

This year, I was lucky enough to be selected as the winner of the 2018 IAFL Studentship, which led to a wonderful three weeks in Victoria, Canada. I chose to undertake my placement in Canada because whilst studying family law, I did a lot of research into Canadian law, as family law there is considerably more liberal, particularly in relation to parenting – it is on this topic that I wrote my essay for the IAFL application.

Indeed, I was not disappointed. I was able to work for two weeks in Brown Henderson Melbye, a Victoria-based law firm which practises solely in family law. Whilst there, I had the opportunity to accompany the lawyers to Court, sit in on meetings, and research cases to become more acquainted with the law in British Columbia.

A particularly interesting aspect of my work was to see how the legal systems differed – for example, whilst I have always been interested in the Barrister side of the law, I greatly enjoyed the Canadian system whereby all lawyers are both barristers *and* solicitors, meaning a hugely diverse work load, where I could experience and learn about both litigation skills and client-work. This solidified for me the very human nature of family law, and certainly enlightened me as to the skills that are needed to succeed in family law.

Moreover, I was exposed to the realities and complexities of family law, whereby cases can go on for years, and often there is no clear-cut solution. In this way, I saw how the lawyers at the firm were pragmatic, adaptable and flexible in their work; observing the lawyers come to decisions and compromises with clients allowed me to see how this challenge can be faced, and was extremely interesting.

Outside of work, I hugely enjoyed the welcoming and neighbourly atmosphere in Victoria, and spent much of my time getting to know other fantastic people in the community, whom I am so grateful to for making me feel so at home. I had once in a lifetime experiences, enjoying whale-watching, hiking, a hilarious day at the Saanichton Fair, and so much more.



The people I met in Canada, both in and outside of the firm, made my experience what it was. Trudi Brown, in particular, in being my host and mentor during the time I spent in Victoria, was not only inspiring as a woman at the forefront of Canadian family law, but became a friend I am sure I will stay in contact with for a long time. This warmth and friendliness was exhibited by everyone I met, which made the work environment refreshing – as a small firm, the essence of Brown Henderson Melbye is collaboration, helpfulness, and kindness. It was an absolute pleasure to work there, and I profusely thank IAFL (especially David Salter, Jo Miles, and Claire Fenton-Glynn for all of their help) for allowing me this opportunity – one which I will never forget.



Part of the BHM Family
(but we can't forget Dyson the dog!)