

# Life After The Labs

## David Scott

After leaving the Labs I had a series of international jobs and a great deal of travel before I retired from Nortel in 2001. I enjoyed the travel and always tried to learn about the countries I visited.

After retirement I enrolled at London University's School of Oriental & African Studies (SOAS) for an MA in Middle Eastern Studies. I had lived for two years in Istanbul as CFO of Nortel's subsidiary Netas, and liked this course because it allowed me to study Turkish language and politics as well as the economics of the Middle East. I returned to Netas for a short time to collect source material for my dissertation on industrialisation in the Middle East.

Netas had three small subsidiaries, in deepest Russia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. I realised that one of the options at SOAS was to study Central Asia, an area commonly known as "the Stans". This was an unfashionable area with very small classes that had been classified as Middle Eastern for administrative convenience.

The history, politics and religion of Central Asia is fascinating and I decided to prepare a doctoral thesis on the transition from its Soviet era to a liberal free market economy. I narrowed down the work to Kyrgyzstan which is about the size of the UK and is spectacularly beautiful. Two thirds of the country is above 3,000 metres and there are two mountains in the highest twenty in the world.

With my wife Dottie I travelled extensively around the country which is now among the poorest in the world, comparable to a country like Yemen.



I spent a year teaching on the MBA course of the American University of Central Asia. The university is in the centre of Kyrgyzstan's capital city, Bishkek. The course was taught in Russian and English to students from Central Asia and Afghanistan.



Teaching MBA students at the American University



Teaching a finance class at the American University



The road between the two main cities, Bishkek and Osh  
Coffee stop at 4,000 metres



Winter in Bishkek - outside the University (summer 40 degrees, winter -25 degrees)



Visiting the Kumtor gold mine (approx 5,000 metres high on the border with China)



A freshly cast gold ingot (25.672 kilos - now worth about \$1million)

At first I lived with a family to develop some school boy Russian. The year provided a marvellous opportunity to get to know the very hospitable Central Asians in the faculty, and also the academic tourists from all over the world that provided the English language component of the course.



Ramadan prayers outside the American University  
Kyrgyzstan is one of the Islamic republics of the former Soviet Union



Roadside cafe Kyrgyz style...



...and its kitchen!

I used the time to carry out field work for my thesis. After returning home, I successfully completed my PhD drawing on the superb libraries of SOAS and LSE.

In 2016 I published a book on the management of public services in Central Asia – available from Amazon.

