

This Month...

What's Cooking? 14
Hilary Paipeti tells us about real Corfiot cooking, and helps us track down where it's cooking

The Road to Damascus 20
In part one of three installments, Sarah and Pete Button join a yacht rally of 76 boats from 15 different countries that takes them on an adventurous journey from Turkey to Egypt. This month, Sarah gives us a description of their visit to mysterious Syria

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The Corfiot

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ear to the ground

CELEBRATIONS ARE IN ORDER as the official news came in that Corfu's Old Town has been designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. The announcement came on 28 June in Christchurch, New Zealand, in the presence of the Mayor of Corfu, Sotiris Michalef. The four sites designated at the same time were Mehmed Paša Sokolović Bridge of Višegrad (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Rideau Canal (Canada), Bordeaux, Port of the Moon (France), and Lavaux, vineyard terraces (Switzerland).

But, while the beauty and unique character of the Town validates the designation, we wonder whether the new proud badge will prompt the authorities to reverse the aesthetic damage caused by thoughtless citizens. One of the most imposing buildings that faces the Esplanade, the Cavalieri Hotel, acquired uPVC shutters in a recent revamp. Everywhere, aircon units disfigure ancient walls, and satellite dishes pollute the skyline. You don't see this in Venice. Worst of all is the uncontrolled graffiti which defaces every vertical surface. The Town Hall Square should be one of the showpieces of the city; instead, covered with meaningless squiggles of black paint, it seems to be the practice-ground for the daubers. Whether these jobs are the same group that uses the area's smoothly sloping walkways as launch-pads for their skateboards, and its flowerbeds as receptacles for their coke cans, I cannot say. But why on earth do the proprietors of the very high class bars, restaurants and shops which share the public space put up with either activity? Why doesn't the Mayor - who has to walk through the blight every day - end it? Why don't they catch one of the little blighters and make an example?

I PLAYED A SMALL PART in Corfu Town's presentation in New Zealand, given at the last minute some sections, mainly captions, of a prestigious little booklet which accompanied the Mayor on his trip. It constitutes 'a short guide to help you understand the town', if you can plough through the rather turgid translation of the main text body.

Why do translators appear to believe that complex sentence construction and obsolete, outdated words somehow indicate their skill? Why don't they use plain English? Maybe they think that florid phrases justify their high fees.

Here's one bit I had to change. Guess which version was published.

1) *The Old Town of Corfu with its 7,200 inhabitants, is now the 'historic centre' of an urban district extending inland to the south and west of the Old Town, with a total population of 28,185, which is the administrative, social and economic centre of the surrounding area and occupies an important place in the life of all the Ionian Islands as well as western Epiros on the mainland.*

2) *Today, with its 7,200 residents, the Old Town of Corfu is the 'historic centre' of an urban district which extends inland to the south and west. The district as a whole has a population of 28,185 and is the administrative, social and economic centre of the surrounding area. It also plays an important role in the entire Ionian Island group as well as in Western Epirus on the mainland.*

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Email: holytrin@otenet.gr Website: www.holytrinitycorfu.net

SUNDAY SERVICES

Sundays 10.30 Holy Communion
19.00 (1st, 3rd & 5th of month) Songs of Praise
(Sunday School & Youth Group run same time as Services except Family Service)

REGULAR EVENTS

Tuesdays 10.00 Library & Coffee Morning
Wednesdays 10.00 Coffee & Kids
Wednesdays 12.00-14.30 Lunch Box
Wednesdays 19.00 Scrabble Club (last Wed. in the month)
Thursdays 10.30 Bible Study, the Old Testament (new series)
Fridays 10.30-12.00 Informal Prayer Meeting

HOW TO FIND HTC: From San

Rocco Square: Walk down Alexandros Avenue to the first set of lights TURN LEFT up the hill. Look for the Bella Venezia Hotel sign at the end up a bank. Bear right on up the hill past the Orpheas Cinema. The main road bends left; you should see the sea now! Turn immediately left into Zambeli Street. Holy Trinity Church is 100 metres along past the Bella Venezia Hotel.

From the Liston/Spianada: Find the band stand in the middle! Take the street directly opposite (it takes vehicles). The old Ionian Parliament building is at the top of that street and HTC is behind it.

Corfu Bazaar

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WE WANT YOUR STAMPS!

Boxes to collect stamps in aid of leukemia research at Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital have been placed at Holy Trinity Church, English Imports and the British Corner Shop. If you would like to help, please request a box from Andy at andrew@ajthompson.co.uk. Locations in the north and south of the island are being sought. Please cut no less than 1 cm around. Don't waste your stamps!

THE ARK'S SUMMER PARTY

will be held at the Corfu Chandris Hotel in Dassia on Saturday, 21 July at 9pm.

Entrance fee of 24 euros includes open buffet, wine and soft drinks.

Tickets are available at the ARK Charity Shop, Anglican Church, and English Imports.

Do join us in our effort to help the stray and abandoned animals on Corfu

ONE EURO DAY

The Ark Charity Shop is having a summer stock clearance day on Friday, 13th July.

We open at 10am and there will be many bargains available.

Do come and join us in our effort to help stray and abandoned animals on Corfu.

See page 4 for how to get there.

NEWS IN SHORT

New charters from Luton

Thomson Holidays adds two new charter flights to its schedule in early July. The flights, which originate at Luton Airport, start on July 3rd and 4th, providing a service on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Music Festival in September

The next 'Divertimenti in Corfu' Festival of Chamber Music starts on 21st September 2007. This year the organizers, Chamber Music Holidays and Festivals, have added three wonderful musicians - a clarinet player, a pianist and a mezzo soprano - to make up varied programmes which include string quartets by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert and Dvorak, Brahms songs with mezzo, viola and piano, the Prokofiev Overture on a Hebrew Theme, and much more.

During the two weeks of the Festival, which is based in the Chandris Hotel in Dassia, a day excursion is planned to Butrinti in Albania, one of the great archaeological sites in Europe.

EU recognizes kumquat drink

Only ouzo, tsikoudia and tsipouro made to traditional Greek recipes can carry the name of the respective alcoholic drinks following a recent European Parliament vote.

Production methods for less popular Greek beverages such as

kumquat liqueur from Corfu, *kitro* from Naxos and *mastiha* from Chios have also been designated as being exclusively Greek. Similar drinks made from other ingredients can only use the name of the Greek drinks if their contents and origin are clearly indicated.

The new rules replace guidelines from 1989 and were needed to ensure the quality of spirit drinks and protect their 'geographic origin' indicator that helps them sell and guarantees their exclusivity.

New babies for poison parents

The separated parents of the two children gassed to death in Corfu are expecting babies with their new partners. Seven-year-old Christi Shepherd and brother Bobby, six, died of carbon monoxide poisoning in their chalet at the Louis Corcyra Beach Hotel in Gouvia during a halfterm holiday last October.

Dad Neil Shepherd said his girlfriend Ruth Beatson is due give birth in January. And ex-wife Sharon, mum of the tragic children, is due to have another child with new husband Paul Wood in the same month.

Company director Neil, 38, said: 'It is nice to think that there will be two new lives to cherish. It will not bring Christi and Bobby back, and we will never forget them, but it is great that there is going to be two new babies around.'

NOTICE BOARD

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- ~ Sponsor an individual donkey
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Call Judy Quinn on 6947 375992. You can visit the Sanctuary to see your money at work. Please call in advance.

To donate money, please use the charity account at Alpha Bank: 01308617 Corfu Donkey Rescue. Swift: CRBAGRAAXXX. Iban: GR88 0140 6800 6800 0210 1302 116. Sort Code: 30-90-99

Music Week at Agios Ioannis

Concerts at Villa Theodora this year will be:

TUESDAY, 4TH SEPTEMBER: Elke Hornig (Flute), Dr. Lionel Mann (Organ)

THURSDAY, 6TH SEPTEMBER: Jim Knight (Folk)

Saturday, 8th September: Richie Henderson (Popmaster), Russ Bartlett and the Good Old Boys

All concerts start at 8 pm. Admission is 15 euros and a buffet meal is served in the concert interval.

ELKE HORNIG studied flute with Hans-Jurgen Pincus at Hamburg Conservatory from 1976 to 1980. She has played as soloist and as a member with orchestras and chamber ensembles, performing music ranging from early Baroque up to contemporary. Elke lives part of the year in Corfu and, also a very accomplished artist, has regularly exhibited both here and in Germany.

A church chorister and playing the pianoforte from the age of six, later the viola and oboe, LIONEL MANN envisaged becoming an orchestral musician or conductor until he was pitched at the tender age of twelve and at three hours' notice into becoming organist and choirmaster of a church choir of twenty-four boys. They were locally famous, determined to remain so, and therefore made sure that he quickly learned his job. He was completely hooked! Following some very unimilitary military service he studied from 1948 to 1952 at the Royal College of Music with Dr. Harold Darke (organ), Dr. William Lloyd Webber (theory, composition), Dr. Thornton Lofthouse (harpsichord, continuo), Dr. Edgar Cooke (choir-training, liturgy). After holding church and cathedral appointments Lionel became a concert organist in 1970 and, also having scholastic appointments, has performed for radio and television with orchestras and choral societies in Britain and New Zealand. Dr. Mann 'retired' to Corfu in 1994 and has since been quite busy making music, teaching and helping with tourism.

The electronic organ used in this performance is the smaller of

Dr. Mann's two Ahlborn instruments. Its twenty-five registers reproduce with good fidelity the tone of a typical mid-eighteenth-century German instrument; it has slightly larger specification than had J.S. Bach's organ at Weimar.

JIM KNIGHT, who is well-known as a frequent visitor and performer in Corfu, was born in Glasgow. He became involved in folk singing some thirty years ago, forming a band which travelled all over Scotland and down into England. As a solo entertainer, who produces most of his own material, he has sung in folk clubs all around Europe and still performs regularly in Germany. His last tour there won the accolade, 'Jim plays guitar in a very precise finger-picking style and has a Pandora's Box of songs.'

RICHIE HENDERSON writes, 'I've been a working musician for thirty years, not really specializing but a general jack-of-all-trades, working mostly in my native Scotland although I've travelled extensively, performing in Scandinavia, Europe and South America. I have worked with such names as K.D. Lang, James Taylor, Richard Thompson, Runrig, The Proclaimers and Nancy Griffiths. I have released one album through my band, The Liberties, signed to Chrysalis Records, and made many television and radio appearances.'

'I mostly perform interpretations of other people's songs, by songwriters such as Randy Newman, Elvis Costello, Neil Finn, Ron Sexsmith and Cole Porter – something for everybody! Presently I am performing at Jools Holland's Jamhouse venue in Edinburgh. Although it's mainly acoustic guitar and vocals, I don't consider myself a folk musician as such, just a bit of a troubadour.'

RUSS BARTLETT AND THE GOOD OLD BOYS are a pop group well known around Corfu. They have been slaying them locally for years. Come and be slain!

QuickTime and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

New arrival at Corfu Donkey Rescue

Corfu Donkey Rescue's newest arrival is not a beast that was found wandering and abandoned in the countryside; nor one sick or injured and handed to the Sanctuary by its owner to avoid the expense of treatment. No. The Rescue's 53rd resident is a female foal, born on Friday, 8th June and named Palli.

Said Judy Quinn, the Sanctuary's founder and manager, 'We didn't even realize Jade, the mother, was pregnant. We don't have any stallions here, so when she started getting fat, we didn't imagine that a foal was the reason. It was only when her belly dropped that we guessed.'

Now Judy will have to run hormone tests on her males to see if any of them has been improperly castrated. 'The only other possibility is that the father is Charlton, who was a stallion when he arrived. We had him done about a month later, but he was being kept separately from the rest and for the life of me I can't see how he or Jade could have got out of their compounds, done their business, and got back in again!'

In fact, Palli resembles Charlton, in that she carries a marked feature that Gerald Durrell described as a characteristic of donkeys from the village of Gastouri - a pale ring around each shining eye. Her coat's not as dark as Charlton's; but Jade is very light in colour. 'I hope she is Charlton's,' said Judy. 'He's one of the sweetest of our donkeys. When he arrived, I was warned that as he was a stallion he would kick and bite, but he was very gentle from the first, and he's a great favourite with our visitors!'



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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

The affectionate nature of all the donkeys is testament to Judy's care. Owned previously by villagers, they were regarded as beasts of burden rather than pets, and were treated to about as many cuddles as a three-wheeled truck would collect. Now, they follow visitors around, vying for attention. 'If I go out into the field with a brush, they push and shove to get groomed first!' said Judy.

Jade had no trouble with the birth. 'Though at around 20 she's one of the youngest of our donkeys, we were worried in case anything went wrong. I was here when she started giving birth. She got the head and shoulders out, then stopped pushing, got up, and started wandering around. It looked as if the foal was walking backwards behind her on its front legs! All I had to do was break the membrane so it could breathe. Then Jade managed the rest by herself.

'When she was born, Palli's ears were hanging down like a hound's. She kept shaking her head as if she knew they should be somewhere else.'

Though just three days old when I visited and still a little unsteady on her pins, Palli is already cantering around the compound, her ability a testament to evolved survival techniques. A donkey's protection against predators is flight, and foals must be able to run very soon after birth. Puppies, in contrast, don't have to do anything other than squirm, squeak, sleep and eat for weeks, their safety resting in the power of their mother's teeth.

No danger threatens Palli. Unlike her companions, she's not destined for a life of work, and neither will she ever be treated with indifference. It's most likely she'll become someone's pet, either in Corfu or abroad. A registered charity which relies purely on donations, Corfu Donkey Rescue cannot cater for all the beasts that need a place to retire after a lifetime of labour. Judy pays many of the costs out of her own pocket, and manages to save on vets' bills by treating minor ailments herself.

'They're Corfiot donkeys, and I'd love to keep them all here,' she explains. 'But we just don't have the space. We send some to sanctuaries in Holland and the UK, but ideally I'd like to adopt them out in Corfu. We've had a couple of very successful adoptions, but really need more residents to join the scheme.'

So if you've got a big plot of land (and outside the town planning zone you need an acre to build - which unless you're a manic gardener is far too much to manage) why not fence off a portion and put it to donkeys? They'll keep the grass down, and provide plenty of free fertilizer as well! And Judy will provide advice on care and prompt support whenever required.

You can also help by visiting the Sanctuary

and making a donation, enjoying at the same time contact with these lovely beasts, now a dying breed. Or you can sponsor an individual donkey; Palli is being sponsored temporarily by Luvcorfu Properties, until her final home is decided.

The Sanctuary is located in the Poulades area, close by Lake Gavrolimni, and it's worth combining the visit with a stroll in the lake area. The easiest way to reach it is from Gouvia: Take the road beside Diellas Supermarket. A mile or so on, you come to a T-junction, where you go left. Continuing uphill, you pass through a sprawl of villas, ignore a track on the left, and then bear left, continuing on the asphalt. When this turns to gravel, the Sanctuary is a short distance further on the left. It is best to phone in advance to ensure that Judy is there: 6947 375992.

See the Notice Board for how to make a donation through the bank.



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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Corfu News and The Corfiot *Working in Association*

With *The Corfiot* catering mostly for the community of permanent residents, and thus not wishing to publish comprehensive tourist information which does not change from month to month, the new broadsheet glossy, *Corfu News*, provides a missing service. It is directed more at visitors who wish to learn about their resort - though it does contain some feature articles as well - and complements the more narrative style of *The Corfiot*.

Our first attempt to create a free local newspaper which combined news and information about a specific region of Corfu came in 2001 when *North West Corfu News* was issued to help a few friends with their businesses in that area. The paper mainly featured advertorials - basically articles written about the advertisers containing all the interesting elements of the business rather than display advertisements. This, combined with some amusing write-ups, had the first issue disappearing as quickly as it was printed, and many readers told us that they read it from front to back and back to front. It was an ideal situation for the new kid on the block, tailor-made for the visitors who wanted to discover more about the place they had chosen for their holiday.

Soon friends from Sidari saw it, and demanded their own.

Corfiot editor Hilary and myself got to work and soon the first issue of *Sidari News* hit the street. And then more friends from the east coast, including the then mayor, put pressure on us to supply a *North East Coast News*. And so passed a very busy summer...

The problem appeared a few years down the line when a demand developed for similar newspapers focusing on the Gouvia Marina and Paxos.

So *Corfu News* was born, covering all these areas in one issue. The trouble was that the cost of a full colour 44 page paper of A3 size required a more expensive commitment. So no more free newspapers. However, we consider the token cost of 60 lepta is a small price to pay for a paper packed with information for locals as well as tourists. And it appears from anecdotal information that it is a sell-out on the first issue - a record for the island.

In this first edition, some controversial issues were raised, like the abandonment of Corfu by the government in Athens, and - for the first time in Corfu - the text of the 1864 Treaty of London (which united Corfu with the Kingdom of Greece) was

First Choice

published, shaking up the local community. It showed what really should have happened in Corfu after the Union, and many letters and emails came in from concerned people (See the letter below). Of course, articles like these do not make the newcomer a favourite with the local authorities, which bow to the big boys in Athens; we are expecting some criticism from them before long.

Anyone who wants to be part of it is welcome to suggest articles and place advertisements; indeed, we are looking for people who are interested in working with us in the advertising department. Please contact Hilary on 6948 889174 or myself on 6947 269112. If you live abroad and would like a free copy posted to you, please let us know.

Harry Tsoukalas

THANK YOU FOR CORFU NEWS

Thank you for the great Corfu newspaper we just received - we've really been looking forward to receiving this! It's got fabulous content.

We'd really like to express our gratitude for all the wonderful effort you and others have made to save the olive trees; it's a real pity others are selfish and can't seem to see the positive in saving the environment and hundreds of years' worth of planting olive trees.

Please don't allow any criticism to dampen you, there will always be people who just think about themselves and don't care about others' consequences. You may have lost some business and I'm sorry for that, but you will gain the right type of clientele, who will value the property they purchase on an island that they truly respect for its real beauty and history and not just as a vacation spot! We don't really want foreign residents on Corfu who don't really 'get' Corfu and what it represents, otherwise it will become another Ibiza!!! Our opinion anyway...

If we were there, we'd be behind you 100% protesting where required, loud and clear! Thank you and everyone else who spent the time, money and energy fighting for such a beautiful paradise!

We have not visited Corfu yet, but have conducted extensive research and feel like we've been there already. We still plan on visiting Corfu soon and purchasing a property, for holidays or maybe permanent!

All the very best with your endeavours!

Paris & John, Melbourne, Australia

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Corfu News

The Battle to PROTECT Corfu's Olive Trees is WON

An end to the destruction of Corfu's olive groves is at last in sight, thanks to a last minute action by Corfu MP Nikos Georgiadis last minute action which resulted in the amendment of a law setting new strict penalties. The law was first presented to Parliament without provision for Corfu's olive groves, and it was only after Georgiadis threatened to resign that a clause applying to Corfu was added.

After a long bitter fight to stop the destruction the president of the Heritage Association Mr Harry Tsoukalas said: "How could we be wrong when our only concern was to save this incredibly beautiful island from destruction?"

Read about the events that took place before this historic decision.

Page 4 and 5



A long-kept secret is revealed

In London on the 29th of March 1864 a TREATY between Great Britain, France, Russia, Austria, Prussia and Greece, respecting the Union of the Ionian Islands to the Kingdom of Greece, was signed. Among other agreements the deeded that the Islands of Corfu and Paxos, as well as their dependencies, should after their Union with the Hellenic Kingdom, enjoy the advantages of PERPETUAL NEUTRALITY.

What does that mean for the citizens of Corfu?

page 2



Corfiot Cuisine gets the thumbs up from Rick Stein

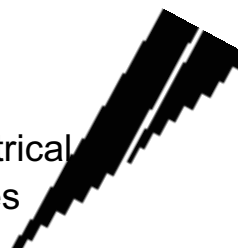


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CHAPLAIN'S CHAT

Yob Culture

 **Clifford Owen**

The scene is a quiet Warwickshire village around 1950. An 8-year-old pupil at the local Church of England Infants' School, Clifford Owen, has nearly completed the one mile walk to school. As he passes the local pub close to the school gates and church, he spies two other pupils who are amusing themselves by throwing stones at a road sign. A direct hit on the said sign is signaled by a loud 'clang' which so excites young Owen that he encourages the pupils to pelt it even more. He would like to have some target practice himself, but something inside him says it is wrong! The cheering is brought to a sudden halt when the cleaner lady in the pub comes out and tells the boys off in words which would be familiar even to today's hearers! They run off and young Owen, with guilty expression, walks away too.

But that was not the end of the matter because within an hour, at school assembly, the headmistress asked the two 'pelters' to stand in front of the assembly, where they were duly harangued. But then Owen's name was mentioned and he was asked to stand too! Worse was to happen because it was the weekly assembly taken by the Vicar, and he was expected to do his bit of the haranguing! Owen never forgot his remarks: 'I would have thought better of Clifford because he is a choirboy and we expect choirboys to set an example.' Owen's nascent hypocrisy

had been exposed! (25 years later I met the same vicar in Cornwall before he retired and he was delighted I had been ordained but had long forgotten the incident, which I had to remind him of!)

As I look back there were several things that seemed to be in place in the England of those days. There was a sense of morality which was still recognizably Christian, and people were prepared to act on it. If I had told my mother of the incident above, I would have been whacked for it at home as well! The local vicar still injected something of order, holiness and a bit of a reminder of standards, even a bit of fear. It had disappeared by the time I was ordained in 1973, apart from in the older generation. I could have become a vandal myself, but somehow I knew it was 'against the rules'. I attended Nuneaton Grammar School from 1954-1960, and whilst I owe an enormous debt to that school for teaching me so many things academically, yet there was an undercurrent of worrying behaviour; some of it mildly shocking, even by today's standards. It was the era of Teddy Boys and they were followed by the Mods and Rockers. Some pupils boasted of smashing up a café. I once saw a flick knife pulled out by a pupil showing how to brandish one. I witnessed shoplifting. There was gangish behaviour about. It was the time of the rise of Elvis and Pop and the 6.5 special on telly

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CHAPLAIN'S CHAT

(remember?). It was the beginning of teenage culture as a newly identifiable phenomenon. The only famous boy of that school in my generation was Ken Loach, Film Producer. I often wondered how much his films were shaped by his experience in that Midlands town.

I contrast that with St. Albans rail station in 2005. I stood on the platform in the rush hour as businessmen waited. One besuited man with brief case answered a call on his mobile phone in what I can only call 'yobbish language'. No-one, including me, batted an eyelid. We have grown up having learnt to hide our shock at such things these days. But I have often reflected upon St. Albans' platform as a marker of where we in England have reached in our new norms of social morality, if there is anything much left of it. Perhaps that is the point. When we read of 'yob culture', that which we used to think of as belonging only to the criminal fringe, or loutish lads (plus now many girls) fuelled by excess lager, we know it has now become a norm of a more commonly tolerated behaviour. It is a wonderful illustration of 'if you can't beat 'em join 'em'. This article is not meant to be a dogmatic polemic, rather a kite-flying exercising. We have all moved with and reflect the prevailing culture to a certain extent. But it seems to me that as far as we English are concerned (I do not speak for our neighbours), we are at a cultural moral crossroads where we ought to do the honest thing: come out with our hands up, admit we have lost the plot, and stop pretending we have answers. Something of this was reflected in John Major's call for 'family values'. It is reflected in the rediscovery of the St. George's Cross on 'white-van man's bonnet'; the crazy icon that British Airways sported for a while on their tail fins, and the latest attempt to re-locate British identity.

Has the church got anything to say in all this? Of course it has! And it has been saying it for fifty years, but is anyone listening? I think it was Harold Macmillan, a former Prime Minister, who coined the famous phrase: 'You've never had it so good', referring to Britain new post-war wealth which took a good generation to hatch. It went down well with the electorate, but not many remember that Harold also said that the moral rot set in when Britain, as a nation, stopped going to church on a Sunday. I would defend the efforts of bishops, clergy of all denominations as they have taught, preached, written, pastored, worked, witnessed for over half a century to say nothing of thousands of exemplary lay leaders and role models (thank you Cliff

Richard!). I can testify from first hand that much effort and prayer has gone in to restoring the lost glory of days gone by. But who listens? Who gives a damn? We have two excellent Archbishops in Rowan Williams and John Sentamu. I do hope that we will listen to what they say rather than simply render them as benign celebrities.

The people who can really make a difference are we ourselves. We need to stop lamenting that we were once great and the world doesn't love us any more. We need to recognize that there are millions of

teachers, police, and a host of good hearted citizens who still love our old country and quietly espouse its values. We need to recognize where those values once came from and recognize that you can't have Christian values without practicing the faith which births them, and accessing the grace which sources them. Our new identity will be born in our repentance.

There was a famous prophecy given by a Russian Orthodox nun before the First World War. In the prophecy she accurately predicted the rise of Communism (and its fall), the future of France and the States, the Division of Germany. She also said that 'Britain would lose all of its Empire and come to the brink of almost total ruin, but would be saved through the prayers of praying women.' Make of it what - become a yob myself! Maybe it was the lady cleaner at the pub that morning! God bless her for reporting us; and please pray for our country.

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What's Cooking?

Traditional Corfiot food

What is it... Where to find it

 Hilary Paipeti

Pastitsada, Sofrito and Bourdetto - the 'trinity' of Corfiot cuisine, are on the restaurant menu wherever local cooking is featured. Grilled meat, especially lamb chops, are a common choice for an evening meal out at the taverna or grill room. But, except on Sundays and on special occasions, you won't find many Corfiots eating these dishes on a day-to-day basis. What DO the locals eat at home? Why don't we find real home cooking in the tavernas? Where can we try these dishes? These are all questions I am asked both by newcomers and by long-time foreign residents who do not have a Greek family.

Until prosperity reached the villages 20 years or so ago, local families ate very simply. Unless out working on the land or elsewhere, families took their main meal at midday. It would comprise a single main dish, in winter perhaps a thick vegetable soup, or some pasta plain or with a strong tomato sauce, or maybe pulses in some form or another. A salad of cabbage, with carrot added sometimes, and cheese or some inexpensive fish fried or grilled would complete the meal. In summer, vegetables picked from the garden and boiled or made into a stew formed the backbone of the diet, with sardines or anchovies the fish of choice. In the evening, the meals were even simpler, and might just consist of bread, cheese and olives, with 'renga' (kipper) a special treat.

Except for an odd appearance midweek, perhaps as keftedes (meatballs), meat was kept for Sundays, when Pastitsada or chicken roasted with potatoes were most commonly served.

Few village households had recipe books (before the last three of generations, not many women could read easily), so the only dishes they cooked were the ones they had learned from their family or immediate neighbours. Of course, this severely limited a housewife's repertoire, as did the seasonality and availability of the ingredients.

Any variety was mainly a result of women learning a cooking technique and applying it to different sets of foodstuffs. For example, that most delicious of spring dishes, the stew of artichokes, potatoes, peas and herbs, could be adapted to include broad beans in their season, or in winter, using frozen peas, to exclude artichokes. Spicy Bourdetto, now considered as exclusively a dish of fresh fish, used to be made with leeks or cabbage, and often salt cod was substituted for the fish. This way, a single style of cooking could form the basis of a whole range of different tastes.

The numerous Greek recipe books that have appeared in the last couple of decades are full of tantalizing glimpses of dishes you will not find at your local taverna. Chick pea soup, cuttlefish in wine or cooked with spinach; lamb with leeks, beef with prunes, courgettes or chestnuts; pork with quince or beans; chicken with noodles, nuts, okra... the list goes on. Not to men-

tion all the delicious vegetable dishes like Briam (Greek ratatouille), Spanakorizo (spinach with rice), giant beans baked with spinach, cabbage with rice and tsigarelli (sauteed greens).

Why are these dishes and hundreds of similar not generally available in local tavernas? To illustrate the reason why, I shall go back a few years to a taverna which did try to put some unusual home cooking on the menu. I remember they had souzoukakia (meatballs in spicy tomato sauce), and a delicious summer casserole of green beans and courgettes, stewed then sprinkled with feta and put under the grill. These had to be cooked in advance. Due to its location, most of the customers were local; they would make favourable comments on the variety of dishes, then promptly order lamb chops. No restaurant proprietor like to throw away pans and pans of food, so one by one the made-in-advance casserole dishes disappeared from the menu, and the restaurant became little more than a grilled meat, chips and salad destination.

The reason is tied up with poverty and 'face'. The locals eat simple food at home - mainly vegetarian, or small quantities of meat augmented with vegetables - and when they go out they naturally do not want to eat the same food. Because in the days of relative poverty meat was a treat, grills and roasts are the prestige food of choice. Still today (though it is very much subconscious), a meal out is regarded as a chance to brandish the ability to afford a large quantity of meat (or even more expensive fish). In contrast, ordering 'homely' dishes would indicate one's poverty, causing a perceived loss of 'face'.

But deep down, the Corfiots love their casseroles, redolent of Grandma's kitchen, where vegetables fresh from the garden would stew in a blackened cooking pot over an open fire, picking up a smokey aroma along with the flavour of handfuls of garlic, pepper and herbs. This love of traditional tastes >19

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>14 has prevented the spread of American-style fast food outlets (Greeks, after all, have their own 'fast food'; it's called 'pitta with donner kebab'). So in this age when working women have less time for cooking than their mothers and grandmothers did, but families still want to sit down at lunchtime to a nice comforting casserole dish, the latest trend in food establishments is the 'lunchtime takeaway'. And because it's lunchtime, there's no prestige or 'face' involved as there would be on an evening meal out. Thus, these restaurants serve just the sort of casserole dishes that you would find in local homes; and they don't compromise because the locals know what it all should taste like!



Unique to Corfu - Bianco, fish in garlic and lemon sauce with potatoes

So where can you get this real local cooking? There are two categories where it can be found - the family-run restaurants, often 'Ma and Pa' establishments (Ma in the kitchen and Pa serving) and the ones specifically set up to supply busy workers with lunch, either eaten in or taken home (many of these also open in the evening as grill rooms, thus catering for both markets). Here are a few:

The River Taverna, Potami, Lefkimmi. Rick Stein loved this one on his recent shoot in Corfu. Spiros, Loula and son Yiannis run the restaurant out of their home. The kitchen is their own, the indoor dining area doubles up as their living room, and in summer tables are set out on the bank of the canalized river. Loula only cooks four or five dishes a day, just a few portions of each, and what's left is their own dinner. Expect deliciously squashy green beans, superb stuffed vegetables with mushrooms instead of mince, and yummy roast chicken. Most of the vegetables are from their own garden.

Rouvas Restaurant, near the market, Corfu Town. Another Stein choice. Ask the chef Nikos (who is Greek-American) to show you what he has been cooking since early morning. The main customers are upper echelon office workers, public servants, solicitors and single elderly people. Expect superb mousaka and pastitsio, fried salt cod, rabbit stifado, boiled greens and artichoke stew in season. Also a changing 'dish of the day'. Open lunchtime only.

Rankios, at Solari on the road out of town towards Kontokali. With its glass and uncompromisingly modern frontage, it looks

like a fast food joint, but the food is uncompromisingly old Corfu. Eat in or take away. Expect a changing menu of usually about half a dozen choices. Their takes on cuttlefish are particularly good, and they have some unusual meat and vegetable casserole combinations.

Max, at Tzarou on the road out of town south (next to Express Service). You could hardly find a more unprepossessing venue for a meal out, at the side of Corfu's busiest road and hemmed in by showrooms and service industries. Yet the food is top class. Expect a changing menu from day to day. Stuffed tomatoes and peppers, shellfish pilaff, octopus stifado and pork with carrots and celery are some dishes recently tried. Also good 'pitta with donner kebab' and excellent grills in the evening.

Chrysavgis, Panagouli Street near the Catholic Convent. Concentrates more on lunchtime takeaways rather than sit-in meals. Expect a menu which changes every day, with seven dishes, including some sort of vegetarian choice, a pasta plate and a sweet of the day. Here you can try authentic pea-and-potato casserole (Fridays), and stuffed squid (Tuesdays).

Paxinos Restaurant, Benitses. An upmarket restaurant which nevertheless holds to tradition and, despite its resort location, does not target the tourist trade. Expect skordalia (garlic sauce) with a variety of boiled vegetables, the best tsigarelli around (in season), Lamb Frikase (with greens and lemon sauce), Lahanodolmades (stuffed cabbage rolls in lemon sauce).

Epiplomania

The Road to Damascus

 **Sarah Button**

Sarah and Pete Button join a yacht rally of 76 boats from 15 different countries that takes them on an adventurous journey from Turkey to Egypt.

In part one of three installments they join their friends Sheila and Patrick aboard 'Shecat' - a 35 foot catamaran - in Antalya, Turkey, and sail to Lattakia in Syria where they take an inland excursion to Damascus.

The coastal area of Syria is lush and pretty, rather like Southern Italy. There are olive groves, orange trees, tomatoes and aubergines. Syria also produces tobacco - for American cigarettes - and more recently natural gas. There are oil refineries too, with a massive pipeline coming from Iraq, this since the toppling of Saddam Hussein who had blocked the project.

As we drove inland the landscape became drier and mountainous. In the distance we could see the Lebanese border. Our first stop was at a perfectly preserved Crusader's castle which sat strategically on a steep hill. Preserved because it was inhabited right up until the thirties when its French occupants were forced to leave. Now it's a tourist attraction and like many ancient sites its inhabitants are now hustlers selling tacky souvenirs and small boys asking for spare change. There was not a local woman or girl in sight.

Further inland the landscape turned to desert. We were on the original Silk Route. This dry, harsh, sandy, rocky middle-of-nowhere was the scenery of Lawrence of Arabia. It looked both scary and beautiful, and a little exciting. Here the Bedouin live at subsistence level in sandy coloured tents farming their sheep, moving on only to find an oasis or a patch of fresh grass to feed their flocks. There are some 15,000 of these folk in Syria and they live a life that hasn't changed much in thousands of years. It looked like hell to me - no running water, no loo, no shops, no nothing. Here in the desert the summer temperatures can reach 50 degrees, in the winter, minus 20. As we watched from our air-conditioned bus I couldn't imagine living in such a hell.

We shot past sinister looking airfields encased in high fences, their radar sending our mobile phones buzzing, lookout towers lurking in their corners and tanks skulking under bunkers like cats ready to pounce.

We lunched in a Bedouin tent only seventy miles from the Iraqi border, it seemed ironic that the tourist trade wished to mimic such visible poverty and glamourise it, but our guide insisted that the Bedouin were happy living their tribal existence and that they were preserving a culture that for much of the Arabian world had died out. He also insisted that they were wealthy folk who simply chose not to spend their money. We ate juicy roasted lamb served with an array of fantastic salads: there was hummus, yoghurt, aubergines and flat bread. Sitting at low

tables on ornate carpets, we were entertained by a troupe of native dancers. As to their authenticity I don't know, but they made a pretty sight. Here it was very hot, like sitting in a hair drier.

The ruins at Palmyra were a log book of life experience; simply stunning. The site had been further excavated by some adventurers in the 1930s and they clearly struck gold. Buried under drifted sand for centuries once uncovered they revealed a picture of life in the desert thousands of years ago. An isolated town that had traded, fought and survived; a true civilised community which had accommodated Romans, Assyrians, Arabs, Christians and Ottomans. Huge granite pillars with ornate porticos rose above the remnants of efficient drainage systems, baths and ovens. There had been barracks, market places, prisons and now there were ghosts - lots of ghosts - and little boys asking for money.

Stopping at 'The Baghdad Cafe' for refreshment I was chatted up by a tall, dark and stunning Arab in a white robe and head dress. He asked where I came from. 'England', I said. 'Arh!' he replied, giving me an attractive and sympathetic smile, '...but, you are not like your government.'

Here we drank 'chi' - black tea - and photographed each other against a background of bleak and parched desolation. The roads were dusty, empty, long and very straight, presumably to aid the movement of tanks and weapons - for there was very little traffic. Syria lives an unpredictable life. This was not the place to break down.

Two hours later we reached Damascus; the oldest city in the world. But the outskirts gave no evidence of its ancient past, comprising only ubiquitous concrete blocks of flats and the low-rise jerry builds of the poorer areas busy with speeding cars, the odd cart pulled by an emaciated looking donkey, motor bikes, ancient tractors, cheerfully clapped-out buses and scabby looking chickens frightened by passing trucks. It was election day and the city was plastered with wall to wall portraits of Bashar Assad, leader of the Baath Party and the country's President; and because the so called 'election' was far from democratic, he was assured of keeping the top job. Our guide told us that he was popular because he had introduced private education and hospitals, but most of all because he had allowed the import of foreign cars, which until his rule were 'provided by the government'; now you could own an Audi or a Mercedes and pose to your hearts content - well, the minority rich could anyway.

Our hotel was a sterile anonymous concrete tower of the 'Holiday Inn' genre, described as the height of luxury. We were told we were privileged, something I'd been aware of since arriving in the Middle East. There was no time to luxuriate

though, and we were whisked off to a 'Gala Dinner' in the centre of the city. The food was great but the Belly Dancer atrocious. She was an automated Barbie doll with too much make up which ran as she sweated, and she couldn't belly dance to save her life; lap dancing was more her line. The waiters stared, their eyes on sticks as they salivated. In an adjoining room a Muslim group were dining too; their women, covered from head to toe, had their backs to us.

It was announced that the President had been re-elected and fireworks started in celebration. These went on all night. I imagined a whole social welfare budget going up in smoke but I doubted that such a budget would ever have existed.

On the road back to the hotel we noticed no women out on the town, but there were gangs of men everywhere behaving badly and noisily; the predatory male out hunting. Close to our hotel were many parked cars, their occupants decamped and seated on rugs on the pavement. They were having a night time picnic; women were passing food around and placed at the centre of each family group was a smouldering hookah.

Falling into a comfy bed, we switched on the telly. The only English speaking channel available was CNN. We had all been concerned about the situation in Lebanon and Israel, which we were to visit next, but nothing was said. Bush was playing his usual games with down-at-heel mineral-rich countries, there was the usual patronising feature about Africa and the stock markets were doing well.

The next day we wanted to see the real Damascus; museums and ancient relics were all very well but we felt as though we were being protected from the real world so we broke away from our guide and wandered off around the 'Souk'. There was no edge in the covered market at all, and it felt safe.

The shops were an eclectic mixture, rather like a box of Belgian chocolates into which someone had added chewing gum, aniseed balls, a few sherbert lemons and some meatballs. You could buy a Persian rug, a belly dancing outfit, a toilet roll holder in the shape of a pink upholstered sofa, sweets, biscuits, knives for fighting, naughty knickers and funeral shrouds. In the middle of the street children were selling wind-up commandos that wriggled on the ground firing a rifle. Occasionally the power would go off and shop keepers brought their generators out into the streets, adding to a noise and smell I had never experienced before. Female shoppers wore the long coats and headscarves or ordinary European clothing. There were young girls in short skirts and sexy tights tottering on high heels, there were tinkers and 'chi' sellers and they all looked happy.

Exhausted from our sensual feast, we stopped for some freshly squeezed orange

juice. Unable to communicate with the trader, we were helped out by an English-speaking Arab who asked us where we were from. Our new friend turned out to be an Iraqi who had spent most of his life in London but had come to Damascus to meet his family who still lived in Iraq. They had to travel to Syria to meet him as he could not get back into his home country.

On the journey back to Lattakia, we reflected on what a country of contrasts this was, and how much of society was in contradiction. At first glance, certainly in the richer areas it would be easy to think it was secular, but away from the money and international hype it's a different story, particularly for Muslim women. As young girls they are free from the shackles of covering up, but once they reach puberty they may have to cover their heads and, once married, many are expected to hide in head to toe gabardines and headscarves, only to be seen in the flesh by their husbands. The men, regardless of religion, are lumbered with national service, and they are groomed to fight from early childhood, like the little boy selling his toy soldiers. Maybe folk are happy with their lot - we didn't see any resentment in the national character, only smiles and greetings. It's a beautiful country full of history, rich traditions and fabulous food. But then, we were simply not there long enough to really get our finger on the pulse; like many a visitor we had just been given just a snapshot. We vowed to return.

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~~Spear Travels~~

RECIPES

Soups to cool you down

July is usually the summer's hottest month, and we all need to cool down and take plenty of liquid. What better way to do that than with a cold soup. Here are some recipes from around Europe. (We continue our 'Making a Meal of Mezes' series next month.)

Gazpacho (Spain)

In his superb travelogue *Iberia*, James Michener offers an authentic recipe for this most famous of cold soups.

'Take two stale rolls and reduce them to crumbs. Soak in water until they form a thick paste and set aside. Into your blender put two pounds of tomatoes, one large pared cucumber, two large green peppers, a quarter-cup of pimientos and two small sweet onions. Season with pinches of salt and pepper. Now comes the tricky part. To this mixture you must add olive oil and vinegar, which are the heart of the soup.. A Spaniard will use one cup of the former; a tablespoon of the latter. Americans, of whom I am certainly one, prefer not more than a quarter-cup of oil and four tablespoons of vinegar. At any rate, reduce all the ingredients except the bread to a liquid, then mix in the bread by hand and put the result in a covered wooden bowl and place in the refrigerator for six hours. Serve ice-cold and pass a serving tray containing separate dishes of chopped tomatoes cucumbers, onions and small cubes of bread. No part of this strange recipe sounds very good, but taken together and properly blended, these ingredients produce a soup that is distinctive as vichyssoise.'

This is based on Arabella Boxer's recipe, from her *Mediterranean Cookbook*.

450 gr tomatoes, 225 gr green peppers, 1/2 cucumber, 50 gr two day old bread, 1/2 red onion, 3 tablespoons white wine vinegar, 2 tablespoons olive oil, 200 ml iced water, salt and black pepper, 6 ice cubes, extra iced water

Garnishes: 2 skinned tomatoes, 1/2 green pepper, 1/4 red onion, 1/4 peeled cucumber, 2 hard-boiled eggs, 2 slices crustless stale bread, 1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil

Skin and quarter the tomatoes. remove stalk and seeds from the peppers and cut in chunks. Peel the cucumber and cut in sections. Tear the bread in pieces and soak in water for an hour, then squeeze dry. Place all the ingredients in the blender in batches, mixing all each time with vinegar, oil and iced water. Pour into a large bowl, add salt and pepper and ice cubes and chill for a few hours.

Just before serving prepare the garnishes. Chop all the vegetables finely, also the eggs, and pile in separate bowls, Dice the bread and fry in the oil until golden brown. Put in a bowl. Place all the bowls in the centre of the table.

Have the bowls well chilled for serving the soup, which you

thin with a little iced water.

It should be a smooth pinky-grey liquid, neither thick nor thin, and with a slightly tart taste and a bit fizzy on the tongue. It comes to life when the garnishes are added. Serves 8.

Chilled Tomato Soup (England)

100 gr chopped carrot, 60 gr chopped onion, 1 clove chopped garlic, 1/2 wineglass olive oil, 1/2 kilo skinned tomatoes, 600 ml chicken stock, salt, pepper, sugar, grated nutmeg, 2 teaspoons concentrated tomato paste, 200 ml single cream, chopped parsley

Cook the first three ingredients in the oil, with the lid on the pan to prevent browning, for about 10 minutes. Halve the tomatoes into the pan and keep simmering until the carrot is cooked soft.

Liquidize the soup and add the seasonings to taste. Allow to cool and chill in a large basin. Stir in the cream, check the consistency and seasonings and chill again. Sprinkle parsley on top just before serving. Serves 6-8.

Simple Tomato Soup (Italy)

Coffee cup olive oil, 1 kilo very ripe tomatoes, 300 ml strong home made chicken stock, salt, pepper, several leaves of basil

Skin and chop the tomatoes finely. Heat the oil in a pan and add the tomatoes and their juice. Over a slow heat, melt them until they have become a uniform mass with the oil, stirring from time to time. Then add the stock, and salt and pepper to taste. Bring to the boil and simmer for 10-15 minutes.

Allow to cool, then put in a bowl and chill. When you are about to serve it, tear the basil leaves into small pieces and sprinkle on the soup. Serves 4.

Beetroot & Cucumber Soup (Russia)

250 gr leaves of young beetroot, 4 small beetroot, 1/2 cucumber, 2 gherkins, a few leaves of fennel and mint, 125 ml cream, salt, pepper, tarragon vinegar

Scrub the beetroot and cook until tender. Peel once cooked - the skins will slip off easily. Chop into small cubes and sprinkle with salt.

Wash the beetroot leaves and remove any hard stalks. Cook them in a little salted water for a few minutes. Drain, squeeze dry and chop finely. Add to the chopped beetroot. Pour in a coffee cup of tarragon vinegar (or ordinary white wine vinegar if you have none). Add the cucumber, peeled and diced and the diced gherkin, with a little of its liquid. Finally, pour in the cream. Put the bowl in the fridge to chill.

Before serving, add the chopped herbs, thin with iced water and serve with little pieces of ice in the tureen.

It comes out a rather violent pink colour, but is very good on a hot evening.

Servos Restaurant

Acharavi

Guidebook descriptions of the Esplanade as 'the largest public square in the Balkans' puzzle many people; yet geographically Greece, though more often classed as a Mediterranean country, is indeed part of the Balkan Peninsula, and up until the end of the Second World War, shared its historical fate. Corfu shares many characteristics with more northerly lands in the peninsula - among them lots of paprika in the cooking - and enjoys strong links particularly with Serbia after the island was refuge for the defeated Serbian army during the Great War.

So it is fitting that one of Corfu's newest restaurants is a Serbian one.

'Servos' Restaurant is located in Acharavi, on the quiet inner road that runs parallel to the main street. Opposite is a pleasant kafenion, one of those which gives the impression of being an extension of the owner's home, with an atmosphere that reminds one of the early days of tourism. We started our evening there with an ouzo.

Over the road, our meal began with a perusal of the menu over a slivovitz made from quinces. Slivovitz is the Serbian equivalent of *grappa* or *tsipouro*, but is stronger (!!!) and bears the flavour of the fruit it derives from. (We finished the meal with a version made from plums which perhaps was even better.)

The menu pays homage to locals tastes, containing a familiar line-up of Greek starters and main courses, mainly charcoal grills; but here and there the eye is arrested by the shock of the new - what on earth are Urnebes and Muckalica? We were to find out.

But first came the bread. Resembling a giant bread roll, it is fresh-baked on the premises, and came to the table still warm from the oven. It was an excellent medium to carry out the 'olive oil test' - a proprietor that doesn't stint on this vital ingredient is likely to be uncompromising on his sourcing in general. He passed with flying colours, though it is a shame that the oil is Cretan, due to the low grade of the local variety.

Urnebes was an excuse for more bread, being a cheesy dip made of feta (also Cretan), yoghurt, tomato and a little hot spice - rather like *tirokafteri* but more subtle. Our second Serbian starter was a dish of meatballs laid on a bed of spinach and smothered in yoghurt (since this resembles a Turkish dish in Claudia Roden's *Middle Eastern Food*, I wonder whether it derives from Ottoman times).

By this time we were on a second batch of bread, which went very well with the first of our main courses to arrive. This was the mysterious Muckalica, which turned out to be a typically Serbian dish of pork with onion, tomato, green peppers and red ones, and enough hot pepper to make it deliciously spicy. Our other main course was a complete contrast in taste and texture - a truly gargantuan *bifteki* (minced beef patty) cooked on the grill and served with matchstick-fine chip. I began to regret the bread. Smooth and delicate in flavour, the portion was more than enough for two.

Two glasses of plum slivovitz later, we left, replete and most satisfied by our Serbian dining experience. We didn't try any of the Greek dishes, but if the *bifteki* is anything to go by, the chef is a true master on the grill. And I bet he cooks a rare steak.

The Blue House Afionas

In the extreme north-west corner of Corfu, on a promontory which thrusts into the sea above Saint George Bay, stands the ancient village of Afionas. Its roots go back to Bronze Age times, and it seems to remain in the Age of the Donkey, with its narrow lanes that no car can enter. The rough stone walls enclosing small yards are pristinely whitewashed, and many of the old doors and windows are painted bright Hellenic blue.

A blue-and-white theme dominates at the Blue House (Das Blaue Haus) Restaurant, located about 500 metres before the road gives out in the main square of Afionas. The blue shades of the walls are reflected by the turquoise and aquamarine of the sea far below, and in the distance the Diapontian islands seems to float between water and sky. As the sun drops behind the islands, beautiful sunsets are a nightly event.

Opened nine years ago by a German lady, Katharina Wahl, the restaurant offers a most interesting menu of freshly-prepared dishes, often refined with unusual ingredients, as we were to find. First, we shared a plate of the already famous chicken liver pate, which was garnished with red peppercorns and herbs. Our accompanying Blue House Salad was a deliciously fresh melange of all sorts of raw vegetables, dotted with tiny cubes of feta and sprinkled with fresh bean sprouts. It came with a dressing mixed with wild herbs which Katharina picks herself.

Second courses were an excellent vegetarian lasagne packed full of different vegetables, and splendid Indonesian chicken with peanut sauce. The third member of the party chose one of the day's specials, a luscious dish of chicken in white wine and herbs. Both chicken dishes were accompanied by a dome of Basmati rice. Special touches are the elegant cruet sets and carafes and the lovely flower garnishes on the plates.

Mouthwatering experiences continued into the dessert course, with homemade apple and chocolate cakes - much praised by my sweet-toothed companions - and gratineed pear and blue cheese, a perfect choice for a diner who likes something to round off a meal but doesn't eat sugar.

Open daily from 18.00 until 20 October. Tel: 26630 52046. To reach Afionas, cross the Troumpetta Pass, keep going straight on for Agros. Then follow the signs for Arillas and then for Afionas.

For more information, see www.das-blaue-haus.com

RESTAURANTS

Galini Restaurant Agios Stefanos

The picturesque fishing village of Agios Stefanos is located in the heart of 'Kensington-on-Sea', that area of Corfu which is characterized by its exclusive villas, and even more exclusive clientele. Galini Restaurant, on the harbour front, is one of their favourite haunts.

Galini means tranquility, and many seek out the region, and the restaurant, to escape from pressures of work and fame. And while you are relaxing you can enjoy no less than 32 starters which include not only local favourites (village sausages and cheese pies), but dishes which are harder to find (hummous and floyeres - filo rolls filled with ham and cheese), dishes straight from mother's kitchen (courgette salad), and sophisticated ones (prosciutto and melon, smoked trout and pan-fried mushrooms in garlic-cream sauce). Fish starters include prawns and mussels cooked by the favourite saganaki method, bubbling in tomato sauce. The taramosalata is outstanding, made with top quality pale fish roe and lots of garlic. We also judged the octopus in vinegar one of the best we'd ever had - firm in texture but not rubbery, and marinated in olive oil, garlic and parsley. Try also the crispy-fried anchovies, fresh from the sea.

Main course range from Swordfish Kebab, to the vegetarian bliss of Briam, while Chicken Curry, Pastitsada and pasta dishes and crepes add to the variety, Chateaubriand and fillet steak with mushrooms and cream are a welcome diversion.

Galini excels itself in desserts, with lots of sinful goodies. Lemon Pie, Chocolate Pie, sweet crepes with nuts and honey or with chocolate ice cream and chocolate sauce or with lemon and sugar make it a pudding-lover's paradise.

Seated at Galini's harbour-side tables watching the far mainland shore descend into night as your savour your meal, you too will find the meaning of galini, and peace will slip into your soul.

Call on 26630 81492 or 26630 81523 to book. Email: ngalini@otenet.gr

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WILD FLOWERS OF GREECE

Vangelis Papiomitoglou (Trans. Jill Pittenger)

Mediterraneo Editions 2006

I am often asked whether there is a good book about Greek flowers, and I have always had to make recommendations with reservations. One of Oleg Polunin's editions has been the most useful so far; but it covers the whole Mediterranean area; and, produced as it was in the days before full colour printing, the photographs and their corresponding descriptions are located in different sections of the book (the one I have at least), meaning tiresome cross-referencing. In any case, the photograph quality is poor, and the search criteria hard to follow (especially when you have to consult a separately printed photo every time you try to identify a flower).

Then I spotted *Wild Flowers of Greece* in the Tourmouzoglou Bookstore on Nikiforos Theotoki Street, and have found a book that I can positively recommend.

The plants are arranged according to classes, families, genii and species, and a summary which includes easy-to-recognise symbols tells you where it is found, its basic characteristics and its flowering period. Each plant is further identified by at least two clear photographs, one a close-up of the flower against the white background of the page and the other a more general shot of the plant as a whole. Brief but comprehensive descriptions accompany the pictures, often informing the reader of its uses (culinary or otherwise) and sometimes of the etymology of its name.

This book solved a puzzle which has been annoying me for a couple of years - one which other books couldn't help me get to the bottom of. While researching a much-requested article about edible wild greens for this magazine, I used books and research papers to cross-reference English, Greek and Latin names in order to identify various species which I knew, for example, only in Greek. Having failed on the ground to find out which plant was the much-prized 'mouscholachano' (almost indispensable for tsigarelli), I was delighted to find its Latin name - *tordylium* - is familiar to me as one of the loveliest of Corfu's spring flowers. From there on, it was short work to find the edible leaves.

However, I was still slightly puzzled because a flower which I thought was a more richly endowed type of *tordylium* had leaves which in no way resembled my sought-after *moscholachano*. This book told me that the flower was actually *Orlaya Grandiflora*, like *tordylium* a member of the *Umbelliferae* family, but a different species altogether! Puzzle solved!

As well as the flower descriptions, the book helpfully contains a section on the botanical geography of Greece, with notes and photographs on various biotopes and environments, natural and man-made. Throughout the book, the translation (the original text was Greek) reads smoothly, quite a feat in a book that must use many very specific technical terms.

By definition, the book focuses on flowers which grow in Greece, and it does not contain many of the very common species distributed all over Europe. So perhaps I shall hold on to the Polunin. But I can now throw out all my other books on wild flowers, for this is the definitive one.

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HOW CAN WE HELP GEORGE PSAILAS?

The letter written by Chris Holmes about the caretaker of the British Cemetery, George Psailas, made me realise just how much we take this truly good and kind man for granted. It's very obvious that he loves the place and takes fantastic care of it, but he needs MANUAL HELP. For how long will he be expected to do this on his own? Last week I saw him at 8.15pm digging up the old bulbs etc in readiness for a visit by the BBC the following Friday/Saturday.

If my information is correct, George Psailas is paid every three months by the War Graves Commission to tend the graves of the victims of the Channel Incident and of those who died in WW1 & 2. Who pays him for the other work he does? His accommodation is given free but the upkeeping expenses are all his. The amount that he receives in no way covers his expenses. Do not get the idea that he is complaining... he isn't. Maybe, we can lobby or petition the WGC to find a way to provide financial means to ensure that help is available to him. Many of us will be interred there so now is the time to do something to ensure that such a place will be there when we need it. Surely, we can come up with some ideas.

Yvonne Basta
Corfu Town

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Anglican (Holy Trinity Church): 21 Mavili St. Tel. & Fax: 26610 31467. email: holytrin@otenet.gr
Website: www.holytrinitycorfu.net
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Roman Catholic Cathedral of St James: Town Hall Square. Sunday Mass at 8.30, 10.00 & 19.00
Evangelical Church of Greece: 3 Iakovou Polila St. Tel.: 26610 37304. Sunday Morning Service 11.00. Evening Service 7.30. email: EV-CH-OF-CO@ker.forthnet.gr

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BOOKS

Prospero's Kitchen : Corfu Sunset

Mediterranean Cooking of the Ionian Islands

Diana Farr Louis & June Marinos

The fashion for Mediterranean cooking has inspired a whole library of cookbooks, from Elizabeth David's classics, through Claudia Roden's eastern viewpoint, to the interpretations of celebrity chefs. This book returns the tradition to where it belongs, in the regional recipes.

Here, the focus is on Corfu and the Ionian Islands, a region with a distinct style defined by its geographical location. Greek in conception, local food is distinguished by the richness of ingredients, and by the many cultural influences which have implanted unique ideas and preferences into the cuisine.

Farr Louis and Marinos have tracked down rare recipes from local kitchens, giving also many anecdotal insights into the local way of life. Available in 'Made in Corfu' shops.

• **Avrio Never Comes**

• *John Waller*

• In the 1970s, the author and his wife built a house above the then-remote Agios Gordis Bay, and *Greek Walls* tells of these early years. Thirty years on, *Corfu Sunset* takes an often hilarious look at their attempts to renovate the house - under a tight time deadline.
• Available at 'Made in Corfu' shops.

• **Review**

• *Delightful episodes and characters emerge from the pages of Corfu Sunset. A highly amusing account of the highs and lows of property ownership abroad with attention to detail that puts most travel authors in the shade.*

• *Tom Teodorczuk, Evening Standard*

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PERSONAL

ANY FELLOW AMERICANS OUT THERE?

I am looking for other Americans on the island who would like to meet up and get together. Send email to elisacostas@hotmail.com or phone 6979 762442

HOMOSEXUAL HELP LINE CLUG (Corfu Lesbians and Gays). Information line: 6934 903726 or email us at corfulg@yahoo.gr We support any people in Corfu with Gay / Lesbian / Bi / Trans information

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