

“Why should I need permission to enter my family’s home?”

Sunday 26 June: The day started early. Today was the day we were returning to our home, ‘Ayios Amvrosios’. I was feeling withdrawn and solemn because I had already visited my mother’s home about 2 or 3 years ago and so I knew what to expect.

Arriving in Ayios Amvrosios was like a welcome back to a lost dream, a lost part of the soul. Everything was just the way it was, how I remembered it to be the first time and in some ways still unspoiled since 1974.

The school was the first place we visited and the girls and I circled the school with Kyriacos as our guide: I climbed in through the window of one of the classrooms where I imagined myself as a student of the school at that time. Even though I was born too late to see my village as pre the invasion, I still felt that I had been here before!

The girls each visited their homes whereby all they could do at first glance was burst into tears. It was very emotional. I went to see my mother’s house for a second time, but this time I did not believe that I should have to ask permission to enter a home under my family’s name, and to have to remove my shoes for a religion that does not influence or involve me in any way. Why should I?

After visiting ‘my home’ a wave of anger,



by Sophia Toumazou

The Gymnasium School of Ayios Amvrosios but the students are no longer the children and grandchildren of those that worked hard to build it but colonists from Turkey.

melancholy, and hatred came over me: from the neutral feelings I felt the first time I visited Ayios Amvrosios, now my emotions and thoughts were more than somewhat negative.

To balance out the negativity of our emotions, we bathed in the waters of the village where we all had time to reflect on our unforgettable 5 days. It was the right way of saying in our minds “We will be back!”

A day full of tears

We arrived in Cyprus on the 22nd June 2005 to partake in the annual Ayios Amvrosios Dinner and Dance. From then on our schedule was non stop. First we went to the Ayios Amvrosios club house to meet all the other girls from Cyprus who we were going to dance with. They were all so nice and I would like to thank them all once again for making us feel so welcome!

On the night of the Dinner and Dance, we all turned up ready to perform and have a great night. The setting was totally different to the way we have it here in London, but it was an amazing experience! It was all set up in the street, with everyone sitting down, eating, drinking, laughing and talking the night away. The atmosphere was lovely and I’m glad to say that our performance also went really well. We combined our ‘Chrisomillia’ dance with theirs and made it one of the best! Overall, we had a brilliant night.

The dancing wasn’t the only amazing experience we had. We also got the chance to go and visit Ayios Amvrosios itself. Although I’m not originally from the town of

Ayios Amvrosios, I was raised by two very special people who are from there. I have been dancing for Ayios Amvrosios for about ten years now, which is why it meant so much to me to go and visit my family’s land. We went to see the schools, the church, the sea and our homes. I say it was amazing but at the same time it was also very hurtful to see it the way it is now. To find that our parent’s and grand parent’s houses were knocked down, and for the few that are still standing, it was horrible to know that there were other people who don’t belong there, living in our houses instead of us! Our whole day in Ayios Amvrosios was full of tears? some happy but mainly sad ones!

When we reached the top of the mountains it was to die for! The view when looking down was so beautiful. The sea looked amazing and the fact that you could see the outline of Cyprus was unreal!

In between all the crying, we also had a lot of fun in Cyprus. We went to many restaurants and even visited some beaches. We even danced our ‘Chrisomillia’ dance in the sea! It was a trip that none of us will ever forget.

Vassoulla Kounnis



I have been a member of the Youth Association for over 13 years and when I first started dancing in the group I was 11 years old and the last in the circle. Now I’m the first in line. Over the years as I have grown up, I have seen many other girls, and there have been many, begin and finish, but as each year passes I am shocked by how fast everyone is growing up!

Whilst on the trip we visited our parent’s homes in Ayios Amvrosios. For me it was my second time, but for a few of the girls it was their first time. It was a very emotional day for everyone including my father and for Kyriacos who had never been back. When my father and I went back to his home last year it was all boarded up, but this time all the windows no longer had bars on them and the door was open. But to our shock it seems that the Turks had, after all these years, only now decided to go in and destroy the inside of the property. It was so sad for us to see. I had been there prior, and it hurt to see the house all smashed up.

Whilst we were outside the church we even danced our traditional ‘Chrisomillia’ dance, but with a cafe across the street and with many Turkish

people making comments we soon stopped! We also managed to swim in Ayios Amvrosios waters which is something that I never thought I would have a chance to do, and it was wonderful to be floating in the warm sea and to be looking at a beautiful part of our heritage. Well it would have been “beautiful” if the landscape had not been blighted by the sprawl of illegal buildings.

Ayios Amvrosios still has some of the most stunning views and I can only wish that one day it will be ours again! I am sure to a large degree, we, as the youth of Ayios Amvrosios do not understand what it must be like to have fled homes and now see that illegally, people are building homes on our parent’s and grandparent’s land and making money from it.

Despite the sadness of our day in Ayios Amvrosios, the trip was a great success and we did a variety of things in the short week we were there. We even managed to go to the beach as well as eating and drinking at many traditional places.

It was a memorable trip that all the girls including myself and even my father didn’t want to end.

Chantel Beshonges