

POSTCARD

**THE WORLD'S A BIG
PLACE, RIGHT?**

BY AURELIA - UPPER III





The World's a **big** place, right?



The single most important thing that lockdown has taught me is that to picture myself as a very small part of a very big World and Universe gives me perspective on life. No

matter how bad things might seem, there is always someone somewhere who needs our help.

Lockdown and the COVID-19 pandemic made the World and life as we know it come to a standstill. Travel to far-flung places became impossible and even travel within England was severely limited at times.

The pandemic's lasting impression on me is that whilst we have to accept these physical restrictions and limitations there is no reason why our minds and souls cannot still journey to all corners of the World – whether that travel be through enjoying David Attenborough's documentaries set in rainforests or deep down in the oceans, or by immersing ourselves in novels set all around the World.

Che Guevara travelled throughout America on a motorcycle and I recently shared his adventures when I read his book titled *The Motorcycle Diaries*. He travelled as a student and later as a doctor and he came into close contact with poverty, hunger and disease. He

saw how lack of money gave rise to the inability to treat children facing disease and how hunger and punishment affected people's lives. He saw how the loss of children became seen by parents as "an unimportant accident" in the poorest communities of America. He said "...I began to realise at that time that there were things that were almost as important to me as becoming famous for making a significant contribution to medical science; I wanted to help those people."

Travel opened Che Guevara's eyes. His experiences and travels taught him so much about the country and people he loved and gave him the passion to fight for their cause.

My parents have always said that the most enlightening thing they ever did in their lives was to take an extended period after university and to travel the World. They said it gave them a greater sense of who they were, of their strengths and weaknesses and of how they fit within not only their own smaller world at home, but also within the World as a whole. It gave them dreams and aspirations and a love for exploration. It gave them an insight into different cultures and appreciation and respect for different ways of life.

I have been so lucky to have had many journeys within my short life so far. I have swum with dolphins in Bali, snorkelled with brightly



coloured fish in the Red Sea and in Thailand. I have floated amongst majestic icebergs in Iceland; I have listened to the call to prayer whilst sipping mint tea (with lots of sugar) in Jemaa el Fnaa in Marrakesh's Medina Quarter (Old City). I have canoed down the rapids on the Dordogne in the South West of France for several days whilst camping under the stars each night. Each of my journeys has taught me much about the country I was in and the problems that each country faces. I have learned about the bombings in that same square in Marrakesh and the flash floods a couple of years ago in the Dordogne that swept away people's lives and livelihoods. I also learned much about myself within each of those journeys.

Each experience sparked within me a real sense of awe at our World and made me feel I am the master of my destiny, and that I can shape my World and my life into whatever I want it to be with infinite possibilities. With every journey I have taken, my life has crossed paths with people I would not otherwise have met and each of those encounters has provided me with opportunities: such as making friends with Balinese children who came to swim in our pool and make chocolate fudge cake with us and who in turn showed us their family's fishing boat and the catch they brought in each day, which they relied on to survive.

Sometimes it seems important to realise that every cloud does have a silver lining and that out of adversity comes opportunity. Lockdown has meant

that people have spent more time exploring our own country rather than travelling further afield. This half term my family and I travelled to one of the outer of the Inner Hebridean Islands in Scotland called Tiree. This island is only 10 miles long and 6 miles wide and has no trees. It is stunningly beautiful in its wildness and simplicity. Telecommunication signals were tricky and we completely left technology behind for a few days. I rode bareback on the beach with the wind rushing through my hair and surfed the waves of the ocean on an island nicknamed "Hawaii of the North". Spending time with people who had the time to talk to me and who showed a very real interest in my family and me made me see how, even at home there is so much to be learned about our World and our own way of life. There is much to be appreciated in every single voyage we make.

My wishlist of adventures is enormous. I want to trek the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu; to scuba dive with turtles in Honduras; to climb Mount Everest in the Himalayas; to gaze at the Taj Mahal; trek with the monkeys to Angkor Wat; see the cherry blossoms in Japan in the springtime; trek to find the Silverback Gorillas in Rwanda and take a revolutionary ride across South America following the wheel tracks of Che Guevara in the Andes. I know that each and every one of the journeys I make in my life will in its own way change my course in life, open my eyes to the joys that the World has to offer and fuel the fire inside me to make a difference to our World in some significant way.

We can all trailblaze in real life and when life is restricted we can trailblaze in our imaginations. Books and plays, the theatre and the internet as well as facetime family and friends abroad all provide a joyous, eye-opening experience. What matters is not how we get that joyous experience but what we choose to do with it and how we allow it to open our eyes and minds.

Written by **Aurelia** – Upper III (Year 7)

“I now know, by an almost fatalistic conformity with the facts, that my destiny is to travel...”

Ernesto “Che” Guevara: *The Motorcycle Diaries; notes on a Latin American journey.*



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