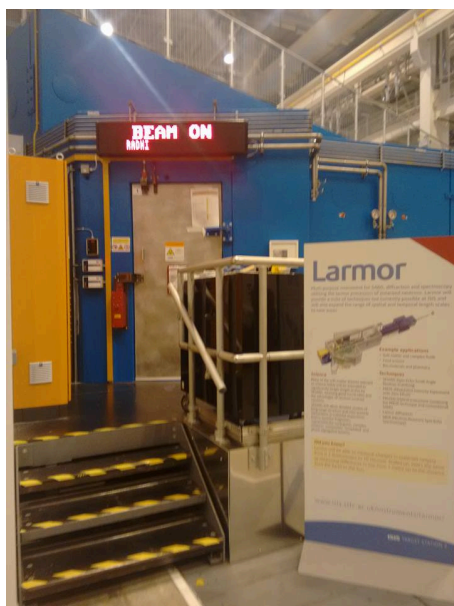


Originally when I signed up to go to CUWiP. I didn't know what so many people from Edinburgh had applied because I didn't know any of the girls before-hand. However, Rosie put us all in touch through email, which was really helpful as we were able to book train tickets together so we wouldn't be travelling alone.

The night we arrived in Oxford, there was a welcome reception for all of the attendees for the conference and the organisers and we took part in a quiz, which was a good chance to get to know some of the other girls.

On the first day, we were given an introductory talk and then got on buses to head to the Rutherford Appleton Laboratories, which is where the first talk was given on what RAL was and what it did. I wasn't even aware that there was a particle accelerator in Britain so this was extremely interesting and informative.



ISIS in RAL

Next, there was the first of three career panels where we got to listen to various women's career stories and ask questions. It was nice to actually be able to speak to someone that had already been through everything we are going through now and be given advice. Most of the questions were about careers and touched upon any difficulties that women had experienced in the field of science just for being women. It was nice to see that most had not experienced much gender bias throughout their career, especially the younger women which reassured us that the STEM field is definitely open to men and women.

Next, we took tours around RAL, looking at the particle accelerator and various departments in the compound. It was really interesting to see people from a range of subjects all working in one place. One lab that I visited was looking into how physics can be used in medicine, and we also received a talk on this later on given by Dr Sonia Trigueros: Nanotechnology for medicine: opportunities and challenges. It was great to see how integrated the different departments were in RAL as I personally have an interest in biology but I wasn't aware that there would be job opportunities that involved both physics and biology.



Group photo in RAL

That evening, there was another social even where we got to talk to the speakers from the day in small groups incase we had any questions we didn't want to as in front of a lecture hall.

The next day mainly consisted of talks such as Prof Christine Davies: The Quandary of Quarks, Prof Haida Liandg: From Astronomy to Archaeology and Prof. Amanda Cooper Sarkar: My path to a career in physics, followed by another career panel.



The banquet

That evening, there was a banquet in Lady Margaret Halls - the accommodation that we were staying in - which provided

us with another chance to be able to chat to the speakers and organisers personally.

On the last day, Prof Fay Dowker gave a lecture on general relativity followed by an academic panel and a tour of the laboratories in Oxford. After lunch, Prof Daniela Bortoletto (the organizer of the conference) gave the closing remarks and we had some free time to look around the city before getting the train home.



A group of us with the organiser, Daniela Bortoletto

Before attending the conference, I had been worried that all of the talks would be from women telling us all how hard being in a STEM field is for women working in the industry and that they experience sexism on a daily basis, especially because I have never witness discrimination against women in physics in Edinburgh University or even in High School. However, the message seemed to be more about having confidence in your won abilities which seems to be something that women struggle with a bit more than men.

My confidence in myself was definitely boosted after the conference, by hearing stories that I could relate to both from the other girls that attended the conference and the guest speakers.



Even now, a month after the conference, I am still in touch with the friends I made from Edinburgh and different universities and was encouraged by Prof Bortoletto to add her and any of the guest speakers on LinkedIn.

Throughout the conference, we were also given information about various internships that were available with the companies that the speakers worked for or the laboratories that we toured and I personally applied to three summer internships in RAL that I wouldn't have known about/even considered before this conference.

If funding hadn't have been provided, I don't think I would have been able to afford to attend the conference, so the fact that Edinburgh paid for travel for all of us is really appreciated! We were told that we were the largest group of girls from one single university that had ever attended the conference!

I definitely think that funding should be available if this conference is ran next year and I would highly recommend people to apply as it has really changed my view on physics as a career - there are so many different options available that I hadn't even contemplated - and it was amazing to hear the stories from successful women in physics and actually be able to relate to the struggles that they had.



All of the girls that attended the conference with the organisers.