



Vine Trust Work Party — Peru

Dave Mockett

September 2006 (1)



INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

During July 2006, four students from Plockton High (Dougal Deans, Allan MacLeod, Laura MacLeod and Malcolm Parsons) and one from Portree High (Grace Matheson) joined Dave and Ruth Mockett on a Vine Trust Work Party to Peru having each raised in excess of £1400. For two weeks we were part of a 30 strong team working with SU Peru. For the final week, Dave and Ruth arranged and led a tour to Cusco and Machu Picchu, for which the students paid themselves.



WEEK 1: THE AMAZON JUNGLE

The new medical ship, Amazon Hope II, had just arrived from Greenock and we were privileged to see it in dock on the Amazon before going into service.



The first week's work was light, visiting SU's jungle home at Puerto Alegria. We were mainly seeing the work and the areas from which the boys came and getting alongside the boys. This allowed us the opportunity to swim (and Allan to fish!) in the Amazon, play football and do crafts with the boys. All our meals were with the boys in the centre and we also slept on site in small dormitories.



The climate was very hot and humid, making sleep difficult but the boys responded very well to our presence and we were able to entertain them very naturally, despite the language difficulties. The food was mainly chicken and rice but very tasty and plenty of it, prepared by the local cooks.





Vine Trust Work Party — Peru

Dave Mockett

September 2006 (2)



WEEK 2: THE ANDEAN MOUNTAINS

After one night in Lima, another early morning began a nine-hour trip into the Andes to the new village of Kusi, on the site of the devastating 1970 landslide below the highest mountain in Peru. The village is partly completed and our task was to continue the building work. We were sleeping in larger and more comfortable dormitories and the climate was more comfortable being not too dissimilar to the UK. The food was more varied and once again well produced and plenty of it. Fresh fruit, chocolate and drinks were also available throughout the day and some of us took the opportunity to taste the national delicacy of guinea pig! In total we were working for six days, with Sundays off and two half days to explore the locality. A trip was organised to the continental divide at 16000ft and also the local market town of Yungay. The tasks were foundation digging, mud mixing, brick making, brick carrying, bamboo carrying, bamboo stripping, sanding and painting and other labouring jobs. We also got the chance in small groups to visit the school which opened last year in Kusi to take a lesson.



In the main we were general labourers for the Peruvian builders and there were limits on our input for safety reasons and that we were working at altitude (about 8500ft). Most jobs were heavy and exhausting and although it did not always feel like we made much of a contribution, SU assured us that every bit we did was a tremendous help on an extensive project due for completion in 2009.



Vine Trust Work Party — Peru

Dave Mockett
September 2006 (3)



WEEK 3: CUSCO & MACHU PICCHU

Following our overnight return trip to Lima and a brief visit to the SU centre in Lima, including breakfast with the boys there and a short city tour, our group of six left the main party for Cusco. The five day tour took in the old Inca capital of Cusco, the Sacred Valley of the Incas and the magnificent mountain city of Machu Picchu. We concluded with an overnight stop in Cusco before the fourteen flight home.

CONCLUSION

My own reflections of the time away, although the work was hard and the constant travel left us quite tired, was that the trip had been extremely worthwhile. It was good to get to know the team and it was humbling to consider the impact the trip had, even as one is considering a change of University course as a result. COOL works all year round in the community and schools, and the Peru project reinforces the valuable service we provide to local young people. Unfortunately work parties for next year are fully booked, but we plan to offer the opportunity again during the summer of 2008.

Dave Mockett
August 2006

