Last April, as I lounged on the sofa, I started thinking about how I was going to spend my summer holidays. I wanted to travel, to go somewhere new and experience a different way of life, but I didn't want to do it all on my own. I flicked through the magazine on my knee and saw a small advert, calling for volunteers to go to Northern Albania, working with a charity called B3P. I punched the web address into my phone and tried to read all of the information on the tiny screen. I read about the charity, its aims and values, and I decided that I would love to be involved and emailed the contact address straight away.

I received a prompt reply with information and an application form explaining that the preparations for the summer were well underway and I should apply as soon as possible. I got to work straight away, looking for flights to Tirana and finding out as much as I could about the country, and the Northern region.

After booking the flights and travel to and from airports, my excitement was overflowing, not knowing what to expect was both nerve wracking and intriguing. I was in email contact with the other volunteers who were working in the same module, and together, we planned resources to take and ideas of activities.

I flew to the capital, Tirana, with another volunteer and we were met at the airport by one of the Albanian staff of the B3P. He organised our transport to the city of Shkodra, the closest city to the rural mountain village of Thethi, and then on to Thethi itself, where we stayed with a host family.

Each day was different from the previous one, with new challenges and excitement, new sights to be seen, things to be learnt and taught, by both the volunteers and the locals. School was every morning, from 9-12.30, with a short break mid-morning.

I taught the older children and the most advanced speakers (aged 14-16), something I felt comfortable with as I teach this age group in the UK. Teaching without a white board, laptops, projectors, electricity, windows or even a classroom was definitely a new experience! The children were lovely and eager to learn anything they could from me and the other volunteers. I taught directions, how to direct visitors to the most picturesque areas of the village, the church, Okol, guest houses, and how to create a treasure hunt and trail. Weather and clothes associated with it, conversation skills and topics, grammar, vocabulary, and lots of lessons related to the environment and its preservation. The oldest class even created some wonderful stories using the clouds as inspiration, and reading them to the youngest children, in English to aid their learning.

In the afternoons, the volunteers would get together to discuss the morning, help plan lessons and extra-curricular events, like volley ball and a choir. We used to take the opportunity when the weather was fine to wander through the valley, visiting families, beautiful natural scenery and taking in the clear air.

Each weekend, we would decide whether we would stay up in the village, or travel to see somewhere new. We saw Shkodra, a number of times, and were lucky enough to be invited to spend some time with a family who were celebrating a wedding. Some volunteers hiked over the 'Cursed Mountains' to a village on the other side, called Valbona. The views all over Northern Albania really are awe inspiring, and every opportunity to see more of it was taken by the B3P volunteers.

The Albanian people are incredibly kind and open; in Thethi, they are generous to a fault. Spending time in a beautiful village, miles upon miles away from anywhere, paddling in the ice cold river and seeing the devastation the melting snow caused after the winter, taking down power lines and roads, was one of the best experiences of my life. I fell in love with the country and the people. I made friends in the volunteers I met. I can't wait to go back!