

During the summer vacation Cranmer students have been on challenging and exciting placements, locally and abroad. Here are some of their stories....

Summer 2005

Linda Gardham, overseas placement, Canada

At Cranmer we are encouraged to be adventurous with our placements and to experience something of the world wide Anglican communion for ourselves. I had the privilege of spending 4 weeks in April/May 2005 on placement in the Diocese of the Arctic in Canada. This is the biggest diocese in the world stretching across the north of Canada from the borders of the Yukon to Labrador. It's a beautiful part of the world, and one of the few dioceses where you can regularly see the Northern lights! I don't think there are many places where Sunday lunch is a joint of bear, shot by a parishioner, or caribou stew! I had a wonderful time in Hay River, working with the Ven. Haydn Schofield, seeing how the Anglican, Catholic, Baptist and Pentecostal churches work closely together and learning a lot about ministry and the Holy Spirit. It is amazing to be part of the Anglican Communion in another part of the world.

2004

Wes Marks - Parish Placement, near to Durham

Three aspects of the life of St Mary Magdalene church in Belmont, Durham stand out in my mind.

Firstly, the warmth of the worshipping community, not only towards each other, but also the warmth and friendship that I received during my brief time on placement is encouraging evidence of the love and grace of God in action.

Secondly, the significant undertaking to bring the Gospel to the children in the parish impressed me. Every week the church provided four separate school assemblies, each occurring at different schools in the parish, meaning that almost 500 children were able to regularly learn about Jesus in an active and stimulating way.

Thirdly, pastoral care for the community was evidenced by the tenacious involvement of many individuals over a five-year period, including the vicar Rob Innes, on a project to pursue funding and commitment to build a new and much needed parish community hall. Members of the church and of the community have worked tirelessly in pursuit of their vision to have a new parish hall built in the grounds of the church, thereby providing a joint cultural and spiritual centre for the community.

So as I reflect on my time at the church in Belmont, I witnessed a response to God's call to love on another, to take the Gospel into the world and through the parish hall project the clear desire of the church to provide for the social and recreational needs of the entire local community.

St Mary Magdalene is a growing church, concerned for its community and resolved to spread God's love in very tangible ways. My own opportunities for learning and growth have been numerous and diverse ranging from home visiting, including funeral visits, to preaching. It has been a wonderful church in which to serve and I commend it highly.

Andrew Cromarty - Overseas Placement: St Michael's Chaplaincy, Paris.

One minute from the British Embassy, two from the Elysée Palace, three from *the Place de la Concorde*, four from the *Seine* and five from the glorious *Musée D'Orsay* – what better setting could you ask for? However, Parisian life is not straightforward! So the ostentatious opulence of the *haute couture* fashion houses of *la rue Faubourg Saint Honoré*, just round the corner, sit uncomfortably alongside the bedraggled scrums of Two-thirds World humanity arguing for visas outside the British Consulate two side-streets away, under the ever-watchful eye of the *CRS* riot police.

This two-week placement was the most challenging and exciting fortnight of my two years at Cranmer. I had requested to spend my time working at St Michael's and I found myself busy on both the English- and French-language sides of the work. I was also the *concierge*, staying in a tiny studio apartment on site, and responsible for locking/unlocking the church etc.

Ven. Anthony Wells, the dynamic senior chaplain, who also oversees thirty Anglican chaplaincies around France, is a visionary and encouraging leader, with a real heart for mission and evangelism. He leads a well-functioning team of seven full-timers, with numerous part-timers and volunteers, who normally meet daily for prayer.

St Michael's offers three English-language services each Sunday, and one in French and one in Tamil. Twice a month the French service is followed by a meal (cooked in the 'state of the art' kitchens on site), and weekly church bible studies are well attended. There are also a host of other meetings throughout the week. Despite it being the quieter August period, there was still plenty to do.

During the fortnight I prepared and led Bible studies in English and French, preached on Romans 8 in French(!), proof-read and corrected the 30-page Common Worship booklet, selected 'second readings' for a preaching series, supported the chaplain at a funeral at the famous *Cimetière Père Lachaise*, acted as a sounding-board for the French language minister, took part in several other prayer-and ministry meetings and chaplaincy services, helped cook and eat wonderful French meals and barbecues, and listened to people's stories.

From the start I was welcomed as a full member of the team and given responsibility. The team was extremely hospitable and friendly. I found that the French folk, especially those who had recently come to faith through *Alpha*, were also open and encouraging, and willing to make light of my occasional linguistic gaffes! I also experienced a deep sense of the Holy Spirit at work there, both in my own life and that of the wider church community. It was a marvellous experience, if exhausting, and I would recommend it as a challenging and thoroughly worthwhile placement. *Allez-y!*

Alison Amelia - Short placement in Hospital Chaplaincy

My placement was primarily to Castle Hill Hospital, which has 507 beds and is in the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospital Trust. This is one of the largest trusts in England covering four sites and the Accident and Emergency department is one of the busiest in the United Kingdom.

I attended emergency call outs to the other sites. On one of these I was called to the blessing of a patient who had died in theatre and at the same time dealt with the grieving relatives as they came to terms with this. There was also sadness when I went to the Women and Children's hospital and joined with the chaplain in blessings for babies who had been terminated or who had died naturally. Hearing the parents stories and being involved in the funeral services which were offered was challenging.

Honouring a patient's final wishes who had converted to Islam while her family was Christian needed to be dealt with sensitively and I found many resources had to be used in designing a liturgy for her memorial service.

I valued the support of working in a team and saying the Morning Office daily helped me in the demands of the day. Every day I visited people and shared in the joy of Ward Communion.

The placement was a joy as I shared in many people's lives but was also a challenge as I saw the many issues and fears that people are faced with in a hospital situation.

Jo Pearson - Parish Placement near Durham

For a teacher it comes as a shock to the system to work in the month of August but spending four weeks on placement in Spennymoor was a real privilege. Anyone who thinks that church life is quiet in August should visit this place! In the first week alone we did a holiday club for fifty children, a PCC meeting, two funerals, a coffee evening to raise money for Rwanda, a bible study on prayer and two wedding blessings – apart from the normal routine of mid-week services, visiting and communions.

The vicar has responsibility for three parishes, St. Paul's in Spennymoor, St. John's in the village of Kirk Merrington and the small church of Whitworth, very popular for weddings and heritage tours. With three services to conduct on a Sunday morning the timing is so tight that you have to leave one service in the last hymn in order to get to the next church before the service begins. This was just one of the issues in serving a number of different parishes and it was a valuable experience in seeing the challenge of trying to balance the different needs of the three congregations.

Having the chance to meet and chat with many local people who are seeking to serve God in their community as well as being given the opportunity to preach, lead a bible study, help at the holiday club, lead worship, pray over a house and bless a scooter (!) made for a fascinating and challenging four weeks.

Chris Stuart

The Cranmer PSU (Pastoral Studies Unit) offers a chance for in-depth study of ministry in a particular context – in my case, rural Weardale, west of Durham. As part of the placement, students are usually sent for four days to experience life (and work) on a farm. As a farmer's son this seemed a bit like 'taking coals to Newcastle', so I asked if there was something I could do that was a little different ...

And so I found myself joining the local Weardale and Teesdale Hunt, to gain insight into a controversial aspect of rural life. Although instinctively against hunting, I felt this was a unique chance to gain first-hand experience of the issues involved. I might not have agreed had I known they hunted (running) on foot... over an area of around ten square miles... on a peat bog... exhausting!

I learnt a great deal about the wisdom and skill involved in training and caring for the hounds, and of hunting with a pack (does hunting refine nature, or distort it?) I also learnt a lot about the guile of a hunted hare (it escaped the hounds, much to my relief). More importantly, whilst my doubts about hunting remain, I now have a better sense of the intricate, often contradictory tripartite relationship between God, humanity and Creation.

The PSU included a week living and working alongside a local vicar/minister, to get an insight into the way the church shapes and is shaped by a distinctive local context. Afterwards, there was a chance to meet up with other students on the same PSU and spend a couple of days reflecting in depth on rural life.

The day after the PSU finished I started my next placement... at Worcester Cathedral. Quite a difference!