

Name: Ben Duffy

Current Affiliation: Department of Medicine, University College London

Host Institution: Department of Functional Brain Imaging, Tohoku University

Host Researcher: Professor Ryuta Kawashima

During the summer of 2013, I participated in the JSPS Summer Programme. During the first week of the programme, all the JSPS Summer Programme Fellows stayed together in Sokendai, which was a wonderful opportunity to meet researchers from all different fields, to participate in a homestay (see photo) and to learn something about the Japanese language and culture before we all dispersed across Japan to our host institutions.

My host institution was Tohoku University in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture where my project was using state-of-the-art magnetic resonance imaging to observe the effects of seizures on brain function. Primarily I worked with Assistant Professor Akira Sumiyoshi, who had enormous amounts of time and patience to teach me about the techniques that the lab specialises in. All the students and staff in the department were inconceivably generous and there was plenty of socialising after office hours.

During my stay in Japan I was fortunate enough to visit regions of extraordinary natural beauty such as the Zaō Quasi, Nikkō and Fuji-Hakone-Izu national parks as well as experience cultural events such as the Tanabata Festival in Sendai.

I benefitted enormously from the summer in Japan, both culturally and scientifically. Most importantly we have developed a fruitful scientific collaboration that involves the sharing of knowledge, information and ideas. This will surely continue in to the future as we have kept in close contact. I would sincerely recommend all post-graduate students to apply for this Programme and believe that its popularity will continue to grow into the future.

