

Kastellorizo: A Professional Viewpoint

by Bill Quin, Melbourne/Perth



Before retirement, Bill Quin was a director of a business consultancy, undertaking business feasibility studies and producing strategies on tourism development for government and private enterprise organisations around Australia.

Recently he visited Kastellorizo for the first time. We asked him to provide us with some first impressions of the island, and what his approach would be if asked to make recommendations to enhance the visitor experience of the island.

When you prepare a tourism development strategy, first you undertake an extensive process of consultation with the stakeholders involved—in the case of Kastellorizo these stakeholders would include business operators, permanent residents, visiting residents, service providers and government bodies.

Obviously you can't set out on a development plan if nobody agrees with it. The difficulty you have in assessing the opinion of the stakeholders is that usually you end up with a conflict of views, often in the detail, but most often in deciding whether there should be development at all. Typically what happens in a holiday/residential location like Kastellorizo is that there is a fundamental conflict on development policy between those who want expansion and development --usually commercial interests-- and those who want the location to remain quiet and peaceful --usually permanent residents, or visitors who see it as their "undiscovered secret".

Once you know whether the stakeholders want development, and if so, what type of development, then you need to gain a thorough understanding of the location, its existing facilities, its potential, the conflicting issues involved and begin, from your professional experience, to assess what can be done, and should be done, to develop the location in the interests of the stakeholders involved.

As part of this stage it is usual to undertake what we refer to in the consultancy business as a SWOT analysis summary (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats). This would seem a good way to summarise my first impressions of the island and the issues involved, and give some idea of the

sort of findings and recommendations (not complete, and not in priority order) a consultant would make in a strategy report on Kastellorizo. (NB. sometimes the same factor can fall into two or more opposing categories such as the low key, laid back nature of the island could be seen as both a Strength and a Weakness). Please refer to the following page for the SWOT analysis.

As well as the impartial, business approach I would like to express my personal view on how I would like to see the future of the island.

I would hate to see Kastellorizo like some other Greek islands, overwhelmed by tourists who are looking for the superficial aspects of what they see as the Greek island holiday, and who have no soul for the unique beauty, peaceful nature, and history of the island. To me there is something very special and unique about the social interaction on the island, between the permanent residents and the service providers, and those who "come home" from various parts of Australia, and elsewhere, to regain their roots and rejoice in their history. This to me, in my brief time there, was the essence and spirit of Kastellorizo, and it must always remain for both current and future generations.

If the island is to be promoted, I would like to see that done only on the Greek mainland, and in Australia, and any other places to where Kastellorizian families have migrated, so the history and essence of the island, its spirit and its soul, are reflected in the visitor profile.

Any development should be low key, and extremely sensitive to the restrained nature of the island, and should be largely confined to improving practical services and facilities, rather than seeking to provide slick new facilities (particularly accommodation) that are aimed at catering for a mass visitor demographic.

If the current Kastellorizian community members feel the same way about the future of their island, and I suspect most would, then they need to make sure that the island's future is a reflection of their wishes, and that means having an organised and very strong voice with the authorities, and others who will influence all aspects of the future of the island.

Australian Friend

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STRENGTHS

- Idyllic—the world's typical impression of what a Greek island is all about
- Small, not overwhelmed by tourists; low key, quaint in many respects
- Proximity to Turkey
- Largely Greek or Greek-Australian ownership of homes and businesses....no apparent conflict based on ethnicity, social harmony
- Long and fascinating history
- Strict building style codes
- Good quality, but restrained style accommodation
- Established base of businesses, services, accommodation facilities, and residences
- Strong external investment, mainly Australian, but also Italian
- Peaceful atmosphere, with minimal vehicle traffic, and particularly no traffic on the waterfront
- There is a cultural, historic ambience to the island, reflected in its buildings (particularly its churches) and the presence of traditional caique fishing boats in the harbour.

WEAKNESSES

- Irregular and not always reliable sea and air transport
- Limited attractions and activities—high risk of boredom after a few days, unless you have a home there, or know a lot of people on the island
- Seasonality, restricting visitation for considerable periods of the year
- Remote—a long way from the Greek mainland. Is this not a strength also as it is part of the reason Kastellorizo has not been overwhelmed by cheap English/German packaged holiday makers you see on other islands?
- Little different from other Greek islands—no unique, distinguishing attraction
- Island is untidy, away from the main waterfront thoroughfare
- Because of its history, and the nature of home ownership, at certain times of the year, the island is like a "club"—great for those in the "club", not so good for outsiders
- Inadequate swimming facilities
- Uncertainty in respect to title to residential locations, and seemingly a somewhat vague policy in respect to identifying ownership rights
- As a result, a lot of derelict buildings, that could give an impression of a depressed society
- Limited hire services, particularly for recreational products

OPPORTUNITIES

- Establish an active, independent, representative island development committee to advise, and work in conjunction with existing authorities, to ensure any development is appropriate and in keeping with stakeholder wishes
- Make more of the history of the island—develop an island history and interpretive centre, via an expanded museum, as a major visitor attraction
- Spread the tourist season, so visitors come for a greater part of the year, via a range of promotional and other initiatives
- Increase the length of stay of visitors, by a range of promotional packages, discount arrangements—the most cost effective way for service providers to increase their revenues
- Central inventory of available accommodation, available on line and with agencies promoting it
- Develop better swimming facilities
- Increased general promotion—web site, identify key targets and aim specifically at those targets
- Improved and diversified retail facilities on the island
- Improved marina facilities
- Combine the museum and the venue where the video is shown, as the initial stage of the proposed history and interpretive centre
- Charge for the video and use the funds for promotion, or to provide some specific need
- Develop a "Mediterraneo" exhibition—after all, the two impressions most outsiders seem to have of Kassie is that it is occupied mainly by Australians, and the film Mediterraneo was made there!
- Tidy the place up—there is too much rubbish lying around (in areas away from the main waterfront thoroughfare)
- Resolve the issue of property location rights and ownership
- Definition of walks, via direction and interpretive signage, resting and photography bays
- Provision of sculptures and statues, via some form of competition or event, and via donation, which could be made a special feature on the island, particularly relating to its history
- Develop hire services (diving, windsurfing, kayaking etc)
- Improved on-island water supplies
- Strongly encourage social and cultural links between the island and those places around the world where Kastellorizian families now live

THREATS

- Domination of home and business ownership by non-Greek interests
- Turkish intrusion
- Competition from other islands
- Disruption to island water supplies
- Disruption of transport services to and from the island
- Tourist overload
- Inappropriate development

Islands of Kastellorizo

Which way to Kastellorizo, mate?

by Philip Bullock, Perth

25 years ago, Greece, to me, was a place where singles and honeymooners converged on one of its many mythical islands to have a reasonably cheap holiday. Ancient Greek history generated a great deal of interest with me, as did some of the ancient ruins of times past. Stories from The Battle of Marathon to Greek kings trying to retrieve Helen from Troy were about the extent of my knowledge of this land in the eastern Mediterranean.

At the time I was quietly farming in Western Australia, having already completed the mandatory trip to the UK and a small section of Europe, then hurrying back to continue pressing activities that awaited me back on the farm. Thoughts of another trip to the northern hemisphere were far away until visits to regions closer to Australia had been accomplished. Changes in my life were about to happen. With the annual arrival of new teachers to my country town in Moora, came an Australian born teacher with Greek heritage (Georgia Manifis). As the romance blossomed, it soon became apparent to me that it was not only the differences in Greek-Australian and Anglo-Australian cultures that needed my utmost attention, but that I was dealing with a proud heritage involving a little island located in the most eastern reaches of the Greek nation. In my mind, Kastellorizo was a small rocky island that boasted a strategic harbour used by many nations throughout history.

Conducting a courtship was a delicate affair as my new family began to understand that this 'skip' was serious. ('Skip' is a term of endearment used by non Anglo-Australians to describe Anglo-Australians being an abbreviation of 'Skippy the Bush Kangaroo'). Georgia's four sisters had all married Australians of Greek heritage. My future 'bethera' (Panayiota Manifis -nee Galletis) initially found it very difficult to accept, let alone apprehend that this Aussie was about to enter the fray with equal determination. Panayiota came to Australia from Kastellorizo after WW11, having spent time in Palestine as a refugee during those dreadful times. After losing her husband, Basil, at a young age and not speaking much English, Panayiota had to bring up a young family of five girls in a strange land. Her strength would have been Herculean. She managed to see four of her daughters married and remain in the Greek fold. My efforts to be accepted in the family were continuous. I even tried to help with the washing up once, only to be told that this was 'not on' when married to a Greek! As time passed, my bazanakyia, (brother-in-laws) and their wives welcomed me into the fold and I no longer needed to fear for my life! I can safely say I am now, very spoilt. When my children were christened with their maternal papou (Vasili) and yiayia's (Panayiota) names, my 'bethera' finally accepted her new family. The Bullocks or (Bullockanacus) could now be integrated into the Kazzie fold.

Perhaps the recent history of Kastellorizo, from the perspective of a non-Greek, has generated the most curiosity. Why does this minute rocky island generate such strong community sentiment with Australian born Greeks of Kastellorizan heritage? Why does this 10 square kilometres of

rock primarily mean more than, say Rottnest Island off the coast of Perth? The desire to travel to Kastellorizo became stronger and stronger as time passed. In August 2008, with family and work priorities under control, it became time to embark on the pilgrimage to this mythical place.

After five weeks of travel through Europe and a stopover of four days in Santorini, we finally arrived in Kastellorizo by plane. The advice was to try and ferry into the harbour to catch its splendour, but our schedule made that too difficult to organise. Next time! This isolated quaint little airport located on the only flat terrain on the island was my first impressions of this mythical place. The wait for our villa to be ready enabled us to have our first coffee by this magnificent harbour and absorb the surroundings. You do not need to be of Kastellorizan heritage to understand why this place draws such empathy to so many people. It is similar to how many country Western Australians view the Kimberley region of their State. Despite being there, you know that whatever happens today or tomorrow there will be a need to return sometime in the future.

Naturally enough a local boat man spied a new arrival (must be the wonderment of that first look across the harbour) and within an instant we were booked to have a swim at St George Island and the Blue Grotto for the following day. Our villa was fantastic which included a tea pot much to the delight of our Scottish friend.

St George's Island is a lovely place, but is in urgent need of upgrading and maintenance to make it more attractive. I am told that work has begun on it since my visit. The Blue Grotto was a highlight; isolated but truly beautiful. We were fortunate to visit the Isle of Capri at a later date –the Greeks have it! After a look at the developing Mandraki harbour, Jessie Zempilas took us for a two hour, 200 metre walk along the harbour. It takes that time frame to show where their homes used to be and all their family history. Naturally the location to where the Galletis house used to be was of particular interest. By the end of our stay, I am sure we must have picked up another 100 relatives. That night I ate the smallest shrimps I have ever seen. Much to my embarrassment, the "skip" took some time to realise that one eats them by the spoon full, not trying to shell them all individually.

After a siesta on another day, it was off to the harbour side to try the local fish, whole fish-bones and all. Am I becoming more Kastellorizan? Sadly no; I have not mastered the coffee as yet. There has to be some fresh cow's milk somewhere in a cup of coffee for a farming lad!

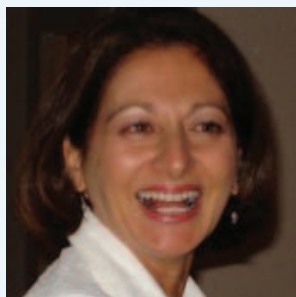
Our last day in Kastellorizo took us to the museum and a film "Life on little Kazzie". It certainly drove home the tragic circumstances that have befallen this piece of rock in paradise.

My Grecian experience was not quite finished as we flew out. Still before me was Rhodes, Athens and the ruins of ancient times revealing real and entwined mythical legends that make this region so compelling. Surely, Apollo, Zeus, Poseidon and Aphrodite spent time in Kastellorizo to make it such a memorable place.



A note from the Editor

Marilyn Tsolakis



In this edition of *Filia*, our lead article challenges you to think about what is the best way forward for the island of Kastellorizo. Government policy and the will of the people will determine future directions. It is not up to organisations such as Australian Friends of

Kastellorizo to determine either; that would smack of cultural arrogance and is not part of our charter. AFK's aim is to assist in furthering the cause of promoting a positive future for Kastellorizo.

I have been excited by the vision first established by a 'think tank' of people in Sydney in 2007. Many of the projects we have undertaken have been challenging because of cross-cultural sensitivities across hemispheres. However, it is possible to make these projects work, because of the passion that makes us love Kastellorizo, regardless of some frustrations. Perseverance leads to success. Isn't this a Kastellorizian trait?

The pride that is also part of the Kastellorizian heritage makes me think that we should be emphasising the character of our forebears, because of their resilience in surviving, regardless of the obstacles that confronted them. The storytelling that many of us experienced is one of the main reasons we feel a spiritual connection with Kastellorizo and why we want to keep going back.

My involvement in co-writing the children's book with J Andrew Johnstone (see notice below), and the endless checks on history from reliable sources leave me in awe of

the courage manifested by our parents, grandparents and previous generations. Once children and teenagers read about the island's history it will help them understand their ancestral origins through the poetic narrative that is about to unfold in between the covers of this dramatic book. That is why *Kastellorizo: My Odyssey* is such an important project. In previous editions of *Filia* and through our eNews communications, AFK has been seeking sponsorship for the book. I am delighted to announce that through the generosity of Peter, Theodosios, Michael and Victor Kailis & sisters Mary Halikis and Katrina Ventouras, the printing of the book is now possible. It will be published later this year, so secure your copy of this limited edition by pre ordering your copy now.

Another article in this edition provides thoughtful perspectives from an Anglo-Australian farmer who married into a Kastellorizian family. Of course, we have Dr Paul Boyatzis' regular column about proverbs and updates on other culturally significant projects such as the Empire Patrol Monument and the Student Exchange Program for 2010.

From the feedback AFK has been receiving, it is apparent many of you enjoy reading *Filia*. It seems to be touching the hearts and minds of many people as it becomes an important way of keeping informed. Up until now, AFK has been able to provide this free to members due to seed funding from Directors. To be viable on an ongoing basis, AFK will be introducing a \$25 membership fee payable from 1 July 2010. You can complete the form on the back page to ensure continued delivery or pay on-line through our website. Foundation Members are exempt for the first year.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue and if you can assist in any way, AFK would love to hear from you.

Kastellorizo: My Odyssey

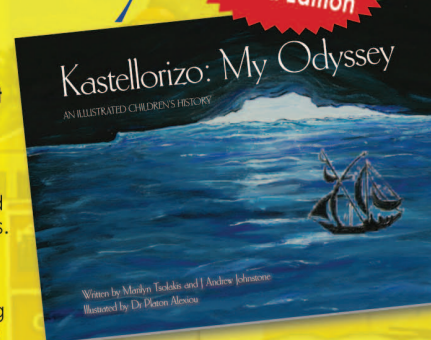
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The story of Kastellorizo, from ancient Greece to the present, is told by the island itself because only the island has known and seen every generation that has lived on its rocky shores. The Dorians, ancient Greeks, pirates, ships captains, traders, knights, the Ottomans, and conquerors from around the Mediterranean, Kastellorizo has seen them all. This is the story of a great odyssey, tragic and exciting, dramatic but hopeful, of a little island in the far eastern Mediterranean, and its indomitable people.

"Kastellorizo: My Odyssey is not only a beautiful and informative book, but also a wonderful and innovative concept. The island speaks to us and engages us, touching our hearts and our minds. This excellent work will delight and educate all ages."
Dr Norman Ashton

"I can think of no better way for a young child to learn, and to re-learn, Kastellorizo's fascinating history than through the pages of this book. Engagingly written from the island's perspective, its poetic tale will draw children across the sweep of centuries in an almost fairytale way, while also re-kindling our own memories of stories heard from proud grandparents many years ago."
Nicholas Pappas



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for further information



Empire Patrol Project



The Empire Patrol monument to commemorate the lives of Kastellorizians who perished on 29 September, 1945 is progressing well according to the resident artist, Alexandros Zygouris. Upon completion, the monument, with the names of the 33 people who lost their lives will be located on the harbour of Kastellorizo, near Aghios Giorgos tou Pigadiou (St George of the Well) church and will be officially unveiled at the 65th anniversary ceremony on 29 September, 2010.

The sculpture is made from a block of beautiful white marble about 90 cm high and about 50cm deep x 50cm wide. It will be placed on a plinth about one metre high.

AFK is assisting with the raising of funds for this project and is aiming to collect AUD\$10,000. Please note these funds will be paid direct to

the sculptor and we are pleased to advise the sum of \$3,000 has been secured from generous donations from Kastellorizians wishing to commemorate their loved ones.

If any of you would like to make a contribution, especially if your family was involved in this tragedy to honour their memory, please contact the AFK Co-ordinator. You can learn more about the Empire Patrol disaster at the following website link which has been created by Allan Cresswell, Dr Paul Boyatzis and Nicholas Pappas. www.empirepatrol.com

Student Exchange Update



AFK is pleased to announce that the following 15 and 16 year old students from the island of Kastellorizo, Konstantinos Amygdalos and Ilias Martalas, have been selected by the High School Principal, to visit Australia from the 26 July as part of the Student Exchange Program for 2010. Anthony Komninos from Perth is very excited to reciprocate the hospitality that was shown to him whilst he was on exchange to Kastellorizo in 2009. His family has offered to accommodate the boys and to show them the cultural and social highlights of Perth which is a sister city to Kastellorizo. Parisse Kailis has offered to provide the boys with some English lessons while they are in Perth. St Andrew's Grammar School in Perth will also integrate the boys into their curriculum for a couple of half days.

AFK is looking for families in Melbourne to assist with accommodating the boys for 7 days in August 2010. No doubt the boys would enjoy this vibrant Australian city that has a strong Greek population.

Irene Calopedos from Sydney has offered to have one of the boys. AFK is seeking assistance from another family to accommodate one of the boys during August. If readers from other Australian cities would like to be involved, please contact the AFK coordinator.

AFK would like to thank the Voudouris family from Darwin, Northern Territory of Australia for sponsoring the Student Exchange Program.

Gatharos aproskalestos ston gamon ti girevi.

(What is the uninvited donkey doing at the wedding.)

Don't go somewhere if you are not invited or welcomed. Don't push yourself into a situation before you are asked. Maintain your pride and dignity at all times.

○ ipnos trefi ta micra , o ilios ta moskaria , ke to kراسi tous gerondes , t'aspra ta palikaria.

(aspra is a word used to refer to money.)
(Sleep nourishes the young, the sun nourishes the calves, and wine the elderly but able bodied persons are nourished with money.)

This advises not be afraid of hard work when you are capable. It's with hard work that you will achieve what you are striving for.

Application for AFK Membership

To date funding of AFK projects has been by way of \$90,000 seed capital and \$8,000 from Foundation Memberships, as well as various sponsorships contributed by some members. To continue to deliver AFK base services a nominal membership fee of \$25 per annum has been introduced effective 1 July, 2010.

To continue receiving the AFK quarterly magazine, Filia, our regular electronic news (eNews), website information about Kastellorizo, as well as other breaking news and information, please complete the Membership Application form and send to Coordinator AFK, 75 Marlow St, Wembley, Western Australia, 6014 or online at <http://www.australianfriendskastellorizo.org/membership.htm>

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