

# Revolutions

Official publication of the Peter Harrison Centre for Disability Sport  
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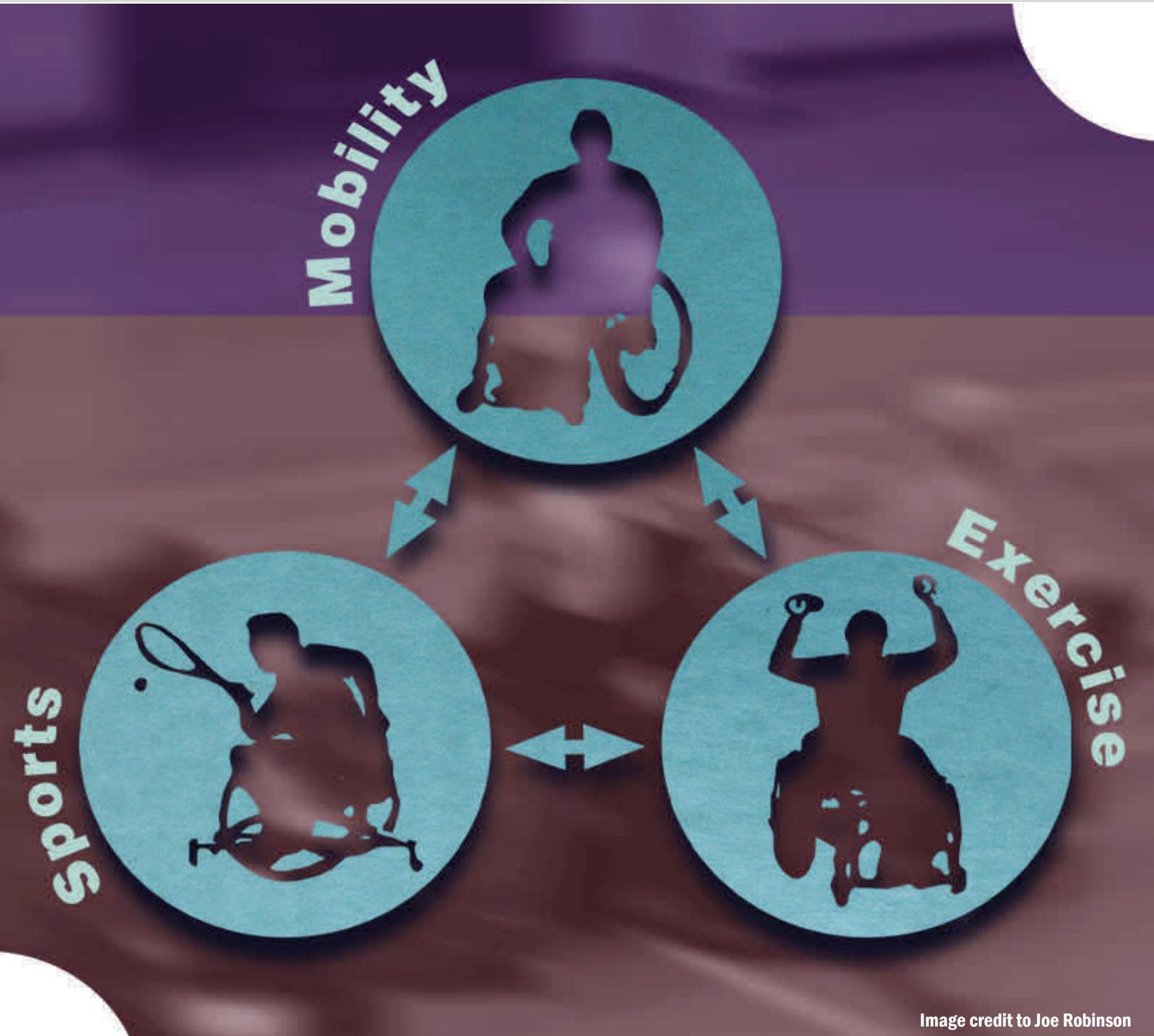


Image credit to Joe Robinson

## Selected highlights in this issue:

- Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise Conference - pg 6-7
- Disability Cricket Nutrition Education Programme - pg 8
- Prof. Vicky Tolfrey's Inaugural Lecture - pg 10
- Strand Updates - pg 15

 Loughborough  
University

Peter Harrison Centre for Disability Sport

# Welcome

## Director's Foreword by Prof. Vicky Tolfrey



Happy New Year and welcome to the first newsletter of 2015, within which we will be detailing the team's activities of Autumn and Winter 2014. It has been an interesting and eventful year and we strive to maintain an International reputation in the field of disability sport/ physical activity and science in academia by working with colleagues from the Netherlands, Canada, Japan, USA and Switzerland. Moreover, I am pleased to say that the PHC research also contributed to the recent successful Research Exercise Framework (REF) as part of a case study entitled 'Improving Paralympic athlete's performance: optimising wheelchair configurations and enhancing training strategies'. Every six years universities submit examples of their best research, which is assessed by a team of subject experts. The assessment is based on staff publications, the impact of the research and the research environment at the university. Each part of a submission is awarded up to four stars. The impact case studies (e.g. research that has an impact on improving sporting performance).

In this newsletter you will see that both main strands of the Centre were represented in Brazil (pg 5) and Japan (pg 5) which is a result of our close working relationships and interdisciplinary approach to our research. Brett Smith and his team hosted the 4<sup>th</sup> International conference on Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise at the University in September (pg 6-7). I am very proud of the PHC staff/students and their continuous commitment to the Centre. There have been many examples of our staff achievements over the last 6 months, some of which you will read in this newsletter (conference attendance at both a National and International level, the delivery of an International Perspectives on Spinal Cord Injury Workshop (pg 10) and a Digital Workshop (pg 12) and publications in Internationally peer-reviewed publications (pg 14).

International conference on Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise at the University in September (pg 6-7). I am very proud of the PHC staff/students and their continuous commitment to the Centre. There have been many examples of our staff achievements over the last 6 months, some of which you will read in this newsletter (conference attendance at both a National and International level, the delivery of an International Perspectives on Spinal Cord Injury Workshop (pg 10) and a Digital Workshop (pg 12) and publications in Internationally peer-reviewed publications (pg 14).

We have continued to upgrade our existing facilities recently relocating to a new laboratory in the National Centre for Sport and Exercise Medicine. So as we move forward in 2015, I would like to say farewell to Dr. John Lenton who has just moved on to new challenges with British Cycling. I would also like to congratulate Nick Caddick for successfully defending his PhD and Dr. Christof Leicht (Lecturer in Physiology) and Dr. Anthony Papathomas (Lecturer in Sport and Exercise Psychology) with their new academic staff roles within the SSEHS at the University. Finally I welcome new student and staff members that you will see introduced on pages 3 and 9.

Vicky Tolfrey

Prof. Vicky Tolfrey (Director)

## Go Karting by Katy Griggs

Sadly Dr. John Lenton finished his contract at the PHC at the end of November this year. John had worked at the centre since Prof. Vicky Tolfrey took over the directorship in 2007, moving with Vicky from Manchester Metropolitan University. To give him a good send-off and get the team together socially, the PHC team went for an evening of Go Karting at a nearby track in Wymeswold.

Although there were a few nervous faces watching the group before whizz around the track, once dressed for the part, everyone seemed to have a great time. The evening was not without crashes, in particular from the boys with close competition between members of the team. Thankfully no one was hurt! The fastest and the slowest of the first two races, raced each other in a second race leading to eventual winners of the fastest and slowest drivers.

We would like to thank John for all his hard work and dedication to the PHC over the years, helping both staff and students. We wish him luck in his new position with Para-Cycling as the Pathway Manager and we are sure that we will stay in contact.



If anyone wishes to remain in contact with John then his new contact details are: [johnlenton@britishcycling.org.uk](mailto:johnlenton@britishcycling.org.uk)

## New Staff and Student Profiles



### Robert Townsend

PhD student

R.Townsend@lboro.ac.uk

Rob has recently joined the PHC undertaking his PhD under the supervision of Dr. Brett Smith and Dr. Chris Cushion. Rob's research falls at the intersection of coaching and disability studies, with a particular interest in sociological inquiry. Developed in partnership with the National Autistic Society, his work explores the learning experiences of coaches who work in disability sport, with a specific focus on Autism Spectrum Disorder. Importantly, the project begins to address the issue of rigorously evaluating coach education and its broader impact on coaching practice within disability sport. Rob worked as a cricket coach in schools and communities across the United Kingdom and in New Zealand. These experiences sparked his interest in disability sport, and stems from his belief that sport can be used as a vehicle to engage with, and help athletes with autism express themselves.



### Michael Hutchinson

Research Assistant/ part-time PhD student

M.J.Hutchinson@lboro.ac.uk

Mike completed his undergraduate degree in Sport and Exercise Science at the University of Bath in 2013, before completing his MSc Exercise Physiology at Loughborough in 2014. He was first introduced to the sports science of disability sport in the lead up to London 2012, during his placement year with the British Paralympic Association that formed the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of his undergraduate.

With physiology being his main area of interest he was intrigued by how responses to exercise are affected by different disabilities, and also with how sports science and physiological research can be used to help benefit disabled athletes. This interest continued during his MSc when he gained the role of nutrition advisor to the England Blind Cricket team. This role has allowed him to broaden his knowledge of sports science within a different disability population and to also carry out research, in the form of his MSc project, which has been able to be applied directly back to the athletes within this sport. He has recently been appointed as a Research Assistant at the PHC to run the lab and assist with the Sport Science Services. He will also complete a part time PhD alongside this role and details of this area of study will appear in the next newsletter.

## Move to the NCSEM by Katy Griggs

The PHC, moved into the new National Centre for Sport & Exercise Medicine (NCSEM) building in January 2015. By co-locating and combining the research, clinical services and education capabilities of three Universities, two Hospital Trusts and a Healthcare Trust in a truly outstanding research environment, the NCSEM will transform research, clinical services and education in five key areas; Performance Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Physical Activity in Disease Prevention, Exercise in Chronic Disease, and Sport Injuries and Musculoskeletal Health. The collaboration of three partners in the East Midlands, Sheffield and London will integrate research, education and clinical services to accelerate the translation of scientific research into new models of patient care.

After a successful move, the PHC are looking forward to continuing our research in a new laboratory and office environment.



NATIONAL CENTRE FOR  
SPORT & EXERCISE MEDICINE  
WORKING FOR HEALTH & WELLBEING

## Stop Press

- Congratulations to Dr. Christof Leicht and Dr. Anthony Papathomas on their recent appointments to Lecturer in Physiology and Lecturer in Sport and Exercise Psychology at the School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences at Loughborough University. They will both remain involved in the PHC's activities.
- Congratulations to Dr. Andrea Bundon on her new position as Research Associate at the PHC. She will be leading a new project investigating career transitions in Paralympic sport with the English Institute of Sport and providing support/guidance in the area of qualitative research methods on other research activities within the centre.
- Prof. Vicky Tolfrey has been invited to deliver a keynote lecture at the 6th International Sports Science and Sports Medicine Conference on the 20th to 22nd April 2015 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- Dr. Barry Mason has been invited to contribute to a symposium at the American College of Sports Medicine entitled 'Give the medals to the scientists and engineers' in San Diego, California in June.

## Applied Sport Psychology by Toni Williams

This October Brett and I attended the Association for Applied Sport Psychology's (AASP) 29th Annual Conference in Las Vegas. Brett was invited to give a keynote lecture on diversity and I was presenting a poster on my PhD research that examines spinal cord injury and active rehabilitation.

The conference was held in the Rio hotel and was attended by nearly a thousand delegates from all corners of the globe. This was the first time I had attended an AASP conference but it was great to see so many colleagues from Loughborough in attendance as well as delegates I had met at QRSE2014 only a month before. The conference was a huge event. There were lectures, workshops, symposia and poster sessions from the crack of dawn until the early evening every day. The keynote presenters included leading academics in the field of sport and exercise psychology and practitioners working in elite sport.



Brett's diversity keynote was entitled "What Might Sport

Psychology Learn from Including Disability? Implications for Practice and Theory". In this presentation he questioned whether AASP members were actually adhering to AASP's commitment to actively promoting human diversity in research by studying diverse populations (e.g. ethnicity, sexual orientation, & disability). He argued that there are many marginalised identities and bodies that are absent within sport psychology research. Furthermore he provided multiple arguments as to why sport psychologists should care about diversity and drew attention to the social responsibility of researchers within this field. Brett clearly delivered a much needed message on diversity. The success of his talk was evidenced in a standing ovation from a packed lecture theatre.



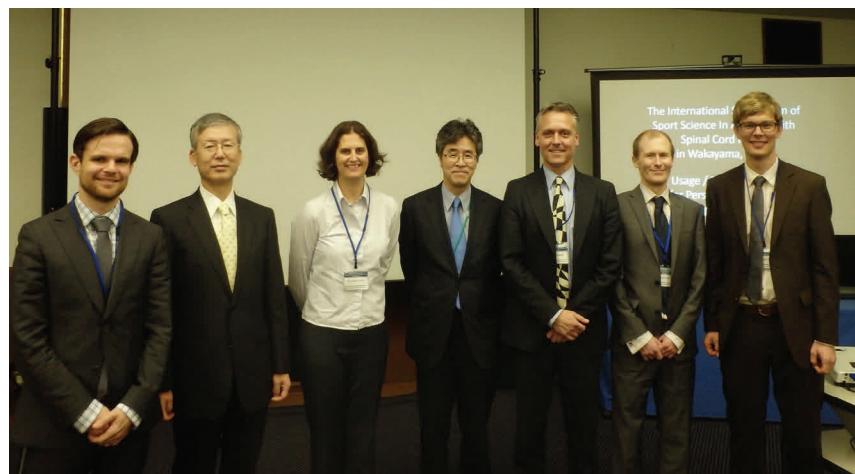
Keeping with the theme of Brett's diversity lecture, I was one of the few delegates presenting research in the field of disability and exercise psychology. My poster presentation was entitled "Activity-based rehabilitation from spinal cord injury: stories of radical hope". I was able to discuss and debate with many delegates the role that hope plays in motivating people with spinal cord injury to be physically active. It was a great opportunity to critically discuss my research area with people outside of my field as they really challenged me to defend aspects of my project. The most challenging question was to sum up my research in one sentence, and that I am still working on...

Overall it was great to be involved in a conference as big and bold as AASP. At the end of each long day we took the opportunity to get out and about to explore the craziness that is Vegas. The conference ended with a banquet followed by an evening of magic and comedy provided by the Penn and Teller show. I was even lucky enough to be able to stay a little longer and venture on a road trip around California, definitely a once in a lifetime experience!



## International Symposium of Sport Science by Dr. Christof Leicht

Three members of the PHC (Prof. Vicky Goosey-Tolfrey, Dr. Brett Smith, Dr. Christof Leicht), one of our long standing research collaborators from Holland (Prof. Thomas Janssen) and an emigrated young UK scientist (Dr. Chris West, University of British Columbia, Vancouver) were invited to deliver keynotes at “The International Symposium of Sport Science in Athletes with Spinal Cord Injury”. This invitation followed up on the collaborative project initiated by Dr. Christof Leicht which resulted in Christof collecting data in Japan over three months last year. The symposium marks the first international conference organised by the research group by Prof. Fumihiro Tajima, with high profile guests such as Dr. Peter van de Vliet (International Paralympic Committee, Medical and Scientific Director) and Mr Kunio Nakamori (Secretary General, Japan Paralympic Committee). It was a great opportunity to attend and deepen the relationships with this research group that has a keen interest in continued collaboration in the lead up to the Paralympic Games in Tokyo that will take place in 2020. Prof. Fumihiro Tajima is very open and diverse with his research which opens many possibilities for joint future projects. Again our Japanese hosts took very good care of us during the stay and introduced us to their culture by taking us out to temple sightseeing, hot springs and traditional Japanese meals. Sadly the planned golf got cancelled due to bad weather which would have been interesting with three absolute rookies in the international team. As an alternative, we enjoyed a multiple course meal in our pyjamas – there's a first time for everything!



## International Para Sports Conference by Prof. Vicky Tolfrey

The Brazilian Paralympic Committee, alongside the Brazilian Academy and in Partnership with the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) hosted the fourth International Para-Sports Conference in Florianopolis (Brazil), 5-7 November. After an eventful flight and series of connections Brett and I safely made it to the beautiful island. This is the largest event in the field of adapted sports in Brazil and it was a pleasure to be invited to present our research and represent both the Sport Science and Psycho-social Health and wellbeing strands of our work. The conference in the past has been geared towards physical education students with additional classification sessions and Paralympic sports taster sessions. However on this occasion it was great to see on the programme that other International colleagues were sharing their expertise across a number of varied themes (see photos below of Brett and I with Dr. Liz Broad formally from Australia and now working also in the USA and Dr. Laurie Malone from the USA. Special thanks go to Jacqueline Patatas for hosting and looking after us and making the trip enjoyable.



# Conferences

## 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise by Toni Williams and Dr. Andrea Bundon



This September Loughborough University hosted the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise. The conference was organised by Peter Harrison Centre members Brett Smith (Chair), Toni Williams (Co-chair) and Andrea Bundon. Over 170 delegates attended the conference from all over the globe including North America, South America, Asia, Australia, and Europe. Scholars at the conference also represented different fields including sport and exercise psychology, the sociology of sport, sports coaching, pedagogy, and sports policy.

We wanted to make QRSE2014 a provoking, enjoyable, and intellectually creative event. The conference not only celebrated qualitative research being done in the sport and exercise sciences, but provided a critically supportive space for dialogue to advance empirical work, methods, theory, and practice. Throughout a selection of hundreds of positive tweets about the conference are shown.



Our keynote speakers reflected different fields and the diversity of qualitative work being conducted. Prof. Mark Andersen (Victoria University/Halmstad Högskolan), Prof. Michael Atkinson (University of Toronto), Dr. Jayne Caudwell (University of Brighton) and Prof. Brendan Gough (Leeds Beckett University) were chosen as they each have a strong history of unselfishly opening up spaces for qualitative research to flourish.



Helen @hels\_bells01 · Sep 3

Fantastic conference @QRSE2014!! Well organised. Brilliant keynotes, inspiring presentations, creative works, chats, gaps, gd food :-) Thanks



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4

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In addition, all of the keynote speakers fully participated in the conference attending presentations and taking the time to engage with delegates on a personable level. For this we are truly grateful.



Aleksandra Krukowska @Ola\_Krukowska · Sep 2

Prof. Atkinson on reassembling ethnography. If you fully take on ethnography, it changes your whole life. @QRSE2014

*contd.....*



**James Brighton** @JamesBrighton\_G · Sep 3

Captivating, heartwarming, evocative and humorous end to @QRSE2014 by Prof Mark Andersen. Thanks to Toni and Brett and everyone!

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The conference was supported by the Peter Harrison Centre for Disability Sport, Routledge and the international journal *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health* (QRSEH). Routledge further supported the conference by publishing a special virtual issue of QRSEH. This special virtual issue was intended to reflect the range of work published in the journal and excite readers to explore further excellent papers contained in past issues. To access the editorial and papers in this issue for free please go to: <http://explore.tandfonline.com/page/pgas/qrse>

 **Anthony Papathomas** @A\_Papathomas · Sep 1

Reluctant Heroes Exhibition all ready to go for @QRSE2014 - come visit us at the @PHC\_Lboro research area...



View more photos and videos

←    2    ★ 2    ...

In addition to traditional conference papers, the organising committee also issued a call for research using arts-based, digital or visual methods. The work submitted in this category was indeed varied and very innovative. Among these were Dr. Helen Owton's (De Montfort University) with her exhibition of illustrations representing her research on asthma and sporting embodiment and Amelia Johnstone's (Cardiff Metropolitan) mixed-media presentation of her 'Run to Draw' project. Three members of the PHC also presented research in this category. Photo collections by Dr. Anthony Papathomas (The reluctant heroes: Spinal cord injury, physical activity and visual representation), Dr. Jo Welford (Football and visual ethnography: Understanding the game through supporter's eyes) and videos by Dr. Andrea Bundon (Are we inspired yet? Digital stories by youth about sport and disability) collectively formed the PHC research exhibit and were on exhibition for the three days of the conference.

The next bi-annual conference, QRSE2016, will be held in conjunction with the journal QRSEH and hosted by Dr. Melissa Day at Chichester University.

 **Melissa Day** @Dr\_mel\_day · Sep 4

2 years to plan the next conference. After a fantastic @QRSE2014 those are big shoes to fill, better get started...



# Disability Cricket Nutrition Education Programme by Terri Graham

## England & Wales Disability Cricket Nutrition



With our MSc students moving onto pastures new we decided to adopt a different and more sustainable approach to the nutrition delivery for the Regional Talent Development sites. Having delivered basic nutrition education, the students laid some solid foundations for the young players. However, a more individualised and one to one approach was needed to further develop their nutritional knowledge and practical skills. Our decision was therefore to advertise for nutrition advisors with more experience in these skills. We recruited 3 new advisors from a large pool of talented applicants: Mark Funnel (Midlands), Sharmain Davies (South) and Kirsten Ward (North) who are already having an impact in their roles. A link still remains with the PHC as Mike Hutchinson (Blind), Louise Croft (Learning Disability) and Terri Graham (Physical Disability and Deaf) continue

their work with the 4 National squads. The PHC also look forward to continuing their relationship with this ever-growing disability sport by involving the sports science and medicine team in future educational workshops and knowledge sharing.

## Inaugural Disability Cricket talent testing weekend

The inaugural talent weekend was another step towards creating a professional, structured pathway for Disability Cricketers and involved fitness and skill testing against England benchmarks. The entire nutrition team attended this event on 4/5<sup>th</sup> October to discuss and share ideas about how we could create the most impact as a team and individuals with our sites/squads over the coming year. Topics included getting to know the team, playing to our strengths, how to work with and deliver to different disabilities and finally, what themes should take priority. The advisors then had some time to get to know their players.

## Celebration of Disability Cricket



Terri and Mike both attended this event on 17<sup>th</sup> November at Lords Cricket Ground. The afternoon aimed to promote Disability Cricket and to remember some of the highlights of 2014. The official premiere of the Physical Disability squad's film 'Dubai Rollercoaster' was aired. This tracked their journey leading into their Tour against Pakistan in Dubai. The film lived up to its name and it was a rollercoaster of emotions for the players re-watching the agony of losing both the ODI and T-20 series'. Fortunately, the film appeared to re-focus and energise the players for the up-coming season.

The day also saw attendees say farewell and good luck to the Blind squad as they left for the T-20 World Cup in South Africa later that week. The tournament saw England play some brilliant cricket, with Luke Sugg gaining

the accolade of top run scorer. The team unfortunately lost in the semi-final to pre-tournament favourites Pakistan. Team member Mahomed Khatri also showed a short film about his charity trek up Mount Kilimanjaro; an inspiring film and player.



## The effect of hydration status on perceptions of thirst and performance in visually impaired athletes.

### What did we investigate?

I investigated the use of a Thirst Symptom Scale (TSS) as a marker of hydration status in visually impaired (VI) athletes, whilst also assessing the impact of hypohydration on physical performance. This involved the participants rating 12 symptoms related to thirst on a scale from 0-9 (0 = not at all, 9 = extremely) whilst well hydrated and throughout a period of exercise and fluid-restriction induced hypohydration. A field testing battery was conducted in both conditions.

### What did we find?

Players were significantly slower over a 20 m sprint and had a lower aerobic capacity when hypohydrated. Analysis also revealed that the majority of TSS items were able to distinguish between euhydration and hypohydration with higher scores indicating hypohydration.

### What does this mean?

The implications are that symptoms related to thirst can be used by VI athletes to monitor their hydration status, whilst future work looking to determine cut-off points on the scale that could identify the level of hypohydration.

### How did we implement these findings?

The results of this project were implemented with the England Blind squad at their recent World Cup in South Africa where they used the TSS every morning. The team did extremely well and reached the semi-finals.

## Paratriathlon Scholarships

To assist with the Sport Science support provided by the PHC to GB Paratriathlon, two MSc students from the Exercise Physiology course have been offered scholarships with the PHC to work with the squad this academic year (2014-5).



**Ben Stephenson**  
MSc Exercise Physiology

Ben is currently working with the PHC and British Paratriathlon alongside his studies on an MSc Exercise Physiology course. He completed his Sport and Exercise Science undergraduate degree at Loughborough University this year in which he undertook a research study into the effects of caffeine supplementation on cycling performance in the heat. Outside of education Ben has experience coaching and competing in athletics, mainly focusing on the sprint disciplines.

Whilst working with Paratriathlon Ben hopes to gain experience working alongside elite athletes and to learn skills and techniques that will become invaluable as he looks to forge a career in applied sports science.

**Eleanor Hynes**  
MSc Exercise Physiology

Ellie graduated from the University of Bath with a BSc in Sport and Exercise Science in July 2013. She then spent one year working as the Students' Union President at Bath before moving to Loughborough this October to start an MSc in Exercise Physiology.

Her undergraduate degree included a work placement year that she spent working in the TeamBath Performance Centre at the University of Bath. This involved delivering sport science support to high performance athletes in the build up to London 2012, university athletes and members of the public.

Ellie is now looking forward to working with GB Paratriathlon for the remainder of the academic year. She believes it is an excellent opportunity to develop her lab skills through the physiological testing with the athletes, learn about Paralympic sport, and be part of a vibrant team that is working towards the Rio Paralympics.



# Inaugural lecture by Dr. Brett Smith



In January, Vicky Goosey-Tolfrey - Director of the Peter Harrison Centre for Disability Sport - gave her inaugural Professorial lecture. The lecture was an opportunity for all to celebrate her many achievements and recent Chair in Applied Disability Sport. The large and diverse international audience was testimony to how popular and valued Professor Goosey-Tolfrey is amongst her peers within the world-wide research community, applied sport community, and the university. It was also a delight to see Sir Peter Harrison, Professor Ian Campbell, and her amazing family in the audience. The lecture opened with an address by the Vice Chancellor, Professor Robert Allison. In the address, he balanced first-rate humour with a tribute to Professor Goosey-Tolfrey's leadership and international reputation in disability sport. The Vice Chancellor also reminded the audience that to gain a Professorship at Loughborough University is no easy task.

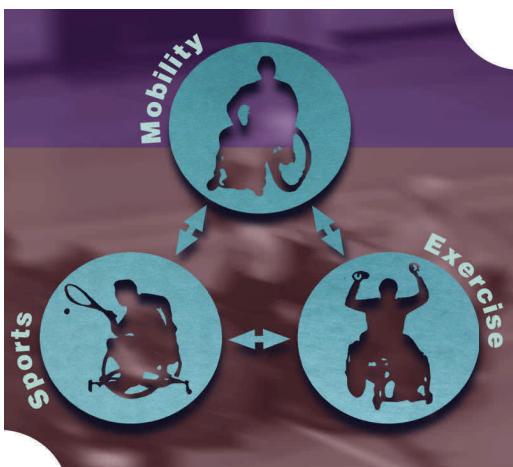
In her lecture, Professor Goosey-Tolfrey took the audience on a journey that eloquently captured her childhood days as an athlete growing up in Loughborough and how inspirational her Dad was to her love for sport and life in general. As the journey unfolded, she paid tribute to many other people, such as Professor Ian Campbell who supervised her PhD, the many athletes whom she has worked with, Sir Phillip Craven, and members of the Peter Harrison Centre, that have played a part in her career. Throughout the inaugural lecture, Professor Goosey-Tolfrey layered her talk with state-of-the-art science, humour, modesty, and generosity. Professor Mark Lewis, Dean of the School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, closed the evening by commenting on not just what an erudite and interesting talk Professor Goosey-Tolfrey gave. He also remarked on how important she is to the School. Afterward, it was clear from the audience that the evening was a huge success.

Dr. Brett Smith commented: "From a personal point of view, it was a privilege to be part of it and share the night with Vicky and her family. Congratulations Professor!"

Prof. Nick Webborn said: "It was a great privilege and pleasure to attend Prof Vicky Tolfrey's inaugural lecture outlining her career and involvement in Paralympic sports science support and the promotion of physical activity for people with disabilities through the work at the Peter Harrison Centre. I've known Vicky as a colleague and friend over a 20 year period and I feel that inaugural lectures are great opportunities to reflect on an individual's contribution to their field. For Vicky, her contribution to sport, science and the Paralympic movement have been immense and the large and international audience was a reflection the respect for her achievements".

Prof. Ian Campbell said "Vicky's Inaugural lecture as Professor was a fantastic occasion for me for a number of reasons. Firstly because it is acknowledgment of the terrific work that Vicky has undertaken in her area of expertise over many years. Secondly to see the Peter Harrison Centre flourishing in such positive way given the Vicky's leadership and the support of Sir Peter Harrison is truly magnificent. Thirdly to meet up and talk to people I had not seen for many years was wonderful. Finally one of the video's Vicky showed, whilst indicating how much I had aged, made me reflect on good times and how quickly time goes! If you find yourself as part of the PHC you have a fantastic opportunity and I encourage you to make the most of it."

## International Perspectives on Spinal Cord Injury Workshop by Katy Griggs



On the 15th January 2015 the PHC hosted the International Perspectives on Spinal Cord Injury across the Exercise Continuum. Speakers were invited from across Europe and from across the Atlantic to discuss specific topics concerning spinal cord injury. The aim of this invite only one-day event was to transfer state-of-the-art knowledge and develop a programme of research that responds to gaps in understanding. The event brought together world leading spinal cord injury academics, clinical practitioners, sports scientists, rehabilitation scientists, sports medicine practitioners and disability user groups.

The workshop aimed to extend understanding of the reciprocal relationship between elite sport, exercise and rehabilitation sciences. Expert delegates discussed specific topics that have been identified by the SCI community, and what is currently known within Paralympic Sport, as key gaps in knowledge to develop. Topics included the perfect wheelchair, the use of functional electrical stimulation (FES) and physical activity guidelines. We would like to thank

all the attendees and speakers at the event for their input and discussions on the day. We look forward to continuing some of the discussions in the future.

Prof. Vicky Tolfrey said 'this was an excellent opportunity to bring together those people working at a rehabilitation level to those working at a sports level to share best practise. It was an event to promote the outreach activities of the NCSEM (pg. 3) and a wonderful way to utilise our experiences of International colleagues that had attended my inaugural lecture the night before. I think that it has helped raise many questions that could be areas that in the future the PHC adds to its research agenda if funding permits'.



Approximately 9 months have passed since I arrived in Loughborough. From the end of November, I was able to start my own research project thanks to the cooperation of the PHC team. Before that, I already had a lot of chances to gain more experience in disability sport. In April, Prof. Vicky Tolfrey recommended I attended the FA Disability Football Masterclass at St. George's Park. It was very interesting and useful for me to further my knowledge in that field. Moreover, there were many research projects in the PHC that I could observe and be involved in. Dr. Christof Leicht conducted part of his research project this spring and he taught me how to analyse blood samples using different techniques in the immunology lab. In early summer, I got the chance to meet visually impaired cricketers and goalball players whilst helping with Mike Hutchinson's MSc research project. I was very surprised that they could play very quickly without using their vision. Also, I have never watched these sports in person, it was very exciting for me. I have recently started my project which is investigating thermal perceptions in individuals with a spinal cord injury. This research is supported by all PHC team members via preparing ethics documents, recruiting participants, being a participant, or helping me during testing. This research aims to gain insight into the behavioural response and perceptions concerned with thermal stimulations in individual with spinal cord injury.

For the rest of my visit, I continue to enjoy Loughborough life and various social and research events!!



## FREE Project Update by Dr. Jo Welford



Disabled football supporters got the chance to discuss their experiences of attending matches at a recent conference hosted by Loughborough University. The 'Whose Game is it? Supporters and Football Governance' conference brought together academics, policy makers, practitioners and football fans to meet and share ideas and research findings about how supporters could be more involved in the governance of a sport that they invest financially and emotionally in.

Supporters are often overlooked by football authorities when considering how to improve the governance of the game, and as disabled supporters represent an (albeit growing) minority, their voices are very rarely heard. The FREE (Football Research in an Enlarged Europe) project invited football fans to share their experiences and thoughts on football governance, and the conference followed this theme. A panel session on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> October, 'Improving the experience for supporters with disabilities', sought to challenge this practice by inviting disabled supporters to discuss their thoughts and experiences as part of the conference. Two disabled football supporters joined Brett Smith and Jo Welford from the Peter Harrison Centre as well as Ruth Hopkins from Level Playing Field (a charitable organisation that acts as a campaigning and advisory organisation to fans, clubs and other organisations involved in sport).

Representatives from bodies such as Supporters Direct and Football Supporters Europe joined William Gaillard, Senior Advisor to UEFA President Michel Platini, to hear the fans who took part in the FREE project describe the difficulties they faced attending football matches. The fans spoke about how many football grounds provided problems for both wheelchair users and the ambulant disabled, with limited space, accessible facilities and staff to assist them. One of the biggest issues was with their view of the match action being obstructed. The FREE project worked with a group of disabled supporters and found that the problems they faced extend beyond issues of accessibility and reflect a lack of understanding of the different facets of disability and the varying needs of the disabled supporter. These findings were discussed with the panel and the audience were invited to ask questions and propose areas of improvement. Several policy makers in attendance agreed that more could be done to help disabled fans, and that clubs should be doing more to provide an accessible and inclusive environment for all fans to enjoy football. The Loughborough University strand of the FREE project team, Borja Garcia, Jo Welford and Brett Smith, will be disseminating findings and working closely with policy makers on examples of best practice over the coming months with the aim of improving the experience of disabled football supporters.



Academics and researchers are increasingly reliant on digital technologies to carry out our work. Not that long ago, being ‘proficient’ with a computer meant being able to send an attachment via email and prepare a simple Power Point presentation. Now many of us are expected to produce websites for our research projects, advertise for participants online and disseminate research finding via Twitter and other social media platforms.

The Design and the Digital World project is a multi-disciplinary initiative that includes research staff from several departments and schools at Loughborough University as well as collaborators from the Universities of Nottingham and Leicester. The idea behind the project is to encourage research staff to share with others how they are using digital technologies in their work and to encourage peer-to-peer learning. PHC team member, Andrea Bundon, is a peer trainer with the initiative and says it has been very rewarding to share

some of the digital methods she uses in her own work and to learn about new digital methods that are being pioneered by researchers in other fields.

The project includes four workshops focusing on different stages of the research process including: establishing an online presence for research projects (creating a website and online branding), digital tools for carrying out research including collaborating within research teams and recruiting participants, disseminating research findings online via infographics, podcasts and video, and enhancing and measuring research impact using online analytics. Several members of the PHC have already attended sessions and have some excellent ideas for how they might implement their new skills on upcoming projects. Future workshops are scheduled for Loughborough, Nottingham and Leicester and are open to all research and academic staff.

To find out more about the initiative or to register, please visit

<http://www.designandthedigitalworld.co.uk>



## Stop Press

- The PHC team members Dr. Barry Mason, Mike Hutchinson and Prof. Vicky Tolfrey received a grant from UK Sport to complete some research with researchers from Sweden to further the understanding of classification in paracanoe (va'a discipline). This work has been completed and we look forward to feedback from the International Paralympic Committee.
- Dr. Brett Smith was recently invited by the Royal Society of Medicine to speak at their sport and exercise medicine event in June 2015.
- Coinciding with the Pan and ParaPan American Games, Brett Smith was recently invited to speak at the Pan Ex 2015 conference in Toronto Canada <http://www.panexsummit.ca/>



**Emily Coleman is working as a Performance Lifestyle (PL) Advisor for the English Institute of Sport providing personal development centred services to a range of Paralympic sports including; Wheelchair Basketball (Men's and Women's Team), Boccia, Visual Impaired (VI) Football, Wheelchair Fencing and Paratriathlon.**

Prior to commencing employment with the English Institute of Sport (EIS) I was practicing as an Occupational Therapist (OT) supporting individuals experiencing cognitive/physical challenges to overcome barriers to daily living using a Holistic (whole-person) Bio-Psycho-Social assessment process. Occupational therapy has offered work in some exciting and diverse work-settings including social care and NHS combined team (dementia care and older peoples Mental Health), facilitating returning to work on the NHS South Staffordshire Partnership 'Fit for Work' programme and as part of the Occupational Health Team within Army primary Health Care as a Vocational OT. These holistic transferable skills and additional work experiences have lent themselves well to my current role both as a Performance Lifestyle (PL) practitioner and as Paralympic lead for Lifestyle.

Minimising stress to maximise performance and training time is really our specialism as PL practitioners. The diversity of this role can require supporting athletes to create revision plans to ensure a manageable blend of University, training, friends and family commitments. We liaise with work places and educational establishments to provide education of elite sport commitment and demands to create a collaborative holistic and manageable support plans for the athlete. Being able to support a child athlete of twelve up to a mature athlete of fifty requires sensitivity, understanding, creativity and effective engagement strategies to optimise engagement for communication and to build trust. As PL practitioners we need to be accessible to all and for the athletes to trust and confide in us. It can be challenging for some athletes to admit that they are struggling with chopping vegetables for example as a result of upper limb impairment when training and competing on a world class performance programme with daily world class demands and expectations. Performance Lifestyle practitioners work collaboratively with para-athletes, internal and external support practitioners and specialists to provide necessary equipment and support, ensuring that all lifestyle challenges are confidentially and collaboratively overcome to maximise independence and optimise performance.

Preparing athletes for life after sport and future careers in the Paralympic world is a huge focus for all nine of our PL practitioners working with Paralympic sports. Following the success of our internal workshop in collating ideas of 'what we know' and 'what we need to know' specific to Paralympic PL there will be some exciting new projects ahead. Our PL practitioners will then receive some bespoke education and support using 'in-house' knowledge and wider world class external contacts to meet the specific needs of Paralympic athletes. The DWP were invited to our workshop to share key messages of impending changes to the disability benefit system, ensuring that PL practitioners are able to notify and provide informed choice to our athletes in order to pre-empt and minimise unpredictable stressors as Rio creeps ever closer.

We are hugely excited to work closely with the PHC to help us to take the next steps in exploring the vocational choices of Paralympians who have since retired from sport. The research and information sharing opportunities will provide additional value and insight in order for us to ensure that we fully understand the transition process of our athletes and continue to provide a world class service to all of our deserving Paralympic athletes.



## Stop Press

- In September this year, Nik Diaper (EIS Head of Sports Science & Sports Medicine for Paralympic Sports) will be taking on the Deloitte Ride Across Britain challenge. This involves cycling the legendary 969 mile route of Land's End to John O'Groats over 9 days. In doing so, Nik is helping to raise money and awareness for the British Paralympic Association. If you would like to sponsor him then please visit: <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/EIScycleLEJOG> Let's hope it stays dry for him and that it's a tail wind all the way!
- Dr. Tom Paulson has been invited to contribute with Luke Sweet from the EIS to symposium entitled 'Developing functional capacity in the Paralympic Athlete' at the UK High Performance Conference for Paralympic Sport Science and Sport Medicine which takes place at St Georges, Park, Burton in March. Prof. Vicky Tolfrey will also be delivering a session with Dr. Lee Romer on 'Improving health & performance in athletes with SCI: The evidence base' at the same conference.



## Sport Science

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- Goosey-Tolfrey, V.L. and Diaper, N. (2014). Chapter 10: The Thermoregulatory Challenges faced by the Wheelchair athlete in Beijing 2008. In. Lane, A., Whyte, G., Godfrey, R. and Loosemore M. *Case Studies in Sport Science and Medicine*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform. Pp. 66-71.

## Performance Health

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- Bakkum, A.J.T., Paulson, T.A.W., Bishop, N.C., Goosey-Tolfrey, V.L., Stolwijk-Swüste, J.M., van Kuppevelt, D.J., de Groot, S. and Janssen, T.W.J. (*in press*). Effects of hybrid versus handcycle exercise on cardiovascular disease risk factors in people with spinal cord injury: a randomized-controlled trial. *Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine*.
- Neefkes-Zonneveld, C.R., Bakkum, A.J., Bishop, N.C., van Tulder, M.W. and Janssen TW. (2015). Effect of Long-Term Physical Activity and Acute Exercise on Markers of Systemic Inflammation in Persons With Chronic Spinal Cord Injury: A Systematic Review. *Archives of Physical Medicine Rehabilitation*. 96(1):30-42.

## Psycho-Social Health and WellBeing

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# Strand Updates

## Sport Science by Prof. Vicky Tolfrey

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Led by Prof. Vicky Tolfrey, the Sport Science team has been working closely with the British Paratriathletes and in December were invited to the launch of their new World Class programme leading to Rio 2016, this new cycle of testing has been coordinated by Katy Griggs. Alongside this, work continues with the Rio preparation of the GB wheelchair rugby players, coordinated by Dr. Tom Paulson and supported by Dr. Barry Mason and James Rhodes. PhD data collection have been priorities for Terri Graham and Paul Sindall in the areas of caffeine and upper body exercise performance and wheelchair tennis, respectively. Dr. Tamae Yoda's work is well on its way with the support of Katy in the area of thermoregulation and the perceptions of heat in individuals with a spinal cord injury, whilst Katy continues to explore her existing data sets within this thematic area. Dr. Christof Leicht has settled in well with his teaching commitments, whilst contributing to the Centre's activities with the symposium in Japan prior to Christmas. While we say our farewells to Dr. John Lenton – wishing him all the best working with British Cycling, we also welcome Mike Hutchinson to the team, who will be embarking on part-time PhD studies whilst contributing to the laboratory and research activities of the Centre.

## Performance Health by Prof. Vicky Tolfrey

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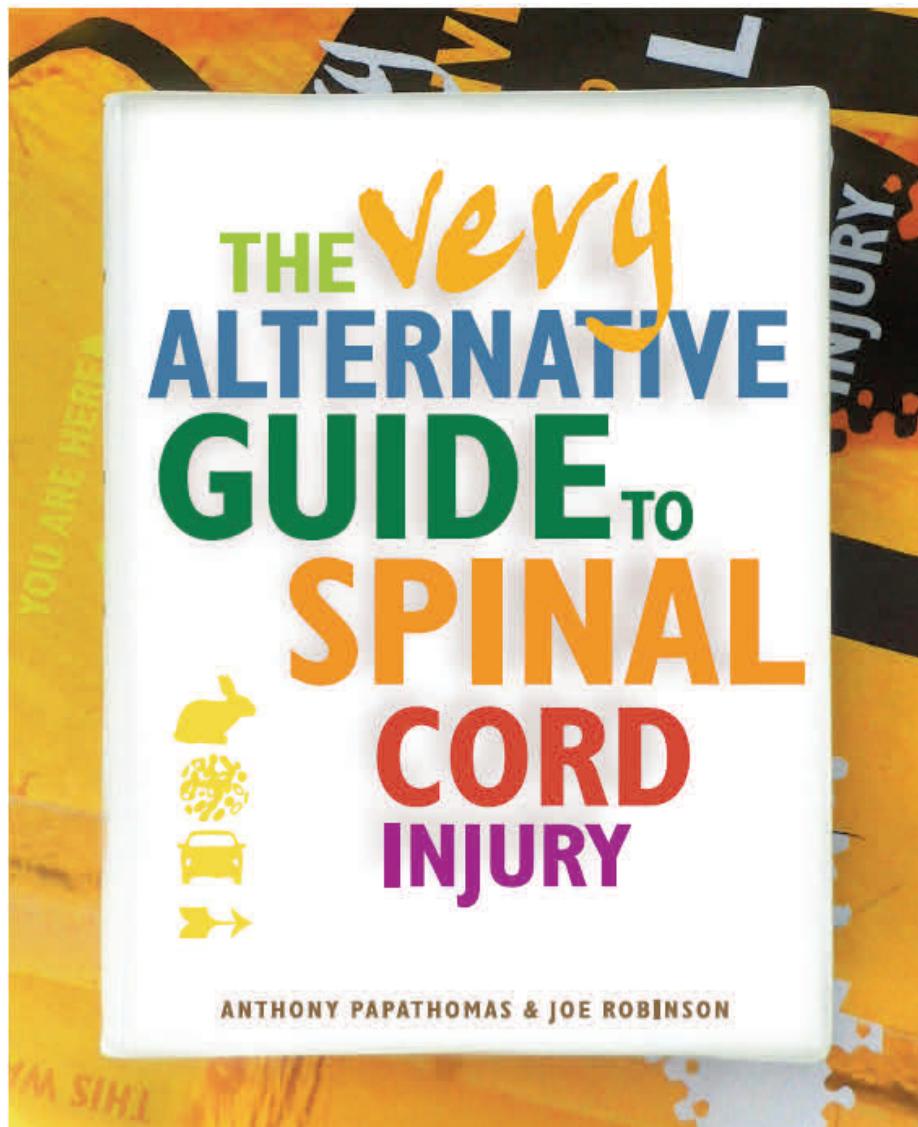
Performance Health is a developing research strand that, unlike the other two research strands, is not led by a defined staff member, but has grown out of the obvious opportunity to link the research being conducted in the Sport Science and Psycho-social Health and Wellbeing research strands. We are grateful for the initial input of Dr. Lettie Bishop and Prof. Maureen McDonald in developing this strand. Prof. McDonald stated "there is great opportunity, given the appropriate resources, for the Peter Harrison Centre to maximize potential health outcomes in disability stakeholders linked to the Centre". Therefore, over the coming months we will be confirming the new academic staff member(s) that will guide the mission and vision and facilitate enhanced interactions with the more established research strands of the Centre. Despite not being able to conduct large scale exercise training or rehabilitation programs focused on health outcomes within our own facilities at Loughborough (in persons with a spinal cord injury), our strong collaborative links already established by the staff mean that these types of research projects can be conducted through adopting a research partnership approach. We look forward to reporting on this work in the future.

## Psycho-Social Health and WellBeing by Dr. Brett Smith

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A Happy New Year to all from the Psycho-Social Health and Wellbeing team. At the beginning of the academic year Robert Townsend joined us. Funded by the National Autistic Society, his PhD research (co-supervised with Dr. Chris Cushion) will critically examine disability sport coaching. The results will be used to inform the future training of coaching programmes for people with autism and to promote their wellbeing through sporting participation. Welcome Robert. Congratulations to a number of people within the PHC. At the end of 2014, Dr. Nick Caddick successfully defended his PhD. His research focused on combat veterans, post-traumatic stress disorder, and the role of surfing in their lives. Nick is now working within the Biomedical Unit at Loughborough University and continues to contribute to the Peter Harrison Centre. With Terri Graham, Dr. Anthony Papathomas has been leading a three year project that has culminated in health and sporting achievement resources for disabled people. Following the success of this interdisciplinary project, Anthony recently applied for and gained a lectureship at Loughborough in Exercise Psychology. It also gives us great pleasure to say that Dr. Andrea Bunton will be leading a new one year research project on Paralympic sporting retirement. This follows the success of her Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (Canada) funded research on disability sport and digital storytelling that finished at the end of 2014. Finally, congratulations to our Director, Professor Vicky Tolfrey, for gaining her Chair, becoming Professor in Applied Disability Sport, and giving in January 2015 an erudite inaugural lecture.





New book! Coming early 2015...

**A spinal injury book like no other.  
Honest. Funny. Informative.  
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We hope you enjoy learning about the Centre and find the links to the website and other resources useful. If you have any feedback or would like to contact the Centre please email: [phc@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:phc@lboro.ac.uk) or contact the PHC Director at [V.L.Tolfrey@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:V.L.Tolfrey@lboro.ac.uk)

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