

lot more adventure to offer me than Australia. I've been a bit of an adrenaline junky in the past, particularly with deep diving. Now I can't think of any place in the world that can offer me more adventure than Kythera.

The island's approximately 30km long and 20km across, at its widest point. There's no way I can help find parts of a forgotten 2500+ year-old ancient city or shipwrecks from thousands of years ago within 30km of where I live in Sydney! And my right to be able to explore is afforded by a blood line from the island on both parents sides. So it's my island too!

There was also a bond with a number of people in Kythera. Especially the Metropolit, Bishop Seraphim.

We built rapport from working on a number of tasks together. Having him bless (conduct an Αγιασμός) one of the archaeological sites for example. Plus collaborating on the historic reopening of Agios Kosmas, which gave us an opportunity to get to know each other. Conducting the first service at Agios Kosmas in well over 100 years was a really special event.

We also got to know Father Yiorgios who is in charge of the monastery where we stayed. This helped build a friendship with him. Similarly, spending time with Father Mariatos because one of the tasks was to archaeologically survey a site where he wants to build a youth camp, which helped create a bond with him too. I've never been very religious but now have close ties with three important members of the Kytherian clergy. And a lot more empathy for what they do.

Respect for the Metropolit's wishes has already stirred enthusiasm for next year - to cut trails through agathia and thick bushes, opening access to another two currently inaccessible churches. Why? Because it seems like a good thing to do, will bring joy to

the community and make Bishop Seraphim happy.

I'll drum up support from a few local farmer friends who have chainsaws, tractors and other tools.

Then find members of the Diaspora to help with labour, forming a working bee to open up paths to the inaccessible churches in question. The reward for everyone will be for the Metropolit to conduct historic services in each, creating history and bringing culture to life. How about that as a complete turn-around for a black sheep? From steering clear of the Greek community, to helping influence a religious calendar of events!

How did it change other people?

In a similar way to me. Volunteering doesn't appeal to everyone, especially those who don't want to wake up really early to dig before it gets too hot. But those who 'connected' with the past became more patriotic, and curious - wanting to learn more. They understood how much of an adventure they were involved in, one that was unique. Heritage is also something to share, particularly with people stemming from the same origins. People connected with each other in two ways, through sharing an intense experience and similar ancestry.

Members of the Kytherian Diaspora connected with others from around the world. People who would never have met any other way. Volunteers from Brisbane, Canberra, Sydney, the United States and all over Greece worked side-by-side. I made friends with a group of Kytherian-Australians from Brisbane who I wouldn't have ever got to know if we didn't work together on the dig.

Any other projects in the future?

Yes! There's a very important shipwreck to excavate in relatively shallow water off Kythera, one of world-wide significance to the Hellenic

community. A project that needs to be conducted by the Greek Underwater Archaeology Ephorate, with support from the Diaspora, just like the land dig this year. But because of greater engineering/equipment requirements, underwater excavations are more expensive.

Plans for this project in 2011 are progressing well, but I'd like to know funding is available before making promises.

Overall, I see my role as a bit of a pioneer. Paving the way for a project to then continue on a long term basis, perhaps run by other teams. For example clearing paths to old Churches which are no longer accessible.

Or systematic excavations where the ancient capital of Kythera is currently buried. Who knows what might be found in a city that thrived for a period of 500 years before Christ, which is now buried on the side of a mountain.

Hopefully going in with crazy passion can lead to a movement that proves the value of such projects, creating longevity in Kythera and also sparking enthusiasm from others to spread throughout Greece.

What's your greatest achievement to date?

Helping rediscover sections of a 2500+ year old forgotten city. Without resources from Australia, and bringing people together from all walks of life, the project wouldn't have taken place this year.

Would you ever consider living in Greece?

I could for set periods of time. I've been fortunate to have met lots of archaeologists and could probably volunteer on digs for about 3 months each year. But that would be labour of love rather than income producing.

Perhaps I could take a year off if I sell my business one day and spend that time adventuring in Greece, particularly around Kythera and Antikythera. There's more than a lifetime's worth of exploring to do in that region.

The same career opportunities would be hard for me to find in Greece though, so I'd have to maintain a career in Australia and visit Greece for philanthropic causes and adventure.

Describe major goals you've set for yourself recently.

Helping organise a project that rediscovered sections of Kythera's ancient capital was a pretty major achievement this year. The icing on the cake was that this took place on the Greek island of my ancestors.

Going exploratory diving in Greece was a goal achieved last year. Things sometimes s-



start as a dream, then morph into a goal and if lucky, turn into reality.

And Dreams?

Several. To one day organise an excavation of the Antikythera shipwreck, where the Antikythera Mechanism was found. This dream may never come true. But who knows, daring to dream, combined with crazy passion sometimes overcomes the odds.

Another dream is to help discover evidence of a Phoenician presence in Kythera, either buried on land or in the sea. We know the Phoenicians inhabited and visited, they were the race who brought Aphrodite to the island, with worship then spreading across the entire Hellenic world.

What's known is primarily from ancient text, finding physical evidence would be a major discovery. An even bigger discovery would be a Phoenician shipwreck!

There was also a strong Minoan presence in Kythera. Finding a well-preserved Minoan shipwreck is another dream. A general dream is to circumnavigate Kythera and Antikythera searching for shipwrecks (with the endorsement of authorities), perhaps over the next ten years.

Don't forget, these are just dreams - not promises.

What are the major reasons for your success?

Determination. I'm a pretty good networker too. It's often helpful if you can call on the right people to get things done.

Tell me something about your-

self that we haven't mentioned in this interview.

My Greek isn't very good. I can probably read at the level of a 4 year old, and speak at the level of a 12 year old. I haven't needed Greek here in Australia and the main times I've used it is when older relatives speak to me. They speak in Greek, and I usually reply in English. Both parties understand and it's been simple.

I learned a lot of new words while in Greece. Especially modern Greek. A few random examples include;

γρασαδόρου - grease gun - this was needed to fix seized boat steering on the day that we wanted to visit a small island just off Kythera to inspect a 2300 year-old Sanctuary to Poseidon.

Σεβασμιότητα - respected one - a way of addressing the Metropolit. I couldn't get my tongue around the word for weeks. Bishop Seraphim politely suggested that I could use the word πατέρ - father - as an alternative.

τομή - trench - a word often used when referring to test trenches, a marked rectangle where archaeological excavation systematically takes place, layer by layer.

ανασκαφή - excavation - a word used for an archaeological excavation, or dig.

Tell me about your most difficult work or personal experience.

I'm a workaholic and find it hard to switch off. The intense amount of adventure just listed has made it hard for me to concentrate on work at the moment, so I'm a bit torn between two different worlds.



John is giving a lecture outlining the concept of Community Backed Archaeology, perhaps sparking similar initiatives in other parts of Greece, plus a presentation of what the team discovered while excavating parts of Kythera's ancient Laconian-controlled capital; at Sydney University on the evening of Wednesday November 10th. 7pm for a 7.30pm start. Perhaps you'd like to join the team as a volunteer next year? Come along and find out how.

Kathy Samios is taking RSVP's for the lecture on 02 9349 1849 or email john.fardoulis@gmail.com to reserve your place on November 10th. This project was graciously supported by the Nicholas Anthony Aroney Trust and Kytherian Association of Australia. The lecture is being sponsored by Laiki Bank and presented in conjunction with the Sydney Friends of the Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens.