



# THE KEFI CLUB NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 8

Sep 2005



## British Museum Visit – Change to Date

Due to unforeseen commitments the date for the visit to the British Museum is now Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2005 (Not on the 19<sup>th</sup> as had previously been announced).

It is proposed to depart Worcester at 8.00am in time to have a guided tour of the fascinating galleries of the Museum and of course the Pantheon Marbles commencing at 11.00am and lasts approximately two hours with free time after that to do more sight seeing or that other 'S' word shopping, (especially with

Christmas not far off). To then leave London at 6.00pm.

Those wishing to attend this exclusive trip should make themselves known as soon as possible to Nick Kontarines, the Kefi Club secretary. His details are located at the end of the Newsletter. Maximum number of seats available is 36. Price per person is £20. What a bargain for a great day out!!

## Another Great Pass in Greek Language

**Y**es she did it our very own Jo Taylor has passed her GCSE Greek with a splendid 'B' grade. Jo has been another regular student at Worcester College of Technology over the last four years. This past year Jo has had to put in a lot of extra time and effort as she was to only one from the class wishing to take the exam, which she took in May. Well done from all of the members of The Kefi Club.



## Quiz night – What a stinker!

Those members who came along to the quiz night on 9<sup>th</sup> September will I'm sure agree that the standard of questions posed by our Quiz Master Les Roberts were far more difficult than the ones last year. One day I might get my head round Greek Mythology as this formed one of the 5 parts of the quiz. The others being questions on Athens, geography, famous faces and food. As with all quizzes they are only easy if you know the answer. Well done to Les who managed the quiz well as we were running short of time due to a late start with a School Master approach he kept going amidst some light hearted minor heckling



from one or two disgruntled people especially when their answers were deemed to be incorrect. So to the winners. In first place with the help of Chris Lloyd (who made a guest appearance from her new home in Crete) were Bridget and Bernard Mason scoring 48 out of a possible 67. In second place just, with a score of 45 was team Sylvia and third place went to Colin or Murrys' team whoever was heading it with a score of 44. Thanks again Les for the time and effort you put in to construct the quiz.

## KOS WE LOVE IT

Looking for that place in the sun, our own Greek saga. [by Mike Cooper, August 2005]

Spurred on by our daughter, my long-suffering wife and I have spent several years looking for that special place in the sun to buy into the dream. But where to look? Every time you turn on the TV it seems there's a programme about somebody who's got a great deal on a place in outer Mongolia or Bhagdad-on-Sea. While on the other channel there's a blonde presenter telling how the unfortunate stars of the show awoke to find raw sewage, or the police, or neighbours, with guns trying to get through their front door.

Then you see the tales about families who get it into their heads after one trip to somewhere hot, that this is the place for them - and before you know it, they've taken the kids out of school, got the dog a pet passport, put granny in a home and moved out, all in the space of a couple of weeks. That's when they realise they can't speak the lingo and have no idea about getting the kids into school and finding work; minor details like that.

Determined not to rush into this project, we've spent years looking around. We had some great adventures doing it too. Like the time we went to Fuerteventura, beautiful place, nice people, scenery, beaches; oh, and a tropical storm, the tail end of a hurricane that popped up from the United States to pay a visit. Our hotel room was flooded, ceiling collapsed and all the gear soaked and covered in ceiling plaster. Nice.

And the Greek island (not Kos!) where a drunken farmer took a liking to my wife and came serenading her outside the studio at 3 am. He got chased off by the owner waving a twelve-bore. Should have remembered to pack mine.

We first looked at Kos in the nineties, after several visits. The agent we found was most helpful, showed us some picturesque plots at the right money and told us he'd be happy to set us up in partnership with a local, because at that time foreigners couldn't buy land outright, particularly in sensitive locations so near to Turkey. The idea of owning half a plot with half a house didn't appeal so we dropped the idea.

Still enthusiastic, we trawled the internet and drove friends with similar ambitions to distraction, constantly asking about the progress of their plots in Spain and France and Italy and, well you get the idea. As you saw, we

wandered around the Canaries; they are certainly magnificent and the all year round climate is enviable, but they just seemed to lack that *je ne sais quoi*. We couldn't put our fingers on it, but there was something not quite us.

Where next, we thought. Ah, yes, the Spanish Costa's, everyone and his sister knows somebody who lives out there. Even my old mum has a pal, who, at 76, upped and went to live on the Costa-del-Sol. Go to Nerja, a friend said, it's near Malaga airport, got a lovely climate and it's not too developed. So we went. It might have been because it was winter, but in our fifth decade, (sorry B!) we were by far the youngest people there, and the miles of shiny new concrete were full of retired folk out for the daily constitutional. They had blankets, flasks of tea, just like boy-scouts, they were prepared. Just as well really, because all the shops and cafes on the sea front, except that is, for McDonalds, were shut for the winter.

Now I come originally from Blackpool so I know what an out of season seaside town looks like, it looks like the Costa when we went; but this is supposed to be an all-year-round destination.

Now to be fair to the Spanish, we did venture into the towns and villages and life pretty much goes on as normal there. The language is fairly easy to pick up too.

So we inquired further and found out about the three-quarters of a million ex-pats who are already living there (anybody remember El Dorado on the TV?). We found what is apparently the largest building site in the whole of Europe, all along the coast, with hotels and malls popping up seemingly every other day. We discovered that 40% of British tourists who travel abroad go to the Costa's and we saw for ourselves how little hope one has of avoiding our fellow country folk, about as much as crossing the National Racetrack, sorry - Highway that runs conveniently just behind the Costa towns.



Not to be put off, we went back to Kos, as we do frequently, for a summer break while we worked out where to look next. In Kefalos, (which for all Nick's students will be a dead give-away as to its location), a village at the head of the island we noticed a new realtor's office.

We had actually seen the firm's website during our annual winter internet surfing marathons. Open 9-9 every day the sign said. So in we went. At 3 pm. Of course, everyone was enjoying the siesta, everyone that is, except the dog. Well, to tell the truth, she was asleep as well. Until she realised she wasn't alone. I'm not sure who was most scared, - the dog, disturbed from her dreams, us, cornered by a slaving hound that stood at least six inches off the ground, or the owner, George. He staggered in from his little bedroom in the back of the place and I must admit was much more coherent and charming than I would be if awakened suddenly by a baying hound sounding the alarm.

We had some coffee, thoughtfully provided by George's wife who by this time had also had her siesta ruined by these crass English folk. Arrangements were made to call in the following day, at a more civilised hour, which we duly did and were taken on a grand tour of the available plots and properties. We heard how the rules had been relaxed and how we could now buy anything we wanted, even though Turkey was only four kilometres away. As long as we really were English – you're sure you are not Turkish? or Albanian?

Having sorted out the nationalities, we went to see some of George's work in progress and were introduced to some ex-pat Brits for whom George had built homes. We were introduced to the mysteries of the Greek planning laws and learned the most important word in the Greek language Avrio (tomorrow). The Greeks, George explained, thought that manyana was just too manic.

Getting into the spirit of avrio and not wanting to rush things, we set about enjoying the rest of the holiday and decided to travel out again in a couple of weeks to do some serious house - hunting.

Now as some of you will know, not many properties come up for sale in the islands. Apparently they are kept in the family and handed down the generations. Certainly on Kos the vast majority of houses we saw for sale were built by foreign nationals as holiday homes.

and, on the other hand, is readily available as farmers realise concrete and tourists are a far more lucrative crop than watermelons. So we bought a plot. Well, we think we did. After visiting a hilltop with a view over Bodrum that was straight out

of the Arabian Nights, we did the math, went back to check out the sunrise and sunset - that was a long day - and visited George at nine am.

The next few days comprised of long hours sitting in offices. We got a tax number; actually, that was very easy, only took about twenty minutes. Funny how anything to do with getting your money can be arranged swiftly, isn't it?

Then there was the lawyer, the notary, the bank, the contracts, - the translator. The whole thing was pretty straightforward really, it was only the language barrier that complicated things and even then, everyone was very helpful and patient with our Janet and John approach to the documentation. (Where's Nick when you need him?).

Everything was going swimmingly until the existing owner of the plot was taken ill and had to be evacuated to Athens. That stopped the show. We couldn't sign anything, it wasn't yet our land to initiate anything so it was back to the beach. Unfortunately the owner's health did not improve so we returned to England having basically just paid a deposit and filled in some paperwork.

Thankfully restored to rude health the owner still wished to sell so a power of attorney was required to expedite the transfer of ownership. Having obtained the documents and necessary translations, the signatures were witnessed by the Greek Consul in Birmingham. I must say I have seldom met such a charming and helpful man. He was a veritable fountain of information and there seems to be little need for anyone in these parts to venture to London for such matters.

We learned how and when to transfer money out to Greece. You have to keep a watchful eye on the bank rate and sweet talk your bank manager into giving you business, rather than tourist rates of exchange. How can it be that it takes up to six working days to clear a cheque drawn on a bank in the same High Street, yet a SWIFT money transfer to southern Europe can be done within a day? Perhaps bankers also believe 'manyana' is manic, at least when it comes to giving us our own money.

A further visit later in the year led to the plans being drawn up. As the area is earthquake prone, all new buildings have to be constructed to withstand the frequent tremors and, hopefully, the big one, if it should arrive. Foundations down into bedrock and lots of reinforced concrete were the order of the day. Water and power supplies, the nightmare of all those who build on the islands, turned out to be very close by so permissions and guarantees of connection were forthcoming. We will

just have to hope the actual cables and pipes materialise as easily. Watch this space.

It is a requirement that an archaeological survey is carried prior to permission to build being granted lest one damages one of the innumerable ancient sites, many of which are still being discovered. Similarly, the Forestry Authorities carry out a survey to ensure the preservation of the small but valuable timber stock. We returned to the UK having arranged for the plans to be submitted and permissions sought.

The architect had a wonderful IT package that produced a 3-D type image of the proposed property and we brought back a copy of the plans to keep us entertained, and the family bored silly, throughout the long winter nights.

Spring finally arrived and like swallows with a malfunctioning GPS, we flew south, only to find

nothing. Well, not quite nothing. The land was now legally ours and the permissions all granted. We have a lovely copy of the Greek deeds of ownership, which, thanks to Nick we can even read. The only problem being that the Forestry Authority had not actually issued the written permit so the groundwork could not commence. Apparently since the change of government, the new administration wants to relax the planning laws, much to the chagrin of the green lobby, who want them tightening. A judicial review is scheduled for early 2006 and until then it seems no one is getting permission to build on Kos. I don't know about elsewhere in Greece, but if you are looking to buy, it is worth investigating local conditions.

So here we are twelve months later. The builder is still waiting for the permit and we are advised that the backlog should be cleared - avrio!

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## Forthcoming Events

**14<sup>th</sup> Oct Golden Crossroads of Ancient Greece (video)**

*An informative video about the ancient sites of Greece.*

**26<sup>th</sup> Nov Trip to British Museum**

**9<sup>th</sup> Dec A Christmas Dinner**

*A combined meal for both Clubs*



### **WORCESTER ANGLO-HELLENIC CLUB - EVENTS**

**Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September Film Night**

This year's presentation is a cult of the 1950's genre. Directed by *Michael Cacoyannis*, the story of 'Stella' is that of a young, wild woman (*Melina Mercouri*) who refuses to compromise and settle down. Stella is a restless, rebellious woman who plays with men and enjoys her life to the full.

**Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> October Plague at Athens**

We welcome back to the Club, *Robin Walker*, who will be presenting his own well researched story of the plague in Athens of 430BC. Whilst not on the same scale as the Great Plague of London in 1665 with over 70,000 deaths, nevertheless this was a significant Hellenic milestone.

**Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November Was Pericles a good thing?**

John Hart makes his second visit to the club. *Pericles* and *Ephialtes* are widely associated with the democratic reforms of 5<sup>th</sup> century Athens. This new democracy led to the military leaders being disposed of, as was *Pericles*, shortly before his death, just after the plague in Athens, in 429BC.

## TRAKHANAS



For those members who were unable to attend Johns' talk on Greek cuisine, John spoke of trakhanas. Although he mentioned it during the piece on the Turkish occupation, it is said to be the oldest recorded soup. So what is Trakhanas? It is granulated pasta traditionally made from wheat boiled with sour milk, dried and stored. It is better known today as Wheat and sour milk soup. Although it is difficult to find on the menu in most places, as it considered to be poor people's food. Hence the reason it was widely eaten during the Ottoman rule by both Greeks and Turks alike.

John provided two dishes using trakhanas after his talk and both are provided below for those wishing to try.

### Trakhanas Soup

<i>6oz/150g trakhanas</i>	<i>1 large onion, finely chopped</i>
<i>½ lb/200g tomatoes, peeled and chopped</i>	<i>A generous ½ cup/130g butter</i>
<i>4 cups 1/litre meat stock</i>	<i>½ tsp dried thyme</i>
<i>1 bunch flat-leaved parsley chopped</i>	<i>1 ½ cups/100g kefalotiri cheese, grated</i>
<i>Salt</i>	<i>Freshly ground black pepper</i>

Heat the butter in a pan and sauté the onion.

Mix in the tomatoes and simmer briefly. Pour over the meat stock, add the thyme, and bring to the boil. Slowly pour in the trakhanas stirring continuously. Cover and simmer over a low heat for about 20 minutes, until the soup becomes creamy, stirring occasionally. Add parsley, salt and pepper, ladle onto plates and sprinkle with grated cheese.

**Recipe supplied from Culinaria Greece**

### Τραχανάς – version 2

<i>100g butter</i>	<i>90ml extra virgin olive oil</i>
<i>250g trahanas</i>	<i>500ml hot chicken stock</i>
<i>500ml goats' milk heated</i>	<i>250g feta cheese, crumbled</i>
<i>a little hot milk if needed</i>	<i>100ml olive oil</i>
<i>100g cherry tomatoes</i>	<i>100g Kalamata olives</i>
<i>250g rocket</i>	<i>Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper</i>

Melt half the butter in a heavy saucepan and add the extra virgin olive oil. Pre-cook the trakhanas gently as if you were making risotto until it is a light golden brown. Pour in the stock and goats' milk and leave to simmer with the lid on for 15 minutes. Stir occasionally. Add the crumbled feta and simmer for another 10 minutes or until the trakhanas is tender and the majority of the liquid has been absorbed. The texture should be that of a well made risotto - no drier. Taste, and it will probably not need much seasoning because of the cheese – but if it does, add salt and pepper at this point. In case the trakhanas becomes too thick have a little hot milk on standby. Stir in the remaining butter before serving. Heat the olive oil in a frying pan, add the cherry tomatoes and olives, and then cook for 10 minutes over a medium heat. Add the rocket and quickly wilt it. Place the rocket and tomato mixture on the top of the trakhanas and serve.

**Recipe supplied from Real Greek Food**

## NEWS

### Greek MEP's name has Europeans in muddle

STRASBOURG (Reuters) - After twice mangling the multisyllabic name of a Greek European Parliament member who authored a report on Iraq, British Foreign Minister Jack Straw gave up and apologized to the speaker.

"I did Ancient Greek at school, but it was written rather than oral," Straw quipped. European External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner also stumbled when trying to pronounce the name of Giorgos Dimitrakopoulos [a New Democracy MEP], who grinned and applauded at each fumbling attempt.

Parliament President Josep Borrell rode to the rescue, offering the speakers Greek lessons at Parliament's expense if it would be helpful. But German lawmaker Elmar Brok, chairman of the foreign affairs committee of which Dimitrakopoulos is a member, said: "We tend to call the rapporteur George. It's much easier."

[www.ekathimerini.com Thu 7<sup>th</sup> July 2005]

## NEWS

***On August 24, the Athens Festival celebrates its 50th anniversary with a performance at the Herod Atticus Theatre, where it all began on the initiative of former prime minister Georgios Rallis, then a minister, who will be at the anniversary performance. Verdi's opera 'Macbeth' by the Bolshoi State Theatre is performed on August 28 and 29, and Sweden's Culbert Ballet on August 31.***

HELBI

Foreign visitors to Athens who arrive in August to see the sights are surprised to find kiosks closed not just in the centre, but also further out. What used to be places full of light, movement, people, information, mini-markets open round the clock, are now locked and deserted, as are many tavernas and shops. Only stores selling souvenirs can be counted on, as well as cafes near the city's sights. Fortunately the outdoor cinemas stay open, and are popular with tourists as they show mostly American movies. The Herod Atticus Theatre is at its best. Now that the "meltemi" winds of August have begun and the marble seats no longer exude heat, it is a joy to listen to music, watch opera or ballet, performances such as Verdi's "Macbeth" by the Bolshoi State Theatre (on August 28 and 29) and Sweden's Culberg Ballet, on August 31. Regular visitors to the Herod Atticus, particularly diplomats, charmed by the magical setting under the Acropolis, will not miss the official 50th anniversary celebration of the Athens Festival this Wednesday, August 24, with the Athens State Orchestra in the same program that launched the first festival 50 years ago: Handel's "Largo," the "Byzantine Sacrifice" by Petros Petridis, Gluck, Mozart, arias by Haydn and Sibelius. The anniversary performance is held under the aegis of the City of Athens. The official guest will be Tourism Development Minister Dimitris Avramopoulos and former prime minister Georgios Rallis, at whose initiative the first festival was held when he was minister to the prime minister in the Papagos government. In 1955, the conductor was Theodoros Vavayiannis (1905-1988), this year it will be Vyrion Fidetzis, with soloist Antigone Papoulka and narrator Nikitas Tsakiroglou. An exceptional evening, taking us 50 years back in time. We look forward to the next 50 years!

KATHIMERINI 20 August 2005]

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

# Examining theatre and ritual

**1st International Symposium on the Theban Cycle to be held on September 11-12 in Thebes**

***A scene from Euripides' 'Bacchae' to be staged by the National Theatre in Thebes.***

By Dimitris Rigopoulos – Kathimerini (7<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2005)



Thebes is one of the few cities in the world that does not need too much promotion. Its classical heritage and monuments, both architectural and literary, have earned the city powerful recognition through the texts of ancient tragedy; a rare privilege which, nevertheless, Thebes was unsure how to handle until now. The city's post war transformation into a colourless urban centre was not advantageous either.

Yet things seem to be changing and Thebes's municipal authorities seem determined to make use of its past heritage to benefit the modern city. In this vein comes the

First International Symposium of the Theban Cycle, titled "Theatre and Ritual," which is to take place on Sunday and Monday under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture. Mayor of Thebes Athanassios Skoumas spoke of turning the symposium into an institution, so that it could "develop into a cultural institution of international standing." Meanwhile, discussions are under way with the Ministry of Culture to move forward with a large-scale urban transformation of the city, while efforts are being made for Catherine Stenou, second-in-command at the trans-cultural relations department of UNESCO (and of Greek descent), to attend the symposium.

The municipal authorities of Thebes who undertook the initiative, with the backing of the society for the protection and promotion of Thebes's antiquities "The Cadmeans," turned to the centre of classical drama at Panteion University and its director, Professor Yiagos Andreadis. Organizers are aiming for the best possible scientific coverage of the symposium, which will attract numerous academics, theatre experts and artists from around the world to the Municipality of Thebes's conference centre.

After talking about the weight that the Theban Cycle has even in the contemporary world — from 20th century modernism to cinema and theatre — Andreadis referred to the "obvious and hidden bonds" between theatre and ritual. In theatre, certain stage habits, such as the ringing of the bell to signal the beginning of the performance and the actors bowing at the end, carry a ritual element; accordingly, some of the most familiar rituals, such as the anastenaria (walking on burning coals), southern Italy's Tarantella or the whirling dervish dance, have a strong theatre quality to them. "So if we try to reopen the issue of theatre and its relationship with ritual, it is not because of some abstract anthropological and theatrical interest," said Andreadis. "What we really need is a long and sustained effort to understand what these kinds of experiences mean to those of us who live, feel, think and create in modern society." Two parallel events will accompany the symposium, the staging of Euripides' tragedy "The Bacchae" by the Greek National Theatre and the premiere of Pepi Rigopoulou's half-hour documentary "Nobody Talked about my Soul," about the fire-walkers in Greece and India.

Quote

### THE SPORTING POWESS OF GREECE.

Greece had yet another success in sport in August. This time the team excelled in the best game ever played on earth; cricket [I hope you have guessed its the best].

This year's ECC Affiliates Championship was held in Belgium from 13 to 21 August. Greece competed against Norway, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Malta and the Isle of Man. Greece was in the same group as Portugal and the Isle of Man, and convincingly won all their games. In the second route, the Super 6, Greece beat Spain by 5 wickets and Malta by 61runs and lost to Belgium by 13 runs and to Norway by 5 wickets. Greece ended in second place and Norway was first. This came as no surprise, because Norway has eleven naturalised

Pakistanis and Greece only three!!

Next year's competition will be held in Scotland. Please book your holidays in advance. For more information see [www.cricketeurope.net](http://www.cricketeurope.net)

[Nick Kontarines 23rd August 2005 ]

Unquote



Here we go with another year of interesting evenings that have a very Greek feel to them. We have had one such evening already which has been outlined previously namely the quiz.

Some of us will have started another year of learning the Greek language. It will be interesting to see whether Jo Taylor has inspired others to take GCSE Greek.

My thanks to those who have contributed to this edition of the Newsletter especially Mike Cooper for his short story about Kos. Have any other members got a story or an event that has happened to them on holiday or whilst visiting Greece which they wouldn't mind sharing?

For those of you wishing to try Trakhanas I have seen it for sale in Ceci Poalo's in Worcester.

The Three Counties Ancient History Society have a guest speaker Dr Niall A McKeown whose topic is "Greek Hoplite Warfare" on Thursday 13 October at Upton Snodsbury Village Hall commencing at 7.30pm sharp.

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