

## It's all in the family

ALLAN Ronald Cresswell's story is of an Australian police officer turned genealogist in search of his Greek roots on the tiny island of Kastellorizo. "I started by mapping my own family and then, upon encouragement, extended it to research the Kastellorizian diaspora," says Cresswell, baptised Agapitos, who created the website [www.castellorizo.org](http://www.castellorizo.org) to help others like himself work out their family tree. "There are now 19,300 people and 6,600 families listed on the site." Several generations of Kastellorizians in Australia and from as far away as Brazil and Canada have embraced Cresswell's genealogical mapping site of the island. And the site is expanding rapidly. "I am constantly updating the site with new information," he says. Last month, Cresswell, who also serves as the vice-president of the Kastellorizian Association of Western Australia, travelled from Perth to Melbourne for a series of seminars for local Cazzies - a name the Australian descendents from Kastellorizo have adopted. Some 30,000 people visit the site each month.

### Why did you create the website?

Allan Cresswell: I started back in the 1980s. My mother was born in Kastellorizo and married an Australian in 1942 in Perth, which was not a thing done in those days. I think she may have been one of the first Greeks in Australia to marry outside. She was ostracised a bit because of it. My upbringing has an Anglo-Saxon background but my mother always taught me to be proud of my Greek heritage. As I got older I got interested in my family history, like most people do. I researched my Anglo-Saxon background and realised there wasn't a lot recorded on my Greek background.

### How did you start?

I suddenly realised that my mother had a wealth of knowledge. She came here to Australia as a young child. She had a lot of knowledge of her family history. I started to interview her and a few other family members, beginning to piece together the

family history on my mother's side.

Then I realised that this information was going to be lost in the next generation. After approaching a few other people, I decided to expand it to cover all Western Australian Cazzies, of which there are quite a few, and more throughout the world. Now I have about 20,000 Cazzies in my database and more than 6,000 families and over 2,000 photos. I had only one photo of my family. Now I have over 50 because other people had photos that I wasn't aware of. With the advent of the internet, I decided to share all this with people around the world. People have been taking this on board and it has grown and grown.

### How does the website work?

The website itself is what they call "a dynamic" type - it can actually create pages based on queries. So family trees can actually be created. This allows viewers to see their heritage and the site has grown from there. People have been willing to share their information. I have had over 500 family contributors to the site. It has become almost a passion - I spend about three hours each day on the site. I've just been to Melbourne, doing a couple of seminars there to explain to people what they can do with this site. I now have more than 900 new photos that I will put online. So, I have a collection of over 3,000 photos.

### Is it just for Australians?

No. I have contacts from the United States, Canada, Brazil, Lebanon - you would be surprised where the Cazzies moved to. Belgium as well, Sweden, Hong Kong - everywhere people have made contact.

### What's been the feedback?

People who have been on the website are in awe over the amount of information that is there. They didn't realise how much information is available - mainly because some family members may know something that other family members don't know.

### Is it just about linking names and dates?

No. I've had to fill in the gaps with the



Wedding of Tsicos Vasiliou Galettis to Garifalia Spiros Karasava, Kastellorizo, 1906.

achievements of people. We are trying to record the stories of different people who have achieved high goals around the world, particularly in Australia.

So I try to record all this to put a face on the skeletons of ancestors - who they were and what they achieved. My ancestors came from Crete originally. It's a lot of information that is almost lost and will be lost for the next generation. I've gone out and interviewed people, older people, mainly for their children and grandchildren who at the moment may not be interested - but as they get older they will.

Even though the heritage gets diluted down - my children are a quarter Greek - they are still very proud and interested in the origins of their family.

### In his own words

My sister Stacey Ann Cresswell and I grew up in North Cottesloe, Western Australia, during the 1940s and 1950s. We resided in a suburb that was almost a totally Anglo-Saxon community, with very few "New Australians", or "foreigners", in the area.

All my family connections were in Perth's western suburbs. I looked British, lived in a British community, had British friends, went to a totally British school and everyone I knew considered Australia as part of Britain.

Often our mum and dad would take my

sister and me to visit our mother's family. These relatives lived in Lake Street, Newcastle Street and other inner metropolitan localities such as Leederville and Mount Hawthorn. They were happy and friendly people and welcomed us with open arms and with strong and sincere family bonds. But they were also different from me, and I knew it. They spoke a foreign language, pronounced the English language strangely, their food smells were different. And everyone was so friendly!

Then the penny dropped. My mother spoke like them, looked like them and she was also part of them. What did this mean to me? How was it going to affect me? Who were these people? They were Greek and came from a strange mystical island called Kastellorizo.

Then there was my grandmother, Anastasia Karasavas (nee Xanthis) my "mum-mee", who could not speak English. My grandmother came to live with us. This initially was great news. But it also brought immense perceptions of social problems to my childhood mind. What would my friends think? These perceptions during my childhood may be wrong, but they were my thoughts at the time. Never was I ashamed of my mixed blood but was only frightened of the effects it might have on my relationship with my friends.

## A new era begins as Laiki Bank Australia becomes Beirut Hellenic Bank after \$420 million investment into Australia by Bank Of Beirut

Following the acquisition of a majority shareholding of Laiki Bank (Australia) Limited by the Bank of Beirut in February 2011, the bank is proud to announce it will be known as Beirut Hellenic Bank from Wednesday 27th April 2011. From this date customers will be able to experience the new branding in existing branches across Australia including its branch in Adelaide, four branches in Melbourne and five branches in Sydney.

Beirut Hellenic Bank will launch with a new logo, new signage across all its branches, new stationery and collateral and a new website from 27th April. Beirut Hellenic Bank is also implementing a new advanced, user friendly and business orientated internet banking platform for all customers, which will be available from mid this year.

The transaction and new brand has been approved by the Australian Prudential

Regulatory Authority (APRA), the Central Bank of Cyprus and the Central Bank of Lebanon.

Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, James Wakim, who was appointed to the role in February 2011, has led the new brand implementation. "We are proud of the new brand we have developed to represent the dawn of a new age for the bank and our customers. The re-brand provides the bank with the opportunity to become a specialist in areas where Hellenics and Lebanese alike excel, such as in small business including food services, transport and in the property investment and development sector, just to name a few. Our Overseas Relations Service will continue to support the community and act as a bridge connecting our Hellenic and Lebanese customers with their country of origin."

The partnership of Bank of Beirut and Laiki Bank under the leadership



Beirut Hellenic Bank

of James Wakim has led to significant achievements over the last month including:

- ☛ Maintaining the most competitive term deposit of any Australian bank at 6.70% p.a. for 12 months

- ☛ Growing the capital of the bank by 80%

- ☛ Increasing loans and deposits to the highest they have been in the last three years;

- ☛ Establishing a correspondent banking and international trade department to handle customers' import and export trade requirements. This will be headed by Allan Harvey, one of the most experienced international bankers in Australia;

- ☛ Recruiting at least 20% additional staff;

- ☛ Committing to open five additional branches over and above the ten existing branches before the end of 2011, with the first branch to be open in Parramatta by early July;

James Wakim continues; "The bank's values are rooted in the importance of family and our customers will be able to expect more from us. Our community and staff have already shown great support in this exciting time of change. Beirut Hellenic Bank represents our commitment to provide simple, trusted and fast banking services to all our customers and continues the service we are known for with our staff truly understanding our customers' needs and aspirations. This phase is the next step on our journey to become the premier multicultural bank in Australia. We extend a warm invitation to welcome all our customers past and present to come into their nearest branch to experience the new brand."