

RSMF

The Roger Short Memorial Fund Newsletter May 2011



Welcome to the fourth newsletter of the Roger Short Memorial Fund. Since it was established in 2004, the Fund has grown to 42 donors including the first Short Traveller donation, 39 Short Travellers, 200 weeks of travel, 34 journals, 8 best journal prizes, 7 dinners at Univ, 8 different countries visited: Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Greece, Cyprus, and Iran, 2010 RSMF most popular Univ travel scholarship, 2010 Facebook Group formed, 2010 news of first marriage between 2 Short Travellers.

The Fund. As a brief reminder, and for newcomers to the RSMF, Roger Short was a Classics scholar at Univ from 1963-1967. While serving as British Consul-General, he was killed in a bomb attack on the British Consulate in Istanbul on 20 November, 2003. The Fund has been established in his name by Univ alumni, friends of Roger Short and other well-wishers. The RSMF's purpose is to finance a travel scholarship which enables 4-6 Univ students each year to travel in the summer vacation for study purposes to Turkey and neighbouring countries.



The dinner. The sixth dinner (which is financed separately to the Fund) was held at Univ on 30 April 2010, attended by 20 Short Travellers and 27 other guests. During his remarks, the Master mentioned that the RSMF has become a thriving institution and that it provided enormous value to the recipients. There were 13 applications for funding, with 7 awards being made. Turkey (and neighbouring countries) was again the most popular destination among other College awards for travel during 2010.

The award for best journal was made to Carys Roberts; Carys travelled to, and worked in, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey.

Fortunately the weather was fine, which permitted the evening to continue outside the Beer Cellar, with suitable refreshments. A few hardy souls stayed up all night to take advantage of the May Morning celebrations.

RSMF Dinner 2010. Clockwise from top left: Chris Lack, Jesse Simon, Sam George, Molly Scott, Marcel Dietsch, Anna Oldmeadow, Andrew Cammish, Luke Fenwick, Robert Phipps, Robin Froggatt-Smith, Olivier Holmey, Alice Morton, Kate Purcell, Rebecca Green, Lucy Fisher, Oliver Walker, Carys Roberts, Geri Della Rocca de Candal, Xiaowei Xu, Amy Ward.

The website of the Fund can be found in the Societies section of the Univ Old Members website at <http://univalumni.org>. This provides access to the previous three newsletters, which document the previous Short Travellers, their areas of study, and also links to a selection of their journals. There is also a RSMF Facebook page. The RSMF group was formed in 2010 to help create an ongoing connection between those in the Short Travellers Club. To date 27 of the 34 Short Travellers have joined the group.



Captions: (left to right): Jesse Simon, Miletus; Amy Ward, Cappadocia; Marcel Dietsch, Sultanahmet, Istanbul.

Joanna Palermo is in her first year of a DPhil degree in Archaeology. She is currently working on the introduction of iron technology in the eastern Mediterranean and specifically the Aegean during the Early Bronze Age. Joanna will use the award to visit Cyprus, both the Turkish area in the North, and the Greek area (The Republic of Cyprus) in the centre and south. During the visit, she will be visiting sites and museums to see and photograph, where permissible, their collections of early iron pieces. "I plan to make contacts with local professors and museum officials so that I can request samples for scientific research at a later date, as well as ask for excavation information. The trip is essential for my research. I am currently taking a course in modern Greek, which will assist me in my travels round the island."

Sarah Dicker is a 2nd year History undergraduate. She is studying Turkey extensively for her Further Subject, "The Near East in the Age of Justinian and Muhammad, 527 – 700". This module has focussed on the Islamic expansion out of the Arabian Peninsula into Turkey and the Middle East, as well as on the history of the 6th and 7th century Byzantine Empire. During her trip she will visit relevant sites in Istanbul, Selcuk, Ephesus, and the Zelve Monastery in Cappadocia. "I feel that the experience of witnessing Islamic culture first-hand will be invaluable to my studies. I am also interested in experiencing the extent to which the Byzantine Church, and its physical representations in architecture and art, differ to its sister in Rome." She is travelling with Elizabeth McDonald.

Elizabeth McDonald is a 2nd year undergraduate reading Classics. She is studying Roman architecture for Mods and is planning to further specialise in this area by taking the Roman Art and Archaeology, and the Roman Cities and Settlement papers for Greats. She has never had the opportunity to see the architecture of the Eastern provinces, which is interesting because of the regional variations that occur through the amalgamation of Roman and local materials, traditional designs, and building styles. "I am considering the possibility of doing a thesis in Roman Architecture as part of my Greats course and the opportunity to see first hand the evidence of the architecture of Roman Turkey would be extremely useful." She is travelling with Sarah Dicker and no doubt the two travellers will benefit from the different perspective that each brings to the trip.

Xiaowei Xu and Chris Lack: A day with a school teacher in the mountains.



Rodrigo Garcia-Velasco is in his second year at Univ, reading for a BA in History. He is studying the Crusades as his Further Subject and plans to use the award to cover the Crusader route from Istanbul to Damascus. However, instead of a horse, he plans to make use of the Interrail train pass for Turkey, and individual trains in Syria. "I believe that to achieve a deep understanding of the source materials I am studying, it is not enough to look at the photos of the castles and temples that are narrated in the chronicles. The events happening since January in the Middle East will make the trip more exciting." According to his tutor, these plans fit very well into many elements of Rodrigo's academic interests and courses.

Joshua Barley is a 3rd year undergraduate reading Classics. He intends to travel to remote North East Turkey, with the main purpose of investigating the influence of Greece on this part of the world. To this end he will visit the rural communities near Trabzon, where a dialect of Greek is spoken which is the closest known relative to the Ancient Greek language. "I am fascinated by Greek linguistics: I study both Modern Greek and Ancient Greek and I am probably doing a thesis on the development of Greek". He then plans to travel further east, visiting small rural communities, for comparison with rural Greek culture, before travelling through Greece on the way home.

Chris Lack writes: I went to Eastern Turkey with Xiaowei Xu to get a feel for Middle Eastern politics: our goal was to speak to as many people from as many different political viewpoints as possible. Over three weeks, we met mercenaries and English journalists; we stayed with nationalists and communist revolutionaries; we went to two weddings; and we drank seemingly endless cups of tea.

When we arrived in Turkey, the country was building up to a constitutional referendum, and people were delighted to tell us what they thought of the reforms. We spent an evening with an Iranian who was fiercely proud of his country and extremely ashamed of Ahmadinejad. In Diyarbakir, a chilling young man told us about his experiences working for Blackwater in Iraq in 2004. Bizarrely, a Turkish man who gave us a lift told us that he liked Obama because he is a Muslim – we were amused that this particularly baseless myth is helping Obama somewhere in the world!

In remote places, people often invited us to stay the night in their houses, and we always took the opportunity to talk to them about politics. The kindest people would often hold the most extreme political views. Near Lake Van, a charming family of PKK supporters fed us, entertained us with revolutionary songs, took us to a wedding, and invited us to stay the night. They were wonderful hosts, but while we were staying with them, breaking news of a PKK terrorist attack reminded us of the dark side of their beliefs. The next day, we visited a Church which was preparing to host an Armenian service for the first time since the genocide. The building was full of Armenians from around the world, and we had lunch with a Wall Street Journal reporter who had been flown out to cover the story.

Everywhere we went, we found extraordinary hospitality. On one occasion, a school teacher spent an entire day showing us round some mountains in northeastern Turkey. He took us to villages of log cabins which looked out over stupendous views, where we met the governor of the village and were plied with home-made cheese and honey. After a while, we virtually abandoned using buses and took to hitch-hiking – we found it a perfect way to meet people and it was



Chris Lack and Xiaowei Xu: on the way home from a Kurdish wedding.

always extremely easy to get a lift.

The trip was not just about politics. In the town of Amasya, we watched a group of whirling dervishes perform in front of a large Turkish crowd. On another day, we visited Sumela monastery, an impressive ruin which clings improbably to the base of a cliff. Days like these were fascinating, but usually, we found it more rewarding to speak to normal people and see how they lived and what they thought about the world. Ultimately, what I remember from this trip is the wonderful warmth of the Turkish people, their hospitality and eagerness to talk to us about their lives and their political views. We had gone to Turkey with the basic aim of talking to as many people as possible about politics, and we went home with a real feel for the human context of politics in the region, and looking forwards to looking at the academic interpretations of the politics that we had observed in action.

Xiaowei Xu writes: On the road to Gevas near Lake Van our lift stopped at the house of a fellow passenger. We attempted to show-off our Turkish, but were promptly informed that the family spoke Kurdish, not Turkish. In one breath the father added that they were members of the PKK, pausing before saying: 'PKK, no terrorists.' I expected him to say, 'PKK, non-violent' or something to that effect, but he continued in earnest: 'PKK, guerrilla fighters.'

We were joined by two younger men, who turned out to be the father's brothers. While the father had a solemn, intellectual look about him, the younger men looked sharp and steadfast – in

short, like guerrilla fighters. One of the brothers brought a baglama from inside the house and started to play songs about Kurdistan. The two children of the house (one named rifle, the other named after a Kurdish philosopher) were instructed to stand up and sing, while the adults clapped along and filled in any forgotten lines. It was a comical sight, in a heartbreaking sort of way – the prepubescent boys looked meek and bookish and kept losing track of the lyrics, scrunching up their faces in concentration. I doubt they had the faintest idea of what they were singing, and what it signified.

That night there was a wedding on the other side of town. The men and women were seated on opposite sides of a make-shift stage, where a band was playing traditional Kurdish music while men and children danced. Chris and I parted ways, and I was immediately swarmed by a group of adolescent girls who quizzed me on the universal interest of adolescent girls – not politics, but whether I had a boyfriend, and whether I was in love. We went inside to pay our respects to the groom (the bride, curiously, does not attend her own wedding in Kurdish culture), and joined a group of guests sipping tea in front of a TV. There had been an explosion in Hakkari a few days earlier, and the guests were watching a commentary on the event on a Kurdish news channel. A teenage girl translated the commentary for me: as the reporter listed the evidence for government involvement, I was saddened by how natural, how logical it was for these people to fight back, given the information to which they were exposed.

Jesse Simon writes: Two thousand years ago, the mouth of the Maeander river was a part of the Aegean sea. Now, after centuries of silting, it is a hypnotically flat plain bathed in that strange seaside light. Despite the ring of distant hazy mountains, it wasn't hard to believe, when you were driving through it, that this agricultural plain might somehow extend forever. In the midst of all this flatness, the site of what looked like a hilltop fortress seemed like a mirage. Only as you got closer did the strange hill reveal itself as the remains of a magnificent classical theatre, the modern tourist's entry to the ancient city of Miletus.

Mine was the only car in the parking lot. The man whose job it was to sell tickets to the site was busy drinking tea with the local gendarmes and seemed reluctant to come all the way over just to take my three lira. When I did get my ticket there was no one to give it to, just a pathway leading to a theatre whose surprising state of preservation was matched only by its emptiness. One could spend hours climbing up the benches and wandering through the vaulted passageways behind, appreciating the space and, from the uppermost seats, looking out over the vast plane which used to be the sea. From the top of the theatre you could see for miles in every direction. A gentle breeze blew through the fields below and everything in my immediate sight felt possessed by a profound stillness.

In its time, Miletus had been home to numerous great minds, but two in particular of interest to me: Anaximander, one of the fathers of cartography; and Hippodamus, one of the only known urban planners of antiquity. Hippodamus earned his fame by laying out several cities to a plan which he may have picked up in his hometown: the grid. I'll confess I had come to Miletus primarily because of its acknowledged position as the home of the classical orthogonal town plan. What I didn't expect to find was the grid itself. Walking out of the top of the theatre onto the raised piece of land which used to be the promontory of Miletus I discovered places where the original orthogonal intersections had been cleared



away just enough to be visible. Standing at that intersection, it was impossible not to feel both an immense thrill and a profound connection to an otherwise unimaginable past. In that moment, the history of the city seemed like no mere academic pursuit, but something immediate, urgent and tangible.

During my travels in Turkey I went as far east as Antioch and as far off the tourist map as Konya, and saw no shortage of extraordinary places in between. But in my recollections, it is that quiet afternoon spent among the ruins of Miletus to which I return most often. It was one of those moments that every traveller hopes for, a moment when the passage of time appears to stop and is replaced by an acute awareness of being. Without the generosity of the Roger Short Memorial Fund – which allowed me to undertake these travels through Turkey – this moment, and countless similar ones, would never have occurred; I am tremendously grateful to all those involved with the scholarship, perhaps more so than mere words could accurately express.

Photos: (top and bottom) Jesse Simon in Miletus.



Molly Scott & Sam George write: After we learned that we had been awarded a grant to travel to Turkey during the Easter break, Sam and I only had just over two weeks to plan before we set off. We had decided to divide the eight days between Istanbul and Ephesus, but our hastily drawn up travel arrangements were admittedly rather sketchy and we weren't entirely sure what to expect from our trip.

Istanbul turned out to be hugely more diverse and actually rather more beautiful than we had first imagined, as exemplified by the wonderfully eclectic skyline visible from our taxi window as we drove along the Bosphorus on our way out of the airport. It is a complete jumble of different architectural styles. High rise flats and modern industrial developments are assembled right next to old stone houses, and the entire view is scattered with minarets from the city's hundreds of mosques.

The first real highlight was Istanbul's archaeological museum which is, amongst other things, home to a remarkable collection of Sarcophagi unearthed in Lebanon in 1887. The reliefs carved onto each sarcophagus bring to life the figures behind some of history's most important moments; one of the most famous and striking pieces in the collection is the intricate Alexander Sarcophagus depicting the life of Alexander the Great. Quite apart from their sheer size and presence, what is extraordinary about these relics is how immaculately preserved they are given their age (some of them date from the fourth century BC). Apart from the faded colours, they appear to look exactly the same as they would have done when they were first buried.

A second highlight for both of us was the Basilica of St John, sprawling atop a hilltop in Selcuk. Although a torturous coach ride away from Istanbul (we truly thought the journey would never end) it proved to be one of the most memorable



parts of our trip. We were surprised to find ourselves almost the only people there, given the historical significance of the basilica to the Christian faith. It is a truly beautiful site to roam around in, with a serene atmosphere that has not been ruined by over-restoration.

The third highlight that we shall mention here was Chora Church, just beyond the tourist centre of Istanbul, which came highly recommended by Victoria Short. It boasted an impressive wall-to-ceiling display of ornate frescoes and mosaics. We were able to surreptitiously tailgate a loud American tour-guide who was most knowledgeable about the narratives depicted by the artwork, no doubt contributing to our enjoyment and subsequent recollection of the art that we had seen!

In addition to the cultural sites that we were able to visit, we were able to cover a fair amount of ground in Istanbul itself, moving on from Sultanahmet to the unerringly cosmopolitan Beyoglu district and one afternoon in the Asian side of the city at the Uskadar port. Having now seen part of Western Turkey, we are both very eager to return and explore the more culturally distinct Eastern Anatolia.

We are both extremely grateful to the benefactors of the Roger Short Memorial Fund for allowing us this opportunity to explore Turkey, particularly since before our trip neither of us had any first-hand knowledge of this fascinating part of the world. The experience of making a brief foray into Turkey has sparked a genuine interest in the history and culture, and we look forward to returning again in the future.

Photos: (left) Molly Scott and Sam George in Selcuk; (top) Molly Scott, inside the Chora Church in Istanbul.



Amy Ward writes: I began my 3 weeks in Turkey by visiting the major sites of Istanbul. Studying the Byzantine Empire, I felt I had studied so many events that had been centred around Hagia Sophia, and so could not wait to get inside this spectacular building. It did not disappoint in the slightest. As well as the awesome sense of history I felt standing looking up at the artwork on the walls and ceilings, I was struck by the sheer size of all its decorations – it is a truly amazing building. The hostel I was staying in had a roof terrace with a fantastic view over the city, and at night it was amazing to watch Hagia Sophia lit up against the darkness of the night sky.

From Istanbul, my travelling partner and I journeyed to the small city of Mardin in the Southeast of the country. It was strikingly different to Istanbul, with very little development at all. The settlement of the old town was built on ledges up one side of an enormous hill, from which the view out over the Syrian plains was simply breathtaking. The first time we walked up to the viewing point through the scorching heat, and call to prayer began from the mosque. I truly felt as if I was in a completely different world, hearing the music of the prayer call out over this crumbling city, with the complete emptiness of the plains as far as the eye could see. From Mardin we travelled to the holy city of Sanliurfa, which is one of the most religious cities in the whole country, but much more bustling than our previous location. The highlight of our stay in the city was definitely the time we spent around the

sacred fish lakes outside what is said to be the birth cave of Abraham, and also walking up to the kale above this, looking out for miles over the region.

After our time in the South East we travelled by bus to the region of Cappadocia, famous for its fairly chimneys. This was the region I had been most excited about, and yet it still exceeded all my expectations. Our days were spent hiking through the different valleys of the region, and exploring different cave settlements. Although we based ourselves at Goreme, we ventured out further afield, the most exciting (but also terrifying!) excursion definitely being the visit to Derinkuyu underground city.

Sadly, after a week in Cappadocia I became ill, and after a few days of resting and hoping it would pass, we were forced to travel back to Istanbul. A 12 hour coach journey with chronic diarrhoea was perhaps one of the most difficult challenges I have faced! Once back in Istanbul I went into hospital, and after tests was told that I had two severe gastric infections. Although I was given antibiotics, we made the decision to cut our trip short and returned home the next day. Despite the frustrating end to my trip, my time in Turkey was an absolutely unforgettable experience. I was amazed by the sites, both natural and man-made, and by the interactions I was lucky enough to have with different local people. I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank everyone that makes the Roger Short Memorial Scholarships possible at Univ – it is a fantastic college institution and one that I feel honoured to now be a part of.



Photos (left to right): Amy Ward, Zelve open air museum in Cappadocia; Marcel Dietsch, a view of Beyoglu, Istanbul; Amy Ward, a view from Mardin.

Marcel Dietsch writes: Country case studies are at the heart of my D.Phil research on the trade relationships between natural gas exporting and importing countries, and I conducted field research for about two weeks in the country that is the subject of my most important case study: Turkey. Turkey is very much exposed to closer cooperation among certain gas exporting countries because it depends on Russian exports to cover 63% of its gas consumption and 18% and 11% respectively in the cases of Iranian and Algerian supplies.

In Ankara, I met with Dr Cenk Pala, who is the general manager of E.ON Ruhrgas' Turkish office. Dr Pala used to be a senior executive and negotiator at Turkey's state-owned BOTAS Petroleum Pipeline Corporation and in that capacity he developed deep expertise in the natural gas business. Dr Pala was extremely generous with his time and having left BOTAS a year ago, he was at liberty to discuss very openly economic and political issues surrounding gas imports. I also met with Levent Ozgul, who works in a senior position in BOTAS' strategy department. He was also very generous with his time and we talked not just about my research questions, but also about wider political and economic issues concerning

in particular Iraq and Iran, which might be significant suppliers of natural gas to Turkey (and indeed Europe) in the future.

I had experienced Turkish hospitality even before I arrived in Istanbul. On my plane from Heathrow to Istanbul was a fellow who lives in Istanbul (but was originally from Van near the Iranian border). He later invited me and some of his friends to dinner during my stay and we talked about a wide range of issues, including Turkish politics. Political issues were extremely topical around the time of the September 12th referendum on constitutional reform. I went to a coffee shop in the late afternoon as the results of the referendums started to trickle in from across the various regions of the country. It was interesting to observe how the urban population (and many on Turkey's west coast) were decidedly against Erdogan's constitutional reform while the rural population in most of the rest of the country favoured the proposed changes.

I should like to thank the Roger Short Fund at University College for enabling me to travel to Istanbul and Ankara in September 2010. My two-week trip in September allowed me to both combine my necessary field research in addition to exploring Turkey's rich history and culture.

Short Travellers Past: Short Travellers' updates

As each year passes, there are new additions to the ranks of Short Travellers and their collective experiences are recorded in their journals. A successful trip can be a result of serendipity, or careful planning, but in both cases, interacting with local people is a critical part of the experience. Listing suitable contacts and organisations could be of benefit to future travellers. If anyone is interested in co-ordinating such a project or other 'Club' activities, please contact David Sykes (dcsykes@aol.com).



Chris Lack and Xiaowei Xu, Singing Kurdish songs near Van

Oliver Walker (2006) I moved to London in August to begin a post-doctoral research job at the Grantham Institute at the LSE (now all I need is a doctorate...). While there I have been working on rational decision making in climate change policy, and hope to produce two papers in this area in the coming months. Making up for lost time on the labour market, I have also taken a teaching position at Corpus Christi College in Oxford, where I am the college lecturer in Economics.

Gabby Savage (2006) I'm still working for international trade title the drinks business magazine. In the past year, I was shortlisted for the Louis Roederer International Wine Writer of the Year "Emerging Wine Writer" award, as well as being promoted to the post of deputy editor. Recent trips around the world of wine have included California, Austria and northern Spain.

Rebecca Green (2006) Since graduating from Univ in 2007, I've been working at BT in a variety of roles via their talent programme. In my current role I'm working as a business manager, providing tactical and strategic support to the Openreach executive. Outside of work, I'm still managing to ride my horse, and I am currently in the process of buying a new house! Taking part in the Roger Short scholarship was one of the most memorable experiences of my

time at Univ, and I am hoping to return to Turkey in the very near future.

Robert Phipps (2007) I am currently looking for a new challenge having done a bit of work for a mobile focussed venture capital company.

Geri Della Rocca de Candal (2007) In summer 2010, I visited Uzbekistan again and Tajikistan for the first time. As a consequence of all this travelling I am actually struggling to complete my D.Phil. But this, I promise, should really be my last year at Univ.

Robin Froggatt-Smith (2008) I currently work as an editor in the financial sector. I am about to cycle from Brussels to Amsterdam, working my way towards a longer Balkan route.

Michael Gibb (2008) I am nearing the end of my D.Phil studies in Philosophy at Univ, where I am working on a thesis on the ethical significance of the many different interpersonal relationships we partake in. Over the past year I am continued to take an interest in events in Turkey and elsewhere in the region, most recently by working with an international NGO to organise a series of workshops designed to promote the political participation of women in Iraq.

Carys Roberts (2009) Since receiving the scholarship in 2009 I have been quite involved in college and Oxford life; I started a volunteering project tutoring local children in Maths and have taken part in outreach and access events as a Univ Ambassador, for which I received the Vice Chancellor's Civic Award last year. After graduating I plan to complete an MSc in Economics at UCL. My trip to Turkey and the Middle East was immensely useful for the module 'Politics of the Middle East', and I plan to return to Istanbul soon.

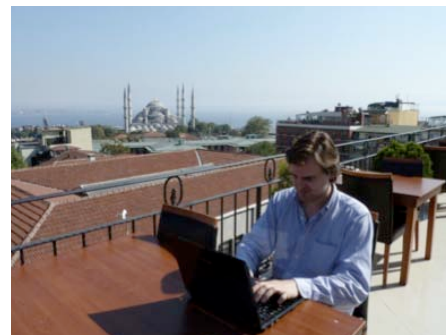
Lucy Fisher (2009)

I'm in my fourth and final year at Univ reading Greats. As the formidable finals loom large on the horizon, I am weening myself off fun and settling in well to my new home (the library).

Luke Fenwick (2009)

I won a Blue in rugby last term and am

hoping to finish my D.Phil in the next month. I will travel this Summer before starting work.



Photos: (bottom to top): Amy Ward in Sanliurfa; Molly Scott, Selcuk; Marcel Dietsch in Istanbul.



Appreciation. Many thanks indeed to all donors to the Fund. The Short Travellers are all very appreciative of the wonderful opportunities made possible by your generosity.

Once again the organisers are indebted to Robin Froggatt-Smith (Short Traveller 2008) for his 3rd successive, very professional newsletter production. Robin takes time from his very busy working life to support the RSMF.

Donations. To make a donation to the Fund, please visit the website under the Societies section at univalumni.org, where a donation form can be downloaded. This includes the facility of donating via Gift Aid, with tax advantages for donor and recipient.

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