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Since graduating from the University of Birmingham I've moved to the United States where I've taken up a Marie Curie Fellowship at Caltech. It has also been a great pleasure to work at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, where I am a Visiting Research Fellow. My time at the University of Birmingham as postgraduate student gave me excellent preparation for postdoctoral research: my supervisor, Prof. Alberto Vecchio, was very supportive but also allowed me to work independently.

What is the best thing about what you are doing now?

My training and subsequent research have given me the confidence to speak with colleagues about science which is slightly outside of my field of expertise. These collaborations are the most rewarding to me, and the most fun!

What was the best thing about your time as a student here?

As a postgraduate student, I developed a close network of friends which I maintain to this day. Some of my fondest memories of my time at the University of Birmingham are times with these friends – getting coffee and working on problems together.

In what way did living and studying in Birmingham live up to your expectations?

Living in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter – a close walk to the city centre – was a great experience. I could work in local coffee shops like York's Bakery for hours at a time, as well as work on the beautiful University campus. The green spaces on campus were wonderful for relaxing in the afternoon on sunny days, and eating lunch with colleagues.

How did you grow as a person by coming to University Did it change your life in any way?

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What advice would you give to current students studying on your degree programme?

Don't give up! Completing a PhD programme is very challenging; don't be afraid to talk to your colleagues, friends or supervisor if you're having a difficult time. We've all been there and it's normal – it's not just you!

Is there anything else you would like to share?

I would like to thank my former supervisor, Prof. Alberto Vecchio, for his continued support in my career. His comments and suggestions for my thesis undoubtedly made it better, and it will soon be published as a book by Springer in the "Springer Theses" series.