



# THE HELLENIC CENTRE NEWS

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THE HELLENIC COMMUNITY TRUST

REGISTERED CHARITY NO 1010360

## Overview of the Year 2006

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The year's coverage of the events and activities at the Hellenic Centre is dominated by one of the most prestigious events to take place in the Centre since its inception – the exhibition of Greek Embroidery, 17th – 19th Century from collections of the Victoria & Albert Museum and the Benaki Museum, Athens. There are so many “firsts” relating to this exhibition but there is only space here to mention but a few. For such a collection, from a major UK museum, to be allowed to be exhibited in a non-museum owned space is in itself exceptional. It is also an endorsement of the Centre's facilities that it was approved by the Museums and Galleries Authority from a security and safety perspective to host an exhibition of this magnitude, for which we can all be justly proud. This specialised exhibition was very well attended by both amateur and professional specialists as well as the general public, with total visitor numbers at just under 2,000. We were delighted that we were able to reach such a wide range of visitors and introduce them both to both the Centre, and to the spectacular embroideries.

As soon as the exhibition closed the Great Hall was immediately back in action for cultural and corporate events which included a fundraising event for the HC, a Murder Mystery Christmas Lunch at the beginning of December. It was a most innovative event where everyone could participate in the fun. It was delightful to see so many families with children of all ages, particularly teenagers and young people attending and everyone enjoying themselves – many thanks to all the participants and organisers.



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The programme of events and activities at the Centre during 2006 were designed to entertain, educate, and inform and we hope that we have fulfilled these intentions. These activities covered music and drama, lectures and films, children's' events, fundraising and social events as well as exhibitions and concerts – so an impressive and demanding repertoire has once again been achieved.

One of the objectives for the Centre's activities in 2006 was to attract as many people from both the Greek and host communities – children's events proved very successful in achieving this aim.

**Lectures and presentations** were notable by the variety of subjects covered. In February, Mrs Alike Kauffmann-Samara gave a fascinating talk - The Louvre lecture – which demonstrated her deep knowledge and love of the Greek antiquities in the Parisian museum. Her enthusiasm, we are sure, made all of the attendees want to revisit to Louvre and see these works again for themselves. In March, Vassilis Zidianakis presented items from the largest collection of Original Paper Dresses from the Sixties and three video works in a presentation called Atopos at works: An interesting Crossover in Past and Future, Art and Fashion. This was a genuinely different event attended by many visitors, all of whom had their senses awakened by edgy videos, an exhibition of 60's paper dresses plus a lecture and a live demonstration of dressing a model by creating a

**Social and fundraising events** this year were fun and successful. In March our usual Kathara Deftera event took place and many paying guests came to the Centre to enjoy a wonderful lunch on the first day of Lent. This traditional fare, comprising squid, octopus and small prawns, and various vegetable and dried pulse combinations, together with stuffed vine leaves and much more, was delicious; together with traditional live Greek music set us all on the right path for Lent! Sunny June saw another HC first - a

**Drama** was well represented by the Drama Club and three Master Class Workshops, all sponsored by Awards for All Lottery Fund. All the workshops were well attended, particularly The Unique Characters of Greek Tragedy. This workshop attracted actors from previous workshops and new recruits. The event was especially enjoyable for the participants as they all had a chance to act – which for aspiring thespians is crucial! Their performances were

We were heartened by our closer connection with local community groups such as the Marylebone Association and the Howard de Walden Estate. The latter resulted in the Centre being included in the Summer Fayre events. The Lykion ton Hellinidon put on a wonderful show of traditional Greek dancing in Marylebone High Street which won them very well deserved applause. On top of this it was one of the sunniest days of the summer thus ensuring the whole event was well attended. With the HC Bar open serving Greek snacks and refreshing cool drinks we were delighted to be able to attract new visitors to the Centre.

paper dress fixed with ONE pin. In October and November, we had three lectures relating to the Greek Embroidery exhibition. One of these lectures was a tour around the exhibition given by Ann French, the grand-daughter of one of the major British collectors, Alan Wace. This was very well supported and was a unique insight into both the items collected and the travels involved in their acquisition.

In November, the HC hosted the Andreas A David Third Biennial Memorial Lecture. Ambassador Stephen W Bosworth gave an address entitled Diplomacy and Negotiation post 9/11. Andreas David was the first Chairman of the Hellenic Community Trust and was immensely proud of the success of the Hellenic Centre.

moody Jazz Evening with Dimitris Vassilakis and his ensemble. The music was exceptional and Dimitris surprised and delighted the audience with his beautiful carousing voice. The ticket price included a mezze plate of food which could satisfy the healthiest appetite. Another pleasing trend for HC events and particularly shown at this Jazz evening is that the audience comprised many local residents as well as our loyal HC members and friends.

accompanied by a saxophone player who picked up the rhythm of their movements and interpreted them in his own way. The last Master Class workshop was a true finale with all the actors performing together for friends and family an informal piece created in the workshop. The final curtain has fallen on the Drama Club for the time being and we thank Awards for All for their support



**Activities for Children** in 2006 as mentioned before were a good way of attracting the local community whilst sharing Greek stories, language and customs. In March, the HC held a storytelling puppet workshop about Pegasus and Mendios. This was a fun event for children and adults alike. Attended by nearly 40 children and their adult companions, we were entertained by two puppeteers telling the age old story of Pegasus and Mendios. It was a perfect event to demonstrate the old and the new, the Hellenic and British culture all mingling together. After the storytelling with music

there was a workshop section where the children were shown how to make their own Pegasus puppet! This event attracted visitors from as far away as York! And made the local newspaper, the Marylebone Express. Other children's events were another puppet storytelling workshop in November, The Island With No Cats; a superb fun day in July with face painting, bouncy castle, a magician and more; another music and movement workshop entitled a Stroll with the Olympian Gods.



Whilst the above events are merely a snapshot of some specific activities of the HC open to members of the public and HC members, it is important to note that the Centre is generally a busy place from early morning until the evening during the week. We are pleased that whenever our meeting and conference facilities are available they are used by our corporate members and clients. Furthermore, we have another strata of continuous activity in the Centre which comprises the Book Club, which meets once a month; exhibitions changing every month in the Friends

Room; our very popular Greek language courses, which attract over 200 students a year, as well as our Greek evenings and late Bar opening evenings. It is gratifying for the whole HC team to have this level of activity going on in parallel with the high level of cultural activities.

We thank you for your support in 2006 and look forward to welcoming you, your family and your friends to this year's programme of events.



This valance, which was exhibited in our embroidery exhibition, features two typical Aegean island designs, the composition of two lozenges forming a hexagon, and the schematic branch motif (*spitha*) in two versions.

The harmonious polychromy, the precise symmetry and the excellent technique attest to the refined aesthetics of the Greek women embroiderers.



## Member Societies of the Hellenic Centre

- Anglo-Hellenic League
- Cypriot Estia of London
- Diaspora Centre
- EFEK UK (National Union of Cypriot Students UK)
- Episteme – The Association of British Cypriot Professionals
- Eteria Ellinon Epistimonon
- Greek Archaeological Committee (UK)
- Greek Cypriot Brotherhood
- Hellenic Association of Translators and Interpreters
- Hellenic Bankers Association
- 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
- SEFL (Union of Greek Students in London)

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