



## Overview

Ayios Amvrosios Association is an organisation whose membership is made up predominantly of Greek Cypriots or their descendants who were illegally evicted from the town of Ayios Amvrosios by the Turkish invading army in 1974.

The town of Ayios Amvrosios was situated 20 miles east of Kyrenia, surrounded by green valleys, Mount Pendadactillos and the sea. Before 1974 there were more than 3,000 people living in Ayios Amvrosios: apricot farming was central to the economic and social life of the village.

The Ayios Amvrosios Association is a cultural organisation whose main objective is to keep the memory of Ayios Amvrosios alive and to ensure that the younger generation never lose touch with their roots and their cultural heritage.

As part of its continuous efforts to enlighten the British born Cypriots (the Anglo Cypriots) of their cultural roots and their history, and in particular, the events that led to the invasion of 1974, the organisation arranged a trip to Cyprus by a group of five young members of the Association. The trip was also, in many respects, a reward for the leadership and the involvement that the five girls had undertaken in so many of our cultural events. The criteria for choosing these girls was that all of them have participated in the traditional 'Chrisomillia' dance for the last five years consecutively. The first objective of the trip was for them to meet youngsters of similar ages from Ayios Amvrosios who are now living in Cyprus, and to join them in dancing the 'Chrisomillia' dance, organised in Nicosia which they did with great distinction.

The second objective was to take them to the town of Ayios Amvrosios in the Kyrenia district, which has now been under military occupation since 1974, to see for the first time the birthplace of their parents and their fore fathers.

In this newsletter we have invited these girls to express their feelings and experiences.

We hope you enjoy it!

## Going Back to Ayios Amvrosios

### An experience by five young girls from London returning to their roots

**I**n this special newsletter we bring you the personal accounts of five of our young members on their first organised trip back to the Turkish occupied town of Ayios Amvrosios in the North of Cyprus.

Reading these personal experiences of teenagers who have never before had the opportunities to see for themselves the birthplace of their parents gives a clear insight into the feelings of a generation that has grown up developing a vision of this beautiful place through the eyes of their parents. It is also evident that the pain, frustration and the emotions experienced by their parents throughout the last years since 1974 has surfaced as soon as they set foot over the five-fingered mountain range and into Ayios Amvrosios.

With this newsletter we want to share these experiences with you.

As one of the youngsters said, "Ayios Amvrosios is more beautiful than the best description given to me by my father". Another said, "This place is worth fighting for".

We hope that with this newsletter you will feel the pain and injustice felt by these young and innocent girls and do all you can to bring an end to the division of the island of Cyprus.

We need a settlement that will bring down barriers and barbed wire.

I had the honour of accompanying the girls and during this trip I have had my own moving experiences both as the Chairman of the Association, as a returning refugee and as a father of one of the girls.

When we visited Ayios



*Ayios Amvrosios.*

*An idealic view from the top of the Pendadaktilos mountain range.*

Ayvrosios we all had too much to take in.

I saw my own home destroyed and devastated. I saw my school, places where I played and grew up.

But I had to suppress my emotions and show strength and courage as the senior person of the group.

However, when we reached the town centre for a moment I looked around but I could no longer see the girls. All of a

sudden all five girls were dancing the 'Apricot' dance at the church courtyard where the dance would have been performed throughout the years before the brutal interruption of the Turkish invasion.

This impulsive act by these girls, to dance where their grandmothers did, without any fear from the so many intimidating Turks around them, (who eventually managed to

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### "Ayios Amvrosios is the most beautiful village"...

**Christina Theodosiou**

When I received a phone call asking if I would be up for a trip to Cyprus, to visit Kyrenia (Ayios Amvrosios), I said "Yes" straight away with no hesitation. I thought it would be an experience I would never forget...oh and it was! There were seven of us altogether - Barbara, Sophia, Vasoulla, Chantel, Angelo the Chairman, my dad Kyriacos and myself. The five days we spent there were brilliant!

I'd never been to the occupied area. I wanted to go, but at the same time I was upset, knowing the fact that I was going to visit my dad's village, which was once his home! When we got to the village it was so pretty, just like my dad had explained it. However there were a lot of changes!

Seeing my dad's house made me very emotional and seeing my dad being so upset made it even worse!

We also got to see the schools, which was a lovely

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