



THE KEFI CLUB NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 7

Jul 2005

Change to clubs meeting night

It has been agreed to change our meeting night from the last Friday of the month to the second Friday of the month. This will enable members from both Kefi club and Anglo-Hellenic to have the chance to visit each others meetings without feeling all "Greeked-out" having two functions running consecutively in one week.



Points from AGM – 20 May 05

Our second AGM saw the return of the committee. They are doing such a splendid job defining the way forward for our club and providing us with some excellent functions. Why change a winning formula, may it long continue, thanks.

The statement of accounts was given to the members present.

The subscription charge for membership is again set at £7.

Jo spoke on the success of the Web site, we had well over 500 hits. Not bad for the first year of existence.

Nick spoke of his plan for a club holiday to Greece.

John told members of the meeting with Anglo-Hellenic committee with a view to closer ties and possible joint events. Then about the newsletter and requesting articles big or small from members on anything Greek.

Then it was down to Nick to provide us with next years Programme with gaps for members to fill. This was quickly achieved with some of the old favourites.

Membership subscriptions now due

For those of you who would like to become members or have a wish to continue then contact either Nick or Les for membership. The benefits are concessions on events and your own pocket-sized programme to carry around with so you don't double book on your social calendar. As mentioned the sum is £7.

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Programme of Events 2005-2006

- 12th Aug** **Walk on the Malvern Hills (possible BBQ afterwards)**
- 9th Sep** **Quiz Night**
Back by request.
- 14th Oct** **Golden Crossroads of Ancient Greece (video)**
An informative video about the ancient sites of Greece.
- 19th Nov** **Trip to British Museum**
This is open to as many people as possible to cut costs
- 9th Dec** **Christmas Dinner**
- 13th Jan** **Vasiliopita – Kourambiedes – Melmakaronia demonstration**
Some of us have already had a go at making these. Now we can see how it's done properly.
- 10th Feb** **Greek wine tasting**
Yet another chance to sample some wines not always on the dinner table in most homes
- 10th Mar** **Talk**
- 14th Apr** **Greek Cooking Competition**
As this was so popular last time we had to have another go.
- 12th May** **AGM & Ouzo and Mezedes tasting**
When ever you read about mezedes one stipulation is that it goes well with ouzo. Here is your chance to try. Help us out by bringing back from your hols a bottle of your favourite tipple.
- 16th Jun** **BBQ at Colwall Cricket Club**
Will this one be rain affected as it is two weeks earlier? The setting makes up for it, come rain or shine.

Greek Orthodox Vespers

As part of "The Worcester Festival" I noticed in the programme that a service of Greek Orthodox Vespers was going to be sung at Old St Martin's Church, The Cornmarket, Worcester on Saturday 6th August, starting at 7.00pm, by the Greek Orthodox Church of the Nativity of the Mother of God, Walsall. The church will be decorated with icons and flowers. Admission is free.

Our Big Fat Greek Christening

Friday the 13th and we're off to Heathrow. Not the best start, but we arrive o k and are met at Athens airport by daughter Yvette, son-in-law Nektarios, other daughter Paulette (already on holiday) and grandson Andrianos Ioannis – totally unfazed by the fact that tomorrow is his Big Day. Pick up hire car and off to Hotel in central Athens as it now the early hours of the morning.

Saturday is sunny and warm and we drive into Piraeus for the ceremony in our posh frocks and suits. There's much to-ing and fro-ing to the church as it appears you have to buy the entire contents of the baptism shop including a giant candle with tutu attached – our daughter assures us this was the least fussy one – two outfits for the baby, and for the guests small gold and blue crosses on ribbon and tiny bags of sweets attached to ceramic ships. This is not to mention a matching set of boxes and trays to carry everything in the chosen nautical theme.

The church is decorated with blue and white bouquets of flowers, in this case provided by the parents although the godparents usually pick up most of the expenses for the Christening. There are beautifully painted icons everywhere so we decide to go for a wander although the congregation are probably wondering what the mad foreigners are doing. Finally

the Priest appears, complete with obligatory beard, and greets the parents, godparents and little Andrianos. He looks friendly.



The ceremony starts near the entrance where an icon is prominently displayed and after much reciting and some responses from godfather Kostas, they all proceed to the altar table. At this point the two photographers start to get very excited and manage to bump into each other.

More chanting and some joining in by the congregation, much to our dismay, as we're having enough trouble working out when to sit down and when to stand let alone cope with miming. The Responder, as I'll call him – dressed for the occasion in T-shirt and jeans – finally gets bored at one point and starts reading the newspaper. The parents kiss the Bible and the baby is undressed. Paulette tries to protect his modesty but the lady photographer insists on a full frontal. He is then almost totally immersed in water – luckily they checked the temperature first – anointed with oil and spat on! A lock of his hair is cut off and put in the

font (did he need a haircut?). Up to this point four-month-old Andrianos has been very quiet and interested but he obviously now thinks that being dressed in a white jacket and what Paulette calls a Florence Nightingale cap is a step too far and starts crying. Fortunately he's happier with the Guy Laroche suit and hat that goes on top and his new cross from the godparents. Kostas' girlfriend Della distributes the crosses to be pinned on the congregation and Paulette holds the lighted candle while Kostas parades the baby as instructed by the Priest.

We suddenly realise that the ceremony is over and we should be stood in line with the parents & in-laws while everyone shakes our hands and/or kisses us with the traditional wish of "na sas zisei". Sweets distributed and more photos and it's off to the taverna – wine, blue sky, sparkling sea and – joy of joys – kandaifi and ice cream for dessert – what more could you ask for? Back to the daughters' for coffee and opening presents. Most interesting one is a football with David Beckham's thumbprint and signatures of the entire Panathinaikos team! Tomorrow it's a trip to the zoo and the next day a short trip to Loutsas. Should be doing our exercises. Sorry Nick – what's the Greek for "left my homework on the plane"?

THE BURNING OF JUDAS by Murray Biscoe (June 2005)

My wife Mary and I had been spending Easter (PASKA) with our Greek son in law's family. We were in a small village called Paralia Astros, 100 miles from Athens on the side of the Gulf of Argolikos in the Peloponnese. Unfortunately, neither, o Giorgos, alias George, nor our daughter Cathy were with us, they were both too busy working at their respective hospitals in London. We were being looked after by Alex, the eldest brother and his wife Anna, mainly because with Alex's broken English and my broken Greek ? we could more or less understand each other!

On the Easter Monday afternoon, Alex asked us if we would like to visit Mesogeio, a neighbouring village, to attend a short church service (15-20 minutes) followed by the Burning of Judas (a play we thought!) and then food with a little of krasi, ouzo or Mythos, or each etc. We had been well "churched" over the Easter period, but this was to be different, not 3 hours, but 20 minutes, so we agreed.

Alex has an excellent voice and is in much demand in the local churches. He sang with the choir and service went on for 1 ½ hours! During the service, fireworks were being let off outside. Not your everyday "Mighty Atom" but massively loud bangs, detonations, which reverberated around the domed church and our rib cages. Not just one or two firework either, lots and lots! It was seriously noisy.

Immediately after the service, we joined others on the Church steps. The village square which was very large,

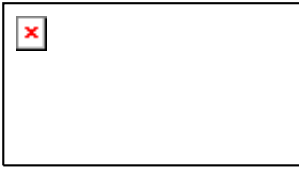
was absolutely packed with people. There must have been a couple of thousand, with many throwing fireworks, particularly the younger generation. Suddenly, the crowd parted and a little donkey appeared, highly decorated, and pulling a sort of rustic sledge with the effigy of a man tied to it, Judas! Now we know what he did, but did he really deserve it? He was dragged to the scaffold, hoisted up in the air and bundles of brushwood were piled underneath him and set on fire. The fireworks had been continuous but nothing like what happened next. Judas was packed full of fireworks and he literally exploded, bits of him went everywhere, accompanied by a great big cheer and lots of clapping. At the same time, a small hot air balloon, shaped like a rocket, took off either on or near Judas. It climbed higher and higher and was totally incongruous against the spectacle in front of us. Greek humour I think, or possibly emulating Judas' Spirit. The poor donkey still pulling the sledge was led way probably totally deaf. I would have awarded it a George Medal and retired it there and then! The Orthodox priests by the way, stood next to us, smoking steadily and silently observing the goings on. The whole spectacle was very reminiscent of Medieval times i.e. the wretched person, the jeering crowd, the burning and then of course the celebrations, food, wine, traditional music and dancing. We had that as well, but no dancing, the Greeks prefer discos today! It was all a bit too close to reality!

The following evening we visited some friends of the

family. Stavroula, the daughter, spoke very good English. She had worked in the Museum of Ceramic Art in Athens and was most interesting to talk with. We asked her if the Church condoned the Judas event. "No" she said, "Definitely not" it was the local Council who organised it. Most of the village in the Peloponnese enjoy a similar spectacle. In a neighbouring village they burn Barabbas, not Judas, poor chap. Also, in one of the mountain villages Judas is tied to the stake in front of a wall and shot at with live bullets. Evidently using weapons left behind after WW2. Well, we all have our idea of fun, but Guy Fawkes day is going to be a bit tame from now on!

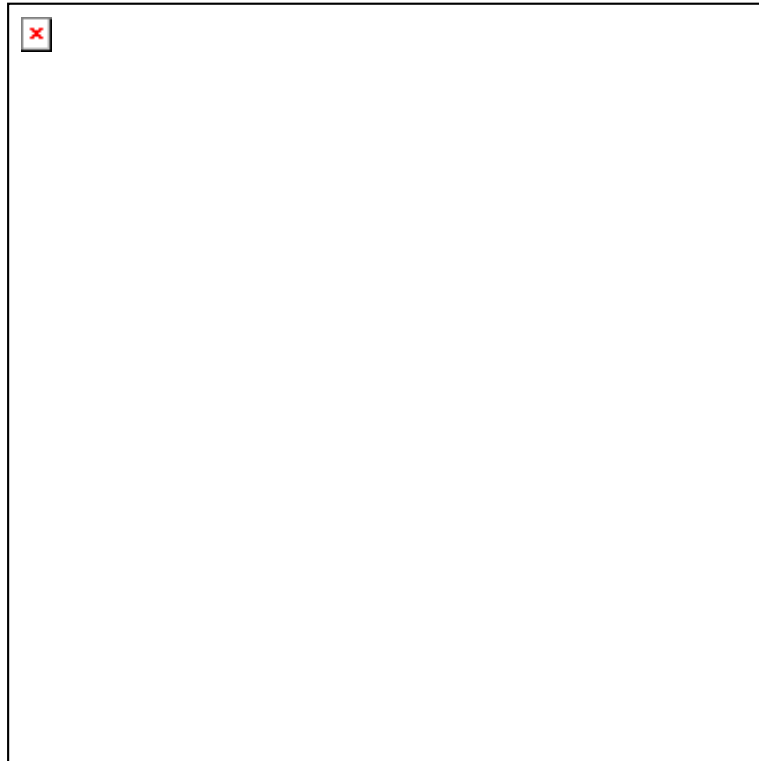
When we returned home we asked George (36yrs) if he knew much about the Judas tradition. "Oh Yes" he said, when I was a young lad, they used dynamite "borrowed" from a local quarry! One year they stuck some in a potato field near by and blew potatoes over the village. We also asked him about the Police presence, as we had not seen any. Well evidently they can get in the way, and as there are only two of them in the whole area, they kidnap them and lock them up for the night, with lots of food and drink. There are evidently never any reports of trouble filed! I also asked cousin Nikos what the delay time was between lighting a firework and it exploding, just 10-15 seconds! You light it and throw it immediately, assuming of course that you have a suitable hand left. One would imagine that the post of Health and Safety Officer in the Peloponnese has been or might be a bit difficult to fill!

ANCIENT GREECE



Taken from www.puzzlechoice.com

Can you find the hidden words? They may be horizontal, vertical, diagonal, forwards or backwards.



AMPHITRITE, APHRODITE, APOLLO, ARES, ARTEMIS, ATHENA,
ATLAS, BOREAS, CHARITES, CLOTHO, DEMETER, DIONYSUS,
EILEITHYIA, EIRENE, ENYO, EPIMETHEUS, EREBUS, ERIS,
EROS, EUNOMIA, GAIA, HEBE, HELIOS, HERA, HERMES,
HESPERIUS, HESTIA, HYPERION, HYPNOS, IAPETUS, LACHESIS,
LETO, MNEMOSYNE, MOIRAE, MORPHEUS, NEMESIS, PHOEBE,
POSEIDON, ZEUS.

EUROVISION TRIUMPH

Elena Paparizou, daughter of the Greek diaspora (she was born to family of Greek migrants in Sweden), graceful, talented and melodious won the Eurovision song contest held in Kiev on 21 May. Beating off 23 contestants she and her dancing partners scored 230 points with an upbeat song combining in an impressively choreographed ensemble the rhythms of rock music and a Pontic war dances rendered by a Cretan lyre. As a result of her victory – watched by some 150 million TV viewers – Athens will host the next Eurovision contest in 2006.

Editors Note

It seems such a long time since April when the last issue of the Newsletter was published. But such a lot has happened.

Our April meet was wine tasting hosted by Nick with some excellent wines more a kin to drinking with a meal than on their own as indeed is the Greek way. For me two wines stood out in the whites it was the Karelas Muscat Dry. For the reds it was the Kerastis Agioritiko.

In May we had the AGM as already mentioned and with it we had a talk by John on Greek cuisine after being inspired to do so whilst reading a piece from The best Greek cookery Book by Chrissa Paradissis. His talk began in Ancient times what did they eat? Who was their inspiration? Then onto the Byzantines. Through the 400 years of Turkish occupation to the modern day after which some food from each of those eras was produced for members to try.

June as is the custom is the BBQ at our favourite spot Colwall Cricket club. In the 2 previous years the weather has been kind to us. This year although it did rain for a short while, I thought we got off lightly. Thanks to Martin for the spit roasted lamb. And yes Mythos beer was there in abundance.

Thanks to Jean and Murry for providing two real life Greek occurrences. Both of which are centred on religion and so diverse.

Just a quick reminder to those of you who like me are of to Greece shortly, would you consider bringing back some ouzo. Perhaps like me you would like to try as many different varieties from as many different islands and places as possible for our function later on in the year.

If you have some fond memories of your hols and points of interest from places visited and have some digital photos you would like to share why not e-mail me with them for inclusion in future newsletters.

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