

Hi Manchester students,

I hope you have been enjoying your time in St Vincent so far and are getting the most out of the trip.

I'm Tom and I'm now a qualified doctor working as a GPST3 in Manchester but back in 2014 I was going through the same experience as you guys as a Manchester medic on elective in SVG.

I've kept in touch with quite a few of the people I met on that trip and SVG still has a fond place in my heart 8 years on!

How did I end up in SVG? I arranged my elective independently (after leaving it a little late) with Milton Cato hospital to shadow the medical team there. I found it quite a difficult process as it was really hard to find the correct contacts and then go through the various steps, especially paying the fees associated which required some complex international bank transfers. When Khari reached out to me to be involved with CEA I thought it was a great idea to streamline the whole process and hopefully help students get the most out of the trip and ideally be able to tailor their experience more to what they want to get out of it.

The placement itself was very interesting and was a huge insight into how different medicine is in other countries - in particular it's a great chance to develop your history taking and examination skills as these are so much more important when resources like CT/MRI and USS are much more scarce.

Outside of the hospital I got involved straight away with a local football team by going along to a random training session and asking if I could play with them. They were more than happy to let me train, help coach and even play some competitive games which was a great way to integrate with some of the locals, although this did lead to trying Sunset rum for the first time which is dangerous stuff - you've been warned!

There are also local rugby and cricket teams and coaching programmes going on that I know you can get involved in.

There is amazing snorkeling and diving available all over the island and I can't recommend enough going to Tobago quays to swim with turtles. You don't have to leave the main island either, there's some great waterfall walks you can do, climbing the volcano (if this is allowed after last year's eruption) and the salt ponds in the north.

Meeting some of the local medical students - typically from America or Canada - broadens your medical horizons as well and has given me 3-4 lifelong friends who I'm still in touch with.

Your time there is really what you can make of it. Put yourself out there, meet new people and don't come back with any regrets or missed opportunities!

If any of you want to reach out for anything, you can use my email below or I'm more than happy for you to WhatsApp me as well, I'm not big on formalities!

Best wishes

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