In November 2011 I attended the 7th International Symposium on Inorganic Phosphate Materials. The conference was held at Argonne National Lab, Illinois and was targeted exclusively at research in Materials Chemistry.

In arriving to the venue my first impressions were that the organisers had certainly succeeded in attracting a very phosphate-focused audience. The overall theme of the conference was “Phosphate Materials for Energy Storage”, though there were presentations on a much broader range of topics over the three days. Indeed, a few of the talks involved general reviews concerning the place of phosphates in nature, the lab and industry. The quality of the research presented was very high and included areas such as Li ion batteries, nuclear waste immobilisation, biomaterials, non-linear optics, *etc*. I was also pleased to find that there were talks on structure-property relationships in transition metal phosphates; an area closely related to my own research.

I gave my oral presentation, “Structural Characterisation of (Mn3+, Fe3+) Condensed Phosphate Systems as new Archetypes for Pigment Materials” on the final day of the conference. While delivering the talk it was nice to see various members of the audience engaged in intense discussion followed by some interesting questions from them. In the interval afterwards I received positive feedback and was further probed about my materials, giving me the sense that my talk had been well-received.

The opportunity to present my work to such an experienced and influential audience has been highly beneficial and allowed me to consider my own research from a different perspective. I would like finish by expressing my sincerest gratitude to the School of Chemistry for part-funding my attendance to this conference.