



The British
Psychological Society
History of Psychology Centre

STORIES OF PSYCHOLOGY ABSTRACTS

‘Women in Psychology: From Invisibility to Influence’

Thursday 19 October 2017, Chancellor’s Hall, Senate House, University of London

Professor Elizabeth Valentine (Royal Holloway, University of London) – ‘Early Women Members of the BPS: Challenges and Achievements’

After sketching the background to British psychology in the early 20th century, I will describe a sample of the 16 women who were members of the British Psychological Society in its first two decades. I will then focus on what difference it made being a woman: (a) the challenges they faced in terms of limited access to education and restricted opportunities for employment; (b) their achievements and career paths; and (c) enabling factors such as personal qualities and strategies employed, including the management of their personal lives and support networks.

Dr Katherine Hubbard (University of Surrey) – ‘The British Projective Test Movement: A Queer Feminist Tale’

In this paper I will be adopting some of my analysis from my recent paper ‘Queer signs: The women of the British projective test movement’ in the *Journal of the Behavioural Sciences* and present some of the notable queer women involved in the early projective test movement. By paying attention to their queerness, in terms of their unusual and unconventional positions in a men-dominated early psychology and their queer private lives, I add an additional lens through which we can consider early British psychology. I argue it is not only important to recognise the work of these early queer women but also *celebrate* their work, their resistance and their unconventionality.

Dr Nick Midgley (Anna Freud Centre) – ‘Anna Freud: An Advocate for Children’

‘Anna Freud – wasn’t she Sigmund Freud’s daughter? Is it true that she was in analysis with her father?’ This may be the most common reaction when her name is mentioned today, but in her lifetime Anna Freud made a massive contribution to the field of child psychology. Not only was she one of the first people to develop a model of play therapy specifically for children, she also developed and popularised the study of ‘defence mechanisms’, set up and ran her own experimental school; promoted the importance of research in psychoanalysis at a time when it was still considered irrelevant by many; helped to found the field of ‘developmental psychopathology’; and much else. This lecture will briefly touch on some of these contributions, and make the case that Anna Freud was, above all else, ‘an advocate for children’, who helped to transform the way that children are understood today.

Professor Jan Burns (Canterbury Christ Church University) – ‘POWs (Psychology of Women Section): Power to Change?’

The Psychology of Women Section (POWs) of the BPS was formed in 1987, 14 years after the same development in the American Psychological Association, and after a similar, but culturally British struggle. POWs has now turned 30, in lifespan terms no longer young, but perhaps as yet not quite fulfilled its potential. In this talk I will chart the advancement of a primarily feminist, post-graduate movement to becoming part of the British Psychological establishment. Then I’ll look forward to where the psychology of women, and perhaps more importantly were women in psychology may, indeed should, go next.

Professor Dame Vicki Bruce (Newcastle University) – ‘Sense and Serendipity’

My career has been shaped by some extraordinary coincidences, some conceptual and some personal. In this talk I will describe the pieces of luck that were so crucial in allowing me to build a successful career in perceptual and cognitive psychology, with contributions that helped shape the area of face perception. I will also underline the support given to me at every stage by peers and role models – men as well as women.