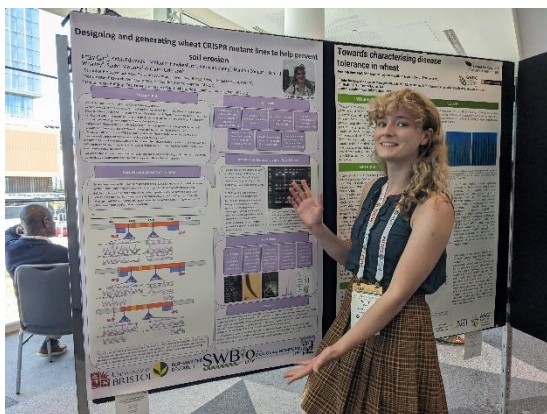


The International Wheat Congress (IWC) is the largest regular event held in the wheat research community, and this year it was held in Perth, Australia from 21st-27th September. The congress arose as a merging of two separate wheat conferences, and as a result the congress spans a broad range of research themes, providing plenty of opportunities to learn more about wheat research.

Second year PhD student, Emily Carr, studying at the University of Bristol was lucky enough to be amongst the IWC conference delegates after securing generous funding from The Douglas Bomford Trust.

Over the six days of the conference she attended a workshop on functional genomics and another on Enhancing wheat productivity through transformation and genome editing. This was of particular interest due to the fact that most of Emily's PhD work so far has been on generating wheat CRISPR mutant lines. This workshop covered the economic and scientific aspects of creating gene edited wheat, with the highlight being a talk from Martin Ventura on the first approved GM wheat, HB4, which was developed in Argentina to improve drought tolerance. Talks continued throughout the week, covering themes on genomics, evolution, breeding, agronomy, nutrition, and abiotic and biotic stress, but a particular highlight was supporting other early career researchers during the ECR presentation session.



Emily was accepted to give her first poster presentation at this international conference, and during her session she networked with many different researchers who visited her poster to hear about her research. There were several poster sessions throughout the congress which allowed her to connect with more researchers and learn more about how to utilise different scientific techniques for different research applications.

On the final day of the conference, Emily attended a field trip to Intergrain, one of the leading cereal breeders in Australia. The tour of Intergrain allowed access to the genomics facility and quality lab, where it was interesting to see how a lab can be combined with a bakery to test the quality of different varieties for different desirable traits for bread and noodles. There was also a presentation on breeding logistics and a tour of the glasshouse, to see future elite varieties being crossed before being sent out to field trials.

Emily would like to thank the Douglas Bomford Trust for their financial support which enabled her to attend the conference. This in turn has inspired her further and provided her with more drive and contacts to pursue her career in agricultural science.