



## A TRIP DOWN THE AMAZON

By Dr Fraser Uytman.

I've recently returned from a really enjoyable trip with The Vine Trust charity to Peru, spending two weeks on the Amazon River in Peru on the Amazon Hope hospital ship.

I joined a team of UK and Peruvian doctors and nurses on the boat, visiting various isolated villages on the river, to provide medical care and services to these communities.

The trip was a fantastic experience, doing interesting work while meeting a great bunch of people and seeing an exciting part of the world.

Patients were seen on the Amazon Hope ship itself, with a mixture of diseases commonly seen in UK General Practice, and some more exotic tropical illnesses and injuries. We also managed to fit in some Salsa dancing lessons from the crew, as well as some piranha fishing!

The Vine Trust charity continues to do essential work in providing medical care to isolated and impoverished communities in Peru, and I would highly recommend this trip to others. Please do have a look at their website to find out more about their work [www.vinetrust.org](http://www.vinetrust.org)



The image shows one of the Vine Trust's ships, the Amazon Hope 1, docked at the town of Indiana in Peru



### Forthcoming dates for your calendar:

Mon 26th-Tues 27th December Public Holidays - Practice closed all day

Mon 2nd-Tues 3rd January Public Holidays - Practice closed all day

Wed 29th February Staff Training - Practice closed 12.30pm onwards

## PRACTICE NEWS

Thank you to everyone who attended the practice on 14th-15th December for their patience and understanding during our recent computer maintenance. Everyone worked hard to keep the disruption to a minimum and the project as a whole was very successful.

Over the holiday period we are saying goodbye to one of our GP trainees and welcoming back another as Dr Emma Rankin starts her maternity leave, and Dr Juliet Fairfax returns. Dr Fairfax starts back on Monday 9th January for six months to finish her training, and Dr Rankin will complete her training after her maternity leave is over.

Dr Boyd's patients should be aware that since her return from maternity leave, she has decided to reduce her hours slightly so that she will no longer be consulting on a Monday.

For those patients who will need a repeat of their prescription over Christmas and New Year, please make sure you plan ahead and give us plenty of time to process your requests over the holidays and to make sure you don't run out of your medication. Remember that in an emergency, your pharmacist may be able to issue you a short supply of your medications until you can get your prescription from the practice.

## FEEDBACK - 'ALCOHOL AWARENESS WEEK'

Some of our patients may remember being asked to complete an 'alcohol intake' questionnaire in November. This was to help us assess whether individuals might like support of advice about their drinking.

A lot of helpful information was gathered and many patients welcomed the opportunity to discuss their intake further, often being surprised to find out how many alcohol units are contained in wine in particular.

We would like to encourage all of our patients to think about potential problems that overuse of alcohol can cause (emotional, financial & physical) and we welcome any questions that you might have. Information leaflets are available around the surgery, on the practice website, or from the staff.

Please remember that there is no safe alcohol level for driving, and that judgement can be affected well before we reach the legal driving limit.

## OUT OF HOURS

The Practice is closed on the Christmas and New Year public holidays, so if you need access to medical assistance or advice, make sure you know who to contact this holiday season.

**NHS24** - online and phone-based service to answer your health questions and offer advice  
08454 242424 - [www.nhs24.com](http://www.nhs24.com)

**NHS Inform** - Scotland's national health information service  
0800 224488 - [www.nhsinform.co.uk](http://www.nhsinform.co.uk)

**Ask Your Pharmacist**  
[www.npa.co.uk/askyourpharmacist](http://www.npa.co.uk/askyourpharmacist)

**Minor Injuries (Western General Hospital)**  
0131 537 1330

## ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE Keep superbugs out of Bruntsfield!

Antibiotic resistance is becoming more common, and not just something that happens in hospitals. Bacteria are very clever! Because they multiply so quickly they can adapt to survive against antibiotics faster than new ones are discovered. The widespread use of antibiotics is causing this to happen at a fast rate.

Over time, resistance becomes more common, and bacteria have the capability of becoming resistant to several antibiotics, making them a 'superbug' such as MRSA.

One of the best ways of stopping this from becoming a problem is to only take antibiotics if necessary. You can discuss this with your doctor, who will advise what's best for you.

### What does this mean for you?

- Even a single dose of antibiotics can lead to greater risk of resistant bacteria in that person for up to a whole year.
- The more antibiotics one has in a year, the greater chance one will have resistant bugs in your body.
- This may make the treatment of simple infections much harder.

### What can you do to help:

- Take your doctor's advice if antibiotics are not required. Remember most flu, coughs, colds and ear infections are caused by viruses, and antibiotics do not help against these.
- Resting at home, fluids and paracetamol are the best treatments for these illnesses.
- If your doctor does recommend antibiotics, remember to take the **whole course**, even if you are feeling better (taking less than the full course encourages antibiotic resistance)

Overall, antibiotics are still a very effective treatment when used carefully against certain infections. By only using them when they are really needed, we can reduce resistance and ensure that they remain an effective treatment.

Please remember to inform us if you can't keep your appointment (by phone or online)



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