

If it does, the inference is that working memory is involved in performance of the disrupted primary task. Using this basic strategy, Baddeley and others have produced a wealth of research that has delineated the cognitive functions of the various components of working memory, clarified a number of theoretical issues and provided new perspectives on cognitive impairments in various populations, including learning-disabled children and patients with Alzheimer's disease.

The principal value of *Working Memory* is that it brings together in one place the best of this research, and it does so effectively. The author's portrayal of his own work and that of others is consistently incisive, critical and even-handed. If there is one disappointment, it is that Baddeley does not address a problem that seems so central to his subject that it cries out to be confronted head on: the place of consciousness in working memory. Baddeley's reluctance to delve into this issue may stem from the relative lack of research on the central executive component of working memory, which is where questions concerning consciousness arise most directly. In fact, the author acknowledges his own disappointment with respect to our ignorance of the central executive, and discusses some promising ideas that may help to reduce it.

In many areas of psychological inquiry, research fashions change with alarming swiftness; sustained programmatic investigations of key issues are the exception rather than the rule. *Working Memory* is a solid demonstration that experimental rigour and ingenuity, coupled with a broad conceptual approach and sheer persistence, can result in something that is as rare as it is invaluable: genuinely cumulative progress. Cognitive psychology owes Baddeley and his associates a debt of gratitude. □

Daniel L. Schacter is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 1A1.

#### New in paperback

- *Functions of the Brain* edited by Clive Coen. Publisher is Oxford University Press, price is £8.95, \$24.95. (Reviewed in *Nature* 320, 223; 1986.)
- *Radiant Science, Dark Politics: A Memoir of the Nuclear Age* by Martin D. Kamen. Publisher is University of California Press, price is \$8.95, £7.50. (*Nature* 318, 607; 1985.)

#### New in the United States

Two books published in Britain and reviewed recently in *Nature* are now available in the United States:

- *False Prophets: Fraud, Error and Misdemeanor in Science and Medicine* by Alexander Kohn. Publisher is Basil Blackwell, price is \$24.95. (Reviewed in *Nature* 324, 181; 1986.)
- *The Red and the Blue: Cambridge, Treason and Intelligence* by Andrew Sinclair. Publisher is Little Brown, price is \$17.95. (*Nature* 322, 217; 1986.)

## London learning

W. F. Bynum

**The University of London 1836-1986: An Illustrated History.** By Negley Harte. *Athlone, London and Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: 1986. Pp. 303. Hbk £11.95, \$39.95; pbk £4.95.*

HUNDRETH birthdays often warrant a letter from the Queen. The sesquicentennial of the University of London gets instead some kind words from Princess Anne, its Chancellor since 1981, to preface Negley Harte's splendid illustrated history of the institution. The 366 pictures and their informative captions are part of his volume, not simply gratuitous adornment of it.

To many, the University of London is a nebulous bureaucratic entity which lives in 'Senate House', that monstrosity just north of the British Museum which would look more at home in Red Square, Moscow, than Bloomsbury. To others, the University is confused with University College, founded after all a decade before the University of London and originally bearing that name. Still others might be tempted to echo Professor Ralf Dahrendorf, former Director of the London School of Economics (yet another part of the federated University): "You mean the so-called University of London". Whatever the misconceptions one brings to Harte's volume, they will be dispelled. His considerable achievement is to have clarified a complex story, and to have turned what could have been a heavy and dull account into an entertaining and witty narrative.

The occasion which makes 1986 a sesquicentennial was a charter which provided *inter alia* an examining and degree-awarding structure for University College (as it then became) and King's College, London, an Anglican establishment founded as a counter to the essentially secular character of the original 'University of London' in Gower Street. Examining has always been a prime function of the University, and from the earliest days candidates could present themselves for examination even if they had not studied in London. By this procedure, the University exerted an enormous influence throughout Britain and her Empire, because it offered the opportunity for individuals — from Manchester or Cairo, Sydney or Bombay — to obtain a degree. Even today, the external degree system continues as a vital part of the University's activities, and it was through this that the curriculum was expanded beyond the traditional classics and mathematics available at Oxford and Cambridge. Science was an early beneficiary of this enlightened policy; so, at a slightly later date,

were women who, after 1880, were eligible for London degrees.

In addition to its examination service, the University has provided a structure for coordinating higher education in the Metropolis. This federal University has become one of the largest in the world, consisting of 24 'Schools' (for example University College, Imperial College and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine) and 13 'Institutes' (for example the Institute of Education and Institute of Historical Research). Relations between

Pilgrims from many paths we came  
To where the roads of Empire meet,  
Our lives to kindle at the flame  
Of schools wherein a million feet  
Have trod the years, or with a fame  
That yet along the years shall beat.

O London maids and London men  
Bring in the golden age again.

In no seclusion pastur'd round  
As where the Cam and Isis flow,  
Our cloister'd learning have we found,  
Where loud the tides of traffic go.  
Our nightingales have been the sound  
Of London bells from Fleet to Bow.

O London maids and London men  
Bring in the golden age again.

Life calls us, and we bid farewell  
To this the latest of our springs,  
But on our travels we will tell  
How fellowship of gentle things  
Is kept for ever where they dwell  
Who know the song that England sings.

O London maids and London men  
Bring in the golden age again.

In field or market place or mill,  
Beneath a dear or alien Sun,  
We'll build a generation still  
Of faith and honour here begun,  
That sires of the old English will  
Shall know their own and cry: Well done.

O London maids and London men  
Bring in the golden age again.

*Echoes of Empire — "Graduation Song"  
of the University, first performed in 1926.  
It was soon dropped.*

the various bodies within the University have not always been harmonious, since their several histories and functions are so diverse. Indeed, even the present loose federation may not be viable if the economic climate continues to deteriorate.

Certainly, with 'rationalization' being one of the key words of the 1980s, the University's future must be under a cloud. Those who believe in it can take comfort from the fact that its future has always been uncertain, and that it has managed to survive innumerable charters and commissions. In the meantime, anyone interested in higher education has a treat in store, for Harte's book makes sense out of Senate House. □

W. F. Bynum is at the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BP, UK.