

For my STP elective I visited the Rare and Imported Pathogens Laboratory (RIPL) at PHE Porton. I was already aware of the important service provided by reference laboratories, and it was during my second year of training I attended the ACB Microbiology Trainee Day where Dr Tim Brooks presented interesting cases handled by the Imported Fever Service. It was after then I was hooked on going to RIPL to do my elective!

The team at RIPL were incredibly friendly and welcoming. My time was split between the clinical team and the diagnostic laboratory, where I worked alongside BMS staff identifying ACDP group 3 and 4 pathogens from returning travellers. With the clinical team, I was able to assist with the selection of tests (molecular & serological) depending on the travel history & clinical details provided, observe the generation of clinical comments which accompany the final report, and the advice given on the management of such infections. The Lyme diagnostic service is also provided by RIPL and I was able to obtain an understanding of the complexities involved in testing and reporting of results. I was also able to spend time within the electron microscopy, food and water testing, health and safety, and emergency response departments also.

My 4 weeks at RIPL passed very quickly, however the knowledge and experience I have gained will be invaluable in my future career as a Clinical Scientist.