

# RISING STARS

Who is the future of the discipline? **THE PSYCHOLOGIST** investigated.

Back in May we contacted all heads of psychology departments and the Professional Practice Board for their help with what we hope will become an annual feature. We were looking for people either undertaking postgraduate studies or in the first two years of their career afterwards who are already showing the potential to make a major contribution to the discipline. This will tend to be shown through published research, but we were also looking for outstanding communicators, teachers or practitioners. On these pages we print the nominations we received. We are sure you will be seeing more of these individuals in years to come.

## **Professor Matt Lambon Ralph (University of Manchester) nominated Dr Beth Jeffries**

Dr Beth Jeffries completed her PhD in Bristol in October 2003, under the supervision of Professor Alan Baddeley and me. She is now an NIMH-funded postdoc here in Manchester.

From the first day she walked into my office I knew she had a special talent for psychological research. This has turned out to be true. In a small number of years during her PhD and postdoctoral time, she has already made a major contribution to the forefront of theories on working memory – more specifically, to the notion of how long-term memories come to interact with the phonological loop.

Dr Jeffries has driven her research programme on this topic through a very clever use of both experimental neuropsychology and cognitive psychology. This programme has replicated and extended existing data from patients with semantic dementia that demonstrates that the loss of long-term representations has a clear impact on short-term memory. Careful analyses and new experiments have shown why there is variation in previous results in the existing literature. She has also pioneered a new methodological

technique that allows these issues to be addressed more readily in normal subjects, both in immediate serial recall and matching tasks. The ability to combine methodologies and develop new ones are strong indicators that she will be a future star in psychology.

There are, however, two more signs. First, Dr Jeffries has already demonstrated that she can apply her talents to other topics in psychology. During her PhD she completed an EPS-sponsored visit to Professor Karalyn Patterson's lab at the MRC Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit in Cambridge. In that time she undertook a detailed analysis of reading data from patients with semantic dementia, looking at the relative impacts of spelling-to-sound consistency vs. regularity on the patients' reading accuracy and errors. Again, she was able to bring novel insights to the analyses of these large patient databases, and the paper based on this study is now accepted for publication in *Neurocase*. Finally, her talent can be seen by her amazing publication record. In all cases Dr Jeffries has been the lead author on papers that are finding homes in the very best psychology journals. Likewise she is a regular contributor to neuropsychology and psychology conferences.

□ For more information see [www.psy.man.ac.uk/rstaff/jeff.htm](http://www.psy.man.ac.uk/rstaff/jeff.htm).



## **Professor Trevor Robbins (University of Cambridge) nominated Suzanne Forwood**

Suzanne Forwood has just achieved the difficult feat of winning a research fellowship at one of the Cambridge colleges, in the face of fierce competition from other more traditional subjects. She originally gained a first in the Cambridge Psychology/Physiology Joint Course. She is shortly due to submit her PhD thesis on the theme of neural processes of memory and learning, having single-handedly designed and implemented a new and significantly improved method for testing object-recognition memory in the rat. Object recognition is regarded as the 'benchmark test' of declarative memory, and this work is

relevant to understanding the nature of memory deficits in Alzheimer's disease. Suzanne now plans a strong element of computer simulation to help adjudicate among the several competing theories of object recognition to inform her psychobiological perspective – a highly original approach.

I feel I must also give honourable mentions to Dr Luke Clark, Hannah Clarke, Dr Sonia Bishop, Dani Turner, Emily Murphy and Dr Rudolf Cardinal.





**Professor Graham Davies (University of Leicester) nominated Dr Alex Linley**

Alex graduated with first class honours from the University of Leicester in 2001 and received the Sluckin Prize for the outstanding graduate performance as well as the Peace-Cotton Prize for clinical psychology; he also won *The Psychologist's* Annual Student Writer Competition in 2000. Uniquely, I suspect, one of his first-year practical reports was published in the journal *Educational Psychology*, and a theoretical paper of which he was sole author during his second year of undergraduate studies was published in the *Journal of Traumatic Stress*.



On graduation, Alex was awarded a University of Warwick Postgraduate Research Fellowship to study for his PhD on post-traumatic growth with Dr Stephen Joseph. This collaboration has led to further publications in the *Counselling and Psychotherapy Journal* and a review article in the *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, which promises to be a benchmark for the field. Further collaborative work is in press.

In September 2003, two years into his PhD, Alex was appointed to a lectureship at the University of Leicester. In a few short years he has become a leading advocate of positive psychology, editing (with Stephen Joseph and Ilona Boniwell) a special issue of *The Psychologist* on positive psychology (March 2003), and following this with the 42-chapter edited volume *Positive Psychology in Practice*. The volume features a foreword by Martin E.P. Seligman, who describes it as 'the cutting edge of positive psychology and the emblem of its future'.

□ See [www.le.ac.uk/pc/pal8/](http://www.le.ac.uk/pc/pal8/) for more information.

**Professor Fiona Patterson (City University) nominated Dr Rebecca Port**

Rebecca graduated from the University of Nottingham in 2000 with a distinction in the MSc Occupational Psychology, and subsequently completed a PhD at the Institute of Work Psychology, University of Sheffield. Rebecca received the BPS Division of Occupational Psychology Student Prize 2000 for the PhD research which made the most valuable contribution to occupational psychology. Rebecca's main research area is innovation at work, and she has developed a psychometric model of the managerial behaviours associated with employee innovation.

Her PhD was sponsored by Coors Brewers, where she also contributed to a range of projects internally. As a chartered occupational psychologist, Rebecca has experience working as an external consultant with a variety of clients from both the public and private sector, and has also worked as an internal consultant at the Royal Bank of Scotland.

In addition, Rebecca makes a substantial contribution to the Division of Occupational Psychology, serving on several committees.



**OUTRAGED AT OMISSION?**

If you wish you had nominated someone based on the criteria outlined in the introduction, let us know about them. Send up to 200 words to [jonsut@bps.org.uk](mailto:jonsut@bps.org.uk). We will consider them for a follow-up or next year's feature.

