

Postgraduate Conference Attendance Grant, European Geosciences Union General Assembly, 2015

Danielle M Alderson

School of Environment, Education and Development, University of Manchester

danielle.alderson@manchester.ac.uk

This report outlines the benefits of my attendance at the European Geosciences Union General Assembly during April 2015 in Vienna, which was subsidised by the BSG. The prestigious conference was my first at an international level and was attended by over 11000 scientists. EGU hosts a wide range of disciplines with groups as diverse as Geomorphology to Planetary and Solar System Sciences. This setting allows not only interactions with experts in an individual field, but also those in a whole host of very different fields, which provides an excellent opportunity for a postgraduate researcher to learn about the diversity of research in the geosciences. The BSG kindly awarded £600 towards the expenses of attending the conference, where I presented posters on two different aspects of my PhD research within Biogeosciences sessions, whilst representing the BSG Postgraduate Forum.

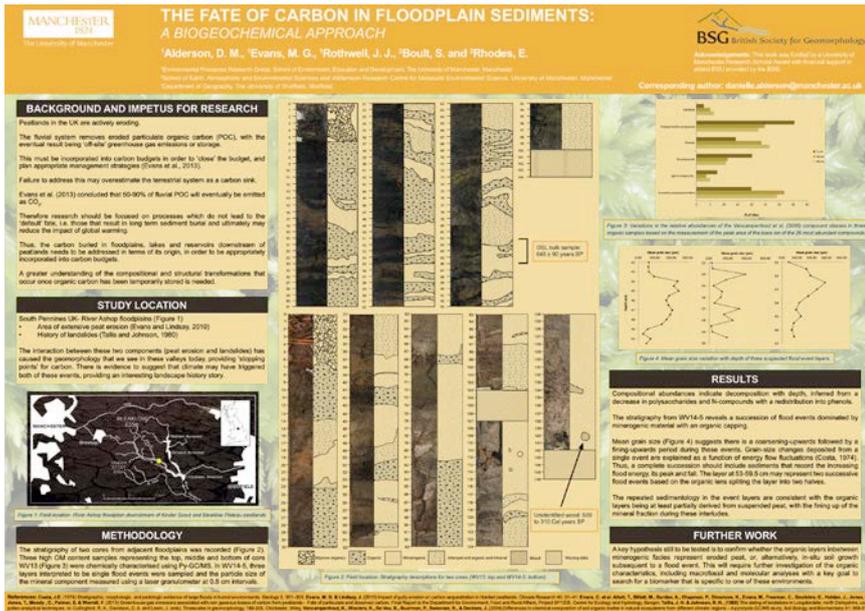


Figure 1: Research poster based on the analysis of floodplain sediments in the Peak District

decomposed with age. Further work is needed to attempt to distinguish between autochthonous and allochthonous organics.

My second paper; 'Defining organic matter quality in sediment systems: a suggested classification scheme' presented a classification scheme which aimed to aid those with an interest in studying organic matter quality in a variety of sediment systems. The feedback I received on this research was extremely positive. As such, I continued working on this manuscript after EGU and it has since been published in Progress in Physical Geography.

I could not have attended EGU without the generous grant provided by the BSG. The positive feedback I received on both aspects of my research both during the conference and through feedback from the Outstanding Student Poster competition, justified my methods and reinvigorated my desire to publish my research when I returned from the general assembly.

I would certainly recommend attending a large international conference during the course of a PhD as it allows you to reassess the 'big picture' of your research, and identify the strengths and weaknesses of your project in order to present to larger audiences (particularly useful for the viva)! EGU in particular is a fantastic conference as it is held in the beautiful Vienna and is an affordable destination for those based in Europe.

My first paper titled 'The fate of carbon in floodplain sediments: A biogeochemical approach' presented preliminary results from my doctoral research. This involves investigating floodplain carbon storage downstream of heavily eroding peatlands in the Peak District, of which the ultimate aim is to produce a carbon budget, which distinguishes between organic carbon that has been stored from two distinct sources. Firstly, organic carbon from overbank flood deposition, that has originated from the peatlands and secondly, autochthonous vegetation that has experienced growth and decay in this environment. Preliminary results supported the hypothesis that the repeated sequences of minerogenic material with an organic capping derived from distinct flood events, and that these organics were more



Figure 2: Stephansdom, Vienna