

Globetrotters Club magazine

GLOBE

/ SUMMER / AUTUMN 2025



Forthcoming Club Meetings

London Meetings take place on the first Saturday of each month (or the second Saturday if the first falls on a bank holiday) except August. Meetings are held at the Church of Scotland, Crown Court, off Russell Street, Covent Garden, London WC2B 5EZ and start around 2.45pm (doors open 2.15pm), finishing at approximately 5.30pm. Admission fee: members £7, non-members £10. Free tea, coffee and biscuits in the break between the two talks. For more information, email london@globetrotters.co.uk or visit <https://globetrotters.co.uk>

We still offer 'hybrid' meetings which means we can combine in-person live events hosted from the church hall in central London with Zoom. However we have returned to a mostly live attendance, with speakers presenting in person. Please see our website for full details and joining instructions.

Next London meeting dates:

- Saturday 4th October 2025
Lola, John and Danny: Wild Guide to Morocco
Oliver Smith : On This Holy Island - a Modern Pilgrimage around Britain
- Saturday 8th November 2025
Laura Coffey: Enchanted Islands
Richard Loosley: Overland to India in the 1970s by public transport
- Saturday 20th December 2025
Shafik Meghji: Small Earthquakes - a Journey through Lost British History in South America
Justyna Hellebrand: Three trips to Paraguay

Chester meetings are held on the third Saturday of every other (odd) month. They take place at The Grosvenor Museum, 25-27 Grosvenor Street, Chester CH1 2DD and start at 1.30pm (doors open 1pm). The museum is a 15-minute walk from Chester railway station or you can catch the free bus into the city from the station by showing your rail ticket. Meeting entrance is £3 including refreshments. Social gatherings take place in the Golden Eagle between the main meetings. For more information, contact Eve MacPherson, 01606 301762. Email: chesterbranch@globetrotters.co.uk or visit chesterglobetrotters.co.uk.

Next meeting date:

- Saturday 20th September 2025
John Brinkley: India - Part 2
Barbara Brooks - tbc

Toronto meetings. Meetings and travel presentations are usually held on the third Friday of September, November, January and March, but the fourth Friday of May at Old York Tower, 85 The Esplanade, Toronto. Public parking is available on Church Street right next to the Old York Tower. Meetings start at 8pm. For more information contact Svatka Hermanek at hermaneks@yahoo.ca or Bruce Weber - bruceaweber@hotmail.com. Tel: 416 203 0911. Everyone welcome, especially visiting travellers.

Next meeting dates:

- Friday 19th September 2025
Dejan Ristic: Greece - A Collage of Ancient with a Hint of New
- Friday 21st November 2025
Peter Jennings: Andorra

Contents

2	Meetings
4-6	Vietnam, Cambodia, Thai - a race around SE Asia
7-8	Time to visit Venice
9	Calendar
10	A letter from a father
11-13	Tayrona adventure
14-15	All along the Indus: a journey in Southern Pakistan
16-17	Travel writing course
18	Recipes from around the world
19	Book review
20-21	High speed Milan to Paris
22-23	Discounts for Globetrotters
24	Globe details

Cover photo by Mary Fogarty:
Naviglio Grande, Milan, in September



From the Editor, Mary Fogarty

Welcome to my first attempt at editing *Globe* - I hope you will enjoy it and overlook any obvious teething problems. I would also love to see contributions from you too for future issues!

We have stories from around the world in this issue: from a race through South East Asia and a walk down south in Pakistan, to trekking in Colombia - and then there are European offerings from Venice and a train journey from Milan to Paris.

There are also book reviews, details of how to enter your photos for the Calendar, and a brand new feature for *Globe*: Recipes from Around the World! In this issue it's Cous-cous aux Sept Legumes (Seven-Veg Couscous) from Morocco ... hopefully this will set your taste buds going, and do please email me with recipes of your own. I think this will be a fun feature we can all take part in!

Overland from Ho Chi Minh City to Bangkok

By Cath and Simon Finnamore



Boat on the Mekong delta

Inspired by BBC's Race Across the World series through Asia in early 2024 and the discovery that we could book multi-city travel via Skyscanner, we decided to fly to Ho Chi Minh City, visit some of south Vietnam, and then travel overland through Cambodia to Bangkok for our flight home (to save us doing a circle back to Ho Chi Minh or potentially doubling back the same route).

We had 18 days to travel from Ho Chi Minh city to Bangkok, which was quite do-able with South East Asia's excellent and affordable transport connections (trains, boats, buses), although it did feel like a race at times! We were always planning the next stop with the end goal to be in Bangkok for our return flight.

We arrived in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) via Qatar Airways, but our luggage didn't!! 18 hours of travel and feeling more than ready for a shower and fresh clothes, it was a little stressful and disappointing; however, the airline immediately handed us \$100 USD compensation and the reassurance that our bags were in Doha and would be delivered to our hotel early next morning (which they were). We purchased a mobile sim card at the airport, so that we had internet access wherever we were.

The next morning (before the bags were delivered!) we had pre-booked a 'Guru' free walking tour of HCMC (formerly Saigon) which introduced us to the culture and history of this fascinating city. We visited the Cathedral,

statues and squares, Saigon Post Office and had delicious iced salt coffee made with condensed milk. The tour finished at the Independence Palace with a game of 'da cau' - players stand in a ring and aim to keep a heavily weighted shuttlecock in the air using their bodies without hands. We all had a go! 'Guru' walking tours are available in many locations, and you simply give a 'tip' in recognition of the guide's time. We book these now via the app in most new cities we visit and have never had a bad experience.

We took a tour to Cu Chi Tunnels, which was a really interesting trip, learning about the ingenuity of the locals to fend off the invading Americans: shoe soles placed the wrong way around to confuse US troops as to which direction to follow; the idea to only cook food in lower tunnels at dawn and dusk so any steam generated would be hidden in the morning/evening mists; and the variety of traps to catch the enemy - yikes!

At the War Remnants Museum in Ho Chi Minh City, you can see the world-famous 'burning girl', as well as many other photographs and military artifacts. We learned about the millions of tonnes of US ordnance (bombs) dropped from bomber airplanes, not to mention the land mines, Agent Orange (defoliant) and three other toxic chemicals which continue to cause foetal abnormalities in families, even today. We were both taken aback with the sheer horror of the Vietnam war.

Next was a Mekong Delta mini two-day tour with a guide, small group and lovely local food. We took boat rides along the Mekong to see how the locals live on boats and the absolute dependence on agriculture. We saw a lovely local floating market, and cycled a short route through orchards, passing along the way stilted houses and seeing at first-hand the rice paddies. We were fascinated to learn that instead of property deeds, families mark the family land/territory by having the graves and gravestones of their parents on the land. The tour also included local musicians, coconut candy workshops and a visit to a fish farm.

One fun and slightly scary 'activity' back in HCMC was booking a Grab (Asia's equivalent of an Uber) motorcycle taxi to take us to a local restaurant. Gets a bit stressful when one of you doesn't have any mobile data and the other one shoots off on their motorbike taxi before the other! Extremely skilful riders zipping along through the traffic getting us both to the restaurant and safely back to our hotel afterwards. It was an exciting and great way to travel around the city.

After another couple of nights back in lovely HCMC, we took a local bus heading for the land border with Cambodia and went on directly to Phnom Penh (PP), a journey which took about 6 hours. We purchased a Cambodian sim card at the border – fairly inexpensive, and always useful to have mobile data.

In Phnom Penh we visited the former school which was used as Security Prison 21 by the Khmer Rouge regime, now Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum: very moving and emotional, as this was a torture and execution centre. Following this, we visited the most famous of the Killing Fields (a short tuk-tuk ride from PP). We spent a couple of sombre hours learning more about the horrific history of the Khmer Rouge, something that you must do if you visit Phnom Penh.

After all that, it was some light relief to discover that by chance it was the Bon Om Touk (Water Festival) in PP and we had a fabulous view of the illuminated boat parade and fireworks from our hotel's rooftop bar!

From Phnom Penh we took the bus to Battambang (as recommended by our daughter, who had visited a few months earlier). We even stayed at the same hostel! There are some fun and interesting things to visit in this area, including a trip on a motorised bamboo train (which they



lift off the tracks to allow oncoming trains to pass!), and the famous bat caves, where a great swarm of thousands of bats flies out at dusk every day in search of food. It's a real spectacle.

We were also lucky to see a performance by the Phare Ponleu Selpak circus. This circus is a charity, well known for supporting and empowering young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, providing education, circus skills and development opportunities. It was a brilliant show.



In a change from buses, motorbikes and tuk tuks, we booked a ticket for the boat ride from Battambang to Siem Reap. Taking about five hours (and not overly comfortable on wooden benches), this lovely scenic boat ride goes through the Tonle Sap Lake and the Sangker River. It passes through floating villages, fishermen at work and flooded forests. Apparently, it can be a completely different experience (and timing) dependent on the season, as the lake almost dries up completely in the dry season.

We spent three nights based at Siem Reap in a lovely hotel, which happened to be next to a local livestock and fruit and veg market (interesting to see!).

Using the Grab app (again) we hired a tuk tuk driver for a whole day and he took us to Angkor Wat, which was utterly mesmerising. Originally constructed as a Hindu temple and later transformed to a Buddhist temple, the site is surrounded by a moat and travelling with our own tuk tuk driver was a fabulous way to see the site; he clearly knew a good route to visit the main temples (we had bought our tickets online already) and we arranged for him to take us the next day also. We didn't feel up to the 4am start to get there for sunrise and consequently it was extremely hot when we were visiting, but still a wonderful experience.

One of our favourite experiences of the whole trip was visiting the Apopo Visitor Center in Siem Reap to learn about the 'Hero' rats. These African Giant Pouched Rats are trained to detect landmines and are now playing a vital role in detecting unexploded ordnance. The rats are surprisingly cute: the handlers explained how they are trained and gave a demonstration of the animals in action. They are looked after well (taken out for short periods at sunrise when it's not too hot and sunscreen applied to their ears and tails!). In some countries, the rats are also used to identify TB and detect illegally trafficked wildlife products (pangolin scales, rhino horn and elephant ivory).

With just a couple of days left, we decided against an eight-hour bus ride from Siem Reap to Bangkok and opted to book a flight, which only took an hour! We know Bangkok very well, having visited many times and having seen most of the main sights on previous trips: so we found a bicycle tour online and booked that as something new to do there. We spent a couple of hours pedalling gently around Chinatown and lesser visited alleyways and back streets, passing temples, churches and metal welding/engine re-cycling shops, as well as taking a ferry across the Chao Phraya River.

In summary, this was quite a fast-paced trip, with time limits, but still a fabulous experience. We suggest putting it on your bucket list!



Now is the time to visit Venice

By William J Arthur

If you've not been to Venice and it's on your list, push it further to the top. If it's not on your list, why not? It is the most beautiful, romantic city to visit. I count myself lucky to be a return visitor, but after two years I found a slightly different Venice this time. I was there in June 2025, and while ostensibly it looked the same – enchanting canals, countless bridges, the distinguished Saint Mark's square and the grandeur of the gothic Doge's Palace – I nevertheless felt an underlying sense of unease amongst the residents. Was it just the start of another summer season – with its sweltering heat and the invasion of tourists or, this year, the impending Jeff Bezos wedding factor?

My wife Sarah and I were not on the Amazon boss's guest list for his forthcoming nuptials to Lauren Sánchez. We were there a couple of weeks earlier and, having 'done the sights' on our previous visit to the Floating City, this time we avoided the queues and took a gondola across the Grand Canal to the Leonardo da Vinci Museum. This fascinating, fully interactive experience had life-sized working models of the engineering, and scientific inventions of the ahead-of-his-time Renaissance genius, together with an exhibition of high-resolution reproductions of his drawings and paintings.

Feeling satisfied with our hour of hands-on education and culture, we rejoined the bustle in the maze of narrow streets for some window shopping. Alongside the international designer boutiques are the independents, selling exquisite handmade linen, lace and embroidery, super soft cashmere, quality leather, and truffles and olive oils. The world-famous Murano coloured glass of all sizes and designs draws you in for a closer look at the craftsmanship: no two pieces are the same. Visits to the factories on the island are easily arranged and are only a ten-minute ferry trip away. Unique to Venice are the window displays of elaborate costumes from a more glamorous bygone era, evoking an image of elegant, masked balls, music, dancing, and Casanova.

Our joys of travel include memorable meals. We found the small Trattoria Ca' D'oro tucked down a side street, Cannaregio 3912. It was nothing flash, with old furniture and décor, but suggested a good meal when we saw striped-shirted gondoliers chatting there at lunch. It lived up to expectations of simple, typical Venetian fare, ensuring a return visit.



To breakfast like a local, go to any of the *caffè*s and have a selection of the *cicchetti*, savoury snacks on small pieces of bread, accompanied by a *cappuccino* or a glass of wine. We recommend Bacaro Risorto Castello at Campo S Provolo, 4700.

For a treat, take a table at Grand Caffè Quadri in St Mark's Square. The prices look expensive for a coffee or a cocktail, but your charming, white-waistcoated waiter will dramatically present you with a generous accompanying variety of snacks on a silver tray. Enjoy the recording of standard band and tap-along pop favourites by Abba, well-known theme tunes and Italian opera.



The cool of the evening is best when the sun has set, and a gentle breeze ripples the parasols. Hotel prices had doubled since our previous visit. So, instead of the splendour of a converted palazzo on the Grand Canal, this time we stayed in a more modest residenza. It was perfect...with one exception. No lift. Third floor and fifty-four stairs with luggage...!

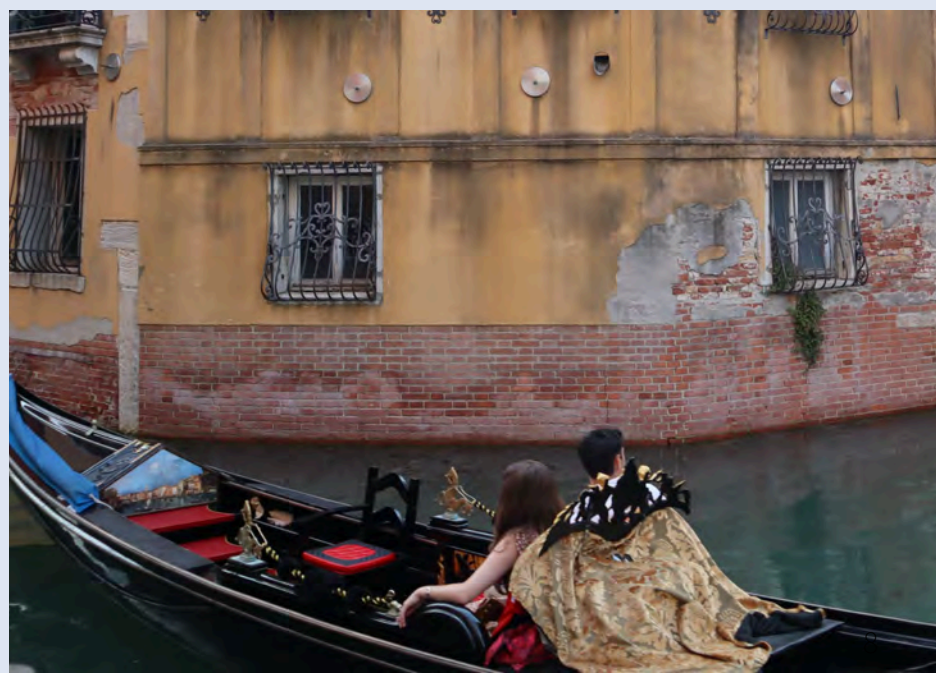
If you want to arrive in style, a private water taxi will zip you across the lagoon from Marco Polo airport to your choice of drop-off in about 20 minutes... for €160. The vaporetto waterbus will only cost €18 but will take an hour longer. A shared water taxi is somewhere in between, in cost and journey time, but you'll need to wait until the driver has filled the seats.

Venice is a collection of mud islands built on wooden planks supported by wooden poles driven into marshland. Incredibly, some of the most impressive and classical architecture in Europe stand on these islands. But Venice is at risk. The lagoon level is rising, the flood defences are challenged more every winter, and the medieval walls are being eroded by the boats' wake and consumed by sea salt.

Traders, pilgrims, and refugees have been drawn to the city for centuries. Now, Venice is protesting in opposition to mass tourism which is blamed by the locals for being priced out of housing, having

only low-paid seasonal work, and for falling education and health services. The huge cruise ships, arriving daily, have been forced to moor away from the city after a collision destroyed a dock. In 2024 an Access Contribution tax, of up to €10, was imposed on all Venice's packed-lunch carrying day-trippers and the cruisers – all those who do not eat in the restaurants or stay in the hotels. On our visit, there were banners and posters against the Bezos 3-day wedding invasion.

My advice is to go soon, before the protests limit the number of visitors, and before the tax, the gondola, the taxi, and the room rates all increase. Before the walls crumble and the city sinks. Go while it can still be enjoyed – if not for a wedding, perhaps for a proposal, in the most seductive city in the world.



The 2026 Globetrotters Calendar

Don't forget your submissions to the Globetrotters Club 2026 calendar, the 12th edition to be produced by the Club – all the photographs are by members and the finished product is free for members: every member receives a copy. and every member with one of their pictures used receives an additional copy.

As always, there is no limit on the age of the photograph, so why not trawl through your archive of images of memorable travels gone by and submit a favourite picture to inspire others? If you haven't entered before, why not give it a go this year? If you have submitted pictures before, but have been unsuccessful so far, do try again – you may have got closer to the shortlist than you think! Entries will be judged anonymously by a panel of judges from the committee. Pictures will only be used for the calendar and in Globetrotters Club publications (Globe magazine, the e-newsletter, the website, and social media) to promote the calendar and the Club.

Please email your entries as attachments to calendar@globetrotters.co.uk. Include your membership number and a short caption that includes where and when the photo was taken. The photos need to be high-resolution jpeg files suitable for printing as an A5 image - ie, approximately 210mm x 150mm (a 7:5 aspect ratio) and images should be at least 2500 pixels on the longest side. Please choose landscape images only, as portrait does not work. All photos to be submitted in colour only. Square format, 3:2, 4:3 and others may be submitted, but they will be judged by the composition you present and their suitability for the calendar once cropped. The images are printed 'full bleed' (to the edges of the paper with no border), so please ensure that any detail included in your composition doesn't fall towards the edges of your picture – if in doubt, send a slightly wider crop. Below you see the cover of the 2025 Calendar ...

Closing date for entries is 21 September 2025, so please make sure that your membership is valid on this day and is kept current until judging has been completed.



A letter from a father

Nick Marchant came across an old letter from his father to the family, written on PanAm airmail when he was literally sky-high, on his way to inspect buildings for the GB Ministry of Works in Beirut

Saturday. Time uncertain but 1.20 pm Hong Kong time and our fourteenth hour up.

Hello cherubs.

You'll be tired of hearing from me soon. Calcutta and Rangoon (well at least the transit lounges) were tatty. Back in the aircraft there were sufficiently few passengers for us to take the arm rests out and to stretch out under a blanket. The combined seat width is about 5 feet so it was a bit of a knees up for your Dad. There was a delay of sorts but I had actually fallen asleep and only woke momentarily when we took off. Quite an experience lying sideways on takeoff. Gravity pushes you down in the seat and then as the cabin pressure takes over you ride under the seat belt for a moment an inch clear of the seat.

Woke up just as we got within descending distance of Karachi. Continental breakfast of rolls, butter and fruit with coffee. Got out for the hour at Karachi. The bliss of turning on taps and getting water, of flushing toilets, after water-less Hong Kong! Breakfast proper after take-off. Orange juice, cereal (those little Kelloggs packets), scrambled eggs and lamb chops (how about that for breakfast!), fresh fruit, coffee, brioches, marmalade etc. Was given 50 Camels, only American brand available, but being only British aboard, I asked Chief Steward – name of Kopecki and straight out of Naked City – “what brand of cigarettes do Americans of taste and discrimination like yourself smoke?”. Chief Steward tickled pink. “You Goddam British” says he, slapping himself on back “No wonder you ruled the Far East”. Much innocent pleasure. Many ‘Goddams’. (Everybody else got 10).

Washed, shaved and changed shirt in marvellous toilets. All stainless steel and electronics. Everything free – toothpaste, cosmetics, use of electric razor – the lot. I have a window seat to myself, left-hand side, just over wing roof, leading edge. Back in seat as we crossed Sharja on the Trucial coast in the Persian Gulf. Time 12.35. Seven miles up. Sea intense blue, sky almost black with blueness, if you know what I mean. Crossed Qatar Coast 300 miles away exactly half an hour later. Whole coastline visible on my left, over 100 miles away. Bahrain at 13.10, whole island visible. Sea blue, marbled with green and yellow in shallows.



Pilot does right-hand down a bit and heads in for Beirut – a good thousand miles away – navigating apparently by sight on oil pipeline that runs Bahrain to Beirut and clearly visible as thin straight thread in the sand of the Saudi-Arabian desert.

Polyglot company aboard. Middle Eastern magnate - image of G.Coulouris - across gangway, seen off at Karachi by sundry wives and concubines with excited and tearful secretarial of Nasser-ish young men invoking the aid of Allah, Mahomet and the board of Pan Am directors for his safe arrival. Many foreign persons writing letters in characters up and down the page. Have vague feeling next refreshment offered will be sherbert, Turkish Delight and rosewater. Will stick to orange juice (Californian and good).

Couple in front clearly honeymoon couple from France. Had champagne at breakfast – mon dieu! Seat backs very high and no-one on opposite side of gangway. When I stood up to photograph Bahrain, il a sa main posée plus haut sur ses jambes. Oh homme heureux! Oh degustation delice!* Oh dear

David

**Translation - 'He has his hands resting high up her legs. Oh happy man! Oh what a delicious delight!'*

A day to remember in Tayrona National Park

By Mary Fogarty

People had told me that Tayrona National Park was the most beautiful place in Colombia – in the world, some even claimed – and so I decided on a day's trip from Santa Marta, taking in a hike and some beaches.

A lot was to happen to me on this day.

First, the overcrowded bus to the park broke down. The driver disappeared underneath, but must have somehow wriggled out the other side because he was never to be seen again. I tried hitching a lift but no bugger would stop. Finally, another bus came along and we all crammed in.

At the Park entrance, there was a great deal of palaver about leaving one's details and buying insurance for the day, together with strict instructions about what one could and couldn't do in the park. For example, one couldn't take alcohol in - as if! I asked at the gate about the walk I wanted to do – up to the ruins of an old indigenous village, Pueblito – and was told it was two hours up and two hours back down, to the road the other side. This seemed about right for the day, so I decided to ignore the Rough Guide's description of a 'physically demanding uphill path' ...

A park bus drove us down to the sea, from where I learnt it was another two hours just to get to the starting point for my walk. The driver made a big fuss about us putting on adequate insect repellente and using the toilet facilities, but I steamed off through the rainforest overtaking everyone, determined to cut back those two hours. Unfortunately, I tripped over an unseen root and fell flat on my face in front of three startled young men. I picked myself up hastily, and headed off for the sea with blood trickling down my leg. Washing my wound in the salty clear water felt like the right thing to do.

Finally, I arrived at El Cabo San Juan de Gula, a peninsula breaking up two stunning bays of the bluest water and whitest sands. Here I had lunch in the one – huge – open-air restaurant that is available there.

This took a long time, but after that I was ready for my ascent. I went to wash my bleeding knee at the toilets - the man there gave me extra paper and looked concerned. I told him where I was going.

'But that is a big walk and better for the morning Señora!' he said. 'There are huge stones to climb and a river to cross with water up to your thighs!'



El Cabo San Juan de Guía

'Exaggerating', I thought - 'no-one mentioned any of this at the entrance!'

All started well: despite a total lack of signs, I managed to cross the river (up to my knees only) and a man emerged to show me the way through two caves ... how was one supposed to do THAT without signs?!

A little way further along, and the first 'stone' appeared ... actually an enormous slab of rock. Two fit Spanish women coming down looked at me, asked if I didn't have better shoes (no, obviously) and then one climbed back up and pulled me while the other stayed below and pushed. I felt quite triumphant once up there, thanked them mucho, and they assured me it was the worst ... there are ropes on the others, they added.

I didn't pay this last comment much heed, especially as a few smaller rocks followed and I felt quite confident ... but then came a rope – and it was hanging down on a MONOLITH. With absolutely no-one else in sight, there was nothing for it – I simply had to learn how to rock climb ...

There then followed the most exhausting 90 minutes of my life as I hauled myself up rocks in BLISTERING HEAT, all the while shouting and swearing out loud, at the park people mostly – all that fuss about repellent and toilets, but no-one had mentioned that you needed both rock climbing experience and proper climbing shoes for this ruddy walk!

In the end I lost any fear of that rope and that rock as I was so exhausted and furious I was past caring. I would grab hold of the rope, scream and swear, and then go for it ... all the while trying to keep my bleeding knee from bashing the blasted rocks!

There was no-one coming up behind me and I only came across a few people coming down ... who looked visibly startled and asked me if I was ok (it was only when I took a selfie that I realised WHY - my face was red as a sun-dried tomato).

At the top, there were some green terraces and neat flights of stone steps in a lovely sunny clearing - all that was left of Pueblito, the indigenous village. Not a soul in sight except a cat, which appeared from nowhere - not the most jungly of creatures.



*Above: Tayrona bay, with backdrop of Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta;
Left and below: the 'path' up to Pueblito*



So with the lack of people up there I started to worry about the sun going down on my descent on the other side - in the deep JUNGLE

I wandered around a bit and found three huts where there were some Kogi women sitting outside - this was lucky as they could point me to the way down. To be fair, the guidebook had warned me about this section, saying: 'you may be better off hiring a guide for this hike, which has no signs and is quite taxing' .

But at least I was on a path, which was also mercifully free of huge boulders to negotiate. I started off confidently enough, but was soon in the thick jungle again, and when I saw monkeys high up in the trees and a strange low-slung raccoon thing sneaking off into the undergrowth I started worrying again about the sun going down. The monkeys and birds screeched from up high, while meanwhile I began my own chant down below ... 'CALABAZO CALABAZO!', I yelled out (the place I was heading for).

I thought that if there were any humans working in the forest they might hear me and help me. And if nothing else it might deter the monkeys from dropping on me.

Trees barred my way and the path often went UP, which was rather unnerving as I needed to be heading DOWN. Also I was worried about SNAKES and had to walk in a marching thumping way to advertise my coming ...

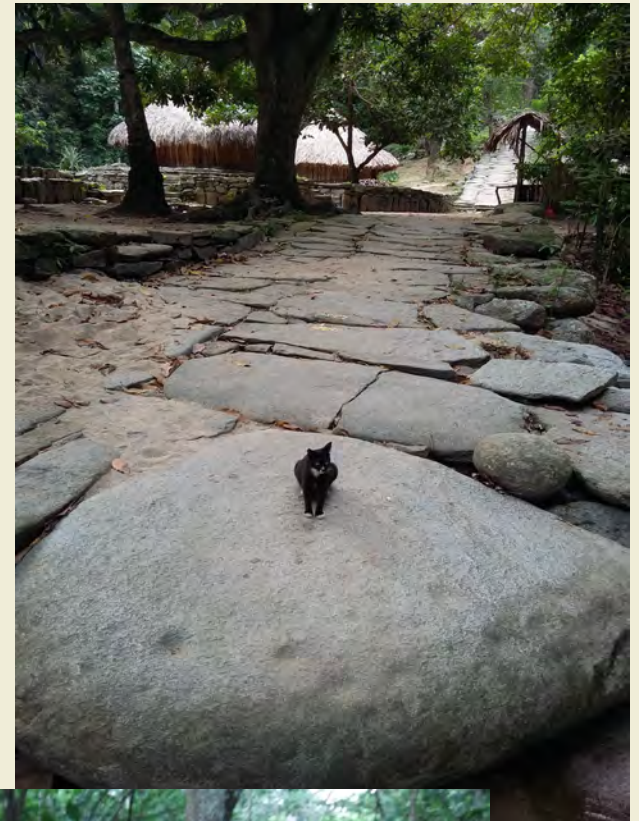
But finally the path widened and I found a small shack, where a woman rushed out and offered me a juice or a Coke - to buy. I went for the Coke and then she saw my bleeding knee and was aghast - she rushed off for alcohol (presumably this sort is allowed in the park!) and wiped it in ... this stung like hell but helped. And then she added some green stuff to keep the flies away ... which probably prevented an infection.

She did not tell me I was mad (she was very kind) but told me to go very carefully the rest of the way, saying it was all downhill now ...

But it wasn't! I had more rivers to cross and steep paths to climb (I must have lost about five stone) and then a hideous sort of road made of solid ROCK, where I was mortified by the sight of two small boys hurtling down past me as if this was just the easiest thing in the world

Finally finally finally I hit the road - and the small town of Calabazo, which was mostly just bars either side of the road, most of them revving up for a night's entertainment ... a great Latinoamerican beat rang out as I walked zombie-like along the road.

I found a toilet and then along came a bus going back to Santa Marta, thank God, but I did sit on it wondering for a while if I had taken quite the right path, as at no point did I find anywhere to register myself as safely out of the park. Perhaps I am still on the missing list ...



*Clockwise:
cat on the
top; the
path down;
the shack
where the
woman
lived*



All Along the Indus:

a journey through the south of Pakistan

In December 2023, Alan Palmer journeyed overland for 17 days from Islamabad, Pakistan's modern political capital in the north, to Karachi, the country's first capital on the shores of the Arabian Sea in the south. Here he describes his personal highlights of the trip.

Although I had previously revelled in travelling through the Hindu Kush, Karakoram and Western Himalayas – the magnificent mountains of northern Pakistan – during many visits, I was conscious that I had largely neglected the vast expanse of the south of the country: much less known, much less frequented, yet no less beautiful.

Two years ago, I finally set about rectifying this. However, as I turned my back on the minarets of Islamabad's Shah Faisal Mosque, set against the backdrop of the Margalla Hills – part of the Himalayan foothills – I knew that I was heading for an altogether different experience. Pakistan, after all, is a land of contrasts like none other.

With so much new territory in the south to explore, I therefore set upon broadly following the course of the Lion River, the mighty Indus, flowing first through Punjab, 'the bread basket' of Pakistan, then around the wild, romantic deserts of Sindh, before finally discharging into the Arabian Sea.

I began by exploring the exquisite Moghul-era city of Lahore. To most, the Moghuls are, of course, synonymous with Agra's Taj Mahal. To my mind, however, the true witness to the brilliance of seventeenth century Moghul architecture is Emperor Aurangzeb's Badshahi Mosque: to truly appreciate this gem yourself, just try standing at the centre of its ginormous walled courtyard, below the perfect ice-white domes which cap its imperious red sandstone prayer halls, deliciously contrasting with the clearest of blue winter skies.

In Multan, I was treated to the celestial performances of fabled Sufi musicians, kneeling at the entrances to a succession of astonishingly ornate shrines. Each shrine, dedicated to a saint, an ancient mystic, attracts throngs of devoted pilgrims. It is, however, the euphoria at the tomb of Lal Shabaz Qalandar in Sindh which lasts longest in the mind. So wild were its swirling, frenzied dancers, hypnotised by a crescendo of horns and drums, that anxious locals urged me to move away from my seat – close to the dancers – for my

Abbasi Mosque, Derawar, in Cholistan Desert



own safety. However, so enraptured was I by the unfolding climactic scene, that I could not be persuaded, sensing that I was perhaps in receipt of divine protection in this most spiritual of settings.

And so, my journey southwards continued, discovering a myriad of isolated mosques, forgotten, sumptuous cemeteries and crumbling fortresses in the depths of the sands of the Cholistan desert. I strolled along ancient lanes, lined by 12-foot high walls, at the ancient archaeological sites of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro, structures even more impressive than those at Pompeii, yet twice as old. This was the Indus Valley Civilisation, one of the three oldest in the world, dating back to the fourth millennium BC – yes, contemporary with the pyramids of Ancient Egypt.

I sought out members of the dwindling Mohana tribe, reputedly direct descendants of the Indus Valley Civilisation peoples, still leading a subsistence life on the banks of Manchar Lake, the largest in Pakistan, on the fringes of society. Traditionally inhabiting floating islands, today they continue to eke out a means of survival by shooting birds with rusting single shot rifles and silently entering the waters disguised as egrets to hand-spear unsuspecting fish.

And finally, I stood upon Karachi's Clifton Beach, suddenly and bizarrely surrounded by scores of city day-trippers sitting atop parades of pleasure camels, silhouetted by the brilliant glare of the expanse of the Arabian Sea. Ironically, despite the abundance of



wonders encountered since Islamabad, I had not set eyes on a solitary foreign tourist. This, of course, made the experience all the more unforgettable and it is one, given half a chance, that I would rush to do all over again.

Alan, who is CEO of Yak Travel, will be running this trip for a small group later this year, from November 1-17, with 10% discount for Globetrotters Club members. Read more about the trip at: <https://www.yaktravel.co.uk/all-along-the-indus/> or contact him direct at alan@yaktravel.co.uk, +44 07910 209766.



*Tomb of
Dewan Shurfa
Khan, Makli
Necropolis,
Thatta*

A travel writing course in Bath

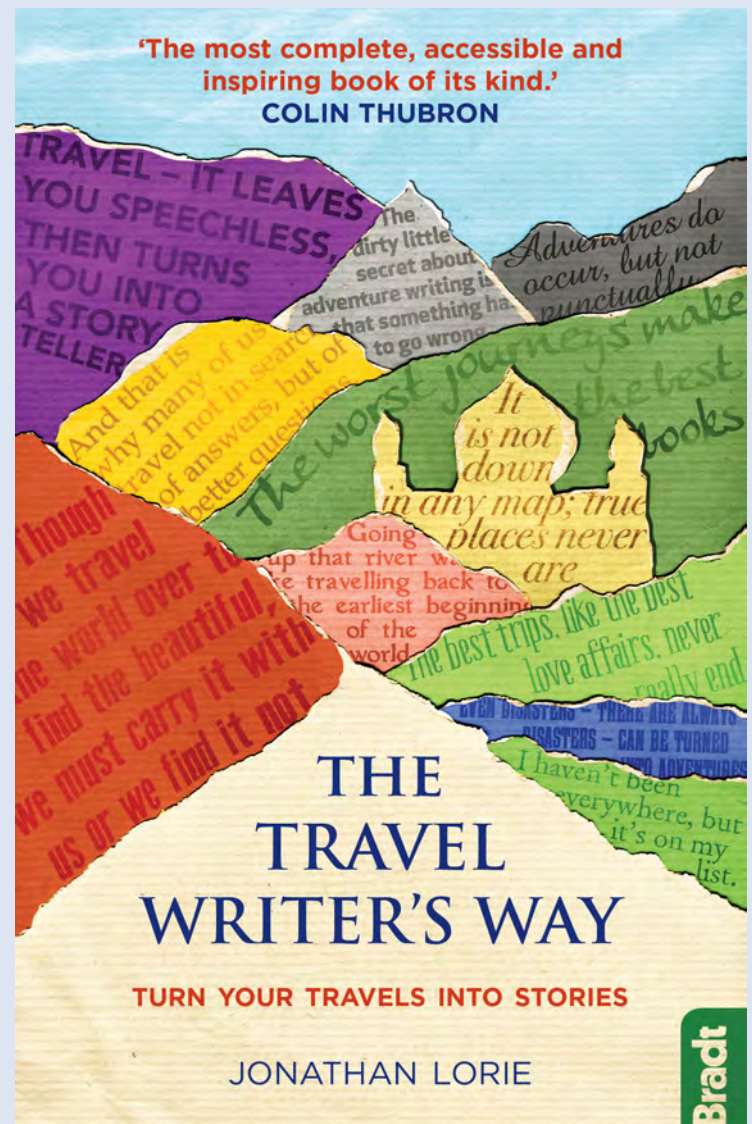
By Jonathan Lorie

Every journey is a story and every traveller has a wealth of stories just waiting to be told – or that’s my experience, after teaching travel writing to beginners for the past 25 years. I wanted to let you know about a way you might like to turn your own travels into stories, for publication or maybe just for pleasure.

I lead a unique course in travel writing, the only one of its kind in the UK and probably in the world. It’s taught online and part-time, and people participate from all over the UK or even all over the world, fitting it around their own busy lives. We spend two years teaching them the craft of writing travel or nature stories for articles, blogs and books, and helping them to become professional-quality writers. Most people come off the course with some articles already published – and right now we have three students who have scored book deals with reputable publishers including Bloomsbury and Bradt Guides, and another who has a regular nature column with his local newspaper.

The course is an MA in Nature and Travel Writing (www.bathspa.ac.uk/courses/pg-nature-and-travel-writing) and it’s offered by Bath Spa University. You study from home, with seminars on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. The vibe is informal and very supportive, with a focus on helping everyone to find their own direction as a writer.

The course opens with a four-day, face-to-face residency in the beautiful city of Bath, where we practise the skills of writing ‘on the road’, as well as building up friendships with the tutors and fellow students – friendships that usually last well beyond the course. The student group is usually about 12 people, of all ages and backgrounds – many without any professional writing experience, but all with a passion for travel or nature. Some want to become professional writers, others have a



particular writing project in mind, some just want to enrich their enjoyment of a hobby well done. All of those approaches are OK with us.

I lead the course, based on my professional experience as a travel magazine editor and freelance travel writer for all the national newspapers and travel magazines. I’ve been teaching people how to turn their travels into stories since 2002, at courses in London, Paris, Marrakech, Istanbul and other inspiring locations. In 2019, I wrote the standard work for aspiring travel writers, *The Travel Writer’s Way*, which was published by Bradt. If you don’t fancy the course, do have a look at this very practical manual, which contains lots of writing exercises and prompts you can do on your own.

However, the MA gives you the time and support to really immerse yourself in your writing and creative plans. I'm joined there by other experienced professionals, including editors and agents, and we form a welcoming group of past and present learners. I take the view that we're all on the same road, just at different stages. With our support, you can learn about the world of great nature and travel writing, enjoy talks from top authors and editors, attend seminars from our seasoned tutors and make great creative friendships with your peers.

A highlight of the course is the solo research trip which students take in their second year, spending a week or so on the road, gathering information and developing story ideas which they then come home and pitch for real – to real media outlets. Last year after this, we saw our students being published in places as prestigious as The Telegraph and Conde Nast Traveller.

This year is our tenth anniversary and everyone is gathering for a birthday party on October, which will be a wonderful chance to catch up with alumni and celebrate where the course has taken them.



Author Jonathon Lorie with gorilla in Rwanda



Jonathan's writers groups in Italy and over a campfire

Past students have had books published by Penguin, Bloomsbury, Granta, Bradt and elsewhere. Their prizes have included the Stanfords New Travel Writer of the Year, BBC Countryfile's New Nature Writer of the Year, the Nature Writing Prize for Working Class Writers, the Footnote x Counterpoints Writing Prize, and shortlists or longlists for the Wainwright Prize for Nature Writing and the Richard Jeffries Prize. That could be you.

For this year, places are still open, so if you're interested do have a look at the website and consider applying swiftly. The Bath residential starts on 29 September, and remember: to apply for this inspiring course, you don't need a literary background, just a love of travel or nature and a desire to write about them.

Globetrotter titbits

Recipes from around the world

Couscous aux sept legumes (from Morocco)

Onions, garlic, chillies
Cumin, coriander, turmeric
Ground ginger
Tomatoes
Carrots, turnips, potatoes
Courgettes, chickpeas



Sauté your onions and garlic cloves till softened, then add spices and ground ginger. Stir in chopped tomatoes, then carrots, turnips etc, with two cups of water. Bring to boil and then simmer for 15 minutes. Add courgettes and chick peas, and season, and then simmer again for 15 mins. Stir in coriander leaves at the last minute.

Put the prepared cous-cous in a dish and place the vegetables on top in a typical Moroccan artistic design! (You can also add chicken if you like).

Cous-cous aux sept legumes, Fag style

- Onion(s) r garlic
- Cumin, coriander, turmeric
- Ginger (ground)
- Tomatoes
- Carrots (r turnips?) Potatoes!
- Courgettes
- Cabbage
- Chickpeas, coriander leaves

Sauté onions, add spices r ground ginger. Stir in chopped tomatoes, then carrots, turnips r cabbage, with 2 cups of water. Bring to boil r then simmer for 15 mins. Add courgettes r chickpeas, and season with salt r pepper, r then simmer again for 15 mins. Stir in coriander at last minute.

Put the prepared cous-cous in a dish r place the vegetables in a Moroccan artistic fashion (Add cooked chicken if you like)

Sri Lanka trip



A group of Globies set off on a voyage to Sri Lanka in July for two weeks. They landed in Negombo, covered the Cultural Triangle of Anuradhapura, Dambulla and Sigiriya, visited elephants at Udawalawe, and then hit the south coast at Matara, visiting Galle and Hikkaduwa before taking the train back up to Colombo..

If you are interested in a tailor-made tour to Sri Lanka, please see the ad on page 23 for birdwatching tours - we went with Sam Casseer from Wild Lanka Tours..

Globies summer fun



As there was no Globetrotters meeting in August, a group of Globies arranged a summer meeting in the Fox on the Hill pub in Denmark Hill. This pulled members in from north, south, east and west!

As this is a Spoons pub, everyone enjoyed a bargain plate of food, most of us plumping for good old fish and chips. Pints and wine flowed - pictured here is the 'hard core' - all that was left of a riotous evening at about, er, 10pm!

Book review

A Training School for Elephants, by Sophy Roberts

By Mary Fogarty

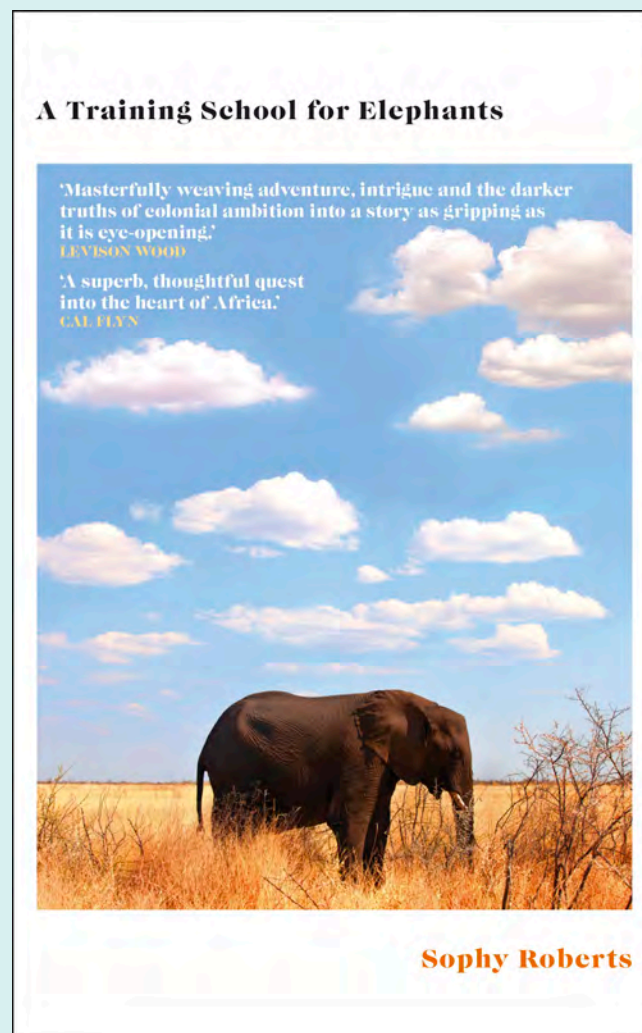
Sophy came to Globetrotters and gave us a talk based on this book: before, I read straight through all of it in a few days – unheard-of for me, normally, but in addition to wanting to be ready for her, I was totally fascinated by this book.

Ostensibly it's about the extraordinary idea of King Leopold of Belgium to bring some Asian elephants to Africa: he had just taken over the whole of the Congo in one outrageous colonial swoop and he wanted to find a route to the coast for the extraction of all that he was looting from that poor country. As Asian elephants already had a well-known reputation for transport work in their own continent, Leopold thought that a few of them could come over to Africa and train some local ones to emulate them.

Sophy follows the journey of the elephants from India via Yemen to Zanzibar, where they were disembarked (with great difficulty) and inland to Lake Tanganika and there are vivid, journalistic, descriptions of everywhere she – and they – went. (I particularly loved her days spent researching in Zanzibar – mornings in the archives, lunch in a Swahili canteen, 'then in the late afternoons when the heat got too much, I'd nip round to a slippery wharf where a boatman would pick me up for a ride to a local sandbar'. At night, she'd lie in bed leafing through her sources, 'with a salty breeze blowing through my room'.

She is in the footsteps of the charismatic Frederic Carter, an Irishman who lived in Mesopotamia and spoke fluent Arabic: King Leopold chose him to bring the Asian elephants to Africa. But as she follows him, she meets so many other memorable characters – and it is her interaction with these that makes the book so winning. While she relates the history of Carter's journey, they bring her up to date with how the country is now; often, too, they have an ancestor who can remember Carter or his times ...

It's a grim old story: the elephants arrive from Asia already in a bad state, sores on their feet from where they've been chained in the bowels of the boat, and no doubt traumatised by the new country they have to trudge through, weighed down by huge amounts of luggage, despite their mahouts trying to advise Carter against this. Two of them die quite quickly en route, another when they have almost reached their destination, and the last before Carter meets his death in a terrible shoot-out in a local village.



But this book is about so much more than the elephants and it is Sophy's combined journalistic/historic approach which opens up the whole world of that part of Africa to us, both then and now. We are confronted with the old colonialism of Leopold and the modern impact of China: 'Over the last 20 years, it's estimated that China has pumped more than 126 billion dollars into African countries, giving the Chinese a controlling influence over trade, and numerous government loans in a continent-wide sweep, with Tanzania one of the larger beneficiaries'.

I particularly salute Sophy's decision to stack all the Notes as a kind of addendum at the back of the book, so that our enjoyment of the reading is not constantly interrupted by having to look at footnotes.

A great book, then, to gain an understanding of much of Tanzania's history – but also to gain insight into its people and its terrain. Sophy made many friends there and they are the stars of this book.

High speed from Milan to Paris

By Mary Fogarty

After a month's wandering through Italy, I needed to get back from Milan to London – but I wanted something more interesting than just another Easyjet flight, so I bought a ticket on the SNCF TGV train from Milan to Paris.

The train left Milan's Porta Garibaldi station at 6am and I would never have made it at that unearthly hour had it not been for my friends, waking me with coffee at 4.30 and driving me on a somewhat jittery ride crossing all the main roads as ALL the traffic lights in Milan are off until 6am.

The train was standing at platform 1 – in some grass, strangely – in Porta Garibaldi station, a small station with six platforms, and very few people around. In fact, there appeared to be NO staff around at all and I therefore found my carriage and seat with absolutely NO security checks made by anyone before boarding – quite the contrast to Eurostar!

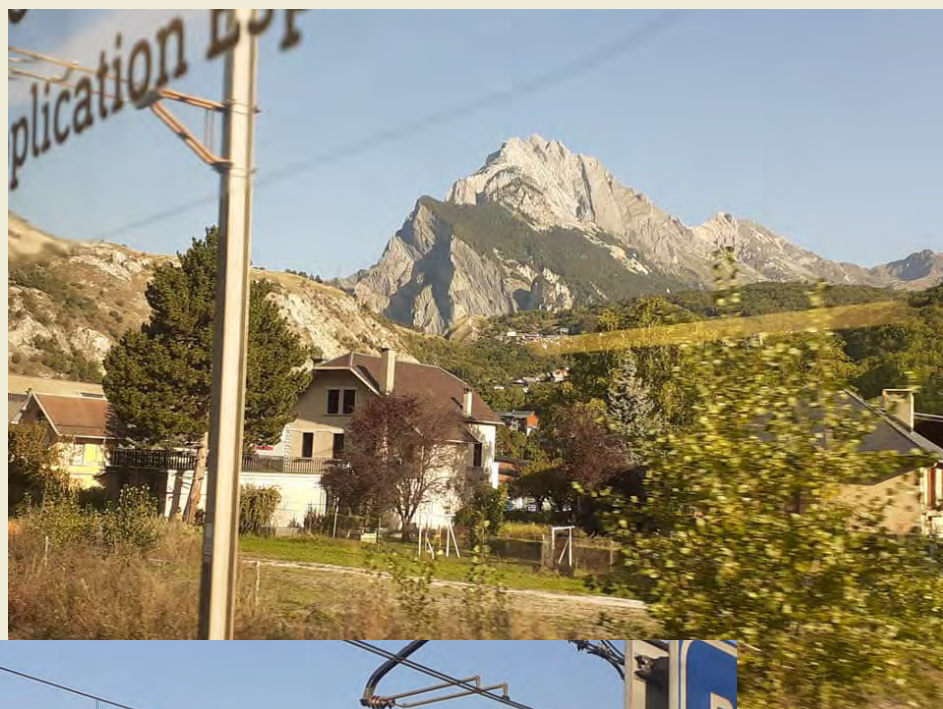
My carriage was full of single young men, most of whom snuck down into hoodies and snored when anyone approached. We stopped first at Vercelli, and then Turin, where a lot more people boarded, including many more suspicious-looking single men with hoodies, who slunk into seats around me. Then it was Bardonecchio, the last Italian stop before the border, and police armed with pistols were everywhere on the platform – quite what they were looking for was not clear and they didn't board the train, but some of the hoodies sunk down still further into their seats.

We trundled on in complete darkness for another hour and a half, until the dawn broke, and the sun rose ... to reveal a spectacular row of jagged peaks up above us, for now we were well and truly travelling through the Alps. We chugged in to a shuddering halt at the next station, Modane, which looked chilly and misty, and here it was announced that we were at the French border. And now it became only too apparent WHY the boys had huddled down in their seats, as several armed French policemen were waiting on the platform. They immediately boarded ... and when they got to my carriage they arrested the boy in front of me AND the man a few seats behind me.

The one in front was Moroccan I am sure: I had heard him speaking in Moroccan Arabic on his phone, and he also spoke good French to the police. At first he seemed quite confident – he showed them his papers and his passport, but the police were clear: the papers were only good for Italy and he could not enter France. And so off he had to get: he went very quietly and just stood on the platform behind the police as they talked to their other captives – I did feel for him. He probably had been visiting relatives in Italy (lots of Moroccans have relatives there) and then thought he'd take a look at possibilities in other parts of Europe ... There weren't a lot of stops after all that drama: just three, at St Jean du Maurienne, Chambéry/Challis-les-Eaux, and Macon Loché, and the problem with being on a TGV is that it does go so very fast just when you want to take a photograph. We would be crawling through some nondescript parts and



then, just as we reached a scene of some spectacular rocky peak or crystal blue lake, the train would speed up and whizz through ... or so it seemed. So it was very difficult to take good photos ... and there were always wires in the way, as well as reflections of carriage lights in the window. But it was, nevertheless, an absolutely fantastic way of passing through a huge part of what appeared to be France's most stunning landscapes – it was early September and I will never forget the endless fields of gold and green, contrasting with the sparkling blue of the lakes and rivers.

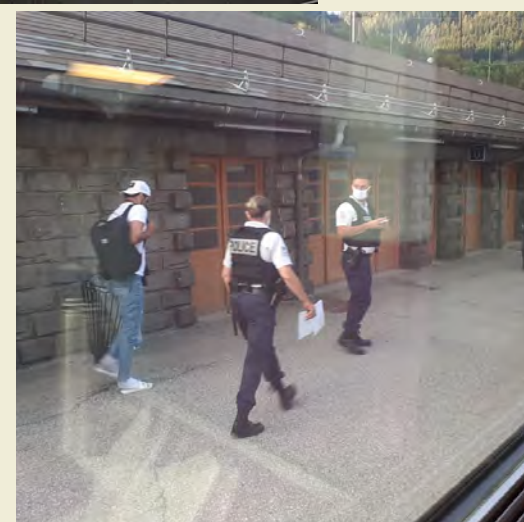


So, not a photographer's paradise, but certainly one for travellers wishing adventure and vivid colour, both inside and outside the speeding train! The whole journey took just over seven hours to reach Gare du Lyons in Paris, arriving punctually at 13.16. I'd already had a coffee and croissant in the smart café on board and – after taking a taxi to Gare du Nord – I consumed steak and frites in the Brasserie du Nord before taking the Eurostar back to London.



*Views from the train:
Modane, French border;
Bardonecchia;
Police at Italian border;
Contents of seat next to me!
Front carriage of the train*

The TGV (Train à Grande Vitesse) high-speed INOUI trains (owned by SNCF) run three services daily from Milano Porta Garibaldi to Paris Gare de Lyon, leaving at 6am, 12.10 and 16.10, and all taking a little over seven hours. My ticket cost 69 euro, but they vary considerably – at present looking like anything between 120 and 200 euro.



There are also two direct daily services offered by Trenitalia (Italian Railways) on their smart red and white Frecciarossa trains. These run from Milano Centrale to Gare de Lyon at 06.20 and 15.48, and also take about seven hours. Tickets look comparable in price.



Discounts and offers for Globetrotter members

Adventure Mania: Himalayan expeditions

Details: 15% discount
(<http://adventuremaniaindia.blogspot.co.uk>)

How to: [REDACTED]

Africa Trails: Africa Overland Tours

Details: 10 % off East Africa Tours, 5% off Trans-Africa and Nile Expeditions
(<http://www.africantrails.co.uk/>)

Angel Holidays: Tours

Details: 5% discount (<http://www.angelholidays.co.uk>)

Artisa: A retreat in Greece

Details: 5% discount off of all retreat programs, along with a free excursion to the ancient theatre of Epidavros.
(<http://www.artisagreece.org>)

Bloomsbury Travel Writing Workshops

Travel workshops
Details: 10% off
(<https://www.travelwritingworkshop.co.uk>)

How to: [REDACTED]

www.writeawaytravel.com

Bradt Travel Guides

35% off all Bradt guides
(<http://www.bradtguides.com/>)

How to: [REDACTED]

Epic Enabled

Guesthouse and 'accessible safaris & travel in South Africa' - ie, for disabled.
Details: 10% discount on Guest house and tours (<http://www.epic-enabled.com>)

How to: [REDACTED]

Eurotalk

What: Language learning products (DVDs/software etc.). 125 languages.

Details: 25% off (<http://www.eurotalk.com>)

How to: [REDACTED]

Footprint Books: Travel books

Details: 30% when ordered online (<https://www.footprinttravelguides.com/>)

How to: [REDACTED]

Global Traveler, American travel magazine

Details: \$10 off subscriptions
(<http://www.globaltravelerusa.com>)

How to: [REDACTED]

Go Barefoot: Tours

Details: 5% discount on tailor made and no-fixed departure date itineraries, and 10% for group sizes 8+
(<https://gobarefoot.travel/>)

How to: [REDACTED]

Jaipur Inn, Rajasthan, India

Accommodation 20% discount (<http://www.jaipurinn.com/>)

How to: [REDACTED] ip

Peter Sommer Travels

Expert-led archaeological tours, gulet cruises and private gulet charters in Turkey, Greece and Italy. Specialising in escorted food tours, family tours and walking holidays.

Details: 5% discount to members (<http://www.petersommer.com>)

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Undiscovered Destinations

Adventure travel company providing truly authentic experiences in some of the world's most exciting regions. Offering guided small group tours, with an extensive choice of guaranteed departures, together with tailor-made travel.

Details: 7% discount on our group tours only
(<http://www.undiscovered-destinations.com>)

How to: [REDACTED]

Travel Local

Tours. Details: £50 off per person on all tours (<http://www.travellocal.com/>)

How to: [REDACTED]

Travel Writing

Travel writing w/s's with Peter Carty

Details: £10 off (<http://www.travelwritingworkshop.co.uk>)

How to: [REDACTED]

TrekAmerica

10% discount on all TrekAmerica and Grand American Adventures trips

Details: 10% on all tours (<http://www.trekamerica.co.uk>)

How to: [REDACTED]

Wanderlust Magazine Travel Magazine

Details: A FREE £50 travel voucher* to save you money on your next trip when booking with a host of top tour operators including Exodus, Intrepid Travel and many others (<http://www.wanderlust.co.uk/>)

How to: [REDACTED]

RealEscapeTravel

A travel company

[REDACTED]

Ethiopia Travellers' Handbook:

A travel guide for the group, package and independent traveller, by Trevor Jenner. Full colour, 448 pages, over 600 images, published by Meru Publishing.

Details: 35% discount (<http://www.merupublishing.com>)

How to: [REDACTED]

Water to Go

Water-to-Go is a filtration system that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants, including viruses, bacteria, chemicals and heavy metals from any non-salt water source.

Details: 30% discount. (<https://watertogo.eu/>)

How to: [REDACTED]

Due South Motorcycle Tours ~ South Africa

Details: Due South offers motorbike touring in intimate organised groups, on current model motorcycles, through a part of the world that offers a truly unique blend of motorcycling tourism (<https://www.due-south.co.za/>)

How to: [REDACTED]

YellowWood Adventures

An adventure travel company specialising in Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan, Iran, Mongolia, Ladakh, Lebanon & Japan.

Details: 10% discount to Globetrotters members for YellowWood Adventures valued up to (but not exceeding) £1,500 (<https://www.yellowwoodadventures.com/>)

How to: [REDACTED]

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To subscribe to the e-newsletter, visit: www.globetrotters.co.uk/register.html

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As the club has no permanent headquarters, this address is that of a forwarding agency.

To email other club officials:

Membership queries:

gtmembership@globetrotters.co.uk

See website for other contacts.

Website: globetrotters.co.uk

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Globetrotters Annual General Meeting

The Globetrotters Club AGM usually takes place before the November meeting in London. The meeting covers the most crucial factors of the running of the Club, so the more members that can attend, the stronger we can be when making important decisions about the future of the Club. All paid up members are encouraged to attend and will have the opportunity to find out about previous and future activities as well as ask general questions about the running of the Club. Please remember to bring your membership card with you to show upon entry.

Globetrotters Club Officers

All officials are voluntary workers and can change from time to time

Founder: Norman D Ford (1921-2009)

President: John Pilkington

Vice Presidents: John Ainsworth, Carol Simonson, John Batchelor, Richard Snailham, Tanis Jordan, Martin Jordan, Malcolm Keir, Hilary Bradt, Sue Learoyd, Arthur Frommer, Gill Ward, Matt Doughty, Paul Woodward, Jacqui Trotter, Kevin Brackley

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Francesca Jaggs, John Pannell

Treasurer: John Pannell

Chair:

Committee Secretary: Kevin Brackley

Membership Secretary:

Catherine Fynamore

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Globe Editor: Mary Fogarty

E-newsletter Editor:

London Meetings Organiser:

Mary Fogarty

Technical Coordinator and Webmaster:

Paul Roberts

Committee members: Kevin Brackley,

Paul Roberts, John Pannell, Gavin A Fernandes,

Catherine Fynamore, Mary Fogarty, Doreen

Taylor

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