



**UNIONE TICINESE**  
FONDATA A LONDRA NEL 1874  
SEZIONE AUTONOMA DELLA PRO TICINO

## **FROM THE PRESIDENT**

OCTOBER 2016

Dear Members,

Welcome back for the autumn season!

I hope you all spent an enjoyable summer. Ticino had an August of back-to-back sunshine. It looked at its very best, leaving me at least with memories of colour and warmth which I hope will sustain me during the dull, grey months to come.

We do hope you will join us for the autumnal outing to Basildon Park and that we'll see you at the long-term favourite event, our Castagnata.

Best wishes,

Peter Barber  
**Presidente dell' Unione Ticinese**



## **AUTUMN OUTING: BASILDON PARK**

12:30PM MAIN TICKET OFFICE, RG8 9ND  
SUNDAY 16 OCTOBER 2016

Basildon Park is a stately home, just West of Reading, dating from the late eighteenth century. Its exterior may look familiar since it featured in *Downton Abbey*. It has had a chequered history, and what you see is now a mixture of Georgian and the 1950s, when it was restored by its last private owners, Lord and Lady Iliffe. We are heading there with three reasons in mind.

Firstly, the paintings on its walls reflect the longstanding love affair between England and the culture of Italy, of which – it is worth remembering – Ticino forms a part. Apart from the Bleniesi cooks and chocolatiers at the court of Turin, the chestnut sellers throughout the peninsula and the hereditary porters from Ronco and the Centovalli in Livorno, you need only think of seventeenth-century Ticinese architects like Francesco Borromini, who was responsible for several of the greatest Baroque churches in Rome and artists like Pier Francesco Mola.

Just as successful Ticinese migrants sent Florentine paintings and scagliola altarpieces to adorn their local parish churches, where they can still be seen, so English Grand Tourists sent home landscape and allegorical paintings and souvenir portraits. The Iliffes were enthusiastic collectors of such paintings, and for the next year or so these are being supplemented by similar paintings from the collection of the late Sir Brinsley Ford (1908-1999), one of the greatest British art collectors of the twentieth century. It is anyone's guess what will happen to the paintings after the loan ends!

Secondly, we are drawn to Basildon Park due to its 400-acre park designed in the spirit of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown (1716-1783), the 300th anniversary of whose birth is being celebrated this year.

Lastly there are the servants' quarters which are as they were in the 1950s. Many of the items on display may evoke memories for our older members.



The house is owned by the National Trust. Free to members, for non-members it's £13 (£6.50 for children) for admission to house and grounds with family tickets costing £32.50. Should the weather be good, there's the option of grounds only tickets at £8 (£4 for children) and £20 for a family ticket.

The house can be reached by road from the M4 (leave at exit 12 and follow signs to Beale Park & Pangbourne). Be warned that if you use satnav, it will take you to the wrong entrance – please follow the signs instead! An alternative is to go by train to Pangbourne or Goring & Streatley stations and to take a taxi from there: it is about a 5 minute drive. You'll need to book a taxi in advance by phoning 01491 672 382.

The mansion tea room serves lunch between 12 and 2.30 and tea throughout the afternoon. The Parlour in the stable yard offers lighter fare.

**I suggest we meet by the main ticket office at 12.30.**

## **CASTAGNATA**

EMBASSY OF SWITZERLAND  
16-18 Montagu Place, London W1H 2BQ  
SATURDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2016

We plan to hold the traditional castagnata on 19 November – save the date! Full details and a booking form will be in the next newsletter.

## **SAN NICOLAO**

SATURDAY 10 DECEMBER 2016

We are thinking of holding a children's Christmas party on 10 December, to be graced with the presence of St Nicolao!

Before we firm up our plans, we need to know how much interest and any preferences there would be for the return of this event. If you have children or grandchildren then this will be a very happy occasion.

Please let Emilie Martinoni Hogenboom know that you're interested by 15<sup>th</sup> October 2016 to ensure this event takes place.

Email Emilie at [emilie\\_martinoni@hotmail.com](mailto:emilie_martinoni@hotmail.com).



## **GOLDERS HILL PICNIC**

SUNDAY 26 JUNE 2016

Our fantastic summer outing to Golders Hill Park was attended by 20 adults and 6 children for a very successful picnic. The weather was fair and warm, very much suiting the facilities of the park – with a small zoo, a children’s play area, an extensive meadow on which to let off steam, and some attractive formal gardens – proving ideal for a relaxed afternoon. The adults chatted and the children played. We even got a free concert from the nearby bandstand. We can’t wait for next year!

## **SWISS NATIONAL DAY LONDON**

17 JULY 2016

Those who attended will agree that the celebration, in the forecourt of University College, London, was most enjoyable thanks to the hard work of the organizing committee, embassy staff and volunteers on the day, including some Unione Ticinese members. We’re hoping that next year more UT members attend to appreciate the efforts.



## TICINESE ARTIST IN LONDON

A charming landscape by Giovanni Battista Innocenzo Colombo of Arogno near Lake Lugano (1717-1793) attracted attention during the London art week at the beginning of July.

While we know of the stuccatori (several also from Arogno) of the early eighteenth century and of course the restaurateurs of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, not many people realise that Ticinese painters also visited England. Colombo, who came from a family of artists, could turn his hand to most branches of painting, but he was particularly skilled in the decorative field. He spent most of his working life in Germany decorating baroque and rococo churches but between 1774 and 1780, he worked as a stage-painter, with much the same sort of requirements, at the King's Theatre in London.

If you want to get an idea of his more fanciful work, a painting by him of Diana and Endymion is owned by the Brighton and Hove Art Gallery.

# THE NEW HELVETIC SOCIETY

Congratulations to a fellow Swiss society on reaching its centennial: 100 years of bringing Swiss culture to London – to be continued, we hope, into the indefinite future!

We were represented by our president and his wife at the celebratory dinner on 24 September 2016.

## MEMBERS NEWS

We send our warmest best wishes to Annetta Diviani, one of our stalwarts, on her 90th birthday which will be falling on 23 October.



We also send our congratulations to the editor of this newsletter, Francesca Pogia, who married John Cartwright at St Clement Danes in London on 23 July.



Further congratulations are in order with a second Ticinese wedding, Cecily Barber and Przemek Koscielak who celebrated their wedding in Biel, Switzerland, on 16 August.

We wish both couples many, many years of happiness together.

## LASTLY

With this newsletter you will find either a hardcopy or electronic version of our new flier. Please pass it on or forward it to any friends or relatives whom you think might be interested!

### **DATES FOR THE DIARY**

#### **FUTURE EVENTS AT A GLANCE**

***Sunday 16 October 2016, 12:30pm***

*Autumn Outing: Basildon Park*

***Saturday 19 November 2016, TBC***

*Castagnata, Embassy of Switzerland*

***Saturday 10 December 2016, TBC***

*San Nicolao*