

# think.

University of Otago Department of Psychology



Produced by



# think.

University of Otago Department of Psychology Magazine

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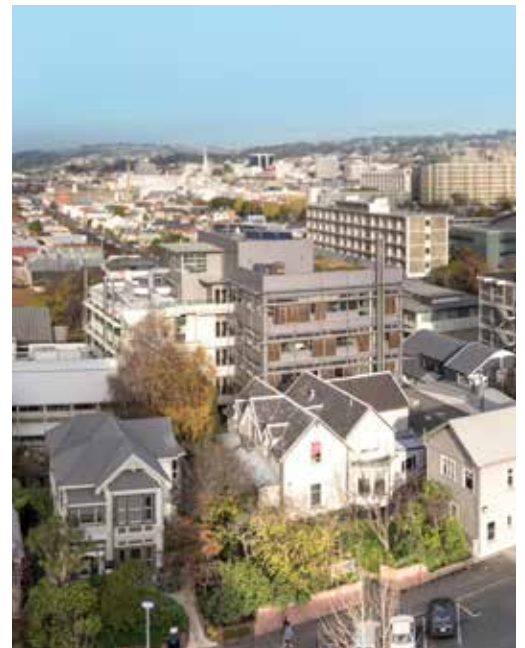
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# WELCOME FROM THE HoD

I would like to be the first to welcome you to the Department of Psychology. I am extremely proud to be a member of this fantastic department. We are dedicated scientists and teachers, and along with our technical and administrative support staff, we have created a world-class department. In fact, did you know that in the highly-cited QS rankings, the Department of Psychology has been ranked in the top 50 Psychology departments in the world for the last four years in a row? The University of Otago has a long-standing reputation for providing high quality tertiary education, and the Department of Psychology takes a leading role in continuing that tradition.

Our aim is to provide you with the best possible education. All of our academic staff are highly rated by our students, and many of them have won and/or been nominated for National and University teaching awards, as well as Otago University Student Association teaching and supervisor-of-the-year awards. Our goal is to equip you with a set of essential skills that will serve you well in life, whatever your ultimate career choice might be. We will teach you how to become critical thinkers, how to become excellent writers, how to clearly communicate your ideas, how to design experiments to answer your questions, and most importantly, how to challenge the conclusions that you hear. These are the skills that all employers seek. Our students have gone on to serve in a diverse range of jobs such as policy analysts in the Ministries of Health, Justice, and Education, strategic analysts for the NZ Police and the NZ Land Transport Safety Authority, human factors specialist for Airbus Industry (UK), animal trainer for land mine detection for the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (Switzerland), medical review writers (NZ) and television journalists (NZ), not to mention, of course, research scientists, lecturers, and professors at universities in New Zealand, Australia, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Not only do we pride ourselves in our teaching but our academic staff are also involved in world-class cutting-edge research. Our Department is home to internationally recognised experts in the molecular mechanisms of Alzheimer's disease, the neural mechanisms of learning, memory, and anxiety, the social dynamics of group behaviour, how religious perceptions influence our behaviour, the human factors underlying airplane crashes, the psychology of eyewitness testimony, the mechanisms underlying human development, the neuropsychological factors underlying normal and abnormal behaviour, and nonhuman animal learning and behaviour. I invite you to explore our website for more detailed information about our research interests.

Our students are an integral part of this Department, and none of our achievements would have been possible without them. Through our first-class teaching,



supervision, and guidance by our lecturers and researchers, and with the immense support of our technical team and administrative staff, we are proactive in promoting our students' success. We pride ourselves on the collegial and inclusive culture of all our people within the Department of Psychology. Our website provides a wealth of information about Psychology at Otago, and interesting items are posted regularly on our Facebook page. We invite you to visit both of these sites to learn more about the Department of Psychology.

Finally, I invite you to read through this wonderful magazine put together by our Otago Psychology Student Committee (OPSYC). What is great about this magazine is that this magazine is written by students for students, showcasing the Department of Psychology from a student's perspective.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact us. I wish you the very best of success in your future studies!

Yours sincerely,

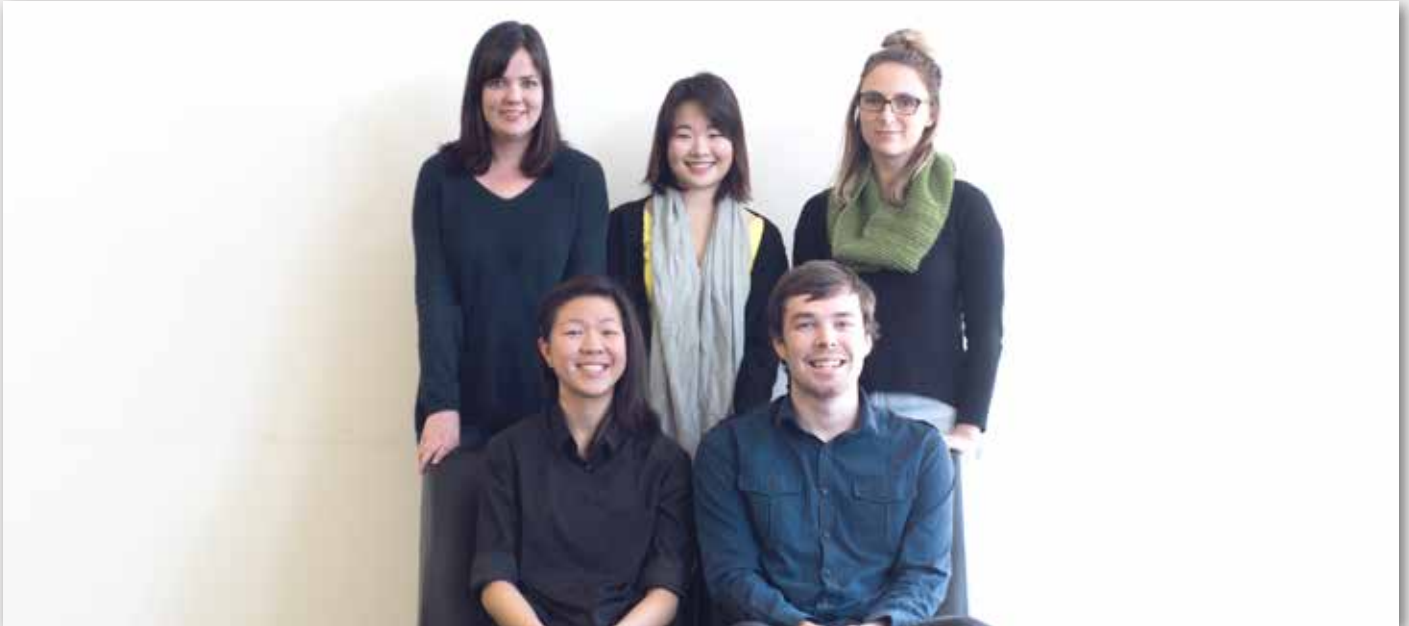


**Michael Colombo**

Professor and Head of Department  
Department of Psychology  
University of Otago  
Dunedin



# LETTER FROM THE EDITORS



Pictured: Kirstie O'Hare, Rachel Goh, Phoebe Poulter, Andrea Chin, and Andrew Mills

When we agreed to produce a second volume of **think.**, we thought it would be easy. I mean, taking the template from the previous magazine and filling it up with new articles—with a couple of edits here and there—couldn't be that hard, right? Little did we know it would end up being a solid three months of work; conducting interviews, writing articles, chasing people for information (kindly at first, then becoming more and more insistent as the weeks dragged on), learning a new software program from scratch, and redesigning the original layout completely. And that doesn't even include our passionate debates over whether a picture should be placed 0.3mm higher or not.

That said, we did have a fantastic time reading through each article and interview sent through, getting to know some of the members of the Department a little bit better, and working on our interpersonal and design skills. The magazine took us on a number of different adventures—our favourite being the *Case of the Missing Entrance*, in which we found ourselves hopelessly lost within the Law Library at the Richardson building having failed to snap an aerial photo of the Psych Department for a snazzy cover photo.

Back in the Department, we took some tips from the last editors and turned on some motivational musical numbers from *'Les Mis'* and *'The Phantom of the Opera'* to spur us on through brightening photos, inserting commas (we've re-established our love of the Oxford Comma), removing double spaces, and again, arguing over whether that picture should have really been 0.3mm higher. We should also mention the fateful morning that

Andrew—attempting to sustain his body through the trying editing process—decided to make some toast... triggering the smoke alarm, spilling the entire Department out onto the street, and summoning a host of fire trucks.

We would like to say a big thank you to everyone that has helped us through this lengthy process. First off, thank you to Cara for being indispensable—answering our incessant questions, sending through countless photos, and allowing us to crash in her office during long weekends of editing. Next, to everyone who contributed to the magazine—writing articles, submitting photos, and answering our questions, this magazine would have no content without you. An especially big thanks to our co-editors; Marea Colombo, Rachel Goh, Kirstie O'Hare, and Phoebe Poulter, for getting the ball rolling with writing articles, proof-reading, and joining us in chasing people up. A special mention goes to the great delivery service of Indian Spice Restaurant, who managed to find the Psychology Department to deliver us delicious curry one rainy Saturday evening.

Lastly, a big thank you to Mike Colombo and the Department for sponsoring another magazine and allowing us to showcase all of the interesting research, exciting events, and proud achievements that the Department has experienced over the last couple of years!

We are happy to finally put this magazine into your hands and look forward to returning to our theses that have been neglected for far too long. We hope you enjoy **think.**

Andrea Chin and Andrew Mills (Editors)

# HOW TO GET A TASTE OF PSYCHOLOGY

*Although Psychology is listed as an NCEA subject, very few secondary schools in New Zealand actually teach Psychology as part of their school curriculum. Here are some of the ways you can get a taste of what Psychology is all about while still in school!*

## HANDS-ON AT OTAGO

Hands-On at Otago is a one-week long summer camp organised by the University of Otago. It is held in January for students entering Years 11-13. 250 students from around the country stay in one of the University's residential colleges and learn about a range of subject areas (including science, humanities, and commerce topics). Students choose a main research project to study every morning, based in one department at the University. In the afternoons, there are 'snacks' of other interesting subjects that students have the opportunity to participate in.

The Department of Psychology offers both 'main research project' and also snack options as part of Hands-On at Otago. The leaders for the projects and snacks consist of Department staff members and senior students. In our main project, students get to be both experimenter and participant as we introduce them to intriguing aspects of human behaviour. We look at things such as: Why does prejudice occur? How do we measure personality? What parts of our brains are specialised in different tasks? Students explore issues like these while learning about how scientific research is conducted in Psychology. We also arrange tours of the Department where students get to meet with scientists and clinicians working in different areas of Psychology. For our snacks, students receive a brief introduction to what Psychology is, and they get to participate in a couple of fun experiments in Psychology.

For more information, see:  
<http://www.otago.ac.nz/hands-on-at-otago/index.html>

## TERTIARY INFORMATION DAY

Tertiary Info Day (TID) happens in early May every year at Otago. A large number of people come from the Otago region (and beyond) to visit the Info Day as a way to see the university in action. A number of talks and presentations occur throughout the day, as well as tours of departments and an interactive expo. Psychology runs a 1-hour presentation and discussion which is very popular with students. For 2017, TID will be held in late-April/early-May.

For more information, see:  
[http://www.otago.ac.nz/about/open\\_days.html](http://www.otago.ac.nz/about/open_days.html)

## OTAGO UNIVERSITY ADVANCED SCHOOL SCIENCES ACADEMY (OUASSA)

OUASSA is very similar in format to Hands-On at Otago, but is aimed at Year 13 students with a passion for science from rural, provincial, or low decile schools throughout New Zealand. Students attend a 1-week camp in January and July, both held at the University of Otago. The Department of Psychology offers a short 2-hour elective project as part of the OUASSA programme. In this elective, students explore how animals' (and humans') behaviour can be shaped by their experiences. We also look at some of the equipment that researchers use to study how animals learn through the consequences of their actions.

For more information, see:  
<http://ouassa.otago.ac.nz/>

## INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FESTIVAL

Every two years, Dunedin hosts the International Science Festival. As part of the festival, the University of Otago runs a two day interactive Science Expo on campus. This is open to everyone and entry is free. The Expo involves about 30 different displays and events involving many different science topics. Psychology has been involved in the past three Expos, with interactive activities and interesting posters at our expo stand that have proved to be very popular for children and adults alike. Stay tuned for the next Science Festival (8th – 16th July 2016)!

For more information, see:  
<http://www.otago.ac.nz/scifest>

## OTHER RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

Our Department is full of very exciting research conducted by world-class researchers. Check out our website or facebook page to keep up to date with what's going on in our Department!

Websites:  
<http://www.otago.ac.nz/psychology>  
<https://www.facebook.com/PsychologyatOtago>

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Dr Celia Lie, a Teaching Fellow in our Department, is involved in a large range of activities involving secondary school students (including the ones listed above). You are more than welcome to contact her if you have any questions about studying Psychology at Otago!

**Tel** 64 3 479 3765  
**Email** [celia@psy.otago.ac.nz](mailto:celia@psy.otago.ac.nz)



# STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

The Department of Psychology aims to provide support, equity, and inclusion for all students. This involves providing specific support for Māori, Pacific, and International students, and students who are experiencing any form of disability (both temporary or permanent).

Support services includes advice about your programme of study, assistance with enrolment, and ongoing advice throughout the year. This advice is provided within the larger framework of support across the University.

## Dr Mele Taumoepeau Pacific Students Support



Talofa lava, Kia orana,  
Fakaalofa lahi atu,  
Talofa ni, Mālō e lelei,  
Ni sa bula, and very  
warm Pacific greetings!

I am a lecturer here  
in the Department of  
Psychology.

I'm originally from the friendly islands of Tonga but have been living in sunny Dunedin for the past 17 years. My research interests are in how children and adolescents develop, and especially the role that culture plays in development. One of my jobs in the Department of Psychology is to welcome and support students of Pacific descent who are taking a Psychology paper or major.

Please feel free to come and talk to me any time about your course or your career plans. I would like to see many more Pacific students studying towards a Psychology degree, especially at honours and post-graduate levels, and so I'm also very happy to discuss research ideas and postgraduate pathways.

### For more information, you can contact Mele at:

Dr Mele Taumoepeau  
**Tel** 64 3 479 4029  
**Email** [mele@psy.otago.ac.nz](mailto:mele@psy.otago.ac.nz)

## Dr Tia Neha Māori Student Services



Tēnā ra koutou kātoa.  
Ki ngā hapori ō te motu,  
tēnā koutou.  
He mihi oha tēnei ki a  
koutou ngā Kaipupuri o te  
Mātauranga.  
Mā koutou e tuku iho te  
taonga nei ki ngā tauira  
hei mana mā rātou. Nō  
reira, tēnā koutou kātoa.

Warm greetings to you all. I have been working in the role of Kaiawhina in the Department of Psychology, University of Otago for the past six years.

I have just completed a PhD in Psychology here at the University of Otago. My research interests are focused around a strong applied and strengths based work with whānau and their children in learning.

The aim of the Kaiawhina is to help Māori postgraduate students and staff in Psychology at cultural, pastoral, and research levels. It is also to liaise with the Māori community using their knowledge and skills to encourage our students to continue at University.

Nō reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā ra  
tātou kātoa.

### For more information, you can contact Tia at:

Dr Tia Neha  
**Tel** 64 3 479 5952  
**Email** [tia@psy.otago.ac.nz](mailto:tia@psy.otago.ac.nz)

Note: We congratulate Tia on her new academic appointment at Victoria University and wish her the very best for her academic career. We are in the process of hiring a new Kaiawhina for the role.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Norma Bartlett for updated information:

**Tel** 64 3 479 7644  
**Email** [psychod@psy.otago.ac.nz](mailto:psychod@psy.otago.ac.nz)

## Dr Celia Lie International Student Adviser



I am originally from China, but moved to New Zealand with my family when I was 3 years old. I grew up in Wellington, but have called Dunedin home since 2001. Employed by the

Department of Psychology as a Teaching Fellow, I am involved in the coordination of the 100-level Psychology laboratory programme. I am also the Department's International Student Adviser.

The University aims to provide a high level of support to international students. My role for the Department is largely one of pastoral care, and I am happy to provide support for international students.

The aim of the Departmental International Student Adviser role is to provide an initial contact point and ongoing support for international students in the Department. Mostly, I am here for anyone that wants to discuss issues related to their course. If I can't help them directly, I try to make sure I put them in touch with someone at the University who can. I also answer emails from international students enquiring about coming to study at Otago, and am amazed by the range of countries that people email me from!

I want to make sure that international students within the Department of Psychology feel like they have someone that they can talk to if they are having difficulties with their studies, or even if they just want some general advice at university.

### For more information, you can contact Celia at:

Dr Celia Lie  
**Tel** 64 3 479 3765  
**Email** [celia@psy.otago.ac.nz](mailto:celia@psy.otago.ac.nz)



**Michelle Moss**

Support for students with disabilities (Central Contact Person)



I took on the role as the Disabilities Adviser for the Department of Psychology in 2013. It is a role I gain a lot of satisfaction from. The Department is committed to making reasonable adjustments that will facilitate participation in our papers so that students with an impairment are treated equally—removing barriers that can arise due to assumptions about functional abilities. We recognise that additional assistance is often required to equitably accommodate students with impairments. This can include hearing, vision, dexterity, or mobility impairments, as well as for students with specific learning difficulties, or with health conditions that are physical or psychological in nature, including injuries and bereavements.

**For more information, you can contact Michelle at:**

Michelle Moss

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**Email** [michelle@psy.otago.ac.nz](mailto:michelle@psy.otago.ac.nz)

**Dr Gareth Treharne**

Support for students with disabilities (Academic Adviser)



My role is the Department of Psychology's academic liaison to the University's Disability Information & Support service. In tandem with Michelle Moss' role as award-winning administrative liaison, my role involves advising students with any form of disability or impairment about selecting and completing undergraduate Psychology papers. I work with the team of staff members in the Disability Information & Support service to advise these students about achieving the requirements of their Psychology degree by planning a feasible workload in their current semester and beyond.

My main aim in this role is to help students with disabilities or impairments achieve their educational potential. One of the main messages I try to spread is that Disability Information & Support is there to support any students whose studies are impacted by their health or other circumstances – this is particularly important as some students might not realise they qualify for 'disability support' for situations ranging from short-term injuries, mental health difficulties, sensory impairments, being differently abled, or having specific learning difficulties.

The University of Otago is committed to supporting all students in achieving their educational potential, particularly students whose health, disability, or other circumstances means they have more complex educational needs – these needs can often be met with the help of the central services of Disability Information & Support and supportive individual departments like the Department of Psychology.

**For more information, you can contact Gareth at:**

Dr Gareth Treharne

**Tel** 64 3 479 7630

**Email** [gtreharne@psy.otago.ac.nz](mailto:gtreharne@psy.otago.ac.nz)

**Lindsay Robertson**

Health and Safety Officer



Psychology is a very diverse subject.

Department of Psychology staff are regularly using hazardous chemicals and drugs, electrically connecting human participants to EEG machines, using power saws and welders, building 230 volt equipment and many other tasks that involve some element of danger.

It's my job to make sure that everyone has the skills and equipment they need to not get hurt doing whatever they need to do. Sometimes that will involve researching the risks of a new process and giving advice, sometimes its simply adjusting someone's computer desk so they are working ergonomically. The idea is that I'm a go-to guy for anything related to the health and safety of employees.

**For more information, you can contact Lindsay at:**

Lindsay Robertson

**Tel** 64 3 479 7668

**Email** [lindsay@psy.otago.ac.nz](mailto:lindsay@psy.otago.ac.nz)

# STAFF vs STUDENTS CRICKET

Nothing gets the Department together quite like a good old cricket match. Unfortunately, this year's cricket match was postponed from its original date due to poor weather, meaning that many of the staff members could not attend this event. However, we pressed on the following week, and the Dunedin weather was more kind to us.

The players were split into Team PhD and Masters versus Team Fourth Year's and Staff. As always, the game started with banter from both teams who were hoping

to play mind games on their opponents. The evening was full of cheering on teammates, pretending to understand cricket, and eating some well-cooked sausages.

As the match reached its end, the scores were very tight. The umpire tallied up the final runs and gave the PhD and Masters students the win, beating Team Fourth Year's and Staff by a mere 3 points (34-31). We look forward to another cricket game next year, as the staff will be hoping to settle the score.

Marea Colombo







# SAY HELLO TO



**RYAN WARD**

**Where are you from/where did you do your degree?**

I'm from Rexburg, Idaho. I got my degree from Utah State University.

**What is your research area and what are you interested in?**

Broadly speaking, I am interested in the neurobiology of cognition, motivation, and their interaction. Problems with the interaction of motivation with other cognitive processes are a significant aspect of the problems that patients face with diseases like schizophrenia. I'm interested in studying the brain circuits that are involved in this interaction in both healthy animals and in animal models of disease.

**What is your favourite thing about being in Psychology/academia?**

I love the intellectual environment of academia. I feel like I'm constantly learning and surrounded by intelligent people who are doing all kinds of interesting things. I also enjoy working with students and seeing them get fired up and excited about research is really rewarding for me. I enjoy the challenge and excitement of research. After all the planning and work that goes into an experiment, to analyse data and get a positive result, there's just no feeling like it. I get excited and giddy every time.

**How did you decide you wanted to go into academia?**

I initially wanted to be a clinician, but realised early on in my studies that I actually wasn't interested in that path. I took a behavioural Psychology class with a lab component and fell in love with lab research. After that, I knew I wanted to do research and train new students, so academia was the obvious career path for me.

**Tell us a little bit about yourself!**

I have a wife and three daughters, and another baby on the way in June. I enjoy listening to music, playing guitar, reading novels, playing baseball (does anyone here play?), and spending time with my family. I am beginning to like camping (although my wife would say I still have a long way to go). I could watch the waves at the beach for hours and never get tired of it.

**Do you have any advice for people wanting to get into Psychology?**

I would advise people to try their hand at laboratory research early on to see if they enjoy it. It takes a certain kind of person to do laboratory research, and if you are that type of person, you should find out so you can get involved in research early and be involved throughout your time at university.

One of my advisors said something to me when I was an undergraduate that has always stuck with me. He said that, in the end, people who do basic research in the laboratory impact more people's lives for good than those who work in the clinic on a person by person basis. Without disparaging any who work in clinical settings (I think they provide a vital service), I've always hoped that this is true in my case, in that I could work towards some more general understanding that could be widely applied to help ease some of the burden of the human condition.



**MARTIN SELLBOM**

**Where are you from/where did you do your degree?**

I was born and raised in Sweden. I moved to the United States when I was 19 to go to university. My main goal was to play American football, which I had already done in Sweden since I was 14. I went to a small university (Tri-State University in Indiana) so that I would be able to actually play. Eventually, I became more serious about studying, and I got my Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and Criminal Justice from Tri-State University in 2000. I then obtained my Master of Arts degree in Clinical Psychology from Ball State University in 2002. Finally, I moved to Ohio, for my PhD in Clinical Psychology, which I completed in 2007.

**What is your research area and what are you interested in?**

My research is focused within three broad domains: integration of personality and psychopathology; personality disorders (especially psychopathic personality disorder), and applied personality assessment. Most generally, I am very interested in understanding mental health conditions from the perspective of individual differences in personality traits. I am also interested in the measurement of abnormal personality traits and the applied use of such measurement in clinical practice.

*Photographs supplied*



# OUR NEW STAFF

## What is your favourite thing about being in Psychology/academia?

Mentoring students! I also like the general flexibility associated with this job.

## How did you decide you wanted to go into academia?

At first, I always thought I wanted to be a practicing Forensic Psychologist. In the US, you need a PhD in Clinical Psychology to register as a Psychologist, but in order to get admitted into such a program, you needed to display some research experience and interests. As I immersed myself in research during my Masters degree, I realised that I found science a lot more interesting than practice. That said, since I started my first academic position, I have always done some Forensic/Clinical Psychology practice on the side.

## Tell us a little bit about yourself!

I have always been an athlete and love all sorts of sports. I grew up playing soccer and American football. Hmm, given that combo, I might have been well-suited for rugby had I grown up in the right country. Anyhow, now in my slightly older years, I like to play golf and can enjoy the occasional pick-up soccer or basketball game. I also spend a lot of time watching sports on TV (football, mixed martial arts, rugby union) and a plethora of TV shows. I am an expert binge-watcher of TV shows and watch more shows than I can remember. Finally, I also enjoy travelling and nature (though I am too lazy for hiking).

## In 3 words, describe your life as a university student!

Football. Beer. Friends.

## Do you have any advice for people wanting to get into Psychology?

Psychology is a very wide field with lots of opportunities; it truly provides a well-rounded education with lots of transferable skills. Keep an open mind and explore the many options before becoming hyper-focused on a particular area (e.g., clinical).



**KRISTIN HILLMAN**

## Where are you from/where did you do your degree?

I am originally from Denver, Colorado in the US. I did my degrees at the University of North Dakota in the US.

## What is your research area and what are you interested in?

My research area is behavioural neuroscience – trying to figure out the brain mechanisms that generate outward behaviour. I am particularly interested in the brain mechanisms that drive goal-directed behaviour, and how those neural mechanisms can be changed by lifestyle modifications, drug use, or disease states.

## What is your favourite thing about being in Psychology/academia?

I like working in an academic Psychology department because it means every day I get to creatively work on something I find extremely fascinating: the brain. When I teach I get to create lectures for undergrad and postgrad students, to hopefully excite them about the brain. When I do research I get to create new hypotheses and projects to test in the lab, to hopefully help advance our understanding of how the brain works. Academia is a neat place where you need to be highly creative, but also highly organised.

## How did you decide you wanted to go into academia?

I took a job as a Laboratory Assistant in my second year of Uni, and it opened my eyes to the world of academic research. Before that I thought that if you had an interest in human biology/disease, your only career path was to go to medical school to become a medical doctor (MD). But taking that job showed me a whole new career path – that instead of a day-to-day routine of diagnosing disease and prescribing drugs as an MD, you could be working on finding out the cause/cure of disease or designing/developing new drugs as a PhD. So from second year onwards I started pursuing a career in academia.

## Tell us a little bit about yourself!

I enjoy fitness, be it group fitness classes, running, yoga, or dog-walking. I like to cook and bake in my free time, and love to travel.

## In 3 words, describe your life as a university student!

Lengthy, rigorous, rewarding

## What's your favourite thing about Dunedin?

Having nature at your doorstep – beaches, walking trails, tramping tracks, ski fields etc. not too far away.

## Do you have any advice for people wanting to get into Psychology?

I would recommend getting some exposure to the discipline, through job-shadowing, summer apprenticeships, paid work, taking a variety of PSYC papers, etc. There are many different areas of Psychology, spanning from social science to neuroscience to clinical work so getting exposure to all this will help you figure out what area of Psychology you'd like to pursue.

Interviews conducted by Andrea Chin

# GREEN CARD FOR TECHS' TOYS

Last year, toys built for research by Meric Hoffman, a technician in the Department of Psychology, were shipped to a research lab in the USA. I met with Meric and Dr Julien (Jules) Gross, Deputy Director of Prof Harlene Hayne's *Early Learning Project (ELP)* research lab to find out how this came about.

"We use experimental stimuli when doing memory research with babies and toddlers – in this case, deferred imitation stimuli, where we show kids how something works - we then take it away, and bring it back after a delay - we then see if they can copy the actions that we showed them," Jules explains.

For this, the ELP lab needed to have novel sets of objects. They want children copying the target behaviour because they remembered having seen the researchers do it - not because they'd done it a million times before with their own toys.

"We came up with the idea of a series of toys that we could use to measure memory... we come up with ideas and basically ask the Techs, 'Can you make something like this?'" Jules laughs.

"We are really good at designing sets of stimuli that can be used across wide age ranges, say six-month-olds right up to three-year-olds. "And that's what Kimberly Cuevas, whom the toys have been shipped to in Connecticut, wanted – a set of stimuli to cover those parameters".

So Meric constructed the animals with Jackie Clearwater, the ELP's research administrator, painting them. Originally made from wood, the construction now involves utilising a 3D printer.

Depending on the age group, the animal stimuli vary in the number of actions. For example, the cow and duck are for really young infants and have only one action. They have a button, which when pushed, makes a 'moo' or a 'quacking' sound. Jeremy (Anderson), the Senior Technical Officer sourced the sound modules, Meric found or created cow and duck noises, and then it all had to be made - the battery compartment, putting little flashing LEDs in, printing the little button...

Although easy to use, the animals took some innovative construction. A lot of things, like cogs and ears, that were relatively easy to design on the computer and 3D printed, rather than make by hand, were created by Lindsay (Robertson). Meric was involved in wiring everything up – getting the right sounds - making the lights flash, and timing the sounds so that when the button is pushed, the sound goes for the right period of time and the lights and sound match.

They tell me about the rattles and the rabbit and monkey animal stimuli used with older children. These all have three actions each – the rattles start with a little cup and you put in an object and then a lid that goes on top and it can be shaken. The rabbit and monkey stimuli have ears that bend up – children have to grab a handle and pull them up (hence the cogs) – and then they put eyes on, and feed them either a carrot or a banana.

"So they are really interactive. These are the new and improved versions really. Normally we have a spare set of all of the stimuli, but we must have sent them away somewhere (Jules laughs again) – so Meric had to work from photographs and work out the actual sizes from those and upscale them."

"It's really satisfying knowing that you've built something and it's being used in an experiment – it could be in Japan, America, England, or Canada – you just don't know where they'll end up, and it's rewarding to know that what you are building is valued and being used." Meric says.

"I never know one day to the next what I'll be doing – it can be completely out of left field! *I never thought when I came to work, one day I'd be putting false eyelashes on a cow!* It makes my job really exciting!"

Cara Duffy



Photograph by Andrew Mills



# DEPARTMENT HEADLINES

**March 2014**

**Dr Dione Healey elected as a co-convenor of Otago's O-Zone Group**

Originating in 2007, the O-Zone group is composed of award-winning researchers tasked with promoting and supporting the innovative work of early-career researchers (ECR) within the university. Top priorities are to raise public awareness of O-Zone, and to improve support for all ECRs at Otago.

**June 2014**

**The Department's 50th Anniversary**

The Department of Psychology at Otago celebrated its 50th Anniversary with a hugely successful research symposium, attended by around 175 people.

**June 2014**

**Prof Neil McNaughton received funding from the Health Research Council of NZ**

Prof McNaughton has been awarded \$1,040,728 over 36 months to support his research into the 'clinical translation of an anxiety process biomarker.'

**July 2014**

**Energy consumption savings for the Department of Psychology:**

**\$16,728**

**October 2014**

**Dr Kristin Hillman wins OUSA Top Teaching Award for 2014**

Dr Hillman was recognised for her ability to engage students, passing on her own enthusiasm for the content she teaches.

**February 2015**

**February 2015**

**Prof Jeff Miller awarded the Humboldt Research Award**

This award recognises researchers whose fundamental discoveries, new theories, or insights have had a significant impact on their own discipline.

**Prof Richie Poulton appointed as Chief Science Advisor to the Ministry of Social Development**

In his new role, Prof Poulton will work to improve the use of evidence in policy development and advice.

**March 2015**

**March 2015**

**Prof David Bilkey appointed to Marsden Fund Council**

Prof Bilkey will convene the Economics and Human and Behavioural Sciences panel.

**Dr Rachel Zajac honoured with a University of Otago Teaching Excellence Award**

Dr Zajac was recognised for her accessibility, enthusiasm, and humour as a teacher.

**April 2015**

**November 2015**

**Michelle Moss, Jessica McTavish, and Dr Gareth Treharne win Disabilities Information & Support Appreciation Awards**

Michelle received an award for being an outstanding departmental disability contact. Jessica received an award for providing exceptional tutoring support, and test/examination supervision for students. Dr Treharne received an award for providing exemplary support to students.

**Dr Owen Jones received the 2015 Research Staff Speaker Award**

The award is aimed at promoting the work of postdocs, research fellows, and assistant research fellows engaged in health-related work at the University of Otago.



*Brain Research New Zealand is a government funded Centre of Research Excellence that aims to address key health and social challenges relating to brain health.*

*Our very own Prof Cliff Abraham is one of two Co-Directors of BRNZ, and Alex Sweetman and Claire Lill work as the Business Manager and Administrator respectively. I asked them a little about their roles and background...*



## CLIFF ABRAHAM

### **What exactly is Brain Research NZ? What does your role involve?**

Brain Research NZ-Rangahau Roro Aotearoa is one of 10 national Centres of Research Excellence (CoRE). It is devoted to understanding and treating ageing-related disorders of the brain. It is co-hosted by the Universities of Otago and Auckland, but includes researchers from Canterbury and AUT as well. It involves ~70 Principal and Associate Investigators, both researchers and clinicians. I am one of two Co-Directors of the CoRE, along with Professor Richard Faull at the University of Auckland, responsible for overseeing and coordinating all the Centre's activities, and reporting on them to our funding body, the Tertiary Education Commission.

### **What events are organised by Brain Research NZ?**

BRNZ, in addition to providing research funding as described in the next question, also has a commitment to Early Career researcher training through workshops and training opportunities. We recently completed a highly successful 2-day session in Christchurch. We are also committed to engaging with the public to increase awareness of ageing-related neurological disorders, and things people can do to delay or prevent their onset. We have a particular commitment to increasing the number of Māori researchers in this field, and engaging with Māori communities to help them understand and deal with these disorders.

### **What is the main focus of research at the moment?**

BRNZ's primary role is to support research in the ageing-related neurological disorders. Such research ranges from basic biomedical research in animal models on how molecules, cells and brain circuits are damaged in neurological disorders and how they can be fixed, to testing new therapies or interventions with people in the community. BRNZ is also establishing a set of Dementia Research Clinics in Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin which will serve as test beds for identifying biomarkers of diseases such as Alzheimer's disease, Frontotemporal dementia, and Parkinson's disease, as well as trialling new interventions to delay the onset of such diseases.

### **What is the most surprising/interesting thing that our brains can do that not many people know of?**

Contrary to popular belief, the brain can make new nerve cells throughout life. Unfortunately, this ability only occurs in some parts of the brain, and it does not occur in a way that can offset the effects of brain damage or disease. However, new technologies, such as being able to turn skin cells into nerve cells, are giving hope to our being able one day to harness the latent developmental properties of the adult brain for therapeutic purposes.

### **Tell me about a project or accomplishment that you consider to be the most significant in this career so far**

During learning, the underlying neural activity changes the strength of the relevant synaptic connections between neurons (i.e. synaptic plasticity), thus forming memories. With students and postdocs in my lab, we discovered that another type of response to neural activity is one of changing the cells' ability to produce synaptic plasticity. Such changes can make it easier to learn when the time is right or, under conditions of too much activity, to slow down change and keep neurons and brain circuits homeostatically stable. We have termed this family of effects, 'metaplasticity', i.e. the plasticity of synaptic plasticity.

### **Tell me the top three things you need to be successful in this career**

Blood, sweat and tears. Well, at least two of those. They get conquered by the enjoyment of making discoveries.



## ALEX SWEETMAN

### What does your role at Brain Research NZ involve?

Formally, my role at BRNZ is to lead the implementation of the BRNZ's corporate strategy, in particular through managing BRNZ's operations in a manner consistent with the Outcomes Statement and Performance Measurement Framework. I am meant to take day-to-day responsibility for the operational management and administration of the BRNZ, including responsibility for relationship management with research partners, and for financial management of the contracts between the host and the partner institutions. In practice, I am basically a jack-of-all-trades who is here to make sure the CoRE is on track to achieve the outcomes it set out to achieve and to support our researchers in any way I can. Managing a CoRE that is hosted by two universities is a constant source of fun, mingled with a tinge of pain, so I'm always busy.

### What motivated you to get involved in Brain Research NZ?

As cheesy as it sounds, it was the opportunity to contribute to something meaningful and useful, albeit in a very small way. I'm not a researcher, but to the extent I can use the skills and experience I have (please don't ask for an inventory, I may be forced to embellish) to help our researchers and BRNZ's cause (and it's a good one) then I can feel as though I'm using my time well. It is also extremely fun working with Cliff and Claire and lots of clever people....

### Tell me about a project or accomplishment that you consider to be the most significant in this career so far

I am only a year in so I can't really say there have been any major accomplishments so far—though one might be not driving Cliff over-the-edge—and I have tried. Building good relationships at the University of Auckland and the University of Otago has taken some doing, and that is very important for our Centre so in that respect, I've done okay.

### What is one piece of advice you would give to a university student?

I have lots of advice for university students! Two things occur to me when you ask this question. One being that age-old question 'where do you see yourself in 20 years' time'? When you are 18 and you've just started university this question seems completely obscure, but time goes absurdly fast so dream up something cool that you want to do with your life, who you want become, and work hard to achieve it. The other thing that jumps to mind is something that was once said to me 'if you keep saying no, people will stop inviting you'. The University has a lot to offer, so put aside your fears and insecurities and try as many things as you can, meet as many people as you can, and put time into your study, it can be painful but it's worth it. AND respect your lecturers, at all times.

## CLAIRE LILL

### What does your role at Brain Research NZ involve?

My responsibilities include managing the day-to-day administrative functions of the CoRE (Centres of Research Excellence) and providing administrative support to the Co-Directors, the Directorate, and the others in the Operations team.

### Where are you from and what brought you to Otago?

I grew up in Dunedin before heading north for study and work opportunities. The chance to be closer to family brought me back to Dunedin.

### What motivated you to get involved in Brain Research NZ?

Prior to this I worked as a Research Technician in a lab that studies neurodegenerative diseases. So, the chance to stay in touch with what is happening in the neuroscience community here in NZ as well as working with a team of people who have the unique opportunity to make a difference to the lives of so many was too good to pass up.

### Tell me about a project or accomplishment you consider to be the most significant in this career

Earlier this year BRNZ held a workshop for our Early Career Researchers in Christchurch. I was heavily involved in organising this event and it was very rewarding to see this young group of people come together and thoroughly enjoy the event.

Interviews conducted by Rachel Goh





BEST TEAM NAME:  
CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE  
OF QUIZZLE



# PSYCHOLOGY QUIZ NIGHT

It was 18 September 2015. The night was young, tensions were running high, and a group of weirdly dressed people descended upon Union Hall. There was a group of people straight out of Cluedo, a team from the pages of the Divergent series, wannabe animals, the 'eyeless' All-Blacks, and even the Scooby Dooby gang! I, for one, tried to blend in with my fellow Hercule Poirots but ended up looking like a tiny Monopoly Man.

There was only one explanation for this behaviour: it was the Psychology Quiz Night! Held once a year, it is arguably the most anticipated event on the social calendar. It gives students and staff of the Department of Psychology a chance to let loose and to challenge themselves with a range of difficult questions. As expected, this year's Quiz Night was popular, with 19 teams in attendance all vying to prove their intelligence (or drink beer).

My lab may not have had the best costumes, but we were certainly there to live up to our intelligently crafted name: Agatha Quiztie. Unfortunately, our confidence was immediately crushed when we had to solve some tricky anagrams at the first

round. We were left flabbergasted by the bonus question, which required us to guess the name of a past French colony. The second round was not much better; it turned out that last minute preparation on general knowledge questions the day before did not help us at all. If only I had learned from my undergraduate years not to cram at the last minute!

Thankfully the rest of the rounds were fairly standard, with a couple of questions on city nicknames, blockbuster movies, and past and present news. Everyone particularly enjoyed the Department focused quiz round, which tested our facial identification skills when famous celebrity faces were morphed with those of our own Psychology staff. Thank you Psych Social Committee for giving us an insight into the fake hybrid child of George Clooney and a certain lecturer.

Overall, it was a tough fight as every team did exceptionally well. To much surprise and relief, the Agatha Quiztie team did live up to expectations. A massive congratulations to Prof David O'Hare who finally got his hope of finishing first place (after



FIRST PLACE:  
AGATHA QUIZZIE  
(O'HARE LAB)



BEST DRESSED:  
NO CLUEDO  
(ZAJAC LAB)



LAST PLACE:  
THE NEUROPSYCH LAB



2014's 3rd place finish) with 85.5 points. Following very closely behind were Team Hunter and "Ruh Roh" (Halberstadt and others) who both tied on 83.5 points.

As is tradition, the prize of wooden spoons went to the last placed team for their efforts: The Divergent-themed Neuropsych Lab. The best team name went to the brilliantly punned Cloudy with a chance of Quizzle (David Bilkey's lab). They were certainly well prepared for quiz night with their colourful umbrellas and props. The highest praise, however, was reserved for Rachel Zajac's lab (No Cluedo) members. It was surreal to see

characters like Colonel Mustard and Mrs White in the flesh. Well done to the Cluedo team for paying as much attention to their costumes as to their studies.

Ultimately, it was a super fun night so thanks again to the Psych Social Committee for another successful year of Quiz Night. I guess it's time to get back to our books and our Psychology day jobs. Most importantly, it's time for me and the Cognitive Psychology lab to start preparing for our next Quiz Night. After all, one shouldn't let their supervisor down, right?

Rachel Goh

## QUIZ PLACINGS

<b>1st.</b> Agatha Quiztie	85.5
<b>2nd=</b> Teah Hunter & Ruh Roh	83.5
<b>Last.</b> The Neuropsych Lab	59.5

## BEST DRESSED

No Cluedo  
(Zajac Lab)

## BEST TEAM NAME

Cloudy with a Chance of Quizzle  
(Bilkey Lab)





# CONFERENCE BLOG

International Society for Psychological and Social Approaches to Psychosis  
International Congress on Schizophrenia Research

As part of my PhD in the Department of Psychology, I took advantage of the \$2000 travel grant that those completing PhDs at the University of Otago can access, and planned a trip to the USA to present my research at two conferences. It was both my first trip to an international research conference, and my first time travelling internationally on my own.

I arrived in New York in March and it was cold, snowy, and spectacular. I spent a week immersing myself in the sights, musicals, shopping, and food. I attended the International Society for Psychological and Social Approaches to Psychosis conference, which focused on psychological treatments of schizophrenia. The poster I presented on my research was titled: 'Does stress sensitivity mediate the relationship between trauma and schizophrenia liability?'

I was so nervous the night before that I couldn't sleep, and had to ring my boyfriend back home to hear a familiar voice. However, the presentation (standing next to my poster while people read it) went really well. People were positive and seemed interested in my research. The highlight of this conference was a tie between the workshop on cognitive behavioural therapy for psychosis, and one of the speakers who spoke about their experience of psychosis. Their talk made me remember why completing research on mental health is so important. The lowlight was definitely the American coffee.

Next, I flew to Colorado Springs for my second conference, the International Congress on

Schizophrenia Research. Colorado Springs was very different to New York—much less multicultural, and full of open highways, and gigantic empty malls. The conference venue was a huge 5 star hotel and I was driven to my room on a golf cart. The hotel employee showed me every light switch and door handle in my three-room villa and didn't seem to want to leave. It wasn't until later that I realised he wanted a tip!

This conference had more of a focus on the aetiology of schizophrenia than the first conference. The poster I presented was titled: 'The effect of maternal antipathy on cognitive-perceptual and interpersonal schizotypy is mediated by sensitivity to stress.'

I was given some thoughtful feedback on this poster, which was very helpful. The highlight of this conference was hearing a keynote talk that supported my theory of schizophrenia aetiology, and meeting some Americans who knew what cricket was (it was the Cricket World Cup at the time). The lowlights were the sugar crashes during keynote talks after the 9am donuts for breakfast.

The USA was more of a culture shock than I had anticipated. People seemed confident, pushy, and talked a lot about themselves. You could buy dinners made of an entire day's worth of calories. However, all in all, it was an amazing trip. I learnt a lot about my own capabilities, my culture, American culture, research, and schizophrenia. I would recommend taking a conference trip to all future PhD students.

Becca Grattan



Photographs provided by Becca Grattan



# STAFF vs STUDENTS PAINTBALL

After weeks of indecision, I finally decided to suck it up and put my name forward for paintball. ‘So what if I’m all bruised up and sore for days afterwards?’ ‘After all, isn’t it the adventure and excitement that makes life interesting?’ were the thoughts I repeated to myself while strapping on my helmet as the two paintball teams (Staff + PhD vs. Masters + Honours) geared up to begin the first of three games.

As a PhD student, I was lucky to be on the best team as we pressed the opposing team back into their base in an attempt to capture their flag. With perhaps a little too much enthusiasm, I volunteered to defend our base for the first game, which meant I saw very little of the action as we had the upper hand for the majority of the game, despite failing to capture the flag before the game ended. The second game began with the same fervour; we quickly covered ground and it only seemed a matter of time before we got the flag. But, to the other team’s credit, they held their ground bravely and protected their flag valiantly once again.

With tensions high after drawing for two games, everyone went all-out in the tie-breaker to capture the flag and bring it to the other team’s base. But alas, the tables turned. After aggressively attacking the first two games, the Staff and PhD team ran out of paint and had to crouch with empty guns and painted wounds down their sides. There was a heart-stopping moment when a team member dropped the flag by my feet as he went out in a blaze of glory, and I looked up from the flag to see three opponents converging on me with guns ready.

*This was it. This was my moment to be a hero.*

Just as I gathered the courage to turn and grab the flag, I lifted my gun for cover fire only to hear it click uselessly as the paintballs jammed. My brain froze in fear as no less than three paintballs hit me at once, one slamming into the side of my helmet, smashing into my chin. Despairing at the quick turnaround, I lifted my hand shamefully to indicate ‘death’ and watched as the other team courageously scooped up the flag and triumphantly charged ahead to clinch the victory.

All in all, despite me forgetting to bring along the BBQ supplies (oops!), we all returned home bruised and battered, but ultimately satisfied with a great game and a fun outing. Congratulations again to the Masters and Honours students for their last minute win!

Andrea Chin



# CLASS OF 2016



Department of Psychology Staff

Photograph by Andrew Mills

## COMPLETE STAFF LIST (ALPHABETICAL)

Professor Cliff Abraham  
Dr Brent Alsop  
Jeremy Anderson  
Norma Bartlett  
Kally Barton  
Professor David Bilkey  
Jason Campbell  
Dr Brittany Cardwell  
Jane Carroll  
Dr Simon Chapple  
Dr Kaa-Sandra Chee  
Jackie Clearwater  
Professor Mike Colombo  
Dr Tamlin Conner  
Assoc Prof David Craig  
Brian Dixon  
Cara Duffy  
Emeritus Prof James Flynn  
Professor Liz Franz  
Dr Julien Gross  
Professor Jamin Halberstadt

Richard Hamelink  
Professor Harlene Hayne  
Vanessa Hayes  
Dr Dione Healey  
Dr Kristin Hillman  
Meric Hoffman  
Sean Hogan  
Lynnette Holland  
Assoc Prof Jackie Hunter  
Sara-Lee Illingworth  
Diane Inder  
Dr Owen Jones  
Emeritus Prof Bob Knight  
Dr Celia Lie  
Claire Lill  
Dr Richard Linscott  
Barbara Logan  
Dr Liana Machado  
Michelle McCann  
Kay McDonald  
Margaret McMurtrie

Professor Neil McNaughton  
Professor Jeff Miller  
Dr Bruce Mockett  
Irene Mosely  
Michelle Moss  
Assoc Prof Janice Murray  
Natasha O'Docherty  
Paul O'Donnell  
Prof David O'Hare  
Dr Shane Ohline  
Russell Phillips  
Joanna Prince  
Professor Richie Poulton  
Dr Sandhya Ramrakha  
Professor Elaine Reese  
Dr Ann Reynolds  
Jane Reynolds  
Lindsay Robertson  
Sarah-Jane Robertson  
Professor Ted Ruffman  
Dr Damian Scarf

Dr Elizabeth Schaughency  
Assoc Prof Martin Sellbom  
Dr Shabah Shadli  
Stephanie Sherburd  
Alex Sweetman  
Dr Mele Taumoepeau  
Jacinta Taylor  
Dr Reremoana Theodore  
Dr Gareth Treharne  
Blaise Turner  
Dr Karen Tustin  
William van der Vliet  
Emeritus Prof Geoff White  
Dr Ryan Ward  
Ione Wooles  
Philippa Youard  
Hadyn Youens  
Dr Rachel Zajac



## SUPPORT STAFF

**Staff members:** Jeremy Anderson, Kally Barton, Norma Bartlett, Jason Campbell, Jane Carroll, Cara Duffy, Richard Hamelink, Meric Hoffman, Sean Hogan, Lynnette Holland, Sara-Lee Illingworth, Diane Inder, Claire Lill, Barbara Logan, Michelle McCann, Margaret McMurtrie, Irene Mosley, Michelle Moss, Tia Neha, Natasha O'Docherty, Paul O'Donnell, Russell Phillips, Jane Reynolds, Lindsay Robertson, Stephanie Sherburd, Alex Sweetman, Jacinta Taylor, Blaise Turner, William van der Vliet, and Hadyn Youens.

The support staff in Psychology offer friendly advice and assistance to staff and students within the Department. Although staff work in - and take ownership for their own areas of expertise – we are lucky to be a part of such a collegial department where everyone gets stuck in to work as a team when necessary.

Admin staff assist staff and students across the board including financial, secretarial and administrative requirements, and pastoral care for all students. Some are involved in teaching and research programmes across the Department, whilst others provide support for multi-disciplinary research units.

The Programmers, IT and Technical staff also support many teaching and research programmes – where they design, construct, programme and maintain both equipment and IT infrastructure across the Department. We count ourselves very lucky to have access to this extremely talented team of technicians – most certainly Psychology's secret weapon to success!



Photograph by Andrew Mills

## ABRAHAM LAB: NEURAL MECHANISMS OF MEMORY

**Supervisor:** Professor Cliff Abraham

**Lab members:** Fawzan Dinnunhan, David Glanzman, Regina Hegemann, Owen Jones, Maddie Kyrke-Smith, Barabara Logan, Stephanie Mercer, Bruce Mockett, Jodi Morrissey, Shane Ohline, Luci Schweitzer, Anurag Singh, Aimee Smith, Lucinda Speers, and Laura Sylvander

Prof Cliff Abraham's research focuses on the rules and mechanisms governing synaptic plasticity, metaplasticity, and memory formation in the brain, with a particular focus on cellular and molecular events in the hippocampus. In their research, the lab uses electrophysiological, behavioural, and immunofluorescent microscopy approaches to studying the mechanisms mediating the induction and persistence of synaptic plasticity in vivo and in vitro, and their relevance to memory.

Research extends to clinical research areas such as Alzheimer's disease, schizophrenia, neurogenesis, and neuroprotection, using animal models. A major current research interest is in biomarkers and therapeutic molecules for Alzheimer's disease.



Photograph by Andrew Mills

## ALSOP LAB: EXPERIMENTAL ANALYSIS OF BEHAVIOUR

**Supervisor:** Dr Brent Alsop

**Lab members:** Scottie Anderson, Emma Beeby, Luca Blumhardt, Stephanie Jensen, Darius Paschke, Brendan Rose, and Huan Wang

Most environments confront humans and other animals with choices. These can range from a major corporation making financial decisions, to ducks foraging for food on a lake. Dr Alsop's research examines the way the distribution of resources in an environment determines humans' and animals' choices.

The lab has three very different lines of research at the moment:

- looking at the role of punishment and reward in sensation seeking and how they influence behaviour in humans
- looking at how pigeons make choices where there are more than two options available
- using a signal-detection task to investigate differences in reward sensitivity with children with ADHD and children without ADHD.

They're also using a second task to look at possible differences in sensitivity to negative outcomes between the same groups.

## BILKEY LAB: BRAIN AND BEHAVIOUR

**Supervisor:** Professor David Bilkey

**Lab members:** Vanessa Bates, Kirsten Cheyne, Ashley Deane, Thom Elston, Kate Godfrey, Maren Kleinmans, Jessica Millar, Wayne Meighan, Blake Porter, and Sam Wilkinson

Prof David Bilkey's general research area is systems neuroscience, with a particular focus on the role of the temporal cortex regions of the brain in memory and learning processes. Specifically, investigating how the brain encodes an episodic memory and how it uses this information in decision-making.

Research in the lab focuses on the hippocampal area of the brain which seems to code 'where' information and has a role in spatial navigation. The group explores its links to regions such as prefrontal cortex, which appears to modulate hippocampal activity and has a role in integrating memorial information with prior experience and motivation. We investigate these questions using a variety of behavioural and electrophysiological techniques, particularly single unit recording.

In a parallel research pathway the group also investigates how the function of the hippocampus is altered in schizophrenia using an animal model of the disorder.



*Photograph by Andrew Mills*

## COLOMBO LAB: NEURAL BASIS OF COGNITION

**Supervisor:** Professor Mike Colombo

**Lab members:** Cat Anderson, Maddie Dykes, Millie Johnston, Aylin Klarer, Jess Lord, Renelyn Para, Sofia Peters, and Alysha Wilson

The focus of Prof Mike Colombo's research is the neural basis of learning and memory and comparative animal cognition. The lab currently supports four lines of research:

- conducting single-unit electrophysiology studies and examining the neural basis of learning, memory, gambling, reward mechanisms, and recently the neural basis of magnetic based navigation
- examining the effects of hippocampal lesions on learning and memory
- exploring the cognitive abilities of birds, focusing on serial-order expertise, numerical competence, concept formation as well as basic mechanisms of learning and memory

- the effects of nootropics (cognitive enhancing drugs) on learning and memory.



*Photograph supplied*

## CONNER LAB: DAILY EXPERIENCES

**Supervisor:** Dr Tamlin Conner

**Lab members:** Kate Brookie, Jayde Flett, Maria Polak, and Ben Riordan

We are interested in the psychological, cognitive, and genetic factors influencing our emotional and physical wellbeing. We use technology, computers, and mobile phones to track people's daily experiences close-to-real time, and in their natural environment.

At present, we are running the 4-year micro-longitudinal Daily Life Study on the daily experiences of University of Otago students. This study is leading to many exciting interdisciplinary projects investigating the interplay between genes, nutritional factors, and wellbeing. Lab projects include:

- social psychology interests in positive psychology and hedonic experience, such as the consequences of repeatedly introspecting on and verbalising our emotional states

- health psychology, investigating health behaviours such as alcohol and drug use.



*Photograph supplied*



## FRANZ LAB: ACTION, BRAIN & COGNITION

**Supervisor:** Professor Liz Franz

**Lab members:** Joseph Cahill-Lane, Paul Crane, Ranjan Debnath, Mikayla Edie, Jordan Gardner, Jeremy Haakma, Charmayne Hughes, Lily Yee, Max Major, Hanani Manan, Terence Mayne, Kieran McCormick, Jess McTavish, Eugene McTavish, Nuzha Saleem, Alexandra Sebastian, Josh Smith, Mitchell Thompson-Holloway, Kierin Turner, Ryan Walker, Michael Wilson, Taylor Winter, and Fu Yan

- How and why do we perform a particular action at a specific time?
- Why not do something else?
- What are the influences on that choice of action?
- Did we consciously choose?

Prof Liz Franz's lab and fMRIotago investigates all of these questions using a variety of techniques, including brain imaging (fMRI, DTI, MRI, EEG), kinematic analysis, behavioural variables, TMS, and gesture analysis. Our primary tool to investigate these issues is bimanual actions. That is, we view bimanual actions as a window into the workings of the brain. In addition, we investigate an action selection model, according to which the basal ganglia

(and frontal-striatal circuitry) play a critical role in what actions get selected and what actions get inhibited.

Our lab investigates neurological patient populations including people with Parkinson's disease, essential tremor, stroke, Autism Spectrum Disorder, congenital disorders (e.g., mirror movements), and other conditions that affect the action system.



*Photograph supplied*

## HALBERSTADT LAB: SOCIAL COGNITION

**Supervisor:** Professor Jamin Halberstadt

**Lab members:** Victoria Alogna, Jenn Arrell, Evan Balkcom, Susie Campbell, Brittany Cardwell, Marea Colombo, Isabella Crawford, Sarah Hill, Chris Jackson, Zoe Morris Trainor, Kahla Redman, Karen Segal, Samantha Smith, Tom Swan, Gabriela Visini, and Maddy Williams

Prof Jamin Halberstadt studies the cognitive processes underlying some of the most important – and sometimes bizarre – social phenomena, including social categorisation, emotion, religion, ritual, face perception and attractiveness to name a few. Some current projects include:

- exploring the connection between religiosity and fear of death, and evaluating factors that may explain or influence this connection
- the effects of prayer on performance and persistence
- adult theory of mind

- cognitive fluency (ease of perceiving and understanding) in judgments of liking and honesty
- using behavioural tracing to test theories of group formation and change.



*Photograph supplied*

## HAYNE LAB: EARLY LEARNING PROJECT

**Supervisor:** Professor Harlene Hayne

**Lab members:** Emilia Barna, Charlotte Bremer, Jackie Clearwater, Ann Cronin, Larnee Flannery, Eilis Gallagher, Jules Gross, Vahideh Karimirad, Mbutu Kariuki, Alice McClintock, Elizabeth McLean, Wulin Tian, Emily Ware, Shannon Westgate, and Weiwei Zhang

Do you remember your first day of school? The first time you drove a car? What about where you left your keys when you came home from the supermarket or what classes you need to

attend tomorrow? These kinds of memory tasks are universally familiar to adults; to function effectively in the world, we frequently reflect on events that have happened in the past and plan for events that we know will happen in the future.

We accomplish this kind of mental time travel using a special kind of memory that is commonly referred to as Episodic Memory.



## HAYNE LAB (CONT'D)

Although there is little debate among memory researchers about the cognitive value of episodic memory, there is heated debate about when episodic memory might emerge during the course of human development.

- At what age do children first show signs of episodic memory skill and how do these skills change as a function of age and experience?
- When do children begin to use what they have learned in the past to make predictions about similar events in the future?



Photograph by Andrew Mills

## HEALEY LAB: ADHD RESEARCH PROGRAMME

**Supervisor:** Dr Dione Healey

**Lab members:** Burt Hatch, Jordan McEwan, Matthew Stevenson, and Sid Wales

Dr Dione Healey's ADHD lab is interested in all things inattentive and hyperactive. Currently, Dr Healey's main project is an HRC funded intervention study where she is comparing an intervention that she has developed, called ENGAGE (Enhancing Neurobehavioural Gains with the Aid of Games and Exercise), which uses games to teach self-control skills, to reduce the disruptive behaviours of preschool children exhibiting high levels of hyperactivity/impulsivity; to a well known parent behavioural management programme, called Triple P (Positive Parenting Programme).

Students are also using physiological measures such as heart rate variability and pupillometry in their research on children with ADHD to help better understand how they relate their emotions and attentional focus.

Individually, they are investigating:

- how social functioning may be impacted by difficulties with emotion recognition and emotional reactions

- attentional fluctuations from executive functioning deficits
- the predictors of impairment and symptom severity in children with ADHD, such as parenting style and temperament; using qualitative methods to look at parents' experiences of having a child with ADHD
- the relationship between classroom attentional behaviour and academic achievement.



Photograph by Andrew Mills

## HILLMAN LAB: BEHAVIOURAL NEUROSCIENCE

**Supervisor:** Dr Kristin Hillman

**Lab member:** Zoe Jaquiere

Dr Kristin Hillman's lab focuses on the neural mechanisms that drive goal-directed behaviours. The lab is particularly interested in deciphering the brain mechanisms that enable individuals to 'work harder' and be more productive.

We use electrophysiological recordings of brain activity, in combination with behavioural assessments, to determine how different brain regions function together to produce different levels of goal-directed behaviour. As we start to understand these basic mechanisms, we can then investigate how these mechanisms are altered by things like exercise or drug-taking. We are also interested in how these brain mechanisms change in clinical conditions like OCD and depression.



Photograph by Alan Dove Photography

## HUNTER LAB: THE LEITH 2 LAB

**Supervisor:** Associate Professor Jackie Hunter

**Lab members:** Hitaua Arahanga-Doyle, Mike Banks, Jennifer Baxter, Kate Fahey, Sabrina Goh, Jill Hayhurst, Renee Hu, Sharanya Komahan, Saleh Moradi, Alex Pallett, Vaughn Rankin, Charlie Ruffman, Olivia Scobie, and Feifei Wu

Dr Jackie Hunter's lab focuses on social identity, self-esteem, and intergroup discrimination. More specifically, the group investigates the question of whether discrimination and prejudice between members of different groups is in part motivated by attempts to achieve and maintain positive self-esteem.

Different areas of research in our lab investigate:

- to what extent different forms of intergroup discrimination are affected by different types of self-esteem
- how threats to self-esteem affect patterns of discrimination
- how other factors such as belongingness, meaning, anxiety, and perceptions of control are related to various forms of intergroup discrimination.

## LINSCOTT LAB: CLINICAL THINK GROUP

**Supervisor:** Dr Richard Linscott

**Lab members:** Amy Beeby, Luke Biggs, Andrea Chin, Kate Edgar, Becca Grattan, Hadar Hazan, Imogen Kaack, Alannah Keogh, Rachel Knight, Suzanne Neumann, Kirstie O'Hare, Theresa Parker, Michela Verwey, Simon Wallace, and Ellen Wright

In Dr Richard Linscott's lab, many hands have been working on a large project assessing performance on numerous indicators that are related to personality differences. We are testing things like:

- eye tracking performance
- motor coordination
- reaction time
- attention
- speech perception
- reward sensitivity, as well as other behaviours and experiences

The results of the project will be able to tell us about the relationships between ethnicity, alcohol and cannabis use, motor performance, speech perception, and personality differences. Two new studies are extending the project to further investigate these relationships.



*Photograph by Andrew Mills*

## MACHADO LAB: NEUROPSYCHOLOGY & COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

**Supervisor:** Dr Liana Machado

**Lab members:** Polly Chen, Georgia Cowan, Sam Flannery, Hayley Guiney, Roanne Hurley, Grace Killmer, Phoebe Naldoza-Drake, Saejung Oh, and Naomi White

Dr Liana Machado's lab conducts research in the areas of neuropsychology and cognitive psychology. The majority of the ongoing projects are investigating the mechanisms and machinery underlying cognitive functions in healthy brains, cognitive deficits that emerge as a result of brain disease and healthy ageing, and methods by which these deficits can be minimised via simple accessible means. Research tools currently being utilised include transcranial direct current stimulation, near infrared spectroscopy, transcranial Doppler ultrasound, and eye tracking.

Research questions currently under investigation relate to:

- benefits of electrical brain stimulation and habitual physical activity for executive functions

- influences of cerebrovascular factors and prescription drugs on cognitive performance
- as part of a community project, methods by which the attention of motorists might be attracted by cyclists to reduce risk.



*Photograph supplied*

**think.**



## MCNAUGHTON LAB: NEUROPSYCHOLOGY OF ANXIETY

**Supervisor:** Professor Neil McNaughton

**Lab members:** Ashik Banstola, Polly Gibbs, Tame Kawe, Shabah Shadli, Carlos Silva, Daniel Martin, Julia McIntosh, Phoebe Neo, Suzanne Neumann, Eilish Reilly, and Shenghuang Zhang

Research in Prof Neil McNaughton's lab combines the psychological analysis of emotion and memory with physiological analysis of rhythmical electrical activity called 'theta' in both rats and humans. Anxiolytic drugs are used to link the psychological and physiological levels of analysis and to generalise from laboratory experiments to clinical situations. In rats, these drugs impair theta and therefore the function of the temporal lobe – which is thought to be crucial for some types of memory.

Currently, at the neural level, we are investigating the pharmacology and neural control of hippocampal theta activity and its relation to theta recorded from frontal cortex. This includes the use of a 'brain bypass' and other techniques to restore function after neural damage. At the psychological level,

we are analysing the human EEG for specific neural signatures of goal conflict and linking this to personality measures and the neuroeconomic theory.



Photograph by Andrew Mills

## MILLER LAB: COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGY

**Supervisor:** Professor Jeff Miller

Studies in this lab investigate human perception, attention, speeded decision-making, and motor control, with an emphasis on contributing to the development of quantitative statistical models. We use behavioural measures such as reaction time and response accuracy, and these are often augmented with psychophysiological measures such as EEG in order to get more specific windows on perceptual or motor processes.

Several recent projects have focused on attentional processes. For example, we have investigated the decrements in performance that arise when people try to do two tasks at once, using both the traditional 'psychological refractory period' paradigm and a new 'prioritised processing' paradigm recently invented in this lab. Other attention-related projects have investigated the distracting effects of information that people are trying to

ignore, and also the benefits in performance that arise when people get two redundant cues telling them to perform the same action. In all cases, the goal is to learn about the underlying brain mechanisms giving rise to the observable effects of attention on performance.

In addition to the studies of attention, other recent projects have investigated (1) the brain processes underlying spontaneous voluntary decision making (a line of research that some neuroscientists believe will give us clues about the nature of free will); and (2) the involvement of the motor system in understanding language describing actions (e.g., is the motor area controlling the foot involved in understanding the spoken word 'kick'). Finally, we aim to contribute to the ongoing discussion within our field about the advantages and drawbacks of both traditional and newly-proposed statistical methods.

## MURRAY LAB: FACE RESEARCH

**Supervisor:** Associate Professor Janice Murray

**Lab members:** Lianne Atkinson and Mark Madill

The Face Research lab, led by Associate Prof Janice Murray investigates the mechanisms that allow for successful face processing, including the role that visual attention plays. A current strand of research focuses on age-related changes in emotion perception and social understanding.

Here are some of the things individual lab members have been researching recently:

- What emotional abilities remain intact with ageing and how can we best assess emotion knowledge?
- Do young and older adults differ in their ability to integrate eye gazes cues and emotion?
- Does raising negative stereotypes about ageing impact negatively on older adults' emotion recognition performance?

- Relative to young people, do older adults pay more attention to positive information than negative information?



Photograph by Andrew Mills



## O'HARE LAB: COGNITIVE ENGINEERING & HUMAN DECISION MAKING

**Supervisor:** Professor David O'Hare

**Lab members:** Brittany Cullen, Piers Furney, Rachel Goh, Jade Jeffery, Lana Kinney, Tayla Shepherd, Charmaine Strickland, Lianne Ten Have, Shannon Tumataroa, Alaska White, and Charlie Wilson

The Cognitive Engineering and Human Decision Making lab, under the supervision of Professor David O'Hare is currently investigating:

- team performance on the bridge of ships
- cognitive depletion and decision making in financial settings
- supporting medical practitioners' assessment and diagnosis of childhood neurodevelopmental disorders
- the development of a powered wheelchair virtual reality simulator
- trust and expertise in joint decision making in a visual search task

We are also conducting studies in our flight simulator of pilot decision making and investigating approaches to reducing flight anxiety in non-pilots.

We are involved with Australian Government funded research on power system operators' expertise and skill acquisition in conjunction with Macquarie University in Sydney. Previous graduates have gone on to jobs in industry (e.g., Airbus, Queensland Rail, Helicopters NZ, RNZAF, etc.) and academia.



Photograph by Andrew Mills

## POULTON LAB: DUNEDIN LONGITUDINAL STUDY

**Supervisor:** Professor Richie Poulton

Prof Richie Poulton is Director of the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Research Unit which conducts the Dunedin longitudinal study, one of the most detailed studies of human health and development ever undertaken.

A multidisciplinary, longitudinal study of 1,037 babies born in Dunedin during 1972/73, the Study members have been followed up since birth, at age three, then every two years to age 15, then at ages 18, 21, 26, 32 and 38 (2010-2012). For each follow-up phase, the Study members are brought to the Dunedin Unit where they undergo numerous assessments and measures of their health and development, including a broad range of studies in the psychosocial, behavioural medicine and biomedical research areas. The age 38 assessment phase was an outstanding success with 95% of the surviving Study members being assessed. It is planned to next see the Study members at age 45.

The Study is now in its fifth decade and has produced over 1,200 publications and reports, many of which have influenced or helped inform policy makers in New Zealand and overseas.

Prof Poulton's research interests include developmental psychopathology; gene-environment prediction of complex disorders; and psychosocial determinants of chronic physical disease. He also has a strong interest in promoting the uptake of evidence for policy and practice.



Photograph by Alan Dove Photography

## REESE LAB: AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMORY & LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

**Supervisor:** Professor Elaine Reese

**Lab members:** Joanna Chan, Amanda Clifford, Shika Das, Laura Gilkison, Hadar Hazan, David Henderson, Jessica Johnston, Kelsi Linney, Claire Mitchell, Lauren Murphy, Tia Neha, Abigail Pigden, Sarah-Jane Robertson, Sarah Rouse, and Tara Tsuji

Research in Prof Elaine Reese's lab focuses on how children develop autobiographical memory, language, and literacy. The way that parents talk to their children influences the child's development.

Research in the lab has found that:

- the quantity and quality of the stories that parents tell their children makes a difference in development
- open ended questions allow children to put experiences in their own words; helping with language development and memory development

## REESE LAB: CONT'D

- talking about more emotional aspects of stories creates a more positive self in children and this helps them understand their emotions and past experiences.

Recent research is focusing on the outcomes of early conversations using longitudinal studies. Children who were told elaborative stories as children have earlier memories and stronger self-concepts in adolescence. These effects are also being investigated in other cultures.



Photograph by Andrew Mills

## RUFFMAN LAB: DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

**Supervisor:** Professor Ted Ruffman

**Lab members:** Irene Ceccato, Christie Cheng, Olivia Galloway, Jack Hsiao, Genevieve Iverson, Ben Lorimer, Kasia Mojescik, Aastha Puri, Ryan Sutcliffe, and Rebecca Then

Prof Ted Ruffman's lab investigates social understanding (theory of mind) in infants, children, young and older adults, and in domestic dogs. We examine emotion recognition, faux pas recognition, verbosity, and lie detection. Examples of the current research are examining:

- how mothers help children to learn about the social world
- empathy in infancy and young children
- empathy in older adults.



Photograph supplied

## SCARF LAB: ANIMAL, BEHAVIOUR, COGNITION & DEVELOPMENT

**Supervisor:** Dr Damian Scarf

**Lab members:** Hannah Boden, Kaitlyn Brown, Louise Cody, Kelsey Davis, Ashley Hinten, Lisa Labuschagne, Ben Riordan, and Chris Smith

The Animal Behaviour & Child Development lab (a.k.a., ABCD lab) conducts both comparative and developmental research. Our comparative research focuses on the cognitive abilities of birds (e.g., pigeons, kea, and kaka) and how they compare to those of children. Our developmental research includes studies with infants, young children, and adolescents.

Research with infants and young children largely focuses on memory, self-control, and social understanding. Research with adolescents includes investigating factors that influence event-specific alcohol consumption (e.g., binge drinking during O'Week) and ways to reduce alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harm.

We also conduct research on resilience in adolescence, primarily investigating the mechanisms through which adventure-education programmes (e.g., a 10-day voyage on the 'Spirit of New Zealand') increase resilience.



Photograph by Andrea Chin



## SCHAUGHENCY LAB: APPLIED DEVELOPMENTAL SCIENCE LAB

**Supervisor:** Dr Libby Schaughency

**Lab members:** Ashleigh Barrett Young, Tracy Cameron, Jane Carroll, Amanda Clifford, Shika Das, Jess Eton, Ella Hall, Becky Harding, Jessica Johnston, Kelsi Linney, Sarah Maessen, Sarah-Jane Robertson, and Sarah Rouse

Dr Libby Schaughency's lab has students involved with studies of developmental change and factors (social, health) that influence development. Different research programmes include:

- growing readers in beginning primary school
- the Getting Ready for School Team, investigating family and community support for young children's learning and development
- the Paediatric Sleep Research Group, a multidisciplinary research group examining the links between children's sleep and their daytime functioning.

- Currently, students are studying children's problem breathing during sleep (sleep disordered breathing) and their learning and behavioural development.



Photograph by Andrew Mills

## SELLBOM LAB: PERSONALITY, PSYCHOPATHOLOGY, AND MEASUREMENT

**Supervisor:** Associate Professor Martin Sellbom

**Lab member:** Blake Kennedy

Research in the Personality, Psychopathology, and Measurement (PPM) lab focuses on psychopathy and other personality disorders (with a current focus on DSM-5 developments), the broader integration of personality and psychopathology, and personality assessment with the MMPI-2 and MMPI-2-RF instruments.

Most of the work on personality disorders has focused on how we can use individual differences personality traits to understand and operationalise personality pathology. The PPM lab is addressing a number of unresolved questions regarding assessment of such traits in clinical contexts; where to draw the line in terms of pathology vs. normality; how to conceptualise and operationalise impairment associated with extreme scores on personality trait dimensions, etc.

Most personality disorder researchers have a particular disorder on which they are the most expert. In the PPM lab, a lot of work is specifically directed on furthering our understanding of the psychopathic personality. We are particularly focused on how psychopathy manifests itself across different settings. While it is easy to study psychopathy in prisons, as individuals high on such traits are readily available there, we know relatively little about how psychopathic individuals operate in the community.

Finally, how can patients' or offenders' personality and mental health be best assessed in applied settings? The PPM lab conducts research on the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory – 2 – Restructured Form (MMPI-2-RF), which is a multi-scale omnibus clinical assessment measure designed to cover a wide range of personality and psychopathology, particularly in forensic psychology settings.

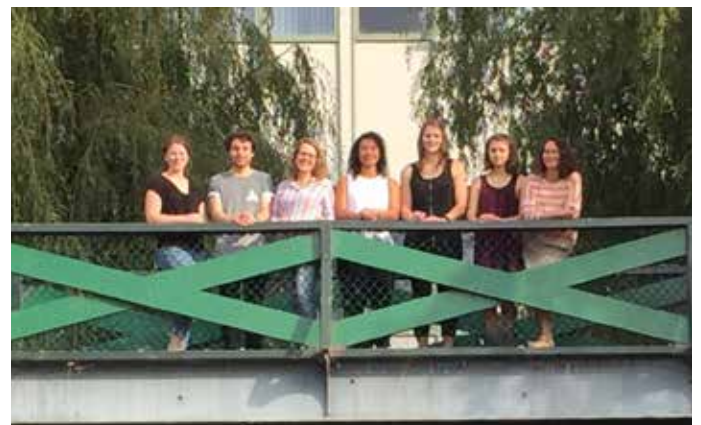
## TAUMOEPEAU LAB: LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**Supervisor:** Dr Mele Taumoepeau

**Lab members:** Jess Aitken, Georgina de Brelaz, Bernice Goh Li-Qian, Meagan Mathers, Ashlie Nobilo, Sanam Sadeghi, Hilla Fukofuka, Catherine Thomas, Kimberly Tuitoga, and Andrew Wilson

Some of the questions we ask in Dr Mele Taumoepeau's lab are:

- What do toddlers know about the minds of others?
- How children learn language?
- How parent-child interactions influence children's cognitive and social development?
- How culture influences the way children and teenagers develop?



Photograph supplied

## TAUMOEPEAU LAB: CONT'D

We're broadly interested in how children learn language and how language helps them understand their social world. It's hard to find the answers to these questions because infants and toddlers can't tell you! Some of the techniques we use include following children and their caregivers around for years observing how children develop in a social context.

We also use implicit methods that involve coding infants' eye gaze to gain insights into the process involved in learning language. More recently, we've started working with the Pacific Trust Otago to understand better how social and cultural factors support the health and wellbeing of Pacific teenagers.

## TREHARNE LAB: HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH TEAM

**Supervisor:** Dr Gareth Treharne

**Lab members:** Bruno Aldaz, Jacob Ashdown, Caylin Bailey, Katie Graham, Roisin Hegarty, Caitlin Helme, Kieran McCormick, Julia Muir, Tia Neha, Paris Pidduck, Phoebe Poulter, Shawn Reader, Jane Reeves, Cassandra Rolston, Irie Schimanski, Warren Scott, Oscar Taylor, and Penny Tipu

Health Psychology is a recent addition to the specialities within Psychology. This speciality involves research into physical health, illnesses, and healthcare from a psychological perspective.

Research projects in Dr Gareth Treharne's lab, include:

- how people with long-term illnesses can be encouraged to be more physically active with psychological support from physiotherapists
- how men with arthritis handle the impact of reduced physical activity on their masculinity
- daily experiences of fatigue among people with arthritis, and how psychologists can support them to achieve their goals
- how people with arthritis can be supported in quitting smoking
- how people with cancer cope with their diagnosis and treatments, and how Psychologists can support them and their loved ones

- the educational needs of Māori and Pākehā people with gout
- Māori preteen children's views of Hauora as a holistic concept
- the experiences of university students who identify as both Māori and Pākehā
- the meaning of positive body image to female university students
- the impact of discrimination experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, trans or queer individuals
- portrayals of gender and sexuality in high school and university education.



*Photograph supplied*

## WARD LAB: NEUROBIOLOGY OF LEARNING AND ADAPTIVE BEHAVIOUR

**Supervisor:** Dr Ryan Ward

**Lab members:** Vanessa Bates, Ashley Deane, Robert Graham, Ashim Maharjan, Wayne Meighan, Rishi Pattabhiraman, Phoebe Roberts, and Faya Tashakori-Sabzevar

Organisms have to constantly modify and adapt their behaviour to changing situations and circumstances. The ability to do this dictates whether we will be successful across changing circumstances. These adaptive behaviours require the coordinated exertion of cognitive and motivational processes and these can be further partitioned into different psychological components. Using cutting-edge molecular genetic approaches combined with rigorous and sophisticated behavioural methods, our lab analyses the neurobiology of these complex adaptive behaviours and attempts to understand them in terms of their component psychological parts.

We also study the role of temporal information processing in adaptive behaviour, and work to characterise motivational and cognitive deficits in animal models of schizophrenia.



*Photograph supplied*



## ZAJAC LAB: FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

**Supervisor:** Dr Rachel Zajac

**Lab members:** Ella Barrett, Emma Fitzgerald, Jacob Ingram, Bridget Irvine, Niha Jalota, Marijn Kouwenhoven, Andrew Mills, Danielle O'Brien, Maryna Verynska, Kimberley Wake, Ellen Warhurst, and Shannon Westgate

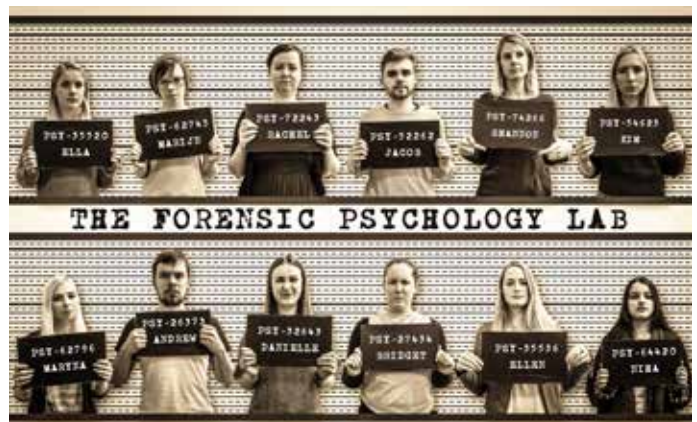
Dr Rachel Zajac's lab works at the intersection of Psychology and Law. Our primary goal is to conduct research that helps to identify and prevent miscarriages of justice. More specifically, we study the factors that influence people's ability to provide reliable evidence about events that they have witnessed. We also look at how expectations and biases can impair people's ability to interpret forensic evidence.

Some of our research questions include:

- How should we interview child, adolescent, and adult witnesses to ensure that their accounts are as complete and accurate as possible?
- Can an eyewitness' evidence become contaminated through discussions with another witness to the same crime?
- What effect does cross-examination have on children's and adults' testimony?
- Why is mistaken identification such a large contributor to wrongful convictions, and how can we help people to avoid this error?

- Why is mistaken identification such a large contributor to wrongful convictions, and how can we help people to avoid this error?
- How can cognitive shortcuts interfere with the interpretation of forensic evidence such as fingerprints, bite marks, and bloodstains?

The research produced by the Zajac laboratory continues to be in demand from the forensic community, with Dr Zajac regularly disseminating the laboratory's findings to the professionals who operate within the criminal justice system.



Photograph by Andrew Mills

## CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY CENTRE

**Clinic Director:** Ione Wooles

**Clinical Programme Director:** Dr Dione Healey

**Staff members:** Kally Barton (Clinic Administrator), Annabel Dawson, Brian Dixon, Dr Richard Linscott, Prof Richie Poulton, Jo Prince, Dr Libby Schaughency, Assoc Prof Martin Sellbom, and Philippa Youard

The Clinical Psychology Centre (CPC) is a training centre for students in the Clinical Psychology Training Programme which provides a referral based assessment and treatment service to children and adults referred from the community. Each year, postgraduate students work part-time at the CPC seeing referrals under close supervision from Registered Clinical Psychologists.

Working in the clinic is a challenging time but is also very rewarding as the students learn how to apply their academic knowledge and develop their clinical skills to help people overcome their personal problems.



Photograph by Andrew Mills

# TEDx DUNEDIN

## FEATURING DR DAMIAN SCARF

*In November 2015, the Department of Psychology's very own Damian Scarf gave a TEDx talk here in Dunedin titled 'Anxiety is an Expert Strategist'*

In his talk, Damian spoke about the expert strategy with which anxiety can impair human functioning and break down social connections. He pointed out the way that group membership not only bolsters resilience against mental health difficulties—such as anxiety and depression—but has been linked with physical benefits, such as reduced cognitive decline and faster recovery following stroke. As he went on to describe his fascinating research on group membership in adolescents, Damian touched on his own experiences with anxiety and his road to overcoming this, as well as illustrating the way in which group membership played a major role throughout the course of this journey.

I met with Damian to ask a few questions about the experience:

**Your research interests span a number of areas within Psychology. What made you decide to focus on social belonging and resilience?**

I guess it is ironic but it was actually a by-product of connecting with Jackie (Hunter) who has now become a close friend. Through talking with him, the overlap between my experiences and some of the research he was doing became clear and we decided to pursue it. It is ideal, the research focuses on belonging/social contentedness and resilience and it came about through connecting with Jackie, who likely increases my resilience... well that is what the research would suggest. In addition to the fact that it lets me work with Jackie, I was also motivated to focus on it because of my own experiences. I thought about how my experiences may have been different if I knew how important certain things were to my mental health.

**During your talk, you reflected on your own experiences and this gave your research context within the real world. How hard was it for you to do this in a public forum?**

Anxiety inducing but also freeing. I invited Jackie, Ted (Ruffman), Tamlin (Connor), Janice (Murray) and a few students were also there. As they say, those that mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind.



*Photograph taken from TEDx Dunedin Live Stream*

**What has the feedback been like from others?**

Feedback has been cool, people have emailed me, stopped me on the street, and connected with me through Facebook. The best Facebook post was probably this one: "Thanks Damian for a life changing perspective. As a father raising boys (who feature significantly in suicide stats) it has given me a map to work with them over the next crucial years as they become men. I cannot thank you enough."

**Would you consider speaking at TEDx again in the future?**

Maybe, I have had people ask about giving a follow-up talk on how people can actually create connections with others.

**What is coming up in the near future for you in terms of research?**

With respect to the resilience/Spirit of New Zealand work, the aim is to expand it to look at other outdoor education and adventure programmes to see if they confer the same benefits. For example, we have a contact down in Southland that runs an outdoor programme with troubled youth, we are about to contact them and collect data on the impact of the programme. Through comparing different programmes it will help us develop a blueprint for how to make an effective programme for increasing resilience etc., in adolescents. We have a manuscript in revision at the *British Journal of Social Psychology* that discusses the relationship between belonging and resilience.

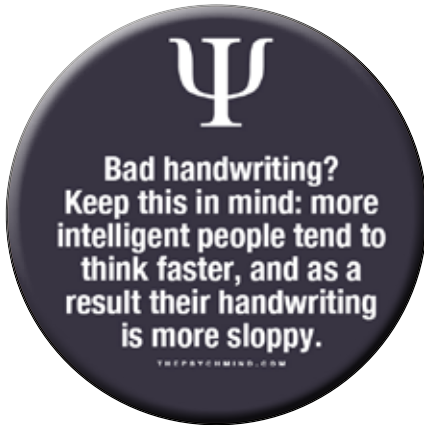
**If you haven't seen it already, you can check out Damian's talk via TEDx Talks on YouTube!**

Interview conducted by Phoebe Poulter



# PSYCHOLOGY FACTS (OR FICTION?)

*A gentle reminder to not always believe everything you read, especially if they are presented as 'fact' and embellished with a formal-looking Psychology logo. We take some popular 'PsycFacts' from social media and attempt to demystify them.*



**FICTION:** The belief that intelligence and personality are somehow reflected in our handwriting has existed for more than a century, yet time and time again, empirical studies have indicated that no relationship can be found. Some recent studies that you can read up on are Furnham, Chamorro-Premuzic, and Callahan (2003) and Gawda (2014), which have both found no correlation between handwriting and valid measures of intelligence and personality.

We're sorry, but we think it's time for you to stop using your 'intelligence' as an excuse for sloppy handwriting!

<http://psycnet.apa.org/psycinfo/2004-15381-001>

<http://dx.doi.org/10.2478/ppb-2014-0011>



**FICTION:** This 'fact' came from a study sponsored by the chewing gum company Wrigley for their 'Healthy Smile' campaign – they found that 69% of people preferred a photo of a woman smiling without make-up compared to a woman not smiling but with make-up. Not only are the motives behind the study questionable, but more importantly, how would the results change if there were also photos of the woman smiling with make-up and a photo of a woman not smiling without make-up?

<http://www.wrigley.com/uk/press/news-details.aspx?id=1382>



**FICTION:** The google searches we conducted to source this information have probably placed us on a number of the government's watch-lists... But we did find that time of death may actually depend on your genes! A common polymorphism rs7221412 (near the gene PER1) can predict time of death, where people with AA and AG genotypes had a mean time of death of 10.51am and people with GG genotype had a mean time of death of 5.50pm. This polymorphism is mainly associated with the timing of human behavioural rhythms and these results have implications for developing possible medical treatments for diseases that correspond with our circadian cycles. Be right back, just checking out our genes!

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23034908>

**Disclaimer:** We are mere students and tried our best to find good sources, but some were quite difficult to find! If we are wrong or there is a better source to cite, please let us know gently (we are fragile creatures often crying about our PhDs).

These images were sourced from THEPSYCHMIND.COM self-proclaimed "The #1 source for fun Psychology facts!" Please **do not** use these 'facts' as templates for sensationalist titles of your own theses!

Researched and written by Kirstie O'Hare, Andrea Chin, and Andrew Mills

# The Clinical Psychology Centre

## Interviewing the Interviewer

*The Clinical Psychology Centre (CPC) is a training centre for students in the Clinical Psychology Training Programme. Ione Wooles has been with the Department since 1993, and is currently the Director of the Centre.*



**IONE WOOLLES**

### What is a Clinical Psychologist?

**Ione:** In New Zealand a Clinical Psychologist is a health professional who is registered with the N.Z. Psychologists Board in the clinical scope of practice. To become registered in the clinical scope, completion of a Masters or PhD research degree in Psychology and a Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology is needed.

Clinical Psychologists assess and treat people with behavioural, emotional, cognitive, and health related problems and work in a range of settings including District Health Boards, Department of Corrections, private practice, consultancy, and in universities in research and academic positions. In our clinical programme, we train the students to use a range of psychometric assessments and primarily cognitive behavioural treatments which have been developed through scientific research and are proven to be effective.

### What is the difference between a Clinical Psychologist and a Psychiatrist?

Clinical Psychologists and Psychiatrists are both registered health professionals who work with people with mental health problems and diagnose psychiatric disorders. Both are trained in psychotherapies but may have different approaches

to helping people with their problems. Psychiatrists have a medical degree and then undergo specialist training which allows them to prescribe medications.

### Would you be able to give us a brief history of the CPC from its beginning?

In 1974 the first three students started clinical training in the Department of Psychology and all their supervised clinical work occurred outside the Department. It was difficult to ensure consistent training experiences and supervision, and it was decided a clinic based at the University was needed. The Community Counselling Centre (now called the Clinical Psychology Centre or CPC) was opened in 1979. At that time the programme only had two academic staff members who provided supervision to students in their final professional year of training. The Vice-Chancellor opened the clinic by cutting a ribbon tied around a filing cabinet. It was housed in Leith 5, a one story brick villa, which was later demolished to allow access for the Commerce building. For many years, six students per year were selected to train, and then in 1993 we began selecting ten students. Since then, the CPC has been housed in several prefab buildings, until 2010, when we moved into our purpose built clinic in the William James building.

### What is the biggest difference between the CPC back then and now?

The biggest differences are in the facilities, changes in technology and number of staff. From an original staff of two we now have four academic staff and four part-time Clinical Psychologists (three of whom are past graduates of the programme). All provide clinical supervision in the CPC to students in their first year of professional training. In the 1970s we watched interviews through one way mirrors and reports/ letters were all handwritten and given to typists to type using



Clinical Psychology Centre from 1979-1991



Room used by clinical students in 1993

*Photographs by Alan Dove Photography (Ione Wooles) and provided by Ione Wooles (building and room)*



carbon paper to create copies of documents. We then moved to using word processors and there was a wonderful day when the trainees were given a computer to share. For many years, sessions were recorded on video cameras, then on DVDs, and now we record sessions on USBs. In the 1970s the facilities consisted of two interview rooms with a viewing room in between. Originally one student worked at the clinic but now we have ten students working part-time for most of the year.

### **Do you have any resources/tips/advice for people thinking of becoming a Clinical Psychologist?**

Gaining entry to a training programme is now a very competitive process. Each year ten students are selected for clinical training at the University of Otago. If someone wants to become a Clinical Psychologist they will need a strong academic record in Psychology. Having good social skills is important and an individual should want to work with and help people. Relevant experience can be helpful in knowing whether working with people who have problems is something that an individual likes. To train as a Psychologist, an individual should be able to manage stress well. It is also important to be interested in research.

### **What are some of the graduates of the CPC doing now?**

At the end of 2015 nearly 240 students have graduated and become eligible to be registered as a Clinical Psychologist. Some have passed away or retired but most are still employed in areas directly related to Clinical Psychology. All DHB's in NZ employ Otago graduates working either as clinicians or in management positions. The current SDHB Psychology advisor and Psychologists Board chairperson are Otago graduates, a number hold positions at universities in N.Z., Australia, U.S.A. and the U.K., and some have branched out into other areas. One is a freelance writer in South America, another is an English teacher in Italy. Five current members of the Department of Psychology staff are graduates of the programme.

### **Can you tell us any interesting stories about your time at the CPC?**

Working in the clinical programme has been a wonderful experience and it has been a privilege to be involved as an external supervisor in the training programme since 1978 and work in the clinic since 1993. There have been many interesting stories. In the 1980s the Community Counselling Centre housed the DHB methadone clinic which treated people for drug addictions and provided students with some interesting and challenging experiences. Students often worked late at night, and on one occasion the programme director was woken at 2:00am by a phone call from a student after someone threw a bottle through her office window. There was also a time when the same programme director's building (Leith 3) was subject to an arson attack.

Interview conducted by Andrea Chin



Current room used by clinical students



Current waiting room at the Centre



One of the current interview rooms at the Centre



In mid-November, Psychology staff and students got up bright and early for the promise of a pastry breakfast and an opportunity to share and learn about all of the exciting research being conducted around the Department. Psycolloquy is an annual presentation day that offers a relaxed and supportive environment for first time speakers (as well as seasoned veterans). The presentations showcased research covering a wide range of topics—from detecting deception to improving psychological well-being with fruit and vegetables.

Additionally, we were delighted to have Drs Julien Gross and Emily Macleod (Departments of Psychology and Psychological Medicine at the University of Otago) presenting the keynote address on their work testing the *Salvation Army's Bridge Programme Model of Addiction Treatment*. It was really great to hear about this evidence-based programme, which is having a meaningful effect on people's lives being used in our communities, as well as providing us with important information that will be useful for researching addiction programmes worldwide.

Every year, the judging panel struggles to select just one student presentation from the series of insightful and entertaining presentations—with no exception this year. Ultimately, Ashley Hinten was awarded the prize for best student presentation, with her talk on '*Four out of five ain't bad: Consistency of results and helper's behaviour in children's social evaluations*'. While adult humans easily predict and evaluate others' moral behaviour, Ashley's work in collaboration with Dr Damian Scarf, indicates that the existing research behind infants' evaluations of moral behaviour needs to be carefully reviewed and replicated. She proposed a number of alternative explanations for previous research findings based on her own experiment replications, and ended with a thought provoking discussion about the importance of replication and the difficulties in challenging accepted research despite constant failures in replicating the original experiments. The judges believed this presentation not only clearly presented the research Ashley had been working on, but also spoke more broadly to everyone in attendance, capturing the spirit of Psycolloquy.

Overall, Psycolloquy 2015 was a great success with the student presentations reflecting the rich and diverse research being conducted within the Department of Psychology at Otago.

Thank you to everyone who came to support the students, to the wonderful team who helped bring Psycolloquy back for another year, to the people at University College who provided their spacious common room and delicious food, and to all of the students who presented their research so confidently and clearly.

Andrew Mills

### STUDENT PRESENTERS

Millie Johnston  
Polly Chen  
Rebecca Harding  
Kate Brookie  
Ashley Hinten  
Charmaine Strickland

Marea Colombo  
Renee Hu  
Hester Roberts  
Saleh Moradi  
Carrie Clifford  
Kimberley Wake







# KIWICAM CONFERENCE '15

harsh realities of science—that science is run by people, and therefore cannot be absolutely pure or free of corruption.

KiwiCAM was the perfect opportunity for us to give our first presentations on our PhD research. It gave us the chance to practice our public speaking skills in front of an open-minded and welcoming audience, and we learnt that being asked questions on our research wasn't as daunting as we first thought. Most importantly, KiwiCAM provided the ideal platform to prepare us for future international conferences. Huge thanks to the KiwiCAM organisers—even in the face of a slight heating malfunction—Maryanne Garry (Victoria University of Wellington), Donna Rose Addis (University of Auckland) and Brittany Cardwell (University of Otago) who worked tirelessly to provide academic entertainment, great food, and an enjoyable weekend. This year KiwiCAM will be held at our very own Department of Psychology here at Otago—we look forward to seeing you all there!

Ella Barrett and Kimberley Wake

KiwiCAM is a student-led conference on memory and cognition, which invites students from University of Auckland, Victoria University of Wellington, and University of Otago to present their research to a supportive and friendly audience. It's designed so that students can 'take the reins'—students present all of the papers and posters, chair all of the sessions, and ask all of the questions. Meanwhile, academics take a backseat (and give smiles and nods of encouragement from the back row). Last year, KiwiCAM was hosted by Victoria University of Wellington.

KiwiCAM began on a Saturday with keynote speaker Dr Tirta Susilo, who gave a fascinating talk about prosopagnosia—the inability to recognise faces—and how research on the disorder can help to elucidate normal face recognition mechanisms. Over the course of the weekend, we were entertained by a total of 27 student talks. These covered numerous research avenues—ranging from neural mechanisms underlying long-term potentiation to the secret life of passwords. In addition to the presentations, there was an informal poster session held where 13 students shared their research without the pressure of all eyes on them.

KiwiCAM also offered the opportunity to get to know fellow students and academics in a relaxed and social atmosphere. On the Saturday night, students and academics could let their hair down and get to know each other better over bowling in town. We were treated to our own bowling lanes, a pool table, and a private bar that kept us entertained for the whole evening.

Following the final student presentations on Sunday, Dr Rhian Salmon closed the conference with an engaging workshop on science communication. She led an interactive discussion on how to effectively communicate scientific research to the public, as well as highlighting some of the



# CATCHING UP WITH OUR RETIRED PROFESSORS

*With a combined experience of over 66 years in the Department, Emeritus Professors Geoff White and Bob Knight both helped shape the Department into what it is today. Geoff, who happened to be the Department's second ever PhD completion, was HoD for 10 years, and for five years was the University's Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research). He also received the first ever 'Supervisor of the Year' award. Bob was Director of the Psychology Clinical programme for 19 years, was a HoD for three, and the University Provost for a decade. As teachers and supervisors, both Geoff and Bob were widely regarded as integral members of the department, each supervising in excess of 20 PhD and many more Masters students.*

*I caught up with both of them to ask about their time in the department and what they have been up to since retiring...*



**GEOFF WHITE**

**For those who aren't familiar, could you describe the various roles that you have had in the Department of Psychology?**

My main roles included building up the Psychology 100 lab and lecture classes from 2006, and as Department Head for 10 years from 1987, building the much important postgrad student group. I'm pleased to say that the PSYC 100 lab and lecture classes continue to be successful. At that earlier time, I felt that PSYC 100 might be the only psychology experience for many students and that we should do our best at this level. I also really enjoyed my 300 and 400 level teaching. It was also immensely important to support the research ethos of the Department. I now take great pride in knowing the Department and my esteemed colleagues have top world-research rankings.

**What do you miss most about the Department?**

The bright and lively students, especially in my (ex)lab, but also chats with Norma, William, Russell, Paul, Lindsay, Jeremy, and all those others who keep it humming.

**What was your most memorable moment here?**

Many, including the then (1994) Vice-Chancellor saying to the Sciences Dean that he could have a new Psychology building, or a Centre of Innovation (which happened, but which I inherited as a DVC-- arrghh!). I wanted a new Psychology building (!), which I'm glad to say we now have (yay!). Other memorable events included the research grant success of my colleagues (they worked soooo hard), and the success of my own postgrad students.

**I understand that you've retired under the 'phased retirement' scheme, could you tell us a bit about that?**

From 2012, I started at a day a week to see my students through. And to do some other things such as chairing committees to review the PhD programme and the early learning in medicine programme. I was so pleased with my last students. Amanda has an A+ for her Masters and Paula has a distinction for her PhD. Recently, a major review paper based on Paula's thesis has been accepted for publication in the *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior*. I believe it will be highly cited and will substantially advance her career.

**What have you been filling your time with since retiring?**

My complete retirement was at the end of June 2014. Sometimes working on papers, or reviews, but mostly working on old houses to improve their condition. Then, as winter comes, skiing!!



**For those who aren't familiar, could you describe the various roles that you have had in the Department of Psychology?**

Well, I acquired the role of Clinical Psychology Programme Director soon after I arrived at Otago, largely by default as everyone else had left, and I did that for several years before having a stint as the Head of Department. I did another few years as Clinical Director after that, and then I had a very enjoyable period when I had no major department responsibilities at all. Oh, and for ten years I was also the University Provost, but that's a whole different story.

**What has been the strangest question asked by a student?**

I have been asked many odd questions, but without a doubt my favourite was when I was asked by a second-year student whether it was possible that the voices heard by people with schizophrenia were really the telepathic thoughts of people from a civilization living in the centre of the Earth. It's a charming hypothesis; sadly rather wanting for evidence. But who knows?

**Some of the older clinical psychology students find it hard to believe that new students will come through their training without the 'Bob Knight experience'. Do you have any advice for those current and future students?**

I am not sure I know what the 'experience' is, but on reflection, the only time I have ever been acknowledged by ageing graduates in far off places for my contribution, it has been for the work they did with me on psychometric theory. I doubt they enjoyed it at the time. So there you are; therapies come and therapies go, but the correlation coefficient is a friend for life.

**What has been your most embarrassing moment here?**

Well, there were a number of times when I summoned technicians to undergraduate lectures to make malfunctioning equipment work, only to be politely shown how to switch a plug on. Possibly the most embarrassing time, however, was when I was in the Clubs and Socs building showers, all by myself, and didn't hear a fire alarm go off when the kitchen caught fire. I emerged from the shower, and just had time to put on my socks before the young lady from reception burst into the changing room to check that everyone was out of the building. She always looked slightly awkward each time I collected my locker key after that.

**What don't you miss?**

I definitely don't miss the Year 6 final clinical exams. And if I never have to attend another committee meeting it will be too soon.

**What was the most rewarding thing about your time working in the Department?**

The clinical students, who were always full of energy and often very amusing, were the best part of life in the Department. I miss them the most (well, I also miss my colleagues who are generous, funny and wonderful people too). One little example: it comes from the first year that all ten students in the clinical class were young women (usually there were at least some males). Each week before the class began they would chatter amongst themselves, no one listening, about such things as their kittens, engagement parties, disappointing boyfriends, and new shoes. One day I said to them as we got started, just joking, that it would be good to have a couple of males in the class, so I could talk about the important things in life, like rugby. There was a little merry banter about this, and we all moved on. The weeks passed, and finally it was the last class for the year. I wandered down to the class room and found no-one was there. I was a little sad because they were a pleasant class, and it would have been nice to say good bye and wish them the best for their exams. But I thought they probably had better things to do, like swotting or feeding kittens. I was just about to leave when suddenly I heard a clattering outside the door, and they all appeared, wearing full rugby kit, complete with boots. "At last", they announced, "the sort of class you always hoped for", ready to talk rugby...

**What has been your most memorable moment?**

I think the best moment for me, and the Department, was the day the results of the first nation-wide audit of university research activity were announced, back in 2003, and the Department of Psychology had exceeded everyone's expectations. Probably even our own. It was nice to be recognised for our strengths.

**What have you been filling your time with since retiring?**

People describing their retirement activities can be rather tedious, so I won't indulge; suffice to say, however, that retirement is something I am very good at. I had no problems adjusting; I do a lot of stuff. Finally, I have a career that completely suits me.

Interviews conducted by Phoebe Poulter



**BOB KNIGHT**





# PSYC STEIN '15

After a five-year absence, excitement and anticipation surrounded the lead up to the Psyc Stein, and whispers about the mysterious new venue and discussions about the theme swept through the Department. Postgraduates and staff alike were looking forward to seeing their colleagues and lecturers in RAWSHARK (the Department of Psychology band) perform some of their favourite classics, and were contemplating pre and post party-time shenanigans.

The night itself was freezing, with icicles forming on the tips of shoes during the walk from the taxi to the building, but inside – inside was on fire!

Conversation was buzzing as we walked in. Everyone was in good spirits and dressed to impress. There were flowers and vines scattered throughout the venue to suit the theme of 'Enchanted Garden'; tables were laid with platters of delicious food, and the fairy lights were twinkling as people passed them on their way to the bar.

RAWSHARK began playing and after a little encouragement, the majority of the room was up, dancing and singing along.

Some new songs had been added to the set list, which were all played to perfection. After an encore of Proud Mary, RAWSHARK left the stage to roaring applause.

After some mingling, drinks, snacks, and a rest from dancing, it was time for the DJ. The DJ who, although no one in the crowd knew him, seemed to know exactly what kind of crowd he was working with. Not only did he take requests, but he also anticipated our requests. He somehow managed to please a diverse crowd – although some of the songs may not have been recognisable to the younger crowd as I overheard the following complaint, "I have no idea what this song is!" Robbie Williams is not even that old! Regardless, the singing and dancing continued away from the venue and well into the night.

Thank you to RAWSHARK, the mysterious DJ, and a massive thank you to the Social Committee for organising this fabulous event. Everything was wonderful and it was so nice to be able to let our hair down and have a great evening out with friends!

Amanda Calder







Photographs by Andrew Mills

**think.**





# TALKING TECHNOLOGY

Whenever I lament writing my PhD, my parents always remind me of a few things. First, they wrote their Masters theses on a typewriter. And second, their data analysis included a complicated series of steps that included punching cards, and taking these cards to the computer room to analyse their data. It is easy to take for granted the vast access we have to technological and tech support as members of this Department. This Department of Psychology is well known for its amazing teaching and dedicated research. These things could not happen, however, without the consistent and unwavering support of our technical staff; the people who frequently come to the rescue for big technical emergencies and who always patiently say, “just try restarting your computer”.

Walking down to Goddard Level 2 to visit the Department technicians is always a surprise. This particular time was no different. I walk up to the counter and am buzzed into the familiar room. There are Mr Potato Heads sitting on the filing cabinets to

the left, a huge monitor on the wall to the right, and a group of six guys each working on a different gadget. Meric is trying to fix a hose-like contraption used for inspecting pipes. A huge arcade cabinet that he is repurposing as a heart rate monitor for Toitū Museum obstructs Lindsay. If you’re like me, the fact that somebody made that machine is mindboggling. If you’re like me, installing SPSS is a feat of human brilliance, and networking computers together feels as foreign as navigating the Death Star.

But all of these tasks seem completely within the realm of possibility for our technical staff. In fact, when asked whether they had ever not found a solution to a problem, there was silence. One by one they all agreed that they have always found a solution, a work around to any problem or challenge someone in the Department has faced. And these challenges range from the difficult to the bizarre, from building sandpits and train sets to finding alternative methods for tactile stimulation before cell phones. Now, it is important to be clear that the television is not always accurate about the work of a computer technician. Although shows like CSI or 24 would have you believe that it is relatively easy to hack into NSA or take control of satellites, apparently it isn’t. The Techs believe the job is more like MacGyver; you have to be knowledgeable and resourceful and, often, the solution to a complex problem is using ordinary objects.

Given the level of expertise, it is easy to assume the Techs have been programming since birth. For most of the Techs, however, computers were not accessible when they were teenagers. Lindsay, who has been involved in the Department since 1985, joined the computer club in high school. The club had two Apple II computers that you could learn to use.





Recuperating after a bad injury on a pushbike, Lindsay learned Basic on an Orange computer to pass the time. Now, just to clarify, an Orange Computer is not the colour of the computer, but a kitset copy of an apple computer. It had no way of saving files, and would crash randomly. In order to see the output of his programming, he would have to type really fast.

When Russell joined the Department in 1980, he started building electromechanical and electronic research equipment. There were no computers during that time, so he built machines to do tasks such as counting responses, making noises or flashing lights. These machines could not be reprogrammed for another experiment and so the machine would become redundant after the study. With the introduction of personal computers, electro-mechanical machines became unnecessary. Personal computers could collect and process research information and, importantly, they could be re-programmed for other tasks.

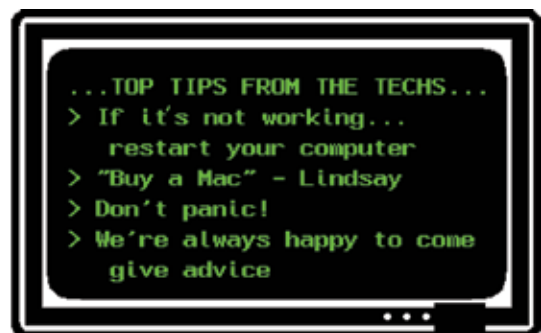
Although it is common for all students to have their own desktop computer (and a personal laptop, cell phone, and iPad), the first personal computer in the Department was a TRS 80 in the early 1980s, which was used to calculate exam and lab results. Now, if you think printing is difficult nowadays, imagine printing in 1980 using a teletype printing machine that would take about an hour to print just a few pages of results. And this was hi-tech at that time!

The Techs remember a time back in 1988 when all the postgrad students had to sign up to share a PDP computer that was the size of a large refrigerator. The time on the PDP was so precious, that some students would sign up for time over night. Professor Geoff White, Professor Cliff Abraham, and Professor Neil McNaughton eventually all used PDP computers in their research labs. In fact, Geoff's computer was so advanced that someone from the American Embassy would inspect his computer annually to ensure that the computer was safe from spies.

Perhaps the most important development in computer use was learning that you could network computers (get the computers to talk to each other). During Lindsay's job interview, the interviewer asked if he wanted to see something cool. The interviewer took him up to a room in Galton House where eight BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) computers were networked together. In a few years that network grew into the largest network of BBC computers in the Southern Hemisphere. It was used in Year 100 labs for processing exam marks and controlling research projects. That network changed and evolved over the years into the Local Area Network we have today (think Shared drive and printing).

And technology development does not seem to be stopping. In a dream world, the Techs hope that some of their tasks will soon be automated, such as filling the coffee machine and bringing the milk to the fridge in the morning. There are more staff, more projects, and more computers in the Department than ever before. These guys, however, still frequently find time to use their skills outside of the Department, providing IT support to local high schools, churches, and the operatic society. Regardless of where the technology takes us in the next few years, we're sure the Technicians will get their hands on it and see how it can be used!

Marea Colombo



Photograph supplied

# DIVISION OF SCIENCES AWARDS



*Photograph by Janice Murray*

Four staff members from the Department of Psychology were the proud recipients of the inaugural Division of Sciences Awards, a celebration held at Arana College in November 2015. Congratulations, everyone!

## **Dr Damian Scarf: Early-Career Researcher of the Year Award**

The Early-Career Researcher of the Year Award recognises outstanding research performance by an emerging researcher within the Division of Sciences. Academic staff (e.g. Lecturers and Research Fellows) who have held an appointment for a period of at least two years, and who have held an academic appointment for less than a combined total of six years at this and other universities, are eligible for this Award. Recognition focused on scientific impact of research outputs over the course of 2014.

## **Cara Duffy: Outstanding Administrative Support Award**

This award recognises administrative staff whose work has made an outstanding contribution to the smooth running of teaching, research and Divisional business. Criteria focused on sustained excellence, innovation, and initiative.

## **Dr Rachel Zajac: Senior Teacher of the Year Award**

The Senior Teacher of the Year Award recognises sustained outstanding tertiary teaching by a staff member within the Division of Sciences. Recognition focused on demonstrated commitment and creativity in the delivery of high-quality teaching that engages students and results in exceptional learning experiences.

## **Dr Jules Gross: Community Engagement Award**

The Community Engagement Award gives recognition to engagement with and service to the general public, whether locally, nationally or internationally. Any staff member (general or academic) in the Division of Sciences who has met the research and teaching performance expectations, but excelled beyond expectation in the area of community engagement, may be nominated for this Award. Engagement recognition focused on leadership, initiative and impact of community engagement.



# OUT AND ABOUT



## Siham Al Lamki, 1st Year

### What do you want to be when you grow up?

I would like to be a child psychologist. I have a sister who has a mental health issue, but back home in my country there is very little information about it. I want to learn more about my sister's mental health and help other children back home.

### Which Psychology lab have you enjoyed most this year?

I really liked the first lab on caffeine effects, because we got to drink coffee. I might drink too much coffee, haha!

### If you could research anything in Psychology, what would it be?

The skills we need to learn languages. What techniques could we use to help learn a second language?

## Louise Cody, 4th Year

### Which Psychology lab did you enjoy the most in first year?

Operant Behaviour: Discrimination training lab. Although I found the material challenging to understand, this lab is one that stands out because we got to work with rats in a lab situation. Having never seen a 'real life' Psychology laboratory before, it was all very exciting.

### What is your favourite or most random line/saying a Psychology lecturer has used in class?

"This will not be in the exam."

### What is your favourite Psychology experiment you have read about?

The Blue eyed vs Brown eyed experiment by Jane Elliot. Controversial (by today's standards), yet groundbreaking research on discrimination.



## John Kim, 3rd Year

### What is the funniest or most random line a Psychology lecturer has used in class?

Everything that Jackie Hunter has said. He is an awesome mad Irish man.

### Coolest fact you've learnt in Psychology?

Humans can get even the simplest things wrong – i.e. the light switches in the William James building (thanks for pointing that out, David O'Hare!).

### Which lecturer is best dressed?

Professor Ted Ruffman – He always gives off a cool vibe when he walks in with his mug of coffee.

### What Psychology lab did you enjoy the most in first year?

The Operant Conditioning lab with the rats! It was the most hands on experience, but unfortunately my rat was super lazy—she just wanted the food.

## Jenn Arrell, 4th Year

### What do you want to be when you grow up?

An adult. But also, a Clinical Psychologist.

### Coolest fact you've learnt in Psychology?

Many supposed UFO sightings could be attributed to Charles-Bonnet Syndrome.

### Which Psychology lab did you enjoy most in first year?

The one where we dressed people up in newspaper!

### What do you think is the worst depiction of a Psychologist on TV?

The 'and how does that make you feel' question repeated over and over and over again.



# OUT AND ABOUT



## **Brendan Rose, 4th Year**

### **What is your favourite Psychology experiment you have read about?**

Probably Milgram or the Stanford Prison experiment.

### **What is the funniest or most random line a Psychology lecturer has used in class?**

Something by Jackie Hunter. Anything by Jackie Hunter.

### **Coollest fact you've learnt in Psychology?**

The brain bone is connected to the smart bone.

### **Which lecturer is best dressed?**

I want to say Jackie Hunter for that too... He has the look on point.

## **Emma Tse, 2nd Year**

### **Which Psychology lab did you enjoy the most in first year?**

The Operant Conditioning labs where we got to work with rats.

### **Which topic in Psychology is your favourite to study?**

The developmental part of Psychology interests me—such as the different stages where things occur, like which stage people learn or develop new things.

### **Coollest Psychology experiment you've participated in?**

The coolest experiment I did was one where I had to do a walk every day for 20 mins, first with a big group, and then by myself, and then we were asked a whole bunch of questions about emotions.



## **Aastha Puri, 4th Year**

### **What do you want to be when you grow up?**

I have always wanted to become a Health Professional. After having done papers in Psychology, I aspire to work in the Mental Health sector, particularly as a Clinical Psychologist.

### **What is the funniest or most random line a Psychology lecturer has used?**

Jackie Hunter turned around and flexed his muscles while he was describing the example of a perfect man. He always has funny examples to share throughout his lectures!

### **Coollest fact you've learnt in Psychology?**

Females are better than males at emotion recognition! Females focus more on the eyes, whereas males focus more on the mouth during social interactions.

## **Jiazhen Fan, 1st Year**

### **What do you want to be when you grow up?**

A Statistician and Psychologist, I think. In the future there will be more and more data to be analysed, so statisticians will be really useful. Also, I am really interested in the psychology behind relationships.

### **Coollest fact you've learnt in Psychology?**

I really liked learning about sleep and the theories surrounding it. I now have lots of things to tell my mum so that she'll give me more sleep, based on science!

### **Which Psychology lab have you enjoyed most this year?**

I enjoy participating in all of the experiments, in our first lab the experiment had a double-blind design, it was mysterious.





# OUT AND ABOUT



## Lana Kinney, Masters Candidate

### What do you want to be when you grow up?

Cognitive Ergonomist, if that what it's called? Someone who helps firms organise themselves and train their employees in a way that reduces error and increases safety.

### Coollest fact you've learnt in Psychology?

I loved the 300-Level Sensation and Perception class, it teaches you so many cool things about how your brain invents your reality. For example: you hear things before you see them but your brain stalls your perception of the hearing for something like 100ms (don't quote me on that number) so your vision and hearing are in sync.

### Which lecturer is best dressed?

Professor David Bilkey for outfits, but Dr Kristin Hillman, who teaches third year Sensation and Perception, is the most attractive lecturer!

### What do you think is the worst depiction of a Psychologist on TV?

Probably Hannibal Lecter. Please stop asking us if we know what you're thinking – WE DON'T.

## Rick Visser, 2nd Year

### Which Psychology lab did you enjoy the most in first year?

The lab on interview techniques where we looked at body maps.

### Which topic in Psychology is your favourite to study?

I like looking at the topic of people's conscious vs. unconscious thoughts and cognitions.

### Which lecturer is best dressed?

Janice Murray. She just has the gadgets, and the watch!

### Coollest Psychology experiment you've participated in the Department?

I had to do one where you had to make up a story about either what you wanted to become, or about mathematics, in front of other people. Other people had to do it too, then you texted back your stress levels and other outcomes every day for two weeks. That was quite cool.



## Bridget Irvine, PhD Candidate

### What do you want to be when you grow up?

It scares me a little that I still don't know... Fortunately I am not technically a grown-up yet, right!? But I am confident that my education from Otago will have opened numerous doors, and perhaps doors I didn't even know existed.

### Which topic in Psychology is your favourite to study?

It may sound cliché, but the area of my PhD research still remains my favourite topic to study. So many aspects of the legal process—questioning of children, eyewitness testimony, and false confessions—also fall squarely into the territory of psychological scientists. It is a difficult, but worthy task to try and integrate the science into the courtroom.

### If you could research anything in Psychology, what would it be?

Right now... The decision-making processes of juries fascinate me—I have so many questions about how, and why, certain pieces of evidence will influence a jury. I would love to be able to address some of those questions.

### Coollest fact you've learnt in Psychology?

Too many to mention! The motto 'you learn something new every day' is alive and well in Psychology.



# BOWLING NIGHT

Most people think perfection in bowling is a 300 game, but that simply isn't enough. Perfection in bowling is having 18 glorious teams from the Department of Psychology take over Bowl Line and enter into a night of fierce competition. On May 18th, at 7:00pm, we descended on Bowl Line in Kaikorai Valley. With 18 teams entered, there were no lanes to spare for the general public. But, given the sight inside, it would have been a brave bunch of people to willingly enter Bowl Line to play; if you were not part of the Department of Psychology, you would have thought you had walked in on the strangest mix of people: pigeons hanging out with cowboys, and Pacman ghosts yapping away with a pack of dalmatians. Not even the air hockey table seemed like neutral territory.

The Halberstadt Lab, ever the favourite on bowling night, was eager to win back their bowling title. And, as

per usual, other labs were interested in ensuring this did not happen. In fact, after the first round, everyone was surprised to hear that the McNaughton Lab had climbed to the top of the leaderboard, the Halberstadt Lab trailing in a distant 4th place. With an upset on the cards, the Halberstadt Lab managed to bowl themselves back into the lead, only to be overtaken in the dying moments by the Tech Team—coming from behind to bowl a grand total of 1039 across two games. Although they tasted victory for a moment, the Halberstadt Lab had to settle for second with a score of 1024; the McNaughton Lab coming in third with a score of 958.

In the competition for the top individual score, superb bowling on Lane 1 saw Damian Scarf claim the Individual trophy for 2016 with an outstanding 330 pins across two games. Sitting much further behind, Andrew Mills and

*Photographs by OPSYC*





TOP INDIVIDUAL:  
DAMIAN SCARF



FIRST PLACE:  
THE TECHS

Russell Phillips took second and third place, with 287 and 254 pins, respectively.

I must remind you all that this is not merely a bowling competition. If anything, this event is the perfect intersection of Olympic sports and the ID fashion show. This year, the competition for best costumes was tough. But, with an excellent combination of spotted dalmatian puppies and a formidable Cruella de Vil, the Linscott Lab managed to steal the show for the third year in a row!

There may not have been any 'perfect' scores that evening, but there was perfection none-the-less. Congratulations to all the competitors and champions of 2016. We cannot wait to see what surprises are in store for Bowling 2017.

Marea Colombo

## TEAM COMPETITION

- 1st.** The Techs 1039
- 2nd.** Halberstadt Lab 1024
- 3rd.** McNaughton Lab 958

## INDIVIDUAL COMPETITION

- 1st.** Damian Scarf 330
- 2nd.** Andrew Mills 287
- 3rd.** Russell Phillips 254



BEST DRESSED:  
THE LINSOTT LAB



# BRAIN HEALTH RESEARCH CENTRE



**DAVID BILKEY**

**What does your role at the Brain Health Research Centre involve?**

I help to coordinate the activities of the Centre, which is a grouping of researchers from across the University who are all interested in brain health. Our activities include facilitating excellent research into brain health that is directed towards generating new treatments for brain disease, organising seminars and outreach, and facilitating collaboration within the various groups.

**Where are you from and what brought you to Otago?**

I was lucky enough to grow up in the Bay of Islands, but have been living in Dunedin since the early 1980s. I came to Dunedin because of the opportunity to attend the University of Otago and haven't really looked back.

**Looking back, who were your main influencers growing up?**

I went to a very small school but was lucky enough to have a couple of very good teachers who encouraged curiosity about the world. Three out of the 15 pupils in the only year 12 class (there was no year 13) went on to get their PhDs and become researchers, so there must have been something going on! Once I got to Otago, Professor Graham Goddard who was my PhD supervisor, had a big role in encouraging my interest in neuroscience.

**What motivated you to begin research into brain health and memory?**

The notion that all of our remembered experience is based on subtle and long-lasting changes in brain circuitry.

*The Brain Health Research Centre at the University of Otago has over 200 multidisciplinary researchers and clinicians across 41 laboratories currently undertaking important international research into how the brain works, brain diseases and repair, and developing new treatments for neurological disorders.*

*At the end of 2014, Prof David Bilkey took on the role of Director at the Brain Health Research Centre. I asked him a little about his role and background...*

**In your research, what has been your most interesting finding to date?**

That what seem like minor changes in the in utero environment can have such a big impact on brain function, a long time later, in the adult brain.

**In 2015, the theme for BHRC was Science for a Healthy Brain. What things would you suggest we do to help maintain our brain function as we age?**

When all else is considered, exercise seems to be the one thing that has been shown to have beneficial effects time and time again.

**What advice would you give to students hoping to embark on a career in brain research?**

Find what you are good at and enjoy doing, and work at getting better at it! It is an exciting time in neuroscience as there are so many new techniques available. Become an expert in one!

**What other activities or interests do you enjoy outside of research and academia?**

I love family life and we get away as often as we can to our crib on the Maniototo. Once we are there it's about cycling, walking, swimming, and eating good food!

Interview conducted by Andrew Mills





# CHRISTMAS PARTY

As the year comes to an end, the annual staff and student Christmas party rolls around, bringing a joyous night of merriness to finish the year. An ever-popular event, the Christmas party offers an opportunity for staff to bring their family and children to celebrate and socialise with other Psychology staff and postgrad students.

With Willie manning the barbeque, bellies were kept satisfied and full with sausages, and for the extra peckish, the chips and lollies managed to suffice. Rawshark provided quality musical entertainment, with a cheeky Hawaiian theme to their costumes to signify the warm Christmas

summer (a change from the usual White Christmas). Their upbeat music got people in tune with their dancing bones and show off some moves. The only thing that interested the children as much as the free potato chips, was Phoebe's face painting. Within an hour there were masterpieces of flowers, various animals, and Disney characters all running around the room happily.

It was a nice night to round off the year, and share in Christmas greetings before people left for their summer breaks to rest and relax. Looking forward to the next one already!

Andrea Chin



# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



**Dr Sue Bidrose**

Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Dunedin City Council

Sue Bidrose's life has taken several unexpected twists and turns since studying at Otago in the 1990s. Despite some intervening years in central government in Wellington, and local government in Auckland, her career has done full circle and brought her back to Dunedin, where she is employed as the CEO of the Dunedin City Council. Local Government suits her well and she says that Senior Management in a Council is ideally suited to someone who thrives on variety. "The job has such huge diversity. On any given day I might be dealing with issues related to libraries, gambling, parking, rubbish disposal, business support, and marketing the city – and I even picked up a role as observer on the local Rugby Football Union!"

**Lisa Dick**

Editor, University of Otago Bulletin

A career in journalism isn't the most obvious step to take from a Psychology degree, but Lisa Dick says it gave her unique and specialised skills which have helped her when working for some of New Zealand's top news organisations. Finishing her honours degree in Neuroscience and Psychology, she was accepted into a postgrad Journalism course. After graduating, she worked at local television station Channel 9 (now Dunedin TV) as a news reporter. This gave her the grounding needed to work first for Radio New Zealand as a general and business reporter, and then for TV3 news. Lisa has since worked alongside some of the best reporters, producers and presenters in New Zealand and is now the editor of the University Bulletin.



**Stephven Kolose**

Human Factors Scientist, Defence Technology Agency (DTA), NZ Defence Force

It was a 300-level paper in Ergonomics (Forensic and Applied Psychology) which set a career in Ergonomics and Human factors in motion for Stephven Kolose. At DTA, the agency responsible for the NZ Defence Force's research, science and technology, Stephven has been part of various projects. Some of those include: assessing the usability/ergonomics of light support weapons; assessing hearing protection devices and long range acoustic devices; providing input into HF training; and ergonomic assessments of helicopter cabin seating and brace procedures. "To this day I credit my Psychology degree at Otago University as the inspiration behind my move to Ergonomics and Human Factors."

**Dr Sarah Morton**

Clinical Psychologist, Regional Youth Forensic Service

After studying in Dunedin, Sarah moved north to Auckland where she began work at the Regional Youth Forensic Service (RYFS). RYFS is a specialist service that provides mental health assessments for young people who are involved with the Justice System. Under Taiohi Tu Taiohi Ora, Sarah also provides therapy to young people who are placed in Child Youth and Family (CYF) residences. Of her work, Sarah said, "There are many challenges. We work with some of New Zealand's most vulnerable youth, and many of the young people have led very difficult lives. More than anything, though, I have been surprised by the resilience of these kids. It can be pretty rewarding work."





# CATCH UP WITH SOME OF OUR GRADUATES...

## Dr Reremoana (Moana) Theodore

Co-Director, National Centre for Lifecourse Research

Moana's research experience and postgraduate diploma in Psychology were key factors that led to her being offered a job as an Interviewer at the world renowned Dunedin Multi-disciplinary Health and Development Study. Her current research focuses on the impact that education has on Māori health and wellbeing throughout the lifecourse ... "As a Māori student and now academic, I have been fortunate to benefit from the support of many of the staff and students within Psychology. Now the skills that I have gained enable me to follow my passion by undertaking lifecourse research to identify what can make a positive difference in the lives of other Māori students and their whānau".



## Rose Patterson

Research Fellow, New Zealand Initiative

Rose Patterson decided to complete a Masters in Psychology after she was given advice that postgraduate study would help towards a career in research and evaluation. This opened the door to work in public health for a crown entity where she ran national surveys, qualitative research projects, and advertising focus groups. "Interpreting the way people think and behave through the lens of Psychology is immensely valuable for navigating the workplace, and life in general!" Rose now works as a Research Fellow for the New Zealand Initiative, a public policy think tank. "Communication skills I developed at Otago – where an emphasis was put on clear and succinct writing for a general audience – have been invaluable."



## Matt Hegan

Psychologist, Intensive Wraparound Service (IWS), Ministry of Education

Graduating with a BA (PSYC), DipGrad (EDUC) and MSc (PSYC) Matt now works as a Psychologist for the IWS, a top-tier Ministry of Education intervention for the most at-risk youths in our communities. In his work day, Matt takes the valuable lessons learned in the lab, implementing them in practical every day solutions. "The work is incredibly varied ... counselling a young person, working with teachers on classroom interventions, working with police youth aid officers on behavioural strategies, parents with violent behaviours, administering cognitive assessments- whatever the need, I analyse the situation, collect data and make sure the implemented interventions are 'best practice' and are making a difference."



## Dr Anna Campbell

Clinical Psychologist, Paediatric Outpatients, Southern District Health Board

Anna graduated with a Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology last year. During her training she worked with older adults (over 60 years), and adults with severe mental health issues. However, after graduating, an opportunity came up for Anna to work in a very different area – paediatric outpatients, with children and their families. Many of the children Anna sees have physical health difficulties, such as diabetes, which can be hard to cope with. She also sees children who need assessments for issues such as intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder, or ADHD. "I am really enjoying being able to work with the whole family to make a difference in children's lives. It is very rewarding work and no two days are the same."



# CONFERENCE BLOG

## TRANS/FORMING FEMINISMS: MEDIA, TECHNOLOGY, IDENTITY

In November 2015, I had the opportunity to attend and present my research at an international conference hosted by The Department of Media, Film, and Communications right here at the University of Otago. The aim of the conference was to bring together academics and activists from diverse disciplinary and radical political backgrounds to facilitate discussion related to both theoretical and practical feminist activism. I was lucky enough to be able to speak about my Masters research examining the experiences and beliefs of university aged women with positive body image, focusing on their engagement with various forms of media from fashion magazines to Tumblr (under the supervision of Dr Gareth Treharne).

Initially, I was nervous to attend an event where I felt my psychological and scientific approach to feminist thought might leave me open to criticism from other fields. However, I very quickly felt a sense of unity that was shared across the many attendees from such different backgrounds. We were all brought together by a shared interest and belief in feminist ideology, and a desire to explore these ideas with each other. When I finally

gave my presentation, (I was the last speaker of the last session!) I was thrilled to share my questions and ideas with such a vast range of individuals, and was met with a swarm of positive feedback and interest in my research.

Highlights for me included talks from young academics from either end of New Zealand, for instance Octavia Calder-Dawe, a fellow Psychology student from the University of Auckland who spoke about her PhD research on young people's identification with feminist ideas and how this was entangled with their 'authentic' selfhood. More locally, Leigh Paterson, a Design Lecturer from Otago Polytechnic, spoke about the way in which design controls gender representation in consumer culture. My favourite part, of course, had to be the workshop on using focus group methods in research on gender and sexuality from queer and feminist standpoints, facilitated by our very own Dr Gareth Treharne and his colleague Dr Virginia Braun from the University of Auckland!

Overall, the conference was an exciting opportunity not only for me to speak about my research for the first time to complete strangers, but to engage with and learn from a variety of interesting

people all with unique ideas and backgrounds.

A big thanks to the Department of Psychology for funding my attendance!

Phoebe Poulter







# BAKE-OFF EXTRAVAGANZA

(AKA HOW MANY WAYS CAN I DESCRIBE YUMMY FOOD?)

The temptation of tantalising sweet treats and tasty savoury snacks did not fail to bring the crowds out in droves when the annual bake-off came around. Staff and students alike descended fervently upon the staff room to taste the divine baking (breads, muffins, cupcakes, etc.) on display, and also do their bit by donating food items to the foodbank. Thanks to everyone's hungry stomachs and charitable hearts, we ended up collecting box after box for the food bank, so well done to everyone! The Presbyterian Support Group were very appreciative of the food and cash donations raised.

Special thanks to our bakers for contributing and showing off their baking talents; all of the baking was

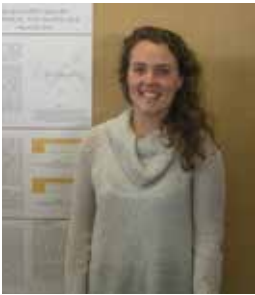
especially delicious and provided the extra fuel to get through the long day of work and toil. As with the previous year, a savoury delicacy took out the competition, leading select members of the audience to grumble about the apparent superiority of savoury to sweet treats. However, this in no way diminished the delight that was Matt Moore's ciabatta bread. Congratulations!

Once again, thanks to the bakers, the hungry crowd, and the social committee for organising the event. In answer to the appeals, it has been decided that there will be separate categories for savoury and sweet treats next bake-off, to prevent the savouries from dominating over the sweets. Till next time!

Andrea Chin



# HONOURS POSTER SESSION 2015



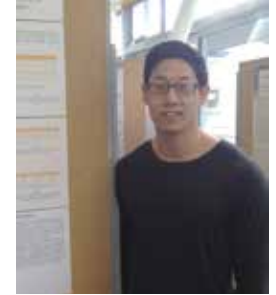
**JULIA MCINTOSH**

The poster sessions on the 4th of November marked the completion of what was a very busy year for Psychology Honours students. Each student's poster represented a significant amount of hard work, effort, and perseverance—and hopefully only a few meltdown moments. These sessions provided students the opportunity to present their year's work to others in a casual and relaxed environment. And of course, there was plenty of food and bad jokes throughout to add to the celebrations.

As a student, it was great to hear about the work that fellow classmates were a part of throughout the year. We all gained an appreciation for the vast array of research being undertaken within the Department here at Otago. The external examiner was extremely friendly, and we soon realised we had nothing to be nervous about. Staff members and postgrad Psychology students from other years also came along to show their support and ask questions. As a whole, these sessions were a special time to reflect on and celebrate the significant achievement made by Honours students throughout 2015.

Julia McIntosh

Leading up to the poster session, countless hours had been devoted to reading and reviewing articles, discussing our ideas and plans with our supervisors, gathering and analysing data, and putting everything together in our final dissertation piece. With the help of Cara, our work was formatted into a friendlier and more approachable poster version. The session ultimately gave us all a chance to showcase our research and also provided us with the opportunity to see what our classmates had been working on.



**KENNY JANG**

Throughout the year, most of us had become familiar and somewhat adept at presenting works by other researchers. However, this was the first opportunity for many of us to present our own work, and we were unsure of what to expect. It's safe to say that we were all relieved by the fact that our performance during the poster session could not negatively affect our grades.

All of our uncertainties and worries were forgotten soon after the poster session kicked off. It was a very relaxed and casual event and this allowed the students and the academic staff to freely roam around to chat and discuss our studies and ideas. While it was great describing our own studies to others, it was just as interesting to talk to our peers about their studies and their ideas. Our external examiner, Associate Professor Marc Wilson, listened to what we had to say about our studies with genuine interest, and asked us a few questions regarding the research process, the potential for future research, and how our research could be applied in real world settings.

Being surrounded by the familiar faces of our classmates during the poster session made for a memorable experience. The support and encouragement from both our peers and the academic staff were invaluable and contributed to not only an enjoyable poster session, but also to the academic year as a whole. All in all, the poster session was a fitting platform to show how far we had come with our research over the academic year.

We were fortunate enough to have the cooperation and assistance of Cara Duffy who designed and set up all of our posters. A special thanks to our external examiner Associate Professor Marc Wilson from University of Victoria, Wellington for coming down and spending his time to talk to each and every one of us.

Kenny Jang





**BEN RIORDAN**

MVP: Ben Riordan

**August 2015:** Awarded Outreach Certificates at the Snap (Science News and Promotion) committee meeting

**September 2015:** Best student oral presentation at the Public Health Association Conference

**October 2015:** Awarded the Otago Student Leadership Award for committing two years into developing his own leadership potential

**November 2015:** Best late-breaking talk at the Australasian Professional Society on Alcohol and Other Drugs (APSAD) conference

## Academic Staff Promotions Effective 1st February 2016

David O'Hare, who has been promoted to full professor joined the Department in 1982. His research interests involve human decision-making involving risk and uncertainty. Many of his studies have involved aviation decision-making studied in flight simulation experiments, online surveys, and archival (accident) records. He has held flight crew licences and been trained in aircraft accident investigation. His work has been funded by the US Federal Aviation Administration and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) amongst others and cited in accident investigations by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). He has authored several books in aviation human factors and has provided expert testimony in a number of legal cases involving road and air accidents.

As well as the aviation work, he has carried out a number of field and laboratory studies of football referee decision making and is a qualified referee and referee assessor. Other interests include the effects of age on decision making, cognitive load and learning, and supporting decision making processes in diagnostic reasoning. He directs work in the Cognitive Engineering and Decision Making laboratory.

**DAVID O'HARE****JACKIE HUNTER****JANICE MURRAY****MELE TAUMOEPEAU**

Other promotions in the Department include Jackie Hunter and Janice Murray, who have both been promoted to Associate Professor; and Mele Taumoepeau, to Senior Lecturer!

O U R N E W D O C T O R S	<b>Dr Susan Baxter</b> <i>Development of a safe, effective and accessible physical activity intervention for people with rheumatoid arthritis</i>	<b>Dr Rebekah Luo</b> <i>Sleep disorder breathing in young children: Natural history and relations to academic performance</i>	<b>Dr Ella Myftari</b> <i>Ko taku reo taku ohoohe, ko taku reo taku mapihi mauria: Exploring Māori narrative identity development and the link to adolescent well-being</i>
	<b>Dr Anna Campbell</b> <i>The influence of oxytocin on older adults' emotion processing</i>	<b>Dr Elizabeth Mayland</b> <i>A conceptual exploration of psychological distress following mild to moderate traumatic upper limb injuries</i>	<b>Dr Tia Neha</b> <i>He Maumahara ki ngā kōrero a ngā whānau ki Te Waipounamu: Family recollections and social contributions to Māori children's learning in the South Island, New Zealand</i>
	<b>Dr Lynne Clay</b> <i>"There are risks to be taken and some just push it too far". A mixed methods exploration of human risk factors in agricultural quad-bike incidents in New Zealand.</i>	<b>Dr Matthew McDonald</b> <i>Age-related changes in memory abilities in older adults</i>	<b>Dr Rana Peniamina</b> <i>The impact of food allergies on quality of life</i>
	<b>Dr Jesicka Goei</b> <i>Investigations of heterogeneity, directionality, and involvement of associative memory in synaesthesia</i>	<b>Dr Celia Guido Mendes</b> <i>The impact of bilingualism on conflict control</i>	<b>Dr Shabah Shadli</b> <i>An improved human anxiety-specific biomarker: Frequency band, modality specificity, personality, pharmacology, and source characterisation</i>
	<b>Dr Ben Jacquierey</b> <i>Age-related cognitive changes in children with ADHD</i>	<b>Dr Matthew Moore</b> <i>Investigating the cognitive neuropsychology of social perception and reasoning</i>	<b>Dr Helen Shuk Ling Tsui</b> <i>Predictors of cognitive impairment in old age</i>
	<b>Dr Sarah Kafka</b> <i>Group identity and intergroup discrimination: Does importance to identity play a special role?</i>	<b>Dr Sarah Morton</b> <i>The latent structure of schizotypy: Looking back and moving forward</i>	

# think.

University of Otago Department of Psychology Magazine

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