CAIA LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

The CAIA is pleased to announce that it has launched its new website produced by Tatevik Ayvazyan supported by Diane John which now incorporates information about its diverse services, projects and archives. While there are some final touches to be made, you can view the website at www.caia.org.uk as well find out more about The UK Armenians & WWI project research/archives, where you can watch the film, Testimonies of War.

CONDOLENCES

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On 18th January 2018, CAIA screened the “Testimonies of War” documentary and accompanying exhibition “UK Armenians & WW1” at Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation - UK Branch’s beautiful offices in Shoreditch. It was very exciting to share our research with over 40 invited guests, and hear their feedback and views. The film was followed by a lively Q&A and discussion with the film Director Athena Mandis. A buffet reception took place at the end with the guests viewing the exhibition. Many thanks to those who attended, contributed to the evening and especially The Gulbenkian Foundation UK for being wonderful hosts.

On Sunday 4th February, CAIA screened the “Testimonies of War” film and accompanying exhibition at the Holy Trinity Armenian Church in Manchester. (above) Over 60 people across Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham and North England attended the screening which took place following the church service and community meal. The film was introduced by CAIA CEO Misak Ohanian, who also talked about the work of CAIA and answered questions about the project. The CAIA is grateful to the Armenian Church wardens in Manchester for enabling this event to take place.

Ealing is a place of diverse narratives where communities come from all over the world to make their home. They bring with them their distinct cultures and expressions that are unified in a common desire to create a home for themselves and their families. Migration, settlement and home are universal themes for life in the city of London.

The CAIA took part in a collaborative event between local artists, residents and community groups entitled @ Home in Ealing - Shaping Identities through the Arts to celebrate these themes through music, poetry, stories, exhibitions, crafts and film. The CAIA contributed to the event by screening its Heritage Lottery Fund supported film “Testimonies of War” and an exhibition about Armenians refugees/genocide from the early part of the 20th century. The 4-hour long event was held at Dominion Centre & Library, Southall, on 2nd December 2017, with over 100 people attending, including Dr Rupa Huq MP for Ealing Central and Acton. (See photo above standing alongside Rachel Pepper, Director, Artification and CAIA members)

A Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony took place on 27 January 2018 at St. Mary’s Church in Acton organised by Ealing Council in collaboration with various local communities. Armenians were well represented at the commemoration with the participation of CAIA, Genocide Institute, the AGRI and the Armenian Church. One of the highlights of the whole commemorative event was an exhibition on the Armenian Genocide, alongside other genocides that followed it in the 20th century. The Armenian Primate of GB and Ireland, Bishop Hovakim Manukyan was a participant in the ceremony itself. One of the sharpest comments made by Mrs Lewis, (a Holocaust survivor) was the fact that the Final Solution was not committed by the riff-raff. The Holocaust was organised and carried out by accountants, doctors, lawyers and other professionals, led by a madman. The rabble and riff-raff who carried out killings were a manifestation of a well organised, criminal act. One could have said the same for the Armenian Genocide. Other speakers and commentators at the ceremony included The Rev. Pete Broadbet, Bishop of Willesden and acting Bishop of London, Mayor of Ealing Cllr. Simon Woodroofe, leader of Ealing Council Cllr. Julian Bell, and Dr Rupa Huq MP. They all made sensible comments on the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide - and the need to hold such ceremonies so that we do not forget the lessons of the past. All credit to the organisers for a particularly moving and reflective ceremony.
CAMPAIGN FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROVISION

CAIA took part in a major consultation event on 12th June 2018 which enabled communities to voice their opinions on mental health services and called for equality.

The meeting included an introduction from Andy Gregg, Executive Director of Race on the Agenda, short showcase of community led mental health and wellbeing projects, group discussions on the experiences and visions for mental health provision by those present.

The event was the latest initiative by the Mental Health Equality Campaign. Members of the campaign group is composed of various Black, Asian and Minority, Ethnic and Refugee (BAME) groups such as CAIA, ILAYS, Council of Somali Organisations, the Tamil Community Centre, Network of Eritrean Women UK, HEAR and Race on the Agenda - ROTA

Feedback from the consultation meeting can be read via following link: https://rota.org.uk/content/submission-mental-health-equality-north-west-london-response-clinical-commissioning-group

ARMENIAN FESTIVAL LONDON

CAIA took part in the Armenian Festival held in Ealing for the first time on 15 July 2018. We were honoured to welcome various dignitaries to our stall, including Bishop Hovakim Manukyan, Stephen Pound MP for Ealing North and Dr. Rupa Huq MP for Ealing Central and Acton (and an avid reader of CAIA’s Newsletter ‘Armenian Voice’)

Thank you to everyone who visited our stall during the day as well as our volunteers who assisted at the stall.

CAIA’S INFORMATION & ADVISORY SERVICE SUCCESSFUL IN ADVICE QUALITY STANDARD

On 15th May 2018, the Ealing Advice Forum (serviced and chaired by CAIA) organised a Health and Safety Essentials free training for community group, voluntary sector workers and volunteers. (Photo below)

The training was delivered by the London Hazard Centre who during the day explained the main UK health and safety laws, who is responsible for health and safety at work? who enforces health and safety, basic risk assessment and sources of information and support

Every taking part received a certificate of attendance.

Armenian Voice No. 71 3
On 15th December 2017, CAIA organised its annual thanksgiving party for Armenian senior citizens, Carers and those connected to them at Hayashen. Over 90 people attended including guests the Worshipful Mayor of Ealing Borough, Cllr. Simon Woodroofe, (above) Rupa Huq, MP for Ealing & Acton, His Grace Bishop Hovakim Manukyan, the Primate of the Diocese of The Armenian Church of GB & Ireland.

As can be seen by the photographs, great time was had by all which included delicious food, singing, poetry recitals and gifts to everyone including the several volunteers who assist with CAIA’s weekly Seniors club.

During January and February 2018, CAIA organised a series of six workshops supported by BME Health Forum via Hammersmith & Fulham CCG to raise awareness about the NHS CHOICE website and other health information sources. The issue of possible digital exclusion of older and/or isolated Armenian people and Carers and therefore the need for such a project was identified during home visits and health assessment carried out by Scarlet Sarkasian, CAIA’s Health & Care Support Worker.

The first two sessions on 9th and 16th January 2018 were used to introduce the NHS Choice website and provided one-to-one practical support on how to navigate the website on smart phones and laptops. This enabled participants to understand and gain confidence about how to use the NHS website, including how to make/cancel GP appointments online, request repeat prescriptions, and much more.

On 23rd January, the workshop was led by Dr Shahen Tamrazian who spoke about viral infection mainly influenza including the symptoms, mode of transmission, complications of the infection, how the risks of spreading the virus can be minimized, when to seek medical advice, when to use antibiotics as a treatment and the dangers of sharing antibiotics with others.

On 30th January, the focus of the workshop was about physiological ageing and in particular what is generally known as dementia. The symptoms of dementia were covered, including certain treatable conditions that can mimic dementia such as depression, an under-active thyroid gland, or B12 and Folic acid deficiencies.

The 6th February 2018 workshop led by Dr Shahen Tamrazian was about optical hygiene and common eye diseases. The session covered eye infections, cataracts, glaucoma and retinal degenerative problems as well as the importance of regular eye checks. The final workshop on 13th February covered gynaecological problems and the types of cancer that affect the female reproductive organs; also, prostate problems and other diseases specific to men. At the end of each workshop very interesting group discussions took place and the NHS Choices website was used to illustrate how more information can be found about a specific health issue.
The CAIA thanks Dr Shahen Tamrazian (above) who gave a comprehensive talk on 15th June 2018 at Hayashen about hearing and looking after ears. He explained in detail the anatomical connection of the ears and throat and nose. He talked about the necessary hygiene and common diseases of the ears, concentrating on the most common causes of hearing loss in older people. He explained the symptoms of Meniere’s disease, then talked about the treatment of certain ear problems and when to seek medical advice. He went on to give some detailed information about the hygiene of the nose and throat because problems there can also affect the ears.

MARKING CARER’S WEEK

CAIA took part in a major Carers Week Event at the Dominion Centre, Southall on 13 June 2018. The 4 hour long event consisted of information stalls, short presentations and speeches, yoga, music entertainment and free refreshments. The event attended by over 100 Carers and older people was organised by “Support4 Carers Ealing”, consortium which consists of The Asian Health Agency (TAHA), Southall Day Centre, ECIL (Centre for Independent Living) and CAIA. The Consortium is funded by Ealing Council.

SEASIDE OUTING TO HASTINGS

Over 50 Armenian senior citizens and carers spend a great day out at the seaside town of Hastings on 24th July 2018. The day was spend visiting the beach, the pier, the Armenian owned NUR restaurant, eating fish & chips and much more. The trip was organised by CAIA.

On 10th February 2018, the CAIA and the Iranian Association organised an enjoyable communal multi-cultural supper evening at Hayashen attended by 40 people. The supper evening was the culmination of a project supported by The Near Neighbours programme which included organising three cookery workshops the week before. In addition to the food, the evening included a short Quiz competition related to Valentine’s Day to break the ice and a dance workshop led by acclaimed solo dance artist and choreographer Mrs Shakeh Major-Tchilingirian. The highlights of the project were also filmed for broadcasting by an independent Iranian Satellite TV station based in West London thanks to Mr. Adom Saboonchian.

The Near Neighbours is a charity set up to bring people together who are near neighbours in communities that are religiously and ethnically diverse, so that they can get to know each other better, build relationships of trust and collaborate together on initiatives that improve the local community they live in. Near Neighbours is administered by the Church Urban Fund and is funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Young people learning how to cook from Master Chef Mr. Johannes Farhadian at Hayashen.
INTRODUCTION TO ARMENIAN HISTORY, CULTURE & IDENTITY

For the 9th consecutive year thanks to Ealing Council Adult Education Department, CAIA organised its “Introduction to Armenian History, Culture & Identity” series of 6 talks over six Sundays during February-March 2018 at Haynashen.

The series started on 18th February with Dr. Jo Laycock speaking about “Saving Armenia? British Responses to Armenian Refugees during and after the First World War”. Dr Laycock is Senior Lecturer in History at Sheffield Hallam University and the author of ‘Imagining Armenian Orientalism, Ambiguity and Intervention’ published by Manchester University Press in 2009. To coincide with the lecture the exhibition supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund about UK Armenians & WWI was displayed. (Dr Laycock above and below)

The next session was on 25th February 2018 with Dr. Hratch Kouyoumjian, B.Sc., Ph.D. (below) speaking about “Ethnic Armenian Civil Servants in the Ottoman Government before the Genocide”. Dr. Kouyoumjian provided a comprehensive background of these people, their locations, roles and questioned as to what happened to these professionals who had held such diverse and pivotal positions within Ottoman society. Following Q & A, copies of the publication by Dr. Kouyoumjian about the subject was available for purchase in aid of CAIA and other charities.

The Armenians of Ethiopia and an Introduction to the Work of B. A. Sevadjian was the title of the next talk held on 4th March 2018 by author Rubina Sevadjian (photo below) who gave an outline of the once vibrant Armenia community of Ethiopia, who had a pivotal presence in that country for more than a century, dispersed after the revolution of 1974. The Armenians of Ethiopia were influential in the modernity of the country under Emperor Menelik II which continued to thrive under Emperor Haile Selassie I. Rubina Sevadjian was raised and educated in Ethiopia before she left for the UK for her further education, staying there after the Derg Revolution of 1974. She is the author of “In the Shadow of The Sultan” a novel for young adults set during the Hamidian Massacres of 1896, and its sequel titled “The Darker Shadow”. She is working on the final part of the trilogy which she hopes to publish in 2019.

Traumatic Art: The Visual Manifestation of Inherited Trauma in Contemporary Diaspora Armenian Art was a lecture by Elizabeth Vartanian Collier held on 11th March 2018 who discussed the visual representation of inherited trauma in the modern and contemporary art of the Armenian diaspora. Elizabeth (photo below) began by speaking about the status of the 1915 Armenian Genocide, and acknowledging the fact that the lack of recognition is probably why the event continues to be addressed by descendants of survivors more than 100 years later. Before discussing the artwork, she spoke about the moment when Armenians first collectively used the word ‘Genocide’, in 1965, the same time as the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, when groups that had previously struggled to be heard first began to discover identity politics. She then spoke about the notion of trauma that included Lucian Freud’s idea of belatedness and Jacques Lacan’s suggestion of an act of passing on to others. In addition to this she discussed historical trauma: an event that has been recognised as traumatic by specific groups of people, which subsequently becomes part of its collective identity. She also acknowledged similarities to holocaust study and the idea of ‘post-memory’, where secondhand memories of holocaust survivors are adopted by their children. The artwork discussed touched on the medium of photography acting as evidence, as well as an educational tool that transforms audiences into witnesses (Ara Oshagan and Levon Parian). Elizabeth also spoke about the inclusion of children in artwork, which shows how orphans were affected (Sophia Gasparian).
She then discussed an Armenian sense of uprootedness (Krikor Momdjian and Jacques Aslanian), pain (Paul Guiragosssian), and a sense of a fragmented identity (Tina Bastajian).

To juxtapose looking towards the past, Elizabeth spoke about artists looking forward, in an act of healing. This part of the talk touched on the 2015 Venice Biennale. The artists who exhibited in the Armenian pavilion used their artwork to act as a method of reconciliation (Anna Boghiguian, Melik Ohanian and Sarkis). I also discussed the seemingly controversial display at the Turkish pavilion (Sarkis), where a publication about the show that mentioned the word Genocide was blocked. The main work was supposed to reflect shared experiences. This exhibition also showed an act of reconciliation from the opposite side. The artist positioned a model of a Venetian girl carrying an antique silver belt from Van between the two pavilions. Unfortunately images of the figure cannot be found and it may have been removed.

To conclude, Elizabeth acknowledged that even the work in Venice was strongly centered on the Genocide and concluded that it is unlikely that this inherited trauma will disappear from Armenian art in the diaspora until the Genocide gains recognition. The talk finished by showing a film by Araz Farra, a young Armenian artist from London, whose work illustrates the identity of an Armenian man from Aleppo.

On 18th March 2018, Tina Walkling spoke about the prehistoric rock art of Armenia at Hayasheh. Tina, together with Anna Khechoyan (Institute of Archaeology & Ethnography, Yerevan), fellow co-director of the Lightser Rock Art Project, has been studying the petroglyphs within an extinct volcano in the mountains of southern Armenia since 2009. Tina started her presentation from the memorials of present-day Armenia by looking back in time, tracing how images on stone have been made and used over the centuries. Concluding that Armenia is home to a rich cultural heritage of rock art sites of international importance. Carving images in stone is still as important in Armenia today as it has been for five millennia or more.

Having completed the basic documentation of the site, the Project’s team members are now preparing a monograph for publication.

All those present were mesmerised by this presentation which was followed by an interesting and lively Q & A which raised the questions as to how best to manage and conserve rock art sites and what did the various carving themes mean to the people who carved them.

Dr. Kevork Oskanian, a Lecturer at the University of Birmingham’s Department of Political Science and International Studies (POLSiS) was the final speaker on 25th March 2018. Dr. Oskanian spoke provided a detailed examination of Russia’s relationship to the various subordinate ethnic groups during the past 250 years through the prism of ‘orientalism’: in its various forms – Czarist, Soviet, Contemporary – Russia has always laid claim to a superior position within ‘Europasia’, pursuing different ‘civilising missions’ in its neighbourhood, in ways echoing those of Western colonialism. The changing position of Armenians (and other ethnic groups and nationalities) in the region was also discussed, as was the consequences for future relations within the former Soviet Union, and between Russia and the West. There followed a interesting Q & A and networking by all those present over light lunch/refreshments.

**FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS**

- Many thanks for organising Sunday’s lecture. Kevork’s delivery was really engaging, informative and thought-provoking. I learned a huge amount. Kind regards, Vartouhi

- This has been an important and significant series of lectures organised by CAIA. Although geographical distance allowed me to attend only one in the series (Dr Jo Latchcock’s presentation back in February) nevertheless I do appreciate the contribution CAIA makes to the Armenian community and wider diaspora in holding onto (and in my case reclaiming!) our Armenian heritage. Helen

- I would like to thank you for putting on the Armenian History, Culture and Heritage course that just completed on Sunday. I was only able to attend the final three lectures and was very impressed with all of them. The speakers were all experts in their fields and had such valuable information to impart to us. It felt like each lecture brought about another piece of the jigsaw of Armenian identity, and indeed, the support in healing the ongoing journey that intergenerational trauma has generated.

I have been very inspired by each of the presented subjects, and have already been to an associated exhibition, and furthered my reading on some of the subjects introduced. I also appreciate how each speaker explained the past and brought it into the context of the present. It has really helped me. I am also delighted at the additional benefit of getting to meet other Armenians who attended the course and finding out a bit about their stories and seeing how other Armenians live and thrive in diaspora.

At the final session I was seated next to a man who comes from the same place as my grandparents (who I never got to meet). I have never met anyone from Kayseri before, and I know it is silly, but it felt very special moment to do so; he knows the land of my family.

Thank you too for providing us all with food! And I particularly appreciate your inclusiveness at ensuring that I had vegan food as an option. Just a lovely series of talks Missak, and I do wish I could have attended the first three; I have truly missed out there. So I thank you for providing a rich, varied, stimulating, educational, and IMPORTANT course. I very much hope that there will be more courses in the future. Best regards and thank you again. - Vanita
25 young people enjoyed Hayashen Armenian Youth Club (HAYC) Xmas Party on 8 December 2017 at Hayashen by socialising and eating together. Guest speaker was 14-year old ice-skating champion Emily Lucine-Phillips who as accompanied by her father David and mother Lucine Chakmakjian who spoke about her eventful career so far. Emily has won a number of very prestigious national and international accolades, both in solo and doubles ice skating from an early age. The excited youth were inspired by her determination and achievements and asked lot of questions which Emily and her parents kindly replied. At the end of the evening Emily received the "Jack Petchey Youth Achievement" Award.

"Science is fun" was the theme of HAYC session of 16 March 2018 as young people marked Science Week. The hour long inspirational and interactive workshop was delivered by a friendly and engaging presenter from Science Rocks. During the workshop the young people were engaged and involved throughout by learning together. At the end of the session, all those present enjoyed a pizza meal together and socialised.

Many thanks to the British Science Association for supporting this event.

On 7th March 2018, over 90 children accompanied by supervisors enjoyed the West End musical ALADDIN together. For many this was the first time they had experienced a West End show. (See photograph above and below) HAYC is planning a similar theatre trip during February 2019.

Congratulations to Inga Vardanyan who became the latest winner of the Jack Petchey Foundation Award nominated by (HAYC) on 9th February 2018. A popular, kind and academically gifted girl, Inga is particularly interested in history and journalism. During the week of Holocaust Memorial Day, she wrote an insightful and moving article about her family’s story of surviving the Armenian Genocide in 1915 which was printed in her school magazine. When we heard about it, we invited Inga to talk at HAYC about researching and writing her article, editing and publishing it in her school newsletter. Inga spoke very well at HAYC and was very inspiring to other young people. (See photo of Inga holding her certificate at HAYC). At HAYC on 2 March 2018, there was a short talk and presentation about the Pahapam Foundation’s work in Tavush region of Armenia and about a fundraising puzzle game developed to secure the safety of school children on the borders with Azerbaijan.
The Annual Christmas Party of the Armenian Community Pre-School Group took place on 14th December 2017 at Hayashen. (See group photographs above and below)
This was the 32nd consecutive year that such a Christmas party was organised with the first one in 1987.
The party was a great success thanks to the many parents who brought lots of food to share as well as the generosity of various volunteers who provided goody bags.
Father Xmas visited the party as tradition dictates from the North Pole to distribute gifts to all the children present.
Many thanks to playleader Armine Sargsyan for all her hard work throughout the year and the many dedicated parents who bring their young children to Hayashen come rain or shine.
The ACPG operates Monday & Thursdays each week from 10:00am -12:30pm and welcomes children under 5 years of age.
The attendance fee is £3 per session payable on the day inclusive of snacks.

During the weekend of 16-18 February 2018, CAIA’s Hayashen Armenian Youth Club (HAYC) organised a residential at Woodrow High House, near Amersham.
35 young people undertook various challenging activities, made and strengthened friendships, ate, learned and generally shared an unforgettable and enjoyable time together thanks to the support of the BBC Children In Need.
A graduation ceremony was held at Kensington Town Hall of the University of London, Heythrop College on 12th December 2017, during which Revd. Dr. Nerses Nersessian archpriest of the Armenian Holy apostolic Church was awarded a degree of Doctor of Divinity, honoris Causa. See above photograph of Dr Nersessian listening to the citation given by Dr. Anthony O’Mahony from Heythrop College.

On 4th March 2018, Dr. Randall Rhodes, the Pratovost of the American University of Armenia (AUA) spoke at Haghbash. The AUA was co-founded by the University of California, Irvine AGBU, and the Government of Armenia and is affiliated with the University of California since its inception in September 1991. Dr. Rhodes displayed a PowerPoint presentation which included the academic programmes of the AUA, its education approach, profile of students and staff, funders, costs, achievements and plans going forward. Dr. Rhodes spoke three more times while in London. For more information about AUA, please subscribe to their e-newsletter via communications@aua.am

On 10th March 2018 an Ecumenical Service was held at St Mary’s Church, Acton, on 23rd April 2018 to commemorate the victims of the Armenian Genocide and Christians being persecuted in the Middle East. The service ended with a traditional Armenian circle dance of life, solidarity and unity outside the church.

The Armenian Symposium was an all day conference held on 10th March 2018 organised by the Armenian Student Society of University College London and co-organised by RepatArmenia, supported by a host of local and international organisations including CAIA, the Armenian Institute, One Armenia, AGBU and several others. Over 150 people attended and took part by listening to 10+ speakers and debate the presentations of people such as Rupen Vartanian, Nicholas Tavitian, Sevan Kabakian, Dr. Randall Rhodes and others.

VAN 1915 was the title of a lecture by Ara Sarafian, Director of the Gomidas Institute (photo above) held at Haghbash on 15th April 2018 to commemorate the Armenian Genocide. The focus of the talk was about the heroic resistance of the people of Van based on a book written by a witness. For more information contact: gomidasinstitute@gmail.com

ARMENIA’S VERY FIRST ART FAIR

Lizzy Vartanian Collier, a writer and curator from London exhibited an exhibition of photography and video works entitled Perpetual Movement during Armenia’s very first art fair during 11-14 May 2018. In addition to her exhibition, Lizzy also helped run the Armenia Art Fair blog (blog.armeniamartfair.com) and its PR effort, securing pieces in The Art Newspaper and Harper’s Bazaar Arabia.

The Art Fair was a great success, with many visitors both from Armenia as well as from abroad. President Armen Sarkissian was also a visitor photographed alongside Lizzy. (Above)
An audiologist from Hearing Well, in Chiswick, West London returned to Armenia on his second hearing mission with Starkey Hearing Technologies. Deepak Jagota joined 14 other hearing audiologists from across the UK and Ireland and a six-strong team from the hearing device manufacturer’s European headquarters. They travelled 2,400 miles to Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, on Friday 25th May 2018.

Deepak’s visit was part of the worldwide Starkey Hearing Foundation initiative, which has provided over 1.9 million hearing devices in more than 100 countries. Its mission is to give the gift of hearing to those in need, helping them to achieve their potential. High-profile supporters include Richard Branson, Bill Clinton and Elton John.

During Deepak’s previous visit in 2017, the mission worked closely with local teams to help improve the hearing health of more than 1,700 Armenians. It followed on from an earlier visit by Starkey, when hearing screening tests were carried out and ear impressions taken to identify candidates. In October 2017, Deepak and the hearing mission fitted the hearing instruments, counselled patients and supported them with what is all-important aftercare. Last month’s visit will further build upon the work already undertaken.

Deepak (below) said: “It was a privilege to go to Armenia for the very first Starkey UK mission last year. I will never forget the happy faces, hugs and blessings I received.

“This was my second visit, but there is still so much work to be done. It goes without saying that I was delighted to be able to return to Armenia. I feel so blessed to give what is without a doubt the gift of better hearing to more people who really need it.

“Providing access to hearing care opens up a whole new world of opportunity. It connects individuals to life and helps them accomplish more than they ever thought possible – bridging gaps at school, work and in life for both children and adults with hearing loss. Our aim is to establish an ongoing community-based hearing service in Yerevan.”

According the World Health Organisation, more than 360 million people have disabling hearing loss, with the greatest number living in developing countries. Unfortunately, less than 3% can afford hearing aids or access to care.

DONATE ON LINE TO CAIA

It is now easy to support CAIA’s charitable our work.

To donate on line

http://caia.org.uk/support-us/donate

To donate by Text over the phone please text “CAIA01” followed by your donation to 70070

You can also follow our latest activities on Facebook via https://www.facebook.com/Hayashen
Ohannes (also Hovannes, Hovan, John or Onik) Vartan Koundourjian was born in Beirut the first child of Vartan and Araxi, and a younger half-brother to Haroutian, whom Araxi had from her previous marriage (she was a widow from the Armenian genocide). Vartan and Araxi had met in Adana (in modern Turkey), where Vartan had moved his family from Talas, near the town of Kayseri in Central Anatolia to flee from the worst excesses of the genocide, before eventually finding safety and settling in Beirut.

Ohannes was soon joined by two younger brothers, Hratch and Hamayag, and attended school in Beirut where he learned English, French and Arabic, along with the Armenian he spoke at home. He also started to develop his lifelong passion for music, singing in the Armenian Church choir. After the end of the Second World War, with little hope of returning to home to Kayseri, and given the potential uncertainty in Lebanon, his family considered emigrating to the United States. As a precursor to this he was sent as a teenager to live with his aunt and uncle in Detroit.

He attended University in Detroit studying Engineering, singing in the Armenian church choir; involving himself in the Arabic society, and soon found himself working as a draughtsman at a sheet metal pressing works, designing and drawing the blueprints for the various moulds. Living in Detroit he attended both the many classical concerts the city had to offer but also the jazz bars. Here he started having first-hand experiences of racism, often being stopped by police “for his own safety” and witnessing the persecution of African Americans.

Having decided Detroit and life in the US was not right for him and the rest of the Koundourjian family, he returned to Beirut, attending the American University there. Soon after the Armenian Bishop in Detroit took up a new post in Jerusalem, and knowing of Ohannes’s talent, invited him to become a researcher at the seminary. He did this for several years, studying and teaching Armenian Church history, comparative religion and the medieval Khaz Armenian musical notation dating from the 8th century, where he translated many works into modern notation for the first time, before deciding to return to Lebanon.

In Beirut he quickly picked up his musical life forming a small roaming choir with his friends that would sing Armenian and other songs in the bars and clubs of Beirut. Finding themselves in great demand they were able to access to some of the best clubs and sound systems, and as a result spent many hours listening to and discuss records together before the clubs would open for the evening.

Ohannes was conting in the Lebanese Ministry of Public Works, discovering that he had previously trained as an engineer, quickly found Ohannes an unofficial position in the Department. Here he studied the topography of the landscape and designed various trunk roads around Lebanon. Eventually Ohannes left the ministry and started working for the English language Beirut magazine The Daily Star where his abilities in English and Arabic proved especially useful.

With the onset of the civil war in 1975 things in Beirut became increasingly difficult, especially for those involved in the press. A chance meeting with Caroline (Rita) Kassardjian after a long friendship led to them discussing marriage. She agreed, and with the Arabic language magazine Al Hawadess set to start-up an English language version Event based in London, they were soon married and moved to the city in early 1976. Leaving behind their families and his beloved Austin Healey Sprite on the streets of Beirut, they arrived with nothing to their name, and were overwhelmed by the generosity and support of other Armenian emigres. It’s not clear at what point of translation his surname became Koundarjian but it may have been here, and for reasons only known to Ohannes he never sought to correct this mistake.

In December of 1976 their first child Arec was born, followed by a second a year later, Hratche. As the troubles in Lebanon escalated the production of Al Hawadess fully moved to London, where Ohannes became Production Manager for the magazine. He was involved in everything from proof reading, deciding which adverts could appear with which articles, and checking the prints as they rolled off the press. Here he had his first experience of computers which lead to the purchase of an early version of the Amstrad PC in the mid 1980’s at which point he ditched his trustee typewriter and never looked back. In his later years he became an avid fan of the internet and YouTube, often finding recordings of performances he had attended or seen in the 50’s and 60’s.

Ohannes continued his involvement with the Armenian community in London in various roles including Choirmaster at St Sarkis Armenian Church in Kensington, and later as a trustee and then Chairmen of the Centre for Armenian Information and Advice (CAIA). Even into his later years he continued to act as a proof reader and translator between Armenian and English and did his best to serve the community when required. He was also fortunate to find and connect with members of his family in London from more distant branches that were thought lost, including the US and New Zealand. Bringing people back together, undoing the separation caused by the genocide, is something he cared deeply about.

Diagnosed with his illness in September 2017 he took it like most things in his stride accepting it as unfortunate but unavoidable, proving a tower of strength to his family and friends and introducing his family and guests to Armenian philosophy along the way. His wish was to remain at home surrounded by his family, books and his music, and we are happy that he was able to do so.

Instead of flowers the family asked donations to be made to CAIA, a charity where Ohannes was a trustee, serving as a treasurer and chairman for several years.
CONDOLENCES

Diran Chakelian, 1954 - 2018

Diran, born in Lebanon, was a much respected human being and active member of London Armenian community for many years. He served as a teacher at Kecork Taha'gan Armenian Community Sunday School, the CAIA as an active member and Trustee and most recently as a trustee of the Barkev Kassardjian Sis Trust (a charity that helps Armenians in the UK). The funeral service was held at St. Sarkis Church on 18th July, followed by burial at South Ealing Cemetery and wake at Hayashen, CAIA.

Our heartfelt condolences to his wife Sue, his daughters Anoush and Lorig and to all Diran’s family and loved ones on his unexpected passing away.

Instead of flowers the family asked donations to be made to three charities via link below: https://diran-chakelian.muchloved.com

Azadouhi Ohanian, 1932 - 2018

It is with deep sorrow that Mrs. Azadouhi Ohanian (Mama) passed away on 24th July 2018 after a long illness. Born in Nicosia, Cyprus on 28th May from a refugee family fleeing the Armenian genocide. She was one of four children of the late Apisoghom and Varteni Annahouni. Azadouhi was an affectioned, supportive, selfless and hard working person all her life. Be it for her late husband Andranik, her children/grandchildren, extended family dispersed across the world or her community in UK.

She was utterly devoted to CAIA as a member and volunteer from its inception by visiting isolated older Armenians to offer comfort, cooking at the Hayashen elders club, at fundraising/cultural events and delivering cooking workshops to share her culinary skills/knowledge to younger people of all background. She was laid to rest at Chiswick new Cemetery on 4th August and will be sorely missed. Instead of flowers the family asked donations to be made to CAIA via https://azadouhi-ohanian.muchloved.com

The CAIA is grateful to everyone for the kind donations of financial support as well as in kind such as books, CD’s, DVDs, photographs since the last issue of Armenian Voice. Their generosity is highly appreciated and most welcome.

The CAIA is particularly grateful to the families of Ovaness Koundarjian and John der Parthog as well as all those who knew them for their kind donations in lieu of flowers.

The CAIA is also grateful to Mr. Sos Grigorian who on the occasion of his birthday asked for donations from friends and relatives instead of gifts to raise £200 for CAIA.

Thank you to all our donors

CONDOLENCES

John der Parthog was a much loved and respected man who made friends with everyone who crossed his path. He was born in Ethiopia in 1927 from a refugee family fleeing Ottoman persecution, and they subsequently moved to Cyprus when John was a boy. After marrying Gwynneth in 1956 he spent the majority of his life in the UK.

John and Gwynneth went on to have a son, Dudley, a daughter, Judith and later a granddaughter, Suzanne. John achieved much in his rich and varied life but he was proudest of co-founding Sunvil Travel with his business partner Noel Josephides in 1970.

The company supported several Armenian causes in the UK by donating travel tickets for charity raffle draws, advertising in newsletters, etc.

Sunvil Travel were also the first travel agency in the UK which promoted tourism to Armenia, including the fledgling Armenian Airlines following Armenia’s independence in the early 1990’s. John continued to be involved with Sunvil until shortly before his passing on the 19th May 2018, ten days before his 91st Birthday; following a short battle with Lymphoma.

A special Memorial Service took place at the St Sarkis Armenian Church, on the 6th June where John’s interesting and inspirational life celebrated. This was followed by refreshments at the Centre for Armenian Information and Advice (CAIA), Hayashen.

John was laid to rest the following week in Cyprus alongside his parents and brother.

Instead of flowers the family asked donations to be made to CAIA, a charity very close to John’s heart where he was a trustee for five years. For details visit: http://caia.org.uk/ https://mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/johnderparthog

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BOOK REVIEWS


It has long been assumed that no Armenian presence remained in eastern Turkey after the 1915 massacres. As a result of what has come to be called the Armenian Genocide, those who survived in Anatolia were assimilated as Muslims, with most losing all traces of their Christian identity. In fact, some did survive and together with their children managed during the last century to conceal their origins. Many of these survivors were orphans, adopted by Turks, only discovering their ‘true’ identity late into their adult lives.

Outwardly, they are Turks or Kurds and while some are practising Muslims, others continue to uphold Christian and Armenian traditions behind closed doors. In recent years, a growing number of ‘secret Armenians’ have begun to emerge from the shadows. Spurred by the bold voices of journalists like Hrant Dink, the Armenian newspaper editor murdered in Istanbul in 2007, the pull towards freedom of speech and soul-searching are taking hold across the region. Avedis Hadjian has travelled to the towns and villages once densely populated by Armenians, recording stories of survival and discovery from those who remain in a region that is deemed unsafe for the people who once lived there. This book takes the reader to the heart of these hidden communities for the first time, unearthing their unique heritage and identity. Revealing the lives of a peoples that have been trapped in a history of denial for more than a century, Secret Nation is essential reading for anyone with an interest in the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide in the very places where the events occurred.


Armenian Christianity Today examines contemporary religious life and the social, political, and cultural functions of religion in the post-Soviet Republic of Armenia and in the Armenian Diaspora worldwide. Scholars from a range of countries and disciplines explore current trends and everyday religiosity, particularly within the Armenian Apostolic Church (AAC), and amongst Armenian Catholics, Protestants and vernacular religions. Themes examined include: Armenian grass-roots religiosity; the changing forms of regular worship and devotion; various types of congregational life; and the dynamics of social composition of both the clergy and lay believers. Exploring through the lens of Armenia, this book considers wider implications of ‘post-secular’ trends in the role of global religion.


This book seeks to honour the memory of the many Ethnic Armenian civil servants in the Ottoman Empire from the early part of the 20th century as a testimony that Armenian were an integral part of Ottoman society and loyally served the government of the day and discharged their duties of public services until the brutal genocide of 1915.

Nor Arax - Storia del villaggio armeno di Bari by Emilia Ashken De Tommasi - ISBN 9788894831061

CAIA is very pleased to announce that one of its members and a contributor to our UK Armenians & WW1 project, Emilia Ashken Wyszynski published a book on the fascinating story of the Nor Arax Community in the Italian town for Bari.

Emilia Ashken’s book. (in Italian) retraces the steps of this modern odyssey, and it does so on the basis of documents and archive sources that are published today for the first time. Piraeus, 1924. The sails of the shipping company “Puglia” fly majestically in the seas of the Greek port. The Captain has a mission to accomplish: to rescue the Armenian refugees who have escaped the genocide of the Young Turks. The crossing is tiring, but everything takes place according to plan. When the profile of the port of Bari appears on the horizon, the nightmare is really over. The poet Nazarianzts greets his compatriots in tears and helps them settle down in a small village outside the city that is renamed “Nor Arax”, “New Arasse”.

Poems for Children - by Susan Kassaib

Published a new book of poems for children.

Susan was born in North West London and began writing while bringing up her two children. She has written short stories and a book of humorous poems for children and her first novel is called “The Mummy of Mulberry Avenue”.

Poems For Children appeals to children because it handles a lot of first experiences, for example death of a much-loved pet. Yet it still manages to keep it lighthearted, like the innocence of a child which fitted perfectly. In My Goldfish she writes

I hope she doesn’t dig him up,
I wouldn’t like to feel
I’d gone to all that trouble just
To give a cat a meal!

It’s not only relatable to children but to adults as well because they have those memories too. They can share with own children as they read along. These poems are all about life as a child and readers can be instantly transported back to their childhood, the excitement of going to a theme park, the morning rush to school, being left out of a party, wanting the same bag as your friend, tasteless school dinners with hidden grey hairs etc.

For more information, follow link https://goo.gl/zqNBGY
INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY: The CAIA is looking for summer interns and volunteers for its rich reference library, containing a wide range of books, periodicals, maps, posters and diverse multimedia resources. Roles include cataloguing in Armenian and/or English language, arranging books in shelves, sorting out archives, helping with the enquiries, scanning, etc. Out of pocket expenses covered, training and references provided. For more details and information, contact: Tatevik 0208 992 4621 or info@caia.org.uk

Sessional job opportunity
We are looking for an enthusiastic, organised person for general and kitchen help during the Elders Lunch Club on Fridays.

Contact us for more details about hours, tasks or remuneration.

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SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL UK ARMENIAN CHARITY

Membership of CAIA enables you to make a regular annual donation to support the work we do. It also enables you to be involved in the direction of the organisation and appointing our Trustees.

Annual Membership Cost

Individual Membership – £15.00 per annum | Family Membership (couple) – £20.00 per annum

Benefits

• Help fund our services which enable us to support those in need within the community
• Strengthen Armenian networking within the UK
• Ability to express your views and opinions and help shape the future of the organisation at our AGM
• Ability to nominate/vote for Trustees at our AGM
• Subsidised Outings / Theatre Trips/Events

I wish to become a member of CAIA and enclose the relevant membership subscription for the year:

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Standing Order

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