

## CANTVS



## VENICE IN PERIL FUND

NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2016

## TENOR



## ALVISE ZORZI and HUGH HONOUR: Obituaries

**W**E WERE SAD TO NOTE the recent deaths of two figures closely associated with Venice, its history and culture. Alvise Zorzi, born in 1922, was a dedicated historian of the city, both as capital of an empire and, in his *Venezia Austriaca*, as an imperial possession. His *La Repubblica del Leone* (1979) is the best single-volume history of Venice, while *Venezia scomparsa* (1977) is a fascinating chronicle of the vanished townscape. From a patrician family (an ancestor, Marino Zorzi, had been doge in 1311) Zorzi grew up in a literary, multilingual household. This cultured background saved his life when in 1944, working as a journalist, he fell foul of the Gestapo in occupied Venice and was rounded up for deportation. Hearing a German officer quoting the opening line of a poem by Schiller, Zorzi at once began reciting the rest, which procured his instant release from custody.

A member of the International Advisory Committee for the Safeguarding of Venice, set up by the Italian Government in agreement with UNESCO, he succeeded Sir Ashley Clarke as chairman of the Association of Private Committees in 1986. He was instrumental in rescuing Venice from a dubious destiny as candidate for the siting of Expo 2000 and saw the Private Committees through a difficult transitional phase in their relationship with UNESCO, resulting in the Joint Programme under which most of Venice in Peril Fund's recent conservation projects have been undertaken. In a 2010 essay entitled 'Thoughts Of A Venetian Survivor', Zorzi tempers his sadness and indignation at the impact of a tourist monoculture on Venice with the simple assertion 'We can hope for the future'. His achievement enables us to do so more confidently.

Hugh Honour, born in 1927, shared this dedication to things Venetian. One of the most

versatile, knowledgeable and prolific of British art historians, he was largely self-schooled, gaining curatorial experience at the British Museum and Leeds City Art Gallery before moving to Italy with his partner and fellow enthusiast, the Scottish lawyer John Fleming. The two settled first at Asolo, near Venice, then moved to a delightful villa in the hills above Lucca. There they collaborated on a series of books, including the prizewinning *A World History of Art* and *The Image of the Black in Western Art*, exceptional for their fusion of scholarly expertise with a remarkable humanity and breadth of taste. It was unjustly said of their work that 'Hugh writes what John thinks' but the single-author monographs *Neo-Classicism* (1968) and *Romanticism* (1979) reveal Honour's own perceptiveness and sensitivity underlying his exceptional fluency of style.

His passion for Venice and its culture was undying. Admiration for the work of Antonio Canova led to a monumental edition of the sculptor's letters and writings on art, a singular achievement for Honour in last years marked by John Fleming's death in 2001 and the onset of prolonged illness. Most welcome of all to lovers of the city, however, was his *Companion Guide To Venice* (1965) finest of all that splendid series and still a perfect introduction to the place. In a superb epilogue, 'The Way To The Station', Honour writes: 'On going away from Venice I have myself felt a greater sadness than on leaving any other city'. We know how he feels.

JONATHAN KEATES  
Chairman



Hugh Honour was a Patron of the Venice in Peril Fund Canova Appeal – see facing page

Hugh Honour (left) and Alvise Zorzi (right)



## Canova Update

After delays in 2015 while the Venetian heritage authorities updated their working arrangements with the Association of Private Committees we can now confirm that work on the conservation of this important neo-classical monument in the Frari church is scheduled to begin in the autumn. It is envisaged that the first phase will take twelve months including planning for the second stage, which will take between eighteen months and two years. The overall cost is expected to be €450,000.



### SPECIAL BOOK OFFER FOR FRIENDS OF VENICE IN PERIL FUND

**33% OFF THE IMAGE OF VENICE: FIALETTI'S VIEW AND SIR HENRY WOTTON**

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# Basilica of San Marco: Conservation of choirbooks in the Archivio Storico Patriarcale

The conservation of seven important 17th–18th-century illustrated choir books, funded by Mrs Humphrey Brooke, longstanding Secretary of the Venice in Peril Fund, has now been completed and the books returned to the Archivio Patriarcale.

Several of the manuscript books were in bad condition and needed the bindings to be picked apart and then restitched while others needed reinforcing with Japanese tissue, all of which was expertly undertaken by the specialist book and paper conservation firm, Lilia Gianotti Restauro. These restored manuscripts join the eleven others restored last year by the same firm of restorers and funded by our sister committees,



*Missa Octava for Five Voices, 1678, D. Natalis Monferrati.*  
The pages and leather binding have both been restored  
Photos © Archivio Storico Patriarcale



*Missa Brevis, 1715 by Antoninus Biffi, Choir Master of the Ducal Chapel.* The card cover has been reinforced with added layers of Japanese paper and cardboard fibre. Above: Here the corner of the page has been reinforced by Japanese tissue.

the American Save Venice Inc and Pro Venezia Switzerland.

The books have now been digitalised and will be made available as an online resource in the Historical Music Inventories 1500-1800 database, published by RISM Switzerland in collaboration with the University of Fribourg. They will also feature in a conference this July at San Giorgio and a publication by Luigi Collarile of the Universities of Fribourg and Venice, whose research prompted the campaign.

The project was directed by the Soprintendenza Beni Librari del Veneto.

## Museo Archeologico: Bursary awarded for a review of the Deposits

**G**iorgia Bonesso is part way through her Venice in Peril funded project to assess the Deposits of the Museo Archeologico on Piazza San Marco.

She has designed the review so that she can draw together the wisdom of current museum staff as well as using historic catalogues and early sources to try and understand the unique character and significance of the collection. Reviewing the different ways in which events and everyday management have affected the Deposits she has been looking at the areas which could benefit the museum and its activities particularly in research and education.

The project includes a risk assessment for the objects in the Deposits and a reordering of the contents in line with a methodology she developed with ICCROM and UNESCO. At the same time she has incorporated current plans at the museum and considered everything in the context of the other Italian national archaeological collections.

After her initial review it has become very clear that there are wonderful opportunities for a better understanding of the Grimani family's collection, given to the Republic in the 16th century, which forms a key part of the Museo Archeologico. After looking in the Deposits of the Museo and Palazzo Grimani a way to do this emerged, with a proposal to reunite some busts, heads and bases, dispersed in different Deposits, initially with a virtual reconstruction. In the next few months she will look closely at the physical spaces of Palazzo Grimani and at descriptions in Pellegrini's guidebook of an early arrangement of objects later reordered by Carlo Anti. Taking as her starting point the recent research done by Marcella De Paoli entitled 'Opera fatta diligentissimamente' the practicality of the idea will be tested with a possible reconstruction of a figure of Agrippa.

We would like to thank all our donors especially those listed below and others who wish to remain anonymous for their generous support and commitment to the conservation work of Venice in Peril Fund in the last year.

Art Pursuits Abroad  
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Twofour  
  
And John Julius Norwich for giving the 2016  
Kirkor lecture



# Palazzo Grimani: Equipping a new restoration laboratory

BOOK YOUR TICKETS FOR OUR AUTUMN LECTURE SERIES NOW. SEE BACK COVER FOR DETAILS.

Venice in Peril Fund recently agreed to grant €15,000 to help equip the laboratory at Palazzo Grimani for the Istituto Veneto per I Beni Culturali. The setting-up of this new laboratory should prove to be a mutually satisfactory arrangement for both the Polo Museale del Veneto, who are leasing the space together with teaching rooms, and IVBC, which will be providing maintenance and restoration services for the state collections.

Renzo Ravagnan set up the IVBC as a non-profit organisation in 1995 to provide technical training to both EQF5 and degree levels for young conservators working with a wide range of materials including stone and wood, architectural ornament and sculpture, wall and canvas paintings. Since its founding it has developed relationships across the Veneto as well as launching initiatives further afield in Jerusalem and Sana'a where Italian conservators train local students.

The Institute partners with the local heritage authorities, Venice Museums as well as a number of the International Private Committees like Venice in Peril Fund and its students work from the first year of their three year course on real projects. In the Spring of 2016 for example a



Restorers at the new laboratory. Photo © IVBC

pilot project to restore five gilded frames from the deposits of the Galleria Giorgio Franchetti at the Cà D'Oro was launched and the results will be included in an exhibition of frames from the museum.

Working alongside expert restorers in small teams, students learn not just the technical restoration but also how to run a restoration workshop to the professional standards required for the handling of works of art registered as being of national importance and owned by museums. Once trained the Institute is involved in helping students with work placements in restoration workshops, museums and laboratories in Italy and abroad.

In the early days of Venice in Peril Fund the Trustees were concerned to ensure that skills shortages in conservation were addressed and for many years offered bursaries for practising British craftsmen and women training at the interdisciplinary conservation courses run by the Council of Europe school on the Island of San Servolo. Later it funded the ICCROM international stonework conservation course and more recently it has facilitated the City and Guilds of London Art School internships at S. Giorgio Maggiore each year. At the same time the Fund has supported, in a modest way, a number of bursaries for research undertaken within the museums.



# Accademia Galleries:

## A Review of the exhibition 'Aldo Manuzio'

In Thomas More's *Utopia*, published 500 years ago, the traveller Raphael Hythlodai packed Aldus Manutius's pocket editions of the classics in his luggage - already within a year of his death in 1515, the reputation of the great Venetian publisher and printer had spread far and wide.

The career of Manutius, set in the context of the rich and varied culture of Renaissance Venice, is the subject of an eye-opening exhibition this summer at the Accademia Galleries. Its beautifully produced catalogue, is available in both English and Italian, edited by Guido Beltramini and Davide Gasparotto.

Set in the spacious, newly refurbished rooms of the Palladian wing of the former Convento della Carità, the exhibition is generously laid out with plenty of space around the exhibits for leisurely contemplation. On entering the first room, the visitor immediately confronts a row of four striking painted portraits of two men and two women, all proudly holding copies of Aldine books. The reflective expressions of the sitters reveal that these books were objects of prestige, adding intellectual depth to their owners' physical beauty.

This is not just an exhibition for librarians and bibliophiles. Aldus devised his famously elegant typefaces to aid legibility and clarity of meaning, not merely to make technical advances in the art of printing. He himself belonged to

an intelligentsia of artists and scientists who propelled astonishing advances in literary, musical, philosophical and mathematical thought in Venice around 1500.

The exhibition layout draws the visitor effortlessly into different physical and mental environments: domestic space, religious thought, pastoral poetry, scientific investigation, and the art and literature of the ancients. The exhibits include objects in a range of media - sculpture, woodcuts, engravings, paintings, drawings, illuminated manuscripts, not to mention early printed books. The whole of Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia poliphili* (*The Strife of Love in a Dream*), published by Manutius in 1499 is laid out in facsimile page by page. One of the most beautiful of all incunabula, famous for its exquisite typeface and numerous woodcuts, this book continues to exert a strange fascination - part treatise, part romance, written in a curious latinised vernacular.

This exhibition is exceptionally subtle in its conception and presentation, and this short account cannot do proper justice to its achievement. Venice in Peril Fund is proud to have been able to contribute, not only to the restoration of the Ala Palladiana but also to the exhibition displayed in its fine rooms to honour the memory of Aldus Manutius.

DEBORAH HOWARD

Venice in Peril Fund has contributed to the Aldo Manuzio exhibition together with the World Monuments Fund, Save Venice, Venetian Heritage and Venice International Foundation

GALLERIE DELL'ACCADEMIA, ALA PALLADIO

19 MARCH - 31 JULY 2016

Opening hours: Monday, 8.15-14.00;

Tuesday-Sunday, 8.15-19.15

Vincenzo Catena, *St Jerome in his Study*, c. 1510, oil on canvas 75.9 x 98.4 cm National Gallery, London

## Autumn 2016 Lecture Series

All lectures will be held at the Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly, W1J 0BE  
Doors open at 6.30, lectures begin at 6.45pm. Drinks will be after the lecture until 8.30pm.  
Tickets (see details below) are £15 for members and £18 for non-members except for the Ashley Clarke Memorial Lecture - £25 for members and £30 for non-members (to include a short reception)

26 September

**Dr Frank Salmon**, President of St John's College & Senior Lecturer in History of Art, Cambridge University  
**'Monumental, refined and urbane: Victorian Architecture and Renaissance Venice'**

17 October

**Jonathan Keates**, Chairman of Venice in Peril Fund and author,  
**'Shakespeare goes to Venice'**

14 November

Ashley Clarke Memorial Lecture  
**Martin Drury CBE, 'Venice and the Society of Dilettanti'**

## New Trustee: Tim Sanderson

We are delighted that Tim Sanderson has joined the Venice in Peril Fund as a Trustee. Tim is Chairman and Chief Investment Officer of Sanderson Asset Management and has worked in the fund management industry in the UK since 1979. He is an active member of a range of academic and philanthropic institutions. Tim is a graduate and Foundation Fellow of University College, Oxford and a Fellow of the Ashmolean Museum.

4 November 2016 marks 50 years since the extreme Acqua Alta and storms of 1966 which led to an appeal to the international community and the founding of Venice in Peril Fund and its sister committees. A number of events are planned, including an exhibition of Venice in Peril Fund's work at Madonna dell'Orto in October and an exhibition at the Biblioteca Marciana of restorations undertaken across the city. Further details will be given nearer the time by e-newsletter.

If you would like to know more about our projects or how you can donate please contact us at

### VENICE IN PERIL FUND

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