

Welcome to the latest Psychology newsletter

July 2019

In this month's newsletter, you'll find the regular updates on our activities, from learning and teaching achievements, new grants and publications, to the conferences and outreach events we've been part of.

To keep up to date with the latest news from the team as it happens, follow us on Twitter [@HWPpsych](#) or find us on [Facebook](#).

Links: [Social Sciences](#) | [Psychology](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#)

The newsletter displays best on tablets (PDF attached also).



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### Taking centre stage...

August in Edinburgh generally means one thing, festivals! For anyone who hasn't been before, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe is the world's largest arts festival. This year we have not one but three of our academics taking to the stage to share their research. Thusha Rajendran will be asking [OK Computer or Paranoid Android?](#), while Alan Gow promises [This Show Will Make You Sharper!](#) Rounding out our appearances is Anna Sedda with [Disgust for Dummies](#).

The shows are part of the [Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas](#), now in it's seventh year, which places "debate, discussion and discourse" at the heart of the Fringe.

You can view trailers for our shows at the links on the right (and get your tickets too). And good luck to our HWU colleagues Paola Ruffo, Ross Alexander and Ross Donaldson who are appearing in the programme too.



### Forthcoming events

#### Research Seminars/Events

- OK Computer or Paranoid Android? 7 & 15 August, New Town Theatre (Edinburgh Fringe)

[Trailer](#) | [Tickets](#)

- This Show Will Make You Sharper! 10 & 14 August, New Town Theatre (Edinburgh Fringe)

[Trailer](#) | [Tickets](#)

- Disgust for Dummies 19 August, New Town Theatre (Edinburgh Fringe)

[Trailer](#) | [Tickets](#)

Full Psychology Research Seminar details are available on [Facebook](#).

### Latest publications



Our latest publications are listed here, but you can find a full list via the [Heriot-Watt Research Portal](#).

McLeod, G., McKendrick, M., Taylor, A., Lynch, J., Ker, J., Sadler A., Halcrow, J., McKendrick, G., Mustafa, A., Seeley, J., Raju, P., Corner, G. (in press). Validity and reliability of metrics for translation of regional anaesthesia performance from cadavers to patients. *British Journal of Anaesthesia*. doi: [10.1016/j.bja.2019.04.060](#).

Scarpina, F., Magnani, F. G., Tagini, S., Priano, L., Mauro, A., Sedda, A. (in press). Mental representation of the body in action in Parkinson's disease. *Experimental Brain Research*. doi: [10.1007/s00221-019-05608-w](#)

Science Advice for Policy by European Academies (2019). Transforming the Future of Ageing. Berlin: SAPEA. doi: [10.26356/ageing](#)

### In the news

[Older people are feeling the wind in their hair through cycling](#)

[Psychology students continue to go 'beyond the headlines'](#)

[Aphasia and linguistics network at Heriot-Watt University Malaysia](#)

[Heriot-Watt academic contributes to new report on ageing](#)

Elemental: [The Art and Science of Remembering](#)

The Conversation: [Tramping artisans who marched thousands of miles a year are proof that Britain was built by migrants](#)

[Robot research opportunity](#)

Konect Magazine: [Can taking up new activities improve the health and wellbeing of older people?](#)

### Research updates and funding

Garraffa, M. Reading in Gaelic at all ages. Bòrd na Gàidhlig, under the scope of the Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund (GLAIF), 2019-20, £51,496.

### Conferences and outreach activities

Our Psychology Research Seminars will restart with the new semester, but don't forget that other events continue to occur throughout the Summer; full details are available on [Facebook](#). As above, please do support three of our colleagues appearing at the Edinburgh Fringe in August: Anna Sedda with [Disgust For Dummies](#), Thusha Rajendran with [OK Computer or Paranoid Android?](#), and Alan Gow with [This Show Will Make You Sharper!](#)

At the end of last week, Alan Gow took part in the Watt Club's first Facebook Live "Ask Me Anything" event. Don't worry if you missed the live feed, you can watch it here: [www.facebook.com/thewattclub/videos/887476471624922/](#)

Argyropoulos, A. & Lansdown, T. (2019). Attendance Monitoring System. ATSiP (Association of Technical Staff in Psychology), Lincoln University, 26th-28th June.

McKendrick, M. (2019) The Novice to Expert Viewpoint. Presentation and Guest Speaker at the CodeYourFuture Conference 2019, University of Glasgow, 28th June.

Gow, A. J. (2019). Cognitive decline: protective factors from across the life course. Presentation at Transforming the Future of Ageing: Lessons from the SAPEA Report and its Application to the Israeli Context, the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Jerusalem, Israel, 23rd July.



The team regularly present at national and international conferences and at a range of public engagement events. A selection of the most recent include:

### Student voice

In "Student voice", we hear from our students. Every contribution is different, so if you have something you'd like to share, get in touch with [Alan Gow](#). We took a little break during the revision and exam period, but the section is back and we're showcasing some thoughts from our recent graduates.

**Reflecting on your time at HWU: How do you feel now it's all over? What was your highlight?**

- The (academic) highlight of the quickest 4 years of my life so far is being asked to present some of my dissertation findings at a conference this summer with my supervisor!
- Now that my years at Heriot-Watt are over I feel very proud of myself for learning from my mistakes and working hard to meet my goals.
- It's a bittersweet feeling: I am so relieved and can't wait to continue my journey, but I will miss Heriot-Watt very much. A key highlight was learning a range of interesting subjects and the wonderful lecturers whose passion for their respective fields really enhanced the learning experience. The biggest highlight of all was their constant support throughout my years at university that motivated me to keep improving and believe in my abilities.

**The next step: Where are you off to next?**

- The next step for me is going on to do a masters in health psychology at Stirling university.
- I am happy to say I'll be staying on at Heriot-Watt after being accepted for a masters degree in commercial management and quantitative surveying!
- I'm not quite sure yet but I'm excited to see where my passions will take me, and with a psychology degree there are many possibilities.

**A helping hand: What advice would you give those about to go into their final year?**

- The best advice has to be something you are told a million times; get to work on your dissertation early or you will be in for a shock, it is not just another essay that can be left to the last minute!
- Make the most of it and use the support available to you: your lecturers, personal tutors, career advisors, classmates etc. Also keep moving forward even at the hardest of times, progress can only be made when you push past your limits.
- The main piece of advice I would give is to break coursework and revision into small tasks so that you do not get overwhelmed and procrastinate.

### Learning and teaching

To help students through the clearing process over the coming weeks, Anna Sedda offered some advice on decision making. The short video was produced for those "thinking about joining us in September, a current student heading into your next year or one of our many hard-working staff members" and was a reminder to "take some time to be in the present and base your decisions on what is best for you now". The video can be viewed at [https://youtu.be/UvOVZQKd6jc](#).

And at the other end of the student experience, coursework from three of our recent graduates was showcased by Research the Headlines:

- [Does keeping active have the potential to protect the brain's functioning?](#) by Sophie McWhirter;
- [Use it or lose it: Can intellectual engagement offset cognitive decline in older age?](#) by Calum Anderson;
- [Alcohol: A Leading Health Risk or Protective Factor against Dementia?](#) by Jennifer Stephen.

### Meet the team

Each month we profile members of our team based across our campuses in Edinburgh, Dubai and Malaysia.

#### Peter McKenna, Research Associate (Edinburgh)

Peter is a Research Associate on the EPSRC funded 'Socially Competent Robots (SoCoRo)' project. SoCoRo studies social robots and their potential to deliver behavioural skills training to adults with an autism-spectrum condition (ASC); to improve social skills and employability. On a personal level, Peter's research interests include developmental disorders, robots for therapy, and children and technology. He completed his PhD in Psychology in 2016 at Heriot-Watt University, studying the relationship between embodied cognition and executive functioning using multimodal technologies. He is passionate about research methods and an advocate of R programming.

#### Alan Gow, Professor (Edinburgh)

Alan completed his PhD at the University of Edinburgh, and held postdoctoral positions there and in Copenhagen before joining Heriot-Watt in 2013. His research explores how our thinking skills change as we age, and how our lifestyles affect those changes. He directs The Ageing Lab where the team develop and test interventions for healthy ageing, specifically cognitive ageing. Alan teaches on the Introduction to Psychology courses in Year 1, Research Methods in Year 3, and a Final Year option on the Psychology of Ageing. He is joining in a range of public engagement activities, and from next month will be taking over as Research Coordinator for Psychology.

Research in the Department of Psychology, School of Social Sciences, at Heriot-Watt University is grouped by three main themes: Cognition, Brain and Behaviour; Lifespan Health and Wellbeing; and Work, Society and Environment. Find out more about our research at [www.psych.hw.ac.uk](#) or follow updates on Twitter [@HWPpsych](#).