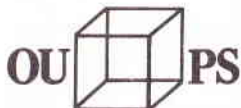


THE NEWSLETTER OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Front Cover and Page two: Walton Hall Open Day 1984.

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The Society as a body is not responsible either for the statements made, or for the opinions expressed in this Newsletter.

The next issue of the *Newsletter* is due out in November 1984. THE COPY DATE FOR THIS ISSUE IS 8th OCTOBER. It would be very helpful if, where possible, copy could be typed – *The Editor*.

Dear Members,

In this 10th Anniversary issue of the *Newsletter*, while we have the usual Reports and information, the main emphasis is on the experience of studying Psychology with the Open University and the contribution the Open University Psychological Society can make to this experience. Anyone who has studied through the OU will be aware of the problems of the relative isolation (as compared to other universities) of studying by correspondence. For some people this method may be ideal, for others it is all that is possible.

From the articles I have received I feel that OUPS has tried to provide an extra channel in communication through the *Journal* and the *Newsletter* and particularly through the organising of events, where people can meet, not only to socialise and discuss problems of

study, but also to articulate in a new language. Words and terms which have mainly only been read and written can be spoken, and through speech and informal discussion, ideas can often be better formulated.

As an extension on this theme I have included photographs of some of the Universities where many of the events have taken place and will continue to take place. I would particularly like to thank Nicholas Heriz-Smith for his photographs of Walton Hall on the *Newsletter* cover, and Alan Colhoun co-opted assistant editor, for all his help in editing this anniversary issue.

As a new participant in the activities of OUPS I hope both new members and those having a long association with the society will find these accounts as interesting and as relevant as I have.

Sarah Miller, *Editor*



In relative isolation



Professor
Judith Greene
Vice-President

OUPS AND THE BPS

All of you will know the OUPS of today: the biggest and most active of OU student societies, organizing its own conferences and weekends. What a different story when I first arrived at the OU in 1976. True there were some brave pioneers who had founded OUPS and had already taken the bold step of approaching the BPS about recognition of OU courses. But, with only DS261 on the stocks and D305 to come, they received a very dusty answer. Not only were OU courses not 'proper' degree courses but there would never be sufficient courses to make up a psychology degree with its associated laboratory classes.

The importance of the OUPS initiative was that it alerted me to a problem I had never even been aware of. The next two years saw a period of lengthy negotiations with the powerful and traditionally-minded Membership Committee of the BPS. Putting together the BPS package to include educational and biology courses (since many of these were still in draft form this involved sending a two foot mountain of paper to members of the committee); persuading them that experimental projects and summer schools are equivalent to three years of weekly labs; reassuring them that our courses are examined by prestigious psychologists from other universities; working out schemes which would allow our students to take a minimum of four psychology credits and at the same time reassure the BPS about Honours classification; each of

these represented a triumphant step towards full recognition.

Veterans among you who achieved recognition in the early years will remember all this. More recent graduates benefit from the current system by which everyone who conforms to the BPS requirements is entitled to one of our 'magic' eligibility certificates which are automatically accepted by the Membership Committee. Each year about 150 OU graduates gain recognition by this route (equivalent to the output of five ordinary psychology departments) and so are eligible for further training and employment as psychologists (witness the letter in last month's *Sesame*).

Far from denigrating OU courses the BPS now positively welcomes OU graduates; they have, too, become increasingly understanding about the special cases. The departments concerned with post-graduate training also respect the OU psychology degree. Occasionally one of you has written to me about an employer or university old-fashioned enough to retain some prejudice against the OU and I have always been happy to write a letter to rectify this!

In fact, one of the nicest spin-offs of BPS recognition are the many contacts with students it has brought in its train. I am delighted to receive so many letters from individual students, enquiring about BPS regulations, seeking advice about courses and careers, and asking me to act as a referee. I am particularly pleased when graduates write to me later about their successes and, indeed, about any problems they may encounter.

The existence of OUPS has led to the kind of contacts and fellow-feeling between academics and students which is taken for granted in other universities. My colleagues have, I know, enjoyed attending and contributing to OUPS week-ends and other activities. I can assure you that I consider my appointment as

Vice-President of OUPS to be both an honour and an opportunity to play a role in the life of OUPS. May this record of successful collaboration continue over the next ten years of OUPS.

Judith Greene

PSYCHOLOGY AND OUPS:

A personal view of the first ten years of OUPS. E. A. Cowne.

I joined the Open University in its first year: 1971 and took A100. I am a teacher and had studied Geography, Botany and Chemistry at A-level. I had taken Geography as main-field study in teacher-training and so when I began with the OU I thought I'd tackle something entirely different, namely Arts subjects; History, Literature and Philosophy, all being of general interest to me.

The whole idea of studying for a degree, while still being deputy head teacher of a local infant school and having a family of two children aged eight and nine with a husband who was attempting to run a business from home, was really rather ludicrous, so I saw it initially as a one-year trial. I worked hard and enjoyed the stimulus, the summer school and the friends I met at the study centre. When I achieved a distinction in that foundation subject it changed the viewpoint I had hitherto held of myself, as not being capable of university work. Perhaps I was able, after all, to achieve what I had always wanted — a degree in Psychology which would allow me to become an Educational Psychologist!

The next year the first of the courses which later were to form part of the Honours package came out; the Biological Bases of Behaviour, SDT 286. I took this with Personality Growth and Learning (E 281), at that time a half course later to be re-made into E 201. I was on the way! I passed these two, but not with distinction this time. No

more Psychology was available so I switched back to Arts. The next year, 1974, I took Introduction to Psychology in the form of DS 261. With credit exemptions this gave me a basic degree. In 1974 I took up the headship of another school — the degree may have helped.

During 1974 I am told OUPS began, but I have not talked to founder members. I believe it began in Birmingham. Perhaps some of our founder members could write to the *Newsletter* to tell us about our first year.

Vivian Milroy, who was the first regional representative for the London region, thinks OUPS may have begun as a result of a weekend school partly run by course team tutors; how appropriate if so. My own beginnings in OUPS were where they stayed throughout my undergraduate years, in the London region. Late in 1975, the year in which I tried Philosophy, I was encouraged by Margaret Green to go to a party run by London OUPS at the University of London Union in Malet Street. It was a wine and cheese social at which I met Vivian Milroy again, whom I had first met at Bangor Summer School when we were doing B.B.B.

Later during 1976 Vivian, Margaret and I were to run London OUPS in a casual manner. Vivian would ring up and say, "Time we had an event", and we would organise something. Vivian ran London OUPS through his office and sent us information about the Association of Humanistic Psychology and "Self and Society" along with our mailings. It was because of Vivian's hard work and his goodwill that London OUPS could flourish. In the summer of 1976 we ran an Encounter Group at the University of London Union. Fifty people came! I have visions of a very crowded, hot room, a very good buffet lunch of cherries and pate, French bread, cheese and wine. "The Dice Man" had just been published.

We played with sugar lumps as dice and dared each other to keep the contracts written by ourselves for each number. Richard Stevens ran the encounter group, as he has run many others for OUPS.

That year was the first year of Social Psychology D 305. The course team were keen to see how real students took to this course. We saw a lot of them; as initiative ran high we had three Psychology weekends devoted to D 305. A private group ran the first at Abergavenny in the spring. I remember the trust games and guided fantasy in the encounter group there. OUPS ran the other two at Nottingham. These Nottingham weekends were enormous fun. The field experiments took place in and around Nottingham. Our group was looking at how people reacted to the invasion of their personal space. Imagine Vivian in striped coloured trousers with a very large brimmed hat trying to look inconspicuous on the platform of Nottingham station as he invaded the space of passengers waiting for trains! We could hardly stop laughing long enough to record our observations of how soon the passengers moved away! When large van-loads of police arrived we thought another site might be a good idea! We fared a little better in the shopping precinct but noted how everyone moves away quite quickly if their private space is invaded. This was a phenomenon Margaret and I had noted earlier in the year when collecting observations of people's conversations in Kew Gardens. It was only at the cafe, the table positions being fixed, that we could get near enough to collect our observations.

For me and for many others OUPS began socially. It began with the wine and cheese, it continued through the humanistic influences as expressed first by Vivian in London activities and then by Richard Stevens through Social Psychology. Social psychology gave the impetus to OUPS to set up weekend schools. At

first it was to substitute for the lack of a summer school for D 305 — a course which we felt needed one. How could students in isolated situations at home study group behaviour unless some of us got together? The general public, as we found in Nottingham and Kew, do not respond too well to anonymous experiments. OUPS gave me an opportunity to share social psychology with others. It also gave opportunities for fun, laughter and a deepening understanding of the concepts. The use of humanistic models in group work opened out for me the inner world of psychology which the course units did not. I learnt about myself, my constructs, my relationships and how to do more work of this kind with groups outside the OU. I owe a great deal to Vivian and Richard and others who ran those early weekends.

The weekends were always well run by the OUPS National group; John Clapham and Len Brown, along with Penny Woolf, Pat Lindley and many others. They took an interest in our well-being. The lecture component of the weekends was of a high standard. The programme for 1976 included such well-known names as Dennis Gahagan, Judith Greene, Richard Stevens, Barbara Thompson, Mary Croxson and John Shotter. The course teams often came and helped us understand the units more thoroughly than our part-time tutors had done. We were very privileged to be OUPS members studying D 305 in that first year.

In 1977 Vivian bowed out gracefully from London OUPS which then appointed its first committee. Tricia Potecary and Derek Fairly ran the show along with Julia Lee Vivienne, Lulu Brown, Margaret Green and myself. They set up an ambitious monthly programme of evening lectures held mainly at ULU which catered for a wide variety of tastes. We ventured into various applications of psychology and allied disciplines.

Margaret Branch spoke of psycho-sexual counselling, Derek May about rehabilitation after limb amputations and Peter Marsh about aspects of aggression and football hooliganism. Our audiences varied in numbers. That autumn Richard Stevens spoke at the OUPS A.G.M. in London. It was, as always, a moving personal experience as well as thought-provoking to listen to him describe his changing paradigms of psychology; his search for new ways to approach his field of study. Even without recourse to notes I can remember the excitement I felt. Richard had a way of synthesizing his reading, his experiences and his thinking into some new wholeness which he shared with us. (Some of this thinking may have led to Unit 9 in DS 262 or part of the new D307 Social Psychology Course). Again we were privileged to be active OUPS participants.

In 1978 I studied Cognitive Psychology in its first year. It seems in retrospect that OUPS also swung away from its more social beginnings and entered a cognitive phase. We looked for lecturers to explain artificial intelligence, thinking processes and the like. The emphasis switched to our thoughts and our heads and we were no longer experiencing our psychology in mainly social terms.

The majority of people studying Psychology seem, at one time or another, to wish to learn more about themselves, how to regulate their lives or change their behaviours. Process Psychology may help, but it is perhaps harder to apply. Before our cognitive year began we listened to Guy Claxton on Zen and Eileen Pickard on the uses of bio-feedback. We also held a meeting to review psychology courses near Conditional Registration time. No-one except the committee came! Wendy Stanton Rogers talked to us about the changing paradigms in Psychology and showed us how search for meaning may be helping to break down barriers between

the Person and Process Psychology. This may have been a pre-runner of her unit eleven in DS 262 on Individual Differences.

In 1979 I took my last credit – Cognitive Development – and this completed an honours degree in Psychology, acceptable now to the BPS for graduate membership. The first batch of those of us who were now eligible to count our credits in this way were now through the system. A few had managed it in 1978 if they had the right courses. The package had only been finally negotiated that year by Judith Greene with the BPS, and one of the original aims of the society achieved.

This year London OUPS ran its first day school at Parsifal College. It was not surprising in view of the acceptance of our Psychology degree that it was called 'Psychology Shop Window' and took a look at careers in psychology. What became clear was that a degree is only a start and is better if added to existing professional qualifications and experience. For example, if you were a teacher, with psychology and then a post-graduate training, you could become an Educational Psychologist. We heard about helping the deaf and about work in telecommunications. The day school was very successful, thanks to the hard work of the committee and Judith Greene's very active help in finding speakers.

London continued in the Cognitive mode. We invited Peter Wason to help our thinking, Four Card tricks, Thogs and all.

Meanwhile South East OUPS also flourished and ran day schools as well. In 1980 Christine Pittman became National OUPS secretary. Jan Morris was President, Ian Aitken Chairman and Brian Clapham Treasurer. Ann Humphries continued the journal and Krystina the *Newsletter*. Most regions had a representative.

OUPS now ran three weekends a year;

a general one in the spring at York in 1978 combined with the BPS, and at Digby Stewart College in London in 1980.

The social psychology weekend also continued. In 1978 OUPS had run one at the Wirral which included the arrival of parachute games; an import from TAD. The revision weekend now included Cognitive Psychology. I remember vividly John Mayhew's clear explanation of Goal State Analysis – so clear I remembered it all in the exam.

Ann Rattue and then Lilli Foster ran London OUPS in all its glory. Lilli brought to it her interest in Personal Construct theory and in 1980 Fran Francella talked about Kelly's theories in her practice. Lilli also brought to the Society her gift for attracting the famous. In 1980 Jonathan Miller came, mid winter snow, to talk in an historical manner about hypnosis and magnetism. The now annual day-schools were star-studded. In 1981 Richard Gregory, Peter Wason, Michael Argyle and John Mayhew all spoke to us about their work. In 1982 Alan Baddeley, Ron Harre, Gillian Cohen and Edmund Leach followed with further research talks. Basil Bernstein spoke in the winter of 1982.

But in 1980 I bowed out of London OUPS and the OU entirely and joined the University of London to study for a Masters Degree in Child Development with clinical studies, a qualification leading to becoming an Educational Psychologist. Jan Morris, our National President, also went there to read the Masters Degree, but without the clinical training aspect. We did the OU credit, she with a first class honours and I with an upper second. I had never quite been able to devote myself to study as hard as Jan. I was weak in statistics because I had not completed the one half course specially designed to teach statistics (E 341). Jan was much better. It was a shock to find myself "statistically subnormal". I coped

by working at it all through the summer. The OU had trained me to teach myself and I did not learn so well from lectures.

The other shock was the library. The OU spoon-feeds by necessity. Now I had to find my own way through Journals, Abstracts, indices and citations. OU students are not prepared for this. I learnt new speed reading skills and my OU survival strategies proved useful. The practical work was in Essex (not too easy a journey from Twickenham) and took two to four days a week. Jan had more time for her study but needed it to do her research on the use of bio-feedback in labour at Queen Charlotte's Maternity Hospital.

By 1982 we both completed the Masters Degree very successfully. There were no posts near my home for Educational Psychologists so I returned to my school. I did become a tutor in the OU for DS 262 and Lilli persuaded me to stand for national president on Jan's resignation. That year as president and the last two as chairperson completed my nine years' association and work in and for OUPS.

In 1983 the highlight of the OUPS's year was our visit from Professor B. F. Skinner who came at Lilli's request.

I realise now how through active participation in OUPS I have been able to talk to many of our most famous present-day psychologists. I enjoyed Professor Skinner's lecture but most of all talking to him at Dinner. Then we heard him give examples of his ability to shape the behaviour of others – of Eric Fromm and of his own work habits. With his dry humour he described his present writing of a book about ageing – a process of which, at seventy-eight, he did not seem to be taking much notice. He rises at four a.m. and works till mid-morning at a desk organised to shape his behaviour into writing; pens and books all within easy reach. He really believes what he preaches

and what good study hints he gave!

In 1983 I left the school headship and took up my present post at the Institute of Education, London, where I am tutor to experienced teachers on a termly secondment to look at special needs in the ordinary schools. The D.E.S. has released some money direct to local authorities for I.N.S.E.T. but has earmarked this for specific uses of which my course is one of six or seven in 1984.

This post requires me to have the ability to organise; to "chair" a group of twenty-five experienced adults in seminars and discussions and to help design each term's lecture programme and content. I also do some of the teaching but mainly in small group seminars, helping teachers develop practical implementations of policies for special needs in their schools. I travel to these schools to discuss the projects with head teachers and local advisors anywhere in S.E. England.

My experience in the OU, studying psychology and participating in student activities — OUSA and OUPS alike — has made it possible to adopt to the demands of this new job. I owe the OU a great deal: the degree itself, which could never have been achieved at that stage of my life in any other institution; and my gain in confidence and ability to handle new situations requiring a range of social skills.

I use Psychology itself to help explain to teachers ways and means of helping children with learning and behavioural difficulties. I wrote to Professor Klaus Wedell who trained Educational Psychologists in Birmingham before moving to the Institute. His area of the Child Development Department uses applied Behavioural Psychology as one of its main models. The Educational world at present is being invaded by initiatives, largely stemming from the Birmingham School of Education Psychology based on Behavioural Objectives.

The methodology allows positive thinking about what the child can do and this swings away from the medical deficit models of handicap, further perpetuated by the use of psychometrics and testing. The use of task analysis allows teachers, parents and care workers under the guidance of psychologists to see progress, however small, towards the priority objective.

Our courses in the OU, I feel, underplay the applications of the behavioural approaches. There are, of course, dangers and an eclectic view is necessary. I draw from cognitive and other models when necessary. Children's difficulties may lie in ineffective strategies of learning. It is the analysis of these strategies, perhaps following ideas from cognitive psychology (Bruner, Piaget etc.) that may help. Work done by Neville Bennett (Ref. 1) and Charles Deforges (Ref. 2) is proving very interesting in this field. My own interest in this was fanned by reading an article by Pask (Ref. 3) and by my own work on D 303 Summer School on learning styles along with Ann Rattue and others. There is much to be done still in this area of cognitive style and learning strategies.

Psychology alone however, cannot answer all the questions in Education. Working with organisations requires other theoretical backgrounds such as systems, sociology or management theories. I find the courses I did not complete, such as School and Society, Systems Performance and Human Factors, Systems Failures, Management in Education almost as useful as those I did finish. Our "rag-bag" degree, as someone once described mine, can prove very useful in applied fields such as mine.

Now midway through 1984 I can look back over nearly thirteen years of Open University life. In this article I have tried to show how study and experience alike have woven together to make possible for me changes of lifestyle, gains in

personal confidence, dynamic new ways of solving problems, to say nothing of the many friendships made en-route. My debt is enormous and OUPS has had a very large part to play. Thank you, everyone, for what we have experienced together. I only hope that now I can repay some of that debt in the future.

As Chairperson of OUPS I look for new directions for us to move in. During the last two years the Society has moved forward in size, scope and hopefully efficiency. Our regional expansion is one of my main hopes. I would like each region to offer something of the richness of experience that I was lucky enough to benefit from in London. It is more difficult in other parts of the country. We will have to be inventive to cope with problems of distance and thinness of OU population. For some, our week-end schools will be the only chance of working with other students; their quality must always remain high.

Time and energy to develop OUPS services are difficult to find in busy lives. We look to new blood — new initiatives. I can promise that active participation recaps its own rewards in the richness of experience gained.



Elizabeth Cowne
Chairperson

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MY DEBT TO OUPS

The path to gain a psychology degree can at times become very strenuous and you might often feel desperately lonely. Friends might see a decision to study with the Open University, and especially to study psychology, as a threat to the set pattern of an existing friendship, they may fear that potential development might influence and change and — perhaps break up that friendship.

From the day I joined the Open University my life began to change. As a student of psychology I encountered much scepticism and heard endless remarks as for example — 'Be on your guard — she is analysing every word you utter'.

Therefore it was with a real need to meet other students of psychology that I joined the Open University Psychological Society. It offered the opportunity of meeting and mixing with other psychology students. The Society arranged both 'General Psychology' events and 'Revision' weekends at various Universities. Here I would meet other psychology students who perhaps also had (as I had) the need to discuss and exchange views and ideas about essays and projects. Burning topics like 'unjust tutors' and 'incomprehensible units' were discussed at length.

My many moments of despair and doubt, of wondering why I voluntarily submitted myself to the agony of studying, were pushed aside when stimulating arguments and discussions with fellow students took place. New breadths of vision developed after an endless process of searching, anticipation, verification and conflicts with myself and others. It was not just that I gained new information from other students, but in discus-

sions and interaction with tutors and students I often suddenly realised that in fact I knew and held certain theories in my own mind, that, until then, I had not been able to fully express.

By realising how much I was benefiting by meeting other students at the OUPS events, I felt I wanted to encourage other students to join the Society to gain what I felt the Society had contributed to my own development. I therefore joined the Committee of the London Region of OUPS, at first as an event organiser, later as chairperson.

Before I began studying with the Open University I had been privileged to know some highly esteemed psychologists, whom I knew as approachable and generous with both their experience and knowledge as well as with their time. I invited such psychologists (as well as many others) to lecture at OUPS day and evening events. Such experienced lecturers gave clear concise talks which stimulated and inspired us to further study and research. Memorable speakers are Michael Argyle, R. L. Gregory, John Mayhew, Basil Bernstein, Jonathan Miller, John Bowlby, Peter Wason — to mention but a few.

As the London Region of OUPS became a successful, financially self-supporting branch, some of the committee members felt they would like to contribute their experience to central OUPS, and were elected onto the central OUPS Executive Committee in 1982. Through many sessions of discussions, arguments, and hard work, the Society has more than doubled its membership over the past few years. The 13 OUPS Regions have been encouraged and assisted and now arrange Day and Evening Regional Events for their members. Every year the Society arranges four University Week-end Events in different parts of the country where many hundreds of students attend. A 'humanistic' week-

end also takes place once yearly. The publication of four editions of the 'new' *Newsletter* has been welcomed and praised by many members who besides the *Newsletter* also receive the yearly journal the *New Psychologist*.

This year OUPS has affiliated with OUSA, this brings with it benefits which give us the use of facilities for postage, printing, publicity and membership, which are important and costly factors now with membership continually increasing. Nevertheless OUPS retains its autonomy and is the biggest and most active of all the Societies within the Open University.

The importance and acceptance of our Society in the psychological world was well demonstrated when Professor B. F. Skinner accepted our invitation to give a talk to our members last July. This event we held at the prestigious 'Royal Society'. It attracted psychologists from all over Britain. Many more members wanted to attend the occasion than space allowed and the BBC recorded and broadcast Professor Skinner's talk on two later dates.

Without the courageous founder members of OUPS, Ann Humphrey, Pat Linley, Len Brown and John Clapham and others who supported them, we would not be able to talk with pride about OUPS, and it is with admiration and thanks that we must look back to these people. I consider it an honour to have had the opportunity to play a part in the development of OUPS.

To the future I look with hope, hope that all coming executive committees will continue to further the benefits of the Society for its many members, and hope that the members will involve themselves more in the continuing development of 'their' Society.

L.H.F.

DEGREE OF CHANGE

by Robert Summersgill

Seven years ago, having come to the intellectually staggering conclusion that British television had sunk to an all time low and that it was unlikely that it would ever improve, I decided that I should try to find some constructive way to fill my time. Now decorating was never my forte and the thought of gardening horrified me; the Open University seemed the only viable option. At that time I was working as an engineer and having studied engineering for many years, (and) hating every second of it, had no burning desire to spend another seven years doing the same. I had a vague interest in psychology, or to be more accurate in what I thought psychology was, and after all there would be no 'hard sums' involved, so the choice was made.

I have few recollections of my time with the OU, just a nebulous feeling of having spent many years rushing headlong, and totally out of control, from one crisis to the next. Such terms as TMA, CMA cut-off date and examination occasionally surface from some dark recess of my memory to haunt me, but I have been told that it is nothing that could not be sorted out by a good psychoanalyst.

Having survived this ordeal relatively unscathed, the question then arose as to what I was going to do with my newly acquired qualification. I was in my mid-thirties, well established in an albeit boring career as a technical author and the ink was not even dry on my shiny new degree (in fact the OU has not even sent it to me yet). It was then that I saw an advertisement in the Appointments Memorandum of the BPS Bulletin for the post of consultant psychologist to work on human factors aspects of computer systems. The six hour interview which resulted from my application was made no easier by the fact that I had no idea

of what the human factors aspects of computer systems were. Fortunately, the rest of the applicants must have suffered the same ignorance because two weeks later, for reasons which still elude me, I was offered the post of senior consultant psychologist. I am at least now in a position to explain the domain of this area of applied psychology.

Human factors, when applied to computer systems, is a field in which current knowledge of human cognitive processes is used to attempt to find a route through the cognitive maze which is often inadvertently set up during computer system design. The increasing use of large computer systems and the increasing complexity of these systems has led to real problems in the 'cognitive mapping' of computer data bases and programs onto human concept formation. The extent to which people can cope with complexity is finite and there is a real danger that as systems become more complex they could become unusable. What are needed are more user-friendly systems that 'disguise' their inherent complexity. It is in the design of such systems that the applied psychologist can play a useful role.

Experience has shown that individual differences in ability to handle complex information play a relatively small part in the success or failure of a system. It is of course true that some people are better than others at handling complexity, but in general nobody can cope with systems of today's complexity without help. The question facing large system users today is not 'can we find people of exceptional ability to operate these systems?', but 'can we develop means by which people of average intelligence can cope with these systems?'

The person-machine interface lies at the heart of any problem a user may have in interacting with a computer. It is the task of the psychologist to, at least on the

surface, make the computer's behaviour appear transparent to the user. The current method of attempting to do this is by mapping known psychological processes onto the machine-person dialogue. Ideally, the users model of any decision-making process and its expression through well-established linguistic structures should be incorporated into the program itself. Such work, often termed cognitive ergonomics, is not carried out simply because it is intrinsically interesting or because it may throw some light on how the brain operates, but because at the present time it is the only way in which interaction, in any meaningful sense, can be achieved between a machine and its human operator.

The methodology used in human factors work would be familiar to any OU psychology graduate. Experimentation, literature searches, error analysis etc., are used to assess the objective suitability of a system, whilst surveys, interviews and observation are used to investigate the user's subjective feelings towards it. I was pleasantly surprised to find that the OU had provided me with a reasonable grounding in most of the skills that were required. It is also satisfying to find the high regard in which the OU is held by the majority of applied psychologists I have met over the past six months. I may have been fortunate, but I have yet

to face any difficulty as far as recognition of an OU degree is concerned. On the contrary, it generally appears to be well respected.

As far as starting a career in psychology is concerned, I think that it is important to remember that when an organisation is advertising a post, what they are describing is the ideal applicant. The chances of that person turning up for an interview, even in these depressed times, is almost zero. The company I now work for were asking for a PhD as a minimum requirement, but I was told during the interview that mature graduates often have more to offer a company than can be gained from a post-graduate degree. There are, of course, certain fields in professional psychology in which an appropriate post-graduate degree is mandatory, and if you want a career in one of these areas, at least the way to go about it is clearly laid down. If, however, you are interested in working in applied psychology and you see a post advertised, then write for it. It only costs 16p. An OU degree can get you into an interview, but ultimately that is all that any qualification can achieve. After that you are on your own. Sell yourself, you have a great deal more to offer than the majority of graduates from any conventional university.

Robert Summersgill



York University

TEN YEARS ON — A PERSONAL VIEW

It was a short letter in SESAME. Ann Humphreys writing about the 1974 introduction of DS261 and Professor Annett's support for the launching of a psychological society. I wrote off to Ann expressing interest and received a reply from someone in the North West who had been roped in to help get the Society off the ground.

The inaugural general meeting followed soon afterwards on 1 June 1974. It was held at Aston University in Birmingham where, following an address by Professor Annett, a draft constitution was thrashed out. Among the topics discussed was the privacy of members' names and addresses and the question of what to do with the funds if the Society didn't survive! The first President was Ann Humphreys with John Annett as Vice President, Mary Winnings as Chairman (no sexist nonsense in those days), Janet McGillivray as Secretary and John Clapham as Treasurer.

I recall that there was also much discussion about the objectives of the Society and its links with other bodies such as the BPS. I was not particularly concerned at that time as I had just changed jobs and did not envisage working as a professional psychologist of any kind. Others, the President in particular, were keen to use OUPS as a pressure group to get an OU degree in psychology which would be recognised by the BPS.

In the January 1978 *Newsletter* (No.2) Ann Humphreys referred to those who 'hoped to pursue a profession in psychology' and in referring to the BPS regulations said, "At present no degree in psychology at the OU renders the holder eligible for graduate membership." She went on to say, "This rather depressing state of affairs is unlikely to change quickly."

Almost 2 years later however in the December 1976 *Newsletter* (No. 8) the head line screamed "OU psychology

degree accepted by BPS." A lot of effort had obviously been put into promoting the acceptability of the OU degree. Although my job was not psychology-orientated I applied for student membership. The BPS obviously didn't realise that OU students might be in full-time employment thus disbarring them from student membership. Professor Judith Greene came to my rescue however and sorted it out.

I decided in 1978 to try and get a degree in psychology acceptable to the BPS and return to personnel work. I also wanted to get the IPM professional qualification from which I obtained some exemptions because of my BA degree. I studied for the remaining subjects at the same time as I studied for the extra credits I needed for an honours degree. By January 1979 however I was "battle-fatigued". I had been offered a Two-one and although I had some spare credits (being a ten credit student) I couldn't meet the BPS's five credit requirements. Out of the blue Judith Greene wrote to me to give me advance warning that the BPS had reduced their requirements to four credits. I duly signed on again and did the Cognitive and Developmental Psychology courses, and completed my personnel qualifications.

By the time I finally completed the BPS requirements and accepted my honours degree I was back in Personnel and Training work. The psychology courses provided me with a valuable basis for the 'training of trainers' courses I undertook and I began designing and delivering 'in-house' management development courses.

In March 1981 I became a graduate member of the BPS and later joined the Occupational Psychology Section and the newly formed Counselling Psychology Section.

Ten years ago I'd moved out of personnel work because of local government

re-organisation. I'd started an OU degree in Social Science subjects because I couldn't get time off work to study for personnel qualifications. I kept on with my degree doing subjects broadly relevant to my changing jobs, eg Systems and Statistics courses, and only joined the OUPS because of a long standing general interest in psychology.

Five years later I'd used my OU degree to move back into personnel work and later joined the BPS.

How do I use psychology? The three main areas in Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development, and Counselling. I'm lucky enough to have a job which gives me the freedom to apply some of the theories and techniques I've learned with or because of the OU, eg Repertory Grid from D305. I'm still learning of course and look forward to becoming a member of the Occupational Psychology Division of the BPS to further my professional experience.

July 1984

M. S. Guttridge

DISCOVERY LEARNING

I am currently hurtling through the pleasant English countryside on the Nottingham-Glasgow Express. (I use the word "express" more in hope than reality - the guard has just announced lengthy delays are expected.) Homeward bound. The train is packed and indeed I had to elbow two old grannies in the stomach and knee a vicar in the groin before I could even get on board. Britain is in the middle of a heatwave. Of course, the train's air-conditioning has come out on strike at having to work so hard. The buffet car is closed and my meat sandwiches are inedible because the temperature has encouraged penicillin to grow on them. I am tired, grimy and hungry but none of these things are bothering me as much as they might. Why not? Let me explain.

For the past 48 hours, I have been in

the company of people from various backgrounds - (for instance), educationalists from universities, industry, the health service, schools, nurseries, and pre-school playgroups; a professional soldier, a classical guitarist, a physiotherapist, a badge maker, a counsellor, a soon-to-be full-time student, and so on. The overt curriculum was an OU revision school for E201. My role was tutor of part of that overt curriculum, but I am not writing about that - best to get the students' interpretation rather than that of the tutors.

What distracts me from my present discomforts on the train are my thoughts about the weekend's hidden curriculum. By that I mean the friendships formed in and out of the study sessions; the relationships; the sharing of different ideas; hearing about alternative lifestyles; the refreshingly varied perspectives. I know that reads like just the sort of statement you would expect from a psychologist. All I can say in defence is that I spend most of my working time meeting people, listening to them and talking with them. So it takes a bit more than the ordinary to get me thinking. Nor am I suggesting that these OU students were particularly special with respect to the general OU student population. I must admit though, I did learn (third-hand I hasten to add) about the art of wrestling in a bath of jelly and how to pass an exam question about an empty box.

What I am suggesting is that while traditional universities have many advantages over the OU for both tutors and students, it is not a total imbalance. The great advantage the OU has is that its students have life experience. In many ways this can be a far superior qualification to any paper certificate from school. For me this was the hallmark of the students which made the weekend so interesting. Not everyone can afford the time or money for attendance at a week-

end revision school. That is a pity.

At last, Glasgow fast approaches. Home, family, the hub-bub of everyday life, far removed from the insular campus. One might worry that such a hectic group experience could distance one's self from one's spouse and children. I feel the opposite and am impatient to share my experience with my family. I think we will all benefit.

Richard C. Woolfson
(E201 Tutor, Region II)

Sue Bates
Secretary



REPORTS ON THE LONDON DAY SCHOOL

LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS

by Dr Michael Argyle

Summary by Susan Bates

"If you have lots of friends you will live longer", stated Dr Argyle. This was the message I picked up from a lecture carried out at a breath-taking pace and covering the findings of many studies into the effect of sound long-term relationships upon our health and general well-being.

It became clear that it is more important to have a few really close friends than a whole range of acquaintances with whom you have only superficial contact, because the essential ingredients for good health are only to be found in the more intimate relationships. One Californian study showed that those with feeble social networks actually die earlier than those with good networks. Even if you

don't die, the likelihood of mental illness is greatly increased when the important relationships in our lives fail.

Dr Argyle then proceeded to spell out in detail for us what the important elements of a good relationship are. It seems that there are several significant factors which must be present for a relationship to have a beneficial effect upon your health.

In the first place you must have someone to talk to. This doesn't just mean talking about the state of the world or the price of children's shoes. There must also be a high level of intimacy and self-disclosure. In other words, you need to be able to talk about yourself and your feelings. Superficial conversation does not satisfy this need.

It is also interesting to note that it is better to talk to a woman than to a man, whatever sex you are yourself, because generally speaking women make better confidantes than men.

A second major factor is 'doing things together'. In this way your timetables become intertwined and this also strengthens the relationship.

The third factor that seems to be important is an understanding of the rules that govern all relationships. The rules are different for each type of relationship, and vary from culture to culture, but they all contain the following elements:

- (a) Exchange of rewards - i.e. the relationship must be of value to both parties.
- (b) Intimacy - i.e. both people must feel able to talk intimately about their feelings.
- (c) Co-ordination - i.e. a certain amount of time must be spent together.
- (d) Third party rules - i.e. both must obey the rules of confidentiality when talking to other people about the relationship.

By and large, if you understand these rules and adhere to them, you will be able to sustain a relationship, and if you break the rules you will lose the relationship.

At this point, it becomes obvious that many of these significant factors are available in marriage, especially if you are a man. Women, however, often don't have anyone to talk to in marriage. (Could this go some way to explaining why so many women are dissatisfied with marriage today, I wondered?). Men benefit more from marriage than women because wives provide emotional support to their husbands, whereas wives have to look outside the marriage for the support that they themselves need. So it seems that marriage may be good for your health, particularly if you are a man.

Talking intimately together and doing things together are the two most important factors needed to create a bond between people. Dr Argyle suggested that, once formed, it is extremely difficult to break the bonds of a relationship. The bonds which are formed when we are very young, such as those with our parents, brothers and sisters, are particularly enduring and often last a lifetime.

Marriage bonds are also extremely strong and difficult to break. Consequently divorce is a much more complex matter than we often believe it to be because it involves breaking the emotional bond which has been formed over a period of time, and it is not always possible to do this. And so divorce does not necessarily lead to happiness, because the old bonds are always there and can continue to cause conflicts.

Dr Argyle seemed to think it would be more satisfactory if we could develop our social skills in such a way that people could face up to disagreements within marriage constructively. It seems that conflict with one's spouse from time to time is inevitable. One study quoted showed that the spouse was the person

who produced the most conflict in one's life, but at the same time the most satisfaction. The amount of conflict was only half as much as the amount of satisfaction, so, on balance, marriage appeared to be a good thing.

There is always a certain amount of conflict in any relationship, whether it be with family, friends, neighbours or spouse, but the important thing to do is to learn how to deal with it constructively and how to resolve difficulties in an effective way.

If we could find ways of training people in the skills necessary to sustain long-term relationships, so that we are all able to:

- (a) form strong bonds in the first place;
- (b) realize that these bonds may last for ever;
- (c) develop useful negotiating skills in order to deal with conflicts effectively;

then perhaps we could avoid divorce and so all be happier, healthier and live longer!

In a book called 'The Anatomy of Relationships' which will be available in November 1984, Dr Argyle considers many of these issues in further detail.



Lilli
Hvingtoft-Foster
President

SOCIAL INTERACTION AND PHOTOGRAPHING

On the afternoon of 2 June 1984 Dr Halla Beloff, Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Edinburgh University, gave a talk to OUPS on 'Social Interaction and Photographing'. She indicated that photography had been one of those popular and ubiquitous areas of activity which social psychologists had previously ignored, although the psychoanalyst Abraham had written on some aspects of it.

Dr Beloff's central theme was to emphasize that the photographer in relation to his/her subjects could be seen in various roles. For example, some became voyeurs, whilst others were taking on roles of community anatomists, and yet others were political or social commentators. Her illustrations took the form of black and white photographs, which she suggested had a literary quality to them. The photographs were somewhat iconoclastic in nature because, apart from a society portrait by Cecil Beaton and a photograph of a young woman servant taken by Marbaret Cameron in the nineteenth century, we were shown a couple of well-known persons depicted in their 'off' moments, a picture of a female subject with the label 'blind' displayed around her neck, a patient dying from cancer, a Nazi officer, several peasants, a jurist, pastry cook, bailiff and tramp. The photographers of this genre were named as including Dian Arbus, Richard Avedon, Don McCullin, August Sande and Margaret Boeuthie-White.

Dr Beloff went on to say that the status of the photographer in relation to the subject was another factor to be considered when attempting to analyze or describe social interaction. She also stressed that photographers could depict only 'a world' and not 'the world'. This fact was certainly exemplified by her collection of illustrations for it excluded subjects in noticeably happy or comic

moods, those engaged in sports activities and those dressed up for social occasions such as weddings, parties, etc. Therefore, although Dr Beloff had described photography as a popular activity available to any person of modest means, she did not concern herself with modern and popular expressions of this form of social interaction, instead she mainly concentrated on showing the work of what she described as 'serious' photographers. Many of the works illustrated had a somewhat 'dated' air to them in that they were taken between fifty and hundred years ago, but perhaps, alternatively, they could be described as historical records and further, in some cases, works of art. Additionally the illustrations could, at times, represent aspects of reality but never reality itself.

Joyce Newman



Angelika Sumpton
Treasurer



David Hardisty
Vice-President

COGNITIVE SCIENCE

A resume on the paper given by Dr Jon Slack at the London OUPS Day Conference on 2nd June 1984 at Parsival College

What is Cognitive Science

Dr Slack opened his talk by stating that Cognitive Science is a recently emerged, multi-disciplined approach to a search for a better understanding of people as 'Information Processing Systems'. He suggested that the various disciplines currently involved include:

- Psychology
- Philosophy
- Neurophysiology
- Sociology
- Linguistics
- Computer Science
- Systems Theory
- Musicology
- Cognitive Anthropology

Each of these fields has its own specialised jargon, and therefore one of the initial problems is to find a common language in which to discuss and exchange information.

(Interestingly, he alluded to an early pioneering approach by Herb Simon at Carnegie who became interested in this 'field' after gaining a Nobel Prize for Economics.)

Dr Slack represented an Information Processing System (IPS) in the following generalised way:



The central COGNITION box, he said, needs to be analysed in terms of:

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Belief Systems | Memory |
| Consciousness | Perception |
| Development | Skills |
| Emotion | Performance |
| Interactions | Thought Processes |
| Learning | Language |

Motivation might also be added to the list although it may be better thought of as naturally arising out of it. He stressed the fact that there is a strong need to look at all the topics in parallel in order to gain significant insights into how people function in terms of being an organic IPS.

How Has It Emerged

Dr Slack briefly outlined the historical lineage of Cognitive Science; being born principally from Cognitive Psychology in the late 70's, out of Information Processing and Computer Science in the 50's and 60's, which in turn were the offspring of Cybernetics, Behaviourism and Communications Theory back in the 40's.

He then devoted a substantial part of his talk to explaining the principal reasons for the emergence of Cognitive Science.

1. Firstly, he said that there had long been an over-differentiation or fragmentation of psychology, a great deal of research had been done on a large number of topics but in relative isolation to one another. There was a perceived need to integrate much of this information;
2. Secondly, there had been a lack of psychological 'reality' in much of the AI modelling activities.
3. Thirdly, a pronounced split had developed between experimental and theoretical psychology, in which there was a tendency for each side to seize upon bits from the other to support their own pet theories, rather than look at the subject with a broader perspective.
4. Next, he suggested that many 'dead ends' were being reached. For example, analysis by models had been based on serial processing, as much as anything for technological reasons, when it was evident that much neural processing is in fact carried out in

parallel. This has clearly been, and still is to a large extent, a major shortcoming. Despite the fact that modern computer hardware far exceeds the brain's capacity in certain primitive (serial) operations, the overall performance of many recent models has been woefully slow.

Dr Slack briefly mentioned the work of Coslyn in building a quite complex model based on 200 findings in different fields. The process of doing this, however, had highlighted the need to incorporate a whole new range of skills, as well as raising the nontrivial problem of how to test such complex models.

5. He then mentioned the need for a new initiative to tackle some long outstanding problems such as how memory works. This brain teaser is now thought to require a multi-disciplinary approach as a sine qua non, if a solution is to be eventually forthcoming.

6. Finally he cited a need to circumvent reductionism. He said he felt it was necessary for the different disciplines to interact with each other in a structured way in order to raise the value of the various types and levels of analysis.

Skills

Dr Slack then outlined the skills and knowledge sets which he believed would be necessary for researchers in the field to have in the future. These included:

- Experimental design and analysis
- Model building theory
- Computer programming
- Experimental observation and data collection
- Neurophysiology
- Theoretical linguistics (Phew!)

(These are, presumably, in addition to any knowledge of traditional psychology!).

Educational Implications

Dr Slack concluded a most interesting talk with some thoughts on how future researchers might be educated to acquire this prodigious body of expertise. He said that he would prefer to avoid the current tendency to overspecialise. He would like to see an undergraduate programme containing subsidiary psychology components. The bulk of the detailed training would then take place as a postgraduate course in which students would attend copious lectures on the specialised topics in the early part of the course. Later in the course the emphasis would switch to their own research work.

Summing Up

On a personal note, I found this historically oriented talk to be a valuable introduction to the subject. It very much complimented the recent talk by Prof. Colin Blakemore on Radio 3, in which various leading figures in AI and other areas were interviewed in depth. It also contrasted with the TV.4 series 'Voices' in which Margaret Bowden, Sir John Eccles and other eminent people in diverse fields talked about the 'Ghost in the Machine', as Arther Koestler put it.

If indeed the way forward in this field is by applying the combined brain power of multi-disciplinary, but nevertheless broadly educated teams, it can be observed that the OU is currently one of the places where a broad based degree can be gained (the BPS preferred profile notwithstanding). I find the idea of including some music, philosophy and linguistics in a 'psychology' degree attractive, while conceding that their relevance could be questioned in some areas. I hope, therefore, that those of you who were present found the paper as interesting as I did, although it sometimes seems difficult to relate what is a fairly erudite subject to the more immediate human problems at the coal face.

Geoff Hardcastle



**REPORTS ON NOTTINGHAM REVISION WEEKEND
ONE PERSON'S PERCEPTION OF THE JULY OUPS REVISION WEEKEND**

Pre-lunch drinks on the lawn, tutorials in the welcome shade of trees, conversation while strolling through rose gardens from seminar to dinner, wine on the terrace and more talk in the balmy dusk – the lucky ones will recognise the Nottingham study weekend. We *did* study, and enjoyed it, thanks to the efforts of the very able tutors to provide just what we wanted. The Mediterranean climate encouraged the casting off of clothes, which lent a holiday atmosphere even to the revision sessions (and may I take this opportunity to pay a personal tribute to Ken Onion's legs, which added considerably to my enjoyment of the Block 4 revision). In addition to all this, the choice and quantity of food was better than usual, the only problems being the self-concept, if one over-indulged, or the cognitive dissonance, if one didn't.

Thanks again to the superb tutors, and the members of the OUPS committee responsible for such a successful weekend.

Sheene Will

A SATURDAY AFTERNOON PUNKNIC

On Saturday afternoon 7th July, Nottingham, at 86°F, was the hottest place in Europe. It was an afternoon for observing your toes via the surface of a cool, clear stream, or the world through the bottom of a lager glass. Have you noticed the heat can give even the most innocuous

people a sadistic streak? So it was with Robert Edelman, a lecturer at the OUPS Nottingham weekend. "We'll do some field studies," he said, mentally releasing himself for a session at the bar. "Who would like to do a study of the punks in Nottingham centre?"

The three not dissimilarly solar-motivated females in our group rose with enthusiasm to the idea. Despite stolid Yorkshire resistance from Ken and my limp agreement, which concealed a rampant Welsh thirst, a format was evolved and a questionnaire hastily assembled.

The study attempted to compare the views of a random sample of punks with those of a random sample of non-punks. We defined a punk as having a certain mode of dress, with variegated hair carefully disarranged into spikes or bristles. The non-punks were those of more conservative and conventional appearance. The questionnaire aimed to investigate their relationships with society at large. No doubt the questions could have been more salient and searching, but we had only three hours to design, execute and analyse our scheme.

It was planned that we, i.e. Jaleel, Jackie, Carole, Ken and myself should interview three or four individuals from each category in an age range from approx. 15 years to approx. 20 years. We would then see what conclusions and significances we could draw from the results. And so began a most interesting and entertaining hour.

A narration of all our anecdotes would result in even more severe editing of this article than it has suffered in its present form. Suffice it to say that our vernacular vocabularies benefitted no end and our prejudices were confounded. We also formulated a counter Piagetian theory in Immoral Development! We learned about "OI!" music, at least Carole did! We learned about Shadies—at least Carole did!

Back at the University we were all so affected by the relationships and discoveries of the afternoon that it took all of Ken's persuasive powers to get us to collate and organise our findings.

We were pleased to notice that there was no rejection or refusal from any subjects in the two samples. In fact, the punks seemed to confer more readily. We also felt that apart from the obvious, superficial differences there was a surprising congruity among the individuals and between the samples. If we allow for our subjective assessment that the punks were more honest at admitting to the negative aspects, and were possibly less honest when referring to the positive ones, and that the converse was true of the conventional group, then the differences could be construed as being less marked. In fact, one young punk lady,

when asked if she might mature into a form of geriatric punkhood, said "Don't be daft. It's only a phase we pass through isn't it?"

The true significance of the study, as far as our group was concerned, was that we discovered for ourselves that things are not always as we believe them to be.

It was anticipated that our interpretation of the responses might reflect the contrasting outlook each sample had towards society in general. The conclusions we reached did not reveal the heterogeneity some of us expected. Of course, the sample was small, the study hastily and inadequately prepared but it was pertinent to our own development.

Jaleel Gristian
Carole Markham
Jackie Yates
Ken Holroyd
Dave Mathias

Questionnaire

- We introduced ourselves as "Members of the Open University" doing a survey of selected groups. Hence the first Question.
- | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Have you heard of the OU? | 4. How do you choose your style of dress? | 9. Do you consider your parents to be working class/middle class? |
| 2. What age were you when you left School?
(How old are you now?) | 5. What kind of music do you like? | 10. Do you belong to any particular "In" group? |
| 3. Are you employed/unemployed?
(Are you looking for work?) | 6. Are you for or against the idea of marriage? | 11. What kind of relationship do you have with the police? |
| | 7. Do you live with your parents? | 12. Are you for or against the miners' strike? |
| | 8. Do you have good relationships with your family? | |

RESPONSES

The Punk Sample = 20; The Conventional Sample = 19. There was a near equal mix of the sexes.

Q.	Positive %		Negative %		Comment or qualifications
	Punks	Cons.	Punks	Cons.	
1. OU?	65	80	35	20	
3. Employed?	75	80	25	20	Percentages of those of employable age.
6. Marriage?	55	80	30	—	15% Punks; 20% Cons. No real opinion.
7. Parents I?	75	90	25	10	
8. Parents II?	70	95	30	5	
11. Police?	25	70	45	20	No strong + or - Punks 20; Cons. 10
12. Miners?	25	5	50	80	No strong + or - Punks 25; Cons. 15
2. 75% of punks left school at 16 years. 63% of Cons.					Some were of normal school age.
4. Explanations of dress were very similar from both groups.					
5. Musical tastes were not easily categorised, though Punks gravitated towards "Hardcore" and "Punk" whilst Cons had wider spread of taste.					
9. W/Class: Punks 70% Cons. 78%; M/Class: Punks 25% Cons. 22%. (1 don't know)					
10. No real "In" sects within original group definition and though 'shadies' were mentioned they could not be defined.					

N.B. - We were impressed with the percentage in employment. The unemployed 'percentages' all stated that they were seeking work. One was enrolling in the Y.T.S. in September.



Cliff Unwin
Regional
Development
Officer

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEWS

I'm glad to say that since the last *Newsletter* there has been a lot of development in many regions. New committees have been formed by Ian Aitkin in 02 and Jean Evans in 04, who have added to those already 'active' regions of 01, 08, 11 and 13. Following in hot pursuit is Dave Lewis in region 10, Barbara Wilson in 07 and Margaret Lawton in 09 who are very active. If you are in one of these regions and would like to help in some way, do not hesitate to contact your regional representative for the time, date and location of the next regional meeting. Being a member of your regional team can give you great satisfaction and many new friends.

I am still looking for regional representatives for regions 03 and 05. Please contact me if you would like to know more about being a regional representative or would be interested in joining your regional committee. You only need about half a dozen people to make a start and you will find that interest will quickly grow. It also means you will have a representative who can attend the Executive and speak on behalf of your region. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sub Regional Contacts

This is a new innovation to cater for remote areas that have too few OUPS members in one locality to form a committee or are too far away from the venue

for the regional committee. The idea is to improve communication by nominating one 'contact' in such an area, who will be sent all the necessary information by the regional rep. It is to encourage local groupings for occasional 'get togethers' or small events such as evening lectures. It may also be possible for a nucleus of members to share travel costs to regional events, meetings or even to week-end schools. It might also help where population areas cut across OU boundaries and members from two regions find it more convenient to meet somewhere on the border.

We already have two such contacts, Jill Heaps for Chester and North Wales (hands across the border) address: 18 Oaklea Avenue, Hoole, Chester; and Carl Taylor for the North Kent area, address: 41 Church Road, Oare, Nr Faversham. By all means contact them if you are in their area and they will keep you informed of meetings and events.

Regional Grants

Grants of £100 each have been authorised to be paid to the following regions, 02, 04, and 11. A provisional grant of £100 is granted to Region 10 pending full organisation of their committee.

Note: Regions must have a properly organised committee before any grant is authorised.

Will all regional reps please keep me informed as to the details of all the members of their committees.

Cliff Unwin



Sue Alexander
Conference
Liaison Officer

REGIONAL NEWS

REGION 01

London Day School, 24th November at Parsifal College. A Multi Disciplinary Applied Psychology Day.

Professor David Hawkrige, Director of Institute of Educational Technology will speak on the Psychology behind Open University studies. Other speakers to be announced.

For further information contact: Carrie Tiffin - Tel. 0753 654612.

REGION 04 - BIRMINGHAM

PUB NIGHTS at the GUN BARRELS, Bristol Road/Edgbaston Park Road, Birmingham, 1st Wednesday of each month at 8.00 p.m. We look forward to seeing as many members as possible.

SOLIHULL & DISTRICT OUSA are organizing a Post Exam Party at the end of November, to which we have arranged an invitation for all Midland, and visiting OUPS members. For details contact Jean Evans.

A BIRTHDAY DANCE at Beltroughton Village Hall, Saturday October 20th 1984 8 p.m. to midnight. This is a Birthday Dance for Penny Cooper (wife of Graeme) and all OUPS members are invited. If you are coming, please contact Graeme Cooper, OUPS Booking Officer, for further details.

Region 13:

SEOUPS - South East Region

17th November, at Brighton.
"Beyond the Fringe"

Relax after exams with our "humanist" Day-school. Games of one sort or another have occupied this date for the last three years.

The New Psychologist 1984

It's time once again to ask OUPS members for contributions to 'The New Psychologist', the journal which we publish annually, shortly after the beginning of the year.

Generally, the articles fall into four categories:

1. Pieces of original research, preferably by our undergraduate members;
2. Articles by our graduate members, which provide an insight into their work, and give an idea of what one can do with an OU psychology degree;
3. Expert articles, written by our members, or by established psychologists associated with us, (a) on the 'state of the art' in a particular important psychology field; (b) on a controversial issue in psychology; (c) on OU Psychology courses; (d) on Psychology careers;
4. Book reviews.

Contributions in any of these categories would be welcome, but at the moment I am particularly looking for items of student research. It's likely that most of you have done experimental work as part of the OU's main psychology courses (particularly DS262 and D303). Have you done an experiment which you thought was particularly original, particularly well-designed, and which produced particularly interesting results? In that case, I'd be most interested to see it. Subject to the advice of our Academic Advisory Board, such a piece could well give you the chance to be published and to appear in the psychology literature for the first time!

A typical full-length article might be about 6000 words, but we certainly would not reject longer or shorter articles simply on grounds of length. Submitted articles are usually edited to house style, in consultation with the author - for further guidance on style, see the last page of the latest edition of 'New Psychologist'.

If you have something to offer, please write to: John Platts, 94 Erlanger Road, London SE14 5TH.

John Platts, Journal Editor.



Sarah Miller
Editor

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

This letter was written in response to a Report by Ruth Ainge on Steve Duck's Lecture on 'Doctor/Patient Relationships' printed in the last issue — *The Editor*.

Dr Michael Cook

Dear Editor,
Thank you for your letter and I am so sorry to be so long in replying. It is difficult really to make much comment on the report (precis?) of a lecture which, inevitably, is as you say unsubstantial. A lot of work is presently being done on the consultation in general practice and quite a literature has already developed. I will try and make a few comments on the doctor/patient relationship in this context which may be of some interest.

Firstly, the consultation in general practice is fascinating for its variety and unexpectedness, particularly a first consultation; the way it is managed has an important bearing on that patient's subsequent progress. It has many features which distinguish it from the consultation in hospital practice. In general practice the patient very often presents a confusing and bewildering array of symptoms, indeed for various reasons the real need is often hidden and a more 'respectable' symptom is presented. So, firstly, the GP helps the patient to 'organise' his illness and, together they identify his salient needs. If referral to hospital is appropriate those particular needs are then indicated to the specialist.

Another difference of the GP consultation which it shares mainly with psychiatry is the therapeutic nature of the encounter itself. Psycho-analysis is expensive and time consuming, as well as being as yet of hardly proven value, so it is not appropriate to the NHS, although occasionally intensive psychotherapy is carried out valuably by a psychiatrist in this situation. Psychotherapy, if that is not too grand a word for it, is often practised by the GP at a less peak level and in this context two new animals have recently appeared on the scene who are using these methods more and working with GP's, namely the clinical psychologist and the community psychiatric nurse.

Many models of the consultation have been produced which help to make the GP more aware of what he is doing. For instance, one model devised by Stott and Davis identifies four areas which could be covered in most consultations, namely the presenting complaint, other continuing problems, opportunistic health education and modification of doctor seeking behaviour. Nearly all consultations are divided into the Interview and the Exposition (Diagnosis and Treatment) phases. For both parts of the consultation the doctor's behaviour can be classified on a point of scale ranging from doctor centred at one end to patient centred at the other. One study of 2,000 taped consultations showed that doctors mainly kept to one style, but could occasionally jump to the other end of the scale if circumstances so dictated. Other interesting points came out of this, namely that patients seemed to adapt themselves to the style of the doctor (there were some consultations of the same patients with different doctors in the Practice). Also at the beginning of the surgery consultations are longer and more patient centred, whereas towards the end, when time has been lost, there was a tendency for the doctor to be more authoritarian ("Doctors

talking to Patients" by Byrnie & Long. HMSO).

The good GP is ever on the alert for non-verbal clues and is aware of the general ambience of his consulting room and premises in encouraging confidence and relaxation. Some patients like the intimacy of a side-by-side chat, others prefer the safety of the other side of the desk with a protective barrier between the two, as I have found by placing chairs so as to give the patient the choice.

The doctor/patient relationship is not unlike a one to one tutorial. The teacher needs imagination, empathy and adaptability. He needs to inspire confidence and advice firmly but also at times to have the humility to pass control over to the other side.

I hope these few comments are of some interest to you.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Michael Cook

A funny thing happened on the way to my degree!

During my foundation course D101 I had a tutor who was extremely agitated by a student who kept telephoning her asking her advice on matters relating to D101, but who never turned up at her tutorials. She vividly described his tone of voice to me — in which he announced himself: "Gardner here . . . etc. etc."

As a flash — the name rang a bell in my head. "Gardner — Gardner" I said — "Your absent student must be the OU Vice Chancellor, Lord Gardner".

I had read somewhere that the Vice Chancellor had decided to study with the OU as well as acting as the OU Vice Chancellor.

Poor Sally, (our Tutor) she nearly flipped! We never again heard any complaints about the absent student.

L.H.F.

Dear Editor,

I would like to express my appreciation to all those who, by their presence and enthusiasm, helped to make the 'Alternative' weekend at Lower Shaw Farm such a success. Everyone there was so kind and helpful that my "organiser's nerves" soon subsided.

In fact I found it so enjoyable that Leonard Phillips and I, who regularly organise one-day workshops together, have decided to run a similar weekend in November: from Friday 9th to Sunday 11th. This will of course be a privately-run (not an OUPS-run) event, but the format (and the cost) will be the same.

So: all those who have enjoyed weekends held at Lower Shaw Farm, or who have wanted to attend but been unable to do so, why not come along and enjoy a weekend with a difference, once the exams are over, and you can let your hair down? Further details and Booking Form in this *Newsletter*.

Yours sincerely,

Patricia Allen

Please note that the weekend referred to in this letter and the application form inserted in this issue relate to an event run by the South London Therapy and Counselling Service and not by O.U.P.S.

The Editor



Lower Shaw Farm

Lower Shaw Farm

Sunshine, swings
Simple things
Succulent stews and salads.

Sky loft's safety, softly stepping
Seeking solace, sun and shade
Soul searching, searing sharing
Silence, stroking
Sylvan starlit serenade.

Avrille McCann

*Pam Murphy
Weekend School
Society Secretary*



CAREER INFORMATION

Would anyone writing to Liz Cowne requiring advice and help on Careers, please be reasonably specific in their interests and include a C.V. and S.A.E.



*Graeme Cooper
Weekend Booking
Officer*

GENERAL EVENTS

REVISION WEEKEND –
7th to 9th September
Stirling University

For DS262 & E201. D305 & D335 will also be included if there are enough applicants to justify running these courses.

REVISION WEEKEND –
21st to 23rd September
Nottingham University

Excellent opportunity to both revise for the exam and sample different courses.

Courses covered include D303, E362, DS262, E201, D305, DE304, SD286.

BOOKING ARRANGEMENTS

To avoid disappointment it is important to book early. £10 deposit secures a place. Send application forms with S.A.E. to Graeme Cooper, 14 Highfield Road, Kidderminster, Worcs.

The price for all Week-ends is £55.00 for members; £60.00 for non-members (to include membership).



*John Platts
Journal Editor*

**PFPF
WHOLE DAY
WORKSHOP**

The Whole Day Workshop will be held at the Westminster Cathedral Conference Centre, 3rd October 1984. Cost: £15.00.

What do you do with your degree?

This workshop will focus on how you can develop in depth the skills you have attained. It will develop your awareness of how and where to apply your specific abilities. It will further your knowledge of qualitative research, explore your potential in post-graduate research and how you might begin your future career as an occupational psychologist, it will demonstrate ideas and skills in interview encounters.

For details and registration please telephone – Milton Keynes 584010.

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