**MIKES PRESENTATION TALK**

**I was born in the north of England and took a degree in mechanical engineering at Manchester University, graduating in 1961.**

**During a 35 year career with British Aerospace (BAe), I was able to visit many countries, sometimes for extensive periods. This gave me the opportunity in my spare time to pursue my wide interests in natural history particularly in Taiwan, India and the USA. I also had holidays abroad with wildlife tour operators and also with friends on our own independent trips. FIGS A1-A5, overseas to TAIWAN & THE GAMBIA**

**At home in the UK I took an active part in a number of British natural history societies. I was elected President of the Manchester Entomological Society at the age of 25 years. I was also a local committee member of the Royal Society for Protection of Birds (RSPB). I acted as leader for excursions by society members into the English countryside seeking birds, plants and insects of interest. I am also a member of the British Dragonfly Society and the British Entomological and Natural History Society. FIGS B1 &B2 DRAGONFLY SOCIETY MEETING**

**I have always been a keen photographer, particularly concentrating on bird photography in the earlier years during which I held a Schedule 1 Licence from the British Environment Ministry to photograph rare protected birds at their nests. FIG C1 KINGFISHER**

**As my interest in insect taxonomy increased I developed photographic techniques to illustrate very small diagnostic features of specimens. These were needed in describing new species and for the formulation of keys to the identification of groups of insects. I have demonstrated my techniques at specialist meetings in the UK and published construction details and methods and procedures for their use on my website www.miketaylornaturalist.co.uk. This equipment is now being made in China. My methods have been adopted worldwide, the website regularly receiving over 500 ‘hits’ per month.**

**Figs 21-24**

**My wife and I had our first experience of Chios In the spring of 1992 by accident. We flew from Manchester to Athens en-route to a holiday on the island of Skiathos. However technical faults on the Olympic aircraft caused our onward flight to be cancelled. So Olympic offered us, as an alternative, return flights to Chios which we accepted. We then took accommodation at the Michaelis and Maria Voulamandis Pansion on their farm in Thimiana.**

**I soon recognised that Chios had huge potential for biodiversity because of its location, size, geology, topography and the comparatively low level of cultivation. This resulted in large areas of uncultivated natural habitat. The destruction and depopulation events of the 19th century and the predominance of shipping and commerce over agriculture maintaining this status in subsequent years**

**My wife and I returned to Chios in the autumn of 1992 and again for two fortnight holidays in 1993. In 1994, finding many more attractive new natural history aspects of Chios I decided to take early retirement so that I could devote my time and satisfy my curiosity in researching the flora and fauna of Chios. I retired in the spring of 1995 and made arrangements for long-term accommodation commencing in the spring of 1996.**

**Over the next seven years I was able to investigate the nature of Chios in great detail and was able to meet a number of residents of Chios with the same enthusiasm for its nature as I had. In particular I had many meetings, discussions and countryside excursions with Iannis Choremi, Pantelis Saliaris , Giorgos Missetzis, Theo and Maria Chaviaras . FIGS E1-E3 MY CHIOS FRIENDS**

**On my retirement in 1995 I joined the Lancashire and Cheshire Entomological Society and became a ‘volunteer’ for World Museum Liverpool. The following years saw increasing visits to Chios by museum staff who were already active in the Eastern Aegean, Cyprus and Turkey on their already established Invertebrate Biodiversity Study of the region. As all the material I was collecting under Licence from the Greek Ministry of Agriculture, Department of National Parks and Game Management, was going to be incorporated into the museum collections the museum agreed to provide me with collecting and curating materials.**

**FIGS G1 & G2 COLLECTING EQUIPMENT, MALAISE TRAP & LIGHT TRAP**

**Between 1995 and 2000 my main research In Chios concerned the Flies, Butterflies, Moths, Dragonflies, Grasshoppers and Crickets, Following making contact with Pantelis Saliaris I then spent more time concentrating on botanical studies, orchids in particular. FIG H1 PANTELIS SALIARIS**

**Because of my previous experience in leading Eco-tourist excursions in the UK and my going on professionally led tours I soon recognised the potential which Chios had for establishing an Eco-tourism industry. This would clearly have the potential to yield financial and cultural benefits throughout all the population of Chios. I wrote several articles for Giorgos Missetzis series on Chios village natural history and for several years I wrote articles for Pelinaeon magazine. Some hour long programmes of mine were broadcast on Chios TV particularly on Alithea TV.**

**Figs 31-32**

**In March 2003 I circulated my Museum Biodiversity Report No.1 recommending the establishment of a strong and sustainable Eco-tourism Industry. This was widely reported in the Chios press, Alithea in particular publishing extensive extracts in their newspaper under the front page heading ‘ THE MAN WHO OPENED OUR EYES’.**

**Fig 33**

**Following my report, the frequency of significant events accelerated, with the following ones being of particular importance:-**

**1. Pantelis Saliaris discussed the possibility of holding an International Orchid Congress in Chios. Pantelis, Giorgos and myself had a meeting with the Prefect, Polydoros Labrinoudis, who approved and agreed to fund it. This conference, called ‘Ophrys 2005’, was to be managed by Pantelis as Chairman with myself and Giorgos Missetzis and others on the organising committee.**

**2. In order to stimulate interest in the nature of Chios amongst its citizens, particularly the children, I wrote a booklet ‘The Naturalist on Chios’. This was published by Iannis Makridakis of Pelinaeon Editions and circulated to the Chios schools. This was freely downloadable from my website. Ten years ago a group of 30 Japanese tourists arrived unexpecedly on Chios seeking to see its wildlife. Their trip organiser had read the booklet on the internet. FIG K1 BOOKLET & K2 JAPENESE TOURISTS**

**3. I was invited by Stamos Fafalios of the Anglo-Hellenic League, a London based organisation of mainly Chios business people and members of the British and Greek Diplomatic Services to present a talk ‘The Naturalist on Chios’. This was delivered in February 2005 in their prestigious headquarters in Marylebone, central London. An immediate result of this was the formation of the organisation ‘Chios Nature.org’ by the Chios community in London led by Anna Stamatiou and Stamos Fafalios.**

**4. In April 2005 the International Orchid Congress ‘Ophrys 2005’ was held in Chios attended by 250 delegates from throughout Europe and further afield. The presence of over 60 Professors ensured the widespread increase in awareness of Chios as an orchid destination amongst European professional botanists, Eco-tourists and tour operators.**

**5. In 2004 I had invited Ian Green, the Proprietor of the leading British tour operator Greentours, to visit Chios as a potential addition to his programme of Eco-tours. I showed him many prime sites in April 2004 and this resulted in his commencing Chios tours in April 2005, with a group of 18 tourists and guides, several of whom extended their visit to include ‘Ophrys 2005’. The expected publication of their detailed ‘Trip Report’ on Chios on their website also hugely increased general awareness of Chios as an ideal place for Eco-tourists to visit. Many such tourists subsequently making their own independent arrangements to visit Chios. Over the next ten years I led annual tours in Chios for Greentours, named ‘Ophrys Odyssey’. FIGS M1-M5 GREETOURS AT ‘OPHRYS 2005’**

**6. I undertook a programme of nature awareness with the Thimiana Primary School with their then science teacher Adonis Gioudis. This included attending insect light traps to examine the insects caught at night, some ‘pond dipping’ at the Keramia pool to examine large predatory water beetles and an autumn lunch time event in the school called ‘Project Ivy’ in which the children tried to identify the different insects which were nectaring on the ivy blossom. Subsequent classroom activities included the use of a binocular microscope donated to the school by Liverpool museum. FIGS N1-N8 THIMIANA PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**7. The presence of many invertebrate specialists visiting Chios to further the museum invertebrate biodiversity study since 1995 has had a very significant effect on our knowledge of the fauna of Chios. In the last 25 years approximately 15 Man Years of research time has been expended on the project in Chios. Some examples of specialists visiting include:-**

**Liverpool Museum and Associates, Dr S.Judd. Dr M.Hull, T.Mawdesley, C.Feltham, Dr C.Palmer, Dr M.Smart. FIGS O1 & O2**

**British Arachnological Society, T.Russell-Smith, R. Allison, M.Askins, W.Blumsom, R.Snazell and C.Spilling. FIG P1 SPIDER RESEARCH MARMARO MARSH**

**University of the Aegean and Associates, Prof T.Petanidou, Prof A.Vujic (Novi-Sad University), Prof S.Rojo (Alicante University), Dr G.Stahls (Helsinki). FIG Q1 Prof Vujic**

**University of Edinburgh, Prof G.Foster. FIG R1 Prof FOSTER, KAMPIA GORGE**

**Greentour Leaders. I.Green, P.Cardy, O.Darling, S.Doglio, P.Green, B.Guner, T.Lafranchis, J.Smythe and K.Vickery.**

**These kinds of visits combined with my own researches has resulted in some remarkable increases in our knowledge of the fauna of Chios, some examples of current totals of known species include:-**

**1990 2019**

**Grasshoppers and Crickets 21 53**

**Dragonflies 11 29**

**Spiders 13 315**

**As a result of my researches into the invertebrates of Chios I have described two species of flies new to science from specimens discovered on Chios, as co-authur with specialist colleagues.**

**A Robber Fly, Pamponerus choremii (Dipt, Asilidae) Smart, Taylor and Hull. 1997. Type locality Kato Fana, Chios FIGs T1 Male & female T.choremii. T2 &T3 Researching P.choremii**

**A Hover Fly, Merodon neonanus (Dipt, Syrphdae) Vujik and Taylor. 2013. With type material widespread on Chios. FIG T4 Merodon neonanus**

**Behavioural research into Robber Fly predator to prey size relationships showed one of the largest known difference worldwide when I photographed a Palapares libelluloides ant lion 135mm span being eaten by a Stenopogon Junceus Robberfly span 33mm at Kato Fana.**

**FIGS 5 & T6.**

**In order to cater for the requirements of Eco-tourists for Field Guides to help them identify plants and animals of interest, as anticipated in my First Biodiversity Report, I wrote an orchid book ‘Illustrated Checklist, Orchids of Chios, Innouses and Psara’ published by Pelinaeon Editions in 2005. This was updated as ‘Revised Illustrated Checklist, Orchids of Chios, Innouses and Psara’ and published in 2012. The availability of these guides stimulated interest in tourist visits to Chios after ‘Ophrys 2005’, and also encouraged tour operators to offer tours in Chios. FIG V1.**

**Each year more Eco-tourists find their way to Chios, already this year I have helped a party of 8 Dutch and Belgian orchid enthusiasts finalise their visit plans for this spring. I have provided them with a suggested itinerary and copies of my orchid book. I think that this kind of tourism on Chios has a bright future as more and more is discovered about its nature this will open up the island for visitors interested in other kinds of plants and animals.**

**As an example of the increased potential of Chios in this regard, last year I was asked to help a visitor who had never been to Chios before. The visitor was the Chief Scientist of the British Antarctic Survey. He was a professional marine biologist based in the South Atlantic responsible for an area including Tristan De Cuna, South Georgia and British Antarctica. He only visits the northern hemisphere every two years for holidays and is a very keen and professional Scuba Diver. He wanted to dive in Chios so I was able to arrange for a local diver to take him into an area to the south west of Chios. He was very impressed with what he found and is making plans to return in 2020. He was particularly attracted by the clear unpolluted water, abundant sea life and undamaged seabed.**

**The most important action needed in the next five years is to protect important wildlife sites. The three most important sites on Chios identified and highlighted in my first biodiversity report in 2003, Kato Fana, Managros and Marmaro Marsh, have subsequently had somewhat mixed fortunes. Kato Fana has not been damaged, though there was a ‘near miss’ in 2012 when the great fire of August did not quite extend into the area. At Managros the damaging wall construction and unauthorised attempt to create a helicopter landing strip highlighted in 2003 have not materialised, a close watch needs to be kept to ensure that no further damaging interventions are made there. Marmaro Marsh however has not fared so well. In contravention of a Presidential Decree declaring it as one of most important Greek wetlands, thereby protected from development or degradation and also previously protected by Greek ‘Natura 2000’ Treaty obligations, extremely damaging wall and industrial installations were created. These artifacts blocked public rights of way, endangered migrating birds and destroyed rare habitat straight through the heart of the protected area. FIG X1 KATO FANA, FIG X2 MANAGROS, FIG X3 MARMARO MARSH**

**A major and farsighted decision by the citizens and officials in Armolia and supported by the Mayor of Chios, Manolis Vournous. and the Perifery, Deputy Administrator Kosta Ganiaris,and his Succsssor, Stamatis Karmatzis to establish the first Greek Dragonfly Sanctuary in Armolia, should be considered as only the start of a process of establishing a mosaic of differing sanctuaries in Chios. In this regard I would also like to thank Maria Kova and her team for helping me promote my conservation ambitions. FIGS Y1-Y5 ARMOLIA**

**Establishing more sanctuaries will not be easy as I discovered, a few years ago, before I successfully campaigned for the dragonfly sanctuary. About twenty years ago I discovered an orchid rich hill site to the north east of Olympi on some very old mastic terraces. I showed this site to Pantelis Saliaris and between us we soon found that the site held 35 different species of orchids, one of the richest and most biodiverse sites on Chios. A year or two later I contacted the Gum Mastic Growers Association seeking their joining with me in sponsoring the site as an orchid sanctuary. The proposal did not entail fencing off the area it just required the recognition of its importance. Official recognition and monitoring being designed to avoid unintentional degradation and destruction of the important flora. However local objections were raised and Association were dissuaded from giving their support.**

**The idea of creating a mosaic of protected sites will not only protect nature and encourage tourism but will also increase the enjoyment and wealth of the citizens of Chios. I will do my best to help like-minded Chios citizens in continuing to carry out this worthy endeavour in the future.**

**In concluding this presentation, I would like to thank the Municipality of Chios and, especially, the mayor Manolis Vournous for bestowing me with the civic honour and the opportunity he provided to me to help ‘spread the word’ and encourage and motivate the citizens of the island to join in this most important mission.**

**My thanks extend also to Mrs Ourania Tora, in charge of the Public Relations of the Municipality of Chios, who has planned and materialised this event, with valuable contributions by Mrs Meli Tsakou, a teacher of English, the Forestry technician of the Regional Periphery of Chios Mrs Antonia Agka, Mrs Evangelia Gerazouni, and my friend Mr Theodoras Chaviaras.**

**I would also like to thank the delegates from the Aegean University Professor Mrs Anna Kostrikia who was in charge, as well as Mr Grigoris Papamikroulis who prepared the video shown.**

**Our aim here today is to make this event the reason for a cluster to be formed ( University, Municipality, Periphery, private citizens and cultural groups), who will co-operate in harmony, aiming to protect areas which are the habitats of rare plants and animals, and, why not, organise on the island regional conferences on the flora and fauna, which could, hopefully, take place at regular intervals of 3 to 5 years. It is something that Chios can support and it will contribute to the strengthening of tourism to the island based on conferences in which nature lovers will participate.**

**In conclusion my answer to people who question the value of nature is to suggest that they take time to listen to Ralph Vaughan Williams’ music ‘The lark ascending’ of 15 minutes duration. They should also read the poem ‘To a skylark’ by Percy Bysshe Shelley….Hail to thee blythe spirit bird thou never wert…both pieces clearly inspired by similar experiences. Communing with nature restores the soul and uplifts the spirit.**

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