

All the fun of the fair in Bolivia!

Letter from South America

by
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The writer is carrying out voluntary work in Bolivia, and is reporting back exclusively to Recorder readers



LAST week we all went out to the local cinema to watch *Spiderman 2*.

Thankfully, it was in English with Spanish subtitles. Despite the predictability of the film, it was a good night out. (See page 9, *Screen Test with Rhodri Guest, for our reviewer's rather more enthusiastic view of the movie*).

The cinema was a dusty old theatre with a huge screen, about two thirds covered by the film. The oohs, aahs, laughs and screeches from the Bolivian audience were quite incredible!

We have also been out exploring the local markets. As the only male volunteer of the six of us now in the house, this has proved to be rather an educational experience.

I cannot believe that somebody can come to a developing country like this and refuse to buy a skirt because she has no shoes to go

with it!! I managed to pick up a few bargains myself, including a beautiful blanket for a couple of pounds.

After a cold few nights though, it has turned warm and muggy and the blanket is now purely decorative!

On Sunday, I joined the hordes of locals at the riverside. It was strange seeing row upon row of 4x4 vehicles negotiating the sandy shores of the Rio Pirai.

I even hired a quad-bike, but EU Safety regulations have not yet reached here and I was extremely cautious. It was great fun, though.

Afterwards I sampled a local dish called Pique Macho, which is essentially a plate of chips with a layer of meat followed by a pile of salad on top. It is then drenched in a mildly spiced gravy! Sounds disgusting but it is actually very tasty.

That night, we all visited the fun-fair in the park across the road from the volunteer house. We queued 40 minutes to go on the big wheel. It was a terrific view up there but we

missed the sunset by about ten minutes and vowed to return with better timing next time.

We also enjoyed a toboggan race down the giant slide and the 'premier' attraction of King Kong. That had to be the most tacky experience of my life as I had been expecting something like a ghost train, but instead witnessed a scantily clad lady metamorphosise into King Kong and charge at the mesmerised crowd! At least the local children found it both scary and amusing!

The food out here is proving rather good, especially the Mexican restaurants! To combat this I have joined the local gym. They are not big on aerobic exercise, but the instructor is certainly putting me through my paces on the weights. I now crave the rest days!

But if it allows me to continue to sample the local culinary delights without piling on the pounds, who am I to complain?