

Directors' Welcome

Autumn 2009

Welcome to the first edition of the Australian Friends of Kastellorizo (AFK) newsletter.

This March newsletter is the first of four issues to be published quarterly in 2009 to keep you up to date on all things AFK and with the news of Kastellorizo.

The Australian Friends of Kastellorizo was formed back in June 2007 to bring together the skills and resources of the Kastellorizian diaspora in Australia to support programs of culture, education, environment and community development on the island of Kastellorizo. We are very proud of the list of achievements realised to date and look forward with excitement to the challenge of successfully delivering the full range of projects AFK has set for itself.

The word "philanthropy" is of Greek origin and literally means 'the love of mankind' and, in its modern sense, means private contributions for public purposes. In studies from around the world, the number one reason people act philanthropically is to bring about positive change * and that is what AFK is about. The mantra of AFK, "giving back to the island of our forefathers", captures the yearning and sense of duty the Kastellorizian diaspora feel for that little rock in the south eastern Aegean Sea and our desire to ensure its rich history and culture endure. Through AFK we acknowledge our deep appreciation for the many sacrifices made by our forefathers to provide a better life for future generations of Megisteons scattered throughout the world.

We encourage you to become actively involved in AFK and learn more about its programs. If you have not already visited the recently revamped AFK webpage please do so at www.australianfriendskastellorizo.org. AFK is not only about giving financially – it is also about capturing the skills, talent and expertise of the diaspora for the greater benefit of Kastellorizo. The enthusiasm to date in this regard has been overwhelming and grows stronger with each meeting of members where suggestions for new projects appear to be endless.

Directors: George Theo Kailis, Nicholas Mitaros, Nicholas Pappas, Peter Satouris, Nicolas Zervos

*K Aikins, CEO Worldwide Ireland Fund 'Power of Philanthropy 2008'.



Filia - what's in a name?

'Filia', which means 'friendship', was the name of a pioneering fortnightly periodical published on Kastellorizo between 1909-1913 under the direction of local chronicler, Petros Mihail Petrides. One of its stated aims was the 'development and promotion of the island of Kastellorizo from all points of view'. The magazine featured pieces on community life on the island and other articles of local interest. Sadly, its circulation was to be cut short by worsening economic conditions in the region that saw emigration begin in earnest while the island headed towards revolt against its Ottoman overlords. Nevertheless, 'Filia' remains to this day a valuable and important record of these momentous years in Kastellorizo's modern history.

Naming this newsletter 'Filia' is a tribute to that first publication exactly a century ago and recognises the strong links that the AFK seeks to establish with the island's more recent history.

Written by Nicholas Pappas

Profile of one of the local Kastellorizians - Costas Mayiafis



Kastellorizo is full of stories and the people on the island all have one to tell about the experiences that have shaped them. The rich tapestry of lives woven together reveals the simple pleasure in the rhythms of their daily lives. There are stories of humour, sadness and courage. Here is one story I heard on the 24th July 2008 when Costas Mayiafis invited me into his home with his wife Anastasia of 60 years to hear how his circumstances made him the strong, resilient character that he has become at 89 years of age.

The gentle lined face of this tall, statuesque man who lived a simple rural life on Kastellorizo before the disruption and turmoil of World War II does not show any signs of anger or discontent. In fact,

Costas smiling eyes and conversation revealed that he was accepting of his life circumstances and the way events have turned out.

Costas' life began as a goatherd. He grew grapes, figs, tomatoes, potatoes, marrows and lived a subsistence life selling what he cultivated to provide for his family.

War broke out in 1941. "We were hungry on Kastellorizo and I remember we could not stand on our feet because of it. The English opened up storehouses (apothikes) of food to eat (Trofima), but they left after two days of air raids. I was one of 29 who were betrayed and arrested for burning Mussolini's photo and the case was heard at the court in Rodos. My punishment was five years in an Italian gaol in San Gimignano."

Coming Events on Kastellorizo

Sunday 12th July 2009
Youth Festival

Saturday 18th July 2009
Katharo Kastellorizo Day

Sunday 19th July 2009
Eve of Tou Profiti Elia Day -
Water Glendi

Australian Friend

Profile of one of the local Kastellorizians - Costas Mayiafis

Today San Gimignano is a well sought after Tuscan tourist destination and its beauty belies the darker forces of a war torn Europe. "There was a bombing in this town and a few of our boys were killed. The Germans took us to Germany for two years. As a prisoner of war in Germany, I carried dead bodies. We were living under daily bombardment and taken to a German mountain village. We hid in the forest to escape being killed by the Germans. We found a child in a shelter who belonged to a Russian woman who was waiting for her sister. In 1945 at 9.00am on the 12th February, which happened to be Holy Saturday, there was jubilation as the Russian tanks liberated us. They gave me a dress as a disguise, in case Germans found me, under which I wore cement bags to keep warm, as I did not have any clothes."

"I found myself at River Elba and on one side there were the English and Americans and on the other side there were the Russians. We were hungry. The Americans gave us food, clothing and injections for sickness before we returned to our beloved homeland in Greece. On the train on my return, I found a carriage that was full of Italian money - I could have been the richest man!" Perhaps you can understand that when life is threatened and you have been absent from family, money has no value in such dangerous circumstances. Or does it simply suggest that he is a highly principled man? Costas was becoming a gentle hero in my eyes as I sat listening to him with Anastasia nodding as if she has heard this story many times.

Costas continued, "After the war, life was difficult on Kastellorizo. We did not even have a chair to sit on. There was no employment. The Indian Guerks who fought under the English stole our furniture. In 1945 when the English left, the Guerks burned the homes they looted. The authorities were going to give the island to Turkey. Our fierce pride did not want this to happen and therefore, we did not want to leave Kastellorizo. We took the Italian flag down from Kavos and put up the Greek flag as a symbol of Greek pride and resistance to injustice."

In 1948, he married Anastasia Karavellatzis and created a family, but with this came greater demands to provide for them. Therefore, in 1955 when an acquaintance told Costas that he would take him to Australia because of the poverty and hunger, he accepted the invitation. He went to Sydney

and worked in a 'biereria' for 17 pounds per month. Later he worked at GMH for three years, but he did not earn much - "psila". He was disappointed with his meagre earnings and gave notice. Costas could not survive on this income and there was no overtime. He needed to send money back to his family on Kastellorizo and pay for accommodation and food.

In 1958 Costas returned to Kastellorizo, returned to the fields as a goatherd, and cultivated crops for food. However, in 1969, Costas and Anastasia moved to Rodos Island for 17 years in search of more opportunities for their four children. Kastellorizo offered very little. After he married off his children, he returned to Kastellorizo in 1986.

While the search for work could have been the driving factor to move to Rodos, I could not help but think that the priority was to marry his children as for Greeks this is the greatest blessing and relief.

After listening to his story of hardship, I found myself making connections with other stories, I have heard and like a jigsaw trying to put all the pieces together, I tried to understand their reasons for making choices to leave their homeland.

I asked Costas about the future of Kastellorizo. He told me that today there is no poverty on the island and that they all live well. The locals have shops and receive pensions from the government. However, there is still not much life for young people. They need to go to Rodos.

Costas is very positive about the future of the island and is enthusiastic about Australians building and restoring homes. "This is contributing to improvements on the island."

"We are happy to see you visit Kastellorizo... I have Australian friends."

As I leave Costas' home, Anastasia takes me to a neighbouring property that is boarded up. She is keeping an eye on it for someone who lives in Australia. When I asked the name of the family, another smile came to my face as she mentioned my maternal grandfather's name.

After leaving their home to make my way to my lodgings, I felt this warm glow of affection for a couple who made time to speak to a stranger, who was not really a stranger, because if your origins are from Kastellorizo, you are truly known.

Written by Marilyn Tsolakis

Gift for Children



This fable would make a great gift for your children or grandchildren and is a wonderful story set on Kastellorizo

\$20 each

If you would like to purchase a copy at \$20.00 plus postage. Please e-mail mazzmacc@tpg.com.au or phone 08 93871681

Island of Kastellorizo

Youth in Action

All members of Australian Friends of Kastellorizo strive towards the same goal: not only to preserve the rich past of Kastellorizo; but to also ensure its diaspora play a role in its future. As third, fourth & fifth generation Kazzies are born across Australia, our knowledge of Greek history and language is watered down, and often traditions are neglected.

It was this realisation that motivated me to attend the AFK meeting, which was held in Sydney on 17 February this year. Being one of the younger persons in the meeting room, at first, I felt that there was little I could do for AFK. However, one of the issues raised is the ability of AFK to reach and interest members of "Generation Y". With more Kastellorizians from the diaspora returning to the island to claim the property of their ancestors and immerse themselves in their own culture, it is the Gen Y Kastellorizians who stand to one day inherit a large portion of Kazy, and take their own families back to the island. Thus, the inclusion of younger members in the activities and projects of AFK is imperative to AFK's mission.

To say that the objectives of the AFK are centred on a specific age or social group is completely false. As global travel and communications become easier, more and more young Australian Kastellorizians are visiting the island for all sorts of reasons: to holiday; to stay long term; to enhance their Greek language skills; and even to wed on the island and observe some of our most treasured traditions. There is no question that Gen Y have a vested interest in Kazy that grows with each successive visit, which makes our involvement with AFK even more valuable.

The recent Sydney meeting brought to light many AFK projects in-the-works, particularly those that would affect younger Kastellorizians. The Youth Festival, a major success in 2008, will be an even bigger event in 2009, with many of the suggestions of both local Kastellorizians and the diaspora being undertaken. This annual event provides an opportunity to remove the "us-and-them" mentality between local Kazzies and visiting Australians with the younger children who are often at the added disadvantage of facing a language barrier. This is just one example of how AFK benefits younger members; there are many more events and publications to come over this year that I eagerly await.

If you are interested in keeping up-to-date with AFK, I encourage you to get involved: join the Facebook group online, visit the new AFK website, sign up for the free quarterly newsletter or write an article.

Written by Elisse Zarimis

*Those born between 1976 and 1993

Student Exchange

As well as two 15 year old girls from Kastellorizo coming to Australia in late July/ August on student exchange, a reciprocal exchange during the October School holidays is being organised. You may know of a family member who may fit the criteria for selection.

- Knowledge of the Greek language
- 15 years of age; either all boys or all girls
- Australian Kastellorizian students who otherwise may not have the opportunity to travel to Kastellorizo
- Preference would be for Kastellorizian descent in accordance with the AFK charter
- Demonstrating integrity & community spirit; willingness to help others; responsible, reliable.
- Application form available online. Closing date 15 April 2009



Blue Star Ferries - Breaking News

Getting to Kastellorizo has just got a lot easier with the commencement of a ferry service from Piraeus to Kastellorizo. Up until 31 May the Diagoras Passenger & Car ferry will depart Piraeus each Tuesday at 3pm and arrive at Kastellorizo 11am each Wednesday. The departure date will change for the summer season (1 June - 30 September) when the Diagoras will depart Piraeus each Monday at 3pm and arrive at Kastellorizo at 2pm each Tuesday stopping in at Paros, Naxos, Kalymnos, Kos, Nisyros, Tilos and Rhodes en route to Kastellorizo.

This means that in addition to the Proteus Ferry (Anes Ferries) which services Kastellorizo each Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday out of Rhodes and the Dodekanisos Express fast ferry service each Monday (summer only also out of Rhodes) there are now more ways to make the pilgrimage home. Of course Olympic Airlines will continue to service Kastellorizo with flights each day throughout summer (except Thursday) with its De Havilland Dash 8 service out of Rhodes.

For the most comprehensive information on getting to and from Kastellorizo (including by private yacht) we recommend you visit the AFK website and go onto the Transport tab : <http://www.australianfriendskastellorizo.org/transport.htm>

Happy travels – see you on Kastellorizo this summer.

Kastellorizo

Cultural points of interest - Did you know?



2.



3.



6.

1. Kastellorizo (formerly known as Megisti) was first colonised as far back as the 9th century BC
2. There were 47 patitiria (treading places for wine making) widely distributed over the island with traditional links to Dionysus, the God of wine. Amphorae (wine jars) were found at all sites and are now in museums.
3. There is archaeological evidence to show that there were 47 fortified sites on Kastellorizo with the best known one being at Palaiokastro where people sought refuge from invaders.
4. There are 52 burial sites predominantly in the central third of the island from the head of the Limani south to Navlakas Bay.
5. A sarcophagus containing a gold crown (stefani) was found near Ayios Yeoryios tou Vouniou in 1913. The sarcophagus is on display at the Louvre in Paris and the stefani in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens.
6. The Lycian Tomb is designed for multiple burials with at least 6 entombments possible.
7. A second Lycian Tomb which is not as well preserved can be located 20 metres north of Ayios Yeoryios tou Vouniou. It is not built into the cliff face, but at ground level at the foot of a large rock outcrop.
8. The Limani at its entrance is 150 metres across and the width increases to approximately 270 metres at its southern extremity while its length is about 450 metres.
9. Ancient Mandraki Bay was a naval dockyard and harbour. Ships of war were built, maintained and brought to shore for mooring.
10. There is every prospect of unearthing intact, unlooted tombs from Greek antiquity if full archaeological excavations were undertaken on Kastellorizo.

Source: *Ancient Megisti*

The Forgotten Kastellorizo by Norman G. Ashton. Published 1995

Application for AFK Membership

To date the funding of AFK projects has been by way of \$90,000 of seed capital contributed by a number of individual members. To continue delivering our projects further funding is required.

At the February 2009 meeting of AFK, members expressed a desire to make a financial contribution to assist AFK achieve its objectives and deliver on its programs and projects. To this end it has been decided that any member can become a Foundation Member by paying a minimum of \$100. Of course payments in excess of \$100 would be most welcome and some members have already indicated they will be making larger contributions. Any contribution will be appreciated.

AFK Membership will of course still remain free to any person wanting to be a friend of Kastellorizo by simply completing the Membership Application form or online at <http://www.australianfriendskastellorizo.org/membership.htm>

Images from Dr Platon Alexiou, an artist and historian in residence on Kastellorizo in July 2008, will be available for sale shortly. He was commissioned by Australian Friends of Kastellorizo Ltd to paint images that will contribute towards an illustrated history of Kastellorizo for children to be published later this year.

Full Name : _____

Residential Address : _____

Postal Address : _____

Are you over 18 years of age? : Yes ☐ No ☐

E-mail Address : _____

Telephone : Home : _____ Work : _____

Mobile : _____ Fax : _____

If you wish to become a Foundation Member please make cheque payable to Australian Friends of Kastellorizo Ltd and post to:
75 Marlow St, Wembley, 6014.

