

Presidential Address

– supporting our diverse membership

In this year's Presidential Address, Professor Dorothy Miell celebrated the 50-year anniversary of the Society being awarded its Royal Charter. The Charter was important in defining how the Society would support the discipline and its members – setting out the rules, the grades of membership and how the BPS would be governed. It marked the growth of the BPS since the first meeting in 1901 of 10 founding members. Miell reflected upon one of the founding aims – to further cooperation amongst different areas of psychology, something which the Society continues to strive for.

This linked with a recurrent theme across the conference – the review of the member networks structure. The number of Sections has proliferated since they were first introduced by Charles Myers in the early part of the 20th century, and the member network structure now serves over 50,000 members. The current structure of Divisions, Sections, Branches and Special Groups appears to some to be overly complex and not best suited to that original aim of promoting cooperation across fields. Details of the review can be found at www.bps.org.uk/membernetnetworkreview.

The Address also highlighted some of the achievements for the Society and for the discipline in the dissemination of psychology. To name just a few: the high uptake of psychology at undergraduate level, career development support through the



Psychology Postgraduates Affairs Group, large-scale delivery of psychology education through means such as MOOCs, TEDx talks, and iTunes U courses, public engagement events, PsychSource, and the new BPS Impact Portal.

One area where room for improvement was seen was the Society's support for diversity. Miell was only the 15th female President out of 80, though 10 of these have been in the last 15 years. More widely, women now make up around 60 per cent of academic staff in psychology, yet around 70 per cent of senior roles are held by men. The BPS

now places greater emphasis upon supporting diversity when accrediting undergraduate degrees, but Miell hinted that perhaps more could be done in the way of mentoring or fellowship schemes.

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