

# *Testimonial*

*by Stuart Gribben*

This time last year, I was into my fourth year teaching in South Korea, a country I called home, a country very close to my heart. Like all places in the world, the longer you stay somewhere the harder it is to leave. I had thought about working in another country, but at that point, Thailand wasn't a country I had given serious consideration. One night as I was cycling home from work, listening to a British radio station, my phone buzzed to let me know an e-mail had come through. The e-mail I received was from my friend Jade, asking me if I'd be interested in working in Thailand. The seed was planted that evening. Next thing I knew, I was having an interview with Peter about coming down to South East Asia to continue my ESL adventure. Things went well in the interview and a start date was arranged for October.

Arriving in Bangkok was something I will never forget, and to be met at the airport by a familiar face, an old friend from Jeju Island, was priceless. The three days spent in Bangkok were fun as well as a real eye opener, but I was anticipating the flight south and the start of my new life in Surat Thani.

Peter picked me up from Surat Thani International Airport and dropped me off at the house I was moving into. Everything went smoothly and I was ready to take the next step, which was to begin working at Thida! I must say that things could not have worked out any better at Thida. The first few weeks were a little, let's say – nuts, as I was working a schedule that took me from New Thida to Old Thida and back again, sometimes even twice a day! I felt I was doing more walking than teaching! I soon got used to the schedule and began to really enjoy it. Surely, going from classes of twelve in Korea to classes at Old Thida with over fifty-five students was also a challenge, but not one I didn't thrive upon. The reason I started to enjoy that schedule was because I was able to see the lives of both schools, New Thida & Old Thida. Both are great campuses in their own rights, very different, but under the same umbrella of Thida. You have New Thida which is more aesthetically pleasing, with cute Anuban students running around calling for high fives in a very easily navigated building. Over at Old Thida, it is much more spontaneous and robust! To get an outlook on both has been fantastic! During my time at Thida, I have also felt that I was very fortunate that to be placed in an office with a lovely blend of Thai English Teachers, Thai Music Teachers and only two other foreign teachers. That experience alone has taught me a lot about Thai people and Thai culture!

Outside of school I have been very active, to the point where at one period, before the March to May break, I was doing some kind of training or exercising seven days at week. From swimming to yoga, you name it, I was doing it! I am very proud to have represented the local foreign soccer team here in Surat, The Surat Penguins. The guys and girls I met through this team helped me become truly settled in the area. Some of those guys will be my brothers for life. Again, through being involved in this team I gained more insight to Thai culture. Playing against Thai guys was completely different from what I had imagined it would be like! Talk about aggressive!

On top of everything, I'd like to add that if Super English had not employed me, none of these great experiences in Thailand would have happened. If truth be told, I probably wouldn't have moved to Thailand if it wasn't Super English I was joining. The staff and management at Super have been fantastic. Every time I have been over to Super English I've been greeted with smiles and positive words! The organization of the agency has been fantastic as well. I have never been left wanting or stuck in a bad position! I can say with confidence that my time being employed with Super English has worked out great! I wish the schools and the agency all the best for the future, and I know I will be dropping in to see everyone again before too long!

Thank you!

Stuart