

## Friends of Tsamantas. Newsletter June 2007



### **Restoration works at the Monastery of St. Georges's, Kamitsiani, April 2007**

The repairs to the roof of St. George's Church are now complete. The Church's small dome now has a new coat of paint, while the olive grove to the north of the monastery has been tidied up and fenced in. Many thanks are due to the Abbott of the Monastery of Giromeri for his guidance and support, as well as to the Church Commission of Kamitsiani, particularly Vassilis Bebis (photo) and Nikos Ntatsis, for all their hard work. Of course, more urgent work is still to be done inside the church, in order to preserve its valuable wall paintings and icons, and the monastery's ruined out-buildings will also need to be restored. In this respect, any assistance of whatever kind that might be offered by The Friends of Tsamantas will be greatly appreciated.

### **Presentation to the St. George's Hellenic Society of Tsamantas in Worcester, MA., and progress made for the '100 years in America' conference in April 2007**

I was honoured to be given the opportunity to make a presentation on the regeneration of Tsamantas, at the Ahepa Hall in Worcester, Massachusetts, on the 25th of April 2007. The event was attended by nearly 60 Greek-Americans. I reported on the positive developments arising from the workshop on 'Common European Heritage' that I convened with my colleague Sarah Blowen in Tsamantas in September 2005. The objective of the workshop, which was financially supported by the St. George's Society of Tsamantas in Worcester, was to encourage the economic revitalisation of this historic community.

I also visited the Hellenic College at Brookline, in Boston, which will host our forthcoming conference on 11 October 2008. The conference, co-organised by Dr Soteris Zoulas of Eastern Nazarene College, in Quincy (Boston), aims to celebrate the centenary of the establishment of St. George's and its philanthropic activities in both Worcester and Tsamantas. We are also very pleased to announce that our invited keynote speaker will be Dr Alexander Kitroeff, Associate Professor of History at the Haverford College of Pennsylvania.



### **Conservation work at the Folklore Museum of Tsamantas, May 2007**

Lynn Morrison, a conservator at the Saffron Walden Museum (UK), undertook extensive voluntary conservation work at the Folklore Museum of Tsamantas from 4-11 May. Lynn was assisted by another expert volunteer, Eleni Kallitsantsi from Volos, and by Alexandros Balos, the Museum's caretaker and guide. I would like to express my gratitude for all their hard work. I would also to thank the St. George's Hellenic Society of Tsamantas, in Worcester, MA., for contributing US\$150 towards the volunteers' transport costs. Whilst in Tsamantas, Lynn also inspected two chapels in the village and prepared a brief report, raising some helpful points regarding their maintenance.

### **The first Summer Volunteers School at Tsamantas, July 22-31 2007**

A pilot for a Summer Volunteers School is scheduled to take place during the last week of July 2007. We have invited 6-7 students from the University of the West of England, Bristol, who will undertake voluntary work to help identify aspects of sustainable development for the mountain communities of Thesprotia. I and my colleague Sarah Blowen hope to organise various workshops, as well as study visits to the surrounding areas. We very much hope to be joined by a similar number of young Greeks and Albanians with links to Tsamantas or nearby villages on both sides of the border. The Church Commission of Tsamantas has kindly offered to accommodate the British students free of charge at the St. Nicholas Guest House.

We hope that the Summer Volunteers School will become a regular event in Tsamantas, involving both the local and diasporic youth of the village. We would also like to encourage members of The Friends of Tsamantas to volunteer to contribute to future Summer Schools, in the form of delivering lectures or organising workshops.

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