



Travel Grant Report

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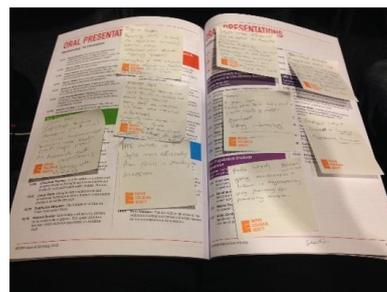


The CAWS Student Travel Award granted to me in 2016 allowed me to travel from Adelaide to Estonia, Scotland and England to present my work at two research institutions and at the British Ecological Society Annual Meeting. Overall my time away was enjoyable and constructive and I am very grateful for the generosity of CAWS which made it all possible.

My trip began in the icy city of Tartu, Estonia on December 5th 2016. I had a lot of fun crunching in the snow (after buying more suitable boots) on my walk to the University of Tartu to meet Professor Martin Zobel, Dr Maarja Õpik and members of their group. I joined their group meeting and was treated to a fantastic meal at one of the restaurants in town. I was thrilled to hear about their research which is focussed around plant ecology and plant-soil interactions, I learnt a lot and found everyone very open to my questions. There are many ways their work can be applied to invasion ecology and I found the whole experience very rewarding. My presentation was also well received with lots of questions.

Next I arrived in Dundee, Scotland and after a few wrong turns in my hire car I arrived at the beautiful old building that would be my home for the next few days. Dr Alison Bennett was my host. She went to a lot of effort to make me feel welcome, showing me around the great facilities at the James Hutton Institute as well setting up meetings with various members of the Institute. Her group focuses on plant-soil interactions but is also interested in how these interactions may affect herbivory or vice versa. I learnt a lot about different techniques and had great conversations with students doing similar work.

The following week I arrived in Liverpool, England, for the British Ecological Society Annual Meeting and it was great to see some friendly faces from my visits the previous week and even some fellow Australians. This was a huge conference with ten concurrent sessions and amazing research from the UK and Europe, I felt very privileged to be there and to present my work. My presentation was well received and inspired many interesting discussions with fellow delegates afterwards. It was also great to hear about the work of several other research groups that are following similar lines of research to me, and to have the opportunity to compare methods and results with them. Future collaborations will hopefully lead on from these introductory discussions.



Me presenting my work at BES and the conference program with my many notes!