



# ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

50th YEAR

No: 238

Issue 2, 2023

www.ithaca.org.au

Publication of the  
Ithacan Philanthropic Society

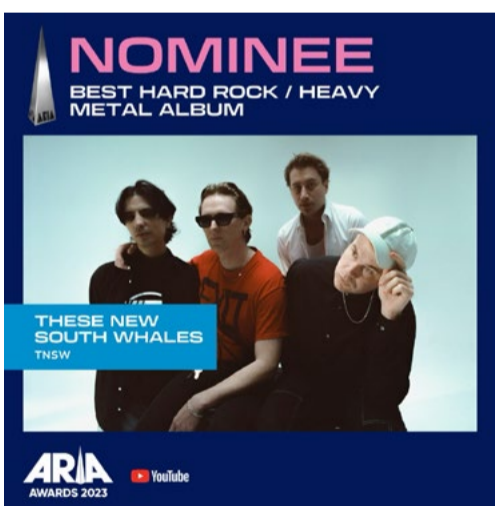
## Ithacan Connections in the Arts



Screening of *Voices in the Deep* at the 2023 Melbourne International Film Festival, directed by Jason Raftopoulos



Final farewell performance at the Sydney Opera House by acclaimed Aussie rock trio *Camp Code*. Singer-guitarist Georgia Maq (centre) is ready for new challenges.



2023 ARIA AWARD nomination for the *These New South Whales* band

Continue reading page 3 to find out more about the Ithacan connection.

**Forthcoming Events**  
**Children's Christmas Tree Party**  
&  
**Christmas Luncheon**

Details on Page 8

## 70 years since the devastating Ionian Earthquakes in 1953

### ΕΒΔΟΜΗΝΤΑ ΧΡΟΝΙΑ ΑΠΟ ΤΟΥΣ ΚΑΤΑΣΤΡΟΦΙΚΟΥΣ ΣΕΙΣΜΟΥΣ ΣΤΟ ΙΟΝΙΟ ΤΟ 1953

The month of August 2023 marked 70 years since the catastrophic earthquakes which struck Ithaca and the neighbouring Ionian islands of Kefalonia and Zakynthos. Foreshocks on August 9 and 11 were followed by the mainshock on 12 August which measured 7.2 on the Richter Scale. Tremors and aftershocks continued in the days and months after. Located in a tectonically complex area, the islands lie in the most seismically active region in Greece and among the most seismogenic regions in Europe.

Damage across the islands was estimated to have totalled billions of drachmas. In Zakynthos, the main town was decimated with three buildings left standing. In Kefalonia, the capital Argostoli was flattened as was most of the island with the exception of a few places in the north such as the town of Fiscardo with its heritage Venetian buildings. On Ithaca, more than 70% of the buildings were demolished and it is estimated that all but 50 of the 1200 buildings in *Vathy* were destroyed. The village of *Lefki* was razed. In the words of Evan John, an English observer in 1953: "... *Lefki* was a truly terrible sight. A fortnight ago ninety-six houses had stood along the main street or on the slopes above. Ninety-five were now in irreparable ruin. Their church and olive presses were rubbish heaps."



There was only one loss of life on Ithaca with a woman killed from a falling rock, but tragically, 455 people lost their life in Kefalonia and Zakynthos. The earthquakes destroyed a total of 27,659 buildings out of 33,300 which once stood on the three islands and raised the eastern coast of Kefalonia by up to 70 centimetres — almost two feet above sea level.

The international community rallied immediately: foreign naval vessels in the Mediterranean region at the time provided immediate disaster relief supporting the Greek armed forces. The Red Cross was on hand as well. Foreign governments, notably UK, USA, France, Norway and Sweden, provided assistance in cash and kind - food drops, tents and other necessities. International support was also forthcoming during reconstruction. The English rebuilt the village of *Lefki*; the Swiss built the Ithacan Naval College (now occupied by the High School/Lykeio) and the primary school in *Platirithia*. Homes were rebuilt earthquake resistant to hopefully ensure that there would never be the same level of devastation as occurred in 1953.

As well as causing major physical damage to buildings and infrastructure, the economic impact of depopulation of the islands after the earthquakes cannot be underestimated. Many left Ithaca, resulting in the largest ever mass migration to countries such as Australia, US, New Zealand and South Africa, where relatives had already settled.

Photo above: Earthquake-damaged home overlooking *Vathy* harbour (photo, *Spiros Meletzis*, courtesy *Odysseus Network/Municipality of Ithaca*); Below: Group photo of Greek armed forces with locals (photo: *Stathis Raftopoulos*, August 1953).



## ΣΕΙΣΜΟΙ 1953 ΜΝΗΜΕΣ ΠΟΥ ΜΕΝΟΥΝ ΖΩΝΤΑΝΕΣ

Κυριακή 9 Αυγούστου γύρω στις 9 η ώρα ενός όμορφου καλοκαιριάτικου πρωινού, άρχισαν ξαφνικά ανήσυχα όλα τα σκυλιά να γαβγίζουν, με αποτέλεσμα όλοι να βγουν έξω και να αναρωτιούνται τι να συμβαίνει. Η απάντηση ήλθε γρήγορα στις 9.41 με ένα τρομακτικό θόρυβο, τα πάντα να σείονται και όλοι να φωνάζουν σεισμός, σεισμός! Να βλέπουμε απέναντι στο βουνό να καταρρακδολύν μεγάλες πέτρες και σύννεφο σκόνης να έχει πνίξει τις Αφάλες. Ήταν η αρχή των καταστροφικών σεισμών που ακολούθησαν με αποκορύφωμα στις 12 Αυγούστου, στα όμορφα νησιά μας Ιθάκη, Κεφαλλινία και Ζάκυνθο. Στους Αγίους Σαράντα δεν έγιναν ζημιές στα σπίτια γιατί το έδαφος είναι βραχώδες, όμως από το πρώτο βράδυ κοιμηθήκαμε έξω, ακόμη οι δονήσεις συνεχίζονταν δεν ήταν ασφαλές να μπούμε στα σπίτια μας και σύντομα η κυβέρνηση μας προμήθευσε με σκηνές.

Οι πρώτες μέρες των σεισμών έρχονται στη μνήμη σαν κινηματογραφική ταινία. Τα στρατιωτικά αεροπλάνα να κατεβαίνουν χαμηλά και να ρίχνουν τρόφιμα, κονσέρβες κ.λ.π. Εμείς τα παιδιά είχαμε αδυναμία στα μπισκότα (γαλέτες). Οι μητέρες μας έπαιρναν σεντόνια και τα κουνούσαμε χαιρετίζοντας τα αεροπλάνα. Νοσοκόμες του Ερυθρού Σταυρού μας εμβολίαζαν για τύφο, δυστυχώς είχαν παρουσιαστεί κρούσματα στο χωριό. Μας έδωσαν να πάρουμε βιταμίνες και το τότε απαραίτητο ΜΟΥΡΟΥΝΕΛΑΙΟ!! Ήταν ένα άσπρο πηχτό παρασκεύασμα με απαισία γεύση. Οι καημένες οι μανάδες μας προσπαθούσαν με το καλό ή και το άγριο, έχοντας και μια φέτα πορτοκάλι έτοιμη να τη φάμε αμέσως μετά! Τα μεγάλα παιδιά ακόμα τρέχουν, τα μικρότερα μας κατάφεραν, αλλά μετά από 70 χρόνια ακόμα η γεύση είναι στο στόμα.....

Παρόλο το φόβο και την αγωνία, η ζωή στις σκηνές και έξω, έδωσε τους ανθρώπους και αγαπημένους περνούσαν τις μέρες με τις καθημερινές ασχολίες με τις χαρούμενες φωνές των παιδιών και τα βράδια μαζεύονταν όλοι σε μια μεγάλη παρέα και πολλές φορές ακουγόταν γέλια και τραγούδια.

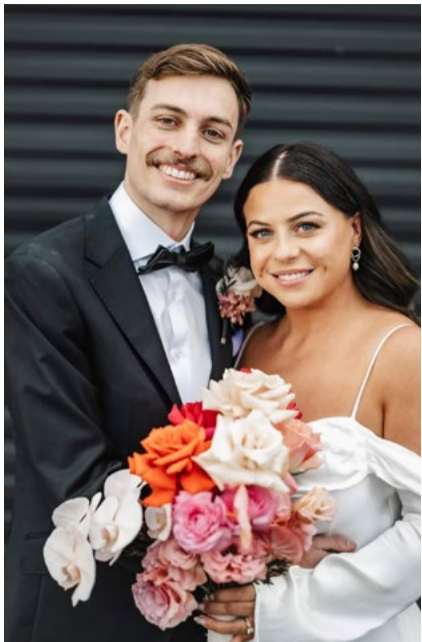
Στις Φρίκες τοποθετήθηκε στρατιωτικό Τολ (τεράστια αποθήκη από λαμαρίνες), όπου στέγαζαν δομικά υλικά, όπου δόθηκαν στους κατοίκους, παρεχόμενα από το ΟΔΙΣΥ (Οργανισμός Διαχείρισης Συμμαχικού Υλικού). Σήμερα, εκεί στεγάζεται το ελαιοτριβείο. Αμέσως σχεδόν κάθε σπίτι κατασκεύασε ξύλινο παράπηγμα όπου μετακομίσαμε από τις σκηνές και μείναμε για μερικά χρόνια μέχρι να είναι ασφαλές να ξαναπούμε στα σπίτια μας. Επίσης έπρεπε να χτιστούν και πολλά αντισεισμικά σπίτια. Ακόμη υπάρχουν μέχρι σήμερα μερικά από τα παραπήγματα.

Στον Πλατρειθιά, καταστράφηκαν το Δημοτικό Σχολείο και η εκκλησία των Ταξιαρχών στο Λόφο του Μοναστηριού. Το σχολείο λειτουργήσε προσωρινά σε παράπηγμα μέχρι που χτίστηκε καινούριο με δωρεά των Ελβετών. Η εκκλησία των Αγίων Σαράντα εξυπηρέτησε τους πιστούς για αρκετά χρόνια. Ο Ναός των Ταξιαρχών κτίστηκε εκ νέου με την γενναιοδορία των κατοίκων και των απανταχού Ιθακισίων. Το χωριό της Κολλιερίης έπαθε μεγάλες ζημιές, πολλοί από τους Κολλιεριάτες, έκτισαν νέα σπίτια στην περιοχή του Μοναστηριού, τη Νέα Κολλιερίη.

Το Θιάκι έχει ξαναχτιστεί, έχει περάσει κι άλλους σεισμούς, αλλά όσοι ζήσαμε του 1953 δεν ξεχνάμε ποτέ και μπορεί πολλοί να έφυγαν εξ αιτίας των σεισμών, πάντα όμως η σκέψη και η αγάπη μας είναι εκεί.

Σπυριδούλα Λιγαλέτου Κουτσοβέλη

**WEDDING**



Paul and Helen Caravias are delighted to announce the marriage of their granddaughter **Karlie McQuillan** to **Sam Prosser** on the 9 September 2023. Karlie is the daughter of Janelle Caravias, and Sam, the son of Robert and Karen Prosser. The marriage ceremony was attended by the immediate family followed by a reception of 140 guests at Studio 9 in Mornington. The couple honeymooned in Thailand. Best wishes to the newlyweds. Karlie is looking forward to her grandfather taking her to Ithaca!!

**BIRTHS**

It is with immense gratitude, happiness, blessings and love, that we announce to our Ithacan relations and friends, the birth of **Riley Jim Vider**. Riley was born on the 3 July 2023 at 6:36pm, 3.1kg and 47cm. He is the second son of Evelyn Morraitis and Matthew Vider, a brother to Jackson.



Riley is the grandson of Helen (nee Kantor) & Jim Vider and Athina (nee Siskos) & Jim Morraitis, and the great-grandson of Evangelia (nee Raftopoulos) Pastras & Spiro Morraitis and Maria (nee Barkas) & George Siskos. On his mother's side, Riley is fourth generation of Greek descent, the great-great-grandson of Ithacan migrants Gianoula Lekatsas & Demosthenes Morraitis and Vasiliki Varvarigos & Dionysius Raftopoulos.

Identical twins Nicole and Gillianne are excited to announce the birth of their respective babies, both born on the same day, 22 August 2023, and weighing exactly the same weight and length.



Pictured front, is **William (Billy)**, the first child of Nicole and John Patrikakos, Beside William is **Alexander**, the third child of Gillianne and Nick Gogas, a playmate for brothers George and Konstantino (Teddy).

William and Alexander are legally first cousins but at a DNA level they are more like half siblings. This is because the children of identical twins share 25% of their genetic material instead of the usual 12.5%.

Nicole and Gillianne are the daughters of Lia Raftopoulos and the late Con Trikaliotis, and the granddaughters of the late Golfo and Naki Raftopoulos. Congratulations to both families.



**FIRST AID TRAINING:** In July a First Aid training course was conducted by St John Ambulance Australia at Ithaca House. Participants were taught general first aid, how to provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and how to administer the newly purchased defibrillator. All attendees were successfully awarded a Statement of Attainment in CPR. Pictured in the midst of training are **Kathy Vlassopoulos, Anna Sofronas, Anna Vlass, Stephanie Cominos and Anastasia Cominos**.



Congratulations to Anthony and Natalie Theodore on the birth of their gorgeous baby daughter, **Zoe**, on Christmas Eve 2022 in Sydney. Anthony is the grandson of the late Anthony and Ourania Arthur nee Kouvaras, and the great-grandson of the late Petros and Zoe Kouvaras nee Lekatsas. Natalie is the daughter of Andreas and Chrystalla Shakallis of Sydney. Na mas zisi



Congratulations to Kristina Tsalikis and Zac Couyant on the birth of their second child, **Maggie Diamanda**, a sister to Zoe and the fourth great-grandchild of Helen Vlass. Grandparents John and Eugenia Tsalikis and George and Melanie Couyant are delighted with the arrival of another grandchild.

**BIRTHDAYS**



Ithacan Club member **Iris Lucas**, wife of Honorary Life Member the Late Peter Lucas, celebrated her 83rd Birthday with her three children, five grandchildren and daughter-in-law on a Seabourn cruise through the Aegean. Prior to the cruise, Iris spent time on Ithaca catching up with family and friends. Happy Birthday Iris!

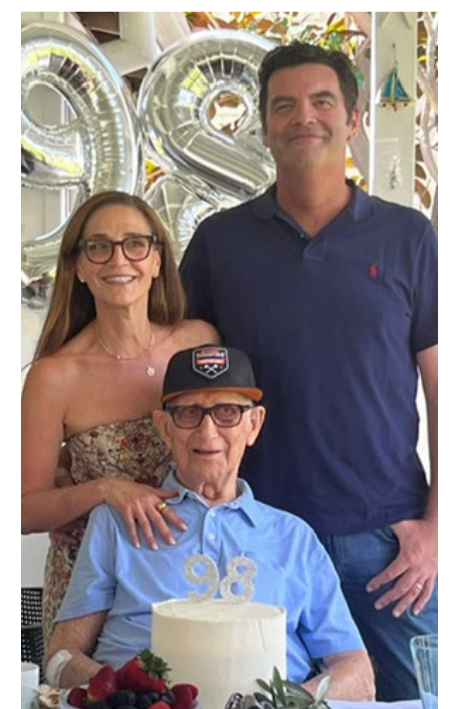


**Gerry Raftopoulos** turned 80 on the 6 June 2023. He was born in South Africa, the son of Spiro (Manteki) Raftopoulos of Platrithia and Sophia Vlassopoulos (Kokkosi) from Agious Saranta. Gerry married Mary Maroudas (Kamenos) daughter of Omiros and granddaughter of Kosta Maroudas (Anoghi). In 2002, he emigrated with his family to Perth from South Africa.

Gerry celebrated his birthday with his children, grandchildren (pictured above) and simbetheri. While on a recent trip to Ithaca, Gerry celebrated again with his family and grandchildren at *Myrtia Restaurant* near Exoghi. He was so touched when one of his grandchildren said, **"Papou this island is very special"**, and excited that his grandchildren feel a connection to the island of their forefathers and will return one day.

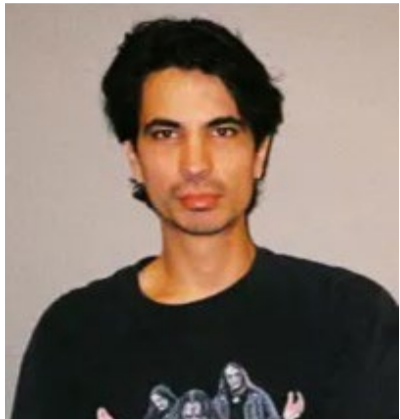


In Perth on 7 October 2023, family and friends celebrated the 98<sup>th</sup> birthday of Spirogiannis Artelaris at a lovely party organised by his daughter Maria who is pictured right with her husband Adam Parsons. Spirogiannis was born in Vathy Ithaca in 1925 and lived there for about thirty-five years before he came to Australia. We extend our congratulations on the achievement of this special milestone!



**These New South Whales band nominated for ARIA Award**

The band *These New South Whales (TNSW)* – Jamie, Todd, Will and Frank – has been nominated for an ARIA Award in the Best Hard Rock/Heavy Metal category for its third album *TNSW*. The band is one of Australia’s most revered punk acts, winning critical praise and global fans who resonate with their powerfully physical and incisive brand of punk. The band’s guitarist, **Todd Andrews** (below) is the son of Ross and Elvera Andrews (Adelaide) and the grandson of the late Olga and Hector Andrews (**Anagnostatos**).



As well as music, the band has moved into the world of comedy TV with *The Comedy Central* and talk show-style *TNSW Tonight*. Todd and Jamie are also co-hosts of the popular *What A Great Punk* podcast, a fly-on-the-wall interview series which has developed a cult following in the alternative comedy scene both in Australia and in North America.

**Farewell to Australian rock trio Camp Code**

*Camp Code* played their final ever show as a band on 13 October 2023 at the Sydney Opera House, during the Opera House’s 50th Birthday Festival, which featured a month-long series of gigs and performances at the venue.



*Camp Code*’s singer-guitarist **Georgia Maq** (above) is the daughter of Anna Paxinos and the late Hugh McDonald (formerly of the Australian folk rock band *Redgum*), and the granddaughter of Peter Paxinos, former President and Honorary Life Member of the IPS and the late Georgia Paxinos.

Together with bassist **Kelly-Dawn Hellmrich** and drummer **Sarah Thompson**, the trio’s final performance was a celebration of a career hard fought – and won – on their own terms. Maq once said, “*Camp Code* is in defiance of everyone who’s tried to bring us down, and it’s like: Well, you can’t, because we have each other, and we’re a mountain together.”

Formed in 2015, the band’s journey has spanned eight years with three albums of “fearless, emo-inflected indie rock and pop” addressing issues such as gendered inequality in the music industry. The band earned critical acclaim, performed internationally in Europe and the USA, received ARIA and Australian Music Award

nominations and have been voted in Triple J’s Hottest 100. *Camp Code* released songs that will go down as classic rebellious tunes, and made the music industry a more welcoming place for women, people of colour and the queer community. Freya Langley describes the band’s achievement: “They leave behind an industry forever changed by their fearless feminist activism, and a legacy of empowered young fans.”, (<https://theconversation.com/>) Best wishes to Georgia who is now based in Los Angeles working on new music.

**Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) screening of Voices In Deep**

In August a group of members attended the Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) for the launch of the latest film by acclaimed director **Jason Raftopoulos**, *Voices in Deep*, which he co-wrote with **Alkinos Tsilimidos**.

The film is set in Athens – not the stereotypical tourist Athens most of us are familiar with – in the aftermath of Greece’s refugee crisis in 2015-16, when almost one million people crossed its border from Turkey. A tragedy at sea connects the lives of an Australian humanitarian worker and two orphaned refugees as they fight for survival in Athens. Through these two separate stories which briefly intersect, the film explores ideas of time, desperation, identity, and freedom, and opens a world to which most of us living in Australia are never exposed to.



In the Q&A session following the screening Jason (above) spoke about his motivation for making the film and the underpinning themes, and the use of ‘wide shot’ filmmaking to create the feeling that one is watching from a distance, as an observer not connected to that world. He also spoke of the enormous challenges he and his production team faced in executing his creative vision when it transpired that filming had to be completed during Covid with all the associated Covid safe restrictions. MIFF aptly described *Voices in Deep* as “an astute and touching examination of statelessness, trauma, and time”.

In 2018, Jason Raftopoulos won the Grand Jury Prize for Best Film for ‘West of Sunshine’ at the Festival des Antipodes in Saint Tropez, and the Best Director award at the Barcelona International Film Festival. Jason is the son of Denis and Chrissie Raftopoulos (Melbos), and Alkinos Tsilimidos is the son of the late Tasia (nee Paizis) and Spiros Tsilimidos. **Anna Vlass**

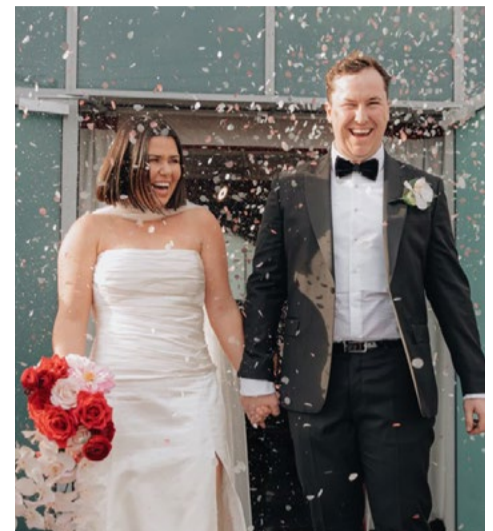
**SEND US  
YOUR SOCIAL NEWS &  
ARTICLES OF INTEREST  
FOR PUBLICATION**  
Editorial discretion may be applied  
Post:  
**PO BOX 311 Balwyn North VIC**  
Email:  
[news@ithaca.org.au](mailto:news@ithaca.org.au)



**Ithaca, the place to meet who’s who!!**

Photo left: Toni (Razos) Tsalikis on holiday in Ithaca this summer just happened to bump into tennis star **Rafael Nadal** who happily accepted a request for a photo. Nadal spent the summer holidays touring the Ionian islands on his luxury yacht.

**NEWS FROM BRISBANE  
by Voula Castan**



On Friday 8 September 2023 **Kristina Maria Lecatsas** and **Matthew Bishop** were married in a traditional wedding at St George Greek Orthodox Church in South Brisbane. Kristina is the daughter of Demitri and Lynda Lecatsas and the granddaughter of Ioakeim-Jack (Kondilatos) and Mary Lecatsas. Kristina’s brother Jack Lecatsas was the best man. The church service was followed by a wonderful wedding celebration at The Lush in Woollongabba. Matthew and Kristina were fortunate to be able to spend ten days in Fiji snorkeling and enjoying the wonderful environment of Fiji. Congratulations and best wishes to Kristina and Matthew for a wonderful future.

**Panayias Katharon**

On Sunday 10 September 2023, Ithacans of Brisbane gathered for the church service at the Greek Orthodox Church of St. George in South Brisbane to celebrate **Tis Panayias Ton Katharon**. The service was followed by a morning tea at the Greek Welfare Centre.

**Summer in Ithaca**

My father **Ioakeim-Jack Lecatsas** (Kondilatos) was born in Stavros and arrived in Australia in 1935. He returned to Ithaca once with my mother, Mary, in 1980. I travelled with him and my memories of his arrival after a 45-year absence still stir deep emotions. His friends were waiting for him at the *kafeneio* at the entrance to Stavros, having heard of his imminent arrival. I think about his return to Ithaca when Atha and I meet with friends at the *kafeneio* in Stavros. One of the great pleasures of spending the European Summer on Ithaca is having time to catch up with Ithacans from other parts of Australia. Our morning coffees at the *kafeneio* and at Margarita’s and our swims in Polis give us the chance to catch up with friends from Stavros and spend time with Ithacans from Brisbane and Melbourne (pictured below). We share stories of our parents’ migration, their life in Australia and our Ithacan connections.

**Barbara Vasdekis (Lecatsas)**

**LYKEIO ITHAKI  
YEAR 12 AWARDS**



On 12 September, the first day of the school year in Greece, the annual Ithacan Philanthropic Awards for Academic Achievement in the Year 12 Panhellenic Examinations were presented to the successful students. The awards, valued at 1000 euros each were presented by former IPS President **Nick Varigos** at the school assembly in Vathy.

Photo top: Nick Varigos (left) and the Principal of the Vocational Lykeio, Ioannis Dendrinis with **Brikena Ntylia** graduate of the Vocational Stream. Brikena is pursuing studies in Music at the University of Macedonia. Nick is also pictured with recipient **Ekaterini Melidoni** who completed the General Stream, gaining a position at the University of Thessaloniki to pursue an Arts Degree (Philologia).

**ΒΡΑΒΕΙΑ ΑΡΙΣΤΟΥΧΩΝ ΛΥΚΕΙΩΝ ΙΘΑΚΗΣ**

Τον Σεπτέμβριο 2023 απονεμήθηκαν τα καθιερωμένα βραβεία του Συνδέσμου μας σε αριστούχους μαθητές, των Γενικού και Επαγγελματικού Λυκείων Ιθάκης. Τα παιδιά μας έστειλαν ευγενικά ευχαριστήρια και μας πληροφόρησαν για τις σπουδές που θα ακολουθήσουν. Συγχαίρουμε τις **Αικατερίνη Μελιδώνη** και **Μπρικένα Ντύλια**, ευχόμενοι πάντα σε ανώτερα και κάθε επιτυχία στη ζωή τους.



## 1953 Earthquakes on Ithaca Recollections and Insights

### Earthquake Exodus By Tania Soulis

At this 70th anniversary milestone of the 1953 Ionian Islands earthquake there will be many families like my own that will have taken a moment to reflect on the impact this event has had on the course of their own family history. Whilst the neighbouring islands of Kefalonia and Zakynthos suffered greatly with significant and tragic losses of life, the impact the earthquake had on Ithacan families, especially through displacement cannot be lightly disregarded. Within my own family the 1953 earthquake fundamentally altered the Soulis family connection to Ithaca and broke an uninterrupted 400 (known) year link to Ithaca.

1983 in New Zealand, on a regular Sunday afternoon visit to my grandparents, Yianni (John) and Melpomene Soulis, I asked them to tell me about significant events in their lives. I recall Pappou, a proud Epiroti, and Yiayia, born in Vathy (Pippos/Razos ancestry). were both quite delighted by this. I took pen to paper having unconsciously realised perhaps the importance of doing so. I recently came across these writings and was amazed to discover amongst their recollections was a personal account of the 1953 earthquake. Here are their insights as translated by my teenage-self from the Greek!

**Pappou Yianni:** *I was in a boat on my way to Piraeus to collect supplies when I realised there was an earthquake. It was so strong that the boat moved! You don't normally believe that you can feel a tremor in the sea but it was so immense that I could feel it.*

*I became extremely worried for the family, so I borrowed some petrol for the boat to return to Ithaca as quickly as I could. I stopped at Astako where I bought more petrol and made my way back to Ithaca. When I saw my family there well and alive all I could do was cry.*

*Some time later there was a second large earthquake. Houses collapsed and the earth opened up. People were in shock and panic, screaming with fright. There was no option but to sleep outside in tents brought from other people in Greece.*

*After the second earthquake a great wind came which tore olive trees out of the ground and threatened to pull apart the tent that we were sheltering in. We didn't know how to set it up, others had done it for us, so we went out and held the tent down to stop it from being blown away. People were terrified.*

**Yiayia Melpomene:** *People in Ithaca were screaming in fright. There were aftershocks and so people slept outside. It was summer and warm enough to do so. I wasn't worried though and so I slept inside with my daughter Diamando who was only five-years old at the time.*

*I remember after the second earthquake, lying down on a blanket in the tent and hearing "boom" "boom" sounds in the earth below. Ithaca had one casualty, an old lady who died.*

At the time of the earthquakes, Yianni and Melpomene's oldest two sons, Dimitrios and Anastasios (my father) were living in Hastings, New Zealand, with their mother's brothers, uncles Thrasivoulos (Jimmy) and Theofanis Razos. **Anastasios** recalled:

*I was working with Uncle Jimmy at his restaurant (Dominion Restaurant) and in the mornings on my way to work I would buy and read the morning newspaper. This particular day, I saw a line of news telling of an earthquake in the Ionian Islands and it mentioned Ithaca. I thought to myself it would have had to have been something big for the newspapers to have printed something about Ithaca. I went and asked Uncle Jimmy to confirm what I had read as my English wasn't too good at that time. Sure enough, he confirmed I had read it right. We sent a telegram immediately to the family but received no answer. For several days there*



**Κατασκηνώσεις στην Λακίνα. Εξωγής - A group of Exoghisani outside their tents at Lakina in Exoghi. Photo: Stathis Raftopoulos 20 August 1953**

*was no answer. A kind Māori woman (Susie Mairi) who worked for Uncle Jimmy had a son who just so happened to be on a New Zealand naval cruiser (HMNZS Black Prince) in the Ionian Sea. The cruiser had been ordered to go and help the people on the islands who were homeless or trapped. He was stationed in Ithaca. We sent a telegram to his ship and he went and found Mum and Dad and reported that all the family was well. A few days later, my father was able to send us a telegram telling us everyone was safe. We were so relieved.*

In January 1954, with the family home in **Mantzarata, Vathy** badly damaged (pictured 1975), my grandparents, Yianni (48) and Melpomene (43) with their two younger children, Dionysios (19) and Diamando (6) migrated to New Zealand. Reuniting with their sons, Dimitrios and Anastasios, Yianni and Melpomene embarked on a new life in a new land and spent their remaining years celebrating their children's marriages and the births of many grandchildren and great-grandchildren before their deaths in the early 1990s.



Over 50 descendants of the Soulis family now live in Australia and New Zealand. Multiplying this descendancy factor across other earthquake displaced Ithacan families worldwide quickly gives a sense of scale and the degree of impact this event has had on Ithaca and its local population. It can be safely said though that whilst the Ionian Islands earthquake of 1953 fundamentally altered the Soulis family and its physical connection to Ithaca, one thing it has not done is changed our sense of identity and understanding of what it is to be Ithacan. Our "Ithacan-ness", even after 70 years of living in the diaspora is as strong as ever.



**Post Earthquake : a family reunited in Wellington, New Zealand, 1956**

**From left, Back Row:** Bill Papageorge, Louiza (nee Razos) Papageorge, Laiza (nee Razos) Boolieris, Vienna (nee Karantze) Soulis, Anastasios Soulis, Dionysios Soulis, Melpomene (nee Razos) Soulis, Thrasivoulos (Jimmy) Razos, Nancy Razos, Voula (nee Serepisos) Soulis, Nick Razos, Yianni (John) Soulis **Middle Row:** Dimitrios(Jimmy) Soulis, Theofanis Razos. **Front Row:** Diamando (nee Soulis) Callinicos, Renee Boolieris & Evangeloula Razos

### Huge boulders rolling down... By John Callinicos Photo: 1956 Wellington NZ

In 1953 I was around 14 years old and lived in **Anoghi**. On the day of the earthquake, I was working with some other boys. The President of Anoghi had employed us to dig and fix the dirt road from Kathara to Anoghi to make it smooth for the cars. I remember huge boulders coming loose above us and rolling down the steep cliffs to the ocean below. We crouched under the rock walls



(λιθιές) so the boulders would go over us. Vathy was a cloud of dust resulting from the collapsed buildings. We slept outside under the almond trees or wherever we could be safe. I remember the planes air-dropping bread and other supplies after the earthquake and people scrambling through the bushes to retrieve them.

### The Aussie Experience By Nancy Paxinos

**Nancy moved to Ithaca from Melbourne with her family in 1951 and spent a number of years on the island. Below is her account of the Ithacan earthquake published in the IPS' 75th Anniversary Commemorative Album 1991.**

One Sunday in August 1953, summertime, we had been for an early morning swim, something we did every day. My husband Tatsi Paxinos and son Pano went to church at **Stavros** and I stayed home [at **Parata**, the family home outside of Stavros] with Spirdoula to cook Sunday lunch; we had a wood stove by then sent from Australia. So it was roast turkey and all the trimmings. At about 11.00am we were both in the kitchen when we heard a noise which sounded like low-flying aeroplanes. Spirdoula was getting down off the sofa to go out and have a look when all of a sudden the house started to sway. I had a clock on the mantle shelf and I could see it sliding towards me. You just could not move. The shaking lasted a second and we rushed out into the yard away from the house and sat under an olive tree. Every few seconds

there would be another tremor. We did not have any idea what was happening until my neighbour sent her son to tell us to stay out of the house because there were sure to be more.

After a few hours my husband and son came home in the afternoon and all his relatives who were living in Lefki came to stay with us. In that village just about every house came down like a pack of cards. We were very lucky that our house was built on solid rock from an old earthquake. Spirdoula and I were also fortunate that the kitchen floor did not crack as the water deposit was located under it; otherwise we would have fallen into the water with no hope of getting out. We took all the beds out into the field at the back of the house and we slept in the open until we were given an army tent. More relatives came from Vathy. The Americans made food drops and every day my son would take the donkey to Stavros to get our share.

... After a few weeks Tatsi mended the cracks in the house and we moved back inside. It was still scary because there was the occasional small tremor every now and then.

### Tsunami at Mavrouna Beach By Andriana Sofianou Zervoulis

I remember the day of the earthquake in August 1953. I was fourteen years old. I was at home in **Rachi** with my late mother Ekaterini Koutsouvelis Sofianou while my sisters and brothers were swimming at **Mavrouna Beach** in Rachi. My mother and I noticed a stillness in the air. Dogs were barking incessantly and birds were quiet, hiding in the trees around us. Then we heard a very loud rumble. My mother told me to go to the beach to see if my siblings were alright. I remember her saying "It's an earthquake" (Είναι σεισμός). As I ran to the beach I could feel the earth shaking beneath me, causing me to fall a couple of times as I lost my balance. I still sense the fear of the moment.

When I finally reached the beach I could see that the water had changed to a reddish, brown colour as seaweed, small fish, sand and seashells were churned up by a circular movement of the water. I then watched as the water quickly receded, and moments later, a gushing wave of water returned just as quickly hitting the shore with force. Unbeknown to me at the time, this was tsunami activity.

Fortunately my siblings and the other local children had all come out of the water and were huddled together in a corner petrified by what was happening around them. We all ran back to our homes staying outside until it was safe to go inside. The next day the Army arrived and set up tents in a flat area in Rachi called **Kapelonata**. They erected one tent per family.

### Things I remember, things my mother told me... By Spyridoula Digaletou Coutsouvelis

I was very young but remember mothers and children waving sheets to the low-flying planes that were dropping food supplies. The children loved the square dry biscuits (called *galetes*) and always looked forward to the next drop. Red Cross nurses came to vaccinate us against typhus. There was an outbreak in my village **Agioi Saranta**. The nurses gave us vitamins and an awful-tasting thick white elixir made from cod-liver oil which we had to take. Mothers had a hard time trying to administer the elixir as the taste was so bad. They would have something ready to give to their children eg a slice of orange, to dissipate the taste.

Despite the fear of further earthquakes and the discomfort and inconvenience of living in tents, villagers bonded and there was a stronger sense of community. At nights people would sit around together and sometimes there would be optimistic outbursts of laughter and singing.

## ΜΙΑ ΠΑΡΑΣΤΑΤΙΚΗ ΕΝΗΜΕΡΩΣΗ ΓΙΑ ΤΟΥΣ ΣΕΙΣΜΟΥΣ ΤΟΥ 1953

**Αποσπάσματα από γράμμα του Καπετάν Φλωριά-Μαρούδα προς τον Π.Γ.Καλλίνικο (Λονδίνο). Γραμμένο στον Σταυρό 1<sup>η</sup> Σεπτεμβρίου 1953. Δημοσιεύτηκε στο Περιοδικό Νόστος Τεύχος 53 Καλοκαίρι 1980.**

... Ήταν Κυριακή πρωί, ύστερ' από μια ζεστή βδομάδα, που είχαμε περάσει. Έκανε αρκετή δροσιά και καθόμαστε, καμιά εικοσαριά, έξω από το καφενείο του ξενοδοχείου του Σταυρού, στη δεξιά πλευρά, απ' όπου θαυμάζαμε τ' αγόρια και τα κορίτσια με τα μπάνια και τις βαρκάδες τους κάτω στην Πόλη. Συζητούσαμε για ψαρική. Ξαφνικά έρχεται μια βοή και φωνάζω: "Ακούτε, μπουρλοτιά!". Σαν να την έφερνε ο αέρας από το Κιόνι... Επειδή όμως κράτησε κάμποσο, μπόρεσαν και πετάχτηκαν πολλοί από τα καθίσματά τους και βρέθηκαν κάπως ξέμακρα από το ξενοδοχείο τη στιγμή που άρχισε ο σεισμός. Κάτι το αφάνταστο. Εγώ είχα μείνει στη θέση μου και είδα το ξενοδοχείο δέκα πόδια από την επιφάνεια του εδάφους να σχίζεται και το άνοιγμα να φτάνει για μια στιγμή δυο περίπου ίντσες.

... Με την παύση όμως του σεισμού, δηλαδή μέσα σε 22 δευτερόλεπτα, ξανάκλεισε, έτσι που το σπίτι να φαίνεται τώρα μόλις ραγισμένο. Βράχοι κατακυλούσαν από τα βουνά προς τις παρυφές του χωριού και σπίτια κατέρρεαν στα Καλύβια, τα Πηλικάτα και τα Σκαλτσάτα. Ο πανικός και οι φωνές δεν περιγράφονται. Σκορπίσαμε αμέσως όλοι για να δούμε μήπως υπήρχαν θύματα. Ευτυχώς από την άποψη αυτή σταθήκαμε τυχεροί. Η σκόνη από την Εξωγή, τις Αφάλες και το στενό της Κεφαλονιάς ήταν τέτοια που δεν μπορούσε να διακρίνεις τίποτε. Όταν κατάκατσε κάπως, διαπιστώσαμε πως δυο χωριά της Κεφαλονιάς, το Νιοχώρι και τα Κομητάτα δεν υπήρχαν πια.

... Στην Εξωγή τα σπίτια φαινόταν και φαίνονται ακόμα από μακριά σώα, αλλά όταν τα πλησιάσεις βλέπεις πως είναι φάτσες μόνο. Οι τηλεφωνικές συγκοινωνίες διακόπηκαν όλες και ο διευθυντής του Ταχυδρομείου Σταυρού Αντώνης Γεωργιάς έτρεχε απ' εδώ και απ' εκεί να τις διορθώσει. Τότε έφθασε ένας πατέρας από τη Λεύκη με το παιδί του στην πλάτη, τραυματισμένο στο κεφάλι και το κορμί. Το έφερε για να το δει ο γιατρός και μας είπε πως στη Λεύκη είχε γίνει καταστροφή και πως ο δρόμος ήταν αδιάβατος σε πολλά σημεία από τους βράχους και τις κατολισθήσεις χωμάτων, και πρόσθεσε πως φοβόταν ότι υπήρχαν και θύματα. Ειδοποιήσαμε αμέσως το γιατρό και ξεκινήσαμε να δώσουμε βοήθεια στη Λεύκη. Σκέφτηκα τότε πως το καλύτερο που θα μπορούσα να κάμω θα ήταν να πεταχτώ στο Φισκάρδο και να ειδοποιήσω απ' εκεί τη Νομαρχία στο Αργοστόλι, αφού οι τηλεπικοινωνίες του Θιακιού είχαν κοπεί. Οι άλλοι επικρότησαν. Αυτοί προχώρησαν για τη Λεύκη κι εγώ κατέβηκα στην Πόλη, πήρα τη βάρκα και πέρασα στο Φισκάρδο. Στη διαδρομή συνάντησα μια νάρκη που είχε εκβραστεί από το σεισμό. Ειδοποίησα τη Νομαρχία στο Αργοστόλι, όπου το σεισμό τον είχαν μόλις αισθανθεί και αμέσως έστειλαν χειρουργό και βοηθούς και είδη πρώτης ανάγκης στην Ιθάκη. Με ρώτησαν για το Βαθύ και δεν ήξερα τι να τους πω, γιατί στη Βόρεια Ιθάκη δεν ξέραμε να είχε γίνει στη Νότιο. Μου είπαν πως η βοήθεια θα πήγαινε μέσω Σάμης κατευθείαν στο Βαθύ και απ' εκεί θα την προωθούσαν στη Βόρεια Ιθάκη, αν το καλούσε η ανάγκη.

... Όταν βεβαιώθηκα ότι είχαν περάσει στην Ιθάκη από τη Σάμη, επέστρεψα στο Σταυρό, όπου έμαθα για την καταστροφή του Βαθιού, του Κιονιού, της Κολλιεράς, της Ανωγής, της Λεύκης και του Περαχωριού. Μόνο που τα θύματα ήταν ευτυχώς λίγα – μια γυναίκα από τη Λεύκη, που τη σκότωσε βράχος που κύλησε από το βουνό, όταν αυτή επέστρεφε από τον Άη – Γιώργη στον Κάβο, όπου είχε πάει να προσκυνήσει. Στη Λεύκη επίσης τραυματίστηκαν τέσσερις άλλες γυναίκες, η μία σοβαρά. Στο Βαθύ τραυματίστηκε σοβαρά η Δώρα Δρακάτου, αδελφή του Αλέκου Αντίππα, λιγότερο σοβαρά δυο άλλα πρόσωπα και ελαφρά καμιά εικοσαριά. Στην Ανωγή δεν είχε καθόλου θύματα. Στο Κιόνι μια γυναίκα είχε τραυματιστεί γερά και είχε ήδη μεταφερθεί στο Βαθύ για περιθαλψη, και δυο άλλοι ελαφρά.

Interview by Debbie Argyropoulos with Professor George Paxinos (Sydney) on YOUTUBE. A first-hand account of the earthquake experience. George was nine years old when the earthquake devastated his village LEFKI.

<https://youtu.be/NC95dWczffe>

Πήγαμε στη Λεύκη και προσπαθήσαμε να περιώσουμε ότι μπορούσαμε κάτω από τα μπάζα των γκρεμισμένων σπιτιών. Μεταξύ των χειρότερων είναι το σπίτι της αδελφής μου Αιμιλίας και του θείου μου Δημήτρη Κολυβά, ο οποίος, κατάκοιτος τώρα από πέντε χρόνια, βρέθηκε με το κρεβάτι του κρεμασμένος σ' ένα πατερό χωρίς να πάθει τίποτε. Προσπαθήσαμε να πείσουμε τους Λευκιανούς να μεταφερθούν στο Σταυρό, για ν' αποφύγουν έτσι τον κίνδυνο των βράχων που κατακυλούσαν από το βουνό, αλλά στάθηκε αδύνατο.

... Την επομένη ασχολήθηκα και πάλι με τη Λεύκη. Τα νέα από παντού ήταν δυσάρεστα με τις καταρρεύσεις και ζημιές των σπιτιών. ... Την Τρίτη το πρωί, στις 5.20, νέος σεισμός (εννοώ ισχυρός, γιατί οι μικροί δεν έπαψαν όλο αυτό το διάστημα). Ο σεισμός αυτός κράτησε περισσότερο από το σεισμό της Κυριακής, ήταν όμως ελαφρύτερος. Τα σπίτια, ωστόσο, που είχαν κλονιστεί με τον πρώτο μεγάλο σεισμό (της Κυριακής), έπαθαν ακόμα μεγαλύτερες ζημιές... Επιτέλους κατορθώσαμε να πείσουμε τους Λευκιανούς να έρθουν στο Σταυρό και ως τις 10 το βράδυ κουβαλούσαμε σε πρόχειρα φορεία τους ασθενείς και τους γέρους από δρόμο αδιάβατο.

... Το Σάββατο το απόγευμα, παραμονή του πρώτου σεισμού, η γυναίκα μου είχε πάει στην Αθήνα για μια βδομάδα. Μόλις όμως έμαθε πως έγινε σεισμός στην Ιθάκη, πήρε το πρώτο βαπόρι και γύρισε και την Τετάρτη το πρωί μου τηλεφώνησαν από το Βαθύ (τα τηλέφωνα είχαν στο μεταξύ διορθωθεί) ότι ήρθε και είχε ήδη πάρει μια βενζινακάτο για ν' ανεβεί στις Φρίκες. Μπήκα τότε στο αυτοκίνητο και κατέβηκα στις Φρίκες για να την παραλάβω. Σημείωσε πως ο μόνος δρόμος όπου μπορούσε να κυκλοφορήσει αυτοκίνητο ήταν ο δρόμος Σταυρού – Φρίκες. Πράγματι έφτασε η Ασπασία [η γυναίκα του Φλωριά] στο μώλο με μια βενζίνα κιονιώτικη. Την πήρα μόλις βγήκε έξω και τρέξαμε στην παραλία, ευτυχώς δε χωρίς καθυστέρηση έφυγε και η βενζίνα. Θα δεις γιατί λέω "ευτυχώς". Βάλαμε τα πράγματα στο αυτοκίνητο και είμαστε έτοιμοι να μπουμέ μέσα, όταν ξαφνικά αρχίζει ο τρίτος και ισχυρότερος απ' όλους σεισμός, μ' όλο που κράτησε δέκα δευτερόλεπτα λιγότερος από τον πρώτο. Βράχος, τουλάχιστον 15 τόνων, έπεσε πάνω στο μώλο στο σημείο ακριβώς που είχε αποβιβαστεί η Ασπασία. Κατρακύλησε από το βουνό με φοβερό πάταγο και γκρεμίστηκε τελικά από το μώλο στη θάλασσα. Στις Φρίκες σπίτια έπεφταν, βράχοι ξεκολλούσαν από τις δυο απότομες βουνοπλαγιές, η παραλία σκίστηκε από την μίαν άκρη ως την άλλη, με αρχικό άνοιγμα δέκα ιντσών, το δε αυτοκίνητο μόλις και γλύτωσε και δεν καταπλακώθηκε από τις πέτρες και τα χώματα. Ευτυχώς θύματα δεν είχαμε και πάλι στο Θιάκι. Που να ξέραμε εκείνη τη στιγμή τι κακό συνέβαινε την ίδια ώρα στο Αργοστόλι, το Ληξούρι, τη Σάμη και τη Ζάκυνθο. Η Σάμη, εννοείται, είχε καταστραφεί με το δεύτερο σεισμό. Όλοι οι δρόμοι στη Φρίκες φράχτηκαν από τα μπάζα και ήταν αδύνατο να περάσει το αυτοκίνητό μας. Αφού ηρεμήσαμε κάπως, σκεφτήκαμε για μια στιγμή να συνεχίσουμε με τα πόδια. Όταν όμως φτάσαμε στο σημείο των πολλών ερειπίων είπα ότι, αν μετατοπιζαμε μερικές μεγάλες πέτρες, θα μπορούσε το αυτοκίνητο να διαβεί, όχι τόσο για να μην αναγκαστούμε να πάμε στο Σταυρό με τα πόδια, αλλά για να μην αποκλειστεί το αυτοκίνητο, που την ευθύνη του την είχα εγώ. Πιάσαμε, λοιπόν, από τη μια μεριά εγώ κι από την άλλη η Ασπασία (που ευτυχώς είναι πολύ γερή και έχει άφθονο θάρρος), και όταν οι υπόλοιποι μας είδαν να παραμερίζουμε τις πέτρες, πήραν κι αυτοί το θάρρος κι έτρεξαν να μας βοηθήσουν και μέσα σ' ένα τέταρτο της ώρας ανοίξαμε το δρόμο. Έτσι πέρασε το αυτοκίνητο και γυρίσαμε σπίτι στο Σταυρό. Όταν ξεκουράστηκε η Ασπασία, είδα να κυλά στο μάγουλό της ένα δάκρυ. Τη ρώτησα γιατί και μου απάντησε: "Βαθύ, όπως ήταν, δεν ξαναγίνεται πια, αλλά και το Κιόνι δύσκολα". Φυσικά, δεν ήξερε ακόμα και της Λεύκης την καταστροφή.



Photos 1953:

**1: Windmill in Lefki brought to the ground by the earthquake (Courtesy the Ithacan Historical Society). A Red Cross nurse in the foreground highlights the enormity of the collapse of the mill.**

**2: The remains of the home of George and Nikoletta Kandiliotis (Liarokapis) in Ai Yianni; young Ai Yianniotas checking the debris to see what can be salvaged.**

**3: One of the many tents set up in Stavros to accommodate people from Lefki & Ai Yianni, villages devastated by the earthquake. Group in the photo, from left, two boys standing, Dionisaki (?) and Nikakis Kandiliotis (?), two children seated, Olga Kandiliotis and Yianni Soupiona, Kostas Kandiliotis standing behind his mother Nikoletta Karantzis-Kandiliotis, couple to the right Spiros and Katerini Kandiliotis (?).**

**Photos 2 & 3 courtesy George Collins (Kallinikos), Melbourne. Story has it that his maternal grandmother's family was the only one in Ai Yianni to have a camera at the time.**

... Την επομένη πέρασ' απ' το Κιόνι, κατεβαίνοντας στο Βαθύ. Το δράμα είναι μεγάλο. Ζήτημα αν απομένουν στο Κιόνι τριάντα σπίτια κατοικήσιμα. Στο Βαθύ μόνο στην πλευρά του Μύλου (Καραβάτα) γλύτωσαν καμιά εικοσαριά σπίτια, καθώς κι εκείνα που απλώνονται από τη Μητρόπολη προς τα Κανελλάτα. Όλα τ' άλλα έχουν σωριαστεί κάτω. Η παραλία, από το καφενείο της εξέδρας ως τη Σχολή, έχει καθίσει σχεδόν δύομισυ πόδια! Τα νερά της θάλασσας σκεπάζουν το δρόμο και με τις πλημμύρες φτάνουν το μέτρο. Επίσης η πλατεία έχει πάθει καθίζηση ως το σπίτι του Δρακούλη. Όλα τα σπίτια έχουν μεταβληθεί σε ερείπια. Η Ανωγή είναι κατά 70% κάτω. Τεράστια τραγωδία για το Θιάκι. Τι να

σου πω για την Κεφαλονιά με τους 380 νεκρούς (110 στη Σάμη) και για τη Ζάκυνθο, όπου η συφορά δεν περιγράφεται. Εμείς εδώ παρηγοριόμαστε πως μας λυπήθηκε τουλάχιστον ο Θεός και δε θρηνήσαμε θύματα.

... Οι βοήθειες έφτασαν στο Βαθύ την επομένη το βράδυ, αλλά το πρωί αναγκάστηκαν να τις πάρουν πίσω για τα μεγαλύτερα κέντρα της Κεφαλονιάς, τη Σάμη, το Αργοστόλι και το Ληξούρι, όπου δεν έχουν μείνει όρθια τρία σπίτια και όπου πολλά χωριά έχουν εντελώς ισοπεδωθεί.



# ITHACAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Archive of Ithaca Seminar



The panel of six speakers at the forum in Ithaca

As part of the ongoing initiative of the Ithacan Historical Society to support the Archive of Ithaca, the Society hosted a very successful forum on Ithaca on 25 September, titled ‘A forum on the Archive of Ithaca’. The event was organised together with the Centre of Maritime History of the Institute for Mediterranean Studies and the Ithacan branch of the General State Archives (ΓΑΚ Τμήμα Ιθάκης).

The forum sought to contribute to improving the Ithacan public’s understanding of the great value of the historical collections of the island’s archive. It also took place with the presence of several members of the Centre of Maritime History, who are conducting a survey of unclassified documents in the archive under the supervision of the Director of the Institute for Mediterranean Studies and Professor of the University of Crete, Gelina Harlaftis.

Dozens of Ithacans attended the forum at the theatre of the **Morfotiko Kentro Ithakis** in Vathy on Monday 25 September at 7 p.m., including the current mayor Mr Dionysios Stanitsas and former mayor Mr Spyros Arsenis, and other distinguished and familiar figures on the island. Six speakers presented on their work at the Archive of Ithaca. The Head of the Archives of Ithaca and Cephalonia, **Dr Theodora Zafeiratou**, began the forum with a presentation on the role of the archive today in its modern administrative context as a working public service.

The second and third speakers were invited from the Centre of Maritime History. **Professor Gelina Harlaftis** gave an introduction to the role of Ithaca in the maritime history of the Mediterranean, and placed the collections of the local archive in Ithaca in the context of other relevant collections for research which are kept in state and private archives across Europe. **Dr Kalliopi Vassilaki**, post-doctoral researcher at the Centre of Maritime History, spoke about the maritime documents held in the Archive of Ithaca.

Three further presentations were given by researchers on other collections held at the archive. **Kyriaco Nikias** of the University of Vienna (and Vice President of the IHS) gave a survey of the documents of the Venetian administration of Ithaca (1638–1797). **Gerasimos Livitsanis**, archaeologist and researcher, presented some highlights from the unclassified archives of the post-Venetian administrations which span the period 1797–1817. Finally, **Dimitrios Prevezianos**, student at the University of Athens and former intern at the Archive, surveyed the ecclesiastical documents.

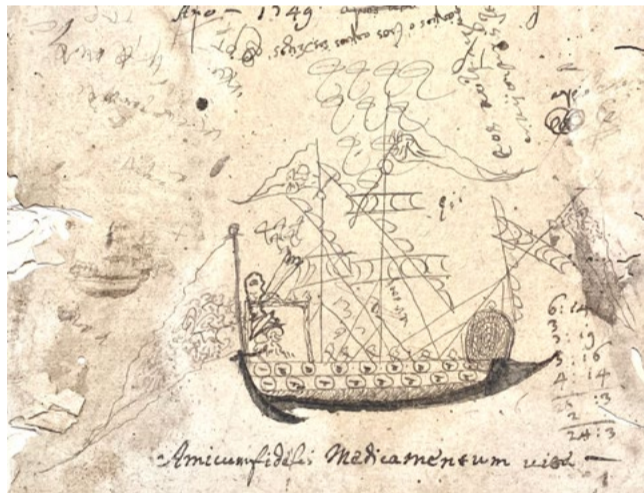


Kyriaco Nikias (Vice President of the IHS) speaking at the forum

The Ithacan Historical Society extended its thanks to the organisers and speakers at the event and expressed its interest to continue this collaboration into the future. The forum shall be repeated in English in an online format on 26 November 2023, with details to be announced via the website and newsletter of the Ithacan Philanthropic Society.

These events take place as part of the ongoing support provided by the Ithacan Historical Society through the **Ithacan Archive Fund** which provides conservation material and support for the other needs of the Archive. The forums organised by the IHS seek to promote public awareness of the riches held at the Archive, being a key objective of the Ithacan Archive Fund. If you would like to donate to the Fund, please see:

<https://ithaca.org.au/historical-society/ithacan-archive-fund>



Detail from a sketch among fragments of records of Governor Demetrio Caruso (1749)

**The Ithacan Historical Society**

**President:**  
Peter Raftopoulos

**Vice President:** Kyriaco Nikias

**Treasurer:** James Morris

**Secretary:** Athena Connock

**Assistant Treasurer:** John Paizis

**Assistant Secretary:** Leah Koutsounis

**Committee Members:**  
Greg Deftereos Nick Galatis Christine Georgopoulos  
Andrew Raftopoulos

## The Ithacan Historical Society Launches New Online Bookstore

The IHS is delighted to announce the launch of our new *Ithacan Historical Society Bookstore*. Our popular range of publications and merchandise can now be purchased online from anywhere in the world and delivered straight to your doorstep. The proceeds from all sales go towards our many not-for-profit activities.

The IHS fosters the study of Ithaca and the Ionian islands from antiquity to the modern era and sells books exploring their history, genealogy, archaeology, geography and culture.

The acclaimed *Passage to Ithaca, Second Edition* by **George Paxinos** is an insightful study of the settlement patterns on the island of Ithaca from the Middle Ages until recent times and includes an authoritative record of family surnames, clan names and villages. George has kindly donated both the copyright and proceeds from the sales to the IHS. The IHS acknowledges and thanks George Paxinos for his generosity and valuable contribution.

To view the bookstore visit: <https://bit.ly/IthacanHistoricalSocietyBookstore> or scan the barcode below. You can also click the links on the ‘Publications’ pages of the IPS website at [ithaca.org.au](http://ithaca.org.au).



A special thank you to **Christine Georgopoulos**, our youngest committee member and IHS Textile Curator for her time and dedication in developing the bookstore.

## The Ithacan Historical Society Online Bookstore

Note prices are GST excl.

<p>PASSAGE TO ITHACA 2ND ED. – GEORGE PAXINOS \$36.37 AUD</p>	<p>IN SEARCH OF HOMERIC ITHACA - JONATHAN BROWN \$36.37 AUD</p>	<p>HOMERIC SITES AROUND TROY - JONATHAN BROWN \$31.82 AUD</p>
<p>JONATHAN BROWN HOMERIC BUNDLE \$63.65 AUD</p>	<p>THE ITHACANS – ITHACAN PHILANTHROPIC SOCIETY \$36.37 AUD</p>	<p>TOTE BAG \$10.00 AUD</p>

**PENELOPE DOUBARAS  
ΠΗΝΕΛΟΠΗ ΚΑΛΛΙΝΙΚΟΥ  
ΝΤΟΥΜΠΑΡΑ  
1933-2023**



Penelope, fondly known as **Poppy**, was born 26 January 1933 in Carlton Melbourne. Her parents were Dimitrios (Mimmo), born in Stavros, Ithaca and Florence Kallinikos. Her grandfather, early immigrant John Kallinikos, was nicknamed *Captain Cook* for all his voyages back and forth to Stavros. Poppy was raised a proud Ithacan and spoke Greek fluently. From a young age she actively attended Ithacan functions and celebrations.

In her youth Poppy enjoyed netball, playing piano, dressmaking and was a very passionate supporter of the Carlton Football Club. She regularly attended many football games with her father throughout her childhood. Poppy was a student at University High School and then went on to Emily MacPherson where she further developed her dressmaking skills. Food played an important part in Poppy's life. Traditional Greek recipes were passed down to Poppy by her father, who was an excellent cook. She took great pride in her cooking. Some of her best and most popular dishes loved by all were her koulouria and her most famous kourabiethes (white bananas).

Poppy with her late husband Spiros, who was from Athens, had five children, Helene, Jim, Anna, Con and Christina. Upon her passing on 1 July 2023, she was a much-loved grandmother of ten grandchildren and thirteen great-grandchildren. Poppy's love of family, sharing her home and her hospitality will continue to be celebrated in generations to come.

**MANTINA COMINOS  
ΔΙΑΜΑΝΤΙΝΑ ΚΟΜΝΗΝΟΥ  
1921-2023**



Η **Διαμαντίνα** γεννήθηκε στο Λαχό Ιθάκης τον Μάρτιο του 1921 σε μίαν εποχή που οι επιπτώσεις της πολιτικής διχόνοιας και αργότερα η Μικρασιατική καταστροφή οδήγησαν σημαντικό μέρος του ελληνικού πληθυσμού σε οικονομική ανασφάλεια και μετανάστευση. Ο πατέρας της, ο Νίκος Βλασσόπουλος, έφυγε για το Γιοχάνεσμπουργκ της Νότιας Αφρικής, όπου είχαν ήδη μεταβεί πολλοί Ιθακήσιοι. Τα εμβάσματα των μεταναστών από τη Νότια Αφρική και την Αυστραλία καθώς και τα εισοδήματα των νεαρών ναυτικών που εργάζονταν σε ναυτιλιακές επιχειρήσεις ενίσχυαν το βιοτικό επίπεδο στην Ιθάκη. Η μητέρα μας μιλούσε συχνά για την περίοδο της δεκαετίας του τριάντα και των αρχών της δεκαετίας του σαράντα. Τη θεωρούσε ως τη πιο χαρούμενη εποχή

της ζωής της, με τις θρησκευτικές γιορτές, τα πανηγύρια, και τους γάμους. Οι πιο όμορφες αναμνήσεις της...

Ο πατέρας της επέστρεψε πριν την έναρξη του Β' Παγκοσμίου Πολέμου. Η οικογένεια της έζησε με σχετική άνεση κατά την περίοδο αυτή. Ωστόσο τα χρήματα της Νότια Αφρικής δεν επενδύθηκαν όπως συνέστησε η μητέρα της, η Βασιλική Πατρίκιος. Μετά τον πόλεμο οι τότε ελληνικές κυβερνήσεις, βρέθηκαν σε δεινή κατάσταση. Απεγνωσμένα προσπάθησαν να ανορθώσουν την ελληνική οικονομία, μετά τις καταστροφές που προκάλεσαν τόσο ο παγκόσμιος πόλεμος όσο και ο εμφύλιος που ακολούθησε. Έλαβαν δραστικά και αντιλαϊκά μέτρα, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της κατάσχεσης των τραπεζικών καταθέσεων πολιτών.

Η νέα πτώχευση ανάγκασε την μητέρα μας, όπως και χιλιάδες άλλους Έλληνες, να μεταναστεύσει. Εγκαταστάθηκε αρχικά στο Κάρλτον της Μελβούρνης. Παντρεύτηκε τον Διογένη Κομνηνό και απέκτησε τρεις γιους, τον Ξενοφώντα, τον Νίκο και τον Δημήτρη. Η έμφυτη δύναμη, η αποφασιστικότητα, η επιμονή και η υπομονή της, της επέτρεψαν να συμβιώσει με το νέο της περιβάλλον. Όμως, δεν μπορούσε να συμφιλιωθεί απόλυτα με τη νέα ζωή της στην Αυστραλία και να αφομοιωθεί πλήρως. Οι αναμνήσεις, και η καρδιά της ήταν πάντα στην Ελλάδα. Στον ελεύθερο χρόνο, ανάμεσα στα καθήκοντά της ως μητέρα και νοικοκυρά, διάβαζε πολύ. Αγαπούσε ιδιαίτερα την Ελληνική Δημοτική Ποίηση, τους Ρομαντικούς Ποιητές, τους Ρώσους μυθιστοριογράφους, Φέοντορ Ντοστογιέφσκι και Λέοντος Τολστόι, τα έργα του Ουίλιαμ Σαίξπηρ και τα γραπτά του Λόρδου Βύρωνα. Τον τελευταίο καιρό θυμόταν με αγάπη και νοσταλγία την παρέα της, την Κατερίνα από την Κύπρο, την κυρία Murphy από την Ιρλανδία, τη Μαρία από την Ελλάδα και την κυρία Μπόρις από τη Ρωσία, φίλες στην γειτονιά της.

Πέθανε τον Ιούλιο 2023 σε ηλικία 102 ετών. Θα τη θυμόμαστε για την πολύπλευρη αντίληψή της απέναντι στα πράγματα, την έντονη ευαισθησία της, την καλοσύνη της προς τους άλλους και τη λεπτότητα της.

**Ξενοφών (Αθήνα)  
Νίκος και Δημήτρης (Μελβούρνη)**

**SPIROS ARKOUZIS  
ΣΠΥΡΟΣ ΑΡΚΟΥΖΗΣ  
1938-2023**



**Spiros Arkouzis** was born in Perahori, Ithaca in 1938, son of Gerassimos Arkouzis and Niki Pippos. In the same year, his father Gerassimos left for Australia where he worked for a few years on ships transporting steel from Sydney to Newcastle. When the Japanese started sinking ships in the Pacific during the Second World War, one of his relatives advised him to leave and find employment elsewhere. He moved to Mullumbimby, NSW where he leased some land to grow bananas, later building a home in anticipation of bringing his wife and his son Spiros to Australia.

In 1947 Gerassimos sent the tickets and his family made the journey, leaving Piraeus by ship for Port Said, Egypt, travelling to Cairo by train and then continuing the journey by sea plane to Australia. The trip took five days

and was an experience for the young Spiros visiting different locations and staying in hotels.

Spiros grew up in Mullumbimby in northern NSW. He attended school there and when he was older worked with his father on the banana farm. In 1964, his parents sold the farm and their home and returned to Ithaca. It was here that Spiros met his future wife Artemis Griva. They married on 30 April 1965.

It was hard to find work, so Spiros and Artemis, together with Spiros parents returned to Australia where they settled in Brisbane. Eventually they bought a business in Bulimba which they ran for eighteen years. After another extended holiday in Ithaca, they returned to Brisbane and set up home in Mansfield.

Spiros was a caring husband, a loving father to his three children, Gerassimos, Niki and Evangelos, a doting grandfather and a good friend to all. Forever in our hearts, we will remember him with beautiful memories.

**GERRY POLITES  
ΓΕΡΑΣΙΜΟΣ ΠΟΛΙΤΗΣ  
1932-2023**

Ο Γεράσιμος γεννήθηκε στο χωριό Κοντάραινα Λευκάδας. Σε ηλικία 15 ετών ήλθε στη Μελβούρνη και αμέσως άρχισε να δουλεύει στο μαγαζί fish and chips του θείου του. Εργάστηκε σκληρά στη ζωή του με αποτέλεσμα να επιτύχει σε επιχείρηση ποτοποιείων. Παντρεύτηκε την Διονυσία Δευτεραίου από την Εξωγή, απέκτησαν δύο τέκνα, τον Στάθη και την Αμαλία και αξιώθηκαν να χαρούν τέσσερα εγγόνια. Ήταν μέλος και υποστηρικτής του Συνδέσμου μας, πάντα με την συζυγό του παρευρισκόταν στις εκδηλώσεις μας, προσφέροντας πάντα με γενναιοδωρία. Καλός και αφοσιωμένος οικογενειάρχης, σεβαστός και αγαπητός σε όλους.



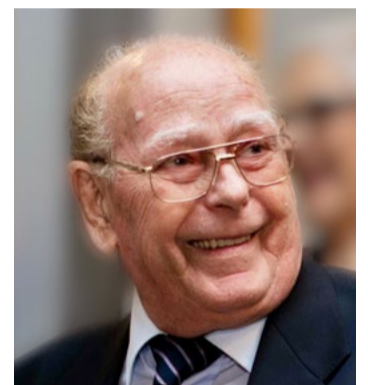
A loving husband to Dionisia Deftereos from Exoghi, devoted father of Steven and Amelia, a proud grandfather and respected father-in-law who devoted his incredible efforts, emotions and dreams to enrich every life he touched. A person with great energy, intelligence, commitment and determination, he would not accept failure as an outcome. Always well-prepared and well-presented throughout his entire life, our father displayed an endless appetite to assist others, whether they be his family, relatives, friends, neighbours or even strangers. Always devoted to his family, for whom his love and generosity were limitless. His ultimate joy was to be in the presence of his grandchildren, Andrew, Catherine, Denise and Gerry, who loved him equally and infinitely in return.

The king of BBQs, he designed them, built them and cooked on them, not only for himself but for others. Many backyards of houses in Melbourne and beyond continue to boast his brick BBQs. He was an avid gardener, growing grapefruit, lemons, oranges, olives, oregano, vegetables, exotic plants and more. A collector of fine wines, he was infamous amongst local shop keepers for his insistence on Australian-made and the pursuit of quality.

From humble beginnings in the village of Kondarena in Lefkada, Gerry travelled far to achieve much. On arriving in Australia in 1947 at the age of 15 years, he immediately began working in his uncle's fish and chip shop in Fitzroy Street St Kilda working 80 hours every week. This was the beginning of many years of hard work. In 1966 Gerry commenced working for himself, establishing the Liquor Store at the newly constructed Northland Shopping Centre in Preston, a large shop that boasted its own drive-through bottle shop, a shop he was very proud of. Eventually selling that business, he went on to purchase the liquor store at Parkmore Shopping Centre Forrest Hill, which he ran until his retirement at the age of 53. By that stage he had moved his family to Doncaster where he lived until 2021 when he became a resident of Fronditha Aged Care in Templestowe.

Loved and respected by many, Gerry will remain forever in our hearts.

**GERASIMOS PASTRAS  
ΓΕΡΑΣΙΜΟΣ ΠΑΣΤΡΑΣ  
1936-2023**



**Gerasimos "Gerry" Pastras** was born in Pastra, Kefalonia, Greece, on the 17th of January 1936 and passed away on 13 September 2023 at the Olivia Newton-John Centre, Heidelberg, Victoria, Gerry was the devoted husband of Evangelia Raftopoulou (Gergouli), dedicated to her care and wellbeing, a beloved father, stepfather, grandfather, great-grandfather and uncle.

A wonderful and loyal friend to many, Gerry was known for his generous hospitality and derived immense pleasure and satisfaction cooking for friends and family. Gerry will be dearly missed by all who knew him. His passing leaves a big gap in our lives. May he rest in peace.

**DONATIONS IN MEMORY  
ΔΩΡΕΕΣ ΕΙΣ ΜΝΗΜΗ**

\$100 Artemis Arkouzis (QLD) in memory of beloved husband, father and grandfather **Spiros Arkouzis**.

\$100 Οικογένεια Ανδριάνας Ζερβούλη εις μνήμη αγαπημένου συζύγου, πατέρα, παππού και προπάππου **Γεωργίου Ζερβούλη**.

\$200 Leah Koutsounis, Rena Varigos, Angela Tsolakis and Spiro Raftopoulos in memory of their father **Stathis Raftopoulos MBE** on the twentieth anniversary of his passing on 5 October 2003, **foundation editor of the Odysseus newspaper**.

\$100 Spiro and Paola Raftopoulos in memory of their beloved mothers **Kassiani Raftopoulos** and **Anastasia Argyris**.

The Society received the following donations in memory of **Margarita Varigos**:

- \$100 Chris and Louli Defteros in memory of a gracious lady and our much-respected Koubara
- \$50 Spiro & Paola Raftopoulos
- \$50 Helen Vlass
- \$20 Eugenia & John Tsalikis
- \$20 Spyridoula & George Coutsouvelis
- \$50 Tasia Kouvara

**DONATIONS TO ODYSSEUS  
ΔΩΡΕΕΣ ΓΙΑ ΕΦΗΜΕΡΙΔΑ**

- \$50 Αγοραστή Μολφέση (Ιθάκη)
- \$50 Μαρία Φιλιππάτου (Πάτρα)

## The Story of "Song of Ithaca"

By Nick Mourcella, Adelaide

Yes, everyone has a story or two to tell, but this one is really unique in its own way as it reflects through words and music my mother's love of the Greek island of Ithaca, her homeland.



Maria Paxinos in Adelaide, aged 25, c 1939

As my two sisters, Irene and Zagarinia, and I were growing up, our mum, **Maria Moursellas (Paxinos)**, would tell us about this magical place and I can distinctly recall the passion, longing and considerable sadness in her voice as she recounted her stories. When Mum sailed out of the harbour at the age of 24 to emigrate to Australia alone, she wondered if she would ever return. The really interesting thing is that my wife, Sharon, and I also experienced the same love and emotions after visiting Ithaca and leaving on a boat from that very same harbour in Vathi.

About ten years ago, before she passed away at the age of 100 years and eight months, I would visit her at the nursing home with my portable video player. I would sit with her and show her videos that Sharon and I took whilst on our holidays in Ithaca. It really gave her much happiness and she cried many tears of joy, and some of sorrow, as she reminisced over her childhood in Anoghi, the village where she grew up and still loved.

When she was still with us I promised her I would write a song about the place where she was born and missed so very much. The song is a tribute to her which, unfortunately, she never got to hear. The process that brought my song or, perhaps more appropriately, my mother's song, to fruition was eight months in the making. Our band, *The Class of Homer*, consisted of seven musicians and two singers; we practised, rehearsed and refined the presentation, and subsequently spent two full days in a studio professionally recording the song.



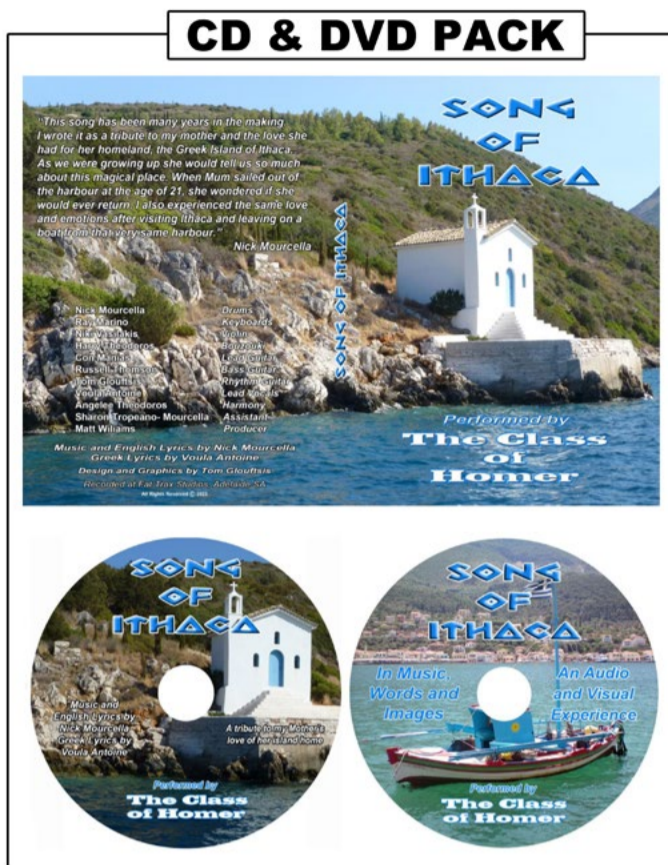
Maria Moursellas (Paxinos) with her children, from left Zagarinia, Irene and Nick

In June 2023 we held the official launch of *Song of Ithaca* at *The Cruising Yacht Club of South Australia*, suitably located with boats and yachts as the backdrop. It was a very successful launch with 180 people attending, and by all accounts, they really enjoyed the occasion. They especially loved hearing the song for the first time, and appreciated the video version which included the lyrics, along with video clips and images of Ithaca, as well as band members playing and putting the song together. A big thank you to Ithacan Philanthropic Society committee member, Dennis Katsamas, who came to Adelaide to attend the launch and took lots of great photos.

I am so very proud of what we achieved and believe Mum will have been tuning in on all of the sessions and was with us at the launch. I bet she is pleased with the *Song of Ithaca*.

Such is our pride in this song, we would love to share it with you. If you'd like to buy the DVD pack, including an audio CD with the song and an extended dance version, and a Disk which has the video version as described above, please contact us at:

[classofhomer@gmail.com](mailto:classofhomer@gmail.com)



## Αγία Μαρίνα Εξωγή St Marina Church Exoghi

The Society is pleased to inform members that funds held in trust by the Society since 2016 have been transferred to their intended destination. The funds were raised to repair the damage to the Aghia Marina Church in Exoghi caused by earthquake activity in the region in 2014. The funds were kept in trust at the request of the Omilo Exoghi. Finally in 2023, with the assistance of the Mayor of Ithaca, a bank account was opened specifically to receive donations for the restoration of the Church. A total of \$9547.41 was transferred which included the Society's donation, donations by members and friends of the Society, and interest earned.



Με χαρά ο Συνδεσμός μας απέστειλε τα χρήματα που είχαν συγκεντρωθεί για ενίσχυση επισκευής **Αγίας Μαρίνας** από ζημιές του σεισμού το 2014. Το ποσό που είχε κατατεθεί σε ιδιαίτερο λογαριασμό από το 2016 ανέρχεται σε \$9547.41. Συμπεριλαμβάνει τις γενναϊόδωρες προσφορές των μελών και φίλων, την δωρεά του Συνδέσμου μας καθώς και τον τραπεζικό τόκο. Κατατέθηκε σε ειδικό λογαριασμό που άνοιξε το 2023 στην Ιθάκη και που είναι αποκλειστικά για δωρεές επισκευής Αγίας Μαρίνας.

Επίσης εφέτος ο Δήμος Ιθάκης ολοκλήρωσε τη μελέτη επισκευής του Ναού και παραδόθηκε λόγω αρμοδιότητας στην Μητρόπολη Λευκάδος και Ιθάκης για τις δικές της ενέργειες. Εκ μέρους του Εκκλησιαστικού Συμβουλίου, λάβαμε από τον **Κύριο Ορέστη Μαυρομάτη** το κάτωθι ευχαριστήριο:

**Το εκκλησιαστικό συμβούλιο του ΙΕΡΟΥ ΝΑΟΥ ΑΓΙΑΣ ΜΑΡΙΝΑΣ ΕΞΩΓΗΣ ΙΘΑΚΗΣ** σας ευχαριστεί θερμά για την βοήθεια που προσφέρατε στον σεισμόπληκτο Ναό μας. Δεν είναι η πρώτη φορά γι αυτό σας ευχαριστούμε διπλά, πάντοτε είστε αρωγοί στο δύσκολο έργο μας αφού έχουμε μείνει λίγοι και η κληρονομιά που πρέπει να παραδώσουμε στις επόμενες γενεές πολύ μεγάλη. Τα χρήματα θα παραμείνουν στον λογαριασμό μέχρι να χρησιμοποιηθούν και τότε θα σας ενημερώσουμε σχετικά. Ελπίζουμε πάντα με την βοήθεια της Αγίας Μαρίνας σύντομα να επιστρέψει στο « σπίτι της » και μεις να συγκεντρωθούμε εκεί για να γιορτάσουμε στην Χαρά της.

Καλή αντάμωση το επόμενο καλοκαίρι στην Ιθάκη μας!!!

Snapshots from the screening of Lucy Kostos' film *The Hidden Eye* at the Clubrooms in July 2023



## Children's Christmas Tree Party

A fun afternoon with entertainment and a visit from Santa  
Sunday 3 December 2.00 pm at the Clubrooms

Register children now. Age limit: 12 years  
Download registration form from website and return completed form by 15 November 2023. Reply details on registration form.



**Christmas Luncheon 2023**  
Join us to celebrate the festive season  
Sunday, 10 December 2023, 12 pm - 4 pm  
at Merrimu Receptions, Murrumbena

Members \$45 - Non-members \$75  
Children 12 years and under \$30  
Bookings essential: RSVP 4 December 2023



Trybooking:  
<https://www.trybooking.com/CMRQR>

or  
QR CODE

For further information contact:  
Kristalena Collins 0409 357 747 [kcollins@ithaca.org.au](mailto:kcollins@ithaca.org.au)