



Get dizzy with traditional dance on Kastellorizo

Stephanos Zois is the bank manager of the National Bank of Greece on Kastellorizo. He has held this position for three years and returns to Athens with his wife, Efrossini Zoniou, in March 2014. Stephanos wrote this article in Greek and Efrossini has translated it into English. We hope that their idea of introducing a Greek dance program on Kastellorizo this year will continue as part of a regular program on the island.

As of July this year, in our beloved homeland Kastellorizo, friends, visitors, tourists and foreign residents who own a house on the island, of all nationalities, have chosen to accompany their daily afternoon swim with learning how to dance by the turquoise waters of the tiny island of Saint George.

This project has been embraced most enthusiastically by many people, and especially by those who feel young and eager to be inspired by the rituals of Dionysius, the god of wine and entertainment, and to gain insight into the culture of our homeland.

Daily Dionysiac motion makes everyone, both the initiated and the uninitiated, dizzy with traditional movements and rhythms. A journey through space and time into Greek tradition; a walk in the footsteps of history into the life experiences and the customs of our people.

The venue for this activity is the islet of Saint George. It is as if the small chapel with the same name seemed to bless this communion with cultural tradition, encouraging universal messages of love, brotherhood and cooperation.

Once more, this cultural activity emerged through volunteers' combined efforts, which proves that culture and volunteering bring together all people, regardless of origin.

Among the dances that are taught initially are: syrtos from the islands, ballos, pidihto from Rhodes, Karagouna from Thessaly, syrtos sta tria from Epirus, syrtos from Kalamata, syrtaki or hassapiko politiko, hassaposserviko, zeibekiko, ikariotiko (from Ikaria), thiakos from Hios, zaramo from Macedonia, dendritsi, zonaradiko and baidoushka from Thrace, Tik from the Pont. Naturally, local dances such as sousta, syrtos and kalamatianos from Kastellorizo could not have been omitted.

The idea was proposed and implemented by Efrossini Zoniou, who is a teacher, while Greek folkdance instructor Irini Meletiadou is in charge of the support, guidance and care of the program.

Special mention should be made of the voluntary and unpaid contribution of those involved in the project.

To name but a few : Agostina Pavone and Stephanos Zois, the life and soul of the program, Katherine Kalaphata from the Greek community of Australia and Jane Oldham, fervent supporters, Catherine Croue as well as a host of friends from every part of the planet, participants, and last, but not least, our "little hero" and "captain", Massimo Paradisi.

After the end of the lesson, every day, we are welcomed by the crystal-clear waters of Saint George's island, where we cool our bodies, then we quench our thirst and feed our happy faces with refreshments and treats in beautiful premises, attended to by the "young sea nymph" Virginia.

The endeavour to promote folk tradition will continue and we hope that it will be met with support by the municipality, as well, so that it can constitute a pillar of cultural activity in the future.

We would be proud if, some time in the future, a Festival of Folkdances from the whole world were to be created and hosted on Kastellorizo. An idea whose implementation would bring multiple benefits... SO COME AND JOIN US!



Στο Καστελλόριζο, Φάρο Πολιτισμού

Στέφανος Ζώης

ΜΕΘΥΣΑΝ ΜΕ ΠΑΡΑΔΟΣΙΑΚΕΣ ΝΟΤΕΣ

Στην αγαπημένη ιδιαίτερη πατρίδα, το Καστελλόριζο, από τον Ιούλιο 2013, φίλοι, επισκέπτες, τουρίστες, και κάτοικοι του εξωτερικού που διατηρούν σπίτια στο νησί, κάθε εθνικότητας, κάθε απόγευμα, δίπλα στα καταγάλανα νερά του μικρού νησιού του Αϊ-Γιώργη, επέλεξαν το καθημερινό απογευματινό τους μπάνιο να συνοδεύεται από «πολιτιστικά εδέσματα».

Καθημερινή διονυσιακή κίνηση, με φιγούρες που μεθούν κάθε μυημένο και αμύητο με παραδοσιακές νότες. Ένα ταξίδι στην Ελληνική Παράδοση, στο χώρο και στο χρόνο, μια επίσκεψη στα βήματα της ιστορίας, στα βιώματα και τα έθιμα του λαού μας.

Ανταπόκριση από πολλούς και ειδικά από όσους αισθάνονται νέοι και έτοιμοι να ρουφήξουν τα σταφύλια της γνώσης του πολιτισμού της πατρίδας μας.

Ο χώρος υλοποίησης της δραστηριότητας, το νησάκι του Αϊ-Γιώργη, με το ομώνυμο εκκλησάκι να ευλογεί καθημερινά τη μέθεξη της πολιτιστικής κουλτούρας, στέλνοντας παντού και παντοτινά μηνύματα αγάπης, αδελφότητας, συνεργασίας, ψυχικής ενότητας και πνευματικής επικοινωνίας.

Για μία ακόμα φορά, αποδεικνύεται ότι ο πολιτισμός και ο εθελοντισμός ενώνουν και φέρνουν κοντά τους ανθρώπους, από όπου και αν προέρχονται.

Οι χοροί που διδάσκονται αρχικά, νησιώτικος συρτός, μπάλος, πηδηχτό Ρόδο, καραγκούνα Θεσσαλίας, συρτός ηπειρώτικος στα τρία, καλαματιανός, τσάμικος, συρτάκι - χασάπικος πολιτικός, χασαποσέρβικος, ζεϊμπέκικος, ικαριώτικος, θειακός χορός Χίου, ζάραμο Μακεδονίας, δενδρίτσι - ζωναράδικος - μπαϊτούσκα, χοροί

Θράκης, και τικ, χορός Πόντου. Φυσικά, δεν θα μπορούσαν να είχαν παραληφθεί οι τοπικοί χοροί σούστα, καλαματιανός και συρτός Καστελλόριζου.

Η ιδέα πραγματοποίησης προτάθηκε και οργανώθηκε από την Ευφροσύνη Ζώνιου, καθηγήτρια, ενώ τη στήριξη, την καθοδήγηση και την επιμέλεια έχει η δασκάλα παραδοσιακών χορών Ειρήνη Μελετιάδου.

Ιδιαίτερη μνεία θα πρέπει να γίνει στον εθελοντισμό και στην αφιλοκέρδεια της προσπάθειας.

Ψυχή και αδιάλειπτη στήριξη της προσπάθειας, οι Στέφανος Ζώης και Αγκοστίνια Παβόνε. Αρωγός από την ομογένεια, η Κατερίνα Καλαφατά. Συμμετοχή Τζαν Όλντχαμ, Κατρίν Κρουέ και πλήθος φίλων από κάθε γωνιά του πλανήτη. «Μικρός ήρωας» και «καπετάνιος μας», ο Μάσιμο Παραντίζι ...

Κάθε φορά, μετά το τέλος, μας υποδέχονται τα πεντακάθαρα νερά του Αϊ-Γιώργη, που δροσίζουν τα σώματά μας. Σβήνουμε τη δίψα μας και ταΐζουμε τα χαρούμενα πρόσωπά μας με λιχουδιές και αναψυκτικά σε ένα όμορφο χώρο υποδοχής, με τη «μικρή νεράιδα εξυπηρέτησης», την Βιργινία.

Η προσπάθεια για ανάδειξη της λαϊκής παράδοσης θα συνεχιστεί και ευελπιστούμε να βρει μιμητές και την αναγκαία υποστήριξη από το Δήμο, έτσι ώστε να αποτελέσει μελλοντικά πυλώνα πολιτιστικής δραστηριότητας.

Θα είμαστε περήφανοι αν κάποτε δημιουργηθεί Φεστιβάλ Παραδοσιακών Χορών από όλο τον κόσμο στο Καστελλόριζο. Μια ιδέα υλοποίησης με πολλαπλά οφέλη. ΚΟΠΙΑΣΤΕ!

SPECIAL NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Please pay your \$25 membership, if you have not already done so, to assist with the continuation of AFK projects.

To become a member, to advertise or for general information contact Marilyn Tsolakis,

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Student Exchange Reflection

by Marie-Claire Phillips



Being accepted to go on this exchange has honestly been the best thing to have ever happened to me. Not only did it help me gain a better understanding about who I am and where I come from, it helped me to become a more independent person. The independence for me started to kick in not even five minutes after we left our parents at Perth International Airport. We were asked to hand over our passports and Jayden couldn't find his (he found it soon after). It was then that I realised we were travelling to the other side of the world, alone. We would have to pay closer attention to our surroundings and look after each other. After that experience, I felt that as a group, we would need to read signs and listen to announcements made over the speakers. We are definitely more confident travellers and have gained so much independence!

When we landed in Kastellorizo on the 29th of September, the feeling was ecstatic; the rush of adrenalin we got when the plane's wheels touched down at the airport was unforgettable! It felt like I was home away from home when really, home was on the opposite side of the world. Having our Greek teacher, Efrossini, meet us at the airport made this day even more memorable, as I realised that special events had been organised just for us.

That night we arrived on Kastellorizo, there was a concert performed by a band from Crete. It was the best introduction to the Student Exchange Program; traditional Greek music, Greek dancing and having all of the lovely Greek kids pulling us up to dance even though we had no clue about what we were doing!



That night something inspired me; it was the energy and good feeling that floated around the room. To me what was amazing was the way the locals would carry on with life even though there were evident financial difficulties. There is definitely a difference between Greece and Australia, both amazing in their own way. But with Greece there is just a different meaning and energy towards life that is inspiring.

Some of the amazing things that we had the privilege of doing were, firstly, Greek lessons with our lovely teacher Efrossini who dedicated so much of her time to make sure we experienced Kastellorizo in the way it should be experienced. She took us on many walks which included visiting St George of the Mountain, St George of the Island and St George of Santrape. We went to Avlonia where we saw Apollo's altar and many patitiria- wine treading places. We visited the castle followed by my highlight walk, the sunset at Paleokastro. This was the most beautiful thing I have ever seen. The way the colours of the sun reflected onto the water made it seem like a dream.

Another one of my favourite things was watching Kyria Despina Misomike make Nifi's Halva and Katoumaria. Watching how she made it was amazing. I've never seen someone cook with such passion. It was unreal!

Some other things we did on the island were kayaking, going to the blue grotto and going across to Turkey for a day.

I genuinely loved the kindness of the students at the school. They would invite us to places and even wanted to hang out with us. They would communicate with us using English and we would swap knowledge of our languages. I have made some great friends with some of the kids and I cannot wait to go back and see them all again!

I have had the best time of my life on this exchange. I don't think I have ever laughed or smiled so much in my life and it honestly wouldn't have been the same if Sofia and Jayden weren't there with me. I have made friendships with people who I wouldn't have thought I'd be friends with. I've learnt so much about Greece and my ancestors. This is information that I'll keep with me and pass on one day.

I'd like to thank the hospitality and generosity of everyone on the island. Everyone was so kind to us; it was very overwhelming! I'd also like to thank anyone who contributed to this exchange; without you I wouldn't have experienced so many things and I've gained so much from even the littlest things! Finally, and personally I'd like to thank Marilyn Tsolakis for putting up with the three of us for two weeks and making this exchange possible in the first place. You have put in so much of your personal time to make sure we got the best of the best, thank you!

Lastly I'd like to thank *Australian Friends of Kastellorizo* for putting this whole exchange together. I will never forget the memories we made and the things we learnt. Thank you.





Student Exchange Reflection

by Jayden Black



On the 29th of September 2013, I landed on the beautiful island of Kastellorizo for the first time with Sofia Tived and Marie-Claire Phillips. I was extremely excited about events that were planned on the island and my expectations were not let down at all. We did so much in our week on Kastellorizo and made many memories I'll never forget.

On our first night we were very fortunate to be able to go to a concert which was being put on by a band from Crete. This was a fantastic introduction to Kastellorizo. We danced with the local kids and listened to Greek music until early hours of the morning. It was a fantastic night and we had so much fun.

Something I'll remember forever is watching the sunrise on our last full day we had on Kastellorizo from on top of the castle.

It was an amazing sight watching the sun come over the distant mountains of Turkey and shine onto St George of The Island. It was the most beautiful sunrise I had ever seen.

All the things I wanted to do when I got to Kastellorizo I did. I climbed the great mountain twice and learnt much about the history of the island and watched a beautiful sunset. I swam into the Blue Grotto. It was scary at first, but once I was inside I felt very safe in the beautiful, blue glow of the water. I did not swim across the Limani, but I did swim in it many times. I experienced where my ancestors grew up and learnt about the hardships they went through. I experienced a different lifestyle which I really enjoyed.

Travelling to Rhodes, before Kastellorizo and Athens after, made me realise that it is very different to the rest of Greece. Maybe it's the lifestyle or there's something in the water, but everyone lives so happily and freely. There's a lot of talk in the media about the economic crisis in Greece, but you wouldn't think there's a problem in the world on Kastellorizo. Everyone on the island welcomed us so (kindly, humbly, generously, happily). We were treated by the locals to many free meals and their great hospitality which made me feel very comforted and is something I'll never forget. I would like to thank Yiannis Alla, Alexandros Dervishi, Yiannis Skoza, Κλαουντια Καλλαντζη Costantina and Eleni (Despina) Papoutsis in particular.

I would also like to thank Efrossini Zoniou for taking time out of her day to teach the three of us some basic Greek which is a great foundation for learning further Greek. Efrossini was also our very knowledgeable tour guide as we walked up and around the mountain. I would like to thank her for also accompanying me on the early morning walk. Thank you Efrossini for all your effort, knowledge and time you put into helping us learn and have a better experience.

I would also like to thank *Australian Friends of Kastellorizo* for giving us this opportunity and making it happen. I would especially like to thank Marilyn Tsolakis for all her long hours and hard work she put into the exchange. She is a very knowledgeable person and was a fantastic guide around Greece. The exchange would not have happened without you, and your commitment is much appreciated.

I was very lucky to travel to Greece with two lovely girls, Marie-Claire Phillips and Sofia Tived. I had only met them a few times before the exchange, but now it feels like I have known them forever. The exchange would not have been the same without them and I have created memories with them which I will never forget.

I am very thankful and feel very privileged for this experience. I feel that I have connected with my ancestry and I am very excited that I will return to the island again. I will forever treasure the week I spent in Kastellorizo, the memories and friendships I've made. Thank you again to all the people we met and were involved in the exchange. Kastellorizo was an experience of a lifetime.





Student Exchange Reflection

by Sophia Tived



I originally applied for the Kastellorizo 2013 Exchange Program so I could learn about the culture and to see how it differs from our culture here in Australia. I believed that the experience would help me gain a better understanding of the island, the history, traditions and the day-to-day life of the local people of Kastellorizo. I also applied so I could gain a better understanding of the language and research my own family history.

On returning to Australia and reflecting on my experiences on Kastellorizo, I feel so proud to have been part of the exchange program. Meeting so many wonderful people and being welcomed by people who I have never met before, gave me a warm feeling in my heart. I was included in various activities and involved in the life style of the island. Kazzie is a happy and vibrant place with an interesting history of which I felt a part. I found a connection to this part of Greece where my grandparents came from and I learnt so much about my heritage.

The highlights of this adventure were many and varied. On the first night in Kastellorizo, we went to a Greek concert in the local hall. The night had a lively atmosphere with the locals dancing and singing along to the songs. Joining in with the madness of the Greek dancing, with my feet going left, right and centre. I understand why the Greek community is always smiling and having fun. This night was a night to remember.

Who would have thought that a four-hour walk around an island would be fun? Well it was. In the warmth of the sun we saddled up with bottles of water and began our walk. Little did we know that it was going to take four hours. Even though it was long, we experienced the complete beauty of the island. We learnt lots of different fun facts about the island that I didn't know before, churches and tombs. Viewing the island in this way was definitely a breathtaking experience.

Another highlight of this experience was making the delicious katoumari and a traditional halva with Kyria Despina Misomike. I have personally never had any of these fantastic sweets before, so watching it get made was very special for me. The katoumari was rolled out, flipped and curled. So much technique and love was put into this. Then the katoumari was cooked on an open fire stove and sprinkled with sugar and cinnamon and ready to eat hot. The best part of this experience was eating it of course, but also helping to make it. We then made a traditional halva that you eat before your wedding day. Kyria Despina Misomike invited us to her house where she got us mixing, measuring and helping her cook. The best part of this experience was making these sweets. The traditions of the kazzi

people reminded me of my grandmother, busy cooking with so much love for the food. I am so lucky to now know how to make these delicious sweets, and to take my experience back to Australia to teach my family and hopefully, keep the tradition going.

Learning Greek with the amazing, caring Efrossini Zoniou who touched us so much in a very short time. I was amazed at how both hard and easy Greek was. I knew some English words came from the Greek language, but I didn't know that most of the words I used were Greek. The Greek language fascinates me. At the beginning I was very confused, but with Efrossini's help I picked it up incredibly fast. I found that the three of us who had no experience of Greek were reading, writing and spelling in Greek. Learning Greek meant a lot to me, because my grandmother, Mary Phillips, always wanted me to learn Greek. I believe I have done her proud.



Being part of the Greek exchange was an unforgettable, magical, cultural experience of a life time. I learnt so much about the island my family came from and myself. This adventure gave me more than I ever expected. I've made life long friends, learnt about the culture of the island and my connection to the island. I feel more connected then I ever felt before. I would like to thank *Australian Friends of Kastellorizo* and the community who supported this exchange program, Kyria Despina Misomike, Efrossini Zoniou, Marie-Claire, Jayden and a special thank you to Marilyn for being our tour guide, mentor and our friend. This trip would not have been so wonderful without her. I hope one day I can take my family and show them the wonder of Kazzie. It will always have a warm spot in my heart.





Yiayia's Mostly True Stories of Kastellorizo

by Nick Bogiatzis, Canberra

(Part 3) The Time of the Knights

In our last edition of Filia, we published the first two of a set of six children's stories: 'Yiayia's Mostly True Stories of Kastellorizo'. These were written by Nick Bogiatzis to try to pass on some of the remarkable history of our island to the next generation of his family.

In this edition we publish the next story in this historical sequence. We hope children, and our readers, will enjoy them.

'Were there really knights on Kastellorizo?' I asked Yiayia one night just after we'd had dinner.

We had just eaten lots of Yiayia's *pastitso*. And while Mum's *pastitso* still had the same macaroni, and meat and sauce, for some reason Yiayia's always tasted better. Not that we'd ever tell Mum that, as she might stop making it, and it was one of our favourites.

But we did tell Yiayia that her *pastitso* was the best, and she said it was because we both always helped her to make it.

That could be true, because another of our favourite times was when we stayed with our special aunt Theia Dimi. As a treat we would make *pastitso*, because it was her favourite food too. And we always helped her, and it always tasted really good too, nearly as good as Yiayia's.

'Of course,' said Yiayia. 'There were knights, and castles, and pirates. Even buried treasures.'

We had had a very busy day with Yiayia and it was time for bed but we didn't want to go yet. We wanted Yiayia to tell us another story.

'Many, many years ago Kastellorizo was very different,' she said, sitting down, with a knowing smile on her face.

'Armies were fighting all around Kastellorizo. Everybody in the whole world, or at least all the world that you could travel to from Kastellorizo, knew of the Emperor of Byzantium.

'The Emperor lived in what was then the greatest city of the world. This was Constantinople, the city of Constantine, and the capital of his empire, Byzantium. The city had been built over a thousand years earlier by the great Roman Emperor Constantine himself. But after so many years, Constantinople had become weak. And the Emperor himself had to fight many wars to save what was left of his empire.

'Many soldiers came from around Europe to help the Emperor fight his enemies. Some wore a red cross on their chests, and were known as the 'carriers of the cross' or the *stavroforoi*. You would know them as the Crusaders, or the Knights of Saint John.

'Not all the people who came to help the Emperor were good, or understood the people they came to help. Many were amazed by the beautiful clothes and fine food and rich ornaments in the Emperor's kingdom. And instead of helping, some killed and stole from the people they were supposed to help.

'But the Knights of Saint John, led by their Grand Master, came not only to fight, but also to build hospitals and to look after the people.

'After many battles, the Emperor lost Constantinople and his kingdom, and the knights were also forced to leave their home in

Jerusalem. They then travelled to Cyprus, then Kastellorizo, and finally settled in Rhodes. To help make sure that Rhodes was safe, they also stayed on Kastellorizo. From there they could keep an eye out for enemies that might attack them, and for any pirates.'

'Wow,' I said. 'Pirates! And did the knights ride up and down on big horses, and have jousting fights?'

'Well, I don't think so,' said Yiayia. 'I'm not sure there was much use for jousting horses on Kastellorizo. By then the island had also changed. The Mandraki, the big flat area of land near where King Megis had buried his soldiers, was now covered by the sea.

'So now, as well as the big, deep main harbour, or Limani, there was now a second shallow harbour, the Mandraki. Now before you ask me how that happened, haven't I already told you that Kastellorizo is slowly sinking into the sea? There are tiny, tiny changes each year, so it takes thousands of years before any real change can be noticed.'

I started to imagine Kastellorizo as an even smaller island, with the castle floating alone on its own tiny rock. But Yiayia started talking again.

'Maybe many, many years ago Kastellorizo was joined to the land opposite. But even when it wasn't joined, the people on Kastellorizo always lived and worked closely with the people who lived in the land opposite.

'For example,' Yiayia added, as if she'd just thought about it, 'Santa Claus.'

'What,' I said, 'Santa Claus? What has he got to do with it?'

'Didn't you know?' Yiayia said. 'I thought I'd told you. The oldest church on Kastellorizo was the Church of Saint Nicholas, just near the castle, which still today is called the Castle of Saint Nicholas.

'In olden days, Saint Nicholas was a bishop in the town of Myra. This was a town opposite Kastellorizo, and many people from Kastellorizo lived and traded there. Bishop Nicholas was a good man, and did many good things, so when he died he was made a saint. As a saint he looked after sailors, so the people on Kastellorizo, who were always travelling in their boats, always thought of him as their special saint.'

'But what's that got to do with Santa Claus?' I asked.

Mia knew. She said: 'Saint Nicholas was called *Santa Nikolaus* in German, or Santa Klaus. But Yiayia,' she added excitedly, 'if Kastellorizians lived in Myra, does that mean Santa Claus was Kastellorizian?'

'No, I don't think so,' Yiayia laughed, 'but he was very special to us in Kastellorizo, and that is why I have the beautiful old wooden icon of Saint Nicholas in my bedroom.'

'Is that your most special icon, Yiayia?' Mia asked. We all grew up with these icons, or religious paintings, both at church and at home. And Mia knew these icons were special to her Yiayia, even though Yiayia knew nothing about the icons on our computers.



'They're all special,' Yiayia said. 'But my oldest one, the one that is nearly black, has always been important for our family. It's called the Virgin of the Sea, because once one of your ancestors was sailing in his big ship far from land, and saw a light out at sea.

'He sent a small boat over to see if it was a shipwrecked sailor, but what a surprise they got. It was a piece of wood with three lighted candles on it. Yet so far from the shore. When they brought the piece of wood on board, they saw it was this icon of the *Panayia*, or Virgin Mary. All the sailors thought it was a miracle and the icon is still in our family.'

Well that was pretty exciting having knights and Santa Claus and miracles in Yiayia's stories about Kastellorizo, but I wanted to hear more about the knights, so Yiayia continued her story.

'The knights worked hard on Kastellorizo. They rebuilt the ancient castle on the Kavos point of the Limani, which was now protected on both sides by the sea. On the front of the castle was the shield of the knights' Grand Master, Juan d'Heredia. And on his shield were five red castles. Maybe this is another reason why the island is called 'Kastellorizo', from Castello Rosso, or Red Castle.

'The knights had to learn the ways of the sea, as now their battles would be with sailors and pirates on ships, rather than soldiers on horses.

'All of the people lived near the castle, instead of by the sea like today, so that if they were attacked they could quickly run into the castle and be protected. The farmers who lived away from the town could still go to the even more ancient castle, or *Palaeokastro*, on the very top of the mountain.

'And just as you helped me today, the knights had to help the Grand Master earn money to pay for the battles. They used the shallow Mandraki, and the shallow waters at the end of the Limani to make salt from the sea, which they would sell.'

'Yuk. Salt,' said Mia, who was imagining princesses and knights in armour.

'Well, yes,' said Yiayia, 'in those days salt was very valuable, like gold, and some soldiers would be paid with salt instead of money.'

'But there were gold and jewels, weren't there Yiayia?' Mia asked. 'Can't you tell us about them?'

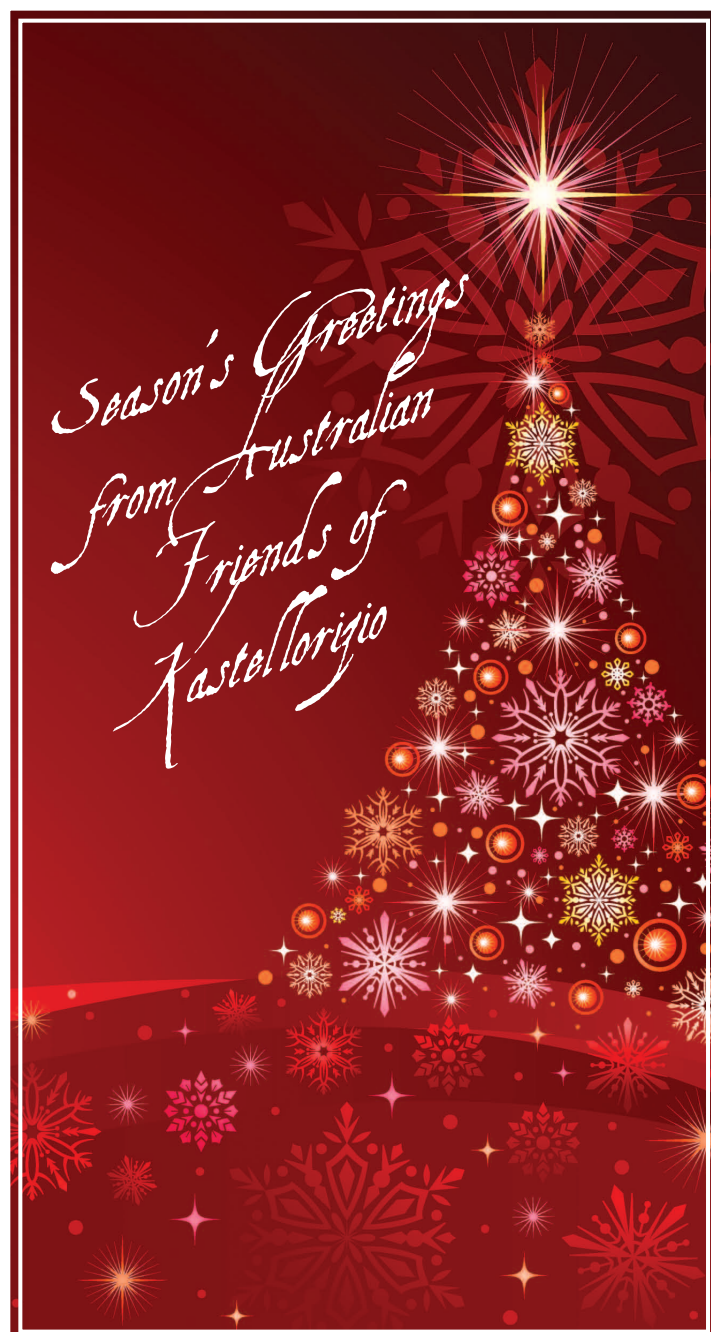
It was already late, and Yiayia probably guessed that we didn't want to go to bed yet. And we did want to hear more from Yiayia. I couldn't stop thinking about the knights and pirates from the island that our family came from.

'Well,' said Yiayia, 'there isn't much more I can tell you. But if you both agree to go to bed now, I'll think up a story about pirates and knights and treasures. And I'll tell it to you tomorrow before you go to bed.' I thought that was a great idea as I would then dream about all these wonderful things, and in the morning I could tell Yiayia the exciting stories that I had dreamt about. We agreed immediately.

The next night we agreed to go to bed early as Yiayia said she had thought about a good story to tell us. Once we were in bed, Yiayia came in with a cup of hot milk, and a *koulouri* biscuit for each of us. And she started her new story that she'd made up just for us.

It was our turn to smile when she started with 'once upon a time', because we knew that all stories from long ago started that way.

The following morning I woke up feeling really good. But I couldn't remember what I dreamt about so I could tell Yiayia. I immediately asked Mia if she dreamt about knights, and pirates and treasures. And she couldn't remember either.





Betty Theodore Interview

by Theona Mitaros, Perth

Betty Theodore was born in Kastellorizo in 1929. Her father was Dimitri Stephano Paltoglou and her mother, Irini Amoni.

Betty returns to the home of her birth annually.

Where were you born?

I was born at my mother's house in the Plaka on the 21st November, 1929. It's all rubble now...but it was at the top of the Nifi's steps third house on the left.

How long did you live in Kastellorizo?

In 1937 we left Kastellorizo... I was 8 years old. My father was already in Melbourne and I travelled with my mother and brothers and sisters [I was the youngest of 7]. They brought family out in sections, we were the last batch. We went through Egypt first. It took over a month.

What did your father do for a living in Australia?

The first time he was picking grapes. One day he had had enough and said 'I didn't come here to pick grapes' so he went back to Kastellorizo. Two years later he returned to Melbourne.

What did he do when he returned the second time?

He just ordered everyone around.

When did you marry?

I married Con in 1948 and had three boys George, Jim and Stanley.

Were they hard years for you the first time you came to Australia?

Not for me...I was the youngest... a bit spoilt. I went to Brighton Road State School which the others didn't have an opportunity of doing.

I am the only one alive now. I lost my brother recently. He was 100 years of age. He was wonderful. He knew everything, he had all the answers even at 100. He was sharp, very sharp.

What was the hardest time in your life?

I lost my mother at 16. That was a hard blow and I had to make the most of it but I had a good husband and that's what counted.

I got engaged at 18. One week later my father died of a stroke. That's how it goes. Once I got married, that was it. I never looked back. I was married 52 years, happy years. We worked hard. It's what you make of it. You have an understanding with each other and you make the most of it.

What makes you happy?

I'm happy anyway. I'm a happy person. I'm satisfied. You have to be satisfied to be happy. Isn't that right?

What makes you sad?

I don't know? What can I say. You take life as it is. You can make yourself sad with things. I don't bother doing that. I'm satisfied... not happy, not sad.

What gives you pleasure?

My family. The grandchildren are the main ones.

What gives you pleasure on Kastellorizo?

When I'm here I think of home but I'd rather be here if truth be told.

Does Kastellorizo make you younger?

Naturally. I walk a lot. I'm happy here. I'm never lonely, never lonely.

Does the generation gap disappear here?

If I meet young people I'm young. It's true.
If I meet old people I'm old.

When was the last time you entertained?

Three days ago. I made lunch for 9 boys without their parents, ranging from 17-25. I always like to make them feel welcome so they can love Kastellorizo and give them a little of the home feeling, that's why I do it.

I spoke to a few of them earlier and they said it was a wonderful and unique experience. Why do you think that is?

Well... you know why because they feel they are important too. Look at it that way. I went to the trouble of providing for them. It makes them feel important.

Did you play any sport?

I was a great swimmer once upon a time. I used to be in the races at school. I did freestyle and backstroke. I was good. My brother was a great runner. I was a great runner too, but loved swimming and still do.

Do you like to read?

Yes, biographies.

When you look out over the Limani what do you see?

It's beautiful like at this moment. I can be sitting by myself out the front looking at the water and my mind roams away. I can stay there if no one comes to interrupt me.

What is your greatest strength?

Willpower... and I've got plenty of that.

What is your favourite food?

I love ice-cream but I'm not allowed to eat it because I've got sugar.

What do you think the future holds for Kastellorizo?

You don't want it to grow too much but a lot of people would like to leave it as it is but there must be improvements. This is already happening.

From the beginning till now there have been great improvements. What amazes me is the young kids who have been coming and they simply love it, love it.

It's up to them now.