

**Article by Eleni Bistika, Kathimerini newspaper
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Edward Lear, the Victorian Painter forever returned to the Corfu he praised...

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CAPTION: The bronze bust of Edward Lear (1812 - 1888) now in its permanent position in the historic hall of the Corfu Reading Society. It is the work of a French Margot Roulleau - Gallais (Copyright © Megakles Rogakos 2014).

SHMEIOMATARO (NOTEBOOK)

"..."The more I observe this place, the more I feel that no other place on earth can encompass so much beauty and so much variety of beauty'... This is what Edward Lear wrote in March 1863 by, the Victorian painter and writer, for Corfu. It was one more unbosoming of the worship he harbored for Corfu"... With these words began the inspired speech from the floor of the Corfu Reading Society, count Spyro Flamburiari the Corfiot Count and founding member of the Edward Lear London, which together with the Reading, the oldest cultural association of Greece, organized a ceremony for the unveiling of a bust of the great voyager and painter Edward Lear (1812 - 1888) that will stay forever in the most historic of the Reading Room.

It is a major cultural event for Corfu, which, thanks to his work, he made known in Europe but also worldwide the famous for his spirit and wit Edward Lear. The ceremony took place on 30 May 2014 and, if it is now more widely known to the Greek public, it is perhaps due to the introversion of Corfiots that keep the borders of the island 'closed.' The bronze bust is the work of the Franco-Greek known sculptor Margot Roulleau - Gallais (born in 1979) who created it "wondrously rendering not just the physical likeness but also the expression of the witty personality of the traveled Englishman" as notes in his article, art historian Megakles Rogakos.

The bust came for the first time in Corfu on 24 May 2012 and was placed at the Cavalieri Hotel, historic neoclassical mansion belonging to the Flamburiari family, and where the prime ministers Georgios Theotokis and Georgios Rallis, in his youth with his mother Zaira. At that time there was a solemn ceremony, attended by Sir David Myers, former British ambassador to Greece, with the 25 British Ambassadors, holders of the Order of St. Michael and St. George. This was hailed by the British press, and as Mr Spiro Flamburiari said in his speech "the large circulation newspaper 'The Evening Standard' had commented in issue of 24 May 2012, as follows: The presence of the Edward Lear bust in Corfu should be regarded of great importance, because it symbolizes a long spiritual connection between England and Greece." Corfu had honoured Lear for his love of the island with the successful exhibition held at the Old Palace, two years ago, together with the exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, for the completion of 200 years from his birth, while the Edward Lear Society of London was founded in order to make known to the general public the multiple interests of the great voyager - poetry,

writing, music, lyrics, experiences from his travels and of course the wide range of his painting works, oils and watercolors. Works by Lear adorn the British Embassy at Loukianou Street, Athens.

As noted by Mr Flamburiari: "Edward Lear has bequeathed a huge legacy. More than 7,000 watercolours that he painted on his travels. In addition 2,000 watercolours that he painted in his studio, also 200 oil paintings, humorous bird drawings, travel books, songs and thousands of letters." Mr Derek Johns, the representative of his works, and an art expert, and Mr Spiro Flamburiari, both are founding members of the Society, decided for the better information of the proponents of Lear's work to create a website that will provides all possible information.

Among the prominent members of this Society is Sir Richard Attenborough and many others. "The rich collection of his watercolours, oil paintings and sketches, with subjects that embrace the island - said Mr Spiro Flamburiari - is the bridge that connects the home of Lear, England, with Corfu. His work highlights the Corfiot landscape throughout the world. Corfu could not have found a better ambassador remembering the Durrel brothers"...

Now, regarding the unveiling event, the Reading Society and the Edward Lear Society of London welcomed Corfiots but also Britons in the nice ceremony, in the packed lecture hall of the Reading Society, which was inaugurated by the late Prime Minister Georgios Rallis, with the benefaction of the A. G. Leventis Foundation. The column was present then, along with Ambassador Achilles Exarchos whose death is a loss to Corfu, where he spent his childhood and school years. At the ceremony spoke the president of the Reading Society historian Mr Giannis Pieris who stressed the significance of the permanent placement of the Edward Lear bust along with others of distinguished Corfiots and foreign friends of Corfu and characterized it a "great cultural and artistic event." Also spoke Mr Derek Johns the insightful connoisseur of the multifaceted work of Edward Lear, while Mr Spiro Flamburiari closed his speech by thanking the Corfiot Mr Marios Paipetis "who was the initiator and architect of this idea." Now, along the many attractions beautiful Corfu presents to her visitors, has been added the bust of Edward Lear, who seems to smile, for having returned to stay forever in Corfu!

TILEFOS

Attendants: Marios Paipetis, Eugenios Voulgaris, John Petsalis, Ileana Trivolis, C. Sofianopoulou, Marianna Fourli, Andreas Pagratis, Nikos Lemis, Nikos Vellianitis, Pericles Laskaris, Marilli Ventura - Dantos, Giourga Brothers, Nick Louvros, Elias Kapodistrias, Megakles Rogakos.