

JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

REPORT ON EXPEDITION/PROJECT/CONFERENCE

Expedition/Project/Conference Title: Annual *Antirrhinum* Conference 2003

Travel Dates: April 2003

Location: La Manga, Spain

Group Member(s): David Greenshields

Aims: To meet members of the international *Antirrhinum* research community and learn about the various areas of study currently being undertaken by them.....

OUTCOME (not less than 300 words):-

The Annual Antirrhinum (Snapdragon) meetings began in 1991 in Köln, and continue to take place at different locations in Europe every year, reinforcing scientific contacts and friendly relations between international research groups. The conference in La Manga, Spain was the first that I have attended as I am currently in the first year of a PhD in the Hudson group in Edinburgh. My PhD project is concerned with the identification and isolation of quantitative trait loci involved in morphological and physiological traits in Antirrhinum and Arabidopsis. The content of the conference was directly applicable to my studies.

The conference represented a valuable opportunity to meet the members of the international Antirrhinum research community, including other group leaders and fellow students. It enabled me to get a better grasp of the many research areas currently being investigated using this diverse flowering plant, from aspects of developmental biology to molecular genetics of flower colour and the evolution of Snapdragons in nature. I feel that the meeting helped me to put my own research into perspective and focus more closely on the content of my PhD. I now have a better understanding of how my project fits into current research, and have a much greater range of contacts that may be able to pass on their expertise to assist me.

The presentations in the conference were informative and interesting and the meeting was exceptionally well organised down to the finest detail, even including traditional Spanish siestas on the glorious La Manga beach! The social side of the meeting was also very worthwhile and I returned from the trip feeling much more integrated into my laboratory group.

I am extremely grateful to the James Rennie Bequest for providing sufficient funding to enable me to attend the meeting. The conference was a very valuable experience and I hope that I will be able to attend many more.