

21st February 2008

People Who Wave

by Jeremy Quinton



Think of a city full of energy, and you might think of Istanbul. Perhaps it's from the waters of the Bosphorus River, the Marmaris Sea, and the Haliç where this energy comes from. Who knows. Perhaps it's partly because of the fact that the city straddles the traditional border between Asia and Europe.

The different areas of the city - different continents! - are connected by ferries. You can probably imagine the beauty of the scene at night, with the ferry lights reflected together with the stars in the water on clear nights...even if you've never actually been to Istanbul...yet.

There recently I noticed (or remembered!) how some people seem to have this natural, spontaneous tendency to wave at the people on passing boats. It seemed that the majority of the 'wavers' were children. And although I didn't give it any more thought then, I've even more recently had a similar experience back home.

On my way into work they're doing major improvements. The road is lined with workmen who stop the normal traffic to allow the works lorries in and out. These works started about 5 months ago and I'm told they'll continue for another 18 so...I've already got to recognise the faces of the road workers rather well!

They're the faces of men who have to stand outside all day every working day in all weathers. So by February, most of them are looking like hardy mountain climbers!

Perhaps not surprisingly, they don't *appear* to express a high level of job satisfaction. They don't smile much, for example (sure, why should they?). Their tasks could be described as easy in many senses, though the conditions are basic and the rewards probably minimal. On the other hand, what they're doing allows the safe flow of people from one place to another in their daily lives - a pretty important job, right? But there's this one guy, one amazing guy, who simply stands out.

Every day for the last 5 months he's waved at me and other motorists as we pass by. And he'll often flash a beaming white smile too. And nod his head. And *every* time I see this I wonder how he does it. I mean...what is it that makes him wave? It's so easy not to, right?

I've got the idea from I-don't-know-where that he's from Morocco, is over here without his family and has learned something big in life that he transmits to anyone who sees his wave. I know, I know, my imagination has kicked in there, but who knows?

What I do know is that his simple wave is a special part of the day for me.

© Copyright CONGENIA 2008