



## **Internship Case Study: Betty Tonnie**

Betty is studying English and business studies as part of her undergraduate degree in Kassel, Germany. She is very interested in history, languages, and learning about different cultures. For her semester abroad, she recently did an internship where she volunteered at the

Weiner Library and the Royal Anthropological Institute.

As part of my undergraduate degree, I have to complete either a semester or an internship abroad in an English-speaking country. I chose to do an internship because I thought it would be more helpful for me and for my future career to get some work experience abroad. There are several reasons why I decided to come to London. First, I like Britain a lot. I have been to Cornwall and London on previous trips and really enjoyed experiencing the green countryside and the multicultural diversity of the city. Second, London was familiar to me so I knew what to expect from my stay there. Third, if I did an internship in the USA I would have had to apply for a visa and the flight and living costs would be very expensive.

After deciding I wanted to do an internship in England, I spent a lot of time researching various options. I sought advice from the department of my university dealing with semesters abroad and internships. The department helps students find appropriate programmes by referring them to the Erasmus or Leonardo Schemes. I couldn't go through Leonardo, because I had not yet finished my undergraduate degree. I also couldn't go with Erasmus because the minimum period required for a placement is three months and I wanted to do one lasting only two months. I therefore quickly realised that I had to sort out my own workplace and accommodation, and that I would not get any external support.

I began my research on the Internet. It was difficult at first, because you have to be careful which word(s) you type in. "Internship London" alone will give you 3,780,000 results at Google. I found it was much better to choose an interesting company or career area. It is also possible to find out if a company in Germany in which you are interested has an associated company in the country you would like to go to. Different agencies in the UK and Germany can help find students work placements, but they usually charge a processing fee.

Initially, I tried getting an internship in a publisher's house or a cultural institution. I sent many applications to publishers in London, but most remained

unanswered. I found out about the Wiener Library, because a relative of mine told me about it. The Wiener Library is one of the world's most extensive archives on the Holocaust and Nazi era. I applied to do an internship at the Library and luckily they accepted me! They also asked me if I would like to work at the Royal Anthropological Institute as they had connections with the RAI. I was very happy to get the chance to work in both institutions. For me the library satisfied my interests in history in general, and the RAI satisfied my interests in learning about different cultures.

Before I came to London, I tried to avoid thinking about what the experience would be like, but inevitably I had some expectations. I hoped that my accommodation would be okay and that it would be in a nice area. I also hoped that the library and the RAI would provide interesting tasks and a nice work environment and that my time in London would in some way shape my future and my attitude towards my career in particular.

My first day in the Library struck me the most because I did not expect that so many Germans would be working there! The Wiener Library's collection includes published and unpublished works, press cuttings, photographs and eyewitness testimonies. I was able to have an insight into the work and research that is done in a memorial and research institute, and was allowed to look at important documents and photos that are not accessible to everyone. My general tasks included copying, doing spreadsheets, taking part in stock checks, and on two projects: One project consisted of scanning photos, documents and books for a spreadsheet that would later be entered into a database for the Holocaust Education Development Programme, which was working in collaboration with the library. For the second project I put together an exhibition about *Kindertransport* (the refugee children movement) before the Second World War.

At the RAI, I worked mostly with the Institute's Education Officer to help with the Educational Outreach Programme. My main tasks involved doing research for the *Discover Anthropology* website, creating spreadsheets and working on film and photo catalogues. Before working at the Institute I had a vague understanding of what anthropology was all about, but I came to realise how broad a subject it is and how much you can do with it!

I would definitely recommend doing an internship to anyone who is considering the experience. During my internship I developed better PC-skills, e.g. at Word, Excel etc. I also widened my knowledge about team work, how cultural institutions make plans and develop projects, and what research is like. The experience also helped me really improve my language skills by working together with native speakers.

I think it is important that the place you choose to do your internship makes you feel welcome and that you are able to do interesting tasks as well as some more dull ones. I also think that it is also important to enjoy the time you have outside your

internship. I really enjoyed my free time in London and did lots of things like visiting museums, going to watch Shakespeare at the Globe, going to Brighton, visiting markets. I think London is great because it provides you with so many options to experience British culture as well as cultures from around the world.