



ROGER SHORT MEMORIAL FUND

JUNE 2021





Baroness Valerie Amos

As the new Master of Univ I was delighted to learn about the Roger Short programme. The opportunity to travel and engage with people from different cultures is a vital part of learning.

I was a Minister in the Foreign Office between 2001-2003 and whilst I never met Roger I was very aware of the work of the embassy and consulate in Turkey in building ties with the Turkish Government and Turkish people, fostering trade links as well as supporting the expatriate British community and tourists who travelled to Turkey. In addition there were the ongoing discussions about the possibility of Turkey joining the European Union, the bridging of East and West. Roger's death and that of other colleagues on that fateful day in September 2003 shocked us all.

Since that time I have visited Turkey on many occasions, particularly when I worked at the United Nations and was responsible for the coordination of the global response to humanitarian crises around the world. Turkey became the host to millions of Syrian refugees as the conflict escalated and the years passed. But there is another Turkey—one that Roger Short knew well and loved. Its rich and diverse history. Its Ottoman Islamic heritage. That is the Turkey these travel scholarships enable Univ students to experience. A rich culture, fascinating people and interesting cuisine.

I look forward to reading the travel journals of the Roger Short scholars of the future. My thanks to Roger's friends and family who have ensured that his memory lives on in such a positive and meaningful way.

2006

REBECCA RICKETTS (GREEN)

It feels as if nothing has happened this year, but when I look back to the start of lockdown in March, I realise that a lot has changed. Back then we had a six month old baby and a three year old. Now we have a walking, talking (often running!) toddler, and a nearly four year old who is going to school this year. We've really enjoyed the time together as a family. We have grown vegetables; done more craft activities than a series of Blue Peter; and taken part in enough Zoom quizzes to last a lifetime! We want to hold on to all of the good things that have come out of this year. As a result, my husband and I have both decided to work part time permanently to make the most of our family time.

GABRIEL SAVAGE

March 2020 saw my freelance writing commissions grind to a halt, which at least left me free to entertain two small children while nurseries were closed. Some rather inventive logistics involving lots of wine glasses left on doorsteps allowed the most

local of my wine courses to transfer rather effectively to Zoom. The writing side has now thankfully picked up again with recent articles in *The Field* magazine spanning themes as varied as sherry and Connemara ponies, both incidentally reported to be in high demand during Covid! I look forward to hearing how everyone else has been navigating the last year.

2007

GERI DELLA ROCCA DE CANDAL

In the pandemic issue of Xavier de Maistre's *Voyage autour de ma chambre*, I travelled extensively within the walls of my new flat in Milan. What I lacked in mileage I made up for in academic overproduction: thanks to the various solitary lockdowns and limited professional commitments, I finally managed to catch up with all of my unfinished projects, some almost ten years old. Having exhausted my interests in early Greek printing, I now intend to work on Renaissance travel literature. I am (optimistically) looking forward to travelling to Greece during the summer, paying a visit to fellow Short Traveller Josh Barley, and missed the 2020 RSMF dinner very much.

2008

OLIVIER HOLMEY

After three years as a staff writer at the magazine *Euromoney*, in London, I decided in 2019 to try my luck as a freelance journalist. Going independent can be nerve-racking, but I've so far relished the sense of freedom it's afforded me. Since

then, I have contributed obituaries to *The Times* and *The Independent*, and gathered news for a variety of publications, from *Private Eye* to *Jeune Afrique*. Though the pandemic has been disheartening and scary, especially so the first lockdown, I'm keeping my spirits up by learning languages at home. That way I'll be ready to travel again, when the time comes!

2013

RUTH HATTERSLEY

Although this year certainly hasn't gone as planned, I've felt very fortunate. I've been working on a mobile app, which was boosted by the pandemic, with a team already set up for remote working and I'm still living in Cape Town, where spending more time outdoors is always a pleasure! Running and cycling have been a real joy and after our strict lockdown forced me and my boyfriend to actually cook, we've found ourselves begrudgingly enjoying that too. I've been supporting family from a distance through some difficult health battles and I'm looking forward to visiting the UK once I can be sure I won't get stuck out of South Africa!

2014

ODETTE CHALABY

I have spent the year in a small flat in north-west London, initially staring at four walls, but slowly finding joy in my slowed down life. I have been baking bread, barbecuing, crosswording, exploring England, running (very occasionally), and somehow managed



Rebecca Ricketts's children



Lockdown life, Gabby Savage

a career change (I will start as a pupil barrister in environmental and planning law later this year). A highlight was a summer escape, now unimaginable, driving through the sunny southwest of France.

ROBERT NATZLER

In 2019 I was able to rekindle the love of Georgia that the Roger Short Scholarship played such a big part in establishing. Together with three friends from Univ, I spent a lovely week tramping around in Tusheti, followed by another in the wine country between Akhmeta and Bodbe. Stories are best told in person, but in summary we got attacked by sheepdogs, made friends with some lovely locals

and are now importing their wine into the UK. So the next time you're in the market for a Tavkeri—let me know!

After that, 2020 was bound to be a letdown, but I have to admit I'd never have guessed just how much of one it was! I'd feel dishonest not sharing the sadnesses. I lost a much loved grandfather, and went through the end of a serious relationship. I'd also be lying if I pretended I didn't miss parties. There's no substitute for socialising, it turns out. That said, I have a lot to be grateful for. The career is going well, and I'm lucky in that my job can be done remotely very easily. I was even able to get a final (work) trip in before the dread virus arrived, this one to India in February, sneaking away from my corporate minders to make an overnight drive to reach the Taj Mahal at dawn. I made it back, tired but joyous, only slightly late for a lunchtime meeting. After that, though, travel stopped.

So, it's been the year of making our own adventures. I've doubled down on my love of food and drink, and now have a favourite mocktail, the ginger switchel (Mother Root does the best drinking vinegar I've found. No, I don't get a commission). I did a lot of DIY, and now have a bedroom filled with bookcases, all of them constructed incorrectly but in interestingly different ways. I went a bit mad in the autumn and built a computer out of spare parts. It took three weeks of swearing to get the hardware working, and a fourth to install the software, but it was diverting. I've started a fancy dress collection as well, and resolved on January



Odette Challaby in Southwold, Suffolk

Ist that 2021 is going to be the year that I really master British regional accents.

The other big hobby project has been organising a lecture series. It's running from January to March, under the title of 'Smashing the Silos'. We've got six Saturdays of lectures from a range of frankly top-flight thinkers, talking about interdisciplinarity in topics ranging from academia to business, AI to ethics, economics to, well, more economics, but that's what happens when you let me organise lectures. They're being broadcast over YouTube by the Oxford Union, who very kindly let me use their Zoom subscription. It remains to be seen whether this turns out to be a highlight—so fingers crossed!

I'm really, really, really, really looking forward to us all getting together for a drink and a meal and a conversation again. Until then, much love.

ABIGAIL REEVES

As ever, it's wonderful to read about the adventures of fellow Short Travellers.



Scrapbook, John-Henry Charles



Lockdown at Univ Stavs, *Diana Avadani*

The RSMF dinner is a highlight of the year and I always look forward to attending and catching up with all of the Short Travellers and everyone invested in the scholarship. It's been a great pleasure to consider how we may all collectively contribute to our mutual ambitions.

I am still working at Skadden, and I am enjoying the pace and the intensity. During lockdown I have spent any spare time doing yoga, reading and trying out new recipes.

2015

DAVID ASTLEY

Trying to reflect on 2020 is a difficult

exercise. On the one hand, the spring and summer of last year feel unreachable, far more distant than countable in months; on the other, it feels—physically, socially, psychologically—as if we are stuck in a long 2020. This conflict reminds me of grief's disruption of the flow of time. I have been extremely lucky, though, losing only my taste and smell for a few days and my loved ones have so far remained largely unaffected. What I hope will linger longest in the mind from 2020 are the images and sensations of warm evening walks, long and criss-crossing, through the empty streets of Central London. I also took up running last year, which has taken me further and further out of Central London and has led to a surprising number of encounters with faces from Univ, some quickly recognised, others needing strenuous attempts at recollection. The time provided from the restrictions and the many, many case studies of the past year have benefitted the Masters I am completing in science and technology studies around my job, which I'll finish this coming September. More immediately, I'll be moving from Clerkenwell and out to Metroland in March. So 2021 will bring more space and comfort, and hopefully a whole lot else.

2016

JOHN-HENRY CHARLES

I have sent in a photo of one of my lockdown projects. I've been putting together a scrapbook of my big bike tours of which the Roger Short ride from Oxford to Turkey plays an integral part. This photo is a snapshot of the Roger Short ride section. It's rather a work-in-progress still (the photos aren't stuck in) ... and I'm sure I'll continue

to tinker with it in the months ahead. Indeed I'm very aware that I need to add photos of Johanna (my fellow 2016 scholar and cyclist) to the page, who I over-printed on other rides/pages in the book, but for my sins somehow omitted on Oxford-Turkey. Once her photos are stuck in, I hope to have the confidence to draw something where the Alps are. Even more hopefully one day I will be able to add a page to the book with a ride from Edirne to Baku, continuing on the Roger Short ride. Let's see where the pages go.

As for what I've been up to this year. I've been on lots of calls scrambling to move infrastructure projects forwards in Algeria, Egypt, and Nigeria. In between, I've run and cycled as much as possible. I also got rather into making my scrapbook and tinkering with my Raspberry Pi.

Looking forwards to the next RSMF newsletter and event—whenever we're able to meet again!

LOUIS GRANDJOUAN

I have moved to the Supreme Court to work as judicial assistant to Lord Stephens, before starting pupillage next year. The court's hearings have continued apace, albeit over the internet. Less entertaining, but perhaps in some (limited) ways more efficient. For any current Univ lawyers or Univites thinking of a career in law, it has been a brilliant, challenging, stimulating experience that I would heartily recommend—it is definitely worth doing. It will be all the better when the hearings are back in the building.

I look forward to hearing about how the latest Short Travellers have navigated their time at Univ through the pandemic. I assume no one made it to Turkey, but I hope there have been some bright moments, and I look forward to when we might talk about trips to Istanbul once more.

HUGH MOORHEAD

The past year has had its challenges but my outlook remains broadly positive. My



Alexi & Iona Andriopoulos



Cycling the New Forest, *Josh Sayer*



Cooking during Covid, Josh Sayer

lockdown hobby was running and to my astonishment I found myself waddling my way through a half marathon around my village during May; this definitely wasn't on the cards at the start of 2020!

Other highlights included sneaking away to Languedoc, France for a month of adventures in August (would that it had been Turkey). I finally qualified as an accountant in September and am looking forward to something of a career change, starting an equity research analyst role in the Spring.

2017

ALEXI ANDRIOPOULOS

This year in the middle of the pandemic I had the privilege of marrying Iona on a lovely summer's day in the Norfolk countryside. Delightfully this happened during the window when we could have some guests and so fellow RSMF scholar Cameron Cullen was able to be with us and take some snaps on the same vintage camera which had accompanied us around Asia Minor a couple of years ago.

I also learned amidst the multiple family Zoom quizzes I took part in this year St Nicholas originally came from Turkey. So even Santa Claus ought to be a welcome participant of the RSMF community.

2018

DIANA AVADANII

I most certainly missed gatherings this year, as I am quite a social person. I am eager to get back to crowded pubs, dinners, barbeques and so on.

I don't have much for the newsletter. I was very lucky to be amongst the students who spent their 2020 lockdown and summer in Stavs. This means I routinely enjoyed my tea in the rose garden and reading outside. Trying to stay active and going for runs in Port Meadow has also helped considerably. I also took advantage of the painting opportunities in Stavs.

Since autumn I am back in Main Site as Junior Dean while keeping on going with my DPhil work. Walks, running, and painting are still the things I do to keep grounded.

2019

JOSH SAYER

I left Oxford at the end of Hilary Term for the vac. I left with thoughts of impending finals heavy on my mind and the somewhat unnerving concern of a new virus flitting around too. I was calmed by future thoughts of the post-finals glow and two weeks in Oxford that replaced hours in libraries with hours at dinners and parties. I had deposited some belongings in other friends' rooms who had long contracts to make packing more bearable and the upcoming unpacking less toilsome to carry up Staircase 12. I left Oxford in a hurry because the parking on Logic Lane waits for no man. I revised and took my exams in my bedroom. My trusty old laptop may have had a bit of a crack in the screen but managed not to update itself during any of them. I felt very lucky for that.

I spent the summer cycling, walking, watching films and cooking as much as possible.

I started teaching in a school outside London, full of bubbles, hand sanitiser and echoing reprimands for students forgetting their mask for yet another day in a row. I teach Latin to the year 7s, the first year group to have the subject. I am really enjoying my job and feel fortunate to be there.

As we enter the third lockdown, it has been easy for me to slip back into thinking about simply what I have done, the things I have



Covid commuting in Milan, Geri della Rocca de Candali

given up and the luck that has been bestowed on me at times too. This year would have been unimaginable and perhaps unbearable without the support of family (surprised all to be back in one house again after so long for so long), the kindness of friends (on buffering screens and arty postcards), the bravery of key workers (especially those who had to ration the supplies of toilet paper in April) and the solidarity of community (fighting for BLM, providing online events and offering support for the vulnerable to Covid). Though the start of the New Year may be bleaker than we wanted, there is reason to be optimistic and hopeful.



Cycling in South Africa, Ruth Hattersley

It is a requirement for recipients of a Roger Short Travel grant to write a journal of their experiences, which is archived in the College library and in many cases uploaded onto the College website. It is also circulated to the Master, who selects the candidate for the “best journal” award, and to the organisers of the annual dinner, at which the award is made. One of the intentions of this requirement is to emphasize that travel is for study purposes, rather than as a tourist on a summer holiday. The journal should therefore give some indications of how the traveller benefitted as a result of the trip, both relating to the study topic and more general learnings and insights.

As a reader of all the journals since the first that were written in 2005, it has been very gratifying to see that these expectations have always been fulfilled. Indeed some journals show very high skills in travel writing, and are full of acute observations and reflections on daily experiences. Accompanying photographs also provide graphic and artistic illustrations and are again often of exceptional quality. Common themes that emerge from the journals are the extraordinary hospitality shown by local people in remote areas, especially if the traveller is in need of some sort of assistance, and that talking to local people (or communicating via Google Translate) is always a rewarding experience. A frequent observation is to contrast experiencing the Classical or Byzantine world first hand, rather than reading about it in a library in Oxford. Another contrast which travellers outside the main cities in Turkey experience is that of comfort, or rather the lack of it. The physical challenges of travelling off the beaten track in Turkey, especially in the summer, can be considerable. But as the saying goes “What doesn’t kill you, makes you stronger”. It is difficult to pick out specific parts of journals for special mention, as the choice is so wide, but here are a few of my favourites:



A Hotel with Character in Aleppo

Kate Purcell, 2009

Exhausted after a full day of travel from Adana to Antakya (ancient Antioch) in Turkey, then across the border into Syria, I took a break from the asylum seeker trail and spent a night in Aleppo’s Baron Hotel.

The former glory of the oldest hotel in Syria can still be imagined, seemingly because of, rather than despite, the layers of soft dust that preserve both the unrestored beauty of the building itself and memories of her many notable guests over the years. It was here that Agatha Christie wrote the first part of *Murder on the Orient Express* and King Faisal declared Syria’s independence. Calling ahead, I reserved Room 202, previously occupied by Oxonian, T.E. Lawrence, whose bar bill remains in the hotel lounge. Pleasantly surprised at this success in securing what I had imagined might be a somewhat sought after place to rest one’s head, I realised upon arrival that the Baron, notwithstanding its historical significance, is neither a tourist trap, nor a museum, nor indeed, a particularly well functioning hotel. Therein lies its charm.

Visiting Ayia Sofia in Trabzon

Josh Barley, 2011

I went into Ayia Sofia’s Greek heart, which pigeons and sparrows have made their home.

The frescoes are astonishing. They reminded me strongly of those at Mystra in Greece, for they are of the same period (late Byzantine), and both show a more expressive, fluid style than the earlier rigid Byzantine expression. Angels rush across the lower reaches of the dome; saints in flowing robes wear deep lines of emotion in their faces. This new artistic flourishing in the Empire of Trebizond, parallel to the Paleologues in Constantinople, represents the final exhalation of the Byzantine Empire.

A Night Out in Beirut

Carys Roberts, 2009

We stopped another night at the Luna Park for a ride on the Ferris wheel that can be seen from across Beirut. Sitting in rusty teacups, paint flaking and an ominous creaking coming from somewhere, we had stunning views across the city, the lights on the mountainside twinkling through the smog and rising heat waves. After fifteen minutes we realised the operator had walked off leaving us going round and round; we could see him in the distance laughing at the two English girls stuck in a rusty teacup. So we were introduced to Lebanese humour.

Experiencing a Hammam in Bursa

Diana Avadanii, 2018

I went to Kaynarca Kaplicasi, which dates from the 17th century and uses thermal waters as the hot water tap. The hammam experience was exactly how I wanted it. Raw, authentic and very Turkish. No one spoke English and they were all very curious and kind with me. The bath itself was a marble room with a bench along the walls and marble basins with a hot and a cold tap. You took combined water from the basin and poured it on yourself. The woman who scrubbed and massaged me was quite raw and unapologetic too. I never knew what would come next. Another bucket of water on my head? A super hot towel on my back? Scrubbing my face?

On an Archeological Dig

Florence Barker, 2018

I found a spout of a beak-spouted jug, dating to the Middle Bronze Age. The fragment is one of my top three because Deniz didn’t know the word ‘beak’ in English, so this bit of pottery is inextricably linked with the image of her flapping and squawking around the office in an attempt to explain. I only actually understood what she meant when I saw some whole examples in the Konya Regional Archaeology museum.

On Visiting Ruins

Tuuli Ahlholm, 2017

My travel reading for the most of this journey was Rose Macaulay’s *The Pleasure of Ruins* (1953); a thorough investigation into the archaeology, theology, philosophy, and literary history of “architectural decay”. What I get out of Macaulay’s dizzying kaleidoscope of literary quotes, investigations, descriptions of actual and imagined “ruin-wilderness” is that: the immense aesthetic pleasure we receive from gazing at ruins stems from their ability to endlessly provoke spatial and temporal meditation on our own place in the world, the pathways that led there and what could have been.

Off the Beaten Track in Georgia

Rob Natzler, 2014

The lizards scuttled and the cows wandered through the dusty ruins of the town below and I shivered in the wind and went back to the car.

Ozymandius sprang to mind; and when I saw Vardzia and Goreme later on, beautiful though they were, on one level I felt disappointed they were not as bleak and desolate as the feast-hall and desert-town of Uplistsikhe.

Istanbul After Dark

Tristen Naylor, 2013

Sultanahmet comes alive differently when the sun goes down. The air becomes sweet with the smell of shisha and grilling kofte. The muzzeins’ competing cries cut through the air and though the sun is gone its warmth remains. There is something extra special on those nights when the moon puts on its crescent face and sits by the minarets. Sultan Ahmed and Hagia Sophia stare at one another in a timeless faceoff. If they’re competing for grandeur, it’s a folly fight—they’re greatest together as a pair. The scene is picture perfect, though no picture can capture it perfectly. How it looks is a fraction of how it feels.

Cycling on the Peloponnese Peninsula

Johanna Schiele, 2016

The coastal road in the direction of Corinth is extremely hilly, it is hot and the air smells of pine and eucalyptus sap. The Mediterranean lies turquoise some 400 meters below us. From up here the sea seems to have no similarity anymore to the windy and wavy challenge it was on the sailing boat. It is 1pm when we start cycling—the next weeks we will skip an hour around noon to avoid burning, but today we want to make at least some kilometres north before the evening. Passing the ancient amphitheatre of Epidaurus—if you let a coin drop in the middle of the stage, even the person up in the 50th row can still hear it drop. We end up close to a monastery from the 14th century called Agnouda, and set up the tent.

On Surveying a Landscape

Rivka Hyland, 2017

In these plains near the Georgia-Azerbaijan border, the landscape gives one a feeling of sleeping in a very large bed. I thought of “Nomadology: The War Machine” which I had read as an undergraduate in a class on Central Asian nomads. The notion of the smooth space of plains, which informs the mind of nomadic inhabitants in a different way from the striated space of cities, had stayed with me for years.



A number of journals also contain very useful advice and tips for future travellers, in particular for solo women, (i.e. recent journals by Diana Avadanii, Tuuli Ahlholm, Francesca Sollohub).

It is apparent that travel off the beaten track is a complementary activity to academic study at home, and therefore can be considered as part of an educational whole, providing many unexpected and memorable learning opportunities.

Roger Short and his family were intrepid travellers throughout the region. It is very gratifying to see that this tradition not only continues but flourishes.

by David Sykes

David was a life-long friend of Roger Short. They first met in 1963 at the beginning of their four years together at Univ from 1963-1967.



In lieu of the Annual Dinner, glasses were raised from afar.

TRAVEL JOURNAL PRIZE

The journal prize is awarded at the dinner each year by Richard and Anna Morgan, life-long friends of Roger's and founding contributors to the Fund. Due to COVID travel restrictions during 2020, there was no travel and no prize awarded.

Previous winners are as follows:

2019 Piers Armitage
2018 Diana Avadanii
2017 Tuuli Ahlholm and Rivka Hyland
2016 Johanna Schiele
2015 David Astley
2014 Robert Natzler
2013 Tristan Naylor
2012 Edward Lewis
2011 Josh Barley
2010 Jesse Simon
2009 Carys Roberts
2008 Robin Froggatt-Smith and Olivier Holmey
2007 Ethan Kay
2006 Andrew Cammish and Rebecca Green
2005 Theo Papaioannou

HONOURS

The University College Record listed the following academic honours:

Theodore Hill (2018) awarded a DPhil for his thesis "Rulers in Greek Tragedy".
Florence Barker (2018) awarded the Allen Exhibition, awarded to a student who has contributed much to college life.

DONATIONS

Donations to the Roger Short Memorial Fund may be made by contacting:

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APPRECIATION

Thank you to all the Short Travellers and supporters who wrote in and sent photos. We could not produce the Newsletter without your contributions. We very much look forward to reuniting at the next dinner, whenever that may be!

Many thanks to all the donors to the Fund. The Short Travellers are appreciative of the very special and unique opportunities made possible by the RSMF travel awards.

NEWSLETTER DESIGN

Layout and design by Charlie Morgan www.charliemorgandesign.com.

Front cover: Topkapi Palace. Source: *Unsplash*, photo by Meriç Dağlı

Back cover: The Basilica Cistern. Built in the 6th century during the reign of Byzantine Emperor Justinian I, it is the largest of several hundred ancient cisterns that lie beneath the city of Istanbul. Source: *Wikimedia Commons*