

Time Travel Australia

Our Business is in Ruins

**Newsletter
Summer 2015**

I have just returned from tours to Peru and Ecuador – I actually had to come home early as I succumbed to injury and bailed out a week early – and missed out on a visit to Sacha Lodge in the jungles of Ecuador. I left the group in the capable hands of Roberto, another fantastic local guide.

The tours were both a success although Peru did throw up a few hurdles for Penny who was managing the group in Cusco after I had left to pick up the other group in Ecuador. She will tell you in her own words later in the newsletter.

Ecuador had its own issues – an erupting volcano. Cotapaxi has been erupting since August. We had planned to spend two nights on the slopes of the mountain but the authorities put a 30km exclusion zone in place. As we left Quito we stopped at a viewpoint to see if we could see the volcano and it didn't let us down! The summit was covered in cloud but shortly after we stopped we witnessed a huge explosion as a cloud of ash and dust shot skyward to rise above the cloud bank (all witnessed from 50 km away!). I was pleased to know that we weren't staying there anymore!

The altered itinerary had us stay in a park near the Volcan Antisana - another spectacular mountain. This time in the Paramo, a beautiful, mountain landscape similar to the Altiplano of Peru and Bolivia but a lot wetter and warmer! We saw a condor on her nest, saw several white-tailed deer and a hummingbird that lives well above the tree line in the Paramo. I am informed that those who stayed on for the visit to Sacha Lodge managed to see a Harpy Eagle – even the local guides were very excited. I have only seen one in a cage and even that was impressive.

The Galapagos cruise was a highlight – for most that is. It was quite rough at times and one member of the party suffered a little from *mal de*

mer. He lasted a couple of days before we left him marooned at Puerto Ayora where he took up residence in a hotel while we continued around the islands.



Guinea pig on a stick, Quito, Ecuador.

Ecuador is a remarkable country and should be put on your bucket list if it's not already. We'll hopefully be heading back in 2017.

The itinerary for the Camino de Santiago walk is taking shape and should be ready for mailing out shortly. If you are interested please let me know as there has been quite a bit of interest. Of course, we won't have a price until early in 2016. We are taking expressions of interest but of course there is no obligation until we have fixed a price and taken a deposit. We are in a similar position for the 'Beagle' and a draft itinerary will be available in a week or two.

Happy travels

Chris Carter

AN ANDEAN ADVENTURE

October 2015

Two day strikes in Cusco, an incoming plane careering off the runway at the airport and a ten hour drive to another airport so our group could make homeward connections weren't really on our agenda for adventures. But that was all part of our recent tour. Apart from these mishaps, all had happy endings and our group enjoyed exploring Chile, Bolivia and Peru.

On arrival a tired group, including a limping and in much pain Chris, who nearly didn't come on the tour, had no time to rest as our time in Santiago was brief and a walking tour of the city took place shortly after our arrival to admire some of the beautiful old colonial buildings around the Plaza de Armas. The next day we went to Valparaiso on the coast and visited Pablo Neruda's house - an eccentric Nobel Prize winning poet, for those who don't know of him. Valparaiso is the main port for Santiago and the population would win competitions for strong calf muscles due to the incredibly steep streets.

Three days were spent in the Atacama Desert staying in the wild-west town of San Pedro de Atacama. In the early 16th century Pedro Valdivia spent a few years there on his way south to Chile and his house still stands - it is now a souvenir shop. Highlights were the crisp early morning visits to Lagos Miscanti and Minques plus a salt lake that attracts beautiful flamingos.

A return to the coast saw us visiting several towns, the most interesting being Pisagua. In a previous era it had been an important nitrate port but now it is almost a ghost town. The remains of Teatro Municipal are a reminder of its former glory, with many famous musicians, actors and singers visiting. However Pisagua was infamous during the Pinochet regime for the incarceration of political prisoners. Birdlife and sea-lions were abundant and we really enjoyed seeing them in their natural habitat. We also had the best fish and chips ever in the only restaurant in town.

Onwards to Arica, an important and historic town near the Peruvian border. Arica is a busy port town and the main port for land-locked Bolivia who have access to it. Arica is a pleasant modern city with a wonderful spring-like climate all of the year. It is famous for the site of the oldest artificial mummies in the world, and we spent

time in two museums seeing part of their collections.

En route to Bolivia we drove inland and visited several sites including walking along a section of an Inka trail into the village of Socoroma (Note to self: - always make sure to wear appropriate footwear. Nasty prickles abound with hypodermic like needles that go right through shoes into feet as well as attaching to clothing. Also a good idea to have a tall person alongside, when the path disappears tall person can find it again).

Lago Chungara in the Altiplano in Lauca National Park is very close to the Bolivian border. The beautiful lake is at the base of the perfect cone of Parinacota Volcano. Vicuñas, llamas, viscachas (rabbit like creatures) and many bird species can be found here.

Farewell Chile. The land of Nescafe. An amazing country, so long and narrow but with an enormous range of features and climates. We saw only a small part but the landscapes and skies were vast and at times quite overwhelming in their beauty.

The road into Bolivia continued over the Altiplano until we reached El Alto, a city that has developed on the outskirts of La Paz. Once a shanty-town it has developed into a bustling city with no planning, enormous traffic problems and a population almost equalling La Paz. La Paz is in a canyon but still at high altitude. We stayed near the Witches' Market and spent hours wandering around the narrow streets and exploring the fascinating shops selling a range of mysterious herbs and potions to cure every known ailment or to be used as offerings in ceremonies to Pacha Mama, Mother Earth.

The ruins of Tiwanaku lie west of La Paz near Lake Titicaca. The site was occupied from about 500BC to 1200AD and is important for the masonry found at the different complexes. It is impressive to see.

A white-knuckled crossing across Lake Titicaca in a ridiculously small and crowded boat took us to Copacabana, a colourful and touristy town on the edge of the lake. The town is full of backpacker hostels, some glam hotels, shops and restaurants, and has a very happy atmosphere. There is also a magnificent church where the

priest, everyday, blesses new cars, taxis and trucks bought by local people. He sprinkles holy water over each car and the delighted owners then shower the cars with sparkling wine or beer. The cars are usually decorated with garlands of flowers and ornaments and after the ceremony, driven around the plaza several times with much loud tooting of horns. The large white church built in a Moorish style is definitely worth a visit.

We also had a visit to the Isla del Sol and enjoyed a picnic purchased at the local markets that morning in Copacabana.

Farewell Bolivia. The land of coffee if they remembered to bring it. There is a marked difference between Bolivia and Chile with Bolivia still emerging economically. Far more to see and explore than we had time for.

Puno was our first stop in Peru, also on the edge of Lake Titicaca. The group visited the Uros [Floating] Islands and Taquile Island, both situated on the lake. These islands are of significance as they are quite different – Uros are the reed islands and a major tourist attraction. The people of Taquile have developed their own cultures and while they are visited by many tourists, they have managed to do it without selling their souls (well, almost). Both are beautiful with Taquile being more challenging for walking and there were some tired calf muscles from the walk down to the harbour.



Bull fight Peruvian style – not a drop of blood in sight.

Always expect the unexpected in Peru and en route to Puno we encountered a bull-fight. Not your average nasty kill the bull, type bull-fight, but a hilarious show for local people to celebrate. The bulls were teased rather than tormented and

harmed, and several weren't even interested in the flag waving around them. There were vast amounts of beer being consumed and crates taken across the arena to the dignitaries who sat under canopies. Then it was hauled back again. Why? No explanations could be made by us. A few hours later and there would have been very few people left standing.

We also came across colourful religious celebrations at Raqchi, an Inka trading post. Raqchi was fascinating, but so were the ceremonies in the local church. The whole town had turned out and the church was packed with everyone wearing bright colourful clothing. There were parades around the plaza with music, dancing and entertainment.

Farewell Chris, still limping and in pain, but on the whole, reasonably good humoured.

With a two day strike looming, Juan, (Juan the Wonderful) managed to completely re-arrange our tour to Machu Picchu so we wouldn't miss out. How he did this proved what an efficient and experienced guide he is. Instead of time in Cusco and the Sacred Valley, we went immediately to Ollantaytambo and the train to Aguas Calientes. Apart from the luck with Juan enabling this to happen, it was a perfect time to visit Machu Picchu - in the afternoon after the morning crowds from the had disappeared, well they were actually queuing in huge lines for buses to take them down the mountain as we arrived. We felt as if we had the area to ourselves. The afternoon light was beautiful and many of the ruins glowed, especially as the sun became lower in the sky. (There is always something to spoil perfection and we had to battle armies of midges with bites to remind us of our afternoon).

We did get to enjoy Cusco, unfortunately many of the places of interest were not open but we did get to visit Coricancha, Sacsayhuaman, and of course a limited number of tourist shops were open and happily sold us some of their beautiful wares.

Farewell Peru. Good coffee, good service, good people.

Our three weeks went so quickly, each day was packed. We had many memorable moments and a lot of fun and laughter. Pisco Sours were the go, but not guinea pig. Catherine was the only

brave soul to try it. Gill was nearly banished, once in Chile for almost setting fire to the toaster. A big sign appeared next day to only put bread the toaster and then in Tiwanaku she was chastised for sitting on a monument. Sirens roared and a loud voice came over the loud speaker. Ali nearly had a heart attack when a 'demon' leapt out at her on the train coming back from Machu Picchu. Kim's white knuckles on the boat to Copacabana reflected how we all were feeling. Lynn is now only just speaking to me for not telling her how steep the stairs were on Taquile, and Colleen's glam wardrobe made me realize practical black can be very boring. My worst moments were on the bus to Arequipa and the concern that such a journey was unnecessary. It wasn't.

We stayed in some great accommodation and had some fabulous meals at some fantastic restaurants. A night at the Fallen Angel in Cusco was a highlight as usual and I loved meeting up with old friends and making new from the group. South America is fabulous and I cannot recommend it highly enough. If you haven't already, make time to go - you won't be disappointed.

Penny Heath

Courses 2016 (Canberra)

Where the rivers run – a history of the Murrumbidgee, Darling and Murray Rivers

4 sessions, 6-8.00pm from 1 February 2016
Presented by Tony Corrigan and Chris Carter

Examine the rich prehistory and history of the Murrumbidgee, Darling and Murray Rivers in NSW and explore the forces that have shaped the wildlife that eke out an existence in its highly variable conditions.

Archaeology and death

4 sessions, 6-8.00pm from 3 February 2016
Presented by: Chris Carter

What happens when we die and how can human remains provide us with information about how we once lived? Explore how death can reveal life to us. If you love CSI then you will love this course.

An Introduction to Archaeology

6 sessions, 6-8.00pm from 23 March
Presented by: Chris Carter

By examining the processes involved we will use case studies from a range of periods throughout the world to demonstrate and illustrate how the discipline functions. Beginning with a brief history of the discipline, we will cover the study of human history from the migration out of Africa through to the historical period. Using case studies, we will examine a range of time periods and regions from around the world including North Africa, Europe, the New World and the Pacific.

Contact the Centre for Continuing Education at the ANU on 6125 4580 for enrolment details.

Scheduled Tours 2016

Kangaroo Island: Nature Writing Retreat

8 days, March 2016.

Led by Inga Simpson & Chris Carter

Join award winning author, Inga Simpson, (*Mr Wigg, Nest*) in this week-long immersion in writing and in place. We'll explore Kangaroo Island's unique landscapes, natural and human histories, flora and fauna (did you know the island was once home to a miniature emu?) – and of course its fine food and wine.

We'll be staying in historic lighthouse-keepers' cottages, explore the island's wild coastline, get to know some of its abundant wildlife and fascinating history – the first European settlement of South Australia.

The retreat is ideal for nonfiction and fiction writers at all levels. You'll unplug and unwind as you explore the island, learn more about your writing craft, how to develop your work in progress – and how to tap deeper into your creativity.

Chris Carter will act as driver and guide.

Contact Inga directly to enquire about the workshop. Call 0403731570 or email inga@olvarwood.com.au. Contact Chris for information relating to tour details.

A Celtic Myth: the History and Heritage of Ireland

21 days, July 2016
Led by Chris Carter

Travelling by private bus, this tour will circuit the Republic of Ireland visiting historic and archaeological sites en route. Weather permitting we will walk a part of the Burren Way and around Omey Island in Connemarra. Sites on the itinerary include Newgrange, the ring forts and megalithic tombs of the west, the Aran Islands, castles, church ruins and graveyards, Cahir Castle, the Rock of Cashel, Jerpoint Abbey and the monastic centre of Glendalough.

We will also offer an optional extension to walk 130kms over seven days from Dublin to the River Shannon via canal tow-paths.

Contact Chris for further information.



Join us in 2016 as we walk 120km along Ireland's canal tow paths.

Art, Treasures and Cuisine of Peru

16 days, August/September 2016
Led by Chris Carter

From ancient civilisations to the world's most 'in-demand' cuisine, Peru offers an extraordinary melange of archaeological sites; golden treasures from the Incas; a flourishing contemporary art scene; sacred, mystical landscapes and an extraordinary food culture.

Delving deep into Peru's fascinating ancient civilisations, begin with the Moche culture (100 – 800 AD) followed by a journey high in the Andes to Cusco, the Sacred Valley of the Incas and Machu Picchu, the most famous remnant of the

Inca civilization of the 14th and 15th centuries.

Finish in the capital Lima for an exploration of the city's emerging art scene and the Mistura Food Festival, a 'must-do' event for any serious foodie.

This tour is being organised by Renaissance Tours, Sydney. Please call Lissa Sharp on 02 92995801 for further information.

Journey to the Lost World Mount Roraima & Angel Falls, Venezuela

14 days, August/September 2016
Led by Stewart McPherson

Join the Redfern Expedition team and film-maker Stewart McPherson as they explore the 'Lost World', the area made famous by Arthur Conan Doyle in 1912. This unique expedition will include a helicopter flight to the summit of Mt Roraima where you will camp for five nights. It also includes a hike to the base of Angel Falls and an excursion across the Gran Sabana.

The photo below gives you some idea of the landscapes. No promises that you'll come across any dinosaurs though!

For those who watch SBS documentaries, you may have seen Stewart as he presented his documentaries 'Britain's Secret Treasure Islands'.

Contact Chris for further information or to register your interest.

The Art & Archaeology of Spain

21 days, September, 2016
Led by Oscar del Pozo

The itinerary has been structured to take in a diverse range of Spanish environments: from the Mediterranean coast, across the Meseta, through the mountain ranges and into the Basque country.

The archaeological sites, cities and towns selected for this tour provide a glimpse of the past through sites including Roman cities, Visigothic towns, Muslim medinas and mosques, the castles of the Reconquista, Mudejar architecture and the Gothic and Baroque churches of the later periods. From the Prado to the Guggenheim, we will also discuss the art

history of Spain, with a chance to view works by famous artists such as Goya, Velasquez and El Greco as well as those of more modern artists such as Picasso and Dali.

Contact Chris for further information.

The Magic of Argentina and Peru

18 days, October/November 2016

Led by: Chris Carter & Janelle Woodham

The *place* - contrasting countries from the snow-capped peaks of the Andes, the jungles surrounding Iguazú Falls and the dry coast of Peru, mystical Machu Picchu and colonial Cusco, through to cosmopolitan Buenos Aires and bustling Lima. The *culture* has developed from a fusion of an indigenous past, Colonial conquest and modern immigration - a mix of place and character that varies from north to south and west to east, absorbing that of its neighbours but each place creating a sentiment of its own.

We'll see tango in BA; taste the wines of Mendoza; try some of the finest cuisine in the world in Lima and Cusco; drive through the Andes passing by Aconcagua – the highest mountain in the Southern Hemisphere; and visit Machu Picchu – the lost city of the Inka.

Contact Chris for further detail.



Iguazu Falls, Misiones, Argentina

Proposed Tours 2017

In the Wake of the Beagle:

The Voyage of Charles Darwin

In 4 modules for a total of 42 days

January/February 2017

Led by: Chris Carter

From Cambridge University to the Galapagos Islands, join us as we follow the route of the Beagle in an attempt to better understand the voyage of Charles Darwin and how it shaped his thinking. We will visit a Museum in Cambridge where many of his specimens are still housed and Down House in Kent before flying to Rio de Janeiro; cruise from Buenos Aires around Cape Horn to Valparaiso; journey up the west coast of Chile and Peru before spending seven days cruising the Galapagos Islands.

While we will not be able to follow the Beagle's itinerary in its entirety, we will certainly experience many of areas visited by Darwin and see how his observations helped develop his understanding

This tour can be taken as whole or in part, joining the group at convenient points along the way.

At this stage we are taking expressions of interest. Full details will not be available until early 2016.

Contact Chris to register your interest.

Camino de Santiago: Via de la Plata – Sevilla to Santiago de Compostela

21 days, April/May 2017

Led by Chris Carter

Well, we are not walking the entire distance! Via Sevilla, Merida, Caceres and Salamanca we will follow the Via de la Plata by bus, walking only selected sections until just beyond Tabara. From that point we will walk the rest of the way to Santiago de Compostela.

As before, we will not be staying in refugios or hostals. Accommodation will be in hotels, generally for 3 night stays, and we will have a bus that will pick us up each afternoon to return to the hotel. We will then be taken back to where we left off to continue walking the following

morning. We will be walking 15 days out of the total 21 for a total distance of around 320km.

A detailed itinerary will not be available until later in the year but please register your interest ASAP if you are at all interested in coming along. Perhaps you can start a training program as well.

* * *

Please contact us directly if you have any questions or require further information for any of the tours.

We are always looking for ideas for new tours, feel free to forward any ideas.

If you have any news that would be of interest to our readers, feel free to forward items, snippets of news or photographs to the address below for inclusion in our next newsletter.

Chris Carter

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