



FROM THE PRESIDENT

OCTOBER 2017

Dear Members

I'm writing 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.

This newsletter also has some brilliant reporting on our summer outing to West Wycombe Park by Peter Barber, on our annual picnic at Golders Green reported by Emilie Martinoni Hogenboom and on our autumn outing to Ditchley Park once again by Peter Barber.

We have noticed that some emails and/or addresses are inaccurate. If you know or suspect that yours is one of them, could you please send the corrections to Francesca by email at fr@nces.ca.

At the embassy in London we have a new Ambassador, Alexandre Fasel. As is traditional, he also takes on the role as our new Honorary President. We welcome him and we look forward to working with him. Before leaving us, the outgoing Ambassador, Dominik Furgler hosted a luncheon for the Swiss athletes who were competing in London for the IAAF World Championship. Our Ticinese runner, Ajla Del Ponte and her team came 5th in the finals, a well-deserved position.



Photograph: With permission of Daniel Mitchell.

From Switzerland we have further exciting news of Ticinesi excelling in their areas, with the nomination of Ignazio Cassis as Cabinet Minister in Bern. Cassis is the first cabinet minister from the Italian-speaking canton of Ticino since 1999. Cassis, who was a favourite for the post, beat his fellow centre-right Radical Party rivals Pierre Maudet and Isabelle Moret from the French speaking area.



Photograph: Ignazio Cassis celebrates in parliament (Keystone, SWI)

We look forward to seeing many of you at our future events,

Rita Day-Giollo

PRESIDENT

WEST WYCOMBE PARK

JUNE 2017

On 18 June a small group of members gathered for a visit to West Wycombe Park. In some ways it was like going back to the 1950s. Though the house is owned by the National Trust, it is lived in (and to a great extent subsidised) by the Dashwood family whose home it has been since the eighteenth century. There was no restaurant and no shop on site however there were deckchairs and, on the day we visited, a local brass band playing at the main entrance offering a chance to relax without consumer pressures.



The exterior and interior of the house reflect the flamboyance of Sir Francis Dashwood, the 2nd baronet, the mid-eighteenth century creator of the house as we see it. He was a government minister (and quite a capable one) and in his private life he was the founder of various secret and not so secret private societies, some learned (e.g. the Dilettante Society, which still exists) and some of a rather risqué nature, reflected in some of the paintings on view.

Sir Francis was also a great architectural and artistic connoisseur. Of particular interest to us were the grandiose ceiling paintings, the finest of which by Giuseppe Mattia Borgnis of Craveggia in Val Vigezzo, some of whose best work is to be found in the Valle Maggia in Ticino. The paintings at West Wycombe are inspired by semi-pagan Rome of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and were copied by Borgnis from prints of paintings by artists such as Raphael and the Carracci in various Roman palaces.

Borgnis and Sir Francis became such good friends that after Borgnis died from a fall off a ladder (an accident supposedly engineered by a rival) at West Wycombe Park in 1761, he was interred in the Dashwood family mausoleum at the top of the neighbouring hill. The Borgnis paintings and several monuments in the surrounding park were restored after 1950 by a Dashwood descendent, also named Sir Francis, the equally flamboyant father of the present day baronet. The most recent Sir Francis was an astute business man with an Italian second wife (she fronted the BBC TV Italian lessons of the early 1960s, *Parliamo Italiano*). He had Borgnis' funeral bust transferred from the mausoleum to the entrance hall of the house where we were able to see it.

Ceiling painting by Borgnis in Cimalmotto, Vallemaggia, 1748



We were able to compare this with his “English style” of three years later in West Wycombe Park House.

Ceiling painting by Borgnis inside the House of about 1751



After touring the house, we walked round the park with its large lake and classical-style monuments, looking their best under the summer sunshine. From there some of us went for tea in West Wycombe village, owned by the National Trust; it has more than a touch of the 1950s about it - except for the heavy traffic. Then up the steep hill to visit the church, a largely late eighteenth-century creation modelled after the temples at Palmyra in Syria, recently sadly severely damaged or destroyed by Isis. Sir Francis Dashwood entrusted the decoration of the church to Borgnis, offering a chance of direct comparison with the religious work he did in Cimalmotto and Campo Valle Maggia.

GOLDERS GREEN PICNIC

JULY 2017

On the 2nd of July, on a sunny Sunday afternoon, a few members of the Unione Ticinese met for a picnic in Golders Hill Park, North London. It was an opportunity to explore the park, which offers beautiful grounds and gardens, a zoo, a playground, tennis and ping pong courts and a croquet lawn. The children in the group had time to play together and the grown-ups to chat. The lovely ice cream sold by the local café was enjoyed by participants of all ages. We hope that in the future more people will join us in this superb and easy to reach location.

At this time of year, Golders Hill Park is still beautiful and the leaves of the majestic trees in the park are displaying superb autumnal colours, as you can see it in the picture of the walled garden. We've added "Ode to Autumn" by John Keats into the newsletter as he lived at the verge of Hampstead Heath, connected to Golders Hill.



TO AUTUMN

JOHN KEATS (1795-1821)

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.
Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last ooziings, hours by hours.
Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

DITCHLEY PARK

SEPTEMBER 2017



On the day that would have been the 100th birthday of Peter Jacomelli, whom many will remember with great fondness, a group of 18 members of the Unione Ticinese and their friends were lucky enough to be given a detailed tour of Ditchley Park House in Oxfordshire, normally closed to the public. The house contains some outstanding work by the Ticinese stuccatori. It stands in the midst of handsome and abundant parkland set in rolling countryside, well populated with cattle.

The tour was expertly led by Mike Montagu, the bursar of the Ditchley Park Foundation, which uses the house mainly for high-powered conferences on current affairs. The most notable aspect for most visitors is its association with Winston Churchill.

Of particular interest to us, however, was the work of the stuccatori and in particular the contrast between the grand front hall and the saloon into which it leads. The hall was designed and its execution tightly controlled by James Gibbs (the architect of St Martin's in the Fields) and William Kent, the dominant figure in British interior design at the time.

By contrast, in the saloon, the plasterwork runs riot. It seems that the stuccatori led by Giuseppe Artari, together with the young Francesco Vassalli and Francesco Serena persuaded their patron to give them free rein. The results are exuberant, energetic ... and just a little out of control!

There are also many fine paintings and furniture in all rooms, not to mention the library which now serves as the conference room. We finished the day with tea and biscuits in one of the rooms, before having the opportunity to step outside to enjoy the grounds in the warm, slightly misty, autumn sunshine. You will be able to read a full report in the next issue of Swiss Review.

VISIT TO THE GRAVES
SUNDAY 29 OCTOBER 2017
St Pancras and Islington Cemetery, 2pm

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. Members are invited join others in laying flowers on the Unione Ticinese graves.

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
SATURDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2017
Embassy of Switzerland, 16-18 Montagu Place, London W1H 2BQ
7 for 7:30pm

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

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) as soon as possible - no later than Saturday 28 October. We look forward to seeing you there!

ST NICOLAO
2 DECEMBER 2017
Venue TBC

We are once again thinking of holding a children's Christmas party on 2 December, to be graced with the presence of St Nicolao!

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 31st October 2017 to ensure this event takes place.

Email Emilie at emilie_martinoni@hotmail.com.

DATES FOR THE DIARY
FUTURE EVENTS AT A GLANCE

You will be given full information on future events in later newsletters.

SATURDAY 29 OCTOBER 2017
FLOWERS FOR THE GRAVES
ST PANCRAS & ISLINGTON CEMETERY

SATURDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2017
CASTAGNATA
SWISS EMBASSY

SATURDAY 2 DECEMBER 2017
SAN NICOLAO
TBC

SATURDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2018
ANNIVERSARY EVENT
TBC

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

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