

Training at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

22nd July to 9th August 2013

By Helen Marsh

I attended RBG Kew for training in Herbarium Management and related subjects.

The timetable covered a wide range of topics (as previously outlined in the funding application.) There were numerous practical activities, such as collection, pressing, mounting and repair of herbarium specimens and also seed collection. Accompanying these was theoretical and computer based tasks such as studying Falkland flora, plant taxonomy and nomenclature and learning and practicing the processes for the digitization and data basing of herbarium specimens. I was introduced to some very informative plant keys to assist with identification and spent time examining plant structure. I met with Kew staff who gave an introduction to the legislation involved with managing the herbarium ,primarily The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Dr Rebecca Upson, Dr Colin Clubbe and I spent time discussing the job description for my position as volunteer curator of the Falkland Islands National Herbarium and considering plans for the future including completing the digitization of the specimens so the complete collection can be viewed on-line, and the planned project of adding bryophyte and algae collections to the herbarium.

During the final week of my time at Kew I gave a presentation to members of the United Kingdom Overseas Territories team and volunteers giving an overview of the Falklands Islands and the herbarium, an experience that was challenging as well as very rewarding.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Kew, immersed in plants, meeting very enthusiastic and knowledgeable people and returned to the Falklands with knowledge and enthusiasm for taking the herbarium forward.

I am grateful to staff at Royal Botanic Gardens Kew and The Millennium Seed Bank for their time and support, namely:

Rebecca Upson, Colin Clubbe, Barrie Blewett, Sara Barrios, Anna Haigh, Angela Bond, Marie-Helene Weech, Rosemary Foley, Ruth Clark, Tom Heller, Natasha Ali, Marcella Corcoran, Kit Strange, Emma Williams, Steph Fuller, Madeleine Groves, Richard Lewis and staff in the Mounting Room.

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