

Hello from the Boat People...

We have officially become known as the first and only students at All Nations to live on a boat, and it's certainly been a character building experience! Scraping ice off the inside of the windows in November when the heating broke down; towing her out of a lock when the engine conked out; and finally an idyllic summer, with all systems fully functional, living out on the River Lee, able to walk to college and enjoy just messing about on the river. As one of our fellow-boaters said one evening, "it makes it all worth while!"

It has been an exhilarating year, full of new ideas and challenges and we can't believe that it's finally come to an end. We've learnt so much about our faith, our God, and ourselves. Fond memories of the year include crying with laughter over Theo's haircut, which he said looked "like a rabbit has tried to eat a cabbage"; the *Football World Cup* with Catherine playing for East Africa and Stephen playing in goal for the winning team - Southern Africa!

Since term finished we've had time out on the boat (taking 4 days to return her to our permanent mooring - a distance of 15 miles). We've taken a cheapo Ryan Air flight to Italy and had a brilliant 10 days travelling round. We've also had some time to catch up with friends and family.

When we last wrote we knew that God had called us to work with children or young people who had been affected by war somewhere in Sub-Sahara Africa. The countries of Southern Sudan and DR Congo were on our hearts. However, we found it hard to find opportunities in those countries where we could join a team that was already working with children affected by war. A few weeks before term finished we spoke with a couple from WEC (Worldwide Evangelisation for Christ) International and we visited them the weekend term finished. This was to be the starting point for something we didn't dream of!

We start in September at *Bulstrode* (WEC International Headquarters) for a 4-month residential orientation course before heading out to Sierra Leone in March to work for 18 months with *Rainbows of Hope*, part of WEC that is working with street children.


THE HIGHS AND LOWS

Highs...

- Attending the 'Working with Children at Risk' course
- Idyllic summer term on Miss Louise out on the River Lee for 3 months
- Contact with 'Rainbows of Hope'
- Relaxing holiday in Italy
- Visiting friends in Yorkshire, the Midlands and Oxfordshire

Lows...

- Preparing to move off Miss Louise - our home for the past year
- Our plans to visit friends in the South-West scuppered by our car breaking down - although we did enjoy being towed along the M40!



The project itself is only a couple of years old and is still developing, working very closely with the national church in Sierra Leone. We feel a little daunted, but also very excited at the possibility of working there. The Great Lakes region (the area around Rwanda-Burundi) is still on our hearts, but Sierra Leone will certainly prove to be a God-given opportunity for working with street kids, former child soldiers and other kids traumatised due to the war.

Already we've been on a course, *Working with Children at Risk* in Glasgow at the International Christian College, which was really encouraging and full of useful ideas and resources. One of the teachers on the course was a lady called Phyllis Kilbourn, who actually set up *Rainbows of Hope*, and she was a great encouragement to us both!

PLEASE PRAY...

- That we adjust well to living 'in community' at Bulstrode
- For peace as we wait for the final interviews with WEC
- For our time saying our goodbyes to friends and family
- That we will trust God to provide for all our needs

All this has happened quite unexpectedly, but we are still waiting for our formal interview with WEC, which will occur some time after we arrive at Bulstrode. The plan is that we will be at Bulstrode until Christmas and then return to *Miss Louise* (our boat) for January and February, to earn some money and visit friends and family. All being well we head out to Africa at the beginning of March.

Once again, thank you for all your prayers and support. It's difficult to explain just how important they are for us, but they are, believe us! We really look forward to catching up with people in the coming months.

God bless, with love from,

Stephen & Catherine