Matthew Judge – Summer Placement Blog

On the surface Arran may not seem as glamorous or exciting as some of the other places my fellow students went to on their summer placement but put simply it is a stunning place to live and work and I’m so glad I was given the opportunity to spend my time there.

Called ‘Scotland in miniature’ Arran is a small green island with rolling hills, beautiful bays and sandy beaches - a great spot for those that like the outdoors. I was more than spoiled for things to do!

For my placement I was working with the Community of Arran Seabed Trust, a nationally important marine conservation charity, to record the changes in crustacean abundance within a small No-take zone that exists on Arran. The work was hard, and involved long hours but was satisfying – both in terms of the day-to-day work, and in terms of the scope of the project and the real world application it has.

The average day involved catching and recording the species that were caught in and outside the NTZ with the help of a few local fishermen. I greatly enjoyed spending time with the fishermen, as their input and perspective was interesting – and we had good conversation about a whole range of marine issues.

I felt welcomed in the team back in the office too and got to get involved with the day-to-day work of COAST, which was varied and exciting.

Crucially I was also allowed to play to my strengths and my talents were utilized by COAST – I produced a series of short videos for their communications effort. Everyone who works for COAST was welcoming and friendly – and I feel I have made both good friends and invaluable contacts for the future.

In my spare time I got to hike, kayak and of course visit the local pub(s) and engage in local ‘cultural’ events – including the highland games.