GOLD AWARDS

A Gold Medal was awarded to Ierapetra, Samothrace and Alonnisos, for their outstanding beaches, by the Quality Coast Association. These three Greek destinations stood out in the top 20 among 1000 popular places in Europe. Ierapetra came 2nd, Samothraki 7th and Alonnisos 17th.

The ceremony of EUCC took place in Torres Verdas in Portugal. The panel of critics evaluated 1000 international tourist destinations from Finland to the Mediterranean including all tourist countries.

Full story, page 7/25

GREEK BEACHES AMONG THE BEST OF COASTAL & MARINE UNION!

Coriva Beach in Ierapetra
Greek visions grow roots in Clare

Clare Valley (South Australia) winemakers Jim Barry Wines took a step towards a more sustainable Australian viticultural industry earlier this month - and the launch of an exciting new white wine - by planting the first cuttings of Greek white wine grape variety Assyrtiko in Australian soil.

A chance tasting by managing director Peter Barry while holidaying on the Greek island of Santorini in 2007 started what has been a long journey of quarantine approval.

"Assyrtiko immediately stood out as a variety suited to the modern Australian palate," Peter said.

"The fresh, crisp acidic qualities of the wine are perfect accompaniments to contemporary Australian food - it is a natural partner for our climate and cuisine."

Embracing innovation in viticulture and winemaking is a hallmark of Jim Barry Wines. Founder, the late Jim Barry was a pioneer of Riesling, Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz and Malbec in the Clare Valley region, and actively encouraged other winemakers to follow suit. Peter is proud to follow in his father’s visionary viticultural footsteps, and sees the planting of Assyrtiko as a step toward growing grapes that have a sustainable future for the region.

"Assyrtiko is grown predominantly on Santorini in arid, windy and hot conditions," Peter said.

"Clare is a cool district with good rainfall but we must face up to climate change and water scarcity and adapt our management appropriately.

"Varieties which can grow on minimal irrigation and still produce contemporary wine styles is what we all look for."

"We’re beginning with half a hectare of Assyrtiko using two dormant cuttings from a single vine - a true mother vine and Santorini clone," explains Peter. The cuttings were planted at the family’s Lodge Hill property in the Clare Valley on an east-facing slope at 480 metres, and celebrated appropriately with a Greek-style feast of grilled lamb.

Peter describes the process as a “labour of love” and an exercise in patience.

"The laborious process of importation and quarantine has discouraged many growers in Australia from trying something new," Peter said.

"As an industry we all support that - we don’t want pests such as phylloxera or other diseases.

"But I don’t think it would have been possible without the assistance and encouragement from Robert Hill Smith and his team at Yalumba.

"The Yalumba nursery in the Barossa is fully accredited for quarantine and they advised and assisted us with the whole process."

Wine from the Jim Barry Wines Assyrtiko vines is still five years away, but is well worth the wait, according to Peter.

"To make fine wine, you must exercise patience. By the time we release this wine, I will have committed 20% of my life to this project – at least 10 years - but it is preferable to passing from this world and wondering 'what if?’" Peter enthuses

More than 60% of the world’s 1200 hectares of Assyrtiko are grown in Santorini. In fact to be labelled under the Santorini classification, the wine must contain 75% or more of the Assyrtiko grape variety with the remaining 25% made up from Athiri and/or Aidani.

The Clare Valley is the first Australian planting.
The Greek Australian VEMA

By Alexis Papachelas - Kathimerini, Athens

The signs coming from Europe are very encouraging. Greece’s EU partners appear to have decided that Greece must stay in the eurozone and get back on its feet. The government is expected to first approve and then implement a painful package of measures that will affect the lives of millions of Greeks.

Prime Minister Antonis Samaras is determined to shoulder the burden as he realizes that there is no alternative solution. He will have to be strong, while the people will have to be understanding. For their part, our EU peers will have to extend a hand to the government and give hope to a frustrated people.

Our foreign lenders should know that if they force the government to start a war with workers in the private sector, it will make the prospect of political collapse all the more likely.

Paying back its private lenders, accelerating the big projects and recapitalizing banks must follow as soon as possible or the real economy will sink deeper into recession.

Greece should be encouraged by the optimistic signals coming from its foreign partners, but it should not let its guard down. The first of these signals is the change of tone in the international press, with even the British media, which used to see Greece through the prism of its own hostile relationship with the euro, admitting that the adjustments made have been huge and have come at a great cost.

Greece’s case has also been helped by the revelation of cases of massive graft and overspending in Spain and other countries, while, for the first time, Europe is beginning to discuss the role played in the crisis by major international lenders and by Brussels, which saw that the level of lending to the countries of Southern Europe was unjustified but opted to say nothing. Then there is also the fact that everyone has started to realize that the sovereign debt crisis is a tsunami that started in Greece and has now hit the entire south, but no one knows where it will stop.

The French are terrified of being swept along while the Americans will face their own fiscal abyss unless some very brave decisions are made in early 2013.

Developments at the European Central Bank, meanwhile, showed that for the meantime at least, the “hawks” in Berlin lost the first round in the bout with the more realistic and moderate representatives of the German establishment.

The losses from ECB President Mario Draghi’s recent announcements are those in Berlin who so passionately and systematically planned for a Greek exit from the euro in the belief that such an eventuality would delight the markets and curb contagion.

It is clear that Germany and the rest of Europe wants Plan A to work for Greece and for the country to stay in the euro area. This may be because they have not managed to come up with a Plan B to deal with the fallout of a Greek exit.

Now the only real danger is that we in Greece let the momentum die down and allow the critics of the bailout deal to believe that we can bully Europe into lending us more money now that it has expressed its desire to see us stay in the eurozone. If Greece wants to be included in Europe’s future plans for the bloc and convince voters in Germany and the Netherlands that it deserves to be a part of developments, it cannot go back on its commitments.

But how do you explain to the beleaguered people of Greece that they must ride out another round of austerity? This is the mission that the country’s political leadership now faces. To convince the people that we cannot drown now, just before the last squall.

The tears of Chios

At least six days of wildfires on Chios became recently a sad but poignant sign of Greece’s troubled times. Economically and environmentally, the fires have proved devastating to an island population that should, justifiably, claim to hold many of the attributes necessary for the country to eventually emerge from this crisis.

Apart from the tourist charm it shares with many Aegean islands, Chios boasts a famed agricultural product that has been granted a protected designation of origin status and is largely exported.

Known as the “tears of Chios” due to the shape taken by the hardened resin once collected, mastic is highly valued for its culinary, medicinal and cosmetic uses. And yet around a quarter of the island’s mastic cultivation is now believed to have been destroyed within a total of 15,000 hectares of burnt land, with local sources estimating the damage to the local economy reaching four million euros. About 2,000 locals are believed to be fully employed in the trade. Whether the fire was started through negligence or deliberately - and the public order ministry suggests the latter, albeit with no proof - a previously vibrant community has, literally, had the earth scorched beneath it.

When the history books of this country’s debt crisis are written, the separate talks of Prime Minister Antonis Samaras with the European political elite of Angela Merkel and Francois Hollande on August 24 and 25 could be seen to be crucial in determining Greece’s eurozone future.

Without at least an easing of the bailout terms, the country might as well kiss its precious euro goodbye right now. And, realistically, the European Central Bank will ultimately need to write off the bulk of the country’s debt, voluntarily or by necessity.

But Greece’s ultimate financial sustainability will surely be determined as much by building on its very real competitive advantages within Europe as by redressing its budgetary imbalances.

When Greece’s economy returns to growth, two of the pillars supporting it will have to be tourism and agriculture, typified by the example of Chios.

Added to those should be shipping - a sector in which, ironically, the island has also made a very big name for itself over the years.

The past, though, is irrelevant if we cannot prevent the present from going down in flames.

Scripture Teachers

ADVANCED COURSE - 2012

Monday 12th November 2012
10 AM – 3 PM
St Nicholas Parish Hall
203-207 Livingstone Road, Marrickville (beside the Church)

An Advanced Course for all Scripture Teachers has been organised for 2012.

It is for experienced and new teachers. This is for special religious education teachers from all parishes and communities.

- The Department of Education and Scripture
- How to answer questions from children
- Classroom management
- Child protection re-accreditation
- Games and activities for children

The course is free. Morning and afternoon teas are supplied
Please bring your own lunch
Sponsored by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia

Supported by:
Greek Orthodox Parish of St Nicholas, Marrickville

Please advise attendance to your parish priest or co-ordinator
RSVP 31 October 2012 – athanasou@gmail.com or Tel. 02 9349 4962
On Wednesday 22 August staff from Vasili's Garden, together with members from Alzheimer's Australia visited St John's College on to help set up a new school garden.

There were members from Dementia Alzheimer's to help promote Dementia awareness, Ecosave, Depco and Spectrum who supported the day by offering valuable knowledge about the environment and how we can build stronger relationships between the young and old.

Students from Parade College who have been working with elderly suffering from dementia also came along, as did the dementia patients. Everyone helped the Year 5 class with the construction of the garden beds, hothouse and planting.

Vasili's Garden filmed the garden construction as a TV show and it was broadcast on channel 31/Digital 44 across Australia on Wednesday 29 August.

The Principle of St John's College, thanked everyone who supported this wonderful event, stating that "we look forward to enjoying the many fresh vegetables and fruit that will be grown in our gardens".

WA's CGL Examination
Results 2012

I am delighted to announce the wonderful results of this year's Centre for the Greek Language (CGL) Examinations. Thirteen out of fifteen candidates passed the examinations at the respective level for which they sat. This constitutes a pass rate of 86.7%. Furthermore, just under half of the total of candidates scored a Grade of "Very Good" whilst one third achieved a Grade of "Excellent". It is also encouraging to note that most of these candidates are children of school age, implying that our educational providers (St. Andrew's Grammar, the Centre for Hellenic Studies, WA, the after-hours school of the Greek Orthodox Community of Evangelismos, among with other providers) are continuing to offer excellent tuition in the Greek language and culture.

Listed below are the names of the successful candidates and the level for which they sat:

Level A1 (for children aged 8-12 years)
- Patricia Maria Fragos
- Phoebe Aikenas

Level A1 (for adolescents and adults)
- Dimitri Michael
- Ellen Nicolaides
- Artemis Andreadou-Dourtsis
- Ekatrina Farsalas
- Michael Karagiannis
- Jack Matsos
- James Nicolaides
- Emmanuel W.C. Terzoudis-Lumsden

Level B1
- Elias Matsos
- Zabetta Ragousis

Level B2
- Mrs Tina Nikolau

Congratulations are extended to each and every one of these candidates, along with their teachers/tutors and parents/grandparents (or anyone who has an influence on their learning of the Greek language).

Listed below are next year's CGL Examination dates:

Level A1 (for children 8-12 years)
- Tuesday 14 May 2013

Level A1 (for adolescents and adults)
- Tuesday 14 May 2013

Level A2
- Tuesday 14 May 2013

Level B1
- Tuesday 14 May 2013

Level B2
- Wednesday 15 May 2013

Level C1
- Wednesday 15 May 2013

Level C2
- Thursday 16 May 2013

Registration commences Friday 1 February 2013 and ends Friday 15 March 2013.

For further information regarding the CGL Examinations in WA, please contact Dr Evangelinou-Yiannakas via email at angelic1_777@hotmail.com or on 0402 400 367.

Dr Angela Evangelinou-Yiannakas
Director - CGL (WA)

Marathon Silver Cup
on display at Acropolis Museum

On August 27, Prime Minister Antonis Samaras unveiled the silver cup awarded to marathon winner Spyros Louis during the first modern Olympic Games in 1896, which will be on display at the Acropolis Museum for a one-year period.

"Today, Greece is running a new marathon. (...) We will win this marathon, we shall overcome all the obstacles and we’ll stay at the end that we have won", said Samaras during the presentation ceremony.

The Bréal Silver Cup - named after French philologist and philhellene Michel Bréal whose idea was the revival of marathon race - was purchased by Stavros Niarchos Foundation at a record price auction on April 18.

Visitors to the Acropolis Museum will now have the opportunity to check the historic Cup up close, and learn about its history and symbolism. The exhibit - which is accessible free of charge to all visitors - will be accompanied by audio-visual and printed informational material, to help enhance the visitors’ experience and understanding.

Following its year-long display at the Acropolis Museum, the Cup will be hosted in other venues across the country until 2015. Thereafter, the Cup will be on permanent show at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center.

The Myth of Olympia in Berlin

A magnificent exhibition devoted to the shrine of Ancient Olympia and the ancient Olympic Games was inaugurated on August 30 at Berlin's Martin-Gropius-Bau Museum by Kostantinos Tzavaras, alternate minister of Education, Religious affairs, Culture and Sports.

In his speech, Tzavaras noted that the exhibition was "the largest and most comprehensive to this day," and the "result of a collective effort by people and institutions from a number of countries, who collaborated, demonstrating that culture does bring us together."

Olympia, Myth, Cult, Games boasts more than 1,000 exhibits, showcased in two sections: the first focuses on Olympia's history and political and religious significance, while the second section follows the history of excavations and research in Ancient Olympia.

This is the largest show of Olympic exhibits abroad, as a record of 550 loans from the Olympia Museum, the National Archaeological Museum and the Numismatic Museum are being showcased in the exhibition. The remaining exhibits come from major European institutions, including the Vatican and the Louvre.
All religions have their own dogmas, namely their basic teachings, but also their symbols, those sacred forms and emblems, with which their followers are distinguished, even externally, from non-followers.

In the same way Christianity has its own dogmas and symbols, which are characteristic of its particular spirituality.

However, between dogmas and symbols there must be such a deep correspondence, such an absolute agreement, as to reach the boundaries of identity. Only thus it becomes possible to express in a single word, namely in forms and signs, truths which the teaching of dogmatics should express in whole pages. Even positive sciences do the same. They try to express, in the most abbreviated and symbolic manner, with "mathematical forms" and "graphic figures", truths and laws of nature, which would fill whole pages to analyse theoretically. Therefore, dogmas and symbols are in essence two aspects of the same coin, they are two different ways of expressing the same truth.

After these introductory remarks, let us remind ourselves that September is the month which is marked characteristic- ally by the Elevation of the Precious Cross. The Cross is "the glory of the angels and the wound of the demons", as our Church chants. But precisely because it has this power, the Cross is the most central and the most sacred symbol of Christianity. And we should use symbol par excellence as the key in order to approach correctly not only experiences within the life of the Church which are mystical and beyond reason, but also all the other data within the boundless creation of God. Because, as St Maximus the Confessor characteristically remarked, "the entire creation is in need of the Cross": This means that everything in the world is in need of the Cross, not only for their purification and therefore for their redemption through the trial of the sacrifice of the Cross, but also for their correct examination and evaluation, especially when human logic does no longer see any open way or any meaning whatsoever. Just as in nature the X rays allow us to examine mysteries which we would not be able even to suspect by our mere sight or by other instruments, likewise the Cross enables us to comprehend indefinable and mysterious truths concerning the relation of God with His Creation. Could we not say that the X rays are morphologically the same as the sign of the Cross? Perhaps it is not my chance that what we seek to find in any kind of research we already in advance call by the sign X (the "unknown X"), which is at the same time the sign of the Cross and the initial letter of Christ's name in Greek.

So gradually we come to realise that the Cross is the synonym of Christ. For this reason and after this affirmation, we are in a position to chant: "The Cross is the strength of the Kings, the Cross is the support of the faithful".

It was not the Cross, but also the Cross is the preserver of all the persons, a love among the persons, which is not caused by the Cross but also for their correct examination and evaluation, especially when human logic does no longer see any open way or any meaning whatsoever. Just as in nature the X rays allow us to examine mysteries which we would not be able even to suspect by our mere sight or by other instruments, likewise the Cross enables us to comprehend indefinable and mysterious truths concerning the relation of God with His Creation. Could we not say that the X rays are morphologically the same as the sign of the Cross? Perhaps it is not by chance that what we seek to find in any kind of research we already in advance call by the sign X (the "unknown X”), which is at the same time the sign of the Cross and the initial letter of Christ’s name in Greek.

So gradually we come to realise that the Cross is the synonym of Christ. For this reason and after this affirmation, we are in a position to chant: "The Cross is the strength of the Kings, the Cross is the support of the faithful". Without the power and the grace of “Him who was spread on it”, namely without relating it to Christ, the Cross was the instrument of capital execution under the Romans, a weapon of dishonoured extermination of those convicted. It was not the “all respectful” mood; it was not the “preserver of all the world”. Yet since the time when Christ spread His spotless hands on the Cross and “united what was formerly divided”, the Cross became the tangible and conspicuous symbol of the most unheard of sacrifice, of the most sacrificial love, of the deepest reconciliation between God and man, and by extension among the whole creation. The Cross thus became the meeting point in an undivided union - on account of the two natures of the God-man - of the inexpressible condescension of God with the extreme humility and obedience of man.

The four hands of the Cross symbolise God’s love towards all directions of Creation. This most powerful love of the Cross is affirmed by His Sacrifice on the Cross, since the whole universe - in its entirety and even in its finer details - was created in Christ. The Evangelist John tells us on this point: “Everything was created through Him, and not one thing in all creation was made without Him” (John 1, 3). For this reason the sign of the Cross is the "seal of the gift" of the Holy Spirit on every creature of God, since the world - according to the classic form of Christian cosmology - was created by the Father, through the son, in the Holy Spirit.

However, speaking of these mystical dimensions, which the most sacred symbol of the Cross has, as the expression of God’s boundless love for man and for the world, we led ourselves almost automatically to the Trinitarian dogma of the Church. This happens not accidentally, but most naturally and because of the course of events themselves. Because, since the Cross is the most central symbol of Christianity, it could not but reflect the most basic and the most fundamental dogma of Christianity, namely the dogma concerning the Holy Trinity. With this dogma as the cornerstone, Christianity distinguishes itself from all the other religions, even from its most related ones, as for instance, Judaism. Just as the Cross of Christ is "a scandal to Jews, and a folly to the Gentiles" (1 Cor. 1, 23), likewise the God of Holy Trinity is equally a provocation, a scandal and a folly to human logic, which cannot understand how the same God is "unconfused Unity and undivided Trinity", to use again the formulation of St Maximus. No one will ever be able to express in human words the mystery of why the Christian God is three persons, but one essence. God Himself revealed this mystery to us in order to show us His love, because "God is love" (John 4, 8). But love can be present only where there exists a free participation of the persons in the same essence, in the same mystery, in the same energies, simulta-
There is a point in the liturgy each Sunday when the priest announces, “And the mercies of our Great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, shall be with you.” At this time, the congregation stands but you will probably note that some are much slower than others. A few wait to take their lead from those in front of them like ducklings following their mother. Most are oblivious and remained chained to their seats.

Imagine that after all these “hardships”, as Joe Hildebrand admires from our history would still be there. They are the Byzantines who prevailed at the Eastern part of the Byzantine Empire, the Romans, the Catalans, the Florentines, The Venetians and the Turks really well.

The second thing is that by no means did the Greek culture cease to exist 2,500 years ago. The Greek civilization continued until nowadays, it kept evolving, flourishing and offering a lot to the rest of the world. In fact, Joe Hildebrand admires from our history would still be there. They are the Byzantines who prevailed at the Eastern part of the Byzantine Empire, the Romans, the Catalans, the Florentines, The Venetians and the Turks really well.

First of all because of the very simplifying and, at the same time, distorted way history is presented. The author of the article needs to be reminded that the ancient Macedonians were Greeks as were the Athenians, the Spartans, the Corinthians and so many others as well. And their language was the Greek language as can be easily understood if you look at coins dating at that period and so were the Byzantines who prevailed at the Eastern part of the Roman Empire after the Romans. Having said that about all the above-mentioned Greeks, it is for others to explain to your journalist who the Romans, the Byzantines, The Catalans, The Florentines, The Venetians and the Turks really were.

As for me, even 10 years later whenever I hear the words: “And the mercies of our Great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, shall be with you” I always recall his example to that past: one only needs to visit the recently inaugurated Acropolis Museum (2009) and the modern Metropolitan Rail System - that runs through the biggest part of the underground of Athens, transporting thousands of Greeks and tourists everyday and in fact hosting whole museums in its stations (i.e. Syntagma, Acropolis, Panepistimiou, Keramikos) at the same time - to understand what I mean by all the above-mentioned Greeks, it is for others to explain to your journalist who the Romans, the Byzantines, The Catalans, The Florentines, The Venetians and the Turks really were.

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Greece recognised for achievements in cultural heritage conservation and dedicated service

Each year, Europa Nostra, a member-based organisation whose mission is to safeguard Europe’s cultural heritage, recognizes achievements in this area with its annual European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage/ Europa Nostra Awards. The award “celebrates excellence and dedication by architects, craftsmen, volunteers, schools, local communities, heritage owners and media.”

This year 28 winners were selected from among 226 submitted projects from 31 countries. The awards are split into four categories - conservation, research, dedicated service, and education, training and awareness raising. Each category has its own specialist jury, composed of independent experts from across Europe.

Greece was amongst the top winners this year, receiving four distinctions: three in the category “conservation” and one in the category “dedicated service.”

Over 1200 people and dignitaries attended the awards ceremony that took place on June 1st, at the majestic Jerónimos Monastery in Lisbon, a world heritage site. The ceremony marked the 10th anniversary of the awards. Hosting the event were Maestro Plácido Domingo, President of Europa Nostra and Ms. Androula Vassiliou, European Commissioner responsible for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth. “I would like to warmly congratulate this year’s winners for reminding us of our wonderfully rich and varied heritage that we should never take for granted. It is in our trust for future generations,” said Commissioner Vassiliou.

In the category “Conservation”, Greece received the following awards for:

1. The Averof Building - School of Architecture, National Technical University
   According to Europa Nostra: “The conservation project of the Averof Building has been awarded as an excellent example of a fine and sophisticated restoration and renovation intervention, on a building that constitutes one of the most important creations of European Neoclassicism, directly influencing in its design by the Monuments of the Athenian Acropolises.”

2. Ancient Citadel at Aghios Andreas, Sifnos
   According to Europa Nostra: “The archaeological conservation project at Aghios Andreas was much impressed by the altruistic approach of the Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation, and praised the important work done to grant derelict heritage buildings a second life by transforming them into regional museums, well suited to attract the public at large... It is an excellent example of the creation and management of museums in the Greek regions, while also ensuring sustainability and supporting regional development.”

3. Windmills of the Monastery of St. John the Theologian, Patmos
   According to Europa Nostra: “... Among the windmills, the jury agreed that this group in Patmos was outstanding in the detail and completeness of its restoration, and in the imaginative uses to which each mill was to be put for future production or education. As a group, the three form an integral part of the island’s aesthetic...”

In the category “Dedicated Service”, Greece won the award for:

The Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation, Athens
According to Europa Nostra: “The Jury was much impressed by the altruistic approaches of the Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation, and praised the important work done to grant derelict heritage buildings a second life by transforming them into regional museums, well suited to attract the public at large... It is an excellent example of the creation and management of museums in the Greek regions, while also ensuring sustainability and supporting regional development.”

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In the category “Dedicated Service”, Greece won the award for:

The Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation, Athens
According to Europa Nostra: “The Jury was much impressed by the altruistic approaches of the Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation, and praised the important work done to grant derelict heritage buildings a second life by transforming them into regional museums, well suited to attract the public at large... It is an excellent example of the creation and management of museums in the Greek regions, while also ensuring sustainability and supporting regional development.”
The Greek Australian VEMA

ST EUPHEDIA COLLEGE DONATIONS
OPENING CEREMONY – BER PROJECT
26 AUGUST 2012

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Gold Key: Mr Nick & Mrs Anna Plomari
Silver Key: Mr Nick & Mrs Anna Plomari
Bronze Key: Mr Tim & Mrs Amelia Stathis
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Mrs Theodora Rapti
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TOTAL $163,124

The Year 7/8 Transition Canberra trip was an outstanding success! Highlights included the National Gallery, Questacon, the High Court of Australia, the Australian Institute of Sport, Parliament House, the National Portrait Gallery, the Australian War Memorial, the National Film and Sound Archive, the Electoral Commission, the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, Government House and last but not least - a day in the snow at Perisher Blue! The students were wonderful ambassadors of the school and were all presented with a certificate of participation at the Secondary School assembly on Friday 27 July. I would like to thank and acknowledge MS Laura Nicholson for her excellent co-ordination of the trip and Mr Mark Williamson for his excellent support. The trip will be offered again in 2013 (Saturday 29 June to Thursday 4 July)

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia
Greek Orthodox Parish & Community of Bankstown

ST Andrew's Grammar (WA)

Year 7/8 Canberra Trip

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Australian Government assistance for National Capital Excursion

Students from our school have recently undertaken an educational tour of the national capital. While on this tour they participated in a variety of educational programs focused on Australia’s history, culture, heritage and democracy.

The Australian Government recognises the importance of all young Australians being able to visit their National Capital as part of their civic and citizenship education. To assist the parents in meeting the cost of the excursion, the Australian Government is contributing funding of $240 per eligible student under the parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER) program toward the travel expenses incurred.

This contribution will be paid directly to the school upon completion of the excursion. We would like to thank the Australian Government for their support of this program. The tour was a rewarding experience for all students.

Mrs Maria Coate
Head of Secondary School
St Andrew’s Grammar

Minoan mansion unearthed on Crete

British archaeologist Sir Arthur Evans noted in his diary over a century ago that the architectural traits of construction materials found at an altitude of 900 metres in Gaidoroufas, in the area of Anoiti, Ierapetra, in southeast Crete, pointed to the presence of a Minoan construction in the area.

Today, the building, which according to initial reports could be described as a Minoan mansion, is gradually resurfacing thanks to a five-year Athens University research program. Besides the actual residue, archaeologists are also examining the personal belongings left behind by the mansion’s ancient residents and looking into possible reasons for their sudden departure.

The new discovery, archaeologists hope, will provide clues with regard to the way natural resources were used by the Minoans in mountainous areas and the importance of mountains in the Minoan economy in general. The only other excavation related to the same period and of a higher altitude is located on the Zanninths plateau in the foothills of Mt Psiloritis, where initial findings point to the existence of a mountain economy largely diversified from the agricultural activity of the Kissosos and Phaistos settlements.
ST SPYRIDON COLLEGE

Sports Presentation Evening
4th September 2012

Mrs Amelia Katsogiannis, Principal Senior School and MC

The Hon Kristina Keneally, CEO Basketball Australia, Keynote Speaker

Mrs Aristea Synesios, Deputy Principal Junior School

The Hon Kristina Keneally with Sports Captains, Kostandino Baratsas and Erin Criticos

Mr Elia Economou, Parish President and Chairman of the Board of Directors presents to the Junior School Swimming Age Champions

The Hon Kristina Keneally presents to the Junior School ASISSA Representatives

Mr Conrad Nissirios presents to the NSW Girls 10yrs Futsal Champions along with their coach Mr Peter Meintanis, Dean of Senior Programs

Mr Ben Keneally presents to the NSW Under 14s Boys Futsal Regional Champions

Father Steven Scoutas presents to the Senior Individual Sports Awards recipients

The Hon Kristina Keneally together with Father Steven Scoutas presents to the Senior School Sportsmen/women of the Year

Mayor of City of Randwick, Cr Scott Nash presents to the ISA Junior B Netball Premiers

Pierre de Coubertin Award presented to Erin Criticos by Mr Con Pavlou, Senior Relationship Manager, Bank of Cyprus

Developing Mind, Body & Soul
The Holy Monastery of Saint George and Panagia of Yellow Rock

By Andrew Mellas

Monasteries ‘came into being even in the mountains and the desert’ was made a city by monks.’ (Saint Athanasius, Life of Saint Antony)

A declaration made centuries ago about monks living in Egypt can echo through space and time, finding its way to the Antipodes, heading the soil of a small village known as Yellow Rock, where since a humble monastery has stood for half a century. The desire to withdraw from the urban life of a city into the solitude of the wilderness is not confined to the Christian tradition. But following in the footsteps of Christ, who was led by the Spirit into the wilderness for forty days, and luminous saints such as Saint Antony the Great and Saint Pachomius, who established monasticism and asceticism in the sands of the Egyptian desert, Christianity has long since embraced the monastic life as the ultimate form of striving towards salvation. In fact, at the very heart of monasticism is a profoundly felt understanding of what it means to cultivate and keep the earth (Genesis 2:15).

Monks know the significance of what it is to be bur- glarized, to dwell in the church, not unlike a mother’s child in her womb. Like grapes on a vine, they do not move much at all, but the process of viticulture is not left to chance. Nor was she ever abandoned. She has never ceased and does not cease being close to us through her ceaseless intercessions, even if it were not for the encouragement and blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos.

The Orthodox celebrate the Holy Archan- gel Michael on September 29th each year. The Orthodox VEMA’s traditional service on this day serves as a landmark event and a moment to pause in the fulfillment of the Orthodox’s love for the monastery.

The Most Holy Theotokos with her reply to the Virgin Mary. The latter will house the icon of the Virgin Mary. The former will house the icon of the Holy Archan- gel Michael.

The VEMA’s event of September 29th has had a special place in his heart for the monastery since its early stages when the katholikon (central church of a monastery) of Saint George and a simple building were the only forms of architecture on the grounds of the monastery. It has slowly flourished ever since then. Today, having passed through the main entrance, one can see a majestic monastic building. The path leads down to a set of majestic doors nestled amongst a towering stone archway and winding walk of manicured rocks.

The katholikon (central church of a monastery) of Saint George as it stands today.

Left: Article in the local newspaper on His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos’ official visit to the Blue Mountains in 1976. Centre: Snippet from one of the early Diocesan celebrated at the Holy Monastery of St George.

The Holy Monastery of Saint George and Panagia of Yellow Rock

In 1962, the then Archbishop Ezekiel and Fr Mihalides Chrissoglo tallied the very first Divine Liturgy at the monastery. It was during the forty-day period after Pascha when the chanting of ‘Christ is risen’ was continued. It was a time of increasing old age and a sense of exhaustion. The joyous paschal hymns and the many faithful who watched over the iconostasis transfigures the very land-

Many of the wondrous landscapes in the Blue Moun- tains are replete with landscapes that mark the earth’s motherly ways. After all, Australia is far more than a natural landscape, it is a cultural, imag- inary and even mystical landscape that has been expe- rience the by traditions of their own, those by whom it is governed and by those who have shaped the country into an imagination nation. Its very name — ‘Blue Mountains’ — has it origins in the Blue Line on the mountains when the range is viewed from a dis- tance. The Blue Mountains is a natural phenomenon. It is the Blue Mountain that watches over the town of Katoomba and what is today Singles Ridge Road was for the most part dirt road. There were only few farms.

In 1962, the then Archbishop Ezekiel and Fr Mihalides Chrissoglo celebrated the very first Divine Liturgy at the monastery. It was during the forty-day period after Pascha when the chanting of ‘Christ is risen’ was continued. It was a time of increasing old age and a sense of exhaustion. The joyous paschal hymns and the many faithful who watched over the iconostasis transfigures the very land-

At the age of 82, Fr Theoklytos Tsachourides retired, having served the monastery for five years, Fr Victor Penel for fourteen years, Fr Constantine Christou for 18 years, Fr Victor Penel for five years, Fr Theodore Tsachourides for three years, and occasionally Fr Mihalides Chrissoglo. The present abbot of the monastery, Fr Konstantinos Serevan- kian, arrived on the 8th of November 1997; the day the Orthodox celebrate the Synaxis of the Holy Archan- gels.

Panagia of Yellow Rock

In 2012, to coincide with its 50th anniversary celebration, the Holy Monastery of Saint George in Yellow Rock commissioned the creation of the icon of Panagia of Yellow Rock by the iconographer Peter Stefanovic. The initiative was made possible with the blessing of the primates of the Greek Orthodox Church in Australia, His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos. It is an unprece- dented event for the world’s smallest continent and one that bears sacred significance. His Eminence Archbish- op Stylianos also gave the blessing for the composition of a special service and supplicatory canon dedicated to Panagia of Yellow Rock, which were written by the hymnographer and Metropolitan of Rhodes, His Emi- nence Cyril Kogerakis.

Today, with the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos and the continuing support of the faithful, the monastery has come full circle. The role played by the Virgin Mary in the monastic life has been especially pronounced.

The Holy Monastery of Saint George and Panagia of Yellow Rock

The Genesis of the Monastery

More than 10 years now, the Holy Monastery of Saint George and Panagia of Yellow Rock was established in Australia. It is a place of great spiritual and cul- tural significance for all Orthodox Christians.

In the early 1900s, the Patriarch of Alexandria in Egypt was highly impressed by the landscape of the Yellow Rock. He promised to send a group of monks to establish a monastery in the region. In the early 1960s, an icon of Panagia was found in Athens, which was transported to Australia and was enshrined in the new monastery.

The Holy Monastery of Saint George and Panagia of Yellow Rock

It was at the suggestion of the Orthodox community that the idea of the monastery was first expressed. These communities were encouraged to purchase a property for the purpose of building a monastery. The purchase of a property was considered a key step in the development of the monastery.

The Holy Monastery of Saint George and Panagia of Yellow Rock

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                      Flora Glannakos
PARALEGAL: Trent Rogaris

Focus Business Centre
Suite 3, 30 Cowper Street
Parramatta NSW 2150

Genesis Offices
Level 1, 299 Elizabeth St
Sydney NSW 2000
The village of Riechia, in the Monemvasia municipality, recently welcomed home Tom Kokkoris who is on a bicycle tour of three continents to raise funds for the Elpida (which is Greek for “hope”) Cancer Hospital for Children. His fellow Greek-Australians - Tom has lived in Sydney since childhood - joined with vacationers and the citizens of Riechia and the surrounding Zarakas region to see him cycle into his home town at the end of the European leg of his trip that has taken in America, Portugal and Spain.

A welcoming ceremony was held in the little theatre in the forecourt of the primary school where Tom began his first school year before his mother took him and his siblings to join their father in Australia. Over 500 people filled the theatre to hear Tom’s stories of his travels. He has a personal interest in his cause, having lost members of his own family to cancer. His particular interest is in supporting hospitals that care for cancer patients, particularly children.

So far he has collected US$50,000 from diaspora Greeks and other supporters. A bank account (see below) has been opened in Greece to collect donations. The Monemvasia municipal council has made a donation of 1,000 euros. At the welcoming ceremony, the Riechia cultural association sold T-shirts for 10 euros each, the proceeds from the sale going to the Elpida hospital.

Niarchos Foundation donates 10m euros to needy

One of the country’s biggest charitable foundations is donating 10m euros to alleviate the plight of children and families hardest hit by the economic crisis.

The Stavros Niarchos Foundation said that 4.5m euros will go towards funding for day-care centres for children and babies. This will allow an additional 3,000 children to attend daycare.

The foundation will also donate 5.3 million euro to Pro-lipsia, a non-profit organisation, in order to support a food aid and dietary training programme in schools during the coming school year. The programme was first launched in 34 state primary and secondary schools in April in the poorest regions of Attica and Thessaloniki and provided one free - snack to 6,272 school children each day.

This year, with the assistance of the Foundation, the programme will be rolled out to meet the needs of at least 18,000 children in state schools.

Finally, 200,000 euros will go to Mission Anthropos, another non-profit organisation, for the vaccination of Greek and immigrant children living in poverty or lacking health insurance.

Students excel at Astro Olympiad

Greek students excelled in the 6th International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics (IOAA) which took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on August 4-14, 2012.

All five members of the Greek delegation at the contest received distinctions: Emmanouil Vourliotis won a silver medal - a first for Greece in an IOAA competition - Kostas Marouda and Ioanna Kourkoulou won bronze and Efthymis - Akivias Prapas and Paraskevas Tzitzimpasis both received honourable mentions.

The students had been meticulously trained in July by a group of astronomers and physicists.

Hellenic Republic President Karolos Papoulias sent the team a congratulatory telegram expressing his “optimism for Greece’s future thanks to its young people.”

Greece: A Quality flag state

The Greek merchant fleet has once again fully qualified for the United States Coast Guard’s (USCG) QUALSHIP 21 listing for 2012-2013.

According to data released on August 21, Greece is among the few Quality Flag States that have fully met the demanding quality standards set by the United States Coastguard to retain the prestigious Qualship 21 award.

Since 2001, the Qualship 21 initiative provides positive rewards to high-quality merchant vessels from qualifying registries, extending recognition to those ships that demonstrate an excellent safety and pollution prevention record. In addition, ships in the Qualship 21 system are required to undergo significantly less Port State Control inspections by the USCG whilst in US waters.

Greeks-Australian round the world cyclist arrives in Riechia - Monemvasia

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All donations made will go towards the building of the chapel of Panagia of Yellow Rock

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Donations may be made to the Elpida Association via the National Bank of Greece, account no. 080/480978-54 IBAN GR 3801100 8000000 8048097854.
**CHILDHOOD IMMUNISATION**

The Australian Government makes the funding decisions for the Australian Vaccination Schedule as recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia (NHMRC). While the decisions are made at a national level as The National Immunisation Program there are variations in how the vaccines are delivered in each state.

In this article I will deal with how the vaccines are delivered in NSW.

In this article I will discuss immunisation generally, including a brief synopsis of the nature of diseases we immunise for in Children, and the benefits of immunisation.

The new vaccines in NSW are:

- **HB-Vax II**
- **RotaT佐**
- **Prevenar 13**
- **Varilrix**

HB-Vax II

This is a Hepatitis B vaccine and is given to newborn babies under eight days of age. Hepatitis B is also given at 2.4 and 6 months of age as part of Infanrix - Hexa.

RotaT佐

RotaT佐 is a human, live attenuated vaccine that helps to protect children against gastro-enteritis (diarrhoea and vomiting) caused by rotavirus infection.

Prevenar 13

Prevenar is a pneumococcal vaccine. Prevenar was replaced by Prevenar 13 on the National Immunisation program on 1 July 2011.

Prevenar 13 protects against 13 strains of pneumococcal disease 4, 6B, 9V, 14, 18C, 19F 23F which are the seven strains the original Prevenar protected against plus an additional seven strains 1, 5, 7F, 3, 6A, 19A.

These vaccines protect against a bacterium known as pneumococcus or streptococcus pneumonia which causes ear infections and more serious invasive diseases such as pneumonia, septicaemia and meningitis.

Infanrix-hexa

Australia’s first six-in-one vaccine is given to all children at 2, 4 and 6 months of age.

Infanrix-hexa protects against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, hepatitis B, Haemophilus influenza type B and poliomyelitis.

Infanrix IPV

This is given to all children at 4 years of age.

Infanrix IPV protects against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and poliomyelitis.

Inactivated polio vaccine (IPV)

IPV is included in the combination vaccine Infanrix-hexa and Infanrix IPV and is given as part of the Infanrix-hexa vaccine injection at 2.4 and 6 months and as part of the Infanrix-IPV vaccine and at 4 years of age.

This vaccine replaced the Oral polo vaccine which is no longer given in Australia.

Hiberix

Hiberix is the monovalent Hib vaccine used as the booster for Haemophilus influenza type B in the NSW schedule and should be administered just after the 12 month birthday.

Priorix

Priorix is a live vaccine used to protect against three viruses Measles,Mumps and Rubella. The vaccine sometimes called MMR. Children are given two doses of this vaccine. The first dose is given at 12 months and a booster is given at 4 years.

Varilrix

Varilrix is the varicella (chicken pox) vaccine used in NSW and is administered to children at 18 months of age.

What is immunisation?

Immunisation is a simple, safe and effective way of protecting children against harmful disease, before they come into contact with them in the community. Immunisation means to receive a vaccine and for the body to mount an immune response to the vaccine. That is, when a person is injected with or swallows a vaccine, their body responds in the same way it would following natural exposure to the disease, but without getting the disease.

Therefore, if the person comes in contact with the disease in the future, the body is prepared and able to respond to that disease quickly enough to prevent the person getting sick.

**What is a vaccine?**

The dictionary definition of a vaccine is a suspension of dead, attenuated, or otherwise modified microorganisms for inoculation to produce immunity to a disease by stimulating the production of antibodies. Vaccines vary in their make up. Some vaccines contain a small amount of killed bacteria and some a small amount of modified toxin in which is produced by the bacteria. The vaccines have other additives. Some contain small amounts of preservatives or antibiotics to preserve the vaccine and some contain an aluminium salt which helps enhance the immune response.

The terms vaccination and immunisation are often confused. Vaccination is the term used for giving the vaccine and immunisation is the process for mounting the immune response.

How long do immunisations take to work?

Immunisation does not immediately protect the person from the disease. The normal immune response may take several weeks after vaccination and so it may be several weeks before protection occurs.

To build long-lasting protection, a child needs to be given a course of the vaccine and the time of subsequent doses is different for different vaccines. A child who has not completed the course for a particular vaccine is not fully protected and the course can vary depending on the age at which the child starts.

Does immunisation always work?

Even when a course has been completed, immunisation may not give complete protection.

Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Tetanus, Polio and Haemophilus influenzae Hib vaccines protect more than 95% of children who have completed the course.

However, if the vaccine doesn’t give complete protection, it will certainly reduce the severity of the disease. Three doses of the Whooping Cough or Pertussis Vaccine will protect 75% to 85% of children who have been immunised. The remaining 15% of children who are immunised, if they do contract the disease, should receive a less severe dose of the disease.

The effect of immunisation is not always life-long and so for some vaccines a booster dose is required.

**Diseases we immunise against**

**TETANUS**

Tetanus is an often fatal disease caused by a bacteria which releases a toxin which attacks the nervous system causing muscle spasms usually first felt in the neck and jaw muscles causing "lockjaw". It can cause breathing difficulties, convulsions and cardiac arrhythmias. Tetanus is present in soil and manure and enters the body from a wound in the skin which may be the size of a pin prick. Tetanus is rare in children today because of immunisation, but it still occurs in previously unimmunised adults.

**WHOOPING COUGH / PERTUSSIS**

Whooping Cough also known as Pertussis is a highly contagious bacterial disease. It is spread by coughing or sneezing. Pertussis attacks the airways and causes breathing difficulties. The child has severe coughing spasms, and will gasp for breath between spasms. This gasping causes the characteristic "Whooping" sound. Complications of Whooping Cough can include convulsions, pneumonia, inflammation of the brain and permanent brain and lung damage.

**POLIO**

Polio is a severe viral infection of the nervous system. It causes paralysis of...
cont. from previous page

parts of the body. Since the introduction of polio vaccines, there has been a dramatic reduction in polio infection. There has not been a case of polio reported in Australia since 1986.

HEPATITIS B This is a serious disease caused by a virus that affects the liver. The Hepatitis B virus is transmitted in infected body fluids including blood, saliva and semen. Babies whose mothers have Hepatitis B are at high risk of being infected at birth. When a person gets the disease, they may only have mild symptoms or no symptoms at all, but many will go on to carry the virus for many years. Twenty five percent of the people who carry this virus will go on to develop cirrhosis of the liver or liver cancer in later life.

MEASLES Measles is a serious, highly contagious viral illness which causes fever, rash, runny nose, cough and conjunctivitis. Complications of measles include pneumonia and encephalitis. A very serious but rare illness called Subacute Sclerosing Panencephalitis (SSPE) can occur in children several years after measles infection. SSPE is a disease which rapidly destroys the brain and always results in death.

MUMPS This is a viral disease which causes inflammation of the salivary glands. It can cause meningitis and encephalitis. Mumps can cause permanent deafness and in adolescent and adult males it can cause infertility.

RUBELLA Rubella, also known as German Measles, is a mild disease of childhood. It is highly contagious. Congenital rubella infection is a serious problem. This is where infection during the first twenty weeks of pregnancy can result in serious defects in the newborn including deafness, blindness, congenital heart disease and mental retardation.

HAEMOPHILUS INFLUENZAE TYPE B (Hib) This is a bacterial infection which can cause life-threatening illnesses in children under five years of age. In addition to causing pneumonia and joint infection, Haemophilus influenzae Type B can cause swelling in the throat of the epiglottis (epiglottitis) which can obstruct breathing and also cause meningitis. In children both these conditions can develop quickly and if not treated, will cause death.

MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE This is a serious disease caused by the bacteria meningococcus. It is spread by droplet infection. There is a vaccine for the C strain of the disease. Meningococcal disease is an uncommon but potentially life-threatening infection that causes meningitis and septicemia.

PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE This is a serious disease caused by the bacteria pneumococcus. It can cause diseases such as ear infections (otitis media) or more serious disease such as pneumonia, septicemia and meningitis.

VARICELLA / CHICKEN POX This is a mild but highly contagious viral disease. The virus responsible for Chicken Pox is known as Variella Zoster. Chicken Pox usually causes a mild illness in children with complete recovery. More serious complications of Chicken Pox include encephalitis and pneumonia.

ROTAVIRUS Rotavirus causes serious gastroenteritis in children.

Common side effects of immunisation

Many children may experience minor side effects after immunisation. These side effects may include low grade fever, being unsettled, grizzly, generally unhappy, sore-ness or redness or swelling at the injection site. Measles, Mumps, Rubella vaccination may cause a head cold, runny nose, faint rash, fever or joint pains and swelling of the facial glands.

These symptoms may be concerning and cause the child discomfort, but the minor adverse effects of these immunisations by far outweigh the risks of the disease.

Generally speaking, if these symptoms do occur, it is important to give the child extra fluids to drink, not to overdress the child, and to give paracetamol to lower the fever.

Other side effects may occur and if you are concerned you should discuss these with your doctor at the time of immunisation.

What your Doctor needs to know before your child is immunised

The doctor needs to know if your child is unwell or has had a severe reaction to a previous vaccine, or has severe allergies.

If your child has had a live vaccine with- in the previous month such as Tuberculo-sis, MMR, or poliomyelitis (no longer given in Australia) or yellow fever vaccine or an injection of immunoglobulin or a transfusion with whole blood, the vaccination may need to be delayed.

The doctor should be advised if the child has a disease which lowers immunity or is having treatment which lowers immunity from the use of corticosteroids or prednisone, radiotherapy or chemotherapy.

Certain medical conditions affecting the brain or spinal cord may mean the immunisation may be given in a different way.

The benefits of immunisation

Immunisation does not only provide a safe and effective way of giving protection against disease. It also provides the advantage that if enough people in the community are immunised, the infection can no longer spread from person to person and the disease dies out altogether.

This is how Small Pox was eradicated from the world and why Polio has disappeared from many countries including Aus-tralia.

Immunisation is there to protect your child.

Talk to your doctor today about the benefits of immunisation.

* The information given in this article is of a general nature and readers should seek advice from their own medical practitioner before embarking on any treatment.

Oakleigh Grammar (VIC) held its inaugural Leadership Day in our Conference Centre which was the culmination of over two years of teaching academics and 21st Century Life Skills through the unique process catch phrased “The Leader in Me”.

Over 150 parents and officials, including Mayor Stephanie Perri, The Honourable Ann Barker MP, N. Theos Zographos and members from other schools and the Independent Schools of Victoria participated in what was an amazing exhibition of student leadership from all the students in Junior School (ELC-Year Five).

Five year student leaders planned, prepared and executed this day and showcased their knowledge of Dr. Stephen Covey’s highly acclaimed work “7 Habits of Highly Effective People” and other leadership skills being explicitly taught now at our School. They greeted guests upon arrival, registered their attendance, escorted them to their seats and assisted with morning tea too, all from students under 12 years old.

At Oakleigh Grammar, we are developing leaders of faith, integrity and community spirit by transforming how we focus on curriculum. We are now teaching academics through the lenses of character and life skills, by modelling the 7 Habits, as educators and embedding the leadership theme in everything we do. Curriculum, traditions, environment and systems all integrate these timeless principles that govern human relationships and this is rapidly transforming the culture and progress of our School. Parents were thrilled to see their Year 5 children begin with prayer, acknowledge the ancestors of the land, and introduce their Principal and dignitaries to the stage. They then went on to explain what they have learnt, and performed wonderful and entertaining skits, from Prep to Year 4 - all exhibiting their leadership skills whilst integrating the 7 Habits and having fun at the same time. It was a day filled with joy and excitement. High Tea was sensational with our students assisting with the event and then the Year Five student leader tour guides were confident enough to take over 150 guests to designated parts of their school where they explained what we do, why we do it and the amazing results we are having.

The day concluded at 12:30pm with the Year Fours performing “Snow White and the 7 Habits” - feedback has described the event as a day that has been a milestone in the history of Oakleigh Grammar. Even from the inception of the school. We are so proud to be part of this journey with our young people. We are changing the face of education. The best is yet to come.

Our journey honours the legacy of the founder of our School, Father Nicholas Moutafis who was a leader in every sense of the word.

Kathy Haramis
The Leader in Me Facilitator
Mr Mark Robertson
Principal
The Crown of Monarchy

Amongst the hymns we sang at the Anglican secondary school in England, which was lumbered with the unenviable task of trying to educate me, one of my favourites began: “Crown him with many crowns, / The Lamb upon his throne.” The words derive from the vision of God’s servant and the Apostle, John the Presbyter or neither need not concern us) recorded in Revelation. The Apocalypse in which the visionary sees the rider of a white horse, Christ, adorned with many crowns/diadems. Symbols can have many meanings, but let us try to throw some light on the rich symbolism of crowns and crownings.

Human beings are unique in that they habitually walk upright (so do chimps, gorillas and such, but they also walk on all fours.) Our upright stance enables us to inhale oxygen from above and below, which connects our earthly being with things that are heavenly. The crown of the head is thus regarded as the pinnacle of the entire body, the first and principal member which symbolically represents or comprehends the totality of the personhood of the individual. In Antiquity, the encircling of the crown of the head with a wreath was thought to protect the person from evil and was regarded as a necessary condition for prayer. To crown an individual with a wreath was also common as a mark of supreme honour, an acknowledgement that the crowned one is to be separated out from the throng by virtue of their outstanding achievements or authority. Thus wreaths of leaves and/or flowers were placed on the heads of emperors, conquering generals and winners of athletic games or poetry contests. The victor at the Ancient Olympic Games was always crowned with olive, as the plant was sacred to Hercules. Homo sapiens is, of course, one of the primates. We contain within our bodies, as do all organisms, genes which carry the whole history of our biological ancestry. Yet we are, the Bible and the Church teach, the pinnacle of creation; collectively we, the only surviving species of the genus Homo, are the monarch of the Animal Kingdom, made in the image of God. (The term “Kingdom” of biological taxonomy is, indeed, a telling one.) As the author of Hebrews puts it, quoting Psalm 8 in the Septuagint version: “What is man that thou art mindful of him, / or the son of man, that thou carest for him? / Thou didst make him for a little while lower than the angels, / thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, / putting everything in subjection under his feet” (Hebrews 2: 6-8a KSV).

The crown worn by a monarch signifies that he or she is acknowledged as the first amongst the people and enjoys supreme authority. It also signifies that the monarch is understood to be the embodiment of the whole people. Hence a distinction is made between the natural body and the body politic of the monarch, the latter being signified by the crown. While the natural body of the monarch dies, the body politic never dies; “The King is dead, long live the King.”

Today there are no Byzantine Emperors or even Russian Tsars, but those who have seen footage of the Coronation of Elizabeth II will have witnessed a very similar rite to that of an Orthodox monarch. The sacramental sign is not in fact the crowning but the anointing of the monarch with chrism, as Kings were anointed with oil in the Old Testament. The crowning as such is the symbol of recognition that the monarch consecrated by the Holy Spirit through anointing is indeed to be honoured and obeyed as first amongst the people.

So back to Revelation. Why did John in vision see Christ crowned with many crowns? Perhaps the obvious answer is the best. Earthly monarchs are crowned with a single crown, but Christ is the King of Kings. The consecration of the hands of the Church imbues the monarch with divine grace to rule as viceregent of Christ. Christian monarchs, therefore, do not, from a theological perspective, owe their crowns to the laws of the State, by virtue of which they were proclaimed as monarch, but to the King of Kings, Christ. This might be reflected in John’s vision in Revelation 4 of the twenty-four elders who cast their golden crowns in homage before the throne of God iv:10:

While unlike the Catholic Church (since 1929) the Orthodox Church has no explicit festival of Christ the King, the concept of the universal monarchy of Christ is ubiquitous in both liturgy and iconography. There is, indeed, an extremely common icon that is frequently placed to the right of the gates of the iconostasis depicting Christ enthroned and vested as an emperor. However, there is an equivocation about this icon of the crowned Christ since imperial vestments came to be assumed by Orthodox bishops. It is not surprising, therefore, that this familiar icon is known by two names, “The King of Kings” and “The High Priest.” The Epistle to the Hebrews frequently refers to Christ as High Priest and so it might be argued that it is as legitimate to depict Him vested as a High Priest as it is as a monarch. But isn’t there something slightly “iffy” about portraying Christ as an emperor or crowning him in a Bishop’s mitre? It is recorded that St Martin of Tours had a dream in which a figure who purported to be Christ appeared and told the fourth-century saint that he would divulge the date of the Second Coming to him. But then Martin noticed that the apparition was at-

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The Crown of Thorns

The only crown Jesus wore was not the crown of a monarch or the mitre of a high priest/bishop but the crown of thorns painfully forced down on His head in mockery by the soldiers. The icon which depicts Christ at this critical moment, before He is forced to carry the cross is a most appropriate one to contemplate at this time when we celebrate the Great Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, at which the Passion of Christ according to John is chanted as the Gospel at the Divine Liturgy.

Monday through Wednesday of Holy Week is known as the Days of the Bridegroom from Christ's parable of the wise and foolish virgins of the wedding feast (Matthew 25:1-13). The Bridegroom of the parable is Christ Himself. The paradox is that it was through His Passion that Christ effected the mystic marriage with His bride, the Church. The Crown of Glory of the risen and ascended Lord is one and the same as the Crown of Thorns of His Passion. There is a marriage feast to which we are invited, and of which the Eucharist is a type, the Messianic marriage feast of the Kingdom, the marriage of the sacrificial Paschal Lamb, Christ Revelation 19.5-9.

Probably the best known Nymphios icon is that of the Monastery of St John the Theologian on the island of Patmos. This powerful icon depicts Christ with the Crown of Thorns and fully covered in the robe of imperial purple with which He was clothed by the soldiers. At the famous Patmian liturgical drama of the Washing of the Feet on Holy Thursday the icon is presented for veneration by the Abbot, who represents Christ in the enactment. There are good grounds for believing that this icon is an early work by the great Cretan painter known as El Greco (Domenikos Theotokopoulos) 1541-1614.

The Pantanassa Monastery on Mangrove Mountain its parelial purple with which He was clothed and pay respect to the much-loved saint of for- of the Cross upon which He will be crucified. Ecce Homo, “The Bridegroom of the Church” but also known as El Greco (Domenikos Theotokopoulos) early work by the great Cretan painter Christ in the enactment. There are good on Holy Thursday the icon is presented for by the soldiers. At the famous Patmian empersal purple with which He was clothed on Holy Thursday the icon is presented for by the soldiers. At the famous Patmian

The Crowns of Glory

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The Pantanassa Monastery on Mangrove Mountain its

Cont. from previous page

The Crown of Thorns

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We've all heard the phrase “practice makes perfect.” However, practice is perhaps one of the most over-used, but not well understood concepts. That every skill requires practice is self-evident. Infants, for example, spend many hours of playful experimenting with repetition, refining and, in effect, practising the skills necessary to carry out activities that we, as adults, regard as ‘natural’, such as talking and walking. When we talk of practice in the context of the art of learning music though, it is often very different, and not particularly amusing in its dimensions to mind. We are unlikely to conjure up an image of a local band hanging out, experimenting with that springs to mind. We are unlikely to conjure up an image of talking and walking. When we talk of practice, we certainly don’t conjure up an image of the scale playing pianist amidst the menagerie of tortoises, elephants and more.

What is practice? I would like to suggest that practice refers to a process whereby we mindfully undertake to refine our abilities. We try to gain conscious control of the skills that influence the final product. In this case, the music, we experiment with the parameters that are under our control, repeating the task, refining our execution, repeating and refining again. It is a process that comes naturally to humans, but can quickly deteriorate into mindless tedium if we don’t have clear goals in sight. In learning music, practice is a distinct activity from performing to an audience, or simply playing a piece, where there is no requirement for critical experimentation and reflection. Within the music world, opinion is divided as to what practice is, and has been for many hundreds of years, divided even at the very highest levels. Perhaps the major opposing viewpoints are expressed succinctly by two of Classical Music’s greatest pianists (who also taught). Liszt was a champion of the ‘more is better’ approach, believing that practising until he was physically fatigued and could no longer play any more was beneficial. This approach finds parallels today with students who are encouraged to practise for a set number of hours. Chopin on the other hand was not fond of such hours of training, but rather appears to have believed that practice should be something that one engaged in sparingly but with one’s full attention. For example, after one of Chopin’s pupils, proudly stated that he had practised six hours in one day, an angry Chopin instructed the pupil that one should practise no more than three hours in a day, and take breaks during this period. He was reading a good book, looking at great art or going for an invigorating walk. According to his pupils, Chopin feared above all students who were merely playing, rather than practice per se, whether I am simply to play the piece again, but rather to see what new possibilities are expressed succinctly by two of Classical Music’s greatest pianists (who also taught). Liszt was a champion of the ‘more is better’ approach, believing that practising until he was physically fatigued and could no longer play any more was beneficial. This approach finds parallels today with students who are encouraged to practise for a set number of hours. Chopin on the other hand was not fond of such hours of training, but rather appears to have believed that practice should be something that one engaged in sparingly but with one’s full attention. For example, after one of Chopin’s pupils, proudly stated that he had practised six hours in one day, an angry Chopin instructed the pupil that one should practise no more than three hours in a day, and take breaks during this period. He was reading a good book, looking at great art or going for an invigorating walk. According to his pupils, Chopin feared above all students who were more musically experienced friends, or by emulating recordings of our favourite artists, or by studying with respected masters, it is helpful to have the guidance of someone who has already achieved the level of ability to which we aspire. In music lessons, the time spent with a teacher is often merely half an hour each week, and practice outside of this time is essential if any meaningful skill development is to be made. If we consider the number of hours we spend in the company of the teacher, as opposed to the number of hours we spend learning either on our own or, if we’re children, hopefully with the help of our parent, it is clear that most of the skill development actually occurs outside the lessons. It pays, then, to have a clear idea of what we’re trying to achieve in our practice, not so much in terms of the big, long-term goals (e.g. I want to be the next great violinist), but rather in terms of the small triumphs that mark our progress. I play that rhythm so it sounded just like my favourite recording. With young children, though, the setting of immediate and manageable goals presented in the manner of games, and being praised for achievement, is perhaps all the more important as the long-term goals seem too far off to them. The perennial favourite, and one of the most useful, games is ‘copy cat’, where the children are given the task to copy a piece by copying the actions/playing of a more skilled musician, whether this is the teacher, parent or a video or recording of our favourite artist.

The aim is to have goals which are just out of reach, but close enough that we are inspired to pursue them, and can achieve them with a little, but not too much struggle. Although this is a fact well recognised by good teachers throughout the ages, recent research has reinforced this observation and suggested that there is a 90:0 rule. That is, if something is enough of a challenge that we will have an 80% success rate, we will feel a sense of satisfaction as well as a drive to try harder. We have a greater sense of achievement with those things that require some effort. Above all, though, practice is our opportunity to discover new things, and discovering new things is always fun! It is what inspires children to get up in the morning, and it is that makes learning new skills enjoyable. This is as true for adults as it is for children.

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* Imogen Coward holds a PhD in musicology (UAB) is a musician, and accredited music teacher.
Alexander the Great exhibition rides into the Australian Museum in Sydney

An exhibition of cultural objects which speak of the history and influence of Alexander the Great is coming to Sydney, and will open at the Australian Museum on November 24.

It was announced yesterday that the exhibition will be the largest collection of treasures ever to come to Australia from the world-renowned State Hermitage in St Petersburg, Russia.

Sydney will be the only city to host the exhibition of more than 400 objects from classical antiquity through to the modern age. They span a period of almost 2500 years.

Some of the works to be seen in Sydney will be "signature pieces" which people travel to the Hermitage to see. These include the famous Gonzaga cameo and the polished black basalt statue of Cleopatra VII.

The museum said another highlight of the exhibition is the figure of Hercules fighting the lion, from the 2nd century AD.

The exhibition starts with art objects showing how Alexander has been represented over the centuries, followed by a section on artefacts which tell the story behind his life.

It traces his journeys and conquests, with objects from Egypt, Persia and Babylon.

It was thanks to the Empress of Russia, Catherine the Great, and her fascination with Alexander that the Hermitage’s collection of Alexander-related objects is so rich.

Australian Museum director Dr Frank Howarth said massive resources are involved in shipping the exhibition from Russia to Sydney.

"The artefacts will come in three shipments, each taking over three days to reach Sydney by air, with much of the road route overseen by police escort," Dr Howarth said.

"There will be a total of 29 curators and conservators accompanying the exhibition to and from Australia, quite apart from our own team working on the project at the Australian Museum."

Greece’s natural food co-ops show the way

Before their country was hit by the crisis, Greeks were used to seeing producers and consumers stand on opposite ends. The nature of their relationship appeared to change with the emergence earlier this year of the highly successful so-called “potato movement,” a scheme that allowed consumers to buy food straight from producers. Prompted by economic hardship, people in Greece are seeking ways to cut out the middleman and to connect farmers to shoppers. Solidarity has often been strengthened by a more eco-friendly outlook. However, some of these cooperatives are not exactly new.

Among the country’s pioneers is Gaia cooperative in Hania, Crete. The cooperative brings together producers and consumers with the aim of promoting organic and green products.

Gaia currently numbers about 250 members, half of whom are farmers. Every day some 300 customers shop at Gaia’s cooperative market.

“Our venture began in 1996, driven by our desire for clean and quality nutrition, a desire to strengthen organic farming and put emphasis on local crops in a bid to also avoid the ecological cost of transporting products from abroad,” says Gaia chief Dimitris Vamvounakis.

In the beginning we were driven by ideology. We continue [our effort] trying to cultivate a more ecological conscience as if we were, for example, organizing events at schools,” says Vamvounakis, adding that the cooperative shop only sells organic products from certified producers.

The benefits from the cooperative are multiple, but the biggest is that the abolition of middlemen means lower prices.

“It’s not always easy. Now that people have had to cut down on the more expensive organic products, we try to talk farmers into lowering their prices,” Vamvounakis says.
Northern Drama
Cold land, warm welcome

This Macedonian district boasts stunning forestland and rare natural habitats

**BY H. ARGYROPOULOS**

Northern Drama in eastern Macedonia boasts beautiful villages with historical architecture against a backdrop of forests and river scenery straight out of a painting. It is here that you will find Greece’s only birch forest, the unique virgin forest of Falaka, and the red spruce forest at Elaia.

The Nestos River, which flows down to Greece from Bulgaria, forms a magnificent green valley between the northern side of Mount Falakro and the western approaches to the Rhodope mountain range, before turning sharply south toward the Aegean Sea.

For panoramic views from 2,110 m and beyond the Bulgarian border, Mt Rhodope, the Drama plain and as far as Mt Athos to the south on clear days, the ski center of Mt Falakro is 46 km from Drama at 1,720 m above sea level. It has eight lifts and a four-seater that will take you 1,400 m up and offer panoramic views from 2,110 m above the Bulgarian border, Mt Rhodope, the Drama plain and as far as Mt Athos to the south on clear days. It has three chalets and is open at weekends until April (25210.41811, www.falakro.gr). Riviera (52410.62-488), based in Stavroupoli, offers 4x4 tours of the Frakto forest.

Where to stay

In Drama town: Kious (57200), Xano (57216-6). Tsakos (25365). In Sidironeri: Dryades (25210.91995), Voras (25210.91391). In Elia, Elia (6972.42377), Tsakos (25268.11357), where you will hear only the sounds of the forest. In Paranesi: Filoxenia (25240.22001), oldest guesthouse in the area Nestos (25240-21022). In Volakas, Petalo Resort (6972.294.266), a traditional slow-food option.

Where to eat

In Thodoras, good meat dishes. In Granitis: Thodoras, good meat dishes. In Volakas: Selini (6972.294.266), a traditional slow-food option. In Paranesi: Iliostasio (6978.441.914), a very good Natural History Museum.

Transport

Flying is the quickest way to get to the area of Drama, either to Thessaloniki or Kavala (68 km, 25910.53273) and then renting a car. SOVs are recommended. Buses to Drama from Athens (210.523.0220) take 7 hours. 30 minutes (Thassaloniki bus station 2510.521.139; Drama bus station 25210.32421). There are three intercity train connections from Athens daily (8:15 hours), and five from Thassaloniki (just over 3 hours). Drama area phone code:25210; tourism office: 62307; police: 33333; forestry dept: 30000.

Where to eat

In Drama town, the various ouzo and kebab houses in the center and Agia Varvara offer good fare. Also good value: Berduma (187 Verginas); Tassarina (S. Eftimia Panos); Ochryro (Greek for “fort”, 670 m, 41 km) owes its name to Fort Lisse, part of what was the Greek equivalent of the Maginot Line, which bravely resisted German attacks in War II. The village is best known for its potatoles and tavernas. Winter temperatures here are Greece’s lowest, contrasting sharply with the warm hospitality of the locals.

Strolling around, you will discover two fountains gushing ice-cold spring water - from which the village takes its name - the 1835 Church of Thetolokos, with a supposedly miraculous icon and an impressive bell tower, and the square with a fine view of Mt Falaka - always snow-capped in winter.

Outdoor activities

The ski center of Mt Falaka is 46 km from Drama at 1,720 m above sea level. It has eight lifts and a four-seater that will take you 1,400 m up and offer panoramic views from 2,110 m beyond the Bulgarian border, Mt Rhodope, the Drama plain and as far as Mt Athos to the south on clear days. It has three chalets and is open at weekends until April (25210.41811, www.falakro.gr). Riviera (52410.62-488), based in Stavroupoli, offers 4x4 tours of the Frakto forest.

What to see

See the artificial lakes formed by the dams of Troumpas and Paranesi, 21 km and 13 km from Paranesi respectively. In Drama town itself, the archaic and folk and ecclesiastical museums and two mosques. In Frakto, you will find the rather odd spa “shantytown” of Therma, with both good for rheumatism and back pain (52540.22351/33). Buy excellent cured meat from Gekantas in Neaorkapi (52689) and from Voras (Elia 177; Dragoumi, Dramot, which also has lightly smoked fillet and sausages.)