

JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

REPORT ON EXPEDITION/PROJECT/CONFERENCE

Expedition/Project/Conference Title: NEUROSPORA 2012

Travel Dates: MARCH 1ST – 12TH 2012
ASILOMAR, PACIFIC GROVE, CA, USA

Location: KATHRYN TOPHAM, ICB (PROF. NICK READ)

Group member(s): CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE AND PRESENTATION OF POSTER

Aims: DISCUSSIONS

OUTCOME (not less than 300 words):-

I should like to take this opportunity to thank the committee and the James Rennie Bequest for providing a bursary to enable me to attend *Neurospora 2012* in California.

This meeting occurs every alternate year and the *fungus cell biology* research group of Professor Nick Read, here in Edinburgh, have aimed to maintain postgraduate-student participation in this gathering. The *Neurospora* meeting alternates biennially with a much larger fungal genetics meeting and both have been held at this same venue for many years.



Entrance from the beach



Delegates on their way to lunch

It had been an ambition during my PhD studies to visit at least one of these meetings, attended by all the laboratories around the globe that work with the filamentous fungus *Neurospora crassa*. It was a particularly small gathering in 2012. I was one of only three representatives from the UK and it was the first time I had visited California. The number of students and early career researchers from outside the Americas was much lower this year for various reasons. It was therefore, an excellent opportunity for those of us who did attend to interact with many experienced group leaders that work with this model organism. Several *retired* workers in the field also attended. It was invaluable to engage in discussion with the wealth of experience from the *Neurospora* community.

I presented a poster entitled: *MAP KINASES AND PROTOPERITHECIAL MORPHOGENESIS IN NEUROSPORA CRASSA*, a precursor to sending a paper of the same title for peer-review. Also, an opportunity to showcase some of my microscopy including some eye-catching three-dimensional scanning electron micrographs, that viewed with tinted goggles helped to draw the crowds; fruitful discussion ensued.

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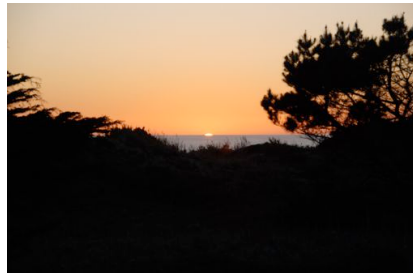
There were no parallel sessions, but it was useful to attend the broad spectrum of work covered. A taster of the talks presented included: Greg Jedd (National University of Singapore) who presented the Beadle and Tatum Award Lecture, talking about septal-pore associated proteins. Stephanie Poeggeler (University of Goettingen, Germany) presented some of her work on *Sordaria macrospora*, a close relative of *Neurospora* and very close to the area in which I work. Scott Baker (Pacific Northwest NDL, USA) gave a particular interesting talk on associating genes with phenotypes using next-generation sequence technologies. Jason Stajich (UC Riverside, USA) introduced us to FungiDB, a functional genomic database and website tool, enabling data mining and analyses of pan-fungal genomic resources. Subjects covered included: cell biology and morphogenesis; signalling and development; light and circadian clock; gene regulation; genomics, evolution and technological advances.

Jennifer Loros presented the post-banquet speech. Jennifer gave a light-hearted overview of the juggling of her science career with family life, extending her family to include the colleagues with whom she has worked and the students that she has mentored over the past decades, many were in attendance at the conference now as group leaders, including some whom she considered as her *science-grandchildren*.

Asilomar, I was informed, when translated from the Spanish means a refuge by the sea. Between the conference sessions and lunch there was just enough time to slip off your socks and shoes and dip your feet in the icy water of the Pacific Ocean, refreshing yourself for the next series of lectures.



Discussion time



The view just before dinner