



## INSIDE

### page 1

Back from Iraq

### page 2

Editorial: "What's New"

### page 3

Who were the Nabataeans?  
The three great cities of Nabataea

### page 4

Who are the Kurds?  
3 cities of Kurdistan

### page 5

Discover Siwa Oasis  
The Kingdom of Dahomey  
Mostar - the tale of a bridge

### page 6

Bethany Baptism Site  
Re-create the Grand Days of Travel  
Delusions of Grandeur

### page 7

The Tunisian connection  
Bohemian Spas  
Manaus Opera House

### page 8

Queen Zenobia's City of Palms  
In Search of Noah's Ark  
The road to Ghadames

## BACK FROM IRAQ

### Our pioneering Kurdistan Horizons tour group returns

The first Australian tour group to visit Iraqi Kurdistan returned on 26th April, escorted by Nick Deacock. Here are some of the many favourable comments we have received:

"Sensational"

"Had a wonderful time on the Kurdistan trip. Nick looked after us wonderfully - a great tour escort!!! All went well - food and accommodation good. Local guides and transport excellent."

"The scenery in the Kurdistan north was dramatic"

"People very hospitable and friendly"

"Nick took great care of all our needs and we were thoroughly spoiled"

"Thanks to Nick and the team for a great holiday - yet again. I can't wait until November 2010!  
(North African Horizons)"

"A wonderful walk back in time to ancient lands. We experienced history and saw wonderful scenery."

"Keep on with the good work finding new and exciting places to tempt us!!"

"As usual, Martin Wright has enabled me to see a part of the world which would not have been possible without his research and organisation."

"Kurdistan is a thoroughly enjoyable experience and Nick Deacock a most reliable leader."



*Farewell dinner in the home of Dr Douglas Layton, co-owner of our local agents, "The Other Iraq Tours" (centre of picture with his hand raised)*



*Col Harry Schute - co-owner of The Other Iraq Tours - with members of our 2009 group (plus a few interested onlookers) at Gaugamela - scene of Alexander the Great's famous victory over the armies of Darius III*



*Anne Bourne (participating in her 17th Far Horizons tour) receiving her welcome gift from the Kurdistan Minister of Tourism*



*Members of the first Australian tour group to visit Iraqi Kurdistan at a reception held in the offices of the Ministry of Tourism in the capital, Erbil. In the centre of the picture is Nimrud Youkbana (Minister of Tourism). Standing next to him is Far Horizons' tour escort, Nick Deacock; on the extreme right is our local tour guide, Balen Zrar*

see pages 2 & 4 for details of our 2010 departure

### Southern Iraq on hold

In my April Newsletter I announced my intention to organise and operate a tour in 2010 to the major sites of Southern Iraq (Babylon, Ur, etc). This followed the successful completion of a tour to these regions operated recently by UK-based Hinterland Travel.

However, following discussions with Kadim Wailli, our local agent in Baghdad, I have come to the conclusion that the security situation in southern Iraq is still not stable enough to guarantee the successful operation of such a tour. Unlike the northern region of Kurdistan, security in the south of the country is still fragile.

I will continue to closely monitor the situation, and will proceed with this tour as soon as we receive the green light to do so.

### *Kurdistan Horizons* takes in Iran

Following the same route as our 2009 tour (but in the reverse direction) our next *Kurdistan Horizons* tour in April 2010 will also cover the important Kurdistan regions of Western Iran.

From Lake Van, in Eastern Turkey, we drive to the 17th-century Ishak Pasha Palace, built in a variety of architectural styles - Seljuk, Ottoman, Georgian, Persian and Armenian - spectacularly located on a 200m high plateau overlooking the town of Dogubayazit.



*Dogubayazit: Ishak Pasha Palace*

From here we take an expedition into the foothills of Mt Ararat to the legendary resting place of Noah's Ark (see feature article on page 8) before crossing the border into Iran.

Following a stay in the ancient city of Tabriz we visit the UNESCO World Heritage site of Takht-e Soleimann, the spiritual home of the Zoroastrian fire-worshippers sect, set on the shores of a crater lake.

We arrive at Sanandaj, capital of Kurdistan province, where the men still wear traditional cummerbunds and baggy Kurdish *shalvar* (trousers).



*Sanandaj - capital of Iranian Kurdistan*

We visit the Museum of Kurdish life, the Khorosobad mansion, the former emir's palace and the impressive fortress built during the period of Abbasid rule (AD 750-1258).

The final stage of our overland journey takes us to the city of Kermanshah, which developed in the 4th century AD as a strategic point on the Royal Road to Baghdad. We visit the Jameh Mosque, the covered bazaar, the old Hosseinieh shrine and the well-preserved Sassanian bas-relief carvings at Tagh-e Bustan.

The tour will end with a day of sightseeing in Tehran with visits to the principal museums.

**An optional 8-day extension to visit Kashan, Isfahan and Shiraz and Persepolis is being offered through our local Iranian agents.**

### Introducing *Nabataean Horizons*

This new tour departing in March 2010 is an overland journey from Jeddah to Beirut, visiting the three most important cities of the ancient Nabataean Kingdom... Madain Saleh (Saudi Arabia), Petra, (Jordan) and Bosra (Syria) (see feature article on page 3).

In addition the tour will take the King's Highway from Kerak to the Dead Sea and visit the ancient cities of Jerash, Palmyra, Mari, Doura Europos, Rasafa, Apamea, Baalbek, Sidon and Tyre.



*A Far Horizons group at Crac des Chevaliers*

Other highlights include St Simeon's basilica, Syria's "Dead Cities", the *norias* of Hama, Crac des Chevaliers crusader castle, the Cedars of Lebanon, and the cities of Jeddah, Damascus, Aleppo, Tripoli and Beirut.

The tour has been planned in such a way that it can be combined with *Kurdistan Horizons*, making a comprehensive 54-day tour of the Middle East.

### Another tour to North Africa



*A Far Horizons group at Leptis Magna*

Departing on 4 November 2010, *North African Horizons* will provide an in-depth coverage of Northern Egypt through regions which are all well-known to us. Highlights include **Egypt**: Cairo, Alexandria, El Alamein and Siwa Oasis. **Libya**: Tobruk, Cyrene, Leptis Magna, Tripoli, Ghadames and Sabratha. **Tunisia**: Matmata, Tozeur, Sbeitla, Kairouan, El Djem, Thuburbo Majus, Tunis and Carthage. **Algeria**: El Oued, Algiers, Tipaza, Djemila and Constantine.

See feature article "The Tunisian Connection" on page 7

**For descriptive brochures of all Far Horizons tours please complete and return the reply-paid Brochure Request Form enclosed with this newsletter.**

Published by  
Far Horizons

2-14 George Street (PO Box 96)  
Truro, South Australia 5356

Telephone [08] 8564 0255

Reservations 1800 083 141

Facsimile [08] 8564 0065

E-mail [info@farhorizons.com.au](mailto:info@farhorizons.com.au)

Website [www.farhorizons.com.au](http://www.farhorizons.com.au)

Travel agents licence no. TTA 164 and 165

# Who were the Nabataeans?



Far Horizons coach at Madain Saleh

The Nabataeans were a trading people of ancient Arabia, whose oasis settlements during the period from around 300 BC to AD 200 occupied the lands between Syria and Arabia, from the Euphrates to the Red Sea. Their loosely-controlled trading network, which centred on strings of oases and the routes that linked them, had no securely defined boundaries in the surrounding desert. Their flourishing kingdom based on commerce and agriculture.

From their capital, Petra, the Nabataeans dominated the rich caravan routes leading to Greece, Rome, Syria, Persia, Egypt, southern Arabia, India, and China. They surpassed their Middle Eastern neighbours in agriculture, improving the yield of oases and turning vast areas of the desert into productive farmland by building irrigation systems. The Nabataeans were also noted for their thin, fine pottery and their ability to carve buildings, monuments, and tombs out of mountains.

The Nabataeans grew wealthy by collecting tolls from caravans for safe conduct through their territory. Petra became a cosmopolitan city, reflecting both Greco-Roman and Eastern influences in its art and architecture. Many Nabataeans spoke Greek and Latin in addition to their native Aramaic dialect.

By the first century BC, Nabataean settlements extended north to Damascus (Syria), south to the Red Sea, east through most of what is now Jordan, and west to the Mediterranean Sea.

The kingdom reached its greatest development under the leadership of Aretas IV (9 BC - AD 40). It was annexed by Rome during AD 105-106 and became known as the Province of Arabia.

Little was known about the Nabataeans until the 20th century, when the American archaeologist Nelson Glueck devoted more than 30 years of study to their remains.



## The three great cities of Nabataea



Madain Saleh (Saudi Arabia)

The southern capital of the Nabataean Kingdom, Madain Saleh is located in northern Saudi Arabia in a magnificent landscape of sweeping sands and beautiful rock formations. Its 131 tombs and temples are scattered over a wide area.



Petra (Jordan)

The Nabataean capital is reached through the narrow, twisting *siq*, a natural canyon up to 100 metres in depth. During our full day visit we explore the Treasury, tombs, temples, amphitheatres and colonnaded streets of the "rose-red city, half as old as time".



Bosra (Syria)

The Syrian city of Bosra was capital of Nabataea for a brief time during the 1st century AD. It is famous for its magnificent black basalt theatre - dating from the 2nd century AD - which held 15,000 spectators and is arguably the finest Roman theatre in existence.

# Who are the Kurds?



Erbil: inside the ancient Citadel

The Kurds are people of Indo-European origin who have lived mainly in the mountains and uplands where Turkey, Iraq, and Iran meet, in an area known as “Kurdistan” for hundreds of years.

They have their own language, related to Persian but divided into two main dialect areas. Although the Kurdish people are overwhelmingly Sunni Muslim, they embrace Jews, Christians, Yazidis and other sects.

From the 16th century the Ottoman and Persian Empires allowed the Kurdish tribes almost total autonomy in return for keeping the peace on the rugged but open border area between the two empires.

From the mid-19th century, with rifles, machine guns, and later warplanes, the governments of the region increasingly decided to control the border themselves and bring these previously independent tribes under direct control.

At the end of World War 1 the Ottoman Empire was carved up and the Kurds found themselves without a homeland, segmented between Turkey, Iran and Iraq.



The area of Kurdistan lying within the boundaries of Iraq was granted independence in 2003 with its own parliament and military, its own flag, language and culture.

All arrangements for out stay in Iraqi Kurdistan have been made by US citizens and residents of Kurdistan, Dr Douglas Layton - author of *Kurds in the Bible* and *Searching for Democracy* and Colonel Harry Schute (ret) - Security Advisor to the Kurdistan Regional Government. Douglas and Harry are the joint proprietors of The Other Iraq Tours. They will meet with our tour group to give detailed insights into the culture, history and other attractions of their adopted homeland.

## Three cities of Kurdistan



Erbil (Iraq)

Capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, Erbil is the site of the ancient city of Urbellum and one of the world's oldest continuously-inhabited cities. The splendid citadel which dominates the city is under complete renovation in co-operation with UNESCO.



Diyarbakir (Turkey)

The heartland of the Turkish kurds, the narrow streets of Diyarbakir are enclosed within a 5 km-long black basalt wall dating back to AD 297. Each of the four quarters - Armenian, Christian, Kurdish and Arab, has its own mosques, churches and houses.



Kermanshah (Iran)

Kermanshah is the largest town in Iranian Kurdistan - situated on the Royal Road to Baghdad at the foot of the magnificent Parom Mountain massif. Its main attraction is Tagh-e Bostan with its remarkably well-preserved Sassanid bas-reliefs.

## Highlights of forthcoming Far Horizons tours

### DISCOVER SIWA OASIS



Siwa Old Town

Situated on the shores of the Great Sand Sea in western Egypt, Siwa Oasis is one of North Africa's most fascinating regions.

200,000 date palms and 40 million olive trees form small islands of life in the Qattara depression - up to 17 metres below sea level, where rolling sand dunes resemble a frozen storm, with 'waves' of up to 100 metres. Inhabited since Palaeolithic times, the Siwans have always been fiercely independent, and only became part of Egypt in the 19th century.

Siwa's importance dates back to Alexander the Great, who came here to consult the Oracle of the Temple of Amun, to obtain recognition and so legitimise his successors on the throne of the Pharaohs.



Siwa Oasis: Adrere Amellal Ecolodge

We stay for two nights at the remarkable Adrere Amellal Ecolodge overlooking Siwa Lake, olive and palm groves. This hotel consists of a series of traditional Siwan houses that have been restored and reconfigured into comfortable rooms. From here we visit the Temple of the Oracle where Alexander the Great was crowned and the Temple of Amun. We drive into the oasis and visit the old town to view the sunset.

**Our 38-day North African Horizons tour to Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Algeria departs on 8th November 2010.**

### THE KINGDOM OF DAHOMEY



Far Horizons "Khartoum to Timbuctoo" tour group with King Agoli-Agbo in the grounds of the Royal Palace in Abomey

The ancient African kingdom of Dahomey, with its capital, Abomey, is situated in what is now the Republic of Benin. It was founded in the 17th century on a plateau 100km inland from the African Slave Coast.

The kingdom grew wealthy in the 1700s as a result of slavery. When slavery declined in the 1800s Dahomey began to produce and export palm oil to Europe.

By the mid-1800s court life flourished in Dahomey, enhanced by the works of artisans employed by the royal family. In the 1890s Dahomey had fallen victim to European rivalries for colonies in Africa, and the kingdom succumbed to an invasion by France.

In 1900 France abolished the kingdom and incorporated it into the French colony of Dahomey. By 1960 Dahomey gained its independence. It changed its name to Benin in 1975.

At its zenith the Royal Palace covered 40 hectares with a court of 10,000 people, including King Glele's 800 wives, 1,000 women slaves and 6,000 Amazonian women bodyguards - female warriors who defeated the French colonial army.

Today the Palace has been classified by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. After a visit to the Palace with its courtyards, ceremonial rooms and burial chambers we are formally received by the present King Agoli-Agbo and a group of his Amazon bodyguards, who will perform a Royal Dance in our honour.

**Visit the Kingdom of Dahomey during the course of our Khartoum to Timbuctoo tour which departs on 31st December 2009**

### MOSTAR - THE TALE OF A BRIDGE



Mostar: "Stari Most" - the old bridge

Spanning the Neretva River at Mostar, in the Republic of Bosnia Herzegovina, the Old Bridge, or *Stari Most*, was built of 456 blocks of stone in 1566 by the Ottoman Turkish architect, Mimar Hajrudin. He was a disciple of the greatest Ottoman architect, Mimar Sinan, builder of some of Istanbul's finest mosques. The bridge gave its name to the town around it and survived for centuries, becoming a UNESCO World Heritage site and a popular tourist attraction. Local men would prove their bravery to their fiancées by jumping into the river before their wedding.

In 1993 the bridge was blown up during the bitter fighting in the Bosnian war between the city's Muslims and Croats.

The project to rebuild the bridge using the same methods and materials which the original Turkish architects employed nearly 500 years ago, began in 1997. Divers began to trace the original stones and recover them from the river using cranes and a floating pontoon.

Construction work on the 20-metre-high arch began in June 2002. The keystone was put in place in August 2003.

More than 2,000 people took part in the official opening ceremony on 23 July 2004 which was seen as symbolic of the healing of divisions between Muslims and Croats. Bands, singers and dancers from both sides of the ethnically divided town entertained the crowds, culminating in the revival of the age-old tradition as one by one, nine men leapt from the bridge into the rushing waters of the Neretva river below.

**Mostar is visited during our Oberammergau and the Balkans tour which departs on 8th September 2010**

## Highlights of forthcoming Far Horizons tours

### BETHANY BAPTISM SITE



*Pope Benedict XVI at Bethany Baptism Site*

The Baptism Site on the Jordan side of the Jordan River is one of the most important recent discoveries in biblical archaeology. Excavations only began in 1996, following Jordan's peace treaty with Israel in 1994, but have already uncovered more than 20 churches, caves and baptismal pools dating from the Roman and Byzantine periods.

The site marks the baptism of Jesus by John, and thus the beginning of Jesus's mission and indeed the beginning of Christianity. It is now considered to be one of the three holiest Christian sites in the world, together with Bethlehem (the Church of the Nativity) where Jesus was born and Jerusalem (the Church of the Holy Sepulchre) where Jesus's terrestrial mission ended.

The site is now recognised by all the major traditional Christian Churches as the real (and only true) site where Jesus was baptised. Many churches of different Christian denominations have either been built, or are in the process of being built, there.

Many Christian leaders have visited the site, including a recent visit in May 2009 by Pope Benedict XVI.

**Bethany Baptism Site is visited from the Dead Sea resort of Sweimeh during our *Nabataen Horizons* tour which departs on 7th March 2010.**

### RE-CREATE THE GRAND DAYS OF TRAVEL



*Boarding a Handley Page HP 42 at London's Croydon Airport*

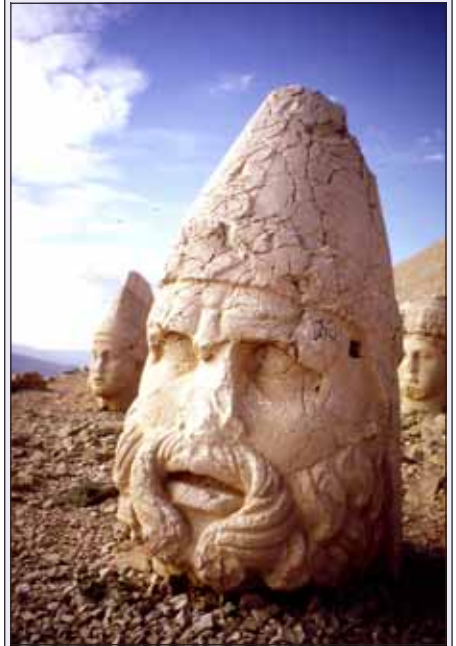
On Monday 14th December 1934 the Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services (Q.A.N.T.A.S.) and Imperial Airways (the fore-runner of British Airways) operated the first scheduled air service between Australia and the United Kingdom. The Aircraft scheduled for the first section of the journey between Brisbane and Singapore was a Q.A.N.T.A.S. 12-seater, 4-engined de Havilland DH 86 "Express Airliner" with a cruising speed of 126 miles per hour.

The journey from Brisbane to Singapore necessitated 17 stops. The remainder of the journey was accomplished with a variety of aeroplanes, the most famous of which was the Handley Page HP 42, described by Mr J.V. Fairbairn, Federal Member of the Australian Parliament, as "this flying hotel, a four-engined 22-seater with a large pantry and bar between the two cabins. The sight of the ice chest through the open door was too much for me, so I rang the bell and ordered a round of drinks, an orangeade for a young kinsman of the Maharajah of Jodhpur and lime squashes for a planter from Assam and myself".

Modern day travellers would appreciate the many attractive features of those early pioneering flights. . . the excitement of seeing remote and exotic places, short duration, daytime flights with each night spent in a comfortable bed at either a grand hotel (or, occasionally, at a desert fort), minimal formalities and the personal attention of the Flight Captain and crew who personally took care of the passengers, affording them VIP treatment at each port of call.

**Now, 76 years later, Far Horizons are giving you the chance to re-create that style of travel. Our 20-day Sydney-London charter flight by jet-prop Convair departs on 8th March 2010, with the opportunity to return by the new Qantas A380 Airbus. The 21-day eastbound charter flight departs London on 8th April.**

### DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR



Our Kurdistan Horizons tour includes a visit to one of Eastern Turkey's most fabulous sights, Nemrut Dagi, which was first discovered in 188. And yet the site was virtually inaccessible until a road was built in the 1960s.

Nemrut Dagi has almost no significance historically, being no more than a vast funeral monument to the ruler of a small local dynasty with delusions of grandeur.

Bearing the inscription "I, Antiochus, caused this monument to be erected in commemoration of my own glory, and that of the gods" the monument consists of colossal statues of Antiochus and the gods, seated on thrones on three vast terraces. The ravages of time have caused the statues to lose their once lofty heads, which have now been set upright, and arranged around this incredible tumulus.

We visit both the Eastern Terrace, with the large rectangular sacrificial altar, the figures of Apollo, the Fertility Goddess, Zeus, Antiochus himself and Hercules, and the Western Terrace, which contains some of the finest pieces of carving.

Nemrut Dagi is reached on an excursion from the small town of Kahta. The final stage of the journey is a rather difficult walk over rough terrain.

**Visit Nemrut Dagi during the course of our *Kurdistan Horizons* tour which departs on 1st April 2010.**

## Highlights of forthcoming Far Horizons tours

### THE TUNISIAN CONNECTION



*Martin Wright, with his parents Syd and Nell disembarking from a Tunis Air "Caravelle" at Tunis Airport in July 1966*

Readers of my book of memoirs *Been There, Done That* will be aware that it was a chance visit to the Tunisian island of Djerba in 1962 which started a sequence of events which eventually led to the formation of Far Horizons in UK and our subsequent migration to Australia in 1975.

By the mid-sixties we had established a series of charter flights from UK to Tunisia and for a time my parents lived in the country to take care of our clients.

Our next *North African Horizons* tour will visit many of my favourite haunts, including the desert oasis of Tozeur, the remarkable Chott el Djerid sea of salt, the ruins of Carthage, the "underground city" of Matmata, the great Roman Colosseum of El Djem and the Holy City of Kairouan.



*The great Roman Colosseum of El Djem*

We shall not, however, include the island of Djerba - which is now just another mega tourist resort. At the time of my first visit, Djerba was a truly magical "desert island" with just two small, modest hotels to share its miles of palm-fringed beaches. Today these beaches are packed with sun-starved northern Europeans who flock to its resort hotels (the Trip Advisor website currently lists 102 of them)

**Our 38-day *North African Horizons* tour to Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Algeria departs on 4th November 2010.**

### BOHEMIA'S GREAT SPA RESORTS



*Karlovy Vary: Grand Hotel Pupp*

128km west of the Czech capital, Prague, not far from the German border, lie the Western Bohemia spa resorts of Karlovy Vary and Mariánské Lázně, formerly known by their old Germanic names of Karlsbad and Marienbad.

For centuries, Bohemia's therapeutic spas hosted the cream of European society including Peter the Great of Russia, Edward VII of England, Empress Maria Theresa of Austria, Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, Goethe and Karl Marx.

The grandest of Bohemia's spa towns, Karlovy Vary's fame dates from the 14th century. Legend tells that Bohemian King Charles IV discovered its healing springs while hunting, when an injured hound fell into a stream and its leg was instantly cured.

Built along the river Tepla, the town still maintains an aristocratic air. Rising in tiers towards wooded uplands, baroque and art nouveau mansions are painted delicate sugar-plum shades. Elegant colonnades are topped with statuary; parks blaze with rhododendrons and azaleas. Shops sparkle with crystal, Bohemian garnets, and glassware gleaming with bejewelled colours.

The famous Grand Hotel Pupp where we stay for two nights first opened in 1701 as a fashionable playground for the aristocracy. Today it remains Bohemia's pre-eminent hotel.

Just 43km away, in the rolling meadows and hills of the Slavkovský Les Nature Reserve, lies the rival spa resort of Mariánské Lázně - with over 100 mineral springs. The Esplanade Spa and Golf Resort where we stay is set in a spectacular park only a 5-minute walk from the famous Marienbad colonnade.

**Visit both Karlovy Vary and Mariánské Lázně during the course of our *Christmas in Prague* tour which departs on 15th December 2009.**

### OPERA HOUSE IN THE AMAZON JUNGLE



*Manaus Opera House*

The story of the *Teatro Amazonas*, more commonly known as the Manaus Opera House - never fails to intrigue me. At the end of the 19th century, Manaus, located in the heart of the Amazon jungle 1,600 kms up-river from the Atlantic Ocean was the centre of the world's booming rubber trade. Despite its remote situation, with no other means of access, it became the most opulent city in South America - a city of fountains and broad avenues; for a short time Manaus boasted the highest per capita income in the world. Wealthy rubber barons built monumental homes and regularly sent their laundry to London! Trams clanged along the cobbled streets lit by electric lights. The floating harbour (necessary because of the 14metre tides) and the adjacent customs building were pre-fabricated in England. The castiron and coloured glass market place was a replica of *Les Halles* in Paris.

Manaus's *Pride and Joy* was the spectacular 700-seat *Teatro Amazonas*. Nearly all of the materials were imported: stone from Portugal for the exterior walls, Italian marble for the interior, chandeliers from Venice and wrought iron from Glasgow for the balcony fronts. The rare woods were local but handworked in Europe, and even the Brazilian gold leaf was laminated in England.

Legend has it that Caruso was engaged to sing at the opening on December 31st, 1896, but was unable to come ashore due to an outbreak of yellow fever. Records show that both Pavlova and Patti performed there during the city's heyday.

The bubble eventually burst when two Englishmen succeeded in smuggling out some rubber seedlings to Kew Gardens where they were able to propagate them, and transplant them successfully in Malaya. From then onward Manaus became a backwater. However, the Opera House has now been restored to its former glory.

**Visit Manaus on our *Amazon Horizons* tour which departs on 13th May 2010.**

## Highlights of forthcoming Far Horizons tours

### QUEEN ZENOBIA'S CITY OF PALMS



Palmyra: The Theatre

Queen Zenobia (AD 250-272) ruled the desert country of Palmyra, initially with her husband Odenathus. Said to be a direct descendant of Cleopatra, half Greek and half Arab, she was one of the great beauties of her day. She was highly educated, spoke several languages (Egyptian and Greek among them), and also wrote the first complete history of her country.



Together with her husband she acquired for Rome the vast territories of Syria, Mesopotamia, and West Armenia.

After the tragic death of her husband, Zenobia chose a life of action over more ladylike endeavours. She won more territories for Rome (Egypt among them).

Known as the City of Palms, Palmyra profited from trade taxation as a key stopping place for caravans carrying trade goods along the Old Silk Road between China, Persia and the Roman Empire.

Zenobia was therefore a powerful monarch of a very rich metropolis, a truly remarkable ruler, famous for her judicious policies and prudence, brave, intelligent, level headed, practical with a devil-may-care attitude. Her subjects adored her

Today Palmyra contains many well-preserved vestiges of its glorious past covering a wide area, including the beautiful theatre (pictured above), the magnificent Temple of Bel, the mysterious Tower Tombs and the monumental arch leading to the great colonnaded main street with the four massive columns of the tetrapylon of pink granite imported from Aswan in southern Egypt.

**Two nights are spent in Palmyra during the course of our Nabataean Horizons tour which departs on 7th March 2010.**

### IN SEARCH OF NOAH'S ARK



On Day 21 of Kurdistan Horizons we plan to make an expedition from the eastern Turkish town of Dogubayazit, in the foothills of Mount Ararat, in search of the resting place of Noah's Ark.

The story of Noah's Ark is related in the Bible, and is of course very well known. The actual site of the Ark's resting place on Mt. Ararat has given rise to much speculation, and inspired several expeditions.

One of the most recent, by American David Fusold in 1985, claims to have discovered vital evidence on the foothill of Musa Dagi, near the village of Uzengili, and that will be the destination for our sightseeing excursion.

We shall set out in our motor coach to Uzengili, where road conditions require us to transfer to minibuses. After a succession of hairpin bends on a very rough road with the snow clad peak of Mt. Ararat still firmly in view, we will reach the modest circular hut claiming to be the Noah's Ark Museum. Its displays consist mainly of cuttings from newspapers and magazines, together with artists' drawings of Noah's Ark taken from Fusold's findings.

Led by our local guide we set off on foot over fairly rugged terrain which eventually leads to an oval depression in a valley, which we are assured had been created by the impact of the Ark coming to rest.

Whether or not we choose to believe the story, the magnificence of our surroundings, below the twin peaks of Mount Ararat, *Buyuk Agri* (Great Ararat) and *Kucuk Agri* (Little Ararat) will minimise any scepticism.

**Our 29-day Kurdistan Horizons tour departs on 1st April 2010.**

### THE ROAD TO GHADAMES



Wandering through the streets of Ghadames

During the course of our *North African Horizons* tour in 2010 our journey through Libya includes a stay in the remote and fascinating Sahara oasis town of Ghadames, close to the borders with Tunisia and Algeria.

Once an important staging post on the trans-Sahara trade route, carrying gold, ivory, wild animals and slaves from the Mediterranean to the Maghreb, Ghadames is renowned for its unique desert architecture, with elegant two-storey houses built of mud and lime, the upper floor supported by palm trunks covered with fronds. The rooms lead off a central courtyard, illuminated by sunlight reflected on the white walls from a hole in the high ceiling.

During our 2-night stay at the new Hotel Dar Ghadames we visit the museums and take a walk through the streets of the Old Town, with lunch inside a traditional house. On our second evening we are entertained by a Touareg folkloric group.

Our outward journey from Tripoli takes us into the Jebel Nafusa mountains for a visit to the small village of Gharyan, where we visit one of the underground houses built by the ancient Berber inhabitants to withstand the hot summers, cold winters and occasional invaders. At Kabaw we visit the 700-year old *qasr* [castle], a grain store built by the local Berbers.

We return to the Mediterranean coast via Nalut, the main town of the Jebel Nafusa to visit the cliff-top *qasr* with over 400 chambers, known as *ghorfas*, used mainly for storing and protecting grain and oil. We also visit the old white-walled mosque and an ancient olive press.

**Our 38-day North African Horizons tour to Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Algeria departs on 8th November 2010.**



## List of forthcoming tours and brochure request form

To receive a copy of our Catalogue of Forthcoming Tours and for any of our dedicated tour brochures please tick the appropriate box(es) and fax this form to [08] 8564 0065 - or mail to Far Horizons, Reply Paid 96, Truro, S.A. 5356

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss .....

Address .....

.....Post Code .....

<b>16 page Catalogue of tours</b>		
<b>Panama to Havana</b>	<b>43 days dep 18 October 2009</b>	<b>FULL</b>
<b>Panama to Cancun</b>	<b>35 days dep 18 October 2009</b>	<b>FULL</b>
<b>Christmas in Prague</b>	<b>19 days dep 15 December 2009</b>	
<b>Khartoum to Timbuctoo</b>	<b>36 days dep 31 December 2009</b>	
<b>Nabataean Horizons</b>	<b>28 days dep 08 March 2010</b>	
<b>Combined Nabataean and Kurdistan Horizons</b>	<b>54 days dep 08 March 2010</b>	
<b>Sydney to London charter flight</b>	<b>20 days dep 18 March 2010</b>	
<b>Kurdistan Horizons</b>	<b>27 days dep 01 April 2010</b>	
<b>London to Sydney charter flight</b>	<b>21 days dep 08 April 2010</b>	
<b>South &amp; North Korea</b>	<b>19 days dep 20 April 2010</b>	
<b>Amazon Horizons</b>	<b>23 days dep 13 May 2010</b>	
<b>Kamchatka, Alaska &amp; Yukon</b>	<b>26 days dep 07 July 2010</b>	
<b>Oberammergau + the Balkans</b>	<b>26 days dep 08 September 2010</b>	
<b>Panama to Havana</b>	<b>42 days dep 17 October 2010</b>	
<b>North African Horizons</b>	<b>37 days dep 04 November 2010</b>	

**Please tick this box if you wish to be removed from our mailing list**