

Why Don't We Go To Burma?

Burma now called Myanmar, welcomes tourists after being a 'no go' area for years and years, because of their political difficulties. Bobbie, a kindergarten school-friend of mine from our home town of Bolton,



vegetation to grow tomatoes and vegetables. The fishermen were amazing, keeping their hands free to manipulate their large nets, they stood with one leg on their narrow boats and their other leg guiding the boat with a large oar.

Lancashire, and I had planned to go to the Crimea, but reading the brochure from Panoramic Journeys of Chadlington, we decided to go to Burma. On various dates in November there were five of us there from the Wychwoods, eight from Charlbury and others from Burford. It is the in-place!

The Road to Mandalay

Arriving at Rangoon (now called Yangon) Airport, we were greeted by our guide, Tin and our driver who presented me with red roses. Rangoon is a lovely city with beautiful colonial architecture, and wide streets, where motor cycles and horns are banned. The Buddha is represented in many shapes and sizes; reclining, sitting and standing, mostly covered in gold leaf and housed in magnificent pagodas. We visited the beautiful war graves cemetery. Ian's second cousin Peter Matthews was killed there in WW2. Mandalay was our second city to visit before we went on to Lake Inle, which was a complete change. Our hotel was on stilts above the lake and we went everywhere by long narrow-boats with a motor at the back. The farmers make floating islands of

Not Lasagne Please!

After a night on a boat on the Irrawaddy, we went to the Bagan, a large rural area with 2000 pagodas and 2000 ruined pagodas. Sadly my flight in a hot air balloon was cancelled after a night of heavy rain!

All our hotels were comfortable but the food was international; French, Italian and Chinese. I did not go there to eat lasagne. We asked Tin to take us to a Burmese restaurant. The plates were 18 inches across divided into sections for fish, meat, rice and varied vegetables. Tin had a plate to himself, Bobbie and I shared one. We visited markets selling fruit and vegetables, craft workshops demonstrating gold leaf, lacquer work and carpentry, and also a family in a rural village. It was a great experience with very friendly, helpful, happy Burmese people, who always made us feel extremely welcome.

If you are thinking of somewhere a bit different for your next holiday I suggest you give it a try.

Anne Matthews