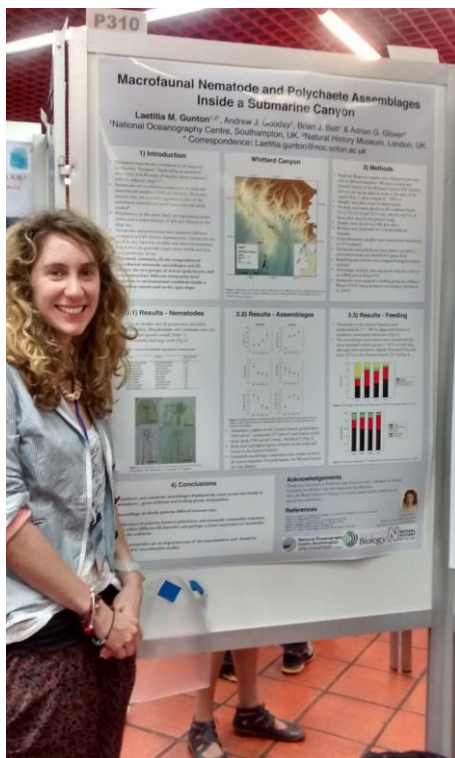


Laetitia Gunton
14th Deep-Sea Biology Symposium, Aveiro, Portugal

The triennial Deep-Sea Biology Symposium (DSBS) is the most important meeting for deep-sea biologists around the world. This year the 14th DSBS was held Aveiro, Portugal from 31st August to 4th September. The venue was the Cultural and Congress Centre of Aveiro, an old ceramics factory situated at the end of the main canal in the city centre.

Around 400 delegates from 35 countries gathered in Aveiro to discuss their latest research in the field of deep-sea biology. It was a full programme, with 200 talks and 200 posters scheduled over the five days. This year, deep-ocean stewardship and deep-sea mining were hot topics. There were special sessions on both including a session on the potential mining impacts on the deep-sea fauna in the UK claim site (North Pacific Ocean). Other interesting talks included advances in video footage of full-colour natural displays of bioluminescence (some beautiful videos were shown), progresses in deep-sea trench exploration and the origins of the deep-sea benthos.



The symposium was a fantastic opportunity for me to meet scientists from around the world working in the field of deep-sea biology. I was also able to find out what deep-sea research is being conducted in laboratories worldwide. This was especially important for me as I am approaching the final stages of my PhD and searching for postdoctoral research opportunities. My current PhD research focuses on the ecology of deep-sea canyons, at the DSBS there was a whole session dedicated to submarine canyons (I was very excited about this!). During the conference I presented a poster titled, "Polychaetes vs. nematodes; a comparison of macrofaunal worm assemblages inside a submarine canyon". This was the first time I had presented a poster at an international conference. My poster sparked up many interesting discussions and I received helpful feedback on my work. I left the conference feeling inspired and motivated to carry on with my own research.

I applied for a Royal Society of Biology travel grant as my PhD research grant would not cover the whole cost of the conference. This was probably the most important and relevant conference for me to attend during my PhD and I am very glad I was able to attend. I would like to thank the Royal Society of Biology very much for the travel grant and I definitely encourage others to apply.

