

Launch of Greek Cypriots in the UK – A Directory of Who's Who, a star studded event

The launch of 'Greek Cypriots in the UK – A Directory of Who's Who' took place last Thursday 2nd February 2006 at the Hellenic Centre in Paddington Street, London.

The event proved a huge success with over 600 people attending. Guests were greeted with complimentary glasses of wine and were able to view photos by the late Andy Nicola as well as the logos of the sponsors, projected on a large screen.

The evening began with the host, actor Peter Polycarpou, welcoming the guests and congratulating Cypriot tennis player, Marcos Baghdatis, on his recent success of reaching the final of the Australian Open tournament. Throughout the evening, he made the crowd laugh with his witty humour.

Peter introduced the first speaker, Joanne Anthony of Pen Press, the publishers of the directory, who congratulated the author of the book, Michael



Over 600 people attended the launch of 'Greek Cypriots in the UK - A Directory of Who's Who', last Thursday 2nd February 2006 at the Hellenic Centre in London.

though; you didn't put me on the front cover!" he joked.

"I'm proud to be Cypriot, everybody knows that, and I'm actually building a home in Cyprus right now so that me, my wife and my children can go and stay there a few months every year. My wife's at the back there by the way!" Everyone turned to

duced "someone we all know very well indeed. A Cypriot who's made all our lives a little easier – he's the founder of easyJet, easyInternetCafe, easyMoney, easyRentACar, easyCruise, easyPizza, and easy peasy lemon squeezy! Stelios Haji-ioannou."

Via a video link-up, Stelios sent the following message: "I was



Like father, like son (l-r):

Costa Polycarpou, Peter Polycarpou, Lord Andrew Adonis, Michael Yiakoumi, Nikos Adonis and Antonis Yiakoumi

Chief Executive of the Law Society, Janet Paraskeva highly praised the publication saying, "We've achieved something great together."

Lord Andrew Adonis spoke of his amazement of seeing so many Cypriots; "I've never seen such a large congregation of

a thousand and a bit profiles is a massive undertaking.

He joked, "I made the big mistake of giving Michael my mobile number - I remember my phone going off while I was in the House of Lords!"

"All of us here tonight are the great example of just how many

Andy Nicola for allowing them to use his photographs.

He concluded, "I just want to point out that although I've been given a lot of credit for the book, it's actually the people in the book who have made this publication possible. And hopefully, we can go on from here and publish a new edition. Thank you very much for all your support and attendance."

Peter Polycarpou thanked all the speakers and apologised on behalf of Mr Haris Sophocles and Professor Kypros Nicolaides who were unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances.

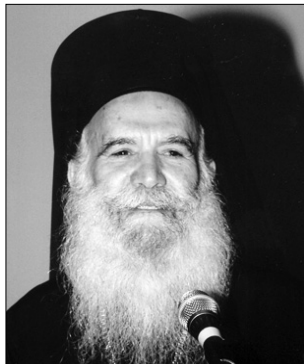
Turning to the audience he said, "I'm sure in one way or another, we've all learnt something more about ourselves. The book is not only about who we are but about where we come from. Michael, you're responsible for giving us a glimpse of ourselves, a kind of incredible look into our own past and in some ways of our future. Thank you"



Stelios Hajiioannou



Joanne Anthony



Archbishop Gregorios



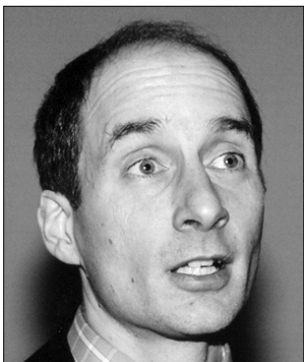
Nikos Christodoulides



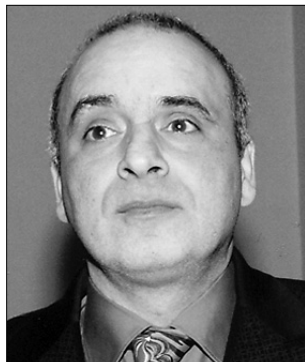
Maggie Koumi



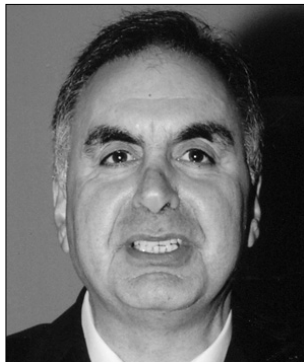
Janet Paraskeva



Lord Andrew Adonis



Peter Polycarpou



Michael Yiakoumi



Linda Papadopoulou



Kyriacos Tsioupras



Sophie Toumazis

Yiakoumi.

Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira & Great Britain also praised the book and wished the compilers all the best for a future edition.

Cyprus High Commissioner, Mr Petros Eftychiou, was unable to attend due to official obligations and therefore Cyprus Consul General, Mr Nikos Christodoulides attended on his behalf. He gave a special mention to the authors for their hard work and dedication.

"One feels proud when one identifies with a certain community. The directory features at least three generations of Greek Cypriots; the oldest being Mr Serghios Florides who recently celebrated his 103rd birthday."

Next to speak was special guest Peter Andre. The host introduced the singer by saying, "This man was offered a recording contract live on television, went on to have seven top 5 hits, a platinum and gold album in the UK and he was the first Australian artist to debut at No1 in the UK."

Following by a very loud applause from the audience, Peter addressed the guests: "Good evening, yia sas, sas agapo poli. First of all thank you for having me here and thank you for featuring me in this fantastic book. There's one disappointment

the upstairs balcony where Jordan seemed to be shying away from the cameras!

He concluded, "Thank you very much, sas sevome ke sas agapo, eftaristoume."

As the press snapped away, the host introduced the next speaker, former editor of Hello! magazine, Maggie Koumi.

In her moving speech, Maggie spoke about growing up in the UK. She advised everyone to talk to their parents and grandparents because "their experience is so interesting. It's unbelievable what you can learn."

Psychologist, Linda Papadopoulou, followed. "I feel overwhelmed to be here tonight," she said.

"As Cypriots, I think we know not only about surviving but about adapting, and that's precisely why we've gone everywhere from the Australian Open, to revolutionising the airline industry to redeveloping the world of medicine. We have accomplished all this because we take pride in our identity."

"The directory has bought together not only what we can do as individuals but what we mean as a society. For me, a Greek Cypriot is someone who can adapt, someone who's willing to learn, who has pride in themselves and their culture. Thank you so much everybody."

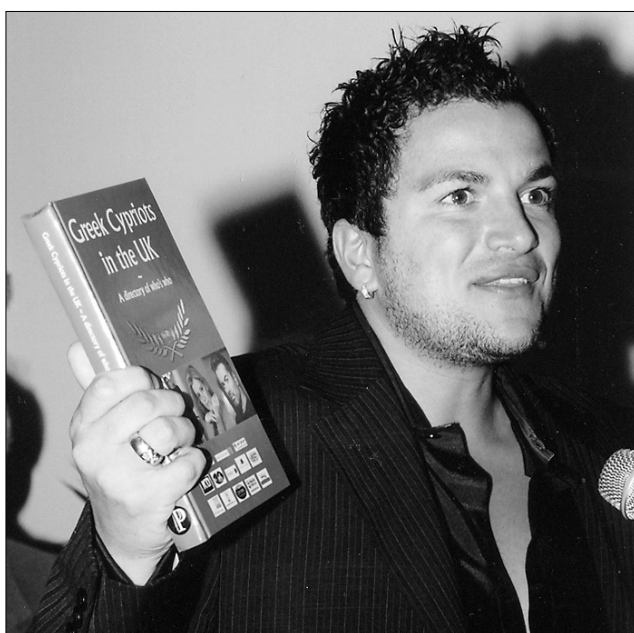
Peter Polycarpou then intro-

duced "someone we all know very well indeed. A Cypriot who's made all our lives a little easier – he's the founder of easyJet, easyInternetCafe, easyMoney, easyRentACar, easyCruise, easyPizza, and easy peasy lemon squeezy! Stelios Haji-ioannou."

Via a video link-up, Stelios sent the following message: "I was

pleasantly surprised when I first saw the book at how many successful Greek Cypriots we have in the UK.

I'm someone who was born



Peter Andre

outside the UK but built my business here. I'm a great believer of people of have the courage to leave their own country and live and work somewhere else. The directory is a one of a kind publication and I'm proud to be part of it."

Cypriots since I was about 11 standing outside the Greek Church in Camden Town when Archbishop Makarios came in 1975."

successful Cypriots we have in the UK," he concluded.

Mr Kyriacos Tsioupras, former managing director of LGR, former editor of Parikiaki and co-author of the directory said in his brief speech, "Going through this book, it is like looking in a mirror showing the Greek Cypriot community. With respect to all those who are mentioned in the book, the real achievers of the Greek Cypriot community story are mostly the ones who are not in these pages; the fathers, mothers and in many cases, the grandparents, who have gone through so many difficulties and so many problems to realise their dream."

The final speaker, Michael Yiakoumi was introduced as "a dedicated searcher of Cypriots, he's co-author of the book and the reason why we are all here this evening."

In his speech, Michael thanked everybody for attending, especially those who had travelled from all over the UK and as far as Cyprus. He presented a bouquet and said a special thank you to Sophie Toumazis who "turned this directory from an ordinary book into something great."

He also thanked Koulla Anastasi for all her help at the earlier stages of compiling the directory and the family of the late

Putting together a collection of

The guests then indulged in delicious canapés and toasted the authors for their hard work and extreme dedication in publishing a unique directory that no household should be without.

The compilers of the directory would like to thank the sponsors: Kounnis and Partners Plc, Bank of Cyprus UK, Laiki Group, Club KO, Demetriou & English, Louisiana Investments, The Ability Group, Anthony Webb Estate Agents, The Yianis Group, Alexander Lawson & Co, Capital Accommodation, Georgiou Nicholas Solicitors and Hornsey Agencies as well as all the advertisers.

The directory can be obtained from Trehantiri, Greek City, Despina's Food Store, the Hellenic Book Service, Aroma Patisserie and all major book stores as well as online from WHSmith and Amazon.co.uk

For more information on the directory or to nominate someone for the next edition, please contact Michael Yiakoumi on 020 7503 3498 or log onto www.greekcypriotsintheuk.com

Andrea Georgiou

Photos by: P. PENTAYIOTIS