

Friends of Tsamantas. Newsletter August 2009



Dear Friends

I am very pleased to inform you that the second stage of restoration of the Monastery of St. George's in Kamitsiani, which included the reinforcement of the foundation of the church and the removal of those graves adjacent to the wall of the church, is completed. On the 23rd of April, the people of Tsamantas and the nearby communities celebrated St. George's day. The Divine Liturgy and the sermon was delivered by the Abbot of Giromeri, assisted by a small group of local clergy. It was followed by the blessing of the nearby 'Ikonisma' and traditional offering of bread, soft cheese, sweets and drinks.

As I reported in my last year's newsletter, the Tsamantas local council, with the involvement and support of the Abbot of Giromeri, received a grant €30,000 from the Bellos legacy for the financing of these works. Moreover, the monastery will now receive the required €230,000 (approximately US\$ 0.5 million) from the Pindos Programme, for the restoration of its priceless wall paintings. The announcement of the relevant public tender is expected to be announced in September.

The Folklore Museum of Tsamantas was re-opened on the 25th of May 2009 and it is envisaged to remain opened throughout the year. Cryssa Gikas, a local of Tsamantas, is in charge of the guiding visitors to the museum, and her wages are expected to be paid by the Prefecture of Thesprotia.

In addition some repairs were undertaken (for instance the main door and half of rotting windows of the Museum were replaced by PVC). Regrettably, one night during the above repairs while the windows were without their iron bars, there was a break-in and three or four old gold sovereigns were stolen.

It was also reported that the community of Tsamantas will receive €120,000 from Pindos Programme, for the completion of the second floor of the building of the Museum (the old school) which also serves as the community's administrative office.



'From Tsamanta to Melbourne',

Book Launch, Melbourne, July 2009.

On the 10th of July, the Society of Tsamantas 'Agios Nikolaos' in Melbourne in collaboration with the Greek-Australian Women's Food for Thought Network and the Panepirotic Federation of Australia organised a successful evening entitled 'Why is it important to record family history: Strategies to engage the second and third generation'.

The event took place at the premises of the Greek Community in central Melbourne, which attracted a capacity crowd and aimed at highlighting the importance of recording the poignant family histories of the first immigrants from the village of Tsamantas in Australia.

The audience was welcomed by Varvara Ioannou, the president of the Food for Thought Network, and was addressed by executive members of Agios Nikolaos, Kostas Skopas and Bill Matoussis. I was privileged to present the experience of the first Tsamantiotis in Worcester, Massachusetts (USA) more than century ago, while my colleague Philip Dimitriadis, from the Victoria University spoke on the history of Tsamantiotis in Melbourne.

Finally, the Secretary of the Panepirotic Federation of Australia, Kostas Kalymnios officially launched the splendid book 'From Tsamanta to Melbourne', a history and a detailed family genealogy in English of the thriving Tsamantas community in Melbourne. It also important to mention here the contribution made in the writing of the book by Peter Gogorosis as well as the remaining executive members of the Society. For obtaining a copy of the book contact Peter Gogorosis at petergog@fronditha.org.

Other News

- This summer, many Tsamantiotis and their friends once again celebrated the festivities of the Ascension of the Virgin in August. The Fair of the Ox is also planned for the 20th of September.
- We are delighted to welcome to Tsamantas Dinos Keratsis (the former president of the St. George's Hellenic Society of Tsamantas in Worcester, MA) and his family.
- On the 5th of July, I presented a paper on the 'History, Identity and Culture of the Borderland Community of Tsamantas in Epirus, Northwestern Greece' at the 8th International Conference on Greek Research at Flinders University, Adelaide Australia. If you like to get an electronic copy of the paper please send me an email.
- Advance Notice: We plan to have a Pan-Tsamantiotis meeting of the diaspora and a series of various other activities in Tsamantas during the summer of 2012 to celebrate the centenary of independence of Tsamantas from the Ottoman rule. Ideas, contributions and offers for help and for volunteering very welcome.

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[Top](#)