



UNIV
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OXFORD



**ROGER SHORT
MEMORIAL FUND**
APRIL 2024

It is almost ten years since we travelled to Turkey and the surrounding region on our respective trips. Headlines since have made for grim reading: the havoc wrought by the fragmentation of Syria; riots in Yerevan and Tbilisi; the steady drumroll of terrorist attacks; war in Nagorno-Karabakh; a devastating earthquake; soaring inflation; and a political class which is by turns chaotic, corrupt, and repressive.

It is striking how Turkey, Georgia, and Armenia are all tightly bound up, in their different ways, with the war in Ukraine. Erdogan has tried, with limited success, to position himself as a mediator, with all the attendant ambiguity which that stance implies. Georgia has played host to the tens of thousands of Russians looking to evade Putin's regime, conscription, or Western sanctions; but at a time when almost a quarter of its territory remains under Russian occupation, and with rapidly diminishing patience. The invasion of Nagorno-Karabakh seems largely to result from Russia's inability or indifference towards guaranteeing the ceasefire which it brokered in 2020. Although the news is bleak, the region is of central relevance.

Yet, may we be reminded of a Turkish proverb: 'kahve cehennem kadar kara, ölüm kadar kuvvetli, sevgi kadar tatlı olmalı', which roughly translates to 'coffee should be black as hell, strong as death, and sweet as love'. In times of darkness, there are occasional shards of light. The opening of the new home for the Istanbul Modern Museum, sleek and shimmering on the Bosphorus is one such moment. A photo of its architect, Renzo Piano, barefoot in the reflecting pool gives a sense of its gauzy elegance. Every year since our trips, more or less, has brought a superb film out of Georgia: vivid, stark, sometimes absurd, always with a strong sense of the place.

Looking back, we are more and more conscious of how the strength of our connection to this region is not mediated through the news, but through memory and association. It stems from the initial generosity of the Roger Short Memorial Fund—without which our trips would never have happened—and the steadily building community around the scholarships. It is a connection maintained through travel, but also, perhaps more lastingly, through what we remember, read or watch, or have a standing disposition to be interested in. Our memories of the warmth of the people, balmy nights tinged in pink, and the bittersweet taste of Turkish coffee. Long therefore may the RSMF community continue to grow.

Louis Grandjouan, ST 2016

Hugh Moorhead, ST 2016

Abi Reeves, ST 2014

Front cover: Tabatabai house courtyard through coloured glass windows, Kashan, Iran. *Olivia Strachan*

Back cover: View from our BnB in Ortahisar. *Amy Paterson*

Short Traveller attendees at the 2023 RSMF dinner. L-R: Geri Della Rocca de Candal, Joanna Palermo, Rob Natzler, Miles Hession, Lucie De Gentile, Andrew Cammish, Abi Reeves, Louis Grandjouan, David Astley, Piers Armitage, Paula Domingo Pasarin, Joshua Pearson, Carys Roberts, Jeff Hawke, Olivia Strachan, Robin Froggatt-Smith, Diana Avadanii, Alexi Andriopolous, Jon Tilley, Hugh Moorhead



SHORT TRAVELLER JOURNAL SYNOPSES

JULIA JOHNSON, 2023

I travelled in September of 2023 with a fellow Roger Short Scholar, Joshua Pearson. It was a three week trip across Turkey, taking us from -19° to $+35^{\circ}\text{C}$ and a 5000m mountain to coastal path. We flew into Istanbul, and then spent a week hiking in each of the Kaçkar mountains, Mount Ararat, and the Lycian way. This breadth showed us the wide range of cultures and landscapes in Turkey, and I am incredibly grateful to the family and friends of Roger Short for the opportunity. By hiking, we had the time to immerse ourselves in places and connect with those living there. It was an experience that I will certainly continue to treasure and I'm sure it will be one of my most vivid memories of studying at Univ.

The trip began with us crashing into Istanbul at 5:45am local time, and not exactly feeling ready to see all that the city had to offer in the 26 hours we had. Regardless, fuelled by excitement for the unknown, we grabbed walnut pastry from a street vendor and got the ferry across the Bosphorus Strait, our first taste of Turkey, as well as our first view of Istanbul. The day that followed was a

intention of stalling the outflow of men to the cities, but actually provided employment for women. Buses ran without timetables and were used to transport bread into the remote villages. In the coastal town, Pazar, serving as a gateway to the valleys I particularly enjoyed a cheese shop where we were offered samples of everything and advice on which would be the best aged cheeses for hiking. We came away with bags weighed down with cheese, smoked olives, and honeycomb. The trailhead town was in a cloud for the entire afternoon we were there, but we stood out in our waterproofs amongst the



Joshua Pearson and I tried to source a UNIV flag for the classic summit photo but with no luck unfortunately—the Ararat sign had to do! *Julia Johnson*



A creative interpretation of the route up Kaçkar Dagı, which was difficult to follow at points due to competing guides laying contradictory route markers. *Julia Johnson*

whirlwind of colour, smell, and sound, and an intersection of culture—feeling more familiar than expected at points, and yet entirely new in others.

From Istanbul, we flew to the Kaçkar mountains in the north-east, and it was immediately obvious that we'd entered a very different realm. The hills were lined with tea plantations which were introduced with the

Two of the women we later chatted with over tea. The one on the right wants a nose job. *Julia Johnson*



other, entirely Arab, tourists.

We started into the mountains at 5am the next day, having read that it got very misty later in the day. We weren't able to see far beyond our bags for the entire day, but awoke the next morning in perfect clear, to discover where we'd pitched the tent. Our journey through the Kaçkar mountains featured striking and entirely untouched scenery, with one of the locals estimating 500 hikers per year, but it was the people we met that made it so special. They welcomed us into their homes for food and to sleep with a level of hospitality totally unfamiliar to us, although they certainly had their fun with Google Translate in return! In the temporary pastoral village we passed through, they spoke no English, but enjoyed asking whether I had an 'aesthetic nose' (one of the women wanted a nose job) while we were munching through walnut pastry fresh from the oven and a bottomless pot of tea. We stayed with an ex-politician who was building a guesthouse, and his daughter gave an insight

into the differences between Ankara and the rural regions in particular regard to women, between enthusing about English literature (she was a particular fan of *The Hobbit*). We summited Kaçkar Dagı a few days later after heading back up into the mountains, and then walked out to the south-east on one of the longest but most memorable days.

The tea culture is something that was consistent throughout the trip and every part of Turkey we visited, despite the other wide variations. The east is more conservative, and I felt that somewhat in the mountains, but considerably more on the roadtrip to the start of our next hike. We passed through Erzurum and Agri, two cities that very clearly receive no international tourism, although Erzurum was of great importance historically. We were warmly welcomed and encouraged to try the local delicacies of baklava.

We met with the guides and other hikers in the Mount Ararat (Ağrı Dağı in Turkish) group in a hotel in Dogubeyazit, before heading to the base of the mountain the following morning. Having spent the past week at 3000m, we were by far the most acclimatised in the group, a large proportion of whom were Dutch. This meant the pace felt as glacial as the summit ice cap, but the world of multi-camp expeditions (complete with pack-horses) was something neither of us had

Our new hiking companion may have provided some fresh conversation, but they couldn't keep the pace! *Julia Johnson*





With the eternal flames of Chimaera. Julia Johnson

entered before and so it was enjoyable to take everything in at the slower pace.

The canvas tents complete with wooden bed frames were a major step up on the small two person tent we'd been using (that was frozen inside and out every morning) and the meals were three courses. We had been unsure of what to expect from this trip, as the guide company had videos of excellent infrastructure on the mountain but charged about a third of many of their competitors. They explained that they had ceased operating when the mountain was closed for military exercises from 2015–2021, and so were keeping prices low to build back up. The borders with Iran and Armenia are only 10km away, and Ararat is very religiously significant due to Noah's Ark; a cause of major tension. It is compulsory to have a permit to be on the mountain, and a local guide. They would occasionally sing in Kurdish while we were hiking, which certainly 'amused' some of the hikers permanently struggling for breath. Summiting was momentous, and yet a total blur, particularly as I'd developed a touch of food poisoning—quite something at 4000m in the snow!

After descending from the mountain, we visited some local sites, with the Silk Road palace, Ishak Pasha, being particularly spectacular. From here, it was a flight to Antalya and on to the Lycian Way for the final

The preserved port at Olympos. Some of the walls had roots meters high up, where they were recently excavated. Julia Johnson



phase. I'm not sure whether the sudden gain of 40° or the cultural change was more of a shock to the system, but both were immediately apparent in the popular party destination. We were no longer getting stared at because we were tourists, but because we looked like we had come out of a bush backwards.

The Lycian Way meanders along the coast between historical sites from numerous periods of ruins, and we enjoyed swimming amongst the ruins of a Roman fishing port on the first day. The unquestionable highlight was Myra, and we were the only people there for the duration of our visit. The carved stone tombs were what excited me about the Lycian Way, particularly as a geologist, and they didn't disappoint. I'd seen one high on a hillside from the bus into

The leg of the hike beyond here was around a headland to a lighthouse, and through some gorgeous (and blissfully cool) woodland. The wildlife of the day ranged from a tortoise to a scorpion—only one of which I wanted a photo with! Another day of forest hiking beyond and we reached Olympos, which was incredibly preserved but not quite as awesome as Myra. From here we hiked in the dark to a hill where natural gas seeps out of the ground and is permanently alight, inspiring the legend of Chimaera. We didn't manage to spot the three-headed beast while toasting our marshmallows, but that was probably for the best. We headed back to Antalya the following day and had the evening to chase the final few foods we wanted to try, before flying



Horses, a guide, and the accommodation tent at camp 2 (4100m) which wouldn't zip shut due to a snowbank. The summit of Ararat is obscured by cloud. Julia Johnson

the trail, but this was truly spectacular, with a more recent style of column. It is one of two necropoleis in Myra; the other, further up the river, was still painted in the 1800s.

home the following morning, straight back into Michaelmas.

AMY PATERSON, 2023

I travelled to Türkiye last spring and am immensely grateful to the Roger Short Memorial Fund for the opportunity. My trip involved a multi-day horse ride through the valleys of Cappadocia and a half marathon through the streets of Istanbul. Below is an attempted but insufficient summary.

The story of my trip to Türkiye begins (perhaps unexpectedly) in a sleepy maize-



Team photo on the outskirts of Göreme National Park. Amy Paterson

fringed town in South Africa in 2008. My mum had just returned from an overseas trip and brought back dazzling depictions of hot air balloons floating over fairy chimneys as elegant horses stood in the foreground. This 'land of beautiful horses' became a fantasy realm for my horse-obsessed, expanding little mind.



Riding between the fairy chimneys in Cappadocia. Amy Paterson

I drew hot air balloons, fairy chimneys, and horses on every permitted surface. Even my first guitar got a layer of paint and a scene from one of my mum's photographs painted onto it. On weekends I would saddle up my farm pony, Bluebell, and ride through the familiar green valleys on the way to count cows, imagining I was surrounded by fairy chimneys.

In the inevitable tragedy that is growing up, at age 17 I left my sleepy hometown and Bluebell behind to study medicine in Cape Town and shelved my Cappadocian dreams. That is, until a twist of fate found me transplanted from South African soil to the grand grounds of Univ, and an email about the Roger Short Memorial Fund found its way into my inbox.

Riding between the fairy chimneys in Cappadocia. Amy Paterson



Riding between the fairy chimneys in Cappadocia. Amy Paterson

we were shown up to a terrace overlooking the glistening town full of fairy chimneys. My childhood dreams had very much just become reality.

We woke to the sound of the call to prayer and a stone ceiling that extended seamlessly into carved bedroom walls. Next came street chatter... and then a message from the ranch to say heavy storms were predicted and we may need to cancel our horse-ride.

Fortunately, the weather predictions improved and we made our way to a ranch tucked away on the edge of Göreme National Park. The owners, Irfan and Flora, welcomed us into their home for apple tea while we waited out the last of the rain.

We were then introduced to a beautiful string of Anatolian (Anadolu) and Arabic horses who we soon came to know. We started our ride in the Red Valley, dismounting at an old church carved into the rocks, and at a stall to get freshly squeezed pomegranate juice and a gözleme for lunch.

We rode through the Rose Valley that afternoon as Irfan told us his family's story and how his grandfather taught him about horses. We ended the day at a cave, where we would spend the night. Two of Irfan and Flora's friends met us and offered us Turkish food and wine around a bonfire. We ate and spoke as we watched the lightening over the valley.

The next day started with heavy rain and,

as a result, a cave sleep in. When we crawled out, we found a feast of olives, breads and coffee prepared for breakfast. We saddled the horses and set off for White Valley at a faster pace than the day before. The paths through some of the region, particularly in the White Valley, are narrow and tricky to navigate, and we marvelled at how effortlessly agile and surefooted the horses were.

Soon the rain started again and eventually the routes became impassable. We headed back to the ranch, and the thrill turned to sadness as we said goodbye to our new horse and human friends.

We left Ortahisar with happy memories despite wet clothing and none of the famed air balloons I had drawn as a kid. We arrived onto the bustling streets of Istanbul and collectively caught our breath as we crossed over the Golden Horn. We spent the first day gazing in awe at the Hagia Sophia and Blue Mosque, and vainly attempting to taste all existing flavours of Turkish Delight.

Spice Bazaar, Istanbul. Amy Paterson





Hagia Sofia views. Amy Paterson

Our second day in the city featured the Istanbul Half Marathon. We soaked in views of iconic landmarks including the Suleymaniye Mosque, Dolmabahce Palace, and the Saint Stephen Bulgarian Orthodox church as well as the cheers of Turkish supporters and musicians en route. To add to the festivities, on our way home from the run, we stopped off at the Spice Bazaar to refuel and I bought my body weight in olives.

Another perk of the half marathon (and reason to appreciate the city of Istanbul) was that the city had arranged for everyone who had a half marathon ticket to have free public transport for the day. We made the most of it by hopping on a tram and visiting the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum (which was mind-blowing).

Our final day was spent meandering through the Grand Bazaar buying a few

Summiting Mount Ararat. Joshua Pearson

precious pieces to take home with us. We said our goodbyes and inadequate thank yous to



Photo with Ismail and his family in Davali. Joshua Pearson

Türkiye and left with a sneaking feeling that we would be back.

JOSHUA PEARSON, 2023

I travelled with another Short Scholar, Julia Johnson. The vision for the trip was to go trekking in a range of locations in Türkiye, seeing the breadth of the country and travelling to some of the more remote areas. That was the plan, anyway...

At 5:45am local time, we landed in Istanbul. Before I had persuaded myself I actually wanted to be awake (Istanbul is two hours ahead of the UK), we had passed through border control and were rushing to make the most of our 26 hours in Türkiye's largest city. The idea was that, by visiting Istanbul, we could adjust somewhat to Turkish culture before travelling further east. This turned out to be a rather flawed plan: Taksim, where we were staying, felt like any other European city, with its workspaces and bars, while the historical centre had a certain fairy-tale atmosphere, heavily catering for international tourism. Regardless, we zig-zagged our way between stunning mosques, sprawling bazaars, and sesame-roll vendors. While the consistent vision of the Blue Mosque was wonderfully aesthetic, it was the peace of the New Mosque that will stay with me.

The first walking location was the Kaçkar mountains, wedged between the Black Sea and Georgia, in the very north-east of the country. One flight and a couple of buses later, we were in a trailhead town (1400m above sea level), discovering that the route book wasn't lying when it claimed cloud could cover the northern slopes. What it hadn't emphasised is how much of a destination this was. The town was full of restaurants and hotels, aimed at Turkish and Arab tourists. As we hiked uphill the following day, we passed a half-built village of cabins, and spoke to a couple, who told us that next season they would have a large business. Based solely on the superb quality of the coffee they served us, I have no doubt they will succeed. This optimism, and scale of vision, appeared again and again, throughout Türkiye. The Turkish dream of building a strong business was evident, and perhaps one of the few consistent points of view as we crossed Türkiye.

After a day walking through clouds, a cold night (socks freezing inside the tent was a new





Bridge in Davali. Joshua Pearson

low for me) and a morning crossing a pass at 3250m, we dropped down a pleasant alpine pasture towards the yaylar (temporary upland village) of Davali. The path entered the village over a wonderful stone bridge, in the style for which the area is known. We walked through the village and sat down for lunch. Just as we were packing up, a man (Ismail) emerged from a house and came over to say hello, bringing us two fantastic pastries (bread stuffed with walnuts). We chatted for a couple of minutes (with some assistance from Google Translate, offline version—cellular connection was a long way away), and he then invited us for çay (tea).

We had read that the residents of the Kaçkar placed a lot of importance giving strangers çay, and perhaps our lunch location had been strategic. Regardless, the welcome we received was incredible: We were offered a range of foods (including lung), and plied with çay. One of their neighbours had a particularly wicked sense of humour, asking us “What brand of sun cream do you use?” None that morning, which had not been the sensible thing! We were repeatedly asked if we wanted to stay with them that night, but felt we should press on to visit Sirakonak, the permanent village downhill of Davali. They then offered to drive us down there, as they were taking their dairy products for sale.

After surviving the drive down, we were introduced to Fahrettin and Ulia, who were in process of building a guesthouse, and who invited us to stay. The couple had worked internationally, mostly in CIS countries, and only recently returned to Sirakonak, Fahrettin’s childhood town. We had coffee, because their daughter, Elvin, was home from school in Ankara, and preferred coffee to the local çay. Fahrettin then suggested a walk, and the five of us (six including Çavaş, their ex-military dog) wandered through the village to a viewpoint. On the walk back, Fahrettin explained that this was an old Armenian village, and pointed out graves—evidence of a dark past.

Summitting Kaçkar Dağı, the highest peak in the Pontic Alps at 3937m, was great fun, but hard to write about. Although not a technical climb, the navigation was far from simple, and the length of day (we decided to descend to the gateway town that day) gruelling.

The next hiking destination was Mount Ararat/Ağrı Dağı. The only issue was getting there. Obtaining tickets for the 6am dolmuş (minibus) was our first experience of ‘haggling’.

Despite previous assurances that the minibus was running, we were told the minibus didn’t run that day, and we would have to pay five times more. Some serious negotiation led to us paying four times instead of five (but paying half for the hostel). This allowed us to connect to a coach, an overnight stop in Erzurum (spectacular Seljuk architecture) and two more coaches. As we travelled further east, the military and police presence intensified: at one point, we were stopped at a roadblock and the coach was inspected by armed police and everyone on the coach had to show ID. Later, we saw a convoy of armoured vehicles speeding down a parallel road.

Climbing Ararat took five days, mostly to allow for altitude acclimatisation. Accordingly, a lot of time was spent in barren camps, drinking çay, and watching the procession of pack horses between the camps. I found it strange to realise that I was staring at Iran. Our guide pointed out the sound of military drones.

The summit day was predictably brutal: 12:45 wake-up, lam breakfast and a 2am trudge upwards. The pace was extraordinarily slow, but, having developed a spot of food poisoning six hours earlier, I was rather thankful. The cold was bitter: estimated -10°C, with a further 10-20°C of wind chill. At around 5am, we strapped on crampons and continued across the ice sheet. One group member violently revisited the breakfast, colouring the ice a delightful yellow; food poisoning or altitude sickness, I don’t know. The summit itself was surreal: the mountain cast a shadow over the clouds. The views stretched on and on.

Coming down the mountain, the guides were a lot more relaxed: it seemed a stressful lifestyle. They explained they took groups for five days, had two days off while groups changed and then returned to climb Ararat again. The camp cook explained that he was studying computer science at university, but it was a family business and so he helped out.

Our final hike was the Lycian way, along Türkiye’s Turquoise Coast. Arriving in Antalya was a shock: buzzing boulevards, lined with bars and nightclubs. Some towns we hiked



The carved tombs at Myra. Julia Johnson

Amphitheatre in Demre. Joshua Pearson



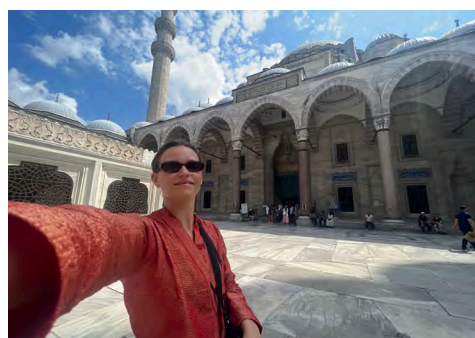


Qashqai nomad herding goats in the Zagros mountains near Shiraz, Iran. *Olivia Strachan*

through were overrun by tourism; others were surrounded by a mosaic of greenhouses—from the plants growing by the road, I guess the area is fantastically fertile. One suspects this fertility allowed classical civilisations to build the impressive structures along our route: the cliff tombs in Olympos were striking, but it was the perfectly preserved amphitheatre in Demre (formerly Myra, where Santa Claus is from) that really blew my mind.

Having travelled from Istanbul to the eastern border and back to the southwest of the country, we certainly saw several sides to Türkiye. While there was some top-quality hiking, it was the people we met that made this trip special: from the shop owner who tried to find the perfect cheese for hiking, to the outspoken local politician who explained our route and the couple who gave us a lift on their tractor.

I am very grateful to the Roger Short Memorial Fund for enabling this trip. The generosity of many of the people we met across Türkiye was overwhelming and it was an experience that will certainly stay with me. I hope that future generations of Short Travellers will have as positive an experience.



Courtyard of Süleymaniye mosque in Istanbul. *Olivia Strachan*

OLIVIA STRACHAN, 2023

I would like to extend my gratitude to the RSMF whose generous travel grant made my trip to Turkey and Iran possible.

My journey started off by eating my way through Istanbul trying doner, baklava, stuffed mussels, tavukögsü, and a full Turkish breakfast. Wandering around a variety of different districts in pursuit of local food was

a beautiful introduction to the city. I have a personal interest in the Byzantine era which stemmed from an extended stint in Venice learning about the intersection between West and East and how this has filtered down into modern perceptions. The influx of external cultural influences due to Istanbul's position as a central trading hub was palpable. The stark differences between the districts of different groups of people and the overlapping nature of their hallmarks was a fascinating reminder of what this city has always been. I visited many mosques including the famed Hagia Sophia, but it was Süleymaniye Mosque up on the hill that stole my heart with its spectacular views over Galata and the Bosphorus. Another day was spent getting lost in the Grand Bazaar and procuring some headscarves and Turkish coffee as well as a beautiful handmade jacquard jacket.

Next, we headed to Izmir and after some questionable driving, we made it to Pergamon. Wandering around the ancient ruins of this great city was eerie with the silence of the wind over the mountains, but fascinating to learn about the history of the place.

Keen to explore the history of the entire region further we headed to Ephesus. Much busier but equally spectacular with its

reconstructed library, you got a real sense of what it might have been like to exist in such a place. Finally, a day was spent exploring Izmir and it was the Kemeraltı Bazaar here that was one of the highlights of the trip. Much less aimed at tourists than the markets in Istanbul, it had an air of authenticity that made it incredibly compelling.

I then flew to Tehran, an overwhelming place seemingly a million miles apart from my personal experience of the world making it all the more compelling. We crisscrossed our way

Azadi tower on the outskirts of Tehran. *Olivia Strachan*





Water pool and buildings of traditional Persian garden - Dowlat Abad Garden in Yazd. *Olivia Strachan*

across the country, with our preconceptions being stamped out at every turn. We visited Tehran, Kashan, Isfahan, Yazd, and finally Shiraz with one day spent with nomads far up in the Zagros mountains. I had anticipated great things, but nothing could have prepared me for the scale, the colour, the age, or the distinctness of what we saw.

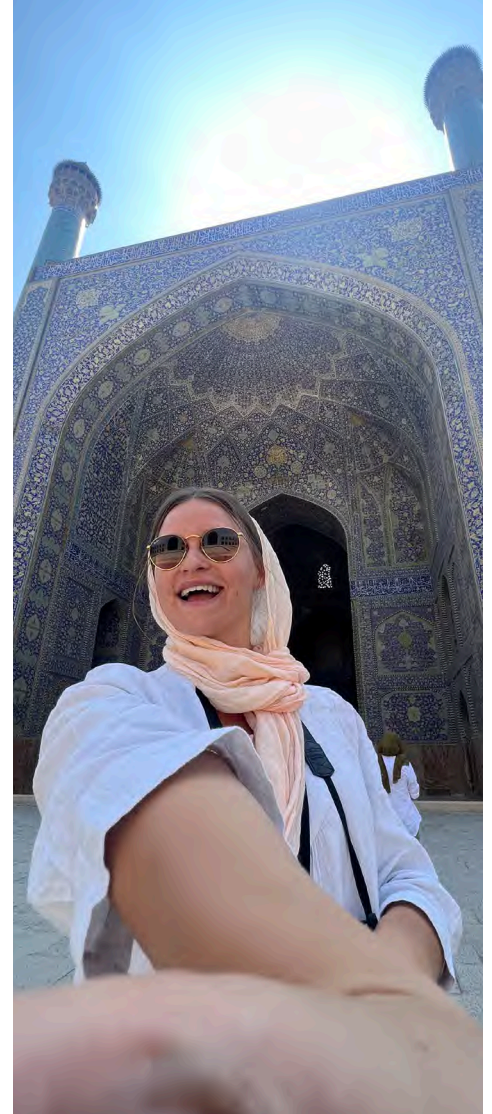
Persia's cohesive identity sets it apart from anywhere else I have ever visited. The resilience and hope of everyone we encountered, particularly the women, was a testament to the Persian spirit. I have never felt more welcome and safe in a country, with genuine goodwill extended to us by everyone we encountered. A particular highlight was

the city of Isfahan with its ancient roots and spectacular architecture. Its very dominance is a testament to Persian ingenuity which we were reminded of at every point from the windcatchers to the qanats allowing all these cities to thrive in the harshest of environments. The sprawling market and spectacular Shah Mosque at Naqsh-e Jahan Square were simply beyond comparison. Reading about Iran's place in the past and its current narrative only scratches the surface. It was certainly an interesting exercise comparing the information that we were exposed to internally vs externally: a reminder of the importance of always questioning what is presented to you as fact, no matter who it comes from.

We also visited Persepolis which I could talk about for days. Looking back 2500 years through the lens of the incredible reliefs that cover the site was the ultimate testament to the human connection that felt like the central theme of this entire trip.

Finally, I can't help but mention the incredible food! I was enveloped by flavours I had never been exposed to before—sour cherry pork, sweet cucumber with vinegar sekanjabin, saffron, cardamom, and rose water in everything.

I was incredibly grateful for the opportunity to further expand my experience of the world by visiting a place that is so fundamentally misunderstood in the West and the chance to expel my own misconceptions about one of the most incredible countries I have ever been to.



Courtyard of the Shah Mosque in Isfahan, Iran. *Olivia Strachan*

Persepolis reliefs at sunset depicting the bull and lion symbol associated with Nowruz. *Olivia Strachan*



PAST SHORT TRAVELLER UPDATES



Rebecca Ricketts and her two boys.

2006

REBECCA RICKETTS (GREEN)

I started a new role six months ago as Director of Strategy and Transformation at Clyde and Co. I'm enjoying the challenge of working in a different sector and working for a firm that has experienced a period of rapid growth. Outside of work, my youngest will be starting school in September, which feels like a huge milestone. We have lots of family adventures planned for 2024, and we are looking forward to making new memories together.

2007

GERI DELLA ROCCA DE CANDAL

I remain based in Milan, but frequently travel to Greece, occasionally meeting up with fellow Short Traveller Josh Barley. I perversely continue to juggle academia and consultancy, and between September and December 2023 I co-curated in Brera, Milan, the exhibition *Alpha-Beta: Learning Greek in Italy, 1360-1860*. In May 2024, I will host an international conference at Lincoln College, *Forgeries, Fakes and Counterfeits in Print Culture*. Though currently postponed to 2025, I am still plotting my grand trip aboard three vintage Fiat Panda 4x4s from Lisbon to Tokyo, the Japanda Express.

2008

MICHAEL GIBB

I work for the United Nations, investigating sanctions-violations and corruption in the

Michael Gibb at work.



natural resources sector. I still get to travel a lot, but mostly on loud and bumpy UN helicopters.

2011

JOSH BARLEY

I am still living in Greece, between Athens and Epirus, working as a translator, writer and guide. My next book, due out next year with OUP, is an anthology of Greek short stories in translation entitled 'Athens Tales'. Alongside my work with the Slow Cyclist (for whom I guide in Zagori and Crete) I am promoting my own private guiding services and have even made a website: www.joshuabarley.com.

RODRIGO GARCIA-VELASCO

After a year in Chicago teaching at Northwestern University, I have now returned to London to take up a position at the Department of History at UCL, where I will continue pursuing my interests in the history of inter-faith relations in the medieval Mediterranean. Last summer, my partner and I brought our friends and family to Skopelos, in the Sporades islands, for a small preparatory celebration prior to our wedding in Oxford, which will take place on 4 May 2024.

JOANNA PALERMO

It's been a busy year. I've taken a role as a COO of a dark kitchen company called Jacuna based in London. We're working hard to grow the business across the UK. I do hope to get some down time, and have a long trip to Australia planned for the end of the year. No itinerary is yet detailed, so any recommendations would be welcome! I've continued to dabble in archaeology, and last year published a part of my doctoral thesis in the compendium *Circuits of Metal Value*.

ELIZABETH POUGET (MACDONALD)

I'm currently on maternity leave after giving birth to Ambrose, a baby brother for our daughter Marianne, on Christmas Eve last year. The best Christmas present for us all!

2014

SAMVARTIKA BAJPAI

The highlight of my 2023 was spending three weeks in Uzbekistan, with the cherry on top being that our flights allowed us a stopover in Istanbul. This was my first time visiting the city with my partner and it was a joy to re-experience the city with the eyes of a first timer. I had a San Sebastián cheesecake and plenty of orange wine in Kadiköy to mark my birthday, and an overall fabulous time. Work and life in London continue as regular otherwise.

ODETTE CHALABY

I have had a busy but exciting year, albeit with a lot of it taken up by work. I am in the early years of a career as an environmental and planning barrister. More importantly, I got married to my now husband Thomas — it was a long time coming as we have been together since sixth form! We are currently planning a delayed long honeymoon to Japan. Hopefully more travels on the horizon than I have had time for recently...!

2016

JOHN-HENRY CHARLES

I guess my big news is that Johanna (fellow Roger Short Traveller from 2016) and I became engaged earlier in the year. If a bike ride through 3 countries, across lots of kilometers, and consuming lots of raki (our Roger Short experience) doesn't bond you I'm not sure what will... A wedding in 2025 is on the cards, then potentially a honeymoon cycling from Turkey to Azerbaijan—we'll keep you posted(!).

HUGH MOORHEAD

I continue to be employed as an equity analyst covering the exciting world of Benelux and Nordic banks. The work remains as challenging as ever and I'm hopefully improving myself in the process and not making too many disastrous investment recommendations. The job also includes the occasional bit of travel although this largely entails office meetings and little in the way of cultural immersion. I am also enjoying living in Stockwell with my saintly OM flatmate, Jordan Reed (*Modern Languages*, 2012).

I was very fortunate to be able to travel a fair bit in 2023, although alas not to Turkey or



Views at work. Michael Gibb

the surrounding region. Instead my excursions took me to Panama, which I would highly recommend to anyone who loves gorgeous tropical coastlines, and India, where I saw the old enemy lift the world cup in Ahmedabad surrounded by 100,000 increasingly despondent India fans.

I hope to see everyone at the Roger Short dinner this year—always a highlight of my year.

2018

DIANA AVADANII

In the past year I have completed my first year as a full-time researcher in battery materials at KIT. It has been an incredibly intellectually stimulating year and I have had lots of fun around the lab. I have also enjoyed going to museums and concerts in Heidelberg, Stuttgart, and Fribourg in my free time, and hiking in the summer in the Alps. I am always happy to connect to fellow Short Travellers who might pass through south-west Germany, so do reach out.



Detail of reconstructed arches of the Temple of Hadrian at Ephesus. *Olivia Strachan*

- ❖ Sameer Bhat, PG (*Rhodes Scholar 2018*) (*Clarendon Scholar*) DPhil candidate in Public Policy Blavatnik Junior Dean
- ❖ Andrew Christian, UG Chemistry (2021)
- ❖ Josephine Forsythe, UG Chemistry (2021)
- ❖ Tom Freeman, UG History (2022)
- ❖ Rufus Jones, UG History (2022)
- ❖ Tiancheng Wang, PG DPhil candidate in Ancient History

INFORMATION

TRAVEL JOURNAL PRIZE

The prize for the best journal is awarded at the dinner each year by Richard and Anna Morgan, life-long friends of Roger's and founding contributors to the Fund.

HONORS

The University College Record listed the following academic honors:

- ❖ Diana Avadanii (2018) awarded a DPhil for her thesis "The role of grain boundaries in plastic deformation".
- ❖ Paula Domingo Pasarin (2022) awarded Master of Philosophy (Slavonic Studies)

APPRECIATION

Thank you to the Master's office for the ongoing assistance and organisational expertise.

We are grateful 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 with those able to attend the dinner in April.

The Short Travellers are appreciative of the Fund donors. Such support provides the very special and unique opportunities made possible by the RSMF travel awards.

DONATIONS

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

Felice Nassar
Director of Development
University College, Oxford
OX1 4BH
☎ +44(0) 1865 276674
✉ felice.nassar@univ.ox.ac.uk

NEWSLETTER DESIGN

Layout and design by Charlie Morgan. Visit her website at: www.charliemorgandesign.com.

