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Six distinguished philhellenes receive awards of the Hellenic Republic for their contribution in enhancing Greece's stature abroad.



On the occasion of the 1821 Bicentenary, the Hellenic Republic has decided to confer on six distinguished philhellenes of Great Britain the honorary distinctions of the Hellenic Orders, in

recognition and reward of their contribution to the strengthening of Greek-British relations and the promotion of Greece in the United Kingdom. April 19, day of Philhellenism and International Solidarity, has been chosen as a symbolic milestone for the granting of the insignia.

The distinguished philhellenes are the following:

Prof. Paul Cartledge	Commander of the Order of Honour
Mr Robin Lane Fox	Gold Cross of the Order of Honour
Dr John Kittmer	Grand Cross of the Order of the Phoenix
Prof. Kevin Featherstone	Grand Commander, Order of Phoenix
Mr Alberto Costa MP	Grand Commander, Order of Phoenix
Mr Stephen John Fry	Commander of the Order of Phoenix

2021, a landmark year for Greece, is an opportunity to renew the historical ties of friendship and cooperation between Greece and the United Kingdom. In this context, the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Greek Revolution includes the aspect of the crucial role of philhellenism in 1821, but also today.

The conferment of these orders is a recognition of their continuous support in giving prominence, through their work, to Greece's universal values; democracy, freedom and solidarity, which are the cornerstones of Greek and European civilization.

Ambassador of Greece in the UK, Mr. Ioannis Raptakis stated: "This year, we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the beginning of the Greek revolution. It is an opportunity to strengthen our relationship with the United Kingdom. The visit of Prince Charles in Greece, demonstrates that there

is common ground for upgrading, deepening and expanding our relations. There is an active Greek community in the United Kingdom, numbering more than 150,000 people, but also the British are favourable towards our country. Let me tell you two examples: 10 year old pupils from the English School Our Lady of Sion sent me letters supporting the return of the Parthenon Marbles to Greece. Also, 25 globally recognized people in their field took the initiative to write a letter to the Times newspaper to support the Implementation of International Law in our region. During the last three days, we conferred on distinguished personalities honorary distinctions. We need to encourage this great potential so that our two peoples - who have always been close since we have always been on the same side of history - can continue into the post-Brexit era."

He added: "Everyone said it was an unexpected and most welcome gesture. They felt close to Greece before. Some said they felt Greek from the moment they started reading, some said that Greece is the country where they belong to. They did not talk about their homeland, they talked about Greece. Some even spoke in Greek. The decoration on behalf of the President of the Hellenic Republic gives them the impetus to work harder, to come closer to us, to reciprocate part of the honour bestowed on them. This is the experience I have from these three days. It was moving and very touching".

Stephen Fry is an actor, broadcaster and director. He is also a prolific writer, contributing to newspapers and magazines, but also writing novels, autobiographies and books. He has participated in many films and won many awards. He has equally presented many radio shows and wrote theatre plays. In 2017 he wrote the book *Mythos* followed by *Heroes* (2018) and finally *Troy* (2020). He has steadily backed and advocated the return of the Parthenon Marbles to Greece. He has participated in the Embassy's celebration of the Bicentenary of the Greek War of Independence through a very warm and personal video on 25/3.

Stephen Fry, after receiving his award, he stated in Greek: "This honour means the world to me", while he argued in favour of the return of the





Parthenon Sculptures, saying: "The word I would use is the word "classy". I think it would be so classy of the British to do this [return the Marbles]; not generous, not smart, just classy. It would show a kind of quality in the British. We've had it. We looked after it – it's possible that those marbles would be in much worse condition if we had not looked after them. If a neighbour has a fire, we might take the paintings and store them in the barn for a while. Then we give them back; and we do so with pleasure and excitement".

Professor Robin Lane Fox is an English classicist, ancient historian, and gardening writer known for his works on Alexander the Great. The original screenplay of the film "Alexander", directed by Oliver Stone was derived by his book "Alexander the Great" written in 1973. He was very moving when he delivered his speech in Greek: "I started learning Greek when I was 10. I started reading Homer when I was 13 years old. I went to Greece when I was 16 years all... I continue worship Homer", he said.

John Kittmer is one of the most sincere and enthusiastic supporters of the Greek culture. He served as UK Ambassador to Greece from 2013 to 2016 and left to devote himself to the studies of Ritsos where he completed his PhD at King's College London University. He is the chair of the Anglo-Hellenic League where he constantly promotes the Greek-British friendship and cooperation. He has established the Runciman Awards to reward the best books published in English about Greece and he writes articles in British media and think tanks supporting Greek positions.

Dr. John Kittmer explained his long "love affair" with Greece: "I went to Greece at the age of 16, fell in love with the country and its culture and its people". "I believe that I am the only diplomat that left his career to follow a communist poet", he said in Greek about his PhD in Yannis Ritsos. "Ritsos is a poet who grabbed my attention in a beach near Marathon many years ago. I was listening to the radio one of Mikis's Theodorakis great settings and I said to my friends: 'Who is this? This is not just a song. This is real poetry'. From that point on, I fell in love again in Greece and this love affair with the poetry of Ritsos has kept me going for over 20 years".

Professor Paul Cartledge is the Deputy Chair of the British Committee for the Reunification of the Parthenon Marbles (BCRPM) and the International Association for the Reunification of the Parthenon

Sculptures (IARPS). He is a prominent British ancient historian and academic. He is the Emeritus A.G. Leventis Professor of Greek Culture and an Honorary Citizen of modern Sparta. After receiving his insignia he thanked the President of the Hellenic Republic for the Honour. Professor Cartledge is one of the few foreigners who hold two insignia, since he also holds the Gold Cross of the Order of Honour of the Hellenic Republic.



Kevin Featherstone is Eleftherios Venizelos Professor in Contemporary Greek Studies and Professor in European Politics in the European Institute at LSE, where he is also Director of the Hellenic Observatory. Professor Featherstone also holds two insignia, since in 2013 he had been conferred Commander, Order of the Phoenix.

After being presented with the award, professor Featherstone stated: "You say that I have made some contribution to Philhellenism. I would be flattered to assume that I have received far more from your country than I have offered. This today is a further example of the generosity of the Greek spirit... It has always struck me the magnitude and depth of the Greek contribution to Europe."

HELLENIC ORDERS AND DECORATIONS

Admission into an Order and conferment of the relevant insignia constitutes a public acknowledgement of outstanding services provided to Greece, or of exceptional achievements in an area of public life.

The Order of Honour was established in 1975 and it ranks second in priority and importance. The Order of the Phoenix was established in 1926 and it ranks third in the hierarchy of Orders. Both Orders consist of five classes: the Grand Cross, the Grand Commander, the Commander, the Gold and Silver Cross.

Photos:

- 1) *Insignia of the Orders of the Hellenic Republic*
- 2) *Mr Stephen John Fry*
- 3) *Professor Robin Lane Fox,*
- 4) *Ambassador Raptakis with Dr. John Kittmer and Prof. Paul Cartledge*
- 5) *Prof Kevin Featherstone (Photo Credit Al. Gennaris)*



Greeks celebrate Easter under COVID-19 lockdown, with hopes for post-pandemic era



This year Greeks celebrated the Christian Orthodox Easter on Sunday 2 May under COVID-19 lockdown, for a second year in a row, gathering with family and friends in small groups. Greek churches in London opened up for their congregation, under restrictions but with the hope for a post-pandemic era.

In his Easter Message, His Eminence Archbishop Nikitas of Thyateira and Great Britain said:

"On Holy Saturday night, just before the Holy Light is shared with the faithful, there is a tradition to turn off the lights of the church and stand together in total darkness... We find ourselves, beloved people of God, at a moment in time when darkness seems to have engulfed both our world and our minds, just as the hymn says of Mary Magdalene. Amidst confusion and aimless drifting, humanity searches for hope, safety, and light. Perhaps we need to do as Mary did, some two thousand years ago, and hasten to the Tomb to see for ourselves that it is empty; that is, to learn what it means that Christ, Who is the very hope and life of the world, has truly risen and that darkness has been dispelled.

It is this message that we seek and desire, especially as we continue to endure the challenges of the global coronavirus pandemic. While we see science and medicine working to heal our bodies, we know that Christ is able to heal and save our whole person, together with all of creation...

Christ is Risen and we have hope. Christ is Risen and we have life eternal. Christ is Risen and love abounds. May this message be with each and everyone, as we celebrate Pascha and the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour."

Photo Credit: Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain

Europe Day - 9 May | Europe Day concert and Europe Day picnic kits for EU citizens



Europe Day held on 9 May every year celebrates peace and unity in Europe. The date marks the anniversary of the historic 'Schuman declaration'. At a speech in Paris in 1950, Robert Schuman, the then French foreign minister, set out his idea for a new form of political cooperation in Europe, which would make war between Europe's nations unthinkable.

His vision was to create a European institution that would pool and manage coal and steel production. A treaty creating such a body was signed just under a year later. Schuman's proposal is considered to be the beginning of what is now the European Union.

In London the European Parliament Liaison Office in the UK held the annual Europe Day Concert, which was broadcasted from St John's Smith Square on Sunday 9 May at noon UK time. The theme of the concert was 'Journeys', both earthbound and spiritual. With Portugal currently holding the Presidency of the EU Council, top Portuguese lyric tenor Luis Gomes took the audience from 'Inferno' - the word which begins an aria from Verdi's opera Simon Boccanegra about the seafaring Genovese people - to 'Purgatorio' in the possibility of exile envisaged by Benjamin Godard's Dante in an operatic rarity of 1890, and finally heavenwards with da Gama's 'O paradís' in Meyerbeer's L'Africaine.

The EU Delegation has been preparing a series of events and engagements to celebrate and mark the occasion. They have been distributing Europe Day picnic kits to EU nationals. These also promoted citizens' rights and contained a range of printed leaflets as well as a greeting card and simple instructions to join online.

Photo Credit: EU Delegation in the UK

The rightful place for the Parthenon Marbles is the Acropolis Museum

Professor Paul Cartledge wrote a paper entitled 'Immodest Proposal' about the Reunification of the Parthenon Marbles. In his paper he explains what are the Parthenon Marbles, what does the Greek government ask for and what is the history of the campaign for reunification. He also explains the arguments for and against reunification, while he answers all British Museum's claims.

The Parthenon itself, and thus the case for Reunification, are both unique: very substantial remains of the original Temple still stand proud atop the Acropolis which soars above the city of Athens. There is no other distinguished building from the Ancient world still standing so prominently.

In Athens the sculptures are arranged so they face outward, as they were intended to do. Their alignment is accurate; they are bathed in Athenian light, and viewed against the Parthenon and Acropolis. In Athens visitors approach the sculptures in a correct sequence, walking up towards them from the excavated site of a village at the base of the Acropolis where once in Ancient times villagers made religious offerings for pilgrims to present at the Parthenon. As if taking part in an ancient Panathenaic ('All-Athenian') procession, visitors climb slowly from floor to floor, each filled with wonderful sculptures, up to the NAM's Parthenon Gallery. More in sorrow than in anger it seems, plaster casts occupy the spaces patiently reserved for the BM's originals.

If you would like to know more, do visit www.theacropolismuseum.gr

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, during an interview in the Greek newspaper TA NEA and Yannis Andritsopoulos, said that the sculptures held in the British Museum would remain in Britain because they had been legally acquired.

Janet Suzman, Chair of the British Committee for the Reunification of the Parthenon Marbles (BCRPM) (www.parthenonuk.com) stated: "Boris Johnson says '2021 is a significant year for Greece and a very exciting year for Britain to be invigorating our relationship with the Greek people'. If only. If only that good brain of his endowed with an impeccable classical education would dare to think outside the boring old box. Go on, Boris, reinvigorate the relationship with the one thing that would do it instantly: give back those Parthenon marbles. The old refrain that they were legally acquired is an invention, a factoid; say something often enough and people begin to believe it. Boris is a master

of that sort of sell. There never was any proof of permission to export those figures, and the laws of the time have become inappropriate and dated. These sculptures represent the very heart and soul of Periclean Greece and so of the modern Greek state. The Ottomans are long gone. After 200 years the Marbles have done their job of enlightening and civilising the peoples of the West. The British Trustees do not own them they hold them in Trust, and to decide that the Greek people should in their celebratory year of 2021 should have a chance to bathe in the aura of the originals would be a magnificent and wholly decent gesture on their part. Those figures so brutally detached from the building still soaring above Athens, should be back where they belong, in sight of the Parthenon itself. A beautiful museum awaits them."

Professor Paul Cartledge, Vice-Chair of the British Committee for the Reunification of the Parthenon Marbles (BCRPM) and the International Association (IARPS) said: "Now is the time, now is the hour, Prime Minister Johnson, to show that you are a true philhellene. That you truly respect not only what the brave Greeks of 1821 and following accomplished, against huge odds, in the name of liberty, but also what the Hellenes of the 5th century BCE achieved in creating a culture and a civilisation that has been an example and model to the world in the 25 centuries since. Consider what Pheidias, master-craftsman and master-designer, and architects Ictinus and Callicrates, would think if they knew that their masterpiece, the Parthenon, had been torn apart and kept apart - not only by a gunpowder explosion in the heat of battle with Venetians long, long ago but by British hands and minds, from the 7th Lord Elgin to the current Trustees of the British Museum even today. Do your duty by the Greeks, would-be philhellene PM Johnson! Reunify."

Lord Alf Dubs rebutted: "Our Prime Minister's comments are very disappointing. He talks of friendship and cooperation with our European friends and claims that the Parthenon marbles were obtained legally. But the permit for their removal from Athens was granted by the occupying Ottoman forces and the Greeks themselves had no say in the matter. I believe that works of art should not be returned to their country of origin save in the most exceptional of circumstances. In the case of the marbles their ownership is doubtful to say the least, the British Museum only has some of them and there is a rightful place for them at the Acropolis Museum."

(In this article there are abstracts of an article published in TA NEA newspaper, by Yannis Andritsopoulos)

Tourism Minister Harry Theoharis visits London



Photo: Minister of Tourism Harry Theoharis with Minister of State Nigel Adams

Greek Tourism Minister Harry Theoharis visited London from 10 to 12 May, a few days before Greece's official opening to tourism. During his visit Minister Theoharis met with British government officials and tourism industry representatives and promoted the reopening of Greek tourism for 2021.

More specifically, Minister Theoharis met with Nigel Adams, Minister of State at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), and discussed the terms of lifting travel restrictions between the United Kingdom and Greece in the near future. Currently the UK has placed Greece – as well as most European countries – on the 'amber' list in its travel system, meaning that people returning from Greece to the UK have to quarantine. However, Minister Theoharis appeared hopeful that the whole of Greece or at least some of its regions will be upgraded from the amber to the green list in the next review, at the beginning of June, and noted that Greece is ready to provide all the necessary data to the UK's officials, so that informed decisions can be made.

In London Minister Theoharis also met with senior executives of the UK's three leading airlines - British Airways, Easyjet and Jet2 – and with tour operators. All of them appeared confident that Greece will soon be included in the green list and expect bookings to surge in the coming months. British Airways has already added more flights from Heathrow airport to many Greek destinations starting from 21 June. The United Kingdom is one of the largest markets for Greek tourism. Indicatively, in 2019 Greece welcomed about 3.5 million visitors from the UK.

During his visit Minister Theoharis gave a series of interviews to BBC, ITV, Sky News and Telegraph

and briefed Greek media correspondents at a press conference which took place at the Greek Ambassador's residence.

"Greece is a very, very safe destination, we have been safer than most countries all throughout this pandemic and we're continuing in the same way," Minister Theoharis told ITV's Good Morning Britain. "Many of our islands are on the same level as Portugal, so it doesn't make sense that the whole of Greece is on the amber list." Minister Theoharis highlighted the good progress of the vaccine rollout, especially on the islands. "We are very proud of our vaccination programme. We are currently vaccinating 1.1% of our population every day. That is a huge logistical exercise and it is only constrained by the number of vaccines that are available in Europe and Greece." To ensure the safety of tourists and locals, Greece has launched the operation 'Blue Freedom' which aims to complete the vaccination of the islands by the end of June. "One third of the islands have already been fully vaccinated. The vaccination of the second third, the medium-sized islands, will be completed by the end of May and the full list of the islands will be completely vaccinated by the end of June- some of them even earlier", Minister Theoharis said. "We want to ensure that we build this wall of immunity, which is essentially a wall of trust between tourists and citizens."

Speaking on Sky News Minister Theoharis noted that tourism is an international activity based on trust and highlighted the importance of cooperation. "Greece has shown leadership", "we were the first country to implement last year digital only passenger locator form and use AI at our borders". "We were awarded the global award of excellence for the systems that we put in place last year and we are now using more tools that we have at our disposal." "We have a very comprehensive, mature and professional plan to ensure the safety of our citizens and anyone that comes to Greece."



19th century British press reports and comments on the 1821 Greek Revolution

Poet, anthologist of poems and literary critic Antonis Skiathas is the owner of a great historical archive, consisting of British newspapers of the 19th century. Antonis Skiathas talked to the @GreeceinUK about his outstanding historical archive.

1. What does historical memory mean?

The historical memory writes down all the things that the past has created as a code of lifestyle of the people who operated in a certain area. The compilation of personal belongings of the protagonists of a historical period, as well as, the record of documents of a certain period that seem the historical time create a perfect presentation in museum level, or even, a historical research level, the modulation of the true information about the events that took place in a certain historical time.

2. How does the historical archive "E. & A. Skiatha" serve the historical memory?

The historical archive of Eugenia & Antoni Skiatha the last forty years with great consistency in the recording of historical memory, sums up in its collections heirlooms and documents of the modern Greek history from 1770 until 1974. With documents from the protagonists, with belongings of the participants and ephemeral documents of the period's activity it constitutes a sturdy reading of the historical horizon of Greece's important moments the last 200 years until the regime change of 1974.

The collection of historical things asserts the activity period, when, in highly scientific way it's preserved, documented, archived and presented with the corresponding museographic studies. It's preserved with specialty on paper, wood, metal and paintings that coordinate the restoration of the heirlooms and documents.

Scholars and Historians evaluate and present in their way the documents of the archive in issues that refer in a certain period. The documents of the Skiatha archive have been presented in many museographic listings in Greece and abroad. In historical exhibitions with thematic units that concern the 1821 Revolution, the Balkan wars, the epic of 1940 and the period of 1941-1944 have been presented a few units of the archive.

3. What are you preparing this period for the anniversary of 200 years of Greek revolution?

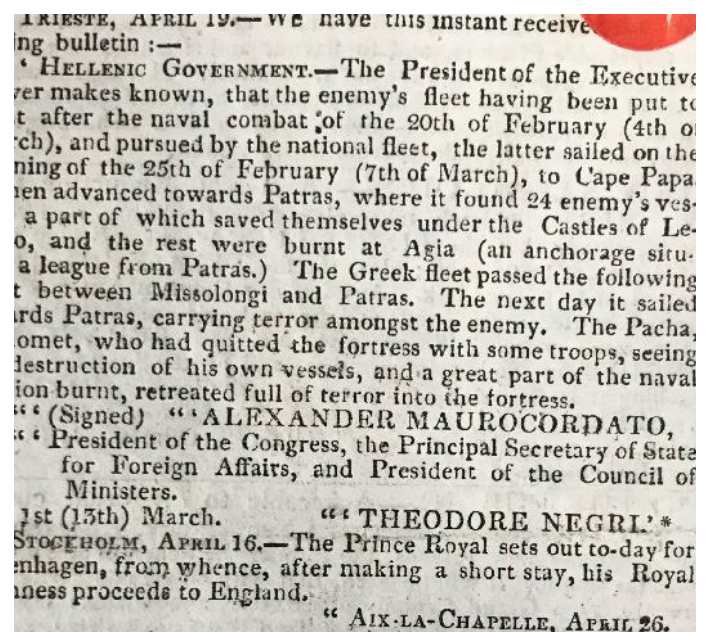
In collaboration with the Western Greece Region, the Regional Municipality and the Greek Library of London we have constituted the historical exhibition of heirlooms and documents with title "1821-2021 200 years of memories". This historical execution

will display personal belongings of the protagonists, important documents of that period, Philhellenism objects, armor pieces of the fighters, costumes of the participants as well as original documents of international personalities who in their way contributed in the events of that period.

The issues that will support those museographic executions in a multi-page album will write down the documents of the period 1821- 1831. Specific educational programs will support the exhibition of heirlooms that have been planned to be displayed in many cities of Greece.

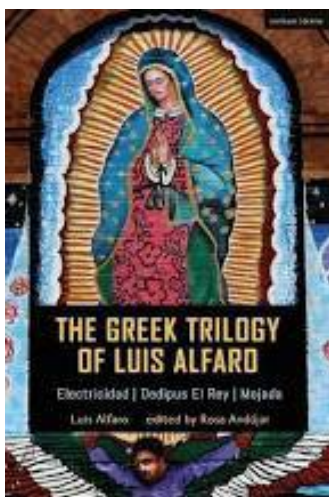
As the Regional Governor of Western Greece, Nektarios Farmakis, as the Regional Vice Governor, Andreas Fillias, that organized in a unique way the exhibitions for the celebration of the 200 years from the Greek Revolution with hundred of exhibitions in the whole region that is the area of great revolutionary activities (Patra, Missolonghi, Kalavryta, Aigion) and have created an important research horizon of historical memory.

Important from the E. & A. Skiatha archive is the album that is planned to be published with subject the Philhellenism movement in the world at that time. From original newspapers from England, Germany, France and America which present the true news that concern in high level the events of that period. In this bilingual album (Greek and English) will be written down and other events with corresponding historical listings.



'The Morning Chronicle' newspaper, London, Monday, May 6, 1822.

The Winner of the 2020 London Hellenic Prize



The London Hellenic Prize (LHP) adjudicating committee met by teleconference on May 7th to discuss the Shortlist of candidates for books published in 2020 and select the winner. The committee was chaired by A.G. Leventis Professor emeritus Paul Cartledge (Clare College, University of Cambridge) and also included Professor Peter Frankopan (Worcester College, Oxford), Mr

Robin Lane Fox (New College, Oxford), Dr Nick Lowe (Royal Holloway, University of London), Professor emeritus Michael Paschalis (University of Crete), and Dr Jennifer Wallace (Peterhouse, University of Cambridge).

The five books shortlisted by the committee were:

*Leon Saltiel's *The Holocaust in Thessaloniki: Reactions to the Anti-Jewish Persecution, 1942–1943* (Routledge) -- an original study based on new archival historical research, illuminating the municipal, civil, and religious responses to the tragedy of the Holocaust victims of Thessaloniki

* Stephen Fry's *Troy* (Penguin/ Michael Joseph) – the third book in a projected tetralogy retelling myths linked with the Trojan War with imagination, intelligence and honour

*Judith Herrin's *Ravenna: Capital of Empire, Crucible of Europe* (Penguin/ Allen Lane) -- an absorbing account of the important historical role of Ravenna during a crucial period of Christian-Byzantine transition, introducing its people, monuments and civilization

* Benjamin Wardhaugh's *The Book of Wonders: The Many Lives of Euclid's Elements* (Harper Collins/ William Collins) --detailing Euclid's achievements and the impact of the major Greek invention of maths, a cultural-historical history of mathematical thinking and writing

*Rosa Andújar's edition of *The Greek Trilogy of Luis Alfaro: Electricidad; Oedipus El Rey; Mojada* (Bloomsbury/Methuen Drama) -- a collection of the three Greek plays by Mexican-American playwright, Luis Alfaro, a highly original cultural and linguistic adaptation of Sophocles' *Electra*, Oedipus Rex and Euripides' *Medea* to the life of urban/ immigrant Latinx communities in Los Angeles. Andújar offers an excellent introductory essay and her commentary provides both ancient and modern context for each play.

The winner of the 2020 LHP was *The Greek Trilogy* by Luis Alfaro and Rosa Andujar.

<http://londonhellenicprize.eu/>

EVENTS TO COME

Online Exhibition: 01 by Minas Kampasis

When: Monday 10 May – Sunday 06 June

Where: Online

<https://helleniccentre.org/virtual-events/exhibitions/01-minas-kampasis/>

Modern Greek Politics

When: Tuesday 25 May 2021, 16:00-17:30

Where: Online

https://lse.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_MqCO6PoeR7CmQJ7TgL8BkQ

Marathon revisited: the new excavation of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens at the site of Plasi

When: Wednesday 26 May

Where: Online

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/2916196459645/WN_qWAmu7KfSWecovCOZoqRFQ

Is emigration a blow to liberal democracy?

When: Thursday, 27 May 2021 - 4:00pm to 5:15pm

Where: Online

<https://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/events/emigration-blow-liberal-democracy>

The Greek War of Independence in Greek Cinema

When: Friday 28 May

Where: Online

<https://helleniccentre.org/event/the-greek-war-of-independence-in-greek-cinema/>

Emigrants and emigration states: A contested relationship?

When: Thursday, 3 June 2021 - 4:00pm to 5:15pm

Where: Online

<https://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/events/emigrants-and-emigration-states-contested-relationship>

"The land of the great, the home of the brave."

When: Friday 11 June

Where: Online

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/6216188407953/WN_Pw_S4cLpSVePSfZAEiYWNQ

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