THE TRAVEL CLUB

E-ZINE #11: MARCH, 2021

The real Jurassic Park

Exploring the self-proclaimed 'Dinosaur Capital of the World'

The lost fires of the Yagan

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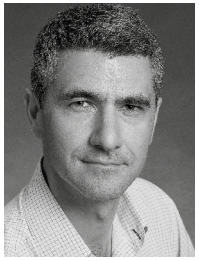

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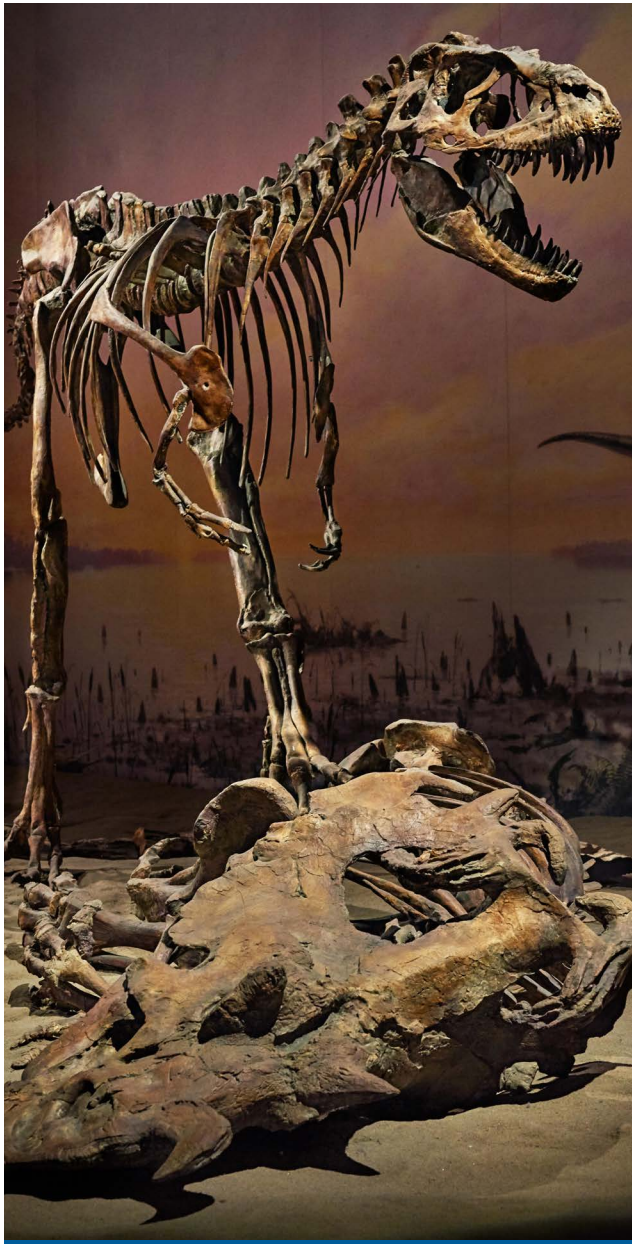
THE REAL JURASSIC PARK

Photographer **Simon Urwin** *follows in the footsteps of giants in Drumheller – the self-proclaimed 'Dinosaur Capital of the World'.*

Dinosaur Provincial Park © SIMON URWIN



A Gorgosaurus on display at the Royal Tyrrell Museum

'From the tiny to the terrifying, we have a wealth of species on display', says palaeontologist Dr Jim Gardner. 'Unlike natural history museums in big cities like London or New York, most of the world-class dinosaur fossils you see here were discovered right on the doorstep in Alberta.'

I'm on a tour of the Royal Tyrrell Museum, a palaeontology museum and research centre in the small town of Drumheller, a 90-minute drive northeast of Calgary. 'Alberta has long been an epicentre for dinosaur discoveries', he explains as we wander through the museum's many gasp-inducing galleries. 'That's because 70 to 80 million years ago it was covered by a semi-tropical coastal plain teeming with life. Seasonal storms and floods killed lots of the animals and then quickly buried them under sediment, so you had the ideal ecosystem to support dinosaur life, and the perfect conditions for preserving their remains when they died.'

Fully reconstructed dinosaur skeletons are visible at every turn: from a long-necked Camarasaurus, the tallest creature ever to have walked the earth, to a vicious-toothed Tyrannosaurus rex, unearthed by chance by schoolboys fishing in the province's Crowsnest River.

But I'm not here just to admire the skeletons on public display. Dr Gardner has invited me backstage too, for a look at some of the machinations of the museum. We begin in the arrivals bay, where a forklift is just pulling in with its cargo of discoveries fresh from the field; the great bones and body parts wrapped in protective jackets of plaster and burlap. 'It's enshrined in law,' explains Dr Gardner. 'Anything dinosaur-related that's discovered in Alberta has to come here first to get checked out.'

We continue to a research lab, where paleontological technicians are busy working away on their various samples of prehistoric life, looking to see if they merit further scientific exploration. 'Each process is as delicate as cutting a diamond,' one tells me, while slowly teasing a dinosaur's head crest from a piece of rock. 'It's particularly nerve-wracking because the specimens are so precious. You never know what new scientific discovery you might be holding in your hands.'

Nearby, another technician is intricately piecing together the skull of what appears to be a horn-faced Ceratops. 'Even after many years, I still have a sense of wonder about the work,' she says. 'It's like being a detective, except the puzzle we are trying to solve is millions of years old.'

We head further into the building and enter a storage space filled with dinosaur fossils that are awaiting shipment to other institutions for further study or public exhibition. There, Dr Gardner moves aside a jumble of wooden crates to reveal

one of the museum's most spectacular pieces – an Ornithomimosaur, or mimic-bird-lizard, which lies in a dramatic death pose. He explains that the black hash marks spotted on its arms were later discovered to be attachment points – offering exciting new evidence that this dinosaur group had feathers.

The Dinosaur Capital of the World

Like many of the museum's grandest specimens, the Ornithomimosaur was discovered in Dinosaur Provincial Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the richest dinosaur fossil locales in the world. It lies a two-hour drive away, across prairie so pancake-flat and featureless, the sky itself is the only scenery on route; one minute scudding with clouds that resemble a fleet of great UFOs, the next swollen with a towering black anvil, its Biblical thunder and lightning storm providing a suitably dramatic introduction to the park's startling Badlands topography.

It was at the end of the last ice age, 14,000 years ago, that the landscapes of Dinosaur Provincial Park were formed, as violent torrents of meltwater surged from glaciers over a kilometre thick, cutting downwards through the rock, and exposing some of the fossilised animal bones locked within them.

'Snake skeletons have been found here,' explains Lois Schmidt, one of the park's guides.

© SIMON URWIN

'Each process is as delicate as cutting a diamond'

'They date back to the time of the dinosaurs and, incredibly, those same creatures are still around to this day. Our short summers and long winters mean the snakes don't build up large venom supplies though, so they've never killed anyone with a bite – not yet, anyway,' she adds with a wry smile.

We set out on one of the trails open to tourists, trekking through avenues of mysterious hoodoos, or 'fairy chimneys', before cresting a ridge with views across an immense dinosaur-bone bed, which covers an area the size of two football pitches. 'This is the resting place of a herd of horned Centrosaurus, a relative of Triceratops,' she tells me. 'They were around 1,000 strong and, looking at the way the bones lie, it appears they panicked and perished while fording a swollen river.'

A large and important discovery, Schmidt is quick to point out that it nonetheless represents just a small fraction of all that's been uncovered to date

A Centrosaurus bone bed at Dinosaur Provincial Park

within the park's borders. More than 500 different ancient life forms have been found here – including around 10% of all known dinosaur species – and more than 300 complete dinosaur skeletons. No wonder they call it the real Jurassic Park.

Later that day, I meet up with aptly named palaeontologist, Amber Whitebone, to take a hike ever deeper into the park's wilderness. 'It's incredible to think that the craze for all things dinosaur might not have happened without the top hat,' she says, as we set off across a stark, otherworldly plain; its rocks striped in shades of russet, black and grey.

Between the 1820s and 1840s there was a huge demand in Europe for animal pelts, especially beaver, to make top hats. Foreign trappers came to the Red Deer River, which cuts right through here because it had an abundant beaver population. The trappers traded with the area's original inhabitants, the Blackfoot people, who had been finding fossils long before the first Europeans came. They didn't recognise them as dinosaurs, though – instead they called them the 'grandfather of the bison', their most sacred animal.

'Word soon spread about the fossils the Blackfoot people had found and, by the 1870s, the age of dinosaur exploration had begun. Come the early 1900s, the 'Great Canadian Dinosaur Rush' was on, and the rest is history.'

Our trek reaches an end in the Valley of the Castles, an area of tortured rock formations dramatically carved some 75 million years ago. 'Just 10 million years later, and the mass extinction of the dinosaurs occurred,' says Whitebone, while casually pointing to the tibia and fibula of a duck-billed Hadrosaur protruding from the ground. 'The end of the Age of the Dinosaurs, the Late Cetaceous period, was when the dinosaurs were at their biggest and baddest, and we have the most remains here from that period, more than anywhere else in the world.'

New finds are unearthed all the time, notably after fierce rainstorms when mud and silt is washed away to reveal bones. 'You never know what you're going to find. When you spot one and start digging, it might be just a tiny shard or a full skeleton. It's the palaeontology version of playing the lottery', she says.

'Regardless, I still get the same rush from handling this incredible and unique evidence of prehistoric life. By understanding the distant past, we can better understand the present, and even make some predictions about the future, too. And that's what's so thrilling – with every discovery, the way we see the world becomes clearer. All thanks to the dinosaurs.'

Simon Urwin is an award-winning photographer and writer who has long sought to showcase hidden stories from across the world. Widely published, his work can be found in BBC Travel, *Sidetracked* and more.

THE LOST FIRES OF THE YAGAN

Curious to find the fires at the end of the earth, writer and photographer **Nori Jemil** *journeys to Patagonia's Tierra del Fuego.*

The 'Land of Fire' is a strange moniker for a place that's home to one of the world's largest extra-polar ice sheets. Swathes of ice flow down from the Southern Patagonian Ice Field, calving off into stormy seas and pooling into still lagoons. According to one Chilean guide I met, 'In Patagonia, you're almost always standing on a glacier.'

Like most first-time visitors to Patagonia, it was the dramatic landscapes that drew me there. Setting off from Punta Arenas in Chile, I backpacked my way through the national parks on either side of the border with Argentina, taking buses that zigzagged back and forth from Los Glaciares and Perito Moreno on one side, to Torres del Paine and Pali-Aike on the other. And, as expected at the pointy end of South America, there were vistas of glacial ice and snow-tipped Andean peaks at every turn.

A good couple of months to hit the trails also allowed for lazy days and the important business of ice (well, ice-cream scoffing in Argentina, to be specific). It felt like I was experiencing it all, from

Exploring the fjords of Tierra del Fuego

trekking the Torres del Paine W route, to horseriding to view the summit of Cerro Fitz Roy and donning crampons to climb over the ice at Glacier Viedma. As the trip wore on and the cold and the ice filled my every waking moment, the desire to look into the origins of fire became less pressing.

Like many travellers who venture to Patagonia, I didn't see much of Tierra del Fuego, the southernmost tail of the continent, beyond the town of Ushuaia. After all, there is a lot of land to cover down there and even two months can't do it justice. The parks are many hundreds of kilometres apart, and the Andean terrain makes journeys by road even longer.

On subsequent visits though, I've had time to venture further southwest – and pick up my quest to search for the fires. Chile and Argentina share the main island of Isla Grande de Tierra del Fuego, but the larger part of the archipelago exists to the west of the border. Those Chilean fjords and innumerable islands make up the expanse of Chile's southwesterly national parks – Alberto de Agostini and Cabo de Hornos, to name but two, well known for their remote and windswept allure. The best way to get to them is by sea.

A journey through the fjords

At the start of 2020, I joined a small-ship expedition with Chilean-owned Australis to navigate the Fuegian fjords. And still there was no upward change in the temperature, and no obvious explanation for the fire metaphor. From the abundant hanging glaciers viewed from the deck of the ship, to tidewater glaciers like Garibaldi and Águila, it was pretty clear from the worsening weather and our latitude that after Cape Horn, the next port of call was the deep freeze itself – Antarctica.

It might seem that much of the exposed and often inhospitable Tierra del Fuego archipelago is too harsh for human settlement – that if trees need to bend with the wind to avoid snapping, then people might be better off in more temperate

© NORI JEMIL

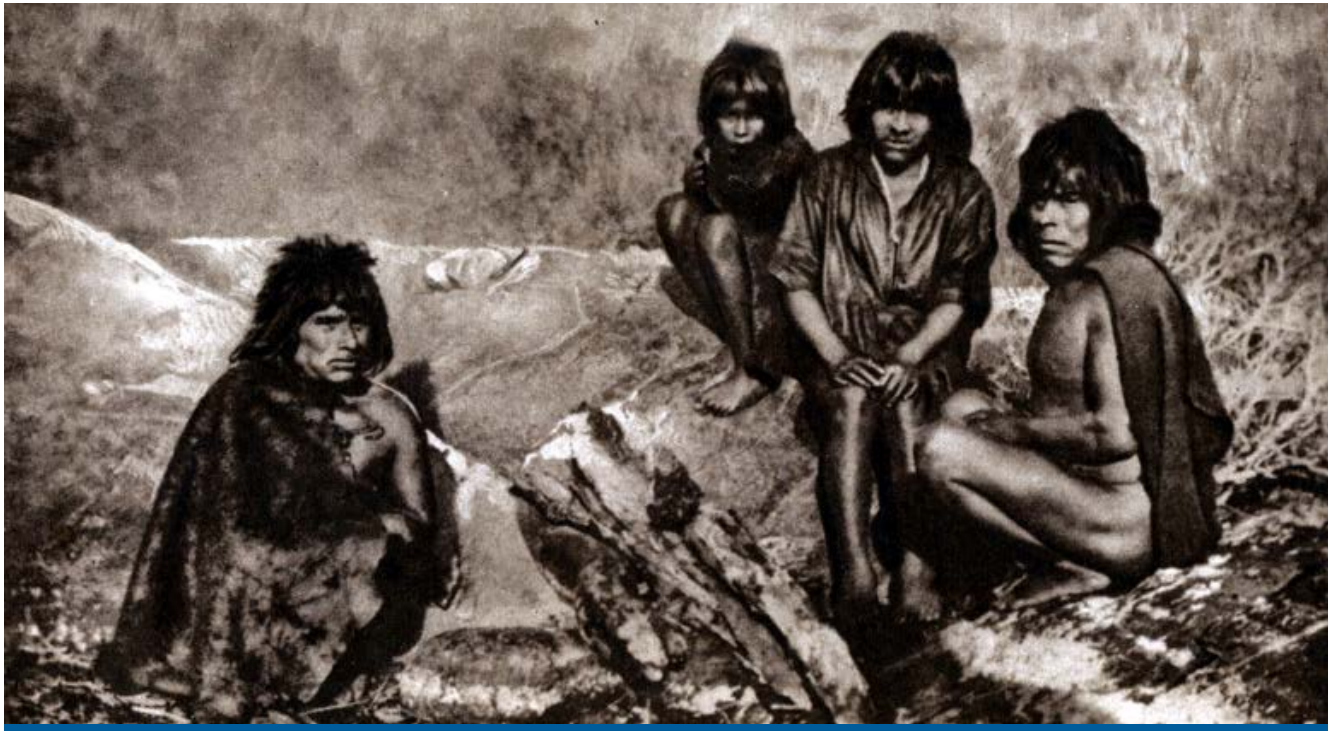
The Condor Glacier

climes. And though most of the archipelago is now uninhabited, during expert on-board lectures by Australis expedition leaders, I learned of a time before conquistadors and buccaneers, when humans lived in ways we can only imagine.

And that's when it all fell into place. Most of us know of human endeavours in the region through the exploits of men such as Charles Darwin and Robert FitzRoy. They voyaged here on the HMS *Beagle* in the 19th century, mapping the area and taking samples to further the cause of naturalism and maritime cartography. The region's nomenclature pays homage to their explorations, from the Beagle Channel to the Darwin Mountain Range.

And 500 years ago, it was the indomitable Portuguese adventurer, Ferdinand Magellan, and his expedition ships, searching for a sea passage that would shorten the journey along the competitive spice trade route, while circumnavigating the globe. Magellan's name is similarly set in stone here – literally on the plinth of his bronze statue in the main square in Punta Arenas – and in the natural world, from the area's diminutive penguins to an entire Chilean province and the now famous Strait of Magellan.

But far from stumbling upon an uninhabited world, Magellan's men did what most explorers had done before them, and laid Western eyes on lands that had already been discovered. In fact, one of the first things that greeted them in 1520 was the smoke from large fires that emanated from the settlements of indigenous groups, lit to attract traders from the north, according to my Australis guide.



The Yagan are the world's southernmost indigenous people

Finding the fires

The Yagan, also known as the Yámana, are the world's southernmost indigenous peoples. From the main island of Tierra del Fuego, to the tempestuous seas around Cape Horn and Onaašáka, or the Beagle Channel, as we now know it, they'd been living as sea-faring nomads for thousands of years before Magellan's arrival, with archaeological sites in the region dating to 11000BC. In large canoes made from local coigüe or Nothofagus trees, they kept permanent fires smouldering on beds of sand and mud. Always naked, but using animal oils and fats, and trading in skins and furs, the Yagan used fires to quickly dry and warm themselves. When they moved into simple structures on

land, they took the fires with them, these eternal flames being central to their survival.

And so it became Tierra del *Fuego* when it might so easily have been Tierra del *Hielo*, had Darwin been the one to name it. He wrote in his notebook: 'It is scarcely possible to imagine anything more beautiful than the beryl-like blue of these glaciers, and especially as contrasted with the dead white of the upper expanse of snow. The fragments which had fallen from the glacier into the water were floating away, and the channel with its icebergs presented, for the space of a mile, a miniature likeness of the Polar Sea.'

I tried to imagine what this must have looked like to Magellan's men, with the hundreds, even thousands of flames of small communities glowing against the glacial blues and whites. The vivid fires, reminiscent of their own hearths and homes, would have perhaps been more striking to a homesick sailor than the inhospitable ice.

There were other groups in Tierra del Fuego and Patagonia too, from the Tehuelche and the Selk'nam to the Ona and the Kawésqar, some venturing further into the mainland for sustenance and shelter. But it was the Yagan, being seafarers, who were the most successful living along the coast. While the women rowed and dived naked into icy waters to forage and fish, the men hunted seals with 3m-long harpoons, constructed with detachable bone spears. At Wulaia Bay, there's a small museum that pays homage to the largest Yagan settlement.

The usual story of zero resistance to Western diseases, dispersal and genocide saw each thriving indigenous group largely decimated, despite having survived there for thousands of years prior to European settlement. Now reduced to a small village, Ukika, near the naval town of Puerto Williams on Isla Navarino, the last-remaining local descendants of the Yagan have tried to keep their language and their ancestral stories alive, making audio recordings and giving language lessons. In the slim volume of transformation tales, *Hai Kur Mamášu Čis* (*I want to tell you a story*), sisters Úrsula and Cristina Calderón passed on the stories that were told to them by their grandmothers. From cormorants and penguins to the ice and rocks of the landscapes, Yagan tales, like the indigenous Australian Dreamtime stories, all relate human existence to the natural environment.

"Yagan tales all relate human existence to the natural environment."

The Yagan believe that there are spirits in the ice and that looking directly at a glacier is to be avoided, telling transformational tales of girls becoming birds. The book tells us that these stories 'take place below the same sky and over these same waters, in giant voyaging canoes and around eternal fires and on immense mountains. A landscape which has always been open to the passage of humankind...' Although Magellan didn't colonise Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, he set the course for the colonisers responsible for the demise of the Yagan people's nomadic way of life.

Úrsula has since passed away, leaving Cristina as the last full-blooded Yagan woman in Chile, and the only person to remember fully her language and ancestral stories. The coastal fires of nomadic groups have long been extinguished, leaving just the glow of electricity from Puerto Williams and Ushuaia, alongside the legacy of the seemingly incongruous but very significant name – the Yagan Land of Fire.

Nori Jemil is a UK-based award-winning photographer, writer and videographer, specialising in travel. She is also an experienced photography tutor, recently leading trips in Patagonia. You can find more of her work on her website.

WILD ABOUT BRITAIN:
10 OUTDOOR HAVENS TO DISCOVER IN 2021

There's no doubt that 2020 was the year of the staycation, but with all the current uncertainty surrounding foreign travel, 2021 looks set to follow the same path. So, as we all start scratching our heads in search of outdoor havens away from the masses, we asked our authors to suggest their favourite little-known corners of Britain.

The seabird cliffs on Colonsay, Inner Hebrides © KATIE FEATHERSTONE

Breidden Hill, Powys

Phoebe Smith

Whether you're interested in legends or landscapes, a walk to the summit of this former volcano is full of rewards. The ascent itself is a joy, beginning in a Forestry Commission plantation. The trees suddenly relent, offering wide views up the rounded ridge, and a grassy track leads you to the summit. The western flank – being quarried away for granite and basalt – adds yet more drama to the walk with the land dropping away sharply from the summit. In spring, common redstart and tree pipit sing here, while common buzzard and sparrowhawk soar overhead in fine weather.

Once atop the summit there are spectacular 360-degree views across Mid-Wales into England's Shropshire Hills, but the one thing you can't help but notice is the 367m-tall Rodney's Pillar on the summit. Built between 1781 and 1782 by the 'Gentlemen of Montgomeryshire' (a local collective of men of high social standing), the monument commemorates Admiral George Rodney who led a number of successful battles for the Royal Navy during the 1700s. The pillar was built from local oaks that were also shipped along the River Severn to Bristol, where Rodney's fleet was manufactured.

Cholsey Marsh, Oxfordshire

Neil & Helen Matthews (with Tony Marshall, Prestwood Nature)

The Thames Valley is generally the last place to go for wilderness, dominated as it is by arterial roads and railways, the river itself dominated by pleasure craft, its banks manicured and gardened. There used to be great Thames-side marshes and water-meadows, but these are mainly drained and gone. One exception is Cholsey Marsh, a confusion of scrub comprising of osier and crack willow and tall vegetation, all tangled together by hedge bindweed and bittersweet, and formerly greater dodder.

"In this 19ha nature reserve you feel the presence of life here, rather than see it."

This 19ha nature reserve perfectly preserves a once-expansive environment, now largely repurposed as perfectly manicured gardens. You feel the presence of life here, rather than see it. Warblers chatter and flit, but they are difficult to glimpse. The breeding snipe are perfectly camouflaged. Kingfishers are a short-lived streak of iridescent blue over the open water. The noise hits a peak when the corn buntings and meadow pipits come in to roost, vanishing into the undergrowth. Others make no sound at all – Pfeiffer's amber snail and Desmoulin's whorl snail glide on liquid feet across the leaves.

Colonsay and Oronsay, Inner Hebrides

Katie Featherstone

At 10 miles long and 2 miles wide, Colonsay is tiny, with a dramatic landscape that smooths out to beautiful sandy beaches, dotted with interesting pockets of archaeology. With a population of 135, there is no shortage of wide-open spaces and its remoteness makes it an ideal spot for stargazing. To the south, neighbouring Oronsay is attached by a tidal sand bank and would be nothing more than a footnote if it were not for its wonderful Augustinian priory – comparable to Iona Abbey in many ways, but with only a fraction of the visitors.

Both islands are also notable for their birdlife, with Oronsay being an RSPB reserve and Colonsay's teeming seabird cliffs among the richest in birdlife of anywhere in the region.

Draycott Sleights, Somerset

Norm Longley

A steeply sloping scarp comprised of limestone grassland (in Somerset speak, 'sleight' means sheep pasture) and rocky outcrops, Draycott Sleights

is one of the Somerset Wildlife Trust's most oft-overlooked reserves. A well-signposted mile-long circular trail starts by the entrance and bisects the reserve. As with so many places in the Mendips, the commanding views make the short trek up here worth the effort; it's a great spot for a picnic.

The 50ha reserve is species-rich, harbouring numerous communities of butterfly and dragonfly, as well as resident brown hares, roe deer and muntjac, while various raptors patrol the skies.

The Colvend Coast, Dumfries & Galloway

Donald Greig & Darren Flint

This stretch of shoreline from south of Dalbeattie eastwards to Mersehead is the most developed part of all of Dumfries and Galloway's 200 miles of coastline, but unlike the worst excesses of the Med, here there is very little of the uncontrolled sprawl of modern holiday resorts. For more than 75 years part of this coast has been in the care of the National Trust for Scotland and there is still a timeless quality to much of it.

The route is dotted with enchanting coastal villages, and walking between them offers stop offs at picturesque seafronts and cosy waterside pubs. The prettiest beach along this stretch is at Rockcliffe which, even in the height of season, somehow retains its air of gentility. With its rocky bay, Victorian villas and cottages, and lush gardens and lawns, it has an almost exotic

Castlehill Point, near Rockcliffe

atmosphere. Offshore lies Rough Island, a 20-acre bird sanctuary that's home to oystercatchers and ringed plovers.

Long Mynd, Shropshire

Marie Kreft

In Welsh, *myndd* means 'bare mountain', which is misleading here as Long Mynd is officially moorland: a wild, sweeping moorland plateau running for around ten miles, covering almost 6,000 heather-tufted acres and rising up to 1,700 feet above sea level.

Little wonder then, that stories abound about its perils. But it's not half as dangerous as it sounds; the Long Mynd is clearly way-marked as long as you tackle it in good weather. The ridge is flat with pleasant walking conditions: you'll see ponies and sheep grazing in the heather and bracken as you make your way over the grit and shale upland.

Maidencombe beach, Devon

Hilary Bradt

Only a mile away from busy, touristy Torquay is this glorious beach, perhaps the most appealing

Ponies grazing on Long Mynd © D. NICHOLL, SHUTTERSTOCK

in the whole region – at least for lovers of Slow. You have to walk here (access is via the South West Coast Path, or from the car park 10 minutes away), as you do with all the best beaches, and for that reason you'll never find it crowded, although there is a little seasonal café to keep you sustained. The sand is the colour of a roan pony, mixed with shingle, with large sedimentary rocks below the red sandstone cliffs and a good supply of tide pools.

Sculthorpe Moor, Norfolk

Laurence Mitchell

A little way west of Fakenham, just off the King's Lynn road, this 18ha nature reserve managed by the Hawk and Owl Trust is a fine example of unimproved fen habitat. With over a mile of walkways threading through woodland and marshes there are plenty of hides and viewing platforms from which to observe the reserve's rich birdlife, including marsh harriers, kingfishers and a variety of warblers. As well as birds, the fen flora here is a treat in spring and early summer with a plethora of yellow flag, ragged robin and the like.

Having easy access and wooden boardwalks running all the way around it, this reserve must be one of the best wildlife reserves in the country for those with restricted mobility.

Sculthorpe Moor is a haven for birdlife, particularly warblers

Seaford Head, East Sussex

Tim Locke

Once a thriving medieval port, Seaford – the next major place east along the coast from Newhaven – has long since seen its harbour silted up; its oldest streets are now inland around the church. Its special qualities lie along the shore, one of the nearest beaches to London, and certainly one of the most inviting despite the shingle, yet one that never gets seriously crowded. The shingle beach runs several miles from Bishopstone along to the start of the cliffs at Seaford Head.

As you look along the base of the crumbling chalk cliffs from the end of the esplanade from Splash Point, a pong of kittiwake droppings will greet you – Sussex's prime colony of these seabirds occupies these cliffs. This easily missed shoreline viewpoint gives one of the most startling cliff views along this stretch of coast, looking up to the precarious chalky heights. The climb up along the cliff from here leads you past perhaps Sussex's most scenically placed golf course, then suddenly Cuckmere Haven and the Seven Sisters spread themselves ahead: one of the great coastal scenes of southern England. Near the much-photographed coastguard cottages at the far end, steps lead down to the foreshore at Hope Gap, a fascinating place for browsing the rockpools.

Hope Gap beneath Seaford Head

Tegg's Nose Country Park, Cheshire

Suzanne King

Just a stone's throw from Macclesfield town centre, this popular country park on the site of an old stone quarry is one of the most accessible places to enjoy Cheshire's hill country. It's a good place to walk at any time of year, but each season brings extra attractions to add to the ever-present stellar views. In spring there are lambs in the fields; in summer, colourful displays of delicate yellow mountain pansies; in autumn there are winberries to be picked; and in winter, slopes to be sledged. Nature has reclaimed its territory over the formerly industrialised spot, with purple heather covering the old spoil heaps, but there are some pieces of old machinery left to remind you of more industrial times.

From the visitor centre there's an easy-to-follow two-mile circular trail around the hilltop with wonderful views along the way. En route you'll come across a bench with a unique 'Library in the Landscape' – a mini bookcase on a pole, so if the views alone aren't enough, you can choose something to read while you're there.

The view over Bottoms Reservoir, Tegg's Nose Country Park © ANDREW, FLICKR

A SPOTLIGHT ON THE INDEPENDENT

Adventurous Ink, *the book club for outdoor folk, started life as a side project of a side project. At the end of 2019 founder and curator, Tim Frenneaux, decided the business merited more than side-line status, pivoting to make it his primary hustle.*

Six months later, in the midst of the first national lockdown, he quit his day job to free up the time that his rapidly growing community demanded. We asked Tim to share his journey with us.

ADVENTUROUS INK

Absent-mindedly missing the 08.18 from Leeds to York at the start of January 2020 didn't seem like the most telling portent of the year. Yet it turned out to be prophetic of the change that was about to unfold in my personal and professional life.

While waiting to take the train to a work meeting, I was distracted by the sudden appearance – and swift disappearance – of a pair who looked out of place among the work-a-day travelling public. Their garb gave them away. Tightly packed 50-litre backpacks with sleeping mats strapped to the side. Trim-insulated jackets and lightweight boots. Cosy hats and cheery conversation distinguishing them from the huddling masses.

They were possessed with the illicit air of micro-adventurers, extending their festive holiday with an expedition into the hinterlands. Intrigued, I moseyed down the platform as they weaved through the pre-Covid commuter throng, towards a less-frequented platform.

Here, things became clear. The 08.19 to Carnforth, on the Little Bentham Line, wends its way northwest in the shadow of the better-known Settle–Carlisle Railway, pausing at a variety

© BEN GILLESPIE

of stations and halts in the badlands between Yorkshire and Lancashire.

I spent the rest of the day distractedly chairing fractious day-job discussions, pondering the adventurers' options. With stops at Long Preston, Giggleswick, Clapham and Bentham, the possibilities for exploring this wild landscape were endless. Were they setting out to scale the heights of Ingleborough? To plumb the mossy depths of Catrigg Force? Or, perhaps, to survey the wilder reaches of the misleadingly named Forest of Bowland?

I will never know.

But what I did know was that I longed to be in their Vibram-soled boots rather than my all-too--sensible brogues.

© SIGHTSEERS

Taking the plunge

Five years earlier, I had slowed up my career in the public sector, going part-time in order to found an online startup in the outdoor industry. Not a sector in which I had experience, but one that had helped me to rediscover my adventurous spirit.

The business went through several incarnations: from equipment-sharing platform to directory of adventure activities and purveyor of sustainable outdoor gear. Each pivot was part of a learning process: learning about business, about the community I sought to serve, and – most of all – about myself. I wasn't seeking the most profitable venture, but something more purposeful. More meaningful.

Bubbling along in the background, almost since day one, was a side project called Adventurous Ink – a monthly subscription service for outdoor and adventure books. Late in 2019, I decided that it was time to do one thing well, and that this should be my one thing.

After several years of searching, I found meaning in bringing great travel, adventure and nature writing to my community to deepen our collective appreciation of the great, wide world.

Committing to the cause, I had the 'Adventurous' part of our logo tattooed along my forearm. This joined a small selection of other indelible notes-to-self that had accumulated along my arms since turning 40, including 'Long time dead' and – most tellingly – 'Liberty' (not just the name of my youngest). Together, they inked out the path my life would take.

As much as there was a purposeful pull, I must confess that there was a push towards my

eventual end too. Despite a successful career as an economic strategist, I was unhappy in my job. More than unhappy, I was unwell.

By the end of 2019, a sudden onset of anxiety forced me to make a reluctant conclusion. It was my job, my relationship with our CEO, that led me to shake when I spoke. To conjure leering gargoyles from the intentions of others. Which was why, during the first Covid-19 lockdown, I quit my job and took a full-time gamble on the business.

Fostering a community

Truthfully, it wasn't a total gamble. After several months of effort, indications of the business' potential success were emerging. It didn't make the decision easy, or comfortable. Our household income halved overnight, pitching us into a meagre year.

But, the thing which gave me the most confidence wasn't the finances. Having always enjoyed engaging with our growing community, I requested feedback in our welcome emails. The responses weren't just friendly, they were thankful.

'I never normally read emails, but yours are a delight.'

'The best thing I've done during Covid.'

Yet, my search for more meaning and connection hadn't ceased with this newfound focus. Quite the opposite.

With each month's book, I would include a handwritten letter explaining the rationale behind its selection. Much as I enjoyed resurrecting the lost art of putting pen to paper, I was always disappointed by the recipient's anonymity, to which the monthly greeting 'My Dear Fellow Adventurer' alluded.

As part of each month's book selection, I would interview the author live on Instagram or Facebook, but I was frustrated by the limited options for community engagement. While pondering this asymmetric communication conundrum and seeking inspiration, I sat in on a Zoom 'Communion' organised by Mark and Nic Shayler, founders of the Reasons to be Cheerful community. Suddenly, it all became clear. Here was a way of bringing the community together, free of the implicit hierarchies of the conversational constraints I had chafed against so far.

"We spent the time discussing childhood memories of trout tickling."

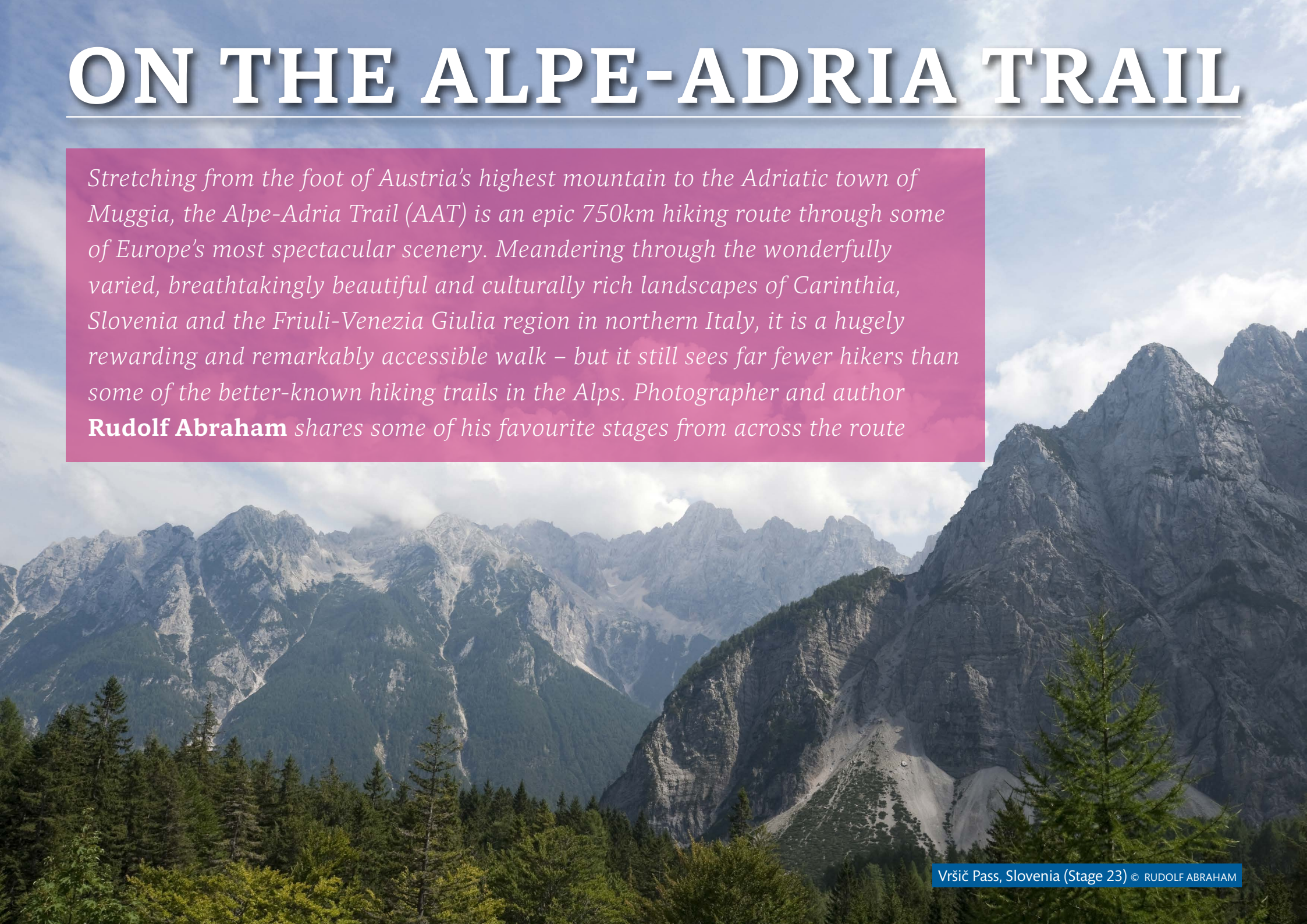
The subtle shift from interviewing the author of each month's book to hosting a conversation with them proved profound. The change paid off right away in our first community conversation, which unfortunately coincided with nap time for John Wright, the author of that month's book, *The Forager's Calendar*! But instead of monologuing my way through the 30 minutes it took for him to join us, we spent the time discussing childhood memories of trout tickling and psychedelic campers gorging themselves on mushrooms in the field next to a community member's house.

From these modest beginnings, it took just four months for tickets to these Zoom conversations to sell out and to having out-of-print titles republished just for us.

At the end of the first full year of Adventurous Ink being 'a thing' I took the opportunity to reflect on everything we had learnt together, in a short anthology: *Future Horizons Past*. This distillation of a year's reading neatly describes the experience and meaning of adventuring in the modern world. As the title suggests, it is more than just a retrospective. It is a statement of passion and purpose. It surveys where we are heading and reminds us that we will go beyond.

ON THE ALPE-ADRIA TRAIL

Stretching from the foot of Austria's highest mountain to the Adriatic town of Muggia, the Alpe-Adria Trail (AAT) is an epic 750km hiking route through some of Europe's most spectacular scenery. Meandering through the wonderfully varied, breathtakingly beautiful and culturally rich landscapes of Carinthia, Slovenia and the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region in northern Italy, it is a hugely rewarding and remarkably accessible walk – but it still sees far fewer hikers than some of the better-known hiking trails in the Alps. Photographer and author **Rudolf Abraham** *shares some of his favourite stages from across the route*



Vršič Pass, Slovenia (Stage 23) © RUDOLF ABRAHAM

Left

Millstätter Alpe, Austria (Stage 13)

Twelve days into the route, the AAT climbs above Seeboden and takes you across Millstätter Alpe on the edge of the Nockberge Mountains. This was taken the following day, after an early morning start from the wonderfully hospitable Millstätter Hütte. I was hiking in late October, on what was effectively the last weekend of the season – most huts had already closed, and it was the last weekend that Millstätter Hütte was open. But it was one of the most beautiful days of walking on the entire route – the sun was out, the ground dusted with snow, and for much of the day I had the trail almost entirely to myself.

Following page

Nockberge Biosphere Reserve, Austria (Stage 15)

Crossing the Nockberge takes several days, but it is perhaps the finest stretch of mountain walking on the AAT. The route winds across ridges and mountaintops, rather than sticking more closely to the valley as it does in earlier stages. A UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve, the Nockberge Mountains are incredibly rich in mineral deposits (including one of the largest garnet deposits in the Alps), and command fantastic views of the Ankogel Group and other spiky peaks of the Hohe Tauern – the peaks of the Nockberge are, in comparison, more rounded. This photo shows Nassbodensee, a small alpine tarn below the Kleiner Rosennock, which can (and should) be visited as a very short detour from the main route.

Rodresnock, Austria (Stage 16)
The hike across Falkert and the Rodresnock makes for a breathtakingly beautiful day of mountain walking. This is the view from just below the Rodresnock, looking southeast towards Schwarzkofel – and in the distance, the Karavanke mountains that form the border with Slovenia.

Previous page

Karavanke mountains, Austrian/ Slovenian border (Stage 22)

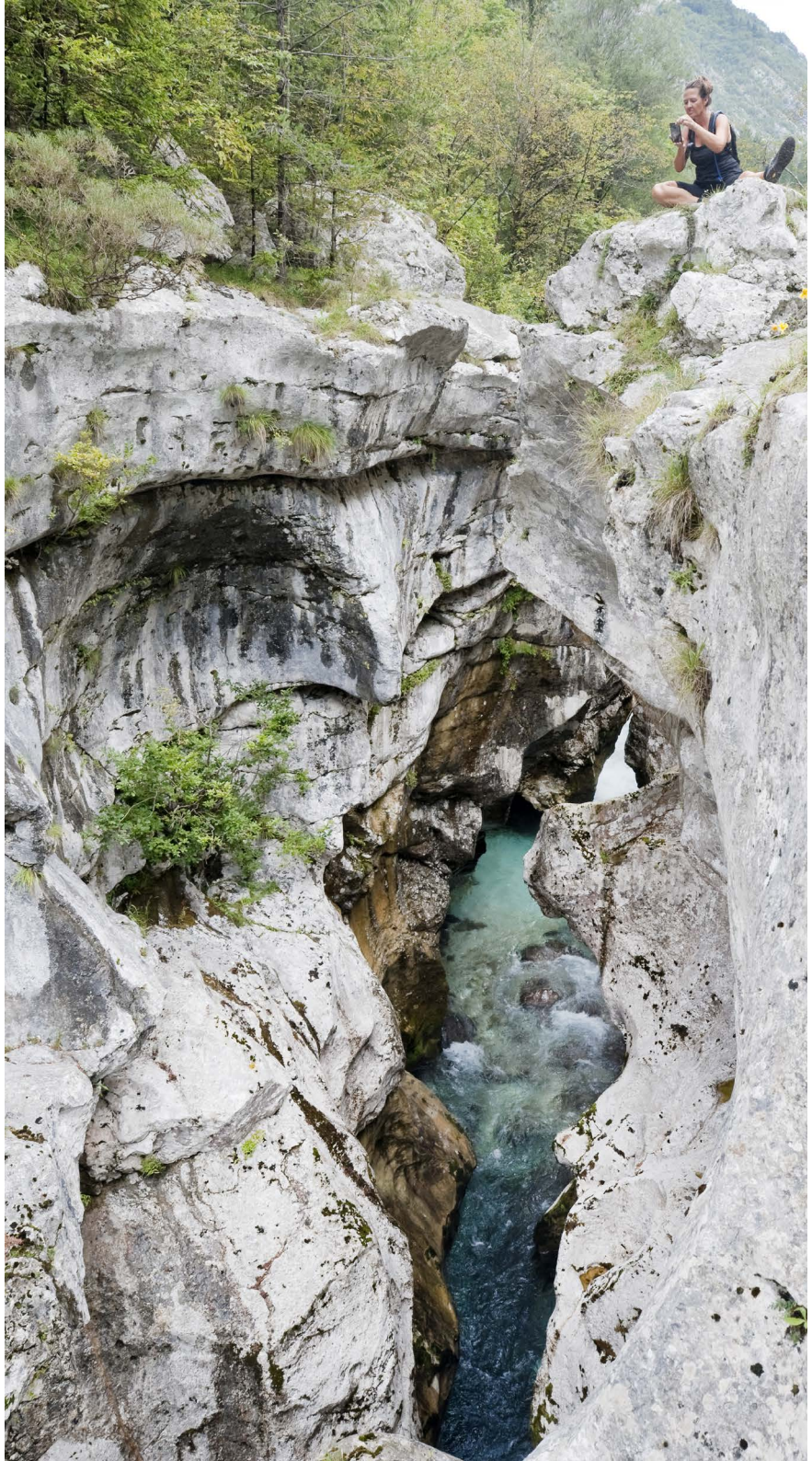
Between Baumgartnerhöhe in Austria and Kranjska Gora in Slovenia, the AAT crosses the Karavanke mountains. A large part of the route follows the crest of the border ridge itself – only a couple of metres wide in places, though the trail is never difficult or exposed, and there are fabulous views on either side. This photo shows the view northwest into Carinthia, looking back across the first three weeks of hiking along the trail.

Left

Vršič Pass, Slovenia (Stage 23)

At 1,611m, the Vršič Pass is one of the highest paved roads in Slovenia. The trail up from Kranjska Gora and the Pišnica Valley winds through forest, only occasionally meeting the asphalt road on one of its succession of hairpins. On its way up, the trail passes the Russian Chapel – the road was built by Russian prisoners of war during WWI – as well as fields of cairns with breathtaking views, and some well-placed mountain huts.

This photo was taken on my most recent visit in 2019, and shows my intrepid daughter (then aged nine) on the final, short slog below the pass itself, after a stop at a nearby mountain hut.



Soča Gorge, Slovenia (Stage 24)
The Soča is, quite simply, one of the most beautiful rivers I have ever seen, anywhere. Its waters are an almost unbelievably vivid emerald green, and the section of the AAT that follows the river from Trenta to Bovec is one of the loveliest on the entire route.

At its most spectacular point the river squeezes through a narrow gorge – 750m long and 15m deep, and only around 2m wide at the top. You can sit on the rocks at the edge of the gorge and watch the water swirling far below, as it rushes between polished cliffs, its brilliant-coloured pools dotted with trout.

Right

Val Rosandra, Italy (Stage 36)

In its penultimate stage, the AAT throws in one final surprise – the Val Rosandra. Discovering this wild and rugged karst valley was something quite unexpected so close to Trieste.

A nature reserve with remarkably rich flora, the Val Rosandra is unusual in that it has a stream gushing through it (surface streams being quite a rare thing in a karst landscape), complete with a 36m-high waterfall. This photo shows the chapel of Santa Maria in Siaris, perched below the steep slopes of Monte Carso.

Following page

Feistritzer Alm, Austo-Italian border (Circular Route, Stage C3)

In addition to the 37-stage through route from Kaiser-Franz-Josefs-Höhe to Muggia, there's also a six-day circular route at the centre of the AAT, which swings through the mountainous knot where Austria, Slovenia and Italy meet. This photo shows the tiny chapel of Maria Schnee, which sits on the border just above Feistritzer Alm, as a group of mountain bikers paused beside it to admire the view.

Rudolf Abraham is an award-winning travel writer and photographer specialising in Central and Eastern Europe. He is the author of a dozen books, including Bradt's *Alpe-Adria Trail* guide, and his work is published widely in magazines. To see more of Rudolf's work head to his website or follow him on Instagram.

THE BRADT TRAVEL TEASER: ANSWER SMASH

This month's travel teaser takes inspiration from the BBC TV programme, *Richard Osman's House of Games* (a great lockdown watch if you've not seen it before). The last round is called Answer Smash, in which contestants are shown two clues – a photo and a question. The ending of the answer to the photo clue makes up the beginning of the answer to the question. All you need to do is smash the two answers together, and hey presto!

We've come up with some travel-themed Answer Smashes below, including an example to help you on your way. How many can you guess correctly? Answers are on page 42.

Example: Pyongyang is the capital of which East Asian country?
Answer: Angel of the North Korea

1. Which country has a flag with three stripes of black, red and orange?

2. Which modern-day capital city was previously known as Constantinople?

3. What is the name of the Romanian region commonly associated with Bram Stoker?

4. How is the easternmost peninsula of Africa more commonly known?

5. Which religious landmark in Bulgaria is world-renowned for its colourful frescoes?

6. What is the name of the river that flows over Victoria Falls?

7. Which of Ethiopia's national parks is the only one inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site?

8. What is the capital city of the Barbados?

FROM THE LION'S MOUTH: A JOURNEY TO AMARNATH CAVE

In this extract from his acclaimed book, From the Lion's Mouth, **Iain Campbell** *shares his experiences of joining the* yatra *to Amarnath Cave in Jammu and Kashmir – one of the most important Hindu pilgrimage routes in the world.*

We climbed up from Panjtarni on a narrow, cliff-cut path, before turning north into the bleak Amarnath Valley. Now we started to pass other pilgrims who had walked in from the road to the west, a shorter route to the cave but not the traditional *yatra* route. We passed three students in plimsolls. They carried their lunch of puris in plastic bags dangling from their fingers and each one had a bottle of Mirinda orange in his trouser pocket.

Next we passed a group of soldiers in a mixture of uniform and casual clothes, who carried their rifles like spades over their shoulders. They told me they would be stationed here at the cave-side army post to prevent the kind of attacks on Hindu pilgrims that had occurred a few years before at one of the tented camps. We quickly overtook a lone bare-footed pilgrim dressed in a white gown and balaclava. He walked slowly and awkwardly,

© IAIN CAMPBELL

En route to Amarnath

trying to take most of the step with his heel. His eyes were hidden behind orange sunglasses and he whispered to himself as I passed.

We were all heading in the same direction, towards the Amarnath Cave, a high-altitude glacial shrine where every year thousands of pilgrims come to witness the iced stalagmite Shiva lingam that forms from the cave roof. I could see the wide, dark entrance of the cave above. The last steep climb was on concrete steps lined with railings. Two flights ran up the slope to cope with the huge crowds that circulated into and out of the cave. Later in the season there would be throngs of people, but now, before the *yatra* season, there were only a few others here.

The odour of the cave was extremely rich and complex in comparison with the spare mountain air. I smelled marigolds and rose petals, sweet incense, *bidi* smoke and the flavour of ginger and coriander from swinging tiffin cans. Iron arches stretched over the path hung with bells and the pilgrims set these chiming with the prayer to Shiva, 'Bham bham bhole'. The *yatri* already in the cave shouted 'Bham bhole' back down, loud and triumphant like challenges on a cricket pitch.

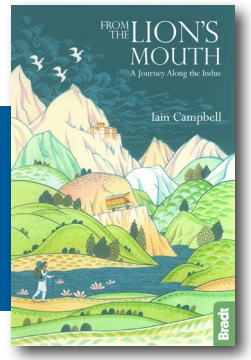
A line of shoes lay at the cave entrance; from here, on ice and gravel, all of us had to go barefoot. At the back of the cave was the white frozen lingam that I had come to see. It filled the apex of the cave, formed from a tiny trickle of water that emerged from an underground stream. It was bulbous and opaque white, so much so that it almost glowed against the black rock. It had been strewn with pink petals that had frozen into the ice so that it was speckled with colour. Now I saw there were other, smaller ice lingams to the left nestling in their own crevices; I was told these were for other gods.

The pilgrims pressed against the railings and handed bags of sweets to the attendants who passed them before the lingams and then handed them back. The railings were covered with photographs: solemn wedding pictures, passport photos, smiling children with the red tikka mark. They were attached with ribbons or pierced on to the barbed wire that protected the shrine. Many of the photos had already fallen to the ice to half-freeze into the base of the lingam where they slowly fragmented before running down the mountain with the meltwater. I turned away and looked out of the mouth of the cave to the twisting rock faces opposite, bare like exposed muscle, snow lying along the line of the cliffs in narrow strips like the sinews.

A few steps down from the lingam was an altar full of statues and black- and red-smeared stone lingams. I remembered the other times I had seen these Hindu Shivaite devotional objects on my journey up the Indus River. I remembered sitting beside the Sadhubela altar, a rare, still-functioning Hindu island temple in Pakistan, and feeling my head burn in the heat and the sweat trickle down my back. It was the same lingam here, the same smells of incense and flowers, but I was over 10,000ft higher now and my bare feet were prickling with the cold of the ice.

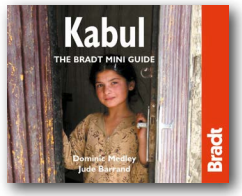
"I smelled marigolds and rose petals, sweet incense, bidi smoke, ginger and coriander."

Far beneath me I could see the white gown of the barefoot yatri I had passed earlier, stepping painfully and slowly, and I thought I recognised something in him too. The joy of a journey almost completed. The sadness of a journey almost completed. The yearning for meaning through a journey. Numb feet.



Iain Campbell has been fascinated by mountains for as long as he can remember, and his book, *From the Lion's Mouth*, recounts his incredible solo journey along the Indus River from source to mouth. The Travel Club members can get their copy for **just £4.99** by using the code **TRAVELCLUB50** at checkout.

FROM THE ARCHIVES:
KABUL



In 2003, all new proposals – which in those days were just emailed ideas – came to me (Hilary). A guide to Kabul, which would be sold by street kids? Absolutely! I was determined to continue the plan of publishing guides that would actually help the local population, something we had achieved two years earlier with our guide to Rwanda. Every now and then, I had argued, we needed to publish a guide that was not expected to make a profit but one that was definitely needed (in fact both Rwanda and Kabul surprised us by making a profit).

Kabul had to be done quickly to catch the surge of foreigners in the city, and Tricia, the editorial director, threw herself into the challenge with her usual vigour, setting other projects aside to design a new mini-guide format and work flat out with Dominic and Jude to create the book in record time. In his own words, this is Dominic's story.

***

'Brace yourself, we've just had a request for a review copy of Kabul from the *News of the World*! We ought to have a competition for the headline they'll give it!'

© DOMINIC MEDLEY

That's the email I received in June 2003 from Hilary Bradt shortly after the new Bradt guide to Kabul was published. It was the first in a new series of mini city guides. From delivery of the manuscript to having books on sale in Kabul took less than three months, which Tricia Hayne, our editor at Bradt, told us was the fastest turnaround they'd ever done. Six thousand copies were printed initially (3,000 for delivery in Kabul), followed by a second run of 1,000. I also have in my possession at least four different pirated versions of varying quality. But how did all of this happen?

Great euphoria

In February 2002, I arrived in Kabul with a colleague to set up a journalism training project for Internews, the US-funded media development NGO. The airport was chaos. The transport minister, Abdul Rahman, had been assassinated just two days before, after he was pulled off a plane by a mob – originally thought to be pilgrims, but government officials were later accused. Pilgrims returning from the Hajj to Mecca prayed on the runway outside the terminal building as a departing Boeing-747 blew their clothes and suitcases everywhere. A media team I saw had no problem getting through customs with a box of six bottles of wine.

Someone shouted 'Faisal Guesthouse'. We'd heard about that place during our preparations in Islamabad, and so we joined them. Within half an hour we were having soup, chicken, chips, rice and green tea (a staple fare with eggs for the coming weeks), and negotiating a long-term rental at a house in the Wazir Akbar Khan district of Kabul.

It was just three months after the brutal Taliban regime had been dislodged from power and fled following the 9/11 Al-Qaeda attacks and the subsequent US-led invasion of Afghanistan. Now Afghans were returning to Kabul and the foreign community was pouring in. There was such a great euphoria and atmosphere in the city.

But things were not always like this. As best-selling author and correspondent Ahmed Rashid wrote of life in Kabul after the Taliban takeover in 1996:

'Kabul quickly became a ghost town; women became invisible and social life outside the home next to impossible. Cinema halls were shut down, the radio played only religious speeches and cafés were closed. The only place where social interaction took place was the mosque.

The revival of Kabul's social life after November 2001 was dramatic in the extreme. Within days of the retreat of the Taliban and even though the majority of people were desperately poor, the bazaars were once again thronged with people, women appeared in the streets for the first time and music blared in every bazaar. As education and clinics and hospitals revived with the help of international aid agencies, women were back at work in large numbers.'

My colleague and I had to find a house for both living and journalism training. We needed to buy everything from knives and forks to the generator. I frequently changed up to US$5,000 in the money market, and although one dollar was worth around 40,000 Afghanis and the largest note was 10,000 Afghanis, I never felt any threat walking through the streets with plastic bags of cash. The only time I packed an emergency grab bag was after an earthquake.

There was a curfew of 22.00 in those days. I remember attending a wedding of Afghans returning from Moscow. The party and dancing started after lunch to beat the curfew. But a few cars were late returning home. We were asked for the password or night word at a checkpoint. Our driver just said it was the same as the one the driver in the car in front had given!

Everyone wants a piece of Kabul

The guidebook had humble beginnings. A BBC friend in London connected me with Jude

Barrand who was also working in Kabul (Jude died from cancer in 2016), and we soon realised there was little information in one place on the new developing city. By September 2002 we had produced a small A5 pamphlet, initially printed on office printers and later at a printing house in the city. Our introduction said:

'So you made it off the UN or Ariana plane. And you've arrived in Kabul for the "Great Game." Welcome. *Salaam a-laykum*! Kabul is constantly changing. People have returned with great speed and in huge numbers. Businesses are starting up and competition, especially in the guesthouse business, is thriving. A few restaurants have opened, curfew is getting later, and it's time you began to see the sights on that Friday off. Of course we're aware this guide will very soon be out of date, so please send us any ideas and suggestions. Inshallah, you'll have a safe and enjoyable time, but no doubt full on visit.'

Distribution of the pamphlet was never a problem – we just went door-to-door delivering to offices, guesthouses, restaurants – anywhere frequented by foreigners and returning Afghans. But the most rapid method was to give out free copies on the street and in traffic jams, mostly to children, who were often found selling things.

By early 2003 Jude and I were in discussions with Tricia, having approached Bradt as the most likely publisher for our guide. Initially only a small print run was discussed, but Jude stood firm: 'There is a need for thousands of new guides here. The 3,000 we printed last year went in a flash, and everyone is clamouring for the new edition so I know we will have no trouble selling 500. Everyone wants a piece of Kabul at the moment and a guide to the city is a souvenir as much as anything.'

Bradt's *Kabul* mini guide was the first to the city since the 1960s when the famous historian Nancy Hatch Dupree had published a series of tourist books covering Afghanistan. Interestingly the second edition of her Afghanistan guide was impounded after the April 1978 revolution. She only got the 10,000 copies released in 1992 after the *mujahedeen* entered Kabul (following the Soviet occupation of 1979–89).

Jude and I were thrilled when reviews flooded in for the guide: 'Book of the week' and 'a must read'; it was even referred to as 'a good stocking filler.' *Wanderlust* magazine reported Bradt had set an 'impressive precedent' with the book, while *The Sunday Times* said the guidebook had put 'something back into the city it describes'.

And that was key for us from the beginning. Jude and I bought 3,000 copies from Bradt for delivery to Kabul. We then gave a group of our street-kid friends ten copies each for free, after which they could then buy more books from us for $5 and sell them for $10 or more. Soon we had a rolling distribution network up and running and some money being put into well-deserving pockets.

I haven't been to Kabul since September 2018 when I completed two years as an advisor to the American general commanding US and NATO forces. For sure it's not the same as 2002 and 2003 when Jude and I worked on the Bradt guide. The Taliban and other terrorists carry out vicious bombings and assassinations, most recently against many media friends I trained as journalists. The number of foreigners in the city has declined and most of the hotels and restaurants we loved to visit and recommended in the guidebook have long closed. But Afghans are finding their way and standing up for the future. I hope the international community will continue to support them.

I miss Kabul. Every day.

Dominic Medley OBE was in Kabul from 2002 to 2018, initially training Afghan journalists and helping establish media outlets. Details on the original pamphlet to Kabul and the Bradt guide can be found online at www.kabulguide.net. Dominic is on Twitter at @DominicMedley.

THE TRAVEL CLUB MEMBER BENEFITS

Our aim for The Travel Club is not only to entertain and inspire, and to bring together like-minded travellers, but to save our members money! We have two exciting new offers to bring you this month, alongside our ever-growing list of other discounts.

Get your first month free with Adventurous Ink

Created by Tim Frenneaux, Adventurous Ink is a unique subscription service that will inspire more memorable experiences and help you reconnect with the natural world while you're out there. Each month you'll receive a new book or journal featuring writers, photographers and illustrators who really 'get' the great outdoors.

The Travel Club members can get their first month **free** when they sign up for a 2-month subscription; just use the code **BRADTINK** at checkout.

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Adventure travel company Untamed Borders runs bespoke trips and small-group adventures to some of the world's most interesting and inaccessible places, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Middle East, East Africa, former Soviet Central Asia and the Caucasus. Their mission is to add positive benefit to the communities they visit. Whether you are staying with Mundari cattle herders in South Sudan or sipping tea in Pakistan's Hindu

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Run by local Penny Walker, this adventure outfit based in the Pyrenees specialises in tailor-made, outdoor holidays in the region. To claim, just quote **Bradt10** when enquiring.

Craghoppers: 20% off

Founded in Yorkshire in 1965, Craghoppers is a global leader in sustainable technical outdoor and travel clothing. Use the code **BRADT20** at checkout (valid on full-priced items only until 2 June 2021).

The Cook's Place: 10% off cooking courses

Based in Malton, North Yorkshire, The Cook's Place are an independent cookery school offering a range of courses. Enter the code **BTG21** at checkout (valid on all half- and full-day courses until 30 November 2021).

HÔRD: 10% off everything

Yorkshire-based HÔRD create meaningful and high-quality gifts and apparel for the adventurous and wild among us. Just use the code **HORDXTRAVELCLUB10** at checkout.

Inertia Network: 5% off any booking

Inertia Network run immersive expeditions that support local communities in remote and threatened regions. Enter the code **Bradt2021** in the 'How Did You Hear About Us' box when making your enquiry.

Lupine Travel: 5% off all tours

UK-based Lupine specialise in unique and off-the-beaten-track destinations, from Chernobyl to North Korea. Just email info@lupinetravel.co.uk and mention that you are a member of The Travel Club when booking.

National Geographic Traveller (UK): 3 issues for £3

With a reputation for compelling storytelling and a focus on off-the-beaten-track travel, *National Geographic Traveller (UK)* is a favourite with intrepid travellers. Click here to get your first 3 issues for just £3.

Safari Drive: 10% off vehicle and equipment hire

Safari Drive are a UK tour operator who have specialised in creating bespoke self-drive safari holidays in Africa since 1993. Just mention that you're a Travel Club member when booking.

Tonic: 10% off subscriptions

Tonic is a brand-new biannual drink and travel magazine. Simply use the code **BRADTTC10** at checkout to redeem your discount, which currently also includes free UK and EU shipping.

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Founded in 1997, *Travel Africa* remains the only international magazine dedicated to exploring Africa's attractions, wildlife and cultures. Click here and enter the code **BRADT2020** at checkout.

Wanderlust: £10 off subscriptions

This legendary travel magazine is still going strong after nearly 30 years, offering issues packed full of articles on wildlife and cultural travel. Click here and enter the code **WLMAG20** at checkout.

NEW! THE FIRST JOURNEY BOOKS

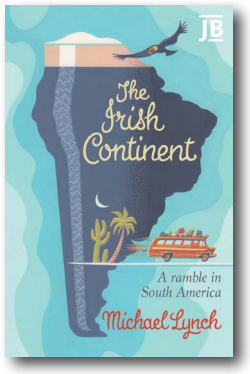
We've seen a fantastic uptake since we launched Journey Books last year – a contract-publishing imprint for unpublished and previously published authors alike. This month sees the publication of the first two titles, and we couldn't be more excited for you to read them! The Travel Club members can claim their exclusive **50% discount** on these (and all other books) by using the code **TRAVELCLUB50** at checkout.

For more information on how to publish with Journey Books, visit bradtguides.com/journeybooks.

The Irish Continent

Michael Lynch

£9.99



Aged 49¼, Irish-born Michael Lynch escaped his IT job and his life in London and skedaddled to South America for two months of meandering. With no fixed plan, somehow two months turned into five, and five months turned into seven. The travel bug had struck.

Lynch immersed himself in South American life. He learned about wars and revolutions and witnessed processions and demonstrations. Irish by birth, he also decided, on a whim, that he would search out places with a connection to his home country.

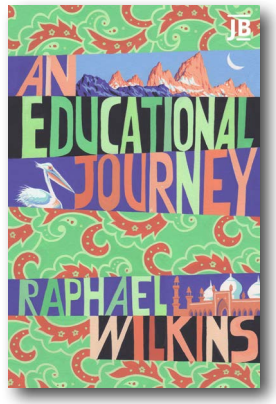
Part history, part travel memoir, this South American ramble is rich with intriguing characters, from Ambrose O'Higgins, the County Sligo boy who went on to become viceroy of Peru, to Eliza Lynch, who fled the Irish Famine and died a Paraguayan hero. In his wry account, Lynch brings alive a continent and the adventures we encounter when we stray from the path to follow our nose.

An Educational Journey

Raphael Wilkins

£9.99

Educationist Raphael Wilkins spent most of his life in London, enjoying holidays in the UK but mainly staying put. Then, in his late career, he was unexpectedly met with the opportunity to explore far-flung places: not as a tourist, but as a visiting expert.



In this frank and entertaining memoir, Wilkins recounts 18 journeys made over a period of two years – treading off and on the tourist path in the Middle East, Asia and Central and South America – and shares honestly the challenges of working, and making human connections, across languages and cultures.

From visiting a Pakistani flood relief camp to being blown away by the wonders of Lahore's old city; from a baffling whirlwind tour of São Paulo to peaceful reflections by the Pacific, Wilkins comes to experience the world with a new perspective and, far from the routines of home, to understand his own path more clearly.

ANSWERS TO THE BRADT TRAVEL TEASER

1. StonehenGermany (Stonehenge & Germany) 2. The RegIstanbul (The Registan & Istanbul) 3. PeTransylvania (Petra & Transylvania) 4. MatterHorn of Africa (Matterhorn & Horn of Africa) 5. KhachapuRila Monastery (Khachpuri & Rila Monastery) 6. Chichén ItZambezi (Chichén Itzá & Zambezi) 7. TbiliSimien Mountains (Tbilisi & Simien Mountains) 8. Forth Bridgetown (Forth Bridge & Bridgetown)

COMING NEXT MONTH...

In April's issue of The Travel Club:

A solo journey across Iraqi Kurdistan, how to enjoy a sustainable holiday in the UK and a sneak preview of our April releases – *Tanked Up* and *A Connemara Journey*.

Amedi, Iraqi Kurdistan © NICOLE SMOOT