

The International School on Foraminifera - 9th Edition

From 6th to 25th of June 2016 academic researchers, graduate students and industry workers from all around the world gathered in Urbino, Italy, for three weeks of “Foram-Fun”! As participants of this well-respected course, we learned many aspects of foraminiferal diversity and biostratigraphy, and their importance for paleoclimatic and paleoceanographic reconstructions.

The course was divided into four modules: Introduction, Larger Benthic Foraminifera, Planktonic Foraminifera and Smaller Benthic Foraminifera. Fabrizio Frontalini and Mike Kaminski were the main organizers, and each module included invited lecturers. The course was accompanied by useful literature and many practical sessions looking under the microscope. There was constant interaction among the lecturers and the participants, and during the “Foraminiferal Party” we had the opportunity to present our own research.

During the field trip day we visited different outcrops in the region between Urbino and Gubbio. The day started with fossil hunting ammonites from the Middle Toarcian (Early Jurassic), then we observed key events in the history of Earth, such as the PETM and ELMO at the famous section of Contessa. The lunch in the medieval town of Gubbio was delightful, and in the afternoon we visited the Bottaccione Gorge section where the iridium anomaly of the K/Pg boundary was first described. The last stop was the beautiful margin of Candigliano Brook, where we could look at a distinct dark-sediment layer corresponding to the Oceanic Anoxic Event of the Aptian (Early Cretaceous). The day ended with a delicious dinner over tasty Italian wine, which resulted in incredible Karaoke performances.

The course left us a great experience that we highly recommend to all early career Micropalaeontologists. After three weeks studying the foraminiferal world we realized that these unicellular organisms are after all not that different from us. We, like forams, grow in size in the high-nutrient environment of Urbino. The full moon which is important for foraminifera reproduction also inspired lovely couples to form during the course. And lastly the daily disagreement regarding the air-conditioning showed that we, like forams, locally adapt to different climatic conditions.

Finally, we would like to thank EGU for the grants awarded to support our registration fees. We are also extremely grateful to the organizers and lecturers for their efforts and attention during the ISF 2016.

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Group picture at the K/Pg boundary in Bottaccione Gorge