

THE CASTELLORIZIAN ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

THE CASTELLORIZIAN NEWSLETTER

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE
CASTELLORIZIAN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

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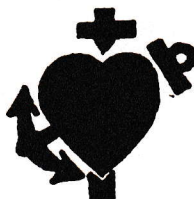
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THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE CASTELLORIZIAN ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA.
"REGISTERED BY AUSTRALIA POST - PUBLICATION No. VBH3850"

Newsletter No. 68 March, 1990

Castellorizian Newsletter No. 68 gives further details of the Castellorizian Youth Conference to be held in Melbourne in June 1990.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

Children's Fashion Parade - February 11th, 1990

A well organised parade at the Jika Restaurant was unfortunately not as well attended as it should have been. However, those who attended enjoyed a very pleasant afternoon. The children paraded well and the fashions supplied by "Gumboots" were well presented. We thank Peter & Bronwyn Paltoglou and Con & Chrissie Paltoglou for their kind donation of their restaurant for the parade. Thanks also to Elizabeth Exintaris for her songs and piano accompaniment. Thanks to all members of Committee who worked hard and organised a professional afternoon. It deserved a better response.

Bus trip to Sydney due to be held on holiday weekend March 10/11/12th was cancelled.

Our next function will be our second Tennis Tournament to be held on April 1st at Elsternwick Park Tennis Centre. All enquiries to Diane Spartels Tel: 596 1787.

SOCIETY FOR THE CARE OF THE ELDERLY -
SPRINGS ROAD, CLAYTON

The Society will be conducting a seminar in April and the A.G.M. will be held in April. Both Meetings will be held at the Castellorizian Club 250 Dorcas Street, South Melbourne. President: Jacob Frenitsas.

CASTELLORIZIAN YOUTH CONFERENCE

The arrangements are going along very well for the Conference. Those who are assisting are George B. Bisas, Kathy Bisas, Leah Pavlou, Anthony A. Adgemis,

Eva Lucas and George Stabelos. The Committee are looking for other Castellorizians of any age to assist in the organising of the Youth Conference. We need people to help plan and organise, the Committee is minimal one night a fortnight. If you are unable to assist now your assistance will be needed on the Queen's Birthday weekend during the Conference.

GOOD NEWS

We have already had confirmation that the New South Wales Cassie Youth Club have booked 50 delegates. This number is sure to be bolstered by additional delegates from Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane and possibly from Perth. During the Conference we will need members to help drive delegates to and from functions and hosting while visitors are in Melbourne. Your support for our two major functions is a must.

SATURDAY NIGHT - Castellorizian Comedy Night Out
SUNDAY NIGHT - Great Debate and Greek Tavern Night

All enquiries from any of the above members of the Youth Committee.

BAPTISM

Teri Miriklis, the son of Michael and Zina was baptised on 28th January, 1990. Godmother from Adelaide, Zina's sister Despina Chryssochoos with fiancée Evan Pappas. Babies given name Elefterios.

Teri is the grandson of Jack and Katina Miriklis. From Adelaide for the christening Mr & Mrs Elefterios & Katina Chryssochoos, Steve with fiancée Mary, Mr & Mrs G. Kostoglou together with Angela and John, Mr. & Mrs D. Malandris, Mary, Bill and Tommy. Mr & Mrs C. Pappas, Evan & Stephen. Reception held at Mykonos Reception.

BIRTH

To Kevin and Mary Zervos a girl, 2nd child for Kevin and Mary and third grandchild for Peggy and Paul Zervos.

HOME AFTER A STAY IN HOSPITAL

Tasia Kalafata, Leo Koutsoukis.

Leo & Helen Koutsoukis would like to thank through our Newsletter all those who sent get well wishes during his recent illness.

V.C.E.

Congratulations to Betty Paul Exintaris for successfully completing her V.C.E. year. She is currently at Monash studying Science.

WEDDING

On 4th February, 1990 Michael Mangos married Mary Tsokas at Evangelismos Church, reception at "Norfolk Room" Flemington Racecourse. Michael is the son of Dorothy and Michael Mangos and grandson of Mrs Evangelia Mangos. Best man was John Mangos of Channel 9 fame. The church service was attended by the Right Hon. The Prime Minister of Australia Mr. Bob Hawke. List of interstate visitors who attended this wedding will be published in next months Newsletter.

21st BIRTHDAY PARTY

A surprise 21st party was held for Helen, wife of George J. Miriklis on Saturday 24th February at Maryborough. George is the son of Jack & Katina Miriklis.

VALE

In Melbourne on 23rd February, 1990 Vayiani Bisas, Age 87. Mother of Nick (dec), Jack, Steve and Alex. Mother-in-law of Christulla (Bollis), Marika (Koutsoukis), Christina (Atherinos) and Maria (Chrisohos). Grandmother of 13 grandchildren, great grandmother of 7 great grandchildren.

Funeral from the Church of Holy Cross, Box Hill to Carlton General Cemetery.

From Sydney to attend the funeral her sister Nina Cotis with son George, Peter Peters, Peter Chrisohos and Mrs. E Kostoglou.

As a mark of respect to my mother I print the following -

Eulogy by George B. Bisas

Our Yiayia was born in Castellorizo in 1902. She was the 4th eldest of a family of eight, daughter of Bartholomew and Katerina Kakulas. Yiayia came to Australia in 1918 and lived with her family in Fremantle, Perth, Western Australia. In 1922 she came to Melbourne and married Anastasios Nicholas Bisas. We believe they were the first couple of Castellorizian origin to marry at Evangelismos Church. During this stay in Melbourne she was blessed with the birth of her first three sons - Nicholas, Jack and Steve. In 1927 she returned to Western Australia where her youngest son Alex was born.

Yiayia, Papou and their family spent the next 14 years in Perth until finally returning to Melbourne where she remained for the rest of her life.

Yiayia came to this country at a time when European migration was not as readily accepted as it is to-day. The need to struggle and fight against a very real hostility. Yiayia herself was often called upon to protect her own young family.

Yiayia was a very religious person and her strength in her faith was very much a factor contributing to the unity of the family. Her 13 grandchildren will always remember the significance of the family gatherings each Easter and Christmas which were spent with our Yiayia.

She endured the great loss of her husband (whom she nursed through a very long illness).

The untimely death of her eldest son Nicholas affected her greatly - but throughout these tragedies, the hardship, and difficulties she always remained a source of strength for her entire family to focus on. The love she generated bound her large family together and will remain the inspiration to keep her family together in the future.

The following have donated to the Castellorizian Club in memory of the late Mrs. V. Bisas -

Mrs Elaine Platis \$40

Mr Theo Conos \$20

Mrs Irene V. Piperoglou \$20

Mrs Magda Kailis \$20

Mr & Mrs Michael Spartels \$20

Mr & Mrs P. Livery \$10

In memory of the late Mrs Vayiani Bisas the following have donated to the restoration of St Nicholas and St. Dimitrios Church on the island of Kastellorizo -

Mr & Mrs Tom Adgemis \$20

Mr & Mrs Peter Adgemis \$20

Mr & Mrs P. Zervos \$20

Mrs Kristalla Kanis \$20

Mr & Mrs John Anastasi Adgemis \$20

Mr & Mrs George Anastasi Adgemis \$20

Mr & Mrs Antonis Stabelos \$30

Mrs Anna Adgemis \$30

Mr & Mrs Con A. Mangos S.A. \$10

Mr & Mrs K.N. Miriklis \$20

Mr & Mrs Nick Zographou \$10

Mr & Mrs Michael Kyriakos \$25

Mr Colin E. Fermanis \$20

Mr & Mrs John Stabelos N.S.W. \$20

Mr & Mrs John S. Adgemis \$20

Mr & Mrs Angelo Adgemis N.S.W. \$20

Mr & Mrs George Varsamis \$20

Mr & Mrs Nick Patiniotis \$30

Mr & Mrs Basil Barboutis Qld. \$30

Mrs Kristala Bisas \$30

Mrs Chrissa N. Bollos \$20

Mr & Mrs Con J. Mangos \$20

Mrs Evangelia J. Mangos \$15

Mr & Mrs Alec Bisas \$20

Mr & Mrs Peter Christofas \$10

Mr & Mrs Luke Lucas N.S.W. \$10

Mr & Mrs Steve Adgemis \$20
 Mrs Tasia Kalafata \$20
 Mr & Mrs Arthur C. Mangos S.A. \$10
 Mr & Mrs Nick K. Miriklis \$10
 Mr & Mrs Spiro Mangos \$20
 Mr & Mrs George Lucas \$10
 Mr & Mrs Nick Georgoulas \$20

The following from the Sunday Mail February 26th, 1990
 by Christabel Hirst - we thank Mrs G Kostoglou of
 Adelaide for forwarding the article to us:-

**'Inside the Homes of South Australia's Rich and
 Famous - Our White House on the Hill a Real Rolls-
 Royce Affair'**

Constantine Polites has style with a capital S - and total self confidence. These days the ebullient multi-millionaire has three glossy Rolls-Royce limos in the garage of his Pasadena home, where he lives with his wife Florence. Why three I ask?

"Well actually there are five," he said. "One in Sydney, a new convertible at Glenelg, and three here." "But why three here?" I persisted. Ticking them off on his fingers, he noted: "One for me, one for Florence and one spare...." Of course!

Mr Polites can afford to be comfortable with the riches his hard work has earned - his opulent, white house on the hill at Pasadena, the carefully chosen and luxurious furnishings, the very expensive cars and his latest "folly" - a bit of a weekender at the top end of Delamere Avenue, Springfield."

The "weekender" is - as may be assumed - a huge and grand house set in riotous, rambling gardens and looking straight out over the rural Waite, where sheep graze and there are majestic stands of gums and olives redolent of Greece.

But it is his Pasadena home where he is most comfortable - mine host for splendid parties, less frequent and less grandiose now the three children have departed. The only unexpected extra is a very solid and slathering bulldog, Bully. And among the grandeur are simple touches to remind you that Florence and Con are the lynchpins of a very close-knit family - the high chair in the kitchen, the grandchildren's paintings, the toys ..

It is a long way from Nelshaby on the skirts of the hazy, blue Flinders Ranges, a tiny community where young Con was brought up with his Greek market-gardening family.

Mr Polites remembers the tough times, running a general store in Port Pirie at the age of 16, working behind a Woolworth's counter, running a taxi and a hire car business, selling used cars...

He worked hard and his empire grew - the ubiquitous blue Polites and Princes signs in the CBD and suburbs, testament to his overriding passion of buying bricks and mortar, and never selling.

Yes he is growing older and has entered his seventh decade, but indefatigable and still working at more of those blue signs. He is cheerfully roguish, with a twinkling and often wicked sense of humor.

"I am planning for my old age," he says, pointing to, and demonstrating the elevator chair he has had installed on the swirling plush ruby red staircase, the focal point of the marble-paved foyer.

He looks like a benevolent Charles Laughton, in the classic film Witness for the Prosecution, but one suspects it will be a long time before Mr Polites has need of elevation. Ironically, his wife has been an occasional user of the chair, since a debilitating heart attack late last year.

"We are extolled to buy Australian, but it was impossible to have this made here, so we went to Britain and they delivered the goods. So interested was the company manager in our installation that he flew her to check it out," said Mr Polites.

They bought the house 23 years ago when it was still on a quiet byway.

Now it is a much recognised landmark on a busy highway, but it still retains the elements which attracted them.

"There are the sunsets and the sea, the carpet of city lights and the hills - and we can open up the ground floor and entertain as many as 400 people without a crush."

At front is the drawing room, decorated with Queen Anne furniture, slate blue velvet, a gilt ormolu clock of horse and chariot on the grand piano, and the ubiquitous chandeliers.

Through the foyer is the dining room, again richly decorated, and the venue for many formal dinner.

Next door is the light and airy garden room and adjoining family room, both designed for comfort and relaxation - full of massed greenery, family mementos and deep, squashy, leather chairs and sofas.

Through sliding doors is the huge swimming pool complex, glassed in to make it an all-weather entertainment area.

Here is another whimsical touch, are those large than life naked statues which for so long graced - and were often defaced - the facade of Jules nightclub in Hindley Street.

Tea, Greek cakes and sweetmeats were served by Mrs Polites, as ever the charming and gracious hostess. Mr Polites had rushed off to work in the silver Roller.

(Footnote: Flo Polites is the former Florence Gemenis of Sydney).

We are indebted to Dimitri Moraitis for the following article from the West Australian 17/2/90. The article, which is by Hugh Schmitt will be printed in two parts. Part 1 will be in this Newsletter. We thank the "West Australian" for permission to print. One of the more controversial statements by West Australian Michael George Kailis is featured in the article.

"The blame for the destructive neglect of this wonderful island lies in the hands of the Australian Castellorizians who are apathetic about it."

"CASTELLORIZO - A GREEK TRAGEDY" Part 1

Castellorizo, a jewel of a Greek island with unbreakable links with Australia, has willingly or resentfully played host to Roman, Byzantine, Egyptian, Venetian, Turkish,

French, Italian, German and British invaders over the centuries.

And it is still under siege - a passive siege of apathy from Australians. About an hour's swim from the Turkish coast and roughly the size of Rottneest, the island is suffering badly from decay caused by neglect.

According to one of the most prominent Australian Castellorizians, Perth fishing magnate Michael G. Kailis, women are largely to blame - through the traditional "proika" or dowry system.

Mr Kailis believes that unless something positive is done in the next generation to arrest the degeneration of abandoned homes that once housed the richest merchant mariners in the Dodecanese archipelago, Castellorizo will crumble into a scenic slum.

The grandson of one of the master mariners that made Castellorizo (literally red castle) the hub of trade last century, the burly tycoon blames both the Castellorizians living in Australia - an estimated 150,000 of them - and the 260 locals for what he calls a modern Greek tradedy.

"The blame for the destructive neglect of this wonderful island lies in the hands of Australian Castellorizians who are apathetic about it," he said.

The 60 year-old foundation president of the world-wide Castellorizian Brotherhood was talking over a glass of ouzo on the balcony of his restored villa on the island recently.

"Beautiful old homes are falling apart and farms neglected because everyone is frightened to restore them for fear they will be claimed by female descendants who received their titles as dowries handed down by their grandmothers.

"This is part of the Greek tradition and law and a lot of women are saying, "This is my property and you can't touch it." It is tragically causing the destruction of the island we all love but neglect."

More than half the Greeks living in Perth have their roots in tiny Castellorizo. And they have proved themselves as worthy migrants, establishing themselves as doctors, scientists, lawyers, entrepreneurs, restaurateurs and business people assimilating brilliantly into the community.

Names like August, Kalaf, Lukas, Zempilas, Kakulas, Hondros, Kailis, Stamatogliou, Papadopoulous, Michael, Boyatsis, Palassis, Lekias, Malaxos, Pitsikas and Papadimitriou spring to mind. (There are many others, of course).

At the turn of the century more than 13,000 people lived on the rocky and almost barren island. About 185 merchant ships used it as home.

Australia was the chosen home for most of the thousands who left.

Walk around the colourful waterfront where sea-stained fishing boats lie cheek-by-jowl with luxury cruising yachts and you will hear the Australian drawl in the shops, tavernas, pensions and winding streets.

There is an Australia Square on the waterfront and the local postman observes that much of the mail is from Australia.

Australian-born "Cazzies", as they call themselves, have the yearning to visit the home of their ancestors for a cheap but idyllic holiday and to discover their origins.

"Castellorizo is part of Australia," former St Georges Terrace sandwich bar proprietor Jack Venitis told me as he roasted a goat in the kitchen of his vine-covered waterfront Cafe International.

"But it is not like the Castellorizo of the good days. Australian Cazzies visit us every year, but we need more financial support from Australia. It would be wonderful to have an Australia House built here where Australian/Cazzie boys and girls can visit the homeland of their parents."

Born on Castellorizo in 1925, Venitis left in despair in 1952 at the age of 27 to start a new life in Australia.

"I was a boy of 15 when the island was under harsh Italian rule in 1940," he reflected, gazing up at a framed portrait of his old boss, (former Perth Lord Mayor) Mick Michael, son of a Castellorizian.

"It was a happy day in 1941 when 600 British commandoes captured the island and liberated us from the Italians. We rang the church bells and flew our flags, which we had hidden, alongside the British flags.

"But the British stayed only two days. Two Italian warships supported by bombers recaptured the island and 33 Castellorizians, including my brother Nick, who had fought in the hills against the Italians, were jailed for 20 to 30 years.

"Then he hard days started. The Italians took over the schools and churches and banned the Greek language. They even ordered the clue colouring on houses be repainted dark grey.

"We were occupied by 500 Italian troops who manned guns in the hills. The island was very strategic militarily."

When Italy capitulated in 1943, British troops returned to the island, which then became a prime target for German bombers. Eventually 1200 islanders, including the Venitis family of five, were evacuated from their beloved island to Cyprus and later to Alexandria.

At war's end the displaced Castellorizians started filtering back to their devastated island.

Jack Venitis was on board a ship called the Empire Patrol, which caught fire just outside Alexandria and sank, taking 34 souls down with it.

"I was only 20 at the time and I remember spending 12 hours in the sea in a life-jacket before I was picked up by an American ship," he said.

Landed back at Alexandria, Venitis was eventually returned to a blackened and bomb-and-bullet-scarred Castellorizo.

"The place was a mess," he said. "The island had burned for 30 days with fuel explosions sending flames 50 metres into the sky. People saw no future in Castellorizo and started migrating. I stuck it out until 1952 when I got on a ship with 450 others for Australia."

The young Greek's electrical diploma was not recognised in Perth and he had to retrain to get his licence. He went to work with Mick Michael, a man he admires greatly, before striking out on his own.

After more than 20 years in his trade he decided to give up "hard work". He bought the Red Cap Sandwich Bar in the Terrace.

In 1978 he decided to revisit Castellorizo. "While I was giving all my strength to Australia, I was all the time thinking I would like to go back to my homeland to die one day," he reflected.

In 1982, his wife (the former Despa Boyatsis) died of a heart attack while on a visit to Athens and Jack Venitis decided to spend the rest of his days in Castellorizo.

Michael Kailis's grandfather, after whom he is named, was a wealthy merchant mariner, who owned a ship called the Evangelistra, in which he transported charcoal from Turkey to Alexandria and wheat from Russia to Marseilles.

He was head of one of the leading families of Castellorizo, the chequered history of which dates back to 300BC, when its inhabitants helped the Athenians fight the Persians.

It had its own civilization so rich that it minted gold coins with the head of the god Apollo on one side and a rose of the obverse.

"At the turn of the century, Castellorizo was the richest island in the Dodecanese group," said Michael Kailis. "It was also one of the most civilised in southern Europe with its 13,000 to 14,000 residents enjoying free schools and hospitals and homes equipped with electricity.

"Shipowners would put into the island for supplies and a code of ethics built up among shipowners, the genesis of the brotherhood that exists today among transplanted Cazzies in Perth, Sydney, Melbourne, Athens and Rhodes."

Inspired by his late father, George Kailis, Michael Kailis has studied the history of the island, its traditions and customs.

"Castellorizians," he observed, "are characterised by being short, stocky, swarthy and big-boned with a flat head at the back - like me - and this is clear evidence of their Doric ancestry.

"They observed a complicated system of marriage based on a type of caste system."

"Before marriage, girls were provided with dowries by their families. In the seafaring families, a house given as a dowry would provide security for the women and children if the husband failed to return due to a mishap at sea.

"This is why so many Australian women have titles to land or houses on the island, property with which they have had no direct interest for 70 to 80 years, and yet is now being claimed by their granddaughters.

"This system is quite different from the concept of the family or ancestral home of the British system."

Because of its fine harbour, across which we swam twice a day, its great beauty and its strategic position off the Anatolian (Turkish) coast, Castellorizo was covered by several nations and has endured 450 years of occupation by Romans, Byzantines, Egyptians, Venetians, Turks, French and in more recent times the Italians, British and Germans.

"One of the tragedies of the island was that Greece wouldn't recognise it as part of Greece," Michael Kailis explained. "It was too far away to be of any strategic use and so was left to the mercy of invaders.

"My grandfather, along with all the other rich merchant sea captains lost their trade, their flags and their nationality when the Italians seized the island during the Balkan Wars of the 1920s.

"Grandfather's ship was siezed, and he had to buy it back, but there was no longer any trade. With the opening of the Suez Canal Castellorizo was no longer as strategically important on the trade routes. "He migrated to Perth in the early 1920s and this once-proud sea captain died as a kitchen hand."

Kailis mother Maria, who died in 1964, was a Kakulas, and her father was also a sea captain.

Michael Kailis remembers his father saying when Arthur Calwell introduced the term "New Australian". "I can't change ... I was born a Castellorizian and I'll die one ... but my son was born here and he will live and die an Australian."

When he returns to Castellorizo for a holiday, Michael Kailis is never referred to as his father's son, but as "Captain Michael Kailis's grandson."

The fishing tycoon bought and lovingly restored a three storey seafront villa "to set an example and prove it can be done."

He gave me a foot-sloggers tour of the 9.2 square kilometre island - there are only a few vehicles on the island and no cars.

We explored the shells of once-stately villas owned by sea merchants and climbed steps carved by Romans and Venetians into the steep hills that surround the picturesque harbour.

He showed me where ancient civilisations had built cisterns for a primitive but efficient water supply and where vats had been scooped out of the rocks for treading grapes for wine.

We visited the castle on the hill built in the early 1300s by Sosicles Nikagoras as a shelter against pirates and other envious invaders.

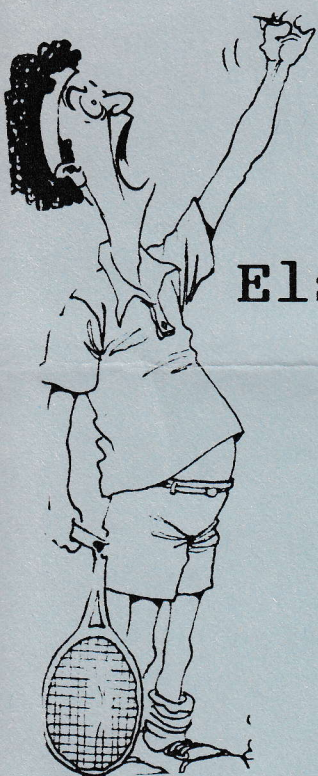
In that era the island was called Megisti after the king Megistea - or perhaps signifying the biggest island of the small archipelago.

It was renamed in the early 1400s after a Spaniard named Ferdinand de Erentia rebuilt the castle and built seven small gold castles, which became the symbols of Castellorizo. The seven castles are long gone.

**FOR THE RESTORATION OF ST NICHOLAS IN
KASTELLORIZON**

Mrs Panagacos \$20
Mr & Mrs Panagos \$10
Mr & Mrs B Hondros \$10
Mr & Mrs Con Paltos \$50
Mr & Mrs Kevin Komninos \$100
Mr & Mrs K N Miriklis \$100
Mr & Mrs Antonis Varsamis \$100
Mr & Mrs George Varsamis \$50
Mr & Mrs Nick Patiniotis \$100
Mrs Zatvthi Potamidis \$20
Mr George Stabelos \$100
Mr & Mrs John S Adgemis \$20
Mr & Mrs Angelo Miriklis \$100
Mrs Kristalla Bisas \$100
Mr George N Bisas \$100
Mr & Mrs P Kostoglou \$100
Mr & Mrs Kevin Mangos \$100
Mr & Mrs Jack M Miriklis \$300
Mr & Mrs Peter Plafadellis \$200
Mr & Mrs Jim Konstas \$100
Mr & Mrs Nick K Miriklis \$100
Mr & Mrs P Stavrou \$100
Mrs Anna Adgemis \$200
Mrs Christina Pavlou \$10
Anonymous \$200

IF YOU ENJOYED YOURSELVES AT OUR
TENNIS MATCH LAST YEAR, COME ALONG
AND JOIN US ONCE AGAIN FOR A GAME OF
SOCIAL TENNIS



to be held at the

Elsternwick Park Tennis Centre

St Kilda Street
Elwood
(Cnr. Glenhuntly Road)

on

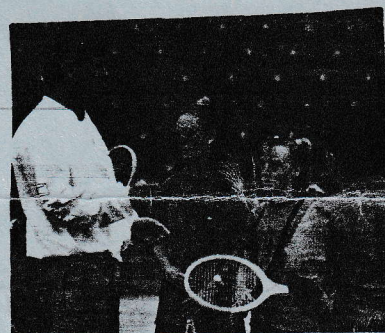
SUNDAY 1ST APRIL, 1990
(APRIL FOOLS DAY)

at

1.00 - 6.00 p.m.

Pick your own partner

\$6.00 per playing person
(8 available courts)



For further information and
bookings please phone Dianne
Spartels on 596-1787 by 25th March

B.B.Q. facilities available bring
your own food, table and chairs.