



Walk your way into your very own Ithaka

POETRY and hiking have more in common than you may think, especially where Xenophon Hasapis is concerned. The man behind Cyprus Strollers is bringing a sense of rhyme and rhythm to our footsteps, as he leads us through the hills of Lythrodontas next Sunday.

The hiking group, which has expanded rapidly since its conception in autumn 2014, will start off the year with a hike that will take all those tired of sitting around a table and eating everything but the kitchen sink, on two trails in the hills of Lythrodontas – which is a 30-km drive from the capital.

The first trail is named Aetomoutti and the second – wait for it, because this is where the poetry comes in – is the Ithaka trail. The trail is named after the famous poem by Greek poet Constantinos Cavafy, that tells us that 'if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you. Wise as you will have become, so full of experience, you will have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.' Cavafy's Ithaka refers to our journey in life, our destination and how we get there. The trail's Ithaka won't take as long to come to a similar conclusion.

The Lefkothea trail is a circular route around a hill, reaching up to the hill top named Aetomoutti. At the point where the hill circle ends, and the first trail reaches a dirt road, the Lefkothea trail flows into the Ithaka trail. It then goes downhill – which is quite demanding at times – on the way out and uphill on the way back. Speaking about how poetry fits perfectly with this second trail, Hasapis said, "we gave the second trail the name Ithaka, because we were puzzled concerning its worthiness for inclusion in the Cyprus Strollers programme of activities. In search of an answer as to why should the club be inviting Strollers along a dirt road downhill and then back uphill, we were inspired by the message by poet Cavafy in his poem Ithaka: a traveller ought to look for the thrills and rewards in the journey, rather than the destination."

The hike will start at 10.45am, but before that there will be a car pool leaving from the Handicrafts Centre in Nicosia on Athalassa Avenue at 10am.

The total distance of the hike will be ten km, and it is expected to take around three hours to be completed. The degree of difficulty for this hike is medium, so you don't have to be that fit to join in, and after the hike you can sit down with fellow hikers for a tavern meal. No registration is required, but if you are staying for the meal, do send an email to Hasapis on xenophon.hasapis@gmail.com, by the Friday before the hike, so he can count you in.

Hiking with Poetry

Take a hike with the Cyprus Strollers in the hills of Lythrodontas – Aetomoutti and Ithaka, followed by lunch. January 14. Car trip starting from the Handicrafts Centre in Nicosia starts at 10am. Tel: 97-613720

By Maria Gregoriou

