Ever since I was a child I have always known that I wanted to work in the field of animal welfare. Being given the opportunity to spend the first week of my Year Ten work experience at the world renowned Structure and Motion Lab at the Royal Veterinary College was a dream come true.

On the first day I was given a grand tour of the whole site and had a sneak preview of the wide range and spectrum of work and research carried out there. I think that was the moment I began to realise that my lifelong ambition to work in veterinary care was not just the whim of an impressionable child, I knew it was the career path for me.

After my initial tour I had the honour of working alongside Robotics Engineer Alex Sprowitz, who was conducting research into the movements of Biped animals (this means two legged animals including birds), but specifically Guinea Fowl. Guinea Fowl have the ability to move extremely fast over all types of terrain and can adjust their stride and movement instantly when the terrain changes. By studying their movements, using motion sensors attached to the birds, the results are videoed and analysed, to assist in the improvement of robotics, the kind of which are used in disaster clean ups and search and rescue in dangerous situations. What I found even more exciting was that this same research is being used to improve the development of human prosthetics.

The range of animals that is studied at the college is mind boggling, and the facilities to accommodate all the different species is very impressive. Whilst my time there did not allow me the opportunity to see the full range of animals that are habitually treated and analysed there I was suitably impressed with the horses on treadmills!

Towards the end of my week I was allowed to attend 2 post mortem operations on domestic animals. Whilst I have always wanted to be a vet, I also harboured a fear that faced with an actual operating procedure I might not feel quite the same! However, seeing the professionalism and respect given to the animals it reassured me that this is still the path I want to take, and I was able to witness both operations with scientific interest and awe, and fully appreciate the importance of researching and analysing every aspect of animal physiology.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to spend a week in such distinguished company and I have every respect for the work they do at RVC. I will go back to school next year with renewed vigour in all my subjects and hope that one day I will be on this campus as a student myself. I hope I will be able to return for future Work Experience placements in my 6th form, and I cannot thank all the people enough, especially Alex, who have taken time to make this week so amazing.

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