

## Duncan Brown IT professional



I spent 4 weeks in Bali doing some work and having a holiday as well. It started off with a lot of doubt, but then after contacting all the people involved at People and Places, LINI in Bali, and other volunteers, I finally decided to take the plunge.

On the plane at Heathrow, I started to feel that this was a good experience, with lots of people traveling all over the world as well. I arrived in Denpasar, Bali after a long flight to a friendly greeting from Ron and Gayatri, who helped me get acclimatised throughout the 4 weeks. I slept for days, and then finally got to work on the database for tropical fish in the area, the idea being to glean as much information on fish stocks, etc.

It was good to see the whole chain of events from the fisherman to middle men, etc. to get some idea of the data trail and the information required for the reports. The heat was not getting to me any more and I was getting more interested in the whole experience - you only get out of it what you put in.

The database was quite complex, and needed a fair amount of work from all involved, but it started to come together after 2 weeks, during which time I was rapidly re-learning how to swim and eating more plant type food, as opposed to KFC's. I got into a daily routine of coffee and omelette's for breakfast, a taxi ride to the LINI office, then back for a jog and a swim. After a swim I used to go to a local supermarket called Hardys, which became a local event in the end, I could chat for ages and cause a queue.

We then went to North Bali for a few days, where we donated a computer and printer to 2 junior schools. It was a pleasure to be there to see the response of the staff and pupils as

we set up the printers, and did a bit of training. In one school I used my laptop to connect to the Internet via a mobile modem, which worked quite well, thanks to the proximity of a mobile phone mast! This part of the island is very hot, so a bit of snorkeling helped with cooling down, and the views on the trip were great, including a volcano.

After that trip, it was back to Sanur, and last few days on the database. I also had a nice weekend trip to Ubud, a very nice hotel, with lots of artistic types, not really my scene at all, but pleasant anyway. Then on to Amed, a small hotel in a spectacular bay, where snorkeling again, but this time with shoals of tropical fish. Unfortunately cut foot on some coral, a painful experience.

Last few days in Bali, less and less tourists around, still good for swimming, etc. any last questions on the database were being sorted out, and basically getting ready to leave for cold UK. On the last day had a meal in the evening which I thoroughly enjoyed, with all the staff at LINI, then a lift from Ron to the airport next day, and a last beer.

Back at work in the UK, have taken up sub-aqua, and thoroughly recommend the whole experience of a placement in Bali.

Duncan.