



February Meeting  
Wednesday the 8<sup>th</sup>  
Ingle hall, Anatolia

## *A few words from the President*

### February greetings from the Board

It seems ages since the Board and I last saw some of you - in fact we haven't officially met since December 2016. For the first time in the annals of IWOG we had to cancel the January meeting due to the weather. Fortunately we took heed of the weather forecast after a chaotic week of temperatures below zero which gave rise to conditions we will not easily forget - some of the residents of Thessaloniki without water, some without heating and other folks without electricity. It's hard to say which was the worst! And of course those who had water, power and heating were among the privileged few. But at least we had a roof over our heads unlike the homeless and tent residing refugees who were to be more than pitied.

However, the weather seems to be improving so by the time February 8th arrives we will be able to wish each other a happy New Year, a romantic St.Valentine's day, an enjoyable Tsiknopempti, kales Apokries, a good "clean" Monday and kali Sarakosti (Lent). So many wishes for us all to exchange!!

The Greeks celebrate, Tsiknopempti, which literally means "Thursday of the Smoke of Grilled Meat" on 16th February this year. It is celebrated 11 days before Clean Monday otherwise known as Ash or Green Monday (February 27th) which marks the start of the fasting period of Lent.

The events for the January meeting such as the cutting of the vasilopita for 2017 and the address from a representative from Anatolia College will take place at the February meeting. In addition a friend and ardent supporter of IWOG, Dr Eleni Hodolidou, will be giving us a talk about her work with the refugees and the efforts of Mayor Boutaris to accommodate and take care of them in Diavata. Her efforts to school them in the Greek language and introduce them to Greek history and the Greek culture is praiseworthy. I first saw her giving an interview on a Greek television programme last year and found her extremely interesting.

As St. Valentine's Day is celebrated throughout the world on the 14th, at the door you will be given a small token to remember this day and there will be a special Valentine raffle prize together with two free cinema tickets, a bottle of Jameson whisky donated by Mr Theodoros Mavroudis the Hon.Consulate of Ireland in Thessaloniki and a discount dinner at Massaya restaurant.

Let's keep our fingers crossed that the February meeting will go as planned. The Board is looking forward to seeing you all.

Sandra McMeekan - Hatzigeorgiou

