

My two months in Oman were an amazing mix of language learning and cultural immersion, made possible by Pembroke College's Alan Jones Travel Grant. I studied Arabic at the Sultan Qaboos College for Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers in Manah, near Nizwa, where we had five hours of classes each day. The programme brought together students from all over the world, which made every day in class lively and full of different perspectives.

Our lessons focused on Modern Standard Arabic, but what I enjoyed most was being able to use the language outside the classroom. I quickly picked up phrases in the Omani dialect and made local friends who often invited me for coffee and dates. One evening, I was even able to attend a wedding ceremony, which was a really special experience.

At weekends, we travelled around the country, visiting the souq in Nizwa, the forts nearby, and the mountains of Jabal Akhdar and Jabal Shams. We went swimming in wadis, spent time with Bedouin families, and learnt about Omani history and traditions from the people we met. During the hotter days, we often cooled down with large slices of watermelon, (baṭṭikh (بطيخ) in Arabic or ghaw (غو) in Omani dialect), which became a staple at every meal.

What made the trip so memorable was the kindness and hospitality of everyone I met. Whether chatting in Arabic after class or sharing a meal with friends, I always felt welcomed and included. This experience helped me grow in confidence with the language and gave me a much deeper understanding of Omani culture.

I am very grateful to Pembroke College for giving me the opportunity to take part in such a unique and enriching experience.

- Amelia Blunden



Al Faiqin Castle



The Goat Market in Nizwa



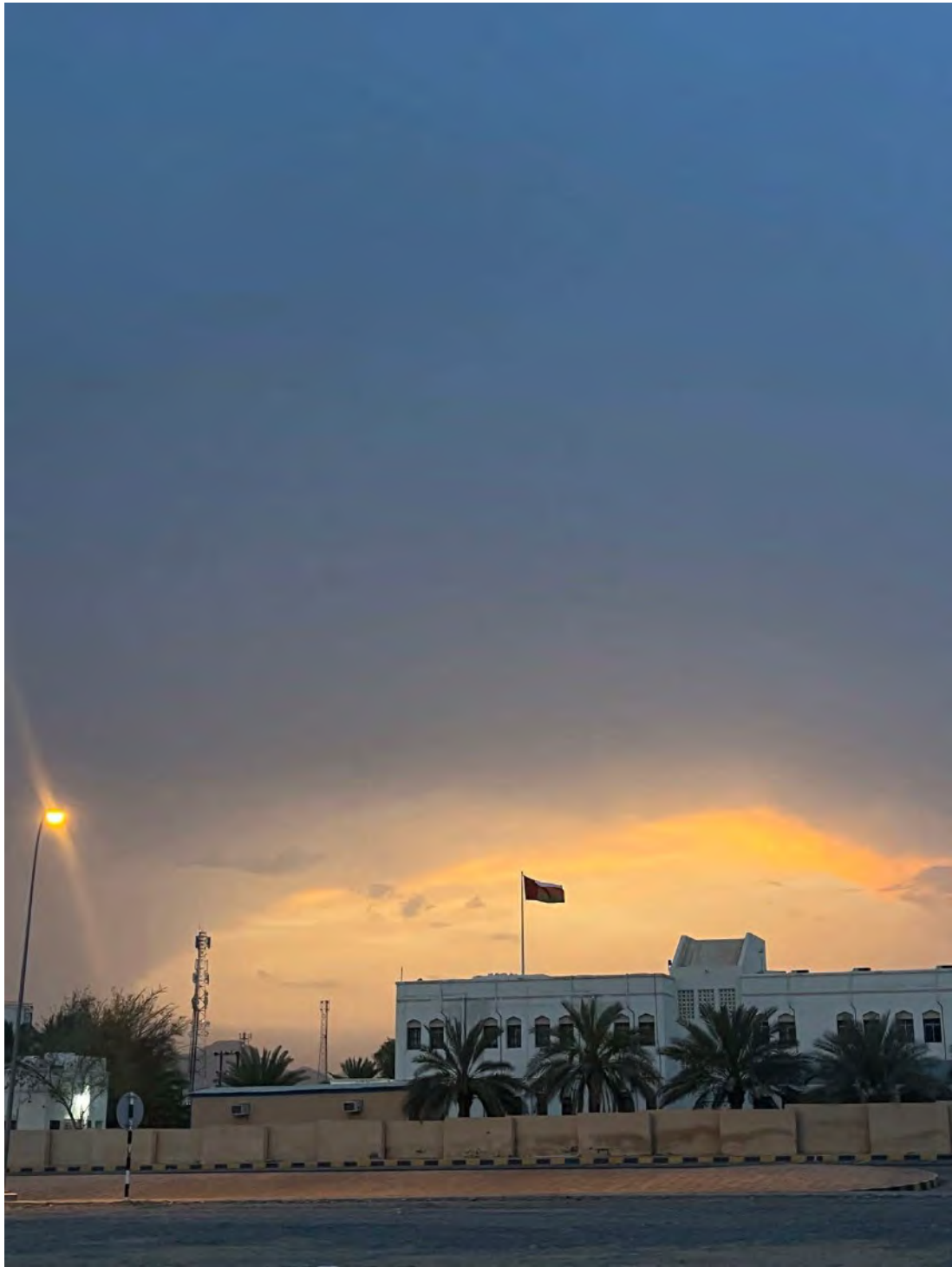
Jabal Akhdar



Manah



The Grand Mosque, Muscat



Manah



Wedding ceremony outfit in a town near Manah



Nizwa Souq



Jabal Shams



Jabal Shams





Date Harvest



Picnic in Manah



Sharqiyah



Wadi Shab



Calligraphy lessons