

editorial

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The tale of Robinson Crusoe, alone on his desert island, strikes a responsive chord with *hidden europe*. Crusoe, despairing of his isolation, starts to create boundaries around him. Borders are important, even on desert islands, if only to mark the divide between ourselves and some ill-defined Other. Travelling, undertaken in the right demeanour, is about encountering the Other, about exploring the borders that restrain us all. Travel in the wrong frame of mind and you might miss all there is to discover — whether about the journey, the destination or even about yourself!

In this *hidden europe* we indulge our interest in frontiers by looking at some of Europe's more short-lived territories. These are often Lilliputian polities that only made it into the margins of history. How different life in Munich would be today if the Soviet Republic of Bavaria had survived! And have you ever heard of the Republic of Western Bosnia or the Republic of North Ingria? Smile if you will, but such political fragments have often turned out to be the flashpoints for conflict, to wit, South Ossetia.

In this issue of the magazine, we look at women who transgressed borders by venturing out into the Arctic wilderness. And we reflect on women's experiences of the Welsh landscape as recounted in an excellent new collection of essays from the Welsh publisher Honno Press.

We venture to another border, that between Europe and Asia, with a feature on Istanbul. Our guide there is Laurence Mitchell, a regular contributor to *hidden europe*. We also welcome two new authors, each writing about a place for which they have a particular affection. Kelly Schierman tells of a Croatian mountain, while Bryn Frank takes us to a village not far from Berlin that has an illustrious place in film history. To Laurence, Kelly and Bryn, a special vote of thanks.

Further acknowledgements appear on the inside back cover, but we should just highlight here our indebtedness to Collins Bartholomew Ltd for allowing us to include occasional map extracts from various editions of *The Times Atlas of the World*. You can find out more about these atlases at www.timesatlas.com.

By the time you read the next *hidden europe*, 2008 will have slipped into 2009, so we take this moment to wish all our readers a very happy Christmas!

Nicky Gardner & Susanne Kries
EDITORS

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front cover: Tresco, Isles of Scilly, England

top left: 'The Children of Tresco' — sculpture in the Isles of Scilly

middle left: Gdańsk, Poland (photo © TZfoto)

bottom left: Miramare, Italy (photo © Piero Pausin)

above right: Haniá, Crete, Greece (photo © Bensliman Hassan)

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