



# THE HELLENIC CENTRE NEWS

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THE HELLENIC COMMUNITY TRUST

REGISTERED CHARITY NO 1010360

## Overview of the Year 2007

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Following a rich cultural year, the closing months of 2007 saw a crescendo of activity and events. It is clear that these events would not be possible without cooperation and collaboration between the governing bodies and the management team of the Centre, its member societies, and most importantly the support of all those, members, members' friends and guests who support and attend our events.

On 17 November, the combined efforts of the the Hellenic Centre, Cypriot Estia of London, Eteria Ellinon Epistimonon, The Hellenic Foundation, as well as the Macedonian Society of Great Britain produced a delightful evening of Greek Songs, ancient and modern by the world renowned singer Nena Venetsanou. The Great Hall was filled to capacity and the beauty of her voice filled the air to the obvious delight of the audience.

The annual Hellenic Centre Family Lunch organised by the Fundraising Committee was held on 25 November and this year it was decided that the proceeds would be for the benefit of the fire victims in Greece. The event more than lived up to expectations and the combination of Music Quiz and Charades made for an afternoon of competition tempered by lots of fun and laughter.

The Centre was delighted to welcome Mr Takis Arapoglou, Chairman and CEO of the National Bank of Greece on 27 November to a dinner where he was the guest speaker, organised by the Hellenic Centre and the Hellenic Bankers Association-UK. Mr Arapoglou gave an address prior to the dinner and circulated with guests beforehand and afterwards. The tickets for this event were almost sold out before they were available and the evening proved to be a huge success. It is hoped it will be the first of many such events.

Finally, on 10 December, the Centre hosted an evening dedicated to the historic political figure Konstantinos Karamanlis on the 100 years' anniversary of his birth, held under the auspices of the Ambassador of Greece, HE Mr Vassilis Pispinis. We were delighted that Mr Achilleas Karamanlis, the brother of Konstantinos Karamanlis, attended the event and gave a short address. The programme for the event comprised six speakers, Professor Konstantinos Svolopoulos, Professor Kevin Featherstone, Sir Michael Llewelyn-Smith, Dr Spyros Economides, Mrs Chryssy Karydi, and Professor George Babiniotis. The evening continued with a video presentation and finally a reception sponsored by the Greek Shipping Cooperation Committee. The Great Hall also had a splendid photographic exhibition around all its walls. It was a just and fitting tribute to such a man and an excellent note on which to end the year.

The preceding months of 2007 also had many social, cultural and educational events the variety of which continues to fascinate and are detailed on the following pages. We would like to thank you all for your support and look forward to welcoming you again to the Centre during 2008.



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### Lectures and Presentations

Both a classic and revolutionary at the same time, this audio visual lecture, entitled *The Callas Legacy* was always going to be a show-stopper. A legend that lives on to infinity - learning more about Maria Callas it is easy to understand how and why she appealed to so many and still does years after her passing. Helena Matheopoulos explored the myth and genius of Maria Callas which was truly fascinating and the audience left the Great Hall with a much deeper appreciation of this world renowned Greek artist.

Also in May the Centre was delighted to welcome Peter Mackridge, Emeritus Professor of Modern Greek, University of Oxford and Visiting Professor of Modern Greek, King's College London who gave a lecture entitled *Dionysios Solomos: National Poet or International Poet?* It was a very illuminating lecture, and it was made even more interesting as Professor Mackridge allowed plenty of time for the Question and Answer session – to witness the active audience participation really does confirm that these events are much enjoyed by our visitors and members.

*Holding Hands* presented by Manon Kanaroglou on 22 May was the first of a series of talks and presentations about voluntary aid work carried out by Hellenic Centre members and friends. This particular talk was about children who arrive in the Lavrion Refugee Reception Centre in Greece. At the beginning of June, Joanna Caroussis presented the second in the series, *UGANDA – Making a Real Difference*, describing her experiences of volunteer work in Uganda, the difficulties and the benefits to the local community. The third talk in the series was on 4 October, entitled the *Heart Doctors*, and presented by Eleni Sotiriou and Genie Lyra and the final talk entitled *From Asylum to Community: The experience of Kaleidoscope, a non-profit making*



*organisation* was by Mrs Fafalios-Dragonas. All of their work is very meaningful to the many and varied beneficiaries and these members who give unstintingly of their time should be applauded for their efforts.

*The History of Cartography*, a lecture in Greek, by Artemis Scutari, curator of Sylvia Ioannou Collection of Maps was a very beautiful and informative presentation. The illustrations and narration were almost poetic and very well received by the audience.

In October, the Centre hosted a combined event of lecture and music, *From National School to Modernity – A Homage to Nikos Skalkottas and his Legacy*. A presentation of the life and work of the composer Nikos Skalkottas was given by Katerina Levidou, University of Oxford and was followed by piano solo concert with Dominic Saunders playing works by the composer alongside compositions by Costas Kafouros (artistic director), Dimitris Dragatakis and Robert Keeley.

### Music and Dance



The music programme for the year started at a high point in February with the *Oxford Philomusica* directed by Marios Papadopoulos. A wonderful evening which was very well supported by the membership and the local community,

with an audience of 200 visitors who filled the Great Hall. The Oxford Philomusica is a renowned orchestra and the reasons for this were amply demonstrated by their performance. The event was co-hosted by the Hellenic Centre and the Cultural Department of the Cyprus High Commission and sponsored by the Ministry of Education and Culture and was considered to be a resounding success by all those who participated.

Later on in February, a song recital by *Julietta Demetriades* (soprano) and *Alan Law* (piano) was held comprising works from Mozart, Brahms, Berlioz and Kalomoiris. Yet again the Great Hall was transformed into a formal recital environment to give an appropriate setting for the beautiful voice of Ms Demetriades who was so very ably accompanied by Alan Law.



## News

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St George's day, 23 April, saw a genuinely unique performance by an award winning group of young adults visiting the UK from Cyprus, *Laika, Rembetika and Smyrneika* Songs Recital. Playing traditional folk music such as Laika and Rembetika and enthusiastic renderings of Smyrneika songs made this a very special evening. It was also an evening of Georges with it being St George's Day, the students coming from St George's Lyceum in Larnaca and the whole event being under the auspices of HE The High Commissioner of Cyprus, Mr George Iacovou!

In June the Great Hall was the venue for a stunningly avant garde performance of visual art by Stavros Panagiotakis –



paintings, video installations and performance, entitled *Kytarro*. An amazing performance by a hugely talented and innovative group – the dancing and music alone were haunting, melodic, emotional and intense. Add to this the contemporary floor standing sculptures and lighting – it was a fantastic evening in the true sense of the word.

The tempo was maintained in July with *Tango Argentino*. Something new at the Centre – a Tango workshop led by Kicca Tommasi. Participants learnt the basic elements of tango and were also helped to develop their overall dance technique. The workshop was followed by a milonga (free dance session). It was a great delight to see the Great Hall filled with so many new visitors dancing the afternoon away.

Autumn was distinguished by *Tangos by Astor Piazzolla*: A wonderful passionate performance by Fugata of some very special tangos by Piazzolla played to a maximum capacity audience in the Great Hall. At the end of the performance we, the audience, all felt very privileged to have enjoyed such a superb musical experience.

As you can see from the music and dance programme alone the spectrum covered by the Centre in a year is broad and we hope there was something for everyone.

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### Fundraising and Social

This year the fundraising and social events started with a blast on 17 February - *Greek Carnival Party* – and how! An event that attracted both young and old who all let their hair down and put on their masks and costumes ...

Followed by the more traditional and very well supported *Kathara Deftera*. This year's lunch was held in the Great Hall and a super feast was enjoyed by our members and guests. The beginning of Lent has never tasted so good. Easter was properly celebrated in the Hellenic Centre Bar

on 12 April with competitive red egg cracking reaching new heights. This evening was one of the regular evenings which take place in the *Hellenic Centre bar* almost every month. Reasonably priced food and cool Keo beer certainly makes the time spent here relaxing and fun. It is good to see these evenings supported by students and members alike and often those visiting the Centre for the first time – but we hope not the last!

The now famous *Greek Evening with the group Plastic Chairs* took place in early June and the eating, dancing and general merry-making were as evident as ever.

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There are still more events that took place at the Centre during the year including many events organised by Member Societies – a lecture about Cavafy and English poetry, a lecture on Helen of Troy by Bethany Hughes and a lecture in Greek to mark the anniversary of Nikos Kazantzakis – to mention but a few; for children a puppet show, *Curious Carla* and the problem of knowledge; film screenings and countless exhibitions in the Friends Room. Drama was represented by several performances of *An evening with Iacovos Kampanelis*.

The Centre also participated fully in events such as the Marylebone Fayre. This was particularly good this year as the Paddington Road closure included the Hellenic Centre which allowed even more people to pass by and drop in to

the Centre. Again the weather was excellent and the Fayre itself was buzzing. The Lykion ton Hellenidon dancers attracted the largest crowds ever and not surprisingly had several pictures in the photo montage in the local Marylebone magazine. They had three changes of costumes all beautiful, colourful and eye-catching.

Other activities which continue to thrive are the Greek language courses which attract new students as well as retaining some who progress to the highest level we offer and the Book Club which meets on a monthly basis. Equally the venue hire of the Centre which is essential to revenue continues to attract many return clients – which confirms to us all that the Centre is valued not only by its members and staff, but by our many visitors and guests.



## Member Societies of the Hellenic Centre

- Anglo-Hellenic League
- Cypriot Estia of London
- Episteme – The Association of British Cypriot Professionals
- Diaspora Centre
- EFEK UK (National Union of Cypriot Students UK)
- Eteria Ellinon Epistimonon
- Greek Archaeological Committee (UK)
- Greek Cypriot Brotherhood
- Hellenic Association of Translators and Interpreters
- Hellenic Bankers Association-UK
- Hellenic Engineers Society
- Hellenic Foundation
- Hellenic Medical Society
- International Society of Friends of Nikos Kazantzakis
- Ionian Society
- London Hellenic Society
- Lykion ton Hellinidon
- Macedonian Society of Great Britain
- Peloponnesian Association of Great Britain
- Standing Committee on Modern Greek in the Universities

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The Centre relies on its Individual, Society and Company members to ensure its future  
**BECOME A MEMBER, SUPPORT CULTURE, SUPPORT THE HELLENIC CENTRE**

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