



Olive Press

Newsletter of the Kefi Club



BBQ – Finale to year's events

Our last meeting of the year, the annual barbecue, held at Rushwick Village Hall on 26th June 2009 was judged by everybody to be a great success.

The thunderstorms, which had been predicted, did not materialise and members of the Kefi Club, visitors from the Worcester Anglo-Hellenic Club and guests were able to eat al fresco in the best barbecue tradition.

Mouth watering barbecued lamb steaks and lamb and mint sausages obtained from Myers the butcher in Upton-upon-Severn were served accompanied by delicious Greek style salads, dips and savouries prepared by Lindsey Kontarines and Dianne Otley. All, of course, washed down with fine Greek wines and beers. With cheerful Greek

music playing in the background, a friendly and convivial atmosphere and authentic Greek food a little of Greece was recreated for a short time in Rushwick. Certainly, the time seemed to pass too quickly.

Our resident chef (and photographer in chief), John Gatfield was, unfortunately (for us), away enjoying the pleasures of Greece. However, our club Secretary, Nick Kontarines, (pictured below) stepped nobly in to the breach and surprised everybody with the skill and panache with



which he manned the barbecue and cooked to perfection the lamb and sausages. We are all left wondering what other hidden talents Nick possesses.

Thanks, also, to Pat who, proudly wearing her “Πρώτος Μαγειράς” apron, presented to her as first prize winner in the sweet section of our 2009 cooking competition, acted the part of hostess, Maitre d', organiser, raffle ticket seller and a dozen other roles.

With the 2008/2009 programme now complete we are all looking forward to the first meeting of the new season on 18th September at Rushwick Village Hall. The annual subscription for 2009/2010 will remain at £10.

By Les Roberts.

Next Event – Meze and Ouzo. 18th Sep 2009

We will start the next year of events off with one of my favourite pastimes in Greece, other than drinking Frappe, is drinking Ouzo and having a complement of various meze to go with it. We will again be using the same venue as last year that of Rushwick Village Hall details of how to get there are on our website, commencing as usual at 7.30pm. Over the last few editions of the newsletter I have been asking members to bring back a bottle of Ouzo from their holidays for this event from feedback I have had this may of given the wrong idea of what this evening is about. That is to enjoy Ouzo whilst eating a variety of meze (Ποικιλία) produced by members to share. As you know a good meze goes well with ouzo and it is this that the evening is all about. I have some gigantes beans I brought back from Crete as an example. Of course this will have to be co-ordinated with our Club Secretary closer to the time.

Visitors flock to new museum

KATERINA MAVRONA/ANA

Visitors from a number of other countries as well as Greeks went to see the displays at the New Acropolis Museum yesterday, its first day open to the public. The museum will be open every day except Mondays and public holidays. Tickets will be priced at 1 euro until the end of this year, after which they are due to rise to 5 euros.



Thousands of people visited the New Acropolis Museum yesterday, the first day that it was open to the public after Greece had used the opening ceremony on Saturday as an opportunity to state its case for the return of the Parthenon Marbles from the British Museum.

Up to 10,000 people who had booked their 1-euro tickets online were expected to walk through the doors of the museum between 8 a.m and 8 p.m. Until tomorrow, only visitors who have booked their tickets via the

www.theacropolismuseum.gr website will be able to view the 4,000 exhibits on display. The first week is almost sold out.

According to The Associated Press, Chryssa Salamanou from Athens was the first through the doors with her husband and child. "We felt that today, with our child, we had to be the first ones to admire the masterpieces which finally found such a worthy, such an important home," she said.

For many visitors, the main attraction was the museum's top floor, where sections of the Parthenon frieze left in Athens have been joined with plaster casts of the works that Lord Elgin removed more than 200 years ago and took to London.

Greece's desire for their return was at the heart of much of

what was said and done during Saturday's ceremony, when some 400 dignitaries were guided through the museum, as the pressure on Britain to return the sculptures was ratcheted up.

"It is time to heal the wounds of the monument with the return of the Marbles that belong to it," said President Karolos Papoulias. "They are our pride and our identity."

Culture Minister Antonis Samaras said the Marbles were in "enforced exile," which is "not just an injustice to us Greeks but to everyone in the world, the English included, because they were made to be seen in sequence and in their entirety." [www.ekathimerini.com 22/06/09]

Titbits from the Editor



As you will see from the next few pages the forecast of events for next year have been finalised. Unfortunately due to commitments and hall bookings we were unable to get a guest speaker to talk on the flora of Greece this time around. Other requests for events have been noted and will feature in the following year of events. I have included the other clubs in the area as well so now may be a good time to sit down and put all those important dates in your diary.

I am told by the Club Secretary Nick that he has lined up some guest writers who are frequent travellers to Greece and have a story to tell. I'm looking forward to that who knows it my inspire others to follow suit. In the next addition I will start the ball rolling by informing you of two exceptional things that happened to me whilst on holiday on Crete.

I have started the long awaited Club cookbook. I now need more recipes to fill it. All the winning cooking competition ones have been added as well as some of the recipes to food I have bought in on occasions. What I think would be great is for you to add your favourite Greek recipe and add a few lines why, easy to prepare, quick, cheap, tastes out of this world, that sort of thing. My email address is at the end of the newsletter as is all the other committee members.

GREEKS have a deep-rooted love of the grape.

"Plant no tree sooner than the vine," Alcaeus advised in 580BC. "No thing more excellent nor more valuable than wine was ever granted to mankind by God," Plato suggested 180 years later; "The peoples of the Mediterranean began to emerge from barbarism when they learnt to cultivate the olive and the vine," Thucydides observed in the same era.

Dangling grapes were used to squeeze out a sour-grape lesson in The Fox and the Grapes fable, purportedly stemming from the Greek slave Aesop in the 6th century BC. Greeks still use sayings like, *na vazis nero sto krasi sou* - literally, dilute your wine with water, meaning you should be flexible.

"To me the grape plant represents the cycle of life," says Marianna Kazakis, founder of the Kazakis House of Viticulture. "It's born in the spring, like a baby, with shoots sprouting, then leaves, stem tops and the grapes. It needs care and caresses, like a baby - then, in October, it slowly loses its leaves and vitality, just like the elderly in the autumn of life."

The Kazakis family is one of many in Greece who live off the vine. They planted their first vineyards in 1987 and bill themselves as Greece's first certified organic cultivators and processors of vine leaves.

Their company quickly developed other grape plant products for the local market and today their vine leaves and stuffed vine leaves, or *dolmadakia*, are exported to the European Union, North America and Japan.

Gastronomic tour

Pangalos, Marianna's son, takes the Athens News on a whirlwind tour of several of the traditional culinary delights Greece has to offer.

The itinerary begins with grape syrup (*petimezi*), a natural sugar substitute rich in iron, calcium and magnesium. Drizzle it onto yogurt, ice cream, cereal or into a cake mix or tea.

"Use the same proportion of grape syrup as you would sugar," Pangalos says.

To make it, squeeze ripe grapes and then strain. This grape juice is called *must*. Boil small portions of the *must* until it thickens into a syrup.

"A slow, rolling boil ensures the retention of vitamins," Pangalos says. "And use a very wide-based pot because the wide bottom helps the water evaporate more quickly."

You can make *must* cookies (*moustokouloura*) by adding grape syrup, raisins and cinnamon to a basic cookie dough, or create *must* cream (*moustalevria*) by thickening boiling *must* or grape syrup with corn flour. (If using grape syrup, add five to seven parts

water to one part grape syrup.) Top with cinnamon, walnuts or roasted sesame seeds or almonds.

Moving on to the vine leaves (*ambelofylla*), harvest the ones that are 12 to 15 centimetres in diameter. Place the washed leaves into a glass jar, vertically if possible. Add brine - one litre of water normally takes 50g of salt and 10g of lemon juice.

Squeeze

"Once the jar is full, squeeze the leaves to expel the air and add more brine to cover," he says. Close the jars, pasteurise and cool.

If you use the preserved leaves to make stuffed vine leaves (*dolmadakia*), rinse, separate and flatten. If you go with fresh leaves, wilt them in boiling water for five to 10 seconds.

"To make the *dolmadakia* the same size, cut the base off the larger leaves," Pangalos says.

Make a filling of raw long-grained rice, salt, pepper, lemon juice, sugar, olive oil, chopped herbs (dill, mint, parsley) and chopped onion (dry and green), all to taste. Place three-quarters of a tablespoon onto the leaf, and start rolling from the bottom, tuck in the sides and continue rolling to the top.

"The secret is lots of herbs and onion," he says. "And place the rolls vertically in a pot, not in layers, so every roll cooks evenly."

Add enough water to cover, along with olive oil and lemon juice to taste. Cover and bring to a boil, cooking for about 20 minutes. Then leave in the covered pot for an additional 20 minutes. Serve with Marianna's sauce: half yogurt, half mayonnaise and a dash of chopped dill.

The leaves are not the only thing worth plucking. The vine tops (*ambelokorfes*) are the soft curly tips of the stems along with the tender crowning leaves.

Wash and dip them into boiling water for 10 seconds. Then put into a jar and cover with a vinegar solution (some salt, lemon juice and a mixture of one part grape vinegar to two parts water). Close and pasteurise. Serve in a salad or sandwich or with *tsipouro*, the distilled, grape-based aperitif.

Some distillers may add salt, dry onions, anise seed, raisins, apples or peaches to *tsipouro*. Ouzo characteristically utilizes more seeds and herbs than *tsipouro*, and *tsipouro* without the anise flavouring is comparable to Italian grappa. Have a cold? Marianna recommends warm *tsipouro* blended with grape syrup before bedtime.

For good reason, winemaking is said to be an art.



The secret to making stuffed vine leaves (*dolmadakia*) the same size is to trim the leaf bottoms accordingly



The trick to picking a vine leaf without damaging it is to grasp it in the centre and pull firmly, yet tenderly

"Use a combination of grapes for the best result," Pangalos advises. "Different varieties can be chosen to lend colour, aroma and taste."

Squeeze the grapes and strain the stems out immediately for a sweet wine. Leave the stems in for up to 10 days for a more brusque flavour. Then bottle or put in a barrel, taking care to leave no air inside the barrel.

Sweet and sour

Initiate your own grape vinegar by using your favourite expensive vinegar as a base. Mix with must and/or leftover wine (but not wine gone bad), and test in a couple of months.



Spring means new growth, new hopes

"Some simply add water to the base vinegar but this produces inferior vinegar," Pangalos says.

Greeks customarily serve guests spoon sweets (glyko koutaliou). To make, de-stem the ripe grapes, wash and leave overnight in a pot filled with brown sugar (two kilos of grapes take 1.5kg of sugar). Then add one or two glasses of water and boil until syrupy. Leave overnight again. The next day, add the juice from a couple of lemons. Boil for 15

minutes, immediately put into jars, close and turn upside down until cool.

Grape marmalade is prepared the same way but the grapes are first crushed. And you can make the grape spoon sweet with grape syrup instead of sugar to produce retseli.

For a lighter version of these treats, make a grape compote by adding sugar water (dissolve one part sugar in three parts water) to de-stemmed grapes in a jar. Simply close, pasteurise and cool.

"The grape is 'alive', and excellent in fruit salads, on cheese cakes or inside regular cakes for a burst of flavour," Pangalos says.

And to conclude with nature's natural candy, make raisins by laying grapes out on nets in long strips to dry in the sun for 45 days, turning every two or three days.

Next, remove the stems and hollow grapes, eaten by bees, by sieving. Wash the raisins in water with a dash of olive oil, for a nice coating, and dry five to 10 minutes in a slow oven.

Enjoy the vine. And for one of Greece's wonders, be "grapeful".

ATHENS NEWS , 29/05/2009

Greece asked to cut down 'booze tourism'

Athens - Britain urged Greece on Thursday to ban organised "bar-hopping" tours and clamp down on doctored drinks to help stop young British tourists getting into alcohol-related trouble, officials said.

British holidaymakers account for about a fifth of the 15 million tourists a year who visit Greece, one of Europe's top holiday destinations. But young Britons have gained notoriety for drunken, violent and sometimes indecent behaviour. Police officials from both countries met on the island of Zakynthos to discuss the problem on Thursday. Britain has already urged young tourists not to drink too much while on holiday in Greece.

"The British police officials called for more controls on bars to prevent drink adulteration and the illegal sale of alcohol to minors, and asked police to use less violence when arresting drunken tourists," said a Greek police official who declined to be named.

British embassy officials declined to comment.

According to British Foreign Office data, 16- to 20-year olds represent a third of all Britons visiting Greece, but account for more than 70 percent of Britain's annual 800-900 consular cases there.

In May, 17 British men went on trial dressed in nun's habits after being arrested for baring their bottoms in public on the island of Crete.

Greece's conservative government vowed to clean up resorts last year, saying much drink-related misconduct was due to profit-hungry bar owners supplying tourists with drinks adulterated with industrial alcohol.

Flyers, beer mats and business cards reading "If you drink too much, things can get out of control" will be handed out to British tourists on Greek islands this year as part of a British campaign titled "Another side to paradise". (Reporting by Renee Maltezou; Editing by Ingrid Melander and Kevin Liffey) - Reuters

Have you viewed our website lately? www.kefi-club.org.uk

KEFI CLUB EVENTS 2009/10

- FRI 18 Nov. Meze & Ouzo**
This is an ideal opportunity to sample different types of meze whilst enjoying Ouzo. We are asking members to bring along a meze dish for this event. Don't forget the Ouzo.
- 23 Oct Ancient Greece & the Nazis [Martin Harris]**
We welcome back Martin for, I think, a third time with another interesting title to his talk.
- 20 Nov Wine for Christmas [Nick Kontarines]**
Yes you can have Greek wine with your Christmas meal. Tonight we will have Christmas foodstuffs to sample as well as some excellent wine.
- 18 Dec Christmas Dinner**
Needs no introduction. Always a great well attended event. Make a date in your diary.
- 22 Jan Traditional Greek Cooking [Eleni Carroll]**
We have asked our judge for the cooking competition held last year to come along and give us her take on Greek cooking.
- 19 Feb The Elgin Marbles [Malcolm Delingpole]**
A controversial topic. We welcome back Malcolm for this. I'm sure it will spark some lively debate.
- 19 Mar The Fight for Independence [John Gatfield]**
After 400 years of occupation enough is enough. The start of the struggle for Greece to become the country we know it as today.
- 23 Apr Celebrations of Greek Easter [4th April]**
Red eggs always come to mind. But find out more of what goes on at this most celebrated time of year.
- 21 May Greek Dance [& AGM]**
Yet another chance to have ago a learning Greek Dances. This time there will be some new ones to learn. Who knows they may just come in handy,
- 18 Jun BBQ**
Another event enjoyed by all and finishes of the year.



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Friday 18th
Meze & Ouzo

Friday 23rd
Ancient Greece & the Nazis
Martin Harris

OCTOBER '09						
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Friday 20th
Greek Wines for Christmas
Nick Kontarines

Friday 18th
Christmas Dinner

DECEMBER '09						
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Friday 22nd
Traditional Greek Cooking
Eleni Carrol

Friday 19th
The Elgin Marbles
Malcolm Delingpole

FEBRUARY '10						
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Friday 19th
The fight for Independence
John Gaffield

Friday 23rd
Celebrations of Greek Easter

APRIL '10						
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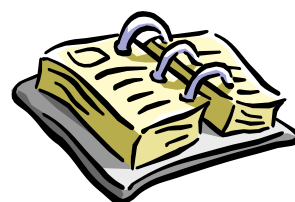
Friday 21st
Greek Dance

Friday 18th
BBQ

JUNE '10						
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Forthcoming Events of Clubs in the Local Area



The Greek Club Birmingham

- September 3** Another evening with Homer - The Odyssey - Ralph and Wyn Braunholtz:
- October 1** Leros: a little island with a big history - Les Roberts:
- November 5** To Istanbul in search of Constantinople - Malcolm Delingpole
- December 3** Christmas celebration

In the Staff Common Room on the first floor Faculty of Arts University of Birmingham 8pm start. Contact: Jennie Marathas on 0121 624 0359 or email: jennie.marathas@blueyonder.co.uk

The Anglo-Hellenic Club

- Sept 24** **Film Night** - The classic this year is 'A Matter of Dignity', a black and white film by Michael Cacoyannis who directed 'Stella' and 'The Girl in Black', which we have seen in previous years.
- Oct 29** **Acrocorinth** – John Fryer explores a topic which leads the listener into Medieval Greece. It hasn't been 'sexy' in archaeological circles so the tours and the guide books gloss over it at the best.
- Nov 26** **Tales from Corinth Part 2** – Eleni Carrol continues her saga of life in Corinth. The story of 'Just a small Greek Polis!' in January 2007 held everyone in raptures and the second part promises to be as engaging and humorous.
- Dec 6** **Christmas Dinner** – As usual we enjoy exclusive use of The Quay in Worcester for our annual end of year supper party warmly hosted by owner-chef Russell.

For further information, Contact petersfoxwood@hotmail.com or visit the Club's website www.wahc.org.uk

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