

European Geoscience Union (EGU) General Assembly 2015, Vienna (Austria), 12 – 17 April 2015

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Thanks to the very generous grant from the British Society for Geomorphology, I was offered the unique chance to attend the European Geoscience Union (EGU) conference in Vienna, held from April 12th - 17th 2015. With more than 11,000 scientists from 108 countries and with a high diversity of sessions covering a wide range of geomorphic and earth science topics, the EGU meeting is probably a globally unique, scientific highlight in the academic career of young PhD students like me.

In many respects, the EGU 2015 was a valuable and, admittedly, an exciting experience for me. Since I will soon finishing my second PhD year the EGU was an excellent opportunity to present my key findings to a broad international and interdisciplinary research community. In the session "Geomechanics in natural environments" convened by Kerry Leith and, amongst other, TC Hales, Jens Turowski and Jeffrey Moore, I presented a poster on the results of my last field work, where I applied different geotechnical, geophysical and classical geomorphic techniques to evaluate the efficiency of rockfalls for rock wall erosion and talus slope deposition. The two-hour poster session was very productive and inspiring - which was related not least to the homely and relaxed atmosphere typical for the EGU's poster sessions. I had some really good discussions with other scientist working on similar topics and I got valuable advices for data interpretation and further field investigations. Most encouraging was the comment by an experienced alpine researcher asking "Are you crazy?!", which probably summarizes very well our exhausting and partly adventurous work in the steep alpine rockfall terrain.

A personal highlight for me was my talk in the session "Rockfall, rockslides and rock avalanches" convened by Michael Krautblatter, Dave Petley and Axel Volkwein, which was my first talk at such a large, international conference. As a counterpart to my local-scale field investigations, I presented my modelling results about the major regional-scale rockfall controls. Giving a talk about my PhD research to an international audience with scientist, who I only knew from publications, was a great experience for me. After my talk I got some very encouraging feedbacks and constructive and valuable inputs, which certainly enrich not only the publication, which I plan to submit next month, but also my future work.

The EGU 2015 was an excellent place to come together with other geomorphologists (both experienced and Postgraduates), to discuss about current research topics, novel field and modelling techniques and conceptual ideas. There were a number of very interesting and high-level talks, PICOs and poster presentations, where I could learn a lot both systemically and methodically for my PhD project. For instance, in the short course "Use of 3D point clouds in Geosciences" held by Antonio Abellan offered very good insights in several examples of LiDAR and photogrammetric techniques, 3D point cloud analysis, software and field applications. In the Penck Lecture, Ann Rowan gave a very impressive overview of the past and future changes of mountain glaciers and their implications for climate change studies. However, even apart from my PhD focus, I learned about sediment mobilisation by crayfish, eating preferences of micro-organisms in soils and why landslides like lying low.

One of my absolute highlights was Heather Viles' Ralph Alger Bagnolds Medal Lecture on "Boulders, biology and buildings: Why weathering is vital to geomorphology", introduced by a BSG/ESPL sponsored reception. The excellent medal lecture was very inspiring and Heather provided a perfect insight into her past and current research projects and highlighted the future big research questions in the field of weathering studies. Especially for a Postgraduate and woman in research like me, Heather Viles strongly impressed by her research activities and experiences, and moreover, by her personality.

In total, the EGU conference 2015 was a complete success and a valuable experience! The meeting was very well organised, provided a number of high-level scientific sessions, workshops, various special formal as well as informal events for young geomorphologists (such as in the Mozartstuben) and allowed to establish new and strengthen existing contacts. Therefore, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the British Society for Geomorphology for their very generous grant, which made it possible to attend the EGU 2015 in Vienna and to collect all these valuable (personal and scientific) experiences.