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Psychology@Nottingham

School of Psychology newsletter

Issue 9, June 2014

News from the School of Psychology



Students catching up in the cafe
at Lakeside Arts Centre.

Big Bang Fair

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

Awards all round

Read about the prizes our staff have
been awarded recently

Brain Awareness Week

Read about this and our other events for
local school pupils and the community

Big Bang Fair 2014

In March, four PhD students and Dr Roger Newport from the School of Psychology represented the University and the British Psychological Society (BPS) at The Big Bang Fair in Birmingham.

One of the PhD students, Katie Greenfield, talks about the four-day event, which aims to show young people the huge number of exciting careers in science: "We used the MIRAGE, a multisensory illusion system created by Roger Newport, to demonstrate how illusions can be used to understand how we create and maintain a sense of body ownership. Word soon got round that the BPS stand had an extraordinary box that could stretch fingers or even make whole hands disappear and it wasn't long before we had constant queues of excited children (and parents) eager to try it out.

When we were not using the MIRAGE it was rewarding to speak to children about what psychology is, how our research applies to everyday life and the broad range of careers that a psychology degree can lead to.

Although we were all exhausted by the end, the reaction to the illusions – from laughing and shrieking through to pure disbelief – were brilliant and the chance to be part of an event which inspires young people to take up a career in science was invaluable."



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

Above: From left to right: Katie Greenfield, Hayley Thair, Natasha Ratcliffe and Kristy Themelis.

Neuroscience @Nottingham Day

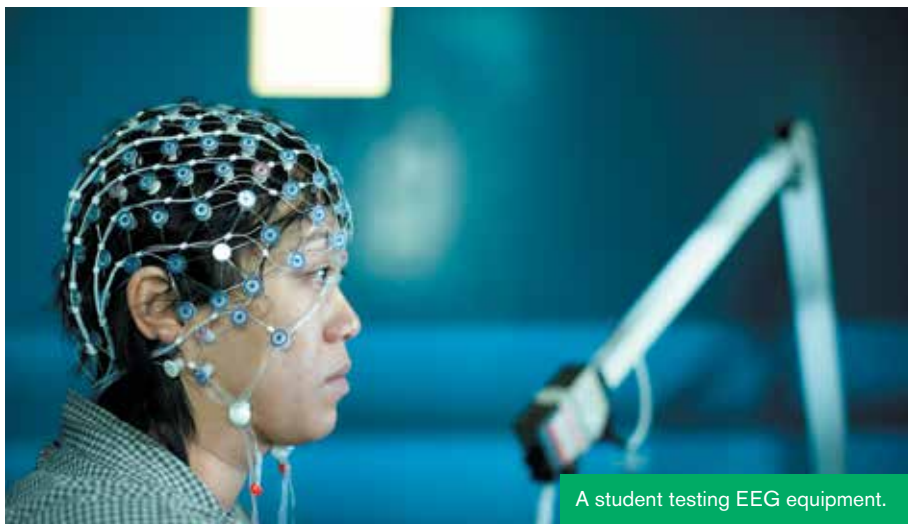
Last December, Nottingham neuroscientists, including members of the School of Psychology, gathered for the annual Neuroscience@Nottingham Poster and Lecture Day.

There were more than 50 posters presenting neuroscience research from across the University's Schools of Life Sciences, Biosciences, Psychology, Physics and Astronomy, Mathematical Sciences and Medicine and the MRC Institute of Hearing Research, with research ranging from molecular and cellular neuroscience to cognitive and clinical neuroscience.

The guest speaker Joanna Wardlaw (Centre for Clinical Brain Sciences, University of Edinburgh) gave a fascinating overview of her multidisciplinary translational research programme on vascular disorders of the brain.

Beili Shao (a third-year PhD student from the School of Medicine, Division of Clinical Neuroscience, Stroke Group) and Sorley Somerled (a first-year student on the four-year BBSRC Doctoral Training Programme, School of Psychology, Behavioural Neuroscience Group) were awarded with the two postgraduate poster prizes for their excellent research and presentations on the effects of hyperglycaemia on cerebral barrier function and on the role of prefrontal cortex in the hippocampal learning-behaviour translation, respectively.

Brain Awareness Week 2014



A student testing EEG equipment.

On 26 March and 2 April 2014 we held our annual Brain Awareness Week events at the School of Psychology. We invited pupils from various schools who came to learn about brain research.

Academic staff gave mini lectures on schizophrenia, the developing brain, brain imaging, vision and autism. PhD students organised lab activities including the TMS, EEG and psychophysiology labs, covering topics such as emotions, memory, navigation, gambling and multi-sensory illusions.

Pupils also visited the Nottingham Integrated Transport and Environment Simulation (NITES) facility and learned about driving research using eye-tracking technology.

The popularity of this event has been annually increasing. This year we had 190 pupils over the two-day event. The feedback was extremely positive. One student said: "I absolutely enjoyed attending the session and learned so much about what psychology is all about and what it would be like to study psychology at The University of Nottingham."

Summer Scientist Week 2014

Each year we hold Summer Scientist Week – a free event for four- to 11-year-olds and their parents which gives a fun introduction to the mind and brain.

Families are invited to spend half a day at the University to play lots of fun games to help members of the school with their research. By taking part, children (and parents) get to learn about how the mind and brain work by experiencing real science first-hand. This year's event will take place on Wednesday 13 to Friday 15 August and Monday 18 to Wednesday 20 August.

A visitor taking part in one of the activities.



Finalists' BBQ

To congratulate all of this year's finalists, we will be holding a school barbeque on Thursday 19 June. All final-year students are welcome to come along. It will be held on the lawn in front of the Psychology Building (weather permitting; or alternatively in the social space) at 1pm and a group photo will be taken just before it starts at around 12.30pm.

Best Paper Prize

Congratulations go to Professor Steve Jackson and his team for winning the Journal of Neuropsychology Best Paper Prize (2013).

The paper 'Motor excitability is reduced prior to voluntary movements in children and adolescents with Tourette syndrome', written by Stephen R. Jackson, Amy Parkinson, Valentina Manfredi, Guy Millon, Chris Hollis and Georgina M. Jackson can be found at [onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1748-6653](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1748-6653)

In September 2013, Steve Jackson was also elected President of the British Association for Cognitive Neuroscience (BACN). For more details on the association, see www.bacn.co.uk

Research prize shortlist honour

Congratulations also go to Antoinette Nicolle who was shortlisted for the Lloyds Science of Risk Research Prize 2013. Antoinette was shortlisted in the Behavioural Risks category and was invited to take part in the prize-giving conference and poster session.

100 heroes

Congratulations to Professor David Clarke and Dr Roger Newport who are both among the '100 Heroes of the Students' Union' chosen as part of the exhibition to mark the centenary of the union. This featured individuals and groups over the last 100 years who had made the biggest difference to the students' experience.

Professor John Newson and Dr Elizabeth Newson OBE were also on the list. See www.100-heroes.co.uk/100-heroes/tutors-and-lecturers

May Fest 2014

Following five successful years, The University of Nottingham once again opened its doors to the local community on Saturday 10 May for May Fest 2014.

As well as the return of more brain games and the ever-popular thunder and lightning sessions, this year's varied line-up included everything from engineering innovations to the mouth-watering delights of the Sutton Bonington Farmers' Market. There was so much to see and do, including tours of our gardens and grounds and many great prizes up for grabs, there really was something for everyone to get involved in.

May Fest will be back next year so keep an eye out for details nearer the time.

May Fest visitors enjoying the activities.



Neural inhibition workshop

The Brain and Body Centre in the School of Psychology recently hosted a one-day workshop looking at neural inhibition and disinhibition in health and disorder.

Neural inhibition by GABAergic neurons has been recognised as playing a key role in modulating, balancing and orchestrating brain mechanisms underlying adaptive cognition and behaviour, and neural 'disinhibition'. The workshop brought together several current perspectives on this important topic.

Following a brief introduction by Stephen Jackson, the organiser of the day, talks in the morning session highlighted recent research on oscillatory cortical and hippocampal network activity and the importance of inhibitory interneuron

function (talks came from Miles Whittington, York; Iris Oren, Edinburgh; Markus Bauer, Nottingham) and on attentional and memory deficits caused by prefrontal and hippocampal disinhibition (from Tobias Bast, Nottingham).

The afternoon session focused on GABAergic mechanisms in the motor cortex and their role in motor learning and rehabilitation (talks came from Charlotte Stagg, Oxford; Soyoung Kim, Nottingham) and in Tourette's syndrome (from Amelia Draper, Nottingham).

The day also included poster presentations around the topic and plenty of opportunities for informal discussion among attendants. The workshop was sponsored by the School of Psychology, Brainvision UK, and Openvivo.

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 are always here to listen to whatever is on your mind, no matter how big or small you feel your problem is.

Contact us:
t: +44 (0)115 951 4985
(free from any internal line on 14985)
e: nightlineanon@nottingham.ac.uk
w: www.nottinghamnightline.co.uk

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

Acknowledgements and keep your news coming

Thanks to Viv Kirk for providing useful notes and the Psychology Research Support Office for keeping an eye on recent news!

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/psych-news

This publication is available in alternative formats:

t: +44 (0)115 951 4591

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