



British Branch Meeting 2017

Lancaster University, Lancaster, UK, 5–7 September 2017

The 42nd International Glaciological Society British Branch Meeting was hosted by Lancaster Environment Centre, Lancaster University, from 5–7 September. On 5 September there was a hugely successful pre-session early career researcher training event on ‘Environmental Data Science for Polar Scientists’ kindly sponsored by Lancaster University’s Data Science Institute. The meeting proper kicked off in style with a barbecue icebreaker in the Environment Centre’s quad that evening, with the last of the British summer holding out for outdoors-based food, drink and discussion. The next morning meeting leader Amber Leeson welcomed over 100 delegates to two days packed full of talks and posters. The programme included 38 talks and 50 posters on an incredibly diverse variety of glaciological research in the UK, from subglacial lakes in the Antarctic to eskers on Mars, gases released from glacial comminution and modelling of the British and Irish Ice Sheet, to name but a few topics. Masters and PhD students were responsible for nearly a third of all talks and over two-thirds of posters, maintaining the British Branch Meeting’s strong history in promoting early-career science.

Day 1 started with talks on glacio-volcanism, weaving seamlessly between Antarctica, Iceland and Mars. Keynote speaker John Smellie gave an excellent demonstration of presenting to a diverse audience, and Open University PhD student Frances Butcher gave a fascinating insight into potential glacial geomorphological features on



A barbecue icebreaker allowed delegates to relax and socialise before the meeting kicked off. Photo: @LancsUniEarth (Twitter)

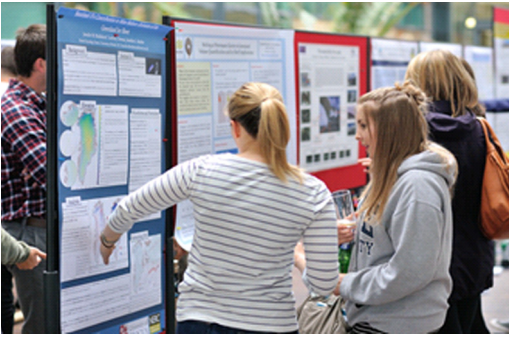
the surface of Mars. We then moved onto the glacial biogeochemists, with second keynote speaker Jemma Wadham telling us why ice sheets should be considered an important and dynamic component of the global carbon cycle, and PhD student Moya MacDonald giving us an insight into mechanochemical reactions under ice and their potential importance in maintaining microbial life, among others. Lunch followed, with delegates encouraged to chat and look round the array of posters on offer.

The afternoon session opened with glacial lakes. Andy Smith and Steve Plamer gave us an insight into subglacial lakes under the ice sheets, while Evan Miles and Andrew Williamson talked about supraglacial lakes in Greenland and the Himalayas. The science-packed first day of talks finished with a session on ice shelves, covering everything from remote sensing of changes to ground observations and modelling ice flow. Addy Pope from ESRI gave the final talk of the day, with some fascinating and inspiring outreach examples using GIS data and ArcGIS in school classrooms. ESRI also kindly donated the beverages for the busy poster session that followed, rounding off an excellent day of glacial science.

Post-science decompression gave the opportunity to visit Lancaster Brewery for a tour and to sample a wide range of local brews, as well as the infamous British Branch Meeting banquet. Pete Nienow turned back the years, and his hairline, with an excellent after dinner speech. It was especially fascinating (and encouraging!) to hear of all the early-career success stories in the UK glaciological community over the past



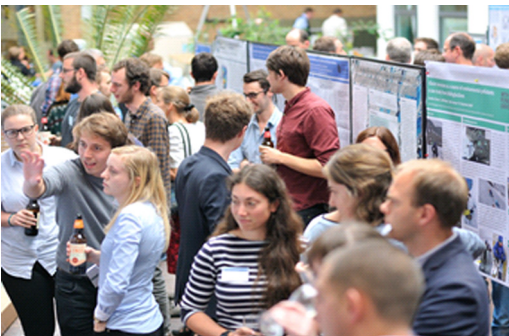
Lancaster University’s Data Science Institute hosted a data science training session for polar researchers before the conference, which attracted a large number of early-career researchers. Photo: Amber Leeson



More than two thirds of posters presented were from masters and PhD students. Photo: Simon Chew



Delegates listen attentively to a talk about the Lancaster Brewery during a tour of their facilities before the conference dinner.



The poster session in full flow. Photo: Simon Chew



The banquet was held at the Brewery.

five years, with a huge number of Aberdeen BBM (2012) early-career attendees now in full employment or in postdoctoral positions. Socializing and discussions continued late into the evening in Lancaster city centre.

The second day began bright and early with the first of two glacial dynamics sessions. The presenters did an outstanding job of presenting complex physics and mathematical theory to the lay person (i.e. me), with Joe Todd showing a particularly interesting 3-D video of Stor Glacier's calving front, and PhD student Arminel Lovell identifying the first surge-type glacier in the Himalayas, among others. Impressively, John Woodward managed to mention both the Dreamworks motion picture *Antz*, snails and glaciers in his talk on potential hydrophobic surfaces under glaciers.

The afternoon sessions kicked off with Ice Sheets and Climate Change. The final keynote speaker, Robert Mulvaney, gave a fascinating insight into ice-core climatic records, and the international race to find the oldest ice on earth in Antarctica, and we learnt about ENSO effects on Antarctic mass balance courtesy of Masters student Julien Bodart. Chris Stokes and PhD



Pete Nienow's after-dinner speech recalled the old days of glaciology when he had hair. Photos: Magnús Már Magnússon



Ian Willis enthusiastically presents his work on the Bach Ice Shelf in front of delegates. Photo: Simon Chew

student Vincent Verjans rounded off the session by looking at East Antarctic and Greenland response to climatic warming. The final session of a highly successful meeting started with Nick Rutter and David Ashmore talking all things snow, and Niall Gandy providing an insight into the British and Irish Ice Sheet using modelling, ending with special guest appearances from South African colleagues John Dunlevey and Alan Smith.

The final task of the meeting was the award of the John Glen prizes for student presentations, as is customary. There could unfortunately only be two winners, although the quality of all

student talks and presentations was extremely high. The prize for oral presentation, presented by Rachel Carr, went to Frances Butcher of the Open University for her talk on 'Recent basal melting of mid latitude glaciers on Mars', and the poster prize, presented by John Woodward, went to Alejandra Urra of the University of Bristol for her work 'Dynamics of weathering rates under contrasting hydrological forcing regimes in Greenland'. Commendations were given to Andrew Williamson, Kyrah McKenzie and Niall Gandy (oral presentations), and Joshua Williams, Jack Garnett and Heather Bell (poster presentations). A stellar effort from all students – well done!

I'm sure I speak for all attendees by thanking the local organizing committee, Amber Leeson, Jennie Gilbert, Peter Wynn, Hugh Tuffen, Crispin Halsall, Jacqueline Owen and Mounir Takriti, for arranging a successful and stimulating meeting! British glaciological research continues to be world leading, on the evidence of the research presented over the two days in Lancaster. I'm sure everyone is already looking forward to the 2018 meeting at the University of Exeter next year.

Jon Hawkings



John Glen prize winners (left) Alejandra Urra and (right) Frances Butcher receive their awards. Photo: Magnus Mar Magnusson