

Vine Trust Work Party — Peru



Dave Mockett
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INTRODUCTION

This summer's work party, as ever, began in a school assembly for S5 and 6 students in April 2009. Out of those interested, six students signed up as well as three volunteers in employment. This then was to be the largest team I have taken to Peru, consisting of Freya Donellan, Freya Allan and Tamara Inglis (Plockton), Daniel Tweats (Kishorn), Fiona Deans (Conchra) and Lucy Smith (Glenelg), as well as Willie Fraser, Jackie MacLennan and Heather Strong.

Due to the rising costs throughout the world, we had to raise in excess of £17,000 as a team. This was a daunting task for individuals and the group but we were blessed with the generosity and hard work of supporters throughout the parishes, allowing us to raise more than needed and even send some gifts independently to the work of the Vine Trust amongst boys in Peru.

It's always my endeavour to allow the team to see some of the sights of Peru, including Machu Picchu

if possible. This year that meant an extra week, following our two week work party, which was to be just for the COOL team lead by myself. Each member had to pay an extra £400 themselves to cover the tour, arranged through Hilda of VTours, Lima.

The work party consisted of 17 volunteers from across the UK, as well as Michelle of the Vine Trust (formerly BCYT) and two translators: Carmen from Peru and the USA, and Billy from the USA. This meant that our contingent made up the majority of the work team. However, the smaller team seemed to allow us to become one very quickly.



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Our work destination this year was subject to change due to floods in the Sacred Valley during January which had sadly destroyed the home that we had worked on in 2006. Thankfully all the boys were on holiday in Kawai at the time, so no one was injured, although everything was lost. At short notice, a property big enough to house over 40 boys was found in the nearby town of Urubamba which is where they are currently living, on a lease that expires at the end of this year. Whilst we had been due to work on their centre, this was now longer viable.

We arrived in Lima on the overnight flight at around 6 in the morning. As our hotel was not ready until late morning, we agreed to a city tour. Paul Clark gave us an hour's introduction to some of the work, then we had our tour followed by lunch in a café. After lunch we visited the deaf centre and then finally got back to the hotel before dinner in a restaurant mid evening. Considering we had only just completed our journey from home, this was all too much, leaving

us tired and a little frustrated on the first day.

Following a day's bus journey over the Andes to La Merced, we arrived at our home for 10 days: the SU centre in the jungle at Kimo. It is a fantastic clearing on the jungle slopes, reached only by hand-pulled cable car across the Chanchamayo River.

The disappointment for a number in our party was that Kimo, although has been in use as an SU holidays centre for many years, is not operational as a boys' home as yet, due to some delays including finding the staff to run it. That meant that we would not be working directly with the boys for most of our stay. However, there was lots to be done on both the campsite and the new home.



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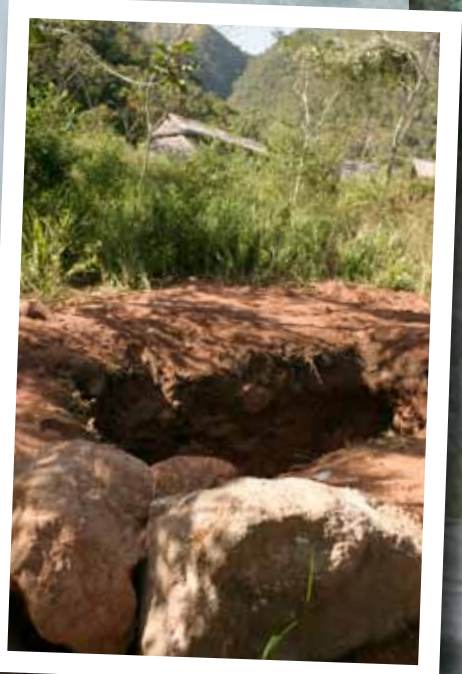
Work included removal of old buildings for renovation; watching out for jungle wildlife(!); installation of new water pipes, carrying water from the mountain streams through a filtration system; and building on the home itself.

For my work group this began with digging out the pit for the septic tank. Although the digging was straightforward, jungle humidity and large boulders made the job exhausting. It was good that Dann, an apprentice joiner, was put to full use building timber staircases in the houses. Over the course of the work he managed to build and install three staircases, as


well as passing on some of his knowledge to the local, self-taught builders. The houses, timber framed built on concrete floors, needed a lot of smoothing,

painting and cladding with T&G. This took up the rest of our time whilst others worked hard on the water system.

We had taken some basic hand tools



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with us which we're very useful, particularly hammers and a saw. In my opinion, we wouldn't have been able to get on so well without them and it would have been useful to have told in advance exactly what the needs were.

The work was interspersed with day trips to local sites of interest, as well as the Sunday service in the

local Baptist church.

Evenings were spent playing games, hearing bits about the work in Kimo and sharing devotional times together, to which everyone came and a number took part.



When it came time to leave, many of us were sad to be saying goodbye to the jungle though we all felt a great sense of achievement.

Cusco

Although the centre in the Sacred Valley was destroyed, boys are still housed there and the Vine Trust had promised to take us there as we had previously booked our tour to begin in Cusco.

We had another bus journey back to Lima before an overnight stay then flight on to Cusco where we were met by Rachel from SU. Being at 10,000ft, the first day

was quite relaxed allowing us to acclimatise, but there were no real problems.

On the Sunday we travelled down to the market of Pisac before heading on to the boys home for lunch. It was great to at last see a thriving centre where over 40 boys (including the centre staffs' own two boys) are cared for. We shared lunch, played games, including football and relay races,



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years previously. He graciously took us up to the site which was a very moving and sad experience. We picked our way through the rubble where the old buildings had once stood, as well as the foundations we had laid for the workshop. Hector told us that there is some hope that they will be able to rebuild on the site in the coming year, but further away from the river.

and socialised with the boys in our pigeon Spanish! Willie had brought with him lots of photos of home as well as colouring activities which were enjoyed for well over an hour by boys of all ages.

Whilst the time went by all too quickly, we were thanked and hugged by everyone there. I had asked Hector, the centre manager, if it were possible to see the site of the floods where we had worked two





ascent of Waynu Picchu, limited to just 400 a day, has now become so popular that to have any chance you would need to be queueing from 2 or 3 in the morning. This was not a feasible option but we did arrive in the city for 7am in time to see the sun rise over the mountains. That was a great experience, and also meant our formal tour had finished by about 11am leaving us most of the

day to do our own things. For some that meant relaxing in the city before descending back to Aguas Calientes, whilst for the older four it gave us the chance to climb the mountain called Machu Picchu overlooking the city.

This affords tremendous views of the ruins and the surrounding jungle, but it is a hard walk in the heat over very exposed paths. This was almost too much for those amongst us who do not handle heights well, but we were glad that we eventually reached the top — and the bottom again! We then still had time to walk up to the Sun Gate where the Inca Trail enters the city before being able to relax again in the hot baths, then catching our train back to Cusco.

TOURISM

On the Monday morning the rest of the team left us to fly home, apart from one who had joined a walking party of the Inca Trail. We were met by our tour guide in Cusco and transferred to the Royal Inca II hotel.

The tour was for four days culminating at Machu Picchu. We found that the days were a little full for our liking leaving us quite tired and back after dark in the evenings. However, the evening of local dancing in a restaurant organised by our guide, although costing an extra \$25 each, seemed to go down well.

I had chosen to spend a night in Aguas Calientes this year, giving us time to relax in the natural hot baths (\$10 entry plus \$1 for lockers) before Machu Picchu. The

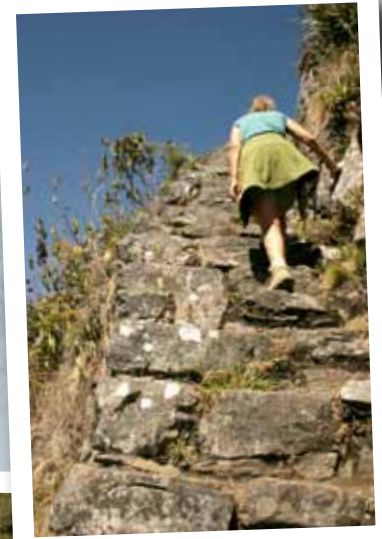
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During the tour, we managed to meet for three Bible studies together. Everyone appreciated this time, and those that weren't Christians felt included and enjoyed learning about our faith.

Our return home was hit by delays, not uncommon in international travel. Sadly we were let down by LAN staff who simply failed at every stage to plan our journey ahead, leaving us stranded in Madrid for an extra night. Thankfully a sympathetic man from Iberia Airlines managed to get us booked back to Heathrow and then Glasgow. Those of us who had lost bags had them returned before the week was out.

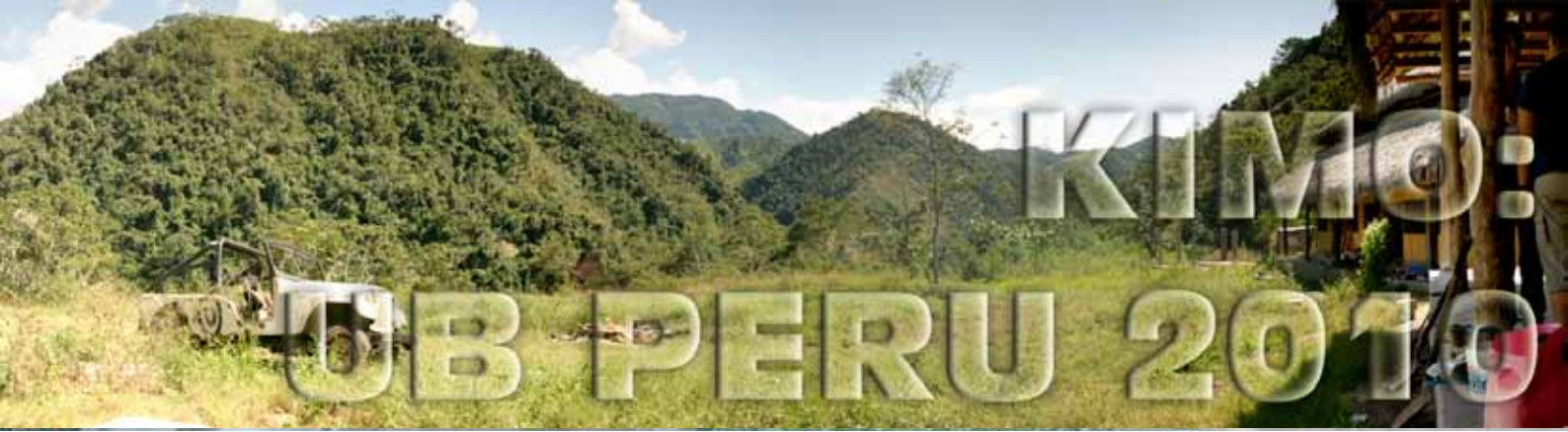
CONCLUDING REMARKS

Once again the Vine Trust work party has afforded me opportunities that I otherwise would not have had. Personally speaking, the group and the work itself was the best I'd been part of. It was especially encouraging that the young people with



me we most sad to be leaving the jungle and enjoyed that aspect of our trip much more than the tourist side, although they were glad to have seen the sights.

It had initially been a disappointment to me that we only had one on the team who was still at school, but the mix seemed to work. (I do have a



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number of students still at school right now who are interested in taking part in the future.)

One frustration was that the fullness of the tourist week meant that we couldn't meet up for a Bible time everyday. However, it was great to see everyone making an effort to be at most if not all of the voluntary devotionals during the work party, and the times we did spend in Bible study together during the final week we very rewarding. We all felt that the tour was too much and I would look to reduce the 'sight-rate' in future.

I am fully intending to put together a team for 2012, and I have at least six who will almost definitely be a part of that, with maybe four others who are showing keen interest.

I would continue to commend overseas trips to our ministry and it seems that the Vine Trust continues to allow us to achieve our aims: providing the best program possible, open to all and allowing the good news of Jesus to be seen in action.

I would like to thank again all those that made this year's trip possible. I especially thank the many volunteers in our communities who worked so hard and gave so generously to raise the funds required.

Dave.

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Youth and Schools' Worker for COOL
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