

**Per Svenson wrote to tell us about his WWOOFing**



Seven weeks in Scotland. Started WWOOFing in Highland Perthshire, awesome nature! I lived in a little cozy off-grid timber cabin with a small fire stove, right next to a paddock. They had a massive reforestation project, 42.700 trees, EU-funded, on the hillside of Ben Lawers. The neighbours played live Scottish music at the local pub, where I met a retired lady who shared her WWOOFing experiences from New Zealand. The week after I met a Kiwi boy!

Went on WWOOFing in Scammadale Glen, about 15 miles from the coast town Oban. Deep in nature, not the slightest sound of a road – if I saw a car, it was the neighbour J Lots of heavy work to do, lots of burning, nice J I had fish and chips for the first time and learnt a lot about Scotland.

One day I saw some cool islands out from the coast of Oban, another day I checked out Castle Stalker – the castle from the ending scene of Monthy Python’s *The Holy Grail*, and two Sundays I went to church in Oban – awesome people!

Finished off by visiting the cousin in Edinburgh, the street artists there are just fantastic! One guy juggled flaming torches on an eight feet unicycle, another guy swallowed a sword and had a 115kg Dane on a nailboard on his bare chest while swallowing a flaming torch!! Bagpipes, haggis, kilts, you name it J

Generally it was a great experience on the other side of the North Sea, especially with all the great people I met! Sometimes it was just fantastic, sometimes totally ok, sometimes I missed Swedish "kaviar" L , but always a genuine Scottish experience!

# YOOF (Youth Media and Food)

**This is a reflection on the experience of two participants from the first workshop of the YOOF (Youth Media and Food) Project that teaches youth from the U.K. and Spain media skills in order to document sustainable practices of local farms and land-based ventures, some of which are WWOOF sites.**

If you are between 18 and 30 and are interested in participating in the next free workshop with YOOF, please see details at the end of the article.

**food production perspective**

Vanessa Wyns, MSc Ethnobotany

Our week began with apple pressing on the evening of our arrival. Ten strangers who had just met plucked apples from trees, crushed them with wooden paddles, and passed the pulp through a bright red press with wooden siding that looked like a vintage

German toy. The juice was delicious: a mix of sharp cider apples and the sweeter Bramley variety. Half of my attention was on the apples, and half on getting to know the other participants who, for the duration of the week, would be my



constant companions. I had very little media production experience coming into the workshop, but I was eager to learn, and excited to participate in food production on the smallholding where we were staying.

One of my favourite memories from the workshop is of carrying a box of freshly picked plums from the orchard to the kitchen one night, where they were going to be dried into prunes. En route, I passed another workshop attendee picking mint for



Vanessa (left)

tea, and one carrying a ceramic vase full of cider to the dinner table. The cider was from apples juiced a few weeks prior, and I found myself wondering who would end up drinking the cider produced from the leftover apple juice that we had pressed on our first day. As I entered the house, a beam from the setting sun crossed my face, the smell of freshly baked jacket potatoes wafted out of the kitchen, and I heard the sound of children laughing from somewhere in the garden. At that moment, I had the feeling I was part of a community. We all came to the workshop for different reasons, and with different skills, but for the week we were there; we all learned from and depended upon one another.



Queen Beet

On the last day of the programme, I stood outside of the house with a rather portly beet in my hand, on her way to becoming part of a produce show that we harvested and arranged. I have a knack for seeing creatures in vegetables, but this Queen Beet with her two root legs, wild hair, and perky smile was so clearly visible that I think even someone without my keen vegetable-creature spotting ability would have noticed her. I like to think we all left the workshop as satisfied as Queen Beet, and perhaps just as dirty as well.

**media production perspective**

Jamie Love, BA Film Production

As a film school graduate, I was attracted to the YOOF Project for its combination of both multimedia production and organic farming: something that felt the perfect fit for this point in my life.

My knowledge and experience in filmmaking at a graduate level gave me confidence, but also an understanding of those who were new to this process. It was great to see people around me with little experience of film equipment and their development learning to adapt to new technologies and skills. What I was most hoping to gain from this workshop was a new understanding about how a more organic and holistic approach to farming can merge into our own individual ways of living. As the course progressed, it was interesting learning from people with a deep-rooted passion about quality food, their connection to it, and how it informed their lifestyles.

Throughout the project we received a lot of support from our course leaders Adam, Chemi, Fabio and Lauren, who engaged us on many different levels: going beyond expectations with fine food, drink, music and company. Adam was



Jamie (right)

particularly proactive in helping us engage with the organic side of things, and, despite my desire to spend copious amounts of time on editing here really brought us back into the real world and got us engaged with the physicality of nature.

The cross-cultural dimension of the course was by far my favourite aspect. Getting to know Spanish customs and constantly laughing at our differences dissolved any preconceived boundaries, and we all grew very close by the end of the week.

As a previous WWOOFer, I found it a great blend between organic farm work and investigative filmmaking: a great opportunity for anyone who is interested in sustainability and multimedia. I am currently on a further seven week WWOOFing experience in Glastonbury and then on to Llanidloes, Wales, where I will be applying my newfound skills.

**If you are interested in joining the next free workshop, taking place April 8-12 of 2019 in Cerededa, Spain (travel will be reimbursed), please contact Adam Cade at [adam@susted.org.uk](mailto:adam@susted.org.uk).**

