

Bill Chaloner Memorial Award
20th INQUA Congress, Dublin



In the early months of 2019 I was awarded my doctorate from Royal Holloway University of London with a thesis entitled 'Environmental responses to abrupt climatic change during the Last Glacial-Interglacial Transition (16-8 cal. ka BP): delineating climatic drivers and landscape responses during millennial- and centennial-scale climatic variability.' This research sought to address key questions in ecology and palaeoclimatology, with a primary aim of understanding vegetation responses to abrupt climatic events within the British Isles. Secondary aims included to better understand the climatic structure of the Last Glacial-Interglacial Transition and the region-specific variability in the expression of abrupt climatic events.

In January 2019, I successfully applied to Royal Holloway for funding support to attend the 20th INQUA (International Union for Quaternary Research) Congress being held in Dublin, Ireland between the 24th and 31st July 2019. The quadrennial INQUA Congress is the largest gathering of Quaternary scientists (2,539 students, early career researchers and academics) where world leading research is presented and shared among delegates. The broad reach of the congress attracted research from across broad themes which were tied to specific INQUA commissions: Coastal and Marine Processes, Humans and Biosphere, Palaeoclimates, Stratigraphy and Chronology, and Terrestrial Processes, Deposits and History.

As part of the funding received from Royal Holloway I was able to attend the conference and present research arising from my PhD with two poster presentations: 'Vegetation responses to abrupt climatic shifts during the Last Glacial-Interglacial Transition: evidence from a north-south transect across the British Isles' and 'Principal Curves in ecological data: insights into palynological shifts in response to abrupt climatic change during the Last Glacial-Interglacial Transition.' These two presentations were delivered within the Humans and Biosphere, and Palaeoclimate commissions respectively.

The delivery of two presentations at INQUA enabled me to think about broader themes that underpin my research. In particular, the former presentation attracted a wider audience which would not have been possible in a smaller traditional conference setting. This wider audience provided feedback and constructive comments about the nature and impact of my research. Many delegates praised the quality and quantity of the research, with a frequent comment 'we are identifying similar features' in locations from across Europe. The latter presentation within the palaeoclimate commission drew audiences that were familiar with my work, providing an opportunity to discuss new approaches and how these approaches can be applied elsewhere. A common discussion point relating to both presentations centred upon the 'what next?' element and how this work can be built upon.

The funding gained from this conference also allowed me to network with other like-minded and internationally renowned scientists. This was possible within the conference itself over a coffee or at different organised events following the daily conference schedule. This included research group meetings. As a member of the INTIMATE working group (INTegrating Ice core MARine and TERrestrial records) being able to attend the conference meant I could attend the INTIMATE working group evening meeting to welcome the new group chairperson, Dr Dirk Sachse, with a short discussion centring on future opportunities and upcoming INTIMATE events. Additionally, as part of my PhD was conducted in Germany under the supervision of

Dirk Sachse, meeting at a large international conference provided an opportunity to discuss in person any unfinished works and potential future research arising from the collaboration.

Finally, attending the conference in Dublin offered the chance to explore the city of Dublin during the mid-conference 'rest day'. This day was spent exploring many cultural aspects and the heritage of the city. This included exploring the impressive Trinity College, to walking around St Stephens Green Park and listening to traditional Irish musicians on Dublin's famous Grafton Street. Dublin is clearly a city with so much to offer and having the chance to take in different elements was very rewarding.

In conclusion, the funding gained from Royal Holloway University of London allowed me to present original research at the INQUA congress in Dublin. Further, congress attendance allowed me to highlight ongoing high-quality research from the Centre for Quaternary Research in the Department of Geography as well as receiving invaluable feedback. I am extremely grateful for this travel award and would encourage any PhD student seeking travel support for research or conference attendance to apply for the Bill Chaloner Memorial Award.

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