

## 14<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Medical Physics.

In September of this year I was lucky enough to attend the International Conference of Medical Physics in Nuremberg, Germany. This was thanks to funding from EFOMP (the European Federation of Organisations in Medical Physics) and our Medical Physics department at Southampton General Hospital, England. The conference itself was four days and this was preceded by a scientific symposium entitled "Advances in Imaging and Radiation Therapy", which I was also able to attend.

I stayed in hotel just a few minutes walk from the centre of Nuremberg called the ART hotel. This felt satisfyingly appropriate being that much of the symposium was indeed on the subject of ART (Adaptive Radiotherapy). It was a great opportunity to get an up-to-date overview on the latest developments in imaging and therapy related to radiation oncology. I particularly enjoyed the passionate photon versus proton debate that wrapped up day two of the symposium.

The main conference was held in Nuremberg's impressive conference centre, a section of which is pictured below:



The conference itself was divided into 12 tracks, each covering a different topic of Medical Physics and Bioengineering. In addition to the scientific sessions there were special sessions (e.g. EFOMP had their own session on the Thursday), poster sessions, refresher courses (particularly popular with the early birds) and lunch symposiums (popular with all!). As a large section of my work is spent in Radiotherapy I decided to follow this session for most of the conference. However, I was able to drop in and out of other sessions too so that I could catch particular talks that caught my eye. For example Boone from the USA gave an informative talk on CT of the breast, in which he described a CT scanner purposely built for imaging the breast with the patient lying prone. I also attended some of the image processing talks as a number of current projects within our department involve image processing, segmentation and registration techniques.

Within radiotherapy there were topics on most of the specialties. There were quite a few talks on Hadron therapy that I found very interesting as this is not

a topic that I had much prior knowledge in. In addition there were talks on treatment planning, brachytherapy, QA and dosimetry, all of which had relevance to our routine work, research and development.

The conference was a great opportunity to hear about the work that's taking place in other departments and to gain some inspiration for future research and development. It also gave me the chance to put faces to the names of a couple of very prominent physicists!

It wasn't all work though. I attended the icebreaker party at the conference on the Wednesday evening where we were treated to the delights of German sausages, sauerkraut and beer! I met a great group of people that evening to pal up with and spend the rest of my free time in Nuremberg with.

It was a truly international mix including German, Swiss, Italian, Portuguese, Austrian, American and British!



I also joined in on a walking tour through Nuremberg. As you can see from the photos - it's a beautiful city.



On the final night we were invited to a state reception in Nuremberg's castle. The evening started with a speech from the secretary of state for education. This was all in German and as my language skills didn't develop much over the week I was very grateful for the translated paper copy! The rest of the

evening was left open for socialising and exploring the castle - a great way to enjoy the last evening!

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