ISSN 1759-6939

RIVISTA

No. 394 2011/12 The Magazine of the British-Italian Society

RIVISTA

The Magazine of the British-Italian Society

No. 394 2011/2012

www.british-italian.org

Co-Editors: Georgina Gordon-Ham and Alexandra Richardson

E-mail addresses:

gg@british-italian.org arr@british-italian.org

Printed by EVONPRINT Ltd

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

Dear Members

It has been a momentous year for Italy with the 150th anniversary of Unification.

So, although we are fast approaching Christmas and the gentleman we chose to put on the cover of this year's issue of RIVISTA - with white beard and luxuriant midriff - might *seem* to have some bearing on the season, he is, in fact, Sir James Hudson and no relative of Santa. In our pages, Tom Richardson explains who he was and sheds light on Hudson's pivotal role as Great Britain's very first envoy to Italy in those exciting times. Elsewhere, the Unification theme threads its way through our pages: there is Charles de Chassiron's account of the talk given at our Christmas Party by Prof. Maurizio Isabella; John Culver reminds us of another moving chapter in the overall history with his piece on the founding of the Anglican Church in Naples. Alessandro Severi weighs in with a family account of the era while another article assesses David Gilmour's views, as expressed in his latest book, on the unity of Italy. A bow is made to several Italian exiles here in London from that era in our write-up on London's Blue Plaques. And another important figure from those times even appears in our Snippets column! So, in a sense, this is a themed-issue, whilst still addressing many other topics.

Once again, printing deadlines made it impossible to feature coverage of the highlight of the BIS year in last year's issue: the annual Leconfield Lecture which was held in November 2010. We are delighted, therefore, to open this RIVISTA with Sandra Fox's very lively description of a colourful evening with Andrew Graham-Dixon talking on Caravaggio at The Italian Cultural Institute. Anew, we are grateful to the generous and friendly hospitality of the Institute and specifically of its Director, Ing. Carlo Presenti who introduced the talk that evening. We are equally indebted to the Tomasso Brothers Fine Art for their extremely generous offer to host the BIS 70th Birthday Celebrations held this Autumn. **(Save the date: this big Anniversary Fundraiser is on 10th November!)**

In the course of the year, BIS went on to host a number of fine events, ranging from Etruria to ice cream, with plenty in between. In May, we had a lecture given by A.N. Wilson on his then about-to-be-published book, "Dante in Love". Fortuitously, Wilson recounted this evening with us days later in a Financial Times Diary column. What more authentic way to report on that evening in the pages of RIVISTA than to have it described by the lecturer himself? We are grateful to Wilson and to The Financial Times for allowing a reprint.

Over these last months, BIS members clearly heeded our pleas: many of you have contributed a fine number of articles. Thank you very much. Talent is not confined to one place alone, though. Thus you will also see some new names from outside the BIS membership list. This greater catchment area has enabled us to give you a wider range of subjects.

With this encouraging note we would like to invite more members to contribute articles to Rivista. Your thoughts and impressions are a valuable cross-cultural source to share with all those who walk back and forth over that bridge which joins our two countries. Please contact the editors direct for anything to do with Rivista. It is important to submit articles as early as possible since they have to be checked for suitability and available space as well as edited before going into print. Our direct contact details are both in Rivista and on the BIS web page.

In the last issue, we rather liked the idea of "companion pieces" namely taking a topic and looking at it from two angles, putting two articles side by side. In fact, we liked it so much that we are running another "set". Sitting right next to Sandra Fox's piece on presenting English theatre in Venice, we have a short account by Mariano Bonetto about putting on Italian theatre here in London. We are recidivists in another respect too: we liked giving you something in Italian so much that in this issue there are *three* articles: Bonetto's piece on theatre, another one by Alessandro Roselli, reflecting on Rome, archaeology and books, and an article by Alessandro Severi on the Risorgimento and post-Risorgimento. Last but certainly not least, we want to give a public thank you to a very unpublic helper who has assisted us all along, John Jinks. We have turned to him on many occasions for technical matters and also to intervene in advertising details: John has never failed us. Thank you!

Buona lettura and warm *auguri* for Christmas and The New Year.

Georgina Gordon-Ham and Alexandra Richardson

A TRIBUTE TO LORD HAREWOOD

The British-Italian Society pays tribute to one of its patrons, George 7th Earl of Harewood, KBE, who died on 11th July 2011. He is remembered by many for his great enthusiasm for music and opera. This lifelong pursuit led him to help transform the British attitude to opera and his foundation of the English National Opera North in 1978. However, these are not the only links he had with Italy.

His connection with Italy goes back to the very roots of the Society and its founders. He served with the Grenadier Guards. On 18th June 1944 he was fighting in Italy when he was shot in the stomach and leg. He was taken prisoner by the Germans and sent to Spangenburg POW camp. Six weeks later he was moved to Colditz and there was classified as one of the "Prominenten", prisoners of social standing who the Germans considered using for propaganda purposes. Hitler signed Lord Harewood's death warrant in March 1945, but fortunately he escaped this ordeal.

Records of the AGM of 30th October 1952 mention Lord Leconfield, the Chairman of the BIS at the time, announcing Lord Harewood's consent to become the Society's President, of which he later became Patron. He is missed for his great contribution to promoting culture.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Mr Charles Alexander
Ms L. Bennett
Mr & Mrs C. Blunden
Ms Monica Bortolin Cossa
Mr E. Bosco LIFE
Ms C. Brooke-Johnson
Mr O. H. Brind
Dr M. Calaresu
Mr A. Ciavolella
Lady Cheyne
Ms R. Chirico
Miss V. Coleman
Mr L. Corabi
Mrs P. D'Amario
Mr A. Del Corno'
Mr & Mrs. D. Eden
Mr A. Graham-Dixon
Ms R. Greenane
Ms V. Hall-Smith
Mr E. Hartley-Watson-Evans
Mr M. Isabella
Ms S. La Greca Bertacchi
Mr R. Mann
Ms Laura Marriott
Mrs H. Maxwell-Hyslop
Mr Mark Motion
Mrs Maria L. Pereira
Ms Jan Rawlinson
Mr J.T. Riby
Ms Simona Riccio
Dr Corinna Riva
Ms Cinzia Semeraro
Mrs E. Shargool
Ms Joan Sheehan
Mr Steven Taylor
Mr J. Ward
Mr A. Watts
Mr K. White & Mrs Wilson-White
Mr A. N. Wilson
Mrs E.B. Winterton

Seasons' Greetings

TO ALL MEMBERS INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING CORPORATE MEMBERS:

Finmeccanica UK Ltd. – Mediobanca – Pirelli International Ltd. – UniCredit HypoVereinsbank

and also to all the organisations which have contributed towards Rivista, and a special thank you to The Italian Cultural Institute, The Italian State Tourist Board ENIT and to Tomasso Brothers Fine Art.

For THE BRITISH-ITALIAN SOCIETY EVENTS

Venues and exact dates had not been finalised at the time of going to press. This information will be supplied by Elisabetta closer to the date (s) of the events.

THE BRITISH ITALIAN SOCIETY – CONTACT DETAILS

Membership secretary:
John Jinks
Tel: 0208 150 9167
e-mail: jj@british-italian.org
skype: member-ship

New contact address:
The British-Italian Society
15 Dawson Road
London
NW2 6UB

Events secretary:
Elisabetta Murgia
Tel: 0208 2082288
e-mail: elisabetta@british-italian.org

THE 2010 LECONFIELD LECTURE: ANDREW GRAHAM-DIXON ON CARAVAGGIO

By Sandra Fox

The annual Leconfield Lecture 2010 was, as in previous years, very kindly hosted by the Italian Cultural Institute, in the presence of the Institute's Director Carlo Presenti and the Deputy Head of Mission of the Italian Embassy, Stefano Pontecorvo. The subject of this fascinating talk by Andrew Graham-Dixon was Caravaggio.

To say that the lecture was 'delivered' by Andrew Graham-Dixon would be a massive understatement. We were treated to over an hour of unadulterated entertainment for both our delight and edification. This included an anecdote about his having given a copy of his book on Caravaggio to Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones, during the course of an interview in New York. Keith Richards (who originally studied art) had looked at this and commented that "Yeah, I really like Caravaggio . . . . . he was a bit of a bad cat . . . looks like he could have been in the Rolling Stones". Mr Graham-Dixon's summary comment was that maybe Caravaggio (both an intellectual and a bit of a thug) was the Keith Richards of the Baroque world.

We were subject to a cascade of just some of the knowledge garnered by Mr Graham-Dixon as a result of writing this book on Caravaggio, an undertaking that took him ten years. As he freely admitted, this length of time was in large part due to his basic, and in some ways, limited command of the Italian language. As a result of this, he had to rely on help from good friends with their fluent Italian. He found plenty of information in Rome, Naples and Malta, all the important places which had forged the person of Caravaggio and shaped his career. For example, one important source was the book written by Sandro Corradini, the Pope's 'Devil's Advocate' (the person who, when an individual is proposed for beatification, finds all the reasons why that individual should not be made a saint), who had, over a thirty year period, patiently sifted his way through every single possible reference source in Rome connected with Caravaggio. The net result was a book, *Caravaggio: materiali per un processo* written largely in Latin and published in a limited edition of 100 copies!

Andrew Graham-Dixon began by speculating about Caravaggio's early life in Milan, growing up in a family where his father was a stonemason - a time that he felt was something of a dark period for him. Unfortunately, much of the evidence for this, we were told, had vanished over the years as the Milan archives had been slowly eaten by rats! However, what is known is that Archbishop Borromeo, the then Archbishop of Milan, had a huge impact and influence on the Milan of Caravaggio's childhood. This was a man who felt that the world had lost its way and that the Church and its followers needed to get back to basics, that any bad luck (such as attacks of the plague) were punishments for them all being sinners and that especially they were being punished for too much human contact between men and women who were far too prone to looking at each other in sinful ways. Indeed, he was so obsessed with this that even the confessional box, the development of which he was largely responsible for, had to be designed so that the priest could neither see nor come into even accidental contact with those confessing, especially if they were women. Borromeo also thought that art had taken a wrong turn and was far too beautiful and that it needed to return to more realism, especially in portraying the horrific and bloody end of Jesus: art had to plunge into the gruesomeness of the Christian story and return to visceral realism. This message was being promulgated in the Milan of Caravaggio's childhood and, Andrew Graham-Dixon, demonstrated with illustrations of

Andrew Graham-Dixon

Caravaggio's work, that his paintings were often *tableaux vivants* with viewer being pitted against the figures within the picture as they delivered their story. That the need for visceral realism in art that Borromeo had preached was very much demonstrated in Caravaggio's work.

We were told that when Caravaggio was six years old, the plague struck Milan and a third of the population died. This was blamed on the population by Borromeo. Indeed, we were treated to a vivid portrayal of the juxtaposition of this head of the Church in Milan adopting the manner of the poor with his ragged dress and bare feet – but only at night time when he sallied forth to harangue them – whilst at the same time not truly appreciating their misery, poverty and illness. Then in October 1577, when Caravaggio was six years old, all the male members of his family died from the plague, except for his younger brother (who later became a Jesuit priest). This may explain the troubled genius that was Caravaggio, as he had no male role models within his family on which to base himself as he was growing up. However, we know little about this period other than that he may have had a good education given that his brother became a Jesuit priest and that these were the intellectuals of the various orders who would not have accepted an illiterate into their midst and that Caravaggio was probably apprenticed to a fresco painter. What may also have happened is that, having inherited a certain amount of money from the dead male members of his family, Caravaggio may have spent some of this time spending his way through his inheritance. An indication of this is a note on Mazzini's life of Caravaggio in the Marciana Library in Venice, which seems to indicate that Caravaggio may well have been in prison for a year in this period for slashing someone on the face, an indication of the early onset of the carousing and fighting which marked his later life.

At the age of 21, Caravaggio left Milan for Rome. He had family connections to the Colonna family, some of whom lived there, but there is no evidence that he had much assistance from them. In the Rome of this period, the Church was dominant and so young artists needed commissions if they were to succeed. At the beginning of his time in Rome, Caravaggio took fairly menial jobs in artists' studios, painting in the flowers and fruit on others artists' paintings. He had little money and slept on friends' floors, living very much from hand to mouth. However, he became

friends with Costantino Spata, an art dealer, and between them they invented a new genre of painting, one portraying real people engaged in real activities. His art came to the attention of Cardinal Del Monte who, in the first instance, bought some of Caravaggio's work and then brought him into his household. This was a man interested in all aspects of the arts, from the early formation of the genre of opera through to the work of Galileo Del Monte was the first person in Rome to have a music room, in which he held soirées with individual singers entertaining rather than an en masse chorus. During this period Caravaggio was painting both real situations and also real people in mythical or biblical settings, such as painting his friend Mario Minniti as Bacchus and painting the Calling of Matthew and his later murder, in real contemporary situations.

Throughout this period Graham-Dixon told us that Caravaggio seems to have been clever, sharp but also a thug. Further, there seems to have been no real foundation to the fact that he was either gay or a full red blooded man, but rather may well have had relationships with both sexes. Andrew Graham-Dixon also speculated that Caravaggio may have earned extra money by being a pimp. We were told that he certainly had a relationship with Fillide Melandroni, a prostitute who seems to have suffered a bad childhood, and who was put on the streets by her mother at the age of 13. Caravaggio stole her from her pimp, whom he later murdered in a fight – the cause of his flight from Rome to Sicily. In the meantime, Graham-Dixon pointed out that a girl prostitute is referred to in contemporary documentation as "a Caravaggio girl" and, if one why not more? Maybe he was also a pimp in this period. This would certainly have been the source of both income and free models, as Fillide certainly was for him in the latter instance.

Throughout his talk, Andrew Graham-Dixon treated us to the most wonderful analysis of Caravagggio's paintings and to insights into the lives of all who surrounded the artist, such as the life (and death) of Fillide Melandroni. But with so much more to say, we ran out of time. We were left stunned by such a brilliant performance, wanting more – and certainly to hear about the other half of Caravaggio's life – and wanting to buy his book so that we could settle down and read about Caravaggio the real man.

ITALIAN VIEWS ON BRITAIN IN THE RISORGIMENTO

By Charles de Chassiron

Dr Maurizio Isabella

About 70 members enjoyed a very successful Society Christmas party dinner in a new venue last December, preceded by an excellent talk by Dr Maurizio Isabella, which was intended as the first in a series to mark the 150th anniversary of Italian Unification. His title was 'Travelling from North to South – Italian views on Britain in the Risorgimento'.

Dr Isabella is Senior Lecturer in Modern European History at Queen Mary London and is an expert on 19th century Europe. He comes from Luino on Lake Maggiore, and studied at the Statale in Milan before getting a Ph D at Cambridge. He recently published a book called 'Risorgimento in Exile', which came very close to winning the Gladstone Prize of the Royal Historical Society, and which put Italian liberalism and patriotism in the context of European ideas of the era.

Dr Isabella spoke wittily and vividly about his topic. He described not so much the familiar British view of Italy and the sympathy (across all of British society) for Italian national aspirations as Italian reactions to these views and Italian images of Britain. Italian admiration for British freedoms was often accompanied by irritation at British stereotypes about Italy. As he said, this was a complex cultural dialogue, and not one conducted on equal terms.

The sympathy in the UK was also partly fed by another type of British engagement with Italy, namely the legacy of the Grand Tour. An idealised view of Italy's past cultural glories was often matched by a certain contempt for the 'degeneracy' of contemporary Italians, though the Romantic-era Grand Tourists were more interested in contemporary Italy than their Georgian predecessors. To illustrate the Italian reaction to these views, we were presented with two case studies, one was of the poet Ugo Foscolo, who died in London in 1827, after writing articles in the British press showing his annoyance at the superior manners of British travellers and their misinterpretation of recent history. A good example was the failure to appreciate the galvanising effect of Napoleon's rule on Italian national feeling. To the British he was always a monster and his influence negative. Foscolo did however draw on other Grand Tour accounts of which he thought more to dismiss such erroneous views. The second case study was the negative Italian reaction to the book by Lady Morgan published in 1819 and the inaccurate view she presented of the 17th century artist Salvator Rosa –whose work was on show in late 2010 at Dulwich - as an early patriot. Some Italian writers did notice though that Lady Morgan had at least talked to and dawn on the views of leading Italian intellectuals,

and they were pleased that she had recognised the 'cultural genius ' of Italy.

Dr Isabella concluded by drawing attention to the real Italian vexation at the time about foreign 'inventions' about the country, and to the significance of this reaction as part of the debate about Italian national character and about how to move towards the longed-for rebirth – of which many Italians had a clear-cut image. Italian feelings also reflected a clear idea of the great importance of Italy's cultural role. All these features were key elements of the Risorgimento movement.

After this stimulating talk, we all enjoyed a convivial three-course Christmas meal featuring prosciutto and melon and later tiramisu - though of course with turkey in the middle, and lots of it. Afterwards Dr Isabella (now an honorary member of the Society) told me how much he had enjoyed talking to us.

Society Christmas party dinner

HOUSE OF COMMONS RECEPTION

By Alexandra Richardson

In the very wintry weather of 20th January this year, over 130 of us made our way in the early evening to Parliament Square. What drew us was a special reception in the *Stranger Dining Room* at the House of Commons, preceded by the (optional) tour of much of the building. Participation in the two events was extended to other related groups here in London, namely the British Chamber of Commerce for Italy (London branch, whose secretary Michael Nathanson was the main organiser), Business Club Italia, Il Circolo (the Italian Cultural Association) and the Monte San Martino Trust.

Congregating beforehand in the oldest (1097) part of the building, the West Hall, about sixty of us broke up into three groups of twenty to take the tour. The guides were superb in pointing out intricate details we otherwise might have missed, educating us in the solid background history of Parliament and occasionally flavouring the talk with anecdotes. The tour lasted one hour and we knew that our time was up when Nick Robinson, the BBC Parliamentary commentator, was spied off to one side, poised to begin his part of the 7:00 p.m. news broadcast. Thus we were guided on to one of the spectacular rooms overlooking the Thames where our reception was just beginning.

After Michael Nathanson had welcomed the guests, our Chairman Charles de Chassiron gave the assembled group a brief talk on the background of BIS and sketched in some of our activities - with a particular nod to the 150th anniversary of Italian unification which BIS proposes to commemorate in activities over the calendar year. He also noted that 2011 marked the 70th anniversary of the original foundation of what became the Society. Edward Chaplin, the very recently retired British Ambassador to Italy gave a thoughtful talk on the political relations between Great Britain and Italy and outlined some of the very real "thorns" – bureaucracy and the snail pace of justice in Italy, for example – hampering stronger business ties between the two countries though he also stressed the positive elements. Sidney Ross, Director General of Business Club Italia filled us in on the workings of her group and Tony Baldry, Conservative MP for North Oxfordshire and Chairman of the All-Party British-Italian Parliamentary Group concluded the speeches with some words on the activities of his group and underlined the friendly ties with his counterparts in Italy.

CITY FOUNDATIONS AND RITUALS IN ETRURIA

By Georgina Gordon-Ham

Etruria was a region of central Italy located in an area which covered part of what now are Tuscany, Latium, Emilia-Romagna and Umbria. The ancient people of Etruria are known as Etruscans and they reached their peak in history around the 7th and 6th centuries BC.

Etruria and the mysterious Etruscans have fascinated archaeologists and historians for years with all sorts of stories. In a talk for BIS members on 28th February, Dr Corinna Riva of the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, explained with detailed illustrations how "Until quite recently, scholars relied on indirect historical sources for the reconstruction of Etruria, but today's wealth of archaeological evidence allows us to trace changes in Etruscan history through the archaeological record".

Dr Riva recalled Arnaldo Momigliano, the great scholar of ancient history, whose view today would be considered Helleno-centric, yet pertinent when touching the core of the issue: "How did Etruscan centres become cities of such a complex type?" Momigliano recognised decades earlier how Etruscan cities were steeped in their own, distinctively Etruscan ritual activities, all of which are to be taken into account when tracing the early urban history of Etruria.

The problem is the absence of Etruscan written sources: "Without written sources, we are unable to access that wealth of information which only textual evidence can provide", commented the speaker. Etruscan civilization was sophisticated, but all that is left are archaeological remains.

Advances in archaeological research of the last two decades have led to a "profound shift" in our understanding of Etruscan cities. Recent research has convincingly pushed back the earliest moments of urban formation in central Italy to roughly the mid-8th century BC, and therefore has encouraged us to view Etruscan urbanization as an essentially "indigenous" phenomenon, to be understood alongside the contemporary urbanization of Rome rather than a by-product of Greek cities in the central Mediterranean. Emphasis is on long-term indigenous developments thanks to an increasing "dialogue" between archaeologists of Etruria and early Rome.

Dr Riva tried to answer the question about how to interpret city foundations by looking at ritual activities performed in the

Tumulus Entrance

Dr Corinna Riva

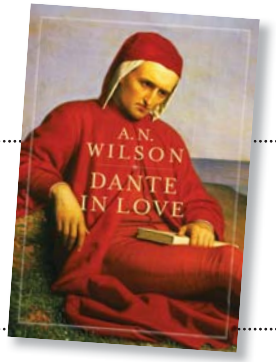
urban landscape of Etruria. She began by what she called "Our best-known case of city foundations in Etruria -Marzabotto, a city which grew in the 6th century BC in what is known as Etruria Padana, not far from modern Bologna". She continued by discussing the various settlements of Etruria, listing a number of interesting sites, such as Veii, Tarquinia and its Civita complex (a monumental sacred complex which began in the early Iron Age), Cerveteri, Vulci, and Volterra.

At all these different sites, the "continuous use of ritual areas" in the course of the centuries confirms a "continuity of ritual activities which was concurrent with the development of urbanism." These ritual activities took the form of sacrificial altars, banqueting, burial grounds and tombs around the settlement. "Developments in tomb types from the trench or *fossa* graves to the earliest semi-built and built chamber or rock-carved tombs under *tumuli* are visible at Cerveteri and Veii", explained Dr Riva. More sophisticated tombs were the monumental *tumuli*, which were stone-built or rock-cut chamber tombs. They first appeared in the cemeteries of Tarquinia in the 7th C, as well as at other urban cemeteries in South Etruria. The aristocratic group "domesticated" the tomb, as it were, in the sense that the tomb took the appearance of a house, particularly at Cerveteri; in doing so, the aristocratic group perpetuated the dead as members of the group into "ancestry", commented Dr Riva. The objects deposited in the aristocratic 'Orientalising tombs' included jewellery, bronze vessels and shields. Examples of these findings can be seen in the museum of Villa Giulia in Rome.

The chamber tombs varied from city to city according to the architectural type, the ritual performed and the number of burials in them. At Tarquinia, for example, chamber tombs had an open roof which was covered by a large *tufa* block (*a fenditura superiore*). At Cerveteri, the use of chamber tombs under tumulus increased in the course of the 7th century - some *tumuli* around and outside the city reached enormous proportions (60 m diam). The tombs at Cerveteri acquired more than one chamber and the interior was carefully designed through architectural sculptural decoration, reaching remarkable architectural complexity.

The talk on city foundations was based on Dr Corinna Riva's book entitled *The Urbanization of Etruria: Funerary Practices and Social Change 700-600 BC*, Cambridge University Press, published last year on the development of Etruscan cities, whose remains of ritual activities are important evidence of Etruria's urban history.

A.N. WILSON ON DANTE



On 10th May, BIS was privileged to have A.N. Wilson speak about his forthcoming book "Dante in Love" and share his thoughts on the great author, his times, the challenges of translation. We turn to Wilson directly for an account of the evening, with grateful thanks to The Financial Times of 21/22 May for permission to excerpt his "Diary" piece.

Never mind policemen getting younger. You know that you have reached the afternoon of your days when school contemporaries are not just ambassadors but retired ambassadors. Charles de Chassiron, who was ambassador to Estonia and a former consul-general in Milan, asked me to address the British-Italian Society, of which he is chairman, about my new book, *Dante in Love*. It was a welcome task, for I feel a bit like a missionary where Dante is concerned and will happily stand on street corners trying to preach for a conversion. Dante is definitely my desert island poet.

What other poet combines such cruel satire and such delicacy? Such flights of erotic mysticism and such political obsession? Such photographic skill in snapshotting heroes and villains alike? Such a warm appreciation of the opposite sex, whether as lovers or as old ladies or as lovingly remembered childhood friends – which is what Beatrice was to him (among other things)?

My talk was held in the University Women's Club in South Audley Street – which Dorothy L. Sayers made into the town house of Lord Peter Wimsey. One is always conscious of her blimpish shade in that place. I owe a lot to the admirable notes to her translation of Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, published by Penguin. I wish I also admired her translation, which she bravely attempted in *terza rima* (the verse form invented by Dante), but I can't. It makes me cringe. But there are many other wonderful translations – buy the new Everyman version of Allen Mandelbaum and you get Botticelli's illustrations thrown in. J.G. Nichols has done superb translations of *Inferno and Purgatory* (Oneworld Classics) with parallel texts. While Nichols is at work on *Heaven*, if you can wait to know how the *Comedy* ends, then Robin Kirkpatrick's parallel text edition in Penguin makes a good replacement for poor old Dorothy L. But Sayers is worth owning for the notes.

You might wonder at my recommending translations of Dante. Why not, you might think, read him in Italian? Fine, if that is a language you know. I wonder, though. How many native English speakers that includes? When I wrote the first draft of my book I left all the quotations in the original and supplied a translation. It soon became apparent that this would be off-putting for a British audience, and so with some reluctance I have written a book about Dante containing very few phrases in Italian, and that – when he is quoted – makes use of modern translations. Without that, I should have limited my audience to the already-converted. What I want is a Dante revival: a prime minister, like Gladstone who devotes every waking hour (when not rescuing prostitutes or cutting down trees) to studying Dante (come on Ed Miliband, let's be having you); and a church that has absorbed a fragment of his wisdom.

But, back to the decline of Italian. My daughter is at secondary school and deciding on languages to study next year. She could do Greek, Russian, Mandarin, German – but not the language of Dante Alighieri.

Vanessa Hall-Smith is the statuesque former director of the British Institute in Florence, where I studied Italian. She kindly attended my talk…and told me that fewer and fewer students at the British Institute now study the language. Italian history, art and culture remain as appetising as ever but the days when well-brought up young people all read Ariosto are long past. If Italian is not taught at schools, this is hardly surprising. I know that it is important that our pushier offspring should be able in Mandarin and Spanish, to speak the language of international commerce. But it is equally important for them to be cultivated and how can one be a European and not want to read Dante.

EATING AND MAKING ICE CREAM IN 18th CENTURY NAPLES

By Georgina Gordon-Ham

Although there are theories and legends about when various forms of ice cream first appeared, the first frozen dessert is credited to Emperor Nero of Rome. It was a mixture of snow (which he sent his slaves into the mountains to retrieve) and nectar, fruit pulp and honey. Another theory is that Marco Polo brought with him to Europe from the Far East recipes for water ices said to be used in Asia for thousands of years, in particular by the Emperors of China. In 1533 Catherine de' Medici of Florence introduced ice cream to France taking with her a recipe for making frozen milk. Hence in Europe ice cream became a luxury for the rich and continued to be so for quite a few centuries.

For those members who missed this appetising talk and also the *assaggio* of delicious ice cream afterwards, our speaker following this year's AGM, held on 7th June at Heythrop College, was Dr Melissa Calaresu, lecturer in history at Gonville and Caius College, University of Cambridge. She explained how her writing a cultural history of the Neapolitan Enlightenment, which has grown out of earlier interests in the political thought of late eighteenth-century Naples, combined with newer interests on the material culture and material interests of the European Enlightenment has led to broadening her research. One of these areas included the history of ice and ice cream making in eighteenth-century Italy, which explores some of what Dr Calaresu called "the recent paradigms of Enlightenment historiography". She has written articles on historical and autobiographical writing in the eighteenth century, including the Grand Tour.

It was not until the eighteenth century that this special dessert became available also to ordinary people, as explained by Melissa Calaresu, who focused her study on findings in and around Naples: "The history of ice cream is often told within a story about the consumption of luxury goods in which frozen desserts available at the banquets of aristocratic and royal palaces in the seventeenth century find their way on the table of more ordinary households by the end of the eighteenth century

– just as coffee, ceramics and calico prints have a similar place in a history which emphasises the widening availability of certain foodstuffs and designs to a larger public increasingly able to buy them". And, she added: "Recent research on the history of ice cream in Naples has shown that ice cream or in its Neapolitan version, *sorbetto*, was not just being eaten in silver cups but also on the streets of the city itself". Slides of visual representations were shown, such as engravings and prints of the period and travel literature from the early eighteenth century confirming the eating of ice cream on the streets in "areas associated with plebian street entertainment such as near the Angevin castle in Naples". She also pointed out how at first glance, these images seem to confirm and continue a history of representing the city of Naples as a theatre of extremes – between extraordinary luxury and immense poverty – but "further research in the archives and along the hills of the bay of Naples reveals a microeconomy which supplied the city with snow every day of the year from at least the late seventeenth century".

Snow was used for different reasons, such as medical purposes in local hospitals, but much of it was used for the preservation of food, cooling and making drinks and desserts, as well as being sold on the streets. One way of keeping it was thanks to the discovery of one of the early means of refrigeration whereby evaporation of brine (salt water) absorbed heat and therefore a container placed in brine would stay cold. Collecting and selling snow was monitored by the municipal and royal governments. It was taxed and prices were controlled in the same way as oil and grain were. Snow was considered a necessity for the inhabitants of the city. One of the main sources of snow in the area was Monte Faito behind the seaside town of Castellammare di Stabia on the Bay of Naples. In winter snow was preserved there in pits covered with cloth of sack and leaves. Carriers would transport the snow on their shoulders down from the mountain to the port to then be sent to Naples and its final destinations.

Dr Melissa Calaresu

By courtesy of Keith Heppell

This interesting talk was the result of attempts to piece together the making and eating of ice cream in eighteenth century Naples based on tax and guild records of the snow trade, from recipe books by professional cooks and later households, from the few objects for serving ice cream which survived, and from pictures of itinerant *sorbettari* which tourists of the Grand Tour brought back with them revealing "the early history of a food product which has disappeared from memory almost as easily as an ice cream melts".

OUR FIRST ENVOY TO UNIFIED ITALY: SIR JAMES HUDSON

By Tom Richardson

Fifty years ago, on the occasion of the centenary of Italian unification, my very distinguished predecessor at the Rome Embassy, Sir Ashley Clarke, wrote a thoughtful account of the life of Sir James Hudson, British Minister in Turin and later our first envoy to the new kingdom of Italy. For reasons of both space and erudition, I cannot hope to compete with Sir Ashley. But it seems right on this 150th anniversary to say a few words about a constant friend of Italy and a skilled diplomat who was close to Cavour but whose contacts extended to men as different from him as Garibaldi. A conference under the auspices of the Cassa di Risparmio di Torino Foundation on Hudson's life took place in Turin in November 2010, and its proceedings, when published, will undoubtedly shed further light on him.

Hudson – who had spent three happy years as a teenager in Florence – had already had a full and varied career before Lord Palmerston appointed him to Turin in 1852. In those years Austria ruled most of Italy, directly or indirectly. In contrast, Victor Emmanuel was a constitutional monarch, albeit reluctantly, and his little kingdom a beacon of hope to many Italian liberals, though not to the conservatives and clergy, nor indeed to Mazzini's republican democrats. Mazzini believed in insurrection. Cavour, who first became Prime Minister in 1852, believed in diplomacy; or to be more precise he knew, after the failures of 1830 and 1848, that tiny Sardinia could not evict the Austrians through negotiations alone and that, whether through war or the threat of war, it needed allies. That meant France or Britain, preferably both, with the distinction that Britain had no territorial ambitions in Italy, whereas Napoleon III's France was seeking to redraw the map of Europe.

Hudson played a vital role in this complex jigsaw on at least two occasions, during the Crimean War of 1854-6 and again during the crises of unification in 1859-60. He was close to the Whig governments of his country; less so to the Tories, whose then foreign minister, Malmesbury, famously described him in 1859 as: "more Italian than the Italians themselves, and he lives entirely with the ultras of that cause". That was slightly unfair. Hudson was certainly an Italophile. But he was always opposed to Mazzini, he distrusted French intentions and with reason at times Cavour's, and as late as May 1860 he did not think Italian unity – including Naples, that is – either a good or a feasible idea. We tend to assume that Italian liberty and Italian unity meant the same thing to Hudson's contemporaries. They didn't, and unity only became a serious proposition after the battle of Solferino and, later, Garibaldi's Sicilian expedition.

He did exceed his instructions at times. *The Times* said of him later that he had disobeyed the instructions of two successive governments, and acted according to the wishes of the people of England. I can guess what would happen to British diplomats today who tried to emulate Hudson's example. The Queen wanted him removed. But he was the best informed British diplomat in Italy. His strongly worded despatches to London certainly scared Ministers at times. He wanted Britain to play a more active role in the crisis of 1859-60, not least to avoid a French hegemony replacing that of Austria in the peninsula. In the end, a united Italy served British interests, though we had done nothing very concrete to bring it about.

Hudson remained at Turin until he could draw a first-class pension, refusing many offers of other posts. He moved to Lake Garda and later to Florence, where he spent the rest of his life. He became a successful businessman and – much in the tradition of his 18th century diplomatic forbears – an art collector and dealer. There is a painting of him in the National Portrait Gallery, and the Turin conference dedicated a whole morning to his artistic activities. He was a keen huntsman and a great conversationalist: "anti-conformist, refined, cheerful, pleasant and popular", as *Vanity Fair* described him in his retirement. Shortly before his death, he married Eugenia Vanotti, his long-time Italian companion.

With his wide range of interests, both public and private, Hudson probably deserves a full biography, and maybe this anniversary will provide the spur. In the meantime, the last word can rest with Lord Russell, the Whig Foreign Secretary, who wrote to him in January 1860: "although I have sometimes thought you too zealous for Italy, I have never doubted that you were the best qualified person to represent England in that country".

SHIPBUILDING IN ITALY

By Anthony Cooke

During 2010, I had occasion to pay several visits to the enormous shipyards at Monfalcone, near Trieste, and at Sestri Ponente on the outskirts of Genoa. Both belong to Fincantieri, the Italian state-owned shipbuilders. Fincantieri is a massive concern, not only having ten yards and docks strung out along the Italian coasts but also owning shipyards in the United States and Germany and several important Italian engineering companies. On the face of it, it is a flourishing enterprise and contrasts sharply with the shrunken state of the British shipbuilding industry, which once bestrode the world but now consists only of a few yards and depends largely on constructing warships for the British government.

The Italians, while building many types of vessel, have in recent years had particular success in the market for large cruise ships. This is perhaps not the place to discuss political reasons for this – although the Italians (and the French) have been particularly adept at negotiating their way through the European Union competition rules. But there is no doubt that they have developed an admirable expertise in designing and constructing these huge and highly sophisticated passenger ships. Since 1987, Fincantieri yards have built 65 cruise ships, over half the total of orders placed worldwide, with a value of 28 billion dollars.

During my visits to Monfalcone, they were building the new Queen Elizabeth for the Cunard Line and were working on vessels for other companies within the giant Carnival Corporation conglomeration, while at the same time at Sestri Ponente they were building the Marina for Oceania Cruises. The Carnival group have been particularly important customers for Fincantieri and have reputedly taken advantage of this to drive some very hard bargains; but they have kept several of the Fincantieri yards busy with orders not just for their Cunard subsidiary but also for their P&O, Princess Cruises, Holland America and Costa companies in addition to the eponymous Carnival Cruise Line.

Photo by courtesy of Maurizio Eliseo

Almost completed, the Queen Elizabeth lies at Fincantieri's fitting out berth at Monfalcone

These ships have been based on several different designs which, over the years, have been gradually modified and expanded and have been tailored to meet the differing requirements of the various brands within the Carnival group. They are huge, most of them being about 1,000 feet long and with a passenger capacity of anything between 2,000 and 3,000. The development of these designs, which together probably form the biggest and most successful group of related passenger ships ever built, has been the responsibility of a special department at Fincantieri under the direction of a talented naval architect called Maurizio Cergol. His department was also involved in the design of the unique Queen Mary 2, the successor to the QE2 in Cunard's regular transatlantic service, although she was actually built in France.

It might seem that shipbuilding is a very prosaic activity but, in fact, there is a romance to it, particularly when it takes place on this scale. At Monfalcone, for instance, there are two huge gantry cranes, each of which is capable of lifting prefabricated chunks of ship weighing up to 1,000 tons. Not only that but, because some of these gigantic blocks are, as a matter of convenience, constructed upside down, the cranes can pick them up and turn them the right way up before trundling them to the building dock and lowering them into place. Even somebody who regards engineering as dirty, noisy, unpleasant and uninteresting must surely recognise that there is something inspiring about the vast strength and the sheer sophistication of these man-made giants.

And there is the 'fitting out' process – the construction and the furnishing of the ship's interiors. When you go aboard a ship which is being fitted out, you seem to be entering a maelstrom. As many as two thousand very skilled men and women are labouring away in an apparently haphazard way: fixing a complicated maze of wiring; installing the plumbing and air-conditioning systems which extend throughout the passenger and crew areas; laying floors; fitting panelling; heaving vast rolls of heavy duty carpet into place and laying it so that the pattern is absolutely symmetrical; tiling swimming pools; fitting the outside decks; and performing a myriad other tasks. Many of these people work for specialist sub-contractors and, at Monfalcone, some of them come from Rumania, Bulgaria, Slovenia or Croatia. It all seems so disordered yet, behind it all there is a vast plan, drawn up with the help of computers (just as the ship herself is the result of CAD – computer-aided design). It may seem impossible for order to emerge from such chaos and for the ship to be delivered in time to meet her very tight deadline. Yet somehow she usually is, although there may still be a few workmen beavering away when she is handed over to her proud new owners.

That is not all: the propulsion system, the electrical system and the navigation systems are equally complicated and wonderful. When she is complete, the ship will undergo several days of rigorous trials at sea. If she does not meet her owners' stated requirements, they can refuse to take delivery of her. Indeed, at every stage in the ship's construction, there is incredible stress on the people responsible. When their job is done, you might expect them to relax but, usually, there is already another ship underway and the whole crazy process has already begun again.

That, however, is less certain now. Shipbuilding has always been an industry of feast and famine, boom and bust. Now, so much extra capacity has been added to the World's cruise fleet, the global recession is making ship owners more cautious about ordering new ships and competition among the shipyards is intense. Fincantieri are feeling the draught as much as anyone and some of their smaller yards are struggling for work. The massive investment which they have made in recent years (no less than 50 million euros at Monfalcone alone) at least ensures that the company is one of the most efficient shipbuilders in the World.

Anthony Cooke, a BIS member, is the proprietor of Carmania Press which, together with an associated company in Trieste, is well-known as a publisher of books on maritime subjects. He has himself written six books and has translated another from Italian into English. He has broadcast on BBC television and on radio in Italy and he lectures to maritime societies and museums in Great Britain and the USA, and also on board cruise ships. In 2009, he was the recipient of the South Street Seaport Museum of New York's Silver Riband award for maritime history.

LONDON'S BLUE PLAQUES: COMMEMORATED ITALIANS

By Alexandra Richardson

Marie Taglioni's blue plaque

You've seen them hundreds of times as you criss-cross London. Those powder-blue roundels dot the urban landscape at every turn, mounted handsomely on the walls of buildings and homes. They are the distinctive plaques in remembrance of noteworthy residents and they have been with us, starting 145 years ago. The idea of marking the homes of eminent achievers originated with the [Royal] Society of Arts in 1866 and it is probably the oldest scheme of its kind in the world. One *Times* journalist in 1873 noted that the initiative would: "make our houses their own biographers".

Among the very first to be considered were the homes of Lord Nelson, David Garrick and Benjamin Franklin. The honour, in the end, fell to the poet Lord Byron and the very first plaque went up at his birthplace, 24 Holles Street, Cavendish Square. The house unfortunately was torn down 22 years later, in 1889. The earliest plaque *to still survive*, also put up in 1867, commemorates Napoleon III in King Street, St. James.

Over the years, the administrative reins of the project were variously held by the RSA, London County Council and the Greater London Council. In 1986, however, English Heritage took over; it still runs the programme today. In all, there are about 850 tablets affixed to walls around London (a further 100 existed but were removed or destroyed due to building demolition). Among them you will find a small but noteworthy number devoted to deserving Italians. Some such as Guglielmo Marconi (who lived at 71 Hereford Road, Bayswater between 1896-1897 and was "plaqued" in 1952) and Giuseppe Mazzini (183 North Gower Street, plaqued in 1950) are figures so well known as to need no introduction. Spare a moment, though, for "the others".

In chronological order of plaque installation, the first remarkable Italian to be so honoured was the Venetian painter Antonio Canal, called Canaletto (1697-1768). In the heady days of the Grand Tour, the Venice-based Englishman Joseph Smith acted on the painter's behalf, promoting the artist's popular views of *La Serenissima* and procuring commissions from wealthy British patrons and collectors. When the War of Austrian Succession broke out in 1740, however, the flow of visitors – and sales – ebbed. Ever the shrewd businessman, Canaletto, aged 49, read the writing on the wall and left for London in 1746 to revive the art orders. For three years (1749-1751) he lodged in the heart of today's Soho, at 41 Beak Street, sharing quarters with Richard Wiggan, a cabinet maker. It was here that Canaletto publically invited: "any gentleman that will be pleased to come to [his] house to see [his] painting *A View from St. James's Park*". He was to take on many lucrative commissions. But when finally his works were deemed repetitive, Canaletto left London, in 1755, and returned to Venice. The plaque to mark his stay in Soho was affixed in 1925.

In 1963, it was the turn of the Roman "all-round" musician Muzio Clementi (1752-1832) who already boasted a posthumous feather in his cap: burial in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey with a tombstone inscription reading "Father of the Pianoforte". In 1766, though, as a youthful organist still living in Rome, he caught the eye of Sir Peter Beckford who persuaded the family to let him to come study in England. For seven years, Clementi lived at Beckford's Dorset estate pursuing his musical studies. He then took the plunge and moved to London, aged 21. Settled comfortably on the fringes of Notting Hill, Clementi was soon appointed opera conductor at the King's Theatre in Haymarket which, in his day, was defined as: "holding the continuo part on the harpsichord during a performance". During his long life, he was to wear a number of hats: accomplished pianist, music teacher, composer of over 100 sonatas, piano manufacturer and publisher. It was in the pretty town house at 128 Kensington Church Street, however, where his rich and distinguished musical life truly flourished.

There would be a 35-year hiatus before another respected Italian "earned" the blue plaque. In 1998, English Heritage nominated Ugo Foscolo (1778-1827). They chose to place the medallion at 19 Edwardes Square in Kensington where the poet-patriot lived between 1817-1818. (He had also lived in a cottage on the bank of Regent's Canal among many other places). Foscolo was born on the Greek island of Zante, but moved to Venice when he was 14. His writings would articulate the feelings of many Italians during the turbulent period of the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars and the restoration of Austrian rule in 1816. Although he had already made his literary mark in Italy, as critic, poet and dramatist with works like *Dei Sepolcri*, Foscolo, in exile in London, wrote critical essays, reworked Ortis and Le Grazie and entered the lively literary life of London.

Scarcely one year later, in 1999, another illustrious writer was chosen. Ettore Schmitz (1861-1928), better known by his pen name, Italo Svevo was born in Trieste, then still part of Austro-Hungary. Financial troubles in the family forced him to abandon his schooling and become a bank clerk. On the side, however, he wrote two (unsuccessful) novels. Putting writing then on hold, he moved to London to work for a family firm and settled for ten years in Greenwich at 67 Charlton Lane. During the London years, he wrote letters back to his wife in Trieste recounting his thoughts on the cultural differences between Edwardian England and his homeland. By 1913, Schmitz-Svevo had left London to return to Trieste. Encouraged by his friend James Joyce, he wrote his most successful book, *La Coscienza di Zeno*, which propelled him to fame.

The focus of the next plaque would turn once again to a man of music: Sir Michael Costa. Born in Naples as Michele Andrea Agniello Costa in 1808, he came from a musical family. Although he composed music, he found his true niche as a conductor

– most notably for the Philharmonic Society and the Sacred Harmonic Society. He also conducted at various festival venues in Birmingham, Leeds and Bradford. Costa made his home in Pimlico, not far from Victoria Station. A blue plaque went up in 2007 at the handsome white house at 59 Eccleston Square where he lived between 1857and 1883.

The last in the octet of gifted Italians to be memorialised was Baron Carlo Marochetti (1805-1867), born in Turin. We know him chiefly for his bold bronze equestrian sculpture of Richard the Lionheart, standing outside the House of Lords. Marochetti had also completed one of the Duke of Wellington which is in front of the Glasgow Royal Exchange. He attracted the attention of Queen Victoria who commented that he was "very agreeable, pleasing and gentlemanlike" and she promptly ordered up a bust of her husband, Prince Albert, from the sculptor. Further public statuary followed, but probably the highest honour was to be asked to create the tombstone effigies of the royal couple at their burial spot at Windsor Castle. All of his commissions were carried out in a large studio-cum-foundry just behind his elegantly pillared home at 34 Onslow Square, Kensington.

SAN CRESCENTINO: A HIDDEN JEWEL OF THE RENAISSANCE

By Diana Darlington

The village of Morra in the Umbrian valley of the Nestore contains a hidden jewel, the tiny early Renaissance oratorio church of San Crescentino (sometimes called Crescenziano). San Crescentino was a Roman soldier, martyred in 303 under the Emperor Diocletian. He was a kind of St George figure, who, amongst other acts of Christian charity, killed a dragon which inhabited Borgo Muccignano on the hill above the church. Fortunately, no dragon descendants inhabit Muccignano today. San Crescentino is buried in Urbino where his statue stands outside the Duomo. His head is reputedly buried in the crypt of the Duomo of Città di Castello.

San Crescentino, built circa1420, is the church of the Confraternity of the Santissimo Sacramento della Madonna di San Crescentino di Morra. The little church, which was extended in c.1507, is humble on the outside; stone-built with a small two-bell campanile at one side of the roof, but it is the inside which has the "Wow Factor". Luca Signorelli, one of the most highly-rated artists of the Italian Renaissance, born in Cortona just over the hills from Morra, came to Città di Castello after completing his wonderful frescoes in the San Brizio Chapel in the Orvieto Cathedral. Signorelli frescoed the interior of San Crescentino in c.1508. The subject of the San Crescentino frescoes is Christ's Passion. Sadly, little remains of many of the fresco panels, but the Flagellation and the Crucifixion, opposite each other on the side walls nearest to the altar, are in good condition, after sympathetic restorations, originally in the 1970s, funded by Alberto Burri, the artist from Città di Castello, and more recently in the last 5 years.

On the lower part of the left wall are traces of earlier frescoes, a saint on horseback, San Giuliano and San Rocco. In the niche, is a Signorelli fresco of the Madonna della Misericordia. The iconography is very common; the Madonna shelters kneeling members of the Confraternity under her spreading cloak. They are clothed in their white hooded robes, which are still worn by the members of the Confraternity today. Two angels stand on either side of the Madonna.

On the upper register of the wall, are fragments of the Incredulity of St Thomas; the Entry into Jerusalem; the Prayer

San Crescentino

in the Garden and the Last Supper. The final panel is the Flagellation. This best preserved fresco repeats the composition of an earlier painting of the Flagellation by Signorelli (circa 1482-84), now in the Brera Museum, Milan. It is also similar in composition in part to Piero della Francesca's Flagellation at Urbino. Christ is shown bound to a column surrounded by muscular near-naked men about to start their assault. Their posture and expressions are like a Roman Dance of the Satyrs. Christ's white body contrasts with the "tanned" skins of His tormentors – a reference perhaps to the purity of Christ as the sacrificial lamb. The silence of Christ is also in deep contrast to the obvious dialogue being carried on between the men. The scene is set on a coloured pavement, which is incised directly into the plaster, giving a strong feeling of perspective. The whole scene conveys energy and monumentality.

On the right wall, little now remains of the early frescoes on the lower part, save for a Madonna and Child. On the upper wall, are the remains of Signorelli's frescoes of the Crucifixion, the Deposition, the Descent of Christ into Limbo, the Placing of Christ in the sepulchre and the Resurrection. Now, only the Crucifixion is visible to any extent. Again, it is a scene full of energy and vigour. Below the three crosses, a crowd of

people, soldiers and men on horseback, mass together, their lances pointing skywards to make a criss-cross pattern in the background, echoing the form of the crosses themselves. Two of the soldiers play the hand game of "morra", seemingly oblivious to the drama which is happening around them.

In the foreground, Mary lies prostrate, tended by three women, one of whom gently feels for a pulse in her wrist, whilst another cradles Mary's head in her lap. Mary Magdalene, with streaming golden hair, clings to the cross, open-mouthed in horror.

The fresco in the niche in the right hand wall, depicts the Madonna of Loreto. She is shown standing, holding the Christ Child under a Gothic canopy, flanked by four angels each holding one of the columns of the baldaquin. This depiction of a standing Madonna is similar to that which Signorelli painted for nearby Montone in1515 (now in London). Local tradition has it that Signorelli, whilst a guest of a Morregiana family called Laurenzi, fell in love with a local girl and she became the model for his Madonna of Loreto. On the front of the small altar in front of the niche is the remains of a fresco of Christ rising from the tomb.

One of the joys of the church is the decorative stone arch framing the altar, flanked by the two doorways leading to the Sacristy, in 'pietra serena'. The arch, supported by two columns decorated with scrolls and pendant pine cone motifs in gold on a blue background, is decorated with motifs of flowers and fruit. The space above and at the side of the inner entablature is frescoed by Signorelli with God between two angels with swirling gowns against a gold background; Mary Magdalene (damaged) stands to one side, in her hand the Book of Life with the Greek letters Alpha and Omega clearly visible. On the other side, is another saint. Within the niche itself, stands a pretty sixteenth century Madonna.

In the vestry are remains of early frescoes, circa 1436, including one of San Crescentino, in which the saint is depicted with curly blond hair, wearing a yellow tunic, mounted on a pale horse, with his lance poised to attack the dragon.

San Crescentino is not the parochial church of the village but is very much used for special services and as a concert venue. The Città di Castello International Music Festival (held annually in August/September) regularly holds chamber music and choral concerts in the church.

THE LINARI CLASSIC MUSIC FESTIVAL

By Veronica Comyn

For centuries, Italy has been one of the recognized focal points of art, music and lifestyle. Tuscany produced many of the greatest figures of the Renaissance and the famous Medici family of Florence, from the 14th century onwards, were serious patrons of the arts. By the 16th century the Grand Tour of Italy had become an educational rite of passage for artists in Europe. Since then, from Palestrina to Vivaldi, Mozart, Bach and Chopin, through to such contemporary luminaries as Piazzolla and Philip Glass,music and the great classics continue to be performed in Florence and the rest of Tuscany.

In 1994 Airdrie Armstrong Terenghi, a passionate music lover from Northern Ireland who lives near Florence, inspired by the long tradition of musical performance and the culture in Tuscany, started organizing master classes at her home, where weekly concerts were subsequently given. These were so successful, both for the musicians and her guests, that she decided to establish a classical music festival featuring young and highly accomplished performers from around the world at Linari, which is in the heart of Tuscany.

And so, in 2003, together with friends and generous sponsors, she launched the Linari Classic Music International Festival, backed by significant patrons such as Dr. Jeffrey Tate, C.B.E.,the internationally renowned conductor, the great Italian pianist, Maria Tipo and the concert master of the Maggio Musicale in Florence, Pietro Horvath.

In 2004 Airdrie, as Founder and Artistic Director, invited Joris van Rijn to work with her as its Musical Director. Joris, a brilliant violinist, who has studied in Holland and at the Juilliard School in New York, is now Concert Master of the Netherlands Radio

Philharmonic. Airdrie and Joris, together with pianist Gabriele Leporatti and Vicki Wright the clarinetist, select the musicians and the repertoire for each festival. Over the years they have put together exciting programmes of concerts, combining the works of well-known and well-loved composers with innovative works by young contemporary composers and have intrigued concert-goers with delightful, forgotten 'gems' such as the performance of Francesco Zanetti's recently re-discovered 18th century flute sonatas in the beautiful music room built especially for him at Villa il Moro near Florence.

The Linari quest is to seek out exceptionally talented young musicians and composers from all over the world and provide opportunities for them to perform before the Festival's international audiences. For example, Rudolf Koelman, former leader of the Royal Concertgebouw, now based in Zurich, brings his young chamber musicians of all nationalities to play at Linari.

The Festival is held every summer with a programme of some ten concerts, ranging from early to contemporary classical music. These concerts are performed in a wide range of exceptional venues around Linari. Linari is a 10th century hilltop village set in a quintessentially beautiful region endowed with an impressive collection of Romanesque churches, Renaissance villas, and medieval castles where most of the concerts are held. More recently, the Linari Festival has expanded to encompass the Chianti Classico region renowned for its wines and local cuisine, holding concerts in places such as the hilltop Castello di Volpaia and the impressive fortified former monastery of Badia a Coltibuono. In addition, last year the Festival was fortunate to have three wonderful new locations: the prestigious Santa Maria della Scala in Siena, the beautiful 16th century private Villa del Cigliano at San Casciano and the magnificent 17th century Villa Gamberaia in Florence.

The Linari Festival has a distinct character and quality of its own which draws like-minded people from all over Europe who appreciate classical music, historic buildings, magnificent landscapes and excellent food. One of its distinguishing features is the convivial combination of beautiful music and delicious Tuscan food and wine. Airdrie, a talented cook and gourmet, decided from the outset to arrange al fresco dinners after each concert to allow participants to get to know each other and to mingle with the musicians. This has been so successful that many people have become friends who now meet each year at the Festival. This group has formed the core of the Linari membership, which continues to grow each year.

Now in its ninth year, the Linari Classic Festival has become a real feature of the Tuscan summer season, appreciated not only for the quality of its international musicians and the exclusive concert venues, but for the magical atmosphere which characterizes each and every event.

For information on the Linari Classic Festival's upcoming programme: www.linariclassic.com

FAMIGLIA, RISORGIMENTO E POST-RISORGIMENTO

By Alessandro Severi

La ricorrenza e i festeggiamenti per il centocinquantesimo anniversario della proclamazione del Regno d'Italia hanno ridestato in me un interesse particolare, anzi addirittura personale, perché la mia famiglia ha avuto un ruolo, anche se molto modesto per la verità, nelle vicende del Risorgimento. Mentre un mio antenato materno combatté come bersagliere nell'esercito sabaudo, la mia famiglia paterna era contraria al movimento unitario e un membro di essa arrivò addirittura a combattere contro i bersaglieri dell'esercito italiano a Roma nel 1870. Forse la consapevolezza di provenire da opposte posizioni in materia di unità d'Italia mi ha incoraggiato a tenere sull'argomento una posizione un po' critica (ma senza alcuna motivazione religiosa) sulla storia edulcorata e romantica del Risorgimento insegnato nelle scuole.

Nel mio studio tengo una cornice con due belle medaglie, una raffigurante Vittorio Emanuele II e l'altra Napoleone III conferite a mio trisnonno Bartolomeo Bovone di Novi Ligure per la sua partecipazione nel Corpo di spedizione dei 15.000 bersaglieri che Cavour inviò alla guerra di Crimea a combattere con francesi e inglesi per contrastare la politica russa di espansione verso Costantinopoli e il Mediterraneo. Manca la terza medaglia, quella della Regina Vittoria, perché una lontana parente poco saggiamente ne fece "dono alla Patria" nel 1936 quando il regime fascista raccoglieva con speciali cerimonie oro e oggetti di valore per far fronte alle "inique sanzioni" imposte dall'Inghilterra per l'invasione dell'Abissinia. Purtroppo nessuna documentazione è rimasta a parte le medaglie, una vecchia foto che ritrae l'ormai vecchio bersagliere e pochi aneddoti trasmessi oralmente in famiglia.

Nella mia famiglia paterna invece esiste una ben documentata storia di eventi e personaggi da tempi molto più lontani. La famiglia già nel 17°secolo viveva in una grande casa nel villaggio di Cadiroggio, vicino a Sassuolo oggi in provincia di Modena e ancora oggi di proprietà di miei parenti.

Fra i personaggi più interessanti della famiglia c'è un Gaetano Severi che nel 1805 si arruola nella esercito del Regno d'Italia creato da Napoleone e comprendente Lombardia, Veneto ed Emilia. Nell'atto di arruolamento nel Corpo della Guardia d'Onore dell'Imperatore gli si rammenta che "avrà l'alto onore di guardare da vicino l'Augusta Persona". Non sappiamo se vide mai l'imperatore di persona, ma sappiamo che divenne Maresciallo d'Alloggio e poi Tenente perché si conservano gli originali delle lettere che mandava da diverse parti dell'Europa occupata da Napoleone. In una lettera del 1812 scrive dalla Germania dove è alloggiato presso civili:

"Non potete credere quanto stia bene di salute in questo clima così freddo. I padroni di casa ci danno la legna per niente e non vi manca altro che il vino per essere felici. Vi è una bellissima ragazza la quale è [..illeggibile..] se non vado io in camera dove è tutta la famiglia. Pare che andiamo a Varsavia essendo il confine col Russo. Si dice che sia sicura la guerra ma non è ancor deciso". In giugno iniziò l'invasione della Russia. Note sono le vicende che portarono alla disfatta del Bonaparte. Dei quarantamila soldati del Regno d'Italia, comandati dal Viceré Eugenio, solo duemila ritornarono ma Gaetano non fu fra questi. Non sappiamo se giunse fino a Mosca, che fu occupata a metà Novembre. È anche possibile che nella disastrosa ritirata che seguì, fosse fra i tanti che perirono nel tragico passaggio della Beresina.

L'attaccamento della famiglia alla chiesa cattolica la pose spesso in una difficile situazione nel periodo risorgimentale e post-risorgimentale. Nel 1860 Garibaldi aveva invaso e conquistato il Regno delle due Sicilie e in tutta la penisola si preparavano i plebisciti per sancire "l'annessione alla Monarchia costituzionale di Re Vittorio Emanuele". La Guardia di Cadiroggio ricevette, come quelle degli altri paesi, una circolare che raccomandava "... Nessuno potrà restare anche un sol momento dubbioso se votare per l'annessione. Se mai s'avessero di questi tali, deve essere vostra premura far loro conoscere lo stato di abbaglio in cui si trovano".

Come è noto, il voto in favore dell'annessione al Piemonte ottenne una grande vittoria: per esempio in Sicilia i voti favorevoli furono 99,84% e in Veneto 99,99% . Nel Ducato di Modena, che votò insieme a Parma e alla Romagna, si registrarono 426.006 favorevoli e 756 contrari (0,2%). In tutta la penisola le autorità avevano fatto in modo, con le buone o con le cattive, che pochi si trovassero "in stato di abbaglio", tanto più che gli elettori dovevano scegliere la scheda del si o quella del no davanti agli ufficiali del seggio prima di riporla nell'urna. I Severi certamente votarono no o non votarono.

Dopo la proclamazione del Regno d'Italia, un Severo Severi, che come molti credeva nel potere temporale del Papa, quando Vittorio Emanuele II attendeva l'occasione propizia per prendere la capitale, andò a Roma e si arruolò negli Zuavi Pontifici.

Nel 1869 pensò di fare ritorno a casa e chiese consiglio alla madre che con lettera del 4 aprile gli rispose: "Tu mi chiedi consiglio intorno al ritorno in patria: io te lo darò come mi detta il cuore materno e cristiano ma non voglio che questo mio consiglio ti sia un comando. Dimmi, quando partisti per Roma quale fu l'oggetto che ti spinse? Dunque il consiglio che ti do è quello di restarti in Roma". Severo restò e l'anno dopo fu tra coloro che a Porta Pia difesero il Papa. Per anni il governo italiano aveva incoraggiato rivolte anti-papali a Roma per avere una scusa per intervenire e riportare l'ordine, ma i romani si erano ben guardati dal correre rischi e Vittorio Emanuele aveva deciso di prendere la città con la forza. Molti anni dopo Severo fu nominato Cameriere Segreto di Cappa e Spada di Papa Leone XIII.

Avendo preso parte a quegli avvenimenti, Severo dovette soffrire per la nuova situazione, come gli Italiani che volevano essere al tempo stesso buoni cattolici e buoni cittadini. Quando la polemica fra cattolici e liberali si fa più aspra per il sorgere di movimenti di massa sia socialisti che cattolici, un articolo di stampa echeggia lugubremente: ".....i giovani del "Grido Liberale" saranno i giustizieri dei socialisti e dei clericali: impiccheranno il deputato Prampolini sulla Torre del Borsello e l'Ing. Severi su quella dell'orologio". Gli anniversari dell'occupazione di Roma erano occasioni di attacchi anticlericali. Così nel 1896 quando Severo, in qualità di Presidente del Comitato Diocesano di Reggio inviò per quella ricorrenza un telegramma che conteneva le parole "malaugurata ricorrenza" l'ufficio telegrafico rifiutò di trasmetterlo ravvisando in tali parole una offesa alla

maestà dello Stato e non accettò nemmeno il cambio con "dolorosa ricorrenza".

É in questo periodo che nasce il così detto "trasformismo", poi divenuto fenomeno tipico della politica italiana che dura tuttora, ma Severo rimase coerente con le sue convinzioni anche se ormai superate dai tempi e rifiutò offerte di entrare in politica a causa del "Non Expedit" di Pio IX , cioè il divieto ai fedeli di partecipare alla vita politica nazionale sia come elettori che come candidati. Questa anomala situazione durò per altri quasi sessant'anni, fino al Concordato del 1929, che Severo non ebbe la gioia di vedere perché morì nel 1923. Un fratello minore di Severo, Gaetano, fu il fondatore della Società Agricola Operaia di Castellarano, la prima Cooperativa cattolica nell'Italia del Nord nel settore della produzione. I suoi sentimenti anti unitari appaiono chiari nella seduta del Consiglio Comunale di Castellarano del 15 luglio 1882 di cui faceva parte in qualità di Consigliere: si oppone alla proposta di concorrere alle spese per l'erigenda tomba di Garibaldi a Caprera promossa da un consorzio del Comune di Bologna, adducendo che Garibaldi non era "né cattolico col Papa, né italiano col Re". Un altro consigliere, il Sig. Lazzarini, prese le difese di Garibaldi affermando di "aver udito con dolore le parole del Severi contro la fama di un uomo onorato da tutte le credenze e da tutto il mondo". Ma intanto la proposta non passò. Passò molto tempo dopo, assente il nostro Gaetano.

Il terzo fratello, mio bisnonno Domenico, è un'altra figura molto rappresentativa di quel mondo post-risorgimentale. Nato nel 1841, si laureò in medicina a soli 23 anni e decise poi di specializzarsi a Praga e a Berlino dove fiorivano i professori della nuova scuola. Nel 1874 gli fu conferita una cattedra all'università di Modena che tenne per oltre cinquant'anni. Continuò anche a visitare pazienti fino a 56 anni, quando si ritirò dopo 33 anni di professione medica per iniziare un'impresa che l'avrebbe occupato non meno intensamente della medicina: venne chiamato a dirigere il nuovo Banco di San Geminiano.

Può apparire strano che un noto professore e valente chirurgo lasci la professione per dedicarsi alla costituzione e direzione di un Banco. Per comprendere dobbiamo ricordare il momento politico di allora e la dura contrapposizione fra il movimento socialista e il mondo cattolico. In quel periodo il socialismo prendeva piede in Italia e lanciava iniziative popolari di grande successo, come le cooperative e mutue di soccorso, per cui i cattolici, impediti dal divieto papale di prendere parte nella politica nazionale, rispondevano con simili iniziative.

Provenendo da una famiglia in parte piemontese e risorgimentale e in parte emiliana e anti unitaria, che sentiva il suo paese aggredito da uno stato straniero, a volte mi chiedo se vedendo com'è l'Italia dopo 150 anni, i miei antenati la riconoscerebbero gli uni come quella che volevano e gli altri come quella che aborrivano.

Questo 150°anniversario è anche un'occasione per ricordare la congiuntura storica in cui si trovava l'Italia unita dopo i primi cinquant'anni di unità e dopo i primi cento. Il primo cinquantenario, nel 1911, fu celebrato in un clima di grande frustrazione perché subito dopo l'unificazione, l'Italia per mettersi al passo con gli altri paesi europei si era lanciata in disastrose guerre coloniali (i massacri di Adua e di Dogali costarono più morti che tutte le battaglie del Risorgimento). Nello stesso anno si fece guerra alla Turchia per impossessarsi della Libia e dopo quattro anni il paese si gettò nella fornace della prima guerra mondiale.

Cinquant'anni dopo, nel 1961, le celebrazioni si svolsero in un clima di scarso interesse. Il paese si trovava in pieno "miracolo economico" e il popolo pensava soprattutto a godersi il nuovo benessere.

Gli ultimi cinquant'anni sono stati anni di pace e di progresso, almeno materiale, ma sul sentimento di unità della nazione si sono addensate alcune nuvole. Forse l'eccessivo centralismo dello stato ha contribuito a risvegliare sentimenti identitari in varie parti del paese che invece che scomparire col tempo si sono accentuati. Lo stato ha pertanto celebrato il 150°anniversario organizzando una intensa campagna di mass media per rafforzare un sentimento di unità che sembra affievolirsi. Quanto abbia servito o quanto la campagna abbia toccato solo aspetti emotivi, è difficile sapere.

REMEMBERING THE BRITISH-ITALIAN SOCIETY IN YOUR WILL

From time to time, the Society receives sums left to it by members in their wills and is immensely grateful to all. Such gifts have not only allowed us to continue our present activities but also to launch new initiatives (such as the biennial Rooke Prizes in Italian studies, which the Society is able to fund as a result of a bequest from the late Rosemary Rooke. These prizes reward undergraduate and graduate work in UK universities).

If you enjoy the Society's events and activities and would like them to continue for the benefit of future generations of Italophiles, leaving a legacy to the Society is one way of ensuring that they will. Any bequest, no matter how small, will be very gratefully received. It would be helpful to our planning to know of your intentions.

We emphasise the importance of consulting a solicitor about drawing up a will (or a codicil to an existing will): real difficulties can result from the well-intentioned efforts of the do-it-yourself testamentary draftsman. In this connection, the Society will gladly send your solicitor any information that is required.

If you are interested in doing this, please contact our Membership Secretary, John Jinks, on **020 815 09167** or by e-mail **info@british-italian.org**.

THE GAME OF KINGS

"Let others play at other things. The king of games is still the game of kings", verse inscribed on a stone tablet next to a polo ground in Gilgit, Pakistan.

Alessandro Giachetti, Head of the Polo Division for FISE (The Italian Federation for Equestrian Sports) talks to Georgina Gordon-Ham about polo in Italy and its close British-Italian links.

Alessandro Giachetti far right with young Italian polo team at Guards Polo Club, Windsor Great Park

Although polo existed in Asia over two thousand years ago, it was not until the 19th century that it was discovered in India by some British army officers, who then spread the game to their peers in England and soon afterwards to other countries in Europe. The first time polo was played in Italy was on Brioni island, then part of Italy, where the first Italian club was set up a few years later in 1924 by Carlo Kupelweiser. Alessandro Giachetti Head of the Polo Division for FISE (the Italian Federation for Equestrian Sports) commented that: "Most of the first Italian polo players were army officers, who were introduced to the game by British officers. His Royal Highness the Duke of Spoleto, honorary president of the Club of Brioni wanted a club to be set up in the capital. Hence the Roma Polo Club was established in 1930, which is the oldest polo club in Italy. There are now 3 other polo clubs in Rome and another one is about to be created". The Rome Polo Club was first built on the grounds of the race course of Villa Glori, and later moved to its current location in the Acqua Acetosa area, far from the chaos of city life where the only noise heard is the charging of horses and the distant 'clacks' of wooden mallets hitting a ball in a wide open field.

As polo became more and more popular, clubs started being set up in different parts of the country: Roma Polo Club, La Ginevra Polo Club on the outskirts of the capital, Acquedotto Romano Polo Club about 9 kilometres from Rome, Firenze Polo Club in the Parco delle Cascine 5 minutes away from Piazza del Duomo, Punta Ala Polo Club near the coast, Sport Club Bornago in an area between Piemonte and Lombardia, Milano Polo Club on the outskirts of the city, La Mimosa Polo Club a few minutes from the centre of Milan, Ambrosiano Polo Club, Villa a Sesta Polo Club in Tuscany between Arezzo and Siena, the Argentario Polo Club, Polo Grande Slam in the province of Terni and the Veneto Polo Club. Other parts of Italy are being drawn into the game, such as Sardinia which is also an up and coming place for polo matches.

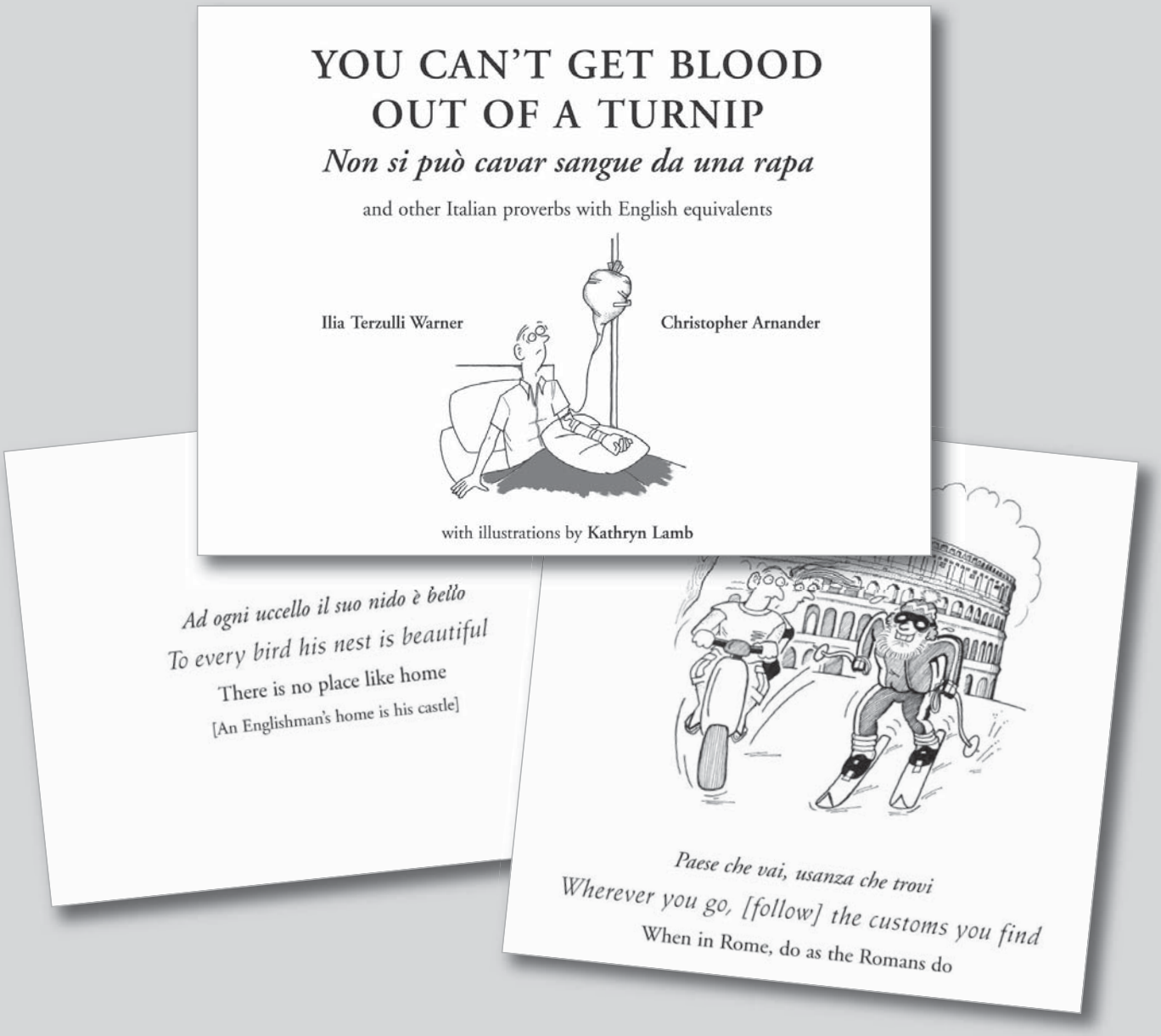
Giachetti recalled how polo used to be an Olympic sport: it was in London in 1908, in Antwerp in 1920, in Paris in 1924, and in Berlin in 1936. The outbreak of the second world war interrupted the Olympic Games until they resumed in 1948 when London was chosen to host the games. However, in the meantime some sports had lost popularity and polo was one of them. Giachetti said for a sport to be included in the Olympic Games: "One needs at least 80 participating countries. Perhaps polo will be in the Olympics again in 2020, but initially only as a demonstration sport, meaning that it will not be competing". As in many sports, there is the International Federation for Polo and the European Federation for Polo apart from the national federation.

To the question about polo being a sport for aristocrats and snobs, hence the rather low number of players, Alessandro Giachetti replied: "Although most people who join are children or friends of polo players, the game is open to anybody; there are no barriers. So I would not call it so much a game for snobs as a game closed in its own circle". The Italian Federation for Polo is doing its utmost to encourage new members and involve children in the game at an early age: "The Polo Pony School in Rome was set up 5 years ago and is for children between the ages of 5 and 12. Currently, there are 40 boys and girls registered with the school. There is another group for the national team of under 21. This young team has played in France and in the UK at The Guards Polo Club in Windsor and in Cirencester. This year there will be an exchange where the young British team will be playing at the Villa a Sesta Polo Club in Tuscany during the world cup championships. One has to be a member of a club and have a membership card from the Federation, which is a licence allowing the member to play polo. This is issued after passing an exam. Membership is renewed every year. Giachetti said: "Polo is a technical sport, where there are professional players, who form teams and organise training courses also for children". Polo is also promoted on TV channels, in particular every Wednesday on Sky channel 221. "This sport is comparatively more affordable", he said, "considering that show jumping and taking part at national horse shows throughout the country can be even more costly". The polo season is normally between April and October, although it is also a winter sport for some.

Apart from polo played on hard grass ground - the traditional way - there are two more ways of playing polo: on sand (as in the case of Rimini, Viareggio and Forte dei Marmi) and on snow. In the case of Cortina Ampezzo, they play on snow on Lake Misurina which is covered with ice and snow during the cold winter months. "These games are also played at international level", Giachetti explained.

The French are the current champions at European level and the Argentinians are the world champions. Spain is becoming a strong competitor. Italy is emerging on the international scene. Members of the Italian clubs play in the European Polo Championships and can also play in International Polo Championships as long as they qualify. At a professional level: "Italy has 161 polo players who are members registered with the Federation, of whom 20 are women".

Alessandro Giachetti was proud to talk about Italy's progress: "Italy has hosted events at international level, such as selecting players from Europe for the World Championship in Melbourne (2001) and the European Championships in 1997 and 2002. In 2005 Italy won the European championship, and at the European championship held in Vienna in September last year (2010), Italy was in 5th place out of 10 teams".



A collection of Italian proverbs with their English equivalents, perfect for anyone interested in Italian language and culture.

To obtain this book at a **promotional price of £8.95** (rrp £9.95) postage free in the UK, please fill in the order form and send it to the address at the bottom of this page.

ORDER FORM

Please send ☐ copies to:

Title Name

Address

Postcode

Email

Telephone

Date

Please charge my credit card/debit card

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Switch

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

☐☐ / ☐☐ Expiry Date ☐ Issue number (for switch only)

☐☐☐ Security Code

☐ I enclose a cheque made payable to **Stacey Publishing Ltd** for £ _____

Stacey International, 128 Kensington Church Street, London, W8 4BH
marketing@stacey-international.co.uk • www.stacey-international.co.uk

CARSIC WEDDINGS

By Hana Pertot

The Carsic Wedding, which began in 1968 on the initiative of the 'Zadruga Naš Kras', an organization which works for the preservation of the culture of the Slovene community of north-east Italy, offers a first hand, authentic experience of that heritage. Based on the traditions of the typical Carsic weddings from the time of the XIX century, this is an actual wedding using traditions reconstructed from historical and ethnological sources which offers visitors a unique experience.

This biennial event, which takes place during the last week of August, with this year's opening ceremony on 24th August, is held in the small municipality of Monrupino, or, in Slovene, Repentabor. Repentabor lies in the heart of the Karst area, 13km from Trieste, the capital city of the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region and combines three villages: Repen, Col and Fernetiči, with a total of 650 inhabitants.

The Karst plateau, an area where the Slovene minority totals more than 60.000, represents a bridge between the Slovene and Italian cultures. This bilingual community runs various bilingual schools, established organizations, newspapers, radio and TV programmes as well as theatres, all in Slovene language. Most people from the Slovene minority identify with Slovene rather than Italian culture.

The Carsic wedding is a combination of a number of smaller events which all take place in Repen. This village offers very well preserved examples of the dominantly stone constructed Carsic architecture, and, most importantly, the Kraška Hiša, the Carsic house, a museum house whose appearance is that of the 1830s. Each and every event traditionally takes places in a specific venue and the whole is enlivened by the opening of many so-called osmica, a tradition dating back to the Habsburg Empire under Maria's Teresa's reign, whereby local farmers open their doors to the general public and serve local homegrown food such as Carsic ham, salami and sausage and the local red Teran and white Vitovska wine.

Every two years, in January, a couple is chosen by the main commission of the organizers. Although there are no official criteria, if the couple resides in the Monrupino municipality, they automatically have priority. In any case, the couple needs to love tradition and needs to be fully available during the week of celebrations, as the marriage is not of an intimate character, but a wider family commitment. Because the organizers want the wedding to take place across the whole municipality, it has been decided that the bride symbolically comes from Col, and the groom from Repen.

Besides the to-be married couple, there are two other couples who represent their "parents". Although they are not the couple's real parents, their attendance is tremendously important as they are active participants/actors, who play important roles in events throughout the week.

From Thursday to Sunday (the wedding is a four-day celebration) visitors can witness a variety of smaller events. It opens with a relatively recent tradition introduced after the Second World War, of the stag and hen parties, each taking place in the symbolic village of origin. The couple then meets on the main square in Repen for a final "single" dance which at the same time is the opening dance of the wedding.

Friday evening is the time for the serenade that the groom dedicates to his beloved. Celebrated with various Slovene songs, this event has strong historical connotations. It reflects the traditional way of Karsic life, where groups of boys used to go around their village and sing under the girls' windows. Singing created a very strong bond between the youth across all Karsic villages. Often, singing was a form of mocking, but its main purpose was to dedicate a boy's love to his beloved.

This event takes place in front of a chosen house in Repen, which for this occasion represents the bride's home: it is a typical Carsic house, near the main square. The bride waits inside the house, in her bedroom. In the room next to hers, her "parents" are present. At a given time, the groom shows up, accompanied by his group of "best buddies". In the old times, after the dedicated serenade, it was then up to the girl to decide whether she'll open her bedroom window and allow him upstairs or ignore the request and keep her window closed.

On the day before the wedding, the transport of the dowry takes place from the "bride's house" in Col, to the "groom's house" in Repen. The dowry is transported by "*balarji*": a group of local boys, who transport the dowry with an ox cart or horse-drawn carriage. The dowry, consisting of a bed with a mattress filled with corn leaves, pillows, a cradle and farming tools is loaded onto a decorated carriage. A very important figure during this event is the bride's small "brother" who carries a rooster in his hands, symbolizing fertility and the desire for the couple to have a big family. On arrival at the new house, the "mother" blesses the goods and then she and the "brother" play out a ritual with the hungry, thirsty rooster which ends in the mother providing food and drinks for the "*balarji*", the rooster and everyone else.

Sunday brings the climax of the event, the marriage ceremony. The groom and the bride ready themselves in their own "houses".

Around 9 o'clock the groom walks to the bride's house in Col accompanied by his relatives and a festive company of

Carsic Wedding

accordion players, playing and singing typical songs and dressed in local folk costumes. He is greeted by the bride's "mother" and by his "father in law", who gives the following advice best summarized as:

"*Treat my daughter nicely and watch out, because I do not want her to come back home weeping*".

Then, as they walk to the church on Tabor hill, around 650 people dressed in traditional costume, join the bridal procession. The couple walks side by side not holding hands, but connected by a white handkerchief, symbol of virginity. Only participants dressed in typical costumes can attend the religious ceremony while others wait outside the church. After the ceremony, everyone processes back to the Carsic house where the last event, the 'giving-away' of the bride, takes place.

Here the bride charms the "parents-in-law" with her beauty and special gifts: an apron for the mother, a handkerchief and a '*kolac*' (typical wedding cake) with a red ribbon for the father. The newlyweds, together with their wedding guests, celebrate their wedding reception at the local village restaurant while the vast majority of other event attendees celebrate with rivers of wine in various "*osmica*" scattered across the village.

After the final official part, the early evening dance, the couple's obligations are completed and they can at last relax and celebrate their wedding in a more private setting, surrounded by their family and friends.

The event is an organizational challenge but one which brings a great sense of satisfaction and pride to the community. The Carsic wedding is still an event loaded with happiness, energy, joy and interest, a significant cultural heritage, now carried in hearts of younger generations.

ALONG THE TRAIL OF LEOPARDI TOWARDS INFINITY

By Georgina Gordon-Ham

L'INFINITO

«Sempre caro mi fu quest'ermo colle,
e questa siepe, che da tanta parte
dell'ultimo orizzonte il guardo esclude.
Ma sedendo e mirando, interminati
spazi di là da quella, e sovrumani
silenzi, e profondissima quïete
io nel pensier mi fingo, ove per poco
il cor non si spaura. E come il vento
odo stormir tra queste piante, io quello
infinito silenzio a questa voce
vo comparando: e mi sovvien l'eterno,
e le morte stagioni, e la presente
e viva, e il suon di lei. Così tra questa
immensità s'annega il pensier mio:
e il naufragar m'è dolce in questo mare»

(Giacomo Leopardi)

I have always been fascinated by Romantic poetry. What struck me in my search was how Giacomo Leopardi (1798-1837), Italy's young romantic poet, had so many points in common with John Keats (1795-1821). Affinity and coincidence brought them together (a short life, bad health, poetry, dreams and unhappiness), yet they never met. Keats was too ill to move from Rome and Leopardi only went to Rome briefly in 1822. The leitmotif of the romantic poet is the struggle between two opposite feelings: reality and infinity of the mind. Both poets had been inspired by their surroundings, knowledge and art.

Recanati, Leopardi's birthplace, has been one of my longed for destinations ever since I was at school. Finally this summer my husband and I managed to visit Le Marche and get away from the scorching hot sun and heat which suddenly permeated Rome during *ferragosto* week. The problem was would we find anywhere to stay the last minute. Once bookings had been arranged, we set off on our journey of discovery. What struck us as we drove across the Apennine mountains into this central area of Le Marche (the origin of the name means *confini*) was the unfolding green landscape with rolling hills. Embedded like jewels set in the hills lay dozens of villages and small towns dotted around rich in history, culture and tradition. This continuum of nature and culture interwove elements of landscape and history all around. Our first stop was at Polverina di Camerino, a hamlet close to Camerino. From here we could take excursions to the neighbouring hilltowns of Camerino with its university and castle, and San Severino of pre-Roman origin with its art, churches, *pinacoteca* and attractive oval-shaped square *Piazza del Popolo* (many of the old buildings in the town have recently been restored making them stand out even more), as well as to Macerata, the capital of the province, with its open-air theatre, the Sferisterio.

Our next stop was Recanati, a lovely medieval town on a hilltop with fascinating architecture, churches and a majestic view of the surrounding area and undulating hills covered with olive groves and grape vines – the ideal landscape for the city of poetry and music, not to mention it as also the birthplace of tenor Beniamino Gigli. Although a recluse buried in his books, Giacomo Leopardi must have known the area and neighbouring towns well. Most of his time was spent in the library, which is the only part of the palazzo visitors are allowed to see since the Leopardi family still live there. A rigid upbringing and constraints of ill health made it hard for him to go about freely. So sitting in the garden of the rather austere family palazzo gazing at the splendid view must have nurtured

Monument of Giacomo Leopardi, Recanati

the poet's imagination beyond the walls towards the infinity of those unfolding hills. Those awesome scenes no doubt inspired the words of *L'Infinito*.

Staying at Recanati and looking at the horizon with the backdrop of undulating hills and an idyllic landscape changing colour under its different hues of day and night was an experience out of this world. It was infinity! We stayed at what was once an old convent (now Gallery Hotel Recanati) offering some of the best views and most delicious cuisine. It was a fortuitous choice. The slight drop in temperature allowed us to enjoy walking along the town's old narrow cobbled streets towards Piazza Giacomo Leopardi with its city tower and the Palazzo Comunale, and to Piazza Sabato del Villaggio where Palazzo Leopardi stands. We found Recanati is ideally located for excursions since most towns are only a few kilometres away. It also has a seaside town, Porto Recanati. Every day included a visit to a new location. We were most impressed by the hill top town of Loreto, about twelve kilometres away, with its archway and main street leading up to a beautiful recently restored spacious Piazza della Madonna and Basilica which holds the Santa Casa with its shrine to the Virgin Mary, which attracts thousands of pilgrims every year. I expected it to be overcrowded with pilgrims and clustered houses. Instead there was an extraordinary feeling of space and light possibly enhanced by the restoration. Not all our visits were art-oriented. A visit to the picturesque town of Sirolo and to Monte Conero Nature Reserve with its cliffs was a relaxing break by the sea. The blue sky and sea lit up by the summer sun just stood out incredibly. The last place where we stayed was the summer and winter resort of Sarnano close to the Parco Nazionale dei Monti Sibillini, called the "Blue Mountains" by Leopardi, also renowned for its spa. The whole mountain range was named after an ancient site where a sibyl was believed to have lived. Sarano turned out to be an excellent base for excursions to the Renaissance town of Caldarola and the medieval town of San Ginesio. The landscape of Le Marche has all the ingredients to arouse a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings which can be perceived by the artist in silence and tranquility. For Leopardi it was the launching pad to infinity.

INFINITY

(English Translation)

This solitary hill has always been dear to me
And this hedge, which prevents me from seeing most of
The endless horizon.
But when I sit and gaze, I imagine, in my thoughts
Endless space beyond the hedge,
A silence beyond the reach of mortal ear
And a deeply profound quiet,
To the point that my heart is almost overwhelmed.
And when I hear the wind rustling through the trees
I compare its voice to the infinite silence.
And eternity comes to mind, and all the past seasons,
And the present time, and its sound.
Thus, amidst this immensity my thoughts drown:
And to flounder in this sea is sweet to me.

ARMANDO TESTA

LAVAZZA

THE REAL

ITALIAN ESPRESSO

EXPERIENCE

LAVAZZA A MODO MIO.
GET THE AUTHENTIC ESPRESSO SYSTEM.

A MODO MIO

THE CHAMPIONSHIPS WIMBLEDON

THE COFFEE OF WIMBLEDON

Call 0800 599 9200
www.lavazzamodomio.com

LOVE LETTERS ON CANVAS

By Alexandra Richardson

We regret that mention of the Pre-Raphaelites and Italy exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford slipped through the net in the last issue of RIVISTA. Although it has ended, we felt that because of the theme it would interest readers.

By courtesy of The Ashmolean Museum

Florence from Bellosguardo, 1863, by John Brett

"Three short weeks in that seventh heaven of a place has made me live again". With these words, Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones spoke of the impact that Italy had had upon him and his fellow-advocates of the Pre-Raphaelite art movement in the mid nineteenth century. Seven of these artists had banded together in 1848 to form the so-called Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in protest to "the frivolous art of the day". They aspired to return to the simplicities of the early 15th century. With time, of course, they turned to the sort of romanticism they originally vowed to spurn. They chose this name for their fraternity in the belief that "Italian art [before Raphael] depended on the attentive observation of inexhaustible Nature". The group would rely heavily on Italy's art, architecture, history and landscape for their own creative output in the years to come. The thrust of the Oxford show was, therefore, on the artworks that emerged out of that love of Italy, largely (but not entirely!) steering clear of the lusciously romantic medievalist portraits one more familiarly associates with the movement.

Drawing on many artworks in their own collection, the Ashmolean set out to underscore those links that bound the two countries through some 140 works in oil, watercolour and ink drawings. In the first room, many of the 37 images on the walls were black and white illustrations by Dante Gabriel Rossetti inspired by passages from Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Interspersed with these were a number of John Ruskin's elegiac landscapes of Lucca, Pisa, Verona, Palermo, Florence. As a child, Ruskin had frequently travelled to Italy with his parents and returned there alone to revisit Tuscany and Venice in 1845. Included in the Ruskin works on these walls is one that is slightly less *riuscito*, a study based on Vittore Carpaccio's extraordinary "The Dream of St. Ursula", which hangs in the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice. Hands down, Carpaccio's Ursula is the stronger picture!

The second gallery featured 44 pencil and watercolour studies by Frank Randall, Henry R. Newman and Thomas M. Rooke (who later would be credited with helping complete the Burne-Jones mosaic opus in Rome at St. Paul's Within-the-Walls). The romantic views – many in hues of pink at dusk – are of Capri and Florence and seem almost like the artists' love letters to Italy.

The greater attraction of this second room, however, lies in the studies and drawings for St. Paul's Church in Rome and one might have wished for even more to feast on! In 1870, the beleaguered Protestant community of Rome , with power wrested from the pope, was at long last allowed to build a church of its own, which would rise at the corner of via Nazionale and via Napoli. St. Paul's was completed and consecrated in 1876. But then came the plans for decorating its interiors. A prestigious plum commission for *any* artist. By then, Edward Burne-Jones was a major name in the Brotherhood. He was in his mid-40s, riding high both at home in England as well as in America where his pictorial style also was much in vogue. He loved Italy. Although St. Paul's was largely seen to be "an American church", that country had no tradition of mural decorating of its own. All these facts conspired in feeling that Burne-Jones was the best candidate to carry out the mosaic murals envisioned for the new church. A cumbersome three-way coordination, however, had to be devised between London where the artist lived, Rome where the church was and Venice where the mosaic 'chips' – *tesserae* – were made and assembled. The 26-year Pre-Raphaelite project was, sadly, described summarily at the Ashmolean. It would have been amusing, for example, to have seen images of the completed works which were to feature the likes of Mary D. Astor, J.P. Morgan's father, Giuseppe Garibaldi (standing in for St. James of Spain) Ulysses S. Grant (St. Patrick), Abraham Lincoln (St. Andrew) and Burne-Jones, as himself.

The show concluded, as its organisers probably felt it had to, with some of the well-known portraits of the Brotherhood muses. Jane Morris, legendarily enveloped in her thicket of auburn hair, reigned supreme as the grand finale.

Allemandi books and newspapers an investment in (lasting) culture

NEWSPAPERS

- ❑ More than 3,000 pages a year
- ❑ Distributed in more than 80 countries

IL GIORNALE DELL'ARTE
SINCE 1983

Also includes
- Vernissage
- Annual Reports
- Vademecum
- What's On
- The Venice Biennale Guide

THE ART NEWSPAPER
SINCE 1990

Also includes
- Art Basel Daily Newspaper
- Art Basel Miami Beach Daily Newspaper
- The Venice Biennale Guide
- Frieze Daily Newspaper
- The Year Ahead
- What's On

IL GIORNALE DELL' ARCHITETTURA
SINCE 2002

Also includes
- The Magazine of Architecture
- Annual Reports
- City&Design
- Vademecum

BOOKS

❑ **THE ISLAMIC CERAMICS**
In the Laura collection
Edited by Manuele Scagliola
€ 35.00 £ 31.00, $ 47.00
Italian and English
ISBN 978-88-422-1843-2

❑ **CREMONINI**
Drawings and watercolours
Edited by Flavio Arensi and Alberto Buffetti
€ 80.00, £ 70.00, $ 114.00
ISBN 978-88-422-1622-3

❑ **COSTANTINOPLE**
Edited by Costas Stamatopoulos
€ 160.00, £ 140.00, $ 220.00
English edition
ISBN 88-422-1601-8
Greek editions
ISBN 978-88-422-1600-1
Turkish edition
ISBN 978-88-422-1602-5

❑ **FLEMISH PAINTING**
from the 16th to the 18th century
Relaying ideas from Erasmus to Diderot
Florence de Voldère
€ 65.00, £54.00, $85.00
Italian and English edition
ISBN 978-88-422-1837-1

❑ **THE MUSEO NAZIONALE DELL'AUTOMOBILE IN TURIN**
€ 30.00, £25.00, $39.00
English edition
ISBN 978-88-422-1993-4

❑ **DALÍ IN THE THIRD DIMENSION**
The Stratton Foundation Collection
€ 90.00, £80.00, $120.00
English edition
ISBN 978-88-422-1665-0

❑ **THE HAND OF PALLADIO**
Lorenzo Capellini and Paolo Portoghesi
€ 60.00, £ 50.00, $ 90.00
English edition
ISBN 88-422-1680-3

❑ **BERTOS**
The triumph of motion
Charles Avery
€ 70.00. £ 63.00, $ 104.00
English edition
ISBN 88-422-1556-1

❑ **KARAJAN**
The Master's Style
Vittoria Crespi Morbio
€ 35.00, £ 28.00, $ 50.00
English edition
ISBN 88-422-1704-6

❑ **FEMMES FATALES**
Vittoria Crespi Morbio
€ 35.00, £ 31.50, $ 52.00
English edition
ISBN 978-88-422-1833

❑ **VENINI GLASS**
€ 150.00, £ 135.00, $ 222.00
English edition
ISBN 88-422-1524-0

❑ **EROI**
Edited by Danilo Eccher
€ 55.00, £ 48.00, $ 78.00
English edition
ISBN 978-88-422-2026-8

❑ **THE THEATRE OF PERFORMANCE**
Edited by Danilo Eccher
€ 25.00 £22.00, $35.7
English edition
ISBN 978-88-422-1825-8

❑ **NIENTE DI MENO / NOTHING LESS 1945-2000**
The power of female design
Edited by Anty Pansera
€ 30.00, £ 26.00, $ 42.00
English edition
ISBN 978-88-422-1972-9

❑ **CLAUDIO SILVESTRIN**
The non materiality of the material
€ 80.00, £ 70.00, $ 114.00
English edition
ISBN 978-88-422-1909-5

❑ **NEW YORK SHOTS**
A boxing tale
Edited by Gabriele Tinti
€ 22.00, £18.50, $ 30.00
English edition
ISBN 978-88-422-1982-8

❑ **DISCOVER THE DALÍ THEATRE-MUSEUM IN FIGUERES**
In collaboration with fundaciò Gala-Salvador Dalí
€ 9.50, £ 8.00, $ 12.50
English edition
ISBN 978-88-422-1727-5
Catalan edition
ISBN 978-88-422-1724-4
French edition
ISBN 978-88-422-1728-2
Russian edition
ISBN 978-88-422-1726-8
Spanish edition
ISBN 978-88-422-1723-7

WORLDWIDE DISTRIBUTION

Antique Collectors' Club:
UK Office
Tel: +44 (0) 1394 389950
Fax: +44 (0) 1394 389999
E-mail: sales@antique-acc.com

Antique Collectors' Club:
US Office
Tel: +1 (413) 529 0861 or (800) 252 5231
Fax: +1 (413) 529 0862
E-mail: sales@antiquecc.com

All prices exclusive of postage and packing

ALLEMANDI & C.
allemandi.com

Information: Allemandi & C. publishing, via Mancini 8, 10121 Torino, Italy, tel. +39 011 8199111, fax +39 011 8193090, allemandi@allemandi.com
Direct orders: Libro Co., via Borromeo 48, 50026 San Casciano (FI), Italy, tel. +39 055 8228461, fax +39 055 8228462, allemandi@libroco.it

150 YEARS AGO….

By John Culver

2010 marked the 150th anniversary of the acquisition by the British community in Naples of land on which to build an Anglican church, thus ending thirty years of uncertainty and difficulty. And it came about through the personal intervention of Giuseppe Garibaldi.

Although an Anglican chaplaincy had been in existence since 1830, the authorities in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies would not allow a church to be built. Indeed they hindered Anglican worship of any sort. In 1834, for example, when the British residents of Naples began to hold services in a room hired for the purpose within the precincts of the British Consulate, the Illustrated London News reported that:"so determined was the Bourbon Government that no Protestant service should be recognised as existing amongst them that no sooner was this room fitted up for the temporary chapel of the Church of England, than the public entrance to it from the street was walled up by the police so that none might enter it except through the apartment of the British Consul".

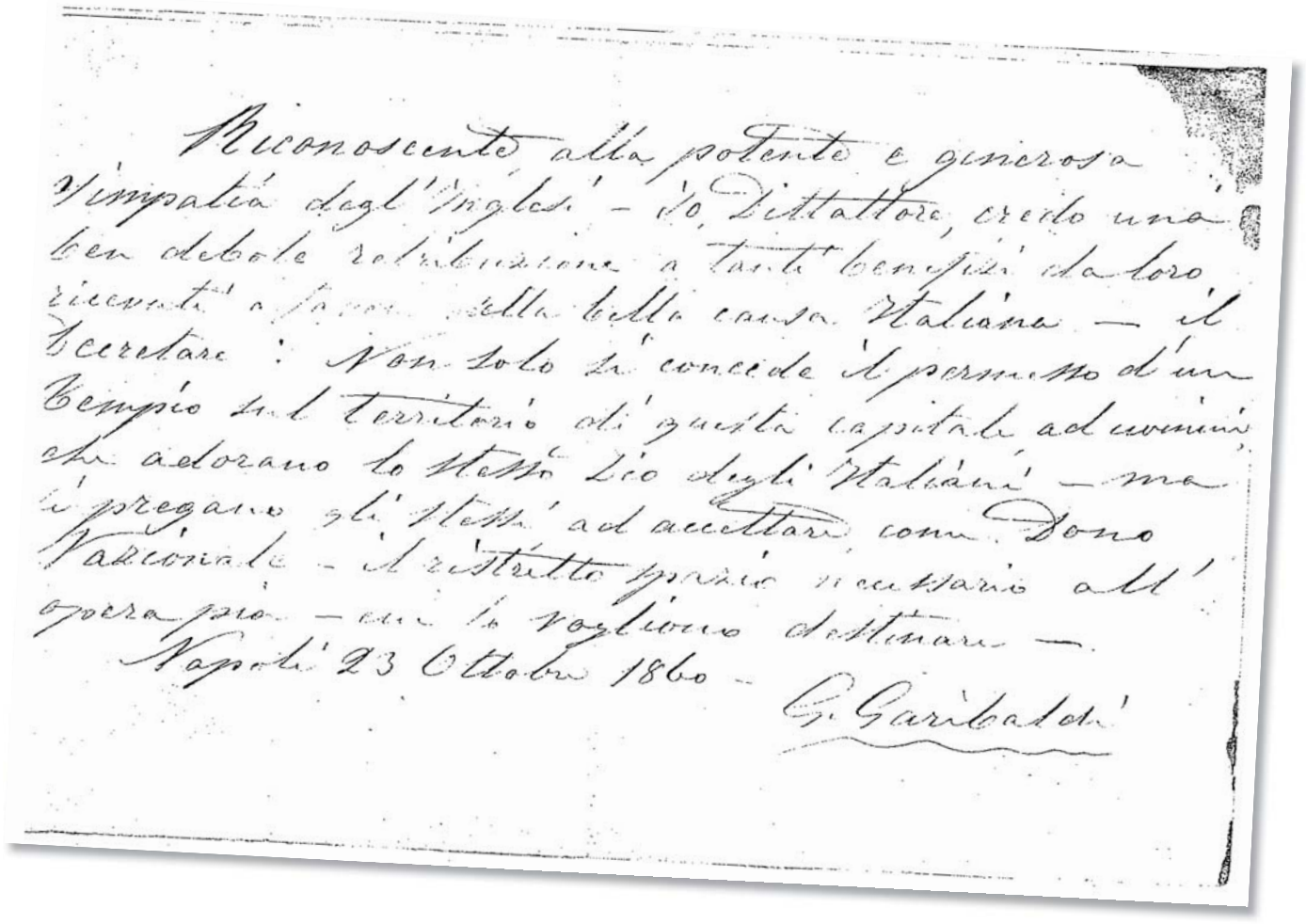
The arrival of Garibaldi and his Thousand provided the British community with an opportunity to change matters and a group of British ladies went to petition the General at his headquarters in Caserta for permission to build a church. The result was spectacular. Garibaldi wrote and signed the following decree, dated 23rd October 1860:

Grateful for the powerful and generous sympathy of the English, the Dictator considers it but a slight return for so many benefits received from them in favour of the noble cause of Italy to decree that not only is permission granted, to men who worship the same God as the Italians, to build a church on the territory of the capital, but they are requested to accept, as a gift from the nation, the small space required for the pious object to which they intend to dedicate it.

The land Garibaldi gave, which had been part of the Cavalry Barracks exercise paddock, was formally handed over by the Italian Government on 10th August 1861 and the foundation stone for the new church, designed by Thomas Smith of London in the best Victorian neo-gothic style, was laid by the Duchess of San Arpino on 15th December 1862. Christ Church, now embellished with a chapel to commemorate the British troops who died during the Salerno landings in 1943, continues to serve the multi-national Anglican community in Naples to this day.

The original of Garibaldi's decree and some of Smith's original architectural drawings are kept for safety at the British Consulate in Naples, appropriately situated on the Via dei Mille, a stone's throw from Christ Church itself.

Rivista is grateful to the Reverend Canon Michael Bullock, former Chaplain of Christ Church, and to the British Consul and his staff in Naples for assistance with this article.


Riconoscente alla potente e generosa
simpatia degl'Inglesi – Io Dittatore, credo una
ben debole retribuzione a tanti benefizi da loro
ricevuti a favore della bella causa Italiana – il
Decretare: Non solo le concede il permesso d'un
Tempio sul territorio di questa capitale ad uomini
che adorano lo stesso Dio degli Italiani – ma
li prega gli stessi ad accettare come Dono
Nazionale – il ristretto spazio necessario all'
opera pia – cui la vogliono destinare –
Napoli 23 Ottobre 1860 – G. Garibaldi

MOSTARDA: THAT PICCANT PLEASURE FROM CREMONA

By Alexandra Richardson

Edith was ecstatic. "It serves as a sweet to the mild meats and sets them on fire, in a cool and lovely way, like moonlight burning on water. It is raffiné…Baroque…sweet, full-bodied, glowing and tingling". The writer was England's Edith Templeton. Her 1954 cult book was "The Surprise of Cremona". And the object of her accolade was an unusual syrupy fruit condiment typical of that southern Lombard city. It featured "cherries…like antique corals, a green pear…with black pips shining like onyx, a green fig…like a flawed emerald, a half of an apricot…[seemingly] carved out of a topaz". The ambrosia in question? *Mostarda di Cremona*.

To call mostarda "mustard" in English would be a gross breakdown in translation. For while mustard oil or powder is indeed an ingredient in this compote, the end result is far from an opaque and sickly ochre paste. *Al contrario!* The syrup is clear and the whole or halved fruits are bright and specially chosen for their perfect shape and colouring. What is a little unclear, however, are the exact origins of this curious concoction and indeed its very name. Some Italian culinary historians, such as Cremona's Carla Bertinelli Spotti, are partial to the theory that the word itself, "mostarda", is a contraction of the Latin words *mustum* and *ardens*. Indeed, it seems that this mixture of grape must and mustard reaches far back, later gaining popularity during the Middle Ages. Tastes and ingredients would continue to evolve over time. The grape juice element would recede and fruits would creep into the equation. Added to its misty beginnings is the fact that the earliest written record about today's style of mostarda cropped up at Voghera and not Cremona. In fact, correspondence from 1397 on behalf of Milan's Duke Gian Galeazzo Visconti, describes an order of mostarda to be produced by a local Voghera spice and flavouring master, Pietro de Murri, for the upcoming Christmas court festivities. It would be another two centuries before the first printed reference ascribed it to Cremona. Whoever it was to stake first claim on this condiment perhaps makes no difference: by the 1500s, much of Lombardy was familiar with it and had adopted it in home and hearth.

Mostarda pretty much follows Mother Nature's own calendar. Fruits (quinces, melons, pears, peaches, cherries, apricots, figs, pumpkins, apples, mandarins: all eligible candidates) are picked around mid-year, before reaching full ripeness. Firm and slightly hard, they are all washed, pitted and stemmed. Water is heated in a large pot and when it simmers, sugar is added to make a syrup. The larger and harder fruits are first to take the plunge in this candying process, followed by the smaller and softer ones needing less simmering time in the pot. Vinegar or white wine and mustard seed powder or oil are then heated separately and added to the syrup. Mostarda is then sealed in sterilised jars, stored in the larder to await the chilling autumn mists rolling in from the nearby Po River – mists which envelop whole towns in a thick, glum mantle. Traditionally, this weather approaches around Christmas. The mostarda, by this time fully saturated by the peppery syrup, is always brought out to serve with holiday fare.

The cremonesi are enthusiastic meat eaters, so it followed that this fiery condiment was served up with a hearty array of boiled meats, poultry and *cotechini*, much the way New Englanders bring on bowls of fresh, tear-provoking horseradish sauce to go with their boiled meats. Given the easy preparation, virtually all families put in their own stocks of mostarda to last the winter, adding or deleting fruits to customise to their own tastes. Country folk brought it to the table as was, in all its simple glory. Milan's food stylist Beatrice Barbieri adds that as a further refinement at wealthier tables: "mostarda was chopped up into smaller pieces and mixed together with either mild crescenza or otherwise creamy mascarpone, both very Lombard ingredients. It made for a richer sort of sauce. Sometimes, people ate it as a course in itself, or spooned into it for dessert".Resourceful Lombards put it to good use elsewhere as well. The sublime pumpkin tortelli of Mantua blend in a bit of mostarda to the stuffing. And much like chutney, it sometimes accompanies a cheese course. The saltier the cheese, the better the duet.

Whatever way you take your mostarda, either nibbling at the edges or aiming for the heart, remember Edith Templeton's purring conclusion after her encounter with the ambrosia of Cremona: "Life is beautiful", she purred.

ERNESTO DE MARCHI AND IRIS MURDOCH

Ernesto De Marchi, or simply Tino to us and his friends, became a reference figure in my life. He came from a wealthy family in Piedmont. Their business was quite assorted: from a chocolate and coffee factory to construction and real estate. Tino lost his mother when he was a teenager and she left him sufficient means to be financially independent at an early stage of his life. This probably allowed him to cultivate his academic interests in philosophy without having to devote too much time to the economic activities of the family. Tino, who had no children, has always been very close and dear to me and undoubtedly played a fundamental part in creating and supporting the bonds I have with Britain.

During one of our weekend conversations, after the end of my University studies in Milan, I expressed the wish to do a post-graduate degree abroad in Private International Law. Tino told me he would think about it and a couple of weekends later he produced the application forms for an LL.M. degree at King's College in London. He had spoken to a friend who lived in London and asked him to go and pick up the forms and send them to Valbrona.

I had always known about his deep friendship with Iris Murdoch, as he often spoke of her during the family chats. When Iris came to Milan in 1985 to present her book The Good Apprentice she invited Tino and my mother to an event organized at the home of Inge Feltrinelli, the Italian publisher. My mother recalled Iris detecting the presence of Tino in the room and suddenly abandoning her interlocutor, moving quickly in their direction to hug Tino with enthusiasm.

He died in 1991. The next day I phoned Iris Murdoch. I had never met her in person but I was the obvious person to do so since my mother was in a terrible state and possibly her English was not up to that sort of difficult conversation. I still remember the astonishment, the sense of loss that came from her few words, interrupted by long silences.

A few days later she wrote a moving letter to my mother which is now among those donated to the College.

In accordance with his will I scattered Tino's ashes in the grounds of Worcester College after having obtained the permission of the Provost.

I remember travelling with the ashes all the way from Valbrona to Oxford by car, airplane, train, taxi and arriving at Worcester on a very wet day.

As I came into the hall of the College, it was about noon. I was greeted by the Provost and after a brief introduction we both realized that the urn was secured by a strong wire. The Provost disappeared and came back a few minutes later with his tool case and a pair of wellingtons. "These should be your size", he said, while outside it was pouring with rain. We managed to open the urn and I went out in the good English weather, in the Provost's wellingtons, to find a place to scatter the ashes which I spotted under a big tree at the far side of the grounds.

That day the Provost, whose warm and somehow unconventional approach had greatly helped in making my task easier, had also kindly gathered at the College some of Tino's old friends for lunch and he made a moving toast with the hope that my children (I had just got married) would come and study at Worcester. My son Giovanni tells me he wants to be an actor and this may make him an unlikely Worcester student. There is a better chance with Ernesto who wants to study archaeology!

My mother died in 2007. I inherited the house in Valbrona with Tino's incredible library and many boxes full of notes, papers, letters belonging to him that had never been properly dealt with after his death. In 2009 I decided to do some work and refurbish the house. Inevitably I had to go through papers and correspondence kept in boxes, folders, files and I tried to put in order what had been sitting there for decades. In one of the several boxes, I found a number of letters and cards sent to Tino by Iris Murdoch.

I contacted Joanna Parker, the Librarian at Worcester, whom I had met in a previous visit to the College and with whom I had organized some years before the gift of the collection of Occidente, to see if the letters could be of interest to the Library. The idea was received with enthusiasm. Hence the gift. If I should imagine what Tino's wish would have been, there would be no better place than Worcester for the letters to be kept.

Luca Corabi

Ernesto De Marchi was born in Vercelli in 1923 from a family of industrialists. During the Second World War he fought in the Resistance with Giustizia e Libertà. He graduated in Italian Literature and Philosophy at the Catholic University of Milan in 1945. After the War he became research assistant to the political philosopher (and later, life senator) Norberto Bobbio at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Turin. In 1945 he co-founded the bi-monthly review *Occidente*, of which he was the general editor, with the aim of examining current political problems in the perspective of history and in particular of internationalism after the catastrophe of the Second World War. As a later note to the English reader stated:

The main political bias of its promoters was revealed in their intention to make *Occidente* strongly anti-nationalist since they all believed that, in the twentieth century, the most fruitful way of approaching almost all major political problems was to consider that they were international in scope and implications. Contributors with every type of political outlook have contributed to *Occidente* but they have been mainly drawn from the area which stretches from leftwing liberal to centre socialist.

After Ernesto came to England in 1951, many more English contributors were introduced and the subtitle *Rivista Anglo-Italiana di Studi Politici* was added. The note to the English reader states:

The main emphasis has been placed upon the comparative study of urgent and important political problems, this emphasis resting upon the belief that it is of great value to bring together articles by scholars of different nationalities on subjects of contemporary significance. Not only is this intrinsically valuable for the discussion of problems both in their national and international settings but, in adopting this comparative pattern, it has also been the aim of *Occidente* to play its part in the breaking down of the barriers which have divided the study of political science in Europe into small, nationalist, compartments. The original aim, which was to perform this widening task in an Italy which had been cut off from many international cultural streams, has been slowly extended.

English contributors included Denis Mack Smith, Hugh Trevor Roper, Hugh Seton Watson, James Joll and many other Oxford scholars, and from Worcester Asa Briggs, Harry Pitt and J.W. Sargent:

The view of *Occidente* has always been that intellectuals, in its case political scientists and historians, have a great deal to offer in the discussion of current problems and that their isolation from the world of practical politics has dangerous implications.

Issues were devoted to single topics, such as the British Labour Party, the independence of the judicial power, the social problems of South Italy, Anglo-Italian relations, and neo-Fascism in Europe. *Occidente* continued to appear until 1956.

In 1947, Ernesto published a book on Camillo Cavour's constitutional thought *Il Pensiero Costituzionale del Cavour: studi sugli scritti precedenti l'ottobre 1850.* He became interested in the ideas of John Locke and published several articles and essays on him in political and philosophical journals. In 1951 he came to Oxford to work for a B.Litt. in political philosophy at Worcester, moving to St Antony's in 1953 as Senior Scholar; he completed his B.Litt. in 1961 on *The Origins of John Locke's Theory of Toleration*. He was a member of the Senior Common Room at St Antony's 1964-74 and Senior Associate Member of St Antony's 1974-84, and divided his time between Oxford, where he lived in North Parade, and Italy, where he lived in Valbrona, near Como. His business interests in Italy especially in the last part of his life distracted him, much to his regret, from his academic studies and activities. He was a keen Anglophile, and preserved happy memories of his time at Worcester. He died in 1991 and his ashes were scattered in the grounds of Worcester College by his stepson, Luca Corabi, in accordance with his will.

Iris Murdoch was teaching Philosophy at St Anne's when Ernesto came to Worcester. Their friendship continued after Iris's marriage to John Bayley in 1956, and Iris and John visited 'Tino', as Iris called him, in the Villa Irma. *The Black Prince* (1973) is dedicated to Ernesto, and she sent him inscribed copies of many of her novels. The earliest dated letter in the sequence of 32 letters, postcards and cards now in the Library, is from October 1961; the final one, dated 28th December 1991, was a condolence letter written to her friend's widow. Hand written, sometimes on blue stationery, sometimes on white, they are very affectionate; Iris often recalls the Muffin Coffee Bar in North Parade, clearly one of Ernesto's favourite haunts, and its transformation into the Italian restaurant, the Luna Caprese: 'I meant to write before to tell you that the Muffin Coffee bar is now the Luna Caprese restaurant, full of chaps enjoying spaghetti & chianti! *Eheu fugaces*'. The following is typical:

Cedar Lodge, Steeple Aston, Oxford, OX5 3SE

22 April [1985]

Dearest Tino,

Just to say am thinking of you. When will you come back to North Parade and the Luna Caprese and memories of the Muffin Coffee Bar? We miss you. It's ages since you were here. I was glad to get a bit of news of you from David Luke – but do please now write to me, and do try to come for a nice long stay in England. The weather is terrible, but you are used to that. Oxford looks beautiful all the same with daffodils & so many trees in flower. I do want to meet Wanda and to see you both over here. It's easy, it's not far. I've been feeling how long it is since we met. I am working away as usual, on a novel and on a long book on philosophy based on some lectures I gave. I keep trying to give up philosophy but the fascination remains.

I hope things are reasonably OK with you business-wise. Your trees must be very big grown-up trees by now. I hope you have good reliable people to help you (and look after things when you come here!) John sends his love. Write now anyway & come before long. All our affectionate greetings to Wanda. Much love to you, dearest Tino, with many thoughts,

Iris

Like his stepfather Luca Corabi, who has presented the Iris Murdoch letters to the Library, is an Anglophile. He was born in 1960 and graduated in Law from the University of Milan in 1983. He was Lecturer at the Institute of European Community Law at the University of Milan (1984-1985) and then completed his studies with a Master of Laws (LL.M.) at King's College London. He worked as a lawyer in London for five years before returning to Milan and starting his own law firm there (now Corabi Catucci & Partners). In 1998 he was appointed Honorary Legal Adviser to her Britannic Majesty's Consul General and Director for Trade and Investments in Milan. Much of his professional activity is of a cross-border nature assisting clients in commercial matters between Italy and Britain. He has also assisted and advised charitable institutions; for example he helped the Monte San Martino Trust with a fund raising exercise in July 2008, when the great granddaughter of George Younghusband decided to follow his escape route from a POW camp in Piacenza to Switzerland in 1943. As well as donating the Iris Murdoch letters, Luca Corabi and his family have also given to Worcester Library Ernesto de Marchi's extensive Oxford library and a complete run of *Occidente*, from 1945-1956 .

Joanna Parker

Worcester College Record 2010

COFFEE: A GREAT ITALIAN SUCCESS STORY

The morning cup of coffee has an exhilaration about it which the cheering influence of the afternoon or evening cup of tea cannot be expected to reproduce. ~ Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., "Over the Teacups," 1891

How many of us find coffee more exhilarating than tea? Perhaps Lavazza can enlighten us on how the UK is turning from a tea culture into a coffee culture.

David Rogers, the UK Home Sales & Marketing Director for LAVAZZA, talks to Georgina Gordon-Ham about how the Italian coffee magnet expanded his business and conquered the British public.

David Rogers

Tell me about LAVAZZA's history

The life of Luigi Lavazza, a self-made man, is the fascinating story of a tenacious and resourceful person with a strong will to go forward. "**Lavazza S.p.A**., the Italian manufacturer of coffee products, founded in Turin in 1895 by Luigi Lavazza was initially run from a small grocery store at 10 Via San Tommaso, now a smart restaurant and café rolled into one. Turning it into an iconic establishment and one of the foremost restaurants in Turin in homage to family history was the idea of Luigi's great grandson, Giuseppe Lavazza". Luigi Lavazza left Monferrato, an agricultural and farming community, aged of 25, with just fifty lire in his pocket and went to seek his fortune in Turin. For the next ten years he often changed jobs: first as a manual worker, then in a factory worker, and later as a shop clerk. In the evening this ambitious young man attended business classes and then the municipal school of chemistry. All this experience and determination led him to set up his own business and buy "Paissa e Olivero", an old grocery shop in the heart of Turin. "This dream came true on 24th March 1894, and Lavazza was founded in 1895". Luigi Lavazza understood the importance of blending, and the complex art of mixing coffee of different origins. Luigi headed the company, assisted by his cousin Pericle Forno. From 1900 onwards the two families witnessed an ever-expanding company. "Since his death in 1949, both sides of the family, from generation to generation, have devoted time and energy to coffee. Today LAVAZZA is seen to be present in over 60 countries. The head office is still based in Turin and is run by the fourth generation of Lavazzas".

How has LAVAZZA developed and diversified?

Rogers explained how the family have not only developed coffee to perfection, but also diversified by moving into other related areas such as gastronomy: "as one of the sponsors for the Slow Food movement". However, the Lavazza restaurant at 10 Via San Tommaso: "is an absolute one-off in Turin. It is a dedication to the family. So, there are no other formal Lavazza owned restaurants in the world. There are, however, Lavazza coffee bars, such as Café di Roma in Spain and in Italy; there is Espression (from the word 'espresso'), a coffee bar which has opened in Harrods recently. In the USA at the top of the Hancock Tower, the tallest building in Chicago, is a Lavazza Espression café, which is a well known and an iconic landmark in the US".

Lavazza is served in a myriad of coffee bars, restaurants and hotels around the world. The coffee shops are part of the coffee bars. There is a whole range of items, such as cups and the new coffee machine "Lavazza A Modo Mio" (my way) home coffee machine to make a coffee bar quality beverage coffee at home. People want the real thing. The strategic objective is not to become yet another Starbucks or a chain, but rather be a brand identity for the excellence of Italian coffee. They are focal points. As part of keeping pace with the times, Rogers commented: "Giuseppe Lavazza, the Vice President of Lavazza is keen that Lavazza reflect Italian excellence around the world. It is about moving the company on and being relevant to today's world in the year 2015".

Would you say that the UK now has a coffee culture?

Italian ice creams began to conquer Britain and British taste at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, and then Italian pasta invaded British supermarkets around the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. To the question "When would you say Italian coffee blends became popular in the UK?" David Rogers replied: "That is a really good question. There were two waves. The first one coincided with the coffee bar craze and Italian coffee in the 1950s and 60s, when London saw an invasion of coffee bars. They were no doubt driven by the iconic film industry of those years with film actors like Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton strolling along Via Veneto and *La dolce vita*. Within the UK, the coffee culture then died down and did not pick up again until the end of the 1980s to the 90s. Lavazza set up in the UK in 1989, in west London with a subsidiary company owned by Lavazza S.p.A. Italy. From 1989 Italian coffee and coffee bars took off once again and started their journey". Another interesting aspect is how the British have changed over the years: "Thanks to low cost airlines and the discovery of good food, drink and sunshine, this no doubt had an impact on coffee culture with consumers enjoying the experience of sitting outside in the street and socializing over a cup of coffee. This has always been in the DNA of Lavazza. Lavazza understood this and has taken advantage of it over the years. It is the Italian experience with all the coffee varieties".

Where does the "LAVAZZA" brand stand in the UK?

During the 21st century the coffee culture has gathered pace faster. People began to want to learn more and be educated on how to prepare coffee. Although the French 'cafetière' is still more popular in the UK, the coffee phenomenon has expanded and preparing coffee the Italian way is more and more popular. David Rogers quoted Lavazza as now becoming "the second largest roasted coffee brand for home consumption in the UK after Taylors of Harrogate. It is London's first largest coffee brand and has an 83% coffee share of the espresso sector in the UK as the Number One brand with a growth rate of between 15 and 20% per year".

PANTOMIME IN VENICE

By Sandra Fox

From Fairy Snowdrop with her West Yorkshire accent and pure unbridled delight in her magenta powder puff skirt to the professional BBC actress who played Fairy Sparkle with carefully enunciated vowels, not to mention the ex film actress from Los Angeles masquerading as Cinders, we have been there on stage with them all in the four Venice pantomimes that there have been so far. I say so far, as there is another one already scheduled for January 2012, this time Sleeping Beauty.

It all started when I was approached by an author who I now know as Laurie Graham, on the terrace of the then British Consulate in Venice overlooking the Grand Canal. It was a lovely sunny day and, glasses of prosecco in hand, we were watching the Vogalunga, an annual rowing race, as it went by in all its chaotic colours and diverse styles of rowing. Basking in the sun, I had been cheering the Oxford Vogalunga crew and indeed anyone else who hailed from our somewhat less sunny isle, on the grounds that they deserved every support just for making the effort to compete, let alone complete the race. In between cheers, Laurie managed to grab my attention as, pen poised over paper, she asked me if I was interested in getting involved, or even acting, in a pantomime during the forthcoming winter in Venice. Knowing that my husband had acted both at school and afterwards and being generous to a fault, in his absence I immediately volunteered him as an actor and said that I was more than willing to help but that, as I had never acted in my life, I would probably not be much good at treading the boards myself. What I also failed to add was that I was petrified of all public performance and died a thousand deaths if anyone so much as suggested it.

Moving on a few months, I found myself at a script reading for Aladdin, reading through the part of Wicked Uncle Pantagane's somewhat weak and equally wicked sidekick. (Note: 'pantagane' is Venetian dialect for an enormous rat, of which there are plenty in Venice). I also found myself acting said part the following January in what can only be described as a minimalist production in the middle of a courtyard in a Venetian Convent. Our stage was a somewhat unstable low platform and there was no scenery. We did, however, have a brilliant script written by Laurie Graham for 'A-lad-din Venice' full of topical references and jokes and it was this that carried the day. The Genie was played as very camp, the Dame had a designer dress, the Fairy's magenta powder puff skirt made its first appearance and the rest of us put together what we could by way of costumes. It can't have been all bad as a child in the audience got so excited by the whole thing that he came up on stage and had to be forcibly removed by the Fairy, ad-libbing like the pro she was.

One thing led to another and Mother Goose followed. For some reason, I was cast as Jack, Mother Goose's son. Luckily I did not have too many lines to learn but short trousers in the winter were no joke! This time we performed in the Auditorio di Santa Margherita (part of the Ca' Foscari University's music department) on a proper stage. There were no curtains and seemingly no possibility to hang flats but nevertheless we had scenery sets hung from wooden frames and ably flipped over, as appropriate, by the tall and elegant stage manager and her assistants, not to mention both a silver and golden egg, professionally gilded by a local artist. The goose's costume was a veritable work of art. Behind the scenes we were all squeezed into a very small changing room. We played three performances to packed houses, one of which was heaving with Venetian children from the Istituto di San Giuseppe, who had all been carefully prepared as to what to expect. Thigh slapping, that we tried to encourage, was all too much: why would anyone want to do that and anyway why was the principal boy always a girl and the Dame a man? Why indeed?

Dick Whittington, our next production, marked two more developments: a well known local artist now painted our sets with help from various assistants and children became part of the acting cast, in this instance as non-speaking rats. A professional dancer and teacher, who had helped us from the very beginning, choreographed them. Dick Whittington turned out to be an extreme example of the 'show must go on' as we lost our Dick Whittington with a threatened miscarriage three days before we were due to perform. There were and never have been any understudies. Fortunately a professional singer with theatrical training, who had been helping with the production and who, fortunately, had no professional engagements, saved the day. She stepped in and acted brilliantly, whilst getting the most from those with whom she acted, especially Alice, an American who had been somewhat surprised to find herself centre stage for the first time ever in this strange thing known as pantomime. Again I ended up in short trousers in the middle of winter, as the Dame's/Cook's son Silly Billy, a part I played in Cockney. This was probably my downfall as, for our next production, Cinderella, I was cast as Buttons. I had a fearsome number of lines to learn and the audience participation song to lead and was told to act in Cockney again.

By now we had evolved into a wonderfully diverse group of actors from a goldsmith who forsook his bench to play one of the Ugly Sisters alongside an Italian participant who used to work for the Venice Port Authority, through to a local school girl and an American children's author who whilst being 80+ was not going to allow a little thing like this get in his way. The Italian Ugly Sister proved to have the most wonderful tenor voice and nearly brought the house down with his rendition of a traditional and humorous Venetian song. The 'House' in this instance was Teatro Avogaria, one of the many old Venetian theatres, whose owner had come to our rescue after the administration of the Auditorio di Campo Santa Margherita had changed and, whilst it was supposedly booked for us, had changed their minds about allowing us to stage what would have been their third and our fourth pantomime. Yet another crisis to be surmounted! But everything has a silver lining. The theatre was smaller than the Auditorio, but we played to four packed houses and could have played to more given the local demand and, we actors had much better facilities back stage, including our own loos!

For information concerning future productions, consult: www.lauriegraham.com

IN-STABILE, IL NUOVO GRUPPO TEATRALE DI LONDRA

By Mariano Bonetto

Il mio personale impegno teatrale a Londra è iniziato nel 2001 con il gruppo " Escape in Art " con il quale ho partecipato a tre commedie nella veste di attore fino al 2005. Nel 2007, sempre con "Escape in Art ", ho curato la produzione e l'organizzazione dell'ultimo lavoro con il suddetto gruppo dal titolo " L'Ascensore ", atto unico di David Morante, ex- Console Generale d'Italia a Londra.

Nel 2010, poi, spinto dalla voglia di continuare a recitare perchè è proprio sul palcoscenico che riesco ad esprimere la mia innata versatilità teatrale - insieme all'amico e regista Carlo di Pamparato ed altri appassionati di teatro - abbiamo creato il nuovo gruppo teatrale " In-Stabile " di Londra. La spinta maggiore per questa nuova avventura è stata di fare beneficienza in prima persona ed in modo più diretto per aiutare essenzialmente bambini che necessitano di cure mediche e supporto anche psicologico.

Quest'anno, come prima produzione del nuovo gruppo, abbiamo messo in scena la commedia " Chiave per due " (traduzione del testo inglese "Key for Two") di John Chapman e David Goodman. In questa pochade del 1982 gli equivoci, i sotterfugi, i personaggi strampalati, e la raffica di gags e doppi sensi sono gli ingredienti principali di una storia che si cala perfettamente nei giorni nostri e che la deride un po'.

E' uno spettacolo divertentissimo che da al pubblico un'allegria priva di inquetitudini e ne sollazza lo spirito. Non è poco in periodo di regressione economica per una commedia spensierata e leggera con una trama avvincente, ricca di situazioni divertenti e colpi di scena che rendono la stessa piacevole da vedere ed interpretare.

La commedia andrà in scena il 19, 20 e 21 Ottobre 2011 presso il Teatro del London Oratory School Arts Centre – Seagrove Road, Fulham – London SW6.

Per quanto riguarda, poi, le nostre scelte per la beneficienza 2011, abbiamo deciso di donare tutto il ricavato delle tre serate di rappresentazione rispettivamente a :

EMERGENCY UK per sostenere le attività del Centro Pediatrico Chirurgico di Bangui (Repubblica Centro Africana)

CHARM (Children of Chechnya Aid Relief Mission), charity inglese creata nel 2003 da Carlo di Pamparato, a sostegno dell'ultimo progetto che è la creazione di una piccola struttura ospedaliera ai confini con la Cecenia che si propone di operare e salvare molte vite umane, particolarmente bambini e giovani, colpiti duramente dalla tragica guerra ancora in corso in Cecenia.

For information concerning future productions, consult: mbsepino@hotmail.com

REMEMBERING THE FALLEN: THE COMMONWEALTH WAR CEMETERIES OF ITALY

By Alexandra Richardson

Italy is the final resting place for 49,254 of the Commonwealth war dead. They are interred in 52 sites throughout the country: 37 sites were created specifically for them alone. The remainder are situated within local Italian cemeteries. As it was the greatest bloodbath of all during World War II, Cassino, south of Rome, holds the greatest number of fallen British and Commonwealth soldiers in Italy, with 4,271. The smallest number? The local cemetery at Bordighera, near the French border, where 72 victims of the Great War lie. Three cemeteries are situated in Sicily, ten on the Italian mainland south of Rome, the remainder scattered as far to the northeast as Udine. Without exception, they are all maintained impeccably and always will be: lawns trimly mowed, trees and bushes pruned and unblighted, flower beds fresh, no single grave marker overturned, crumbling or illegible.

The history of the commission that oversees this admirable work goes back to one single man in the course of the Great War, Sir Fabian Ware. Staggered by the number of deaths and unable to enlist due to his age, Ware came to see his mission elsewhere: he would devote his coming years to meticulously recording the whereabouts of each fallen soldier. What was more, he would oversee the sites of each grave, ensuring their maintenance in perpetuity. By 1915, formally folded into the British Army, his group became known as the Graves Registration Commission. With the end of the Great War, the unit's work escalated in earnest. Land was procured and memorials commissioned. Before long, they would be able to report that 587,000 graves had been identified and formally recorded on their files, while the names of another 559,000 victims of the conflict were registered as having no known grave.

Ware felt that his mission should not stop there, however. The sites that would rise up had also to have dignified architecture, serene landscaping, memorable prose. The guidance of none less than such figures as Sir Edwin Lutyens was sought to shape the monuments to be built. Rudyard Kipling was enlisted to draft the inscriptions. The famous garden designer Gertrude Jekyll weighed in with advice on the plantings. Their expertise was distilled into the first three "experimental" cemeteries, the most notable of which was that sited at Forceville in France. The Commission was satisfied that the overall results met their aspirations. Uniformity in the headstones – all in sturdy white stone – would ensure that no one soldier's remains would

War section, Bordighera Cemetery

Cassino War Cemetery

seem more important than others. Surviving family members could contribute personal inscriptions for them. The flower beds adorning each row had to feature small plants so as not to obstruct the view of these inscriptions.

The Commission could use these early three as their "templates" for the further cemeteries that still had to be created. And while those burial sites in Italy are of particular interest to Rivista, it must not be forgotten that since its inception, the Commission has built 2,500 cemeteries and plots, commemorating more than one million casualties in 150 countries. If one phrase could attempt to sum up the noble aim of this group, perhaps it would be:

Not a Single Sacrifice will be Allowed to Fade.

FORTHCOMING EXHIBITS AND EVENTS IN ITALY

Until 8 January 2012:

"At the Table of The Lord: Masterpieces of European art from Raphael to Tiepolo" *Paintings, sculpture, tapestry and other works of art by famous artists on the theme of the Last Supper.*
Mole Vanvitelliana, Ancona

Until 15 January 2012:

"Filippino Lippi and Sandro Botticelli in 15th Century Florence" *The exhibition focuses mainly on the artistic career of Lippi, through his panels, drawings and frescoes, many of which are on loan from important foreign museums and from private collections. The works of Botticelli on display are there mostly in order to invite a comparison to the painting style of Filippino Lippi.*
Scuderie del Quirinale, Rome

Until 15 January 2012:

"Piranesi in the House of Goethe" *The Piranesi exhibition gives an excellent insight into what Rome must have looked like in the days of Goethe and focuses especially on his work Vedute di Roma (Views of Rome), which is represented with 35 reprints.*
Casa di Goethe, Rome

Until 22 January 2012:

"Money And Beauty. Bankers, Botticelli and the Bonfire of the Vanities" *Masterpieces by Botticelli, Beato Angelico, Piero del Pollaiolo,the Della Robbia family, and Lorenzo di Credi-the cream of Renaissance artists-show how the modern banking system developed in parallel alongside the most important artistic flowering in the history of the Western world. The exhibition analyses the systems that bankers used to build up their immense fortunes, it illustrates the way in which they handled international relations and it also sheds light on the birth of modern art patronage, which frequently began as a penitential gesture only to then turn into a tool for wielding power.*
Palazzo Strozzi, Florence

Until 29 January 2012:

"Artemisia Gentileschi" *This exhibition pays tribute to one of the greatest female painters of all times, Artemisia Gentileschi. She was a contemporary of Caravaggio and a pupil of her father Orazio. The artist worked in Florence, Rome, Venice and finally Naples where she returned after a stay in London. She was an excellent portrait painter, but she also painted numerous works with a religious or biblical subject such as "Judith". She was a great inspiration for the Neapolitan School of painting.*
Palazzo Reale, Milan

Until 29 January 2012:

"Leonardo. From genius to myth" *The Great Stables of the Reggia di Venaria will host the display of one of the finest masterpieces of the Savoy collections: the Self-Portrait by Leonardo da Vinci, conserved in the Royal Library of Turin. The work, famous throughout the world for its artistic value and for the numerous meanings it has been attributed, will be accompanied by other drawings by Leonardo on the theme of the human face. This spectacular exhibition will provide a chance to pay tribute to Italy's most extraordinary figures of all times.*
Great Stables, Reggia di Venaria Reale, Turin

Until 12 February 2012:

"Symbolism in Italy" *Symbolism was a significant European movement. In Italy it changed the course of painting by allowing it to reach modernity. The strength if this movement was in how it interpreted and succeeded in representing the great universal values of humanity while also exploring the unconscious mind.*
Palazzo Zabarella, Padua

Until 4 March 2012:

"Expressionism" *For the first time in Italy this exhibition gathers the best works of the German art movement Expressionism (Die Brucke and Der Blaue Reiter) at the beginning of the 20th century. There are more than 100 paintings and paper works gathered from collections all over the word and especially from Germany. Expressionism had an important impact on art of the 20th century taking inspiration from the works of Van Gogh and Gauguin and reworking their concepts in a radical and often revolutionary way.*
Villa Manin, Passariano di Codroipo, Udine

RE-OPENING OF THE PALAZZO BARBERINI, in Rome

The final 10 rooms of the new Museum of Ancient Art have been re-opened to the public after 60 years of careful restoration work. The Museum housed in Palazzo Barberini in Rome traces the history of ancient art in Italy between the 12th century and the Neoclassicism encompassing works such as "Judith and Oloferne" by Caravaggio, "La Fornarina" by Raffaello, the portraits of Pope Urbano VIII by Bernini and other works by Borromini, Pietro da Cortona and others.

ANNUAL EVENTS

- 18, 19 – 20 November:

"Festa del Torrone" *The streets and squares of Cremona will be alive with events, shows and tastings on the occasion of the Feast of Nougat. More than 50 initiatives, including games, entertainment and cultural events, designed to celebrate the food and wine pairing nougat-journey in a magical atmosphere rich in history and traditions, will be organized for this event.*
(www.festadeltorronecremona.it)

- From 8 December:

"Mercatini di natale" *in Italy, most towns hold a special market, which is usually held in one of the main squares. See the following website guide and key in the specific town in the window if it is not already on the list:* **(www.mercatini-natale.com)**

- 21 February 2012:

"Carnival in Italy" *Carnival is being celebrated in more and more cities and towns in Italy. See the menu Carnevale A-Z of the following website:* **(www.carnevaleitaliano.it)**

ANNUAL EVENTS

- 1 April to 8 April:

"Easter Week" For special events in Italy during La Settimana Santa, see the following website:
(www.folclore.eu/It/Eventi/Italia/Feste-popolari/Aprile/)

- Two day event in the first week of May:

"500 Septempeda meeting" is for Fiat 500, one of the most important cars in Italian automobile.
Piazza del Popolo di San Severino, Le Marche
(www.sanseverino500club.sinp.net)

- The first two weeks in June:

"Il Palio dei Castelli" is held in San Severino and neighbouring towns re-evoking the Middle Ages with processions, dances and various activities. Le Marche
(www.paliodeicastelli.org)

- June to early July:

The Festival dei Due Mondi (Festival of the Two Worlds) *is an annual summer music and opera festival held each year. Founded by composer Gian Carlo Menotti in 1958. It features a vast array of concerts, opera, dance, drama, visual arts and roundtable discussions on science. Spoleto* **(www.festivaldispoleto.com)**

- 10 - 14 July:

"21st Edition of the Modena International Military Tattoo" *A full five days programme includes afternoon walking bands and night concerts through streets, squares, and parks. Military bands come from different countries (The 20th edition of 2011 included music performed by the Conscript Band of the Finnish Defence Forces, the Band of the Grenadier Guards, the Pipes and Drums of the 1st Battalion Scots Guards, the Turkish Mehter Band and other outstanding Italian Military Bands). City centre, Modena* **(www.modenafestivalbande.it)**

- First Sunday of September:

"Historical Regatta" *The Grand Canal every year during the first Sunday of September becomes a theatre for one of the greatest of Venetian events, the Historical Regatta, dating back to 1315 under the rule of doge Giovanni Soranzo.*
Venice **(www.comune.venezia.it)**

- End September to mid October:

"Liuteria in Festival" *The city of Cremona hosts this annual event featuring various competitions, promotional activities, exhibitions, concerts, seminars and conferences on the subject of violin making. It is a true immersion into the world of stringed instruments, which only Cremona, the cradle of stringed instrument making, can offer.*
Cremona **(www. turismo.comune.cremona.it www.fondazionestradivari.it; www.friendsofstradivari.it;)**

FORTHCOMING EXHIBITS IN ENGLAND

Until 8 January 2012:

"Claude Lorrain: The Enchanted Landscape" *brings together 140 works from international collections of the French-born painter's landscapes of the Roman campagna and its classical ruins.*
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

11 January – 8 April 2012:

Alberto Burri". *The first solo showing by a major British institution of this Umbrian-born painter who died in 1995.*
On show will be examples of his richly-textured canvasses, famous for their gashes, melted plastic and charred cork.
Estorick Collection, 39a Canonbury Square, London N 1

Until 9 February 2012:

"Leonardo da Vinci: Painter at the Court of Milan"
(See details in previous issue of RIVISTA).
National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, London

21 February – 27 May 2012:

"Alighiero Boetti". *As a major figure in the Arte Povera movement, Boetti is reckoned to be one of the most important and influential Italian artists of the twentieth century, using eclectic materials ranging from stamps to pens and embroideries.*
Tate Modern, London

4 May – 7 October 2012:

"Leonardo da Vinci: Anatomy". The largest collection of Leonardo's studies of the human body, this is one of the Royal Collection's finest treasures.
The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, London

FORTHCOMING BRITISH-ITALIAN SOCIETY EVENTS

Thursday 10th November 2011 7.00pm to 10.00pm

The British-Italian Society's 70th Birthday Party -
Celebrating the Anglo-Italian love affair!
Tomasso Brothers Fine Art Gallery
Dove Walk, 107b Pimlico Rd, London SW1W 8PH

Monday 12th December 2011 6.30pm to 10.30pm

"Italy, a troubled Birthday" - *A talk by Antonio Caprarica, followed by the BIS Christmas Party*
Grange Fitzrovia Hotel
20-28 Bolsover Street, London W1W 5NB

SOR GIUSEPPE'S

By C.T. Riley

Sadly, Sor Giuseppe's no longer there. I was walking from the Tritone to Piazza di Spagna on a recent visit to Rome, and passed the street where Giuseppe's used to be. I remembered the old days when it was a favourite meeting place for all walks of society, but that was a long time ago – in the days of the 'dolce vita'. Sor Giuseppe's was a wine shop. You entered through a brown mullioned glass door. To the right was a long marble counter where you could buy wine by the glass. The rest of the space in the single room was taken up by marble topped tables and uncomfortable, hard wooden chairs. The only window was a fanlight above the counter and 'air conditioning' was supplied by a huge fan in the centre of the ceiling. Giuseppe's was no ordinary wine shop. Each year Sor Giuseppe himself would make a tour of the vineyards around Frascati and choose the very best wines for his clients. He had one other attraction also. His assistant, Pietro, had a flair for cooking white Tuscan beans. I don't know what his secret was but, when Pietro was away for any reason and the beans were cooked by Pietro's stand-in, they did not taste the same by a long chalk.

Of a morning, you would most likely find a hardened drinker or two at Sor Giuseppe's and perhaps the porter from the brothel across the street. You would never have known that it was a brothel. There was nothing to distinguish its door from any other door in the street and no suggestive names above the bell push. The door was open one day as I went past, but there was nothing to see except a banal ochre and chocolate brown corridor leading to glass doors.

Later on in the morning, you might see a Roman prince at the counter – he having dropped in for a glass of wine on his way back from the Vatican to his palace – while his chauffeur waited for him in the street.

At mid-day, workmen in their jaunty pillbox hats, made out of newspaper, would appear. They would have been to the grocers next door first to buy bread and whatever fillings took their fancy. Once in Sor Giuseppe's , they would seat themselves at the tables, order wine, and spread out their food on the white paper in front of them. Their talk would be of football and feelings some times ran high but, on the whole, it was good-natured banter which never came to fisticuffs.

Throughout the day, 'regulars' might drop in but rarely during the 'siesta hours'.

The evening was when you might meet British ex-pats reviving after a day's shooting as extras on the latest American blockbuster being filmed at Cinecittà. And, even later, there would be the late theatre and concert goers, rounding off the day with a plate of Pietro's excellent beans.

Of the 'regulars', a few stick in my memory:

The 'Captain' The 'Captain' had fallen on hard times. Cash was short. He dined on the same thing each day – a small fillet of smoked fish, a bread roll (from the grocers) and a small carafe of wine. He relieved the monotony of his diet by looking upon each meal as he would a naval exercise. His tactics changed daily, and the bread, wine, salt, toothpicks etc., played different roles in his fleet, but the fish was always the 'fish' and the ultimate prey. It was not until everything had been deployed to his satisfaction that he would go in for 'the kill'.

Camilla and Carter Carter had starred in a successful Broadway musical which later toured Europe. He came to Rome, met Camilla, fell in love with both, and stayed on. The theatre was in his blood however, and he had dreams of declaiming Shakespeare from the Spanish Steps. Other ideas were to stage an all-singing, all-dancing Wagner opera or a musical version of Sweeney Todd – the Demon Barber of Fleet Street. But for these he needed premises. He and Camilla spent their days roaring around Rome on his Harley-Davidson motorbike searching for a suitable cellar to convert. That is to say, when he was not practising his scales. He had a powerful voice and rumour had it that he and Camilla were continuously being turned out of flats – for not only did Carter shatter his neighbours' eardrums but their best glass too!

Robert Robert was very intelligent – a double first from Oxford. He came to Rome straight from university to teach Latin at a prestigious Roman international school. And that is exactly what he did. He taught Latin regardless of the mayhem around him in the classroom. Ignoring the paper darts, horseplay and ribaldry, he just went on calmly with his lesson. Of course, he didn't last long. He soon lost his job. In the end, he was reduced to making a living by translating incomprehensible instructions for dubious electrical appliances. What a waste.

Emiliano Emiliano was an ageing gigolo – somewhat frayed at the edges. His was a sorry tale. He had been flying to America with his fiancée when, without warning, a window blew in and she was sucked out along with all his bright hopes. He would tell his story to anyone who would listen – preferably a lonely lady of a certain age. At the crucial moment, he would bow his head, bring out his handkerchief, dab his eyes, blow his nose loudly and gaze furtively at his listener to see how his story was going down.

Rodolfo And then there was Rodolfo. Tall, dark and handsome with dark flashing eyes. I'd read about dark flashing eyes of course, but had never actually seen them before. He had impeccable manners also, oozed charm from every pore and was equally at ease in half a dozen languages. When he spoke to you, he gave you his complete, undivided attention and you really glowed. He was the delight of all the bored and neglected Roman matrons – but the bane of those with marriageable daughters. He was clearly a refugee, but from what or where was open to speculation. He had, however, one failing – a passion for gambling. He would spend hours with his friend Giulio at Sor Giuseppe's, over a glass of wine, working out complicated mathematical systems to beat the tables As soon as he had gathered enough cash, he would be off to San Remo to test them out.

"Rodolfo's coming round for a drink", said my husband one day. "Probably wants money." My husband never lent money. He said he had seen too many friendships come to grief when a hopeful borrower had been refused and also when a successful borrower had failed to repay. In his view, you should look upon whatever you gave as a gift and not expect any return.

Sure enough, when polite formalities were out of the way, Rodolfo said he was in a hole and needed 50,000 lire urgently." Terribly sorry, old chap", said my husband, "but we're a bit pushed for cash ourselves. I can let you have 5,000 lire though, if that would be of any use". "That would be a great help", said Rodolfo and after a few more pleasantries, he left in high good humour. I must say, I never saw Rodolfo in a bad mood. Life's irritations seemed to leave him completely unmoved.

One remarkable day everything changed. Rodolfo came into Sor Giuseppe's, put his hand in his coat and pulled out a sheaf of banknotes which he flung up in the air with a cry "Look what I've got!" I wasn't there at the time but soon heard all about it. It turned out that Rodolfo had become engaged to a Swiss heiress, some years his senior, but none the worse for that. Unfortunately, Rodolfo's fiancée did not approve of some of his friends –

particularly not the Sor Giuseppe crowd – so we saw less and less of him. We heard that he had married, and that his wife had bought a fish canning factory on the coast north of Rome, and had put Rodolfo in charge.

There can be nothing more soul destroying than the witnessing of the daily massacre of thousands of fish, followed by the handling of their mangled bodies by unfeeling machines ending with the final ignominy of a neatly labelled can.

Rodolfo stood it for a while, but he had only one relief – San Remo. As time went on, the visits to San Remo became more frequent. Before long all the factory's assets had been gambled away. This was the gossip that filtered through to Rome. The inevitable happened – divorce!

I have no idea what became of Rodolfo but I trust that he is still alive – still working out systems to beat the tables. I hope he hasn't been 'canned', the world would be a far sadder place without him.

CULTURAL ECOLOGY AND GREEN TOURISM

By Georgina Gordon-Ham

Plato: *Rhetoric is "the art of winning the soul by discourse."*

Cicero: *"Rhetoric is one great art comprised of five lesser arts: inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, and pronunciatio."*

Bernard Anson Silj combines the rhetoric skills of both philosophers with that extra art of storytelling. Words just flow out as he tells stories about places and people. At times you lose track of time as he takes you on a journey between reality and myth.

A little background will help understand what cultivated his imagination ever since his childhood. I met him at Villa Silj [pronounced Sili], which stands on the ancient border between the Etruscan world and Rome. It is the family home built by his Italian grandfather Marquis Bernardino Silj of Sant'Andrea di Ussita. Bernard Anson's father Hugh Anson came to Rome in 1945 to marry Annina and remained in Italy where he lived as a gentleman farmer and polo player. Bernard Anson recalled "I still have memories of Prince Philip coming to our house for strategic polo brunches". His parents' marriage initially met "opposition since the Siljs were most influential in the Roman Church. They knew about my father's ancestry: for example that the Ansons (Earls of Lichfield) were a well-known British Knights Templar family and that Shugborough House held secrets".

Bernard Anson Silj explained how the villa and garden had inspired his philosophy of life and idea for a new approach to tourism which he called the 'storygardenz project', whereby he said there has always been a link between place, the environment around us, and a story: "We are talking about landscape. We are talking about a mythical content in gardens as an enchanted place in all cultures since the beginning of time. It has many aspects to it".

Rather than go around looking at monuments and reading about historical facts, the idea is to sit and relax and listen to stories about places. "There has been an extraordinary discovery in relation to the idea of storytelling, to gardens and to ecology and the environment". Anson says it all has to do with the left and right hemispheres of the human brain. The left hemisphere is linear and logical. But this hemisphere has become sick and allows the right hemisphere not to operate properly. The right hemisphere is the only hemisphere which can see the web of life. That takes you straight back to the myth of Eden and the garden". Anson then went on to explain his position. "Like many Anglo-Italians, the emotional side is predominantly Italian, and my education was in Great Britain, so intellectually I am more British. Hence my emotional side allows me to understand here (Italy) very well". Italy has not had a real storytelling tradition, whereby many of these stories exist implicitly but not like in northern countries in Europe.

All this inspired Anson for his new approach to tourism whereby reality and myth are brought together: "I started this project by looking at which places had a particular story which needed unraveling. And why green tourism? Green tourism, simply because these places are the perfect way people can relax and experience this form of entry into the mythical mind. Then another aspect of the project is ecology because the frenzy and speed by which people live their lives nowadays is one of the worst pollutants. People become so scrambled, never seeming to find a sense of gravity. One of the special aspects of green tourism is to induce people in special places to reduce their rhythms through relaxation, change their perspective and discover quality time. True storytelling is a strange form of communication which shifts the axis of the brain". Bernard Anson has been receiving visitors for ten years from the United States and other countries, who write back to him saying: "I cannot continue doing what I used to do before visiting Italy. Now I have had to change everything. I was wondering whether you could tell me what has happened, what has changed me". To this Anson commented: "I hadn't the foggiest idea what had happened. All they had done was to sit still and listen. They came to a place which had some content already. Italy does have some extraordinary stories. In due course I began to understand that this combination of empty time of vacation *dies vacantes (the empty days)* had something to do with it. Most people do not have any spare time to sit still and relax any longer".

Are you saying that Italy offers the opportunity to find a sort of refuge, a place to contemplate and pause?

"Yes", he said, "Italy has an extraordinary combination of power of enchantment and its natural *locale* made of nature, art and memory, and the quality of life which is partly the food and the *dolce far niente*. It is a combination of all things with extraordinary ingredients which somehow affect people. I know the travel business quite well and see people arriving over here almost as on a pilgrimage, whereas there isn't the same level of enchantment with local people, who have lost all that due to too much familiarity. Outsiders seem to be more available to change because they predispose themselves. There is an incredible wealth here in Italy. Then by connecting and accentuating the storytelling part I noticed this process could be accelerated. There are the ingredients for letting oneself be naturally in a natural unhurried state, vaguely contemplative and the exposure to so much beauty and enchantment have allowed them to be more open to learn about history through stories. There are many beautiful places, but they lack that animus spirit and the animus has not beeen brought out.

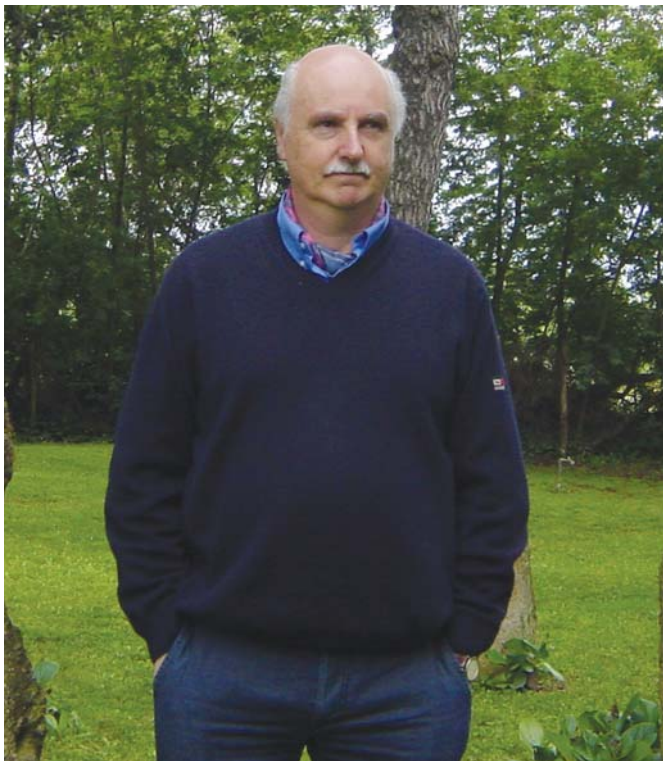
So would you call it a new approach to tourism? Are you saying 'story' rather than 'history'?

"It is a new approach to tourism: living the experience supplied by story and place". History is a more formal report of events usually produced by those in power which means propaganda. For example we have information and facts about the Etruscans mostly from Roman sources. The Latin culture is the left brain and quite materialistic. That is the testimony we are left with. History is made up from the Latin version, whereas, in our case it is more legend and myth connected to reality, hence storytelling". Anson's theory is that: "Conquered people tend to express themselves through legend and myth. Whereas the conquerers tend to express themselves through history. The conquerer in this equation is the left hemisphere. Whereas the conquered are the right hemisphere and express themselves through storytelling. The Etruscans were rather mystical, whereas the Romans were more materialistic, logical and practical. You really need both hemispheres, the day world and the night world for a balanced account of our history and story".

Where is the borderline between reality and myth?

"There are two sides. History and story overlap. There isn't a clear defining line. There is a fine line between working out what is fact and what is myth, and Italy is the perfect place for this. To be a good writer you have to be a good teller. I had to learn to speak well in public. And this helped me to be a good storyteller. It started with travel related to special places and special stories. I then understood there was potential. So instead of exploring the countryside with a whole list of artefacts, dates,styles and history, whereby the consequence is the artefact not the cause, I understood the expression of the animus of what has been lived". It is history through landscape and storytelling.

Bernard Anson has written the following story guides on Italy: Etruscan stories, Roland, St Benedict, St Francis, St Peter, Quo Vadis,



Bernard Anson Silj

and Pinocchio. "They are all stories which somehow create a fabric of a land, and within that fabric there are artefacts. You can visit them. The idea is to create a kind of Michelin guide of dreams through landscape. Anson was inspired by legend and storytelling from northern Europe, such as Scandinavian countries, Ireland and in particular Scotland. In July 2011 he took part in a special venue held at the Museo Laboratorio di Arte Contemporanea, La Sapienza University, Rome, entitled *Altre narrazioni, Happening, incontri, proiezioni* from 4th to 28th July. Performances include visual arts, photography, cinema, dance, performance, theatre, poetry, journalism and storytelling. His role is to make people aware that history can be learnt and enjoyed through a story: "Today's frenetic life with television and media tends to exclude this world of enchantment which emits joy and energy".

Looking at history and the world with a completely different outlook, a mythical eye, you see the world in a completely different way which is "ecological, *legendary rooting*, where you can actually see that the legend is physically rooted through certain types of trees, forest formations, ruins, relics, the shape of land". One of the examples he gave is Circeo south of Rome, which has the shape of Circe's profile. Another example is Enceladus, the mythological giant of Mount Etna where the giant rumbles. The volcanic fires of Etna were said to be the breath of Enceladus, and its tremors caused by him rolling his injured side beneath the mountain. One could go on with other stories, such as the sword in the stone of San Galgano, the pilgrimages, Roland, the Holy Grail where reality and legend merge.

History is not just a series of facts. These stories are rooted and retain their anchoring in the landscape. Legend and myth are re-evoked and written in the landscape. Storytelling can be told anywhere. "We are the songs we sing. We are in Europe and Italy is the heart. To understand the west you need to understand Italy since they all came through this crucible".

FUNGI, FORAGING AND FUN OUTDOORS

By Liza Zucconi & Carlo Laurenzi

Porcini

Foraging for fungi is enormous fun and two fungi fanatics show us how, what and why mushrooming is back on the popular agenda after centuries of decline. In the UK we lost most of our accumulated knowledge of foraging with the advent of the industrial revolution and its consequent urbanisation. The availability of fresh, cheap food became the final nail in the coffin of foraging. Little independent foraging has happened in the UK since World War II with regard to gathering berries, nuts, flowers, vegetables, herbs, fungi, fruit, roots and even spices. Recent TV programmes starring celebrities such as Ray Mears and the chef, Antonio Carluccio, have led to an increased interest in the boon that is offered to us by the natural world.

Apart from celebrities, where else can potential participants learn from the shrinking knowledge of the natural world? There are numerous short courses, many of which are associated with the recent interest in the subject of bush craft. A simpler route is to go 'a funghi' with someone who knows what they're doing. The arrival of new communities in the UK, such as the Italians in the 1950s, and more recently those from eastern Europe, have brought with them a passion and skill for gathering mushrooms.

It is essential that places and habitats where fungi grow are respected so that we foragers are able to reap the delicate rewards, and at the same time the fungi have the opportunity to reproduce in optimal circumstances. It is equally important that the amateur forager considers his own safety. Each year hundreds of people across Europe die from poisoning. In 2009, four hundred people died in China from eating small white fungi mistakenly assumed to be something else.

In short: Protect the environment and protect yourselves!

What to look for

Out of the numerous varieties of mushrooms which grow in the UK only a tiny handful can be fatal but many more are poisonous. Sadly, the number of species of mushroom which make for seriously good eating is relatively small. Italian mushroom hunters prize one above all others: the porcino or penny bun (boletus edulis). Other edible species of boletus may also be put into the basket as a supplement. Porcini are sturdy mushrooms with thick stems, firm white flesh and sponge-like pores on the undersides of their brown to reddish-brown caps. They are most commonly found in mature woodlands, especially beech and oak, in the autumn. Rainfall is a critical factor in dictating the quantity and quality of porcini available in season. Too little rainfall and the mushrooms cannot grow. Too much rainfall and the mushrooms spoil quickly, making them likely prey to slugs and fungi worms. The brown-capped porcini are well camouflaged and blend in with the surrounding soil and fallen leaves. Their elusive nature is one of the reasons why many people can become so passionate about 'hunting' for them. Patience and careful observation are rewarded and a sense of achievement accompanies each and every find.

Unlike Italy, where a combination of mountainous terrain and the occasional poisonous snake can make mushrooming really dangerous, the more gentle British landscape requires little in

the way of specialist equipment. Most mushroom gatherers carry some variation of the following items: sensible clothes, including waterproof footwear, a hat with some kind of peak or brim to reduce the glare from the morning sun, a snack and a flask of something hot, a walking stick to gently lift up any foliage which is obscuring a promising spot, a small folding knife to pick and clean the mushrooms, a brush or cloth to dust the mushrooms down, and a wicker basket to protect the mushrooms from breakage. Avoid using plastic bags as these can spoil the fungi. The knife is particularly important, as it is best practice to cut mushrooms away from the ground at their base, rather than ripping them out of the soil. This limits the damage to the "fungi threads", or mycelium, from which the mushrooms grow.

What to do once you get your fungi home

Once home they are given a thorough clean by brushing, wiping with a dry cloth or trimming with a knife. Any damaged or rotten parts are cut away and discarded. Water is not used in the cleaning process as it promotes spoilage. Fresh porcini can be grilled and served with olive oil and parsley, fried with garlic and served on toasted bread, or stewed with tomatoes and thyme. A large proportion of the harvest is usually preserved by either freezing or drying. Frozen mushrooms can be added straight to the pan and used as if they were fresh. Dried porcini develop a more concentrated, almost meaty, taste and a firmer texture which works very well in risotto, stew and a variety of sauces. Porcini dry easily and will keep for months in screw top jars. Specialist dehydrators are not essential and many Italians simply slice the mushrooms thinly and lay them out on wire racks or cloths which are then placed in an airing cupboard or near a radiator for a day or two.

A few simple pointers:

- **Learn from someone who knows what they are doing**
- **Don't take risks with your safety**
- **Protect the natural environment**
- **Consider what to wear and what you need to take with you**
- **Prepare your fungi with care**
- **Plan your next trip!**

Carlo is CEO of the Capital's main nature conservation body, London Wildlife Trust. He has a personal interest in bush craft and wild food. He received his OBE for his services in supporting British prisoners held in overseas prisons. Carlo's father was from Umbria and his mother, Calabria.

Liza is a corporate lawyer at Rochman Landau solicitors and specializes in advising British clients on any aspect relating to Italian Law. She has a house in Emilia Romagna where she likes to spend any spare time with her husband Davide and children, Francesca 7, Giacomo 4 and 3 year old Massimiliano.

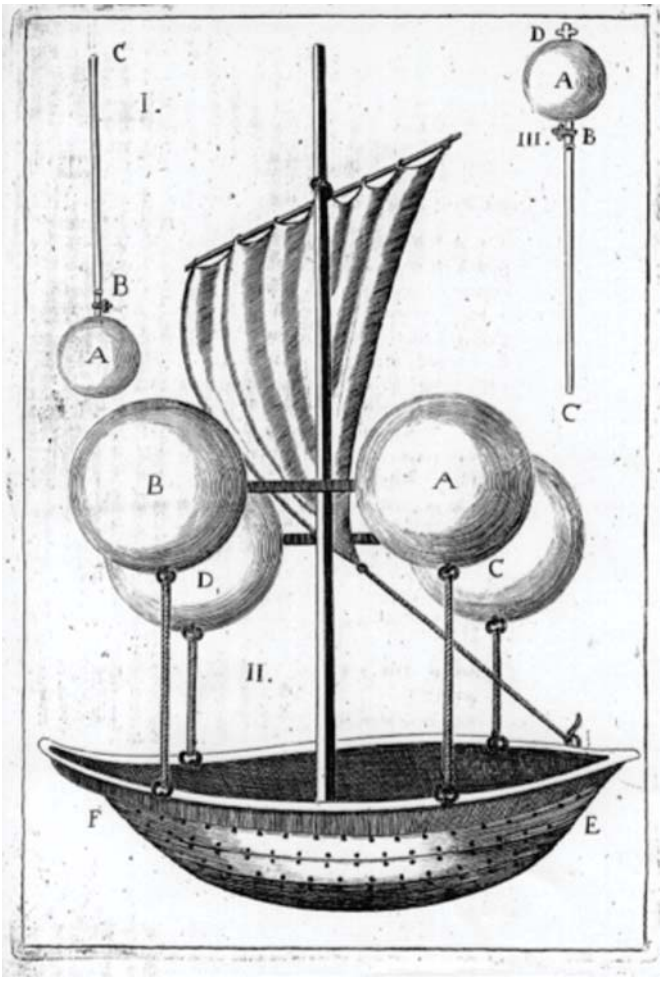
UP, UP AND AWAY: **ITALY'S LONG AND SOARING ROMANCE WITH HOT-AIR BALLOONS**

By Alexandra Richardson

He called his pot-bellied craft a "flying boat". It was to feature four slender cables, or "masts", clamped to the sides of the vessel, atop which he envisaged copper-foiled spheres, each measuring 7 ½ meters in diameter. To the untutored eye it looked like a fistful of uprighted lollypops rooted to a bathtub. There would be a sail, of course, with which to navigate the "boat" through the skies, a rudder to steer and space for six passengers. The year was 1663 and this was no whimsical aberration of an unspooled scientist. Nor was it the dream of a latter-day Daedalus or Icarus, but rather the reflected invention of an esteemed Jesuit, the Brescia-born Francesco Lana de Terzi. In his *Prodromo dell'Arte Maestra in 1670*, the priest – who had his scholarly grounding in physics and mathematics - described in great detail how he believed the flying boat would work. Well, it didn't. No one quite knew how to make the lightweight copper foil he required for covering those spheres. What was more, his priestly vow of poverty stood in the way of finding the necessary 100 ducats to experiment. And, presciently, he feared: *"that God would surely never allow such a machine to be successful, since it would create many disturbances in the civil and political governments of mankind…cities could be destroyed…fireballs and bombs could be hurled from a great height"*. Sadly, the invention earned him a hearing before the Inquisition courts for toying with magic.

However, it would take more than an Inquisition, either before or after Lana, to dampen Italian curiosity about airborne travel. Leonardo da Vinci, of course, famously thought that emulating birds, with strapped-on wings, was man's best chance of getting aloft. Over the years, other far more forgotten names in Italy – Fausto Veranzio, Paolo Guidotti, Tiberio Cavallo – would briefly be associated with those aspirations. But it would be two French brothers, Joseph Michel and Jacques Etienne Montgolfier to truly usher in the age of manned hot air ballooning. An initial test flight was conducted on 14th December 1782. They would hold their first public demonstration a half year later on 4th June 1783 at Annonay. The globe-shaped "envelope" was made of sackcloth and lined inside with three layers of fine paper. To the amazement of the watching crowds below, the Montgolfier flight travelled aloft for ten minutes and landed two kilometres away. The impact on the admiring public was immediate and stunning: women turned to balloon-shaped gowns, wallpapers adopted the balloon theme in their décor and poems and songs of praise followed. In honour of those two Frenchmen, a brand new word, *mongolfiere,* would enter the Italian vocabulary to describe hot air balloons.

The Italians would not be far behind their neighbours from France. One early spring evening of 1784 as the lights of La Scala opera house dimmed, soprano Anna Morichelli-Bosello stepped out on stage to sing the adulatory words of an ode just written by Giovanni Parini: *"Chi da lassú discende piú mortal non é"* (he who descends from the heavens above is no longer a mere mortal). Out in the audience sat young Count Paolo Andreani and scarcely 24 hours earlier, on 13 March 1784 he had been the first man outside France and the first man on Italian soil to ascend in a hot air balloon. The 21-year old Andreani had, in fact, quietly made a trial run the month before. Satisfied that his vertical-striped balloon, made of pliant sheepskin, was in good working order, he then recruited two reluctant carpenters, Gaetano Rossi and Giuseppe Barzago, to help him get it



Early design for Francesco Lana de Terzi's flying contraption

airborne. Fortified by three bottles of red wine, they boarded the 22-meter high balloon at noon at Moncucco, south of Milan. The three men soared to an altitude of 1280 meters. Stoking the fire on a platform above them with coal and wood, the three men floated through the air. Thirty-five minutes later, somewhat daunted by a thick Lombard fog and frost caking the envelope, they made a smooth descent between Carugate and Caponago, 35 kilometres to the northeast. Andreani thereafter was lionised in poetry and at that performance at the opera house.

The next Italian of note to take to balloons earned his notoriety in England, not Italy: Vincenzo Lunardi. The Lucca-born Lunardi found himself in London serving as the private secretary to the ambassador, Prince Caramanico, at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Naples. Caught up as much as everyone else in the romance of flight, Lunardi contrived to build his own craft with the guidance of a fellow Italian, Francesco Zambeccari. On 19th September 1784 – scarcely six months after Andreani – Lunardi and a menagerie of cat, dog and pigeon lifted off from the Honourable Artillery Company grounds at Moorfields. Some 150,000 assembled to watch the first manned free floating balloon flight in English skies. It was not without its glitches. The pigeon escaped his aerial confines. Lunardi apparently lost part of his steering equipment and as it fells to earth, one female spectator was so horrified by what she took to be the pilot

himself that she swooned and died several days later. Lunardi stopped briefly at Welham Green: his feline passenger either got air sick or suffered the cold, history does not relate which. In any event, that site is commemorated with a stone marker. After two hours and fifteen minutes, he concluded the adventure at Collier's End in Hertfordshire. Very much the showman, he went on to stage many more flights in England and Scotland as well as elsewhere in Europe.

In 1824, Eufrasia Bernardi would be the first Italian woman to go up in a balloon in Milan. She played it safe, however, by ensuring that it was tethered to spare herself an extensive magical mystery tour across the Lombard countryside. Needless to say, whether it was Lunardi, Bernardi or any number of their successors, this was very much a sport of the élite and remains so even today*. Levaldigi near Cuneo in Piedmont is one prime centre for Italy's enthusiasts today. And for those who cannot afford to own and operate their very own balloon, there is no shortage of Italy-based companies happy to sweep you off the ground for the ethereal experience of a lifetime.

**No fewer than eleven important festivals or meets were staged throughout Italy:*

4-6 January: Mondovì
7-16 January: Dobbiaco
10-14 February: Carpineti
11-14 February: Aosta
23 April-1 May: Castiglione del Lago
13-15 May: Bibbiano
10-25 July: Todi
2-4 September: Lodi
9-18 September: Ferrara
1-2 October: Fragneto
1-9 November: Turin

For venue information and dates for 2012, log on to www.balloncalendar.com

BOOK REVIEWS

SULL'USO DELLE ROVINE, E SUGLI SCAVI IN CORSO A ROMA

"Pompey indeed! Believe me, dear sir, none of these structures, columns, painted walls and other antiquarian nonsense, are even of so old a date as our house at Infrescata, the building of which I perfectly remember. All you here behold has been fabricated by our Neapolitan government, partly out of a foolish pride, but chiefly to attract travellers from all parts of Europe, and to make them spend their money in the kingdom"

Questo è ciò che il napoletano don Michele dice – durante un'escursione a Pompei - al suo ospite inglese, don L., mentre questi ammira le rovine della città. Don L. annota tutto, e lo riporta in un suo delizioso libro che, da buon viaggiatore del Grand Tour, è il diario della sua permanenza in Campania ("Naples and the Campagna Felice", 1815, illustrato da Thomas Rowlandson). Non è del tutto chiaro se don Michele credesse a quello che diceva, oppure se volesse bonariamente prendere in giro don L., mentre questo restava, giustamente, a bocca aperta davanti alle rovine di Pompei. Non importa: quello che qui conta è "l'uso delle rovine".

Questo mi veniva in mente mentre leggevo un'inusuale guida al Foro romano, di David Watkin, un Emeritus Professor di storia dell'architettura a Cambridge ("The Roman Forum", Profile Books, 2009). Ma perché mi veniva in mente? Watkin è un illustre studioso, e scrive un libro di grande interesse e competenza sul Foro, e ogni raffronto con "Naples" sarebbe fuorviante al limite dell'irriverenza. Però c'è qualcosa in comune: la principale preoccupazione di Watkin è di mostrare al lettore tutte le modifiche, le stratificazioni che, nel corso dei secoli, hanno sostanzialmente alterato l'aspetto del Foro, rispetto a quello con cui esso doveva presentarsi ai romani dell'epoca imperiale. Nota Watkin che il Foro andrebbe guardato non solo come sito archeologico e come evidenza della civiltà romana (cosa che in genere le guide turistiche si limitano a fare), ma anche nelle sue importantissime costruzioni successive, del Medio Evo, del Rinascimento, del Barocco - chiese, per lo più -, così da essere vissuto come "fuller and more exciting place" (p 7). Prendendo come riferimento le famose incisioni di Piranesi dedicate al Foro, l'autore ci accompagna in un affascinante giro, entra nelle chiese, percorre le strade, sale le scalinate, passa sotto gli archi, con una descrizione tanto erudita quanto appassionata. Secondo Watkin, il visitatore proverà le sensazioni più profonde ("*breathtaking*", egli dice) proprio nella comunanza di "*temple-cum-church*", una "*intensely evocative experience*" (p 9).

Ma occorre anche descrivere ciò che Piranesi non poteva vedere, in quanto non ancora scavato. Watkin avverte: si tratta per lo più di "*fairly unimpressive traces*" o di edifici ricostruiti, perché – egli sottolinea – "*some of the favourite monuments of today's visitors are in fact modern, though they may look ancient*" (p 74). Quel che disturba Watkin sono le contraffazioni, le ricostruzioni arbitrarie degli edifici romani, senza che il turista sia avvertito – se non in minima parte – dei falsi creati dagli archeologi. In assenza di questi falsi, spesso ciò che rimane sono solo "*ugly foundations and incomprehensible lumps of brick*" (p 29). Mentre a Pompei don Michele, forse prendendosi gioco del compassato amico inglese, chiamava "false" le rovine "vere", nel Foro gli archeologi hanno fatto passare per "vere" le loro "false" ricostruzioni. E Watkin compie un'opera meritoria quando svela il "falso" all'ignaro visitatore. Il Foro – osserva Watkin - non sembra avere oggi altra funzione che quella di servire il turismo di massa, al quale queste "finzioni" nulla importano (la funzione turistica ante litteram che i Borboni di Napoli, a sentire don Michele, attribuivano a Pompei).

Oltre la metà del libro è dedicata *"to what some of the archaeologists and guidebooks do not really want us to consider, the post-antiques monuments and life of the Forum"*. Questa voglia di avere davanti a sè la Roma imperiale quale essa era, è antica quanto il "mito di Roma", e il vizietto di rifarla artificialmente va

quindi assai indietro. Il nemico giurato di Watkin è l'archeologo Rodolfo Lanciani (1845-1929), che godette di grande popolarità proprio nei paesi anglo-sassoni, divulgando l'archeologia presso i ricchi turisti che venivano a svernare e a cacciare la volpe nella Campagna romana[1]. Dice Watkin: "*Archaeologists from the nineteenth century on began to believe that post-antique buildings in the Forum are of little or no interest. A typical fruit of this is the astonishing claim in 1882 by the leading archaeologist Rodolfo Lanciani that the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Farnese Gardens*[2] *… 'were born with a heavy original sin – that of concealing, of disfiguring, and of cutting piecemeal the magnificent ruins of the imperial palace'…[but] the 'magnificent ruins' were mainly little more than foundations*". (p 6)

Certamente, l'idea di "Roma" ebbe un ruolo importante nell'esaltare ciò che di romano c'era nel Foro, o si supponeva vi fosse, e nello svilire quanto realizzato nei secoli successivi. Watkin fa risalire alla breve Repubblica romana del 1798, voluta da Napoleone, la ripresa del culto della romanità, in funzione anti-papalina e anti-cattolica, ma lo stesso Papa, reinsediatosi a Roma, promuove il restauro dei monumenti dell'antica Roma. Gli archeologi papalini cercano le glorie romane, scavano e distruggono ciò che "romano" non è. Così, l'arco di Tito è *"today largely a nineteen-century monument",* una copia dell'originale, opera degli architetti Stern e Valadier (p 190). Gli architetti del 19mo secolo praticamente sospesero a mezz'aria il Tempio di Romolo e la Basilica di Massenzio, mettendone a nudo le fondamenta con la rimozione del pavimento post-neroniano su cui essi appoggiavano. Il ricordato Lanciani è poi il responsabile della creazione dell' *"unpleasant ramp that still exists"*, come ingresso principale del Foro e, nell'intento esasperato di mettere in luce quello che appariva come la fase più alta della romanità, indiscriminatamente condanna perfino l'edilizia dell'età imperiale, succeduta alla purezza dell'epoca repubblicana; a maggior ragione, condanna ciò che c'è di bizantino, di medievale, di rinascimentale , di barocco.

Non basta: Pio IX fa ricostruire di sana pianta nel 1858 il Portico degli Dei Consenti, ma la furia di ricostruzione si scatena con Roma capitale d'Italia, dopo il 1870 - in particolare con l' "*ebullient*" Lanciani, che scava forsennatamente - e continua con Mussolini. Watkin elenca i monumenti in tutto o in buona parte rifatti: il Tempio di Vesta (1933), la Fontana di Giuturna (1953-55), i Rostri (1904); del Tempio del Divo Giulio Watkin cita un *"ugly rebuilt section of the brown tufa and concrete wall of the platform"* (p 84). Gli sventramenti di Mussolini furono una logica conseguenza del cosiddetto primato dell'idea di Roma, e travolsero chiese pregevoli e antichi quartieri.

Nelle sue pagine, c'è tutto lo sdegno dello storico dell'architettura, quale Watkin è, per la astoricità di questa visione. Egli vuole che siano mantenute le testimonianze di civiltà succedutesi nei secoli nella nostra città, e non attribuisce un primato ad alcuna di esse. Ma c'è un altro aspetto nel suo libro, di cui vale la pena occuparsi, quello di critica verso gli scavi archeologici attuali. Il punto è delicato, perché tocca gli scopi stessi dell'archeologia, la quale è vista oggi non tanto come ricerca del bello o del monumentale, magari da abbellire ulteriormente e artificiosamente (come s'è visto), quanto come indagine sulle testimonianze, anche se artisticamente non significative, dell'evoluzione storica, sociale e civile di un certo posto. In questa visione, l'archeologo è "uno storico che si avvale prima di tutto delle cose fatte dall'uomo" (Andrea Carandini: "Roma. Il primo giorno", Laterza, 2007, p 7). Watkin non è un archeologo. E mentre Carandini sottolinea che nei suoi recenti scavi al Palatino, ha potuto accertare che "la fondazione di Roma rappresenta un evento epocale che ci separa dalla protostoria e che inaugura la storia" (p 13), un evento preciso e storicamente documentato, Watkin, in evidente polemica con questo mostro sacro della cultura archeologica italiana, lamenta che si continui a scavare troppo estensivamente: *"archaeologists continue over-optimistically to seek evidence of historical facts", mentre si tratta "almost certainly" di "pure myth"* (p 17). Che cosa soprattutto teme? *"It would be alarming if a new generation of archaeologists were to follow twentieth century precedent by 'digging deeply' and destroying Baroque monuments in order to expose ruined fragments of Roman buildings and foundations"* (p 219).

Noi romani ci imbattiamo in scavi sempre più in profondità, i quali, fatti nel comprensibile intento di saperne di più, si lasciano dietro detriti e buche, brutti e difficile da capire, e vediamo Roma come un po' vittima di questa manìa di scavo, con risultati che al profano sembrano modesti. Ma Carandini sarebbe di diverso parere.

L'uso "politico" delle rovine sembra finito, ma non finisce il lungo dibattito su Roma e l'archeologia, un dibattito dal quale, non essendo né critico d'arte né archeologo, doverosamente mi astengo. Il libro di Watkin ha il merito, notevole, di richiamare l'attenzione su questi temi, e di invitare il visitatore a esercitare un occhio più consapevole e critico.

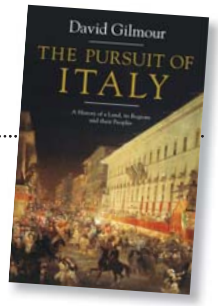
Alessandro Roselli

[1] Esemplificativo è il suo volume "Wanderings in the Roman Campagna", Houghton Mifflin, 1909

[2] I giardini Farnese dominano il Foro dal sovrastante Palatino, facendone quasi parte integrante

THE PURSUIT OF ITALY

David Gilmour Allen Lane £25



This is a splendidly irreverent book but it will probably offend Italians who, like all of us, are ready to criticise their country but resent others doing so. Gilmour disclaims any pretensions to being an academic, but he has written superb biographies of Lampedusa and Kipling and he knows his Italy. In this 150th anniversary of Italian unification, he argues that it was a huge mistake and that, in his own words, today's Italy may be united but is not unitary. He sees the real Italy as, variously, its regions (and former independent states) like Tuscany or Venice, or its (mostly northern) communes, to which he pays a tribute in his final pages. He argues that very few Italians wanted or fought for unification in 1848 and that equally few, whatever their later claims, were anti-fascist partisans, or their supporters, in 1945. He believes, like his favourite Massimo D'Azeglio, that Italy was united top-down by Piedmontese expansionists, and contends that the Lombards were reasonably content with the Habsburgs and likewise the South with the Bourbons, and that the Venetians wanted back their own republic, not incorporation into a Savoyard Italy. He asserts that Italy has never been a functioning nation-state; and that until 1934 Mussolini "probably made Italy feel more united than ever before – or since". Nor has he much time for Cavour's foreign policies. And he takes a happy side-swipe at Bertolucci's left-wing "1900" in one of the most destructive pieces of film criticism that I've ever read.

So the brickbats merrily fly around. But this is a deeply serious (and well written) book about the country's centrifugal tendencies, and one that deserves all our reflection. In 400 pages Gilmour takes the concept of Italy, and what it meant at any given time, from Virgil and Cicero to the present day. Inevitably this is a bit of a gallop. The first third takes us from the Roman Empire to Napoleon and identifies the usual villains who prevented Italy from becoming over time a nation-state like France or Spain: geography and location, communal particularism, foreign intervention and the malign claims of the papacy. Apart from the thirty year rule of the Goth Theodoric, the only "Italian" moment that Gilmour discerns – amply commemorated in nineteenth century hagiography – is the Lombard League and the battle of Legnano in 1176.

The remaining two-thirds of the book deal with Italy since Napoleon, who for all his faults he accepts "did help indirectly to foster a sense of nation", as he did in Germany and Greece. But for many years this remained a largely northern and middle class phenomenon. Southerners remained indifferent. Free trade ruined their nascent industries and the later tariff wars with France their agriculture. Few knew what they were fighting for in 1915, and though, as mentioned above, Gilmour says that Mussolini brought some sense of unity to the peninsula, he also notes that southern peasants (the vast majority) "felt no attachment to the state". More generally, he unearths the astonishing finding of an opinion poll in the late 1990s that "a large majority of Italians did not even realise that Trieste was in Italy".

I could quarrel with some of Gilmour's judgements, inevitable in so rich and compressed a canvas. He is very good on Garibaldi, De Gasperi and Berlusconi, but a bit unfair on Cavour who, like everyone else in 1859-60, was scrambling to keep up with events. I don't think that the Triple Alliance (with Germany and Austria) was quite as illogical as he makes out: relations with France were uneasy for much of the late nineteenth century. Nor, and more crucially, am I sure that if the Bourbon kingdom had remained independent after 1860 it would have evolved and progressed by itself. Gilmour argues that had Austria been defeated in 1848 Italy, like Germany in 1871, would have become a confederation of states, Turin would not have dominated the whole peninsula, and the rulers of Naples and Tuscany "would have had a status comparable to the Kings of Wurttemberg and Bavaria in 1871". Yet Prussia effectively dominated the German Empire and surely Piedmont, with the wealth of the north behind it, would have done the same.

The crucial question, however, is whether today's Italy is an artificial creation or not. In his introduction Gilmour suggests that "in today's Europe, which contains so many successful small nations, there surely would have been room for a flourishing Tuscany … and a prosperous Venice". That is not quite the exercise in nostalgia that it might seem to be. Eurosceptics often argue that the E.U.'s effect, wittingly or unwittingly, is to give dissident regions a one-way ticket to statehood since no one imagines that their separatist yearnings will today be suppressed by force. I am not sure that is true of Spain, but certainly the current plight of Belgium (and, who knows, one day the United Kingdom?) suggest that the map of Europe isn't set in concrete for all time. And the "fiscal federalism" issue – with devolution to the regions, who will pay for Calabria/Wallonia/Andalusia/Scotland? – is likely to be with us for many years to come.

While I agree that Italy's post-war constitution deliberately (and unlike the F.R.G.'s) created a weak state, and I believe needs revision, a weak state seems to be what quite a few Italians want. We should rejoice, as Gilmour does, in the country's diversity, wish it success in overcoming its present problems, and I hope look forward to celebrating its 200th anniversary long after I, and most readers of Rivista, have gone.

Tom Richardson

DIVIDED AFFECTIONS

The Extraordinary Life of Maria Cosway: Celebrity Artist and Thomas Jefferson's Impossible Love

Carol Burnell Column House £29.99

The enthralling story, encapsulating a lifelong, requited – but unconsummated – love affair, ranges from Florence to Rome, from London to Paris, from Lyon to Lombardy and eventually to the far-off, new-born, republic of the United States of America. Carol Burnell, a distinguished, highly literate American lady, formerly in the civil and diplomatic services of her country, hit upon its subject among some historical documents that she came across during two of her postings, first in the White House and secondly at the U.S. Embassy in Paris, namely the papers of Thomas Jefferson. It was a twelve page letter penned by him while American Envoy in Paris in October 1786 to a young married woman that caught the author's imagination, for it was a forthright declaration of love. This "Dialogue of the Head and the Heart" was addressed to Maria Hadfield Cosway, wife of the celebrated painter Richard, and a successful, fashionable miniaturist in her own right. Burnell reveals in the sub-title to her book, *Divided Affections* that this was to be an "Impossible Love". She then became fascinated by its object, Maria, the pretty, vivacious and talented daughter of an English inn-keeper hailing from Manchester. Charles ("Carlo") Hadfield, kept the best inn in Florence for visiting British gentry; his genial hospitality was immortalized in *"A punch party"* by Thomas Patch.

The name of this painter, if not that of the publican will make most members of the British-Italian Society prick up their ears, for his wry caricatures of fellow-countrymen on their Grand Tours are such an entertaining and informative feature of the less serious artistic endeavours that the Tour promoted. From the point of view of little Maria's education as an artist – a path she chose herself – this background was ideal: she was taught first by Violante Siriès Cerruoti and then by Johan Zoffany, when he came to Florence to depict the English *conoscenti* in the Tribuna. As Maria matured, her thoroughly Catholic education and beliefs as well as her father's rather dubious occupation, let alone her own ambitions, would – once in London – trammel her with the deepest prejudices of the period in terms of marriage and career prospects. But she overcame these obstacles with a feisty mixture of charm, worldly-wisdom and determination, enduring a marriage arranged before she was eighteen, by her penurious, widowed mother with the well-off – though ill-favoured – London portrait-painter Richard Cosway. Nevertheless, this match was to be Maria's making, for she was forced into the role of a hostess in smart London society, thus meeting many people of influence, eventually reaching socially as far up as the level of the Court and Royalty. This helped not only her husband's career but also opened many doors for her in her own right as a gifted miniaturist, with personal charm and a light touch.

The author has devised an exemplary code for easily – almost seamlessly – separating historical facts (derived from many diverse documentary sources) from fictional passages – often imagined conversations – extrapolated with feminine intuition from the circumstances, by having the printer set them in italics. She has naturally also introduced breathless verbatim passages from Maria's copious correspondence and diaries to convey their author's vivacious, if mercurial, character. This seasoning of the pure "historical" biography helps to bring the narrative to life.

This combination of careful research, measured weighing of the evidence, and highly literate and imaginative writing, which befits the particular subject, its protagonists and the period in general (the "Age of Enlightenment") make this biography one of the most enthralling and informative that this reviewer has ever come across.

The evocative chapter headings lead one through Maria's life and career: "Daughter of the Arno" – her childhood and education with kindly nuns in Florence (which ultimately predisposed her in older age towards a second career – that of an innovative and perspicacious educator of girls, in a similar, disciplined but kindly, convent atmosphere, first in Lyon and then in Lodi, south of Milan). They passed her for art-education to a local Italian paintress and to studying the Grand-Ducal collections of Palazzo Putti and the Uffizi Gallery – lucky child! She was then taken up by Zoffany, when he was on an official visit to paint the Tribuna and its contents, to be peopled with "inglesi"! He was a kindly tutor and pointed her in what direction to strive and what best to copy. His penchant for portraiture made a lasting impression, for she excelled at it and is today remembered most for her evocative miniatures of the "great and good", as well as the fashionable celebrities of Georgian London, including herself – for she was a vivacious and charming beauty – the English equivalent (almost!) of Mme. Vigée-Leburn in Paris. Alas, Maria's striving for success in "history painting" (then considered the highest branch of art) was not met with approbation, indeed became the 'butt of unkind caricatures'. This was due in part to undisguised prejudice against a woman – especially a "lady" (which – by a hair's breadth – she became) – putting herself about in what was considered a rather louche enclave in a "man's world". Let us not forget that women were for many years yet – and obvious reasons - forbidden to attend the Life Class at the newly-founded Royal Academy Schools!

The second chapter, "Grand Tour", refers to Maria's personal break-away at sixteen from her English family in Florence to Rome, under the watchful eye of the well-connected *mère de famille*, Mrs. Mary Gove. Carol Burnell gives a brilliant account of what life was then like in the Eternal City for a bright-eyed, well-informed teenage girl in the company of many bright sparks of student painters – some of whom she had already met in the context of their studies in the Uffizi Gallery – Henry Tresham and Ozias Humphry among them. She was even proposed to by a music student, whom she turned down. In Rome she added Mr. Prince Hoare to her côterie. Picnics in the Campagna - notionally studying Roman ruins ensued, followed by visits to grand palaces and to the early museums to sketch antiquities – the only male nudes that a young girl then could! She also met the two (in)famous British ciceroni, James Byres and Thomas Jenkins – guides, dealers and entrepreneurs, both very much "on the make". Maria also met the English sculptor Thomas Banks and the bizarre Swiss man, Henry Fuseli, as well as Pompeo Batoni and A.R. Mengs – both distinguished, professional portraitists. Indeed the comely art-student was quite the centre of male attention, also turning down a proposal from Ozias Humphry. Maria's stay was however darkened by the death of her father, which shortly triggered her departure for London in 1779 with her mother and family, in the company of Banks and his family.

Once there, it was not long before, through penury, the penniless Maria was married off to Richard Cosway for a handsome

settlement of £2,800. They were introduced by the rich and refined collector Charles Townley. Cosway was lampooned unkindly as "The Macaroni Painter", on account of his small size, dandyish dress and the fact that he painted on a miniature scale, which was considered rather effeminate.

Even so, Cosway was on the rise, for he had just penetrated the circle of the art-loving Prince of Wales. Maria was unenthused, but, good Catholic girl that she was, settled for her lot and was married in St. George's Hanover Square on 18th January 1781. "Despite her early awe or distaste, they soon settled into an easy relationship that was at times a happy one", writes Carol Burnell. "He was kind and gentle and could be agreeable". They lived at the epicentre of London society, first at 4 Berkeley Street (next to Devonshire House), which was by Cosway transformed from a normal abode into a veritable collector's cabinet. By 1782 Maria was painting a portrait of the Duchess of Devonshire, having already shown three pictures at the Royal Academy exhibition in 1781.

The author then charts the rise of the Cosways in Society, with their move in 1784 to the centre part of Schomberg House in Pall Mall – a William and Mary brick palace. Here Richard could display not only his and his wife's pictures, but his other diverse collections, including Old Masters and antiquities, from which he was not above making sales to his clientele, and thus acting as an art dealer. The couple were rather charmingly obsessed with one another and specialised in portraying themselves in fancy costume. Maria meanwhile flourished as a smart hostess who could entertain their guests with musical performances, for her talents included singing and accompanying herself on the harp or harpsichord. The accolade came when Richard was named Principal Painter to the Prince of Wales, who brought his rather dissolute set with him, including Mrs. Fitzherbert and Charles James Fox. Unfortunately for Maria, public disapproval of the Prince's drunken antics coloured reviews of her paintings at the Royal Academy in 1785, which were distinctly "underwhelming". She took refuge in forming a close friendship with an older man, General Pasquale Paoli, the national hero of Corsica, who became what the Italians call a *Cicisbeo*. This was more than a flirtation, but less than a full-blown love affair, perhaps it was a genuine friendship!

The Cosways then break away from the caustic criticism of their parties, the company they kept and their rather self-serving paintings, for pastures new. Richard had received a prestigious commission from the Duc d'Orleans to paint his wife and children: a friend on the Prince of Wales, he was head of the younger branch of the French royal family, who lived near the Louvre in the Palais Royal. Cosway, with an eye to the main chance, volunteered to give to the King four huge cartoons by Raphael and Giulio Romano (which perhaps he had found unsaleable in London!) for a new display being contemplated for the Grand Galerie. With such an entrée into Parisian society, the Cosways were positively fêted.

Their friends included John Trumbull, an American painter, whom they had first met in London, who accompanied them on excursions, for instance to Versailles, and it was through him that they met the American Envoy, Thomas Jefferson, when going to visit a splendid new building based on the Pantheon, the Corn Market: "The English couple must have felt at home with the two Americans and at the same time introduced to a New World", writes Burnell, "Cultivated and polite, their new friends were visibly unimpressed by notions of nobility and rank, a refreshing contrast with the carefully-regulated European society. To them, merit and honesty were the great values". Jefferson described his new Italianate house in Virginia, "Monticello", and its very name of course attracted Maria's attention. Jefferson evidently enjoyed Maria's company and was an assiduous guide to the English couple round the sights of Paris, especially the various châteaux – old and new – and their delightful gardens: this was Paris in its heyday, only a few years before the depradations on the royal patrimony wrought by the French Revolution. Maria and the tall, diplomatic American began to fall in love before Richard Cosway's very eyes, seemingly, until he – unwisely – allowed himself to be distracted by his commission to portray the d'Orléans family. In an imagined visit to "Le désert de Retz", a strange folly-like building inspired by the imagery of the Freemasons, the *innamorati* may have been alone together. The idyll was broken some days later, when Jefferson broke his wrist while gallantly retrieving a fan that Maria had mislaid, but the fact that he was laid up by it occasioned some correspondence that has survived and a deepening of Maria's affection.

Soon afterwards, Richard had finished his portrait commissions and – perhaps also sensing the dangerous rivalry for his wife's affections – returned with her post-haste to London. Their departure occasioned Jefferson's remarkable letter arguing the pros and cons of the "Impossible Love" of the book's sub-title, which Maria received in a parcel of various presents. A desultory exchange of letters ensued, accompanied sometimes by gifts of love songs or poems, whose sentiments were readily understood by the recipients as applying to themselves. Jefferson – for the sake of discretion in view of his diplomatic posting – avoided the official post and waited for opportunities for his rather indiscreet missives to be taken to London by hand.

One year later, Maria persuaded her husband to let her return to France alone. No sooner had Maria arrived than she "bumped into" her amour at the Salon exhibition of pictures on 28 August 1787: italic script marks four pages of mildly suggestive conversation imagined for us by the author, and continues sporadically to enliven what bare facts we have relating to Mrs. Cosway's visit to Paris. Jefferson seems to have been rather jumpy, presumably because with Maria now being on her own, their being seen together could be misconstrued as being by way of an affair. "She was a woman used to abiding by the strictures of religion and society. He was a man and a rather free thinking one at that … He should have had the will to prevail, if he felt what he professed. She had expected more of him".

The truth of the matter was that Jefferson had the interests of his promising career and newly-formed country to constrain him from risking the consummation of his passion for Maria. Had he given in to the temptation that she deliberately proffered, she would certainly have surrendered herself to him. After all, she was a grown-woman in a – by now – arranged, loveless marriage, who was for the first time genuinely in love of her own volition. Maria left Paris in a huff at Jefferson's seemingly distant behaviour.

To solace herself, Maria finally began to look in London for a more attentive male companion than her overly-busy husband, and found it in an attractive Italian castrato opera singer, Luigi Marchesi. A popular star that season, she even persuaded him to perform with her at one of her Monday evening entertainments at home: he reciprocated by openly flirting with her in a box near the stage between acts at his next opera, as was noted with glee by the *Morning Post!*

Richard was finally piqued into jealousy and recrimination. At the end of 1788 Jefferson announced that he had to return

to America, but hoped that Maria might manage to visit him there. However this – perhaps fortunately for his reputation in Virginia – never took place. As he left, after the French Revolution had begun to break out, Jefferson ended his parting letter of 14 October 1789 with the words: "So be it, my dear friend, and Adieu under the hope which springs naturally out of what we wish. Once and again then farewell, remember me and love me".

Maria, meanwhile was temporarily distracted by the discovery that after eight childless years of marriage, she was pregnant. Alas, the experience was a mixed one: she became rather ill, felt abandoned by some of her male favourites and also discovered that Richard had begun to seek affection elsewhere. A baby girl emerged on 4 May 1790 and was christened Louisa. Unwell and depressed, Maria was sent to Italy to recuperate leaving her child behind, with her family. Once there, she was spotted again with the singer Marchesi, which was most unwise, for it gave rise to a scandal that she had abandoned her husband and child to run away with him! Polite English society began to close its doors on her: in Italy, Mary Berry and Ann Damer, the sculptress, dubbed her unkindly "Marchesa" and wrote gossipy – though amusing – denunciations home, which destroyed her reputation entirely.

Alas, after only eighteen months of actual motherhood, Maria's child, her happiness at last, was snatched away by a week-long summer's cold.

To Maria this misfortune naturally seemed like a divine judgement: "After the first shock Maria came back into the world, filling her days with a passionate devotion to good works and painting to fill the void in her heart". Indeed in 1800 she exhibited seven paintings at the Royal Academy, and also began to collaborate with Ackermann in producing series of soft ground etchings, starting with 36 of Richard Cosway's drawings called "Imitations in Chalk", six of them appearing each month. Her own obsession with female education and proper behaviour [!] led to the production of two companion volumes entitled (à la Hogarth) "A Progress of Female Virtue" and "A Progress of Female Dissipation". She was steadily drawn to what would become – after the final breakdown of her marriage in 1801 – a second and surprisingly successful career, as headmistress of private girls' schools, first in Lyon and then in Lombardy. Once again, this was under the aegis of Mother Church, through which she was eventually able to end her life – after a brief rapprochement with the infirm Richard in his old age and then his death – on a happy note.

Carol Burnell has succeeded by her clear interweaving of complex data in creating a real human character, with whom one is drawn into empathising, out of a woman otherwise know only as a painter of second rank specialising in pretty portraits, but on the whole attracting derision with her attempts at history painting in the grand manner that was in vogue in her day. The story is animated by the long drawn-out epistolary relationship with Jefferson, on whom Maria doted and who certainly reciprocated her feelings in a more measured, masculine way, ever conscious of his own responsibilities. The resulting book is an entrancing biography.

Charles Avery

CASANOVA

Actor Spy Lover Priest

Ian Kelly Hodder & Stoughton £20

His very first chaste introduction to sex occurred at age 11 with his tutor's younger sister in Padua and it amounted to not much more than a vigorous once-over to his torso with a scrub brush. He would have to wait another six years for full induction. When it happened, it was with not one but two accommodating sisters. Nanetta and Marta Savorgnan took to their teamwork with gusto and the 17-year old Giacomo Casanova never looked back. From then on, the mere name of this Venetian-born bon viveur who descended from a family of theatrical entertainers would forever be associated with sexual zeal. He lived most of his life for the impenitent pleasure of the moment, thanks in part to inherited genes - licentious living permeated his own inner circle. La Mamma, actress Zanetta Farussi, in fact, counted among her lovers none less than Carlo Goldoni. And it was somewhat uncertain who the boy's Papà was. Young Giacomo would follow in her footsteps with a parade of trysts, becoming a serial womanizer over time. He was particularly drawn to strong and unorthodox women whom Venice apparently offered in abundance throughout the 18th century. But in a pinch, even the timorous and chaste would do. By his own reckoning, as he wrote in his memoir ***Histoire de Ma Vie***, his romantic conquests numbered between 122 and 136. The number may have been far higher inasmuch as not all of his ladies made it into the pages of his book. At least eight fathered children followed in the wake of his liaisons. And yet, as the author Ian Kelly reminds us, there were others vying for the sexual championships which may well have topped Casanova's numbers. "Lord Byron", for example, "alludes to more conquests in a couple of years at the Palazzo Mocenigo in Venice than Casanova did in an entire lifetime".

Poor Giacomo! Maybe not quite as notorious as we thought. For starters, he was no beauty. He had a long beaked nose, puffy eyes, a swarthy complexion and a swollen neck. And throughout his 73 years of life (1725-1798), he travelled so restlessly from city to city and country to country, never staying for longer than two years in one place, that it must have made it all that much harder to fully acquaint himself with the local ladies. Indeed, the author calculates that Giacomo Casanova lived in no less than 20 cities from his early adulthood.

Many readers are fully familiar with the well-charted territory of Casanova's love life Kelly truly excels, however, in his portrayals of Casanova's other many personal polymath talents, of the Venetian backdrop in which he lived and of the lifestyle he encountered during his travels. Vivaldi was composing. Canova was sculpting. Goldoni was writing comedies. The Doges were fuelling the cultural liveliness of the Serenissima. And before the firm grip of nationalism took hold, wealthy aristocrats all over Europe were nurturing fresh new talent in their courts, wherever it came from. Young Giacomo had an unfailing knack for seeking

such people out wherever he could. A good sense of timing: being at the right place at the right time, stumbling into the right people when he most needed them.

The most fortunate stroke of all occurred one night as he was emerging from a Venice wedding party just before dawn. So too was the powerful and well-to-do Senator Matteo Giovanni Bragadin. Bragadin dropped a note on the ground. Casanova picked it up and returned it to the Senator. In gratitude, Bragadin offered the 21-year old Giacomo a lift home in his gondola. During the ride, though, Bragadin suffered a stroke. Casanova made him comfortable then raced ashore to summon a surgeon. When the doctor prescribed bleeding the senator, Casanova stepped forward to provide replacement blood. With that, his meal ticket was assured for the remainder of Bragadin's life. A handsome cheque arrived every single month enshrining Giacomo as a man of leisure and helping him through whatever adversities lay unexpectedly in store in the coming years.

Tutored at the outset by Abbot Antonio Marin Gozzi in Padua, Casanova got a solid grounding in religion and agonised, between one romance and another, over whether to pursue the priesthood. In the end, he didn't. But it certainly gave him a good entrée into the affluent papal circle of Rome on his first foray out of Venice aged 18. In the winter of 1743, in fact, he met Pope Benedict XIV and was taken on as secretary to Cardinal Acquaviva. It would be Acquaviva who arranged his speedy transfer to Constantinople when Casanova made one young Roman housewife pregnant.

Savvy from early on, it was probably around then that the young Venetian shrewdly started honing fresh new skills. He could read and write Latin and Greek fluently. More usefully, conversational German, English, Russian would follow. And, of course, he had his Venetian dialect. His preferred language for writing, though, would be French and indeed, his memoirs were penned in that language. He was to write 42 books, plays, mathematical treatises, opera libretti. He translated Homer's Iliad into modern Italian. As a famed gourmet, he steeped himself in all things culinary. The author was able to draw on previously unpublished documents from the Venetian Inquisition which was secretly tracking and reporting on Casanova's sometimes suspect activities in the Republic. Based partly on the findings of the Inquisition, the author was able to grapple bravely with the complicated interests of Casanova in later life as well: the bewilderingly abstract mysteries of the Cabbala, Free Masonry and assorted aspects of the occult.

Ian Kelly is a London-based historian and author of two other biographies.

Alexandra Richardson

DONNA IGNOTA

Giuseppina Franco Tall

A bilingual edition Tall Publishing 2011 Price £14.99

Riflessioni di un'italiana in Inghilterra

Qui si ricorda, grati, l'invasione romana,
Sue strade vaste e dritte, come l'alma italiana
Ch'è franca ed è leale, che sprezza i falsi orpelli.
Molti i figliol di Cesare, pochi di Macchiavelli,
Dei nostri padri antichi la traccia non si perse.
Siam razze sorelle, se pur sembriam diverse.
Quando il mondo si esamina viene alla conclusione:
Che borgo de la Terra è inver ogni Nazione!

Donna Ignota is a collection of poems about the life and impressions of an Italian emigrant from Turin, Giuseppina Franco Tall, who came to England in 1936 with her husband Cyril Blandford Tall in those difficult times between the two world wars and Mussolini's Italy of the 1930s.

Her poems, translated by her daughter Marion Tall Wilkinson, evoke many aspects of what the writer called "What I remember of my life" as wife, mother, observer and poetess. A few poems talk about her impressions and feelings in her newly adopted land. In *La Coltre Inglese*, the poet calls the "Popol d'Albione…. amalgamato di diverse razze" in search of adventure "Fu missionario, esploratore, mercante..". In Sposa Straniera, she confesses her loneliness:

… E mi sentivo sola e lontana
Ora che gli occhi chiari mi dicevan:
"Sei troppo italiana!"…

Giuseppina Franco Tall also touches on social issues in the capital offering some food for thought with her poem *Kensington Gardens & Hyde Park:*

E "Ladies" e "stelle" vi passano nel sole
Belle ed altere portan gioielli e moda
Gara accanita di lusso e di splendore….

……

A notte alta, quando cessa l'ansare
Cupo del traffico che al Parco fa cintura
Dentro quest'oasi si rifugiano i miseri
Senza una casa…e sono pena e vergogna
Assurdo tragico in tanto possedere.

These poems make delightful reading for those who love verse. Giuseppina Franco Tall's greatest wish was to convey joy into other hearts: "Vorrei che l'eco di questo mio guadio si ripercuotesse in altri cuori e li rasserenasse. Se una sola delle mie poesie avesse questo potere, mi renderebbe felice".

The book was edited by Ornella Trevisan to fulfill the last will of a daughter who wished to make her mother's literary dream come true. Of interest, no doubt, to B.I.S. members is the mention on page 214 of the book of a letter dated 5th February 1946 welcoming Giuseppina Tall and her daughter Marion as new members into the British-Italian Society.

Georgina Gordon-Ham

SNIPPETS

Travel guide publisher Lonely Planet together with the BBC chose the world's best city to visit in spring 2011. The winner was **Lucca**.

" 'Wandering through Lucca in Tuscany is like stepping into an illuminated manuscript. The town's red-orange roofs and spires thrust out of a landscape of deepest green, with cypress-tree brushstrokes and a backdrop of mountains. And its climate in spring resembles a perfect English summer's day with blue skies", they declared.

Lucca won because of its charm and beautiful colours. The city is also known for its flower market in Piazza dell'Anfiteatro, botanical gardens located in the piazza in front of the Basilica di San Frediano, and the evening concerts hosted by the city's churches.

For details, see: **www.bbc.com/travel/feature/20110107 -best-city-for-spring-2011-lucca-italy.**

Has anything really changed?

"Report of fashions in proud Italy,
Whose manners still our tardy-apish nation
Limps after in base imitation".

(C. 1595 William Shakespeare, Richard II, II. i)

Italy's Ministry of Agriculture has issued emergency measures to combat the rapid spread of the red palm weevil, which is destroying thousands of palm trees in Rome, the surrounding Lazio region, and all along Italy's western coastline from Liguria to Sicily.

Since its arrival in Sicily in 2004, the Asian weevil has spread quickly and has decimated Rome's Villa Sciarra and Villa Torlonia parks, and killed 700 palm trees alone in the city's seaside area of Ostia. In fact, the first thing to greet tourists leaving Fiumicino airport on their way into Rome is dead palm trees.

The region hardest hit in Italy is Sicily where the weevil has destroyed 30,000 of the island's palm trees.

Earlier this year, you may have done a double-take driving down Park Lane. Near the Dorchester Hotel, perched on a plinth, stood a 15-foot high "sculpture" of a genuine little black Fiat 500 clasped by a towering child's hand, a homage to the automobile in this bicycle-besotted city. As part of Westminster Council's City of Sculpture Festival, **Vroom Vroom** was the whimsical work of Italian artist Lorenzo Quinn (Anthony's son); the car in question was the very first Quinn ever purchased with his own money. As an artwork, it has put considerable mileage onto its gauge, displayed first in Valencia, Spain, then in Abu Dhabi before its temporary visit to London.

Nestled high in the Tuscan Hills in the province of Lucca, the small medieval town of Barga tastes distinctly Glaswegian. In the late 19th century Barga was an area particularly hit by economic depression after the unification of Italy in 1861 when scores of locals emigrated to Glasgow and its surrounding area. Most of today's Scotsitalians can trace their roots back to the early 1850s.

Many of these carved out careers in the arts and were accomplished barbers and hairdressers. Indeed in 1928 a college of Italian hairdressers opened up in Glasgow. Glasgow today has the third largest contingent of people from Italian extraction in the UK after London and Manchester.

However, many of the older settlers hoped to return to Italy to retire one day and viewed Scotland in a transitory fashion. It is estimated that today 60% of Barga's residents have relatives in the west of Scotland, while many of the original emigrant families have made the return journey and now live in Barga.

Those who returned to their original homeland have brought back with them Scottish customs and traditions, such as Burns Night, which is celebrated by the local residents in January, and la Saga del Pesce e delle Patate, the annual Fish and Chips festival is held for 17 days in the summer through July and August.

However, Barga's Scottish connection is about more than food and drink. John Bellany, one of Scotland's painters of the last century made the town his home in 1988. The great grandparents of the Scottish pop star Paolo Nutini left the town for Paisley, just outside Glasgow. The singer regularly visits the land of his ancestors. Barga is often known as "The Most Scottish Town in Italy".

Italy's Bureau of Statistics, ISTAT, reported that in their last survey, the number of births fell significantly in 2010. They fell by 12,000 to 557,000 following four years of modest growth. That is the lowest figure since 554,000 births in 2005. The drop is attributed to the decreasing fertility of women born during the baby boom of the 1970s.

Earlier this year, Venetians woke up to an alarming headline on the front page of *Il Gazzettino* : ***"The Grand Canal has been snatched !"*** It seems that ownership of the city's iconic 4-kilometer long waterway had suddenly changed hands and that this was no *Pesce d'Aprile*.

What appears to have happened was that a new national law intended to eliminate out-of-date provisions still on the books since the days of monarchy in fact seemingly transferred ownership of the canal from Venice to Rome. One hundred and seven years ago King Victor Emmanuel III had provided for just the opposite, making Venice the manager of its own property. Now, accidentally, the waterway threatened to become Roman. A mauvais quart d'heure ensued until the Minister for Legislative Simplification Roberto Calderoli stepped in to undo the tempest in a teapot: it was a misinterpretation of the law, he stated. The Grand Canal would remain Venetian.

The medical schools of three universities in ***Pavia and Milan*** have begun teaching their courses in English, but following the Italian curriculum. The courses are conducted by professors who have worked and taught abroad. The objective is not only to extend (more affordable) admission to foreign medical students but also to ensure that aspiring Italian doctors keep their professional language skills up to scratch.

Jessie White Mario (1832-1906), also known as 'Hurricane Jessie', was British by birth, educated at the Sorbonne1852 to 1854 took up the cause of Italian unity and was a nurse to Garibaldi's soldiers in four separate wars. A philanthropist and journalist, she wrote a famous biography of Garibaldi. Her marriage to Alberto Mario, a member of Garibaldi's staff, took her to all Garibaldi's campaigns after 1860, to battles in Genoa, Sicily, battlefields near Venice and Rome and even against Germans in eastern France, where she was always in the thick of the fight as a heroic nurse. She remains one of the most famous and beloved expatriates in Italian history. She wore her Garibaldi red shirt to the end.

Although she was in Florence at the end of her life, she lived in the later part of the 19th century in Lendinara in northern Italy and is still remembered as the English woman who took an active part in the struggle for the Unification of Italy at the side of Mazzini and Garibaldi.

What is the Italian's dream job today: a place in banking, fashion or in the high-tech industry? Guess again. According to one annual sampling of over 12,000 graduates in Milan, overwhelmingly the vote went to joining a major pasta producer, **Barilla**

Italian Police in southeastern Italy confiscated a rare Siberian tiger belonging to Puglia underworld boss, Lucio Vetrugno. Vetrugno, nicknamed 'Lucio of the Tiger' by fellow criminals, was a convicted member of Puglia's powerful Sacra Corona Unita clan, Italy's fourth major crime syndicate after Sicily's Cosa Nostra, Calabria's 'Ndrangheta and the Neapolitan Camorra.

The tiger, which eats around 30 kilos of meat a day, had lived for 16 years in a cage on the estate near the town of Monteroni di Lecce in Puglia. The forestry police transferred it to a shelter for large felines near Bologna.

This was just one of many examples of Italian *mafiosi* with a penchant for dangerous exotic animals.

A Camorra drugs ring used a large white python to protect their cocaine stash, months after a similar case of a snake being used to guard narcotics, while police also caught a Naples crime boss with a large crocodile said to have used to frighten extortion victims if they showed any reluctance to pay up.

At £4 million, the Baldacchino Supreme deserves mention as the most expensive bed ever made. Chesnut, ash and cherry woods have gone into the framework. The headboard, skirting and canopy are swathed in the finest Italian silk. And, yes, slotted in here and there is plenty (236 pounds) of 24-carat gold, giving it that final *Je ne sais quoi*.

Liverpool designer Stuart Hughes is credited with the design and Nocera Superiore furniture makers Hebanon Fratelli Basile carried out the work. Only two of them have been made so far and one is already spoken for. Better hurry!

Italy recorded their first Giuseppe Garibaldi Trophy victory on 12th March 2011 with a thrilling 22-21 win in the ***Italy-France rugby match***. The French were gobsmacked, since they had won the trophy four times ever since it was first awarded in 2007.

The Giuseppe Garibaldi rugby trophy is a rugby union trophy, which is an Italo-French equivalent to the Calcutta Cup awarded to the winner of the match between Italy and France within the annual Six Nations Championship. It was first awarded in February 2007 as part of the celebrations of the bicentenary of Garibaldi's birth.

London has adopted the names of no fewer than 18 Italian cities or regions to give to its own streets. There are Ancona, Calabria, Capri, Florence, Milan, Palermo, Ravenna, Padua, Roma, Treviso, Turin and Verona Roads, a Bassano and Como Street, not to mention a Parma Crescent, Genoa and Sicilian Avenues and an Elba Place.

With the Bondi decree now regulating their salaries and terms of employment, Italy's opera houses and companies are having to come to terms with new realities as they plan their future seasons and make cuts while trying to still maintain standards.

Staff hiring is frozen until December 2011, apart from the top artistic roles, and even then new employees may only be taken on to fill positions left vacant in the previous season.

The opera companies also have to negotiate the new national contract (the old one expired in 2003) at a time when there is a 25 per cent cut in the finance available for overtime pay, incentives and additional bonuses.

Apart from strikes, such opera houses as Rome's Teatro dell'Opera and the Teatri Comunali in Bologna and Florence, have reduced the number of productions staged. Many are playing safe, deriving their box office by staging much-loved operas sure to draw in the audiences. In contrast to the novelties there is a surfeit of repertory opera. Rigoletto by Verdi at Lucca, Catania, Rovigo, Turin and Florence. The Barber of Seville by Rossini in Venice, Sassari and Verona. Tosca by Puccini in Naples, Florence, Palermo and Milan.

Another solution has been to have co-productions, with two or more theatres sharing resources and dividing the costs. This has already been tried for several years in theatres in Tuscany and Lombardy and now the larger and more important theatres are beginning to follow suit. Salome by Strauss, for example, which inaugurated the season at the Teatro Comunale in Florence was a co-production with the Regio in Turin and the Teatro Real in Madrid. And at La Scala in Milan, its inaugural opera Die Walküre by Wagner, a sumptuous production conducted by Daniel Barenboim, was only made possible thanks to the fact that it is a co-production with Berlin's Staatsoper, Unter den Linden.

Roberto Saviano, the literary icon of Naples, most known for his book Gomorra, earlier this year won a highly unusual new prize. It is a lifetime supply of fresh mozzarella, given to him by the ***Buffalo Mozzarella Consortium*** of Campania in gratitude for featuring this cheese in his latest book *Vieni Via Con Me* as his "foremost reason to live".

Tourists can now visit the underground of the Colosseum, where gladiators once prepared for fights, and lions and tigers were caged before entertaining a bloodthirsty public.

Rome culture officials said that, after several months of work to make the area safe for visits, the public are now allowed to add the underground section to tours of the arena. However, this area and the third upper circle are periodically closed for maintenance. So check first, by phoning 0039 06 39967700. Visits are free for those under 18 or over 65.

For the first time since its foundation in 1977, l'Associazione Dimore Storiche Italiane launched at the end of May 2011 its first edition of "National Days of A.D.S.I." to coincide with the celebrations for the unification of Italy and the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy. It is the first time such an event was held simultaneously throughout the country from 28th to 29th May – a weekend 'a casa dei principi'. Until now, this was normally done on a regional basis and at different times of the year. The 160 stately homes opened to the public from Rome to Matera and from Florence to Trento.

The aim of the association is to promote the extraordinary architectural and cultural heritage of Italy's privately owned historic houses and stately homes.

For further information, contact:

ADSI
Largo dei Fiorentini, 1
00186 Roma
Tel: 06/68307426
email: info@adsi.it www.adsi.it

PATRON
H.E. The Italian Ambassador

PRESIDENT
Sir Tom Richardson, KCMG

CHAIRMAN
Mr Charles de Chassiron, CVO

WE WISH TO REMIND MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH-ITALIAN SOCIETY'S BACKGROUND AND THE BRAVERY OF ITS FOUNDER MEMBERS

In 1941, a group of British academics, journalists, broadcasters and former residents of Italy decided to form the Friends of Free Italy, echoing the "Friends of Italy" founded in London by Mazzini in 1851. The new group resolved to remind their countrymen of the true and immortal Italy which transcended the Axis regime with which the country was at war.

Around the same time, a parallel group of Italians formed the Free Italy Committee which became the Movimento Libera Italia. Following internal dissension, the Movimento merged with the Friends and in 1945 became the British-Italian Society which it has remained ever since. Its aims and objects were redefined as being "to increase the understanding in Great Britain of Italian history, Italian institutions, the Italian way of life and the Italian contribution to civilisation, to increase the knowledge of the Italian language in Great Britain, and to encourage and promote the traditional friendship between Great Britain and Italy".

The aims of the Society are to increase the understanding in Great Britain of Italy and Italian civilisation and to encourage friendship between the two countries.

The Society is interested in the political, economic and social development of Italy as well as its culture and history – and as much in the Italy of to-day as in the glories of the past.

Regular lecture meetings are held on topics covering a wide range of subjects. The annual Leconfield Lecture, in memory of the Society's first Chairman, Lord Leconfield, is always given by a speaker of particular distinction.

Various social events and occasional outings to places of interest are also arranged.

"Remembrance"

Christ Church, Naples