

## **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations of Greek the Orthodox Community of Margate**

The celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the Greek Orthodox community of Margate took place on Sunday, November 16th.

After the church service which was officiated by the Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain Gregorios, the guests and community members transferred to the Winter Gardens for lunch.

The celebration was attended by many distinguished guests including Archbishop Gregorios, his Excellency the High Commissioner of the Republic of Cyprus Mr. Evripides Evriadiades, the Consul of Greece Mr. Demestichas, the esteemed friend of Cyprus Sir Roger Gale, the Bishop of Dover Rt Revd. Trevor Willmott, the High Sheriff of Kent (Queen's representative), his worshipful the Mayor of Margate John Edwards, the Chairman of the Kent County Council Mr. Peter Homewood, Mr. Marios Minaidis (President of the Association of Greek Orthodox Communities of Great Britain) and many others.

The event was a great success. The guests watched an artistic program presented by the children of the primary Greek school of Margate with poems and songs under the guidance of their teacher Mr. Elias Kanetouni. The children continued with dances taught by Antonia Michael.

During lunch the guests were entertained by the wonderful violinist Christakis Ioannou who offered his services for free because of his ties with Margate. The artistic programme continued with Michael Dianellos, 16 years old, who played the piano and sang, and enthused and moved everyone in the hall with his performance. Joshua Konstantinos Hall (21 years old) then played the saxophone and was thoroughly applauded. Michael and Joshua Konstantinos are two of the younger members of our community and volunteered to play and sing for free for their community.

The guests were welcomed by the community's president Michalis Papadopoulos who in his speech referred to the founders of the Church of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel. He also referred to the annual Blessing of the Waters celebration established by the community fifty years ago and which has proved to be the catalyst to develop very friendly relations with the municipal authorities of the city. He added that the community is proud because it is the only minority that was honoured by the Chartered Trustees and the Mayor of Margate with the planting in the central park of Margate of an olive tree, commemorating the social and economic contribution of the community to the town. This great honour was bestowed on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March 2011, during the presidency of Zacharias Charou, who was also honoured.

The gathering was then addressed by the Bishop of Dover, the Rt Revd. Trevor Willmott who paid tribute to the Greek community and the cooperation with the Anglican Church and clergy

in the area. After him, the High Commissioner of Cyprus Mr Evripidis Evriviadis spoke about the Cyprus problem, thanked Sir Roger Gale for his support in our struggle for a just solution to the Cyprus problem and read out a message to the community of Margate from the President of Cyprus, Mr Nikos Anastasiades. Mr Evriviadis was followed on the podium by the Consul of Greece, Mr. Demestichas.

The local MP Sir Roger Gale in his speech also talked about the Cyprus issue and expressed the support of our Government and its position. He also said that he felt proud to be honorary resident of Morphou.

Mr. Craig Mackinlay, representing the South Thanet MP Laura Sandys, read out a message from the Prime Minister Mr David Cameron to the community of Margate. Mr. Cameron congratulated the Greek and Cypriot community for the economic and social contribution to the city.

The former Mayor of Margate Mr Mick Tomlinson, spoke with affection for Cypriots he met and worked for whilst growing up in the town. The Mayor of Margate Mr. John Edwards then addressed the guests and again congratulated and thanked the Greek and Greek-Cypriot community for their contribution to the life of the town.

The priest of the Greek Orthodox Church of Margate Archimandrite Vissarion Kokliotis, addressing the congregation expressed the thanks of the community to all the priests who served the Church of Archangels Michael and Gabriel, and expressed his pleasure that he happens to be serving the community at such a significant moment. He also referred to the commemorative album he is preparing and which will be ready on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 2015, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Blessing of the Seas in Margate.

The celebration ended with a salutation of the Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain Gregorios who among other things encouraged the community to continue the efforts to keep alive their beliefs and their culture, but also to embrace with love and understanding the new immigrants whether they come from Greece or Cyprus.

Michalis Papadopoulos