

Niamh Ní Challanáin Ní Chianáin, Gaelcholaiste Cheatharlach, Carlow

I really enjoyed my week's experience in AMBER. My favourite part of the week was the labs in St James' on the Tuesday. I found it extremely interesting to see nano science applied to real life as opposed to just stuck in the lab.

On the first day, Monday, we took a tour of the labs and the basement and also the Trinity grounds. It was really interesting to see all the different equipment and how the equipment is set up such as the Scanning Tunnelling Microscope which is sitting on its own plinth so that the Dart travelling past doesn't affect the results of any experiments.

On Tuesday, we started with our labs. The first one we did was to create gold nano particles with tetrachloroauric acid. We heated the solution until it started to boil and then added another solution to create the nano particles. Unfortunately, our nano particles fell out of the solution really quickly and we sort of created little gold clumps. Later we headed to St James' where we saw nano science and medicine combined in a working lab. The people working in the lab were all working at cancer but different types such as leukaemia and pancreatic cancer.

On Wednesday, we visited the advanced microscopy lab where we saw scanned electron microscope. With this we saw an individual hair follicle on a spider, the spores of a lavender, the ridges of a cd and a butterfly's wing. We also cross sectioned a hair. We also had a talk on how to start a company. We were split into groups and made our own company.

On Thursday, we visited the materials lab where we saw bio-degradable plastics made out of different bacteria and also a plastic that was soluble in water. Later that day we went to RCSI in Stephan's Green. We saw how scaffolds are made and the nano science that is involved.

On Friday, we went to the science makeshop and made speakers. Following this we listened to a talk about nano technology and how Crann and Trinity researchers are contributing to the new technology. After lunch we went on a tour of the science gallery.

On the whole I really enjoyed my week in Crann. I definitely want to pursue a career in science.