

11.

Still Hvancho

Ok, so I'm a lot behind. Let's whiz through a few days ....

Hvancho – I think I covered our gripping tour of Chan Chan in the last letter. After that the day degenerated into a drunken truth or dare without the dares. So I'm on a truck full of perverts – works for me. Anyway, it all ended in tears and tempers and off to bed we went.

Next day – to Lima.

15 hours on the truck. Really not much I can say about that. It was only improved by the fact that I have the runs & have wrecked my shoulder somehow.

Lima – City of scary shop dummies.

Shop dummies with teeth. It's not right. Got (briefly) chatted up by a couple of lady boy hairdressers. Mine had great breasts but Paul's was rough so we moved on. Visited more churches and plazas than required, ate lunch, which was carnivore heaven. Think the place was called "Offal is us". Out in the evening to the Miloflores for the welsh hotties birthday (nice bod). I made the mistake of buying a rose from a small child and was stalked by her entire family for the evening. Great night overlooking the Lima Coast & eating huge quantities. Then we went bowling. It wasn't pretty. Finally a fear induced taxi ride to the hotel. I had Laura on my lap – one of us enjoyed it.

To Iquitos.

12.

Iquitos, deep in the Amazon rainforest and only accessible by air. Unfortunately this means Air Peru & six hours in the domestic terminal at Lima – oh how we laughed.

So I'm starting to have a good time. Lets run down the fellas:

Andy (with Alex) – Very entertaining & running the truck bar so I have to be nice about him.

Adam – Good fun & likes a beer. Enjoying a few late ones with him.

David – The rent boy. Very pretty & probably the nicest of the blokes. God we hate him.

Eddie (with Helen) – I think the girls consider him the best body on the trip (obviously apart from myself).

Mark – Nice bloke – not sure if I like him yet – juries out.

Andy (other Andy) – been over landing for 9 months now & has become an 'expert'. May have to kill him if we have the hygiene conversation again.

Paul – Even more grumpy and intolerant than me. Still, he's a teacher and their all a bit weird. Can't hold his drink which is entertaining.

Brendon – Co-leader. Really laid back, ski's, surfs, is fit, it would be depressing but he's unwell which makes me feel good.

Phil – my tent & cooking buddy. Is a really nice bloke & everyone feels sorry for him 'cos he's with me.

So finally we arrive in Iquitos. Thank god its only a 3 hour boat ride to our lodge. Speeding down the Amazon at dusk is pretty special – just not 3 hours worth of special. The lodge is a lit with lanterns & looks great. The food is fantastic and the bot flies are unable to

13.

Get past the wall of mosquitoes. Its an early start in the morning so the sensible people go to bed early. About 3am the rest of us tire of jungle noises and join them.

Jungle.

The lodge is great, as is the food. Unfortunately there are 'trips'. There is the bird watching trip, where you sit in a boat passing through festering jungle, sweating profusely and being eaten by mosquitoes. Then there is the jungle trek. Two hell like hours trudging through festering jungle, sweating profusely and being eaten by mosquitoes. Finally the cayman hunt. This turns out to be fun. We must look for the reflection of their eyes in the spotlight the guide tells us as we head upstream. After five minutes the guide points dramatically "there, I see one". Since up till this point the spotlight has been wandering around the treetops and the guides have been discussing football this seems to be a remarkable spot. We edge up a hidden inlet for several hundred yards. Clearly no cayman was spotted from the river & we suspect this is the home of Cyril the tame cayman. "There" calls the guide "a small one – I will catch him". The boat runs in, the guide leans out, there is a splash, a loud curse and no cayman. Clearly Cyril is not performing to plan. The guide and the boatman exchange angry words and puzzled looks. Our cries of "go Cyril" do not seem to help. Clearly there is no backup plan. We go further up river to the animal tree. The sloth that was fixed there earlier has been replaced by an owl. The guide tries to get excited but clearly he is a broken man. We photograph a few frogs and return. No sign of the other boat. They arrive an hour later. Did they see the cayman? No, but their boat broke down and they

14.

had to paddle back.

After dinner Adam, little Andy and I drink and play cards. Andy discusses truck hygiene (or the lack of) for two hours. Finally we move on to the “who would you like to shag” conversation. Since Adam is with Jenny he opts out. I have a fairly clear idea about who I would like to sleep with (many) and who I might get to sleep with (none) so I remain quiet. Andy has a prioritised list which Adam and I look forward to sharing with the girls. At 4am we call it a day. Then, just as I am off to bed I realise that Debbie has left her camera out and its not a digital. I spend a happy ten minutes photographing myself in the shower – that will be a nice treat for her when she gets her pictures back.

Jungle II

More trips. Surely piranha fishing and village visits are a must. Only a complete philistine would want to spend the day in a hammock reading and drinking cold beer. I wave the others goodbye and settle down for a great day.

The piranha (no idea how that’s spelt) fishing has been of mixed success. Laura caught five, most people caught one very small one, Emily caught a sardine, Brendon caught nothing and Eddie got bitten. Pat has bought me a cayman tooth necklace which will apparently improve my virility. That night we eat the fish (surprisingly bland) & then its off for another cayman hunt. Such is our enthusiasm that we all pile onto the dock at once. It begins to sink and the large collection of deadly spiders living in it climbed all over us.

After the panic subsided off we set on the Cyril hunt. No messing this time. Straight to Cyril’s lair

15.

and out of the water he was plucked. He was passed around & we got our photos. Suspicions that Cyril was in fact rubber were squashed when Mark dropped him and he yawned. No doubt that Cyril was alive and heavily sedated. Photo opportunity complete Cyril was passed to the other boat & we returned cayman complete. An hour later the other returned. Apparently their boat broke down and they had to paddle back.

Another late night. The girls went to the village as it was one of the guides birthdays. Brendon got sent along as chaperone. Suspecting that it was one of the guides birthdays every week and that this was another marketing opportunity the boys stayed back and played cards. The girls finally returned & little worse for 'firewater'. Brendon had done a fine job of minding them and was 'as a newt'. Laura decided that we should abandon cards and play the name game ....

The name game: Strictly for intellectual giants this game requires each person to name a celebrity in turn. The cunning twist is that the first name of you celebrity must start with the same letter as the surname of the previous celebrity. There is no scoring, reason, point, value or challenge to this game. It only ends when someone actually dies of boredom.

..... 4 am someone died of boredom and off to bed we went.

Having an excellent time, shoulder no longer functions & have the runs. Covered in mossi bites and not loosing weight.

Rich.