

# JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

## REPORT ON EXPEDITION / PROJECT / CONFERENCE

<b>Expedition/Project/ Conference Title:</b>	iGEM Giant Jamboree
<b>Travel Dates:</b>	19-30/10/2018
<b>Location:</b>	Boston, MA
<b>Group member(s):</b>	Charlotte Mathews, Ben Astles, Eva Steele
<b>Aims:</b>	Represent Edinburgh university while competing in the iGEM competition.

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### **OUTCOME (not less than 300 words):-**

iGEM is the international Genetically Engineered Machine competition. Over 350 teams from universities and schools across the world carried out research during the summer and presented their projects at the giant jamboree in Boston, Massachusetts, in October. The aim of the competition is to design biological tools using standardised parts, “biobricks”, to help tackle problems in synthetic biology. Our team designed parts for a maxicells, which are a novel achromosomal *E. coli* chassis: a step towards being able to use synthetic DNA constructs outside the lab, by carrying them in non-replicating cells.

Our team of 10 successfully carried out most planned parts of the project in our summer in the lab and thus were able to proudly present our results at the jamboree. The team worked hard to create the presentation, and then two of the seven team members that attended presented to a panel of four iGEM judges, who discussed with a large group at the end of the conference. We also created a poster and spoke to individual judges with respect to this about our findings and difficulties throughout the summer. We also watched other team’s presentations and spoke with many others, to learn about their designs and projects. We worked hard to meet the criteria for a gold award and ultimately we achieved the Gold award, by persuading the judges during our presentation, talking to them by our poster and through our team wiki page, that we met all the conditions. We were also one of four undergraduate teams to be nominated for best foundational advance project. The teams all choose which category their project fits best into and one from each wins the award for best in category. There were 46 teams in our category, so even a nomination was a great achievement, for which we are all very proud. In addition to the competition there were events to attend, such as a careers fair, in which I enjoyed connecting with representatives for some fantastic companies to consider for future employment. There were also three fantastic keynote speakers: Ingrid Swanson Pultz, Jason Kelly and George Church. The jamboree was an incredible experience and I learned so much over the week. I am incredibly thankful to have been part of it.