



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

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2017

SATURDAY 29 APRIL, 6.00 PM

SWISS EMBASSY, 16-18 MONTAGU PLACE, LONDON W1H 2BQ

Dear Members,

You are cordially invited to the Society's ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING to be held in the Canteen of the Swiss Embassy, by kind permission of the Ambassador, Mr Dominik Furgler.

For security reasons it is essential that everyone attending complete the enclosed booking slip in their own and their guests' names. Please make sure you return it by Monday 24 April 2017. The meeting will be followed by a delicious traditional risotto.

This is your opportunity to stand for the committee or put yourself forward as an officer.

This year it is particularly important that you consider doing so. After six years in office, I am standing down as president and there are also vacancies for the post of secretary and on the committee. It is difficult for me to see how the Society can continue unless these posts are filled.

Please contact Peter Barber if you have questions or wish to help at peter_barber@mac.com or on 07958132761.

Best wishes,

Peter Barber
Presidente dell' Unione Ticinese

AGM AGENDA 2017

1. Introduction
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the AGM of 7 April 2016 to be approved and signed
4. Matters arising
5. President's Report
6. Audited accounts 2016
7. New members and membership
8. Subscription for 2018/19
9. Election of officers and members of the committee for 2017/18
10. Election of the Auditors for 2017/18
11. AOB

Please find enclosed your Booking Form, the minutes for the AGM 2016 and the President's Report 2016-2017. You can now make event payments by bank transfer, but you'll still need to complete the Booking Form and send it to Christiane Barber. Please check the account numbers carefully:

Payee: Unione Ticinese

Sort Code: 30-64-57

Account No. 46005060

Please note that the accounts for 2016, budget proposal for 2017/18 and membership figures will only be available at the meeting. Should you wish to view this in advance please contact Peter Barber at peter_barber@mac.com.

PAST EVENTS

CARNEVALE
SATURDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2017



Although only 19 members and their guests attended the annual dinner celebrating our foundation, those present had a good time. We had a room to ourselves, the food was good, the atmosphere warm and there was much chatting! I hope more members will consider joining us for similar dinners in the future.



THE WIDER SWISS COMMUNITY

Over the past few months the leaders of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK (FOSSUK) has been trying to co-ordinate the activities of the Swiss societies in this country, in order to avoid clashes of date and to increase the numbers attending events. As you will know, the Unione Ticinese has for some years been making donations to community-wide activities such as the National Day celebrations and meetings devoted to specific themes.

There have been meetings of the presidents and their representatives and the societies are now pooling information more effectively. Measures are also in place to spread information about activities more widely. At the same time, all the presidents agree that the special character of each society needs to be treasured and enhanced. So, with luck, we shall have a win/win situation!

A WINTER WALK IN VALLE LEVENTINA IN 1833...

Many of you will know that one of the earliest and best books in English on Ticino was *Alps and Sanctuaries* by Samuel Butler, which was published in 1881. Butler and his friends continued to visit Ticino for many years afterwards and their letters are now in the British Library. In one of them, Butler's secretary and fellow-Ticino enthusiast, Henry Festing Jones, describes a walk that he took in the Valle Leventina, on All Saints Day, 1 November 1883:

I have been for a walk today. It has been a beautiful day; chose the North side of the valley because it gets the sun which the other side does not... I went up to Mairengo. There was no one about except a dog who barked at me for disturbing the stillness, thereby making matters worse. The chestnuts have begun to find out that the leaves are not all their fancy painted them & are ... casting them off, so that the grass under every tree is smothered in brown & yellow.

Mairengo church was throbbing like a beehive, full of people singing because it is All Saints Day. I sat down in the porch opposite a stone put up in honour of Lorenzo Delmonico, the great Restaurateur of New York, who was a native of Primadengo & is buried at Mairengo, & listened. I seemed to hear one woman and one man whose voices were more prominent than the other voices & they led, not only in the sense of knowing what they were about, but the rest of the congregations literally followed them, about ½ a beat behind, with all manner of improvised counterpoints...

Presently a woman brought a baby out of the church & took it out of sight round the corner & then brought it back in the porch & there came a time when she had to cross herself & she wanted the baby to cross itself but it wouldn't. It had had enough of the whole business so it had to have it done for it & that made it cry.

After a time the singing stopped & the church burst & the whole village came out: first the men, then the women crossing themselves & last a very old man on crutches & then I went in. The curato was still on his knees before one of the high altars (I suppose it is at Mairengo there are two equally high altars, a compromise to settle some heresy). It was all over but he was just squeezing out the last few drops before washing up.

Then I went to Osco & Osco had gone to church too & was singing the same music. I tried to write down some of the less vague parts, but the bell kept ringing & put me out. There were lambs at Osco, but I don't know what age, but I suppose a few weeks old – the age when they run races.

*I had to come down to Mairengo again to get to Calpiogna. Here the people were in church again & I stood in the door till the priest came out with two acolytes & a banner & a crucifix & some holy water & led the way down to the Campo Santo. "all of them that sleep" in *Alps & Sanctuaries*. We all went in & I counted that we were 85*

people. The priest blessed the graves with holy water & called upon the saints by name. I suppose he only named the boss saints & lumped the others together as tutti santi, but to my taste he did it all not merely perfunctorily but almost flippantly. Indeed I could not help thinking he must have been taking a drop too much of his Saviour's blood.



Then I went to Primadengo & saw the cherry trees. They have a few leaves left on them, bright red. I cannot remember whether it was between Mairengo & Calpiogna or between Primadengo & Rossura that I sat down by some water & ate the cold meat & bread & drank the wine I had brought with me as we do when we are together.



There was no service going on in Primadengo or Rossura. What a beautiful thing the porch of the Rossura church is. I sat down on the top step & the goats came in right up to me & asked for a little salt & when they found I hadn't got any, they turned me up as they did to us when you brought me over from Fusio. I went on to Tengia just to see your view of the church in real life again & then back to Faido through Rossura.

The larches have turned a sort of brown orange (I suppose it's the larches) & among the dark green firs on the side of the opposite valley they make it look as I have seen the side of the valley look when the sun first comes over the top & catches only the highest trees.

The artist who illustrates the chapels in the mountains seem to me to be about up to the standard of those who do pictorial advertisements for the London theatres & I suppose they have the same objects in view...

DATES FOR THE DIARY

FUTURE EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Later dates are tentative. You will be given full information on the events in later newsletters.

29 April 2017:

AGM

Please see enclosed documentation – we look forward to seeing you there.

20-21 May 2017:

FOSSUK AGM

Coin Street Neighbourhood Centre

18 June 2017:

DITCHLEY PARK HOUSE

[This 18th Century Oxfordshire country home of Winston Churchill during WW2 contains some of the best work by stuccatori from Ticino]

2 July 2017:

PICNIC

Golders Hill Park

4 July 2017:

PLAQUE TO CARLO GATTI

Unveiling Westminster plaque on Villiers Street

TBC September 2017:

OUTING

21 October 2017:

CASTAGNATA

9 December 2017:

SAN NICOLAO

Children's Party

And for a full calendar of Swiss events please go here:

www.swiss-societies.co.uk/events/index