



Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk - İngiliz Derneği

THE ANGLO TURKISH ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN CYPRUS

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The friendly listening association with a heart supporting good causes in Northern Cyprus for the benefit of everyone

History of the ATA

In the 1970's & 80's, the small English-speaking community in Girne used a tree in the Girne Post Office car park to pin up for-sale notices, announcements and even local news items.



The Anglo Turkish Association of Northern Cyprus

During the early part of 1987 the idea of forming an Association dedicated to promoting the mutual cultural understanding between the Turkish Cypriot people and other nationalities living in the TRNC was brought to fruition.

The original Constitution of the Anglo Turkish Association of Northern Cyprus (ATA) was formed and agreed at a meeting of 12 people on Thursday 2nd April 1987.

The Association was launched on the 28th November 1987.

The first recorded social event took place on the 6th May 1988 and was a buffet supper at Paşa Bahçeç. This was followed on the 18th June by a dinner at Hıronnelle, at which Mr Hakki Atun gave a talk on the Environment. On the 7th December that year, a dinner was held at the Dome Hotel at which His Excellency the President was guest speaker. The minutes recorded this was an extremely well supported and successful evening.

Members of the founding committee were:

Mr Metin Silman (subsequently elected as Chairman)

Mr Tom Lightbody (Vice Chairman)

Mr Attila Berberoğlu (Honorary Treasurer)

Mrs Rita Cornwell (Honorary Secretary)

Dr Latife Birgen

Mrs Lorna Swindells

Mrs Audrey Ellison

Mr Oktay Feridün

Mr Rüstem Tatar

Mr John Chambers

The Initial Annual General Meeting was held on the 23rd February 1989 at the Halk Evi.

In March 1989 the committee minutes reported that there were 150 members of which 86 were Turkish Cypriot and 64 other Nationalities.

A year later the membership numbers had grown to 252 and the following year 318

The Association used to publicise its events via the newspapers and on a tree outside the Girne Post Office. The Tree was to become the emblem of the Association and the “Story of the Tree” can be seen below.

A Newsletter for the Association, “The Tree”, was started in May 1988 and was issued fortnightly until the end of August of that year when it was discontinued through lack of practical support.

The 1988 Treasurers report showed a net profit (surplus) of 165.8TL, at that time the membership subscription rate was 3TL per annum.

The membership list dated September 1990 showed the creation of 9 Honorary Members:

Mr Hakki Atun
Mr Oktay Feridün
Viscount Hanworth
Viscountess Hanworth
Mrs Safiye Nadir

Mr Keith Speed M.P.
Mr Andrew Faulds M.P.
Mr Michael Knowles M.P.
Lord Ted Willis

The annual subscription for 1990 was 5TL and the minutes from the third AGM dated 28th February 1991 reported that the subscriptions for 1991 would be 10TL.

The 1990 AGM was chaired by the honorary chairman for the night Mr Oktay Feridün who has fulfilled that role until his last appearance at the AGM held in 2009.

The Story of the “Tree”



The following story, by Ian Shephard, appeared in the Cyprus Today Newspaper on January 2009 and they have kindly given us permission to use this article. The article tells the story of the “Tree” which became to symbol of the Anglo Turkish Association.

A nostalgic link with the past that was familiar to Girne’s early expats has ended up as firewood.

Long before the days of Cyprus Today – which first appeared in 1991 – the small English-speaking community of Girne used a tree in the Girne post office car park to pin up for-sale notices, announcements and even local news items. Now, however, only a bare stump marks the spot where the old Tree once stood.

Its demise, due to age and disease - was greeted with sadness by some of the dwindling group which once used it.

“It was the focal point of our expat community then” said Audrey Ellison, a founding member of the ATA, an avid user and reader of the contents of “The Tree” from 1983 when she moved to Girne.

“If you wanted to get a message around, that was the place to do it” said Audrey.

“It was used like that for many years before I arrived and for many years afterwards”.

“You could see who had lost their specs, who was selling a piano and who wanted a ticket for Wimbledon. I even saw unwanted airline tickets for sale on it”

“It became so popular that a weekly news sheet was produced to cope with all the messages, which was called “The Tree” (produced by the ATA committee of the day) It proved popular but some people still continued using the green version”

Another of those with nostalgic memories of the original tree is Bertil Wedin (early ATA member), who first came to Cyprus as an army officer in 1964, returning as a visitor many times, before coming to live permanently in Girne in 1985.

“It was our main source of local information for many years” he recalled.

“One memory I have is attending the first meeting of the Anglo Turkish Association (ATA) which had been previously advertised on the Tree. Only Audrey Ellison and myself turned up but we went away and rounded up a few others to get the Association going”.

The tree’s use as a community news source diminished in the 1990s when the ATA created a large, conventional notice board (called the TREE) near the original tree, which is still heavily used.

In 2009 a spokeswoman for Girne Post Office told Cyprus Today “unfortunately the tree was old and diseased. I believe it ended up as firewood”.

