In May 2012 I attended the 60th American Society for Mass Spectrometry Conference on Mass Spectrometry and Allied Topics in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. This annual conference is the largest for mass spectrometrist’s and provided me with a fantastic opportunity to present my work at an event attended by thousands.

My initial impressions were of awe; of the stunning views from the Canada Place conference centre, of the sheer size of the venue and the vast number of speakers attending. Six parallel oral sessions run alongside one another throughout the day, focusing on a range of topics. And with 700 or more posters presented each day it was important to plan my time in the poster sessions to ensure that I was able to read any posters of particular interest and allow time for discussion with the poster presenter.

During the course of the five day conference I was able to attend a number of interesting talks, many of which served as inspiration for my future research. I also conversed with a number of people about their posters and was able to relate my own research to date to some of the presented work. Discussions such as these were also particularly beneficial when I presented my own work.

After the conference dates I was able to take the opportunity to explore the beautiful city and surrounding area. Particular highlights were climbing Grouse Mountain and being rewarded with some truly breath-taking views, and kayaking in the peace and tranquillity of Deep Cove, surrounded by trees and in the company of the seals which inhabited the waters.