



British Branch Meeting 2014

University of Bristol, 8–9 September 2014

The 39th Annual Meeting of the International Glaciological Society British Branch was hosted by the Bristol Glaciology Centre at the University of Bristol, between 8 and 9 September 2014. We were warmly welcomed to the historic university buildings by Martin Siegert, ahead of two days of presentations on all aspects of glaciology. This included 37 talks, with 11 delivered by postgraduate students, and 33 poster presentations.

Day 1 kicked off with a session on remote sensing, which used a wide variety of data sources to understand glacier behaviour. This ranged all the way from unmanned aerial vehicles through to the remains of Viking settlements. Next, we moved to a much smaller scale for a series of talks on the interactions between microbes and glacier ice. During the lunch break, the younger participants benefited from the expertise of the UK Polar Network Panel on opportunities outside academia after the PhD. The afternoon session focused on glacier hydrology, which really highlighted the importance of subglacial melt water plumes, but also the limitations to our understanding of them.

After the presentations, we were privileged to listen to a captivating talk by John Nye, entitled 'Glaciology 65 years ago'. He took us back to the world of glaciology at the start of his career, when he and John Glen were the entire UK glaciology

community, and made us realize just how much the field has grown in recent decades. However, it was nice to see that some things have not changed, particularly the principle of observing glaciers and explaining their behaviour. As Professor Nye eloquently put it, 'You don't need to go there, just to think, but there is something about being there that really concentrates the mind'. He then told us about some of his early fieldwork experiences, including measuring strain rates for the first time and using time-lapse photography to determine glacier velocities. As with fieldwork today, there were anecdotes of near-misses, including camping on unstable moraines and tunnelling to the bed of glaciers (!) and just about making it out before the tunnels closed.

John Nye's talk was followed by a lively poster session, which was made all the more lively by the provision of vodka in glasses made of ice. As it turned out, these were rather difficult to hold once they began to warm up, but certainly helped promote an excellent environment for the discussion of all things glacial. Conversations were then transferred onto a boat, for a water-borne tour of Bristol harbour and Brunel's famous ship, the S.S. Great Eastern. The nautical theme continued and the Annual Dinner was held aboard the floating restaurant Spyglass, which was moored up at



Question: Why is there a mystery chair at the front of the lecture theatre?



Answer: for our special guest, John Nye.



The position of the screen over the splendid heraldic fireplace inspired some artistic gestures..

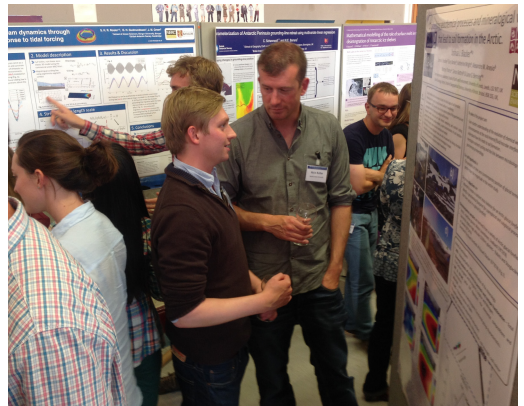
Welsh Back. David Sugden provided an entertaining speech during dinner and demonstrated his talents as an impressionist, aided by his hat. The night ended with the opportunity to sample the excellent beers available in Bristol's public houses.

Day 2 began bright and early with an informative session on palaeoglaciology, which was followed by talks on geophysics. Lunch time was devoted to the Annual General Meeting, where it was confirmed that the next meeting would be held in Durham. Next came a series of talks on the ice sheets, which presented research from across Antarctic and Greenland, and the talks were rounded off by the second remote sensing session.

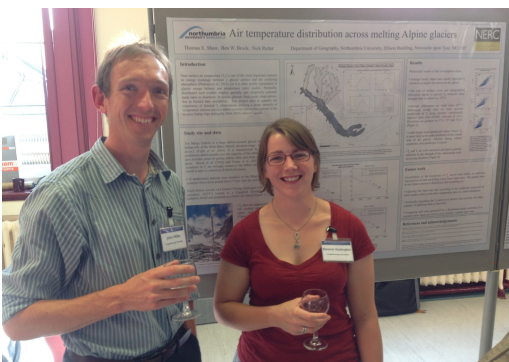
The British Branch Meeting finished with the customary awarding of the John Glen prizes for student presentations, which were presented by David Sugden (as himself). The winners were Emma Smith for the best talk, entitled 'Mapping the ice-bed interface characteristics of Rutford Ice Stream, West Antarctica using micro seismicity'



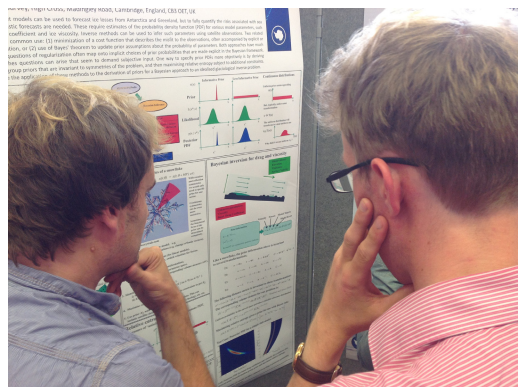
Vodka served in glasses made of ice added an extra dimension to the poster session....



... which was as lively and well attended as ever.



Here, John Hillier and Eleanor Darlington are obviously enjoying looking round the posters.



... although it looks as if Ian Hewitt and Rob Arendt may have discovered an error somewhere!



Students look younger and younger these days: school children from a local primary school enjoy the outreach activities associated with the meeting.



David Sugden and Martin Siegert present Emma Smith with the John Glen Prize for best student talk.



The children also judged the polar photo prize and took part in an art competition.

and Sammie Buzzard for her poster on 'Mathematical modelling of melt lake formation on an ice shelf'.

In addition to the presentation awards, the long-awaited results of the polar photo prize were announced. This formed part of an outreach programme with a local school, Harelive Primary, who were asked to judge photographs submitted by the meeting participants on the themes of polar science and glaciology. The pupils also took part in an art competition as part of the meeting and visited during the UK Antarctic Research Symposium, which followed the British Branch Meeting.

All that remains is to thank the local organizing committee for an interesting and productive meeting and to also thank everyone for presenting their work. We can all look forward to the next meeting in Durham in September 2015.

Rachel Carr