

JA

This summer, Wild Trails took other pupils from Robertsbridge Community College and I to South Africa, for a fantastic trip that I will never forget. We were able to learn so much about animal conservation and endangered species, but we also learnt about cultures that were very different from our own.

This trip showed me the dangers that many innocent species are in due to poaching and has made me think more about the subject. After the trip, I believed that if we all try to stop the horrendous activity of poaching, we can save many of these beautiful animals from becoming endangered.

Coming back from South Africa, I believe that I gained more confidence because of the amazing experiences and activities we did. This has helped me in situations back home and I also believe that going to South Africa has made me think and act differently to how I did before.

I now have some incredible memories which include feeding elephants, to meeting some beautiful children at a health centre. I can't thank Wild Trails, Angus and the other leaders enough as without them, I would never have been able to have this wonderful experience.

SG

What did Africa mean to me? This trip means more to me than i am capable of describing. It was life changing. It has changed my outlook on the way i treat others, my environment and myself. It opened my eyes to a need that's greater than mine and it allowed me to learn just how privileged i am. Being able to learn about other cultures by being there and asking questions and seeing it first-hand is an experience that I cant put into words. All i can say to you is that to understand Africa you need to go there. This trip helped me grow and change as a person and it continues to keep me focused every day. It is well worth the cost and I can't thank angus and tommy enough for all their hard work to make sure this trip went well.

TR

"Experiencing South Africa with the help of Africa Wild Trails 4 years ago was the most rewarding and beneficial choice I have ever made.

It sounds cliché, but before going I struggled with my confidence and found myself being dependent on others to feel comfortable. Three weeks in South Africa helped me to become the person I am today! I am so grateful to everyone who was part of the trip and still talk about it to new people I meet.

During the three weeks we were out there, we were taught a great deal about the history of the country as well as the magnificent flora and fauna that inhabit it. People think you can read a book about the country and know all about it, but nothing compares to being there and learning something new each day.

After that trip to South Africa (where we were taught a great deal about conservation and had hands on experiences) I studied a Foundation Degree in Animal Science. During my studies we had another opportunity to go to South Africa, and although it was still amazing and informative, it just didn't match the personal experience Wild Trails had given.

I am now currently training to be a Biomedical Scientist, after graduating from Brighton University with a degree in Biomedical Science. Although this is a step away from the Animal background, I have no doubt in my mind, I wouldn't be where I am had I not been offered the opportunity by Angus a few years ago. I cannot thank Wild Trails enough...! "

MC

Thank you Michael for sharing this with us. You are an inspirational young person...!

"The July 2014 tour to South Africa was a real eye opener for me. I was stuck in a personal place that

would have only have got worse but with the help of Africa Wild Trails I am now in Plumpton College studying a BTEC2 Course in Animal Care. I learnt so much on the tour to South Africa such as wildlife conservation, endangered species, Rhino conservation and the history of poaching.

We did plenty of sport as well which included kayaking, abseiling and river rafting... I remember just floating down the Pongola river on our kayaks taking in the surroundings, it was so beautiful. These are just a few of the many great experiences I was given on this trip. I will never forget them :-)

CL

Thanks to Chloe Lord for your wonderful comments. We are all so glad this experience was a great one for you!

"My trip to Africa will stay in my heart for the rest of my life, it was the most incredible experience for me. Being so far from home, never having experienced anything like it before, I was very nervous and shy - I overcame a lot personally in ten days and I really made myself proud. It changed the way I saw and felt about myself as a person, It made me believe in myself more and my confidence grew quickly. Even now (it's been about two years since we got back) it still feels very close to me and I would love to do it again. What an amazing thing to do, I think everyone should get the chance to experience it!"

KK

When I went to South Africa back in 2012 I had the best time of my life . I learnt a lot about myself and learning how to work as a team . I did things that I thought I'd never do . Having Angus Wingfield and his guides for pushing me to do those I don't think I would be able to do it . We travelled loads and walked up mountings .we camped in the middle of the bush , we visited an orphanage which was heart broken. Learned different kinds of culture .

I had the best experience of my life . If it wasn't for angus I don't think I would ever go there . So thank you angus .

I loved it that much I went back out there early this year with Angus and Kevin Lawrence and a lovely group . I met some really good friends . There was some ups and downs but if there was a problem then I knew that I could go to Kevin and Angus . I just want to say thank you to Kevin and Angus for that experience . Don't worry we will go shopping for our man bags :))

LB

For me South Africa was a really important experience, because it opened my eyes to an entirely different environment and way of life to anywhere I've been before. I'd say that meeting so many interesting and passionate people out there really helped improve my perspective and approach to life, especially as I was quite apprehensive about meeting people before going. I found it pretty challenging, but actually hugely rewarding and an enriching experience. The trip has actually had a huge impact on my decisions for what I want to do later in life, as since I came back from the trip I have decided not to apply for Architecture at Uni, instead I have just applied for International Development, with a view to spend my research year in South Africa. I now have an unconditional offer..!!

Miss Lydia Bennett-Li

DA

My experience in Africa changed my life so much, I came back a stronger and more determined person I felt like I could accomplish anything I set my mind to. It was a once in a life time opportunity for me and I will never forget it.

When I was in Africa I learned so much about wildlife conservation I didn't know about before. I also

loved their culture and I met some amazing people over there, everyone was so welcoming I just really did have an amazing time.

What I learnt about myself in Africa 6 years ago I still use today. If I get set a challenge I go for it 100% now because I know I'm capable of anything I set mind to, where as before I probably wouldn't have tried.

It has gas changed my life so thank you so much for giving me that opportunity all those years ago, I could never repay you for what this has done for me.

Debbie Ayling

GD

Testimonial by Gee Denne:

Since I left college, I've always had a dream of working with animals. Last summer I contacted Africa Wild Trails and met Angus the director of the organisation. The meeting was very professional and delivered the best experience up to date and the programme that was arranged for me exceeded my expectations. The people that I met, the places I have been and the things I have done have been amazing.

The two months I spent in South Africa was hard work, amazing fun, educational and enlightening. All of the staff I met there are very professional but at the same time fun to be around and they make every day just that little bit more special. I had the opportunity to work along side Safari Guides and to become one myself as I helped out with the daily routine and learn a lot about anti poaching, wild animals, hunting and surviving in the wilds.

It's hard sometimes when you get reminded to do things the right way by the owner of the camp but at the end of the day he meant well and he taught me a lot about what life is about and so much more. I have done so many things I could never have dreamt of doing, seeing the Big 5 (Lion, Leopard, Elephant, Buffalo, Rhino) face to face on a Wilderness Trail, seeing so many birds I have never seen before such as a Hornbill, Tiger Fish fly fishing, kayaking on Tugela and Pongola rivers, mountain biking in the bush, hiking, snorkelling in the rivers and sleeping out in the wild under the stars, surrounded by Baboons, Lions, Rhinos, Buffalo, Elephants and more.

I also got the opportunity to be involved in conservation programs and being in one of the biggest safari locations in South Africa at Hluhluwe iMfolozi Game Reserve and Thembe Elephant Reserve. Thank you to Angus Wingfield and the team and last but not least the "old man" who taught me how to fly fish, make food and for looking after me during the time I was there. It has been a dream come true and I'm looking forward to go back again...

By Gee Denne