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Prokletije – Montenegro



Mt. Arapit – Albania



Guri i Kuq – Kosova

BALKANS PEACE PARK PROJECT

Creating a trans-national, cross-border park in the adjoining mountain areas of Albania, Kosovo/a, Montenegro

UK Registered Charity No. 1105447

www.balkanspeacepark.org



UK NEWSLETTER No. 12 November 2015



ARE WE NEARLY THERE?

Parents setting out on a day’s journey with young children will be all too familiar with this cry from the back of the car within a few miles of starting out.

The Balkans Peace Park Project, usefully known now as just B3P, began its journey in 2001. Its destination? The dream of a chain of national parks across the mountain range straddling Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo/a, their communities working together across the national borders to protect the environment and to develop sustainable mountain tourism. 14 years on, **“Are we nearly there?”** The answer is, **“No, not yet,”** but this year there has been:

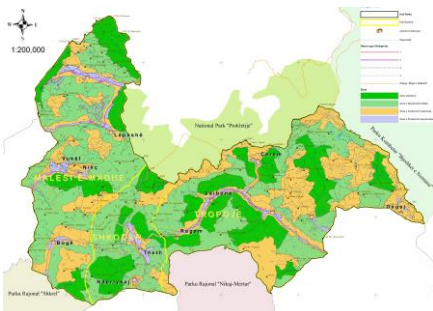
A big step on the way

When we started out there were no maps in the region. So, as you see on the left, we had to make our own to explain what we wanted to achieve. By 2013 there were government approved national parks in Kosovo/a, the Bjeshkët e Nemuna NP, and in Montenegro, the Prokletije NP, but Albania only had its small areas in Thethi and Valbona, national parks in name only, dating from

the communist era. Now, in a major development, the Albanian Ministry of the Environment, working with the German government organization GIZ, has produced this splendid map of what they call the Albanian Alps National Park”. It is printed again a bit larger on the next page.

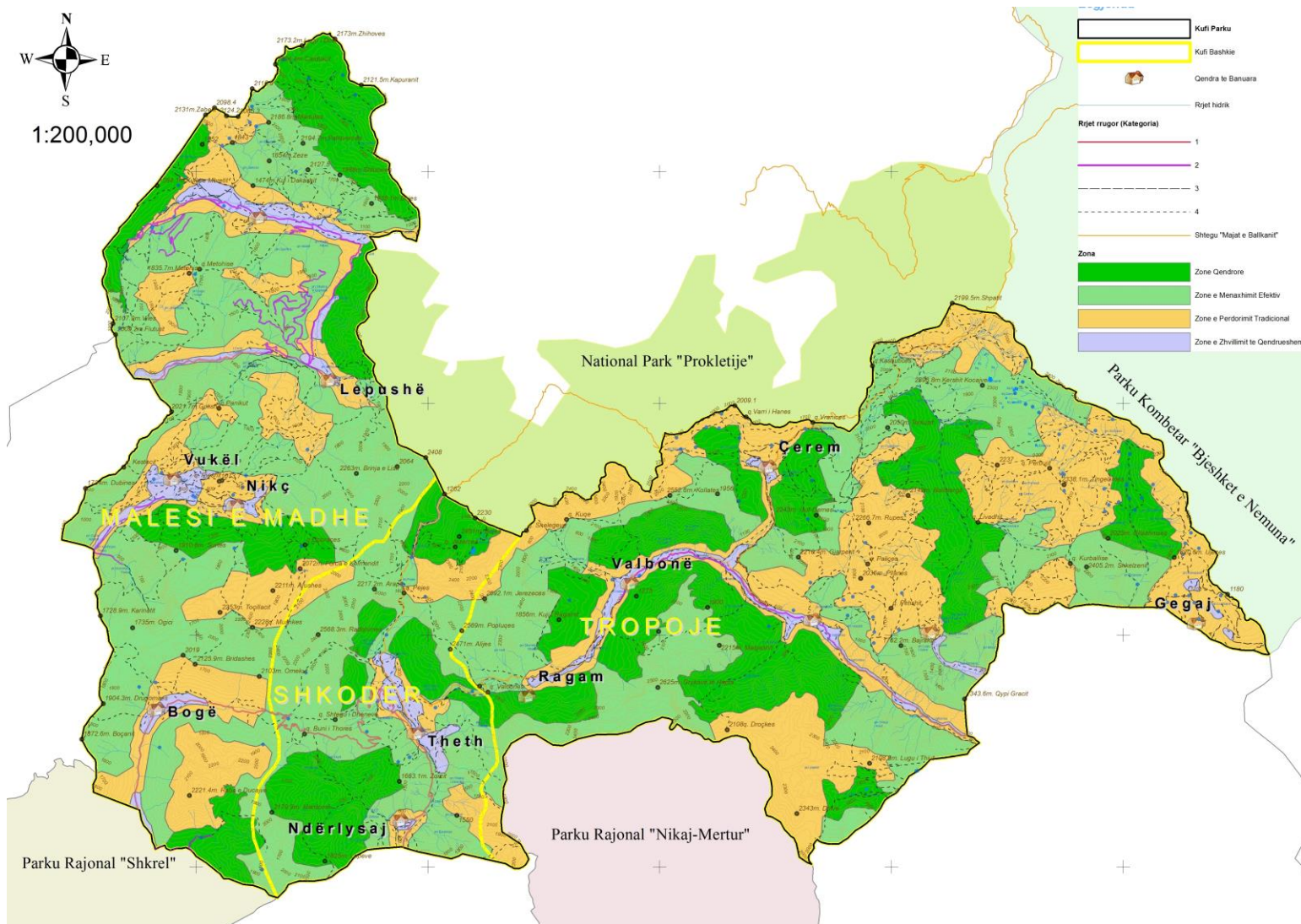
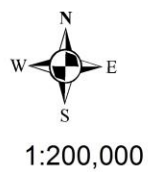


Map of proposed peace park area.



PARKU KOMBËTAR “ALPET E SHQIPËRISË”

Harta e zonimit të Parkut Kombëtar “Alpet e Shqipërisë”



The map shows clearly how the new proposed Albanian Alps National Park, covering a larger area of northern Albania than we had envisaged, abuts the existing national parks in Montenegro (pale green) and Kosovo/a (even paler green). The chain of national parks across the mountain region is now complete. **On paper!** We congratulate GIZ and the Environment Ministry on this hugely welcome plan and we wish it a speedy journey to full ratification by the Albanian government. The colour coding on the map means:

Dark green: Central Zone. Strictly protected conservation area.

Lighter green: Effective Management Zone. Controlled development of visitor facilities.

Yellow: Zone for traditional use. Controlled use and development of land and agriculture.

Purple: Zone for lasting development. Traditional practices of residents and businesses.

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1. 2015 SUMMER PROGRAMMES

We successfully ran five Summer Programmes this year, three in Albania (Valbona, Thethi, Lëpushë) and two in Montenegro (Babino Polje and Grbaje). We are very grateful to the US Embassy in each country for their financial support. A particular feature this year was the much increased and very enthusiastic involvement of volunteers from within the Balkans. Other volunteers came from England, Germany, Malta, Scotland and the USA/Alaska.

a) 13th – 18th July, Thethi, Albania

The Programme was run entirely by our Albanian friends, Pranvera Çarku and Miranda Terthorje, with good support from the community. The 15 pupils aged 8 – 15 showed great interest, they were very punctual, respected all the programme rules and everyone enjoyed it.



Classes ran for two hours a day: English and Environmental Education. Additionally, some classes were organized as different activities outside, which were particularly popular, e.g. handicrafts, drawing, sewing, sports, how to keep Thethi clean, with a clean-up day. Ever since the first Summer Programme in Thethi in 2008 they have had a good impact in the whole area and we hope to continue the programmes there.

b) 27th – 31st July, Valbona, Albania

This was a pilot project for five days, coordinated by Gill Akhtar from the UK with terrific help with logistics and registering students from Jonid Sula from Tirana. Overall, the project ran smoothly and successfully, ably supported by an enthusiastic and energetic team of 17 volunteers, 11 of

them from Kosovo/a, led by Arber Jashari, coordinator from the American Corner in Prishtina. In all, 60 students aged from 4 to 21 joined in the programme, the numbers increasing each day as the news spread. Nearly all students attended the Graduation Ceremony at the end, performing songs or speaking about their favourite place in Valbona, all in English. The lessons took place in the mornings only.

. Environmental and Heritage Education



Visits for two days from members of two organizations, Eco-Albania and Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHwB), added greatly to the programme. Eco-Albania ran differentiated workshops to each age group on environmental issues such as pollution of rivers, water supply, the food chain and protection for trout in Valbona river. The workshops took place both in

the classroom and in a wooded area near the school. CHwB worked with the younger age groups, using a story, *Xhubleta*, to look at the ancient dress and culture of people living in the Albanian Alps. The youngest group made models of traditional Albanian houses, an important topic when so many of the rapidly increasing number of houses and buildings in Valbona are modern and out of keeping with the environment and tradition. This input on environmental education from the volunteers from these organizations was particularly valuable because they had expertise which other international volunteers didn't have. We must invite them back next year when the programme returns for a full two weeks, as pleaded for by students and parents in Valbona.

c) 3rd – 7th August, Lëpushë, Albania

This programme was coordinated by Jonid Sula and Klejd Costa from Tirana. 38 students took part, with ages from 6 to 30! A third of the students were 18 or older. There were 13 volunteers altogether, working on different stages of the programme. Classes were held in the primary school "Lucë Agraja" in Lëpushë and outside for additional activities. Learning English and Environmental Awareness were the main activities, covering issues of wildlife protection,



You're alright. I'm not the dentist!

forest conservation, problems of garbage, as well as using the local biodiversity in cooking for tourists. As in Valbona, there was a day's workshop provided by members of CHwB, looking at traditional buildings, styles and costume. The graduation ceremony at the end of the week included song recitals, displays of traditional clothing, sports, including cricket!, games and refreshments.

Study of Responsible Tourism

An important activity which took place in the programme during afternoons was a 'Study of Responsible Tourism' with Dr Simon Woodward, Principal Lecturer and Head of Tourism at Leeds Beckett University, UK. With his colleague Patricia Cliff and with the help of volunteers he visited all the tourist guesthouses in Lëpushë and Vermosh, discussing concepts of responsible tourism with the owners. Dr Woodward's full report was given to B3P and notes of it are on Page 8 in this newsletter.

d) 10th-14th August, Babino Polje, and 17th-20th August, Grbaje, Montenegro

These programmes were coordinated by Sylvia Shatwell (UK) and Kelsy Aho (USA, Alaska).

They worked in partnership with friends and colleagues in the Prokletije National Park and

NGOs: PSDK HRID and TRITON. They were also very grateful for terrific help from local friends

and volunteers, Alsen Radončić, Emir

Feratović and Irfan Talević. Both

programmes had a strong emphasis on the

environment; in Babino Polje, where the

classes and accommodation for volunteers

were in the 'eco village', the learning

focused on air, water and biodiversity, with

particularly successful activities on the

water cycle. In Grbaje, the younger group

focused on themes of animals, water,

natural and man-made features in the

environment, while the older group explored the resources and features in the valley and also

discussed the water cycle and biodiversity in the region. Games and out door activities featured

energetically and enthusiastically in the programmes. The school base in Grbaje was the old

Serbian army building. It was cleaned up and made adequate by the local volunteers.



Visit to a traditional house in Plav with teacher

Sylvia dressed as a traditional bride!

Kosovar volunteers

Two new Kosovar volunteers, Gjeta Gjysinca and Djella Krasniqi, joined the programme in Grbaje, bringing a very welcome cross-border element and a lot of informal exchange of ideas

and knowledge, not least among the UK and Montenegrin volunteers. A number of adult Kosovar locals were very interested in the project and there was a clear interest and appetite for

cross-border collaboration. There were 20 students on each programme, 40 in all, and their evaluations of the project gave it 10/10. Well done everyone! On a less happy note there was a marked difference between the children of Plav (Babino Polje programme) and Gusinje (Grbaje) in terms of language proficiency, levels of engagement and attention span. The children of Gusinje appear to have a collective aspiration to emigrate to the USA, very like the young people in Vermosh, 10 miles away across the border in Albania.

2. 2016 SUMMER PROGRAMMES

We are pleased to announce the provisional but pretty firm dates for our Summer Programmes in 2016, including a new programme in Rugova, Kosovo/a, which means that for the first time since they started in 2008 we have SPs in all three countries of B3P. This early announcement should make it easier to attract a good number of international volunteers, as well as the inspirational volunteers from within the B3P countries who added so much to the programmes this year.

- 9th – 23rd July Thethi, Albania
- 16th – 30th July Rugova , Kosovo/a, coordinated by Arber Jashari
- 23rd July – 6th August Valbona, Albania
- 30th July – 13th August Lëpushë
- 13th – 20th August Grbaje, Montenegro
- 20th – 27th August Babino Polje, Montenegro

These dates also mean that the programmes have the flexibility to run for a full week, if appropriate, not just five days.

3. CROSS-BORDER TREKKING, PEAKS OF THE BALKANS TRAIL

The Peaks of the Balkans trail, PoB for short, is the 190km circular, waymarked, trekking route through the whole mountain range in the B3P area. It was established in 2012 by GIZ and local action groups in each country, inspired, we like to think, by B3P's initiatives in cross-border trekking since 2003. Although there are plenty of variations on the PoB route to attract independent mountain trekkers and other routes to explore well away from it, for us in B3P it is a symbol for what we hoped for in the first place, international, cross-border cooperation bringing mountain visitors from abroad to enjoy the spectacular scenery and local culture and to put money into the local economy, leaving only the impact of their footprints on the environment. It has proved extremely popular. We do not know and can't calculate the numbers of people walking the trail or parts of it; many come in organized groups from alpine clubs in Italy,

Germany, Holland and Austria, others come in smaller groups of friends from the UK and other countries. A handful of UK adventure travel companies now take groups on parts of the PoB. Hazardous a guess and waiting to be put right by statistics from another year, we suggest that between 500 and 1000 people a year are tackling parts or all of the trail. Even those whose backpacking days are over can appreciate the trail while their packs are taken for them to their destination each day by vehicle, horse or bus. There are issues to be faced, of course, inevitable when a route is used to this extent, such as trail maintenance, improved waymarking, developing a wider range of accommodation and camp sites for overnight stops, amending the map and directions, and, sadly, the removal of litter and garbage which is a big problem all over the region. There are several companies, individuals or organizations in the Balkans which help with arrangements for this or other treks in the region. They are included in the list on page 12 of this newsletter.

4. POLICE PERMISSION FOR UNOFFICIAL BORDER CROSSING

It is still necessary to get police permission in advance if you wish to cross the borders on the PoB or other trails in the B3P mountains. A meeting in Podgorica in 2011 between border police from the three countries and interested organizations agreed a system for obtaining the necessary permits. The principle is that you get permission from each country that you **leave**. It does work, sort of! People applying independently should download the application form for each country from the PoB or B3P website and e-mail it to the police addresses given. Do not expect a reply but make sure you have a copy of your application with you. They don't like you applying more than a month in advance! The Kosovo/a police sometimes like the pleasant drive up the Rugova valley to check out a group over a breakfast coffee in the café at Kuçiste, but you are unlikely to meet any other border police on the trek. For a small fee the organizations listed on pages 12/13 can obtain the necessary permission for you. If you are booking a trek through them the permission is part of the package.

5. PAVLIN'S HOUSE IN THETHI

Pavlin Polia's house in Thethi is very well known to many of us in B3P, the house itself, Pavlin's



family and the 'staff' in resplendent red t-shirts who help to create the super hospitable atmosphere there. Sadly, in April this year there was an accident which caused a huge fire and gutted the house. Luckily, no one was hurt and the family are safe. Funds were set up in the USA, in Germany and on the B3P Just Giving website to help Pavlin rebuild his house. On the understanding that it would be rebuilt in

traditional style we sent out £1000, contributed by members of UK trekking groups who have stayed there. A further £200 from B3P is waiting to be taken out in person. Apart from compulsory 3rd party motor insurance, insurance is an unknown concept in Albania. We hear that the shell of the house is now rebuilt and that windows may, or may not, be in. Vlora and the children are in Kosovo/a with her parents while Pavlin battles on in Thethi, hoping to have it all ready for visitors next year. We wish him well and all the good luck he needs.

6. REVIEW OF TOURISM IN LEPUSHE AND VERMOSH

During our Summer Programmes in Lëpushë in the last three years we have often heard complaints from guesthouse owners and other residents that they were not getting enough visitors, that it was the bad roads keeping tourists away and that they hoped things would be better when the roads were properly surfaced. In the English lessons and in discussion with guesthouse owners the needs of visitors and how to meet them have been frequent topics. In 2014, in addition to the Summer Programme, we organised two meetings for guesthouse owners and others interested in developing tourism in the area – one in Vermosh, one in Lëpushë. These were supplemented by a series of informal meetings with local people to discuss how B3P might best work with them to achieve their aim of encouraging sustainable tourism and creating a more sustainable economy in general. Consequently, we invited Dr Simon Woodward, Principal Lecturer in the School of Events, Tourism and Hospitality at Leeds Beckett University in the UK, to come to Lëpushë in 2015 at the time of the Summer Programme to cast his professional eye over the problems and possibilities. Simon has long been interested in the work of B3P. He readily agreed. We can't reproduce the whole of his report here, but here are some of the main points he makes.



ABSTRACT

This short report, prepared for the Balkans Peace Park Project, reviews the current state of tourism in the North East of Kelmend Municipality, Albania, and identifies a range of opportunities for developing the industry in a responsible fashion, creating sustainable benefits for the host communities of Lepushe and Vermosh.

Dr Simon C Woodward & Patricia Cliff

School of Events, Tourism & Hospitality, Leeds Beckett University

Some recommendations and conclusions

It is crucial that the communities in Lëpushë and Vermosh prepare for the completion of the new road surface, probably by 2017. B3P should work with other NGOs, such as VIS (the Italian

NGO which is active in Vermosh), local businesses, the community and national agencies on issues like:

- **USP** = Unique Selling Point. Identify and agree on the most special feature of the area which will attract visitors and tourists.
- **Marketing.** This is expensive but use informal means such as Facebook and general awareness via B3P activities and other active organizations. Try the country's Destination Marketing Organization for national support.
- **Product Development.**
 - a) I.e. a wide range of possible activities to be offered: nature tourism, waymarked low-level walks, cycle touring, mountain biking, trekking, caving, rock climbing, painting and photography, plus winter sports: snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, etc.
 - b) Increase the number of guesthouses offering double, en-suite bedrooms for older couples who are prepared to pay a bit more.
 - c) A food trail linking local farm producers
- **Environmental Management** Crucial for promoting the area as a high quality centre for outdoor activities. Importance of waste management, care of water sources, trail maintenance, etc.
- **Tourist taxes and visitor payback schemes.** Consider inviting visitors to pay a bit more on top of their accommodation costs, the money raised to go into tourist information or development activities.
- **Tourist information.** Build up information panels and produce leaflets, especially to attract visitors from Gusinje and Plav just across the Montenegro border. Open a tourist office.
- **Business support.** Getting support from local businesses is essential. Get professional help or advice on upgrading guesthouses and the skills needed for other activities.
- **Mountain guides.** Have a corps of trained guides in the area for mountain walking, winter activity and mountain biking, etc.

Further support

Simon based his report on only a week's visit, some desk research and conversations with several local business owners. He wasn't able to talk with government agencies or other NGOs, so input from them is not available. However, Simon's team has considerable experience of working in many emerging tourist destinations around the world, e.g. Scandinavia, the Middle East, South-East Asia and widely in Africa. The tourist team at Leeds Beckett University would be delighted to provide additional support to B3P and other partners in developing Kelmend as a thriving tourist area.

7. ANTONIA AND NIGEL YOUNG IN THE BALKANS

In July 2015, Antonia and Nigel worked on the fringes of the Valbona Summer Programme and were involved in meetings connected with B3P and making new contacts which were highly relevant to B3P.

Shkodra

Here they put on a dinner at the San Francisco restaurant for 17 supporters of B3P and Summer Programme volunteers arriving. They welcomed two special guests, Alma Shkreli and Vildan Plepi, who had been interpreters and helpers on the B3P inaugural cross-border trek in 2003. They showed their B3P powerpoint presentation to residents at the Backpackers Hostel in Shkodra (Mi Casa es Tu Casa) and they had valuable time with Arian Gjura, our main link with B3P Albania. They also prepared for a major meeting to be addressed by Professor Zef Gjeta (Tirana) and Dr. Simon Woodward (Leeds-Beckett) on environmental issues in the B3P Albanian regions.

Valbona

From Shkodra they travelled to Koman and then up Lake Koman to Fierze on one of the new ferries. All the party were volunteers for the Valbona SP, ably organized by Jonid Sula. In Valbona they showed the B3P presentation again in the 'Special Room' in the privately run Tourist Office, finding that for really up-to-date information one should go to the Centre run by JourneytoValbona.com. They met the three members of CHwB (Cultural Heritage without Borders) and two of Eco-Albania, both of who were to run workshops on the Summer Programme. While in Valbona they heard of a meeting called by GIZ for 35 stakeholders on the planned development of the Albanian Alps National Park. They were warmly welcomed to this crucial meeting where B3P had the first knowledge of the exciting plans as described at the start of this newsletter. We are pleased to have good contact with GIZ.

Kosovo/a

From Valbona they travelled to Peja in Kosovo/a to meet up with Ellen Frank, another old friend from the inaugural trek in 2003, at ERA's (Environmentally Responsible Action) centre in Peja, and with Arber Jashari who was the leader of the Kosovar team which contributed so well to the Summer programme in Valbona. They were also able to see the work of CHwB in restored 'kullas' in Junik and other towns.

8. TREKKING IN SOUTHERN ALBANIA

After many years of trekking in the mountains of B3P in the north, Richard Hargreaves was tempted to see what it was like in Southern Albania. In April, his group of 7 friends from the Fell and Rock Climbing Club flew to Corfu and crossed to Albania by ferry to Saranda for two weeks

of mountain trekking, interspersed with 'cultural' days in World Heritage sites like Gjirokaster, Berat, Apollonia, Butrint and others. A rather less strenuous trip this time and with a lot of being driven around in a minibus, but it was nonetheless hugely enjoyable and fascinating to compare it with the whole atmosphere in northern Albania. The treks of 4 days and 3 days followed the river valleys of Zagoria and Kurvelesh, with days over high cols to get to and from them at the beginning and end. The mountains were long continuous ridges above the river valleys without the spectacular 'crocodile teeth' peaks of the north. Tourism is much less developed than in the north and the political, historical and religious atmosphere is very different. However, Albanian hospitality in family farmhouses is familiar: the welcome with çaj malit and raki, the copious suppers and breakfasts of all home produce, the feeling of sharing in family life each evening.



Ottoman bridges and polyphonic singing



In Zagoria we loved the Ottoman bridges we saw each day with their high graceful arches with no parapets to stop you falling off them. The highlight in Kurvelesh was in the village of Terbaç where the family helped us to celebrate Paul's 70th birthday with a

performance of intense Albanian polyphonic singing, a quartet of male family members producing a sound combination of drone, oral percussion, melody and vocal line. We have recordings of this but, sadly, no still photo.

A wartime memorial plaque



On the third day of the first trek in Zagoria, in the remote village of Nivan, we were surprised to come across a smart village water point with this memorial plaque. This



was Tilman Square (Sheshi). Tilman is one of the great names of British mountaineering in partnership with Eric Shipton in the years between the two World Wars. His war record was also remarkable: 4 years a gunnery officer on the Western Front in WW1, then WW2 at Dunkirk and El Alamein before volunteering to be parachuted into Albania in 1943 to liaise with the partisan forces against the Germans. I had read about this episode but hadn't remembered which part of Albania he had been in. At the next village, Sheper, where we stayed the night, we learned that Tilman had stayed there. Reading about him when we got home we found that Sheper had actually been his HQ during his 10 months in Albania and that many of the routes we walked and places we visited in peaceful 2015 Tilman had walked and fought over, 70 years before in 1943/44. Richard is preparing a Powerpoint talk on Tilman in Albania and maybe writing a journal article too.

'Zbulo' = 'Explore' in Albanian

This splendid trip was organized for us by Zbulo, the adventure travel company, run by Endrit Shima and Ricardo Fahrig in Tirana. It was carefully worked out in detail over several months of e-mail correspondence with them. Endrit himself accompanied us as our guide for the first half of the trip as far as Berat, where he handed over to Erenik Selmani for the second half from Berat to Saranda. Both were excellent, knowledgeable guides and great companions. Erenik, especially, had a passionate interest in the archaeology and the history of the area, giving us valuable insight into the transition from the rule of communist dictator Enver Hoxha (1944 – 1985) to the turbulent post-communist era which followed it, as he interpreted the landscape and buildings for us.

9. HELPFUL ORGANIZATIONS FOR TREKKING, ETC.

For readers of this newsletter who might be interested in visiting the B3P or other regions of those three countries we list here the people and organizations whose help we really appreciate.

a) **Kosova Outdoor** www.kosovaoutdoor.com Lendita Hyseni, leahyseni@gmail.com, and her husband Adnan set up this company in Peja. She works closely with Admir Lalić in Plav/Gusinje, Montenegro, info@prokletije.com, and Pavlin Polia in Thethi, Albania, pavpolia@gmail.com, arranging routes, guides, accommodation, travel and baggage transfer, for individuals or groups intending to trek the PoB or other adventures in the B3P region. It was Lendita who pioneered for us the different ways to transfer the packs of those who no longer go in for full backpacking treks and her friendly, highly professional help is a great example of cross-border cooperation. She can help you to explore other towns and areas of Kosova, the cultures and traditions of Rugova valley and is an advocate of the Slow Food International movement www.slowfood.com in Kosova. Lendita is also a good contact for getting police cross-border permission from Kosovo/a.

b) **Admir Lalić** info@prokletije.com is the Information and Education Specialist at the Prokletije National Park Visitors Centre in Gusinje, Montenegro. He can arrange tours, guides, accommodation and transport for trekkers and visitors and is the best contact for getting police permission for cross-border trekking from Montenegro.

c) **Zbulo** www.zbulo.com Endrit Shima, endrit.shima@gmail.com ,and his colleague Ricardo Fahrig, ricardo@zbulo.org from their office in Tirana offer a wide range of mountain and cultural adventures in Albania, especially, but also the PoB trail and other travel in Kosovo/a and Montenegro. Their close associate for Montenegro is the well qualified mountain guide Vlatko Bulatović, welcome@zalas.me . Endrit was very much in the forefront in establishing the PoB trail in 2011/2012 and the map which goes with it. Like Lendita they provide a very friendly and professional service. For a small fee they offer to get police permission for border-crossing for all three countries.

Other organizations

Apart from the cross-border trekking, there are other people and organizations with whom we have varying degrees of contact and whose work across the borders in the B3P for environmental conservation, sustainable development and environmental education of young people we warmly appreciate. These include:

- d) **ERA** (Environmentally Responsible Action) www.eradirect.org Fatos Lajçi and Ellen Frank run this longstanding group from their beautifully restored Haxhi Mill Environmental Education Centre in Peja, Kosovo/a. They seek to increase environmental consciousness, awareness, and responsibility amongst the youth and community of Kosovo/a in order to protect, conserve and promote the region's natural and cultural heritage. They like to take groups of young people from different countries to share outdoor experience at centres they have built high in the mountains above Rugova.
- e) **American Embassies** in Tirana, Podgorica and Pristina which have given money to help fund the B3P Summer Programmes in Thethi, in Plav/Grbaje and by enabling Kosovar volunteers to take part in the programme in Valbona, Albania. We are deeply grateful for this financial help and the interest which the embassies take in what the programmes seek to do.
- f) **B3P Albania** Thanks to Arian Gjura in Shkodra handling the complicated finances it was B3PA which set up the Summer Programme in Thethi this year.
- g) **GIZ** (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) the German government development organization. It was the backing of GIZ that lay behind the establishment of the PoB trail and the meeting to get agreement on cross-border police permission in 2011. Now they have put their influence and money to good

use in working with the Albanian Environment Ministry to make progress towards the creation of the Albanian Alps National Park.

- h) **CHWB** www.chwb.org (Cultural Heritage without Borders) This NGO is dedicated to rescuing and preserving cultural heritage affected by conflict, neglect or human and natural disaster. They work especially in Bosnia, Albania and Kosovo/a. We were delighted to meet this organization this year and to have their input with workshops on two of our Summer Programmes.
- i) **Eco-Albania** www.ecoalbania.org The centre for Protection of the Natural Ecosystems in Albania (Eco-Albania) is an NGO, created in December 2014 as a joint initiative of professors of the Department of Biology of the Tirana University and the "Save the Blue Heart of Europe" team in Albania. It works to strengthen the friendly coexistence of man and nature in Albania. Again, we were delighted to have their workshops as part of the Valbona SP.

10. B3P UK COMMITTEE CHANGES

At the AGM in Leeds on November 7th we agreed a number of changes to the committee structure. It is a fact of life for voluntary organizations like ours that it is already busy and committed people who add yet another commitment to their lives. And often these other commitments take over so that they have to choose which ones to stay with and which ones to drop. Last year Ann Kennard who had been our wonderful chairperson for several years had to give that up and after a year as President she has had to step down from that as well. Ann is still a good friend of B3P and will keep in close touch with us. We are very grateful for all the work she did and the visits to the Balkans which she fitted in to her life. Peter Spafford took over as chairperson for 2014/2015 but he too has had to step down because of other commitments. So, our new committee structure to take us forward into 2016 is:

Nigel Young	Chairperson
Antonia Young	Secretary for Communication
Angela Selmani	Secretary for Administration and Volunteers
John Milsom	Treasurer
Richard Hargreaves	Newsletter Editor and Information on Trekking, etc.

Gill Akhtar, who has coordinated Summer Programmes in Thethi and this year in Valbona, is keen to work on 2016 programmes if her teaching job in Edinburgh makes it possible. Sadly, Sylvia Shatwell, who has worked so well with people in Montenegro to get SPs going there for two years, has had to resign. She may be able to join us again in future years.

Support our work?

Our successful and enjoyable Summer Programmes and their extension into all three countries

depend considerably on funding from donations.

Donations can be made preferably on line at:

www.justgiving.com/balkanspeacepark

or by cheque to Balkans Peace Park Project, sent to Hon Treasurer B3P, The Camp, Gladestry, Kington HR5 3NY

Get involved?

We are always interested to hear from people who might be able to join in our work from the UK or help on our current projects in the Balkans.

Please check our website www.balkanspeacepark.org or our Facebook www.facebook.com/B3PBalkansPeaceParkProject or look on the next page, for our latest volunteer requirements

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www.balkanspeacepark.org

Registered UK Charity No 1105447

www.justgiving.com/balkanspeacepark



SUMMER IN THE BALKANS? **VOLUNTEER WITH B3P – THE BALKANS PEACE PARK** **PROJECT**

B3P is a small charity with a BIG picture.

The vision? A transnational park in the rugged, mountainous region spanning Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo/a where communities from all three countries work together to protect their environment, stimulate local employment and promote sustainable visitor activities.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Volunteer for or Co-ordinate a 2-week Summer Programme: July and August, 2016

Our programmes are based in beautiful mountain villages in the cross-border regions: Albania in Thethi, Lepushë-Vermosh and Valbona; Montenegro in Grbaja and Babino Polje and in Rugova, Kosovo. Teaching experience is useful but not essential. Other skills and interests which are equally useful: construction, music, drama, art, photography, environmental studies, trekking & way-marking.

Volunteer for Fund Raising

Help raise funds for our valuable work.

Sponsored fund raising is also possible to fund yourself – set up a page on the B3P area of the Just Giving Website
www.justgiving.com/balkanspeacepark

and ask colleagues, friends and family to sponsor you

See application form on website

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Please contact Angela Selmani B3P Summer Programme Co-ordinator:
angela315@hotmail.co.uk

