



Welcome to a well overdue issue of my newsletter on Syder Travel news, views, 'hot' destinations and recent visits. Firstly it is with grateful thanks to all of you who have booked with me during the past year, and previous years, enabling me to offer another rich and diverse range of destinations into 2014

I am sure that at the forefront of many of our minds is our great sadness as we witness the appalling situation in Syria and the death of so many innocent civilians. Whilst on a very recent tour to South East Turkey this was brought even closer to home as I met a number of refugees who had managed to escape their war torn neighbourhoods and related terrible stories of losing loved ones and the destruction of their homes and lands. Whatever the solution to this dreadful scenario, let us pray that it comes quickly.

Recent Tour News and Views

Ethiopia

Easter Festivals and Historic Abyssinia
22 April – 6 May 2013

As you'll see from the 'Photo Feature Tour' this trip was timed to coincide with the colourful spectacle of the Easter week celebrations in Axum and Lalibela, as well as discover the lesser visited and remote rock-cut churches of the Eastern Tigray, the beautiful landscapes of the Simien Mountains and the serenity of Lake Tana; source of the Blue Nile. Group member *Emma Stirrup, from Surrey* wrote to say "Walking in the Simien Mountains - the roof of Africa - is an experience alone that can sustain a restless soul – let alone the experience of the Easter festivities in Axum and Lalibela. Such a wonderful, wonderful trip!"

Certainly Ethiopia is in the news at the moment - only last week BBC's George Alagiah reported that Ethiopia is 'Africa's fastest growing economy at 8.7%' and I can report that there has not been a better time to visit the country. New quality private hotels and fabulous new restaurants are opening in the capital and across the Northern circuit in Bahar Dar, Gondar, Lalibela and Axum.



The Simien Mountain National Park – 'the Roof of Africa'

My next trip at the end of September will be very different from the usual classic route chosen by the majority of UK operators, and is set to include the ancient *Meskel* celebration in Addis Ababa marking the finding of the True Cross on which Jesus Christ was crucified. A procession bearing flaming torches approaches Meskel Square in the centre of the capital from various directions. A burning pyramid (*demera*) is located in the centre and is circled by priests in brightly coloured robes carrying giant crosses and torches. The tour also includes the lesser visited region of Eastern Tigray renowned not only for its stunning natural landscapes but also superbly preserved medieval rock-cut churches plus the opportunity to visit the historic walled city of Harar.

The [Meskel Festival and Historic Abyssinia Tour](#) departs on 24 September 2013

Turkey

Treasures of South East Anatolia
8 – 15 May 2013

A real groundbreaking tour for Syder Travel as described in detail here by group member *Julian Day from West Midlands*.

"Gobekli Tepe, the new wonder of the ancient world that has turned recorded history on its head; the world's first temples of dozens of sixteen-ton T-shaped carved pillars, proving that collaborative construction and collective ritual pre-dates communal living and not vice versa; the trigger that transformed hunter-gatherers into farmers of crops and keepers of livestock soon after the last Ice Age; an astronomical clock in stone on the scale of twenty Stonehenges, built seven thousand years before the Pyramids, chiming to tell when animal migrations would bring food to the hungry tribes people.

Oh, and according to new DNA analysis, eighty per cent of us Europeans are descended from the Gobeklians!



One of the recently excavated and extraordinary temples at Gobekli Tepe

Could the highlight of our “Treasures of South East Anatolia” tour possibly live up to all this hype?

Answer: emphatically yes. A lecture tour of the jaw-dropping site of the quarry and seven of the twenty stone circles so far revealed, headed by a leading member of the excavation team, added to the exhilaration of being some of the first visitors to marvel and trade theories and ideas as fresh as the newly-turned Stone Age soil.

Yet Gobekli was simply top of the bill of a glittering seven-day historical and cultural extravaganza that included the stunning Roman villa mosaics of the Gaziantep Museum and their original site on the banks of the Euphrates at Zeugma; a pilgrimage to Abraham’s birthplace; the ascent of Mount Nemrut to gaze at the giant stone heads of first century BC gods; and a taking of the waters of the Tigris beneath the mighty walls of Diyarbakir, capital of Mesopotamia and the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world. Don’t delay your South East Turkey trip.

The word’s out and new tribes are gathering! But, as usual, Syder Travel leads the way.”

The next [Treasures of South East Anatolia Tour](#) departs on 2 November 2013

Burma (Myanmar)

The Golden Land

13 – 25 November 2013

We had a very successful group visit to Burma at the beginning of 2013 but demand for tours to Burma from across the globe continues to grow at an unprecedented rate and as a result costs within Burma have soared, particularly for hotel rooms and internal flight seats. However I am pleased to announce that I have managed to secure a very competitively priced 12 day tour package once again, that includes the cultural

and historical highlights of the country, for November. This might well be the last scheduled visit to the country for a while as prices seem set to continue to rise until more competition on the ground is established.

The [Golden Land Tour](#) departs on 13 November 2013



The shimmering Shwedagon Pagoda, Yangon

Autumn/Winter 2013 Tours

Sadly a significant part of the Middle East and Islamic African is currently unsafe to visit as confirmed by the Foreign Commonwealth Office, however Jordan, Oman, Tunisia and Morocco are very much open for business and I am offering group and tailor-made departures during 2013/14. In fact a recently organised private group to Jordan returned ecstatically to relate that ‘*Petra had not been so quiet since its rediscovery!*’. So a good time to visit certainly!

[ETHIOPIA – Meskel Festival and Historic Abyssinia](#)
24 September – 7 October 2013

[TUNISIA – Ancient Carthage and Desert Oases](#)
8 – 18 October 2013

[MOROCCO – Imperial Cities and Desert Kasbahs](#)
19 October – 1 November 2013

[TURKEY – Gobekli Tepe and the Treasures of South East Anatolia](#)
2 – 9 November 2013

[MYANMAR \(BURMA\) – The Golden Land](#)
13 – 25 November 2013

[OMAN – Jewel of Arabia](#)
30 November – 8 December 2013

[NEPAL – Land of the Majestic Mountain](#)
9 – 19 December 2013

New Look Website and 2014

The Syder Travel concept is very much about providing a personal service and a product that is value for money in a very specialist field. Paramount to its success is the ability to provide new and exciting destinations each year as well as continually monitor those already established. New tour destinations for 2014 include Sudan, Bhutan, Rajasthan, Greece and Indonesia now available to read and download from my revamped website just released today so please click on any of the tours below to take you thereenjoy!

NORTHERN SUDAN – Royal Cities of the Nile

9 – 18 January 2014

ETHIOPIA – Timkat Festival and Historic Abyssinia

18 January – 5 February 2014

RAJASTHAN – India's Golden Triangle

12 – 26 February 2014

BHUTAN – Kingdom of the Thunder Dragon

5 – 17 March 2014

LAOS & CAMBODIA – Jewels of Indo-China

18 March – 3 April 2014

ETHIOPIA – Easter Festivals and Historic Abyssinia

7 – 21 April 2013

JORDAN – Highlights of the Hashemite Kingdom

24 April – 1 May 2014

GREECE – Classic Sites of the Ancient Greeks

6 -17 May 2014

TURKEY – A Journey through Anatolia

20 May – 3 June 2014

ARMENIA and GEORGIA – East of Byzantium

11 – 25 June 2014

ETHIOPIA – Tribes of the Omo Valley

9 – 21 July 2014

INDONESIA – Highlights of Java and Bali

12 – 25 August 2014

Help Genet to help others

Finally.....I know that many of you who have visited Ethiopia feel the need to give something back in return for the enormous pleasure it provides as a travel destination. I feel very much the same. In 2008 I joint sponsored a very bright young lady who needed help financially to train as a nurse, and who now, five years later, is training others as a result. Today, 23 year old Genet Amare (below) from Lalibela needs similar help. Her circumstances are more desperate. She has tragically lost all her family members - her parents from disease, her brother from fighting in the war against Eritrea and most recently she lost her sister in a terrible accident. Genet is a single mother and moved to Bahar Dar to find work but because her education was cut short, her English is poor and so her chances of finding reasonably paid work is very limited. She desperately wants to train as a nurse and help others, but she needs to develop her English before she can begin her nurse training.



With logistical assistance from my local Addis Ababa based agent who is acting as 'guardian', I have provided enough financial support to cover Genet's immediate expenses and fees to enable her to start her English studies but need to raise funds in order to help continue to support her over the next two years. I am looking at a sponsored South Downs walk locally in the summer but any one-off or monthly donations, however small, would literally be a life-changer and be received with enormous gratitude by Genet. I can personally guarantee that every single penny received would go to help Genet achieve her dream. Thank you.

Account Name: Patrick Syder (The Genet Amare Fund)
Account Number : 48278068
Sort Code: 30-98-77

I hope that you have enjoyed reading this first issue of *Travel Addict*. If you know of friends who would be interested in the tours that Syder Travel has to offer then I would be most grateful if you could pass this on to them. Kindest regards, **Patrick**

SYDER TRAVEL Escorted Cultural Tours

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TRAVEL ADDICT Feature Tour

Easter Festivals & Historic Abyssinia 2013

'In Photographs'



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