

Faculty News

Faculty of Natural Sciences

30 June 2023



Research heroes!

The Festival of Research at the end of May showcased research being carried out across the institution, with presentations from all faculties and career stages. The Festival culminated in the Research Culture Awards, with the number of nominees and nominators more than the past 3 years, proving the increasing popularity of this event. Click on the link to see the full list of nominees from FNS, and those who were Highly Commended in a category. Well done to all those who were nominated - you all help to make a healthy and vibrant research culture, and you are all research heroes!

[Full list of FNS nominees & commendations](#)

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Other news



Wasseem Emam, IoA's image "Empowering Zanzibari women through small-scale seaweed farming" was voted the winner by both the Judges' and People's Choice votes in the PGR Images of Research competition. The judges noted that the image was engaging and impactful and clearly conveyed the



Inspirational student

Hannah MacDonald graduated on 29 June 2023 in Environmental Geography. This has been a monumental achievement given that she became very ill with a grade 4 brain tumour at the end of her 3rd year in 2021, but has battled back this year to finish her degree. Not only that, she is the recipient of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society medal which was presented during her graduation.

Hannah and her family are very grateful to everyone at the university who has supported her through her final year and made it such a positive experience - **Tom Bradwell**, **Carlos Loureiro** and so many other support staff. Hannah has been through so much over the past 2 years to get to this stage. We all wish her the very best of luck and good health in the next stage of her life - she is truly inspirational.



First Health Psychology graduates

message behind the narrative. Wasseem was involved in the project in Zanzibar helping expand the seaweed farming supply chain to maintain more on-land processing, thereby adding more value to the economy. These women were incredible examples of hard-working entrepreneurs running their own business whilst looking after their families.



UKSK Workshop

Anna Bobak, Psych, attended a three day workshop at University of Birmingham hosted by the ESRC funded [UK-South Korea Eyewitness Memory Network](#). The Network brings together eyewitness memory researchers from UK and South Korean universities willing to work on cross-cultural projects, exchange ideas, and influence policy and practice. We all left Birmingham inspired by our colleagues and students and with some clear plans for collaborative grant applications.

Staff and students on the *Health Psychology Professional Doctorate* are delighted to be celebrating with two of our trainees, **Dr Sarah Keith (L)** and **Dr Katie Heslop (R)**, who are the first to graduate from our programme which started in 2019. Both have been accepted as Registrants with the *Health and Care Professions Council* and are starting new roles in the NHS as qualified Health Psychologists.

Sarah works in a hospital psychology service in Middlesbrough. Her research studied the impact of illness perceptions of people with long-covid. Katie studied reinfection risk of Hepatitis C in people who inject drugs – using qualitative methods. She will be working in NHS Tayside Drug and Alcohol services.



NATO Women Experts meeting

Wen-shin Lee, CSM, was invited to present at NATO Science and Technology Organization's inaugural research specialists' meeting on Women in SET (Sensor and Electronics Technology). The meeting, held on June 13-14 in Paris at the historic Hôtel de Talleyrand (also known as Hôtel de Saint Florentin, where the Marshall Plan was administered), brought together 33 women experts from 11 NATO nations and partner nations.

Currently, in NATO STO (Science and Technology Organization) women experts in SET panel comprise only 12% of the total, with a mere 4% representation at the leadership level. Recognizing the importance of fostering a more vibrant community of women expertise within NATO STO's expert network, this initiative has garnered significant attention from NATO STO. This meeting offered Wen-shin a valuable opportunity to connect and collaborate with other women scientists and engineers from the world's largest collaborative network for defense science and technology across the Alliance.



World Aqua Society Conference

Sonia Rey Planellas, IoA, met with other welfare researchers at the recent World Aquaculture Conference in Darwin Australia. The session was organised by one of the other Open Philanthropy funded projects led by FAI Farms. Sonia stood in at short notice to make a presentation on "The Impact on Fish Welfare of Behavioural Thermoregulation Linked to Daily Photocycles in Zebrafish and Nile Tilapia"



Aqua Collaboration Award

Monica Betancor, IoA, won the Collaboration award at the Aquaculture UK Awards held on Thurs 15 June in Inverness. This is the only UK awards event dedicated to the global aquaculture community, and winners were selected above many other individuals and

Britain's Highest Trees

PhD researcher Sarah Watts published research which revealed trees are growing at record-breaking heights atop Scotland's Munros.



Eleven new altitudinal records for tree species in Britain were recorded, including Rowan at 1,150m near the summit of Sgurr nan Ceathreamhnan in West Affric, Sitka Spruce at 1,125m on Braeriach, the third highest mountain in Britain, and Goat Willow at 984m on Beinn Eibhinn.

Sarah climbed dozens of Munros in the process of verifying altitudes and her travails caught the attention of the media, with Sarah's research covered by the [BBC](#), Radio 4, Radio Scotland, The Independent, The [Herald](#), The [Scotsman](#), The [P&J](#) and many more. More information can be found [here](#).

BES PhD success



Congratulations to **Dr Alex Elsey** on his PhD entitled "*Tropical tree and liana community recovery through secondary succession*" supervised by Dr Isabel Jones and Prof Alistair Jump, Dr Daisy Dent (ETH-Zurich) and Dr Marion Pfieler (University of Newcastle). With thanks to Dr Dan Chapman (internal examiner), Dr Geertje van der Heijden (external examiner, University of Nottingham) and Dr Clare Wilson (independent chair)



And to **Dr Josh Bauld** on his PhD: "*Causes and consequences of sexual dimorphism in mandrill (Mandrillus sphinx) feeding and spatial behaviour*" supervised by Prof Kate Abernethy and Dr Isabel Jones, Dr Luc Bussi re (University of Gothenburg), Dr David Lehmann (Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux (ANPN), Gabon) and Dr Jason Newton (University of Glasgow). With thanks to Prof Matt Tinsley (internal examiner), Prof Peter Kappeler (external

businesses making an exceptional contribution to the industry. Fiona Strachan accepted the award for Monica who was unable to attend the event.



Kindergarten press features

The Psychology Kindergarten has been featured in two key sector publications. Some of the intergenerational work in collaboration with Ready Generations, was featured in the Northumberland Early Years publication and the latest issue of [Nursery World](#).



Dagstuhl Seminar

Prof. Gabriela Ochoa participated in the Dagstuhl Seminar entitled "[Challenges in Benchmarking Optimization Heuristics](#)", 18 – Jun 23, 2023, where she also gave one of the six invited talks summarising her work on visualisation an analysis of optimisation

examiner, Göttingen University) and Prof David Coplestone (independent chair)

landscapes. [Schloss Dagstuhl](#), the Leibniz Center for Informatics, Germany, is recognised worldwide for its scientific meetings. [Dagstuhl Seminars](#) are invitation-based meetings, where renowned scientists in computer science from academia and industry, along with promising young researchers discuss scientific developments and exchange their ideas.

Clean Air Day 2023

Heather Price, UKRI Regional Clean Air Champion for Scotland, wrote for [The Herald](#) to mark Clean Air Day 2023. She offered suggestions of small steps we can take to tackle the air pollution crisis which is causing an estimated 2,500 – 3,500 premature deaths in Scotland, and seven million deaths worldwide, every year. [Read more about it here.](#)



Heather delivered a similar message in an online talk to thousands of school children, by Bauer Planet Radio stations including Clyde 1/2, Forth 1/2, Northsound 1/2 and Radio Tay, with Heather's interview broadcast on hourly news bulletins. Heather's talk was also covered by the Stirling Observer. [Read more about it here.](#)



Arctic climate change study

Phil Wookey, BES, will soon be bound for the Arctic after he secured £1m of funding for research into whether global warming is leading to increased carbon emissions from ecosystems. Phil and his team will carry out cutting edge experiments in northern Sweden and also in the Scottish Highlands, an environment that has much in common with the Arctic tundra. The project was covered by [The Herald](#), [The National](#), Stirling Observer and Alloa Advertiser as well as some international media outlets. More information can be found [here](#).



Vision Sciences presentation

Jud Lowes, Psychology PhD student presented her research *A new way of classifying developmental prosopagnosia: Accounting for speed-accuracy trade-offs with Balanced Integration Scores* at the Vision Sciences Society conference in Florida at the end of May (authors Judith Lowes, Peter Hancock and Anna Bobak, Psychology).

Festival of Friendship

On 10 June, **Maud Siebers** and some of her colleagues from BES participated in the Festival of Friendship for the Falkirk Girl Guides. They were part of the science section and had several aquatic related activities for them to do. They were able to show how fun science can be and how important freshwater is, as well as representing University of Stirling in the area.



Blue Spaces event

Gozde Ozakinci, Psych, presented the team's work funded by NERC Discipline Hopping grant on wet wipe use and disposal through behavioural and environmental science lens at Hydro nation Blue Spaces event on 5 June 2023 and also during the Research Festival with Dr Till Stowasser (Economics).

FNS Mental Health & Wellbeing Drop-in Sessions



The Mental Health and Wellbeing team will be offering a monthly drop in for the use of faculty academic and professional services staff. Fiona Glashan (Mental Health and Wellbeing Officer) will attend **on the first Wednesday of every month** from 10am-12noon in the BES Hub (4U2). It's an opportunity for staff to drop in and ask general questions about student mental health and available support, discuss students you are supporting, or seek advice about when to refer and utilising the referral pathways. Please note that this service is not an urgent service, any urgent concerns should be referred following the pathway – [supporting staff to support students](#).



Timetable reminder!

Don't forget to check your [pre-published timetable](#) before you go on holiday!

The pre-published timetable has now been made available for academic staff to check the scheduling of their modules. Don't forget to submit any changes to your administrator by Friday, 14th July before you start your holidays!!!



Martínez-Espinosa RM, Armengaud J, **Matallana-Surget S** & Olaya-Abril A (2023) Editorial: Environmental omics and their biotechnological applications. [Frontiers in Microbiology](#).

Géron A, Werner J, Wattiez R, Matallana-Surget S. Towards the discovery of novel molecular clocks in Prokaryotes. *Crit Rev Microbiol.* 2023 Jun 18:1-13. doi: 10.1080/1040841X.2023.2220789. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 37330701.

Charlotte E. Lee, Lauren F. Messer, Sophie I. Holland, Tony Gutierrez, Richard S. Quilliam & Sabine Matallana-Surget (2023) The primary molecular influences of marine plastisphere formation and function: Novel insights into organism -organism and -co-pollutant interactions, [Critical Reviews in Environmental Science and Technology](#),

Bradwell, T., Stoker, M.S. 2023 (in press). Subaqueous moraines around the Summer Isles and in the approaches to Loch Broom (Wester Ross Marine Protected Area). *Scottish Geographical Journal*, 139 (1-2)

Charlotte E. Lee, Lauren F. Messer, Sophie I. Holland, Tony Gutierrez, Richard S. Quilliam & Sabine Matallana-Surget The primary molecular influences of marine plastisphere formation and function: Novel insights into organism -organism and -co-pollutant interactions

Dugdale, A., N.K. Ramkissoon, P. Fawdon, M.R. Patel, L. Hills, G. Degli-Alessandrini, **E. Bonsall, C. Schröder**, S.M.R. Turner, C.N. Achilles, and V.K. Pearson (2023), SOPHIA: A mineralogical simulant for phyllosilicate terrains at the Rosalind Franklin landing site, Oxia Planum, Mars, [Icarus](#) 400, 115568

Scheck, M., R. Chapman, J. Dobaczewski, C. Ederer, P. Ivanov, G. Lorusso, D. O'Donnell, and **C. Schröder** (2023), A new avenue in the search for CP violation: Mössbauer spectroscopy of ²²⁷Ac, [The European Physical Journal A](#)

Watts, S.H. 2023. High mountain trees: altitudinal records recently broken for eleven different tree species in Britain. [British & Irish Botany](#) 5(2).



Congratulations Graduands!

And finally, many congratulations to all our students graduating this week - it has been sunshine and smiles - well done on your achievements.

FNS webpage

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THIS IS STIRLING

Contributions for next edition

The next Newsletter will be published on **Friday 28 July 2023**
Please submit contributions at least 3 days in advance to Diane Davidson:
FNSDeanPA@stir.ac.uk