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# Summer Edition

173rd Edition

# The Agiot

## Part 1

**PREFACE :** Owing to the length of this issue[ 100 pages]: For this edition we have split it into Parts 1 and 2. Part 2 will be uploaded on September 10<sup>th</sup>.

### This Month

#### Part 1

Cover Photo

Page 1

Gooner's Gags

Pages 2-10

Letters to the Editor

Pages 11-15

Empress Sissi

Pages 15-17

Nature

Pages 18-19

Effrosyni Writes

Page 20

Ocay Property Management  
& Holiday Rentals

Pages 20-26

Pine Leaves

Pages 27-29

Video Plus Corner

Page 30

Rosie's Story

Pages 31-34

Village and Island Times

Pages 34-40

My island of Dreams

Pages 41-43

Walking with Hilary Paipeti and  
Paul Bloomfield

Pages 44-48

Durrells: The Ultimate Irony

Pages 49-50

#### Part 2

Beyond the Grave

Pages 51-52

The World of Simon

Pages 52-58

Hilary's Ramblings

Pages 58-60

Customer Srvce Served

Pages 60-62

Little Brother is Watching  
You.

Pages 63-74

When Nitsa was Young

Pages 75-77

For you Motorheads

Pages 78-79

Vidos

Pages 79-82

Weather.

Page 82

Advertising

Pages 83-89

Agiotfest Remembered

Pages 90-91

Lula's Lovebites

Page 92

The Way Things Were and  
Are

Pages 93-94

Saucy Postcards

Pages 95-97

The Eagle

Page 98

Holly

Page 99

Stop Press

Page 100



**'Summer is here, and so is our Silke'**

# Gooners Gags

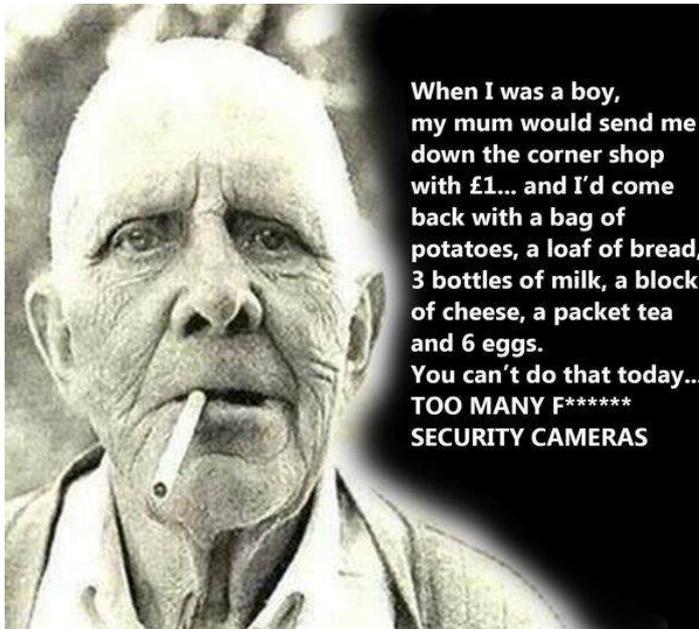
Did you know there's an Arab trying to buy every fish and chip shop in Britain? His name is Sultan Vinegar.



Just bought a log cabin from Ikea



Did you hear about the invisible man who married the invisible woman - But their children weren't much to look at.



When I was a boy, my mum would send me down the corner shop with £1... and I'd come back with a bag of potatoes, a loaf of bread, 3 bottles of milk, a block of cheese, a packet tea and 6 eggs. You can't do that today... **TOO MANY F\*\*\*\*\* SECURITY CAMERAS**



SO, WHEN DID YOU NOTICE YOUR WIFE WAS DEAD?

THE LOVEMAKING WAS THE SAME BUT THEN THE DISHES STARTED TO PILE UP...

To the person who stole my camouflage jacket and my flip-flops...  
You can hide, but you can't run!



*Gooners Gags* - Continued from page 3

## Stupid questions fielded by tourism officials

"Which side of the road do we stand on to wait for the bus?"

"Are there any lakes in the Lake District?"

"In what month is the May Day demonstration?"

"What is the entry fee for Brighton?"

"Why on earth did they build Windsor Castle on the flight path of Heathrow?"

"Is Wales closed during the winter?"

"Can you tell me who performs at the circus in Piccadilly?"

Asked by a tourist at Whitby Abbey, North Yorkshire: "Why did they build so many ruined castles and abbeys in England?"

"Which bus do I get from the Orkney Islands to the Shetland Islands?"

"What time of night does the Loch Ness monster surface and who feeds it?"

"Is Edinburgh in Glasgow?"

"Can I wear high heels in Australia?"

"Are there supermarkets in Sydney and is milk available all year round?"

"I want to walk from Perth to Sydney - can I follow the railroad tracks?"

"Which direction is North in Australia?"

Asked by a tourist at the Grand Canyon National Park: "Was this man-made?"

Asked by a tourist at the Carlsbad Caverns National Park: "How much of the caves is underground?"

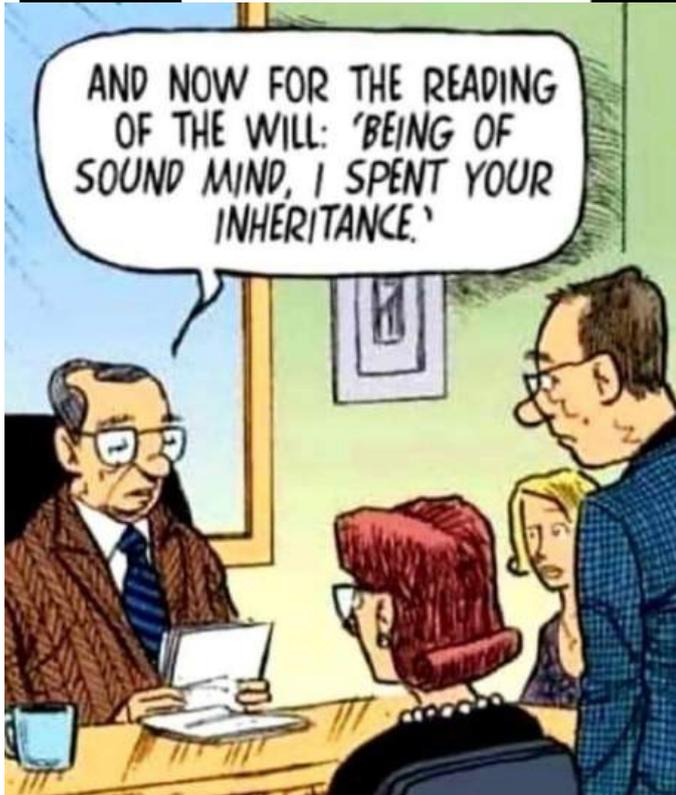
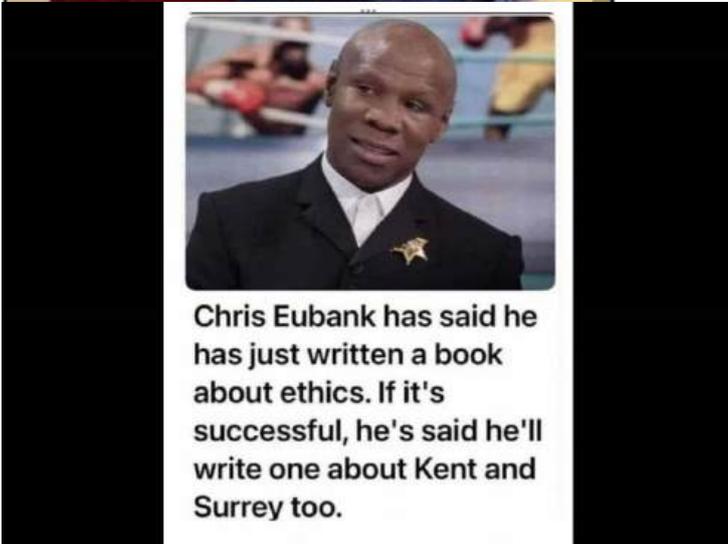
Asked by a tourist at the Mesa Verde National Park: "Do you know of any undiscovered ruins?"

Pensioners making sure they won't freeze this winter.



Continued on page 5

Gooners Gags - Continued from page 4



Continued on page 6

*Gooners Gags* - Continued from page 5

Wife crashed the car again today.....  
 She told the police the man she collided  
 with was on his mobile phone and  
 drinking can of beer !  
 Police said he can do what he likes in his  
 own living room !



"Nice iron. Your wife will love it. While I wrap it, you might want to go over to sporting goods and pick out a helmet."

By our New York correspondent -  
 Eileen Dover

Today at 0900 EST on November 11 a saucer shaped UFO landed in Central Park, New York City which soon attracted a sizeable crowd of onlookers. A strange almost human like figure appeared in a doorway of the craft and began to descend a flight of stairs. When it was halfway down the stairs it stopped looked around and said "Take me to your leade....., no, hang on, just a moment, on second thoughts we are good and have to go". With that he hastily returned to his craft which then departed at great speed towards Alpha Centauri.



Americans: We walked on the moon

Also Americans:



Continued on page 7

Gooners Gags - Continued from page 6



**WOMAN:**  
Shampoo for dry and damaged hair.

**MAN:**  
6 in 1 shampoo for hair, face, body, carpet, car and dishes.

Apparently you can reheat pizza by turning your toaster on its side... your welcome

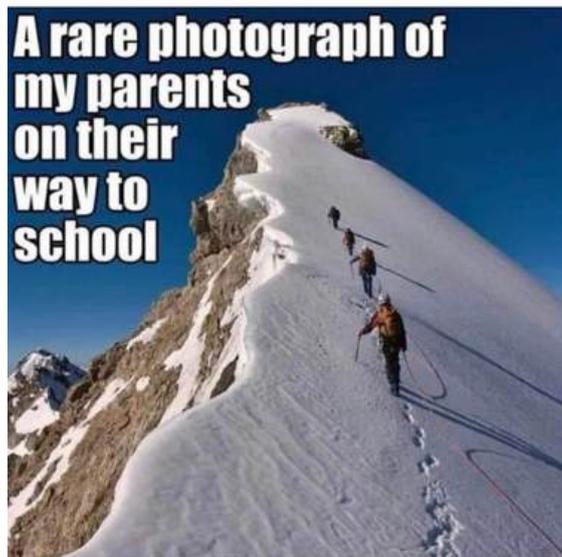


The distance it takes for me to forget a number between 1 and 10



Continued on page 8

Gooners Gags - Continued from page 7



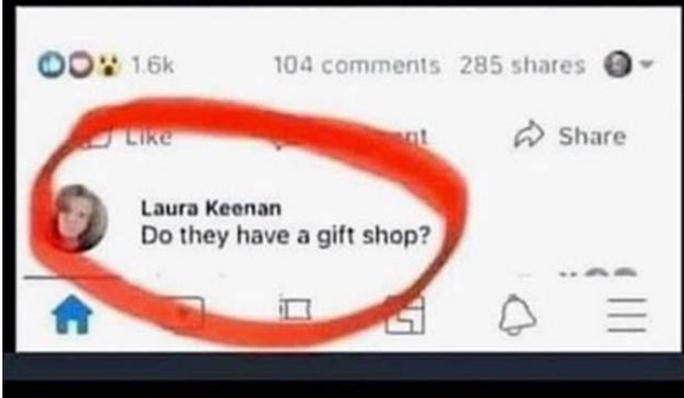
Continued on page 9

Gooners Gags - Continued from page 8

There's a garden in England dedicated entirely to plants that are deadly and can kill you. It's the most dangerous garden in the world. It holds over 100 killers Such as, hemlock, strychnine and nightshade.



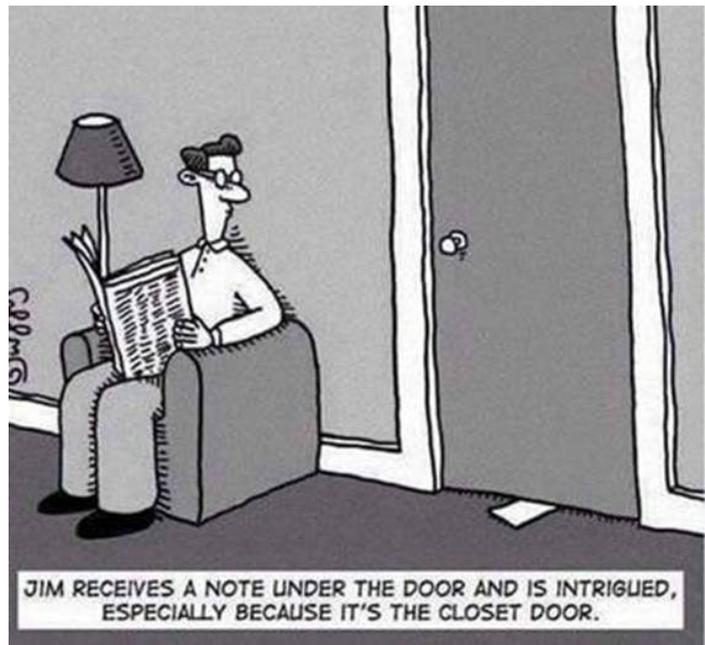
# Bed and Breakfast



Continued on page 10

Gooners Gags - Continued from page 9

I'm watching this Show for like, 10 minutes and the Lady is Listing all these really Great things to do. Then I realize it's the Religious Channel and she was listing Sins.



I am starting to think I will never be old enough to know better.



## Letters to the Editor



Nothing you love is lost.

Not really.

Things, people. They always go away,  
sooner or later.

You can't hold them, any more than you  
can hold moonlight.

But if they've touched you,  
if they're inside you,  
then they're still yours.

The only things you ever really have  
are the ones you hold inside your heart ...

It's been a long time Gentle Readers.

I trust you are both well and dandy.

From my journal it seems nearly a whole year has  
slipped away since the last Agiot.

Of course, I'd like to make excuses and blame the  
delay on others, but I can't for the life of me, even  
me, conjure up a big enough porky, to let me off  
the hook.

Time ticks along in its unstoppable fashion, and with it we all change, either imperceptibly, or suddenly. For your friend and Editor there is no exception. As things continue to drop off of my body with increasing frequency, visits to the toilet take longer [too much information maybe], and the urge to suck in the very air of life each day, rather than hunch over a keyboard, is my new and welcome companion, it seems that my visits to the pages of Agiotland may be rarer in the future. Maybe this will be the last one. I'm not sure, being in several minds about the subject.

Those words were surprisingly hard to type. But true. If it should be that this is the last issue, I want to say what great fun it has been, right from the very start in 2007 when dear Lionel and myself wrote out the first Edition on a postage stamp.

I can say that the Agiot has been one of the great loves of my life and I thank you for sharing it with me.

It would be remiss of me not to mention a few special friends who have made the Agiot what it has become. Please forgive me if you are not in this list, it is not meant as any snub. But the few I mention here have made the difference. So, in alphabetical order;

Agiotfesters to a man [and woman], Dick, Effrosyni, Graeme, Hilary, Jan, Lionel, Lula, Nick and Simon.

**Here are a couple of letters from months ago:**

**Dick:** I have no problems reading the pages mate. give Lula a big compliment for her poetic words about her mam and dad.

**Margreth:**  
Really enjoyed it. Especially Nitsa's history.

....

**Ken:** I live in the Rum Jungle Paul so I have a bush breakfast every day surrounded by our wild animals I have trees which I love and the spirit of ancient Australia governs my daily day.

Letters to the Editor - Continued from page 11

## Smoky War Dog LLC



This dog's name was Gunner. My uncle brought him back from WW2. He was raised and slept under my uncle's anti-aircraft gun.

The gun crew shared their rations to feed him. By the time he was 18 months old, my uncle said he would stand up and look at the sky. If he laid back down, they knew all was ok. If he growled and put his hackles up they got at the ready. He knew the sound of the German aircraft and my uncle said he never got it wrong. He said Gunner was better than any early warning system. I'm probably the only one left in the family that knows that story now, so I thought I'd tell it before it's lost forever, like many stories must be from that time. Thanks for reading it.



Friend Graeme sent in this photo, with the heartfelt regret that the sign in question does not exist in his village.

<



**Barry Allsworth** was a great friend of the Agiot and Agios Ioannis. Indeed, he instigated the 'Losers' Cup to our village all those years back, though it seems like

yesterday. Unfortunately, he has left this mortal coil, but here is a loving letter from his daughter Sue.

It is with a relieved heart ❤️ that the peaceful passing of my best buddy and dad left this planet in the early hours of Thursday the 17th of October.

He was an absolute legend of a human who I got to call best friend and dad.

I am filled with so much gratitude right now.

How bloody lucky was I? To those who had met and knew my parents knew how awesome they were as parents and as humans.

From their days at The Orion, playing tennis and table tennis over the years. They were so much more than just my parents. 🙏🍌 They lived life and had the best experiences and gave me a better life than I could have ever asked for. I was truly blessed. ✨

The care and support I have had around me these last few months by the district nurses, Sandgate rd. surgery home visit team, my aunt for feeding us, my cousin for stepping in when I had to just simply be a daughter and not dads' carer. To a friend who was my unpaid therapist, a friend who bought dad his last Peruvian meal from London that happened to be his last meal and a friend who travelled from a far just to give me a hug and some black forest cake box gateaux. My neighbour who saved the day and stepped in when I had to step out of my carer role. To my soul sister who I have had the pleasure of sharing my parents with over 40yrs and to my "adopted" daughter whose cooking and company dad loved.

I am going to take some well-deserved time out now to breathe, sleep and process the last 4 yrs.

Death I personally find quite comforting as you cannot argue or bargain with it. As a moto we have in this house goes.... It is what it is nothing more and nothing less.

Continued on page 13

Letters to the Editor - Continued from page 12

*I don't want to dwell in sadness but I need to mention with respect the Agiots who have left us since the last Edition:*



**Walter Stuart**, aged 77, [COPD]. Walter was one of the original Degenerates, coming here in the 1970's. He is part of our rich folklore. Here is shown 'Ma wee spiti', the cottage he owned and stayed in for many a year. Died September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

**Ma wee spiti**

**Giorgos Halikia**, aged 88, [Hydro cephalus] [Uncle to Lula and Anna] Died October 11<sup>th</sup> 2024.

**Cornelius Gholke**, aged 72 [cancer]: long-time visitor to our famous tables. Died December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

**Nicola Manetas**, aged 45 [cancer]. Died January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

**Jan the Dutch cyclist**, aged 84 [Henk's cousin]. Died from natural causes in the preceding winter in Holland.

**Katina Tzouminis**. Aged 87 approx. Died in June from Alzheimers. Her husband George lives in our lane.

**Aki**, aged 54, partner of Lula's cousin Maria. Died from Leukemia in June, 2025.

Our dear old friend and legend **Nick the Watch** is buried in Athens.

For those passing through that fair city, drop in to this cemetery if you can, and say hello:-  
Nick Coles AREA {zone} 30 A n. 171.

*A new development has grown in the plateia of the ages.*



**3 TREEHOUSERS**

We call it the TreeHouse Society. Nick would have been the trunk of this fine but ephemeral gathering. Here are a few saps of recent 'happenings'.

**Anybody you know?**



Continued on page 14

Letters to the Editor – Any one you know? - Continued from page 13



*Letters to the Editor – Any one you know? Continued from page 14*



## Did Empress Sissi (inadvertently) help cause the Great War?

By Hilary Paipeti.



*Corfu's most famous building, the Achillion Palace in Gastouri was built in 1890 on the site of a country villa, an estate purchased by the Empress Elizabeth of Austria, wife of Emperor Franz Josef. Known affectionately as Sissi, the Empress intended it as a refuge from the Austro-Hungarian court*

*with its intrigues and protocols, and as a sanctuary to mourn the mysterious death of her son Rudolf at Mayerling. She spent extended periods of time in the Palace until her death by assassination in Geneva in 1898.*

Though many of the important events of the First World War played out over the wider Balkan region, Corfu was spared any damaging direct military action. The island's main claim to fame was as refuge in 1916 for the defeated Serbian army, its gentle and hospitable resources restoring the soldiers to fighting capacity, and enabling their return to face the forces of Prussia, the Austrian Empire and Bulgaria on the Macedonian Front.

*Continued on page 16*

*Did Empress Sissi (inadvertently) help cause the Great War? -  
Continued from page 15*

In October of the previous year, offensives by these three armies had forced the Serbian military into a winter retreat. Driven out of Serbia and fighting a rearguard action against pursuing Bulgarian troops, they fled in good order across the mountains towards the Adriatic. Arriving on the coast debilitated by hunger, exhaustion and disease, the soldiers, accompanied by the Serbian Royal Family and government, were evacuated to Corfu. In January 1916, the first of 150,000 troops arrived at Govino Bay, now the Gouvia Marina. They were accommodated in makeshift camps all over the island, including on Vidos Island. The death toll was immense, and with no room for graves many of the bodies had to be consigned to a watery resting place in the surrounding sea. Today, this is known by Serbians as the 'Blue Cenotaph'.



*The remains of the devastated Serbian Army, after their retreat through Albania, arrive at Corfu, 1916.*

Rightly or wrongly, the nations of Western Europe focus their Great War histories on the carnage of the trenches, from Flanders to Verdun. But arguably, more was at stake on the Eastern Front than on the Western. Four empires fell in the East, for a start \*. The course of the 20th century was decided on this side of Europe, more so than in the West. And what provoked the war? The history books say the tinder was the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, or rather his assassination in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914.

Mostly thanks to the policies of the Ottoman Empire, the Balkan Peninsula was a hotchpotch of different ethnic groupings, who during 1912 and 1913 had already fought two wars over the last European territories of their former Turkish imperial rulers. Issues had not been fully resolved by the fighting.

The Archduke's visit to Sarajevo fell inauspiciously on the Day of Kosovo, the anniversary of the destruction by the Turks of the old Serbian kingdom. For five centuries it had been kept as a day of mourning, but in 1914 for the first time it was celebrated in Serbia as a national fete, since the recent Balkan War had restored territorial losses. Belgrade kept high holiday, and the people of the Bosnian capital followed the example of their kinsmen.

This unfortunate concurrence laid bare long-held gripes. The Archduke was relatively popular amongst the Croats, but much less so amongst the Serbs, who looked askance at all things Austrian. The Serbs hoped for the unification of the Southern Slavs into one nation separate from the Empire. (This was to come about in 1929, with the foundation of Yugoslavia, literally 'the Kingdom of the South Slavs', initially announced on the steps of Corfu's Theatre. However, the potpourri of ethnic groupings persisted, and enduring enmities would again spark a series of conflicts as late as the 1990s.)

Ironically, Franz Ferdinand was a reformer who believed that the Slav element should have racial equality. He was at odds with the weight of Austrian opinion, which was that the Serbians should be crushed along with their dream of a homeland. The assassin Gavrilo Princip was driven by this more rudimentary creed.

And so the dominoes of treaties and alliances fell and minor actions avalanched into larger ones. To paraphrase British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey, the lights went out all over Europe, not to be relit, really, in anyone's lifetime.

*Did Empress Sissi (inadvertently) help cause the Great War? -  
Continued from page 16*

And Sissi's role? She had been married young to the future Emperor Franz Josef (initially a love-match, by all accounts), and their only son, Crown Prince Rudolf, was heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Under the domination of the Austrian faction, the imperial Court was stuffy with protocol and formality. Sissi leaned more towards the Hungarian frame of mind, being endowed with a classical and romantic outlook which caused her to admire the Greek Hero and Demi-god Achilles.

It appears her son shared this romantic and rather melancholy streak, rather than possessing the disciplined nature of his father. Aged 30, he took a much younger lover, Baroness Mary von Vetsera, who was just 17. On 30 January 1889 the couple was found dead at the Imperial Hunting Lodge at Mayerling. What happened remains a mystery, though the deaths are generally supposed to have been the result of a suicide pact.

The loss of the sole heir broke the dynastic succession of the Hapsburg empire. The succession now ran sideways via the Emperor Franz Josef's brother, Archduke Karl Ludwig, to his eldest son, Archduke Franz Ferdinand. The replacement of the direct line with a less popular one served to destabilise the growing reconciliation between the Austrian and Hungarian factions of the empire, and led directly to the 1914 assassination.

Was it Rudolf's romantic character, inherited from his mother, that caused him to excuse himself that day from a formal dinner, and abscond for an assignation with his lover at Mayerling? If he had lived, no assassination at Sarajevo would have taken place. Who knows whether a different trigger might have caused the rivalries and alliances of a volatile Europe to shatter into war. Was the war-of-wars inevitable even without Sarajevo?

But if it wasn't inevitable, what would the 20th century have looked like, with no Great War to define it? Historians agree that the harsh terms of the Treaty of Versailles, which officially ended the four-year conflict, led directly to the rise of Hitler and thus to the Third Reich and to the Second World War (some scholars argue that the period

from the start of the Great War and the conclusion of the Second constituted a single war with an extended break). The Great War certainly contributed to the fall of the Russian Empire and the rise of communism under Lenin and Stalin: pressured by armies from every side and aware that a clear-cut revolution would cause Russia to withdraw from the fighting, the German regime allowed Lenin to pass on a closed train from his place of exile through their territory to Russia, trusting his arrival would spark the communist triumph in 1917. But what if there had been no Sarajevo, and no other trigger for war? Would revolution in politically unstable Russia have happened anyway? If so, with no Great War and therefore no Third Reich, no strong block in Central Europe would exist in mid-century to resist a rising Red power from sweeping across the continent \*\*. If Rudolph had not been tempted by Mayerling, if he had been more 'Austrian' and less like his mother, and by 1914 had lived to become a respected and reforming heir, would our fate have been different? Would we, in the words of left-wing commentator Christopher Hitchens, have seen a Communist Army water its horses in the Thames \*\*\*? Be careful what you wish for.

As for Sissi, in 1891 she retreated to her newly built palace in the village of Gastouri, Corfu, which she named after her hero, Achilles. There is no doubt this is the place where she was free to mourn her son: her most poignant memorial is not the Achillion Palace, not its statues nor the nearby eponymous Spring, but a modest and moss-grown plaque on the wall of a tiny chapel on the summit of Mount Agia Kyriaki, the conical hill that towers above Gastouri. On it is written: 'In this sacred place, the grieving Empress Elizabeth of Austria, praying, reclaimed her peace.'

\* The four doomed empires: Ottoman Turkish; Hohenzollern Prussian; Hapsburg Austrian; and Romanov Russian.

\*\* Imagine if, instead of a mighty Third Reich, only a dithering, divided European Union had stood in the way of an aggressive, resurgent Russia! Oh...

\*\*\* Hitchens later denied it, but was recorded as saying he 'wouldn't care if the Red Army watered its horses in Hendon.'

# Nature

Nature to me is beyond any of the limited words I have. Best to show photos. Here, among others, are some beauties from Peter Hardiman, Joy Konstantis and Linda Weaver. Enjoy.



*Quite a remarkable discovery yesterday. I was walking alongside the Tiflos river and on the path was a big Blue Crab (*Callinectes sapidus*) that was only just alive. I put it back in the river and it slowly disappeared into the depths.*

*If this Mediterranean Cone-headed Grasshopper (*Acrida ungarica*) hadn't flown away as I walked through the grass I never would have spotted it.*



*I really love these Zitting Cisticolas, they are such active and fearless little birds.*



*Blue-eyed Hawker (*Aeshna affinis*)*

All contributed by Peter Hardiman



*Contributed  
By  
Joy Konstantis*

<



*I could watch these seagulls all day ...cheeky chappies ..... loved this view yesterday .x*

*Contributed by  
Linda Weaver*

<

*Nature - Continued from page 18*



*4000 year old olive tree in Greece! This tree started growing around 2000 BC, during the Bronze Age, around the time the last woolly mammoth was hunted, the 7th dynasty of Egypt was over and humans discovered the existence of glass. This tree has seen humans go from the Bronze Age to the Atomic Age. It has witnessed our changing world and lived through many wars. It has seen many kings, politicians, warriors, and prophets go from birth to death, and it still continues to produce olives annually!*

<



*Rows and flows of angels hair and ice cream castles in the air*

*Not a selfie*

>



*Inside the tree*

*More pictures of the Oldest Olive Tree*

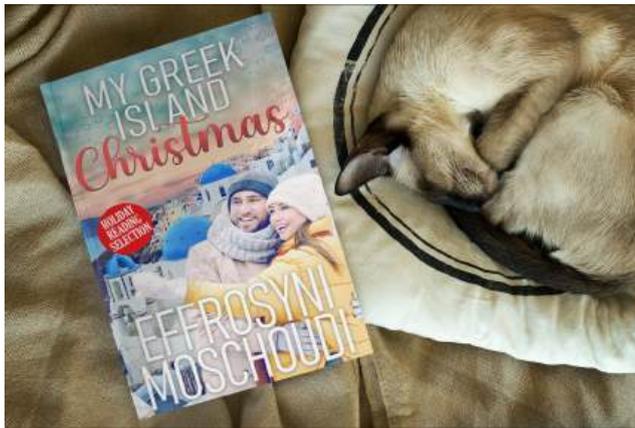
*Ano Vouves, Crete - Courtesy of Jan*

# Effrosyni writes

**“DROP THE WEAPON!!”**



Our dear friend and the most prolific of authors, Effrosyni Moschoudi, is increasing her output. It couldn't happen to a nicer person. She is now also to be found on Amazon, the store not the river.

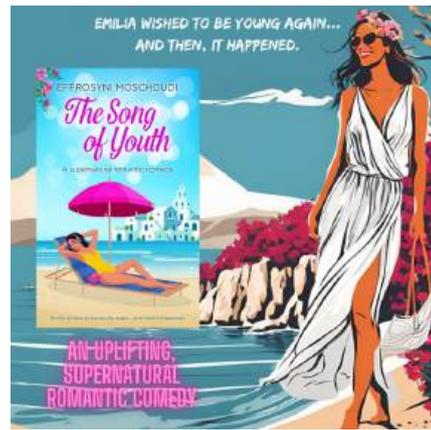


She has a new novel out on preorder in collaboration with American publisher, Written Musings. It is a Christmas romance and only 99c on kindle until its release this December.

Two die-hard cynics when it comes to love meet on a small family farm on the alluring Greek island of Santorini, and the magic of Christmas goes to work... AmazonUK:

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/s?k=My+Greek+Island+Christmas&i=stripbooks&crd=3A159BASROKAN&prefix=my+greek+island+christmas%2Cstripbooks%2C191&ref=nb\\_sb\\_noss\\_1](https://www.amazon.co.uk/s?k=My+Greek+Island+Christmas&i=stripbooks&crd=3A159BASROKAN&prefix=my+greek+island+christmas%2Cstripbooks%2C191&ref=nb_sb_noss_1)

US: [https://www.amazon.com/s?k=My+Greek+Island+Christmas&i=stripbooks-intl-ship&crd=1YZ3US0DNA1WN&prefix=my+greek+island+christmas%2Cstripbooks-intl-ship%2C194&ref=nb\\_sb\\_noss\\_1](https://www.amazon.com/s?k=My+Greek+Island+Christmas&i=stripbooks-intl-ship&crd=1YZ3US0DNA1WN&prefix=my+greek+island+christmas%2Cstripbooks-intl-ship%2C194&ref=nb_sb_noss_1)



While you are about it, take a peek at this one; <https://bit.ly/4cJ7Arw> Song of Youth



And this; The Raven Witch of Corfu is an original story that will rivet you from the first page all the way to the mind-blowing ending! Start

the series with episode 1 at 99c! Or, you can read all 4 short episodes for FREE with Kindle Unlimited! It's the perfect read for Halloween, combining chills and thrills with Corfu's summer bliss! <http://bit.ly/2CZMlow>

'Also, Paul, I have a fun little post to suggest for The Agiot. If it fits, feel free to use it': <https://effrosyniwrites.com/2021/05/28/royal-secret-mollusks/>

For more posts from Effrosyni, join her newsletter: <http://bit.ly/2yA74No> You will receive 3 of her books for FREE in your welcome email

Effrosyni adds: 'I have updated an old post about how to visit the film set of the Durrells of Corfu, Danilia. It has updated info now as I phoned the resort the other day to get the current nitty gritty. In the post, I also provide info about a boat trip to Kalami. Durrells enthusiasts are bound to love it. See if it's of interest for our readers':

<https://effrosyniwrites.com/2018/07/27/how-to-visit-danilia-village-in-corfu/>

# Ocay Property Management and Holiday Rentals

Here is an update on what has been happening since the summer of 2024 with Ocay Property.

The Aged Persons still have life in them, however, so they are happy to report that their work on Panorama West is drawing to a conclusion, and sale of the property is imminent.

Peter and Kostas have taken the reigns, as Lula and I drift towards the Grey Havens.

**Panorama West** - Here is a selection of snaps from the work in progress: -



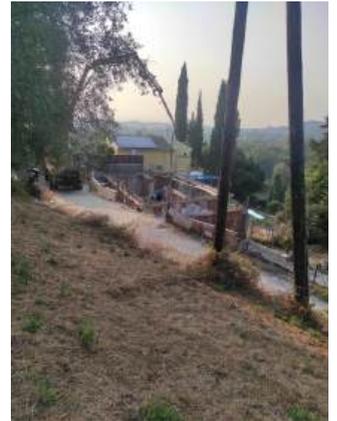
*July 2024*



*July 2024*



*July 2024*



*July 2024*



*August 2024*



*October 2024*



*November 2024*



*November 2024*



*< November 2024*

*December 2024 >*



Continued on page 22

*Ocay Property Management and Holiday Rentals - Continued from page 21*

***Panorama West cont. - March 2025***



***At the end of a day***

\*\*\*\*\*

For Kostas and Peter, it has been a busy and productive year, seeing the completion of two major developments; Villas Natalia 1 and 2 [formerly Lydia's] in Agios Ioannis, and Claire de Lune in Avlaki.

They also shared work with the owners on the completion of Oak Lodge and Cypress Lodge in Ano Korakiana.

Here are some selected photos of those properties:

**Villa Natalia**



*Continued on page 23*

Ocay Property Management and Holiday Rentals - Continued from page 22

**Villa Natalia cont.**



*Ocay Property Management and Holiday Rentals - Continued from page 23*

### Villa Claire de Lune:



*Continued on page 25*

Ocay Property Management and Holiday Rentals - Continued from page 24

### The Lodges:



These properties and other excellent rentals can all be found at <https://ocaycorfu.com/>

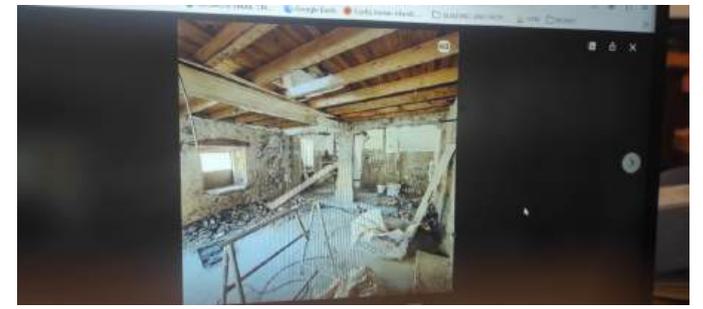
Book early for 2026, as demand is strong.

Continued on page 26

*Ocay Property Management and Holiday Rentals - Continued from page 25*

Since the winter Ocay Property has started another major improvement, to an old house in the centre of Doukades.

Here are some photos.



# Pine Leaves

## Assaults in Greece over property development now adding to problems caused by over-tourism

### Greek tourism could collapse due to greed, a lack of infrastructure and the absence of planning and control

Richard Pine  
Monday, 5th August 2024

On July 2nd, Panagiotis Stathis, a 54-year-old civil engineer, was shot dead outside his office in Athens. While there have been several killings related to both terrorism and drugs, this is the first in a dispute over building on Mykonos, an island which has become a Mecca for the super-rich.

Police are investigating Stathis's connections with local business interests since he had been involved as a surveyor in land deals in Mykonos since the 1990s, including what may be unlicensed constructions. He also worked on the islands of Paros and Ios, which have also been adversely affected by over-tourism.

Stathis's assassination comes at a time when Mykonos and other hotspot islands are in public focus due to a police crackdown on, for example, illegally-built beach bars.

This was not the first time that Stathis had been attacked: he was beaten up on Mykonos by unknown assailants in 2021. An archaeologist whose work involved examining proposed building sites on the island for ancient remains was also savagely beaten in 2023, and an Albanian building contractor was assaulted last year.

The media are widely linking the killing of Stathis to a Greek mafia-type operation. So much so that the day after the killing Kathimerini newspaper asked in an editorial, "Who truly governs Mykonos - the Mafia or the Hellenic Republic?"

As for the "Mafia", the Italian writer Andrea Camilleri frequently referred to Mafia-led illegal building in Sicily, while novelist Jeffrey Siger has weighed into the current debate with a "I told you so" since one of his Mykonos-based crime thrillers, *The Mykonos Mob*, predicted a killing like Stathis's five years ago.

But equally disturbing is the escalating problem of over-tourism. While tourists wilted throughout July under temperatures of over 40 degrees and high levels of humidity, there is another and wider tragedy unfolding, as I reported here last month. This is the likely collapse of the overall tourism business in Greece due to three factors: greed, lack of infrastructure and, most of all, lack of planning and control.

Greed because there seems to be no end to the "get rich quick" mentality of both locals and foreign investors.

Lack of infrastructure because, especially in the islands, water shortage is acute, and waste management cannot cope with the detritus of tourism. In Corfu, where I live, we are often without water, and the landfill cannot accept the extra garbage created by hotels and restaurants.

And lack of planning because as soon as the government had announced its plan for a new vision for planning and development in tourism, the plan was shown to be shortsighted and self-contradictory. Journalist Giorgos Lialios, who writes frequently on environmental issues, says "tourism is the absolute dominator in Greece's zoning plans".

He points out three flaws in the new plan: the emphasis is on large resorts, which are permissible even on uninhabited islands; very few areas are designated as "saturated"; and there are no restrictions on size - in fact the plan seems to say "the larger the better".

*Continued on page 28*

*Pine Leaves - Continued from page 27*

This will cause a downward spiral in income since the all-in resorts are prepaid, mostly to operators outside Greece. It is also due to the high cost of accommodation (especially on Airbnb) which reduces discretionary spending. Despite the ever-rising numbers of tourists (17 per cent increase in 2023 over the previous year) they are spending less per capita so their contribution to GDP is in fact less significant.

But the mentality matches that of Harvard-educated prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, who has welcomed a resort development on a pristine site of ecological importance in Corfu on the grounds that, since it was unproductive it was a “waste of space”. Those who sought to retain its pristine condition as a recreational facility were standing in the way of progress, he said. What worries me most, as a resident of a small village in Corfu, is the evident erosion of a sense of community identity as people’s actions are directed more to satisfying the demands of tourism than in providing local services. Corfiot identity is called “kerkyraikotita” or “Corfiotitude” and every island and many parts of the mainland have a similar cohesion to local culture and sense of community. The globalisation of tourism puts at risk people’s individual and collective identity as its homogenising effect becomes the hallmark of travel.

Venice and Barcelona are examples of cities which are resisting over-tourism. Athens could well do the same, to the advantage of its residents, who are also complaining of the prevalence of Airbnb, demand for which is exponentially growing.

Serving mass tourism is damaging any sense of identity. To be practical what use is a village without water? Or the local bakery when it is so intent in supplying the major resorts in the area that we don’t get the bread delivery until lunchtime?



## Despite the disparities and anomalies, Greece remains a very beautiful country

**Emigration of young minds a pressing problem, as is the widening gap between rich and poor; then there is chicanery and deceit at every level**

Richard Pine, Irish Times  
Monday, September 16, 2024

“Italy is a precarious republic founded on mistakes”. So wrote Andrea Camilleri, one of his country’s more sceptical commentators, in 2007. Much the same could be said of [Greece](#), which became a republic in 1974, following abolition of the monarchy. Precarious? In terms of economics, social cohesion and even its borders, Greece is unsafe. Mistakes? In modern times, the greatest mistake Greece made was to decide that its future lay in westernisation and turning its back on its eastern character.

*Continued on page 29*

*Pine Leaves - Continued from page 28*

The 1980 statement by the then prime minister, Konstantinos Karamanlis, “We belong to the West”, reflects the mindset which has kowtowed to Europe and America, believing that modernisation (meaning westernisation) was the only possible route for Greece.

Yet Greece belongs more to the rest of the Balkans than it does to the sense of what “Europe” means. Its history, geography and culture are qualitatively different. It was this difference that westernisation has sought to change.

A deeply conservative society since independence has virtually excluded the left from political thought, but it has also created an educational system where students are largely taught by rote: catalogues of facts rather than lateral thinking. This gap between facts and ideas cripples imagination and creativity. Parents who want their children to flourish are obliged to send them, after school hours, to a “frontisterio” (a posh name for “crammer”) where a broader education is available.

This continues into university. I have been shocked, as a visiting lecturer at the Ionian University, to find a disturbing absence of teaching about the world beyond Greece: music postgraduates had no awareness of Sibelius; students of foreign languages had not been introduced to Kafka or Yeats.

When thinking outside the box is not encouraged, the best option for young people with imagination, initiative and hope is to get outside the box that is Greece. Hence emigration of young minds is one of Greece’s big problems, as is the increasing gap between rich and poor. Furthermore, we accept chicanery and deceit at every level, like Camilleri’s Italians.

In his 2014 book *The 13th Labour of Hercules*, Yanis Palaiologos described clientelism as “an acid corroding everything in Greek life, leaving the country in the hands of well-connected mediocrities”. This is supported today by Aristides Hatzis, professor of law at Athens University, who sees the intersections of the Greek state (which he calls “the joints of power”) as inherently geared to “the erosion of the rule of law”, leading to dysfunctional institutions and, ultimately, a dysfunctional civil society.

Not only is the Greek economy precarious – depend-

ing on mass tourism for more than 20 per cent of GDP and with massive unpaid taxes by the super-rich – but its borders also remain negotiable. Greece’s second city, Thessaloniki, and Crete, its largest island (home to prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis), only became part of the Greek state as a result of warfare in 1913, and the Dodecanese islands only joined in 1947, as a consequence of the second World War.

Long-term disputes with Turkey over respective marine rights and ownership of some Aegean Islands have brought the two countries to the brink of open hostilities on several occasions. Today, the borders of Greece (and by definition of the EU itself) are a source of anxiety in respect of refugees from Turkey. These borders are porous. How could they be otherwise?

Most recently, the diplomatic fracas over the naming of the former Yugoslav province of Macedonia betrays a division in Greek national sentiment. On Greece’s northern border, the new state actually abuts on to the Greek province also called Macedonia. An Ulster situation if ever there was one. Balkan history is replete with such border confusions, fragmented identities and cultural diversity, and precarious borders are to be found in Albania, Bulgaria and Turkey, with Greece involved in disputes in all cases.

And yet, despite the disparities and the anomalies, it remains a very beautiful country and I don’t mean its physical beauty – which is constantly eroded by greedy, often illegal, building – but beautiful in its people, who live their lives almost regardless of the top-heavy bureaucracy, nepotism and clientelism.

A Greek diplomat accosted me in Dublin with the undiplomatic question: “Why do you hate my country?” I replied: “How could I possibly hate the country where I live?” The diplomat thought I was merely an occasional visitor to Greece and wrote these Letters cosily in a Dublin suburb. Quite the opposite.

My village neighbours are, for the most part, innately intelligent, argumentative, industrious and honest. Last year the village came the closest ever to being devastated by [forest fire](#). The villagers’ response to this potentially lethal catastrophe demonstrated a particular aspect of “Greekness”: fortitude and resilience. Apart from the professional firefighters, it was the young volunteers who personified this spirit of engagement with fate. A pity they don’t get to use it in everyday life.

## Video Plus Corner



The little square in Greece which has meant so much to so many for so many years, features the Main man himself, Kostas Halikia.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gty5Vjy24zY>

MR.BEAN (Rowan Atkinson) - Communist Britain! Freedom of Speech!  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxWMhB4Cfm0>

Paul McCartney and Yoko Ono  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YRkIorirwTM>

Nazis last stand  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssaVVGYPbPQ>

The Dentist  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqYHb41OISE>

Diana Mosely, Adolf, Oswald and me.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kv-KtTUV2N0>

Milton Jones  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hgJcA\\_ZDfDc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hgJcA_ZDfDc)

An interview with Spike  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w54aoIUC-Vw>

Donald Sutherland  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2uq2TmbJKcA>

Isolated places  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-1moF1o5H0>

The Old West in Real Images  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hh4Ac1LD27E>

Grovelling Little Bastard  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkOAUht3G5o>

It is only an act, but such a beautiful one  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uS9xI1BoSkE>

Intelligence  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BAyG5a2L-QI>

Greeker than the Greeks  
<https://greekertanthe Greeks.com/mani-and-maniates-most-ferocious-of/>

# Rosie's Story

**Part 1:** An introduction and short history of the Jewish Community.



*The Bakery*

At Paleologu 71, Kérkira, Greece, in the Jewish neighbourhood, you will find a warm and lovely soul named Rosie Soussis. She is the proprietor of a bakery shop, which is a hotbed for traditional Greek and Corfu sweets, gluten free sweets, vegetarian pies, home-made yoghurt and the delightful Rosie herself.

Most days you will find her here, smiling and serving and charming the many visitors who pass by. She is always busy, but never too busy for a smile and a chat.

Rosie, fourth generation Corfiot, came into this world in 1963, one of two children. Her father, Mosche Zinos, and her mother, Zaav, were respected members of the community. Her father was 56 when Rosie arrived, so no surprise she was so very special to him, and he contributed vitally to her happy childhood. She was always encouraged to express herself as a child, and for many years she took ballet lessons, yet admits to having been only 'average' at that pursuit. What she found a natural talent for was cooking.

Every Friday before Shabbat she would rendezvous in her own house or at one of her two Aunts' houses for the beginning of her culinary apprenticeship. She particularly liked going to Aunt Speranza's, because that lady had a very large kitchen!

Rosie attended a private Elementary school and later was educated in town. When she left High School she went to Athens where she studied French Literature and Studies, at the French Academy.

By the age of 22 she was back in Corfu. Her father had died a year or so earlier, and Rosie decided to follow somewhat in his footsteps, *as will be seen in the next chapter of this story.*



*Rosie with her dad*



*Oretta and Rosie*

*Mosche and Zaav*



She landed a job with Monarch Airlines and was soon in charge of their operation there. For three years she worked hard, but then decided to break completely and set up her own bakery.

*Rosie's Story part 1 - Continued from page 31*

This she did at Filarmonikis Street and, three years later, she moved to her current location. She also has another shop in town, managed by her daughter Oretta, [ meaning Excellence] and a bakery outside of the city. Her daughter has taken after her mum, in terms of cleverness and industry. She has three degrees from different Universities, and works at the Irish Consulate.

I asked Rosie if she had any hobbies? 'None!' was her emphatic response. Not surprising, really, as she normally works 17 hours per day, to 'make and create'.



*Zaav, who passed away in 2000*

➤

This Jewish neighbourhood in Corfu has a rich and fascinating history, dating back 800 years. From 1363 there was a large Jewish ghetto here, under the control of the Venetians. Inside were once four synagogues, but today there is only one, Scuola Greca, with a further, anonymous, ruin, which can still be seen. There is no Rabbi on the island now.



*'It's like a museum now,' Rosie says sadly*

Curfews were applied by the Venetians, but because the Colonists recognised the cleverness of the population, the restrictions relaxed, as the Jews proved able traders and advisors, a definite advantage to the Venetians.

The people were quite poor, but over the generations they gradually established themselves and became more prosperous.



### *The Sephardim diaspora*

In 1492, Isabella and Ferdinand commanded that all Jews who refused to convert to Christianity be expelled from Spain: The Exodus of the Sephardim. The Jews were given four months to leave Spain and were forced to sell their houses and businesses at low prices. It is estimated that 100,000 Jews left Spain at this time. The expulsion from Spain is commemorated every year by all Jews on the holiday of Tisha B'Av.

Many of these Jews came to Corfu.



*Continued on page 33*

*Rosie's Story part 1 - Continued from page 32*

By the time of the outbreak of the Second World War the population of this community had grown to between 2500 and 2800, but after the war it was reduced to between 70 and 90 souls. These were centred around Paleologu and Ag. Sofias street.

Post-war the numbers increased again, as people came from abroad, many from Israel, so that in our present day the Jewish population is dispersed around the island.

During the war the Soussis family, unlike many of their neighbours, were extremely fortunate. Her entire family escaped the German round-up, unlike most of their neighbours.

In the August edition of this magazine, you will read how they escaped the extermination camps, thanks to the ingenuity of Mosche Zinos Soussis.



Editor's note: Population figures vary from different sources. For this article I have adhered to Rosie's estimates.

## Rosie's Story *continued*

### Part 2: Escape from the Nazis



When World War 2 broke out, Corfu was under Italian occupation. Italy surrendered in 1943, causing Germans to start bombing on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September, 1943. They destroyed two of the synagogues, Pugliesa and Nuova. The island was finally occupied two weeks later.

The synagogues in Corfu have never fully recovered. They were once full. Today they cannot muster ten men to form a Minyan, and there is no Rabbi.

Initially, Italians tried to warn the local Jewish population about deportations, especially after the news from Thessaloniki. However, local Jews didn't

realize how severe the situation could be and didn't bother to find a way out.

Logistical reasons kept Jews in Corfu for a while, but the deportation began on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June, 1944. All the Jewish families were brought to Kato Platia, the main square of the town. They were taken to the Old Fortress and asked to surrender all valuables, including keys to their homes.

An announcement was made by the Nazis to the Greek Authorities that for every single Jew that was not presented at the square punctually then ten Christians would be executed.

The Jewish homes got plundered and destroyed during the same day. Local authorities greeted the expulsion and printed all kinds of announcements before plastering them on walls. Corfu's mayor at that time, Spyridonas Kollas, was a known collaborator who appreciated the Germans for cleansing the island.

About 1,800 Jews were taken to Athens. From Athens, they were moved to Auschwitz. Around 200 Jews managed to avoid the deportation by hiding in villages around the island. Many of them were protected by Christians.

*Continued on page 34*

*Rosie's Story part 2 - Continued from page 33*

Jews arrived to the Haidari concentration camp in Athens in a few stages. The journey to Auschwitz took nine days, with all of them being crammed into cattle cars. They had no water, but only beets and onions for food.

As soon as they got to Auschwitz, around 1,600 Jews were sent to gas chambers and crematoria. Only about 200 of them were considered able to work.

The few survivors went to Israel after liberation. Some of them were turned back, so around 50 Jews returned to Corfu.

In 1944 Rosie's father, Mosche Zinos Soussis, proved what a clever and resourceful man he was. He had a good friend, a Christian, who worked in the Municipality. Mosche had heeded the rumours of the roundup, so arranged with his friend to change the names and identities of all his family's members.

This brave friend invited him to his office desk, on which there was a number of Identification forms. The friend discretely excused himself to the bathroom for a while, leaving Rosie's father to stamp the documentation. Unfortunately, though he covered the requirements of his family, he came up one form short, so was unable to forge his own papers!

As is customary for Jewish males, he was circumcised, so, without covering documentation, he could have been nabbed from the street at any time and exposed, literally.

Thus, for the duration of the war he was hidden in the storage room of a friend's house right under the German's noses, but happy that his family could move about freely with their assumed identities.

When finally liberated, for the few remaining Jews in Corfu everything was destroyed.

They had nothing. No money. No property.

Out of the ashes Mosche had to start over and make a living for his family.

And that Chapter we will leave for another day.

## Village and Island times by Paul McGovern



***Juanita***

Much ado about everything is the watchword for the events hereabouts over the last year, so I'll try to give just an arrow-slit of happenstances, else the tale will become rambling and zzzzzzzzzzz.

One of the most notable changes in these parts has been the hive of industry concerning property improvements in our part of 'town'. We are in danger of becoming posh, bijou even. Whatever next?



***A wall reappeared around the plane tree***



***Refurbishment of the old Ocay office and Nitsa's Kitchen***

*Continued on page 35*

*Village and Island Times - Continued from page 34*



***Rufty tufty lorry in our lane***



***Stair construction Panorama West***

Young Teo over the road has been in on the act too. You can glimpse his work on the left of the lorry photo. He is moving downstairs from George and Antigoni's family nest, into his own pad on the ground floor. He has been employing a new star in the village. We call him SocratesMan. I have never seen such industry form a worker. His output challenges the legendary Nitsa.

Tony's House is Lionel's former abode, shortly up for rental.



***Tony's House >***



***Villa Sofia spruced***



The pond I built at the start of this century, using a pond liner with a ten-year guarantee, was well past its efficiency, though still, mostly, held water. I'd promised Elina and Peter a long time back that I would rebuild it. At last, this Spring, I started, rebuilding it with concrete and mesh. It has been quite a task I can tell you, and is quite treacherous on occasion, stepping in and out of the pond.



***Villa Theodora trimmed garden***

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***Oops***

*Village and Island Times - Continued from page 35*

The worst part was clearing the thicket of reeds which pervaded a large section of the pond, I grandly name Lake Inferior. At long last I'm reaching a conclusion, I hope. Danae tells me that fish *must* be added by her 10th birthday in September. I think we can manage that.



***Lake Inferior under reconstruction***

A new manifestation appeared in the plateia in August 2024. We call it the TreeHouse Society. Its spiritual home is under the old plane tree in the plateia, but just like an Ent, it is prone to moving about and exploring. The TreeHouse has proved to be rather popular, which is a little surprising, as nobody really knows why it even exists. Perhaps it doesn't. Nonetheless, it has over 400 branches, buds, berries and flowers now. [ you would say members perhaps].



***Kostas would have approved I'm sure***



***Lake Inferior getting there***



***Lake Inferior filling up***

In January Anna, Lula and me went to Thessaloniki, for Lula to have an operation on her thyroid. It turned into a very interesting romp at the same time. I very much enjoyed being cooped up with the Stereo Sisters for a couple of weeks.



***A sliver of the beauties of Pellas***

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***Yes, Anna does like the black stuff***

>



Andrea, who threatens to blow in one day with the wind, sent this: -

*Ο Κώστας! He was ένας από τους παλιούς, one of the old school Greek guys, a λεβέντης by heart. I luckily got to know him more than three decades ago as an open minded and straight character.*

*I was a youngster with a pile of problems, kind of an outlaw.*

*And Kostas in the way he treated me and spoke to me was one puzzle piece on my way to become a straight and upright man.*

*Ευχαριστώ φίλε μου Κώστα, όπου και νάσαι!*

*Village and Island Times - Continued from page 36*

After a very early meeting, I had this conversation with friend Ian;

Me: - 'Yep, there will be more. But I was being honest, I really don't know what it is all about. I just thought it would be nice to arrange something that didn't have rules, agenda, target.'

Ian: - 'That was the beauty of it, grasshopper, let the Tai (Dao) unfold in the moment, no agenda,' let words arise and fade, be in the moment!'

You see, we have philosophers among us, or, as branch Dick says; 'Among those present were British, Romanians, Welsh, Spanish, Dutch, Americans and of course Greeks, forming a mix of craftsmen, businessmen, nobles, vagabonds, lawyers and lawbreakers.'



***Lula, Mel and Jo***



***Micky, Elizabeth and Aegli***



***Molly aka Phoenix***

Meantime, Agiot self-styled lumberjack Paul Grove gave this advice; -

*Sally and I are in Southern India in Kochi.*

*We came across this delightful Tree House and thought it might be a good venue for the next meeting of the Corfu Tree House Society. They can do a special rate on beer €2.50 for a large bottle of Kingfisher however wine is a little more expensive*

*What are your thoughts? I look forward to discussing it with you when we come back to Corfu around the 19th of March.*



***A second secretive venue within the village***



***A spontaneous Meet in May***



***Irish fairies visit at the time of the Panygeri***



***Paul Grove imagines this personification***

*Village and Island Times - Continued from page 37*

I think the TreeHouse may have landed.



### *Vintage*

Excitement, if you can call it that, came to the village earlier this summer in the form of the BBC.

Why they chose Agios Ioannis to represent a Cretan village in an upcoming thriller called *The Marble Hall Murders* is beyond me. Perhaps it was a cheaper option to film here. Nonetheless, they descended upon our backwater, taking over the plateia and using our village hotel as a base. They were set to do two days of filming for this period piece; one indoors [the hotel] and one out in the square.

Us yokels were asked, politely, to be unobtrusive during filming and not make a noise. Unfortunately, they could not have read the weather reports, as they chose a wet day for filming outside and a dry day for the interior. Never mind, they managed between the showers. They had their own security team, acting as police, dressed in high visibility yellow. They had one stationed at either end of our lane, to deter traffic whilst filming was in motion.

I was indoors. Opposite I could hear the very loud drilling at Teo's house, being undertaken by the unstoppable SocratesMan. The 'policewoman' stationed outside my window tried to get SocratesMan to desist, as the cameras rolled. SocratesMan does not speak English, so he just carried on. The lady called for reinforcements. Along came Vana, with a small posse trailing in her wake

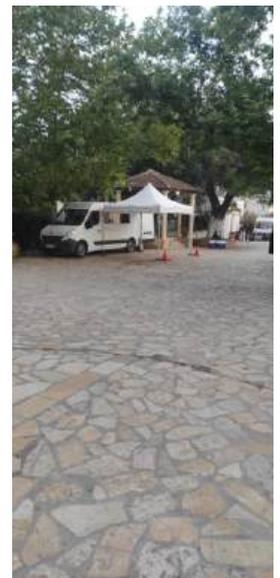
like ducklings. Vana was in a no-win position, as SocratesMan was working on her nephew's building. On the other hand, her daughter Valerie is manager of the hotel. Vana asked him, politely, to stop. He did, for about two minutes, then he started up his drill again, only now his bursts of drilling were fiercer, and longer.

Only God can stop SocratesMan.

At the other end of the square, more yellow vests were dispatched to the fields near the church, as somebody was furiously chopping the undergrowth with a motorized brush cutter, even louder than Socrates Man. Alas, they were unable to make contact, as they were fenced out, the grass was too long to actually see the offender, and he would not have been able to hear their imprecations anyway.

In the middle of the square the Beeb had set up their own pie van for staff, among the big vans and trailers and vintage cars. I said to Anna and Lula, as we sat and watched the unfolding spectacle from the taverna tables. 'I might pop over and get some chips.' I will leave you, Gentle Reader, to imagine their expressions.

Despite their best intentions for economy the BBC had to return to the village days later to wrap up, having been soundly thrashed by natives and climate in Round 1.



### *Pie Van*



### *3 pals out for a walk*

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*Continued on page 39*

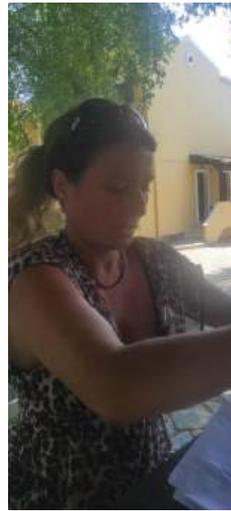
Village and Island Times - Continued from page 38



*A birthday party at Natalia's*



*Additions to the Pride*



*Daniela*



*Elina Peter with Jason and Danae and Trunky*



*Ai and Kostas's house*



*Always on best behaviour*



*Enrico*



*Invasion of Lake*



*My House*



*In store for winter*

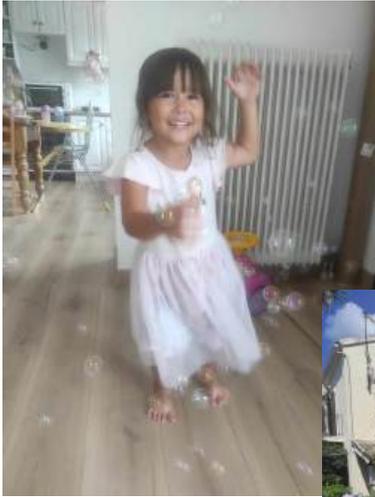


*Makes a change from smartphones*

*Young Agiots*  
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Village and Island Times - Continued from page 39



*Just fun*  
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*Showing off as usual*  
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*Some older ones*  
>



*Party time at the Egg*  
>



*Playtime*  
<

*Summer visitors*

*The Young Ones*  
>



*Poor disguise*  
>



*There is always a birthday or two*

*We are always good*



*The long and winding road*  
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# My Island of Dreams

## Editor's note:

This is the third installment in the Agiot, extracted by Jani Tully Chaplin from her book *The Butterflies Fly Backwards*, continuing her love affair with Corfu.

*It takes a lifetime for someone to discover Greece, but it only takes an instant to fall in love with her.*

Henry Miller

The years had flown by and now Rory was fifteen and a competent sailor, while Miranda was almost ten and a very confident swimmer; suddenly the time had come when we might contemplate buying a sailing boat again. Being confirmed warm weather sailors who had been thoroughly spoilt by so much time afloat in the Mediterranean and the West Indies, we could only entertain the idea of keeping a boat in an equable, oilskin-free climate. The idea of returning to Corfu on a regular basis had dawned on us both, but plans were forming in our minds without either of us daring to voice them.



***Kassiope Harbour***

During that week of extreme heat we had taken a tourist caique from Kassiope to Corfu Town one evening. We docked at seven in the evening but the temperature was still in the high eighties as we walked from the port, up through the narrow streets to the top of the town, where the aromas of fresh coffee, baking pastry, leather and expensive perfume wafted from the shops to mingle beneath festoons of

fresh washing suspended high above the narrow side streets. Eventually we emerged onto the verdant expanse of the Espianada, pleasantly surprised and relieved to find slightly fresher air; turning around we were entranced by the sight of the Liston, the magnificent French colonial, five-storey arcaded building now home to a dozen restaurants; the perfect proportions of its façade were further enhanced by the patinated splendour of weathered plaster and paint, which glowed under the brilliant evening sky.



***Corfu alleyways***

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***The Liston***

>



The four of us wandered along the promenade in search of an air-conditioned restaurant for supper before our return boat trip to Kassiope, unaware of the cool shade offered by the acacia trees above the many outside tables. As we passed a jewellery shop that stood in isolation between the many restaurants, a rush of icy cold air wafted out of its open doors.

“Come on,” I said. “Let's go in here to cool off for a minute.”

*Continued on page 42*

*My Island of Dreams - Continued from page 41*

"You can't, Mummy. They'll think you want to buy something!" insisted Miranda, who was still thinking like an English girl.

But I knew the Greeks better than she did. We stepped over the threshold to be greeted by the astonishing sight of handsome identical twins dressed in matching pale blue shirts and navy trousers; they welcomed us warmly and immediately offered us cold drinks.

"Oh no thank you; we won't be buying any jewellery, I'm afraid," I said apologetically. "We are just so hot! Do you mind if we cool off for a minute in your wonderful air-conditioning?"

"But of course you are most welcome," said one of the twins in impeccable English. "Take a seat and stay as long as you like. Where do you come from?"

"Oh, a tiny village in England, you won't have heard of it," I said.

"What part of England?"

"The West Country, South Devon actually," I replied, certain he would not know anywhere in Devon.

"Do you know Kingswear, by any chance?" inquired Christos, the chattier of the twins.

Miranda gasped.

"Very well indeed! Several of our friends live there; it's not far from our home," I replied in amazement.

"My mother-in-law's house is called Nethway, a great big Queen Annie mansion. You know it?" enquired Christos.

"That once belonged to a friend from school!" I exclaimed, hardly believing my ears.

As we chatted about Nethway and some mutual acquaintances in South Devon, I realised we had met Christos' mother-in-law and her Italian husband at our closest friends' wedding in Kingswear in 1983. I called Jeremy and Rory into the shop and made our formal introductions. Cold drinks arrived as if by magic and a table was spirited up for us at Aegli Restaurant next door; thus a potentially disastrous evening had been transformed into the most memorable night of our holiday. When Jeremy asked for the supper bill he was assured it had already been settled by our new friends, despite all protestation. We could not have known at the time that we would never be allowed to pay any such bill when the twins were with us, or even nearby:

"I can't take your money, sir; it's more than my job's worth!" the waiters would invariably reply.

Later, as our caique pattered up the coast through deliciously refreshing sea air, passing a handful of unspoilt capes and headlands on the way back to Kassiope under a star filled sky, I thought it was high time to sow the seed.

"Wouldn't it be super to come back next year? It must be wonderful at Easter ... I must find out if our little house will be available."

"We need some sort of base here," Jeremy replied. "Somewhere we could come for most school holidays. We could probably get about eighteen weeks' use each year, if we put our minds to it."

Had I noticed the dreamy look in his eyes as he gazed at the shadowy shapes of indented coastline from the bow of the caique, I could have guessed what he had in mind; it was not the fisherman's house, nor yet a beachside apartment or luxury villa. His holiday home would have to incorporate a mast, sails and engines.

On the final day of our holiday we rented a small car for the day and went to explore. I had envisaged a day driving into the hills, marvelling at views of mountains and fertile valleys, enjoying the slightly cooler air, taking lunch at some rustic taverna before buying local honey and olive wood souvenirs on the way home. Jeremy, however, drove us determinedly in the opposite direction from the beckoning foothills, interrupting my daydreams.

"Why are we going this way?" I asked disappointedly.

"Well, there's this marina....."

"Oh no!" groaned the children and I in unison, realising we had been caught up in another pointless reconnaissance mission. We were all too well aware of Jeremy's total fascination with boats and his unhealthy interest in marinas and chandleries.

"It'll take hours," wailed Miranda, "I want to go swimming."

"It will be nice to see something different," Jeremy cajoled, "and there's bound to be a café serving croissants."

"Chocolate ones?" asked Miranda, perking up.

"I'm quite certain of it," retorted Jeremy, rather unconvincingly.

*Continued on page 43*

*My Island of Dreams - Continued from page 42*



### ***Gouvia Marina***

In our long experience of Mediterranean marinas we had seldom found any that offered drinkable coffee, let alone fresh croissants. Most ablution blocks were so appalling that you would be loath to bath a dog in them, certainly not yourself or your children: dirty floors, ununlockable doors, smelly drains and enough hungry mosquitoes to deter even the staunchest yachtsman. Generally marinas are constructed in the most inhospitable areas, either where no breeze ever penetrates or where perpetual gales produce ragged nerves; favourite sites seemed to be chosen either for their proximity to industrial zones, or for their remoteness from any vaguely pleasant beach, civilization and shopping facilities; often they were cleverly carved directly out of a cliff face so that maximum reflected heat and swirling dust storms could smother you and your craft.

Rory, although slightly more sanguine about the visit, was feeling carsick in the back of the car, thanks to the hairpin bends of the coast road from Kassiopi. I swapped places with him, then felt carsick as well; consequently the children and I were irritably hot by the time we arrived at Gouvia an hour later. Jeremy was still exuding cheerful optimism, unusual for him except of course when matters nautical came into the equation. At first glance we could see this marina was different. Behind the car park was a luxuriantly green cricket pitch around which saplings had been planted; mimosa bushes decorated the grass verges and pink and white oleanders surrounded the buildings. The marina offices, shops and restaurants were built in deference to Corfiot style with a multitude of archways, shutters and balconies, the whole painted in a profusion of toning pastel colours. Of course we were still in Corfu, so the occasional quaintly attractive anomaly was only to be expected: a colossal pile of rusting chain and tangled

cable at the centre of an immaculately planted flowerbed, or a rotting wooden yacht balanced at an alarming angle atop a hillock of freshly quarried boulders to resemble some studio back-lot reconstruction of a disastrous shipwreck.

We settled ourselves in one of the quayside cafés, having made use of the gleaming facilities, and ordered freshly squeezed orange juice and the elusive chocolate croissants while we waited for Jeremy to complete his enquiries at the office. The orange juice was ice-cool and served in long, frosted glasses with gaudy miniature paper parasols, which nine-year-old Miranda thought the height of sophistication; the sensuous pains-au-chocolat were hot and crisp on the outside with soft, warm chocolate oozing from within. Sitting on comfortably upholstered cane chairs in the shade of canvas awnings, we absorbed the view beyond the neat rows of shining yachts directly in front of us. The natural harbour of Gouvia, arguably once the most important in the Venetian Empire, has a spectacular setting; the view beyond the entrance stretches over the straits to the distant hills on the Greek-Albanian border, flanked to the north by the majestic presence of Pantokrator Mountain. It was a stunningly beautiful outlook, by far the best I had seen from any marina in the Mediterranean.

Across the bay stood a tiny, picture postcard white church, sitting at the end of a narrow causeway like a sugar lump; the nearer promontory provided thickly wooded shelter to a cluster of ramshackle fishermen's cottages, fronted by rickety wooden piers bedecked with nets drying in the sun. In the majority of marinas your berth faces a singularly unattractive concrete seawall or an even uglier stone breakwater; unless you climb to the top of your mast you will never gain sight of the open sea.

The sun was at its zenith as Jeremy emerged from the air-conditioned office, looking rather smug and clutching a glossy brochure. We spent the rest of that day back on the beach at Kassiopi, the children and I in the water, Jeremy under an umbrella engrossed in his brochure and undoubtedly choosing his future berth. Unable to get any sense out of him about our plans for dinner, I gave up and resigned myself to the inevitable. One look at his glazed expression told me all I needed to know: from now on we would be seriously on the lookout for the third boat in our married life.

# Walking with Hilary Paipeti and Paul Bloomfield

My usual midday port of call for the Internet having a connection problem, I went to my second choice instead, two kilometres away rather than just half a k, and in the other direction. Both are on the course of the Corfu Trail, the island's long distance walking route, now available from Narratour. The major difference between the two venues is that many walkers stop to eat at Tristrato.

Tristrato is the local equivalent of a gastropub. It's a hangout for locals from their morning coffee until early evening, and also serves a limited but delicious mezes menu of meat or fish, and sometimes an awesome pie or two.

This particular day, there were two parties of walkers, one an English couple, and the other a large group of Belgians. I introduced myself as the founder of the Trail, and therefore was obliged to pose for photographs. Here I am with the Belgian group.

Leader Bart Vandecapelle sent me the photo, and a nice message:



'Hi Hilary,

I'm still under the impression of meeting you in Tristrato last Monday. After seven journeys on the Corfu trail, I finally met the founder and inspirator! I will never forget (sic).'

He's the big guy in the centre holding the CT sign.

They had an amazing meal, and were loving the hike.

## Teletrail

### Editor's Note: -

*I'm very pleased to introduce writer Paul Bloomfield, another walking enthusiast.*

It's still possible to find a Corfu unspoilt by mass tourism – here's how.

A century after Gerald Durrell's birth, I went in search of the island's olive groves, paint-peeling villas, fireflies and figs.



*Writer Paul Bloomfield, pictured here at a traditional Greek taverna, set out to discover Gerald Durrell's unspoilt Corfu Credit: Paul Bloomfield.*

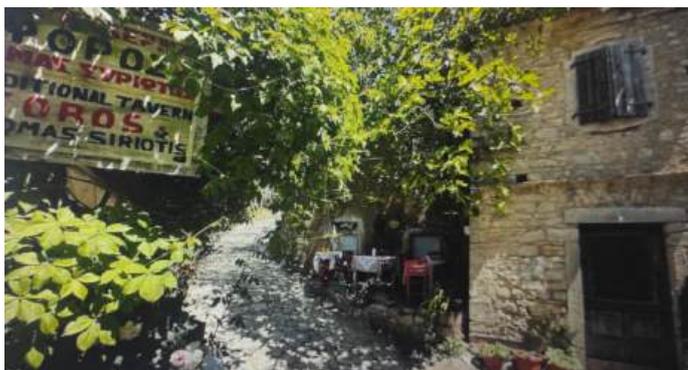
If Eau de Corfu were a fragrance, there'd be a couple of editions.

'Kavos Summer' would combine aromas of Ambre Solaire, lager, souvlaki and moped fumes. 'Durrell Spring', meanwhile, would feature top notes of orange blossom and sea breeze, hints of wild oregano and fennel, undertones of pine and olive. Which is a roundabout way of saying that there is more than one Corfu. There's the fly-and-flop destination typified by sprawling resorts. Then there's the magical isle evoked so lyrically in conservationist, naturalist and presenter Gerald Durrell's *My Family and Other Animals*: tortoises lumbering through somnolent olive groves, paint-peeling villas, fireflies and figs.

That's the version that sparked my vicarious long-distance love affair with Corfu many decades ago – though I'd never actually visited.

*Continued on page 45*

*Walking with Hilary Paipeti and Paul Bloomfield—Teletrail -  
Continued from page 44*



*O Foros is a rustic, enchanting tavern in one of Corfu's historic villages serving authentic, local Greek food  
Credit: Paul Bloomfield*

This year marks the centenary of Gerald's birth, celebrated with events including a revival of the play of *My Family* in Corfu Town. So the time seemed ripe for a first visit to Corfu, to search for his old haunts. On the face of it, this is easier said than done. In the postwar decades Corfu's tourism industry boomed, redrawing stretches of coastline. In 2024, nearly two million international air passengers landed, a figure doubled by domestic flights, cruise-ship passengers and ferries.

"Gerry thought it was partly his fault that Corfu succumbed to mass tourism," I was told by Lee

Durrell, his widow, who has a home in the island's hilly centre. "In the 1960s, he became distraught at the pace of shoreline development, believing it was in some ways a result of the popularity of his books."



*Gerald and friend*

In truth, the worst of overtourism in Corfu is concentrated in a limited number of spots, largely on the east coast. You'll also find other smaller, more pleasant resorts with luxury villas, family-friendly hotels and welcoming guesthouses. But historically

most Corfiot Italians lived inland, seeking safety from seaborne raids in settlements amid the hilly interior. Today that hinterland is, if not untouched, still largely a sleepy swathe of variegated greens: some four million olive trees interspersed with cypress, myrtle and kermes oak.

How, then, to discover authentic glimpses of Gerry Durrell's childhood paradise? I found the answer –and not for the first time – in a hike: the 110 or so miles of the Corfu Trail, which traverses the island from south to north, winding inland to visit settlements little touched by tourism.

Don't expect to find the exact places Durrell depicts, though, cautions Hilary Whitton Paipeti, an English expat who launched the Trail in 2001. "Not all of the specific locations and moments he

recounts may have existed in the way he describes them," she notes. "They could be amalgams of various sites and incidents. But you can find similar spots if you know where to look." Her updated book *In the Footsteps of Lawrence Durrell and Gerald Durrell in Corfu* (<https://corfudurrellfootsteps.com/>) offers handy pointers.



*Monastery Beach*

Wary of the fierce heat and hordes of summer, my wife and I walked in April, enjoying the freshness of spring when, Gerry wrote, "the island was flower-filled, scented, and a-flutter with new leaves". Stage-by-stage descriptions of walking routes rarely thrill, so let's paint a broad-brushstrokes picture of a typical day.

As the morning stretches wide its arms and yawns, we follow a stony track between veteran olive trees.

*Continued on page 46*

*Walking with Hilary Paipeti and Paul Bloomfield—Teletrail -  
Continued from page 45*

Cats snooze under chairs, on tables, beneath bushes. The fluting whistle of a golden oriole, the trills of Sardinian warblers, the liquid babble of goldfinch. Basking blue-faced lizards skitter off the path. Wildflowers jostle for attention, festooned with butterflies: shivering rock roses, flimsy mauve petals crumpled like crepe paper. Ivory lace-flowers, cerulean borage and blowsy, bearded iris.



And orchids – so many orchids: pyramidal, horseshoe bee, green-winged, early-purple and titillating naked-man orchids. Each stage ended on the coast, to find accommodation and food. We'd shed sandy boots, plunge into the limpid Med for a spring-brisk swim, then dither over typical Corfiot dishes: stifado, beef or rabbit simmered with tomatoes, baby onions and red wine vinegar; sofrito, thin slices of veal in garlic, herb and white wine sauce; pastitsada, rich meat stew with pasta; or bourdetto, dogfish or eel in a spicy red sauce.

Inevitably, wildlife encounters were pale echoes of those described by the boy naturalist. On Lake Korission, where Gerry and mentor Theodore Stephanides watched flamingos, we spotted only a lone egret stalking the shallows.



*Lake Korission in Corfu is a well-known stop for migratory birds, including flamingos Credit: iStockphoto*

The Durrells enjoyed a nocturnal lightshow as cavorting porpoises set the bioluminescent sea

ablaze; we delighted in fireflies dancing like “green embers” beneath our balcony.

Gerry watched mating snakes “entangled as streamers at a carnival”; I narrowly avoided treading on a pair of horned vipers coupling on the path.

The route stitches together stretches of stony tracks, sandy paths and forest trails, cobbled kalderimi (traditional donkey paths), concrete and asphalt, linking scenic, cultural and culinary highlights. There's the clifftop Byzantine fortress of Angelokastro, with sweeping views across Palaiokastritsa – reputedly where Odysseus washed ashore, and where parts of recent Ralph Fiennes epic *The Return* were filmed. Though now much developed, its gorgeously sculpted coves retain the allure that prompted Theodore Stephanides to rhapsodise: “Palaiokastritsa... with its three bays and rocky headlands, was a dream from another world.”



### *Paleokastritsa*

There were unforgettable characters, too. Above Prasouli Beach we met Mitéra, “Mother of the Olive Groves”. Impossibly twisted, sinewy and pocked with holes, Mitéra is laden with history – and 10,000 olives in a good year. Perhaps 1,500 years old, she yielded fruit before England existed, and well before the



*Mitera, mother of the olive groves*

*Continued on page 47*

*Walking with Hilary Paipeti and Paul Bloomfield—Teletrail -  
Continued from page 46*

In inland settlements, sightless windows stare from empty houses abandoned when residents sought opportunities on the coast or overseas – a hollowing- out of hill villages being alleviated somewhat by the Corfu Trail. At his cafe in Dafnata, for example, Kostas Raris refuels hikers with apple pie, baklava and walnut cake washed down with ginger beer, made using a recipe left by the British in the 19th century. “When I was young, and my father ran this cafe, locals would pop in at six o’clock for an ouzo and half a cigarette – that was all they could afford – en route to their olive groves,” he recalls. “Now, few people tend their trees, but 20 or 30 walkers come through daily in spring and autumn.”



*Hikers refuel at Kostas Raris cafe with apple pie, baklava and walnut cake Credit: Paul Bloomfield*

Like any good story, the Corfu Trail builds to a climax. Our final day’s walk climbed steeply from Spartylas on a stony path leading to the decrepit chapel of Taxiarchis, where once-vivid frescos have been sun-bleached and wind-scrubbed. Continuing through magical goblin woodland and the flower-spangled karst plateau, we tackled the island’s loftiest peak, 906 metre Pantokrator – its monastery now overshadowed by an unsightly forest of antennae – then descended its northern slopes to Palea (Old) Perithia.

At its zenith, Corfu’s oldest continuously inhabited village, established in the 14th century, was a prosperous settlement of some 130 houses served by no fewer than eight churches. In decline from the 1960s, today there’s again something of buzz – and not just from bees producing its renowned honey.



*Palea (Old) Perithia is Corfu’s oldest continuously inhabited village Credit: Getty*

Under the leafy pergola of Foros, one of several tavernas opened in historic houses, we glugged icy ginger beer and wiped plates clean of tzatziki and spinach tsigareli with garlicky crusts. Old Perithia’s renaissance reflects hopes that alternative tourism, including hiking, can help revive dwindling settlements away from the beaches – and yield glimpses of lost lifestyles and landscapes Gerry loved.

### **Erimitis: coastal Corfu’s last stand?**

In Corfu’s far northeast curves the exquisite cove of Kalami. In the Thirties it cast its spell on Gerry’s brother Lawrence Durrell, who lived with his first wife, Nancy, in “a white house set like a dice in a rock already venerable with the scars of wind and water”. You can stay in their apartment, which still holds Larry’s typewriter, sideboard and rocking chair, or eat in the well-respected The White House restaurant below. That once-lonely bay is now increasingly hemmed in by villas, apartments, tavernas and a resort. But a pleasant amble north round headlands and beaches leads to the Erimitis (“Hermit”) peninsula – focus of a campaign to prevent planned tourism development.



*The ‘exquisite’ cove of Kalami in Corfu’s far northeast Credit: iStockphoto*

*Continued on page 48*

*Walking with Hilary Paipeti and Paul Bloomfield—Teletrail -  
Continued from page 47*

That once-lonely bay is now increasingly hemmed in by villas, apartments, tavernas and a resort. But a pleasant amble north round headlands and beaches leads to the Erimitis (“Hermit”) peninsula – focus of a campaign to prevent planned tourism development.

“This is the last pristine, virtually untouched coastal area of Corfu,” says Dr Simon Karythis, executive director of the Ionian Environment Foundation.

“There are no olive groves, just natural Mediterranean scrub, and no buildings to speak of.” It’s a precious Corfiot remnant of an ancient ecosystem, where oaks, myrtles and strawberry trees shade sandy footpaths lined by orchids; the wider habitat, including three brackish lakes and thriving near-shore seagrass beds, is home to a profusion of birds, terrapins, fish, mammals and invertebrates.

“Erimitis has a high diversity of butterflies – endemic species and some shared with Albania,” explains Karythis. “It’s on an important migratory route for birds, many of which stop over and feed in the lakes. There are otters and dolphins, and vulnerable Mediterranean monk seals have been spotted; we’re funding research into possible pupping caves on the peninsula.”

A swathe comprising around one-third of Erimitis was previously government-owned, site of a naval observation post on this closest point to Albania. But following Greece’s financial crisis, in 2012 rights to develop around one-third of the headland were sold to investment company NCH Capital, whose plans included a high-end hotel, holiday apartments and villas.



*Erimitis is ‘the last pristine, virtually untouched coastal area of Corfu’ Credit: Edward Staines.*

The current status of the project is unclear, though information provided to The Telegraph by NCH in 2019 stated that only 7 per cent of the land would be built on, that the design complies with Greek sustainable development requirements, and that it would enhance environmental protection. Yet campaigners believe any substantial development would be devastating for Erimitis.

For now, it’s a uniquely beautiful patch to explore on foot, with near-empty swimming beaches, serene lagoons and dense thickets providing delicious pools of shade and wildlife habitat – a last untouched coastal corner of Gerald Durrell’s “Garden of the Gods”.

“It’s wonderful that Erimitis has remained so unscathed by mass tourism,” muses Lee Durrell. “It’s a really wild place where you can stroll beautiful footpaths, and look for reptiles and butterflies and migratory birds. Right now, Corfu has an amazing opportunity to do something really fine – to be bold and brave, and save this last gasp of nature.”

For now, it’s a uniquely beautiful patch to explore on foot, with near-empty swimming beaches, serene lagoons and dense thickets providing delicious pools of shade and wildlife habitat – a last untouched coastal corner of Gerald Durrell’s “Garden of the Gods”.

### **How to do it**

<https://www.walksworldwide.com/> (01962 302085) offers a 15-day Corfu Trail holiday covering the entire route plus nights in Kalami, close to Erimitis, from £1,329 including flights, B&B and two dinners. Shorter itineraries also available.

## Durrells: The Ultimate Irony by Hilary Paipeti



*The Durrell Family*

Famously introduced by youngest child Gerald's 1956 memoir *My Family and Other Animals* and its two sequels, the Durrells may be the world's most envied family, warm and strongly bonded around motherly widow Louisa, with characterful friends and mentors, and living in idyllic surroundings. Eccentric family members provide comic interludes amongst the titular animals: Larry's gripes, Leslie's weapon fixation, and Margo's habit of sunbathing in a swimsuit, unknown in 1930s Corfu.

Three books, two TV serials and a short film later, everyone is intimately acquainted with the Durrells and their adventures - real, exaggerated and imaginary.

Gerry's boyhood exploits, however, would not have happened without a family background that strayed well into the orbit of the permissive and the somewhat louche.

The four siblings were all born in India, Larry in 1912, Leslie in 1917, Margo in 1919 and Gerry in 1925. Their parents were second-generation Anglo-Indians, father Lawrence being a successful railway engineer under the Raj. His premature death when Larry was 16 and Gerry just three sent the family to England, where they understandably failed to settle. It wasn't long before they emigrated to Corfu, Larry having acquired a wife, Nancy, in the meantime.

That's the whitewashed version.

Their father's death left the children without an authoritative father figure, parented by a mother who, while loving and an excellent cook, was a drunk. Whilst still in 'Pudding Island', as he disparagingly called it, Larry already pursued a permissive lifestyle, playing the piano in Bohemian nightclubs, and setting up house with the equally free-and-easy Nancy, an artist whose own chosen lifestyle was an act of rebellion against her fiercely conventional and restrictive parents. They both detested and despised the bourgeoisie nature of the society around them.

Once in Corfu, they were able to throw off the constraints of the hated stuffy Victorian values that largely dominated contemporary family life in England (though it now seems Queen Victoria herself was not the virtuous role model she is held up to be). Larry and Nancy, finally married just before they left England, upset the locals by swimming naked - even swimming was frowned on, never mind in the nude! Nancy had at least two abortions while living in Kalami. In Paris, they became friends with the notorious uber-progressives Henry Miller and Anais Nin. Leslie largely mixed with semi-feral local lads. Margo's minimal clothing was viewed with disfavour, and she may have fallen pregnant by one of Gerry's tutors. Once adolescence hit, Gerry ran wild; in desperation, Louisa sent him to stay one summer with his eldest brother in Kalami. It was all very different to the staid behaviour of the ex-pats in residence, many of them descendants of old families that had remained after the British left in 1864 (though the Durrells did make acquaintance with the then Anglican Chaplain, Geoffrey Carr, who was invited to Gerry's thirteenth birthday party).

Mainly as a result of their family circumstances, they lived in a state of freedom atypical for the period, a condition regarded with approbation and aspiration by viewers of the most recent TV series.

*Durrells: The Ultimate Irony - Continued from page 49*

As Jane Fryer wrote recently in the Mail, their life as portrayed on TV was 'joyous and golden, awash with love, eccentricity and mad humour. We all wanted to be part of that wonderful chaotic family...'

But a darker side lurks, a side which would be grounds for 'cancellation' if fully brought into the light of today's obsessed class warriors. Not at fault is the speculation that Larry committed incest with his daughter Sappho (this is an old charge, but the accusation has been resurrected in Michael Haag's recent book), nor the appalling misogyny shown by the treatment of the women in his life. Nor Gerry's possible later misdeeds, nor Leslie's borderline criminal behaviour and later descent into homelessness. In the modern charge sheet, they committed a worse crime by far.

During the 'Black Lives Matter' hysteria, mobs clamoured for the removal of statues, monuments and even place names relating to anyone and everyone that might have the barest association with slavery and more broadly with colonialism. And colonialist attitudes are certainly an accusation that can be levelled at the Durrells. As children of the Raj, the byword for colonial practices, it is not surprising that such a mindset was inscribed in their DNA.

For the Durrells, Corfu with its inexpensive way of life was a substitute for India, a place where - unlike England where their remaining inheritance was inadequate to maintain their lost Indian idyll - they could enjoy relative affluence and maintain servants; and feel superior. Larry's descriptions of the local 'peasants' are sometimes disparaging, while many of Gerry's otherwise colourful characters are portrayed as exotic stereotypes.

Frequently, the family displayed discourtesy and disdain for the islanders, who in turn regarded them as 'rude, boorish and ... disrespectful', according to the Fryer article. Gerry, young enough to assimilate, is said to have been 'loved' by many of the locals - until he later 'ran wild' and succeeded in irking them in his turn. Corfu's society had its own rules, probably stricter than the English ones they had rejected, but as members of the 'colonial class' the Durrells could ignore them.

Then there is the case of the Durrell's servant, Maria Kondou, a cousin of family friend Menelaos, who lived near the Strawberry-Pink Villa. When it became clear that the coming war would force the family back to England, a return to the situation they had escaped, Louisa persuaded Maria to join them, with the promise of a better life. Bearing in mind the hardship suffered by the people in Corfu during the war, a move to England certainly saved her from those terrible years. But at the time it is likelier that Louisa was dissembling, and her true motive was a desire to secure a servant at a rate she could afford - riches by Maria's Corfu expectations, but pocket money by English standards.

Worse, in early 1945 Maria fell pregnant, and claimed that the much-younger Leslie was the father (though she was living independently by that time). A later court case ruled in Maria's favour, but the Durrell family refused to acknowledge the child, Tony, as a scion, and he took the surname Condos from his mother's family.

The later narratives, in book form and in film, may have presented the Durrells as liberal and permissive well before the time those societal values became prevalent, evoking the approval and esteem now firmly attached to their legend and legacy. But they also embodied the type of colonialist attitudes that would not sit at all well with today's leftist progressives.

But no-one is perfect, not even the Durrells.



*1938 Tassos and Larry*