

Report on a Round Square Exchange visit to South Africa.

It seems a long time ago that I was emailing Jasmin before my exchange, trying to get every ounce of information out of her about Bridge House. But words can't explain the mixture of emotions I felt on my six weeks exchange in South Africa. When people talk about their trip, they usually tell you all the highs and no lows. I feel the lows are the most important part. The lows are where people grow up, and learn from their experiences.

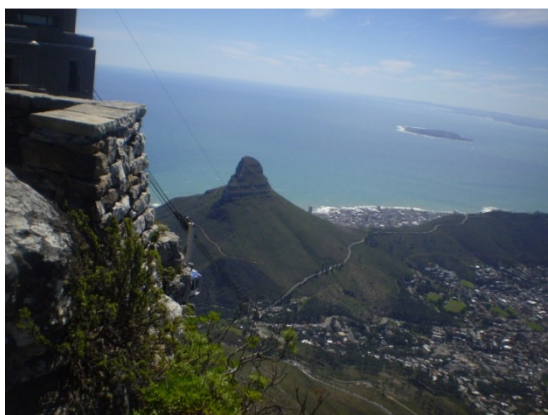
Setting off on the 4th August, believing I was a big girl, aged 16, and could face the world alone. I flew from Gatwick to Dubai and finally Cape Town. For the first time that I can remember, I sat on the plane crying, wishing my mum would come and hold my hand, but she never came.

This feeling of wanting a friend from home lasted three whole weeks, but I made the most out of it, anyway. On the 3rd weekend of my exchange, I suddenly stopped feeling homesick: I realised I didn't want to come home. I would stay there forever if I could. Jas's family felt like family to me. I had made a close band of friends: Kerry, Sai (who was on exchange from Oman), Oliver, Johnny, James, Fran, Jordan, Chris and Renay.



Bridge House is a mixed school, in a remote setting, in a village called Fransshoek. Fransshoek is beautiful. Mountains soaring high all around. It felt so peaceful. The family home of the Swanepoels is situated there. Their house is massive compared to mine. It had a swimming pool and maids.

Bearing in mind, I am an only child, Jas isn't! Far from it! I found myself living with three of her sisters, and one of her brothers and two of her sisters visited, while I was there. Also bearing in mind I only have two cats and fishes out the back, she had three dogs, one cat and two parrots.



While out there, I visited many places. I went to camp at Betty's Bay on an educational camp with the school. It was so much fun, I loved it! On a school trip, I went to the theatre in Cape Town and the three shows we saw were interesting. I visited knee deep snow in the mountains near Ceres. To get to the snow, Jas's family and I went on a 4x4 trail which was really fun! On my last Monday, I visit Cape Town Marina with Varrie, Jassy's step mum. I also climbed Table Mountain on my last day, which was awesome and really made my exchange.

By the end, I was crying again on the plane, but this time for a different reason. I wanted to stay and not go home and not leave all my new friends, like I had to

Cobham Hall's motto is that there is more in you than you think. Exchange really demonstrated this to me. I never thought on the plane in Gatwick that I would manage 6 weeks away from my mum and dad, living in a house with four children and not want to leave. But all that happened! Exchange was a learning experience.

Thank you to everyone who made it possible! Especially Mr. Gilchrist, my mum, my dad and everyone in South Africa.

by Rachel Morfett