

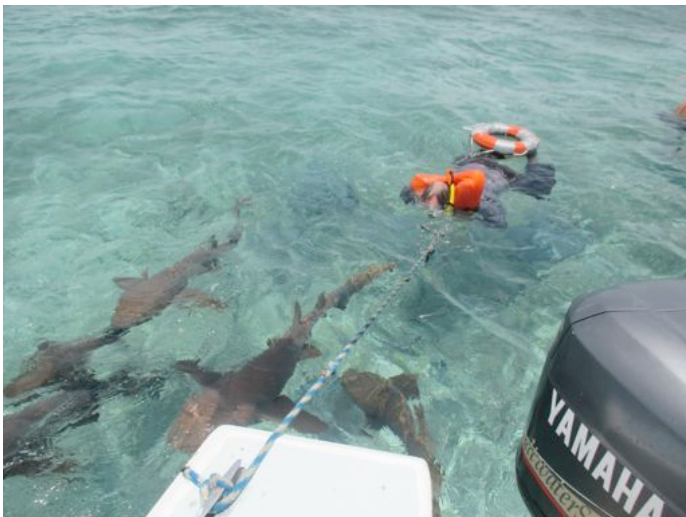
Time Travel Australia

Our Business is in Ruins

Newsletter Winter 2015

For those of us living in Canberra, winter has arrived with a vengeance. Coming home from Guatemala where it was in the high 30s to sub-zero Canberra was a not a pleasant experience.

Mexico, Belize and Guatemala was a great tour. We were very lucky with the weather and it was neither too hot nor did we get much rain. If I recall the most rain we had was as we were heading to the reef in Belize to go snorkelling. By the time we reached the reef the sun was out and the sharks and rays were swarming around. There were two or three who had never been snorkelling in their life, or at least never with sharks, and they had a fantastic experience. Peter (surname withheld to protect the guilty) was a little dubious and didn't even take his swimmers. That didn't stop him once he saw the sharks, and he went in fully clothed. I have included a photo for those who didn't catch it on Facebook (sorry Pete).



Shark-Ray Alley, Belize

We had a great stay in Orange Walk in Belize. This year we stayed in units on the banks of the New River. The cabins were built by the owners of the hotel we normally use (La Fuente). For those who had been there previously, the hotel

again let me borrow their bus so I could drive the group to a restaurant. I think a couple were a little dubious but we all survived. They have a restaurant on the property and as we prepared for dinner one night, a 2m crocodile (actually a caiman) surfaced only a few metres away from our table and appeared to be ready to come ashore! One of the staff thought the croc might like some chicken, so tied a wing on a line and tossed it in. Gratefully received, but (perhaps thankfully) the animal didn't hang around for a photo. I did manage to snap one photo but I am the only one who can see the beast!

Overall it was a great trip and we were fortunate to avoid the crowds at Chichen Itza and Uxmal. We did manage to catch the cruise crowd when we went swimming at the cenote (sink hole) just out of Chichen Itza. Despite the number of people there, it was still a spectacular place for a swim.

We are heading back to Mexico next year. It will be a different tour though as we have added some more 'adventurous' activities like canoeing deep into a cave system; crossing from Mexico into Guatemala across the Rio Usamacinta at Frontera Corazal; cruising the Belize barrier reef and camping on the cayes as we head south from Caye Caulker to Placencia. It may not suit everyone but it should be a lot of fun.

Over the past year or so we have been asked a few times when we will do the Camino de Santiago again. As 2016 has already been fully subscribed, we have decided to schedule a tour for May 2017. As before, we will 'cheat' a little and not carry our bags or stay in refugios but will base ourselves in a hotel for two or three nights at a time and use to bus to shuttle us back and forth. We certainly won't be walking any less but will have the luxury of staying in each hotel for at least two nights and having a bus on hand should we need it. Due to the increasing numbers of

pilgrims walking the Camino Frances, I have decided to walk part of the Via de la Plata (there are a number of trails that end at Santiago de Compostela). It is a beautiful walk and much of the trail follows the original Roman road that linked Sevilla (Italica) with the cities to the north.

The trail commences in Sevilla and is over 1,000kms in length. While we will visit Sevilla and may walk a few kilometres here and there, we will travel by bus from there on to Merida, Caceres and Salamanca and not start walking seriously until Tabara, or thereabouts, to walk the last 320kms to Santiago.

2017 will be an interesting year. I have also decided to schedule a Round-the-World tour following (in part) the voyage of the Beagle. I have talked about this for some time and several people have expressed interest should I ever get around to it. Well, here's your chance. This tour, in its entirety, will run for six weeks made up of three separate modules: Britain; Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Peru (including cruise around Cape Horn on a large cruise vessel); and the Galapagos Islands (where we will charter our own boat). You can choose to do any or all of the modules. We may be a little ambitious but it will be a fantastic tour. It will cover a range of landscapes and environments to give us a better understanding of how Darwin saw the world and how it allowed him to develop theories that underpinned evolutionary theory.

Happy travels

Chris Carter

Mexico

Having travelled with Chris previously to Chile and Machu Picchu, the Nazca Plains and more, I was looking forward to this trip to Mexico to see the history of its peoples ... with a specialist archaeologist to guide us to the many interesting sites. Our driver, Jaime, was instrumental in navigating the sometime difficult road system and when arriving at a city seemed to find our accommodation very easily ... and we did a lot of kilometres on the trip. This is almost the last thing on my 'bucket list' and I thank Chris for his

abilities and knowledge and I thank Jaime for getting us there.

The ancient people of Mexico were marvellous builders without modern equipment and the results of their work is certainly worth the effort to view what they achieved. Mexico however is full of rocks and mountains and was an eye opener on its own.

Bill Hanley
May, 2015

Bill also provided a photograph thanking Jaime for his driving as we parted company at the Belize border – Bill had taught him a 'friendship' handshake. He was not only a great driver but also became part of the group and joined us for a swim here and there. I hope to use his services again.

Chris



Bill & Jaime, Tulum, Mexico.

Vale

It is with much sadness that we report the passing of two of our friends - Lois Roberts and Fiona Arthur. They were both enthusiastic travellers and always keen to learn. Both passed away after relatively brief illnesses - Lois earlier this year and Fiona only a few weeks ago.

I will always remember Lois for her skill at the helm of a canal barge in Ireland. I was required to vacate the helm and handed it over to Lois who assured me that she could steer the boat. No sooner than I had taken a seat below (on the loo!) when the boat crashed into the bank and I was almost thrown to the floor. When I made my way back on deck, I found that Lois was too short to see over the cabin and had no view forward at all. She must have been steering by the stars!

The following photo from 2013 shows Fiona and Georgia on top of the largest pyramid at Calakmul, a Mayan city located deep in the Yucatan jungle.

Lois and Fiona will both be missed. We send our sincere condolences to Fred and David.



Fiona & Georgia, Calakmul, Mexico

Courses – 2015

Kangaroos and wallabies – their biology and management

4 weeks, 6.00-8.00pm, from Thurs. 21 July 2015

Presented by: Tony Corrigan

Kangaroos and wallabies are highly adapted to life in Australia however their current conservation status range from endangered to overabundant. This six week course looks at the broad range of kangaroo species and their habitats across Australia and examines the issues surrounding conservation and management of these iconic Australian species.

Call ANU CCE on 61252892 for full details.

Weekend Nature Writing Retreat @ Kioloa

South Coast, NSW

4-6 December 2015

Presented by: Inga Simpson, author of *Nest* and *Mr Wigg*.

Spend a weekend immersed in nature writing and Kioloa's beautiful beaches and forest.

Through a mixture of tuition, examples, practical writing exercises and discussion, you'll learn about the genre of nature writing, and hone your skills for describing the natural world, and connecting place to character and plot.

Call or email Chris for further details.

Tour Schedule 2015

Al Andalus:

Morocco & southern Spain

18 days, August/September 2015

Led by: Chris Carter

The theme of the tour will follow the culmination of the Islamic expansion westward across north Africa early in the 8th century when they decided to cross the Straits onto the European mainland instead of heading south, deeper into Africa. The Moorish invasion of Spain was swift, expansive and left a telling mark on modern Spanish culture. This tour will commence in central Morocco, move inland to visit several of the classic cities before passing through the Rif

mountains to Tangier where we cross the Straits of Gibraltar into Southern Spain – ‘al Andalus’ to the Moors. Moving through the mountains we will visit Ronda before moving on to Sevilla and original Muslim capital, Cordoba. We will then follow the fall of Islam in southern Spain and follow the frontier as it collapsed toward Granada.

Contact Chris for further information.

An Andean Adventure: Chile, Bolivia & Peru

21 days, October 2015

Led by Chris Carter & Juan Cardenas

Tour manager: Penny Heath

Travelling through Chile, Bolivia and Peru this tour will provide a basic understanding of the cultures of the Central Andean Region of South America. While it would not be possible to follow a distinct chronological route, the theme of the tour will basically follow the Inka Empire from its southern periphery in the Atacama Desert to its inner sanctum in Cuzco. En route we will also visit a range of sites that present evidence of many of the cultures that either pre-date or were contemporaneous with the Inka.

Please note that Chris will only leading the first two thirds of this tour.

Contact Chris for further information.

Ecuador and the Galápagos

23 days - October/November 2015

Led by: Christopher Carter

Ecuador is a remarkable country, apart from being the most bio-diverse in the world, it has a rich and varied history and numerous cultural sites including the World Heritage Sites of Quito and Cuenca. In the Amazon, we shall learn something of the culture and modern life of the Añangu Quichua people. Ecuador also has some of the northern most Inka sites including Incairca where you will see examples of the fine masonry similar to that found in Cusco.

This tour focuses on four key areas – the southern high Andes near Cuenca, the north-western cloud forests, the eastern lowland Amazon basin rainforests and of course the near-mythical, remote and wonderful Galápagos

archipelago, in the Pacific 1000 kms west of mainland Ecuador.

Contact Chris for further information.

Mt Serle Archaeological and Ecological Survey: Northern Flinders Ranges, SA

11 days, November 2015

Led by Doug Williams & Tony Corrigan

After a successful inaugural season, we will be offering this programme again in 2015.

Mt Serle Station is located in the northern Flinders Ranges of South Australia. Working closely with the traditional owners, the Adnyamathanha people, this project will involve a survey and recording plan of this property and will be undertaken over a number of years.

In 2015 we will be continuing the archaeological survey that commenced in 2014, however an ecologist will join us and we will have a team undertaking a floral and faunal survey at the same time. You can choose to participate in both or just stay with one discipline.

Accommodation will be in an established camp located adjacent to Mt Serle. Some camping may be required when working in more remote locations.

Contact Chris for further information.



Tony Corrigan, Mt Serle, South Australia

Victoria: Through the Ages

15 days, November 2015

Led by Doug Williams

Covering a mere 50,000 years, this tour will take you to some of Victoria's iconic locations as well as a number of lesser known sites. The tour starts in Melbourne, travels through Ballarat before moving to the coast and on to the Grampians. After a stopover in Mildura, we will move north into NSW and Lake Mungo before returning to Victoria to return to Melbourne via Echuca and Bendigo.

Contact Chris or Doug on 0412997177 for further information.

Scheduled Tours 2016

A Little TLC: Thailand, Laos & Cambodia

18 days, March, 2015

Led by Doug Williams

From Bangkok, this small group tour will take you through three exciting South-East Asian countries - Thailand, Laos and Cambodia. Although these countries have similar histories and adjoining borders, they are all quite different and by visiting them we can explore their similarities and differences and get to know our near neighbours.

We will visit temples, archaeological sites and cultural centres as well as NGOs who help the local people in so many ways. Spectacular Angkor Wat is only one of the many highlights this trip has to offer.

Contact Chris for further information.

Kangaroo Island: Nature Writing Retreat

8 days, March 2016.

Led by Inga Simpson

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.



Sea lion, Seal Bay, Kangaroo Island, South Australia

Pyramids, Temples & Tombs A Taste of Mexico, Guatemala & Belize

21 days, April/May, 2016

Led by Chris Carter

A vibrant palette of ancient cultures and modern art, heritage cities and glorious beaches, colourful music, dance and tradition, Meso-America offers a feast for all the senses.

Begin with an exploration of the wonderful museums, pre-historic sites, colonial heritage and thriving cultural scene in and around Mexico City. Then travel into the jungle to visit the ancient Mayan sites of Palenque and Yaxchilan, before moving through Guatemala and Tikal on

to the Caribbean coast of Belize.

Apart from the history and heritage of these countries this tour will include kayaking deep inside a mountain, cruise the blue waters of the Belize Barrier Reef, camp on sand cays and swim with sharks (if you're brave enough).

There will be an option to extend the tour by seven days to travel on to Cuba.

Contact Chris for further information.



Cenote (sink hole), Yucatan Peninsula.

Journey through the Andes: Chile & Peru

21 days, May 2016

Led by Chris Carter

Travelling through Chile and Peru this tour will provide a basic understanding of the cultures of the Central Andean Region of South America. While it would not be possible to follow a distinct chronological route, the theme of the tour will basically follow the Inka Empire from its southern periphery in the Atacama Desert to its

inner sanctum in Cusco. En route we will also visit a range of sites that present evidence of many of the cultures that either pre-date or were contemporaneous with the Inka.

This tour is being organised on behalf of Academy Travel, Sydney. Call Mark Lalor on (02) 9235 0023 for further information.

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 Connemara. 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.

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, Mudéjar 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.

**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!

Contact Chris for further information or to register your interest.

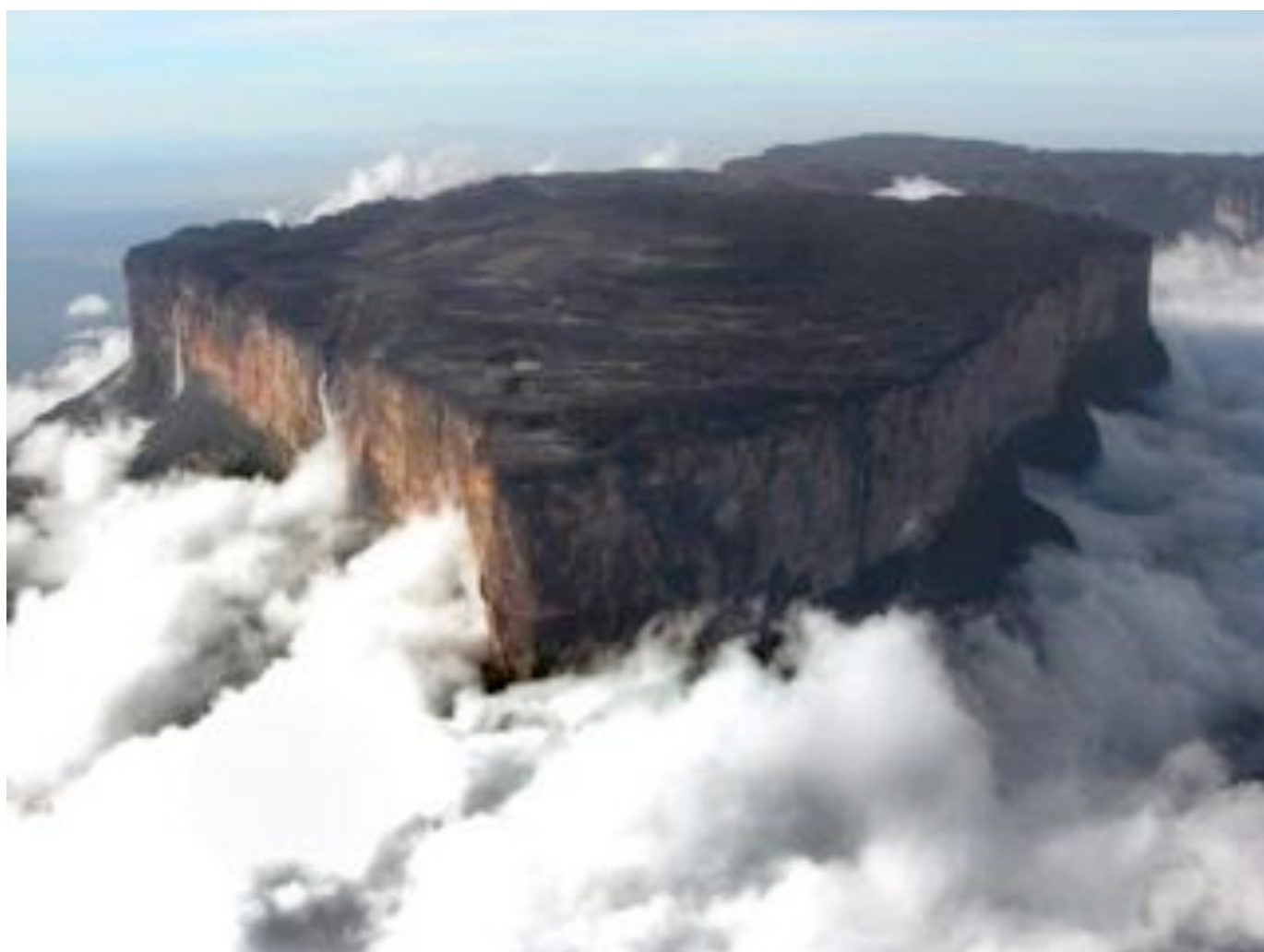
Proposed Tours 2017

In the Wake of the Beagle: The Voyage of Charles Darwin

Up to 42 days, 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 the Darwin Museum in Cambridge 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 7 days cruising the Galapagos Islands. We will return to Australia via Tahiti. 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



Mt Roraima, Venezuela

This tour can be taken as whole or in part, joining the group at any convenient point.

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

Contact Chris for further information or to register your interest.

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

21 days, 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 training 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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