



## Good Friends, Good Cheer!

It's that time of year for high spirits, cheerfulness, merriment, joviality, good humour and liveliness. All words which describe "Kefi" (well in my Greek dictionary any way). For the 41 members, guests and friends who attended this year's "Taste of Greece" Christmas meal on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December, again at our usual venue of the Bradbury Centre in Worcester, those words describe very well the evening. This was the third such dinner and they just seem to get better and better

each time. I can't wait until the next one. Again it was the ideal forum to meet up with acquaintances, who perhaps, you haven't seen since the last time. With good plentiful food, washed down with fine Greek wine and in the background Greek music. What else could you ask for as a reminder to your trips to Greece? Just to set the scene even more we managed to get the temperature to that of a hot Greek summer evening until we found the controls for the air conditioning. On behalf of the committee I would like once



again to thank Gill and her daughter for preparing the wonderful meal. Total/Fage must get a mention for providing us with the feta cheese that so many people commented on how good it was and other dairy products.

## Forthcoming Events

### Greece in the 50's by Simon Honyold – 28<sup>th</sup> Jan 05

This is a change to published programme.



### Saucepans and kitchen utensils to the ready. 25<sup>th</sup> Feb 05

Back by popular request is the Kefi clubs own version of "Master Chef" or should I say Greek cooking competition. To be held again in the Bradbury Centre, Samsome Place on 25<sup>th</sup> Feb 05. This time there are two categories a sweet and a savoury with prizes for best in class. The judge for the competition is Stephen Hewitt head of hospitality at Worcester Technical College. Best of all, like last time we get to sample all the dishes, that's the clever part a self made buffet.

Will Diane Otley win again? Come along, take part and find out.

# An Ancient Greek Play 18<sup>th</sup> March 05

## Recent events

### Quiz night 25 sep 04

**W**e managed to keep it under wraps but the Quiz Master for our quiz to start the year was none other than Les Roberts our Club treasurer. There were prizes for the top three teams and the teams were made up of either 3 or 4 members, which took a bit of organizing, but without too much fuss it was down to Les to get us going. The quiz was in three parts. The first being questions on the recent Olympics (naming the athletes was impossible), food and drink, geography and of course Greek mythology. The second part was testing whether we could pinpoint locations and islands from a map. Lastly a picture paper of well known or not so well known Greek personalities past and present. I thought the level of the quiz was

pitched about right as the winning team scored a credible 48 out of a possible 55 (those Greek athletes did it). The second team got 46. Thanks to Les for all the time and effort he put into compiling the quiz and for making it so much fun.

### Chris saves the day

Due to our guest speaker being unavailable for our November meeting Chris Lloyd kindly stepped in to give us an insight into her two-month island hopping experience. With little preparation Chris gave us a very in depth presentation backed up by some excellent slides. This presentation was forecasted to be later on in our calendar but Chris has informed us that early in the New Year she will be setting up a new life on Crete. We wish you well. You will be sadly missed. Good luck from all Members of The Kefi Club.

### Ashmolean Museum Visit – 30<sup>th</sup> October 04



**A**pologies to those who have been to this museum before, but to those who haven't and are interested in Ancient Greek pottery this is a must. Due to the party size of 14 we elected to pay £4 each for a guided tour. This was well worth it as we were able to see exhibits of black figured pottery, not on view to the general public, dating from the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C. Then it was into the main room showing a vast range of antiquities. However, it was a bit rushed as the tour had been arranged to start at 12 O'clock and due to parking problems was delayed. The guide

also managed to get us to see the Cast Gallery depicting Greek and Roman sculptures and closes at 1 O'clock on Saturdays. In here were replicas of the Elgin marbles and copies of other well - known statues. After a spot of lunch there was just time to explore a couple of the other exhibits, as there are many more exhibits from countries and times gone by. I have taken photos, alas no room for them in this issue.

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## READERS FEATURES

### Ancient Greek to the Rescue

**I**n a bid to improve the much-maligned language skills of the country's high school students, Education Minister Marietta Giannakou is pressing for an increase in the numbers of hours dedicated to the teaching of Ancient Greek. "The advantage of boosting existing knowledge of the Ancient Greek language, weakness in expression and poor vocabulary have become an everyday phenomenon." Mrs Giannakou said.

"This will not only contribute to a better language level, but also boost pupils cultural consciousness" the Head of the Country's Union of Ancient Greek Teachers told Kathimerini.

## Olympics in Athens, a triumph or a disaster? By G Smith



**S**o! Now that it is all over, do we think of the 2004 Athens Olympics as an unmitigated disaster?

To read the British papers in April or May, there was no way in which the Greek authorities were going to make it on time. An impending disaster, or Greek Tragedy, seemed just around the corner. The Stadium was not finished (that eye-catching roof designed by a slightly risky Italian), the Metro and Tram systems not yet completed (would they ever be?) and the road to Marathon... well that begged description. There had been one, we had travelled many times on it, but now there wasn't. In this country there would have been a large sign saying 'Danger – No Entry'. But of course that is not the Greek way so we all proceeded regardless. Quite an experience. We were visiting our daughter, who lives in Vrilissia, a northern suburb of Athens, at the time, and there was very little other than Olympic comment on the TV – and in the papers. And why not? The Olympic Games is the largest event in the world and Greece, a country of only 11 million had to follow arguably the most successful games in modern times, 4 years ago in Sydney. OK, so Australia is not that much larger in terms of population, though everybody there is sports mad, but it does have a much better developed infrastructure and resources – so we have been led to believe? And everybody said after the 2002 games in Sydney that it couldn't be done better. Of course, for comment about progress in Athens, we had to rely on The Times – available from the kiosk in the Platia, just up the road, at about 6.00 p.m. of same day. Very impressive.

The Times is reputed to be an honest (and accurate) journal but did they really think it was fair or even sensible to suggest that it was a serious option to cancel the Athens Olympics and revert to Sydney? And so called security lapses at the Athletics Stadium in the middle of the night - what was that all about? Just giving some people ideas that they shouldn't have perhaps. Didn't they believe the IOC when they said they were satisfied that everything would be ready on time?

And of course everything was ready, or ready enough. So what if the trains on the new Metro were diesel not electric (as planned). They were new, clean, prompt and comfortable. Not much like home at all. Oh.. and how about being on time.

### And was it a success?

You bet it was. Everything seemed to work perfectly. Our Olympic experience started when we flew to Athens for the second week of the Athletics. However, it didn't begin too well for us. We had pre-booked tickets for various events but thought that we would start by seeing Paula Radcliffe in the Marathon – a sure fire medal winner, if you were to believe the pundits (Cram and Foster to name but two). And it would be free if we got the new Metro to Evangelismos and walked just 500 metres

or so. We got there in good time, bagged our 'pitch' just 100 metres from the entrance to the old Olympic stadium and settled down to wait. The rest is history. Where was she? We were not the only ones asking 'where's Paula?'. It was sad to see so many Brits in a state of confusion. Luckily we got a 'phone call that saved us waiting too long but it was a very disappointing start to our Olympic experience. Thankfully it got better, much, much better.

A visit to the Rhythmic Gymnastics (little Ploumy, our grand daughter, was enthralled) then the Velodrome to see the cycling finals of the Madison (Wiggins a Bronze to add to his Gold and Silver), and Kieren Races, really set us up for the finale. For us that was the last Saturday in the main Stadium. What a fantastic place! We had booked our tickets well in advance and so had good seats where we were well placed to see Kelly Holmes win her second Gold, followed shortly afterwards by seeing the 'no-hoppers' win Gold for GB in the 4 x 100 metres mens' relay. Did those flags fly. The Stadium erupted and, jingoistic as it may sound, wasn't it nice to see those 'cocky yanks' come second for a change! There were obviously other fantastic medal winning performances – we remember El Garrouje winning his second gold - but the evening belonged to Athens. Everything went perfectly. No more so than the trains. Where else in Europe (certainly not in London; please note Mr Livingstone), could 70,000 people exit a major stadium, many walk in complete safety for 1 mile to the station, walk down to the platform, wait 5 minutes, get on an empty train and go home? We expected it to take at least an hour and it only took 10 minutes.

### Our conclusions?

We worry that the people of Athens, many of whom gave up many hours of voluntary work to make the Olympics a success, will not be rewarded for their efforts. Bad publicity beforehand probably reduced the numbers attending and there are questions about the economics of the Games. Has it been a 'financial' success? It will be a great shame if there is a long-term burden for the Athenians to bear by way of extra taxes. They definitely do not deserve that.

On a brighter note, however, they now have a first class transportation system, which must be a benefit in the future – we do not include the new tram system in this judgement. Slow, noisy, jerky and a complete waste of time, but notable for being the only real criticism that we can level at the Games organisation.

Finally, it has been suggested that future Games should be held in Athens, a so-called permanent Olympic site. Obviously there are all sorts of political (not philosophical) problems with that but given the option in 2012 of going to the Games in London or Athens, guess where we would prefer to go.

*Unfortunately this piece arrived too late for inclusion in the previous edition of the Newsletter. I thought that as this is the last*

## Religion and Tradition (Thriskia ke Paradosi)

I have recently been loaned a book from one of our members on Greek pastries and desserts. Part of it describes Greek religion and tradition and how intermingled they are I thought I would share it with you.

Greek tradition is linked closely with the Greek Orthodox religion. Orthodox Greeks as devout and God-fearing people follow the dogmas of the church.

The Church always has been the centre of all Greek life events, such as weddings, christenings and funerals. The full circle of life goes through the Church. For 2000 years the four fasting periods of the year preceding Christmas, Easter, Feast of the Apostles (June 30) and the Assumption of the blessed Virgin Mary (August 15) regulated the Greeks' diet. Greek people were fasting and receiving the Holy Communion very often.

The role of bread in the Greek Orthodox Church always has been very important. In every Divine Liturgy, the priest commemorates, re-enacts, relives the Last Supper of Christ with his disciples. The Altar Bread called "Prosforon", which means offering, is offered by the believers to God and symbolizes the bread offered by Christ to his disciples. Prosforon is used in the preparation of the gifts of Holy Communion and distributed to the congregation after the Divine Liturgy. Prosforon consists of two parts, to signify the two natures of Christ, heavenly and earthly. The Altar Bread is stamped on top with a religious seal "Sfragida", which is divided into four parts with the sign of the cross, and the Greek symbols IC XC, NIKA marked on it are abbreviations of the words "Jesus Christ conquers".

Sharing of "Artoklasia" the five loaves brought by the faithful to the church, to be blessed on their name day, is in memory of the five breads blessed by Christ in the desert to feed the 5000.

"Koliva" is a traditional, religious dish, made with boiled wheat and brought to the church to be blessed in memory of a deceased relative or friend, forty days after the death. The special memorial service is called "Mnimosino". Wheat symbolizes the eternal life and resurrection. Just as the wheat kernel is buried in the earth, sprouts and bears fruit again, so do our lives. The human body buried in the earth after death, holds the promise of the Risen Christ. The offering of the wheat is a request to the congregation to join in prayer for the salvation of the departed soul. In memory of all our loved ones, trays of koliva are blessed in church on the last Saturday of the Mardigras, on three Saturdays during the Great Lent and on the Saturday before Pentecost Sunday. These Saturdays are called "Psihosavata" (Saturdays of the Souls).

The wedding ceremony in an Orthodox church is so beautiful that it reminds one of a royal coronation.

Engagement rings are exchanged and the bride and the groom sip wine from a golden cup. Beautifully worked lemon blossom wreaths, joined together with a white satin ribbon, are placed on the heads of the couple, then exchanged three times by the priest, calling upon the Holy Trinity in prayer to bless the bride and the groom. While still wearing the wreaths, the couple follow the priest in a wedding walk around in a circle three times in front of the Altar, as the priest chants the hymn of Isaiah. Friends and relatives throw rose petals and rice at them. The rice regarded as a symbol of an unbroken union and fertility. Upon leaving the church, the guests are offered "koufeta" candy coated almonds wrapped in tulle and tied with white satin ribbons forming a little bouquet "boubouniera". Also often offered is a small snow-white meringue. Both denote a wish for sweetness in the couples' life.

Christening, another of the seven Holy Sacraments of the Orthodox Church, is also a beautiful and impressive ceremony. The naked infant is anointed by the godfather or godmother with oil. Then the priest submerges the child three times in a huge brass or silver "Kolibithra" (a large basin with warm water which the priest has invoked the Holy Trinity to bless). The child is then dried and anointed by the priest with the Holy Myron (Chrism) so that it may enter to the new Kingdom, the Kingdom of God. The godparents then dress the child in completely new clothes and bring a gold cross on a chain which the priest asks God to bless and then puts around the child's neck, all gifts to the new Christian. After the Christening, "Martiria" a tiny cross decorated with a small bow (pink for a baby girl and blue for the boy) is offered to each guest, plus a boubouniera and a small sweet. In Hydra and on other islands small marzipan cookies are given to the guests.

Besides all these religious ceremonies, there are also a lot of other customs linked to the church. Farmers used to bring their first crops to be blessed by the priest. On August 6th, Transfiguration Day, worshippers carry baskets overflowing with first-cut grapes to be blessed before the harvest. This is similar to the "Aparches", a ceremony that took place in ancient Greece. At Easter time the believers bring little baskets filled with red eggs and Tsourekia (Easter sweet breads). They are placed under the icons next to the Altar. The eggs and sweets are later distributed by the priest to the not-so-wealthy families of the neighborhood. On the 27th August, St Fanourios namesday, unmarried girls prepare "Fanouropita", a cake containing nine ingredients, and bring it to the church to be blessed so that St. Fanourios will disclose their future.

On New Year's Eve, just before midnight, in each home the head of the household cuts the Vasilopita (New Year's Sweet Bread). He makes the sign of the cross over the pita and cuts the first slice in the name of Christ. Slices are then cut for the family members in order of age and then for relatives and friends present. If the coin should be found in the slice offered to Christ, it denotes blessings and happiness for the whole family. Otherwise, the slice in it specifies personal blessings for the individual for whom the slice was cut.

Sixty Years On

# 1944 THEN & NOW 2004

## WILL CIVIL WAR THREATEN ATHENS AS GERMANS RETREAT?

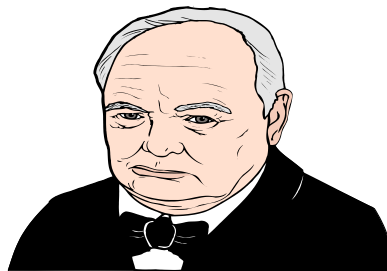
On 4 October 1944, a British airborne force helped liberate Patras. A few days later, more airborne landings took place on and around the aerodromes at Elefsis and Megara. Then on 14 October, a mixed Greek and British naval squadron dropped anchor in Piraeus, the harbour of Athens, to disembark the British 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps under the command of Lt-Gen Ronald Scobie. Operation Manna was under way.

The Operation had two aims. The first was to be sure once the Germans had been chased out, Greece's borders with Albania, what was Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, especially, would be respected. Churchill feared that the Communist regimes now rising to power in these countries must have their eye on northern Greek provinces such as Eastern Macedonia. The second, General Scobie was ordered to prevent, by force if need be, the Peoples' Liberation Army (ELAS) from usurping the established political system by unconstitutional means, George Papandreou headed to Greek Government at this time. He struck a liberal and democratic posture and his appointment earlier in the year seemed enough to bring together opposing factions in the Greek political spectrum. At one time, a mutiny by pro-Communist

Greek sailors on a warship in Alexandria had led to bloodshed.

But now the danger of subversion was growing daily. In answer to the call by EAM (a left-wing Liberation Committee), units of ELAS converged on Athens, on the way passing large numbers of retreating German soldiers without seeking a fight.

### CHURCHILL UNDER FIRE



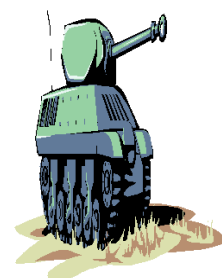
A call by Papandreou for the demobilisation of all guerrilla groups of both the left and the right on 1 December was refuted by the EAM. Within days fighting flared on the streets of Athens between police and rebel ELAS supporters. On 5 December, Churchill ordered Scobie to restore order. At the same time as the General declared a state of martial law. ELAS fighters moved in to seize key points in the Greek capital. The British seemed caught up in someone else's civil war.

Early successes for ELAS included the capture of the rear RAF headquarters at Kifissia where 350 British military

personnel were trapped in a wrecked hotel only to be rescued by the arrival of a column of tanks and armoured cars in the nick of time.

However, it was not long before the trained and disciplined British army gained the upper hand, even though the ELAS threat could not be entirely extinguished. Over the Christmas period, Churchill himself went to Athens, basing himself aboard the cruiser HMS Ajax in Piraeus and meeting representatives from all sides of the conflict to a background of gunfire in the city. Shells were even directed at his ship, which responded in kind on the Prime Minister's orders.

Within a week of Churchill leaving Athens, full-scale talks began to find a peaceful solution. A new Greek premier, General Plastiras, assured both sides of a role in the political future of the country and urged a return to duty for 'all who have been misled and turned their arms against the country'. On 12 February 1945, Harold McMillan, British Resident in the Mediterranean, could report to London that the Civil War in



Greece was, for the time being, over.

*An extract taken from **Motoring and Leisure brochure** by CSMA to their members.*

## An object of **We're on the web. [www.kefi-club.org.uk](http://www.kefi-club.org.uk)**

The Ancient Greeks drank huge quantities of wine diluted with water, usually about three parts of the latter to one of the former, and mixed the two in a special wide-mouthed pottery vessel called a "krater". While hoi polloi used plain pottery, wealthy Athenians emphasised their status by buying magnificently decorated kraters made by the finest craftsmen of the day that were used at lavish, formal dinner parties.

One of these made in Athens about 510 BC is among 56 ancient Greek objects that will go on sale in an antiquities exhibition at the London dealers Charles Ede. Priced at £30,000, the krater is 16in high and 18.5in in diameter, and it is decorated with a picture of three fully-armed

Hoplites. These heavily armoured infantry-men, carrying shields and wearing high-crested Corinthian-style helmets, appeared to go off to war, and an old man and two women are bidding them farewell. On the other side of the vessel is a chariot driven by the mythological figure Ariadne and standing in front of her is Dionysos, the Greek god of wine, carrying a two-handed drinking cup.

James Ede, managing director of the firm, bought it from a Swiss collection 18 month ago and it has spent a year with a restorer in England who has removed all evidence of a less successful 19<sup>th</sup>-century restoration attempt.

The Athenian potter who made the vessel 2,500 years ago used a sophisticated three-phase firing cycle, opening and closing the kiln

vents to produce intricate black figures on a red background. Further decoration was added when this process was completed.

(The Daily Telegraph 27/9/04 by Will Bennett, Edited)



## Titbits from the Editor

Just a quick note of thanks to all who have contributed to this edition of the Newsletter. It makes my job easier and the Newsletter more enjoyable to the readers.

In the next edition the island of Limnos is going to be featured as I have already been sent an extract. If there is anyone else out there who wishes to add to this then contact any of the contact names below.

Please don't restrict your journalistic cravings send me anything you feel our readers would be interested in.

## Newsletter Name Competition

Now we have our Kefi club logo. We need a name for the Newsletter rather than what we have at the moment. The suggestion that is adopted will win a mystery prize. Suggestions to any of the members mentioned below

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