduate programmes. I enjoy all the different aspects of my job. I like seeing the students through cognitive psychology, because of the challenge of teaching cognitive psychology. I like the partnership role because it is something different – it involves meeting people outside of the university and helping them establish their courses.

How did your career develop following your undergraduate degree?
My journey is not quite the traditional route! After my undergraduate degree, I got a job in the Psychology department at Derby as a psychology technician. This role involved supporting students with technical issues, supporting the staff and writing web pages. In this role I particularly enjoyed working with the students. Once in this role, I started a part-time PhD. A few years later I got a job in the same department as a lecturer and continued with the PhD. So I never did my PhD full-time. It was always alongside a job which made it quite hard to juggle at times.

I did my PhD this way because there weren’t any studentships available. It was hard to fit a research degree in alongside a job, and it consequently took a long time to complete the thesis. It’s hard to find a job that allows you the time to do the PhD if you’re self-funded. But being in employment is a major advantage for developing your CV!

I got really involved in my first job and so got a lot of experience at many different administrative roles in the department. When I moved to Nottingham Trent University, I had a lot of experience which allowed me to take on more senior administrative roles, such as being involved with course
management. The Senior Lecturer role hasn’t changed much since I came to Staffordshire University. All universities and, within them, all departments, work slightly differently. You have to learn new processes with each change, but the job is the same – planning and delivering teaching, administration, designing assessments, marking, keep track of your students and dealing with any issues, administrative roles, open days and recruitment activities, etc.

How/when did you first hear about PsyPAG?
I first heard about PsyPAG when I was a in my job as technician after starting my PhD. The PsyPAG newsletter was sent to the department and also a colleague who joined the department told me about it as she had been involved with PsyPAG at a previous institution. I then went to the annual conference at Plymouth where a friend of mine was doing her PhD and that’s when I became more heavily involved.

What roles have you had within PsyPAG?
After the Plymouth conference – although I’m a bit fuzzy on dates as it was long time ago, it was around 1996–1998 I think! – I became the PsyPAG rep for the Cognitive Psychology Section. At that time PsyPAG had a rep, and it’s probably still true, on all the sections of the BPS, so I would attend Cognitive Section meetings when requested, a couple of times a year. I also got persuaded to run The PsyPAG Quarterly for a year. A group of four of us did this for a year at Derby. Dr Heather Buchanan, a Health Psychologist, now a lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at the University of Nottingham, took the editorial lead. I also agreed to put on the Annual Conference – and took the lead in organising the event. At the time, putting on the conference, in the context of working full-time and doing my PhD part-time, was quite stressful – but a great experience!

What’s your most outstanding memory of your involvement with PsyPAG?
I think it is organising the conference. It was a real lesson in organisation, persuasion and negotiation. I had to get a lot out of the conference fee by getting as many freebies as possible – which involved strategic liaison with the university’s marketing department and relying on people’s goodwill – but this is the bit I enjoyed. I remember securing a very good deal for the conference meal. The whole process was hugely satisfying when it all came together and the conference was (I hope!) a success. I think my other main memory of PsyPAG is the people I met. In the couple of years I was involved with the organisation I met a lot of great, friendly, supportive people and I still see those faces today at events and conferences I attend. Many of them are now established academics with great careers.

How have the skills you developed by your involvement in PsyPAG helped you with your career?
Organising the conference was an excellent lesson in organisation and negotiation. Because I was very heavily involved in PsyPAG, it did give me a taste of what academic life was like. My journey was a bit different as I only ever did my PhD part-time but I think PsyPAG was a place for me and friends to ‘practice’ skills and learn a bit what some of academic life is about. If you’re involved in PsyPAG then you are part of an organisation. You have to work with people as part of team which is really important when you’re a lecturer. In PsyPAG you will have to attend meetings, you may have to produce things to deadlines, and you definitely need to organise and plan your time, attend conferences, present to your peers, and be engaged in discussions about research. All these things you will do as a lecturer. It’s all about planning and implementing whatever it is you’re working on whether that’s teaching, research or policies and procedures that make both students and staff’s life and work easier.
From your viewpoint as a Senior Lecturer, how aware are you of PsyPAG now?

I know we do get The PsyPAG Quarterly – I checked that out the first time you first contacted me about the possibility of this interview! And I’m aware of the Twitter feed – I see posts from that fairly regularly.

That’s great feedback, Erica. Thanks. It’s good to know that alumni stay connected with PsyPAG through Twitter. I’m wondering, again from your position as a Senior Lecturer, what do you see as the value of PsyPAG for postgraduate students?

I think value of PsyPAG is that it is an immediate network of people who are all at the same stage of their education or career as you are. Whether you are at an institution that has a large PhD community or not, PsyPAG is an organisation that connects you to others going through the same thing as you at the same time. It can give you that early, supportive experience that helps make the transition into an academic career. The conferences are a great place to give your first presentation in a supportive environment, which may be less overwhelming than going to one of the bigger conferences.

What would you say to anyone thinking about becoming involved in PsyPAG?

I thoroughly enjoyed my involvement with PsyPAG and so would highly recommend getting involved. At the very least, attending workshops and conferences is a great way to meet others in your field or, as I said earlier, just others going through the same process as you. If you join the committee you will learn all sorts of valuable skills for later academic life!

Is there anything we haven’t covered that you’d like to say to our postgraduate readers?

More specifically, a difference between when I did my PhD and now is the exponential growth of the internet, mobile communication and social media. There are some great resources out there. It’s important to connect with people who share your interests. I find Twitter a great means for doing this (@EricaHolland). Here’s a selection of things I follow on Twitter. I also follow individual psychologists and the Twitter feeds for various psychology departments in the UK.

Twitter links

@BPS_Cognitive – The Cognitive Section of the BPS, lots of useful links to articles with lots of real-world examples.
@UK_Psychology – PsychologyUK news, again links to articles.
@UniversitiesUK – this is the representative organisation for UK unis and publicises Uni UK events.
@GdnHigherEd – Guardian Higher education network for people working in HE – news and debate and keeps you up to date with what’s going on in education, sometimes interesting.
@APA_Style – official tweets from the Publication manual of the American Psychological Association – has lots of good tips!
@SocialPsych – Twitter feed from Social Psychology Network, has lots of links to articles.
@sciammind – Scientifica American Mind Magazine.
@PsychologyNow – latest psychology news and research (US based).
@PsychToday – Psychology Today, links to interesting articles
@psychmag – Twitter feed from the monthly publication of the BPS.
@ResearchDigest – BPS Research Digest, lots of reports on latest psychology research

And, of course,
@PsyPAG!
Thanks very much, Erica. Maybe some of our readers will meet you on Twitter?
(Readers, if you do, don’t forget to mention PsyPAG!)
Thanks Kate.

Acknowledgement
Thanks to Dr Jeremy Miles for suggesting Dr Erica Lucas for this interview.

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DECEMBER 2015 – SPECIAL ISSUE:
CELEBRATING SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

To celebrate 20 years of stereotype threat research (Steele & Aronson, 1995), the December 2015 issue of The PsyPAG Quarterly will be a Social Psychology special. We welcome submissions on a broad range of social psychological topics, theoretical contributions, methodological approaches and critiques.

Please email quarterly@psypag.co.uk or tweet @PsyPAGQuarterly with your ideas.
Hints and Tips:

Tips for collecting data in public sector organisations

Helen McFarlane

Recent issues of The PsyPAG Quarterly have included articles on the practicalities of collecting data in schools (Jayman, 2014; Rix, 2014). Reading these led me to reflect on my own experiences of data collection in the NHS and, more recently, in the civil service. I resonated with some of the challenges the authors described, such as planning the research and building relationships. However, in conducting research in public sector organisations I have also experienced many unique challenges. The following tips are based on these experiences of collecting data within such organisations and I believe that they will be helpful to anyone planning to collect data within the public sector.

Tip number 1: Be aware of organisational priorities
Public sector organisations are expected to deliver high quality services within a small, and variable, budget. Their staff are normally their most expensive resource and they are, therefore, likely to expect their employees to only spend their time on important tasks. They are also usually very careful about who they allow access to their customers or patients. You are unlikely to be allowed access to customers or staff unless you can show that your research will be of some benefit to the organisation, and can ensure that the research will be conducted ethically. Accordingly, it is beneficial to think about what your research will offer the organisation and how it will help them to provide a better service. If the organisation can envisage clear benefits from your research, they are more likely to support it. You should also aim to minimise disruption to staff and customers. For example, when conducting my research in the civil service, I wanted to measure a wide range of variables. Using a large battery of questionnaires was not feasible within the employees’ working day. Therefore, I used a short questionnaire made up of single item measures to ensure that staff could complete it within 10 or 15 minutes in order to minimise disruption to the business.

Tip number 2: Be realistic about the amount of time you will need
Public sector organisations often have formal processes and procedures which you will need to follow before you can begin collecting data. These can take several months to complete. It is best to find out about procedures as early as possible and allow plenty of time in the planning stage of the research to complete these procedures. For example, if conducting research in the NHS, you will need to receive ethical approval from NHS Research Ethics Committee (REC). You should allow up to three to four months for this process (including preparing the application and making any changes that the committee recommends). If you are conducting research in a government organisation, you may need to undergo background checks for security reasons. You may also need a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, particularly if you will have contact with patients, children or other vulnerable groups. Ensuring you understand the processes you need to go through early on will allow you to make a realistic plan for managing your time.
**Tip number 3: Expect and accept change**
Change happens frequently in the public sector. This will be more obvious in certain areas and at particular times. Major change often occurs following a change in government policy, however, short term drives on particular issues are apparent at all times. The outcome of this may be that you are asked to provide some data on issues which were not mentioned at the outset of the project. It can be difficult to predict what these will be – particularly if you are collecting data over a relatively long period. Two years into my current project, I have noticed that organisational priorities have shifted several times. It can be stressful when it seems as though expectations have suddenly shifted. Tips 4 to 6 contain some of the things I have put into place to try and manage this.

**Tip number 4: Agree aims early on but be flexible**
The aims of the research need to be agreed clearly at the start of the project; this should reduce miscommunication from the outset. It is useful to have a written agreement including a timeline which states what you will measure and when, as well as who is responsible for each task identified. This document can then be referred to throughout the research process. I had an agreement in place near the start of my current project and it was very useful to be able to refer back to this. I have been asked along the way about adding in extra questions or variables which are of interest to the organisation. My approach to this has been to take it on a case-by-case basis and discuss the implications of adding these variables with the organisation. I did not feel it would be helpful to dismiss these requests immediately but, at the same time, needed to evaluate how these requests might affect my research question. Discussing the organisation’s requests in terms of the impact on staff and the original question allowed us to agree on how to proceed. I have added additional questions into my original survey in response to one request. However, after discussing another request, the organisation and I came to the conclusion that measuring what they wanted to measure would be too disruptive to the research and, therefore, could be a separate piece of work for the future.

**Tip number 5: Offer ‘quick wins’**
The research process often takes a long time from beginning to end. Since organisational priorities may change over time, offering regular feedback and recommendations based on interim results can be a good idea. These ‘quick wins’ for the organisation can reinforce the value of what you are doing by reminding them that you are offering them something useful. They also ensure that the feedback they get is timely and relevant. However, you may need to think carefully about how and when you provide feedback and the impact this will have on future data collection. Since I am collecting longitudinal data on staff well-being, I have had to carefully consider what data to share with the organisation and how to do so. Sharing information could potentially affect the results of later data collection if the organisation makes changes to their well-being policy or practice as a result. However, without these ‘quick wins’, organisations may become frustrated with the research process and believe that their goals are not being met in a timely manner. They may therefore provide less support to access participants. The amount of information to feed back, as well as when and how to do so, needs to be carefully considered at the start of the project.

**Tip number 6: Do not lose sight of your research aims**
It is important to keep the organisation happy and get them engaged with the research. This will probably involve some compromise, whether that involves measuring an extra variable that they are interested in or changing your methods to reduce
disruption to the organisation. However, it is important that in making compromises, you do not lose sight of what you set out to do. It is easy to be influenced by the organisation’s wider aims and move away from your original question. It is worth regularly coming back to your original aims and asking yourself if you are still on track.

**Tip number 7: Find out who your stakeholders are and maintain contact**
Public sector organisations are often large and multi-layered. There are likely to be a number of interested parties who will need to be informed about your research before it begins, and who may have their own questions, concerns and input to your project. At a minimum, it is likely you will need to inform senior management, human resources and the relevant unions about the research you are planning to undertake. It is worth doing this as soon as possible in order that any concerns can be addressed at an early stage. The stakeholders you identify may have some important insights which can help you in your planning. My discussions with trade union representatives early in my research were very valuable in providing a very different perspective on the workplace than the one I had gained from speaking to management. This allowed me a more complex and rounded understanding of the workplace which informed my research planning. Agree with your stakeholders the kind of involvement they will have and how often you will keep in touch with them.

**Tip number 8: Maintain your independence (and perceived independence)**
Engaging and building good relationships with managers is really important in gaining access to your participants, planning the research and understanding the organisation. However, if conducting research with staff or customers, it is important that you are independent of the organisation and do not feel compromised by a close relationship with managers. Firstly, you will need to ensure that you are clear about your boundaries. For example, when conducting research within an organisation, confidentiality and anonymity of participants are particularly important and should be stressed. You will also think about how your participants may perceive you. One of the things which I considered when conducting my current research was how my clothing affected how I was perceived. I noticed that there was a big difference between how the managers and the other employees dressed. Managers wore formal business wear whereas their employees dressed casually in jeans and t-shirts. I wanted to ensure that my participants felt comfortable with me and I was not seen as too close to the management team. However, I also wanted to be seen as professional by managers, particularly when attending meetings. I decided that smart casual wear would be most appropriate. This would allow me to form an independent identity, distinguishing me from managers. I aimed to be seen as both approachable and professional and, importantly, as independent of the organisation.

**Tip number 9: Promote your research to staff ‘on the ground’**
Whether research is with staff, customers or patients, frontline staff are probably the most important people in making it happen. You will need to think about how to communicate with the staff group you are targeting and promote what you are doing. I found the best way to connect with staff in the civil service organisation was attend some team meetings and communicate with the employees face to face. I have also kept in touch by sending email updates on the research which were circulated to all staff. However, when researching in the NHS, going in to speak to staff was not practical due to the nature of the organisation. In this case, I found that the intranet was the best way of disseminating information. The most appropriate format for communication depends on the organisation you are working in and the group that you are targeting. Your contact in the organi-
sation should be able to provide advice on the ways that information is normally communicated and the practicalities of getting your message out.

**Tip number 10: Reflect and learn from the experience**

Every organisation is different and the challenges you will face cannot always be predicted. Sometimes problems do not have clear answers and you will need to use trial and error to find out what works. As a postgraduate researcher, it is important to reflect on your experience. I feel it is useful to write my reflections by hand; carrying a notebook to jot down ideas and reflections as I go along. However, you need to find a way that works for you. Remember that doing research is a learning experience and it is a huge opportunity to develop your skills and personal characteristics.

Carrying out research in the public sector is challenging. However, I have found that it can be hugely rewarding. I have met many committed people who are keen to improve their working environment and are willing to give up their time to do so. It is a huge privilege to do research which could make an improvement to the ways in which public sector organisations work. Therefore, my final piece of advice is to enjoy it!

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**References**

Research in Brief:

Impaired perception of facial motion in autism spectrum disorders

Christine Girges

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental condition characterised by a severe impairment in social communication and interaction (DSM-5, 2013). It has been suggested that this social-communicative symptom arises from a fundamental deficit in perceiving biological motion (Herrington et al., 2007). Indeed, several studies with ASD participants report impairments in perceiving bodily movements. Research suggests that children with autism commit more errors than controls when indicating whether a brief point-light animation (impoverished displays depicting movement at limb joints in the absence of form cues) represents a body or not (Blake et al., 2003). Similarly, deficits are evident when ASD participants attempt to identify the emotion portrayed by point-light walkers (Atkinson, 2009; Hubert et al., 2007; Parron et al., 2008). Further, individuals with the disorder are less accurate than controls when indicating whether a hand performing sinusoidal actions moved in a natural or unnatural way (Cook, Blakemore & Press, 2013). They also experience difficulty orienting to a point-light pointing gesture (Swettenham et al., 2013).

Facial motion perception has been less extensively explored in ASD. Uono, Sato and Toichi (2009) report that the integration of dynamic emotion and gaze direction cues, needed for joint attention, is impaired in ASD. Rating the naturalness of facial expressions which differ in speed is also problematic for participants (Sato, Uono & Toichi, 2013). The authors suggest this reflects a dysfunction in the earliest visual component of processing. Recently, Enticott et al. (2014) found that control participants were more accurate than individuals with ASD when recognising anger and disgust from dynamic faces. Interestingly, decreasing the speed of video presentations appears to facilitate the ASDs performance on facial recognition and imitation tasks (Gepner, Deruelle & Grynfeltt, 2001; Tardif et al., 2007).

Unfortunately, very little is known about how ASD participants perceive categorical information from facial motion. Studies with typically developing participants show that facial movement facilitates gender and identity discriminations by providing a better structural 3D depiction and conveying idiosyncratic movements (Thornton, Mullins & Banahan, 2011). In this study, ASD participants were asked to discriminate between sequences, identify unfamiliar individuals and categorise genders from facial motion. The stimuli depicted real human movements (rigid and non-rigid) in the absence of confounding spatial cues. As the appearances of animations were identical to each other, judgments would be based solely on differences in motion patterns. Presentations varied between upright and inverted stimuli in order to assess configural processing in ASD (Webb et al., 2012).

The aims of the current study were thus twofold: (1) are participants with ASD able to perceive facial motion, and use such information when making categorical judgments; and (2) is the performance of ASD participants unaffected by inversion paradigms, therefore confirming feature-based processing of faces in ASD. Answering such questions might shed light on whether an impaired perception of facial motion
contributes to the social cognitive impairments seen in this disorder.

**Method**

**Participants**

Two groups of adults were tested: 14 individuals with ASD (11 male, \(M_{age}=33.85, SD=11.23\)) and 14 with typical development (seven male, \(M_{age}=31.14, SD=13.00\)). ASD participants received a clinical diagnosis of ASD from a developmental psychiatrist prior to the study. Groups were matched on age and scales of non-verbal intelligence (Ravens Standard Progressive Matrices). Participants were also tested on their ability to perceive static faces (Benton’s Facial Recognition), which they completed within the normal range (as indicated by scores above 41 out of 54 possible correct answers). Any difficulty then experienced during experimental testing would suggest a specific problem in facial motion perception, rather than a generalised impairment in face processing. Characteristics of control and ASD participants are presented in Table 1.

**Stimuli**

The stimuli were developed by Hill and Johnston (2001). Using markers placed on facial landmarks, motion was captured from 12 actors reciting jokes. This evoked natural facial expressions, speech and head movements. The motion sequences were then applied to a 3D computer-generated face. By using an average face on all sequences, facial motion could be measured independently from structural cues. The appearances of all animations were, therefore, identical and only differed in the way they moved.

An inverted version of each stimulus was generated in Matlab.

**Procedure**

The dynamic face stimuli were presented using an LCD display with resolution 1024 x 768 and 60Hz refresh rate. Viewing distance was approximately 60cm, at which distance the 30cm x 22.5cm display subtended an angle of 26.6° x 20.6°. The height of the face was approximately 10.5°, and the framerate of the animation was 30fps.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Characteristics of adults with ASD and the control group.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Controls</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standard Progressive Matrices</strong>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benton Facial Recognition</strong>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benton Facial Recognition</strong>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Autistic Quotient</strong>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Maximum possible scores for the Standard Progressive Matrices=60; for the Benton Facial Recognition test=54; scores between 11 and 22 on the Autistic Quotient were considered average.
The experimenter recorded participants’ verbal responses manually. Stimuli duration was five seconds.

There were three experimental conditions, each with 21 trials plus eight attention-control trials. The first condition consisted of discriminating between different sequences of facial motion. A single facial animation was displayed in the centre of a black screen. Immediately after, the same animation was presented again plus a completely different animation (shown side-by-side). Using a two-alternative forced choice procedure, participants had to indicate which stimuli (left or right) were present in both trials. A similar format was used for the second condition, in which participants were required to discriminate between different identities of facial motion. A single facial animation was shown, followed by another two animations. One was of the original actor reciting a different joke (target), and the other was of a completely different actor (foil). Participants had to indicate which animation (left or right) represented the same individual from the first presentation. The gender discrimination test required participants to view a single animation and indicate its gender. These tasks were completed with upright and inverted stimuli.

Attention-control trials were included to ensure maximal attention throughout the study. On every fourth trial, the correct responses were indicated with a blue arrow placed above the animation. The arrow was present at the beginning of the trial and remained on the screen until the participant responded. Participants were aware that the arrow indicated the correct answer. The responses to these trials were not included in any subsequent analysis. Control and ASD participants completed these trials without error.

Results
Figure 1 shows the proportion of correct responses made by ASD and controls for each task. One-sampled $t$-tests were used to compare the performance in each condition with the chance response rate of 10.5 (50 per cent). For the ASD group, performance was not significantly above chance level of 0.05 (Bonferroni corrected) in the: (1) inverted identity discrimination; (2) upright gender discrimination; and (3) inverted gender discrimination tasks. The control group did not perform above chance on the inverted gender discrimination task.

A mixed design Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) indicated a significant three-way interaction between task type (sequence, identity, gender) orientation (upright, inverted) and group (ASD, controls), $F(2,52)=9.97$, $p<.001$. A significant interaction was also observed between orientation and group on the facial motion sequence ($F(1,26)=5.24$, $p=.030$), identity ($F(1,26)=4.83$, $p=.037$) and gender ($F(1,26)=9.07$, $p=.006$) discrimination tasks.

A follow-up one-way ANOVA revealed a significant difference between the performance of the ASD and control group on both the upright sequence ($F(1,26)=7.73$, $p=.01$) and upright identity ($F(1,26)=9.16$, $p<.01$) discrimination tasks. Compared to control participants, the ASD sample made more errors during these tasks (Table 2). There were no significant differences between ASD and control participants on the upright gender discrimination task ($p>.05$). However, the difficulty of this task was such that performance was above chance only for the control group.

The same analysis was applied to data from inverted conditions (Table 2). There were no significant differences between the ASD and control group for inverted sequence ($F(1,26)=.90$, $p>.05$) and inverted identity discrimination tasks ($F(1,26)=.19$, $p>.05$). Inverted facial motion affected the controls, decreasing their correct response rate. For those with ASD, there was no difference in performance on upright and inverted conditions. Inverting the stimuli during gender discrimination tasks did produce a significant difference between the control and ASD group ($F(1,27)=11.89$, $p=.02$).
Figure 1: Proportion of correct responses (and standard error) on each task for the control and ASD participants.

Table 2: Mean scores (standard deviations) and results from a one-way ANOVA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Differences between groups (One-way ANOVA)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ASD</td>
<td>Controls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequence</td>
<td>16.43 (3.18)</td>
<td>19.07 (1.59)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sequence Inverted</td>
<td>16.50 (2.93)</td>
<td>17.43 (2.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>13.14 (2.63)</td>
<td>15.57 (1.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity Inverted</td>
<td>12.71* (3.05)</td>
<td>13.14 (2.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>12.00* (2.35)</td>
<td>12.71 (1.59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Inverted</td>
<td>9.36* (2.74)</td>
<td>13.00* (2.68)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates any result not above chance.
Discussion
Although the current ASD sample was able to recognise static faces from the Benton’s test, they were still poor on tasks requiring them to discriminate between upright sequences of facial motion. They were also unable to use upright facial motion as a cue for identity. An inability to recognise a number of different individuals from motion patterns would significantly impact social cognition in ASD. Moreover, unlike the control group, ASD participants did not show an inversion effect in either task. It would appear then that the neural mechanisms responsible for facial motion perception are weakened in ASD. This finding is comparable to other investigations which have utilised point-light body motion stimuli (e.g. Hubert et al., 2007; Parron et al., 2008).

It is possible that the impairment in facial motion perception arises from problems in configural processing (Blake et al., 2003). Individuals with ASD may focus heavily on a particular and perhaps trivial feature at the expense of global motion (Behrman, Thomas & Humphreys, 2006; Van Boxtel & Lu, 2013). An absence in configural (or global) processing would certainly support the indifference to orientation present in the current ASD sample. Engaging more in featural or local processing would by-pass the disruption caused by inverted motion (Hobson, Ouston & Lee, 1988).

The impairment could also lie within low-level visual mechanisms, specifically in the transmission of information from primary visual areas to substrates involved in social cognition (Zilbovicius et al., 2006). This would explain why the superior temporal sulcus – a structure known for its involvement in biological motion processing – is often hypoactivated in ASD individuals (Freitag et al., 2008). It is not unreasonable to suggest a deficit in integrating or transmitting complex perceptual information, rather than a dysfunction of a specialised structure per se. Indeed, studies of motion coherence perception in ASD have shown the etiology of such deficit to lie within weakened integration mechanisms and/or faulty visual (dorsal) pathways (Robertson et al., 2012; Spencer et al., 2000).

Control and ASD participants did not differ in their performance on upright gender discrimination tasks. This may highlight a weakness of the stimuli set as some of the animations appeared impassive or expressionless. Moreover, research suggests that female faces may be more typically animated during interaction than male faces (Berry, 1991). For the control group, a higher percentage of animations may have, therefore, been incorrectly judged as male. This would then be more comparable with ASD participants, who seemed to completely guess answers as indicated by a below chance performance. The ASD participants also showed an inversion effect during this task. It is difficult to ascertain whether this was a genuine effect due to their below chance performance here. Additionally, it is possible that there may have been a floor effect on the gender discrimination tasks. However, other studies which have also investigated this report similar results (Berry, 1991; Hill & Johnston, 2001). It may be the case that accurate gender identification relies on the presence of both facial motion and facial form.

Conclusions
The current study indicates that those with ASD have an impaired perception of facial motion, and are unable to use such cues when making categorical discriminations. Such impairment could thus contribute to the socio-emotional deficits seen within individuals with ASD.


CLIMATE CHANGE. Unless you choose to ignore swaths of strong evidence in its favour, you’ll probably realise climate change is a big problem. Renewable energy and new technologies are essential if we are to tackle climate change. Within my own field of lighting, Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) have been heralded as bringing a new era of low energy light (Pimputkar et al., 2009). With the development of new energy-saving technologies though, there comes a danger that as a society we become too reliant on this to reduce the carbon emissions needed to save our necks, and we ignore perhaps the simplest way of addressing climate change – reducing our demand for energy. Learning to use less energy in our lives can equal and enhance the energy-saving benefits provided by the ongoing stream of increasingly efficient technologies that are developed. This is a necessary step if you consider the savings provided by improvements in efficiency are rarely fully realised due to the Rebound Effect (e.g Sorrell, Dimitropoulos & Sommerville, 2009). Put simply, the Rebound Effect refers to how savings produced by increased efficiency are usually offset by increases in usage. For example, imagine a UK family who have their household insulated, and in doing so manage to save £200 from their annual gas and electricity bill. ‘Great’, thinks the bill-payer, ‘with those savings we can afford to fly to Morocco rather than Northern France’, and the carbon and energy savings from the improved insulation are counteracted by extra energy use through additional flight time. Behavioural changes are, therefore, needed alongside improvements to technology if climate change is to be addressed. In this article I will discuss psychological and psychophysical concepts related to lighting that could be used to reduce demand for energy. Lighting is not a unique field in this context and these concepts could be applied in other areas. I only use examples from lighting as it is a field I am familiar with.

When most people switch their lights on in their office they come on at one illuminance with no option to adjust this other than turning them off. Providing the opportunity for people to adjust the amount of light in their area may, therefore, provide more opportunities to save energy in this particular context of office lighting. Giving people control over their lighting is also likely to make them happier and more accepting of the lighting they experience. This was demonstrated in a study in which participants were asked to set the illuminance in their area to their preferred level (Uttley, Fotios & Cheal, 2013). After making the setting, participants rated how satisfied they were with the lighting. Later on in the study, participants had to provide a similar rating of a light level that had been set by the experimenter. Unbeknown to the participant though this light level was exactly the same as the illuminance they had set themselves earlier in the experiment. Participants reported significantly less satisfaction with this experimenter-set light level compared with the light level they had set themselves,
despite these being exactly the same. Thus people are more likely to accept lower light levels if they have control over the lighting themselves. This currently isn’t the case in many office settings, where pressing the light switch turns the lights on to a pre-determined level.

One argument against setting the lights to lower illuminance levels is that we need enough light in order to work effectively and perform tasks to required standards. This is one reason why we have design guidance which recommends how much light should be provided in different situations and for different tasks. For example, the recommended illuminance in offices is 500 lux in the UK. Surely this amount is founded on sound empirical evidence, based on our visual needs? The fact that this recommended level varies greatly between countries hints that this may not be the case. In the Netherlands, for example, the recommendation is for 100 to 200 lux, whilst in Brazil it is 750 to 1000 lux (Mills & Borg, 1999). Many studies have attempted to identify appropriate light levels. One method that has been used is to ask people to adjust the amount of light in their area until they find a suitable level for their requirements. On first glance this may seem reasonable. However, this approach potentially suffers from stimulus range bias. If you ask someone to make a judgement about something (such as ‘What is your preferred light level?’), their response will be influenced by the range of the stimulus being offered to them. A range with a higher maximum will tend to produce judgements of higher values compared with ranges of a lower maximum. This has been shown in many different areas, and one example from the lighting field is provided by Logadottir, Christoffersen and Fotios (2011). They asked people to set the illuminance in a small office to their preferred level, providing three different ranges of illuminance they could choose from with varying maximums (482, 906 and 1307 lux). The ranges with higher maximums produced significantly higher average settings of preferred illuminance, with averages being around the middle of the range being used. This tendency for average judgements to be around the centre of the range being offered can be seen in many other studies (see Fotios & Cheal, 2010).

Although this stimulus range bias means much of the evidence supporting current lighting guidelines may be flawed, we can also use it to our advantage. Here’s an example: allow office workers to set their own light levels but provide an illuminance range that has its midpoint below the current level used (which is probably 500 lux, if in a UK office). The range available could be chosen so that the previous illuminance people were used to (e.g. 500 lux) was still available, and was just at the higher end of the range. The effects of stimulus range bias should lead people to set a light level somewhere around the middle of the range and below the previous level. And as we have seen, because the office workers have been able to set the light themselves, they should hopefully be more accepting and satisfied with the new light level than if it had been dictated to them from afar. This concept was demonstrated in the study I carried out with colleagues, referred to earlier (Uttley et al., 2013). We asked people to set the illuminance to their preferred level, and gave them two different illuminance ranges (40 to 500 lux and 40 to 700 lux). We found that average settings tended to be around the centre of the range available, meaning that the lower range gave a lower preferred setting (see Figure 1). To check that people were still just as happy when setting the illuminance using the lower range, we asked them to rate how satisfied they were with the light. No differences were found between the two ranges, people were equally satisfied with both, even though they generally set a lower illuminance on the lower range.

Another way we could encourage people to set light levels that are lower than current recommendations is by ‘anchoring’ their preferred level. Anchoring is probably a familiar concept to most psychologists,
having been discussed 40 years ago by Tversky and Kahneman (1974). When making a judgement or decision about something people are biased (or ‘anchored’) by the initial value or quantity presented to them. So when someone is asked to set the lighting to their preferred level they will be influenced by where the light level starts off from. For example, if the initial illuminance is low people will generally set a lower illuminance as their preferred level compared with if the initial illuminance is high (e.g. Logadottir, Christoffersen & Fotios, 2011). We could use this inherent bias in people to help ensure energy is not being wasted by making sure the lights always come on at a low illuminance when they are initially switched on, before allowing people to adjust the light to the level they want.

So far I have discussed how biases and control could be tools to help reduce the amount of energy used by lighting. Another tool relies more on our physiological rather than cognitive responses. What we perceive as light is simply the small portion of the electromagnetic spectrum that our eyes respond to (radiation with a wavelength between 380 and 780 nm). Our eyes respond differently to different light wavelengths, and this is what gives us colour vision. Light with a wavelength of 510 nm is perceived as green, for example, and light with a wavelength of 650 nm is perceived as red. The way our eyes respond to light also changes with the amount of light being received. At relatively low light levels the rod photoreceptors in our eyes become more dominant than the cone photoreceptors. These rod photoreceptors respond more to light that is made up of shorter wavelengths. Under low light levels, lighting that provides more short-wavelength light will be perceived as brighter than lighting with more medium- or long-wavelength light. Unfortunately the street lighting stock in the UK at the moment is dominated by sodium
lamps (Parry, 2014). These lamps give a yellow or golden-coloured light which have relatively large wavelengths, not very good for stimulating the rods that are more dominant under the low light levels we find when the street lights are on. Switching to lamps that produce more short-wavelength light would require less energy to produce the same amount of perceived brightness compared with the dominant sodium lamps due to greater stimulation of the rod photoreceptors in our eyes (Boyce et al., 2009), as the increased overall luminous efficacy greatly offsets any possible energy increase in producing light of shorter wavelengths.

There is currently a revolution underway in the lighting industry with the advent of relatively cheap LED lighting. From an energy-saving perspective LEDs provide two major benefits. Not only are they more energy-efficient than other types of lamps (Pimputkar et al., 2009) but they are also capable of producing shorter-wavelength light which is generally perceived as brighter under low light conditions, meaning less energy needs to be used to create the same perceptions of brightness as other types of lamp (see Figure 2).

Many areas in the UK and other parts of the world are capitalising on these benefits and are replacing the existing sodium-dominated street lighting with the dazzling new LEDs (Parry, 2014). A further benefit of LED lighting is that it offers greater control over the light output compared with other lamp types. This means they can provide very responsive and dynamic lighting, for example responding to the presence of road users and pedestrians. If no one is there, they can dim down or switch off completely, saving energy. Ok, this is a technological innovation so why have I mentioned it in an article about psychological and physiological ways to reduce energy demand for lighting? Well, the flexibility of LED street lamps

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**Figure 2: Typical (normalised) spectral power distributions for High-Pressure Sodium (HPS) and LED lamps.** The LED lamp provides more shorter-wavelength light than the HPS lamp, better stimulating the rod photoreceptors that are dominant under low light levels, creating perceptions of increased brightness.
provide options in how our roads and pavements are lit. For example, just our immediate area could be lit as we walk along, effectively putting us in a spotlight. Alternatively, we could be kept in the dark but the area we are walking into in front of us could be lit. These are just two ways in which the LED street lighting could be used but there are others. The distribution of light raises important psychological questions, such as how safe it makes us feel and whether it encourages or discourages us to walk down the street. Such questions were examined in research in Eindhoven (Haans & de Kort, 2012). In an outdoor study under real street lighting the researchers examined preferences for different distributions of light in dynamic lighting conditions. Their findings suggested pedestrians preferred to have light in their immediate vicinity, rather than on the road ahead.

So far my discussion has been limited to saving energy used for lighting. On a final note though I wish to mention one way lighting could be used to save energy in another area, that of heating and cooling. Space heating and cooling accounts for a huge chunk of our energy use, 51 per cent if you exclude energy for transport (DECC, 2014). This energy is helping us achieve ‘thermal comfort’. This can be defined as ‘that condition of mind which expresses satisfaction with the thermal environment’ (BS EN ISO 7730). Note use of the word ‘mind’ in this definition – thermal comfort is a perception and can be influenced by a range of different factors, many physical but some psychological. Lighting may be one factor that can influence the psychological aspect of the perception of thermal comfort. The ‘Hue-Heat hypothesis’ suggests that the colour of light someone experiences can influence their perception of temperature (e.g. Bennett & Rey, 1972). A cooler, ‘blueish’ light may lead to a cooler temperature perception whilst a warmer, ‘reddish’ light may lead to a warmer temperature perception. This hypothesis has recently been tested by researchers at University College London (Huebner et al., 2014). Participants sat for 60 minutes in a climate chamber in which temperature and other environmental conditions were closely controlled. The chamber was lit either with a ‘cool’ blueish light or a ‘warm’ reddish light. The temperature in the chamber was gradually dropped from 24°C to 20°C and the number of additional items of clothing participants put on during this time was counted. Results showed that participants in the cool light condition put on significantly more items of clothing as the temperature dropped compared with participants in the warm light condition. This suggests those people experiencing the cold light did indeed feel colder. You can imagine how this effect could be used to encourage less heating or air conditioning to be used. Perhaps you’re sat in an open-plan office on a cold winter’s day. To save some money on his heating bill the sneaky building operator makes the lighting in the office slightly warmer in colour, allowing him to turn the thermostat down a notch or two safe in the knowledge he won’t be getting complaints from people about being too cold, as the light now has a ‘warmer’ appearance. Although warmer light has longer wavelengths, which as discussed earlier can be perceived as less bright than shorter-wavelength light, this effect is less pronounced under higher light levels (‘photopic’ conditions), such as those encountered in office environments rather than under street lights at night. The office workers may also be unlikely to perceive any changes in brightness if the change is introduced gradually (e.g. Kryszczuk & Boyce, 2002). This seems a nice idea and it would be interesting to know whether it works in reality, or if the sneaky building operator would actually be inundated with complaints! Let’s ignore as well the lack of control over their lighting these poor office-workers seem to have...
My aim with this article was to highlight potential ways to reduce energy demand through utilisation of cognitive biases and psychological and physiological mechanisms, using my own field of lighting as a context. It is important we use every trick in the book to reduce our demand for energy and I feel this is often overlooked in our technological fixation on energy efficiency innovations. The Rebound Effect demonstrates we cannot rely solely on such innovations to address climate change.

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References
During 2013, psychologists in the UK conducted nearly 50,000 scientific procedures involving animals (Home Office Statistics, 2014). Animal research in the UK is governed principally by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA). In The Politics of Animal Experimentation, Lyons – an animal rights lobbyist – seeks to address claims that scant attention has been paid to the impact of ASPA, or to the evolution of policy which led to its creation. As a political scientist, he focuses on the relationship between different interest groups and government actors in order to understand policy creation and outcomes – an approach known as policy network analysis. Thus, in this book, the roles animal rights groups, advocates of animal research and government regulators have played in the creation and regulation of animal research policy are analysed.

The book first provides the reader with a general review of the methodology and theory associated with policy network analysis. The review is both comprehensive and well-structured, and allows the reader to clearly appreciate the lens through which Lyons is viewing animal research policy. Through the subsequent application of the policy network approach to animal research policy, Lyons constructs a detailed and engaging narrative of the evolution of animal research policy-making, and how this has been influenced (or not) by both animal research advocates and animal rights groups. The book asserts that overall, the policy decision-making process has not taken into account the diversity of perspectives associated with animal research. Instead, it has served the interests of animal research groups, whilst consistently ignoring the interests of animals, as well as input from groups concerned with animal welfare. Lyons discusses many differences between pro- and anti-vivisectionist groups which may explain this observation, such as those relating to media influence, strategic action, resource availability, the prioritisation of self-regulation over public accountability, and relationship status with government regulators.

Some people may be inclined to question how objective the accounts provided in this book are, given that it was written by an outspoken animal rights lobbyist. Indeed, Lyons is the current chief executive officer of the Centre for Animals and Social Justice (CASJ) – an animal protection think tank. However, throughout the book Lyons presents his case in a logical fashion, uses a wide range of evidence to substantiate his points,
and frequently considers alternative explanations. Thus, the arguments outlined in the book merit serious consideration.

The other major feature of the book is its examination of the implementation of ASPA. ASPA was thought to represent a significant change in policy; unlike previous policies, it adopted a framework characterised by the use of a cost-benefit assessment to judge the legitimacy of proposed animal experiments, resulting in substantial consideration being given to the welfare of animals. To assess the practical implications of the introduction of ASPA, the book draws upon primary data from pig-to-primate organ transplantation experiments conducted from 1995–2000 by the research company Imutran Ltd. This data was initially confidential, though legal proceedings brought on by Lyons forced their release into the public domain. Their subsequent inclusion in the analysis presented by Lyons in this book represents a considerable achievement, and means that the book can provide a valuable and unique insight into the application of ASPA by both government regulators and researchers.

Lyons concludes that government regulators and Imutran researchers worked together to carry out a cost-benefit assessment in which the expected benefits of the research project were greatly exaggerated, whilst the expected suffering caused to the animals was massively underestimated. As such, Lyons declares that despite the shift towards an ‘animal welfare’ framework with the introduction of ASPA, the welfare of animals was actually given scant consideration. It can be argued that this conclusion may be premature though, considering that it is based on a study of only one commercial organisation. Indeed, the majority of scientific procedures involving animals are conducted at academic institutions (Home Office Statistics, 2014). However, detailed data from commercial organisations or academic institutions are not readily available, precluding a more expansive analysis.

To conclude, *The Politics of Animal Experimentation* makes an important contribution to our understanding of public policy-making and animal welfare through its discussion of the evolution and impact of animal research policy. The book fills a large gap in the literature, as only one other contemporary study has investigated UK animal research from a public policy perspective in detail (Garner, 1998). Though the detailed nature of Lyons’ analysis makes the book at times inaccessible to the layperson, I would highly recommend it to academics that have an interest in animal welfare, animal experimentation or public policy-making in general. I think the book is especially interesting for those who conduct research involving animals – though one may not necessarily agree with the conclusions drawn in the book, Lyons attempts to explore issues in animal research far beyond those normally discussed by animal rights lobbyists. Such an approach is rare for a controversial and emotional topic so often characterised by polarised opinion in public debate (Fisher, 2014). As a result, the book makes for a fascinating and refreshing read.

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**References**


Dates for your Diary

1–3 July 2015
Division of Forensic Psychology Annual Conference
Manchester Metropolitan University

10–11 July 2015
Division of Counselling Psychology Annual Conference
The Majestic Hotel, Harrogate

22–24 July 2015
PsyPAG 30th Annual Conference
University of Glasgow
www.psypag.co.uk/conference

2–4 September 2015
Qualitative Methods in Psychology Section Annual Conference
Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge

9–11 September 2015
Developmental Section & Social Section Annual Conference
The Palace Hotel, Manchester

16–18 September 2015
Division of Health Psychology Annual Conference
Radisson Blu Portman Hotel, London

6–8 January 2016
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The publication has a broad word limit of 500 to 2500 words excluding references. The maximum word limit is flexible for in-depth discussion papers, longer interviews or hints and tips. The word count will differ depending on the type of article; for example, conference and book reviews should be shorter than featured articles.

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Please submit all articles in Microsoft Word format. The content, including tables, figures, and references, should all comply with the most recent APA guidelines. You should also include your contact details at the end of each article in the format of:

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## PsyPAG Committee 2014/2015

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CALLING ALL POSTGRADS!

Are you currently studying or starting out in your career? The Division of Occupational Psychology Annual Conference offers excellent rates for all students and those who have graduated within the last 18 months!

For those in the early stages of their careers, the 2016 conference provides many chances including the chance to showcase your work to a wide audience of occupational psychologists, access to Stage 2 and PhD sessions, and the opportunity to partake in our ‘Ambassador Programme’ designed to support the formation and development of new networks with more experienced delegates. Students have the opportunity to interact with a diverse range of experts, academics and practitioners, specialising in different areas of the field. In addition, the careers forum provides the perfect opportunity for students to gain a unique insight into potential career paths and learn about current and forthcoming job openings. Here is what some of our 2015 students and graduates had to say:

‘This was the first professional conference I have ever attended. I had the chance to present a short paper and the feedback I have received will be extremely valuable for my research. The talks covered a variety of topics providing interesting and relevant new information.’
Anna Viragos, PhD Student, Leeds University Business School.
I was truly inspired by all the speakers and the keynotes. As it was my first time, I was nervous attending, but not once did I feel out of place as I was surrounded with like-minded people. The talks were fascinating and the delegates made me feel welcomed. I feel more motivated than ever to start my career and to gain experience as a graduate.’

Maya Mistry, MSc Occupational Psychology Graduate, The University of Nottingham.

‘The DOP conference was an incredible experience. As a student, the event will have a definite impact on my future endeavors due to the connections that have been made and the growth I have made in expanding my knowledge of the field.’

Ethan Shapiro, MSc in Occupational Psychology at Northumbria University.

Why not present a paper or a bite-size symposium with other colleagues from your university? An excellent opportunity to showcase your own research!

The DOP conference provides postgraduates with a unique opportunity to present their own research to industry colleagues and raise their profile in the profession. There are many submission types to choose from. For example, you can present your research in the form of a short/standard paper, or a bite-size symposium (NEW to this year!) To enter your research as a bite-size symposium, you will need to work with others at your university to identify several inter-related presentations on a particular topic. As a team, you will present with your colleagues in a bite-size symposium, with each student having five to 10 minutes to present their own research. Please see the Submission Guidelines (www.bps.org.uk/dop2016/submissions) for more information about different session types.

You do not have to be a BPS or DOP member to present and we welcome submissions from presenters at any level of experience for any of these session types. Please note PhD/MSc students do not need to have their research results ready in order to submit.

Call for Submissions

The DOP Conference 2016 is themed around ‘Resilience in a challenging world’ – emphasising the importance of new technology and security in our profession, and encouraging discussion around future sustainability. We are looking forward to an exceptionally informative and stimulating forum, offering enhanced opportunities for professional development, and welcome everyone who is involved or interested in the world of occupational psychology.

Submissions should relate to the conference theme and fit into one of our six categories, which follow the new MSc curriculum:

- Learning, Training and Development;
- Leadership, Engagement and Motivation;
- Well-being and Work;
- Work Design, Organisational Change and Development;
- Psychological Assessment at Work;

Submissions may take the form of posters, papers, symposia, bite-size symposia, discussions and workshops. In keeping with our theme, we are particularly interested in proposals covering the practical application of psychological research to real-life work situations. All submissions must clearly show originality and relevance to the conference theme and selected category.
How do I submit?
You need to use the BPS Online Submission System. Full details of how to make a submission can be found on the conference website – www.bps.org.uk/dop2016/submissions – please ensure you read the submission guidelines before preparing your submission. The closing date for DOP and MSc/PhD students or recent graduates’ entries is midnight on Monday 3 August 2015.

Ambassador Programme
Attending the conference for the first time, or wanting to expand your professional network? As usual we will be running our successful ‘Ambassador Programme’. Through an online questionnaire we match new conference delegates (Ambassadees) with experienced delegates (Ambassador). Ambassador will introduce you to their network of colleagues, providing an easy and effective way for you to gain access to the networking communities that are such an important part of the conference experience.

‘The Ambassador programme was amazing. 100 per cent the best thing to do if you are attending for the first time! Kudos to the BPS for organising that so well!’

‘Participate in the Ambassador programme. It’s well worth it!’

Exceptional value for money
The DOP Annual Conference offers an exceptional opportunity for you to be a part of an outstanding event with a high quality programme, and offers excellent networking opportunities for those that are new to the profession. Conference rates offer remarkable value for money and as a postgraduate you can take advantage of our special three-day ‘POP’ package. Now is a great time to book a place at this event and take advantage of the early bird rates. Full registration details are available at: www.bps.org.uk/dop2016. If you have any queries please get in touch with us at: dopconf@bps.org.uk.

For instant updates on the DOP Conference 2016, follow us on Twitter: @dopconference #dopconf and join our Facebook group: Division Occupational Psychology Annual Conference.
Calling out for new voices

When someone is making waves in psychology in years to come, we want to be able to say they published their first piece in *The Psychologist*. Our ‘new voices’ section will give space to new talent and original perspectives.

We are looking for sole-authored pieces by those who have not had a full article published in *The Psychologist* before. The only other criteria will be that the articles should engage and inform our large and diverse audience, be written exclusively for *The Psychologist*, and be no more than 1800 words. The emphasis is on unearthing new writing talent, within and about psychology.

The successful authors will reach an audience of 48,000 psychologists in print, and many more online.

So get writing! Discuss ideas or submit your work to jon.sutton@bps.org.uk. And if you are one of our more senior readers, perhaps you know of someone who would be ideal for ‘new voices’: do let us know.
PsyPAG is a national organisation for all psychology postgraduates based at UK Institutions. Funded by the Research Board of the British Psychological Society, PsyPAG is run on a voluntary basis by postgraduates for postgraduates.

Its aims are to provide support for postgraduate students in the UK, to act as a vehicle for communication between postgraduates, and represent postgraduates within the British Psychological Society. It also fulfills the vital role of bringing together postgraduates from around the country.

- PsyPAG has no official membership scheme; anyone involved in postgraduate study in psychology at a UK Institution is automatically a member.
- PsyPAG runs an annual workshop and conference and also produces a quarterly publication, which is delivered free of charge to all postgraduate psychology departments in the UK.
- PsyPAG is run by an elected committee, which any postgraduate student can be voted on to. Elections are held at the PsyPAG Annual Conference each year.
- The committee includes representatives for each Sub-Division within the British Psychological Society, their role being to represent postgraduate interests and problems within that Division or the British Psychological Society generally. We also liaise with the Student Group of the British Psychological Society to raise awareness of postgraduate issues in the undergraduate community.
- Committee members also include Practitioners-in-Training who are represented by PsyPAG.

Mailing list
PsyPAG maintains a JISCmail list open to ALL psychology postgraduate students. To join, visit www.psypag.co.uk and scroll down on the main page to find the link, or go to http://tinyurl.comPsypAGjiscmail.
This list is a fantastic resource for support and advice regarding your research, statistical advice or postgraduate issues.

Social networking
You can also follow PsyPAG on Twitter (http://twitter.com/PsyPAG and add us on Facebook: http://tinyurl.comPsypAGfacebook.
Again, this information is also provided at www.psypag.co.uk.
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