



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

FROM THE PRESIDENT

OCTOBER II 2016

Dear Members,

Your second newsletter for October with some essential event updates.

The Castagnata is now approaching and I've attached a booking form so that you can claim your space. I do hope that as many of you as possible will join us for one of the most delicious highlights of the year.

Best wishes,

Peter Barber
Presidente dell' Unione Ticinese

DATES FOR THE DIARY

FUTURE EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Sunday 30 October 2016, 2PM

St Pancras and Islington Cemetery

Saturday 19 November 2016, 7 for 7:30PM

Castagnata, Embassy of Switzerland

FUTURE EVENTS

VISIT TO THE GRAVES

St Pancras and Islington Cemetery
SUNDAY 30 OCTOBER 2016

The graves are the most important reminders of the Society's origins as a benevolent society – and members of *Unione Ticinese* still have a right of burial in them. So they are an important part of our heritage, with a story – and a person - behind each name.

This year we shall be laying flowers on the Society's graves in the St Pancras and Islington Cemetery in East Finchley.

We shall be meeting at the entrance to St Pancras and Islington Cemetery, 278 High Road, East Finchley, London N2 9AG at 2pm, please feel free to attend to give your respects in person.

CASTAGNATA

EMBASSY OF SWITZERLAND
16-18 Montagu Place, London W1H 2BQ
SATURDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2016, 7 for 7:30PM

By kind permission of the Swiss Ambassador, Mr Dominik Furgler, this year's much-anticipated Castagnata will be held in the Embassy of Switzerland's canteen.

We shall ensure that only the best and most succulent chestnuts are served with the usual accompaniment of cold meats or a vegetarian alternative and cheese – with, of course, wine, music and song (well, the last is up to you)! This year we have held the price at £20 per head and £22 for non-members (including members of other Swiss clubs who are not also UT members). A ticket for children between 8 and 16 years old is £10.

Please don't hesitate - do come – and you're welcome to bring some friends too.

Reserve your place by completing the attached form and returning it with your cheque (made payable to the *Unione Ticinese*), to Christiane Barber as soon as possible and certainly no later than Saturday 12 November. We look forward to seeing you there!

PAST EVENT

BASILDON PARK SUNDAY 16 OCTOBER 2016



Perhaps it was the weather warnings that scared people off, but only an extremely select group gathered to visit Basildon Park. It was a pity, because the rain gave way to beautifully sunny and clear weather by midday when we gathered. The park and the views from there were spectacular, with the hills and verdant meadows enhanced by cows, a wide variety of trees, their leaves tinged with the colours of early autumn, all basking in clear light under sunny skies.

We were able not only to see the interiors of the main house but were also given a private tour of the pictures from the collection of the late Sir Brinsley Ford which are temporarily accommodated in the south pavilion. This took us through rooms above and beneath stairs which will be familiar to many from Downtown Abbey.

But perhaps best of all was an unexpected treat: just as we past a sweet chestnut tree a gust of wind blew the chestnuts down at our feet! They were small, but, as a result of the warm later summer and autumn, as we later found out, they were sweet and succulent!

RINALDO SIMEN



Peter has been going through the papers of the writer Samuel Butler (1835-1902) in the British Library and brings to you a scintillating quote. Butler was the author of *Alps and Sanctuaries in Piedmont and Canton Ticino* (1882) one of the earliest English-language books on Ticino and its people – featuring people like Alpino Bolla and other early members of the Unione Ticinese.

Butler and his close friend, and assistant, Henry Festing Jones, continued to visit their friends in Ticino over the following decades, reporting what they did and whom they saw to each other. In August 1892, Festing Jones found himself staying in the same hotel in Fusio as the leading Liberal politician, Rinaldo Simen (1849-1910). Simen, the founder of *il Dovere* and the leader of the Ticino government in the 1890s, is now commemorated by many statues and roads are named after him.

Festing Jones, however, was fascinated by Simen's nose and wrote:

“He is not ugly, but no one would call him good looking, & his nose isn't bad, but it is a little odd. It's never the same for two seconds together. It's like watching the sea. He writes with it, he edits the *Dovere* with it, he eats his soup with it, he cracks the almonds with it & looks inside with it... I am sure he governed Ticino with it, and believe Mrs Editor would tell us that he uses it for every purpose. When he talks, it follows every shade of his conversation & responds to all the emotions that are passing through his mind like the orchestra in a Wagner opera...”