

# Report on my trip to the EGU General Assembly, Vienna, with funding from the Bill Chaloner Memorial Award

Max Coleman

I was awarded funding from the Bill Chaloner Memorial Award for attending the European Geosciences Union (EGU) General Assembly conference in Vienna, Austria, in April 2019. The EGU general assembly is one of the biggest conferences in geoscience research with 16,250 presentations at this year's assembly! Scientific conferences are a really important means for communicating scientific research, through presentations of research and meeting face-to-face with other researchers in the same and different fields.

I am currently an MSc by Research student in the Department of Earth Sciences at Royal Holloway. My research in the Greenhouse Gas Research Group concerns characterisation of methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) emissions from the UK gas industry and supply network. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas which has been on the rise since 2007; understanding the sources of methane is important in mitigating emissions. At the EGU general assembly I presented a 'PICO' presentation titled 'Characterising methane emissions from North Sea gas production using  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  in CH<sub>4</sub> and C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>6</sub>:CH<sub>4</sub> ratios', which detailed my work on a collaborative UK research project investigating methane emissions from the Southern North Sea. PICO stands for 'Presenting Content Interactively' and is a form of presentation involving a short 2-minute summary of the presentation in front of an audience followed by discussion in front of interactive displays. Below is the title slide from my PICO presentation (with a cool photo of the aircraft used and some flight routes!).

The North Sea methane emissions research project is also part of a wider range of projects under the 'International Methane Studies' initiative, coordinated by the Climate and Clean Air Coalition. I attended a meeting of researchers conducting various projects within the International Methane Studies initiative where I summarised the findings so far of the Southern North Sea surveys project. I was very grateful for the opportunity to be able to report on my own work and the work of others at the meeting.

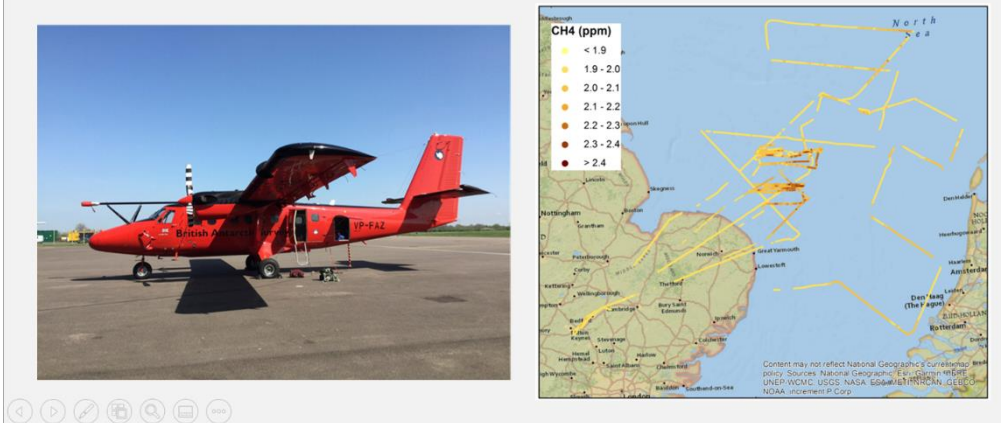
I stayed for five nights in Vienna to attend all five days of the conference to get the most out of my time there. Aside from presenting my PICO I attended many presentations by other researchers in the field of atmospheric methane research which widened my knowledge of

## 2-minute madness

Characterising methane emissions from North Sea gas production using  $\delta^{13}\text{C}-\text{CH}_4$  and  $\text{C}_2\text{H}_6:\text{CH}_4$  ratios

**Max Coleman, Rebecca Fisher, Dave Lowry, James France, Mathias Lanoiselle, Julianne Fernandez** – PICO Screen 5a.9

Department of Earth Sciences, Royal Holloway University of London, United Kingdom



what research and different methods are currently being conducted in the research field. It was also a great opportunity to attend presentations relating to the research I will be conducting in the PhD project I am starting in September, which is also within the wider field of climate science. Additionally, I attended several meetings including a meeting planning a second flight campaign surveying methane emissions from gas production in the Southern North Sea. Finally, I attended a few evening meals out with other researchers from around the world (including as far away as Australia!), which was a great chance to get to know other researchers better.

Aside from all the work and science, it was also lovely to visit a city I'd never been to before. Going out for meals in the evenings was also a lot of fun, and I was able to make new friends – who, hopefully, I'll be able to meet again at future conferences.

Being able to present my research was a great experience and I received feedback on my PICO presentation which I will aim to take on board for future presentations. The whole experience was also great practice organising my own itinerary, travel, and arranging funding. The highlight of the experience was witnessing (and being part of) 'real-time' scientific collaboration: I was able to experience ideas for projects and field studies being generated and planned there and then – opportunities which wouldn't be possible without conferences like the EGU general assembly.

Overall the experience was definitely worth the time, travel and organising; and I'd like to think worth the money which I received from the Bill Chaloner memorial award. As an MSc by Research student I don't have any allocated funding for conferences so the funding definitely helped make attending the EGU general assembly feasible. It perhaps goes without saying, but I highly recommend attending scientific conferences (which are not just for PhD students or above!) since I learned so much and enjoyed the experience as well. They are purportedly one of the key elements of modern science, so it is great that opportunities exist to apply for funding to be able to attend them, and I am very grateful for the funding I received. Thanks for reading and enjoy those conferences!

