Summer Placement 2014

For my placement I was fortunate enough to spend 9 weeks working in Alderney with the Alderney Wildlife Trust (AWT). My project was to produce a baseline survey of the largest bay on the island, Braye. My primary focus was on mapping the intertidal habitats along with assessing species composition using quadrats, secondary to this was a small-scale subtidal survey. This was a simple presence/absence survey with the goal of observing and recording the location of key species such as Eelgrass (*Zostera marina*). My project gained extra significance because of potential plans for a marina to be constructed in the bay as such my data can now, hopefully, be used as the basis for any future Environmental Impact Assessment and monitoring program in the bay.

Some of the team

Despite not sounding as exciting as visiting the far-flung corners of the world my time on Alderney was beyond what I expected. The most obvious benefit of working with the AWT is that you are effectively a member of staff, which for me was fantastic. When I wasn’t conducting my own research I was involved in all aspects of the Trust’s activities, be it landscape management, events, education and general odd jobs around the island. Most of the work that the Trust does is terrestrial based,
however they work with a fantastic Marine Biologist, Mel, who is so supportive and helped me develop my skills.

Accommodation (two minutes from the beach!)

The island itself is beautiful with many great bays to snorkel in and some fantastic subtidal communities to observe. Working with the Trust gave me the opportunity to meet so many great people on the island and almost start to feel like I was at home. You also get to drive the Trust’s vehicles and learn so many skills both marine and terrestrial!

Braye Bay on a good day (*Himanthalia elongata* in the foreground)

Tom Rossiter – September 2014