Pieter Bots - Mineralogical Society of Great Britain and Ireland Student Bursary Award 2009

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My first major conference, Goldschmidt 2009, started with the MSA short course in Thermodynamics and Kinetics of Water-Rock Interactions. This was a good way to start of in a smaller crowd and to get to know some people before Goldschmidt kicked off. The short course was also very interesting because it gave me some more knowledge on basic principles in mineralogy.

After the short course when the main conference started I noticed how big Goldschmidt actually is. This was really noticeable at the ice breaker, where because of the size I mainly socialized with people I already knew. During the rest of the conference I did get many opportunities to have chats with people from my area of research that I didn't know in advance. Although, I hoped that I was able to chat to more researchers that I didn't know in advance. Due to the size of the conference and the busy schedule of everybody present at the conference this wasn't always possible.

Overall I really enjoyed my first major conference. It was a whole new experience running from one place to the next to find out that the talk I was interested in wasn't as interesting as I hoped for. I did go to many presentations that were really interested and useful for my PhD, including some poster presentation or just really interesting to see what (geochemical) research other people are doing.

Goldschmidt's last day was the most exciting day for me, because my oral presentation (the effect of SO_4 and Mg/Ca on precipitated calcium carbonate) was at the last day of Goldschmidt. My presentation went really well and got some nice comments afterwards, although I was hoping for more questions at the end of my presentation, so I would have been more challenged to think about what I do. For my research project, I am trying establish better links between solution chemistry (with the focus on magnesium and sulphate) and calcium carbonate mineralogy to be able to predict/explain the presence of calcite and aragonite seas during the Phanerozoic better.