

Caws Student travel award recipient

Gayle Somerville

Travel report 2015

Thank you to the Council of Australasian Weed Societies (CAWS) for providing support allowing me to attend the Mathematical modelling in Ecology and Evolution Conference, in Paris in June 2015. Whilst in Europe I also attended a meeting at the Rothamsted research centre.

The Mathematical modelling in Ecology and Evolution Conference, in Paris 2015 was very interesting. It is held every two years, and billed as 'one of the largest conferences that brings together researchers working at the interface between evolutionary biology and the mathematical, physical, and computational sciences'. I presented my latest research and received helpful and positive feedback from several interested people. Many of the speakers were people who had designed or improved original models, and I was very impressed by the level of expertise in this area. I realised how much I had to learn, and how many more interesting areas there were for me to work in throughout my career. I had attended a local modelling and simulation (MODSIM) conference in Queensland, where the range of projects was much broader, whereas the Paris conference was of a world class standard, and the level of computational skill was of a correspondingly high standard. I met and listened to some interesting people in Paris and found out about several interesting areas of research that I did not even know existed. Thank you for the opportunity to experience this.

Rothamsted research centre is the longest running agricultural research station in the world, working for nearly 170 years. They aim to 'deliver the knowledge and new practices to increase crop productivity and quality and to develop environmentally sustainable solutions for food and energy production'. It was a great pleasure to tour the site and meet several of the staff, gaining some insight into work they have done over the last 170 years, and how they continue to support research that uses both ancient and modern materials and research. We met staff who are looking at mathematical studies of the evolution of resistance, which is my area of study; it was good to see what is being done at another small group, like we have here. I talked about my latest work, and it was very interesting to discuss it with fellow researchers and receive helpful advice and feedback.

The Caws Student travel award assisted my travel to the Mathematical modelling in Ecology and Evolution Conference, in Paris and a meeting at the Rothamsted research centre. These experiences helped develop my understanding of weed management and allowed me to meet diverse and interesting people working in this field, whom I look forward to seeing more of in the future. I also had a good look around the agricultural country in the UK and France, which I found informative, and enjoyed very much. This time overseas influenced me to have a future career in this field.

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