

Leaving home: Ipoh to Shrewsbury Abbey.

By Wai Theng

I am coming towards the end of my twelve months in Lichfield Diocese as a St Chad's volunteer. I gave up my job as a graphic designer in West Malaysia to be here but it has been good to be able to use my skills and experience to produce material for the St Chad's Volunteer Programme, Shrewsbury Abbey, the World Mission department, Meole Brace and the Diocese. (To find out more about the St Chad's volunteer scheme please [click here](#)).

St Peter's congregation has welcomed me with open arms and I have spent time with friends; baking and knitting. It was lovely to be able to set up a small group called Happy Snapper. We meet to share photographic techniques and knowledge.

I thought I knew a lot about the world before I came here, and now I realise that the world is so big and there is a lot more to learn. It has been eye-opening: at home a mission trip means going into a local village and spending time with the local children, singing, dancing, playing games, giving a testimony and then the vicar preaches a sermon so that the children hear the gospel. Here I have seen that mission can mean outreach to another country or continent, engaging in issues of poverty and injustice.

I have learned such a lot in Shrewsbury Abbey: I particularly enjoy my weekly meeting at Holy Trinity, Meole Brace; I meet up with people of my own age and we study the bible together. I have also travelled to Scotland, Wales, France and Germany; I am particularly grateful for these opportunities to travel.

One of the highlights was staying in Brewood where I participated in worship and had a delicious Sunday roast; then we visited an Open Garden: I was amazed that such a beautiful garden lay hidden behind an ordinary house.

I have communicated with friends nearly every day on Facebook but I am a bit worried about going home because their lives have moved on so much while I have been here. It will be hard to settle down again.