The 15th International Symposium on Spin and Magnetic Field Effects in Chemistry and Related Phenomena (Spin Chemistry Meeting 2017)

Schluchsee, Black Forest, Germany, September 17-21, 2017

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Tokyo, November 2017

My name is Lewis Antill, a doctoral student of the Graduate Program on Environmental Sciences (GPES) at The University of Tokyo, Japan. My research focusses on the development of microspectroscopic techniques to observe the magnetosensitivity of photochemical reactions believed to be responsible for the ability of some animals to navigate in the Earth's magnetic field, on a scale that allows the observation of these reactions taking place in sub-cellular environments.

The first Spin Chemistry Meeting (SCM) was held in 1991, since then the meeting has occurred every one or two years. Spin chemistry focusses on magnetic and spin effects on the rates and yields of chemical reactions. The field extends from chemical systems encompassing the solid and gaseous state, to both biological systems and material science, with the application of magnetic field strengths ranging from very weak fields of tens of microtesla (comparable to the geomagnetic field) up to tens of tesla.

I was able to attend this year's SCM due to the generous research travel grant from the Department of Multidisciplinary Sciences of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, The University of Tokyo. SCM 2017 was held in Schluchsee, which is located in the Black Forest of south-west Germany. The SCM comprised of oral and poster presentations in a wide range of topics, by the leading experts in their respective fields, from quantum computing to animal navigation. There were over 150 participants with around 90 presentations. There were numerous stimulating discussions allowing the marvellous opportunity to exchange ideas and broaden perspectives on the field.

Attending this conference was an excellent opportunity to meet the experts in my field, for the first time. I was able to discuss the current scientific endeavours in the field of spin chemistry with numerous people both in formal and informal settings. During the conference, I was given the opportunity to present my work in the form of a poster. My poster entitled 'Magnetosensitive flavin photochemistry in micron-scale reaction environments' discussed

major parts of my PhD research conducted at The University of Tokyo. I had numerous people attend my presentation, which led to many fruitful discussions.

On the last day of the conference, I participated in a cultural excursion to the beautiful city of Freiburg. During the excursion, we visited numerous important historical landmarks in the medieval city centre. This was a wonderful experience and also an excellent opportunity to meet new scientists with similar research interests. In the evening, we attended a formal dinner in the heart of the Black Forest. During the dinner, prizes for the posters were presented. To my delight, I was awarded 1st place, the Taylor & Francis SCM 2017 Poster Prize. A cash reward and a subscription to the journal Molecular Physics were part of my prize.

I would like to conclude by extending my gratitude to the Department of Multidisciplinary Sciences for the travel grant and the GPES program for giving me the opportunity to attend this prestigious event. The whole experience was invaluable both academically and personally, thank you.