



Ollscoil Chathair  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City University

## **London International Youth Science Forum**

**Lucy Grogan**

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## London International Youth Science Forum


'Science for Unity' was the theme given to the 64<sup>th</sup> annual London International Youth Science Forum (LIYSF) and I believe that this theme perfectly encapsulates the spirit of this amazing event.

I had the privilege to belong to a group of almost 500 young people from 84 different countries and regions who were brought to London for the purpose of discussing and learning about science, while simultaneously enjoying ourselves and forming friendships that will last well beyond these two life-changing weeks. Science is at the forefront of this event, however I also learned so much about the culture and history of many different countries from people all across the globe.

Nobel prize winner Professor Ben Feringa gave the first lecture at the opening ceremony. This lecture on nanotechnology piqued my interest- it was fascinating to learn that by mimicking the functions naturally found in nature, such as how receptor molecules in our eyes 'spin' when hit by light, we can make huge leaps in science and technology. This area in science is especially relevant to my degree and the impact of this lecture has stuck in my mind since- I am seriously considering pursuing nanotechnology in the future.

Other lectures on topics I previously would not have had much interest in, such as T-cells, turned out to be quite intriguing due to the passion of the speakers and how well they can present such complicated concepts across to us students. One lecture 'The Geographical Record of Climate Change' stood out to me thanks to the amazing Professor Christopher Jackson. Through shocking facts and alarming statistics, he demonstrated the severity of global warming due to human activity, yet also managed to sprinkle in some humour to this serious topic, engaging the audience and making his lecture one to remember.

These two weeks weren't all just lectures- we had fantastic opportunities to visit universities conducting cutting-edge research all over the UK. Personally, I chose to visit the department of crime science in University College London -a tube's journey away from my accommodation at Imperial- and the school of pharmaceuticals in Cardiff University -a very long bus journey away. My favourite trip was to Oxford, where we visited



the Oxford University Museum of Natural History and got a mini lecture on evolution, focusing on topics such as Charles Darwin and just how strange barnacles are. After the museum visit, we had the opportunity to explore Oxford and I fell in love with the historical, quaint buildings of the city.

Another highlight of LIYSF is the Science Bazaar, where students have the opportunity to present research they themselves have conducted to fellow students and judges. One friend I made from the US was chosen to present her project on stage in front of all 500 of us- a very daunting yet wonderful opportunity for her. The project focused on Alzheimer's and how certain cultures around the world may have reduced rates of the disease due to the types of foods eaten there. My friend even tested her hypothesis on worms and found a correlation between certain spices and reduced Alzheimer's in the worms. It is fascinating to think that people my age are already out there conducting valuable research and contributing to science and the welfare of humanity.

From learning about the power of fusion energy to trying to work in a group to somehow explain quantum computers in under 6 minutes to an audience who may know nothing about it, I can say with certainty that I have gained valuable knowledge in just these two weeks- and not just academic knowledge but also communication, networking, and teamwork skills.

These two weeks have given me even more passion for what I am studying and so much excitement for the possibilities of what I could be studying in the future. I thank DCU for giving me such an amazing opportunity- it was truly priceless. LIYSF has without a doubt guided me towards my future career path and has given me an unforgettable experience that has allowed me to grow not just as a person- but as a scientist.