



Margo Roulleau-Gallais' "Edward Lear" found a fitting permanent home in the Corfu Reading Society
By Megakles Rogakos

Greeks take pride in the fact that the British Victorian poet and painter Edward Lear (1812-1888), known for his absurd wit, made a most memorable pictorial record of so many beautiful parts of their country in his tour of Greece in the period 1848-1849. Lear's works in British public collections and other collections open to the public reveal that he was fascinated by Athens, Cephalonia, Corfu, Crete (Chania, Arkadi, Mt Ida, Mon Gonia), Epirus (Filiates, Ioanina, Parga, Souli), Euboea (Vrisi), Ithaca, Khalkis, Kythira, Lefkada (Santa Maura), Marathon, Meteora, Mt Athos (Mon Stavronikita, Mon Zografou, Mon Karakalou, Mon Hilandar), Mt Olympus, Mt Parnassus (Delphi, Livadia), Paxos, the Peloponnese (Argos, Bassae, Corinth, Kaki Scala, Mycenae, Mon. Megaspelaion, Nemea, Sparta), Thessaloniki, and Zante. Especially in Corfu he lived and worked for long periods from 1855 until the end of the British protectorate in 1864, a total of eight years. As a matter of fact, calling Corfu "the loveliest place in the world" (diary note of Monday, 4 April 1864), it is only natural that this island should pay due tribute to Lear.

In 2012, celebrating the 200th anniversary from Lear's birth, Corfiot Count Spiro Flamburiari and Old Masters paintings dealer Mr Derek E. Johns had the idea to found the Edward Lear Society of London with the high purpose "to advance knowledge and education and to preserve and protect all matters in connection with the heritage, writings, work and art of Edward Lear" (<http://www.edwardlearsociety.org/edward-lear-society/>).

One of the Society's first tasks was to commission Franco-Hellenic sculptor Margo Roulleau-Gallais (b. 1979) to create a portrait of Lear. Based on photographic archives, Roulleau-Gallais crafted a bronze life-size bust of the painter's great naturalistic likeness, as largely familiar to the public, groomed with a long and thick beard, wearing spectacles with oval lenses, and dressed in a three-piece period suit. This bust was first unveiled at the Cavalieri Hotel in Corfu on 24 May 2012 by Sir David Miers, ex-British Ambassador to Greece, in the presence of 25 ex-British ambassadors, holders of the Order of St Michael and St George.

More recently, on 30 May 2014, the founder members of the Edward Lear Society unveiled the same bust of Lear in its permanent home, the historic and prestigious Corfu Reading Society. In his opening speech Count Flamburiari related Lear's role today, serving as an all-important cultural bridge connecting Greece and Britain. He also thanked Mr Marios D. Paipetis for mediating between the Edward Lear Society and the

Corfu Reading Society. Subsequently, Mr Johns spoke about Lear's work and the appropriateness of the Corfu Reading Society to be this bust's keeper, especially as the artist had made a drawing of the building. Finally, the soprano Rosa Poulimenou and pianist Marilena Eloul performed songs by Corfiot composer Napoleon Labelet (1864-1932), including a 'nonsense' poem by Lear. Many people from the cultural community in Corfu attended this well-organised event, including Lord Jacob Rothschild, who is a great patron of the arts and cares for the island's heritage.

Athens, 3 June 2014

Public Information

Corfu Reading Society' website | www.anagnostikicorfu.com

Edward Lear Society's website | www.edwardlearsociety.org

Margot Roulleau-Gallais' blogspot | http://mrgsculpture.blogspot.gr/p/private-commission_11.html

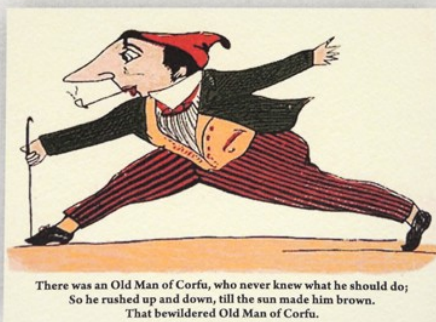
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The Chairman and the Committee of
THE READING SOCIETY OF CORFU
in association with
Spiro Flamburiari and Derek Johns
Founder Members of
THE EDWARD LEAR SOCIETY OF LONDON

cordially invite you to the

**UNVEILING OF A BRONZE BUST OF
EDWARD LEAR**
in the premises of the Reading Society
where it will be permanently displayed.

The event will take place at 20.30 hours
on Friday 30th of May 2014.
A Reception will be held after the ceremony.



▲ Invitation to the Corfu Reading Society Rouleau-Gallais' "Lear" at the Cavalieri Hotel, 24 May 2012 ▼





▲ Mr & Mrs Simon Edsor, Countess Flamburiari, Ms Marianna Fourli Corfu Reading Society's plaque ▼





▲ The main lecture hall on the second floor of the Corfu Reading Society, 30 May 2014 ▼





▲ Opening speech by Count Spiro L. Flamburiari

Subsequent speech by Mr Derek E. Johns ▼





▲ Margo Roulleau-Gallais' "Lear," unveiled by Corfu Reading Society President, Mr Giannis S. Pieris ▼





▲ Marilena Eloul and Rosa Poulimenou Lord Jacob Rothschild with Mr Johns and Count Flamburiari ▼





▲ Roulleau-Gallais' "Lear" in the Corfu Reading Society Mr Marios D. Paipetis with Count Flamburiari ▼

