

When I began my first term in Durham, I didn't imagine that my student days would last quite such a long time! I remember the excitement and trepidation of autumn 1995 quite vividly, but at that time I had no idea how important the subsequent years would be. Reading some of the reflections on university life by recent graduates for this month's *Spire*, many of the comments resonate with my own memories. There are common experiences and recollections: the value of friends, the pressures of work, managing a budget, coping with house-mates.

To spend time away at college is a challenging and formative time. Some might approach it with a level of self-assurance and optimism. For others, it is extremely daunting. For most, there will be a complex mixture of feelings and emotions during those years, and in the face of different pressures. When I was at college, someone made the comment that students don't have "real" problems. In reality the intensity of being at university presents a microcosm of life: like the rest of us, students wrestle with financial concerns, a complex web of personal relationships, the stresses of work, disappointments, bereavement, uncertainty about the future as well as joy and excitement.

Studying for a degree means wrestling with important, and hopefully interesting, questions. We never stop having to confront difficult questions or awkward situations, both personally and professionally. The opportunity of studying away from home also allows time to grow, to discern what it is we want to do, to discover more about our strengths and weaknesses. That process doesn't suddenly come to an end on graduation day. We are continually learning who we are and reflecting on what we might do. We make mistakes, and hopefully grow in wisdom. We might commit ourselves to a particular career, or we might find ourselves using our skills in different contexts.

Reflecting on my time in Durham, I realise how some of the most ordinary conversations and experiences were actually profoundly important and formative. On my graduation day I remember feeling a mixture of relief, excitement and sadness. I didn't know what I might end up doing next. The vague hopes and thoughts I had at that point were resting on decisions to be made by other people. Sometimes life also takes us down unexpected avenues. As we face new challenges we are changed; as we live with the ordinary we find the expected; in overcoming difficulties and enjoying life new possibilities may emerge. Whatever path we take we risk encounter with people and places that are extraordinary and transformative. We also live with the challenge of what God is calling us to, as individuals and as a Church.

When Peter, James and John, the disciples closest to Jesus, accompanied him to the top of a high mountain they didn't know what they were going to be letting themselves in for. He led them on a taxing journey away from the familiar. Suddenly, Jesus' face is shining and his clothes become dazzling white. They see Moses and Elijah; they hear a voice identifying Jesus as God's beloved Son; they hear a voice telling them to listen to Jesus. This narrative is celebrated by the Church on the feast

of the Transfiguration in early August. The disciples were overawed and confused by the sudden intrusion of an extraordinary transformation into their lives. Peter was tempted to hold on to the wonder and mystery of the experience. He wanted to make tents to control God's presence, to make the glimpse of glory permanent. But glory goes hand in hand with the difficult and mundane. They return to the world. We, along with those graduating this summer, must also live in the world. As we do so, we have the chance to reflect on who we are, who we are becoming; we have the chance to reflect on the words of God: listen to my Son.

Julie Gittoes

3rd HAMPTON HILL BROWNIES

We have had a busy but fun term making the most of the good weather to hold many outside activities. Our annual fund raiser was a great success raising £150.00 which Brian very kindly allowed us to donate to the Church's Open Door Project. As always we are grateful to the Hall Committee for allowing us the use of the church hall each Tuesday evening and hope that you do not mind that this year our donation bought 2 paving slabs and 10 bricks!

We finished the term with our Annual Bike Ride - a great turn-out meant the evening was a wonderful family opportunity as well as being very special for Vicky and Natasha who made their promise along with Emer, Georgia, Darcy and Emily.

This is my last Promise ceremony as I will now be taking a back seat during the next 12 months as Vicky and Natasha get to grips with Guiding and all that this entails. However, we are still short of a Brown Owl and unless someone else comes forward before next July the future of the Brownies looks very uncertain. So please, please, please think long and hard about whether you could give a few hours a week to make 24 young ladies very happy!

Lesley Brough

WHAT NEXT?

The Editorial Committee suggested to some of the newly-graduated members of our congregation that they reflect on their years of university life. What, we asked them, had been the most enjoyable aspects of this experience, how had they coped with debt and with personal relationships and, most significantly, what had they discovered about themselves. Here are some of their thoughts:

Matthew Horner

I have just finished studying at the University of York for 4 years, where I graduated with a Masters in Physics and Astrophysics and a Year in Europe. Before going to university I was unsure whether I wanted to study Physics or German or even if I

wanted to study at all, but when I found out that there was the possibility of doing a year in Germany as part of my degree this seemed the ideal compromise, and was a large factor in me choosing to go to York as there were only 6 universities in the country to offer this combination.

In the first year I was in halls on a corridor with 5 other people, who all came from different part of the country and studied different subjects. The mix worked brilliantly and we all became really good friends. One of the people commented that the group became like a second family, which is true - a fantastic group of people to have fun with, but who were also around and who would help out if things were ever difficult. One of the most important things that I learnt was in the first few weeks to just speak to anyone at every opportunity. Whether you are standing in a queue or waiting for something, just turn to the person next to you and start talking about something. I would never have dreamt of doing this before going to York, but invariably the person next to you is just as nervous, and is suddenly very grateful to also have someone to talk to! It isn't easy at first, and you do have to force yourself, but I found everyone to be really friendly, because you're all in the same boat of being new, and it provides an excellent way to get to know people, and you may well never bump into them again so what does it matter if the conversation wasn't amazing, just talk, talk, talk!

The year studying in Germany was one of the best experiences of my time at university, but initially it was very difficult. I went there without knowing anyone else, and because I was joining students in their third or fourth year they already knew lots of people and so it was often hard to join already established friendship groups. The first few months were the hardest - before I went I had decided that I would speak only German the whole time, except in an absolute emergency. Occasionally this proved unpopular because lots of people were keen to practise their English, but I found that if you relent for one person suddenly the floodgates open. This policy did make the first few months harder, but after about Christmas the benefits of all the hard work really started to show, and by the end my language had picked up to such a level that I could hold my own in pubs, make jokes, and even speak to friends for 5 hours continuously in German. Living for a year in a country allows you to experience it in a way that is impossible on a holiday or even living there for a month or so - if you're only there for a short term you have all the hard work and none of the benefits! One thing that really helped was going along to a church and the Christian Union at the university, because there you could be guaranteed a friendly welcome and you automatically had a common basis through faith. Without the Church or CU the year would have been extremely hard, going from an environment where you have so many groups of friends to one where you sometimes struggle to even be understood - it makes you realise how we take some of the most basic aspects of communication for granted. When I was back in York I made a deliberate effort to get to know the incoming foreign students in order to help them through the problems and difficulties which I had experienced firsthand the previous year.

And I had such a good time in Germany that now that I've finished I'm looking to move back there to work for a year or so. Before university I could never have

imagined that in four years time I would be based abroad, but it is a consequence of the fantastic opportunities that university offers, and the chance it gives to develop as your own person in your own direction. For anyone reading this unsure like I was whether to go to university or not, I would recommend it unreservedly - I'm certain that you won't regret it, and that afterwards you will recommend it to other people just like I do!

Sarah Clay

I have just finished a history degree at Southampton University and am returning home to live as it is cheaper!

I would say I have enjoyed the independence the most. Being able to do what you want when you want without the responsibilities and ties of adulthood is brilliant. It was also reassuring to know that my family was not far away and would still be able to provide support and choccy biscuits when needed! I also enjoyed studying a subject I love with other students and lecturers who were all equally keen on the course. Looking back I can only think of one thing that was the worst and that was the first week at uni and the home sickness, I soon met someone who was feeling exactly the same though and we are still best friends!

It's easier to see the change university creates in others, yet I am sure I am more confident than I was three years ago. I am happy in myself when I am at uni although find it hard when I go home as I notice some of this confidence goes. Whilst at uni I feel like I've led two separate lives and had two different personalities to go with them, now I need to find a balance between the old and new me.

I've found that over the last three years I have learnt a lot about the different types of people. It seems you will always meet those that are not necessarily nice or trustworthy, however the kind and fun people you meet in between are worth waiting for. I especially loved living in my house this year, over the three years I've stayed close to a few friends and this year we were all together in a lovely little house. Whilst it sounds a cliché I really see them as my second family; we talk, laugh and support each other.

University has showed me that I need to be more confident. Throughout the three years I have done things which at the time scared me, arriving in the first year, starting societies and making friends on my course; whilst these things made me nervous at the time, they were well worth it. Pushing myself to do things I was scared of has made me realise how much can be achieved if I just force myself a little more to face my fears. I'm very bad at worrying and over the three years I find I need to worry less, after all it isn't really going to get me anywhere!

University cost me far more than I thought, food, equipment, bills, rent, my passion for shopping and of course "entertainment" all mounts up. I found though that if I set myself a weekly limit and tried to keep within that I was ok. I was fortunate that my parents could help me out along with my student loan, though I had friends who did not have such help. I was determined to make the most of my time at uni and managed not to sink under the overdraft limit!

I can not recommend university highly enough, I really didn't want to go but knew I needed to do a degree for what I wanted to do in life. However, as it happens, going away to uni was the best thing I've ever done, and has given me the best three years of my life.

Some days there is little I do look forward to as I'd much rather stay here however, hopefully now I'll have a chance to use my history degree and either teach or work within heritage - an exciting prospect for me, though I appreciate many find museums dusty! Before I become too tied down by responsibility however, I would also like to see a bit of the world. I didn't look forward to uni and that turned out alright so who knows what could be around the corner.

Alice Taylor

The moment has finally come for me to graduate from being a student and to join the world as a grown-up. The past five years at the Royal Veterinary College have flown by and it's definitely been a real rollercoaster ride of emotions and experience. I've made some amazing friends (and some equally bizarre ones) and had some fantastic times but it's also been incredibly hard work, which at times never felt like it would ever end.

The past five years have not only increased my veterinary knowledge but have also developed my personal skills. The course demands a huge amount of commitment and self-discipline - it can be very difficult to keep motivated when all your friends are off on traditional university holidays! All stages of the course require team work but the last 18 months have really tested our abilities to work together, both during the day and during the night.

Whilst I am looking forward to graduating there are a lot of things about university life that I will miss - friends, lecturers, clinicians and, strangely enough, I will even miss the midnight emergencies and going without sleep for 38 hours. But now it is time to move on. My friends are friends for life and are only ever a phone call away, wherever we end up. The clinicians have become mentors and friends, rather than the terrifying ogres that they were when we started in the first year, and as for the midnight emergencies well, that's all part and parcel of being a vet. So as one door closes, another one opens, and who knows what's behind it

Anusha Leathard

I have just come to the end of a three year university course in law (Law LLB) at The University of Southampton. I think it would be virtually impossible to pin down a "best" thing about university because there were so many. I enjoyed the opportunity to further my education in a subject which was completely new to me. I think the experience of university life allowed me to develop as a person and appreciate my individuality, independence and responsibility for my own actions. I especially enjoyed the many chances I had to make so many new friends and to try things that I had never had the opportunity to do before, such as joining the Showstoppers (Musical Theatre) and the Ballroom and Latin Dancing Societies!

I suppose perhaps the worst moments were those of intense pressure and stress about course/work/dissertation/exams! Also perhaps living with other students had its tense moments to say the least. Without going into detail there were several problems with one particular housemate in the second year but after she moved out everything returned to normal! One final point to note it that there comes a time when one really cannot put up with the mess and dirty dishes left around the house by other housemates. Being one of the two out of seven housemates who actually tried to keep the house clean certainly had its stressful days!

I can honestly say that I did not have too many problems with controlling my finances and debt. This is mostly due to the support of my parents and the fact that even before university I had been responsible for my own money for quite some time. I think that it is important to have some experience and understanding of dealing with finances before university because so many people had and do have problems accepting responsibility for their money once they go to university.

I think that in some ways I have changed but in other ways I have not changed since being at university. If I have changed at all it is that I have become more mature, more responsible for my actions, more motivated and I have definitely grown used to having my independence!

Having now finished and knowing that I have a 2.1 in law behind me I am looking forward to relaxing for a while and reading a stack of books (for pleasure!)!!! As for what next, I think I will be using the summer holidays to figure that out! I would definitely recommend university to anybody who asks. I had a fantastic three years which went incredibly fast but which provided me with so many opportunities, enjoyable moments and many new friends.

Tom Parker

I have just finished a BA in Maths and Music (Joint Honours) at the University of Birmingham. There have been so many "best" things about uni, far too many to choose one in particular; being given the chance to further my education and enjoy myself at the same time, meeting all sorts of different people (including Catherine, my girlfriend) and making a lot of really good friends, and having the opportunity to do a whole host of things which I might otherwise not have done are amongst them. I really don't think there has been a "worst" thing - apart from that it will very soon be over!

I have changed a huge amount over the last three years, but at the same time I have not really changed at all (if that makes any sense!) - mostly I think I have just grown up a lot, and that is almost entirely due to the experience of life that I have had. After three years at uni I now feel that I am very much better equipped to deal with any situations I may find myself in, but I also realise that there will be a great many occasions when it is unclear what the correct course of action is, and that in those cases one must simply do what one believes to be the best thing at the time.

I am quite good at adapting myself to my surroundings and coping in what may not be ideal conditions, and so I didn't find living with others too much of a problem.

That said, there does come a point when my tolerance of other people's dirty dishes and general untidiness reaches its limit! For the last year I have been living with Catherine, which has been wonderfully stress-free.

I am fortunate to have parents who are willing and able to offer me financial support, and I have therefore come to the end of three years relatively debt free. Doing a Masters, however, is a rather costly thing - I will owe significantly more in a year's time! While I do not like owing money, I realise that it is now an unavoidable aspect of university life. I hope that my future career (whatever that may be!) Will provide me with the means to repay my debts without too much difficulty.

I cannot recommend university highly enough; it has been a wonderful three years. I am very much looking forward to starting an MPhil in Pure Maths in September (thereby putting off making any career decisions for another year!).

ALMA - Angola, London and Mozambique Association

Sunday the 11th July was ALMA Sunday celebrating 6 years of the link between the diocese of London and the dioceses of Angola & Mozambique. On 21st June ALMA Parish Representatives were invited to a meeting with Bishop Mark van Koevering of Niassa, Mozambique, and his wife, Helen. Mark was enthroned as Bishop of Niassa on the 12th October 2003 and he came to talk to us about his first hectic and demanding few months in this new role. It has been a challenging time for the whole family, and what an inspiring family they are. Helen has been teaching their three children herself in order to keep the family together during these first few months, but in July their eldest son, Jake (11), will be going to boarding school in South Africa and their lives will enter another transition as the remaining children, Matthew (9) and Kylie (6), together with their parents, remain in Mozambique without Jake.

The first accounts for 4 years announced a meagre sum left, but produced a new hunger and spirit to start again. Today in Mozambique there are around 40,000 Anglicans in 300 congregations, with only 16 priests earning the minimum wage in the country of US \$ 40 per month. With so few priests the majority of worship is non-Eucharistic and led by 300 volunteer lay ministers or catechists. Mark made special mention of the vibrancy of the worship wherever he goes and often there are 300-400 people packed into the small churches with song and dancing from all groups - of which there are many!

Given the size of the diocese of Niassa, Mark explained that shared ministry with the Archdeacons in regional hubs is essential, each having a small budget. There are now 4 Archdeacons: Lichinga, The Lakeshore (Lago), Zambezia and Nampula. Mark has already visited all the parishes in Lichinga and The Lakeshore and will soon be starting a 6 week tour of Zambezia and Nampula. The family travelled with Mark on his visit to The Lakeshore and Helen told of the shock they experienced at the very poor conditions and quality of life. Women who lived through 12 years of war have seen little change in the following 12 years. Messumba Cathedral is the heart of the

diocese and used to house a teachers training college, housing for priest, nurses, ex-pat missionaries etc. Nationalisation in 1975 on independence was followed by civil war which left the Cathedral in a state of disrepair and the Archdeacon's house is now closed. The Cathedral displays a big white cross on an outside wall, clearly visible across the lake as a sign of hope amidst the derelict state of the town.

There is so much to do and so much enthusiasm shown by Mark and Helen. Helen reminded us that the link between our dioceses is all about what friends can do in a mission together. No matter how much money is raised and sent, our ultimate aim must be friendship and two-way sharing. Please remember them in your prayers.



The Visitors Group recently had a very enjoyable meeting, combining a discussion of the past year's work with a good party! Please speak to Greta Rosten if you know someone who might like a friendly chat, or to talk about baptisms, bereavement or anything else, either on a regular basis or as a "one-off".

We were glad to hear that our late organist, Christopher Cromer and his wife Eva, are now the happy parents of a daughter, Marie-Louise. Congratulations to all three.

The Sunday School Bring and Buy sale raised just over £500 pounds, thanks to the hard work of the teachers and thanks, of course, to all who came to support and enjoy the occasion.

We appreciate our lovely churchyard, with its flowers and birds. Recently, however, there has been rubbish left, especially by the lych-gate. If you pass that way, please take one piece of rubbish away with you!! This will help the problem considerably.

There are some changes afoot in Hampton Hill High Street and we very much hope that the arrival of branches of the large supermarkets will not cause damage to the popular smaller traders who contribute so much to the friendly atmosphere, part of the fabric of our common life.

Betty Redmond is still in Teddington Hospital - a very easy place to drop in for a chat.

When you go on an interesting holiday this year, do send a post card to the church, addressed to the Vicarage. We'll hopefully receive a fabulous collection for display in the autumn.

A well known member of the congregation has tried a "folk-remedy" for verrucas. It was so successful that she thought you might find it useful- put a banana skin (inner side) on the verruca in your shoe. This worked for her in four days! Gone!!

St James' PCC - Sub-Committees

<i>Name</i>	<i>Members</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Recent Activities</i>
Standing	Brian Leathard (Chairman) Rodney Taylor, Liz Butler, Paul Peterken, Michael Bunce	To carry out routine work of the PCC between each PCC meeting	NB: This committee is required by law It has not met in recent years
Finance	Paul Peterken (Chairman), Brian Leathard, Rodney Taylor, Liz Butler, Dick Wilde, Anne Cowlin	Advise the PCC on the conduct of its financial affairs, with the objects of (i) using its money wisely in support of the parish's mission and (ii) complying with legal and C of E requirements	Preparation of 2003 accounts Funding of Open Doors Project Reserves Policy
Hall	Betty Rainbow (Chairman), Brian Baker, Wendy Baker, Kate O'Sullivan, David Taylor, John Nunn	The management of the Hall	Considering action to compensate for the end of some regular lets. Building Maintenance - Floor sealing, Painting
Magazine	Brian Leathard (Chairman), Julie Gittoes, Margaret Taylor, Dick Wilde, Martin Dewey, Susan Homer, Sheila Bly	Organise content and production of the Spire	Produce monthly magazines
Charities and Links	Ann Peterken (Chairman), Lesley Mortimer, Margaret Taylor, Gwynneth Lloyd, Dennis Wilmot, Elizabeth Wilmot, John Williams	Organise the parish's activities that connect to the wider world	Determine the specific charities that receive grants from the parish's general funds
Planned Giving	Don Barrett (Chairman), Pip Rowett, Brian Leathard, Ann Peterken, Carol Bailey, Margaret Taylor, Anne Cowlin	To plan and promote our Planned Giving scheme	Prepare for Mary Spredbury's visit (Area Finance and Stewardship advisor), so as to get her suggestions Prepare new material for our Web Site
Properties	Rodney Taylor (Chairman), Brian Leathard, Bryan Basdell, Chris Edwards, Jack Gostling, Peter Hale, John Nunn, Eric Peterson, Dick Wilde	To care for the church's properties in the best possible way. It has the responsibility for the maintenance, upkeep and care of all of the church's properties, that it, all of its buildings and its land, with the exception of moveable items.	Church Spring Clean Hall lawn Health and Safety Policy West Porch interior decoration
Open Doors	Brian Leathard (Chairman), Rodney Taylor, Liz Butler, Paul Peterken, Jack Gostling	Carry out liaison with the architect and builders of the West Porch, and to organise and co-ordinate fund raising	2004 Fund Raising programme Site meetings with Architect and Builders

FROM THE JUNE REGISTERS

BAPTISMS

- 6 James Simpkin, Teddington
20 Jake Ethan Carroll, Hampton
Alicia Suzanne Carroll, Hampton
27 Sophie Anne Peerless, Hampton Hill
Benjamin Robert Peerless, Hampton Hill

WEDDINGS

- 5 David Andrew Pinsent and Eleanor Mary Edwards
19 Diane Paula Golden and Darren Wayne Packer
26 Julia Rachel Pike and Jason Edward Hartley Dear

FUNERALS

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|----|
| 4 | Evan Llewelyn Roberts, London W2 | 86 |
| 14 | Hilda Jeffries, Ashstead | 96 |
| 16 | Albert Martin, Laurel Dene | 93 |
| 18 | George Clements, Hampton Hill | 94 |

DATES TO NOTE FOR AUGUST

- 1 **Trinity 8**
7 John Mason Neale, Priest & Hymnwriter, 1866
8 **THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD (tr) Trinity 9**
9 Mary Sumner, Founder of the Mothers' Union, 1921
11 Clare of Assisi, Founder of the Poor Clares, 1253
13 Florence Nightingale, Nurse and Social Reformer, 1910
14 Maximilian Kolbe, Friar & Martyr, 1941
15 **THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY Trinity 10**
20 Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, 1153
22 **Trinity 11**
24 Bartholomew the Apostle
29 **Trinity 12**
30 John Bunyan, Writer 1688
31 Aidan, Bishop of Lindisfarne, Missionary, 651