

JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

REPORT ON EXPEDITION/PROJECT/CONFERENCE

Expedition/Project/

Conference Title: Seventh Kinetoplastid Molecular Cell Biology Meeting, 2017

Travel Dates: 21st-26th April 2017

Location: Woodshole, Massachusetts, USA

Group member(s): Kirsty McWilliam (PhD Student)

Aims: To present a research poster of PhD data to date

To network with other researchers in the field and establish collaborations.

OUTCOME (not less than 300 words):-

The Kinetoplastid Molecular Cell Biology Meeting is notorious amongst trypanosome and leishmania circles, with folklore describing 5 days of intense science, stimulating discussion and a certain establishment named Captain Kidd's.

The meeting, held biennially at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Massachusetts, is the leading conference in our field and as such attracts a host of distinguished researchers as well as those just starting out, eager to gain some international conference experience and establish themselves as a promising young scientist to look out for. The conference consisted of seven talk sessions and three poster sessions. Overall, over 60 oral presentations were given, covering wide-ranging topics such as molecular, cellular and (everyone's favourite) RNA biology, and over 130 posters presented. As well as myself, my PI Keith Matthews and 5 other post-docs from the Matthews Lab attended the meeting.

Poster sessions were held on the second, third and fourth evenings after dinner and provided a lively, relatively informal and generally sweltering hot atmosphere for scientific discussion. Top tip: take a t-shirt and shorts for presenting your poster. I was to present my poster in the second evening session after a well-received afternoon off. Though prior to conference I had been full of nerves, an afternoon of fresh air, adventure and ice-cream provided a welcome distraction. Even if it meant I didn't have time to do my hair. Being completely honest, I fully expected my work to be torn to shreds by the prolific group leaders, if any were to actually turn up to my poster at all. My data was at a very provisional stage and I knew full well that the conference had perhaps come a couple of months too early for me. What I experienced couldn't have been further from my expectations. As soon as I had stood next to my purple poster, immediately seeming an altogether quite muted colour compared to the garish fuchsia pink of the poster stationed next to mine, scientists began to crowd round willing to listen to, and discuss, my work. For an intense two and a half hours I spoke non stop to PhD students, post docs and numerous well renowned group leaders all of whom were enthusiastic to give useful suggestions and feedback. In that short period of time I gained so much. I left full of new ideas and with a renewed enthusiasm for my work, having endured a long period before travelling of experimental shortcomings. Many of these ideas I have now successfully integrated into my work, for which I am now reaping the benefits as I begin to generate the data that will form my thesis. In addition, I am now working in collaboration with a group leader in America as a result of my poster presentation.

JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

The KMCB Conference was a hugely enjoyable and beneficial experience which left me with a real sense of community. I would like to thank the James Rennie Bequest for kindly providing the funds which enabled me to make this trip and attend the KMCBM.