

ARMENIAN VOICE



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CENTRE FOR
ARMENIAN INFORMATION
AND ADVICE

NEWSLETTER FOR THE LONDON - ARMENIAN COMMUNITY. WINTER 2023 No.76

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HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN ARMENIA



After three thousand years of presence, the Armenians of Artsakh was forcibly ended as Azerbaijan attacked the region on 19th September, 2023. This followed a more than ten month blockade of Artsakh, preventing food, fuel, and medical supplies from entering the besieged region. As a result over 100,000 Artsakh Armenians are now being resettled in various regions of Armenia, and there is an immediate need for humanitarian aid to assist the refugees. Donations are being accepted by many Armenian organisations and by international organisations.

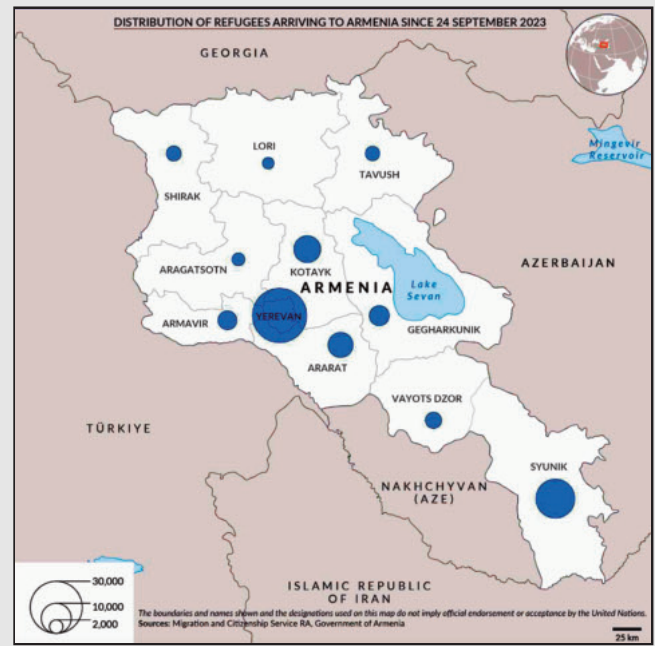
The CAIA is trying to do it's part by:

Raising Awareness: CAIA has been drawing attention of the international community to the critical situation of the Artsakh Armenian refugees. We have sent letters to major international humanitarian organisations with the aim of encouraging them to offer practical support to alleviate the suffering of Artsakh Armenians. While not all responses have met our expectations, we plan to continue to exert pressure on them to respond even though events in the Middle East, Ukraine and elsewhere compete for humanitarian support attention.

Networking and Collaboration: CAIA is in close contact with various local Armenian charities and NGOs. This enables us to effectively share information about the im-

mediate needs and requirements of affected communities. This collaboration helps ensure that short-term assistance is delivered effectively and efficiently.

Supporting Charities and NGOs in Armenia to provide Emergency Relief and Humanitarian Aid: CAIA has and will continue (within the limit of its resources) to provide targeted support to a small number of charities and NGOs operating in Armenia. Our efforts are focused on alleviating the suffering of displaced Armenians, particularly vulnerable groups such as women, children, older individuals, and those with disabilities. These populations often face heightened challenges and are in urgent need of essential supplies. As at the time of going to print, the CAIA has donated £7000 from its own funds and those donated by its generous members and supporters directly the following NGOs on the ground, Frontline Therapists, Sose Women's Issues NGO, All For Armenia, Transparent Armenia and VIVA.



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HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT 2023/2024



Over 30 residents from Ealing and across West London benefited from a special *Cost of Living* event organised by CAIA on 4 July 2023 thanks to the support of *The London Community Foundation*.

Visitors had the opportunity to meet with CAIA's advice worker, and digital champion, as well as find out more about the work of *EAS Ealing Advice Service* and *Ealing Welfare Assistance Team*. Throughout the 4 hours those present engaged enthusiastically with the stall holders to learn more about how to access the range of support available to them. All those in attendance showed their gratitude with the positive comments they gave, not least of all the two *Welfare Benefits Support Officers* from *Ealing Council* who wrote saying "It was lovely to meet you, your team and community today and thank you very much for the warm welcome and hospitality."

"Fascinating to learn about your organisation, and all the steps you have taken to overcome the obstacles to keep your dream alive and bring the community together."



HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT

OCT 2023- MAR 2024

If you are a resident of Ealing Borough, CAIA can help you with your cost of living crisis

Help includes weekly free food boxes and a one-off shopping voucher. For Terms & Conditions, please contact CAIA on 0208 992 4621 or email info@caia.org.uk

www.ealing.gov.uk



Thanks to a grant from the *London Ealing Council Household Support Fund*, the CAIA continued its weekly distribution of free food between Oct 2023-March 2024. The grant has enabled CAIA to make small payments towards the energy and water bills of 80 vulnerable Armenian households and families. Many thanks to the *The Felix Project* and *City Harvest London* for providing much of the food as well as to our staff and volunteers who are helping to out with this project. ■

ADVICE SERVICE 2022-2023

546

People born in 28 countries assisted with housing, welfare benefits, employment, education & training, signposting & referrals in relation to debt and money, health, community care, immigration & nationality, asylum, legal issues and other areas

1800+

Advice was provided

3000

Interventions / actions were made to progress cases

A total of

£712,572.57

was raised in financial support and welfare benefits, which otherwise would not have been claimed

427

Housing/homelessness related queries dealt with

- 14 households gained permanent housing
- 10 families gained temporary / private rented accommodation
- 9 households improved living conditions through housing repairs, lodging complaints
- 6 households helped gain improved banding on the Locata scheme

268

Immigration Advice provided

- benefiting 96 ethnic Armenians with Ukrainian nationality & family members via Homes for Ukraine Scheme
- 34 people obtained visitor visa/gained refugee status/visa extensions/British naturalization/indefinite leave to remain and children's first passport

13

Disabled people helped overcome barriers

- successfully awarded blue badge
- freedom pass
- over 60s Oyster
- subsidised travel via Dial A Ride / London Taxi & Oyster Card Schemes

86

Helped address fuel poverty

- Low-income people gained cheaper household utility/water bills via Watersure Discount Scheme, smart meter installation or helped to make complaints
- helped obtain the government **£650** Cost of Living Payments and **£150** Disability Cost of Living Payment

30

Food Poverty

- low-income households provided with weekly food boxes
- 60 LBE households provided with **£100** shopping vouchers thanks to *Ealing Council Household Support Fund*

3

Workshops delivered to improve employment prospects

- 1-2-1 career advice
- CV writing/improvements
- confidence building
- types of interviews & techniques

10

People benefited from an empowering *Universal Credit* workshop

- increasing knowledge and confidence in claiming this benefit
- effective management of claims and what to do when things go wrong



BAREV ARMENIA



An open air event was held on 18 December 2022 in *Norwich, Norfolk* to celebrate Armenia and its culture and to raise awareness campaign of invasion and aggression which Azerbaijan has been pursuing since 2020. We displayed posters of the beautiful sights of Armenia and also press releases and information from CAIA. We made various delicious Armenian snacks such as *halva, vine leaves dolma, lah-majoon and cheese boregs*.

Also available was delicious Armenian Christmas cake and delicious Armenian *baklava* made by Armenian friends who attended. As well as many local people, there were altogether about 4 Armenian families from the region who attended and we agreed to keep in touch and have regular meetings as we are very isolated community here in *Norfolk*! Despite being a bitterly cold day there was an good turnout and those attending enjoyed food, music and company - and learned more of Armenia and its long culture and history. Some £500 was raised to supports <https://www.facebook.com/kooyrigs> - *Kooyrigs*, is a non-profit NGO which provides aid and resources to displaced communities from *Artsakh*. *Kooyrigs* support is also providing cold weather gear to volunteer soldiers defending borders, dry goods to village residents and clothing to families in need; also holiday gifts for children. To find out more about *Kooyrigs* look at their website kooyrigs.org. Huge thanks to Donna Campbell and Armine Nikoghosyan for support and encouragement. Also thanks to all the people who donated generously. Next time we will definitely arrange to do a summer event!
Tania Donnachie

FUNDRAISING CONCERT



On 22 January 2023 the exceptionally talented 9-year-old Armenian cellist Charlotte Melkonian and her revered teacher, Leonid Gorokhov from *Hannover, Germany*, performed a duo concert at *King's Ely Gibson Music Room* in aid of Armenian families forced to flee the war in Ukraine. The concert was completely sold out and the audience listened with joy to a beautiful programme of pieces by *Barrière, Boccherini and Gorokhov*. £876 was raised by the generous audience, and the funds have been sent to CAIA to be used to assist Armenian refugees from the Ukraine war. Charlotte, her mother Isabella and Leonid Gorokov were the guests of Sarah Mnatzaganian and her husband, cello maker Robin Aitchison who are based in *Ely, Cambridgeshire*. Sarah is now engaged in fundraising to support Charlotte in the purchase of a suitable instrument.

NO VOTE NO VOICE



On 12th February 2023, a special event was held at *Hayashen* as part of the campaign to inform the Armenian and wider community about their voting rights in the UK following the *Elections Act 2022*. The event was hosted by CAIA supported by *#the3million*, *#ShoutOutUK* and the *#GreaterLondonAuthority (GLA)*. Following a brief summary by Matteo Bergamini, CEO and founder of *#ShoutOutUK*, Lara Parizotto from *#the3million*, an organisation that supports *#EU citizens* in the UK, gave a talk about the changes introduced by the *#ElectionsAct* to voting rights. She set out how voters will need to show a Photo ID at a polling station, how the voting rights of EU citizens have been affected by the Act and how to continue participating in democracy. At the end of the event, light refreshments and food were provided.



CAIA staff, trustees and volunteers attended the *Armenian Summer Festival* held on 16th July 2023 in *North Acton Playing Fields*. CAIA stall visitors included Ealing & Acton MP Rupa Huq and the *Worshipful Mayor of Ealing Councillor Hitesh Tailor*. It was a pleasure to meet and engage with so many members of the Armenian and wider community, the stall holders and performers. Congratulations to the organisers of the festival.



On 28th September 2023, the '*Ealing Community Network*' organised its last public event to honour the work of the local voluntary, charitable and non-profit organisations sector. During a wonderful evening of speeches, food and entertainment, two CAIA members were honoured. First, CAIA Trustee and Apprenticeship manager at *LBE*, Vanita Nicholls for her fantastic partnership work between Ealing Council and voluntary sector. Second, CAIA CEO Misak Ohanian for outstanding lifetime achievement. ■

ARMENIAN SENIOR CITIZENS

ELDER'S CHRISTMAS PARTY 2022



On 16th December 2022, the Centre for Armenian Information & Advice held its annual Seniors Christmas celebration. There were lots of good, music and dancing throughout the afternoon. Local MP for *Ealing Central and Acton*, Dr Rupa Huq for Ealing Central and Acton was in attendance who also accepted a petition with 150+ signatories collected over two days from visitors to *Hayashen* regarding the *Artsakh* blockade by Azerbaijan which has caused a lot of pain and distress to Armenians worldwide.

SENIOR'S LUNCH CLUB



Every Friday at *Hayashen* between 12.00-4.00pm, young at heart Armenians aged 50+, Carers and friends gather to share a hot meal, play games, listen and dance to music to keep their spirits high/*Hye*. Those unable to use public transport in *LB of Ealing* are provided with free door to door transport and there is advice support on matters to do with benefit entitlements, housing and immigration. For more details, contact Melanie at CAIA on 0208 992 4621 or by email - befriending@caia.org.uk



Photo of some of those living in *LB of Ealing* who are provided with door-to-door transport to attend *Hayashen Senior's and Carers* activities on Fridays.

BIRTHDAYS AT THE ELDER'S CLUB



CAIA's *Hayashen Seniors Club* celebrated the 100th birthday of one of its first members, Mrs Jemma Vartanian (*Almary*) on 10th February 2023. Mrs Jemma was joined by two of her children and many friends who enjoyed a delicious kebab meal followed by a celebration cake. On the occasion of this happy milestone, Mrs Jemma received a congratulatory message from King Charles and Queen Consort Camilla.

Mrs Rita Osipova, born in Azerbaijan and a survivor of the 1990 pogroms against Armenians, celebrated her 99th birthday at *Hayashen* on 27th January 2023. CAIA is proud to have helped Mrs Rita and her family settle in London from the time when they first arrived as refugees. Something that CAIA continues to do for newly arriving refugees today.



PAINLESS WAY TO SUPPORT CAIA

Please sign up, it's easy and completely **FREE!** 7,400 brands will donate to us when you do your usual online shopping with them - at no extra cost to you!

easyfundraising

Help us raise **FREE** donations when you do your Christmas shopping online

make it count
RAISE A DONATION

DIGITAL INCLUSION PROJECT



On 24th January 2023 a workshop took place in *Hayashen* about *Linkedin* which is a business and employment focused social media platform. On 7th February 2023, a further workshop took place about using social media platforms such as *TikTok*, *Instagram*, *Facebook* and *Twitter*. These 4-hour long workshops were delivered by CAIA's Digital Champion Zarine who covered what each platform can be used for and their key features. We have only received positive feedbacks on our workshops. It is very rewarding to see the attendee's happy and satisfied faces, and their motivation to use their newly gained knowledge, and desire to learn more. Zarine also offers 1-2-1 face-to-face and online tuition too by appointment on Mondays-Wednesdays.

DIGITAL INCLUSION CONFERENCE



On May 25th 2023, CAIA's Digital Champion Zarine took part in a *Digital Inclusion* conference at the *Coin Street Conference Centre* organised by *Loti* (London Office of Technology & Innovation), *Mayor of London*, *Get Online London* and *Good Things Foundation*. Zarine presented the steps CAIA is taking to address the digital divide in the Armenian community to enable them to fully participate in an increasingly digital society. Tackling the digital divide is crucial to address social and economic inequalities.

IMPACT OF INFLATION SURVEY

In August 2023, CAIA in collaboration with *HEAR Equality and Human Rights Network* created a short audio study on impact of inflation and the *cost-of-living-crisis* as a contribution to a wider survey undertaken by the *Trust for London*. Five London Armenian visiting *Hayashen* from different backgrounds took part in the study which illustrated the real life circumstances for some members of our community. According to the survey, the main issues people are struggling with are:

- High cost of food
- Gas and electricity bills
- Childcare costs
- Rent increases
- Unable to afford travel costs and taking holidays

The impact of CAIA's Digital Inclusion project 2022/23

- 76** People benefited from the project
- 32** People helped open online accounts for council tax, water and utilities
- 36** Children aged between 6 and 18 from low-income families received free Raspberry Pi PCs
- 130** Sessions were delivered including 1-2-1, Group & online
- 16** People helped learn to use their mobile phones/tablets
- 7** People learned, downloaded and started using the NHS app
- 12** People received help to open email accounts
- 27** People helped receive free prepaid or data preloaded SIM cards from the National Databank
- 4** Workshops were delivered
- 50** People benefited from the workshops



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your needs!

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020 8992 4621 / info@caia.org.uk

INTRODUCTION TO ARMENIAN HISTORY, CULTURE & HERITAGE 2023



Thanks to funding from Ealing Adult Learning, the "Introduction to Armenian History, Culture and Heritage" course was delivered for the 14th successive year during February and March 2023 over 6 Sundays. For the first time ever, the course was delivered by one person. So, we were grateful to Alyson Wharton-Durgaryan who lectures in the School of History and Heritage at the University of Lincoln, UK. The focus of Alyson's six illustrative talks covered broadly Armenian architecture, art, history, culture, identity, the UK Armenian community, Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, Russian Empire, Soviet Union and the Diaspora. Over 50 people from various backgrounds and ages benefited from the sessions and follow up Q&A's and discussions.



All 6 sessions were digitally recorded and can be viewed on CAIA's YouTube Channel link below
<https://www.youtube.com/user/CAIAHayashen>
 or QR codes on this page.



Quotes from some of those who attended the course:

"I came to the first course just to see what it was like and I have been to every lecture since then."

"I'm very glad that CAIA has set this up and thank you to the funders."

"I have found it very interesting and I recommend it to everyone."

"I think it's a very good, complete point of view. A lot of knowledge that I didn't know before and I have learnt a lot and I appreciate that."



"The most interesting aspect was the objectivity and depth of the presentation."

"It was a very enriching experience and will add to my professional developments and widening of knowledge."

"It's interesting to hear the same stories you have heard all your life but from a person who is not Armenian."

"Thanks to Allison and Hayashen for organising this. I think the interesting angle was Allison being a specialist in art and her angle of basically going from Turkey to Armenia." ■

INTRODUCTION TO ARMENIAN HISTORY, CULTURE & HERITAGE 2024

6 half day Course - 1:30 - 4:30pm at Hayashen

- Sunday 18 February 2024
- Sunday 25 February 2024
- Sunday 3 March 2024
- Sunday 10 March 2024
- Sunday 17 March 2024
- Sunday 24 March 2024

For registration please enrol in advance by writing to:
info@caia.org.uk

2021 CENSUS & ARMENIANS

According to data publicly available from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) the following information from the 2021 Census reveals the following:

- Top ten locations populated by Armenians in England and Wales are all London boroughs
- The largest population of Armenians outside of London in a single location is in Birmingham
- The largest population of Armenians outside of England in a single location is in Cardiff
- London Borough of Ealing has three times more Armenian residents than the second highest location which is London Borough of Hounslow
- Average age (median age) of 'Other ethnic group: Armenian' is 44
- Average age (median age) of 'White: Armenian' is 45
- The largest group of Armenians for age of arrival in England and Wales is 25-34
- The smallest group of Armenians for age of arrival in England and Wales is 65 and over
- There are 5837 Armenians in England and Wales. ■

ARMENIAN COMMUNITY PRE-SCHOOL GROUP

CHRISTMAS PARTY 2022



The ACPG held its annual Christmas celebration on 15th December 2022 with Ft. Xmas visiting *Hayashen* bearing gifts to all the young children who attend the *Pre-School Group*. This joyful event was welcomed by both children and parents alike as they enjoyed themselves with plenty of food, refreshments, fruits and cakes.

EASTER PARTY 2023



Over 50 young children, parents and grandparents enjoyed a wonderful Easter party at *Hayashen* on 3rd April 2023. There were plenty of delicious food, fruits, cakes, games and toys to keep the excited children happy. The party culminated with an outdoor *Easter Egg Hunt*. Many thanks to everyone who contributed to the fun and excitement.

IMAGES FROM 2023 SUMMER ACTIVITIES



Please scan above QR code to view the Legoland outing of 29th August 2023

A great day out took place at *Legoland* on 29th August benefiting over 40 children and young people. The trip was organised by the CAIA supported by BBC Children in Need. A short video about the trip can be viewed on CAIA's YouTube via above QR code.

HAYASHEN YOUTH CLUB



On 9th December CAIA's Hayashen Armenian Youth Club (HAYC) held its Christmas Party (Photo above).



Hayashen Armenian Youth Club welcomed the very talented Sarkies Stephen who delivered an interactive workshop about Calligraphy 20th January 2023. (Photos below)



Calligraphy is described as a visual art related to writing. It is the design and execution of lettering with a pen, ink brush, or other writing instrument. Mr Stephen spoke, demonstrated various technique to the enthusiastic and creative youth who practised writing in Calligraphy, many of them very successfully.

On 10th Feb 2023, a Survival workshop took place at HAYC. During the session the youth learnt a few basic survival skills and then as a group were given different hypothetical scenarios in which they had to discuss what they would do in order to survive. The youth managed to use their knowledge and survival instincts and as a team they survived the test!

WEST END THEATRE OUTING



A great evening of fun and music was enjoyed by 60 young people at the Apollo Victoria Theatre on 2nd March 2023 organised by HAYC.

The majority of the group travelled from Acton where they met up for a group photo (above) before going into the theatre.

Ms Nikola Tadeja ran a workshop at HAYC on 24th February 2023 about her journey into Law. (Photo below)

The session took in the form of a debate and discussion as well as learning about all the different aspects of lawyering.



On 10th March 2023, HAYC welcomed Mr Colin Brent, Integrated Youth Service Coordinator and PC Adam Justice, from the Metropolitan Police Service, West Area. They were invited to talk about personal safety and shared their experiences in their respective roles. The youth used the opportunity to ask many questions during the talks. (Photos below)



SCIENCE WEEK AT HAYASHEN



British Science Week was marked on 17th March 2023 at HAYC with 20+ excited youth enjoying themselves while learning. Thank you to Matt, the *Mad Scientist* for his various dry ice experiments. Thank you also to the *British Science Association* for making the workshop possible.



Please scan the QR code to view the Science week on 17th March 2023



On 9th June 2023, HAYC welcomed Arie Dakesian, a young classical guitar musician and student from the *Royal College of Music*. Arie spoke to the youth about his personal journey from *Beirut, Lebanon* where he was born, how he started to learn the guitar from an early age. Following a Q & A, Arie played a classical piece on his guitar to the delight of the youth. CAIA's HAYC is always keen to promote positive role models to young Armenians growing in UK and this evening was another exceptional example.



HAYC organised a musical talent show on 8th September 2023, with various exceptional young musicians performing to the delight of all those present. The excitement continued with the live viewing of the UEFA EURO 2024 football match between Armenia and Turkey.



First year university student Karen Mesilane provided a motivational talk to his peers at HAYC on 22nd September 2023 about how to start your business. Karen's presentation was based on his own knowledge and experience of establishing a co consultancy company at the age of 18.



Gor Barseghian, (above) a student with a master degree in creative writing born in Moscow but educated in USA, delivered a very thoughtful workshop at HAYC on 6th October 2023. The youth listened attentively as Gor talked and provided the youth with writing books to keep as diaries and encouraged them to write down their thoughts, feelings, poems, experiences and anything they can think of even for a few minutes a day. Just for themselves. For no one to read. The youth appreciated the workshop greatly and asked lots of questions which Gor kindly replied to all.



On 20th October 2023, young people enjoyed making their own healthy milkshakes at HAYC. However, the purpose of the workshop was not just about making a drink but rather a task of creating a business product. The youth had to first answer questions enabling them to gain the ingredients of their choice to

make the milkshake, naming, branding, marketing, and selling it. Well done to all for taking part

Gap year student Lucine Strecker led a fun interactive drama workshop on 10th November at HAYC, which involved young people to improv. (A form of live theatre that's made up on the spot)

Thanks to Lucine introductions and timely interventions, the youth embraced the improv challenges and had fun while learning to make up stories. (Photo below)



JACK PETCHEY FOUNDATION ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



The annual *Jack Petchey Foundation Youth Achievement Awards* presentation evening for Ealing Schools & Clubs took place on 9th February 2023 at *Greenford Assembly Hall*. Three young people from CAIA's *Hayashen Armenian Youth Club* were honoured with gold medals by various dignitaries including the Worshipful Mayor of Ealing Councillor Mohinder Midha. The three were Armen Kebedjian, Maria Telalyan and Lourdes Avakian. Their citations submitted by the CAIA were read to an audience of over 200. Congratulations to everyone who received awards and a big thank you to the *Jack Petchey Foundation* for organising this annual event. If you know anyone who deserves nomination, please write to info@caia.org.uk

JACK PETCHEY YOUNG ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNERS 2023

The following three young people were recognised by CAIA's *Hayashen Armenian Youth Club* and awarded the *Jack Petchey Foundation Young achievement award* in 2023.



Congratulations to 15-year-old Hannah Kaprielian who has been selected for the England hockey team as a regional performance player based on her experiences of playing throughout the UK. She has been the only Armenian girl in her age group to do so. Hannah currently attends *Notting Hill and Ealing High School*.

Congratulations also to Zori, (photo right) for his JPF award. Zori as a member of the well-known *Tiffin Boys' Choir* has performed at the *Royal Opera House*, the *Royal Festival Hall* and *Royal Albert Hall*. Apart from singing, Zori also has a talent for acting, writing and drawing.



Congratulations to Karina Avagimova who is a student at *Westway School of Performing Arts* where she studies drama and singing. Karina sings also in her school's choir and has sang with them at the *Royal Festival Hall*. Karina also plays in her school's football team.

HAYC GO KARTING



On 24th October 2023, forty four young people enjoyed a great *Go karting* fun day at *Brentwood Leisure Centre* organised by CAIA's *Hayashen Armenian Youth Club* thanks to the support of the *BBC Children In Need Fund* and the *Jack Petchey Foundation*.



The excited youth travelled by coach early in the morning from *Hayashen* and on arrival were greeted by the excellent staff who provided them with their costumes and health and safety instructions. The young people aged 8 to 18 competed against each other three times over four hours. For lunch, the youth consumed 22 large pizzas.



By 4.00pm, the fastest (and safest) three drivers from the four teams were announced and awarded with Gold, Silver and bronze trophies, while all participants received certificates.

CAIA WELCOMES VOLUNTEERS



CAIA welcomes, values and relies the good will of volunteers. Same time, the CAIA offers positive ways to people from all walks of life, age and ability to contribute towards its charitable mission.

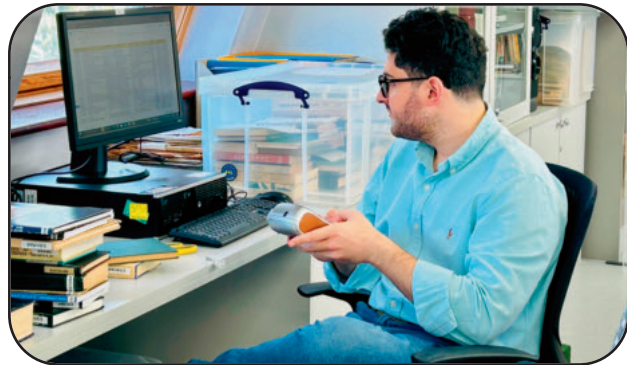
CAIA offers wide range of volunteering opportunities including administration, research, social media, cataloguing and book restoration at our library, Youth Club, Elders Lunch Club, Digital Inclusion Project, events, Befriending project and more. (See also above photo of our volunteers putting the last issue of 'Armenian Voice' in envelopes which is posted free to 3000 UK Armenian homes)

Apart from helping us to help others, voluntary work can have many advantages such as making new friends, learning new skills, and a real sense of making a positive difference to the community and wider society.

In return, we provide out-of-pocket travel costs, lunch if volunteering over 4 hours, and references.

For more information about volunteering opportunities please write your availability, ideas and suggestions to info@caia.org.uk

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS



(See photographs above and below some of our dedicated volunteers who help CAIA pursue its charitable mission)



IN 2022 - 2023 CAIA'S BEFRIENDING SERVICE



52 people were supported



322 phone calls were made, and
7 home visits



7 people started to
attend the Friday Elder's /
Carer's Social Club



13 people referred to the
Armenian Clergy for moral
and spiritual support



8 people benefited from
CAIA's Advice & Digital
Inclusion Project



3 additional volunteers were
trained for the Befriending
Service

PEOPLE SUPPORTED

19 people came
from other boroughs
and the UK



100% group are of
Armenian ethnicity and born
in **14** different countries

48 spoke Armenian,
while **4** preferred to
speak in English



included **2** people
suffering from dementia,
3 with severe memory
problems and **1** with severe
anxiety and depression

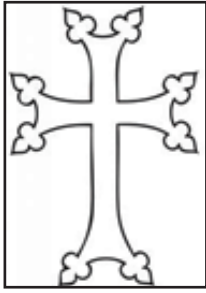


IMPROVING HAYASHEN



CAIA is always investing to make improvements to Hayashen to enhance the experience of its visitors, staff and volunteers. Repainting the office recently is yet another example.

CONDOLENCES



The CAIA extends its deepest condolences to the families and friends of following who sadly passed away in 2023. They are sorely missed by everyone who knew and loved them. If we have omitted anyone from the list below, please forgive us.

- + Samir Dikran Ibrahim 1938 - 2023
- + Mary O'Regan (nee Dellalian) 1925 - 2023
- + Seta Cox 1952 - 2023
- + Hripsime Grigorian 1943 - 2023
- + Martin Beniatians 1934 - 2023
- + Roubik Markarian 1948 - 2023
- + Greta Hovhannisyan 1947 - 2023
- + Siranoush Alexanian 1934 - 2023

OBITUARY

Marie O'Regan 1925 – 2023



Marie was born in the city of Istanbul, Turkey to Krikor Delalian and Varvara (nee Zazikian) at the time of extraordinary turmoil right after the WW1 and the Armenian Genocide of 1915 in the Ottoman Empire. At age of four, Marie, followed by her mother and sister, Aurora, moved to Paris, France, where her father and older brother had moved two years prior to save her brother from the draft into the Turkish army, which

would have meant a death sentence, at the time. As penniless refugees living in cramped conditions, they started a new life in Paris.

Despite her turbulent childhood, post-WWI, and disturbing teens during the Nazi-occupation of Paris, Marie had always been the most affable and kind person who treated everyone around her with genuine solicitude and great tenderness. Her thirst for knowledge and experience, without any preconceptions, all contributed towards her astonishing talent of fashion design and millinery.

Unable to attend a design school Marie sharpened her hat-making talent in the workrooms of Parisian millinery companies such as *Madame Suzy*, *Legroux Soeurs*, *Maud Roser* and *Gilbert Orcl*. Her technical skills and designs honed, underpinning each other in creative output.

In the 1950s, Marie moved to England as a designer to work for Otto Lucas, a German London-based milliner, but later switched jobs and worked for *Christian Dior*, and led Dior's London millinery department. Her professional success didn't stop there, and soon she was introduced to the *Queen Elizabeth II* by the royal designer Ian Thomas. A special bond was established between Marie and the *Queen Elizabeth II*, and in 2005, as a result of their connection, Marie had received a royal warrant.

Simultaneously to her undoubtedly impressive career, Marie's personal life wasn't standing still as in 1960s she had met Stephen O'Regan, a wild and creative actor. Their

beautiful union brought to life their two amazing sons, Michael and Stephen, and two grandsons Patrick and Daniel. After *Christian Dior*, Marie's career took an academic turn as she took a position at the *London College of Fashion*. Subsequently, she found the millinery department at the *Royal College of Art*, where she had taught until her retirement in 1985.

Now, Marie is gone. We would all give anything to once again hear her laugh, encourage, or gently scold. As her sons, Michael and Stephen, pointed out she didn't realise the effect that she had on people – how many lives she touched, raised up, and made better. There is a saying along that goes, 'While you are in the world, you will be judged by how little harm you do.' Marie's life generated an unbelievable amount of good, love, and positivity. She was fond of saying 'Life goes on', and of course it will!

<https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2023/apr/03/marie-oregan-obituary>

Varos Shahbazian 1937 - 2023



Varos Philip Shahbazian was born on 3 August 1937, in the Dollis Hill area of London, the eldest child of Varos and Dorothy. He had three younger brothers: Souren, Ara and Dikran. His father – also called Varos Shahbazian – was born in Kars and survived the Armenian Genocide, and was brought to the UK in the 1920s by an English priest, the Rev Hubert Harcourt, who was

in Armenia with *Save the Children / the Lord Mayor's Fund*. Varos had an extremely curious mind and his desire to understand the world. His first love was astronomy, with his father dubbing him 'the stargazer' when he was young. This led him into maths and physics, studies of which were cut short by his call-up to the RAF for National Service, where he was involved in radar research and was intensively trained in some of the latest technology yet to reach civilian life. On leaving the RAF he joined the Mining Research Establishment of the *National Coal Board* where he remained for four years, investigating the safe use of electrical equipment in pits, before moving to *International Computers & Tabulators Ltd* (ICT, later becoming ICL) in 1963. He stayed at ICL for much of his career, initially as a computer hardware engineer working on mainframes and ultimately progressing into management. In 1991 he worked for the *Education Department of Surrey County Council* before taking up a position as a manager for *Hotpoint Ltd* until 2002.

In retirement he gave his time generously to causes such as his local residents' association, the police, *Headstone Manor Museum & Heritage Centre* and *The Centre for Armenian Information and Advice* (CAIA). He was a trustee for the CAIA and volunteered many hours of his time to support the charity over the years. Other causes close to his heart that received his support included *The Cat Survival Trust* (Welwyn), *The Monkey Sanctuary* (Looe), *Flora and Fauna International*, *Hayastan All-Armenian Fund*, *Zimbabwe A National Emergency* (ZANE), the *Vulcan XH558 rebuild project*, the *Colossus rebuild project*, *Bodmin heritage steam railway* and many more. He was a kind, caring man who was helpful, and if it was within his ability to reach out and support people he would do so. He was a stickler for detail, but with an irreverent sense of humour. He was a gentleman: chivalrous and well-mannered he always carried himself correctly. Varos is survived by his wife Christiane, who he married in 1966, his three brothers, his daughter, son-in-law and granddaughter. ■

OBITUARY



Avedis Ohanian
1937 - 2023

Born as Avedis on January 4th, 1937 in Nicosia, Cyprus, John was one of three boys. John's parents settled in Cyprus to begin rebuilding a stable and peaceful life after the atrocious Armenian genocide they'd endured in the Ottoman Empire.

John attended the local school in the village where his family lived. In school, John discovered his enthusiasm for languages. After school, he continued his studies at the *Terra Santa college*, a Vatican funded institution.

At 16 years old, John began working in the government office where his language skills came in handy, as subsequently he became a military interpreter.

In 1955, at 18 years old, John, young and ambitious fellow, took a boat journey to England, to the land of opportunities. Having no money, John worked two jobs as a roofer and a factory worker. While living in London, John became friends with an Australian man, Ken MacDonald, with whom he shared a great passion in sports, and particularly in weight lifting, often together participating in various competitions.

In 1952, Ken represented Australia in the 1952 *Helsinki Olympics*. Despite Ken's departure from London, John and Ken shared a lifetime of great friendship.

In early 1960s, John had moved to *Slough* where he met a pretty young girl named Ann with whom he fell in love with from the first sight. By that time John was working night shifts at the chocolate factory *Mars* where he was regarded as a highly reliable professional.

Several years later John and Ann married and settled in to their first house in *Cippenham Slough* and in the mid-1960s they had three boys, Philip, Stephen and Martin.

John, as man of enormous work ethic, continued working three jobs, at a local bakery, at a fencing company and at *Mars* factory during night shifts.

After 10 years of relentless shift work and part-time jobs, John and his wife, Ann, decided to go into a business venture. John built a large workshop in the rear garden of their bungalow from where began manufacturing and selling fence panels. This was the beginning of *Fencing Products Ltd*, which is today a 3rd generation family-run business, established over 55 years ago. John was still actively involved in the business until very recently.

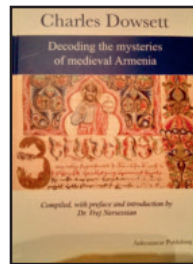
John was also a long time member of *CAIA* and supporter of various Armenian causes, never forgetting his roots and humble beginnings.

A Husband, Father, Son, Brother, Grandfather, Great Grandfather, Entrepreneur, Leader, Sportsman, Pilot and Dog lover! Throughout John's full life he still managed to travel the world, including his true homeland – Armenia. If you met John, you wouldn't forget him. Only 5'2 tall, but truly unique! Whether just shopping at *Sainsbury's* on a Sunday morning or out walking his dog, he would love to stop, chat and share stories. A true man of charm.

One of John's favourite quotes, *'To live on in the lives of those you leave behind is not to die.'*

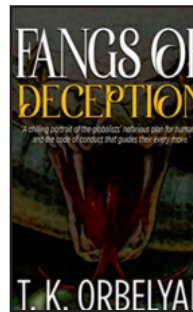
BOOK REVIEWS

Decoding the mysteries of medieval Armenia: by Charles Dowsett; Hardcover; 603 pp; ISBN 978-9939-850-54-2 Published by Ankyunacar Publishing.



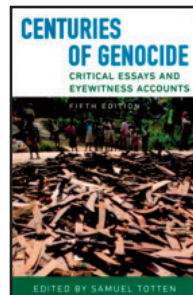
The thirty studies collected in this volume belong to Charles James Frank Dowsett (1924-1998), the *First Calouste Gulbenkian Professor of Armenian Studies* in Oxford from 1964 to 1991. The articles cover a period from 1951 to his retirement in 1990, explore and elaborate topics of Armenian history, literary sources, classical, patristic, medieval and early modern, his lifelong contribution to Armenia's heritage. The most fascinating aspect of the studies are the titles and the manner in which the content of the studies expand in unpredictable direction thanks to his prodigious range of learning.

Fangs of Deception: A chilling portrait of the globalist-s'nefarious plan for humanity and the code of conduct that guides their every move by T. K. Orbelyan; P/B; 172 pages; Published by i2i Publishing. ISBN: 978-1914933554



"We couldn't care less about what a tiny minority of people think they know. We own the media, we own the courts. Hell, we own the whole bloody system, everything. There's no stopping what we're doing, Terry. Surely you've understood that by now." Just days after Carl Palmer introduces his new girlfriend to his cousin Terry at a family get-together, where he reveals explosive information he has discovered about the pandemic and the vaccines, he disappears into thin air. This forces Terry to delve into the world of 'conspiracy theories' and uncover the truth behind his cousin's disappearance whilst undergoing a soul-searching journey of his own. Exploring the themes of self-empowerment, anti-conformity and loss of innocence, *Fangs of Deception* is a gripping psychological thriller that offers a dystopian vision of a world in which both the mainstream media and world governments are pawns in a nefarious globalist plan for humanity.

Centuries of Genocide: Critical Essays and Eyewitness Accounts by Samuel Totten; Paperback; 736 pages; Published by University of Toronto Press; ISBN 9781-4875-2535-4



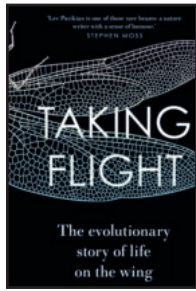
The fifth edition of this classic textbook includes updates on previously acknowledged genocides, such as of Armenians, Cambodians, Jewish-Europeans, and Rwandans, while bringing attention to important ongoing cases. Essays and accounts focus on victims, governments, militaries, and militias such as in settler-era California, the *Cold War* regimes of Argentina, juntas of Myanmar, and others which, with Totten's new additions on *ISIS* and China, make this a comprehensive collection.



Mass Insanity by Theo Alistair; P/P: 488 pages, ISBN 978-8-39-654461-2, Published by Liberty in Print.

Mass Insanity explores the subject communities, the clash of identities, and how societies indoctrinate their members and shape their way of thinking. It also discusses the decay of the Western civilization & arising psychological difficulties.

Taking Flight: The evolutionary story of life on the wing by Lev Parikian; Hardcover; 282 pages; Published by Elliot & Thompson; ISBN: 978-1-78396-703-2

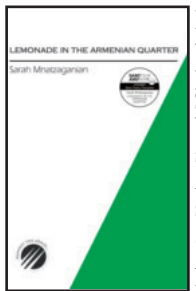


This is the miracle of flight as you've never seen it before: the evolutionary story of life on the wing. A bird flits overhead. It's an everyday occurrence, repeated hundreds, thousands, millions of times daily by creatures across the world. It's something so normal, so entirely taken for granted, that sometimes we forget how extraordinary it is. But take that in for a moment. This animal flies. It. Flies.

The miracle of flight has evolved in hugely diverse ways, with countless variations of flapping and gliding, hovering and diving, murmuring and migrating. Conjuring lost worlds, ancient species and ever-shifting ecologies, this exhilarating new book is a mesmerising encounter with fourteen flying species: from the first fluttering insect of 300 million years ago to the crested pterosaurs of the *Mesozoic Era*, from hummingbirds that co-evolved with rainforest flowers to the wonders of dragonfly, albatross, pipistrelle and monarch butterfly with which we share the planet today.

Taking Flight is a mind-expanding feat of the imagination, a close encounter with flight in its myriad forms, urging us to look up and drink in the spectacle of these gravity-defying marvels that continue to shape life on Earth.

Lemonade in the Armenian Quarter by Sarah Mnatzaganian; Paperback; 33 pages; Published by Against the Grain Poetry Press; ISBN 978-1-91-634478-5



Published in spring 2022, this book has won the *Saboteur Awards* 2022 for best poetry pamphlet.

Sarah Mnatzaganian grew up in rural Wiltshire and in her late teens spent each summer with her father's family in the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem. She studied English at *Oxford University* and *Byzantine Art History* at the *Courtauld Institute*. Sarah worked as an editor, teacher and freelance journalist before co-

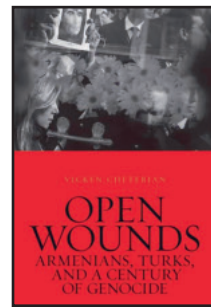
founding a cello business with her husband Robin Aitchison in *Ely*, where they brought up their two children. Her poems have been widely published in literary magazines including *The North*, *Poetry Wales* and *The Rialto*. She won first prize in the *Spelt Poetry Competition* in 2021. www.sarahmnatzaganian.co.uk

We Are All Armenian: Voices from the Diaspora edited by Aram Mrjoian; Hardcover; 224 pages; Published by University of Texas Press; ISBN 978-1-4773-2679-4



"The greatest strength of *We Are All Armenians* is the diversity of its writers. The presence of multiracial Armenian, queer Armenian, and polyamorous Armenian voices alongside one another adds a bold richness that goes beyond simply being novel. Not only are these stories that many readers may have never heard before, but they also beautifully subvert preconceived notions about who and what constitutes the Armenian diaspora. The writers, who understand profoundly what it means to have one's history erased or denied, thus ensure that other types of erasure are both confronted and avoided". Leila Emery, coeditor of *My Shadow Is My Skin: Voices from the Iranian Diaspora*

Open Wounds: Armenians, Turks, and a Century of Genocide by Vicken Cheterian; Paperback; 432 Pages; Published by C Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd, ISBN: 9781787389687



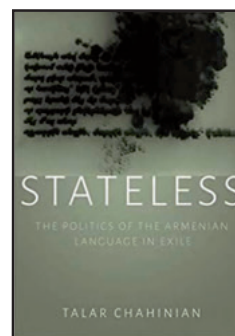
The assassination in Istanbul in 2007 of the author Hrant Dink, the high-profile advocate of Turkish-Armenian reconciliation, reignited the debate in Turkey on the annihilation of the Ottoman Armenians.

Many Turks subsequently reawakened to their Armenian heritage, in the process reflecting on how their grandparents were forcibly Islamised and Turkified, and the suffering they endured to keep their stories secret.

There was public debate about Armenian property confiscated by the Turkish state and books were published about the extermination of the minorities. The silence had been broken.

After the First World War, Turkey forcibly erased the memory of the atrocities, and traces of Armenians, from their historic lands, to which the international community turned a blind eye. The price for this amnesia was, Cheterian argues, '*a century of genocide*'. Turkish intellectuals acknowledge the price a society must pay collectively to forget such traumatic events, and that Turkey cannot solve its recurrent conflicts with its minorities - like the Kurds today - nor have an open and democratic society without addressing its original sin: *the Armenian Genocide, on which the Republic was founded*.

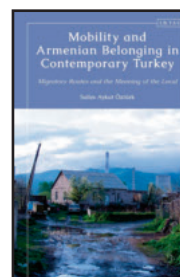
Stateless: The Politics of the Armenian Language in Exile by Talar Chahinian; Paperback; 296 pages; Published by Syracuse University Press; ISBN: 978-0-8156-3795-0



Stateless: The Politics of the Armenian Language in Exile focuses on two centers of Western Armenian literary production following the Armenian genocide to examine the intersection of violence and art, displacement and language vitality. In looking at the work of a post WWI Paris-based, short-lived transnational literary movement called *Menk [We]*, it explores how the politically violent origins of dispersion informed the aesthetic development of a new

literature and the articulation of literary belonging in exile. In looking at the post WWII activities and publications of the *Writers' Association of Syria and Lebanon*, it traces how the Armenian diaspora's literature was nationalized in the absence of state institutions.

Mobility and Armenian Belonging in Contemporary Turkey Migratory Routes and the Meaning of the Local by Salim Aykut Öztürk, 2023 - Bloomsbury Publishing ISBN 9780755645091



The author provides both a critical account of how historical and more contemporary forms of violence and structural discrimination have targeted Armenians in the country, and also focuses on the re-articulations and the appropriation of a sense of belonging by these and other minority communities. ■

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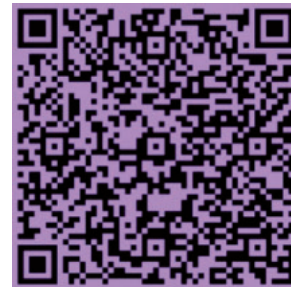
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