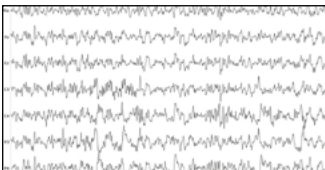

Psychology News

School of Psychology | University of Aberdeen



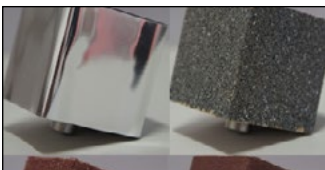
Our new MSc Foundations of Clinical Psychology Programme



Lip Jin Tee explains his PhD work on EEG and Alzheimer's disease



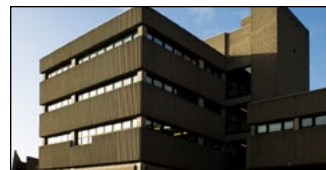
Prof Ben Tatler and Prof Louise Phillips talk about their ESRC-funded project



Dr Constanze Hesse discusses her research funded by the Leverhulme Trust



Drs Irwin and Nordmann investigate non-technical skills in agriculture



40-year Reunion and Building Renovation



Recent publications, grant awards, and impact activities

Welcome to the School of Psychology Newsletter, Winter 2017/18

As the new Director of Communications, I would like to thank our previous directors Dr Jasna Martinovic and Prof Ben Tatler for their superb communications work over the past few years. I am delighted to introduce our winter newsletter. This has been a busy and productive few months.

Our postgraduate community is thriving. In October we launched a new Masters course, our MSc in Foundations of Clinical Psychology, and welcomed our first cohort of students. This course prepares Psychology graduates for the next steps in pursuing a career in Clinical Psychology and related fields. The programme coordinator Dr Ceri Trevethan explains more on page 2. We also welcomed 12 new PhD students who are supported by a wide variety of funding bodies (page 8). Several of our successfully completed PhD students graduated this winter, and we wish them all the best in their future careers. One of our current PhD students, Lip Jin Tee, explains his research into electrical brain activity biomarkers of Alzheimer's disease (page 3).

Our research funding success continues, and supports a wide range of projects which examine social attention in aging (page 4), material properties in vision and action (page 5), and non-technical skills in UK agriculture (page 6). At the start of term staff settled back into the newly modernised William Guild building, which underwent the largest refurbishment in 40 years. Another significant 40-year event was enjoyed by the Psychology Honours Class of 1977, as they met for a reunion and tour of the new building. You can read about these events on page 7.

I extend best wishes to all our readers.

Dr Margaret Jackson, Director of Communications

Introducing our Foundations of Clinical Psychology Masters Programme



Dr Ceri Trevethan, the programme coordinator, tells us all about it

In September we welcomed our first intake to the new MSc in Foundations of Clinical Psychology programme. Our new Masters qualification can prepare psychology graduates who are interested in clinical psychology and related fields, such as clinical research and mental health, for the next step in their careers/training.

The programme combines strong theoretical foundations (including core and clinical research methods) with consideration of current key issues and debates in the field. A series of workshops delivered by Clinical and Health Psychologists provide an insight into some of the realities of working clinically with a range of client groups (including children, learning disabilities, adults and acquired brain injury), across a range of settings (including the NHS and charitable organisations).

An interactive workshop format, often featuring role-play exercises, enables students to develop a more practical understanding of some key issues. Completing a clinical project, which is typically co-supervised by a Practitioner Psychologist and often involves auditing or evaluating a real clinical question, provides a great opportunity for networking and the application of new knowledge and skills.

Dr Trevethan is excited to return to the School of Psychology where she completed her undergraduate degree, PhD and a BBSRC Research Fellowship before embarking on her clinical training at the University of Edinburgh. Dr Trevethan continues to work clinically and holds an Honorary Principal Clinical Psychologist post with NHS Grampian.



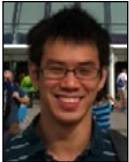
“I ultimately decided that Foundations of Clinical Psychology was the most relevant and compelling course to choose. Through my previous work experiences in healthcare, I developed a desire to learn more about the fundamental importance of promoting mental health and emotional well-being. Now, I wish to significantly broaden my knowledge of mental health service provision and the professional contexts in which clinical psychologists operate.”

- Jonathan Spry, current student

Interested in finding out more?

www.abdn.ac.uk/msc/foundations-of-clinical-psychology

EEG biomarkers of Alzheimer's disease



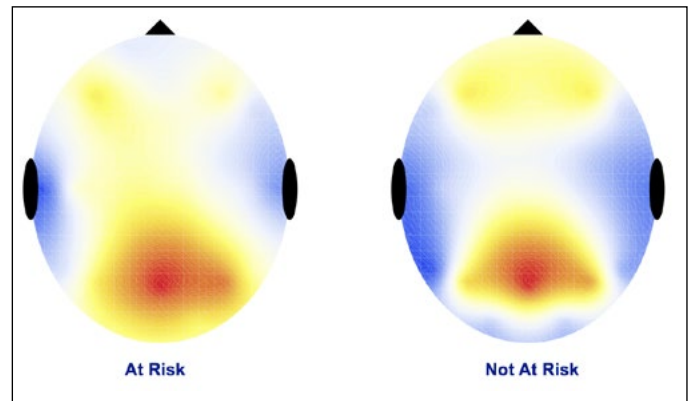
Lip Jin Tee, 3rd year PhD student, talks about his project

My research topic is on finding electroencephalography (EEG) bio-markers of Alzheimer's disease. Today, Alzheimer's disease is diagnosed crudely and can be very expensive. It's usually done based on a person's medical history, behavioural observations, approximate blood tests or PET scans. The only way to truly determine if a patient has Alzheimer's disease is through an invasive examination of brain tissue. EEG measures electrical activity in our brain using small electrodes (metal discs) placed on the surface of the scalp. Some clinics implement EEG to exclude other subtypes of dementia. Although the accuracy of these EEG diagnostic methods has improved, we need to further develop these methods and have them detect the disease early, as drugs may potentially be more effective during the early stages of the disease.

My PhD project involves the application of a novel mathematical method, the "renormalized partial directed coherence", developed by Physicists at the University of Aberdeen.

The method measures the relationship between activity in different brain areas (called connectivity), resulting in a map of brain networks that characterise the brain's functions and processes.

A branch of mathematics called Graph Theory is then applied to analyse these networks. By applying this to healthy controls and patients, we are able find new biomarkers of Alzheimer's disease that may be better than previous methods for diagnosing the disease. I'm also involved in applying the same methods to investigate the networks corresponding to different functions of the brain such as memory, semantic processing and decision making processes.



My PhD is funded by Genting TauRx Diagnostic Centre Sdn Bhd and my supervisors are Dr Kevin Allan (School of Psychology, Aberdeen) and Professor Bjoern Schelter (Institute for Complex Systems and Mathematical Biology, Aberdeen). As part of my PhD, I also have the opportunity to be involved in clinical diagnostic trials which are taking place in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. Being a part of this huge project has been very eye-opening, and I'm always excited to learn more and continue developing the methods used in my research.

Interested in finding out more?

For more about this work that Lip has been carrying out in collaboration with Dr Kevin Allan, please contact Lip via email at r01ljt15@abdn.ac.uk.

Adult aging and social attention: the role of cognitive decline and social motivation



Professors Phillips & Tatler describe their new ESRC project

Social isolation is one of the most prevalent problems for older adults, but we know relatively little about age differences in social communication skills likely to be important in initiating and maintaining relationships. The current project will focus on one particular aspect of social communication: why do older people engage less in mutual gaze than younger people? Older adults are less likely than young to attend to and follow the gaze direction of other people. This is likely to be important, because attending to another's gaze is an informative social cue which facilitates joint understanding and communication. There are two opposing theoretical explanations for age differences in gaze following. First, older adults may follow gaze less than young because of declining perceptual and cognitive processes. Second, older adults may show less gaze following because the typical paradigms used in experimental studies to date are not socially motivating for them. We will use novel experimental manipulations to test the role of the perceptual, cognitive and motivational mechanisms underlying age difference in attention to others' eye gaze. Drs Luke and Slessor are post-doctoral researchers on the project.

To date, all of the studies of adult age differences in gaze following have used decontextualised pictures of unfamiliar faces. We will use innovative eye-tracking technology to investigate age differences in attention to gaze in complex social scenes and real interpersonal interactions. The project will also increase understanding of the pattern of younger adults' social attention to older adults, and thus improve models of intergenerational communication. The outcomes from this research, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, will improve



From top left clockwise: Prof Ben Tatler, Prof Louise Phillips, Dr Chris Luke, Dr Gillian Slessor

theoretical understanding of the nature of gaze following in interpersonal behaviour, and how it is influenced by perceptual, cognitive and motivational factors. Another benefit will be a more integrated and multi-dimensional theory of social attention in old age.

Interested in finding out more?

Prof Phillips' site: www.abdn.ac.uk/psychology/people/profiles/louise.phillips

Prof Tatler's site: activevisionlab.org/

Handle with Care: Material Properties in Vision and Action Control



The Leverhulme Trust

Dr Constanze Hesse and Dr Martin Giesel explain their Leverhulme Trust project

Our bodies and brains are exquisitely tuned to our surroundings, yet it still remains a mystery how we are able to navigate in our environment so successfully. Many important, sometimes vital, decisions that we make rely on the correct identification of material properties. For example, when walking, we keep an eye on the ground to assess whether it is wet or slippery. If necessary, we adjust our gait to avoid a puddle or an icy patch. When grasping an object, we check beforehand whether it is hot, sharp or sticky. Vision serves as an early warning system allowing us to adjust our actions to the properties of the environment in a quick and usually accurate way.



This apparently effortless ability hides a complex problem: how to use the light that is reflected from objects and surfaces to determine the physical properties of objects. How the brain does this is a largely unsolved problem. In our research project “Handle with Care: Material properties in Vision and Action Control” funded by the Leverhulme Trust, we use a novel approach to address the issue by studying how material properties influence

human hand movements. We know that hand movements are tightly linked to the visual appearance of objects such as their size, shape, and perceived material properties. For example, picking up a slippery object is usually slower and requires a more precise choice of grasp locations. Moreover, our actions are influenced by the consequences associated with potential mistakes during movement execution. For example, we slow our movements when objects are fragile. Thus by measuring hand movements, we can identify key perceptual features of objects. Our main goals are to classify material properties by measuring their relevance for our actions and to develop a model that predicts hand movements based on those material properties.



This project is conducted by **Dr Constanze Hesse** (*left*) in collaboration with **Prof Julie Harris** and **Dr Martin Giesel** from the University of St. Andrews (*right*).

Interested in finding out more?

www.abdn.ac.uk/psychology/people/profiles/c.hesse

The Human Factor: Introducing non-technical skills to UK Agriculture



Dr Amy Irwin & Dr Emily Nordmann explain their IKEC funded project

Dr Amy Irwin and Dr Emily Nordmann were awarded £5000 from the University of Aberdeen's Impact, Knowledge Exchange and Commercialisation (IKEC) fund, for their project to raise awareness of non-technical skills (NTS) in farming.

Agriculture is a high risk industrial sector that accounts for approximately one in five of all fatal injuries to UK workers and an estimated 170,000 annual farm worker fatalities worldwide. The main hazards which can have an impact on farm worker safety include machinery, farm animals and working at height. The UK government, the Health and Safety Executive, the National Farmers Union, and many other organisations are keen to reduce injuries and fatalities within the agriculture sector.

Research conducted by Dr Amy Irwin has identified a potential avenue that has the capacity to impact agricultural safety is understanding the role of non-technical skills. Non-technical skills (NTS) have been defined as the social (leadership, teamwork and communication) and cognitive skills (decision-making, situation awareness, task management) necessary for safe and effective task performance. Within industry and healthcare a strong link between NTS and adverse events has already been established, for example, failures in situation awareness have been linked to offshore incidents (e.g., Deepwater Horizon). Across industry the strengthening of NTS through training has been highlighted as a method for improving safety and minimising adverse events.



The IKEC award is designed to encourage knowledge exchange and research impact and will enable several key developments, with the aim of facilitating the long-term goal of increased safety in farming:

- Increased awareness of non-technical skills and the application of those skills in order to improve safety through a NTS workshop with major stakeholders.
- Development of preliminary educational resources, including information leaflets, infographic posters and webinars in order to share knowledge and information about NTS with farmers.
- The production of a website where information, educational resources and interactive elements can be accessed.

These aspects will facilitate the development of further impact activities in the long-term.

Interested in finding out more?

<https://www.yellowwellies.org/>

40-year Reunion and Building Renovation

Psychology graduates reminisce in our refurbished School

40-year Reunion

A group from the Psychology Honours class of 1977 met for their 40 year reunion in October.



They enjoyed a talk and a tour of the School led by our Head of School Prof Sahraie. This brought back many memories, including sitting their final exams in room T32 of the William Guild building and conducting experiments with rats and monkeys in the animal house.



Junior Hons Psychology Jun 1976

Building Renovation

The start of the 2017/18 academic year saw staff from the School of Psychology returning to their offices in the newly refurbished south wing of the School's William Guild Building. Between April and August 2017 our building underwent the most significant refurbishment it has seen in 40 years, with freshly painted walls and doors, new ceilings, gender neutral toilets, and new energy efficient lighting and new carpets in the offices, teaching rooms, corridors and stairwells.



This significant investment has breathed new life into our offices, teaching spaces and research laboratory facilities, creating a brighter, more pleasant work environment for our staff, students and visitors. Why not arrange a visit to the School to see it for yourself?

Interested in finding out more?

www.abdn.ac.uk/psychology/

Recent publications, grant awards, and impact activities

PHD Students

This autumn we welcomed 12 new PhD students to our School, supported by a great variety of funding sources.

STUDENT NAME	FUNDING	SUPERVISOR
Plamen Antonov	ESRC	Dr Søren Andersen
Matilda Cederblad	EastBio BBSRC Case	Prof Arash Sahraie
Carolyn Dallimore	Elphinstone Scholarship	Dr Doug Martin
Johanna Falben	ESRC AQM	Prof Neil Macrae
Oliver Hamlet	ESRC (SGSSS)	Dr Amy Irwin
Warren James	School of Psychology	Dr Amelia Hunt
Karina Kangur	EastBio BBSRC DTP	Dr Constanze Hesse
Gosia Kasprzyk	School of Psychology 1+3	Dr Bert Timmermans
Gabi Lipan	ESRC & SDS	Dr Emily Nordmann
Cathy Macpherson	Carnegie	Dr Lynden Miles
Zsofia Stefan	School of Psychology 1+3	Dr Agnieszka Konopka
Vanessa Wong	Elphinstone Scholarship	Dr Katharina Schnitzspahn

Key: ESRC – The Economic and Social Research Council, BBSRC – Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, AQM – Advanced Quantitative Methods, DTP – Doctoral Training Partnership, SGSSS – Scottish Graduate School of Social Science, SDS – Skills Development Scotland

RESEARCH FUNDING AND AWARDS

Prof Louise Phillips & Prof Ben Tatler have successfully secured a £500, 000 ESRC grant on their joint project: “Adult aging and social attention: the role of cognitive decline and social motivation”.

Dr. Constanze Hesse has successfully secured a £200, 000 Leverhulme Trust grant on the project: “Handle with Care: Material properties in Vision and Action Control”, in collaboration with Prof Julie Harris and Dr Martin Giesel from the University of St Andrews.

Dr Amy Irwin and *Dr Emily Nordmann* have received a £5000 Impact, Knowledge Exchange and Commercialisation (IKEC) award from the University of Aberdeen for their project: “The Human Factor: Introducing non-technical skills to UK agriculture”.

Amanda Hardman won the W.D. Wright award for her presentation on the 24th symposium of the International Colour Vision Society.

Dr Chris Luke was awarded a Grindley grant from the Experimental Psychology Society (£500) to attend the 3rd Virtual Social Interaction workshop at Bielefeld University, Germany, 6–7 July 2017.

Dr Chris Luke was awarded a Guarantors of Brain Travel Grant (£385) to attend the 7th Joint Action Meeting at the Queen Mary University of London, 22–25 July 2017.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Dr Mirjam Brady-Van den Bos gave a talk at the Festival of Social Science at Belmont Filmhouse, “True human nature? What Tinder-use reveals about us”, 9th Nov.

Dr Agnieszka Konopka held a public event at the Aberdeen Science Centre, “Perspective Taking in Communication”, 16th Sept.

Dr Amy Irwin, Oliver Hamlet, and Dr Ruby Roberts held a behavioural safety awareness event for TRAC Engineering Ltd, 26th Sept.

Dr Katharina Schnitzspahn and her PhD student Francesco Pupillo held an Explorathon Event on Aging and Prospective Memory, 29th Sept.

The School of Psychology held its annual Anderson Lecture, presented by Prof Nicola Clayton from University of Cambridge: “Ways of Thinking, from Crows to Children and Back Again”, 3rd Oct.

Dr Emily Nordmann gave a talk at a Psychology Society event, “Psychology of Swearing”, 5th Oct.

Dr Sandie Cleland gave a talk at Café Scientifique, “Numerical Cognition Across the Lifespan”, 11th Oct.

Dr Katharina Schnitzspahn held a session on Prospective Memory and Aging with the Cults Over 50’s Group in Aberdeen, 18th Oct.

Dr Jasna Martinovic gave a talk and discussion on “Sounds and Words” for the Philosophy Cafe at Ellon library on 8th Nov.

PUBLICATIONS

Key: **current academic staff**, **research fellows/assistants**, **postgraduates**, **undergraduates**

Agnew, H. C. & **Pilz, K. S.** (2017). Temporal aspects of natural scene categorisation in healthy ageing. *Vision Research*, 140, 25-32. DOI: 10.1016/j.visres.2017.06.012

Allan, K., **Morson, S.**, Dixon, S., **Martin, D.**, & Cunningham, S. J. (2017). Simulation-based mentalizing generates a ‘proxy’ self-reference effect in memory. *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 70, 1074-1084. DOI: 10.1080/17470218.2016.1209532

Ballhausen, N., **Schnitzspahn, K. M.**, Horn, S. S., & Kliegel, M. (2017). The interplay of intention maintenance and cue monitoring in younger and older adults’ prospective memory. *Memory and Cognition*, 45, 1113-1125. DOI: 10.3758/s13421-017-0720-5

Biehl, S. C., **Andersen, M.**, Waiter, G. D., & **Pilz, K. S.** (2017). Neural changes related to motion processing in healthy aging. *Neurobiology of Aging*, 57, 162-169. DOI: 10.1016/j.neurobiolaging.2017.05.018

Bull, R., Marshark, M., **Nordmann, E.**, Sapere, P., & **Skene, W. A.** (2017). The approximate number system and domain general abilities as predictors of math ability in children with normal hearing and hearing loss. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, DOI: 10.1111/bjdp.12204

Bouman, W. P., Claes, L., Brewin, N., **Crawford, J. R.**, Millet, N., Fernandez-Aranda, E., & Arcelus, J. (2017). Transgender and anxiety: A comparative study between transgender people and the general population. *International Journal of Transgenderism*, 18, 16-26. DOI: 10.1080/15532739.2016.1258352

Forschack, N., **Andersen, S. K.**, & Müller, M. M. (2017). Global Enhancement but Local Suppression in Feature Based Attention. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, 29, 619-627. DOI: 10.1162/jocn_a_01075

Golubickis, M., **Falben, J. K.**, **Sahraie, A.**, **Visokomogilski, A.**, Cunningham, W. A., Sui, J., & **Macrae, C. N.** (2017). Self prioritization and perceptual matching: The effects of temporal construal. *Memory and Cognition*, 45, 1223-1239. DOI: 10.3758/s13421-017-0722-3

PUBLICATIONS (continued)

 Key: current academic staff, research fellows/assistants, **postgraduates**, **undergraduates**

- Golubickis, M., Sahraie, A., Hunt, A. R., Visokomogilski, A., Topalidis, P., & MacRae, C. N.** (2017). The Visual Influence of Ostracism. *European Journal of Social Psychology*. DOI: 10.1002/ejsp.2305
- Grainger, S. A., Henry, J. D., **Phillips, L. H.**, Vanman, E. J., & Allen, R. (2017). Age Deficits in Facial Affect Recognition: The Influence of Dynamic Cues. *Journals of Gerontology. Series B, Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 72, 622-632. DOI: 10.1093/geronb/gbv100
- Hagerman, S., Woolard, Z., Anderson, K., **Tatler, B. W.**, & Moore, F. R. (2017). Women's self-rated attraction to male faces does not correspond with physiological arousal. *Scientific Reports*, 7, [13564]. DOI: 10.1038/s41598-017-13812-3
- Hutchison, J.**, Cunningham, S. J., **Slessor, G., Urquhart, J.**, Smith, K., & **Martin, D.** (2017). Context and Perceptual Salience Influence the Formation of Novel Stereotypes via Cumulative Cultural Evolution. *Cognitive Science*. DOI: 10.1111/cogs.12560
- Irwin, A.**, & **Poots, J.** (2017). Predictors of attitudes towards non-technical skills in farming. *Journal of Agromedicine*. DOI: 10.1080/1059924X.2017.1384775
- Irwin, A.** & **Cederblad, A.M.H.** (in press). Faculty experience of rudeness in Scottish higher education: dealing with rudeness from students and colleagues. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*. DOI: 10.1080/0309877X.2017.1394987
- Jackson, M. C.**, Counter, P., & Tree, J. J. (2017). Face working memory deficits in developmental prosopagnosia: Tests of encoding limits and updating processes. *Neuropsychologia*, 106, 60-70. DOI: 10.1016/j.neuropsychologia.2017.09.003
- Jackson, M. C.** (2017). Eye gaze influences working memory for happy but not angry faces. *Cognition and Emotion*. DOI: 10.1080/02699931.2017.1345720
- Kretschmer-Trendowicz, A., **Schnitzspahn, K.**, Reuter, L., & Altgassen, M. (2017). Episodic future thinking improves children's prospective memory performance in a complex task setting with real life task demands. *Psychological Research*. DOI: 10.1007/s00426-017-0908-0
- Liu, L., Yan, X., Liu, J., Xia, M., Lu, C., Emmorey, K., **Chu, M.**, Ding, G. (2017). Graph theoretical analysis of functional network for comprehension of sign language. *Brain Research*, 1671, 55-66. DOI: 10.1016/j.brainres.2017.06.031
- Macrae, C. N.**, Mitchell, J. P., **Golubickis, M.**, Ho, N. S. P., Sherlock, R., Parlongo, R., ... **Christian, B. M.** (2017). Saving For Your Future Self: The Role of Imaginary Experiences. *Self and Identity*, 16, 384-398. DOI:10.1080/15298868.2016.1264465
- Martin, D.**, **Cunningham, S. J.**, Hutchison, J., Slessor, G., & Smith, K. (2017). How societal stereotypes might form and evolve via cumulative cultural evolution. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 11, 1-13. DOI: 10.1111/spc3.12338
- Miles, L. K., Lumsden, J.**, Flannigan, N., **Allsop, J. S.**, & **Marie, D.** (2017). Coordination Matters: Interpersonal Synchrony Influences Collaborative Problem-Solving. *Psychology*, 8, 1857-1878. DOI: 10.4236/psych.2017.811121
- Miller, L.**, **Agnew, H.**, & **Pilz, K. S.** (2017). Behavioural evidence for distinct mechanisms related to global and biological motion perception. *Vision Research*. DOI: 10.1016/j.visres.2017.08.004
- Pilz, K. S.**, **Miller, L.**, **Agnew, H.** (2017). Motion coherence and direction discrimination in healthy aging. *Journal of Vision*, 17, [31]. DOI: 10.1167/17.1.31

PUBLICATIONS (continued)

Key: **current academic staff**, **research fellows/assistants**, **postgraduates**, **undergraduates**

Ray, D. G., Neugebauer, J., & Sassenberg, K. (2017). Learners' habitual social comparisons can hinder effective learning partner choice. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 58, 83-89. DOI: 10.1016/j.lindif.2017.08.003

Reuther, J., & **Chakravarthi, R.** (2017). Does self-prioritization affect perceptual processes? *Visual Cognition*, 25, 381-398. DOI: 10.1080/13506285.2017.1323813

Schenk, T., Utz, K. S., & **Hesse, C.** (2017). Violations of Weber's law tell us more about methodological challenges in sensorimotor research than about the neural correlates of visual behaviour. *Vision Research*, 140, 140-143. DOI: 10.1016/j.visres.2017.05.017

Schenk, T., & **Hesse, C.** (2017). Do we have distinct systems for immediate and delayed actions? A selective review on the role of visual memory in action. *Cortex*. DOI: 10.1016/j.cortex.2017.05.014

Scrafton, S., **Stainer, M. J.**, & **Tatler, B. W.** (2017). Coordinating vision and action in natural behaviour: differences in spatiotemporal coupling in everyday tasks. *Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 71(2), 133-145. DOI: 10.1037/cep0000120

Utz, K. S., **Hesse, C.**, Hintz, A., Grüneberger, D., Kulke, H., Roth, I., ... Schenk, T. (2017). Visual feedback explains why propointing is better than antipointing in spatial neglect. *Cortex*. DOI: 10.1016/j.cortex.2017.05.012

Welling, L. L. M., Bestelmeyer, P. E. G., Jones, B. C., DeBruine, L. M., & **Allan, K.** (2017). Effects of Sexually Dimorphic Shape Cues on Neurophysiological Correlates of Women's Face Processing. *Adaptive Human Behavior and Physiology*, 3(4), 337-350. DOI: 10.1007/s40750-017-0072-1

Interested in finding out more?

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KEEPING UP WITH THE NEWS

For more information about what we are up to in the School please visit our [website](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/psychology/), follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/abdnpsych) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/abdnpsych), or get in touch with us via [e-mail](mailto:psych@abdn.ac.uk) or phone.

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