Life far too easy for pupils, says academic

Schoolchildren 'need to come out of comfort zone'

John Roberts

SCHOOLCHILDREN today are mollycoddled and can lack the mental toughness needed to succeed according to a Yorkshire academic who believes that coping with stress is as important as academic ability when it comes to passing exams.

Peter Clough believes pupils could benefit from being taught that life can be tough and carries a risk of failure to help them deal with the pressure of performing in tests.

First-year psychology students at Hull University are to be given a questionnaire which will assess their mental strength to help tutors ensure they make the most of their ability by toughening up those who need it.

Dr Clough said: "We have developed a way of measuring mental toughness. People know it exists and you will always hear it talked about in sport. But we have devised a 48-part questionnaire which shows us how mentally tough a person is.

The questions measure how confident they are, how much they worry about big events and how much personal responsibility they are prepared to take for

Dr Clough said: "Students come here and they have never been put in a position where they could fail before because they could keep resitting modules to get better marks.

'This might be nice and comfortable but is it a good idea because eventually they will come to a point in life where they can fail

"Instead of teaching them that everything is super we need to prepare them for life. Life is competitive and life can be hard.

"Students need to come out of their comfort zone because anything worth having in life carries a risk of failure.

"In my view, there are too nany safety nets in schools, such as the option to re-sit many safety nets in schools, such as the option to re-sit exams, meaning that young

people are less tough than previous generations."

He also dismissed the idea that pupils are under more pressure because of an increased focus on exam success in both secondary and primary schools.

A report earlier this year by Cambridge-based Primary Review said primary school pupils felt stressed by the pressures of modern life and standard assessment tests.

But Dr Clough said: "I think we need to get away from the idea that pupils are under more pressure now. I don't think they are.

There have always been tests in schools. We can look at these reports and ask whether kids really are more stressed nowadays, or is it just that they can't cope as well as previous generations? My opinion is that they

"It seems that we are starting from the idea that somebody being stressed is a bad thing to be avoided. I think we need to accept stress is a part of life and people need to thrive on it."

Dr Clough, who has worked as a sports psychologist for rugby league teams such as Huddersfield Giants and Hunslet Hawks, believes competitive sports have a key role to play in getting pupils used to dealing with pressure and disappointment.

He said: "It can particularly good because as well as learning how to deal with winning and losing, they also make you physically healthier which makes you better at coping with stress.

"But it doesn't just have to be sport. It could be a teacher giving prizes to the child who is the best writer in the class or the best at art. My research to date has merely scraped the surface of the positive effects that can come from a better understanding of mental toughness.'

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British stiff upper lip not such a bad idea, US study suggests

Tom Smithard

psychotherapy.

IT IS as British as cream tea, bulldogs and double-deck buses. But despite getting us through two world wars, the British stiff upper lip has recently begun to waver under constant bombardment from American-style

But new evidence suggests that Britons might have had it right all along - and that Americans may survive traumas better if they kept things bottled up.

A study by the New York-based Buffalo University suggests that bottling up feelings after a traumatic shock may be a better strategy than letting them spill

A popular assumption is that talking about a terrifying experience, such as a terrorist attack or natural disaster, can be therapeutic and helpful.

But new evidence suggests "getting it off your chest" may not be the right thing to do.

Psychologists in the US used an online survey to test people's responses to the September 11,

2001 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington. Those who chose to express their thoughts and feelings were

compared with those who did not over a two-year period. To their surprise, individuals

who bottled up their feelings ended up better off. They suffered fewer negative mental and

people who were willing to talk.

The results have important implications for expectations about how people should react to collective trauma that affects a whole community or nation, said the researchers.

After last year's Virginia Tech University shootings in the US, numerous "media-doc" psychiatrists told how important it was for the students to express their

Mark Seery, from Buffalo University, said: "This perfectly exemplifies the assumption in popular culture, and even in clinical practice, that people need to talk in order to overcome a collective trauma.

"Instead, we should be telling people there is likely nothing wrong if they do not want to express their thoughts and feelings after experiencing a collec-

tive trauma. "In fact, they can cope quite successfully and, according to our results, are likely to be better off than someone who does want to express his or her feelings. The findings are published in the June issue of the Journal of Con-

sulting and Clinical Psychology. Dr Seery stressed it would be wrong to say people recovering from trauma should never

express their feelings. 'Îts important to remember that not everyone copes with events in the same way," he said.



RESCUER RESCUED: After being saved from dereliction, the Whitby rowing lifeboat *William Riley of Birmingham and Leamington* is officially unveiled by Maureen Goodwill, wife of Scarborough and Whitby MP Robert Goodwill, before being launched in Whitby Harbour.

Lifeboat involved in historic rescue

returns to harbour after restoration

lifeboat, John Fielden was hauled over an 8ft harbour wall and dragged three-quarters of mile over the Scar to be launched into the surf and rescued 35 people before being too badly damaged to continue. Conditions were so bad the William Riley had to be

hauled overland and lowered down a 200ft cliff to the reach the *Rohilla* but could do no more as darkness fell.

The following day six lifeboats were involved in the rescue, including the Tynemouth motor lifeboat, *Henry Vernon*, which

Riley, named after her benefactor, served until 1931. Little is then known of her

remaining 50 survivors. William

history, but it is rumoured that she helped evacuate Dunkirk. Three years ago lifeboat

succeeded in rescuing the

enthusiast Dave Charlton saw an advert on an internet auction site for a derelict boat in Devon which turned out to be the William Riley.

A £20,000 restoration has taken place with help from the Heritage Lottery Fund and yesterday - 99 years after being named by the wife of the then MP – the William Riley was rededicated by Maureen Goodwill, wife of the Scarborough and Whitby MP Robert Goodwill.

Later the lifeboat was relaunched at Whitby harbour. In July a crew will try to row from the Tyne to her home port in aid

Huge cash find in high-rise tower

A huge stash of money – said to be around £200,000 - has been seized at an exclusive high-rise hotel and apartment block.

Two workers reportedly found the money hidden in an air vent at Birmingham's 39-floor Beetham Tower last month.

West Midlands Police would not comment on the details of the find, including the amount discovered, but said "a substantial amount of cash" had been seized under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

And a force spokesman said a potential owner "has made themselves known".

Hypodermic used to rob motorist in car

A motorist was robbed at the point of a hypodermic needle after a robber grabbed the handle of a door as his car slowed and clung on until the driver stopped.

The robber climbed inside and left after the 22-year-old driver handed over cash. The motorist had been making his way through Basildon, Essex, shortly before 11am on Saturday.

A police spokeswoman described the robber as white, in his 20s and with "dirty brown

First home for the few remembered

Curators at The Imperial War Museum yesterday staged a day of special events to remember the men and women of RAF Duxford near Cambridge for the 90th anniversary of the RAF.

Duxford was first used in the First World War and went on to become the first RAF station to house the Spitfire. Some of the Battle of Britain's greatest aces, including Douglas Bader, were

Sister tells of fears for Gascoigne's life

The sister of Paul Gascoigne yesterday pleaded with fans of the ex-footballer not to buy him a drink, saying if they did "You will have blood on your hands" Anna Gascoigne added: "I fear

every day he'll die." Her words came amid reports that Gascoigne, 41, collapsed in front of travellers at St Pancras station, London, on Saturday before being taken away in an

Ministers 'must listen over planning quango'

Tom Smithard

place in history.

Brian Dooks

A LIFEBOAT involved in one of

the most significant rescues in

seaworthy again and about to be

rowed from Newcastle to Whitby

Leamington and Birmingham

was built in London in 1909 at a

cost of £722 and was allocated to

the Upgang Lifeboat Station one

The self-righting lifeboat relied

on oars and was launched only

twice from Upgang before being

transferred to Whitby where she

was launched a further 31 times,

saving 10 lives. But it is her place

in the rescue from the hospital

ship Rohilla which secures her

The *Rohilla*, en-route to

Dunkirk with 229 on board on

October 30, 1914, ran aground

on rocks at Saltwick Nab. Whitby

mile west of Whitby harbour.

the history of the RNLI is

after being saved from

The William Riley of

THE Government needs to listen to the public and not impose an expensive new closed-shop quango to judge controversial planning applications, a leading campaign group will say today.

The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) will call upon the Government to listen to the "serious public concern" about a series of proposals the pressure group says would reduce democracy in the planning

process. Government proposals include setting up a new quango, the Infrastructure Planning Commission, to make decisions on major developments, which would not be directly accountable to Parliament or the

Official estimates suggest it would cost £5m to set up the commission and £9.3m each year to run it. In return, taxpayers would save about £900,000 each year through reduced costs of Government departments and agencies and the Government predicts "benefits to society" from earlier completion of nationally significant infrastructure projects of £280m a year.

whether projects such as new airport runways, power stations and potentially even ecotowns - should go ahead.

But the CPRE believes that the commission would impose policies that had not undergone proper debate or environmental appraisal. And, it says, the comrights for communities to hold developers to account at public

MPs will debate the proposals The commission would be in Parliament today. Ahead of responsible for deciding that debate, CPRE senior planning campaigner Paul Miner said: "The Government needs to listen to the public, ditch ill-conceived proposals for an unnecessary and expensive new planning quango and not impose airport expansion without proper public debate.

'The Government's plans for a commission will make the planning system less open and accountable than it is now and they will also make it more expensive for the taxpayer. Gordon Brown now needs to

listen to the high level of public concern and learn from the experiences of the past." The CPRE is being backed by

MP Keith Hill, who was Planning Minister between 2003 and 2005. In Yorkshire the commission would be likely to decide on whether an eco-town was built in Rossington, near Doncaster,

or in the Selby district.

Eco-town campaign asks MP to accept one scheme 'dead'

Tom Smithard

VILLAGERS campaigning to stop an eco-town being built on their doorstep yesterday asked their MP to finally accept the proposals were dead and John and Mary McCartney,

who represent Eggborough on

Selby Council, said that they

were close to winning their cam-

paign to stop the Willow Green eco-town development from going ahead. Manchester-based consultancy firm GVA Grimleys is currently analysing four proposals for eco-towns in the Selby area, and is believed likely to recom-

mend the site at Gascoigne Wood goes ahead to members of the Leeds City Region leaders panel when it meets in early If the panel – made up of every council leader in West Yorkshire, Selby, Harrogate, York and

Barnsley – accepts the findings

that site is then almost certain to

go on to the Government's 15-

strong shortlist of locations

Ex-Lib Dem head expelled in strife-hit council



JOHN GROGAN: Asked to accept end of Willow Green.

around the country, from which 10 eco-towns will be built. The McCartneys are now calling on Selby MP John Grogan to join with them to request developers GMI withdraw its application to build Willow Green, or call upon the Government to formally reject it.

Ín a letter to Mr Grogan they wrote: "You said that once the

decision, and if that decision was not Willow Green, then you would join with the residents of Beal, Kellington and Eggborough and call upon GMI to formally withdraw the Willow Green eco-

"We also hope that you will now be prepared to call upon the Department of Communities and Local Government to announce that the Willow Green bid is now formally rejected.

'The residents of the three rural communities have had this proposal hanging over them since the middle of January. It is now time that they were put out of their misery. "We look forward to working

with you to achieve that objec-Last night Mary McCartney

said: "It is clear that the Willow Green proposal is dead, we hope that Mr Grogan will join with us

YOUR SAY What do you think? Let us know,

three-strong Community Group,

has accepted an invitation to

provide a nomination and may

The Conservative group

remains unhappy after Mayor

Winter turned down their nomi-

nee, Alan Jones and the Labour

group - the largest with 26 mem-

bers – is unlikely to have any role

The Independent Alliance,

take on old people's services.

By David Joy Forwarded by the show's patron, HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES Published to mark the 150th Great Yorkshire Show, this book celebrates a unique institution in our county. ORKSHIRE

A Celebration of 150 shows

This lavishly illustrated book draws on the archives of the Yorkshire Agricultural Society and the Yorkshire Post to portray the show in all its infinite variety and colour. Leading personalities describe in their own words what the show means to them. The Great Yorkshire Show is the county's melting pot where rural folk and townies come together for three days a year to enjoy the best that Yorkshire has to offer. This full-colour hard-back book will bring the memories flooding back.

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MARTIN WINTER: Cabinet choices lead to more friction.

THE political strife surrounding Doncaster's elected mayor has taken another twist after Patrick Wilson, the former leader of the Liberal Democrat group, was expelled from his party after accepting a post in Martin Winter's new cabinet.

It follows the removal of Mayor Winter from the Labour Party after he set up his own independent group with colleagues, Stuart Exelby and Eva Hughes. Coun Exelby, who has also been expelled by Labour, will be

Hughes has returned to the Labour group but faces expulsion if she stays in the cabinet. It comes after a district auditor

report warned relationships on the council had to improve or the government could intervene in the running of the authority. Heated debate on the report's

findings last week concluded with Mayor Winter deriding other councillors for "behaviour worse than that during Donnygate", the council corruption scandal in the late 1990s. Coun Wilson, who lost the ple's services in the cabinet. A statement by Stephen Coddington, deputy Lib Dem group leader, confirmed that following an extraordinary meeting of the

leadership of the Lib Dem group

after the May elections, declined

to comment. It is understood he

be responsible for young peo-

Liberal Democrat group Coun Patrick Wilson had been expelled with immediate effect. The decision was unanimous and he said his group would

continue to work with other groups on Doncaster Council. Martin Williams, leader of the

which has 12 members, has already said it will not nominate anyone to serve on the mayor's

in the cabinet.

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