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Psychology@Nottingham

School of Psychology newsletter

Issue 7, June 2013

News from the School of Psychology



Studying in the Portland
Building on University Park.

Big Bang Fair 2013

Find out about our trip to the annual event held in London

Award for achievement

Two of our academics are recognised for their contribution to public engagement

New postgraduate courses

Read about our exciting postgraduate opportunities

Big Bang Fair 2013

Last March, Roger Newport took four lucky second-year psychology students to London to represent the School of Psychology and the British Psychological Society (BPS) at the Big Bang Fair 2013.

The event celebrates science by aiming to reach out to and spark interest for science in school children of any age and year. High-profile firms, such as E.ON and L'Oréal, and other university departments attended.

Second-year psychology student Louisa Morrison talks about how hugely successful the School of Psychology and BPS stall was. It captured everyone's imagination by providing interactive demonstrations of experiments including Roger Newport's invention, the MIRAGE box.

"While our machines weren't as obviously visual as the flashing lights and bright colours other stalls had to offer, our stall increased in popularity throughout the event mostly through word of mouth about our bodily illusions being 'creepy', 'weird' and simply 'amazing'. For example, the finger stretching illusion, in which a person sees an image of their finger being stretched in the box while we simultaneously pull at the finger, results in an actual feeling of a stretched finger.

Even though people know their finger is not actually being stretched, their brain is fooled into sensing the stretch anyway.

While this demonstrated a fun side of psychology to the younger children, we could also address the older audience members by explaining that this is an example of how our brain's representation of the body is simply made up of what we see and feel. And that, on a more serious note, the finger stretching illusion has been found to temporarily reduce or eliminate pain in patients with arthritis.

It was rewarding to see the amazement in the children's eyes and observe them trying to peak into the box to see whether their finger actually had been stretched. Additionally, it was a wonderful experience to be able to share our passion for psychology with the university students of tomorrow, especially sparking interest in those young eager minds to whom psychology was something completely new.

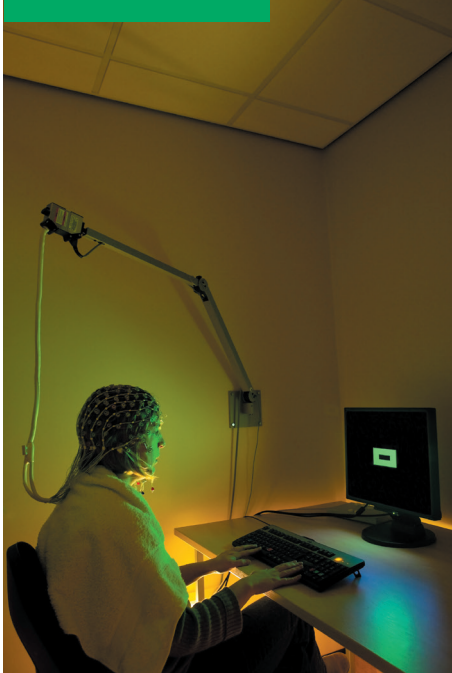
It was an experience I would not have wanted to miss and a huge thank you has to go to all involved in making this an incredible experience, but especially to Roger Newport for giving us this opportunity and trusting us to adequately represent his invention."



The finger stretching illusion that was demonstrated by the group at the Big Bang Fair.

New postgraduate courses

A student in the EEG lab.



From September, the School of Psychology will be offering three postgraduate courses for students with and without a background in psychology.

MSc/PGDip Psychology (Conversion)

These courses are for those who have little or no previous background in psychology but want to pursue a career in this area. They offer eligibility for Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership of the British Psychological Society. The courses consist of lectures, seminar-based teaching and practicals, and the MSc also includes a substantial independent hands-on research project.

MSc Brain Imaging

If you are interested in brain imaging, this course covers key areas of cognitive neuroscience using a highly interdisciplinary curriculum. The course provides advanced research training and develops transferrable skills to prepare students for careers in academia or industry.

MSc Psychology Research Methods

If you have graduated in psychology or a closely related discipline and wish to extend your psychology training, we offer the MSc Psychology Research Methods. The course is approved by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) as the first part of a '1+3' postgraduate training programme leading eventually to a PhD.

Deadlines for applications are approaching.

Find out more about each course on the postgraduate online prospectus www.nottingham.ac.uk/pgstudy/courses/psychology

Award for achievement



Two members of staff in the School of Psychology, Dr Lucy Cragg and Dr Alastair Smith, were recently made recipients of the Vice Chancellor's Achievement Award.

The award was given in recognition of their work organising and conducting Summer Scientist Week and was presented at a ceremony in December.

The public engagement event takes place annually and invites local children to the University to learn more about the psychological sciences and to participate in studies themselves.

Early career opportunities for women

The Elsevier Foundation's 'New Scholars Program' supports projects to help early- to mid-career women scientists balance family responsibilities with demanding academic careers.

The Foundation provides one-, two- and three-year grants to STEM institutions and organisations actively working towards having a balanced faculty by: encouraging networking and collaborations in ways that support the challenges of staff with family responsibilities; developing and implementing strategies to advance knowledge, awareness and application of programmes to retain, recruit and develop women in science; and by helping scientists with childcare and other family responsibilities when attending scientific gatherings that are critical to the development of their career.

It is a free interactive event for four- to 11-year-olds and their parents which gives a fun introduction to the mind and brain.

Summer Scientist Week 2013 takes place from 14 to 16 August and 19 to 21 August. For more information about the event and opportunities for you to volunteer, please see www.summerscientist.org

The deadline for proposals is 24 June 2013. For more information about the Elsevier Foundation and the New Scholars Program, see www.elsevierfoundation.org/new-scholars/how-to-apply

The School of Psychology values and promotes the importance of women in science and this was recognised with the honour of an Athena SWAN Silver Award. The Athena SWAN Charter recognises commitment to advancing women's careers in science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine employment in higher education.

For more information about Athena SWAN, see www.athenaswan.org.uk/content/athena-swan

Finalists' reception

All final-year students are invited to a reception to be held in the social space in the School of Psychology at 12.00pm on Thursday 20 June.

Professor McGraw will make an announcement about the recipient of the Pumphrey Prize – awarded each year for outstanding work by a psychology finalist, the Standen Prize for work on intelligent systems, the Newson Prize and the Examiners Prize. He will also announce the winner of the British Psychological Society (BPS) Undergraduate Award, which is awarded to the student with the highest overall classification average.

We will then celebrate with a BBQ outside the School of Psychology at approximately 1.30pm. A class of 2013 photograph will also be taken (weather permitting!).

Staff updates

We would like to welcome two new research fellows to the school, Dr Antoinette Nicolle who works on the neuroscience of decision making and emotion will be starting on 1 August, and Dr Jonathan Dennis will be joining us in January 2014.

Dr Markus Bauer from the Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience at University College London (UCL) will also join the school in September 2013. Dr Bauer's research focuses on attentional selection and decision making in sensory perception. Some of his particular interests include the combination of neuropharmacological manipulations with MEG/EEG measurements.

We bid farewell to three members of staff who will be moving on to other institutions: Antonia Hamilton will be going to UCL, Marios Philiastides to Glasgow and David Crundall to Nottingham Trent University.

Listen up!

Congratulations to Dr Ellen Townsend who has been awarded a grant of nearly £500,000 from the Department of Health. The 'Listen-up!' project is aimed at understanding and helping looked-after young people who self-harm.

Find out more: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health

Proposed new module

Global Psychology is a newly proposed online module that will cover the psychological implications of globalisation and cross-cultural aspects of mainstream psychology research.

Areas of focus are likely to include family, language, education, work, health, and technology. We hope that this will complement the current syllabus for psychology students and provide an appealing point of access to our discipline for students taking other courses.

The project is being led by Dr Marc Archer (The University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus, UNMC), Dr Nicola Pitchford (The University of Nottingham, UK), and Dr Margaret Dowens (The University of Nottingham Ningbo China) over the coming year with a £10,000 grant from the Teaching and Learning Board.

As the module will be delivered online, a key element of the project is to explore and devise innovative delivery and assessment formats. If approved, this will be the first psychology module made available to students at the China Campus.

A series of focus groups with diverse sets of UNMC students found great enthusiasm for the proposed module and yielded useful ideas and directions.

An online survey to gauge attitudes and interest in the module will be conducted soon. If you have any questions or thoughts, or would like to know more about the module, please contact Eisya Azman at eisya.azman@nottingham.edu.my



Fundamentals of Developmental Psychology

The second edition of Fundamentals of Developmental Psychology, authored by Peter Mitchell and Fenja Ziegler, was published by Psychology Press (Taylor & Francis) early in 2013.

Peter Mitchell is Professor of Psychology and Dean of Science at The University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus.

The first edition of the book appeared in 2007 and was used extensively in the UK and abroad as a comprehensive textbook in developmental psychology suitable for first- and second-year undergraduate students.

The new edition contains several new chapters, including sections on methods in developmental psychology, developmental disorders and the development of numeracy.

Supporting materials have also been thoroughly revised and updated, including lecture slides and practice multiple choice questions which can be accessed free of charge from the publisher's website.

Nightline

Nightline is an anonymous and confidential, non-judgemental listening and information service run for students, by students. We are open every night of term from 7pm-8am and can be contacted by phone, email and instant messenger. We want you to know that we are always here to listen to whatever is on your mind, no matter how big or small you feel your problem is.

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To instant message us, see www.nottinghamnightline.co.uk/im

Keep your news coming

If you have anything for inclusion in this newsletter, please contact Denis Schluppeck at denis.schluppeck@nottingham.ac.uk

Or see the News Stories page on Workspace for guidance on submitting your stories: tiny.cc/your-psych-news

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