

Eloise Littley

University of St Andrews

Attendance at the 13th International Conference on Paleooceanography

‘CO₂ perturbations during rapid climate change in the North Atlantic’



From the 2nd -6th September 2019, the 13th International Conference on Paleooceanography was held in Sydney, Australia. With support from MASTS I was able to cover the conference fees and contribute to the costs of the 23 hour flight to the other side of the world to present my research. This conference takes place every three years and attracts many of the leading scientists from the field. It is well known amongst peers as a networking hotspot for early career researchers.

With approximately 400 delegates, the conference is structured with a single session of invited talks each morning followed by posters after lunch. As a result, it is possible to attend every presentation and not feel like you're missing out and also have time to visit as many posters as possible before the keynote talk at the end of the day. I really appreciated this structure as it allowed me to listen to talks outside of my field of research which I found to be very inspiring in providing new ideas for my work and my career. I particularly enjoyed a talk about early human dispersal and another detailing a new method which uses DNA to reconstruct past marine life.

At the Tuesday afternoon poster session I presented my research on ‘CO₂ perturbations during rapid climate change in the North Atlantic’. It was a really good session with some great comments and suggestions from a diverse group of scientists that I will be looking into over the coming months. Presenting my work to a paleoceanography audience has been extremely beneficial at this point in my PhD as I begin to write up and refine my ideas.



Being a small conference, there were a number of social activities organised for the delegates to attend that were included in the conference fee. On the first night we received a traditional ‘Welcome to Country’ ceremony from local aboriginal descendants who performed songs accompanied by the didgeridoo. This event set the bar high for the rest of the week! However the conference dinner was by far the best conference dinner I have yet attended. Late afternoon we boarded a boat next to the Sydney Opera house and experienced an incredible sunset cruise around Sydney harbour. While on board it was impossible not to run into other delegates and have some really fascinating conversations both about science and not! The final event was the traditional ‘Paleomusicology concert’ that has been running since the very first ICP in 1987. Talented delegates performed an amazing range of classical music and campfire songs made all the more impressive by the fact that they formed their groups only 3 days prior!

I spent an extra couple of days in Sydney after the conference to see some of the famous beaches and landmarks including the Blue Mountains, Sydney Opera House and Manly beach. I also explored the neighbourhood where I was staying in Woollomooloo and left the city hoping that one day I will have the opportunity to go back. It was such an incredible place and the perfect setting for ICP – the first

time it has been held in the Southern Hemisphere. I wish to thank MASTS for their support which enabled me to attend this conference and experience such a beautiful city

