

# FRIENDS OF MOUNT ATHOS

(Registered Charity No. 1047287)

[www.athosfriends.org](http://www.athosfriends.org)

## Newsletter No. 29: April 2019

### **The 2018 Summer Conference: Saturday 8 June at St Anne's College, Oxford**

The day will start with a celebration of the Divine Liturgy at the Orthodox Church of the Holy Trinity and the Annunciation (1 Canterbury Road, Oxford OX2 6LU) at 9.00 am. All members and their guests, Orthodox and non-Orthodox, are warmly invited to attend. The church is only five minutes' walk from St Anne's College where coffee will be available in the **Tsuzuki Theatre Foyer** from 10.45 am. Proceedings will begin at 11.30 am. The theme for all the talks is the ecology of Mount Athos.

Our first speaker will be **Martin Palmer**, whose talk is entitled **Mount Athos - Icon of Faith and Ecology**. Mount Athos has frozen ecology in time through its monastic models, but has also suffered the attacks of commercialisation and tourism. Yet within its ancient traditions lies a wisdom which, as the world is beginning to realise, has to replace consumerism and the quest for financial wellbeing. Martin will trace the development of Orthodox action on the environment worldwide and its role in shaping not just Christian, but other faiths', response to the environment.

Martin Palmer is a theologian, broadcaster, writer, translator of Chinese Classics and environmentalist. He has headed the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC), which he founded with HRH Prince Philip, since 1995. He was part of the team which surveyed the ecology of Mount Athos in the mid-1990s - a project supported by HRH Prince Philip and the Ecumenical Patriarch. He is a regular presenter on BBC Radio 4 and has written many books on the world's faiths and on ecology.

In the afternoon, **John Mole** will talk on **Path Clearing on Athos - Ecology and Prayer**.

Footpaths are among the most ancient artefacts of Athos, a result of man's interaction with its topography and ecology. John Mole illustrates how the paths began, their vital role in the life of Athos and, threatened as they are by concrete and vehicles, how the path-clearers of FOMA keep them alive as highways of reflection, meditation and prayer.

John Mole lives in London and Evia. He has been on the path-clearing team three times. His latest book, *Martoni's Pilgrimage*, is a translation from Latin of an Italian lawyer's diary of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1392.

Our last speaker, **Anna Conomos**, is known to many members of the society as a gifted story teller and a frequent participant in our pilgrimages. She will give an illustrated talk about the society's 2018 pilgrimage to Crete.

A buffet lunch is available in the college and must be booked in advance. It is followed by the official business of the AGM itself and as usual there will be elections. Graham Speake and Christopher Solomon will have reached the end of their terms of office and offer themselves for re-election. Two new members, Mr Hugo Grimwood and Mr Christopher Thomas, have been co-opted onto the committee during the year, and have indicated their willingness to stand. Any other

nominations should reach the Secretary in writing at least one week before the meeting. Guests are welcome at the AGM but may not vote.

The committee is sorry to see the retirement of Simon Jennings. Simon has been a mainstay of the Society for 21 years, and we owe him an enormous vote of thanks for everything he has done for us.

After tea there is a further opportunity to join the Orthodox community at 1 Canterbury Road for a Vigil service at 5.30 pm. The service will last about two hours and will be primarily in English.

Attendance at the AGM is free. The charge for attending the rest of the day (including coffee and tea) is £18.00 each (students £10.00). Completed forms and cheques (payable to The Friends of Mount Athos) should be sent as soon as possible to the Revd Douglas Dales, The Glebe House, 3 Drakes Farm, Peasemore, Newbury RG20 7DF.

### **Project for the restoration of footpaths and wayside shrines and fountains**

This May another expedition, the nineteenth, will spend a fortnight on the Mountain. The list for this year is already full, but the project leaders will soon be assembling a team for next year. Any members who are interested in volunteering should contact them at [fomafootpaths@gmail.com](mailto:fomafootpaths@gmail.com).

### **Pilgrimage to the Monastery of St John the Baptist, Tolleshunt Knights**

This year's pilgrimage will take place on 6 July 2019. Both Orthodox and non-Orthodox members and their families and friends are warmly welcome to join it. Those who are interested should contact the organiser, Dimitri Conomos ([dimitri2609@gmail.com](mailto:dimitri2609@gmail.com)).

### **Visit to Highgrove**

HRH The Prince of Wales has invited FOMA members to a garden tour and reception at Highgrove on 8 July. Guests are asked to contribute a minimum of £100 each to the Axion Estin appeal. The event is nearly fully subscribed, but there are still a few places left. Please contact me if interested.

### **Pilgrimage to the Peloponnese**

This year's pilgrimage, to the Peloponnese, will run from 26 October to 3 November 2019. Some spaces are still available, so anyone interested should contact the organiser, Dimitri Conomos, as soon as possible.

### **FoMA Travel Bursary**

Qualified graduate students, working towards a higher degree or diploma at a UK institution of higher learning, may apply for a FoMA Travel Bursary of £500. Applicants should be engaged in, or willing to become engaged in, a project with a specifically Athonite context. Applications, accompanied by the names and addresses of two referees, should be addressed to me at 58 Manor Road, Woodstock OX20 1XJ.

**Peter Lea**  
**Secretary**