

**TEL AVIV, JERUSALEM, BETHLEHEM.....
AND GALILEE ISTANBUL
(SUADIYE, BURKAZADA AND THE BOSPHORUS)**

Continuing adventures out of Sasashima in what used to be
the Ottoman Empire October 15 -November 1st 2019

John HAMILTON

There are important people I must thank this time:

First there is TAMARA my granddaughter, now 8 and elder sister to Raphael, Daphne and Mikhail (Shuki). They live in Neve Tsedek in Tel Aviv and all speak Hebrew rather better than English....I'm quite proud of them. They are the first Hamiltons to speak Hebrew and go to schools where that is the language.

Second there is another Daphne, DAPHNE BIRCH, a neighbour living in the cowsheds on the other side of our big hedge at Lordington they are not cowsheds, but converted cowsheds, but my mother always called them cowsheds, so I think of them as cowsheds. Daphne went olive picking in Beit Sahur a year or two back and she thought I should do it too....and October is the month.....so I went ahead.....she organised it and I did it and it was fun and I met some fine people.

Third I must thank RUTH COHEN, the artist who loves Japanese Washi and black ink (sumi 墨) and lives in Yoel Salomon, West Jerusalem. She has recently broken an arm and a leg, and can barely get in and out of her flat. So I went there to help walk her dog. Thanks to her, this time I had a lulav blessing during the Sukkoth and also a Sukkoth feast. It set me up for the year !

Fourth, while walking Ruth's dog Nakita in the park in Jerusalem I met GIL ZOHAR ('Zohar' means light) walking with his dog. Recently he had been walking with both dogs, but when I turned up he took a break from Nakita. In the dog pound Gil wrote down on an envelope where I should go in the Bethlehem. He had also written an article in the Jerusalem Post on how to visit Sinai. I am very grateful to him for his helpful advice and encouragement.

Fifth, in Galilee I met a Druze beekeeper ASAL ALNOR (RASAN) who had actually been to Japan, to Gifu and to Tokyo in a previous life, before he became a beekeeper, as a Karate bronze medalist. He was very welcoming. And on the next visit SpringI hope to visit him again and help him with his bees.

Sixth, thank you LISA SOMAY who lives in Suadiye on the Anatolian side of Istanbul. She taught me how to get around in Istanbul by ferry, train and bus, and made me immediately feel at home there.

And seventh I must thank her husband NOYAN SOMAY, a Turkish Pasha (I think Pasha means 'gentleman') who introduced me to Burkazada, one of the Princes Islands and lent me his flat, and later in the week took me out with maybe 200,000 other people in the Suadiye Republic Day Procession on October 29th ' to catch the atmosphere.'

Finally thank you EMIN SAATCHI who took me around Fener on the Golden Horn. The Phanariote Greek aristocratic families in Romania during the 18th century came from heregreat names like Cantacucino.....and he introduced me over lunch to the Economics Faculty of the Bosphorus University.....perhaps I can have another life, I thought, and follow in the footsteps of John Freely and Norman Stone.... perhaps I can...

Background

October 2019 was an exciting time in the Middle East. Jamal Khashoggi

had just been murdered and chopped up in the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul. That was a most unfortunate story!! Actually I went to Levent 4 and walked round the embassy district there and found the Saudi Consulate where it had happened. The two women to whom I asked the way looked at me in horror. But all was quiet there though there was plenty of security.....Also the Saudi oil refinery had just been attacked by drones from goodness knows where, by goodness knows who (Iran proxies, people said.....And the Turks had just invaded Northern Syria to create 'a safe zone.' And the British were due to leave the European Union on October 31st so I wasn't sure I could get back into my own country on an EU passport. And over in Hong Kong the students were challenging the Chinese Government to treat Hong Kong as they had said they would in 1997. China is also involved in the Middle East because the Uighurs who live in Xinjiang province 新疆 are by way of being Turks and followers of Islam.

TEL AVIV/ JAFFA

I arrived at Ben Gurion after a broken night on the plane from Stansted....broken at Sabiha Gokcen in Istanbul. The first thing at Ben Gurion was Immigration. There was a little black girl in the immigration cubicle with white eyes. I asked her where she came from. She said Ethiopia. Israel has plenty of surprises like this. The next thing was to get the equivalent of an Oyster card which can be used on all the trains and buses in Israel. It makes life much much easier because transportation in Israel is very good now.

Then I caught the train into Tel Aviv and a bus to the Jaffa Clocktower, and walked from there through the flea market to the Old Jaffa Hostel. My son Mark lives in Neve Tsedek, Tel Aviv which is a 20 minute walk away along the seafront. He has always lived near to one of the most famous icecream shops in Israel...Anita's.... But now his apartment is

actually next door and the children's room is directly over it. But the flat, though palatial, is rather small so it is best that I stay in the dormitory in the Old Jaffa Hostel. That evening, because half my luggage was their possessions, I took a taxi over to them. Neve Tsedek is a nice part of town built on the sand dunes beside the beach, and for me it has the feeling of Okinawa with bougainvillea everywhere, palm trees and the smell of coffee, and pretty girls with dogs.....Down the street (which is Shalom Shebazi) Abramovich (of Chelsea Football Club fame) has recently bought a little block of delapidated houses at a vast price and there is the gallery of a good sculptress (Domi Gaon) where the prices (I thought) were very reasonable. I always hate travelling with extra luggage but certainly Shimrit and Daphne were pleased to get back the jewelry which they had left behind in England. It wasn't valuable , but I think it was the way their eyes sparkled that made me glad I had brought it. Actually Shimrit's family came from Fez where the Jewish community was very much into jewelry. With a few emeralds, sapphires and rubies provided by a friend of ours, I think she and little Daphne could make a good living. Arkady from St Petersburg was still coming every week without fail to teach all the children how to play the Yamaha piano (four from the price of two now.) This time Tamara wasn't there because she had stayed over in Jerusalem with her other grandmother during the Sukkoth school holiday..... But for me the Old Jaffa Hostel was best, partly because it was the old Turkish Customs House, partly because it was decorated with pictures collected from the flea market, even the fountain on the roof where breakfast was on offer was from the flea market..... I think Lawrence Durrell would have been comfortable with the people he ran into there. As for me, this time over breakfast on the roof I talked with Harmut Zeitel, an art professor from Wendlingen in Germany. Like me he had recently had a quadruple heart bypass. So we (two old men !) celebrated with an Israeli breakfast (salad, humus and burnt toast) that we were both still alive! Talk was of Alice Weidel, the

AfD (Alternative for Germany) politician and how she had worked for Goldman Sachs and spent a lot of time in China (Did she have a sense of humour?) ...he had his doubts about AfD.....and we also talked about the Coburg Conference and the Anglo- German Reconciliation tapestry at Chichester Cathedral.....Bishop Bell having been a friend of Dietrich Bonhoeffer before the war. Another person I talked with at the Old Jaffa Hostel was Maiko Miyazaki from Takatsuki near Osaka, Japan who was just back from the West Bank and was indeed concerned about the Israeli settlements there, and the support for them/ recognition of them by the American Government in the form of Mr Trump's Administration. More on that because I am now friends with her on Facebook and the arguments keep flowing. A third encounter was with the Russian girl making breakfast, I didn't get her name so I call her Irina. She told me she came from Irkutsk, and that she was learning Hebrew and that she had got a visa because of her Jewish rootsso I looked up Irkutsk on my iPad and there was indeed a famous synagogue there and a Jewish community of some 15000 people..... I thought of myself with no Jewish roots at allbut I have Jewish branches.....which is more in line with the future than the past....!

JERUSALEM

Because I had been unable to see my granddaughter Tamara in Neve Tsedek I decided to go and find her in Jerusalem. Tel Aviv is very close to Jerusalem and it is now quite easy to get there by a fast and comfortable train. First I took a bus along to the station, then a train to Ben Gurion again (15 minutes) and then changed to another train up to Jerusalem (30 minutes) and then up 3 or 4 escalators (like the London Underground only more so and newer) to the tram car which goes right across the top of Jerusalem to the Old City and beyond. To my surprise the last tram stop was Heil Ha'avir which means 'Airforce Base' which was where I wanted to go. And from there I was able to walk a short distance to the

Shimony house. And there, believe it or not was Tamara who had been decorating the Sukkah on the verandah, and Grandmother Tamara (Tammy) and David, and Amit. It was really good to find them so easily. Until this trip I had always thought of Israel being a big place but actually it is very small and it is very easy to get about now, especially with an Oyster card. And it was the first time to be in Israel for the Sukkoth holiday week, because usually I go there during Purim. They had just bought a new sofa so I was able to sit on it and watch the most beautiful singing on television, boys in front of their parents, the expressions on the parents' faces were a joy to behold ! The next day was David Shimony's birthday. I had thought he was a little older than me, but actually I think I am a little older than him, and so his Senior ! There was still no talk of his distinguished grandfather in Zakho..... Amit very kindly drove me back to somewhere near where Ruth lived.

Ruth lives on Yoel Saloman in the heart or one of the hearts of West Jerusalem. I had her phone number and went to a shop opposite her balconies and asked if they could give her a call. He gave me a horrified look and said he would rather not . "I have nothing against her personally but she has called the police twice about the noise around here....." I said I had come from England and that Ruth had broken an arm and a leg and I had to see her. So he relented and Ruth answered the phone sounding very welcoming and human. He looked surprised that the monster / witch upstairs could sound so nice....It was clear that Ruth was quite well known around there! Also she will never give in.....which is the great thing about her (the people around there must accept that)... So I got in which was wonderful and she was just able to walk and to get downstairs. How did she break an arm and a leg? She said she thought she was knocked over by somebody riding a bicycle and talking on a mobile phone. But Gil Zohar from over the road thinks she was pulled over by the dog, Nakita. It doesn't matter....she keeps going ..and she is

still alive. The paintings around her studioand her whole house is a studio....were pretty good this time. I especially liked a washi work with a light behind it. We went out and managed to get on the back of a tram with a bit of help from a police girl because the tram was crowded and went to have a Sukkoth meal in a friend's Sukka.....and after supper I took the dog to the other side of the park where there was a small supermarket. I tied Nakita to the railings. The security man seemed to know him. The next morning I set off again with Nakita and spotted Gil Zohar 200 yards ahead of me which was a stroke of good fortune. He knows Nakita very well. He told me that Nakita is very fierce with some other dogs. I hadn't known that. "Prepare for World War III " he said as another dog approached.....I went with Gil to the Dog Pound on the top side of the park, and we sat while his dog and Nakita potttered about peacefully. On the back of an envelope Gil wrote down some things for me to do in the West Bank. I haven't done all these things he suggested so some will have to wait until next time. In Bethlehem:

* Bus 231 from the Damascus Gate to Bethlehem

*But get off at the Beit Jala Municipality stop and go and eat at Kaabar, the chicken grill for 40 NIS

* Visit the Milk Grotto in Bethlehem

* Walk back to the Church of the Nativity

* Visit the Church of St Catherine's

* Find the Bethlehem Icon Centre in Star Street

* Visit the Jacir Palace Hotel from which you can see the Aida Refugee Camp

* Go to Banksy's Walled-Off Hotel next door to the Jacir Palace

In Ramallah: * The Yasir Arafat Mausoleum

* The Darwish Museum

* The Taiba Brewery

In Haifa: * Stay at the Stella Maris Hotel

In the Old City in Jerusalem:

* Stay at the Austrian Hospice, better than the Armenian one he said, but book in advance.

I had cup of coffee on Gil's veranda and met his wife within who was also a friend of Ruth. I am glad Ruth has friends like them nearby.

The last thing I remember doing with Ruth was receiving a Lulav blessing in a sukkah up the street. (What is a LULAV ? It is written up in Leviticus 23 verse 40. A lulav is the closed frond of a date palm, bunched with hadass (myrtle) and aravah (willow). The person giving the blessing holds this in one hand, and in the other hand holds the etrog (citron)The lulav blessing channels the divine energy into the world and into man.....)

BETHLEHEM

I did indeed catch the 231 bus from the Damascus Gate as Gil Zohar had suggested, but I missed the Beit Jala Municipality stop and since I had a suitcase decided to head for the Sahara Hotel where Daphne Birch had stayed in Beit Sahur , and this turned out to be the right thing to do because Yasmin the owner of the hotel was able to put me in touch with the Olive Pickers who were starting a couple of days later. She also knew Kristel, the Dutch girl, who runs the Singer Cafe in Beit Sahur. So I had a day in hand to explore Bethlehem. The Hotel Sahara is at Shepherd's Field West and it caters for church groups from just about everywhere. I was actually lucky to walk in and find a bed. One group of tourists/ pilgrims came from Russia, and there were three others from Poland, Wroclaw, Krakov and Lubin, and there was a church group of Vietnamese from Germany. The difference between pilgrims and tourists is that pilgrims get a Mass. One Vietnamese woman had come from Los Angeles. She told me cheerfully that she had terminal cancer and was joining her friend from Germany. Then they all had to run for the bus. There were three or four buses parked on the street outside.

I set off on foot in my gumboots first for the Singer Cafe where I didn't find Kristel (this time). On the way I had a cup of coffee with a radiator

mechanic from Gaza. He heated up the coffee with a Bunsen burner and it tasted delicious, and told me that he had 8 children, 5 boys and three girls. At the Singer Cafe I delivered the present from Daphne to Kristel and over another cup of coffee talked with two American English teachers from Georgia at a neighbouring table. I asked them whether they had students from the refugee camps.....and did they have students from the Israeli settlements? They said yes, they had students from the refugee camps....but not from the settlements. Quite a lot of the settlers have come from America so they didn't need teachers there, they said. I walked up to the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. It was more of a hike than I expected because Bethlehem is on the top of the hill above Beit Sahur. In the church I met a group from Haiti....and there was also a party of Australian Muslims from Sydney who were quite clear that the Church of the Nativity was for them too. The Church was full of people, but not too many, and it had a good atmosphere. I went outside into Manger Square and up into the market which was a good one and crowded.

I looked at Gil's list and asked for the Jacir Palace Hotel. This was a hotel worth visiting, and possibly even staying in. It was built in 1910 by the Jacir family during the Ottoman period and it is indeed a palace. During the British Mandate it was used as a gaol. Today down below in the valley it has an Intercontinental style swimming pool which was closed already for winter on the day of my visit. Out at the back is the Aida Refugee Camp but you wouldn't know this if you hadn't been told. In the lobby there was a photograph of Chinese President Jiang Zeming being greeted by Yasser Arafat. The girl behind the desk showed me round. There didn't seem to be any guests but maybe large numbers come sometimes. I like palaces and it is really nice and surprising to find such a place 15 minutes walk in gumboots down the hill from the Church of the Nativity. She also told me I should visit the 'Walled-off Hotel', three minutes walk away up beside the Wall. So I set off in that direction

and couldn't find it. I went into a bank and everybody laughed. In the end I did find the Wall covered with graffiti and the hotel, which wasn't a hotel at all, or perhaps it was..... It was a Banksy installation, really extraordinary. Inside there was a coffee shop and a bar and then a series of rooms documenting the Israeli occupation of Palestine. And the Israelis allow it to be there which shows they have a lot of confidence. There were some famous exhibits in the coffee shop. Of interest to me were the paintings of life jackets washed up on the shore....also the Mavi Mamara life ring hung on the wall. I had just received a letter from Istanbul telling me to catch the Mavi Mamara ferry to Burkazada, one of the Princes Islands. (Mavi Mamara = Blue Sea of Mamara). I think this was all about the Gaza Blockade which is still going on, two million people blocked into a forty mile strip down the coast south of Ashkelon.



The Mavi Mamara life ring in the Banksy Hotel at Bethlehem

The Israelis may have made some progress towards a peaceful solution in the West Bank but with the people bottled up and 'forgotten' in Gaza they have not yet achieved anything, except bottling them up. There had been a missile coming from there towards Tel Aviv only a week before.

The next morning I went Olive Picking. Yasmin from the Sahara had contacted Joint Advocacy Initiative Jawad and I joined the team at the neighbouring Golden Park Hotel. There was a whole bus load of people from many countries but mainly Europe and North America, with quite a few British. I sat with a couple from California. And later I sat with an Ethiopian girl from Norway who was living in Bethlehem. In the luggage compartment of the bus there were buckets and ladders and tarpaulins which we carried to the olive orchard. There are different ways to pick. Standing round the tree, climbing up into the tree to pick the top, or standing on a ladder to pick the sides, or else sweeping up the olives that had landed on the tarpaulins into the buckets.....it is quite shadey among the trees although one does need a hat when on the top.....The volunteers (pickers) were minded by the charity people and there were a few Arab farmers about but not so much communication between the farmers and volunteers because of language. We were picking right up close to an Israeli settlement.



Olive picking in Beit Sahur

Apparently if the trees are not harvested the Settlers claim they have a right to harvest them and there have been quite a few disputes. Put

politely, it was said there was a need for an international presence. I was happy to be part of an international presence and enjoyed the experience. Afterwards the volunteers were taken off to visit a refugee camp and I headed back to the Sahara Hotel to collect my luggage. The first time I visited a refugee camp was in 1969, 50 years ago when I visited the Baqa Camp in Jordan just across the river from Jericho. I wonder if that camp is still there.

A DRUZE VILLAGE IN GALILEE

I had two days left so I caught the train up to Akko. I had heard it was a nice place beside the sea famous for Saladin and Richard the Lionheart, also I knew Marco Polo had visited it. I walked from the station to the Youth Hostel but it was closed for repairs. So I went to a Hostel run by a Palestinian couple. In an Israeli hostel you pay when you arrive. In a Palestinian run hostel you are expected to pay when you leave. But I paid when I arrived. The old part of Akko is lived in by Palestinians and in the middle of it is the Israeli tourist office. I went in there and asked a girl if there was any chance I might meet a beekeeper nearby. And she said there was. 'Please come back in the morning' she said....The citadel is now a World Heritage Site. I found the Turkish bath ' Hamam al-Basha' rather beautiful with its marble inlay floors and blue tiles. I had taken along my towel in the hope of a bath but the bathers there were bronze sculptures rather than real bodies like Japan, so I didn't need my towel. I looked forward to getting back to Japan !

The hostel where I stayed was behind the Al-Jazzar Mosque. I went into the mosque and sat there in the garden for quite a long time surrounded by the cats. The next morning I went to the Tourist Office and the girl said ' Yes there is a beekeeper, but I might have to hitchhike to find him. Actually it wasn't too difficult. I walked to the bus stop. Curiously, at the bus stop I met a Russian from Svedlovsk, whose father was into myot

which I think means honey. I took bus 271 to Nahariya, and from Nahariya bus 44 up to Peqi'in. Then I walked up the hill to the Rashbi cave and the Beekeepers shop was right opposite the entrance to the cave area. And that is how I met Rasan (Asal Alnor). Rasan, who to me looked like James Bond (!) had been to Japan twice, to Gifu which is my area and to Tokyo. In a previous life he had been a Karate Bronze medalist, which is some way up the tree in the karate world. Then for a year he had studied beekeeping at the agricultural station at Keriati Shimona which is on the north side of the Golan Heights within range of Hezbollah rockets. At some point he had done his military service because the Druze have a battalion in the IDF. I forgot to say that Peqi'in is a Druze village of about 5000 people up in the Galilee hills about 45 minutes on the bus from Nahariya. I didn't know that before I got there. We talked about bees and honey and the operation out of Yad Mordecai in Ashkelon. He had views on the way they do things down there but we didn't go into that. Clearly the only honey you can buy in supermarkets in Israel is Yad Mordechai honey and in my limited experience it is not terribly exciting, but my experience was very limited. I linked up with Rasan on Facebook and I hope to go there again and lend him a hand in the spring. Very quickly from my Facebook page he found out about me, a photograph of me holding up a honey comb covered with Cerana bees with two Chinese beekeepers (all of us without nets) near to Chongqing 重庆. He showed me an Italian girl looking after her bees in a bikini..... After that we went to look at the Rashbi cave which is a Jewish holy site. It was here that the Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai and his son Elazar sought refuge from the Romans while the Rabbi wrote the Kabbalistic work, the Zohar. They were kept alive by an ancient carob tree and a spring of water. After 12 years in hiding the prophet Elijah came to tell them that they could come out. The Emperor was dead ! We met some ringletted blackhatted students who had come to visit the cave. Following that we went into the Druze village centre and visited the Jewish museum with

photographs of families who had lived there in the 1920's. There was even talk of a Jewish community living there in the 16th century before Zionism had ever been thought about.



Druze Meeting House in
Peqi'in, Galilee

Then we met the Mayor. Rasan was on the village council. And we saw the Druze statues in the village square, and finally Jamal who was a descendant of the family who own the Druze meeting house. There was talk of Sir Lawrence Oliphant who wrote about the Druze in the 1880s. As we were leaving for the bus stop we met a travelling salesman from Gaza cold-calling in the village. Rasan told him that because of the women he couldn't do that. He must set up his stall in the village square so that they could come to him. So he had something of a police role..... I think I made a friend and look forward to helping him with his bees in the Spring.

It is a better time for bees than the Autumn.

So once more back to Jaffa and Tel Aviv. On the bus there was a girl with a barbed wire bracelet tattooed on her wrist. She had been a taxi driver in Manhattan. I had a discussion with Mark about Tamara's education. Her English isn't yet confident. But I wonder if that matters.

She hasn't begun Arabic. Perhaps that does matter. Music and Art need to be kept going. Is it better to go to school in Tel Aviv than in North London or Compton in West Sussex ? Tel Aviv is pretty good but it needs to be supplemented. What about military service. I saw several pretty girls with small machine guns. It doesn't worry me that a Hamilton should be in the IDF. I enjoyed myself in the Eton Corps. And the others, will an Israeli upbringing suit them? I think that the Israeli scene is a brave one. I like the Palestinian Arabs but I think they should operate with the Israelis like the Druze in Peqi'in. It is possible and could work. As I left for the Airport in the early morning I met tall Irina hand in hand with the tiny worker at the hostel...I don't know what nationality he was....I imagine his name was Richard and he came from the Lebanon..... this I felt was Alexandrian Quartet material.

ISTANBUL

This time from Ben Gurion I went up to Istanbul. Some very kind friends of my daughter Meg had a flat on one of the Princes Islands in the Sea of Marmara and had offered to let me base myself there.

I had to pay £20 for a Turkish visa at Sabiha Gokcen, the airport. And there too I got the equivalent of an Oyster card for use on the buses and trains and ferries. Istanbul is a bit like Hong Kong when it comes to ferries.

I caught the bus from Sabiha Gokcen to Bostanci Iskele (Iskele = ferry) where I was met by Lisa and Noyan Somay, who took me by car to their flat nearby in Suadiye. Lisa on day one told me to be careful not to trip over the bollards on the pavements. This was important advice. These bollards were to stop people parking on the pavement, but in the dark you don't see them and can easily trip over them.....Lisa was a good teacher.....

On the first day I caught the train from Suadiye station along to Uskudar a ferry terminal beside the Bosphorus. Uskudar in Greek is Scutari (I

think) which is famous because FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE had her hospital there during the Crimean War. From Uskudar I took the ferry across the Bosphorus to Besiktas, and from there a bus to Levent 4, one of the embassy areas in Istanbul. I wanted to visit the Consulate of Saudi Arabia where JAMAL KHASHOGGI had been murdered a few weeks before my visit. Why ? (A few years ago I had visited the hotel on the mountain above Chongqing 重庆 in China where the Englishman Neil Heywood had been murdered. The results of that murder have been quite far reaching in China, and I think the murder of Khashoggi will be the same.) After this I went by underground to Haliç which means Golden Horn, and walked up into Eminobu where I found a shop selling watch straps and bought one which I am now wearing. In Eminobu is the



Map of the Bosphorus with the Princes Islands.

Spice Market where I found the honey shops selling delicious looking comb honey. From Eminobu I caught another ferry which took half an hour to get me back to Uskudar, from which I caught the train back to Suadiye.

The next day I set out with Noyan Somay on the ferry from Bostanci to Burkazada, one of the Princes Islands where they had a flat. It was a Mavi Mamara (Blue Marmara) ferry, and I remembered the Mavi Marmara life ring I had seen hanging up in the Banksy museum in Bethlehem . We were followed by a cloud of seagulls.....It takes about 45 minutes from Bostanci to the islands. We went first to the flat which was in an apartment block beside the sea. Many of the blocks there were beside a cliff and several of them had two front doors, one at the bottom facing the sea, and one at the top facing inland. Noyan's flat I think was on the second floor. He threw open the windows facing the sea. Later from there in the morning I was to watch the Dolphins playing which was a fine sight indeed.

After that we walked up the hill to find the Beekeeper. I had asked in my letter to them if I might meet a beekeeper and Noyan had reconnoitred the island and I think found two people who kept bees. We walked up the hill and came to a block of apartments. Noyan shouted up 'Hussein Bey!' And quickly Hussein Bey appeared. And a bit further up the hill was his apiary with quite a lot of bees for late October flying in and out of the hives. He opened up one of the hives and began swatting the hornets that were attacking it with a bunch of twigs. We left him and went on up to the top of the island where there was a ruined church amongst the pine trees. After that we went down to the ferry and Noyan set off back to Suadiye abandoning me on the island. That evening I had dinner in a restaurant called Pyrgos near to the apartment where I had some delicious fish. It was a romantic place but I was all alone. But under the table I had three little cats around my legs waiting to finish off

my fish. So I wasn't lonely. And they did finish off my fish. After dinner I walked into the town and there I ran into Hussein Bey again. He called me over and I joined him for a little while drinking raqi and talking about bees. At the table there was an Armenian couple, and a Turk called Ishmael and the owner of the restaurant. A couple of days later I went up to where Hussein Bey lived near to the apiary and bought some honey. His wife who did the business side was called Valentina and came from Odessa, and had been living on Burkazada for 20 years. I had hoped he would have some lovely fragrant honey, perhaps Thyme honey. I had seen lots of bees on the thyme. But it turned out to be Heather honey. Since I like Heather honey, that was fine. In the middle of the room was a punching sock. They said that their son sometimes attacks it. Curiously and happily I am now in contact with Valentina on Facebook. I haven't learned any Turkish yet but they can see my photographs and I can see her's. She writes in Russian and Turkish.

Over the next two days I went to explore the other Princes Islands..... Heybeliada, Buyukada and Kinaliada.....'Ada' means 'island'. Heybeliada, I think, houses the Turkish Naval Academy. It was visible across the water from the top of Burkazada. It only took me ten minutes to reach the port there. I walked up to the monastery on the top and spoke with the priest and his assistant who were both from Greece. The priest had been to theological college in Crete, and his assistant was from Athens. The difference between visiting an empty church here and an empty church in England, is that the churches here always have a lighted candle. It really makes all the difference to a church to have a lighted candle in it. The whole church comes alive. In England I suppose the insurance companies would not insure church buildings if there were lighted candles in them with nobody about.....I spent a morning on Kinaliada and walked right round the island, by chance taking a good photograph of some cormorants on a rock, also of a pomegranate tree

with a fine crop of pomegranates.and later I had an afternoon on Buyukada (Great Island) which again has a monastery on the top, also a derelict orphanage, surrounded by pine trees, actually a pine forest which would have made Japanese visitors very happy. There are lots of fine houses there with gardens full of Bougainvillea and Morning Glory. Some people I met asked me if I was thinking of buying a house there. It hadn't occurred to me that I might be.....!But certainly it would be a nice place to live, and it is only 45 minutes by ferry from the centre of Istanbul !

In the evening I went by ferry back to Bostanci and walked to Suadiye. Noyan thought that I should join the Republic Day (October 29th) parade along the Main Street in Suadiye ' to catch the atmosphere' he said. I did join with him, and the atmosphere was good. There were somewhere between 100,000 and 300,000 people in Suadiye that evening. Lisa turned back because there were too many people but it was all quite peaceful. Mothers were pushing children in prams. Some people were carrying their small dogs (which looked quite terrified.) They were carrying photographs of Mustapha Kemal (Attaturk = father



Mustapha Kemal Attaturk (=Father of Turkey)
on the front of a navy building at Heybeliada

of Turkey) who stands for a Secular State, and that is what the Turks were turning out for. There were other boards, all printed, saying:

COSKUYLA UMUTLA HEP BIRLIKTE. YURUYORUZ

" With great happiness and hope, altogether we are marching."

On the last day I met Emin Saatci who had been introduced by Colin and Renata Baillieu. Emin was Greek or perhaps more correctly Byzantine. (I may be wrong. It was rather exciting.....) He was connected with the Levantine Heritage Foundation and had recently been out on the Princes Islands for the funeral of the widow of John Freely's son Brendon. Renata told me that Emin had worked for a long time for the British Council and he knew everybody. He was one of the founders of the Cornucopia magazine, and was (I think) one of the translators of Orhan Pamuk. Actually he gave me a copy of the poet James Lovett's Turkish Album. And he had a house near to the university which was for sale ! Emin spoke quietly and fast and all of what he said was interesting.....I met him at Starbucks in the Levent Metro City Shopping Centre, and he very kindly took me on a whistle stop tour of Istanbul. We went to the Cathedral "The Patriarchal Church of St George" where I remember three wonderful icons, one of which was a 12th century Virgin Mary. We passed by the Dimitrie Cantemir Museum (KANTEMIROGLU 1673-1723, Voivode of Moldavia twice and a collector of Ottoman music) but didn't go in. This was in the Greek quarter of Istanbul called Fener (PHANAR). My interest was in the Phanariot period in Romania 1711- 1821. The Ottomans employed many Greeks to run their empire. Names of the Phanariot aristocracy in Wallachia and Moldavia include Argyropoulos, Cantacuzino, Mavrokordatos, Ypsilantis and VĂCĂRESCU is in this category which is the name of my grandchildren)Emin took me to the campus of the Bosphorus University, formerly the (Christopher) Robert College, and we had lunch with the Economics faculty at a restaurant overlooking

the Bosphorus (They looked like the professors in my Japanese university and I felt immediately at home)I talked with a Professor Deniz (?) who was still working, still teaching basic economics, aged 77. I felt I was being interviewed for a job.....as a possible successor to John Freely and Norman Stone, two legendary Englishmen....a second career was/ is even possible.....! (I will write about John Freely and Norman Stone in a future article.) I wish I could start again....

Conclusion

The above article is part of a series about frontiers in what used to be the Ottoman empire. I am not sure at the moment that I can predict how the situation in Palestine will develop. There are just too many unanswered questions and unsolved problems. In the Balkans in some places there may be a fading away of frontiers. But I think the Danube frontier between Romania and Bulgaria, where I went two years ago, is not going to fade away.

One of my techniques in this kind of 'research' (and it is eccentric I know) is to try to meet a beekeeper. In countries that are politically unstable and many people are carrying guns, it is not a bad idea to carry beekeeping equipment anyway. So this time I went up into Galilee to meet a beekeeper and (by complete chance) I found myself in a Druze village.....and during the next section of the trip, on the Princes islands in the Sea of Marmara, I met Hussein Bey and his wife Valentina who had come from Odessa. Thanks to bees I found myself thus in interesting situations.



Hussein Bey's bees with a lizard
on Burkazada.

At the end of this trip I wasn't sure I would be able to get back into the UK as we were due to leave the European Union on October 31st. As it turned out we didn't leave the EU on that occasion. In December, while I was in Japan, the Conservatives in England led by Boris Johnson won the General Election which was a remarkable achievement, and it now looks as if we really will leave. On my iPad I looked up ALI KEMAL, Boris's great great grandfather who was brutally murdered/ lynched during the Turkish War of Independence.....but I will investigate that story another time, when I have learned a bit more about Turkey. At the time of writing this, January 24th 2020, we have a week more as members of the EU. People around here are planning to ring the church bells on January 31st. I don't feel like that, basically because the EU system has given us peace and prosperity for the last 40 years and it was set to do so for the next 40 years. The negotiations with the French and the Germans will have to continue whether we are out or whether we are in. The issues won't go away. Perhaps a future government will want to rejoin, or perhaps it won't.