



Dear Woolf Friends,

Last week, the Woolf Institute undertook another Patrons' Pilgrimage, this time spending four days in the fascinating ancient city of Istanbul.

The group was a diverse mix of different faith backgrounds: Jewish, Christian and Muslim, and subsets of Sephardi, Ashkenazi, Catholic, Sunni and Shia. We were privileged to be guided on our tour by a team of expert academics led by Miriam Wagner and Ed Kessler.

Our exploration of Istanbul included engaging with an equally diverse set of people: amongst others, the Chief Rabbi of Turkey, the Patriarch of the Turkish Orthodox Church, whirling dervishes articulating devotional ecstasy with their movement, and the small remnant of the Sephardic Jewish community who hosted us for a joyous Shabbat.

Throughout our four days in this extraordinary place we saw wonderful places and heard some curious tales. Perhaps the most eyebrow-raising was that of the Pythonesque Sabbatai Zvi, a 17th century Jew with 200,000 disciples convinced he was the new messiah until the Sultan convinced him that was a bad idea, whereupon he miraculously ditched his claim and converted to Islam.

Istanbul is a city straining between the secular and the religious, modernity and antiquity, social media and dialogue, muscular nationalism and economic duress.

It is a looking glass society where a life lived is part how one sees oneself, and part how one is seen, for better and often worse. Under the current geopolitical environment, it provides a difficult backdrop for minority communities. As Nobel prizewinning Turkish author Orhan Pamuk said, the 'huzun' of Istanbul is 'the visceral melancholy that comes from past glories lost.'

However, my own particular favourite experiences occurred in a slightly lower key, everyday encounters with those in the footnotes of history, still exuberant with hope despite their own challenges. Musician Alaa, for example, at a centre for Syrian refugees, spontaneously filling the air with evocative and joyous

renditions of Syrian music from his Oud, flanked by a Turkish singer and Arab singer either side, riffing on the music in their own languages, and suppressing recent memory with the unbridled joy of song.

And a witty, young, enthusiastic and intellectually curious young guide by the name of Sevde, educating us with pride at the Suleymaniye Mosque, and then inviting us for tea. She spoke with some sadness about the prejudices she had suffered as a hijab wearing woman, but remained upbeat about her future, resolutely independent, and philosophically attached to the idea that, eventually, better days always follow.

The trip was a perfect example of the value of Woolf's governing principle of "Encounter".

Look into the eyes of others, listen to their stories. *Listen*. Learn a little.

Understand a little more, and inch toward the sense of community that comes from a slow aggregation of understanding the small differences.

Grasp tightly to the thread that ties your own sense of self and history to the stories told.

Eyes, minds and heart opened a little more.

Encounter.....

Best wishes,

Adam Glinsman

WOOLF INSTITUTE JUBILEE GARDEN PARTY



WOOLF INSTITUTE JUBILEE GARDEN PARTY

On Tuesday 7 June the Woolf institute celebrated The Queen's Jubilee with a Garden Part which was attended by staff, Trustees, Patrons, Friends of the Woolf and Cambridge colleagues.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE PHOTOS OF THE EVENT](#)

The Woolf:

Within Living Memory 

CALLING ALL ALUMNI OF THE WOOLF INSTITUTE

Were you a student at the Woolf? What was it like? Did it change your life? We are collecting memories from our alumni about their experiences of studying in Cambridge at the Woolf Institute, particularly those who studied here in the early days of the Institute. Please tell us where you came from, what you studied, what your first impressions of Cambridge were and how your research at the Woolf affected you and the decisions you took afterwards. What are you doing now? Have you kept in touch with people you met back then? Do you come back to Cambridge?

We would love to hear from you. If you would like to contribute a short piece of around 300 words, please send it to Liz Winter at ejw39@cam.ac.uk, together with any relevant photos you have.

We look forward to hearing from you.

[CLICK HERE TO SEND IN YOUR MEMORIES](#)

DIASPORA

Naked Reflections Podcast x The Woolf Institute

IS DIASPORA COMMUNITY JUST A POSH
PHRASE FOR IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY?



PODCAST: DIASPORA

Is diaspora community just a posh phrase for immigrant community?

Diasporas are often born of misfortune, the experience of homelands left willingly because of lack of opportunity, or fled because of war. In the age after Empire, many subject communities seemed to be drawn irresistibly by the magnet of the former colonial power, where they formed their own sometimes unwelcome diaspora communities. Esther-Miriam Wagner and Dragos Herescu discuss the experience...

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COMING SOON

Naked Reflections Podcast x The Woolf Institute

QANON

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