

Laura Henry / INTERN REPORT / Autumn 2018

I joined Deveron Projects in September 2018 having graduated from ECA in the summer. My research at university led me to useful art and its place within society and communities, so I was interested to see how this manifested into live projects. I had the most lovely time at Deveron Projects, had the best laughs, ate incredible food and spent a good portion of my time outside.

I joined as a Project Intern which was focused on the administration of the organisation. The responsibilities of the internship were mostly in assisting Robyn, the Project Manager, with the administration of the organisation. She was incredibly supportive and professional but also so much fun!



Much of this consisted of small tasks including filing press and entering the data into the spreadsheet, counting cash boxes, sending out any shop orders, keeping on top of the office email account and the social media pages. There were also bigger projects to keep me busy like the Audience Analysis Report for the Board Meeting/AGM in November, proofing the Annual Report and beginning to organise the contact database. However, each day was different in the office and tasks changed depending on the imminent events that needed organisation. This was a precious thing because it kept my brain fresh and encouraged the whole team to get together to complete something, mostly with a biscuit in hand.



As important as the office tasks were (and probably continue to be so), I think I gained more from the conversations that I had with such a variety of fascinating people. One of my favourite memories is helping forrester (and friend of DP) Steve Brown maintain the White Wood on an incredibly beautiful, sunny day, where we chatted about poetry, young people getting into forrestry and about families. Farmer's Markets and the People's Vote March allowed me to make connections with the locals, laugh with them and get a

better understanding of local life. Putting together the Audience Analysis report was also enjoyable because it gave me a focus and I felt like I was truly doing something helpful, which is not always obvious with the other tasks in the project office. Tasks where I was required to engage my brain critically were more satisfying but understanding the importance of the smaller tasks is something I will carry forward with me.

Visitors to Deveron Projects, mostly from the art world, were another opportunity to make new connections, learn from someone else's experience and test ideas. Some of the most memorable and exploratory conversations were with David Finn, an American artist and lecturer and with Marsha Bradfield, a curator (amongst other things) on a Thinking Residency at DP.



This varied and fun work life can be tiring and intense at times too. I think it is easier said than done to “work where you live and live where you work,” because it means you can rarely escape your work. I understand the origins of this quote, and its benefits when working in a community, but I think it is important to strike a healthy work/life balance. I was really fortunate that Lauren, the other intern whom I lived with, got on so well. To maximise my experience of Huntly it was important to me to become involved locally, so I joined Aurora and walked my neighbours dogs. This made my work better and more holistic since I was engaging with the community on a social level. I used this opportunity to gain an understanding of how Deveron Projects was viewed from within the community.



Ultimately, I think the internship can be whatever you choose to make of it. I recommend that new interns get involved with the community for mutual benefit, and that they are clear and vocal about the type of work they want to do and the skills they want to learn. I found that I was really supported in my role and I was encouraged to think critically about an area of work that I feel passionate about. As I mentioned before, the most valuable aspect of my time at Deveron Projects has been all the discussions and exchanges of perspectives borne from different backgrounds, practical tips in life and academic and theoretical pointers too. I also thought that the Town is the Garden project was/still is an incredible thing, and wish that I could have spent more time working with them. On the whole, my life feels richer because of all this!

Thank you for having me! Over and out.

