



THE SEVENTH CONGRESS OF EUROPEAN MALACOLOGICAL SOCIETIES

CONFERENCE REPORT

The Seventh Congress of European Malacological Societies – EuroMal2014 – took place on September 7–11 in Cambridge, UK. The Organising Committee included JON ABLETT, DAVID ALDRIDGE (Chairman), KATRIN LINSE, RICHARD C. PREECE, TONY WALKER,

and TOM S. WHITE, with support from the members of The Malacological Society of London. The Scientific Committee was composed of 15 scientists.

About 120 participants from 24 countries attended the conference, the main representation being



Figs 1–4. Snapshots of the Congress: 1 – King's College, Cambridge, 2 – Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, 3 – debate in St. Catharine's College, 4 – Polish malacologists at the Congress. Photos: ANNA SULIKOWSKA-DROZD

from European research centres, but also scientists from Argentina, USA, New Zealand, Hong Kong, and Thailand were present.

The conference started and ended with keynote lectures. The first was "Catastrophic events shape patterns of mollusc biodiversity in ancient lakes" by TOM WILKE from Justus Liebig University, Giessen, Germany. The closing lecture, "Marine molluscs at high latitude", was given by LLOYD S. PECK from the British Antarctic Survey, Cambridge, UK. The presentations were divided among 12 lecture sessions. The general themes of the EuroMal2014 were as follows: Biogeography, Ecology & Conservation; (Molecular) Taxonomy and Phylogenetics; Climate, Palaeontology and Archaeology; Molluscan Biology and Physiology; Miscellaneous Highlights. In total, the conference participants gave 47 lectures. Most of them were presented by scientists representing research institutions from the UK (16), Portugal (8), and Spain (6). Two lectures, dealing with gastropod and bivalve physiology, were given by Polish scientists: JOANNA PIEŃKOWSKA (Adam Mickiewicz

University in Poznań), and ALEKSANDRA SKAWINA (University of Warsaw). The conference was dominated by topics related to marine (25) and freshwater molluscs (18), only four lectures dealt with terrestrial snails. Three lectures were devoted to chitons and two to cephalopods. The ratio of gastropod to bivalve presentations was 23:25, and thus nearly even. Among bivalve topics the most frequent were unionid research issues. Very many lectures and reports concerned molluscan physiology (11), genome (8) and also the role of molluscs in palaeoclimate research. About 50 posters were presented at the conference, most of them by researchers from Spain (11) and Poland (8).

As usual, at the end of the conference, the best lectures and posters prepared by undergraduate and graduate students were awarded prizes or diplomas. The Organisers rewarded LAUREN H. SUMNER-ROONEY from University of Belfast (UK) for her presentation about recently discovered photoreceptors in chitons (Schwabe organ), and PHILIP HOLLYMAN from Bangor University (UK) for his poster about



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Figs 5–8. Snapshots of the Congress: 5–6 – lunch at the Main Hall of St. Catharine's College, 7 – collecting samples in the Botanic Garden, 8 – conference trip – punting on the River Cam. Photos: ANNA SULIKOWSKA-DROZD (5–6, 8) and IGA LEWIN (7)



statoliths, operculum and shell growth in *Buccinum undatum*. Additional prizes were awarded by the Spanish Malacologists Society (Sociedad Espanola de Malacologia) to PEDRO E. ROMERO (Biodiversity and Climate Research Centre, Frankfurt am Main, Germany) for his presentation on the evolution of euthyneuran gastropods; his findings were based on mitochondrial genome data, and to ELISAVET GEORGOPOULOU (Natural History Museum Vienna, Austria) for her poster about the FreshGEN project.

The conference lecture sessions were held within the premises of St. Catharine's College modern building of McGrath Centre while the poster session was held in a laboratory of the Department of Zoology, University of Cambridge. Most of the participants were accommodated in the historic buildings of St. Catharine's College. Typical British breakfast (including porridge) and elegant lunches were served in the College's Main Hall. The first informal meeting, Ice Breaker, took place in the galleries of the Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, the oldest of the University of Cambridge museums. There we could admire the fossils collected in 1728 and displayed in the original cabinets. St. Catharine's provided refreshments between the lecture sessions. Mid-morning coffee and afternoon tea were served in the bar beneath the lecture theatre. There were also drinks at the poster session. The conference dinner was served in the historic building of Corpus Christi College Dining Hall.

Cambridge offers a wide selection of charming places where we could enjoy malacological discussions (for example the famous Eagle pub, where in

1953 Crick and Watson announced the discovery of DNA structure by saying "we have discovered the secret of life").

The last day of the conference was spent on excursions in Cambridge. We visited the Cambridge University Botanic Garden designed in the 19th c. by John S. Henslow who studied intraspecific variation of plants and was Charles Darwin's mentor. The Organisers also gave us the opportunity to sight-see from the inland side (amazing King's College Chapel!) as well as from the traditional Cambridge Punts cruising along the Cam River. We were encouraged to try punting ourselves which turned out to be a real sporting challenge.

The conference ended with invitation to participate in the 8th Congress of European Malacological Societies which will be organised in 2017 in Poland.

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