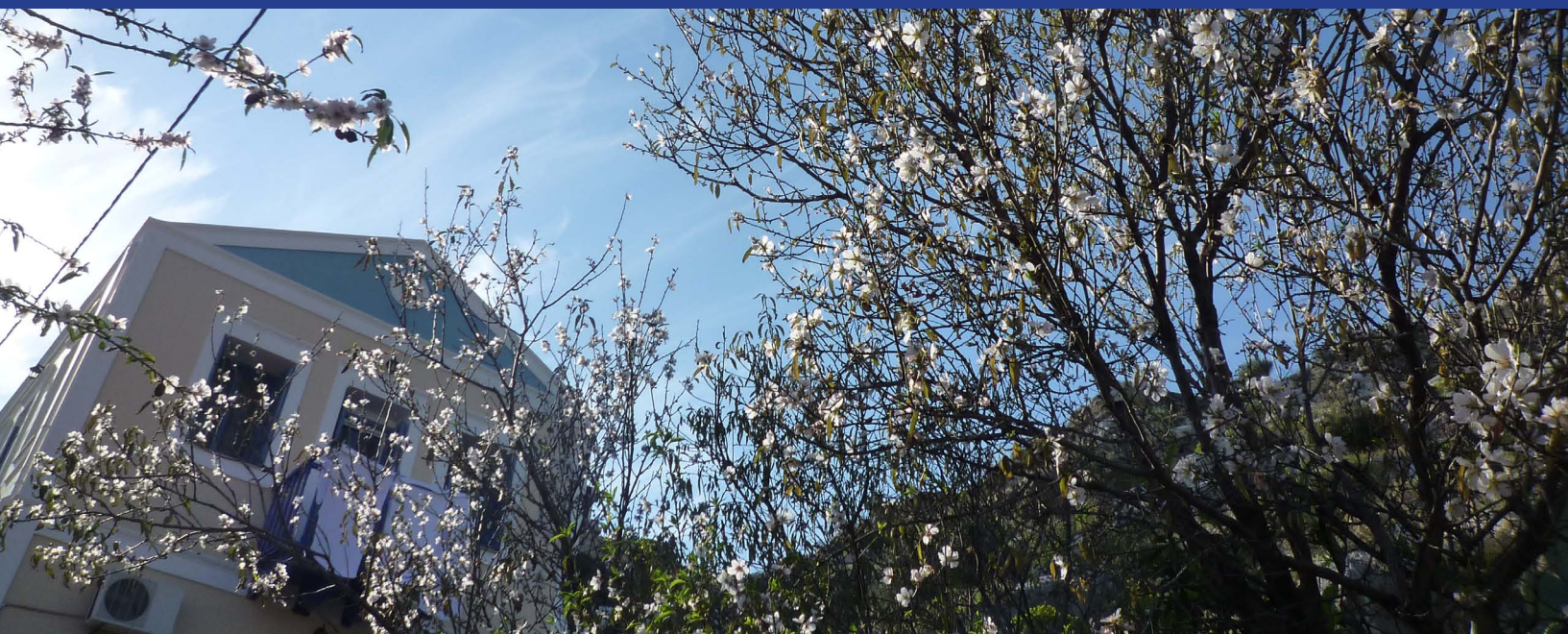


Blessings And Curses Of Living On Kastellorizo

by Efrossini Zoniou, Kastellorizo



Efrossini is of Greek heritage and was born and educated in Belgium, where she also learnt Dutch. She is a qualified teacher of German, English and French as foreign languages. She also teaches Greek for foreigners and taught herself Italian. She was trained as an interpreter by the European Parliament at the École de Traduction et d'Interprétation (School for Translation and Interpretation) in Geneva, but chose to live and work in Greece. In Athens, she was a foreign language teacher, director of studies, teacher trainer and published writer of educational books at a large language institute before setting up her own foreign language institute, which she closed when she came to Kastellorizo with her husband, Sephanos Zois.

This is the first of two articles in which Efrossini reflects on living on Kastellorizo for three years.

Part One

In the past such was the stigma associated with living on Kastellorizo that a transfer to a new post on the tiny island at the extreme confines of the Greek territory was deemed disciplinary action. We nevertheless deliberately chose to abandon the hectic pace of Athenian life for a more leisurely lifestyle in a rural border area, hoping to contribute our services to the isolated community, while pursuing our interests closer to nature and having time for reflection and introspection.

The widely held view about living conditions on Kastellorizo is summed up in the phrase "the forgotten confines of Greece", whereby the emphasis is on the isolation, hardships and abandonment suffered by its residents on the one hand, and the callous indifference of central administration on the other.

We were pleasantly surprised by the reality we experienced on Kastellorizo. It would be unfair to say that this was solely because we had been prepared for the worst. It would not do justice to the

island's treasures or to the numerous initiatives undertaken in the last few years to alleviate its isolation.

Firstly, regular flight and ferry links mean that it is now accessible daily in the summer, sometimes enabling one to take a day-return flight to Rhodes, and four days weekly in winter.

The tourist season lasts much longer than in many, more renowned holiday destinations in Greece: the peak is in July and August, but visitors continue to flock to the island in the most clement autumn months, not to mention the steadily increasing numbers of tourists sailing in from Turkey, sometimes twice daily. A significant category of regular visitors are foreign residents who have acquired property on the island as well as Kastellorizians living abroad, especially in Australia, who own homes on the island. As a result, some coffee bars and restaurants remain open virtually all the year round, which is more than most islands can boast. The implication of this is that people here come in contact with visitors from all over the world for several months a year without leaving their home, the atmosphere in summer being decidedly cosmopolitan. In this crossroads of civilisations, locals can broaden their minds through the interaction with foreigners, be educated and adopt the best features of each world they are exposed to.

Due to its strategic geographical location many services otherwise non-existent in small communities operate on Kastellorizo: the so-called security corps (police, coast guard, customs), armed forces, airport, the Hellenic post, bank, education at pre-school, primary and secondary levels, archaeological service and the power supply company. All these are manned by a significant number of employees, who bring life to the island all the year round and keep businesses open. Kastellorizo is hardly a desert(ed) place.

In recent years, the island has become the focus of nationwide and worldwide attention, thus it has received frequent media coverage, with TV crews regularly visiting the island or newspapers and magazines dedicating special reports or supplements to the tiny



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gem of the Dodecanese. It occupies a privileged position in the hearts of Greek people, who have a raised awareness of the difficulty of being an "akrita", resident of border regions, and infinite sympathy for their trials.

A number of initiatives have been taken by authorities in Athens or in Rhodes, by private institutions, NGOs or voluntary organisations to break the isolation of the inhabitants in an attempt to bring entertainment, culture, education and health services to the residents. Concerts by popular idols, art exhibitions, poetry readings by the poets themselves, theatre plays, folk dances are performed by visiting artists and/or volunteer groups, whereas several times a year a team of doctors visit the island to provide not only medical care, but also information in the form of workshops and presentations. A prime example of such projects is the recent preventive medicine weekend held on 19-20 January, when the National Primary Healthcare Education and Promotion Programme was launched on Kastellorizo, offering its inhabitants the opportunity to visit doctors of a wide range of specialties, undergo diagnostic tests free of charge alongside attending workshops on healthy nutrition, a training programme in first aid, at the end of which participants had the option of becoming certified for emergency situations.

Moreover, parent involvement in the educational process is sought by the Ministry of Education, who ran a series of seminars entitled "School for Parents" to foster teacher and parent cooperation.

It is essential that such useful initiatives be warmly embraced and massively attended by the local population if they are to be repeated, continued and extended, to the benefit of Kastellorizians and the quality of life on the island.

The local school also plays an instrumental role in cultivating the younger generation. Housed in an inspiring neo-classical building, erected with the donation of an emigrant Kastellorizian benefactor over 100 years ago, it can pride itself on its enviable comprehensive lending library, which comprises hundreds of books donated by fellow citizens and organisations from all over Greece, as part of a solidarity initiative called "Do not forget Kastellorizo", and which was organised through the efforts of motivated teachers. The scheme started as an invitation to send a postcard or a book to Kastellorizo, but it multiplied as school supplies and any items considered useful were subsequently dispatched, flooding the post office, the school and the town hall with parcels.



Furthermore, the teaching staff and pupils screen films, which cater for the entertainment of the younger and the older alike. Students are also encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities and projects, which broaden their horizons and have earned the school nationwide distinctions. Currently an ambitious project is being run, aimed at clearing and signposting mountain paths, as well as promoting archaeological sites and remains located along these paths. The role of education to cultivate the mind, shape the character, instill in the young ethical principles, rather than materialistic values, besides transmitting knowledge and skills, the usefulness of professional expertise to improve career prospects, the management and the quality of services of local businesses, and the role of teachers to inspire responsible citizens should be realised and valorised by the family and social environment. Lifetime opportunities offered by the *Australian Friends of Kastellorizo* Student Exchange Programme to leave an isolated society to visit the wide world, glimpse another culture and meet people with different ways of thinking must be actively supported.

The need to exercise the body has not been overlooked and sports facilities are also available: Kastellorizians can play football at the 4x4 football court, basketball at the school court or work out at the municipal gym.

The contribution of expatriate Kastellorizians living in other parts of Greece and abroad, especially Australia, cannot be understated. Individual donations as well as organisations have secured the funding for repair works and equipment for the school, the restoration of monuments and the promotion of the local heritage. The invaluable work of AFK must be acknowledged and paid tribute to. So must the devotion of Kazzies, who, after three or four generations, return to the island, which they call their home, to trace their roots and to support Kastellorizo in any way they can: common to them all is a passion for the island and the will to dedicate their learning, energy and /or fortune to promote the heritage and progress on the island.

At a time of unprecedented crisis the vital role of Kastellorizo as part of the Greek heritage and territory is acknowledged by the state. Proof for this is the extensive restoration projects run by the Archaeological Service at St George of the Mountain, St George of Horafia or Santrape, on Paleokastro, the islands of Rho and Strongyli, recently declared an archaeological area, with the appointment of a Heritage architect and an archaeologist to implement and supervise the works.





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All this should constitute sufficient evidence that Kastellorizo is not a godforsaken place abandoned to its meagre resources. The notion of “forgotten” is ungrateful and simply inaccurate as it utterly ignores the efforts and the achievements resulting from the combined action of the local community, the state and the supportive Kastellorizian community of the diaspora.

The time I have spent on the island has been mostly gratifying to me. I have tried to make the most of my numerous experiences and acquaintances. The natural and architectural beauty of Kastellorizo, its rich past and heritage, the mettle of its present and past inhabitants have been to me an inexhaustible source of wonder and emotion. Being in such immediate contact with unspoilt nature, surrounded by such beauty every single moment of your day has been the most satisfying aspect of my life here.

I have enjoyed many a rewarding walk on the mountain. The daunting, seemingly impassable steep rocky face rising above the horse-shoe shaped limani hides on its top unsuspected wonders, unveiled only to the more daring hiker who will undertake a walk up traditional kalderimia or paved paths: breathtaking views of the surrounding islands of the Kastellorizo archipelago and of neighbouring Turkey, a stunning panoramic view of the picturesque limani with its stately houses nestled around the Ribbon and of peaceful Mandraki Bay, vast fertile expanses once covered in vineyards, dotted with the ruins of formerly prosperous farms, interspersed with churches and monasteries. The rich past of Megisti, already inhabited in ancient times, has left its imprint on the landscape and resurfaces under almost every step: numerous remains of ancient fortifications, tombs, patitiria or wine presses, and of a French occupation cart track among bushes of aromatic herbs, a feast of intoxicating colours and scents.



It is not only the heights of Kastellorizo that are enchanting. A stroll into the maze of paved backstreets dazzles the visitor with the splendour of the majestic houses, unaffected by the ravages of time, wars and oblivion. These feats of architectural design are a monument to the harmonious marriage of nature’s resources and man’s resourcefulness, of nature’s art and man’s artistry. They are more than an aesthetic landscape feature, their walls seem to enclose a soul of their own, as well as the soul of their owners.



The souls of their owners, past and present, are truly admirable. Through my acquaintance with Kastellorizian ladies I came to know that special breed of woman, the traditional Kastellorizian matron: caring and warm-hearted, but also enterprising and tirelessly energetic, a pillar of strength, her resilience and resourcefulness in the face of hardships unmatched. She rules her realm, the household, with an iron hand in a velvet glove. Most importantly, in Kastellorizian matriarchal society she is the link between past and present, entrusted with preserving and transmitting the local heritage. My friendship with local women has given me insight into Kastellorizian traditions, customs and celebrations, into the tragic recent history of the island and its inhabitants, and initiated me to the secret rites of Kastellorizian culinary art.

I have also made wonderful friendships with foreigners who possess a home here and with many remarkable Kastellorizians living away from their home island. The latter have inherited their forebears’ ingenuity, enterprising spirit, fervent love for their home island, inclination for learning and benefaction tradition. Strikingly, in most cases, the connection to Kastellorizo’s heritage was “yiayia”, as a true Kastellorizian woman, the Keeper of Kastellorizian tradition and identity.

In the three years I have spent here I have been at leisure to pause and reflect over the events I experienced and the people I met, to reprocess the invaluable information they passed on to me and draw the lessons from my interaction with them. Their stoical perseverance, their creative and entrepreneurial drive have taught me a life lesson, their example has inspired and filled me with greater maturity and wisdom.

Megisti inevitably captures the visitor like an enchantress with her magic spells. Kastellorizo seems a paradise, an idyllic place to live in. At the best of times and, more often than not, it is. At the worst of times, however, it can be hell, and Megisti’s curses are as harrowing as her blessings are delightful.

Part 2 to follow in the next edition of *Filia*.



Yiayia's Mostly True Stories of Kastellorizo

by Nick Bogiatzis, Canberra

(Part 4) Yiayia's 'once upon a time' Story

In our last edition we published 'The Time of the Knights,' as part of six children's stories outlining the history of Kastellorizo. In it, Yiayia promised the children to make up a story about the knights that were once on Kastellorizo. Here is Yiayia's Story.

Once upon a time, on Kastellorizo there lived a girl called Xanthi, and her brother Lukas. 'Xanthi' means 'yellow', but her hair was light brown, and her eyes laughing. They lived on Kavos, next to the castle where the Knights of Saint John lived. From their home they could see all over the Limani and the Mandraki harbours, and all the little islands between Kastellorizo and the land opposite.

The castle was big and strong with huge stone walls, and three round stone towers, and a big square tower. The castle was ancient, but the knights had rebuilt it and had cannon to fight any enemy. Xanthi and Lukas's home was also made of stone, with iron bars on the windows, so it would be safe.

On the ground floor of their home was their shop, and they lived upstairs. So they often helped their father in the shop. Nearby was the church of Saint Nicholas, joined to the Church of Saint Dimitri. At that time they were still new, and very beautiful with arched ceilings made of stone, and all the walls were covered with paintings of the saints, or icons. Lukas knew where the icon of Saint Luke was, as he was the special saint for icon painters, because everybody knew that Saint Luke had painted the first icon.

Xanthi thought it wasn't fair that there wasn't an icon of a Saint Xanthi. In fact nobody was even sure if there was a Saint Xanthi. She thought there should be such a saint who would fight dragons and evil persons.

The knights were not at all like the other families on Kastellorizo. They spoke different languages and wore strange clothes. On special occasions they wore iron chain armour underneath their white cloaks with their red crosses, and they carried swords.

Xanthi and Lukas had a special friend in the castle. His name was Wilfrid. Wilfrid spoke English like his father, but also knew some Greek and Turkish and even Arabic and Spanish. Xanthi and Lukas also knew some of these languages, as all the children liked to talk in the languages of the people around them.

The knights kept watch for pirates that attacked the trading ships that came and went from Kastellorizo. The pirates sometimes even attacked the small towns on the coast opposite Kastellorizo. The children had visited some of these towns, like Antiphellos, and Myra, and Kalamaki, as their parents would buy food there, and visit friends and family who had homes there as well as on Kastellorizo.

Wilfrid's father told stories of when the knights were in Jerusalem in the East, both fighting their enemies and looking after the sick and injured. There were exciting stories of battles, and castles, much bigger and stronger even than the ones on Kastellorizo. Everything seemed so different. Wilfrid's father told of how much he learned in the East, and how much he would be able to teach to his people when they returned home one day.

That way Xanthi and Lukas knew that Wilfrid, and his younger brother Felix, would not always be with them. So they always made sure they did as much as they could together, as they were all good friends, except that Felix was still too small to go out with them.

One of their favourite places in the mountains was the underground cave, with the slippery wet rock deep inside. A small church of Saint George had been built over the cave, partly to hide it, but partly because it was a special place for Kastellorizians since ancient times.

The children particularly liked going fishing on their father's small boat. They had been out on the sea from the time they were born, and their parents knew they would be safe.

So often the three would row to the small islands near to Kastellorizo. They knew not to go too far. Although they were very careful, no one ever knew if one day a pirate boat might come and kidnap some children.

Their favourite place was the tiny, deserted island of Saint George. It was close to the Limani, and big enough for them to play amongst the olive and fruit trees, and with the goats that grazed there. There was also a deep stone cistern, or tank, that collected rain water. They would draw up the water in a bucket to drink, or for a wash down after swimming. And there were always lots of fish to catch there.

Best of all were the hidden cisterns, half buried by the sea. These were very special places. Many years ago they were built to catch rain water, but had now sunk into the sea. They were even big enough to carefully row a small boat into.

And they loved to swim in the secret cisterns with their cool shadows. These were still shallow enough that they could stand up and run around. Except that there were lots of spiky ahinous or sea urchins there. These were good to eat, except for the black ones, and provided you didn't get a spike in your finger or in your foot.

In fact, because the two cisterns were joined together, they reminded Xanthi of the Churches of Saints Nicholas and Dimitri near her home, as they were also joined together. She therefore decided that one of these ancient cisterns should be the special place for her own Saint Xanthi.

Now that Xanthi had found a special place, then obviously she must also have a Saint Xanthi's nameday, or yiorti. Wilfrid and Felix didn't know if they had a yiorti. But then nobody in their family celebrated their saints' day or nameday. In fact Wilfrid and Felix celebrated their birthdays, while everybody else on Kastellorizo celebrated their nameday instead.

Xanthi decided that her nameday would be the 9 March, because it was exactly one week away, and she didn't want to wait too long.

The children decided they had to make this a special day. Yet the parents were not to know. They told their parents that they were going out to gather the ahinous and wild green korandro that grew on the rocks and on the edge of the sea on Saint George Island. And



that was true. All the family liked eating the insides of the ahinous and eating the korandro when it was boiled up and served with olive oil and lemon.

So straight after breakfast, on the 9 March, the three were out rowing to the hidden cisterns. Xanthi had gathered some wild spring flowers, and had them hidden in the cloth bags for the ahinous and korandro. Lukas had candles and matches that he had carefully collected, and Wilfrid brought a whole bag of nuts with dried figs and apricots. It was going to be a special day.

The first thing Xanthi wanted to do was to go to the cistern, to set up the flowers and candles for her Saint Xanthi. There they could also collect the ahinous. They carefully rowed into the first cistern, then jumped out to wade into the second cistern which Xanthi wanted as her special place. The water was shallow, and seemed a different blue, mysterious in this secret underground place.

Xanthi and Lukas got the biggest fright when Wilfrid shouted out.

In the cistern his voice was booming. They rushed over to him, and there he was, holding a coin - of gold! He had found it lying beside a big brown ahinos under the water. The children couldn't understand where it came from, and excitedly looked all around them, but with no luck.

After a while Xanthi looked for a stone ledge where she could put the flowers and candles for her Saint Xanthi. Some of the rocks stuck out more than the others, and one looked to be in just the right place. But it just wasn't wide enough. Wilfrid noticed it was a bit loose, so he and Lukas started to pull it out a bit more to make a bigger ledge.

Suddenly they and the rock fell backwards into the water. The rock was very loose and surprised them when it completely fell out. They were about to put it back, but there was something shining in the hole. Carefully Wilfrid reached in, and pulled out - gold coins. Lukas reached in next and found a bag that the coins must have fallen from. And when it was Xanthi's turn, she pulled out a small gold cup!

There was even more. A treasure of gold and silver. Clearly pirates had come here. They were clever enough to sail a small boat in at night, and to hide their stolen treasure near the castle of Kastellorizo where no one would ever think of looking.

Now what should the children do? Wilfrid immediately said they should tell his father, so the knights could keep watch from the castle. To prove that there really was a treasure, Wilfrid emptied his bag of ahinous and wrapped the gold cup inside.

Their parents were so amazed and pleased that they agreed that Wilfrid could stay at Xanthi and Lukas's house near the castle for the next few nights to help keep watch for the pirates.

The rooves of all the houses then were flat, a perfect place to keep watch. It was exciting up there, but very hard to stay awake, especially as they were bundled up in warm blankets. By the third night, when nothing had happened for two whole nights, the tired children went to sleep very early in their watch.

And that was the night. Fortunately Wilfrid's father came to take them to the castle when the pirates were sighted. From there they could see the island of Saint George. Even though there were no lights, they could see two small boats of knights come out from the Mandraki, and one big boat from the Limani. The knights wanted to trap the pirates in the cisterns so they wouldn't slip into the water and swim away in the dark.

And that is exactly what the pirates tried to do. Except that when one jumped from the boat, he stepped on the pile of spiky ahinous that Wilfrid had tipped out from his bag in order to wrap the gold cup. When the pirate tried to jump back into his little row boat, it tipped over and in all the confusion all the pirates were captured.

The treasure wasn't lost as the water was so shallow. And later the children watched as the pirates were put into the castle's prison. They even felt sorry for the pirate who was limping because they knew how sore it could be to have a foot full of thorns from the ahinous.

The next day there were big celebrations on Kastellorizo. And not just there, but also in all the towns that had had their gold and silver stolen by the pirates. The three children were heroes everywhere. And to say thank-you, the townspeople gave each of the children a chain of gold coins that they could wear and keep forever. Xanthi had never dreamt her nameday could have turned out so exciting.

AFK is bringing two students from Kastellorizo to Australia in early August. We are looking for host families in capital cities and the territories. If you can assist, please contact the AFK co-ordinator.

Marilyn Tsolakis, AFK Co-ordinator

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Website: www.kastellorizo.com

Address: PO Box 2118 Churchlands, Western Australia 6018.



Local Students' View of the 2013 Student Exchange Program

Many greetings from our small island. I hope you will enjoy these short confessions, and I have to say that the students wrote them down on their own, with no interference or help from me, except for some brief corrections... I really had in mind to preserve their style, and I do believe that they really love you all!! Ifigenia Lentziou, the English teacher at Santrapeia School.



Alex Dervishi

This year's student exchange program was the best of all exchange programs that have been organised so far.

The children that came from Australia were amazing and interesting. We did a lot of things. We first met at a party that was organized for all Kastellorizians. We took to each other from the first moment. We had dinner and then we danced traditional dances together.

Next day they came to our school and gave a presentation about their lives in Australia. I really enjoyed this because I could see how our lives differ. In Australia they do many things and they go to well-equipped private schools, but on the other hand they don't have much time to play and go out with friends. We don't go to private schools and we don't wear uniforms as they do, but we have more hours to play and go out.

The next day we went to the local history and archaeological museums with my school and the children. We had been there before, so it wasn't fun for us but the children hadn't been there, so they were amazed.

Moreover, we went for walks up to the mountain with my English teacher and it was fabulous. She took the children and me to the ancient acropolis of Kastellorizo on a treasure hunt game. On the way we saw the Cyclopean wall, ancient vineyards and patitiria, used to press the wine, near St John of the Mountain church. When we arrived on the acropolis, we were guided by the archaeologist of Kastellorizo and then we watched the sunset. We felt so amazed that we were there that we took lots of pictures. In the evening we ate together at a restaurant, where I was invited by AFK: we ate roast goat on a spit, yum!

The next day we went to an elderly lady who was named Mrs Despina Matsou and who showed us how to bake a traditional cake called Katoumari. We rolled out the dough together and we baked it together. It was fantastic for the kids and me to learn how you could make it and we were very impressed. When it was baked on a wood fire, we ate it together and it was delicious.

Every day, we stayed together and we enjoyed ourselves by going for swims, we played backgammon with Jayden and I beat him every single time that we played. We also went out every night. We liked each other very much and we enjoyed staying together.

I wish it could be my turn to go to Australia this year to meet the children again and to see their world, as they saw mine.



John Alla (2nd grade of Junior High School)

I'll never forget the first time I met my 3 best friends from Australia, Jayden Black, Sofia Tived and Marie-Claire Philips, up until the moment they finally left Kastellorizo.

We had a great time together and thanks to them I learnt about how things are in Australia through our friendly conversations. We first met at

school because I wasn't able to go to the welcoming celebration organised in their honour the day before. Even from the first day they treated me very kindly and politely. On that day I met a very kind woman, too. Her name is Marilyn Tsolakis. In the company of those 4 people, of Ms Efrossini Zoniou and some more students we went to Avlonia, to many churches like St George of the Mountain, as well as kayaking, and we explored the whole island. Furthermore, we ate Katoumaria and Halva, which Mrs Despina Matsou had cooked. They were delicious and we had a lot of fun! Apart from the exploration of the island, we went for many walks at the harbour and near the Hotel Megisti.

It goes without saying that this whole experience would not have taken place if it hadn't been for the association of Australian Friends of Kastellorizo, or Mrs Marilyn, so I would like to thank both for making this event possible. I wanted to thank Mrs Efrossini too, who guided the whole group and taught us things that I hadn't learnt on my own over the years that I have lived on this island.



Despina Papoutsis (1st grade of Junior High School)

In November three great kids came to Kastellorizo from Australia. They visited us through a programme of "Students Exchange". There was a boy named Jayden and two girls named Sofia and Marie-Claire. We became very good friends and we had a great time! We spent all day together, we visited a lot of sights of the island such

as the Castle, Avlonia, the Blue Cave, the Church of Saint-George and the Metropolis of Saint Constantine and Helen. Also, we swam a lot and I invited them to my house.

During the year of 2014 the older boy of my school will travel to Australia, something that we are all looking forward to!

I have to add that Ms Marilyn Tsolakis is very helpful and kind! Thanks to her maybe one of my dreams will come true, and I may be able to visit Australia, too! Thank you for everything!!!



An Interview with Lola Moustaka

by Theona Mitaros, Perth

What are your roots?

My fathers' family name was Venetis. My mother was a Boyatzis. She was Despina Boyatzis, Antonia's daughter from Perth. I was born in Perth, Western Australia. Everyone in Australia celebrates my birthday, 26th January, 1956, Australia Day. When the fireworks are on please think of me.

What are your memories of Perth?

I went to Brigadine College. I was born in 18 Gregory Street, Wembley. I remember that. After my stroke I came to Perth and I asked my family to drive past the house, so if you go past please say 'hello'.

When did you first come to Kastellorizo?

In 1970, with my dad. I was an only child of the family. My father wanted me to come back to Kastellorizo for only one reason – he wanted to take me down to the cemetery and show me where he wanted to be buried. He passed away in 1992.

Where did you meet Komninos?

I met him in Rhodes. In those days there were arranged marriages. Although I was from Australia my parents were very, very old fashioned Kastellorizians. Our mothers got together and then my whole life changed. My parents moved here permanently. We then started restoring the house and slowly, slowly we started the restaurant on the island.

What was it called then?

My dad called it the 'International Restaurant'. When he died my husband and I decided to move over from Rhodes and call it 'The Old Story'. It has always been under the vines. I always have my Aussie flag up there and when Australians get off the plane they call out 'Are you Aussie?'

As we are chatting under the vines, as is the custom throughout Greece when you visit, Mrs Eleni Karavelatzi appears with two glasses of icy water and two plates of delicious fig glyka...heaven, (middle photograph above).

What is your favourite time of year?

September...it's cool and lovely then. It's beautiful.

What makes you happy?

Seeing all my family especially when they come to see me...like they did recently. They came on the catamaran...25 of them all the way from Perth for 4 hours.

What makes you sad?

Losing all my dear, dear family and friends.

Did you play sport?

Yes I did. I was very good at basketball, but now I must say I'm disabled. I had a stroke and can't play basketball any more. I was very good. I was number 6.

What gives you the most pleasure in life?

My kids, my children. I must say I was very excited when my eldest daughter, Despina was married in January. That is giving me lots of pleasure. My family said they would come for the wedding from Perth. Although I don't have Dad and Mum with me now, my family will come and be next to me. That's why I love them so much.

Will the bells ring as your daughter walks into church?

Of course. In our lives the bells ring three times. For our christening, our wedding and for our death. Of course the bells rang on the 11th January, 2014.

Who makes you laugh?

My youngest daughter Constantina because she gets up and starts dancing...she's like her mother when she was young. Don't forget my name is Lola...the showgirl! I was always a showgirl.

What was your childhood dream?

I had no dreams. I just wanted my family to be together and be happy together, everyone being united. I dreamt one day about coming to Kastellorizo. It was always my father saying 'Kastellorizo, Kastellorizo'. That's the only thing I remember. My dad left straight after the war. When he first came back he kissed the ground and cried and cried. Those moments I will not forget ever, ever.

Kastellorizo was in my blood from a young child. So the dream was Kastellorizo. Everything was Kastellorizo. Nothing more. That's why I love it so much.

What do you see when you look out over the Limani?

This is my everything. I think about what our parents and grandparents went through many, many years ago.

What do you think about later generations of the Diaspora returning?

That makes me feel fantastic especially the weddings...the Aussie weddings.

What advice would you give your teenage self?

Don't worry about how life turns out. Live for today, enjoy your life, do everything. Don't worry about the old times...go for it, do what you can. It's not like the old days when you're not allowed to do this or that and worried about what people would say.

How would you describe yourself today?

I get very sad with myself and very angry with myself when I can't do things. I've got to keep on trying. I have to be very strong. I get up in the morning and say 'stop feeling sorry for yourself and get up and do it.' I was 44 years old when I had the stroke. That was 12 years ago. I was disabled for 7 months and couldn't walk and couldn't talk.

What is the best advice you have ever received?

From my father it went like this, In Greek:

'Build a good name in your life and don't look at wealth.'

All through my life even from when I was a little baby, I say it and say it to my daughters and they say 'Mamma we know'.

Do you like to cook?

Yes... I'm the one arm cook and cake maker. My fava is good and my melinzanes and stifatha too. I make pavlovas. I have a great cook in the shop too, Despina.

Did you have a pet?

Snoopy. He lived for 18 years. Snoopy was dad's pet for all the years dad didn't have mum. Snoopy would walk just in front of him and everyone would know that my father was just around the corner. Snoopy was his life.

What would you like to see for Kastellorizo in the future?

I would like to see more Aussies coming. It makes me very proud and very happy. So come on guys come over. We need you here.

How do you see yourself as Greek or Australian?

I say Aussie even though I have lived here longer than in Australia. I still have a strong Aussie accent.

By the way when you next come to Kastellorizo think of Lola and bring me a Mrs Mac meat pie with sauce. That would be lovely.

Who inspires you?

My kids. Despina, who is 32 and Constantina who's 28.

They inspire me to be strong and keep on trying for them. In the hospital I kept thinking one day these kids are going to get married. I didn't have my mother for most of my life and I didn't want that for them.

Proverbs by Dr Paul Boyatzis, Perth

Proverbs

O Ághios Nikólas sto timóni sou .

(May Saint Nicholas be on the helm of your boat).

A good wish for safety to a sailor / passenger about to undertake a sea journey.

Áthiko na sévri

(Injustice may fall upon you)

A curse ...a strong expression of bad luck by one person to another.

Kastellorizian Lexicon

The Kastellorizian word is in bold lettering with the demotic word in brackets.

yiáouma	(árpagma)	to grab quickly
halóftis	(me megála aftiá)	a person with large protruding ears
ttemené	(herétisma (stratiotikó))	military salute
katsirdí	(tréximo – viastikó)	to run hurriedly
epoutéris	(prolígou)	shortly previously
xanástrefo	(anápotho)	back to front (inside out)
pouttoúnikos	(olókleros)	in one piece
saytía	(tiganisméno rízi me ládi)	fried rice with oil
kakkamíla	(maskaráta)	masquerading for Apokries or the Carnival

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