

## Placement report

### National Trust, Nine days, Saddlescombe Farm, East Sussex, UK

Setup in 1835, the National Trust is a charity which focuses on the conservation of the country's countryside and wildlife as well as historical infrastructure. They own 775 miles of coastline; over 248,000 hectares of land and over 500 historic houses, castles, ancient monuments gardens and parks and nature reserves (National Trust 2015).

My placement involved many different tasks across the variety of activities the National Trust has to offer. I was located at Saddlescombe Farm in West Sussex. The farm is set in the surrounding South Downs National Park. I found the placement as I had already done some work experience at a different National Trust site with Louise Buckley before attending university.

This is a breakdown of what I undertook for my placement:

#### Day 1 - 6th June

I helped to set up tasks about map reading and identification of object found at Saddlescombe farm and the surrounding countryside.

I ran the map reading task and I was in charge of 15 children. The task involved explaining how 6 figure grid references work. I assisted the children in finding numerous different locations on a map. The task also involved map symbol identification, symbols were hanging up around the room and the children had to try and work out what they were. I also got them to come up with their own map symbols.

On the same day I also assisted in a talk about the local Lime kiln and chalk quarry and about the uses of these features in the past, along with the geology of the area and how that effected the use of the land as well as how it acts as a habitat for a vast number of species of animals.

#### Days 2 &3 - 9th/10th June

I helped run a conservation task with school children. This was a task to help conserve the rare and endangered chalk grassland habitat. This is a particularly valuable environment for certain species of insects and flowers. The way we helped to conserve it was by removing and burning Ash and Hawthorne trees. This reduced the shading and produced a glade where the grassland habitat could develop. I also attended to the fire to meet health and safety regulations.



Figure 1: Fire starting up

#### Day 4 - 23rd June

I carried out another similar conservation task on Wolstonbury Hill with a senior school. We cleared old Ash trees that were infected with ash dieback and burnt the debris. This also created another

glade of chalk grassland habitat although the main reason for the clearance was to remove the infected trees.

#### Day 5 - 25th June

In the morning I was working at the National Trust information van at Devil's Dyke. My role was to interact with the public about the work that the National trust does in the local area. Also I was collecting parking fees and speaking to the public about becoming National Trust members.



Figure 2: National Trust info van

In the afternoon I was surveying various plant species across Devil's Dyke. I did this by photographing and classifying various species of plants using identification charts and books. I then added these into a word document to create a handout for a school group to use at a later date.

#### Day 6 - 27th June

I undertook various tasks at Devil's Dyke. I Assisted with both brush cutting and litter picking. I also collected in signs warning the public of livestock with young as the livestock had been moved to other areas by the farmer. As well as this, I helped to remove vegetation from the Saddlescombe farm pond in order to improve living conditions for the species of birds and fish. The oxygen levels were becoming too low as there was too much eutrophication occurring so we removed a lot of dead and decaying matter in order to reverse the process.



Figure 3: Pyramidal Orchid

#### Day 7 - 30th June

Ran a compass navigation task with 50 children in years 3 and 4. This involved grid references and navigating with a compass between certain points. It also involved map symbol identification. I also repaired some signs from around the farm.

#### Day 8 - 5th July

Fixing and putting in new fencing at Black cap. This involved removing wires and old corner post. Tongs were used in order to remove excess material from the hole created as a lot of the fence post had become rotten and was clogging up the hole. I also put in a new post and supports (see pictures).



Figures 4a & 4b: Fence post being installed

#### Day 9 - 7th July

Ran a bug hunting activity for a school group. Compared the abundance of species of insect between the woodland and the grassland at Devil's Dyke. Spoke about how the differing habitats attract different species of organisms. I undertook tree bashing in order to show the children species of animals that they may not normally notice as they live in the trees.

As part of the placement there were many areas in which I believe I was very competent. I was willing to try new things and undergo new experiences which I hadn't worked in prior to the placement. The main situation was working with school groups, which is something I didn't have much past experience of but I believe I excelled in it. I worked well as part of groups, such as in the conservation tasks. I also worked well individually for certain tasks, like the flower identification task.

There were also some areas in which I could improve. One area I think I need more experience in is public interactions. My public relations skills were improved by this placement due to its nature, of being very public orientated, but I feel I need to continue to gain experience in this area. Further placements would be beneficial to me before leaving university and going into work. This would help me develop my personal skills to workplace quality.

One thing I learnt on my first placement was how hard working within the National Trust really is. The amount of hours that go into it are really demanding with resources and budgets being stretched. On the days of my placement I would work 9-5 but my day would start at around 7am and not finish until around 7pm. I also learnt how rewarding it can be at the same time. Preserving the countryside; educating the public about the importance of the trust's work and also inspiring others to follow suit, through school education programmes is important work.

This placement helped me realise an option for me to go down after finishing my course. It opened my mind to the option of teaching being a path that I could pursue in the future.

### Reference

National Trust. (2017). About the National Trust. Available at:  
<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/about-the-national-trust> [Accessed 22 Aug. 2017].



FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

SUPERVISED WORK PLACEMENT APPRAISAL - End of placement report

This document forms part of the student's assessment and is essential to their submission.

To be completed and signed by the Supervisor/Manager and submitted by the student with their placement coursework. If you have a query about this form, please contact: scitechplacements@bournemouth.ac.uk

Student Name and Number: <b>BRENDAN PITTMAN</b>	Name of Organisation: <b>NATIONAL TRUST</b>
Course: <b>ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE</b>	Supervisor/Manager: <b>LOUISE BUCKLEY</b>

**DATES**

Start Date: 06/06/2017 End Date: 07/07/2017

Total Weeks Completed: 4 Number of Days Per Week: 2

Number of Days Annual Leave Taken: 0 Number of Days Sickness: 1

Reason for leaving: End of Contract / Redundancy / Dismissal / Other (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

	Excellent	Good	Average	Needs Development	Poor	Comments
Technical Knowledge / Skills		✓				
Analytical ability / Judgement		✓				
Quality of work	✓					High + met each challenge with enthusiasm
Output (quantity)	✓					
Commercial/Sector awareness	✓					
Resourcefulness / Initiative / Enterprise		✓				
Quality of recommendations		✓				
Drive / Enthusiasm / Application		✓				
Ownership / Responsibility	✓					happy to take on responsibility for a group of 15 students
Stability (under pressure)	✓					Excellent speed well as leading on excellent activity with little notice great time keeping + reliable
Professionalism	✓					
Self-assurance	✓					very calm + capable
Communication	✓					

Time management / Organisation	✓					Excellent
Relations with colleagues	✓					Friendly + professional
Overall effectiveness	✓					Met objectives
Employment Prospects	✓					The company would / <del>would not</del> consider employing this student (delete as appropriate)

**What have been the student's main strengths and achievements?**

Willingness to try a wide variety of tasks, even when without prior experience. Coped well with changes of plans due to weather + happily took on a lot of responsibility from day one, e.g. leading a navigation activity with a school group and working independently in the Carbyside e.g. collecting grazing signs.

**Has the student addressed improvements/areas for development you identified and discussed with them in previous feedback sessions?**

We discussed doing a practical conservation task as an area for development which Brendan undertook at Black Cap where we took down some old stock fencing + put in a new one. Despite the difficult working conditions (bad weather + steep slope) Brendan did a great job, used his initiative and performed well.

**To have a successful career in the future what advice would you give the student regarding skills or knowledge they need to develop?**

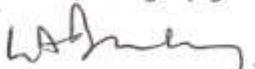
I recommend Brendan gets as much work/volunteer experience as possible to enhance his practical + public engagement skills.

**Has the student worked abroad as part of their placement? Or worked with an international team (please elaborate)**

N/A

**Further Comments**

It was great having Brendan as part of the Carbyside team for 4 weeks and he would be welcomed back as a volunteer.

Supervisor/Manager (signature):  


Date:  
 25/07/2017

Placement 2 - Salmon and Trout research, Sixteen days, East Stoke, Dorset, UK

I spent my second placement at the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT), based in East Stoke in Dorset. The GWCT was set up in order to conserve species of animals which are hunted. They work with landowners and farmers in order to raise awareness of the importance of conservation. (GWCT, 2017)

I found the placement via mycareerhub and it was advertised by Genoveva Esteban who taught the Diversity of Life unit in my 1<sup>st</sup> year.

My placement was on the latest project that the GWCT is undertaking. This is part of a 5 year project in order to help conserve Salmon and Trout populations in the River Frome.



Figure 5: Anode and Net setup

The process involved electrofishing. This is where an electrical current is passed through the water from an anode (left) to a cathode from the front to the back of the boat. This stunned fish which are then forced to swim towards the anode as the electrical current interferes with their nervous system, causing their muscles to spasm, thus swim. The electrical equipment was

controlled by a generator on the boat.

Once the salmon and trout are stunned, they are collected in nets and put in buckets. This process is done in sections of the river called reaches. Each reach is, on average, 100m in length. The fish that are collected for each reach are then taken to the processing unit where the fish is anaesthetised, weighed measured and then tagged with a PIT tag. The tag is inserted into the body cavity of the fish so minimal damage is caused. The data is stored on a computer. The adipose fin is cut off every captured fish to tell people that it's not a fish they can catch. This is because the adipose fin doesn't grow back so is the universal marker for a tagged fish.



Figure 6: Salmon being measured

Over the time I spent at the placement, we took samples from multiple locations throughout the Frome. We fished at over 20 different locations to get tagged fish in all parts of the river.

I undertook many different roles during my time with GWCT. I started off on simpler roles, such as pulling the boat and carrying the buckets of fish from the boat to the processing area. I also moved onto netting the fish after they had been stunned. Long nets were used to reach the bottom of the river as you couldn't put your hands in otherwise you would get an electric shock. I also undertook different roles on the processing table. One role was to input all the data into the laptop so there is an electrical database of all the fish's length and weight assigned to each tag. The final role I had was to do the scale packets. For each fish, a few scales are removed. This allows the fish to be genetically screened to determine sex accurately.

My role was to number each scale packet, note the number of each fish caught and record the species, date and reach code. Figure 8 shows the equipment used to tag the fish.

One day media reporters from "That's Salisbury" (Local TV) and BBC radio 4 came down to do interviews about the project. I'm in the video from That's Salisbury doing scale packets, which can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bj3wxkrn9HQ>



Figure 7: Me filling in scale packets

I feel I improved many things on this placement. One thing I improved was my general fish knowledge. I learnt a lot about the behaviour of fish along with how many fish there are in our rivers. I honestly didn't realise the vast quantity of fish present in UK rivers. My understanding of the importance of the habitats to be preserved was also improved by this placement. This is because there was a clear correlation between the amount of river weed present and the number of salmon and trout that were present. This is due to the fact that the weed slows the water flow down, thus there is less energy expenditure in remaining in the same place in the river. Also the weed makes the water deeper as well as offering physical protection from predators.

My knowledge of the salmon and trout migration routes were also improved. I now understand the migration in more detail, as well as the physical processes that the fish go through en route to the sea.

I also gained a lot of practical skills, from identifying fish whilst in the river, to learning how the fish are stunned and tagged. I used a range of equipment and improved my data collection skills.



Figure 8: Tagging equipment

I did have a few weaknesses during the placement. One was the technique of netting fish. This came from a lack of experience of doing it. Originally I wasn't very good at it. However, by the end I have really improved as I had an understanding of the appearance of the fish that I needed to catch and which ones I didn't need to waste time collecting. Another weakness was my knowledge of the fish when I first arrived. However, once again, this improved throughout the placement and I left feeling that I

was confident in fish

identification.

This placement will help me a lot with my studies because I believe it linked with the content of the Environmental Science course. For example, I have already completed a practical in the Diversity of Life unit last year that was based around fish morphology and their adaptations to their environment. I think this placement has helped build on that previous knowledge and how it applies in the wild compared to being based in a lab.

## Reference

Game and Wildlife Trust. (2017). About us. Available at: <https://www.gwct.org.uk/about/what-we-do/> [Accessed 20 September 2017].



**FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

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scitechplacements@bournemouth.ac.uk

Student Name and Number: <u>Brendan Pittman</u> <u>4903821</u>	Name of Organisation: <u>GAME &amp; WILDLIFE TRUST</u>
Course: <u>ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE</u>	Supervisor/Manager: <u>DYLAN ROBERTS</u>

**DATES**

**LONG PLACEMENT**

Start Date: 02/09/2017 End Date: 16/09/2017

Total Weeks Completed: 2 Number of Days Per Week: 7

Number of Days Annual Leave Taken: 0 Number of Days Sickness: 0

Reason for leaving: End of Contract Redundancy / Dismissal / Other (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

	Excellent	Good	Average	Needs Development	Poor	Comments
Technical Knowledge / Skills		✓				
Analytical ability / Judgement		✓				
Quality of work		✓				
Output (quantity)		✓				
Commercial/Sector awareness						N/A.
Resourcefulness / Initiative / Enterprise		✓				
Quality of recommendations		✓				
Drive / Enthusiasm / Application		✓				
Ownership / Responsibility		✓				
Stability (under pressure)		✓				



Professionalism		✓				
Self assurance		✓				
Communication		✓				
Time management / Organisation		✓				
Relations with colleagues		✓				
Overall effectiveness		✓				
Employment Prospects		✓				The company would / <del>would not</del> consider employing this student (delete as appropriate)

**What have been the student's main strengths and achievements?**

Brendan showed initiative and a willingness to learn new skills. He learnt quickly and tackled a range of new tasks with ease, consistency and accuracy. Including competing in difficult fieldwork conditions. He played a key role in helping us complete our fieldwork targets.

**Has the student addressed improvements/areas for development you identified and discussed with them in previous feedback sessions?**

Brendan was only with us for some 3 weeks, but he improved consistently and took comments and guidance on board.


**To have a successful career in the future what advice would you give the student regarding skills or knowledge they need to develop?**

Keep at it! Continue to show a willingness to learn. Employers like to see a positive can do attitude.

**Further Comments**

A huge thank you to Brendan for his hard work with us, after working long hours in difficult conditions.

Good luck for the future.

Supervisor/Manager (signature):   
Dylan Roberts

Head of GWCT Fisheries.

Date: 29/9/2017.