

JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

REPORT ON EXPEDITION/PROJECT/CONFERENCE

**Expedition/Project/
Conference Title:**

European Geosciences Union 2011 General Assembly

Travel Dates:

3-8 April 2011

Location:

Vienna, Austria

Group member(s):

Emily Woollen

Aims:

1. To give an oral presentation on some of my PhD research entitled "Carbon stocks in a miombo woodland landscape: spatial distributions and controls".
2. Attend poster and oral presentations on current research by other scientists within geosciences.
3. To discuss ideas and theories with top scientists within my field of research.

OUTCOME (not less than 300 words):-

The European Geosciences Union (EGU) General Assembly is one of the largest annual conferences in Europe for geosciences, bringing together geoscientists from all over the world into one meeting covering all disciplines of the earth, planetary and space sciences. This year more than 10,000 people attended the conference, of which 28% were students. There were a total of 4,333 oral and 8,439 poster presentations in 707 sessions. The funding granted by the James Rennie Bequest allowed me to attend and give an oral presentation at the EGU conference, providing a forum for me to present and disseminate my PhD research and discuss ideas with experts in my field.

The conference began with an opening reception and a specific side event for young scientists, where I met other young scientists from a variety of research backgrounds. I also had the chance to meet with old friends from different research institutes and universities who were attending the conference. The conference was a week long event, with several sessions within the Biogeosciences on every day. With so many interesting presentations to see it was sometimes difficult to manage my time efficiently, and I often had to run between sessions to see all the talks.

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Throughout the week I attended several sessions within the Biogeosciences. The most interesting session which was relevant to my research, apart from the session within which I was presenting, was on the Tuesday. The session was on tropical ecosystem function and response to environmental change. Presentations were given by several research groups and scientists, which I have read many papers and reports by. It was great to put faces to many of the names which I have become familiar with through my research. Following the session I went along to a dinner where I met scientists doing research in the tropics from various institutions. I also had a chance to catch up with people I already knew whose research I was interested in knowing more about. It was a great opportunity to network and to hear about what kind of research is currently going on in my field.

My session, "Soil carbon dynamics at different spatial scales", was on the Wednesday and my talk was the last of the day. I was very nervous, but I had practiced my talk several times the week before to make sure I would be able to deliver a good talk. Once I started talking it went very well. I had some very good questions at the end, which I was able to answer but that also allowed me to reflect on my research in a new light. Several people came up to speak to me at the end for further discussions. I made some good contacts with other researchers who were doing similar work or who were interested in my research.

There was a meeting on the last day of the conference about women in Geosciences, which aimed to discuss what EGU could do for women geoscientists. The former president of the EGU, a successful female geoscientist, gave a talk on what EGU has done in the past and what it intends to do in the future. The focus was not on distinguishing between women and men geoscientists, but rather on encouraging more women to pursue a career in geosciences and to aim higher.

I would like to thank the James Rennie Bequest for providing me with travel grant aid to allow me to attend the EGU 2011 conference. It gave me experience in presenting my research to a large audience and I learnt a lot about current research within the Biogeosciences. It would not have been possible to attend the EGU 2011 General Assembly without their support.