RIVISTA

Winter 2019

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Cover photo: Anselm Kiefer: The Seven Heavenly Palaces 2004-2015 installation

Review of the year

by Richard Northern, BIS Chair

In addition to modern history, literature and history of art, our programme of lectures and outings this year featured themes ranging from music to archaeology, contemporary art and cinema. You will read about them in detail in the pages of this Rivista.

A highlight of the year was the party generously hosted by our President Olga Polizzi and her husband William Shawcross at their home in London in December. We are grateful to Olga and William, and to Skye McAlpine who prepared cicchetti from recipes in her book *a Table in Venice* for a very enjoyable evening. The event raised a considerable sum which will enhance the Society's capacity to make charitable donations.

Our two named lectures this year were Denis Reidy on Edgar Degas' connections with Italy and its influence on the development of his painting (the Leconfield lecture); and Sarah Quill on *A Room with a View* where she photographed the filming in Florence in 1985 (the Charles De Chassiron Memorial Lecture). Sarah gave a fascinating insight into the film-making process at that time, ably assisted during a lively question and answer session by other members of the production team.

We arranged two outings to major exhibitions in London – the Renzo Piano exhibition at the Royal Academy in November and the Leonardo da Vinci exhibition at the British Library in July. Both proved popular and informative. We particularly thank Stephen Parkin, who gave an outstanding introduction to the Leonardo exhibition and then guided us through it.

The Society made a number of grants during the year to support worthy artistic, academic and other projects in line with its aims:

- a donation of £750 towards costs of the Festival of Italian Literature in London (FILL) in Notting Hill in October 2018.
- a donation of £100 towards the annual Christmas Bazaar appeal organised by Il Circolo (for a programme advert).
- a donation of £350 towards the costs of the Annual Lecture of the Italian Studies Library Group in June 2019.
- a contribution of £300 towards translation costs for the Festival of New Italian Writing at Theatre 503 in June 2019.
- a donation of £300 to the Italian School in London, partly in payment for their housing of the BIS Archives.

Richard Northern, BIS Chair

This year we relaunched our biennial award scheme for students of Italian studies as the *British-Italian Society* prizes. We are indebted to the Society for Italian Studies for their support and assistance in administering the scheme. The standard of entries was encouragingly high; and we look forward to presenting awards to the winners in Spring 2020.

We are grateful to Philippa Leslie, who has taken over as Editor of *Rivista*. This is Philippa's first edition of the magazine. Previous editions of *Rivista* can be found on the Society's website.

Sadly our Secretary, Elisabetta Murgia, stood down in August 2019 after ten years in the role. We pay tribute to her tireless and dedicated work elsewhere in this edition. Meanwhile we are delighted to welcome Rhuna Barduagni to the role. Rhuna has a background in theatre in Italy, and has more recently worked on event management since moving to London.

As always, we acknowledge with gratitude our Patron, H.E. Ambassador Raffaele Trombetta. We also very warmly thank Dr Marco Delogu, Director of the Italian Cultural Institute until July this year, for hosting the Leconfield Lecture and for his generous support in making a room available for regular Trustees meetings. We wish Marco the very best for his future career.

We look forward to welcoming all *Rivista* readers to our new season of events in 2019-20.

Art in Italy: not only the Grand Tour

Silvia Badiali on the new Italian private art museum scene: Three progressive private art foundations.

Charles Barber reviews an intriguing evening

Three private art Fondazioni new to the art and cultural scene in Italy: Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin, created by collector Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaurengo in 1995 and located in a converted railway engine shed; Fondazione Prada, developed by Miuccia Prada and Patrizio Bertelli, established in 1993, and built around their private art collection in the suburbs of Milan, in a building which was once a distillery; and Fondazione Pirelli Hangar Bicocca, founded in 2004, in a building in an industrial quarter of Milan originally used to build railway carriages and locomotives. Silvia Badiali, an art and finance adviser, held the audience spellbound as she discussed and demonstrated the important and exciting contributions these new foundations bring to Italy.

The style of art and the mission of all three Fondazioni are similar: to support new Italian artists, to bring internationally acclaimed artists like Anish Kapoor and Michael Heizer to Italian audiences, often for the first time; to display contemporary and modern art in all its forms; to display painting, film and sculpture made from various materials, as well as performance art, and to expand educational opportunities in the cultural sphere.

The nuclei of the Prada and Rebaudengo collections are the private collections of Miuccia Prada and her husband, and Patrizia Rebaudengo. Ownership of the artworks remains with the families, but the Fondazione may make use of them when curating exhibitions or loaning them to other galleries. In building their collections, both women not only acquired, but commissioned pieces from artists, building a close and symbiotic relationship with many of them.

> 'To display contemporary and modern art in all its forms'

Pirelli HangarBicocca did not have a pre-existing collection, so they commissioned Anselm Kiefer's most important site-specific works, *The Seven Heavenly Palaces* 2004-2015, for the opening of Pirelli HangarBicocca. The Fondazione then acquired Fausto Melotti's *La Sequenza* installation, now positioned on the approach to the Fondazione.

©Agostino Osio/Alto Piano

The symbolic relationship between art and architecture

"Starchitects" such as Rem Koolhaas, for Prada, were employed to transform crumbling buildings into cavernous exhibition spaces, or in the case of Rebaudengo, Claudio Silvestrin was commissioned to design a brand new building to showcase the collection.

Badiali used London's Tate Modern 34,500 square metres as a reference point, noting that Fondazione Prada comes in at 18,600 square metres and Pirelli HangarBicocca at 9,500 square metres, with a ceiling height of 30 metres, which allows the artwork to breathe.

The new white tower at Fondazione Prada is built over several floors, with the ceiling height of each floor increasing as one ascends the building. This allows the same artwork to be displayed in spaces of different sizes and shapes, altering the viewing experience at each level, creating a symbiotic relationship between art and architecture. Innovative materials were used too, ranging from the gold leaf-covered Haunted House for Prada which bathes visitors in a golden light when the sun shines as they approach the building, to a special concrete in the construction of the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo.

Alongside the permanent collections, the Fondazione put on exhibitions of solo artists, as well as curated thematic exhibitions featuring various contemporary artists from Italy and beyond. As Fondazione Pirelli HangarBicocca has no permanent collection, it favours exhibitions focusing on solo exhibitions featuring an artist from the countries where the Pirelli brand is strongest.

Guides versus individual viewing experience

Common to all three Fondazioni is the calibre of their permanent staff: they are run in the same way, in some cases arguably

Anselm Kiefer: The Seven Heavenly Palaces 2004-2015 installation

Mikhail Karikis: Children of Unquiet *video still*

better than, a large public gallery, with similar governance in place. Fondazione Prada announced featuring a multimedia installation, *Whether Line*, by Lizzie Fitch and Ryan Trecartin in Spring 2019, while at Rabaurengo, the Fondazione is introducing Italy to the paintings of the Nairobi-born artist, Michael Armitage. This exhibition runs concurrently with the performance art of Mikail Karikis, *Children of Unquiet*. Given that these concepts are a stark departure from the sacred and profane subject matter so often depicted in Italian museums, Fondazione Rebaudengo and HangarBicocca have employed ambassadors who greet visitors on arrival, explaining the art displayed to assist the visitor in understanding what they are seeing, and guiding them on how to engage with modern and contemporary art. Fondazione Prada takes an entirely different approach, leaving visitors to curate their own experience through the maze of buildings and art on display, believing that the audience must take an active role in curating their own viewing experience. Whether this is a more successful approach is debatable as modern art can be inaccessible to a lay audience.

Exposing Italians to modern and contemporary art, and educating them about it, is a core driver of the Fondazione. Believing that children as young as four are not too young to start learning, interactive programmes and workshops for them, school-age children, university students and adults are put on by each Fondazione. Each year, students from the world's leading universities compete for the three places on the Young Curators Residency programme offered by Fondazione Rebaudengo. The four-month residency introduces the young curators to artists who display their work in the Fondazione, curators from other galleries and of course, the staff of the Fondazione Rebaudengo itself.

Making modern art accessible

Critics of these private Fondazioni argue that the entry of private money and curated art into the public sphere shapes the taste of the public. However, given the parlous state of the Italian economy, these Fondazioni are providing a service that the Italian state simply cannot afford. Only Fondazione Prada is paid entry, though it is open longer than the others, and all three are making modern art more accessible to the public in a country where the norm is paid entry to art galleries. And as every gallery and museum has a mission and a curated experience, whether private or public, does it really matter if the public taste is shaped by private individuals? Isn't it more important that the public experiences new art, has new cultural spaces and programmes laid on for them, rather than a nebulous argument on the shaping of public taste? Undoubtedly the value of these collections has increased dramatically due to their public display, providing an obvious monetary gain for their owners. The LVMH Foundation in Paris cost north of £600m to create so these private individuals and corporations are spending considerable sums to bring their art to the public.

Unlike LVMH, the Prada family strives to keep the fashion brand and the Fondazione separate; there is not a Prada logo to be found at the complex. Yes, they will likely achieve immortality (perhaps another motivation for creating their Fondazione) in the same way the Medici did, after Anna Maria Luisa left the family collection to Tuscany, decreeing no item could ever leave Tuscany. It is not improbable that there may be some tax benefits available through them.

As Silvia suggested, take a flight to Milan and Turin, visit these Fondazioni and experience them for yourselves!

Silvia Badiali is a professional adviser on art and finance, based in London. She regularly speaks at international art fairs, and at universities in Italy, about the art market and art as an investment.

Charles Barber is a regular contributor to Rivista and a specialist in Renaissance Italy.

GALLERY INFORMATION

Sandretto Re Raubedengo
Via Modane 16, Torino
www.fsrr.org
Thurs: 8pm-11pm,
Fri-Sun: Noon-7pm
Entry free

Prada
Largo Isarco, 2, Milano
www.fondazioneprada.com
Mon, Wed, Thurs: 10am-7pm,
Fri-Sun: 10am-8pm
Entry from 10 €, free for over 65s

Pirelli Hangar Bicocca
Via Chiese, 2, Milano
www.hangarbicocca.org
Thurs-Sun: 10am-10pm
Entry free

Art history with a 'wow factor'

Orazio and Artemisia Gentileschi: two Italian artists at the court of Charles I

Leconfield Lecture 24 October 2019 at Senate House London University

Dr Gabriele Finaldi, Director of the National Gallery

Art history with a 'wow factor' was an apt description of Dr Gabriele Finaldi's lively Leconfield Lecture. Dr Finaldi traced the lives and artistic development of Orazio Gentileschi and his daughter Artemisia, beginning in Rome in the late 16th century and ending with Orazio's death in London in 1639 and Artemisia's in Naples, probably from plague, in the mid 1650s.

Around 1600 Orazio, nearly 40, met Caravaggio. A friendship, both personal and artistic, grew. Orazio became Caravaggist, responding to his friend's intimate, naturalistic style. This was reflected in Orazio's work. They even shared props used in their paintings – for example, a monk's habit and a pair of angel's wings. Caravaggio, giving character evidence at a trial in which they were both implicated, described Orazio as a "valent'uomo" *an able man.*

Artemisia, born in 1593 and one of several children, displayed a precocious artistic talent when, at only 17, she painted 'Susanna and the Elders'. Here, Dr Finaldi argued, lay proof of her early ambition to be acknowledged as an artist, something that marked her career and is evidenced in the 'Allegory of Painting' *Autoritratto in veste di Pittura',* painted much later in England for Charles I.

Dr Gabriele Finaldi in conversation

In speaking about Artemisia's rape by Augustino Tassi, her father's artistic collaborator, Dr Finaldi drew interestingly on the surviving transcript of the court case that ensued and in which Tassi was accused not only of "deflowering" Artemisia but of dishonouring the Gentileschi family. Sentenced either to exile from Rome or the galleys Tassi chose exile.

Artemisia's subsequent marriage to the brother of her defending lawyer and later move to his home city of Florence marked the start of a new independence in her artistic life.

'What a woman can do'

Dr Finaldi had begun his lecture by quoting her later protestation "I will show you what a woman can do." She had already begun to fulfil this promise.

Her work for Florentine patrons, friendships with the city's artists and intellectuals and being the first woman to be elected to the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno all marked the development. According to Dr Finaldi this was reflected in her painting – significantly, in the portrait of St Catherine of Alexandria now in the Uffizi. He reminded us that this Catherine had debated her Christian beliefs with fifty pagan philosophers and won: an example of a woman triumphing when confronted by a non propitious situation in a man's world.

He speculated that her signature on her 1620 painting of 'Judith Slaying Holofernes' EGO ARTEMITIA LOMI FECIT[1] was a further assertion of her independence as both a woman and an artist. ARTE MIT IA written thus, could be construed as "May I be filled with Art"

Was Artemisia a feminist? She certainly had form but Dr Finaldi did not attempt an answer, at least not head on. No doubt the question will be discussed in the context of next spring's eagerly awaited Artemisia exhibition at the National Gallery.

Orazio moved to Genoa in 1621 and Artemisia returned to Rome. In Genoa Orazio found new patrons and his paintings became more courtly. In 1624 he was invited to Paris under the patronage of Marie de Medici, second wife of Henry IV.

'a precocious artistic talent'

Meanwhile in Rome Artemisia's reputation grew. She was feted and painters sought to paint her portrait. Dr Finaldi reminded us that even so she still needed to find a market and accordingly responded to her patrons' demands.

In 1626 Orazio moved to London, following Marie de Medici's daughter Henrietta Maria who had married Charles I. He received a royal pension and was taken up by the Duke of Buckingham. Once more he adjusted his work while maintaining elements of Caravaggism and sometimes adding a local touch. In his 'The Finding of Moses' the hill by the banks of the Nile bears more than a passing resemblance to Greenwich.

In 1630 Artemisia moved to Naples, setting up a studio, finding new patrons and painting big history works. In 1639 she briefly joined her father in London and while there producing 'The Allegory of Painting' for Charles I. Dr Finaldi admitted that little is known about her time in London.

Artemisia died in Naples.

1 *Lomi was the other name used by the Gentileschis*

Public domain source: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Susanna_and_the_Elders_(1610)_Artemisia_Gentileschi.jpg

Artemisia Gentileschi: 'Susanna and the Elders'; circa 1610

Public domain source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judith_Slaying_Holofernes_(Artemisia_Gentileschi_Naples)

Artemisia Gentileschi: 'Judith Slaying Holofernes'; circa 1610

Public domain source: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Artemisia_Gentileschi_-_Self-Portrait_(1615-17).jpg

Artemisia Gentileschi: Self-Portrait as Saint Catherine of Alexandria; circa 1616

Public domain source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Finding_of_Moses_(Gentileschi)

Orazio Gentileschi: The Finding of Moses; circa 1630

Securing 'St Catherine' for the nation

Dr Finaldi began and ended his lecture with reference to the purchase by the National Gallery of Artemisia's 'Self Portrait as St Catherine of Alexandria' and to the Artemisia Gentileschi exhibition which will open there in spring 2020 – a "must see". He recounted occasions when the National Gallery had missed opportunities to buy Artemisia's paintings in the past and, with justified satisfaction, told us of the success of securing St Catherine for the nation supported by a number of donors.

He also recalled her four appearances outside the Gallery after some necessary conservation work. The first was at the Glasgow Women's Library, then at a GP surgery in Pocklington in Yorkshire in collaboration with Paintings in Hospitals, then at Send Women's Prison in Surrey and at a girl's school in Newcastle.

by Dick Alford

The British Italian Society thanked Dr Finaldi for telling the stories of both Orazio and Artemisia Gentileschi so expertly and engagingly. A donation was made to support the work of the National Gallery and a gift made to Dr Finaldi.

Dick Alford is a Former Director British Council Italy

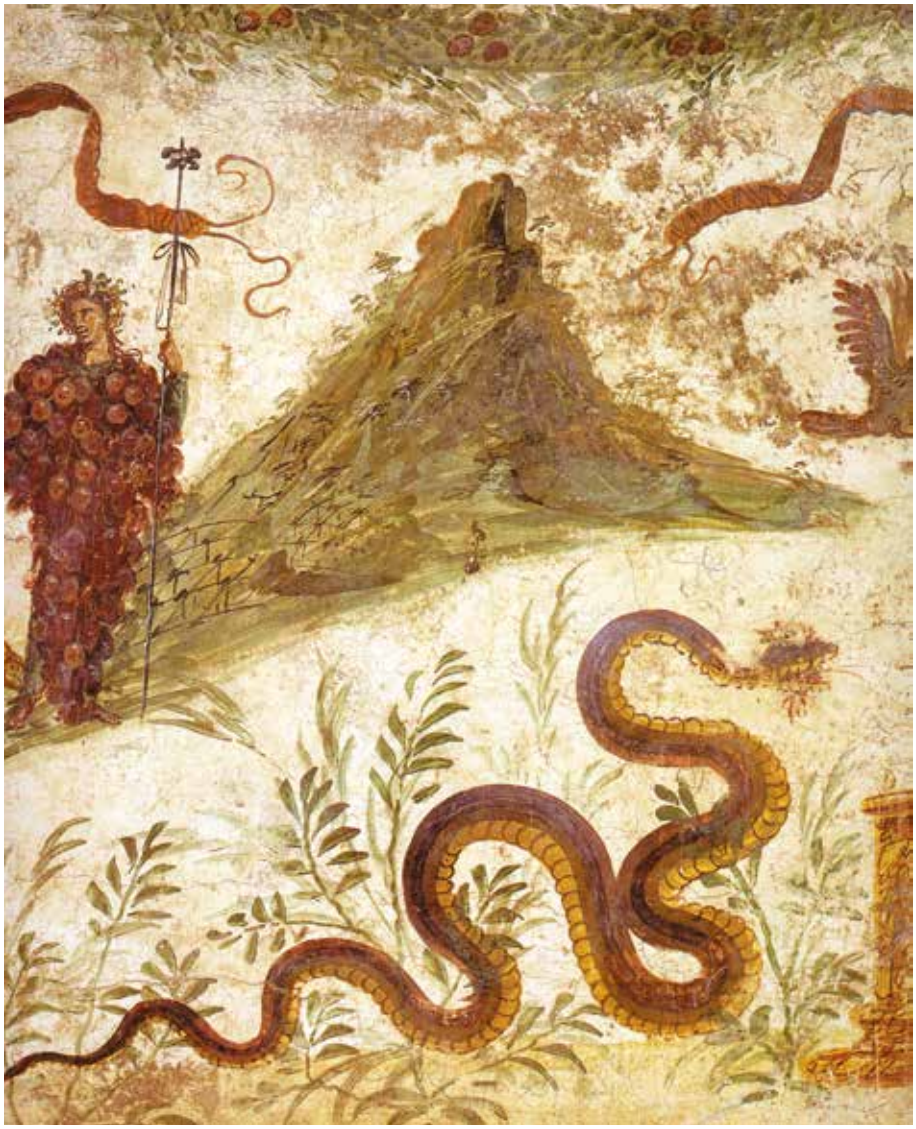
Last supper in Pompeii:

As a preview to the planned exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, its curator, Dr Paul Roberts, held the audience spellbound

Diana Darlington celebrates the story of an enticing cuisine

Dr Paul Roberts gave members and their guests a fascinating foretaste of the major exhibition which he has curated at the Ashmolean Museum (25 July 2019 to 12 January 2020), featuring exhibits from Pompeii, the Naples Museum of Archeology and Paestum, as well as items found in England from the Roman period from British museums.

In many ways, this was a love story, of Dr. Roberts' love for the daily life lived by the early Romans and of those Romans' love of life, of good food and drink. In Pompeii, in AD79, the wealthy dined at home, the poor ate out, unlike modern day Italy. The wealthy celebrated the importance of dining by decorating their houses and their seaside villas with frescoes and mosaics depicting men and women reclining on their dining couches, attended by servants bringing dishes of food and jugs of wine. One amusing mosaic depicts a grinning skeleton holding a jug of wine in each bony hand. Unlike the ancient Greeks, Roman men and women dined together, as did the Etruscans from whom the Romans took many of their customs. The gods featured in all their activities and unsurprisingly, Bacchus, the god of wine, was particularly celebrated and ever present at feasts.



Public domain source: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pompeii_-_Casa_del_Centenario_-_MAN.jpg

Bacchus: This wall painting in the House of the Centenary features the earliest known representation of Vesuvius

Dr Roberts considered the kinds of foods that were consumed and how and where they were produced. The fertile slopes of Vesuvius were covered with vines and recent excavations have uncovered vineyards showing that wine was produced on an industrial scale. Villa B at Oplontis appears to have been an import/export emporium with hundreds of amphora washed and ready to be filled with wine or dry goods, together with a metric ton of pomegranates laid out on straw mats.

When did the eruption occur?

At Villa Regina, Boscoreale, there was a large dolia yard (a dolium is a large lidded storage jar. At Villa Regina they were buried up to the rim for storing wine or oil). The fact that dolia in the area were full after the harvest is the basis for current argument that the eruption occurred not in August but in October AD79.

Flocks of sheep, goats and pigs were reared for meat, and fish was an important constituent of the Roman diet. Dr Roberts showed a wonderful mosaic depicting many kinds of fish, including crustaceans, squid, octopus and eels. A staple flavouring was garum, a kind of fermented fish sauce. In Pompeii, a prolific local producer, Scaurus, is known by inscriptions of his name on numerous amphorae.

The Romans were superstitious people and to avert the evil eye and bring good luck, phallic symbols were prominently displayed outside business premises. The streets of Pompeii would have been like the streets of a souk, bustling with shoppers and passersby. The street fronts of houses, including those of quite wealthy people, often contained shops or capona

– taverns – which were open fronted with dolia set into the counters to hold the food. Local wines, such as Falernian were sold. Here too, the phallos appeared in the form of lamps, often with bells on.

The city contained around 32 bakeries at the time of the eruption and in one, the bakery of Modestus, 81 loaves were discovered still in the oven, carbonized but perfectly preserved. Loaves were usually round and marked into eight sections.

Houses often incorporated an internal garden where herbs could be grown and many had sophisticated hydraulic water systems for fountains and other water features.

Dining 'from the egg to the apple'

Diners, having removed their shoes, reclined on couches in the triclinium and ate, according to Horace 'from the egg to the apple'. Dinner consisted of three main courses. The Gustatio or appetisers, which would include eggs, fish and other seafood, as well as vegetables, cheese and dormice (considered a delicacy). The main course, the Mensa Prima, consisted of meat, flavoured with pepper and ginger (imported from India). Dessert was chiefly fruit, figs, melons, plums, cherries, apricots, apples, dates and walnuts. A type of ricotta cake could also have been on the menu. Food would have been served on local ceramics or in richer households, on silverware. Greek pottery vessels were often used for mixing wine and water.

Kitchens were rather smelly dirty places, usually being situated right next to the lavatories. All kinds of cooking utensils have been found and in readiness for the exhibition, 30 bronze vessels were being conserved at the Ashmolean.

> ...the locals [in Britain] valued the good life as much as the Romans

Slaves and the poorer sections of society could also have a reasonably varied diet, with bread and onions a staple. Meat was eaten perhaps twice a week if they were lucky, but a variety of vegetables and grains were also available.

A section of the exhibition is devoted to food and drink in Britain during the Roman period. Recent finds in the City of London show that beer production was well established. Over four hundred wooden writing tablets give the names of brewers and costs of related transactions. Tombstones, statues and fragments of fresco show that the locals valued the good life as much as the Romans, though they were likely to be dining off locally made pottery and pewter rather than fine Greek pottery and silver.

Public domain source: artfixdaily.com//images/sd/87/e2/Dinner_Party_(c)_Museo_Archeologico_Nazionale.jpg

A banquet in a Roman triclinium (dining room), AD 40–79, House of the Triclinium

Public domain source: ancient.eu/img/rp/750x750/961.jpg?v=1569519768

Terentius Neo holds a scroll and his wife holds a stylus and writing tablet. From the Villa di Guilia Felice

Poignant reminders

No-one can think of Pompeii without recalling the thousands who died on that terrible day. The exhibition contains a poignant reminder of those unfortunates in the form of the 'Resin Lady'. Excavations in the 1980's and 1990's at Villa B at Oplontis led to the discovery of a large number of bodies. Instead of pouring plaster into the cavity left by the body in the volcanic ash, a type of resin was used in the case of the body of one of the women. The resulting cast shows every detail and is strong enough to withstand the journey from Italy to Oxford. Her gold armband and rings and the small jug she was clutching will accompany her.

Dr Roberts graphically brought to life the Roman world in Pompeii in AD79; not just the feasting, but the preparations which brought the food and wines to the table. His talk left us wanting more and our wants can be satisfied (from 25 July to 12 January 2020) – his exhibition is at the Asmolean Museum, Oxford. An unmissable treat.

Dr Paul Roberts is the Sackler Keeper of Antiquities at the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archeology, Oxford University

Diana Darlington is Vice Chairman of the British Italian Society

Sarah Quill

A unique perspective

How A Room with a View went from budget to box office hit

Letitia Blake discusses Sarah Quill's fascinating insights as the stills photographer on set

Surely there must be very few Italophiles who have never seen the Merchant Ivory film *A Room with a View* – it burst onto our cinema screens to huge acclaim in 1985 and went on to become an enduring favourite. It was therefore a great treat for members to attend this year's Charles de Chassiron Memorial Lecture by Sarah Quill entitled: *Rooms and Views: Filming in Florence with Merchant Ivory*. Sarah worked as the stills photographer on the film, for ten weeks in Florence and England, and her unique perspective gave us a fascinating insight into the dramatic, often comic and, at times, perilous process of filming this triple Academy Award-winning classic.

As Sarah showed us her beautiful still photographs, some which have never been seen or published, we were back in the company of the much-loved cast of characters such as Lucy Honeychurch, played by Helena Bonham Carter just starting out on her career, aged 19, and two 'future Dames' Judi Dench (Miss Lavish) and Maggie Smith (Charlotte Bartlett), seen resting between takes beside a large Italian fountain. We heard about the suffering undergone by the actresses wearing their long heavy dresses, whalebone corsets and large hats in the stifling Italian heat. As she showed us a romantic poster of the hero and heroine,

> An enduring favourite since it burst onto screen in 1985

Lucy and George, sitting on a swing, Sarah explained that some photographs were taken to be used as publicity shots and were in fact not depicting scenes that appeared in the film.

We learnt that in the pre-digital era she was manoeuvring four heavy, cumbersome cameras with a variety of interchangeable lenses. Approximately half of her photos were in black and white and this was important because with these came negatives, from which sets of prints could be made that were used to sell the film in advance.

The importance of prints

Prints made as the film progressed meant that the producers could show various scenes to the backers and distributors during the making of the film. The colour material produced no negatives, and when copies were needed, expensive duplicates had to be made to send out. So if a quick decision had to be made about catching an important photograph, the instinct was often to reach for the camera with black and white film in it.

Sarah recalled her far from glamorous start, arriving at the elegant Villa di Maiano, near Fiesole, where many scenes were filmed and some of the crew were staying. It was late at night and after a sweltering day's travel she was desperate for a bath only to find the old tub full to the brim with cables and lighting equipment!

Main photo: Miss Lavish (Judi Dench), Cousin Charlotte (Maggie Smith), and Lucy (Helena Bonham Carter) prepare for a picnic

When food was a funding forecast…

Major challenges for Merchant and Ivory were funding and location issues. Ismail Merchant was an excellent cook, well-known for his delicious curries, but it gradually became clear that he always cooked the communal curry to soften the blow of announcing a dangerous drop in funds. For cast and crew the wafting curry smell soon triggered a sinking heart. The film had a relatively low budget of just under $3m and went on to make $60m, but one of Sarah's photographs, showing a very grave-looking Merchant, had preceded an emergency dash to India to raise the cash to carry on. (A Room with a View was their first commercial success and funding was much easier for subsequent projects.) Getting behind schedule due to bad weather can scupper a film financially but here their luck held and glorious sunshine prevailed in Florence and, more surprisingly, in Kent.

Another enjoyable memory Sarah described was the challenge of clearing the Piazza della Signoria of cars in order to fill it with actors in Edwardian costume – the Italian location manager was greatly abetted by Merchant throwing himself into frantic traffic warden activity, gesturing wildly in the middle of the square, amidst much hooting and shouting.

Several key locations met with strange fates subsequently. One of the most famous episodes in the film is the nude swimming party when the Reverend Beebe, Lucy's brother Freddy, and George shed their clothes and leap into a pond. The scene has been described as 'an explosion of movement and light and physical joy'. After finding the sunken pond near Sevenoaks crew members were busy for weeks reinforcing the sides ready for filming but in the following year the 1987 hurricane wreaked havoc in the area and a large beech tree fell across the lake, destroying it. Though gone, it has been preserved by the film.

> It was late at night and after a sweltering day's travel she was desperate for a bath only to find the old tub full to the brim with cables and lighting equipment!

The hotel in the centre of Florence where Lucy and her aunt Charlotte lamented their lack of a view was the quaint Pensione Quisisana which had been a favourite with generations of tourists since it opened in 1903. Eight years after the film, in 1993, a mafia bomb exploded in a car outside killing five people in apartments nearby and causing serious damage to the Quisisana, which proved its death sentence. The original interior lives on in some of the most enjoyable scenes of the film with Mr Emerson trying to persuade the ladies to switch rooms so they can have the view – behaviour abhorred by Charlotte as vulgar and ungentlemanlike.

Sarah Quill

James Ivory (director) and Ismail Merchant (producer) set up a carriage scene with Julian Sands and Maggie Smith, in the hills near Maiano

Sarah Quill

Lucy (Helena Bonham Carter) in Piazza della Signoria

The very British muddle?

A core theme of the book, which E.M. Forster wrote aged 28 after one long summer in Italy and which he referred to as "my nicest novel", was *muddle*, created by the British inability to experience and communicate authentic and passionate emotion (in contrast with the Italians' spontaneous emotional fluency). As the hero and heroine work their way painfully through the muddle towards a happy conclusion, as she presented her final photo of Lucy and George at the window of their very own room with a view, Sarah reminded us that Forster himself did not see it as that simple. He knew that he could never aspire to this 'happiness', as an 'illegal' homosexual in Edwardian England.

As the first of three Merchant Ivory adaptations (*Maurice* and *Howards End* were to follow), *A Room with a View* remains the firm favourite, certainly among Italophiles, and Sarah's intriguing and entertaining lecture whetted many an appetite in the audience to experience and enjoy its timeless and charming beauty once again.

Sarah Quill is a freelance photographer. She has created a photographic archive in colour and black and white of Venice, 1971 – 2018.

Letitia Blake is Secretary of the Monte San Martino Trust which gives annual language bursaries to 25 young Italians, to express gratitude to the Italians who helped escaping Allied prisoners of war, including her own father, in Italy in 1943-45.

Degas and Italy:

Dr. Denis V Reidy on Degas' productive years in Italy
Leconfield Lecture 22 November 2018 at the Italian Cultural Institute

Eugenio Bosco was there

We are all familiar with the connection between Edgar Degas and Italy through his paintings, but this Leconfield Lecture gave us the opportunity to hear about much deeper and direct ties. It illustrated how Italy, especially Naples, held a special place for Degas and how Italian culture, particularly the Tuscan Impressionist artists of the school of the Macchiaioli, were formative influences on him.

Public domain source: wikiart.org/en/edgar-degas/a-roman-beggar-woman-1857

Edgar Degas: A gypsy woman

The Italian connection

Edgar Degas was born in Paris in 1834, lived there for most of his life, and died there in 1917. But he had Italian connections: his grandfather, a wealthy international banker, had moved to Naples after the outbreak of the French Revolution. In Naples he met and married a Genovese aristocrat and Edgar's father was born there. Hence, we can say Italy was – quite literally – in Degas' DNA. It was only natural that he was drawn towards the old Italian Masters.

He spent years copying Leonardo, Botticelli and Mantegna as well as Il Bacchiacca and Veronese. He worked mainly in the Louvre but also in Cambridge and the National Gallery in London. The exercise was not just about copying. His numerous copies and studies were 'impressionistic' and he developed a very specific technique – vividly illustrated

> It was only natural that Degas was drawn towards the old Italian Masters

by Dr.Reidy – which allows the viewer to look from the left to the right of the painting. Although Degas supported the Impressionists, he did not regard himself as an impressionist (or part of any group) but rather as a realist and follower of Courbet. Later on, he turned to creating small sculptures and was interested in photography. During his lifetime, Degas hardly sold any paintings but was an avid collector. He was particularly interested in the depiction of the working classes, whilst also creating his famous equine studies, which were almost an 'idée fixe', prompted by his visits to racecourses, as well as studies of his admired scenes of ballerinas and dancers.

From the 1850s onwards, until the end of his life Degas visited his beloved Italy almost every year. In particular, he spent three productive years in Italy from 1856-58. Initially he was in Naples, where he painted his grandfather's portrait, views from his villa and Vesuvius, Castel Sant'Elmo and marine and countryside views. Thereafter in Rome, he copied works by Bronzino and other Italian Masters. His wide range of artistic interests included sketches of the Roman working classes. A well known example is the portrait of a woman with yellow shawl – a Roman beggar – which demonstrates his typical pyramidal structure in the 'contadine romane' series. But he also drew other social groups, such as the famiglia Bellelli (drawing more than 150 sketches of them), and sketches with classical themes.

The Macchiaioli, horses and portraits

In Florence Degas was in touch with the artists of the Macchiaioli movement. Although he was not keen on countryside and 'plein air' painting, which the Macchiaioli were, Borrani and Fattori had a significant influence on him. They shared his love of horses and Fattori and Degas also painted each other's portraits.

The times spent in Italy clearly influenced Degas' work, as he immersed himself in its paintings and sculptures of antiquity and the Renaissance, but his connections with the Macchiaioli in Florence provided a more natural aspect to his work, and he considered himself more a realist artist than an impressionist.

Dr Denis V. Reidy is former Lead Curator Italian Collections, The British Library, and Associate Fellow Institute of Advanced Studies at the University of London. He has had a life-long interest in nineteenth-century culture. He found the inspiration for his fascinating lecture when he came across this connection while working in Florence on the Macchiaioli artists.

Eugenio Bosco is a Trustee of the British Italian Society

Public domain source: Edgar_Degas_-_The_Bellelli_Family_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg

Edgar Degas: The Bellelli Family

An iconic goldsmith's work:

Cellini's salt cellar

Charles Avery on Benvenuto Cellini's gold and enamel salt cellar, or saliera, an exquisite piece which he made for Francis I of France in the early 1540's, creating a representation of an allegory of the earth and the interplay of land and sea

Benvenuto Cellini's gold and enamel salt cellar, or saliera, is an exquisite piece which he made for Francis I of France in the early 1540's, creating a representation of an allegory of the earth and the interplay of land and sea.

The Society has certainly not neglected Cellini. It is only four years or so since Margherita Calderoni spoke about his *Perseus*, which is in the Loggia dei Lanzi in Florence. For this occasion, the first talk for the Society's 2018/19 season, Charles Avery focussed on a very special, small work. With some excellent slides, he revealed the details of this almost iconic goldsmith's work: the two statues (of Neptune and the female Terra, their legs entwined just as sea-inlets run into the land) and the gods around the base (one of whom recalls Michelangelo's Day in the New Baptistery of San Lorenzo). He showed how the base had ball bearings in it, so that the cellar could be rolled along a table: and said that 'salt cellar' was perhaps a misnomer, since as well as the salt in the little vase or ship on one side of the object, the *tempietto* on the other side opened to reveal pepper.

Benvenuto Cellini: Salt Cellar, circa 1540; a temple-shaped box for pepper is placed next to the female figure (inset)

The stolen salt cellar

Charles addressed broader aspects of Cellini's life, and then this work in particular. He explained that the link between Cellini and this object was lost at one stage and that it was only in the late eighteenth century that authorship was re-established from Cellini's own description of it in his *Vita* or Autobiography. He reminded too the literary significance of that amusing but occasionally overblown work: it is one of the first autobiographies of a non-aristocratic layman. And amazingly, in May 2003 the salt cellar – at that time worth around £35m – was stolen, undetected, from the Vienna Kunsthistorisches Museum. It was only recovered three years later. The saliera, after the Francis I commission, had later passed into the possession of Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol, before ending up in the imperial Viennese collection, where it had been since the 19th century.

The king gasped in amazement

The evening inspired me to read (in George Bull's English, I confess) the Autobiography which I had possessed for years but never opened. The book deals uproariously with a thousand topics but as far as the cellar is concerned, it describes not only the early model made in Italy but also the version Cellini ultimately presented to Francis I. Characteristically, Cellini says "When I set this work before the King he gasped in amazement and could not take his eyes off it". Cellini relates how he was ordered to keep it safely at home before continuing "I took it home, and at once invited in some of my close friends; and with them I dined very cheerfully, placing the salt-cellar in the middle of the table. We were the first to make use of it."

by Ian Grainger

Charles Avery is an art historian and consultant. He was curator of the Department of Sculpture at the Victoria and Albert Museum from 1966 to 1979, an art dealer at Christie's from 1979 to 1990, specialising in the Italian Renaissance. He has given the Society many excellent talks on Italian art. Past subjects have been as wide-ranging as the elephant (or the dolphin) in Italian art and the sadly unvisited realm of bell-manufacture. The Cellini presentation maintained his high standards of fascinating information in the intrigues of the art world, which delighted his audience.

Ian Grainger is a retired judge and a former Vice Chair of the BIS and a Trustee.

‘Italians speak in dialect and eat in dialect’

Acclaimed food writer Matthew Fort affirms: ‘Everywhere a story, every dish a history lesson’

Early one May morning I was sitting in one of Reggio di Calabria’s smarter trattorias with Silvia, a schoolteacher and native of the city. Typically, there was no written menu. ‘What fish do you have?’ she asked the proprietor. It was taken for granted that the fish would have been landed that morning.

‘Spigola,’ said the proprietor. ‘Capone, triglie, pesce spada.’

‘Pesce spada?! Swordfish?!’ Silvia said sharply. ‘Are you sure this swordfish came from Italy?’

The proprietor looked affronted. ‘But of course, signorina.’

‘It’s not Greek or Turkish swordfish? Surely it’s too early for proper Italian swordfish.’

‘I assure you signorina, it is Italian.’

Silvia was not convinced and ordered something else. I opted for the swordfish.

When the proprietor went off muttering, I asked Silvia what difference it made whether the swordfish came from Turkey, Greece, Italy or Timbuktu.

She explained that the swordfish made their way along the Mediterranean from east to west and through the Straits of Messina to breed in the waters north of Sicily. And as the time of spawning grew near, the fish became ‘piu amoroso’ and as they became ‘piu amoroso’ their flesh became ‘piu dolce, piu delicata e piu morbida’, and so better to eat. As far as she was concerned, it was still too early for the swordfish to have arrive off the coast of Reggio di Calabria and so be certain that it was a native Italian fish in prime condition for eating.

‘Can you really tell?’ I asked.

‘Of course,’ she said, looking scandalised.

I ate my swordfish with every sense of pleasure, unable to discern whether it was male, female or of a specific nationality. However, I respected Silvia’s pointed explanation. I wondered how many school teachers in the UK would be able to tell wild salmon from farmed salmon, let along whether or not they were getting ready to spawn.

But in a sense, this was not the point. Food lies at the heart of Italian culture and society. Silvia’s passionate belief that there is a difference, and that that difference matters – a belief shared by so many Italians. I’ve witnessed a husband and wife all but coming to blows over the correct ingredients for a *pastiera*, the great Neapolitan Easter tart – has helped protect Italian food culture from the wholesale dismantling that has affected so many other European countries.

Every Italian seems to wake each morning with the inherent expectation that they have a divine right to eat the best food money can buy. And if they don’t get it, they will complain vociferously. Unlike in the UK, everyone has a sense that their culinary culture belongs to

them, even if they can't actually agree on what constitutes that ideal form of a particular dish. A wise Italian once said to me that the problem for a foreigner is that Italians speak in dialect and eat in dialect. This applies not simply to regions, but to valleys, hills, villages and even houses. Food – produce and dishes – helps define people's sense of themselves. Food in Italy is the history of the country on a plate.

Researching history by eating it, not reading it

When travelling in Calabria, I came across a dainty called *ficchi al cioccolato*, a dried fig stuffed with an almond dusted with ground cloves and covered in chocolate. As I munched this splendid sweetmeat, I deconstructed the elements. The fish wouldn't have been around since time immemorial, but the ancient Greeks were keen cultivators of fig trees, and Southern Italy had once been part of Magna Grecia. The Moors, who had occupied southern Italy, were fond of including almonds in their pastries. The cloves were an echo of the days when the traders brought spices from the eastern Mediterranean to Venice and Genoa, dropping into those southern ports en route. And chocolate would never have appeared in Europe until the conquistadores brought it back from Central America in the sixteenth century and yes, of course, southern Italy was ruled by Spaniards. So, I thought, every time I popped another fruit and nut special into my mouth, I was eating – what? – 2500 years of history. It's so much more fun to research history by eating it than reading it.

> Food in Italy is the history of the country on a plate

This applies to every part of the country. Why are there many recipes for *stoccofisso* in Sicily but few for *baccala'*? Because the Norman knights who introduced them had come to the conclusion that the high salt content of *baccala'* played merry hell with their piles, not something you need when you're spending a lot of your working day in the saddle. The dispersion of *pizza* through the whole of Italy tells the story of internal migration. *Tonno di coniglio*, a dish of the Piedmont mountains, is a testament to the culinary ingenuity of cooks too far from the sea to have access to fresh fish and too poor to afford canned. And so on and so on. Everywhere a story, every dish a history lesson.

Italy's food culture is being squeezed

However, let's not be misty-eyed about it. Italy may have a food culture of unparalleled richness and diversity, but, as elsewhere in Europe, the forces of globalisation and the pressures of social change are resulting in culinary homogenisation. Much of the delight of Italian dishes is to be found in the quality and character of local, seasonal ingredients grown by contadini on small holdings. But who wants to be a peasant any more? The life is tough and hardly rewarding. How much easier and more profitable to be an IT specialist, an accountant, a dentist.

And who has the time to plan meals any more? Or shop daily for the ingredients, and cook dishes from scratch when both partners in a relationship need to work to maintain their standard of living. Children, too, are losing their taste for the traditional dishes, preferring processed food packed with fats, salts and sugars, with predictable consequences for obesity and health. Inevitably Italy's food culture, slowly but surely, is being squeezed.

Tourism, too, has an insidious effect on the standards of public eating, as travellers from all over the world bring with them their expectations of Italian dishes based on their experiences in their own countries, experiences that rarely bear much resemblance to the dishes with the same names you actually eat in Italy. Too often, Italian cooks give up the unequal struggle to maintain their cultural purity and produce the bastardised versions of the dishes expected by their foreign clientele.

All is not yet lost, however, while there are Silvias (and Silvios) to protest that standards need to be respected, that difference matters. There is hope. To the barricades! Or better still, *a tavola*!

Matthew Fort is an award winning writer on food and cookery as well as a keen cook. Some of his many books focus on Italy: 'Eating up Italy' (from the south to Turin), 'Sweet Honey and Bitter Lemons' (Sicily) and the recent 'Summer in the Islands' (the Aeolian islands) (2017).

Roberto Capucci

internationally celebrated designer: 'Sono contento dalla mia vita'

A look back over seventy years of creativity, clients, innovations. Still working, he is 89

After art school in Rome, Roberto Capucci thought about becoming an architect, but fate stepped in when he met a well known costumier who convinced him to become a designer. He began his life's work in the 1950s, setting up a studio in Via Sistina in Rome. From the start, his innovative designs attracted an influential clientele, including actresses Isa Miranda ('tall, thin, bellissima'), Doris Duranti and Elisa Cegani, princesses of the Borghese, Odescalchi and Colonna, artists like opera singer Raina Kabajvanska, an academic – the 1986 Nobel prize winner for Medicine, Rita Levi Montalcini. He has exhibited over many years, in many countries, including the United States, China and Russia.

The Maestro says: 'All my clients had personality. They lived in their own style.' Among them was the Princess Elvina Pallavicini, a client from the late 1950s. 'She was a very strong personality, knew what she wanted. She had rules: never a black dress, always a slim waistline, a high neck, long sleeves, evening dresses always to have a train of one metre. And colours – she adored colours. She wasn't beautiful, but had great character, and was 'piena di vita'. I made a dress a week for her – she gave many receptions and only ever wore a dress once.' The Principessa lived until she was 90. In later years she was in a wheelchair, but commissioning dresses that must cover it. 'I had to cut the sleeves to cover the arms of the chair. But always colours!' Another loved client was Silvana Mangano: 'Beautiful, very elegant, never spoke badly of anyone.'

'I decided my collections would not be seasonal'

In 1958, Capucci created a new style, 'la moda quadrata'. It was like a box, so it was also called the 'linea a scatola'. The collection was a huge success internationally, especially in America. But it was too avant garde for Italy, Capucci says. He won an award for the collection, dubbed 'la linea dura' and comments: 'The style suited everyone who wasn't thin.' A journalist at The Tribune in New York advised him to open in Paris. He took a studio near Place Vendome and was there for six years, going back and forth each week between clients in Paris and Rome. His Paris cutter had worked for Balenciaga and Dior, and he had a male cutter from Chanel. One of his clients was Colette; and he dressed the Duchess of Windsor – 'she was very thin, very distant'. When he returned to Rome for family reasons he discovered that everything had changed. 'I realised I had to change too. Or give up. So I changed! And decided that I would show my collections only when I was ready – that they would not be seasonal. That gave me the freedom to design what I wanted, to show when I wanted.'

> 'I still have hands that work, a mind that creates'

Dress as sculpture

In 1998, his fame having spread, the Maestro was commissioned by the Italian government to create a formal dress for Expo, held that year in Lisbon. The fair's theme was ***The oceans, a heritage for the future***. 'So I designed a very special dress. It took five months. It was all the colours of the sea, in taffeta. The dress was very challenging to create – it had 27 hues of

Costumes in the Capucci Museum

Roberto Capucci arrives at Schiphol Airport with his models on 18 September 1952 ; Roberto in 2019 (inset)

blue and 1,200 pleats cut in strips and sewn on. The government said: 'This dress is a sculpture.' The husband of the model who wore it said he'd marry her all over again, the dress was so beautiful!'

Another prestigious commission: in 2010, for the inauguration of the restored Daming Palace of the Tang dynasty, Xian, he was asked by the Chinese government to make 10 dresses. The brief: to be extremely formal in style and have 5% of something Chinese, to ward against bad luck. 'I took a year to make them, in silk, satin, organza and taffeta, with special embroideries and in the Tang colours – yellow, green, blue, pink, purple – with one in red and orange dedicated to the city of Xian and the Palace.'

Every silk has its own sound

Capucci's favourite fabric is monochrome 'mikado' silk. He explains: 'It is quite a heavy weight taffeta, ideal for a structured dress, and it has a soft sheen. But it is difficult to work with. It is wonderful for brides as it has a mother of pearl look. Georgette is another material I like working with. They are made at Biella and Como – and they are expensive. In New York I worked for Anna Piaggi, in a room where the only sound was the silk. Every silk has its own sound.'

In 2018 the Maestro was invited to create a collection of male ballet costumes: ***Dionysian Capucci: Theatre Designs,*** exhibited at the Uffizi. Suzy Menkes reviewed that collection for Vogue with huge enthusiasm – 'a sensational surprise …fantasies soaring into flight'. After the exhibition, the Uffizi wrote asking for the honour of two of Capucci's designs. He sent three!

The Maestro finds that life today lacks serenity, that taste has degenerated and that he doesn't follow, nor understand, modern fashion like ripped jeans.

He reflects: 'For me, elegance is personality, and the confidence in knowing what suits one. I love clients with personality – it is easier to dress them. In life you need to find beauty, and create from that. I still make dresses, thousands of dresses, but now they are for the daughters of my first clients.

To design at my age gives me a sense of peace

'This profession is a fascinating vocation. I am a Sagittarius, it's creative, it has allowed me to be free to do what I wanted, create what I thought. And to design at my age gives me a sense of peace. I often wake in the night and sketch a dress. In the morning, I make it! It must be made with my hands. I like to choose the colour and the style and I do everything by hand. I still have hands that work, a mind that creates. I am very, very serene. I can contemplate a flower for an hour. I say to my students: Remember that nature has given us everything! I am enchanted by nature. On my terrace I have 400 plants, and I talk to them.'

His favourite colour? 'All colours! Colour is life! And freedom to create is the most important thing!'

Philippa Leslie is editor of RIVISTA

Refugee issues:

interrupted lives, unfinished studies

Building a future with new talents – a response to Italy's skills crisis

Hannah Roberts, a British Journalist based in Rome, on a new initiative

Salaam Palace, a seven-storey former university tower block in Rome, is a city within a city, home to nearly 1000 refugees from the Horn of Africa.

Residents, from Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia, have put up makeshift walls to construct mini apartments, creating a self-contained community, served by a mosque, a barber, a restaurant, and a tailor's shop. They elect their leaders. But they have no heating or proper bathrooms and suffer routinely from preventable medical problems such as scabies, as well as post-traumatic stress disorder and depression. Unemployment is around 70 per cent.

When I visited the community in 2018 as a journalist, their leaders were tired of media intrusion over years where nothing improved. I was struck by the fact that many had been in Italy for more than a decade, but had found no opportunities for integration and employment that would allow them to begin a new life. The only training outside of Italian language offered, had been courses for maids, cleaning the houses of rich people.

The fastest path to integration

In a country such as Italy, which is suffering from depopulation and brain drain, the waste of young talent and energy seemed to me absurd. A dignified job is clearly the fastest path to integration, providing independence, a career and the means to live in a real home and have a family.

I had heard about coding programmes in refugee communities in Greece and was inspired to contact Code Your Future, a free computer programming school, which launched in London in 2016, providing refugees with a sought after skill in the jobs market.

Code Your Future were excited to try to replicate their programme in Italy, and with a phenomenal team of volunteers that now form our team in Rome, we opened our own school in Rome in May 2019.

Becoming professional web developers

Our students, from Iran, Syria, Eritrea, Nigeria, Egypt, Gambia, are learning to become professional web developers, from zero, over an eight months-course. Youseff, a Syrian refugee, formerly a graphic designer, decided to retrain to have a better chance of finding work. Million, an Eritrean refugee, studied computer science for four years in Asmara using pencil and paper, rather than a computer. To encourage integration, we also have Italian students in the class, from disadvantaged backgrounds.

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We see our students not as charity cases to be helped, but as an opportunity for Italy and for tech companies. Italy has a technology skills deficit. While youth unemployment is as high as 50 per cent in some areas, 200,000 tech workers will be needed by 2023, according to the EU. But only three per cent of students study information technology at Italian universities. Starting salaries for developers are higher than the average salary for any age and experienced developers can expect to receive multiple job offers from headhunters every week.

Our model also offers something essential to the tech industry: diversity. Tech giants such as Google and Facebook have belatedly realised that a workforce

> An opportunity for Italy and for tech companies

of white or Asian males from wealthy socio-economic backgrounds do not offer diverse solutions to problems. Studies have repeatedly shown that variety of backgrounds in workers results in more creative and better decision making. A recent study of 1500 companies by Boston Consulting Group showed that diversity created 19 per cent more revenue.

We have been donated teaching space at the best imaginable site in Rome by the very generous L-venture: Luiss Enlabs, a start-up accelerator near Termini station. It is Rome's major tech hub, and it puts our students at the heart of Rome's tech ecosystem from the start.

As well as classes every Saturday, students work from home remotely during the week, with the help of computers given to us by the UN's Food and Agriculture agency FAO and dongles by ONEMYFI.

The students study the most up to date technology designed to give them an edge in the job market. We also offer soft skills such as communication and feedback and provide interview practice, personal support and working with employers to find positions for students. We break up the coding sessions with games and presentations to boost communication skills and build a team.

It has been a privilege to get to know our students, and get their insight into Italy and learn about their home countries, where some were political activists. Our teaching style is relaxed and includes games.

venturegroup.com

Luiss Enlabs, Rome

As we pay students to cook lunch, in turns, we have even benefited from their home cuisine, trying dishes new to me such as Gambian peanut-butter meat stew. We also pay for their transport so that no-one misses class because of financial hardship.

The challenge of living in refugee camps

At times it has been a struggle. Even the most motivated students face pressures and problems in their home country such as dependent family members or as they await a decision on their immigration status. Most live in refugee camps which are challenging in the extreme. It can be difficult to concentrate on homework when there is a bed bug infestation at the camp, or the power socket is shared among ten roommates.

But half way through the course, skills are advancing fast and we are confident that in early 2020 they will hit the job market running. We aim to beat the UK Code Your Future's commendable record of 70 per cent of graduates working in tech within 6 months!

We are a small pilot project for now. But we are proud that the project offers a wider model for integration. We have been asked to expand the programme to other cities, and to replicate it into government funded refugee camps, and hope eventually to have the capacity to do so as we attract more funding.

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Through the shared experience of becoming developers, the students have bonded, across cultures, often meeting outside class to help each other. For us volunteers the experience has been at times frustrating, as things don't always go to plan, but funny, moving and rewarding as we have built friendships across different cultures, breaking down the line between teacher and student. It is a line that we hope will disappear completely if this year's graduates can return as mentors to future classes, creating a new generation of coders capable of providing a response to Italy's skills crisis.

To find out more about how to help please go to www.codeyourfuture.io or email italy@codeyourfuture.io

Herbert Kilpin

The lace worker who founded a famous football team but died penniless

Robert Nieri on 'the lord of Milan'

Who was Herbert Kilpin? His name is largely unknown in this country. But not in Italy, where he founded AC Milan. Born on 24 January 1870 in Nottingham, the son of a butcher, he grew up at 191 Mansfield Road. Leaving school at 13, he went to work as a textile worker.

As a boy he played in a local football team – called 'Garibaldi' because they wore red shirts, in admiration of Giuseppe Garibaldi -and then for amateur teams (but not Nottingham Forest or Nottingham Council as he wasn't considered good enough).

But the lace industry in Nottingham, which had peaked around 1810 had led to a population explosion in Nottingham, had begun to decline by the time young Herbert was joining the work force. So when in 1891 he met an Italian textile merchant who offered him a job in his silk mill in Turin, he went to work in the developing lace trade there. On weekends he played in a football club in the city.

By 1896 he had moved to Milan, but was playing weekend football in Turin and Genoa as Milan didn't have any teams. He found, to his surprise, that they were 20-30 years behind in football development and had no idea of technique or tactics.

Viva i rossoneri!

So Kilpin, with a group of friends, founded the club in 1899, and contacted the British consul general to be their president. It was formally established in what is now the Principe di Savoia hotel. The team's colours were red (to represent devils) and black (for fear!). It was named the Milan Football Club (known locally as 'i rossoneri') and had a mixture of Italian and English players. Kilpin became their player-manager, playing his last season in 1907 and scoring a very respectable four goals in six matches.

That same year, Inter Milan was formed. It included expatriots because AC Milan had ruled that they would only have Italian players. (They didn't win again until 1954.) Kilpin played football until the age of 37, and then veterans' football until he was 43, when his habits of drinking and smoking caught up with him!

Very little is known of the last ten years of his life, and he died in 1916 at the early age of 46. The Italian Gazzetta dello Sport announced: 'E' morto il pioniere del football in italia'.

In 1979 Luigi La Rocca became the club's volunteer historian, and due to his researches, Kilpin's remains were discovered in the Protestant Cemetery in 1998, and then reburied the following year in Milan's Cimitero Monumentale. On 22 October 2017, on the 101st anniversary of Kilpin's death, a plaque was unveiled at his birthplace by the Mayor of Nottingham. His memory has also been honoured with the publication of Nieri's book and recognition in the city of his birth – a pub and a city bus bear his name, and the Herbert Kilpin Cup for a school football competition has been established.

The Italian Gazzetta dello Sport announced: 'E' morto il pioniere del football in italia'

Philippa Leslie

Robert Nieri is a charity lawyer who works in Nottingham. He is half Italian.

Philippa Leslie edits Rivista

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Babington's tea rooms:

A story of two intrepid ladies – and tea parties – on their Grand Tour

Chiara Bedini, great grand daughter of a remarkable legacy

When Isabel Cargill and Anna Maria Babington, a family friend, arrived in Rome in the summer of 1893 as part of their Grand Tour expedition, in the heat of the city they searched in vain for a restoring cup of tea. There was none to be had – except in pharmacies, as tea was considered a medicine.

Tea was not an Italian custom. The two young ladies, determined and full of energy, had found their niche. They would create a proper tea room. They set to, organised a location and imported everything, including a supply of very special tea (from Darjeeling) and Babington's Tea Rooms were born. They never looked back, and, with an already devoted clientele, moved in 1896 from their first site in Via Due Macelli, to the present position beside the Spanish Steps. The building was the original stables of the 18th century palazzo designed by Francesco De Sanctis, architect of the Spanish Steps and the Casina Rossa (which is today the Keats and Shelley Museum, on the other side of the Steps – the 'Scalinata').

As time went on, Isabel met and married her painting teacher, the Friulan artist Giuseppe da Pozzo (he painted the portraits of Anna Maria and Isabel which hang in the Tea Rooms today). Their daughter, Dorothy, married MGM's head in Europe, Count Attilio Bedini Jacobini, the grandfather of the present owners, Chiara Bedini and Rory Bruce.

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AromiCreativi Leslie

Babingtons tea rooms by the famous Spanish Steps, Fontana della Barcaccia, and Piazza di Spagna; the descendants, Rory Bruce and Chiara Bedini (inset)

'Ricetta di guerra degli scones'

The two ladies ran the tea rooms throughout World War I, and during World War II, there were fascists taking tea in the front room and partigiani doing the same in the back room. Babingtons was the only English business which stayed open throughout the war. During that time, Dorothy took her four children to live in Cortina, and the waitresses ran the Rooms. The pastry chefs baked the now famous scones. Because of the supply conditions, they were made with potato flour, according to their recorded 'Ricetta di guerra degli scones'. Three of the staff, Crescenza, Giulia and Anita walked from home to open Babingtons every day, using their own rations to invent something to serve in the Tea Rooms – they made nut croquettes, potato-flour bread, chick-pea-flour scones and dried-chestnut-flour cakes. During the whole course of the war, the Tea Rooms had closed only for a few hours when the Allies entered Rome.

War ended, Dorothy returned to Rome with her family and worked in cinema, at Cinecitta'. It was a profitable liaison which brought many famous film stars to the Tea Rooms – Burton and Taylor came for breakfast, Peter Ustinov came for tea, Tony Curtis brought his daughter, Jamie Lee, to play with Chiara, Gregory Peck and Audrey Hepburn came.

125 years later...

In 2018 the Tea Rooms celebrated their 125th anniversary with a huge party in Villa Wolkonsky (the British Embassy residence), with a wide range of Roman society represented, including the Vice Sindaco (mayor) and many clients and friends. They have also recently set up a corporate social responsibility project in Darjeeling (because of the tea connection) which offers courses in hospitality and nursing – and English – to the local young impoverished, and because that was the first tea served to the English clients all those years ago. In July, they presented the first 50 diplomas.

> Babingtons was the only English business which stayed open throughout the war.

Today, the Tea Rooms continue to welcome stars of stage and screen, as they have done for over a century

Babingtons, now managed by Isabel's great grandchildren, Chiara and Rory, are proving that the enterprising spirit that originally inspired Babingtons carries on, four generations and thousands of scones later. Chiara: 'A lovely adventure.' Rory: 'Who knows what Isabel and Anna Maria would think of the Tea Rooms today!'

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R/18

Soho's Georgian House of Secrets

Mysteries and discoveries uncovered in a town house

Richard Northern was there

Those of us who joined the September 2019 visit to the home of BIS member David Bieda in Dean Street, Soho, were not quite sure what to expect; but the visit proved a real revelation.

Built between 1730 and 1732, the house belongs to a group of some of the few surviving examples of London residential architecture from the early Georgian period. David carried out the initial restoration works over two years (1994-96), employing his own sub-contractors. He restored the hitherto unknown cesspits a few year later. He worked closely with English Heritage and Westminster City Council. The project produced a great deal of valuable information – some of it new to the experts – how the families and later businesses which occupied the property would have lived and about drainage and waste disposal systems of the time going right back to the original house built on the site in 1680-81.

> In restoring a wonderful 18th century interior, its decorative and architectural tastes were revealed

David led us on a tour of all five floors of the house, including the basement and the two separate cesspits, one for the Meard family, whose residence it had been, and the other under the street for the servants. He was a mine of information not only about the lifestyle, hygiene, and dining habits of the 18th century residents but also about the decorative and architectural tastes of the period. A strict hierarchy of design and layout was followed throughout the house. This was reflected in the great care taken over the wood panelling, cornices and room proportions in different parts of the house, as in the rest of John Meard Junior's estate in Meard Street (1720-30) and is possibly explained by the fact that Meard the younger was a carpenter, later esquire, who developed the street in the 1720s and 30s.

Anticlockwise from top: the visiting group; bathroom; dining room; the cesspit vault (now a wine cellar)

The mystery of the secret room

When we reached the top floor, David let us into one of the house's hidden secrets. Under one of the roofs we were able to visit two small hidden rooms. Their purpose remains a mystery, because they would have been uninhabitable without a fireplace. David's restoration work had uncovered the original entrance door to these rooms, a find which had initially been greeted with scepticism and disbelief by English Heritage. No-one had been aware of their existence. The rooms had been blocked off in the 1880s; but their floorboards appeared, when the ceiling of the top floor room below was removed during restoration.

A living museum

The house has now been turned into a wonderful home, faithfully restored to reflect its Georgian heritage. It is very much enhanced by David's collection of Japanese and European prints, including lithographs by De Chirico, Dali and Braque. But the dedicated journey of restoration on which he embarked many years ago – where for three years he had to live in the property without modern services and conveniences – has made it a living museum of Georgian London in the middle of bustling Soho. A passer-by in Dean Street would never guess what lies beyond the front door.

The tour occupied a full evening and ended with a refreshing glass of wine and pizza kindly donated by the Italian restaurant across the road. We left fascinated by all the insights David had given us into everyday life in Georgian London in such evocative surroundings, and feeling privileged to have been taken on a unique tour of historical discovery.

Richard Northern is the Chairman of the British Italian Society and former diplomat.

An evening of songs of Italy and love of Italy

Charlotte Bowden, soprano and Michael Pandya, piano, performed to great acclaim

Peter and Beatrice Crossley attended

This excellent concert opened with Cleopatra's aria 'Piangeró la sorte mia' from Act 3 of Handel's Giulio Cesare. It was first sung by the prima donna Francesca Cuzzini in 1724 (the lady Handel threatened to throw out of the window when she refused to sing one of his arias). The scene: Cleopatra has just been defeated in battle by Tolomeo, is taken prisoner and believes that her lover Cesare is dead. With exemplary Italian, soprano Charlotte Bowden took us from anger to lament to the poignant ending, with the longing 'Finché vita in petto avró' (as long as I have life in me). The delicacy of Michael Pandya's piano accompaniment emphasised the close harmony of piano and voice in the aria.

'Tornami a vagheggiar' from Alcina by Handel was first performed at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden in 1735. It is sung by Morgana, the sorceress sister of Alcina whose speciality is transforming any men who fall in love with her into animals or bushes. When she hears that Ricciardo might love her, the ecstatic Morgana sings 'Tornami a vagheggiar' (Come back soon to woo me – I love only you. I'll never betray you!). This entreaty is repeated several times, the music allowing Charlotte to demonstrate her coloratura technique and for Michael to accompany her in the beautiful piano intermezzo, playing with tight control of tempo.

'Povera me… O care parolette' from Handel's Orlando, 1733, is sung by the shepherdess Dorinda who falls in love with the wounded Moorish warrior Medoro, who is brought to her hut by Princess Angelica. Medoro tells her he is not in love with Angelica, but Dorinda sees through his rather ambiguous protestations. In this light-hearted aria Charlotte's soprano gently reminded us that there is no place for 'bugie' (lies).

Michael and Charlotte ended the first half with Mozart's 'Deh vieni non tardar' (Oh come do not be late) from Le nozze di Figaro, the aria sung by Susanna disguised as the Countess which she sings to Figaro as if singing to the Count. With elegant breath control, Charlotte characterised the flirty spirit of Susanna admirably.

From Italian arias to songs about Italy

After interval Michael introduced five German pieces dedicated to Venice by Felix Mendelssohn and Robert Schumann, opening with a solo from Mendelssohn's "Liede ohne Worte" op 19 no 6, a Venetian Gondola Song from 1830, and conveying the gentle rocking of the gondola in the laguna.

In 'Venetianische Gondellied' op 57 no 5 from 1842, Charlotte sang movingly of Ninetta's love and longing for a masked gondolier, and followed this lament with two 'Venetianisches Liede' by Robert Schumann from 1840: 'Leis, rudern hier', from a poem by Moore where a lover tells his gondolier to row quietly towards the balcony of his beloved. The music and voice transported us to a fresh evening on the laguna; and 'Wenn durch die Piazzetta',

Charlotte Bowden and Michael Pandya

which takes place in the same setting as Mendelssohn's 'Venetianische Gondellied'. But here the masked gondolier is singing to Ninetta, asking her to flee with him. Michael's piano evoked the gondolier's enticing of Charlotte to follow him to a night of passion on the laguna.

> The music and voice transported us to a fresh evening on the laguna

The concert closed with bel canto songs in the style of Vincenzo Bellini. An aria from 'I Capuleti e I Montecchi', first performed in Venice in 1830, introduced the section. We are on Giulietta's balcony in Verona. Giulietta is distraught because she does not know where her Romeo has gone. The piano introduces the love theme and then Charlotte takes us to the drama of Giulietta, elegantly attired, ('Eccomi in lieta vest') and missing her Romeo. 'O quante volte' intones Giulietta, as she imagines Romeo's profile in the first light of dawn.

The final three Bellini songs belong to a group of 'Sei Ariette' (six small arias) published by Ricordi. 'Per Pietá' is the 1829 Bellini version of an aria written by the poet Pietro Metastasio for the opera Artaserse. Semira accuses her fiancé Artaserse of not loving her. His aria assures her of his love before he takes his leave of her, to go and avenge the death of his father.

Then a hymn to the nymph Melancholy, lyrics by Ippolito Pindemonte, 'Malinconia, ninfa gentile'. The piano accompaniment imitates an orchestra and the soprano voice takes centre stage.

The concert closed with Bellini's 'Vaga luna, che inargenti' (1838) a romantic song where the lover confides his longing to the night sky. The lyrics are anonymous. Michael and Charlotte worked together to create the spirit of a lyrical nocturne. It was a beautiful ending to a highly enjoyable evening.

[We have to thank Elisabetta Murgia and Michael Pandya for their cool-headed determination in delivering this recital at the University Women's Club on 9 May. On the very day of the concert counter-tenor Alexander Simpson cancelled due to illness. Elisabetta decided the show must go on and Michael Pandya brilliantly persuaded a soprano from the Royal College of Music to take over at the last minute. This was a challenging task. The programme had to be amended and Charlotte Bowden had to learn new songs from scratch in Italian and German in a few hours. In the end all went extremely well.

The new programme included Italian arias and songs and German lieder dedicated to Venice in roughly chronological order, from the Baroque through to Bel Canto.]

Michael Pandya is an award winning young pianist specialising in song and chamber music. After studies at Oxford, he graduated from the Royal Academy of Music in 2017, and then studied at Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Charlotte Bowden is a young prize winning soprano whose recent studies include the Masters of Performance Course at the Royal College of Music.

Peter and Beatrice Crossley are longstanding members of the British Italian Society

BIS SPONSOR NATIONAL PRIZE FOR TRANSLATION FROM ITALIAN, 2019: WARWICK UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE TRANSLATION PRIZE

The British Italian Society has been pleased to sponsor the Prize with £200 to fund winner and runner up, results announced in October 2019. The texts were:

1) song by the Italian singer Samuele Bersani "Un pallone" (from the album Psycho – vent'anni di canzoni, 2012)
2) extract from the theatre play Si nota all'imbrunire (Solitudine da paese spopolato) by Lucia Calamaro. (Padova: Marsilio, 2019 – pp. 60-62).
3) extract from the young adult novel Bernardo e l'angelo nero by Fabrizio Silei (Milan: Salani, 2010 – pp. 79-80, third edition, 2013).

Congratulations to the winner, Alex Joseland (York) and runner up, Jemma Henry (Cambridge).

A bold and dangerous family:

The story of the antifacist Rosselli brothers

Caroline Moorehead, whose many books have documented the extraordinary courage of ordinary people in the face of oppression and injustice

in conversation with Susan Kikoler

Who were the Rossellis? And why did Denis Mack Smith describe Carlo Rosselli as 'Italy's most famous anti-fascist martyr'? In an absorbing conversation with Susan Kikoler, Caroline Moorehead described how she had researched the family archives, in Turin and the British Library, and had discovered a story of courage and commitment which ended in tragedy.

The significance of a footnote

Why did she choose this topic? After two books – 'A train in winter' which was the only train of non-Jewish people taken to Auschwitz – and then 'Village of secrets'[1] – where a French town sheltered those fleeting the Gestapo and no one ever broke silence, she discovered the story of Carlo and Nello Rosselli. Whilst researching in the British Library – I love research – by chance she saw a footnote: that Amelia, their mother, had written her memoirs, about her and her two sons. Moorehead traced two daughters still living and worked with their Foundation in Turin, where there are between 8,000 and 10,000 letters the family members wrote to each other, almost daily, over many years.

Amelia, born in Venice, Jewish, the youngest child in her family, had a very moral upbringing. She married a musicologist – lazy, a philanderer. She bore him three sons. Having made some money writing plays, she left him in 1900 and with the three little boys, and a very small income, set off to live in Florence. She brought up her children to believe in Italy and respect being Jewish. They'd had relatives who had fought with Mazzini. [Her father had kept a piece of bread from the 1848 revolution.] Aldo, the oldest boy, was lazy, so she sent him to the Jesuit boarding school in Pisa. She was very strict with the children. All the family wrote letters. Carlo – an extrovert, energetic, was 'a saucepan always on the boil', lazy too. He was taken out of school and sent as an apprentice to a shoe maker. The third son was Nello, just under two years younger than Carlo, and a dreamer, an academic. Aldo became a medical student and signed up at the First World War. He was sent to the Front where his mother, who was working at the Red Cross office in Florence, wrote to him every day. It was said 'everyone knows Aldo doesn't reply because he's dead.'

How the story unfolded

Moorehead says part of the fascination of this kind of research is that, as the reader of the letters, you know what is going to happen, but the family don't. She continues: 'I started the book with the

1 *'Village of secrets' – Le Chambon-sur-Lignon is a small village in the mountains of the Ardèche. During the Second World War, the inhabitants hid thousands fleeing the Gestapo. Not a single inhabitant of Le Chambon ever broke silence.*

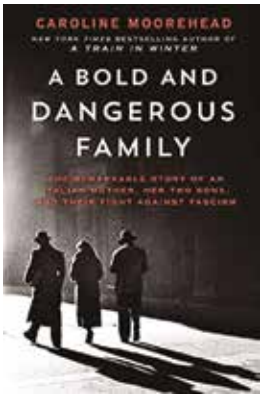
Mattioti murder (June 1924). He was killed by people close to Mussolini, although Mussolini only admits it was his fault six months later. At this time, the boys were still students (25 and 24). Mussolini said 'I'll pull Italy back together again.' And that's when the dictatorship takes hold. The brothers decide they have to do something, and form a Resistance group. Florence was the heart of the black shirts resistance – and they become involved in 'stunts'. There is a growing sense of violence and gangs. Carlo works on getting people out of Italy (those who couldn't get visas to leave). It is now 1927. Carlo is arrested. Antifascists – 15,000 of them – get sent to islands off the Italian coast. Carlo is sent to trial, found not guilty, but is given five months in prison and Mussolini sends him to Lipari. He is out to get the brothers. Nello is also sent to an island.

The prisoners have nothing to do, so they start a school for themselves and the illiterate locals. Carlo's English wife, who had money, is able to organise his escape by boat to France. Paris is the centre of antifascism abroad. It is the time of the civil war in Spain. Mussolini sends 50,000 troops to fight with the fascists. Carlo sends antifascists and is head of the group (but by now he has three children and is back in Paris, but sends broadcasts via Barcelona: 'This is your Spain, next year Italy.'). From this point, he is a marked man.

Mussolini has a spy network set up under Bocchini (10,000 spies). The French spy network agrees to murder Carlo. Meanwhile, Carlo has agreed to meet Nello and his wife at a spa in France. It is 1937. Their mother, Amelia, is sick and cannot join them. As they drive through the countryside, they see a car apparently in trouble and stop to help. It is an ambush and both are shot. A cortege of 200,000 accompanies them to Père Lachaise in Paris. Fourteen years after the murders, the bodies are brought back to Florence, and all the senior politicians give speeches (for example, Sandro Pertini, journalist, partisan, socialist politician, later seventh President of Italy).

Amelia, the two daughters-in-law and seven grandchildren all go to America (courtesy of Mrs Roosevelt). They return to Italy after the war and are feted as they take a special train all the way up Italy.

Moorehead in conclusion: 'The Rosselli brothers kept alive a moral anti-fascism, the spirit of resistance, and the spirit that it is possible to behave well.'



Caroline Moorehead's latest book is 'A house in the mountains', published by Chatto & Windus, November 2019. 'A train in winter', Chatto & Windus, 2011, follows resistance women in France, imprisoned by the Nazis and then sent to Auschwitz. A portrait of ordinary people, their bravery and survival.

Susan Kikoler is a cultural historian with a focus on Sicily. She is Honorary Director of the British Italian Society.

Quando i sogni diventano realta':

A personal note of memories and gratitude

On behalf of the British Italian Society, Susan Kikoler interviewed Elisabetta Murgia who leaves the Society after ten years of hard work, commitment and enthusiasm. She says goodbye in her own words. The Society is hugely appreciative for all that she has done for us and wishes her all the very best for her next endeavours.

Nick Harvey

Missoni exhibition, the Estorick Collection, 2009

I come from a big and modest family where meat was only served on a Sunday after attending and singing at church. I was taught to work hard, to be respectful and to adjust my skirt before sitting. I was content in my little town, but not enough to make me want to stay, marry there and live an ordinary life. I was craving to meet people of different cultures. I wished to speak different languages and explore what was beyond that blue sea and rocky hills. At the age of 19 I left my lovely home where I could see, nearly every day, the sunset over the lagoon and headed to the north, not knowing I would actually spend longer living in the north than in my beloved 'Sardaland'.

In May 2009 I was offered a post as the Events Secretary of – to me – an unknown organisation, The British-Italian Society. Little did I know then that I would grow and stay for 10 years.

For many many years I always felt 'butterflies' in my tummy before going to a BIS event, but confidence, self-esteem and courage grew until I could get to an event as if I were wearing armour, feeling empowered. Maybe it was then that I decided to move away: "If I can do this with my eyes closed, I wish to need to open my eyes again and search and look and feel butterflies in my tummy again."

But oh dear, how many memories, how many events, how many speakers, how many subjects, how many outfits, how many handshakes and how many smiles!

My very first event was the Missoni exhibition at the Estorick Collection and my last the Leonardo exhibition at the British-Library: Italian fashion and Italian art – two topics that are close to me.

At a school reunion some years ago my old friends were delighted that I was in a job that really suited me.

If only I could have told my grandfather, Luigi, who was the barber at the army camp in Corsica during WWII, that I had dined at the table of the Italian Ambassador and I had attended a reception for the Italian Prime Minister! He would have listened carefully, with great interest and without a shadow of a doubt he would have been proud of me, for experiencing this and for leaving my island to follow what it is dear to us, sharing our culture, our customs, in friendship with the British.

For the many gifts that have enriched my life: grazie mille!

What the BIS has given me goes beyond any skills acquired in learning – how to make changes on a website, how to write the right amount on a cheque book, etc. It is about the human connection, how we communicate what we learn and keep learning, how we share our heritage and look at ways to promote and keep alive this very long-standing friendship.

There are so many important moments that I will always cherish.

The BIS has given me many gifts that have enriched my life and I will always be so grateful and that goes beyond all the exquisite venues I have visited, the wonderful meals we have enjoyed, and the music.

The BIS has kept me close to my native country. But it has made me feel at home here, too. Above all the BIS is made up of people and its people are the real gifts to me, the people I was always craving for. From the speakers who so generously share their knowledge, to the Trustees who give their free time and the Chairmen who have been so patient in mentoring me – above all Charles De Chassiron whose kindness and encouragement I shall always treasure.

And the members, the ones who never complained, the ones who have always been kind and supportive, the ones who become friends (and the list is very long) and the one who gave me her very last breath (RIP V.T.).

Grazie mille to you all. I shall look forward to seeing you all at our next event!

ELISABETTA MURGIA:

an appreciation from the Society

Elisabetta Murgia has been the welcoming smile at all British-Italian Society events for the last ten years and it has been a delight for all to work with her. From the beginning her charm and conscientiousness have been exemplary – whether patiently responding to enquiries, no matter how tenuous their links to the BIS, sourcing new venues or, most especially, arriving at Europa House hours in advance to make certain members found the prosecco chilled to perfection!

Appointed Events Secretary in 2009, in 2016 she also took over the role of Membership Secretary and rose to the challenge of learning new database and website skills with great aplomb.

Throughout her tenure Elisabetta worked closely and devotedly with Charles de Chassiron and his untimely passing was an immense blow. Elisabetta has always cared deeply about the BIS and its members, forging friendships and appreciation – feelings sincerely and affectionately reciprocated by all who have met her whether Speaker, Committee member or attendee. Some older members, such as Frank Unwin and Valerie Taylor, have had a special place in her heart.

Certain events Elisabetta organised have brought her particular satisfaction and delight despite the intense commitment involved – the trips to Cambridge and Petworth, the 70th and 75th Anniversaries of the BIS and the Pappano Gala at the Italian Embassy stand out while certain lectures such as Lidia Lonegan on Geology whetted her appetite to learn more. Now as a Life Member and freed from responsibility she will finally be able to listen to the lectures from the very beginning instead of having to wait patiently outside the room for latecomers.

Above all she has become a very dear friend. Elisabetta always says working for the BIS has enriched her life. I believe it is we who have been enriched. She is very special and it has been a privilege to work with her. The whole Society wishes her great success and happiness in her future career.

Susan Kikoler, Honorary Director BIS

New Master's programme in medicine and surgery

Professor Paolo Pozzilli describes the International and cultural component offered at Campus Bio-Medico, University of Rome

A new six-year international Master's degree programme in medicine and surgery, entirely taught in English, has been inaugurated for the academic year 2019/2020 at Campus Bio-Medico University of Rome.

Patient-centred and cutting edge technology

In line with the guiding principles of the University, the teaching is entirely patient-centred and community-centred. A deep knowledge of ethical issues is combined with the use of cutting edge medical technology in order to promote healthcare through a humanistic approach.

The most consistent feature of this course is represented by a strong international and cultural component, a tangible aspect characterising its three main pillars, that is, the students, the faculty and the teaching methods. The programme takes into account the main aspects of today's multi-ethnic society with its vast migrant population, paying special attention to diversity and the value of interfaith dialogue, thus creating the basis for understanding the cultural challenges that modern health professionals face.

Another important aspect is related to the teaching methodology, which is mainly centred on Problem-Based Learning (PBL). This method uses complex real-world problems as the vehicle to stimulate student learning of theoretical concepts and principles as opposed to direct presentation of facts and concepts. In this way, students develop a host of core skills essential for medical doctors, such as critical thinking, problem-solving and communication skills. The ground breaking syllabus means that students begin their professional training at the very start of the programme, through continuous contact with patients and colleagues, thus building not only confidence but also learning to work independently.

President of Italy Sergio Mattarella shakes hands with one of the Master's Degree Program in Medicine and Surgery during the inauguration of the 27th academic year at Campus Bio-Medico University of Rome (inset).

The key features

- Inter-professional education: fostering understanding of how medical conditions affect patients and their social and family environment.
- Solid educational background in basic sciences: providing a broad knowledge of the biologically complex structures and functions of the human organism under physiological conditions.

> The programme covers the main aspects of today's multi-ethnic society in a medical context

- Solid educational background in human sciences (Anthropology, Ethics, and Bioethics): providing knowledge of the different cultures that form the social environment, which is fundamental for doctors in a multi-ethnic society in continuous and rapid evolution.
- Special attention to clinical skills: developing analytical and problem solving skills in medical practice.
- Special attention to 'environmental' skills: developing the students' ability to assess the environmental, political and occupational impact of health and diseases; assessing the health service, its effectiveness, and its impact in economic terms, especially by measuring its value through a cost benefit analysis.
- Special attention to transversal soft skills: developing and consolidating self-directed learning and self-assessment skills, time management skills, planning and organisational skills.
- Continuing professional development: fostering the habit of systematically updating knowledge and skills.

Conforms to the European specifications for global standards in medical education

Moreover, as part of the Univerity's internationalisation process, the core content of the programme is in line with the European specifications for global standards in medical education, according to the World Federation on Medical Education in international basic standards and quality development of biomedical education (WFME Office, University of Copenhagen, 2007) as well as the Basic Medical Education WFME Global Standards for Quality Improvement - 2015 Revision (WFME Office Ferney-Voltaire, France Copenhagen, Denmark 2015).

How to apply

Next call for admission will also come with further innovations. The most important being the introduction of The BioMedical Admissions Test (BMAT) for the non-UE applicants. You may find more details at https://www.unicampus.it/ammissioni

Flavia Daniele and Professor Paolo Pozzilli

Paolo Pozzilli is Professor of Endocrinology and Metabolism at Campus Bio-Medico, Rome and of Diabetes at the Blizard Institute, St Bartholomew's, University of London.

Italian Travel News 2020

November's World Travel Market in London has announced new cultural and sporting events to be held in Italy in 2020.

HISTORY

LIBERATION ROUTE ITALIA (facebook.com/liberationrouteitaly/) celebrates the 75th anniversary of the end of WWII with a series of trails along the Gothic Line, museums, battlefields and cemeteries

CULTURE

2020 Not just *The Italian Job* – Torino hosts a year-long celebration of cinema celebrating 20 years of its Museo del Cinema in the amazing Mole Antonelliana and 20 years of the Piedmont Film Commission (www.torinocittadelcinema2020.it) with festivals of film, cinematographic fashion, music and workshops

2020 PARMA is Italy's City of Culture

2020 GENOA proposes opening its 60+ historic palaces to include overnight stays. Genoa will also host the 2020 International Boat Show

2020 CATANIA will hold a Bellini Festival Sept 23 – Nov 23

2021 TRAPANI will host more than 300 International Folklore groups at the 2021 Europaede dance and music Festival, 7 – 11 July

2026 WINTER OLIMPICS MILAN-CORTINA – FAI (Italy's equivalent of the National Trust) has created accompanying cultural trails encompassing some of Italy's 55 World Heritage Sites such as Monza's 6th century Chapel of Teodolinda and Villa Reale, with the largest enclosed park in Europe, the baroque splendours of Palazzo Malacrida, Morbegno, the newly discovered Roman frescoes of the Capitolium in Brescia, the Grotto of Catullus at Sirmione, the Castle of Avio, at Sabbionara d'Avio, with its unusual 14th century frescoes on the themes of love and war, the Castle of Buonconsiglio and Torre Aquila in Trento with frescoes on the Cycle of the Seasons, and the celebrated Giotto paintings in the Scrovegni Chapel, Padua.

Modern accomplishments are also included from MART (the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art) at Rovereto to the 'company town' of Crespi d'Adda, Bergamo, where in 1875 a textile mill and workers' village was set up and the hydroelectric plant looks more like a palace than an industrial site.

SPORT

2020 The first America's Cup World Series Regatta of the 36th America's Cup, now sponsored by Prada, will take place in Cagliari, Sardinia, April 23 – 26

2021 The World Ski Championships will be held in Cortina

2022 The Ryder Cup will be played in Rome

2026 The Winter Olympics will be held in Italy between Milan and Cortina

ANNIVERSARIES

The 500th anniversary of the death of RAPHAEL will be marked by the National Gallery, London, with an exhibition covering his complete career (3 October 2020 – 24 January 2021) while throughout 2020 there will be events and exhibitions in Raphael's native Marche region, (**www.turismo.marche.it**), and an exhibition of Raphael's designs at the Quirinale Stables, Rome, (March – June 2020)

FEDERICO FELLINI – the centenary of the birth of the great film director will be celebrated here in London at the BFI with a major retrospective of his work throughout January and February 2020 – *da non perdere*!

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