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Psychological Society  
Promoting excellence in psychology

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

#### The British Psychological Society

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

*Extract from The Charter*



## President's column

Dorothy Miell

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At the end of a year it's perhaps not surprising that I find myself in a reflective mood. I wanted to write about some things that I've been involved with as I've been travelling round to meet a range of members at different events. First of these was the General Assembly, where the Chairs of every member network meet together (or at least of the main network groups – you may recall from an earlier column I was explaining the rather complicated substructures that some of our Divisions have, leading to more groups than most of us can keep track of!).

Some of the sessions allow the Branch, Section and Division Chairs to meet in separate groups to consider their shared concerns about particular issues, and in other sessions we're all mixed together to ensure there's discussion across those groupings and with the Trustees and key staff of the Society. There's also plenty of opportunity for more informal conversations too, and often it's these serendipitous chats that lead, for example, to suggestions of joint day conferences or workshops, or ideas for keynote speakers from other groups.

At this year's General Assembly we talked quite a lot about the new strategic plan for the Society's work over the next five years as well as about the member network review that's currently being undertaken – chaired by our President Elect. We also took some soundings about a possible name change for the Society since the Trustee had received a request to consider investigating a new title (e.g. Royal Psychological Society / Royal College of Psychology). On this latter point there was little support for a name change, as colleagues felt there was already good recognition of our existing name and changing this would involve a great deal of work (especially to try and obtain a Royal title) as well as then having to work to achieve recognition for the new name.

Other ideas did get more agreement, however. First amongst these was the call for improved communication – between member networks, for networks with their members, and between the networks and the Trustees and staff. I think our current review and revamp of the Society website will go a long way to help with this (wouldn't it be good to have more easily accessible listings of all events being run

and searchable not only by topic but also network organising it and by geographical area, for example, and might it not be helpful for members beyond a particular subgroup to be able to see events and activities being run by other groups/networks?). There was also a call to build in more effective use of technology, for example to record and stream events for those who can't attend them, and to enable richer content for CPD, etc.

One interesting comment was made more than once – might we not draw more on our own psychological expertise and insights to help organise and enhance the Society's functioning? It does indeed seem strange that what we collectively know about communication, about feelings of inclusion and exclusion, of organisational dynamics, etc., is not more obviously brought into our attempts to improve the Society's services to members. I'd like to challenge all of those involved in the member network review (and others, such as the Trustees and network committees) to perhaps do this more often and more explicitly.

I've also recently attended some events organised by the Society's North West Branch. One was a student conference that gave current undergraduate and postgraduate students the opportunity to present their own work to a supportive audience, hear a keynote from Dr Abigail Locke, the Chair of the Society's Social



...by any other name?

Psychology Section, and take part in a Q&A session with a panel including academic and professional psychology representatives discussing career options after graduation.

Running such events in collaboration with local universities allows the Society to support current students and their departments by extending the range of activities available and so extending the students' knowledge about psychology. They also increase the students' awareness of the benefits of Society membership and hopefully encourage more of them to join and get involved in the member networks. I'd like to see more of such collaborative working between psychology departments, Branches,



## Award for Promoting Equality of Opportunity

Professor Til Wykes

Professor Til Wykes, from the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience at King's College London, has received the Society's 2014 Award for Promoting Equality of Opportunity for her part in championing the active role of mental health service users in research. The award, conferred by the Society's Ethics Committee, recognises a person whose work as a psychologist has made a significant contribution to challenging social inequalities in the UK.

Throughout her career Professor Wykes has sought to involve mental health service users as active members of research – not just as research participants or consumers. This drive led to the establishment in 2001 of the Service User Research Enterprise (SURE) at King's College London. SURE undertakes research to test the effectiveness of services and treatments from the perspective of people with mental health problems and their carers. It aims to involve service users in a collaborative way in the whole research process: from design to data collection, through to data analysis and dissemination of results.

Professor Wykes' commitment was further reflected in her decision, as editor of the *Journal of Mental Health*, to increase the representation of service users on the board and to change the focus of the published research. These changes were reflected in



Professor Til Wykes

the journal's author guidance, which encouraged service users as contributing authors.

On receiving the award, Professor Wykes, currently a Professor of Clinical Psychology and Rehabilitation and Vice Dean of Psychology, said: 'I am absolutely delighted to have received this acknowledgement of the important work of including service users in mental health research. I will continue to carry out my research with, rather than on, patients and try to demonstrate how this can then have much more impact on mental health and the NHS.'

'Challenging questions from service users themselves made me ask key questions about the focus of my research, the research designs and my choice of outcomes. My journey has not always been smooth, but I do really value their continued challenge. It keeps me on my intellectual toes and make my research more relevant to their lives.'

Nominating her, Professor Richard Brown (King's College London) said: 'Professor Wykes has followed a path from early contributions on service-user priorities for research, to setting up a unit to highlight how it can be done, to improving the potential for academic publication and on to advising others on how it can be done and providing the tools and support necessary. All this information is in the public domain and has certainly changed how researchers approach and include service users.'

Professor Wykes will be invited to deliver an award lecture and accept a commemorative certificate at the Society's 2015 Annual Conference in Liverpool.

Divisions and Sections, since there are benefits for all the groups involved. We will also need to consider addressing anything that makes organising such events more difficult – such as restrictions on advertising – as this will prevent us pursuing key aims that we have adopted in our new Strategic Plan. I'll be discussing this further with staff in the Society.

Another collaborative activity that I enjoyed taking part in was a workshop with heads of psychology departments on addressing gender inequality in academic psychology careers [see also p.918]. This will be taken forward by helping departments gain Athena SWAN (Scientific Women Academics' Network) accreditation – a scheme that has been influential in changing the culture of departments in other science subject areas and is an attempt to address what's called the 'leaky pipeline' for women trying to progress in their careers from undergraduate to professorial levels. Whilst the initial focus came from concerns about women's progress in STEM subjects, actions to address these concerns have had a positive

effect on the formal and informal working culture for both men and women, for example clarifying promotions processes, avoiding pressure to attend 'out of hours' activities and providing mentors. We heard how the Royal Society of Chemistry had supported chemistry departments around the UK to improve the situation in their subject and so will look at further ways that the BPS can support psychology departments to do the same. I'll be working with the Association of Heads of Psychology Departments and Professor Kate Bullen (Chair of our Society Ethics Committee) to do this, supported by Lisa Morrison Coulthard from the Society's staff.

I want to end by remembering one woman who managed to beat the 'leaky pipeline' in academic psychology to have a very successful career – Professor Christine Temple. Christine became founding Chair of the Department of Psychology at Essex University in 1990 at the very young age of 32. She began her career after graduating from St Andrews with a first class degree in psychology with

a master's at UCLA and a doctorate from Oxford University before time at the University of London, where she established the Developmental Neuropsychology Unit that she later moved to Essex when she was invited to set up the department there. She was a talented researcher and her many publications and PhD students made a lasting contribution to this field. She was also an outstanding academic manager and served for six years as Pro Vice Chancellor for planning and resources at Essex. After she stepped down from that role she devoted herself to writing a new book – *Picasso's Brain* – combining her two passions of art and neuroscience to consider what lies behind great feats of creativity. Very sadly Christine had not yet had the book published when she died in October, but I hope that may be possible posthumously. I know her colleagues, friends and students will miss her enormously, and our work to improve gender equality in psychology careers can see her as an all too rare but wonderful example of what can be achieved.



## Book Award winners

The two winners of the 2014 BPS Book Award have been announced as *Psychology, Mental Health and Distress* by John Cromby, David Harper and Paula Reavey in the Textbook category and *The Optimism Bias – Why We're Wired to Look on the Bright Side* by Tali Sharot in the Popular Science category.

Dr John Cromby, a Reader in Psychology (Loughborough University) co-wrote *Psychology, Mental Health and*

*Distress* with David Harper, a reader in Clinical Psychology and Programme Director on the Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology at the University of East London and Paula Reavey, Professor of Psychology at London South Bank University.

Dr Cromby said their book was quite different to others in the same field; he



explained: 'We rejected the concept of "abnormal psychology", included the voices of mental health service users, and found a way of discussing mental health psychologically without depending on psychiatric diagnosis. Rather than present distress as illness we presented it as a kind of experience – a consistently psychological perspective that fits neatly

## Risk and resilience – reaching out

Clare Mansfield (a UKCP psychotherapist in private practice) reports from a Division of Counselling Psychology event

The Division of Counselling Psychology Young Work Group is a recently formed networking group within the Society, for counselling psychologists with a particular interest in working with children, young people and families. On 3 October this group put on their first event – 'Risk and Resilience: Reaching Out to Children, Young People and Families'.

The presenter line-up was enticing, and the event was quickly fully booked. I am not a child and young person specialist myself, but it struck me that the subject is of universal interest and relevance: we were all young ourselves once, and even if not dealing with young people directly, we are all dealing with others – clients, colleagues, friends – who are.

Mick Cooper led the day with a scene-setting paper on the current picture of counselling work in secondary schools. Six hundred of every thousand children have 'an emotional concern', and of these 60 will have no one to talk to (Cooper, 2010; Family, Kids and Youth, 2012). Although England lags behind Wales and Northern Ireland (where there is a counsellor in every school), school-based counselling is on the increase, and in many respects in line with the contemporary young person-centred mental health agenda advocating service-user empowerment, equality of access, destigmatisation of mental health difficulties and early intervention.

Mick feels there is a real opportunity for counselling psychologists to get involved – currently very few are. Although he himself produced some encouraging outcomes graphs, showing counselling in schools reducing psychological stress, increasing self-

esteem, etc., these were small-scale studies, and Mick underlined an overall reluctance within school-based counselling to think in 'evidence-informed' ways – which is where counselling psychologists could have more of a role. Mick also introduced us to Counselling MindEd, a freely available online support (45 30-minute sessions) for professionals making the transition from working with adults to children.

Other speakers focused more specifically on the concepts of 'risk' and 'resilience'. Jacob Zelinger gave a moving clinical vignette involving an abusing parent and her child. He suggested a view of resilience as 'having the courage to reach out for help' (be it anyone involved in a case of child abuse – child, parent or supervisee).

Gianna Daly, Head of Clinical Services at the childhood bereavement charity Winston's Wish, talked about an additional service recently developed for the most 'at risk' children – SWITCH. This targets the most vulnerable bereaved children, who have lower levels of resilience and a high risk of truancy or offending. A logic model has been developed, whereby a variety of interventions for child and family are used to help with 'processing the death', and leading to an improvement in self-regulation, relationships, capacity to learn, and so on. The experiential element of this presentation was powerful in itself, as well as a useful tool to be introduced to. In pairs, we were given three stones – jagged, ordinary and gem; we closed our palm tightly round each, and shared with our partner the corresponding childhood memories it evoked – 'painful', 'everyday' and 'special'. In the SWITCH context, the

exercise is used with bereaved children to help them keep alive memories – of all kinds – of the dead parent. Gianna also made the valuable point that with the right support, bereaved children can be more likely to develop into resilient adults because of that life experience, rather than in spite of it.

Zack Eleftheriadou, in her presentation on therapeutic work with traumatised children, unpacked the nature of resilience, referring to the ability to mentalise, having an internal locus of control, and good emotional 'immunity' in the face of stress (Gerhardt, 2004). She stressed the key role of attachment and the secure base in dealing with traumatic events, as well as – and overlapping with – individual 'protective' factors. With the background premise of the brain having (some) continued malleability, Zack presented case vignettes of how traumatised children can be helped by relational psychological therapy – some more successfully than others.

All the presentations were about 'reaching out' to young people in distress; and all delivered hope in the context of the psychological struggles of the future generation.

### References

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- Family, Kids and Youth (2012). *Understanding the needs and wishes of young people who require information about therapy*. A report of qualitative and quantitative research carried out on behalf of BACP. Lutterworth: BACP.
- Gerhardt, S. (2004). *Why love matters*. Hove: Routledge Mental Health.

with clinical training in formulation. Essentially, our book is a call to teach about mental health in a way more consistent with psychological theory and practice, and in accord with what many service users say they find helpful. We were extremely pleased that the Society recognises the value of this, and hope it will encourage others to reconsider how they teach this important topic.'

Dr Cromby said they benefited from four strands of academic and clinical work in writing the book: 'First, UK clinical psychological research, which is currently leading the world in producing credible, evidence-based psychological alternatives to psychiatric models of distress. Second, the mental health service-user movement in the UK, who have been working to develop and promote innovative ways of understanding and working with people with mental health difficulties. Third, the Critical Psychiatry Network, whose members have provided more sophisticated understandings of medication and psychiatric work. Fourth, recent psychological research working with concepts of experience (rather than with its components such as memory, emotion, etc.).

'Finally, but of no less importance, over the years we have had the privilege of teaching diverse groups of students from varying social and cultural backgrounds. Many have been vocal in challenging traditional psychiatric approaches, either because they have

different cultural beliefs about distress, or because of their own experiences of mental health services. Their perspectives have both helped us develop our understanding and enhanced how we communicate our ideas.'

David Harper is now editing a book called *Beyond 'Delusion'*, which offers insights into the psychology of unusual beliefs amongst both clinical and non-clinical samples; while Paula Reavey has a co-authored book in press on memory and affect, and John Cromby has just finished writing a book on feeling and embodiment in psychology.

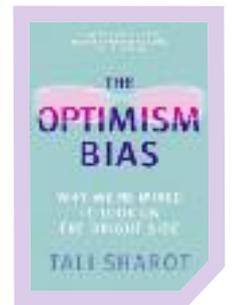
Neuroscientist Dr Tali Sharot, a Reader in Cognitive Neuroscience at the Department of Experimental Psychology, (University College London), directs the Affective Brain Lab and is currently a Wellcome Trust Fellow and previously a British Academy postdoctoral fellow. Her book gives an in-depth look at how the brain generates hope and what happens when it fails, how the brains of optimists and pessimists differ and how our optimistic illusions affect our financial, professional and emotional decisions. Dr Sharot said she was thrilled to find she had received the award.

She explained her work on *The Optimism Bias* had come around as something of a happy accident: 'The first experiment we did on the optimism bias was back in 2007 but it was, in fact, a mistake. I was looking at something else altogether and the optimism bias just

crept in. My aim was to look at how people imagined negative events in their future. But people kept changing them in a positive way.

'So people who were asked to imagine the breakdown of a romantic relationship would then imagine finding someone better, or someone imagining losing their house keys would then imagine contacting their landlady to be let in and it all turning out okay. I started to think this was quite interesting and learned about this whole literature in social psychology on the optimism bias. But pretty much nothing was known about the neural mechanisms of the bias, and our first study on this led me to write the book.'

Dr Sharot said her findings on the optimism bias and its neural components has interested both health professionals and the general public and has implications in a variety of different domains, including in finance and health. She added: 'Most people have been surprised by the findings because we aren't aware of our own biases.' Professor Sharot is continuing her research into the optimism bias as well as looking in to emotion and learning in groups rather than just individuals.



## Working for culture change in the NHS

The Division of Occupational Psychology has released a report outlining ways in which cultural change can be achieved within the NHS. The *Implementing NHS Culture Change: Contributions from Occupational Psychology* report focuses on outlining solutions to implement the recommendations of the Francis Report and Berwick Review for NHS culture change, using evidence from occupational psychology.

Following the release of the Francis Report last year, after the public inquiry into Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust, the large task of implementing the recommended culture change in the NHS has been the focus of healthcare policy. This DOP report is being released to outline the usefulness of using evidence

from occupational psychology in implementing this culture shift.

The DOP's Occupational Psychology in Public Policy group has compiled the report, bringing together eight occupational psychologists to write a series of essays on different aspects of NHS culture change from a staff, leadership and organisational point of view. For example, Professor Chris Clegg explores issues such as how jobs and workplaces can be designed to facilitate high-quality, safer health care and Barbara Wren, Lead Psychologist at the Point of Care Foundation, examines the importance of reflective spaces for staff to ensure psychologically safe work environments. Dr Joanna Wilde also points out how it can be possible to

build a culture of transparency and openness, specifically focusing on the psychological factors that need to be managed to enable such a culture to exist in the NHS.

The report was launched at a special event at the Burrell Street Auditorium in London in November. The event included talks from several of the contributors, including Barbara Wren and Chris Clegg. Professor Michael West, Senior Fellow in the Leadership Development directorate at The King's Fund, and Professor of Work and Organisational Psychology at Lancaster University Management School, also spoke at the event to give a response to the report.

**! To download a free copy of the report, visit [tinyurl.com/dopnhsreport](http://tinyurl.com/dopnhsreport)**



# New Society portal to showcase research impact

In recent years, an increasing emphasis has been placed on ‘impact’ when seeking funding and assessing published studies. Now the Society has launched BPS Impact, an online portal where work that has potential social, economic and cultural benefits can be showcased.

The Society has released a call for more submissions to be included in BPS Impact, which aims to demonstrate the significant influence that high-quality psychological research has had, or could have, on society. It is hoped this resource will be useful for individuals, organisations and nations, as well as those who are involved in developing policy, service provision, legislation and behaviour change.

Professor Daryl O’Connor, chair elect of the Society’s Research Board, said: ‘This BPS Impact portal represents an exciting new development for UK psychological science and reflects the changing demands of research and the requirements of the

Research Excellence Framework. It was developed for three main reasons. First, to showcase the best examples of psychological research that has already demonstrated impact. Second, to highlight psychological research that has the potential to be impactful in the future and to help facilitate this process. Third, to provide a resource to inform, communicate and demonstrate the nature of impact in relation to psychological science. I’m looking forward to seeing the portal expand and become populated with the very best examples of impact.’

The portal aims to serve as a repository for completed research which has the potential to be impactful, defined as all kinds of social, economic and cultural benefits and impacts beyond academia. The database can be searched by keyword and submissions are accepted through an online system. Submissions can be updated as they accrue impact,

providing an ongoing commentary on the work.

It is also intended that through the Society’s contacts with government departments, high-quality research logged on the site will directly inform policymakers and advisers and, therefore, increase its impact. Recent meetings with government departments have highlighted the importance of providing input in an accessible form, and more importantly, the willingness of those departments to receive such input.

Submissions will be subject to peer review before publication on the web portal. If you have any queries about BPS Impact, its content, and making a submission, or require any assistance in identifying impactful research in an area not currently covered by the entries, please contact Dr Lisa Morrison Coulthard on [Lisa.MorrisonCoulthard@bps.org.uk](mailto:Lisa.MorrisonCoulthard@bps.org.uk) | See [www.bps.org.uk/impact](http://www.bps.org.uk/impact)

# Mind Hacks scoops Society award

The editors of a popular blog covering psychology and neuroscience news and views, [www.mindhacks.com](http://www.mindhacks.com), are to receive the 2014 British Psychological Society’s Public Engagement and Media Award.

The Award recognises the work of psychologists who, either directly or through the media, have made an outstanding contribution to raising the profile of psychology with the general public.

Mind Hacks was established by BPS Fellows Dr Tom Stafford (University of Sheffield) and Dr Vaughan Bell (Behavioural Disorders Unit, Bethlem Royal Hospital) in 2004 with the aim of making research related to the mind and brain accessible to the general public.

The blog has a wide international audience, reaching thousands of people using content informed by academic research. On its most popular day (10 May 2014) it received more than 100,000 unique visitors. Readers are given the

opportunity to keep up to date with the latest research, which is accompanied by objective critiques and an indication of the wider context.



It was described as ‘riveting’ by *Scientific American*, who gave it a 2005 Science & Technology Web Award. In August 2014 the site was recommended by the *Journal of the American Judges*

*Association* who said it is ‘consistently entertaining and often has legal relevance’.

Commenting on the award Claudia Hammond said: ‘When [mindhacks.com](http://www.mindhacks.com) started there were few psychology blogs. So it has helped define a blossoming culture of online commentary on psychology research and maintains an internationally recognised profile within that culture. [Mindhacks.com](http://www.mindhacks.com) has remained independent, with no advertising and the writers work unpaid in their spare time. Their work is licensed under a “Creative Commons” copyright

licence, meaning that it can be republished freely.

‘I’m constantly impressed by the quality of the site, and see it as a crucial way of obtaining critically considered information about psychological research. Their blog posts are always evidence-based and well-argued, and often provide a counterpoint to more sensationalist coverage in other outlets.’

On winning the award Tom Stafford said: ‘Vaughan Bell deserves the credit on this one for his insight, humour and intelligence, he writes the bulk of our posts. It’s really pleasing that this is the first time a blog has been nominated for this award and the first time one has won. It recognises that public engagement isn’t all about a single charismatic figurehead. The thing that’s always drawn Mind Hacks is finding the everyday angle on things, how can we see these phenomena outside of the lab.’

To celebrate its 10th anniversary, Vaughan and Tom are holding a Mind Hacks live event in London. Look out for a report next month, and a special feature at [www.thepsychologist.org.uk](http://www.thepsychologist.org.uk).



## Around the party conferences

The Society organised fringe events at all three of the main political party conferences this autumn, aiming to raise the profile of the Society, align it with key themes that are high on the political agenda, and highlight the contribution psychology can make to sound and effective policy responses.

At the Labour Party conference in Manchester the Society's Policy Team co-organised a fringe event with the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), which focused on the topic of how to deliver psychological therapies in the context of Labour's vision of whole-person care. Professor Jamie Hacker Hughes, the Society's President-Elect, spoke at the event, which also heard from Chris Ruane MP, Kevan Jones MP, Baroness Hollins (BMA), Ian Hulatt (Royal College of Nursing) and Dame Sue Bailey (BACP).

Professor Hacker Hughes argued that although access to psychological therapies had improved for people with common mental health problems, there is still variation around the country with people in some areas and groups waiting for prolonged periods to access treatment. He said: 'Veterans' provision, for example, is still patchy, poorly regulated and poorly coordinated. The British Psychological Society firmly supports the development of mental health service provision in order to produce services that are high-quality and easily accessible, which allow for flexibility and depth of provision of care from an appropriate range of professionals, delivered in a timely fashion and on the basis of parity with physical healthcare provision. If people suffering psychological problems are identified early and are able to access assessment

and intervention without barriers (and this includes the hugely important issue of tackling stigma) then they are more likely to make an effective and lasting improvement.'

At the Conservative Party conference held in Birmingham, the Society organised a fringe event concerning evidence-based crime policy. This event was held in close cooperation with the Society's partner organisations: Sense about Science and the Alliance for Useful Evidence (AfUE), along with NatCen Social Research. Attendees also heard from Katy Bourne, the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, who gave an interesting account of the challenges in applying new, evidence-based policy and practice, but how this is something Sussex Police are implementing. The Society's Lead Policy Advisor, Dr Lisa Morrison Coulthard, spoke to highlight examples of psychological research that have informed good practice policing in the UK and abroad. These were refinements in facial composite production systems and associated procedures, identification parades and the policing of crowds.

The Society's fringe event at the Liberal Democrat Party conference was themed along the same lines of the fringe event at the Conservative Party conference. The event was held in cooperation with the Society's partner organisations Sense about Science and the Alliance for Useful Evidence (AfUE). It was chaired by Sir Alan Beith, Chair of the House of Commons Justice Committee, who spoke on the topic of crime reduction. The event also heard from Norman Baker, the then Minister of State for Crime Prevention.

In addition to organising these events

at the party conferences, Policy Team staff were also invited to key roundtable meetings and also attended meetings with political contacts and kindred organisations at the party conferences. These meetings offered a valuable means to gain a direct insight into current party thinking and for Society staff to highlight the contribution psychology research and practice can make to key policy challenges. Examples of significant Society activity that staff were able to highlight during these meetings include: behaviour change, brain injury and the criminal justice system, mental health, end-of-life care, examples of impactful psychology research and interventions for those with dementia.

Policy Team staff are following up with the political speakers from these events and the political contacts and third-sector representatives with whom they met to both strengthen ties and explore options for the further dissemination of psychology research and practice.

*Ella Rhodes*

### SOCIETY NOTICES

**Psychology in the Pub** See p.903  
**Division of Health Psychology 2015 Annual Conference, London** See p.923  
**BPS Annual Conference, 5-7 May 2015, Liverpool** See p.i  
**BPS events and conferences** See p.958  
**2015 CPD workshops** See p.960-1