

Summer Scientist
Week at the University
of Nottingham (see p3)



Welcome by the new Head of School

by Paul McGraw

Welcome to the inaugural issue of psych@nottingham, the new quarterly newsletter for staff and students in the School of Psychology at the University of Nottingham. In previous years, some of our undergraduate students have felt that communication with those who teach them was somewhat lacking. Similarly, many members of staff felt they would like to have a better understanding of what our students get up to. Therefore, one of our aims with this publication is to highlight news about our teaching, student activities, community outreach and research carried out in the School. I hope this effort to

bring news from students to staff and vice versa – in the shape of a few colourful pages – will go some way to helping us all understand each others important role in the School. This newsletter is something that will gradually evolve over time and I would encourage staff and students alike to get behind it and contribute information that they feel other members of the School should know about. Finally, I would like to thank Richard Tunney and Denis Schluppeck, the University's Psychology Society, and all the other contributors to this first issue for making it happen.



Paul McGraw is Professor of Visual Neuroscience at the School of Psychology. His research interests include normal and abnormal vision.

A few words from the Psychology Society

by Adam Townsend

With the passing of a long summer of feigning to find a job and the colds winds of Fresher germs circulating every auditorium, it can only mean a new start to the year at Nottingham to study the endless bounties of Psychology. And whilst every one of us is keen to soak up the knowledge like a feckless sponge, the rest are quite keen to take some time out.

This is potentially where *Psychology Society* steps in... Just like last year we're ready and set to shamelessly promote our renowned socials – our first is a Boat Party down the Trent (20/Oct/10). Following this – a Halloween event, a Christmas dinner and, well, that's it so far. But we've got some great ideas. We also organise football, hockey, netball and running teams, an exemplary mentoring system, various book sales, and guest speakers.

Throughout your time studying Psychology we want to be here to serve you. So if you have any suggestions or want to get involved then please contact your PsychoSoc president, Adam Townsend. Likewise, we're really keen to see you out on socials and for everyone within the school to get to know each other. Wouldn't that be nice!

Our Ten Top Tips for Freshers:

1. Limit the amount of time you spend on Facebook during lectures. Have some self control.
2. Always attend your Subsid seminars. If you don't, they will probably fail you.
3. Barocca. Cures. Everything.
4. Go to Bodega at least once. It sounds cool if you say you go to Bodega.
5. If you plagiarize they will make you attend a very awkward meeting. It's not worth the awkwardness so don't do it.
6. Join our Psychology Running Club and our other teams.
7. Don't feel like you have to enjoy DubStep. It's a phase which will pass soon.
8. Pay extra attention during statistics and practical methods. These will come to haunt you in second year. And third year.
9. Err...
10. Join Psychology Society!

www.su.nottingham.ac.uk/studentgroups/society/PsychoSoc/

Word Nerds

by Nikki Pitchford

This summer, researchers from our School launched the UK Orthography Group (UKOG).

UKOG is a special interest group in orthographic processing for researchers in the UK and those from elsewhere visiting the UK. The focus of the group is on research investigating the processes involved with visual letter and word recognition in typical and atypical, skilled and developing, readers of any orthography. The aim of the group is to facilitate research development and collaboration through open discussion and exchange of ideas in a friendly and supportive environment.

This was the initiative of Dr Nikki Pitchford, who, together with Dr Walter van Heuven, launched the UKOG website and mailing list, helping to bring together researchers from across the UK who are interested in reading research.

They also hosted the 1st UKOG workshop on 9th September 2010, where early- (PhD students), mid- (postdocs & lecturers) and senior- (Professors) career researchers from all corners of the UK, as well as France, Spain, and the USA, discussed their latest findings, methods, and ideas.

More UKOG workshops are planned to take place at the University of Reading and the University of Manchester in future years.

www.psychology.nottingham.ac.uk/ukog/

News from Teaching & Learning

In response to the National Student Survey (NSS), the School of Psychology has recently made several important changes. **Top of the pick: A++**. To bring our marking scheme in line with that at other Departments and Universities, we have introduced the '100% mark' (A++), a new categorical mark for outstanding work. This change is with immediate effect and applies across all three years of the undergraduate program. **Exam feedback.** In response to many requests by students, the Teaching and Learning Committee together with the School Office have started providing Individual Examination Feedback. The new third year undergraduate students had the opportunity to receive written essay exam feedback in a specially organized afternoon session earlier this month (6/



Nikki Pitchford is an Associate Professor in the Cognitive Learning and Development group. Her research interest are in cognition, especially spoken and written language.



Walter van Heuven is a lecturer in the Bilingualism Research Group. He studies language processing, computational modelling, and the bilingual brain.

Adam Townsend is a 3rd year undergraduate at the School of Psychology and current President of the University's Psychology Society.

October). **Prizes.** We continue to recognize outstanding achievements by our undergraduate students. Among the prizes awarded to third year contributions are the *Jonathan Pumfrey Memorial Prize*, the *Allen Standen Prize*, the newly established *John Newson Prize*, as well as the Joint Honours, Examiners' and BPS awards.

The School also announced the new *Robin Stevens* prize for the highest first in the PCN finals. Robin Stevens, who recently retired, dedicated his working life to the well-being of students at the School.

Summer scientists

by *Steph Morris*

For one unforgettable week in August, the Exchange building on Jubilee Campus was transformed as hundreds of children arrived for the university's annual Summer Scientist Week.

Summer Scientist Week is an innovative event for local families, organised by researchers in the Human Development and Learning (HDL) Group in the School of Psychology and the Learning Sciences Research Institute (LSRI). During the week, 4- to 11-year-olds and their parents are invited to visit the university for an enjoyable session of activities and research studies. The success of the project is reflected in the rise in attendance of local parents and their children each year, from just 52 children in 2007, the project's first year, to the 278 children who attended this year.

The event provides a great research opportunity in which scientists from the LSRI and HDL group are able to access a large number of young and enthusiastic participants for their studies. "This year's SSW was the best yet", said Alastair Smith, one of the researchers involved. "The kids really enjoyed it and we managed to collect data from almost 150 of them!" 16 different studies were running throughout the week with each investigating a different aspect of child development.

Students from the School of Psychology play a key role in the event. In addition to the research studies, there are a host of fun activities such as face painting and funfair games for the children to enjoy, and each of these activities is supervised by undergraduate volunteers.

Summer Scientist Week also brings the University to the local community. Both parents and children are able to gain a unique insight into the work that is carried at Nottingham, and are able to experience first-hand how research is conducted in a friendly and enjoyable

atmosphere. The feedback from parents and children was overwhelmingly positive, with 100% stating they would recommend the event to a friend. The children also had a great time. 'I really enjoyed having fun!' said Bethany, aged 8.

To find out more about Summer Scientist Week and how you can be involved, visit the website or contact Lucy Cragg.

www.summerscientist.org
lucy.cragg@nottingham.ac.uk

International

School welcomes new International students

The Undergraduate International Team welcomed the new intake of international students at the beginning of term. At the event Michelle Lumumba, a new student from Nairobi, was awarded the International Student Book Prize.

The International Undergraduate Team provides guidance and support for all international UG students. Check the University's International Office for International news and events!

www.nottingham.ac.uk/InternationalOffice/

Mastery!

The MSc programme

The School's MSc in Cognitive Neuroscience and Neuroimaging has become a popular choice. Dr Martin Schürmann, the course organizer, writes that the admission team "had 63 applications and expect 10 students to start the MSc as a standalone course"; this includes several international students. In recent years, most graduate students successful in applying for PhD places are now made offers as part of a "1+3" programme: one year on the *MSc in Cognitive Neuroscience and Neuroimaging* course followed by three years working on a research project towards their PhD.

If you are interested in exploring life in science and research, or if you just want to know more about the MSc course, get in touch.

PhD student wins best poster prize at Age UK conference

Alan Blighe, a second year PhD student in the School's Visual Neuroscience group, won a prize for his poster presentation at the Age UK National conference in September. The title of his presentation was "The effect of age on perceptual



Dr Lucy Cragg is an RCUK Academic Research Fellow at the School. Her research interests are in the development of cognitive control. She was one of the organizers of Summer Scientist Week.



Steph Morris is a third-year undergraduate student, on a summer internship with Lucy Cragg, who helped to organize summer scientist week.



Mitchelle Lumumba awarded book prize by the International Tutors, Ellen Townsend (l) and Nikki Pitchford (r)



Dr Martin Schürmann is an Associate Professor & Reader in Cognitive Neuroscience. His research interests include Crossmodal Interactions and the Neurobiological basis of social perception

www.nottingham.ac.uk/psychology/studywithus/postgraduate



Alan Blighe is a PhD student in the Visual Neuroscience Group. He is supported by a studentship from ageUK.

learning in the peripheral visual field". The results report progress in a project investigating possible rehabilitation strategies for a type of central blindness (age-related macular disease). Loss of central vision severely impacts on individuals' ability to read, recognise faces, drive, etc. The long-term goal of this research is to improve the peripheral vision of individuals with macular disease, and it is hoped that this will compensate for their loss of central vision. Results to date indicate that significant improvements are achievable in the peripheral vision of older adults. The conference organisers and attendees were highly impressed with both the content of the research and the style of presentation.

President's Preclinical Prize for First year PhD student

by Paula Moran



Dr Paula Moran is an Associate Professor & Reader in Behavioural Neuroscience.

Congratulations to Allison McIntosh who received the President's Preclinical Prize for the best abstract and poster presentation at the British Association for Psychopharmacology meeting held in the Harrogate International Conference Centre at the end of July. Allison's presentation entitled 'Atypical antipsychotic risperidone reverses the recognition memory deficits induced by post-weaning social isolation in rats' was selected from over 200 abstracts submitted to this annual meeting. She is in the first year of her PhD working with Kevin Fone and Paula Moran on a project funded by F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd.

Summer internships

Several students successfully completed summer internships with different scientists in the School of Psychology. Among them were **Anthony Hall**, who worked on a project with Alastair Smith on the development of route learning and efficient navigation by use of different landmarks along routes. **Amy Inman** completed an experiment

under the supervision of Lee Hogarth on human extinction learning, and input a substantial body of questionnaire data from both the laboratory and an NHS collaboration. **Jenny Tellett's** summer internship with Lucy Cragg focused on investigating the development of attentional flexibility in school-age children. Jenny also helped organize the Summer Scientist Week and with data analysis on other projects.

Natalia Ciborowska worked in Geoff Underwood's lab on a project on identification of images by inspection of an eye movement scan pattern. Her experiment tried to assess whether we can distinguish between pictures of natural scenes on the basis of eye fixation scan patterns made by other viewers. Neil Roach and Paul McGraw supervised two visual neuroscience projects: **Jack Pflug** from the University of Exeter, who was sponsored by an EPSRC Vacation Bursary worked on 'Forward modeling in visual motion processing', **Rebecca Elliott** on 'Keeping a step ahead of moving objects'.

Check the website for external funding opportunities (Research Calendar), deadlines, and how to apply for the next round of internships.

Thanks for contributions from supervisors and students. Summary by [ds].

Research Participation

The new online *Research Participation Scheme* (RPS) is now up and running. The scheme enables students to familiarise themselves with some of the research methods used in the School. Currently, students can also recruit participants for their 3rd year projects, provided they have

earned an equivalent amount of points by participating in experiments themselves. Applying to use the system is easy – look out for a detailed explanation on the School's website (Resources for Current Students), or contact Alastair Smith, the organizer.

nottingham.sona-systems.com

Editorial

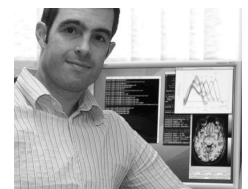
by Denis Schluppeck

Welcome to the first issue of psych@nottingham, our new quarterly newsletter for everyone at (or interested in) the School of Psychology.

As Jerry Seinfeld observed, "...it's amazing that the amount of news that happens in the world every day always just exactly fits the newspaper." Clearly, the content of future issues will depend on the amount of news from students and members of staff. So, in this spirit – if you have any newsworthy items you want to share, comments, suggestions, ideas, rants (or maybe even positive feedback), think of this newsletter and all the other people in the Department who might be interested in your news.

Get in touch: my e-mail inbox is open!

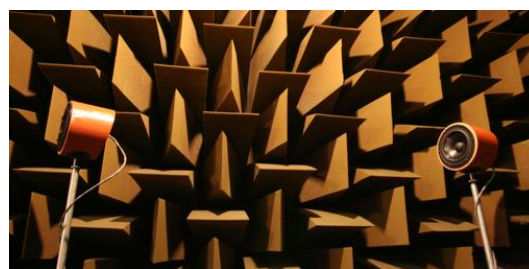
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Denis Schluppeck is an RCUK Academic Research Fellow. His research interests include sensory neuroscience and neuroimaging. He also edits this newsletter.



Dr Alastair Smith is a Lecturer at the School. His research interests lie in how we use spatial information to interact with our surroundings. He runs the School's Research Participation Scheme.



A view of the anechoic chamber. In this room, carefully calibrated auditory stimuli can be presented that allow researchers to study our perception of sound.