

A letter from India.

I have had several reports that my previous efforts for The Key have been "about as funny as penguin jokes" which is quite hurtful.

Because of these comments I packed my bags on the 19th February and left for India in search of new sights, sounds, smells, jokes and possibly, if I'm lucky a wife.....or two.

I have been here now about 18 days and have made some very strong friendships already. The kindness of people is amazing and everyone has accepted me, a pasty skinned fellow from Bromley into their community. I wondered how people here would react to my stay, a person who is seen to be very very rich coming over to help, but the welcome has been so warm.

The first couple of weeks have been spent settling in, visiting projects the Delhi Brotherhood Society run, and getting to know people. I also got a brilliant opportunity to visit a little known wonder of the world called the Taj Mahal which was fantastic.

The DBS' work is very varied with projects - helping out, the young, the disabled, the elderly, street children, women, the sick and also farmers. They work indiscriminately to care for everyone from every walk of life and every religion. DBS get people back on their feet and give them a future.

Now I have a good idea of all the projects, I have a choice to help out in whatever projects I wish to. My main work has been to sit in on English lessons helping the children with their work and speech and I have also had the chance to teach a few lessons which wasn't as nerve racking as I thought! The DBS run a disabled day care centre which I have been helping out with 2-3 mornings a week. It has been a challenge because some of the children cannot walk properly and need leg braces, one boy cannot walk at all and has to physically drag himself about with his hands. Other children there cannot

Speak or hear which makes communicating with them very hard but we come up with very clever ways to get our point across!

A lot of my time is spent hanging out with the 55 boys at the orphanage; we get on really well and always have a laugh even if I can't speak Hindi! They teach me Indian Games, and are showing me up when it comes to cricket. I have been teaching them football, although they keep picking the ball up - and even had them doing the conga yesterday!

The last project I am getting involved with is the HIV/AIDS project which is an increasing problem in India. The knowledge I gain here will help me a lot with my course at university.

The time so far has flown by and I have had a brilliant time already. Being here isn't all rosy; it is full of new challenges and situations that I have got no experience of which can be hard. I have learned that I am here to 'be' and not to 'do'; it is no good trying to change everything, but simply being here shows someone you care.

Thank you for the contribution towards my trip which has made this all possible for me.

Reading back, this has been quite a serious report, so here's a joke:

Two hydrogen atoms walk into a bar
One says to the other "I think I've lost an electron"

The other says "Are you sure?"
The first says, "Yes, I'm positive".

Stop cringing.

Matt Newman 9.3.05

Matt's progress and letters can be followed on website www.preachdesigns.co.uk/india

You can write to him at the following address: c/o Mr. D. Rajamani,
175c, J + K Pocket MIG Flats,
Dilshad Gardens, Delhi 1100