Although we may think that the summer is a time for ‘winding down’ in Universities the sheer scale of research activity going on in the School of Social Sciences currently reveals that this is definitely not the case. Our research activities are being enhanced by the welcome arrival of new staff and a growing number of ‘studentship’ opportunities from undergraduate through to post graduate levels.

We are also working hard to continue to secure research funding and to find ways of thinking creatively about how we promote the impact of our research.

With a view to taking the strategic agenda forward aligned with this university’s strategic planning process, the school exec are having a research ‘away day’ on September 20th. We will also be planning a school wide research event for the Autumn—so more information on this to follow.

It seems like the past academic session had flown by and it is hard to believe that this is our 7th newsletter. With that in mind, I would just like to say a huge ‘thank-you’ on everyone’s behalf to Lianne Kerlin who leaves us at the end of August 2013 for pastures new at the BBC in Manchester. Lianne has played a key role in the success of the Newsletter and has helped a number of colleagues in the School on various projects. I am sure you will join me in wishing Lianne every success in her new role, which I’m sure will make excellent use of the research skills and expertise she has contributed at NTU.

Lianne Kerlin

EDITORIAL
News from across the School

SOCIOLOGY

A warm welcome to Professor Azrini Wahidin who joined the team on 1st July. Look out for an exclusive interview with Azrini in the next issue.

A further warm welcome to Rebecca Thompson who joined the Division of Sociology on 1st June to work as a Research Fellow on the ESRC-SDAI funded project Which burglary security devices work for whom and in what context?

Rebecca is currently a final year doctoral student in Criminology examining theft from person and robbery trends in England and Wales. She received her BSc (Hons) in Criminology and Social Policy from Loughborough University and MSc in Criminology and Criminal Justice for which she received a distinction and course prize.

Rebecca worked for Leicestershire Constabulary before being awarded a Vice-Chancellor’s Scholarship to undertake doctoral study here at NTU. Her research analyses multiple sweeps of the British Crime Survey (BCS) data via advanced statistical techniques to identify patterns and trends in victim, incident and type of stolen goods characteristics of completed and attempted theft from person and robbery between 1994 and 2010/11. These results will inform policy aimed at preventing theft from person and robbery.

Rebecca has presented part of her PhD research findings at national and international conferences (for example, the British Society of Criminology Conference in Portsmouth and the European Society of Criminology Conference in Bilbao). She has also co-authored a chapter on a comprehensive research agenda for exploring opportunity theory and the crime drop which was published in an edited volume The International Crime Drop: New Directions in Research (van Dijk et al., 2012).

POLITICS & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Oliver Harrison has authored a book titled Revolutionary subjectivity in post-Marxist thought: Laclau, Negri, Badiou. This will be published by Ashgate Press in 2014.

SOCIAL WORK & PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Chak Kwan of Social Work and Professional Practice and Professor Kinglun Ngok (of Sun Yat-Sen University of China) have been offered a contract from Routledge to edit a book that will be published in October 2014. The title of the book will be China’s Social Policy: Transformation and Challenges. Abingdon: Routledge. The book aims to critically analyse Chinese social policy development, from its open door policy in 1978 to the administration of Chinese new leaders Xi and Li, who came to power in 2013.
The Division of Social Work and Professional Practice has been successful in putting forward a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council. Adam Barnard, Simon Howard and Di Bailey are Nottingham Trent University’s research team. Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) is a UK-wide initiative that helps businesses to improve their competitiveness and productivity by making better use of knowledge, technology and skills by working with universities, colleges and research organisations.

The project is funded by Nottinghamshire County Council and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). Knowledge Transfer Partnerships offer ‘cutting-edge research taking place at the University that will have an impact on the lives of people across the world’.

The KTP is to ‘develop and introduce an innovative model of service delivery to reduce expenditure, improve outcomes, understand behaviour change, and rethink public service delivery to meet young people and children’s needs’. The research will make effective use of Participatory Action Research to include service users, children and young people in the design and delivery of the project. This innovative approach meets the needs of the Council’s service delivery and prioritises service users ‘voices’ and their experience in conducting research.

The project also meets the strategic prioritises of the ESRC for:

- Economic Performance and Sustainable Growth
- Influencing Behaviour and Informing Interventions
- A Vibrant and Fair Society

Adam Barnard, Social Work and Professional Practice

For more information please contact adam.barnard@ntu.ac.uk
The Use of Medication to Treat Sexual Preoccupation and Hypersexuality in Sexual Offenders

Members of the Sexual Offences Crime and Misconduct Research Unit (SOCAMRU) (Dr Belinda Winder [Head], Rebecca Lievesley, Helen Elliott, Dr Christine Norman) have been involved in an evaluation of pharmacological treatment of male sexual offenders at Her Majesty’s Prison Service Whatton. A three year pilot began in 2007 and the treatment has continued since due to ongoing funding. Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIS) and anti-androgens have been prescribed on a voluntary basis to 64 sexual offenders as a method to reduce sexual preoccupation, sexual compulsivity and hypersexuality. Preliminary findings from a large mixed method evaluation are extremely promising. The research team has found significant reductions in sexual preoccupation, sexual compulsivity and hypersexuality post medication compared to pre medication. In addition, qualitative research with offenders has indicated positive effects of the medication in terms of reducing intrusive sexual fantasies and arousal and giving offenders ‘head space’ to process thoughts and make conscious decisions. Interviews with staff have demonstrated the good standard of practice of the intervention team at the prison, and have allowed for recommendations to be made in areas requiring further work or improvement. HMP Whatton have already responded to the research team’s initial findings and have delivered training packages for various staff groups. The evaluation is ongoing, with further data being collated to strengthen the analysis.

Helen Elliot
Research Assistant, Psychology

British Psychological Society Undergraduate Research Assistantship Scheme

Mhairi Bowe and Viv Brunsden, along with Holly Wharton who is a second year BSc Psychology student, have been successful in bidding for British Psychological Society funding through their Undergraduate Research Assistantship Scheme. This scheme provides researchers with the opportunity to give an undergraduate ‘hands on’ experience of research during the summer vacation. Successful applicants are marked out as a future researcher and potential academic. There is an expectation that the academics will then develop the Research Assistant’s potential and their interest in research. Awards are made not only on the quality of the research project proposed but also on the quality of the student to be employed. Holly is therefore to be particularly commended on this achievement, particularly as the scheme received over 60 applications this year but funded only 12. Over the summer the team will use photo-elicitation with individuals who have Alzheimer’s Disease. The research will explore whether places can help construct a sense of self, and a sense of memory and connection over time. It is hoped that the findings will aid the development of tools to assist in memory retention and identity preservation.

Viv Brunsden
Lecturer in Psychology
The University launched a 2013 round of the SPUR Undergraduate Research Scheme, which provides students with opportunities to engage with some of the cutting edge research undertaken at NTU.

Second year undergraduates from the School of Social Sciences were invited to apply for a bursary of £170 per week to join staff on a research project looking at young people, substance misuse and mental health. The successful student applicant will be involved in the project for up to 10 weeks / 370 hours during the 2013 summer vacation, helping to produce a literature review, liaising with colleagues from substance misuse and mental health services, and helping with the design and analysis of data sets.

A strong field of candidates applied for the bursary position, after briefing sessions outlined the project and the expectations required by the scheme. The successful candidate, Hannah Skelhorn from B.A. (Hons) Health and Social Care, was in post by 1st July 2013 working with Dr. Adam Barnard.

Reflecting on the experience, Hannah said initially the project ‘looks like a lot of work but very interesting’. One of Hannah’s first commitments was attending the School of Social Science’s Conference on Cannabis. She commented it ‘was so interesting!’.

The work that has been conducted on the substance misuse project has developed Hannah’s understanding of the field of mental health and substance misuse, as well as research methodologies. It ‘was really interesting’, and ‘I got to listen to the transcripts of the interviews’ with service users. The project will lead to the publication of academic papers and a poster presentation for the British Council of Undergraduate Research Conference in September.

#Adam Barnard,
Lecturer, Social Work and Professional Practice
Criminologists are hoping to pinpoint the most effective home security measures in a move which they hope could one day make domestic burglary a thing of the past. 

Professor Andromachi Tseloni, Criminology (alongside Nick Tilley, University College London; Dr Louise Grove, Loughborough University; and Professor Graham Farrell, Simon Fraser University) are aiming to identify the most successful and cost-effective burglary devices for different people – depending on a variety of issues including area, accommodation types and occupants’ characteristics.

They are analysing more than 20 years’ worth of British Crime Survey data to uncover what works best for which people and properties, as part of the 18 month Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded project. It is hoped that the findings will be used by the police to successfully target different population groups, a move which the researchers believe could have a dramatic effect in reducing home burglaries.

The range of security measures the research team will be looking at will include alarms, dummy alarm boxes, security chains, indoor and outdoor lights on timer and sensor switches, bars or grills on windows and doors, deadlocks and window locks, and even dogs.

The study – the first of its kind – comes at a time when, due to the recession, there are fears that domestic burglary may start rising after a prolonged period of sustained falls.

The researchers are hopeful that the knock-on effect of cutting burglary could mean a drop in other crimes, as was the case when vehicle security improved in the 1990s. A theory behind this is that because many young people started on their path to criminality by stealing cars for joy-riding, when this was made more difficult there was a marked reduction in other offences. This was proposed during an earlier project on ‘Explaining and Sustaining the Crime Drop in the Industrialised World’ which the researchers undertook with ESRC funding in 2007-2009.

The need for identifying tailor-made, cost-effective – and targeted – home security is seen as crucial, at a time of massive public spending cuts and declining disposable incomes. It is hoped that the benefit from the research will be both societal and economical, by deterring burglary and preventing wasteful financial decisions.

Professor Andromachi Tseloni, said: “Domestic burglary is a high volume crime affecting many UK households. As well as substantial financial loss and damage to property, burglary – and the possibility of being burgled – causes high levels of anxiety. It is such a blight on society, that surveys documenting public priorities about crime place burglary at the top. We know that burglar alarms and other security devices work in principle to deter burglars – but now, for the first time, we want to uncover what works best and for which people. Our earlier research showed that burglary protection may not be commensurate to investments in security. We will be engaging with public and voluntary sector representatives and hope our findings will be used to inform national and international guidelines on burglary prevention. The findings will also be of interest to the security and insurance industry”. 
The study comes after the Department for Communities and Local Government highlighted the need for research evidence on cost-effective burglary security devices to inform the debate on minimum standards for security in homes and enjoys the support of local (the Nottingham Crime and Drugs Partnership, City Homes, Victim Support and City Council Portfolio Holder for Area Working, Cleansing & Community Safety) and national (Neighbourhood & Home Watch Network, Department for Communities and Local Government, Crime Prevention Initiatives, Home Office and Office of National Statistics) public and voluntary sector stakeholders Chaired by the Association Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Lead on Burglary.

In Profile: Becky Heath
Administrator in the School Management Team

Welcome to NTU Becky. How are you settling in?
Great thanks. Everyone is really lovely and helpful so I’m enjoying it.

How long have you been here now?
This is the end of my second week, so I still feel really new. I’m trying to get to grips with who everyone is and how the systems work.

What were you doing before you came to work here?
I was a Teacher at a Middle School. I taught Geography, History and RE for three years, but decided I wanted a change. Before teaching I did a PA role within the Probation Service, so my new role here will make use of those skills. As I did a Social Sciences degree myself when I was at University, I thought this was another good reason to work within this particular team.

Great. So can you briefly outline what your role will be?
I’m an Administrator in the School Management Support Team. Specifically, I will be working on research with Di Bailey in her role within the division of Social Work & Professional Practice and external networking and partnerships for Jason Pandya-Wood in his role within the division of Sociology. It should be very interesting.

How will your role be related to research?
I’ll be helping Di with the Research Funding Panel, setting up any meetings and as Di is the school lead, I’ll be helping with the administration of this too.

There is the Research Funding Panel fast approaching...
Yes, it is on the 24th September, and Di would like all application forms to be submitted by the 18th September. The panel will decide how the funding will be allocated by the 23rd. If people don’t apply by this date, then the group won’t have a chance to review their applications at this meeting. The panel meet about 4 or 5 times a year so this seems like a good opportunity to remind people to get their applications in. If anyone is unsure of the forms or the process, I’m happy to help!

We heard that you’ll also be working on the newsletter, so welcome to the RaISS-IT team.
Thank you. Yes, I saw the newsletter for the first time yesterday. Di thought that as I’m coming in as a new role with my PA and teaching skills that I could be involved, so I’m very much looking forward to working on it.
On Tuesday the 11th June Her Majesty’s Prison Whatton hosted a conference to provide the opportunity to present the most recent developments in the treatment of sex offenders. A range of professionals including treatment practitioners, public protection specialists and academics attended the conference to gain insight into the most recent innovations for treatment.

The conference hosted talks on: anti-libidinal medication; sex offender treatment & learning disability; group work for deaf sex offenders; commissioning and desistance. A highlight for many was the presentation on the first ever group treatment programme for deaf sex offenders. Hearing the trials and tribulations of running such a complicated treatment programme for some of the most vulnerable, high need sex offenders was both captivating and inspirational.

For Nottingham Trent University’s Sexual Offences Crime and Misconduct Research Unit (SOCAMRU), the conference was an opportunity to showcase to colleagues and many other professionals the research they have been conducting alongside HMP Whatton for over six years. Dr Nicholas Blagden presented a talk on fostering change through therapeutic and rehabilitative prison climates. A concluding point to the presentation was that ‘finding meaning and purpose in prison may help with finding it outside prison and effective climates can help foster this’. Dr Belinda Winder and fellow research assistants and PhD students also presented their research in poster form including: the evaluation of anti-libidinal medication, screening measures for intellectually disabled prisoners and internet sex offenders.

The Whatton conference demonstrated the fantastic work the institution are doing to promote the rehabilitation of sex offenders in one of the most challenging environments, to achieve their aim of ‘no more victims’.

Upcoming conferences

**Manchester Workshops in Political Theory, Manchester—August 2013**
Oliver Harrison will be presenting: “Sustainability and the ethics of character: Sean Penn’s Into the Wild (2007)”

**The European Society of Criminology Conference, Budapest—September 2013**
Andromachi Tseloni will be presenting: “Burglary Security Effectiveness”

**Falling Crime Rates and Criminal Law Reform (DRAFT) Modern Law Review Symposium, University of Sheffield - October 2013**
Andromachi Tseloni will be presenting: “Falling rates of household burglary and the rise in personal security”
Hot Off the Press!

Recent Publications


Recent Conferences

Robert Dingwall
Attended “Socio-Legal Studies”, York, March 2013 and “Law and Society Association”, Boston, May 2013

Presented a sub-plenary in medical sociology titled ”The sick role in a consumer society” at the British Sociological Association, London, April 2013

Invited speaker at “Interazionismo Simbolico, Inclusione Sociale e Pace/ Romantics, Stoics and Symbolic Interactionists “, University of Pisa, Italy, May 2013

Marie Gibbert
“Using Films and Podcasts to Teach Africa’s International Relations: A First Assessment” presented at: Teaching Africa and International Studies workshop (with the support of the BISA International Studies and Africa Working Group and the Higher Education Academy), Royal Holloway, University of London, June 2013.


Andromachi Tseloni
“From modelling to preventing victimisation” presented at: The Stockholm Criminology Symposium:“ Recognizing Knowledge to Reduce Crime and Injustice”
Members of the Emergency Services Research Unit had great success in the recent SPUR competition. Viv Brunsden, Rowena Hill and Duncan Guest secured one of the 12 projects awarded by the university this year. The project was suggested by Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service and will consider the utility of social media for delivering fire safety messages. The project will review and synthesise a diverse range of literature including those from cognitive psychology, social psychology, cyberpsychology, risk, fire science and business. The intention is to develop a better understanding of the potential of social media to contribute to fire prevention and to make recommendations for practice within that arena. Two students have been appointed to the project in a job share: Freyja Nash and Robert Wilding who are both studying psychology.

**Creating a student research community**

Having two SPUR projects running concurrently has additional benefits for the students concerned as they will be able to share any relevant information and also support each other in the new and exciting (but perhaps a little scary!) experience of working alongside their lecturers as peers in the research process.

Research presentations arising from the projects have already been accepted at a number of relevant conferences that will be attended by both academics and practitioners from the Fire & Rescue Service. The intention is that the work will also be written up for both academic journals and fire professionals.

In addition to the SPUR appointments ESRU currently has two postgraduate students working with us as voluntary research assistants. Dipti Mistry has been conducting a review of the literature on posttraumatic growth and psychological resilience in emergency services personnel but is now switching her attentions to working with Kevin Maguire, and School colleagues from outside ESRU Phil Hodgson and Kevin Love, on some transcripts of interviews with members of the police. Arjun Dedhia is conducting a review of the literature surrounding serious injury and death notification. It is hoped that this work will also be disseminated through relevant conferences and publications.

**ESRU PhD news**

ESRU will also soon have its first funded PhD student. Lisa Sanderson has secured funding from the Division to research posttraumatic growth in firefighters. This has generally been studied in clinical populations but the Fire & Rescue Service are a population who are constantly exposed to traumatic incidents but do not necessarily experience subsequent traumatic stress. The research will use sequential mixed methods, specifically using grounded theory to explore how growth is experienced and to develop a model of growth that can then be operationalized and tested using psychometric measures. Lisa will commence her studies in January 2014 and will be supervised by Viv Brunsden (DoS), Rowena Hill and Duncan Guest.
ESRU teaching news

Students on the ‘Psychology & Emergency Services’ module (BSc Psychology) led by Rowena Hill & Viv Brunsden have gained publications for the second year running. During this module students complete a formative task where they review recent literature and collectively produce a research digest. One of the digests has already been published in the professional journal Resilience, a publication of the Emergency Planning Society, and the second one will be published in the next issue. The students are to be congratulated in producing work of such a high standard that it can be published – for a task that didn’t even carry a mark!

Academic & professional co-ordination

Jeff Goatcher and Viv Brunsden recently attended the first Academic Conference on Teaching and Research in Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience at University College London. Attendance at this event was by invitation only. The intention was to lay the foundations for disaster education and research as a unitary discipline and to provide the necessary structures for the professionalization of disaster managers and emergency planners across the UK and Europe. It is great to have ESRU at the forefront of this exciting development in disaster and emergency management.

Viv Brunsden
Lecturer in Psychology

Making Social Work Count!

Although debates on social work as an art or a science have hopefully been laid to rest, great differences of view remain on the nature and role of empirical knowledge required for professional practice. While “evidence-informed practice” features on most social work curricula (including NTU’s), there has generally been a strong emphasis on qualitative approaches as the preferred method of enquiry. This methodology currently attracts 409 citations in Social Care Online – the major UK database of social work research – whereas quantitative methods only appear in 72. Measurement, quantification, and associated forms of research are associated with a (supposedly) outdated “medical model” of human problems, and tend to be regarded as unethical, irrelevant, or simply too hard to understand. This is not really a tenable position, given the profession’s emphasis on accurate observation, estimating risk, and securing and measuring change – all demanding quantification to varying degrees.

So “Making Social Work Count” – a two-year initiative funded by the ESRC – is very timely. This aims both to integrate the teaching of quantitative research methods into social work training, and to equip practitioners to access, understand, apply and in some cases conduct quantitative studies. We were fortunate to be offered the opportunity to spend two days at the University of Bedford to learn more of this initiative, and to hear about the pilot programme which has been running at Bath, Queen’s Belfast and Bedfordshire for the last year. The incremental learning approach that has been developed begins from a very low baseline (fractions and percentages), progressively building students’ understanding and skills in quantitative enquiry through a series of ten workshops, ending in some basic multivariate analysis.

We were very impressed with the range of materials available, which can be adapted according to the needs of individual programmes, and are potentially applicable beyond social work to allied disciplines. We will be working with colleagues to introduce appropriate aspects of this into the new Social Work curriculum, and would be happy to share our experience with other readers. Please contact either of us if you would like to learn more.

Chris Ring and Graham Bowpitt
Lecturer in Social Work and Professional Practice and Reader in Social Policy respectively
The division of Psychology and School of Social Science welcomes
Professor David Crundall

Welcome to NTU, David. We hope you are settling in well.

In profile:
Professor David Crundall

There are going to be new versions of that test going to come out over the next 12-24 months, so it’s good to have that level of real world impact because 100,000 people a month do their hazard perception test.

It sounds as though the real world impact is very important to you...

The really crucial aspect to a lot of my research is to maintain the iterative relationship between the theory and the applied. The applied work should always be done with the theoretical work in mind. Theory should inform any applied research, and ideally, if you do some applied research, you should think about how that feeds back into the theoretical research as well.

In terms of current research, do you have anything in the pipeline for the immediate or long term future?

In terms of the transportation side of my research, one of the very exciting things is the relationship that Nottingham Trent has with the DSA. There is a trial on going at the moment, which means that both the city campus and the Clifton campus are hosting driving tests and that’s a pilot thing that the DSA are trying out. I’ve worked with the DSA before so I’m keen to keep those relationships going, but at an institutional level it’s very nice to have that there as well.

I’ve been discussing with the DSA about following the learning process of learner drivers through that first year using telematic devices placed in driving instructors’ cars. So looking at what teaching works, what problems they have, who is more likely to go on and pass their test compared to other learner drivers, and most importantly whether we find any data in their ‘learning to drive period’ which predicts how likely they are to have a crash immediately after having passed the test.

It really does have some hard hitting implications if that process isn’t gone through successfully, because lots of people die on the road every year, and if there is anything that psychologists can do to reduce the number of accidents and the number of fatalities on the road then that’s all too good.

Shall we start off by talking about your research background?

I see myself as a Cognitive Psychologist, specialising in applied Cognitive Psychology, specialising in traffic and transport Psychology. Cognitive Psychology is primarily about information processing which can be anything from visual perception, visual attention, through to memory, decision making processes and language. Within that, I’m more in the areas of visual attention and eye tracking. I have done a lot of stuff in a variety of applied areas, from cardiotocograms (foetal heart monitors) through to advertising and clay therapy.

My main specialisation is transport psychology. Again, there are many different areas in transport psychology and many niches within them. When I started in this area there was probably only 2-300 in the whole world in this area, but it’s become quite a big field now. Somebody the other day said to me ‘you must spend all your time doing road rage then!’ which I don’t. I’m more interested in studying the cognitive aspects of driving: the skills that people develop that allow them to drive, their visual strategies, their peripheral vision and decision making qualities. All of those things that go towards making somebody less likely to crash. On the flip side of that, I’m also interested in the skills and things that people lack, which leads to potential crashes. Now of course you can’t separate that out completely from the more social psychological aspects, so I do dabble in social psychology, with attitudes and behavioural change, because they’ll all tie up together.

I’ve done a lot of work in simulation, in distraction, in eye tracking during driving, to look at where these skills are under-developed. This sort of research has led to changes in the driving test. Psychologists are very much at the heart of how we test learner drivers. For instance, it was a psychologist who designed the hazard perception test was introduced into the driving test in 2002. I’ve done a lot of work on hazard perception, some of which has been done in collaboration with the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) looking at nuanced versions of the hazard perception test.
I’m also working with researchers in Malaysia to develop a hazard perception test that fits their particular road-safety culture. Our first paper on the cross-cultural challenges of international hazard perception should be coming out soon.

**How do you see your research aligning with other members of psychology or wider in social sciences?**

There’s two ways I see myself fitting in with the school and within the university as a whole. One way is to take the theoretical approach. Mine would be a cognitive approach with an eye tracking and visual perception specialisation that can be applied to or linked in with numerous people in the division and beyond the division. I’ve been working with Carol Hall (out in Brackenurst) on the eye movements of show jumpers. There are other potential links with other research groups as well, but of course we can make those links even within the division.

Then you look at the themes of the research, specifically the applied themes. My biggest applied theme is traffic and transport, which can link in and take expertise from different people. We have a lot of people working with specific populations, such as autistic people or older people, looking at the problems and challenges that these groups might face in terms of processing information and dealing with day to day life. Increasingly, a lot of these specialist groups are driving. A lot of autistic people want to learn to drive and it’s interesting to actually see what challenges they face on the road compared to normal drivers.

If we move away from the research areas to talk research in general. You’ve touched upon having the real world impact, but what other things are important to you?

There’s a lot of stuff that’s really fun about doing research. When you design that perfect experiment - that’s aesthetically pleasing to see. The problem with applied research is that you don’t often get a very clean design. So for my aesthetic needs, that’s where I can turn to my theoretical work as I can design a very carefully controlled experiment. Obviously I don’t get the real world impact from the theoretical stuff, but that’s where I’ve got my applied work to give me the joy of actually having an effect on the world, and talking to people who aren’t psychologists and seeing them get excited about the research.

The idea that you’ve just collected some data and you sit down and ready to do your first analysis - that’s quite exciting too. You don’t know what you’re going to find. It really is quite a journey and quite an adventure at that point. I’ve just got to try to convince my students that that is the case!

The other wonderful aspect of academia is the freedom to seek out novelty. As academics have a free range in terms of what research they want to do, they can follow their desires to a certain extent. Obviously I get my funding primarily from the transport stuff and I’d be a fool to walk away from that but at the same time I’m talking to a director from a local amateur dramatics company and it might be really nice to put some cognitive experimentation into one of their plays. To actually test the audience members about what they’ve seen in the play and what they can remember. Again, I think that’s a wonderful way to take psychology out into the general public.

**Do you have any negatives or frustrations with research?**

I think the biggest frustration is linked to the financial climate. The idea of getting three wonderful reviews for a research grant, yet knowing that you’ve got such a slim chance of getting something funded means that there has been a lot of very good research that has been turned down. I know a lot of people up and down the country that have had brilliant ideas that will not see the light of day. Whereas 4 or 5 years ago with that same proposal, they would have easily been funded. It makes things really tricky for an academic if they can’t get research funding - but I suppose on the bright side it does make academics focus more on getting their message across in that grant proposal.

**Thank you for the interview, David. Is there anything that you would like to add?**

Just to say thank you to everybody in psychology who have made my welcome so warm. The collegiate atmosphere in the division and in the university as a whole is a real asset to the place. There are lots of challenges that all universities face in terms of maintaining and increasing grant income, and we have to be more creative in terms of where we get money from - but I think this is one of the things we can exploit at NTU in psychology because of the vast number of links we have with industry.

These challenges are aided so much by having a collegiate workforce where people are all pulling in the same direction and that is something that NTU can be justifiably proud of. And certainly, at only 3 weeks in I’ve enjoyed my time here immensely. I’m looking forward to having a very productive career here for the next umpteen years. Everybody I have spoken to have been extremely positive and extremely welcoming.

*In the next issue the RaISS-IT team interviews Professor Azrini Wahidin*
Welcome to our new Postgraduate Research Students!

We would like to welcome two new postgraduate research students who have recently joined the School. Each has secured bursaries from our very competitive School bursary schemes, and we look forward to working with them and to finding out more about their exciting new research projects.

Harriet Smith completed her undergraduate degree in History and had a complete change of direction 2 years ago, when she decided to do an MSc in Psychology at NTU. By the end of the course she confessed that she was ‘totally hooked’ on Cognitive Psychology.

With a view to doing a PhD, Harriet has spent the past year at the University of Leicester gaining research experience, working on studies investigating face processing and line-up performance. When a funding opportunity came up at NTU she was delighted to have the opportunity to return to NTU. Harriet’s PhD started in June, and she will be investigating how information from faces and voices is integrated to facilitate person identification.

Christian Perrin is one of two recent postgraduates to be awarded a Psychology PhD Bursary. Christian achieved a degree in Criminology in 2009 at Sheffield Hallam University and then spent four years working with disadvantaged young people, on projects often led by Youth Offending Teams and Special Behaviour Management Schools. Interested in anti-social behaviour, delinquency and behaviour change, Christian began an MSc in Psychology with NTU in 2011. Graduating with a Distinction, Christian specialised in crime desistance and produced a final project that explored how being part of meaningful peer support schemes in prison can foster transformative experiences for offenders. The report (Perrin, C., & Blagden, N. (In Press). “It would’ve been harder, I would’ve learned less, and I don’t know what my attention would have gone on”. An Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis of Samaritans Prison Listener Schemes – The Impact of Being a Listener in Prison. Psychology, Crime and Law, In Press.) is expected to be published within the next six weeks.

As an extension of Christian’s MSc research, his PhD will focus on prison volunteerism in general and what ‘goods’ prisoners may be able to accumulate via upholding peer support roles. It has been widely suggested that in order to enhance offenders’ chances of successfully re-joining society, prison needs to be less about punishment and more about meaningful, rehabilitation-focused activity. As such, current research highlights the need for ‘purposeful activity’ in prisons and schemes that allow offenders to make positive contributions towards their own rehabilitation. A recent report from the Ministry of Justice has emphasised the importance of ‘active citizenship’ and the provision of opportunities that allow for ‘personal growth’ in prisons. Christian’s PhD will explore what ‘meaningful work’ in prisons actually is and if or how this assists offenders’ desistance process.

We wish the new postgraduate students the best of luck with their research.
Nottingham Trent University in collaboration with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS and Nottingham Crime and drug partnership hosted a one day conference on perspectives on substance abuse in Nottingham Conference Centre on June 19th 2013. This one day conference was an event aiming to bring together researchers, academics, policymakers and healthcare practitioners to address current issues around cannabis use.

This event, comes at a time when the issue of the legalization of cannabis is revisited by the British Government, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction and the World Health Organization. This event, supported by Nottingham Trent University and Nottingham Crime and Drugs Partnership, pursued to explore the use and abuse of cannabis, its mental health and long-term psychological aspects, medical uses, links with crime and issues around legalization of its use. Delegates attending the conference came from different disciplines including academia, crime and criminal justice, the pharmaceutical sector, members of the institute of psychiatry, crime and drugs partnerships members, and practitioners in criminal justice, youth justice, the legal sector, public policy and health policy.

In addition to the diverse audience the conference had a diverse panel of speakers including keynote speakers Professor Robin Murray from the institute of psychiatry that explored the link between cannabis use and mental health, Professor Jan Van Dijk that talked about decriminalizing and regulating cannabis in the Netherlands, Dr Joao Goulao that talked about the Portuguese model of decrim inalizing cannabis and Dr Ben Whalley that talked about the complex pharmacology of cannabis and its medical uses. Dr Alexander Sumich (Nottingham Trent University) also presented some research on the effect of intravenous THC on neuropsychological indices and Dr James Houston (University of Ulster) his latest research on the role of childhood trauma in the relationship between cannabis use and psychosis while Doctor Ekramy, Elmorsy (Mansoura Medical School, Egypt & Nottingham School of Biomedical Sciences) described the consumption of cannabis in Egypt. Finally, Claire de Motte (Nottingham Trent University) and Jamie Satherwaite (Nottingham County Council) described the reasons why young people in Nottinghamshire consume cannabis and the possible impact of legalising the drug.

The director of Nottingham Crime and Drugs Partnership Mr Peter Moyes opened the conference with a summary of the current situation and issues around cannabis use in Nottinghamshire and the day ended with a very interesting discussion about the current issues with cannabis use in the UK and the possible impact of decriminalizing and regulating cannabis use in the UK. Some of the important issues raised during the discussion were that the current drug policies don’t seem to have a positive impact on the problems surrounding not only cannabis use but also other drugs. It is therefore important to consider other ways of addressing this problem perhaps by controlling and/or regulating cannabis similar to the Portuguese and Dutch models. The possible positive and negative consequences of such action were extensively discussed amongst delegates.

After the success of this conference that managed to bring together people from different disciplines and discuss the issue of cannabis consumption in the UK from different perspectives, we are hoping that this is the first of many more events to come that will address current issues and debates of substance abuse.
Dates for the Diary

Research Funding deadline: Final application submission is Wednesday 18th September. The panel will meet on Monday 23rd September.

2012-2013 Academic Year Calendar

Next Issue: October 2013

If you wish to contribute to the next issue of the newsletter, then please contact Claire de Motte at claire.demotte@ntu.ac.uk

There’s Social Science in your apple.

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Food miles?

And you thought it was just fruit.