

School of Biomedical Sciences Postgraduate Newsletter

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PHD DEGREES AWARDED IN 2009

Congratulations to the following students (and their supervisors) who have achieved their goal of attaining a Doctor of Philosophy degree in 2009.

Andrea Marshall: Professor Mike Bennett
Maria Ikononopoulou: Dr Adrian Bradley
Lisa Kidd: Dr Mark Forwood
Louise Harvey: Dr Darryl Eyles
Trung Ngo: Emeritus Professor Jack Pettigrew
Jai Polepalli: Dr Pankaj Sah
Shannon Armstrong: Professor Julie Campbell
Simon Pierce: Professor Mike Bennett
Dini Naiker: Associate Professor Lesley Lluca
Yvonne Yang: Professor Rod Minchin
Chris Carty: Professor Mike Bennett
Ricky Chen: Associate Professor Joe Lynch
Sarah Jansen: Professor Peter Kaye
Prasad Chunduri: Associate Professor Lindsay Brown
Arjuna Kumarasuriyar: Dr Simon Cool
Blake Harahush: Professor Shaun Collin
Susan Theiss: Dr Nathan Hart
Lenore Litherland: Dr Kirsten Fritsches
Shyuan Ngo: Associate Professor Peter Noakes
Carley Bansemer: Professor Mike Bennett
Emma Luong-Van: Dr Simon Cool

Congratulations also go to the following students on their awards.

Abishek (Abbi) Iyer, for his award of an ANZ Trustees PhD Scholarship in Medical Research. This scholarship provides a living allowance for two years and \$2,250 pa towards research costs.

Dr Stephan Pless, supervised by Associate Professor Joe Lynch, who has been awarded a prestigious *Dean's Commendation* for his thesis: "Novel insights into the activation of glycine receptors". Stephan is working as a Postdoc at the University of British Columbia.

PhD student Shyuan Ngo found time to meet with the stars during her recent trip to the US to attend the Society for Neuroscience meeting held in Chicago.



NEUROSCIENCE, SHU—AND HUGH

Shyuan Ngo attended the 39th Annual Meeting of the Society for Neuroscience (SfN) held in Chicago from 17-21 October 2009. There were 31,000 delegates attending the meeting!



At the Conference Shu was awarded a Graduate Student Travel Award supported by *Eli Lilly & Co.*

This award was judged by the Professional Development Committee's Women in Neuroscience Subcommittee (WINS), and was presented at the "Networking: A Mentoring Event".

This is a prestigious internationally contested award offered by the Society to recognise Women in Neuroscience and entitled Shu to attend many Neuroscience events in 2009.

One of special interest is the "Celebration of Women in Neuroscience" Luncheon and "The Presidential Reception" at The Field Museum in Chicago, which was a prestigious invitation-only event.

Congratulations to Shu on this award and **double congratulations** on the coup she achieved as shown in the attached photo.

Shu found time to attend the Broadway Show currently playing and starring Daniel Craig and Hugh Jackman. She also met the stars following the performance. *Wow!!*

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SOLANDER TRAVEL GRANT RECIPIENT

Congratulations to Amira Parker (supervised by Dr Uli Siebeck) who has recently been awarded a Solander Scholarship Travel Grant. This grant provides funding to visit Lund University, Sweden, to work with Professor Almut Kelber and Professor Eric Warrant, both of the Lund Vision Group. The Solander Program is open to five universities: Lund University; the Universities of Melbourne, New South Wales and Queensland; and the University of Auckland.

'This grant has enabled me to form a collaborative project with world renowned scientists in the field of animal colour vision.'



The program provides new initiatives to promote, support and widen scientific exchange between the above universities, all of which have a long and established scientific collaboration. This is a wonderful opportunity for Amira to work with Professor Almut Kelber who is regarded as one of the world experts in animal colour vision—in particular, colour vision in dim light.

Currently, Amira is working on the absolute thresholds of sensitivity to colour in these insects.

'One of the core questions of my PhD,' Amira said, 'is investigating the absolute sensitivity of reef fish for UV and white light. This involves conducting behavioural experiments similar to those Professor Kelber has been involved in for many years. I also propose to work with Professor Warrant on understanding how predators and prey see each other in the marine environment.'

Professor Warrant is very highly regarded as an expert in animal vision, with particular interest in combining behavioural, electrophysiological and anatomical studies to model visual capabilities.

Amira said she believes going to Sweden and working with Professors Kelber Warrant will provide her with a wealth of knowledge regarding the type of equipment, experimental design and procedures she should use, as well as methods for analysing results from the behavioural experiments. Amira will take up her two-month scholarship

GRADUATE SCHOOL RESEARCH TRAVEL RECIPIENT GRANT

Adrian Flynn, a PhD student with the Deep Ocean Australia Project led by Professor Justin Marshall, has been awarded a GSRTA travel grant to visit the United States of America in order to take part in various research activities.

Adrian is studying the ecology and biogeography of mesopelagic fishes (those that live between 200 and 1000m water depth). 'I am honoured to be representing Professor Marshall's lab, the Deep Ocean Australia Project and The University of Queensland during my visits to our collaborators in the USA,' Adrian said.

Adrian will be presenting a paper at the 2010 Ocean Sciences Meeting in Portland, Oregon, in a special session on deep-sea foodwebs. From there, Adrian will travel to the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences to develop research objectives for a collaborative sampling voyage to the Peru-Chile Trench that the Deep Ocean Australia Project will be involved in. He will then travel to Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution in Florida to take part in collaborative research and development of a number of deep-sea sampling devices currently in the pipeline, including innovative netting devices and camera systems. Adrian's final destination is Scripps Oceanographic Institution, San Diego, where collaborative research is being undertaken on a species of fish collected by The University of Queensland team, which may be a new species.

Scripps holds one of the world's largest fish collections which Adrian will be accessing to further his biogeographic study and to study historical fish collections made in the Peru-Chile Trench.

The GSRTA grant will enable Adrian to present his research at an international conference and undertake collaborative research that otherwise could not have been achieved. Exposure to these leading centres of deep-sea research and direct collaboration with specialists in the US will greatly enrich Adrian's research outcomes and professional development.



'I am tremendously grateful for the travel award. This will allow me to add a new dimension to my research which could not have otherwise been achieved. It will also broaden my professional development in this emerging field.'

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THE AUSTRALIAN-ISRAELI SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGE FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIP

By Chris Talbot
PhD student, Marshall Lab

In late 2008, I was awarded a postgraduate fellowship from the Australian-Israeli Scientific Exchange Foundation to conduct research in Israel from March to June this year. My mission – to explore the visual ecology of a local species of cuttlefish in the Red Sea! This species is not found in Australian waters, so it was a good opportunity to obtain data for my comparative analysis of visual ecology in cephalopods.

I worked at the Inter-University Institute (IUI) for Marine Sciences in Eilat, Israel (on the very southern tip of Israel), situated literally on the edge of the Red Sea. Take two steps into the crystal clear water, dunk your head in, and you come face-to-face with a smorgasbord of colourful corals, fish and BIG octopuses! It's a perfect location for the students to conduct their research and, just 30 odd metres from the shore, is an 800m drop off into the Gulf of Aqaba, so there's a great range of habitats to explore.



View from the top of the tower of the underwater observatory adjacent to IUI - with a beautiful contrast of coral reef and desert!

I caught myself five cuttlefish to work on. My experiments involved rotating polarized stimuli around the animals to test for visual responses to polarized light, and investigate the acuity of their polarization sensitivity system. The experiments were a great success, and I ended up with mountains of data to analyse and include in my PhD.



Chris face-to-face with a pair of Clownfish.

It was an AMAZING experience both academically and personally. I met so many wonderful people, learnt so much about the Israeli culture, and collected some really important data for my research. I certainly appreciate how important such an exchange can be for any student, and I encourage everyone to explore such opportunities.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW STUDENTS—LILI, MATT, LEE AND HEMANT

A warm welcome to the following students who have joined SBMS recently.

Lili Huang, supervised by Professor Chen Chen, is our first scholar to receive a Chinese Scholarship Council (CSC) award. She has a Bachelor of Medicine and a Master of Clinical Sciences from Xi'an Jiaotong University in China. Lili's research topic is *Regulation of endocrine cell functions by metabolic factors or hormones*. Professor Chen has worked very hard for some time to establish links with China and promote this scholarship scheme. Another CSC student, Liping Yu, will shortly be joining Dr Marc Ruitenbergh and Professor Brian Key.



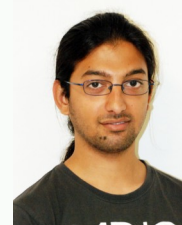
Matt Fogarty is supervised by Dr Peter Noakes. Matt has a BVetSc from UQ has been awarded an APA for his research titled *The effect of reduced GABAergic and glycinergic Neuro-transmitter release on Motoneuron survival*.



Lee O'Sullivan is supervised by Dr Karen Moritz. He is an international student with a BSc Honours from the University of Glamorgan in the UK. Lee was awarded a UQIRTA/UQRS and is working on *The effects of prenatal ethanol exposure on development and function of the heart and cardiovascular system*.



Hemant Poudyal is supervised by Associate Professor Lindsay Brown. He completed his undergraduate degree at Bangalore University in India and a Master of Biotechnology at UQ. Hemant is funded by a Dr Red Scholarship and a UQIRTA. His research topic is *Dietary interventions and exercise in a rat model of the metabolic syndrome*.



R The Faculty of Science Conference Travel Awards for
E Research Excellence are available for application twice
M yearly. Next deadline is 30 April for travel between July-
I December 2010. Information and guidelines are available
N on the SBMS website.
D Graduate School Research Training Awards are open for
E submission all year for confirmed students. Details are
R available at <http://www.uq.edu.au/grad-school/gsrting>
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