

# Purbeck SERT Heathland Team Blog

2016

# Day 1- Introduction day and plant identification

August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016

First day of SERT

Early afternoon was spent with a general orientation of the project and guidelines for the next two weeks. Once all the paperwork, teams and responsibilities were divided out we set out for plant identification training with Anita. We arrived at a heathland site in Studland, where our task was to collect as many plant species from a wet heath and from a dry heath. This was very entertaining due to the fact that my plant identification skills are slim to none, I felt as if I had the whole heath in my envelopes. With what felt like gale force winds, it was difficult to secure samples in the envelopes, it then turned into a game of chasing white envelopes as they flittered around the heathland. Once everyone was done collecting their samples, we headed back to the National Trust office for identification. When we reached the office, our samples spread out on a table, Anita went through each sample and also gave us a list of other common species that we were likely to come across.

Lessons learned:

Deer's have ears, sedges have edges and grasses have....

-Miriam and Alice



Base Camp





## Day 2 – Studland Heathland Survey's

August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016

Are we going in the right direction?

Morning was spent with brief GPS training and looking over our survey sites. When the debriefing was done we gathered our supplies and headed out to our sites in Studland. Each team was given eight sites to survey and were told to be back at the offices by 5. On each site we set up a 20x20 meter quadrat and did 5 haphazard 2x2 meter quadrates inside of the space. Surveyed % vegetation cover, species cover, % flowered and vegetation height. The first couple of quadrates were difficult, then became easier when the plant life was more familiar. Nothing better than hearing the GPS announcing that you have arrived to your destination, till that destination is an electric fence. Alice and I surely thought that we wound up in the wrong area but our trusty GPS kept beeping showing that our final destination was 10m in front of us. Quickly threw our bags over the humming fence and rolled under the fence. We were then greeted by cows and strange looks by passer byers. Once we completed our surveys we headed back to camp for data entry and dinner.



-Miriam and Alice



## Heaths and data input





## Day 3- Studland Heathland survey's

August 3rd, 2016

Back at it again.

Today's task consisted of going back to our Heathland sites at Studland to survey the whole sites, set pan traps and to do pollinator transects. The whole site was the same set up to the haphazard but instead of looking at 5 random sites we looked at the total area. Pan traps were set at four of our sites. The traps were plastic plates, spray painted different colors. The colors were red, blue, yellow and white as each color attracts a different type of pollinator. Traps were filled with a solution to humanely dispose of the pollinators. Plates were set out in a square or straight line around the middle of the quadrat. For the pollinator transect, the survey took around 10 minutes. You would walk from one end of the 20x20 meter then walk on the transecting side. Recorded was the pollinator species that was seen and where it was found: on a heather, flying by or hovering.

-Miriam and Alice





## Day 4 -

August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Don't cross through, go around.

Day started out like the following, morning project/team meeting and then we were out on our surveys. We were at a new site and unfamiliar with the area. Each team surveyed two wet heathlands and 2 dry heathlands, pollinator transects and pan trapping. Wet heathlands proved an interesting obstacle to find. When you find that you are waist deep in a mire, you do begin to question just how well your day is going. "Sphagnum is not our friend"-Alice. This further strengthened our lesson learned for the day- there is always a pathway way around the corner. Spirits were lifted when Forbes were finally found. When we arrived back to camp, Anita kindly reminded us that we all indeed had maps to avoid the mires.

Trodd's future advice- Don't cross through an area that looks innocent, there is always a path way around the corner.

-Miriam and Alice







Spider Talk

## Day 5: Deer impact survey

August 5th 2016

It's much more fun to go through a forest from a deer perspective.

In the morning we had a team meeting followed by Michelle giving an orientation on the woodland surveys that we were starting. Each team would be assigned a different woodland for the next 3 days. The surveys consisted of looking at Sika deer impact and looking for deer signs and evidence of browsing. We were put into slightly larger groups, there were two groups of three and one group of four (team Teal Seal). Alice and I were paired with David Taylor and David Stanley, on the first day we surveyed Pippen woods which consisted on three concessions: Pippen woods, Pippen enclosure and Aspen woods. We moved in a serpentine pattern to cover the most ground and stopped in various points to check for signs of deer impact. Later that afternoon we were met by a retired Entomologist who volunteers for the National Trust. He gave us a tutorial on how to sweep net and how to identify hover fly's.

-Miriam and Alice







Hoverfly  
identification



## Day 6

August 8, 2016

Hey there woodlands

Morning activities were collecting our pan traps in Studland, which proved interesting since it had been so windy we weren't sure how that pan traps fared. Mine and Alice's pan traps fared okay, only one set was blown away (luckily not too far). We also used our new acquired sweep netting skills and sweep netted each site for hoverflies. We reset two pan traps, one on a wet heath site and one on a dry. Soon then after we headed back to camp to collect our maps and details for the woodland that we were surveying. Our new woodland was The Warren which had a large coppiced area, that looked untouched by deer.

Fun Fact: Banks Arm does good cheesy chip  
-Miriam and Alice





What the  
pan traps  
looked like





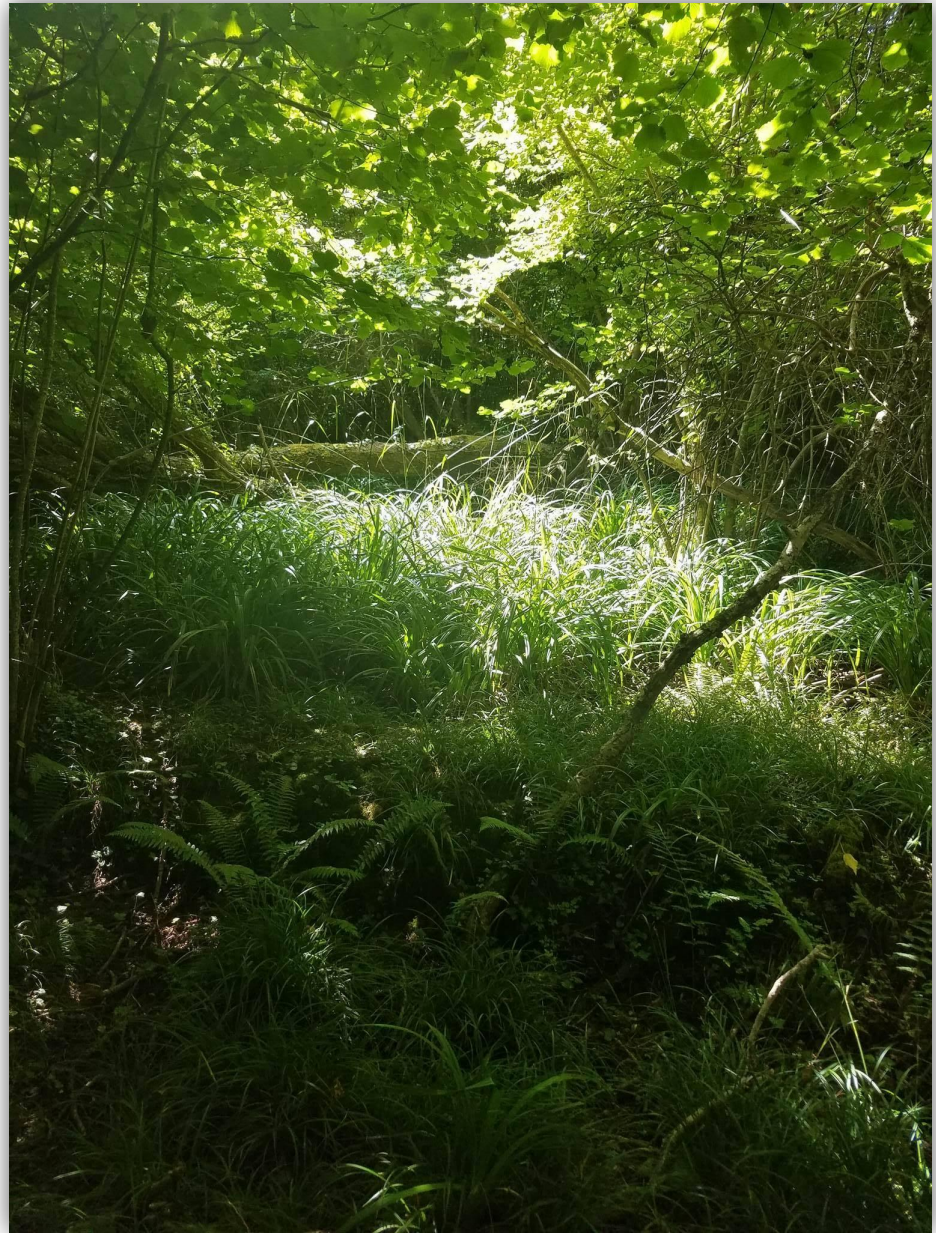
## Day 7

August 9th , 2016

Just be a deer, you can jump that ditch...

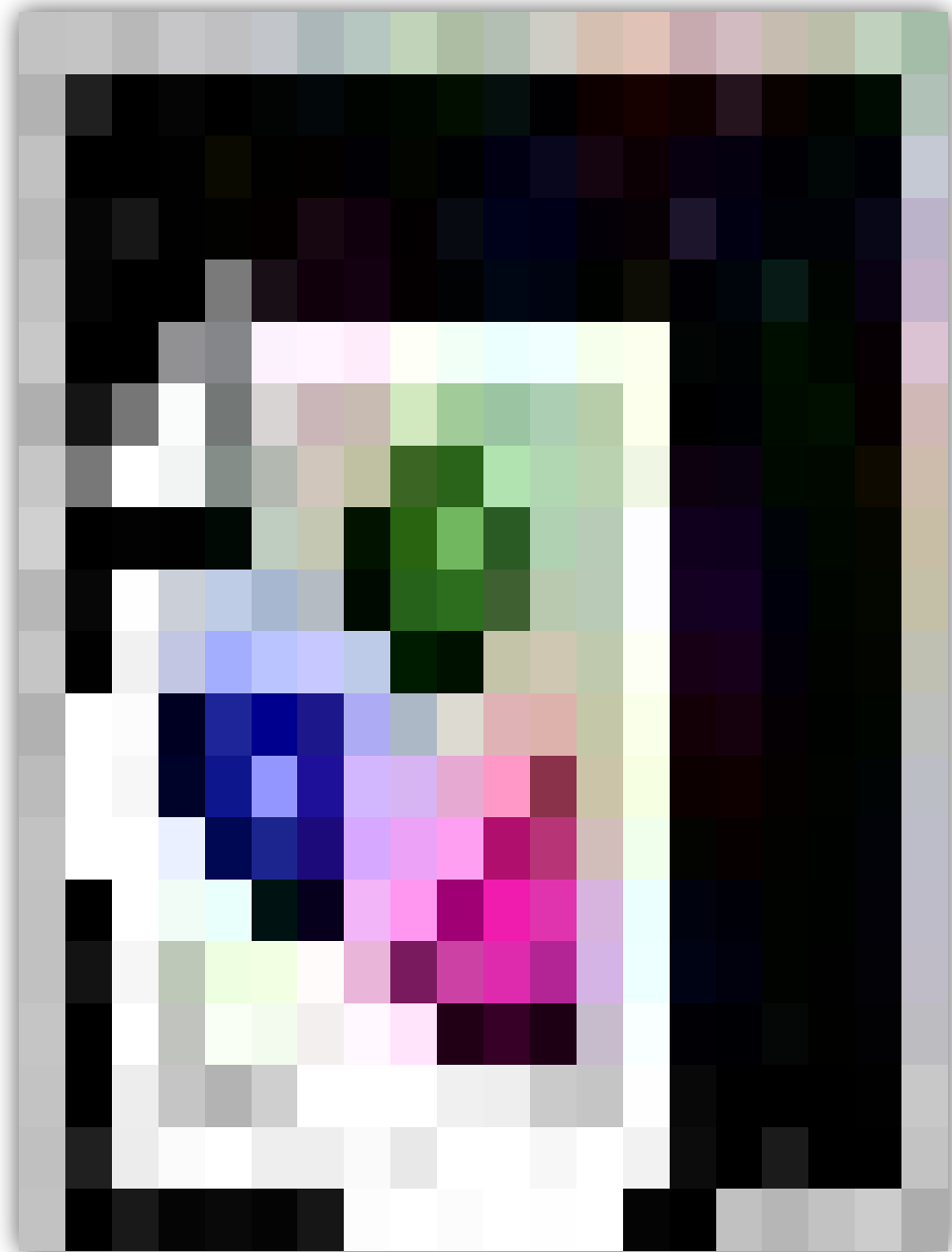
The previous night, we had set out a moth trap to study and learn the local species. The trap consisted of a white sheet, a bowl like contraption (looks like Christmas tree holder), and a bright light. Michelle was kind enough to meet us early in the morning for an introduction lesson. In total, there were 10 species of moths. All moths were photographed and id by books. There were a few specimens that were unidentifiable, photographs are getting sent to a specialist. Alice and myself are going to set the trap out again tonight, to expand our knowledge and to see if we can catch any new species. Last day of studying deer impact on woodlands. Surveyed Wilderness woods and Langton Northwest woods. Both areas exhibited low signs of deer impact. Agreed upon conclusion for the low impact was due to the fact both areas (Wilderness particularly) showed signs of human impact such as timber cutting, burn piles and tractor tracks.

-Miriam and Alice





Moth  
Identification



Moth Identification:  
Female Drinker Moth  
( aka. Pancake Maple Trodd)



## Day 8

August 10th, 2016

Heathland and Bats

Last full day of the SERT, morning and afternoon was spent in Hartland. Each group had was assigned six sites. GPS was not our friend this particular day, which led to Alice trying to find short cuts to our destinations. We did stumble upon some lovely sites along the way and got to roll underneath some barbed wire. We did quadrates and pollinator transects on each site, no pan traps were set out. In the evening, we went to Winspit to see the bats.

-Miriam and Alice





# Day 9

August 11, 2016

Last day and Deer reports

Today was our last day at Purbeck. Morning was spent data collecting and inputting. Also, was working on our woodland presentations. Presentations consisted of a short summary of the woods that were surveyed. After the surveys, we finished packed up camp and headed back home.

-Miriam and Alice

