

Holiday in Greece:

July 1977



Adrian Hall

Contents

| | |
|---|----------|
| Holiday in Greece | 1 |
| July 1977 | 1 |
| Diary notes..... | 1 |
| Letter to my parents (7 July 1977) | 2 |
| Diary notes (continued)..... | 2 |
| Letter to my parents (15 July 1977) | 3 |
| Nauplia Prophecy (16 July 1977)..... | 4 |
| Diary notes (continued)..... | 4 |
| The Kercyra Convention (or the Council of Corfu)..... | 5 |
| Letter from Dad (21 July 1977) | 6 |
| Return from Europe (30 and 31 July 1977)..... | 7 |
| Photographs of Greece, July 1977 | 8 |
| Photographs of Greece, July 1977 (continued)..... | 9 |

Holiday in Greece

July 1977

Diary notes

Notes from a diary I kept at the time:

3 July 1977, hotel at Mestre, near Venice, Italy – Journey out from UK by Greek bus. Some strange folk in it! But I felt a sense of detachment and independence – at last – so long awaited. I had some misgivings about going off alone, but considered the alternatives – involvement in Christian work (but all last year and next year); research work in Cambridge (no thanks – I had to get away from the place); staying at home (but here's a chance to travel); touring with a friend – but this is a unique opportunity to be alone, to think, to pray, to spend time with the Lord and in His presence, to learn from Him, to be perhaps broken down and built up again by Him, to be refreshed spiritually, mentally, culturally. To clear my mind of the clutter and debris, and try to sort out priorities. A chance to stand back – a breathing space between three hectic years at Cambridge and the new life when I return – structured, integrated, involved – hard work, relationships, above all the 'Lord's battle'.

Is this an escape? No, a positive step into 'the wilderness'. Like a warship going in for a refit, she, like the Christian, has always to operate in a hostile environment. Assimilation of the past; preparation for the future. Questions, priorities... All this against the background of Greece and Crete – Greek people, ancient history, ruins, fantastic scenery. The beauty of God's creation, the stimulus of travel – when alone, you absorb far more... On the journey I read 2 Timothy and 'Guard the Gospel' (by John Stott), trying to imbibe God's word more. Time for prayer and meditation. I also read 'The Little Prince', as we traveled through Paris and (literally) through Mont Blanc [through the tunnel connecting France to Italy].

5 July 1977, Hotel Metropole, Athens (ΑΘΗΝΑΙ) Greece – the journey continued through Yugoslavia and Greece. I had a sense of the Lord's leading – "This is the way, walk in it" (Isaiah 30 v 21). 2 Timothy chapter 2 – the challenge: "You then (σὺ δὲ), be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (verse 1). As a follower and servant of Christ, it is necessary to stand out, to be strong and rugged, faithful to the gospel, holy in attitude and behaviour. But we have the grace of Christ Jesus. "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12 v 9). My weakness, but His strength. Metaphors of soldier, athlete, farmer, workman, vessel, teacher. I experienced a sense of detachment and independence not felt since Africa. I'm unlikely ever to have such a protracted time of independence again, so 'Fly the flag of independence' – possibly for the last time. I felt this was a period of passing from student days to adulthood – to full manhood with its independence, freedom and responsibility...

8 July 1977, ferry from Piraeus (ΠΙΡΑΕΥΣ) to Chania (ΧΑΝΙΑ), Crete (ΚΡΗΤΗ) – the true wilderness.

I lost contact with my Australian friends [two teachers from Perth on long service leave], and so felt all at once terribly alone. Lost in this huge, strange, teeming city, without a friend in the world. I felt let down several times by people I'd met – I felt rebuffed, rejected. Left alone to explore this unfriendly city. I was longing for a friend to share the experiences (museum, Acropolis etc.). But then, you can't have it both ways, and I'd chosen to go it alone, to be independent – to experience, perhaps for the last time, the test of living alone, travelling through strange places – of having to rely on the Lord as never before.

After the Acropolis, I thought and prayed on the Areopagus, where Paul preached to the Athenians. I read Acts 17, and I was reminded that "the times of ignorance God overlooked", but that now he commands everyone to repent (Acts 17 v 30). I was also reminded that God made everything and "it was very good", so that we can love and enjoy and appreciate the world that God loves. White marble ruins bare beneath the deep blue

Mediterranean sky. Suddenly I realized I was not alone, for the Lord, as always, was with me, and He had promised: "I will never fail you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13 v 5). And, detached for a brief period of time, I learned really to appreciate those I loved and those who loved me. As I began to pray for them one by one, I felt especially close to them, rejoicing in the warmth and security of love and close friendship, thanking God for this best of His gifts, for "Every... perfect gift is from above" (James 1 v 17). Love is not confined to a few brief periods in each other's company. "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends..." (1 Corinthians 13 v 7, 8).

And so, after a time of reflection and prayer as the sun went down over the Parthenon, turning the marble to rose pink, I found the address Virginia had given me, and was welcomed by Richard and Jean, in their home at the foot of the Acropolis, and we had a good meal together in a friendly *taverna*. So the Lord provided the friendly contact and company I so desperately needed.

In a much happier frame of mind I left for Crete, leaving the noise and smog of Athens behind, hoping to find peace, friendliness and stimulation in the Cretan countryside. Walking, camping, realizing that the time is not long and the days are slipping by quickly.

Letter to my parents (7 July 1977)

Aerogramme written from Athens, Greece, dated 7th July 1977:

Have arrived in Athens after an amazing trans-European journey! Quite an experience and not really as gruelling as I thought. It took 4 days and 3 nights, the middle one spent at a comfortable hotel in Venice. First day – delayed at Dover, but reached Paris by midnight (very nostalgic to see it again). By next morning we were in southern France, then through Geneva (but not across Swiss border) and then through Mont Blanc, or as Australian friends insisted on calling it "Mount Blank"! Superb view from the Italian side. Then Torino – Milano – Venezia, but saw nothing of the Old City as – if you pay for a hotel bed, you want to sleep in it! Day 3 – into Yugoslavia via Trieste. Very interesting indeed. Zagreb, Beograd, then by next morning we crossed into Greece. Stopped for a swim, just under the pass of Thermopylae (very exciting!), and got to Athens late that evening.

Last 3 nights spent in cheap hotels (if anything, I'd rather be in a tent). Intended to see Athens with Australian friends I met in the bus, but somehow we kept missing each other, and now they've left for Mykonos. Called round on Richard and Jean last night – they send their love to Virginia. They were very welcoming, and said next time I was in Athens we could all go out for a meal. Had supper last night underneath the Acropolis, in the company of a teacher from Taiwan! I've done the Acropolis (✓) – what a fantastic monument it is, and to actually see it after learning so much about it at Packwood, and the Agora (✓) – the Blue Guide is indispensable! Perhaps best of all, I watched the sunset from the Areopagus (where Paul preached his famous sermon to the Athenians, Acts chapter 17), turning the stone of the Acropolis a beautiful pink. I did the Museum as well (✓) – as all sites are free on Thursdays, spending really all the time in the Mycenaen Hall – the face of Agamemnon and beautiful gold cups; also Poseidon hurling a trident. Altogether, though, Athens is noisy and very polluted (sort of Los Angeles smog), and I'll be glad to get out into open country where I can use the tent. Very hot, as expected – though not as hot as Pakistan.

I'm leaving Piraeus tonight for Chania (Crete) – Samaria gorge, Knossos, and back from Iraklion. On to Nauplion, spending a few days in the Peloponnese – Mycenae, Epidauros. Then a day in Athens including Sounion, returning (c. July 18th) via Delphi, Corfu, Brindisi, Venice, Dolomites (if time), and back through Italy and France... I'll write again when I get back from Crete, and ring when I reach London (29/30th July approx.)...

Diary notes (continued)

13 July 1977, ferry from Iraklion (HPAKAEION) to Athens – Praise the Lord for five wonderful days in Crete!

Day 1, Chania, Omalos, top of Samaria Gorge – Beautiful bus journey winding up into the Cretan hills, a refreshing contrast to Athens. Solitude, relaxation and

thoughts on the road and in the hills between Omalos and the gorge. Read Mother Teresa's book at sunset on a hillside, to the evening chorus of goat bells...

Day 2, Samaria Gorge to Chora Sfakion – Exhilarating walk through the gorge, with George and Paul (a medical student at the Middlesex Hospital) – deep and cool, at first; then as it became shallower, grueling heat until we reached the south coast. Welcome swim and boat trip to Chora Sfakion.

Day 3, Chora Sfakion to Rethymnon – Very tired after a second night on concrete, as I had slept on the harbour wall at Chora Sfakion. Back to the north coast by bus; pitched tent at Camp Elizabeth, near Rethymnon. I felt utterly out of place – people passing the hours of day lazing on a Mediterranean beach. I wanted to get away as quickly as possible, but “People can never be satisfied where they are...” (The Little Prince), so I decided to stay put and make the best of it. The whole place was transformed and became beautiful at evening, when the fierce sun lost its strength and the heat abated. Prayed, as I walked along the sea shore, as the sun sank, and the sea became pale blue mixed with rich gold. A ‘solitary and independent’ cup of tea in front of my tent.

Day 4, Rethymnon – Day at Rethymnon with Paul. Very relaxing, sitting in a *taverna* in the Old Harbour, watching the world go by. Watched fishermen putting out to sea at sunset. Dinner on the waterfront – baby squid, *ouzo*, *retsina*.

Day 5, Iraklion, Knossos – Absorbed, fascinated by antiquities 3,500 years old. An entire civilization wiped out 1,000 years before even Classical Greece. Throne Room – tried to enter into the experience of those in the room when disaster struck. Immense sense of time, diminished only by the sense of eternity. Art, architecture, engineering (e.g. hydrodynamics at Knossos), history all combined to provide a fascinating day. Sailed for Athens at sunset.

16 July 1977, Nauplia (ΝΑΥΠΛΙΑ) – Bus from Piraeus to Nauplia, via Corinth and Argos. Climbed the fortress of Palamidi (about 1,000 steps), superb view from the top overlooking the Western Mole, the Bourdzi Fort and the hills of Argolis in the distance. I stayed at a very nice ‘pension’ near the waterfront, with an elderly couple, who couldn’t speak a word of English but could not do too much for you! They asked what my name was: “Adrianos!”

Letter to my parents (15 July 1977)

Aerogramme written from Nauplia, Greece, dated 15th July 1977:

Thank you for your letters which I picked up from Poste Restante, Athens yesterday... I hope you got my first letter, dated 7.7.77 and sent from Athens. I spent 5 wonderful days in Crete, KPHTH, mainly in the company of a very nice doctor called Paul – just qualified from being a medical student at the Middlesex, and who may be coming to work at Addenbrookes next year – whom I met at the top of the Samaria Gorge on the first day. Ferry from Piraeus to Chania, and precipitous bus journey to Omalos (top of Gorge), spending the day savouring the Cretan countryside, though it was very hot. Walked 12 miles down the Gorge the next day (3 of us, British) – quite dramatic and very beautiful – but with heavy packs on our backs we were glad to make the south coast – Lager and swim! Ferry to Chora Sfakion, with superb view of barren, steep almost uninhabited coast. Dinner at Chora Sfakion on waterfront overlooking the tiny harbour – Ouzo and Retsina. We didn’t like the look of any of the hotels, so we slept on the harbour wall!

Bus to Rethymnon – the nicest of the main north coast towns; camped for 2 nights on site on the coast. The town was really beautiful, with an old harbour and fishing boats putting out to sea in the evening. Paul’s idea of heaven is sitting outside tavernas on the waterfront with a bottle of Retsina and a good book, watching the world go by! And there was always plenty going on – fishermen getting their boats ready, or someone who’s had too much Ouzo – very typically Greek! Fresh sea squid for dinner (octopus, shrimps, lobster also available). Out in the Cretan countryside, shepherds leading their sheep to water at sunset, goats and the sound of bells filling the valley – the sunsets are out of this world!

Left for Iraklion, spending a fascinating day at Knossos and in the museum. I'll have to tell you all about that when I get back. Ferry that evening back to Piraeus. Got to Nauplia yesterday, and the King Otto hotel found me a very good 'maison' up the hill – more like the room of a private house. The Greek couple who own it don't speak a word of English, but can't do too much for you! Also, it is very much cheaper than the Otto hotel. So I'm writing under a parasol on the waterfront, looking across to the castle, having climbed the 1,000 odd steps to the fortress this morning. Nauplia is a superb place, especially in the evening with the sun going down behind the mountains of Argolis. To Mycenae tomorrow evening. Epidauros on Sunday, with Festival: Euripides' 'Helen'. Back to Athens 18/19th, then Patras via Delphi (1 night), having booked Patras to Brindisi ferry (a bit expensive!) for 21st. Home via Venice. Am writing postcards to Virginia and Nick and Ewa. Lots of love. WISH YOU WERE HERE – Greetings from ΕΛΛΑΣ...

Nauplia Prophecy (16 July 1977)

Read Isaiah 6 – “the whole earth is full of his glory” (verse 3); “your guilt is taken away, and your sin is forgiven” (verse 7); “Hear am I! Send me.” (verse 8). I sensed the Lord saying to me:

You shall be holy, for I, the Lord, am holy. Being holy means being different – defying tradition, convention and the pressures of the age. This is true freedom – the freedom to be different and not conformed to the present world. Wherever you go, not only in the wilderness, in isolation, in Greece – you can have that inner freedom and maturity because you belong to the Lord. To be holy is to be called apart, purified from sin and set apart for God's use – not your own use, or man's use. Without holiness you cannot see the Lord; without holiness you cannot please Him, the Spirit is ineffective and your works are useless and go for nothing. But you are cleansed, purified through the blood of Jesus – just as the Seraphim touched Isaiah's mouth with a coal and pronounced it clean. No longer say that you are an unworthy sinner. See yourself as God sees you in Christ – chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that you should be holy and blameless before Him. Let the Lord make you holy – the holier you are the happier. Love, joy, peace is the fruit of the Spirit. Not your love, but the love of Jesus. You bear this fruit if you let the Spirit fill you and bear this fruit in you – if you abide in Christ.

The whole world is full of His glory – it is His earth. “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given unto Me. Therefore, go...” The Lord is sending you back – to Cambridge, to your family and circle of friends – and on, into the world. “Behold I have set before you an open door...” to a ministry in dark places. Though men may reject the gospel, all authority is Mine. You are not strong enough to fight against the forces of darkness and evil, but the Spirit is stronger, and you have the victory through Him. I will prepare you for the ministry and life which lie ahead, because you have offered yourself: “Lord, here am I, send me.” And you shall not be alone in that ministry – not a loner but fulfilling your ministry as a member of the Body of Christ. Offer yourself daily to the Lord, that He may use you – and He will. “Lord, here am I, send me – use me this day, work through me.” Let Matthew 28 v 18 to 20 be your motto: “Go and make disciples of all the nations of the world.” Put this into practice, obeying the Lord's commission for you. Encourage others also to obey the Great Commission. “If anyone purifies himself from what is ignoble, then he will be a vessel for noble use, consecrated and useful to the master of the house, ready for any good work” (2 Timothy 2 v 21).

Diary notes (continued)

Friday 22 July 1977, ferry from Patras to Corfu – Events from Nauplia to Mycenae to Epidavros to Athens to Delphi to Patras...

Day 1 – Left Nauplia for Mycenae, arriving early evening. Watched the sun set on the ruined walls of the citadel.

Day 2, Sunday 17 July 1977 – Mass at typical Greek orthodox church. Mycenae: The Lion Gate, Grave Circle A, the Treasury of Atreus (Agamemnon's tomb?). Left Mycenae for Epidavros (ΕΠΙΔΑΥΡΟΣ). The Ancient Theatre. Epidavros Festival – in

the company of some Dutch travellers. Watched Euripedes' Helena (ΕΛΗΝΑ). The setting was perfect, but the performance was somewhat spoiled by overuse of electronics. The plot was rather contrived. Slept on the grass at Epidavros.

Day 3, Monday 18 July 1977 – Lift to Argos, then bus to Athenai. Managed to sort out details of return journey and get money changed. Stayed the night with Richard and Jean. Dinner at a *taverna* near the *Thesion*. Conversation till late on the roof top.

Day 4, Tuesday 19 July 1977 – Bus from Athens to Delphi. Pitched tent on site overlooking Itea and the Sacred Valley.

Day 5, Wednesday 20 July 1977 – Delphi at sunrise. Sacred Precinct – Temple of Apollo, treasury of the Athenians, Theatre, Stadium. Museum – the Charioteer. The *Tholos* (Marmaria) and the Castalian Spring. Watched Electra (ΕΛΕΚΤΡΑ) by Sophocles – superb setting and production.

Day 6, Thursday 21 July 1977 – Bus to Nafpaktos, and ferry across the Gulf of Corinth to Patras. [I must have watched fishing boats setting sail at sunset, for some 30 years later, a photograph adorned my office wall.]

Day 7, Friday 22 July 1977 – Day at Patras; sailed for Corfu in the evening...

CORFU – 24th July – The Future – Kerkyra Convention: “Forgetting what lies behind” (Philippians 3 v 13), not trying to live off the past, past blessing, past experience, past glory, success and failure, “and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal, for the prize of the upward call of God...” Prophecy (sunset near Temploni, about to return) “Don’t worry, for I will be with you.”

The Kerkyra Convention (or the Council of Corfu)

Praise God for *six amazing years*, dated from the time when God first filled me with His Spirit – October 1971... “Forget not all his benefits...” (Psalm 103 v 2). Drawing from past experience in order to take thought for the future: “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling...” (Philippians 2 v 12)

Preparation for the future: Evening walk from Kondokali via Temploni to the centre of Corfu Island.

To be a Civil Engineer, working as a Christian in Islamic countries – this is me! Building much on the experience of Pakistan – Islamic Nations Prayer Group (because of call to witness among Muslims, ministry of prayer, background reading – Islamic studies, learning Arabic).

Fellowship – belonging to the Body of Christ. Obviously St Matthews, preparation via Fountain Trust Conference. Minimum commitment is church once on a Sunday (morning service), Thursday night Bible study.

Witness, Acts 1 v 8 – (a) Jerusalem: home, family (M, D, V, N/E); (b) Judea: those immediately around me (MMP engineers, people sharing house, people I meet through St Matts); (c) Samaria: wider circle (more casual relationships e.g. extended family, friends in London, scattered folk often involving journeys to see them); (d) Ends of the world: through overseas students, especially Muslims, out on Mission field overseas.

Ministry – distinction between (a) consistent: fellowship and ministry of house, witness to family and employees of MMP, through St Matts sharing in its corporate ministry, ministry to Muslims; (b) spasmodic: Haileybury meeting etc.

Missionary involvement – (a) now: keep tabs on CMS, BMMF, ears to the ground for projects like Z, degree and depth of involvement with CMS not clear yet, prayer for

individuals; (b) long-term: branching out from MMP site-work overseas, as the Lord leads.

Possessions – principle: ‘the more you get, the more you can give’, giving intelligently for the furtherance of the Gospel, as led by the Spirit; be a wise steward of the money I earn; trying to live simply but not meanly; being generous with possessions (not my own but His), hospitality, time, money.

Car – use at weekends: going home to Legbourne (very important), maintaining strong ties with family, though now financially and spiritually independent; enriching family life by introducing friends; Huddersfield, N/E, R’s etc.; visit to London and friends there; giving lifts to hitch-hikers, witness.

Quiet times – morning, Bible reading for ½ hour, get up at 07:15; evening prayer walk, before bed and at weekends.

Use of leisure time – entertainment over meals, part of ministry and service; learning Arabic, reading, poetry, the Classics, music.

Relationships – continue... until the Lord makes it clear to quit, but pro tem, to be kept ‘back-stage’ – not interfering too much with the ‘vivid and colourful drama unfolding in the foreground’; keeping options wide open, continuing, developing in friendships where possible. Let love for all these wonderful people deepen. ‘Girl’ friends – sensitivity, openness and depth. New friends – some old friendships will fade, but keep up with the really close ones: Dave C, Brian T, Heather, Richard T, Adrian S, Stuart and Sue, Peter M, Joan, Richard C, Adrian T, Estelle, Rosie, Ian.

Each day – “Commit your way to the Lord; Trust in him and He will act” (Psalm 37 v 5).

Love, engagement, marriage – many of these long-term plans will have to be entirely rethought; independence and autonomy are lost, no longer having the liberty to choose life-style freely, but need to plan ahead – with the Lord – *together*.

Addendum – Civil Engineering in the UK, by involvement with a British firm: chance to arrive at a Christian attitude to industry; experience of living and working in the UK; involvement in national issues, e.g. as raised by the ICE.

VENICE – 26, 27th July – Prayer (on waterfront, St Marco, Doge’s Palace), Reading (Hotel room, overlooking canal, morning): 2 Timothy 3 v 16 “All scripture is inspired by God” from Guard the Gospel by John Stott. Praised the Lord for two fabulous days in the most beautiful city in the world! *Bella Venezia!*

Letter from Dad (21 July 1977)

Letter from Dad, dated 21st July 1977, from Legbourne Abbey (but not received until later):

This is just to thank you very much indeed for my birthday-present – the super ‘Peanuts’ book – which is ‘magnifique’. It is really an absolute scream, causing me to chortle with glee at almost every page – so it is certainly lightening our rather humdrum lives! The day itself was really rather fun. I’d organised a tennis party well in advance – and the garden and court were at their best. With Mummy and me we were eight – four men and four women – so were able to play mixed fours, men’s fours and ladies’ fours. The organisation was a bit fraught because one by one our guests kept ringing up to say for one reason or another they couldn’t come after all – so right up till lunchtime we had to keep replacing them with others at pretty short notice... The four people not on the court at any given time had tea and birth-day cake in the ‘conservatoire’ till 6 pm – and thenceforward quaffed glasses of iced Pimm’s till 8 pm when the last guests departed. On the whole a great success – even though one or two of the sets were interrupted by brief showers of rain.

Thank you for keeping us posted as to your movements. It all sounds most interesting and great fun – and you’re certainly seeing something of Europe. I don’t know much about Greece (except one or two of the Aegean islands) but I have pleasant memories of Crete –

Candia, Knossos, Mt Ida etc. – and also of the Yugo-slav coast, which I thought was second only to Norway – quite superb, with Dubrovnik (or Ragusa as it was then known) absolutely perfect. All this was 43 years ago, though, so I expect it has changed somewhat since then. I trust the rest of your trip will go smoothly and according to plan. We imagine you are now coming north through Italy – and with luck this letter may reach you in Paris. It will be nice if you can make contact with Catriona while you're there, and in case you didn't get her address before you left Athens, Mummy is enclosing a note of it with this letter. We look forward to seeing you back here early in August, in good time for your birthday. The Kellocks (including James) will be here that week-end – so I hope we can have some tennis on the Saturday – and your god-father is due to arrive on the Sunday evening! Again, old boy, very many thanks for a superb birthday present – and the very best of luck with your trip...

Return from Europe (30 and 31 July 1977)

30th and 31st July – on return from Europe (Greenwich) – coming out of the wilderness. A return from the (perhaps) selfish but necessary independence and solitude, to full involvement once again. Having felt, abroad, somewhat out of place, I was now able to be truly 'me' once again. Wanting very much now to forget self-interest and self-seeking, to give myself to the Lord for him to guide and use, to enable me to be (i) a blessing to others, serving them; (ii) and pleasing to the Lord...

Photographs of Greece, July 1977

Some photographs I took during the July 1977 holiday in Greece...



Acropolis, Athens...



Temple of Athena Nike, Athens



Sunset over mountains of Argolis



Harbour at Rethymnon, Crete



The amphitheatre, Epidavros



The amphitheatre at Delphi

Photographs of Greece, July 1977 (continued)



Sunset from Patras



Samaria Gorge, Crete



Church at Mycenae



Fishing boat setting sail from Rethymnon



Temple of Apollo, Delphi



Walking inland towards Temploni, Corfu...