



THE VENICE IN PERIL FUND  
NEWSLETTER WINTER 2014/15

# Thank you to all our Friends and Supporters

**D**EAR FRIEND AND SUPPORTER,  
As 2014 draws to a close we would like to thank everyone who has supported the Venice in Peril Fund this year - longstanding Friends of the Fund as well as the growing number of new Friends.

Thank you to everyone who has made donations whether large or small that have enabled us to continue to take on smaller projects such as the Cattedra Cicognara, the First World War Bronze Doors and the Winged Figure with Elephant statue while preparing for the project to save the Canova Monument.

Particular thanks go to the Veneziana Fund and all those who continue to choose the Veneziana pizza at Pizza Express, to the Headley Trust, the J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust, Lord and Lady Phillimore, the Awareness Trust, Francis and Christine Kyle, Bernard Gillman and Kirker Holidays and to those who wish to remain anonymous.

Around 1000 people came to our events in 2014. Thank you to our wonderful lecturers who treated audiences to entertaining and expert talks throughout the year: **Jon Whiteley, Charles Hope, Tim Knox, Sheila Hale, Richard Bassett and Sir David Chipperfield.**

## Books for Christmas

Books as we know them – perhaps I should say ‘used to know them’, given the rise of Kindle and the ebook – are a Venetian invention. On your way from the Frari to San Giacomo

dell’Orio, turn aside for a moment in Rio Terà Secondo to salute the little palazzo numbered 2311, once the home of the Aldine Press. Here in 1490 Aldus Manutius printed the first portable editions, to be carried in a pocket or placed on a bedside table, thus making reading an everyday exercise for those in search of illumination or entertainment rather than the specialized province of clerics and scholars.

Did Manutius anticipate the way in which Venice itself would become a favourite theme for writers? The titles keep on coming and the past twelve months have brought a score of them to your Chairman’s notice so here is a handful of suggestions, including an ideal stocking-present (maybe a little stretching needed alongside the tangerines or lumps of coal).

2014 has brought us an outstanding ninth edition of Alta Macadam’s **VENICE** in the Blue Guide series (Somerset Books, £14.95). Her eye for telling detail – Longhena’s mascarons on Palazzo Giustiniani-Lolin, for instance, or the mathematical game played by Palladio at San Giorgio Maggiore – is reinforced by a continuing sense of personal engagement with the city as a living community. The guide, what’s more, features a two-page spread on Venice in Peril Fund, its achievements and challenges, written by our president Frances Clarke.

A different sort of *cicerone* altogether is Milton Grundy, whose **VENICE: THE ANTHOLOGY GUIDE** (ebook 2014) is now an established classic and this new ebook version,

Our front cover shows the *Winged Figure and Elephant* just after the covers came off in November following conservation. An article in the next newsletter will reveal what more has been learnt about the Istrian stone sculpture as a result of the project. Photograph by Sarah Quill © 2014

SEE THE BACK COVER FOR OUR 2015 EVENTS,  
PUT THE DATES IN YOUR DIARY AND HELP RAISE  
FUNDS FOR CONSERVATION PROJECTS IN VENICE.



for the post-Manutian age, is specially revised and updated. Taking us on a distinctly do-able series of seven walks and four excursions up and down *calli*, *campi* and *ponti*, he garners opinions on everything from Marco Basaiti's *Agony In The Garden* at the Accademia ('somewhat artificial and un-Bellinesque': Cecil Gould) to Mantegna's *Saint Sebastian* in the Ca'd'Oro ('wincing as yet another bolt finds its mark': Alan Bennett). There's a wealth of useful hints – while waiting for the vaporetto at Ca'd'Oro take a careful look at Palazzo Corner della Regina etcetera – slipped in alongside the varied discourse between aesthetes, historians and curious travellers.

A more abrasive approach to La Serenissima is R.J.B. Bosworth's in **ITALIAN VENICE: A HISTORY** (Yale University Press, £25). The book has seriously divided its reviewers and our trustees. A purview of the city's 20th-century experience, it finds little to admire in those who try to keep the place upright and afloat (not excluding Venice in Peril Fund). A bracing read! You can hear Bosworth discussing his book with Jonathan Keates and Charles de Chassiron of the British-Italian Society on 9 February.

The stocking present I mentioned earlier is Jan Morris's delightful **CIAO, CARPACCIO!** (Pallas Athene, £12.95), the warmest of tributes to the magician of the Scuola Dalmata, generously illustrated and rich with its author's enthusiasm, wit and love of things Venetian. Finally, returning to Aldus Manutius, I strongly recommend Alessandro Marzo Magno's **BOUND IN VENICE** (Europa Editions £9.95), a lively, readable and highly informative history of the city's momentous relationship with the printed word.

*Buon Natale a tutti!*

JONATHAN KEATES, CHAIRMAN

## How you can help

The Canova Monument is now 90% funded and the project is due to start shortly. Please make a donation and help us raise the final £40,000.

Online at [www.veniceinperil.org](http://www.veniceinperil.org), by telephone 020 7736 6891 or by sending a cheque made out to Venice in Peril Fund (for address see back page)

You may also like to consider other ways of supporting the Fund's future projects in Venice

**BECOME A FRIEND** – or gift a Friend membership – £50 a year

**MAKE AN ANNUAL DONATION**

**SET UP PAYROLL GIVING** – an easy and tax effective way of making regular donations from your gross pay or pension

**LEAVE A LEGACY**

Please contact the office for more information about any of the above ways of giving or if you are interested in becoming more closely involved by supporting a specific project.

## Christmas card 2014: Lotto's *Adoration of the Shepherds*

## New Trustee: Deborah Howard

WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL to the Fondazione Brescia Musei for giving Venice in Peril Fund permission to reproduce this painting by Lorenzo Lotto (1480–1556/7) as our 2014 Christmas card. *Adoration of the Shepherds* (1530) is a masterpiece by Lotto, a leading exponent of Renaissance painting who was living in Venice when the picture was completed, although it is not known who commissioned it. In 1825 the painting was bought by Count Paolo Tosio, (one of the best-known of 19th-century Lombard collectors) and entered the civic collections in Brescia through the Tosio bequest in 1844.

*Adoration* was exhibited in Venice this autumn at the recently opened Palazzo Cini Gallery, where its striking colours were revealed after cleaning undertaken by Fondazione Brescia Musei as part of its current programme of conservation and redevelopment. Visit [www.bresciamusei.com](http://www.bresciamusei.com), and for the Palazzo Cini and [www.palazzocini.it/en](http://www.palazzocini.it/en)

WE ARE DELIGHTED that Deborah Howard will be joining Venice in Peril Fund as a Trustee in 2015. Deborah is Professor Emerita of Architectural History and Director of Research in the Faculty of Architecture and History of Art at the University of Cambridge, where she is also a Fellow of St John's College. A graduate of Cambridge and of the Courtauld Institute of Art, she taught at University College London, Edinburgh University and the Courtauld Institute, before returning to Cambridge in 1992. She was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2010.

Her principal research interests are the art and architecture of Venice and the Veneto; music and architecture in the Renaissance; and the relationship between Italy and the Eastern Mediterranean. She is currently one of the three co-ordinators of a major ERC-funded research project entitled 'Domestic Devotions: The Place of Piety in the Italian Home 1400–1600': <http://domesticdevotions.lib.cam.ac.uk/>



*Adoration of the Shepherds*, 1530, by  
Lorenzo Lotto © Fondazione Brescia  
Musei, Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo



## City & Guilds of London Art School: Student bursaries at San Giorgio Maggiore

THIS YEAR'S Venice in Peril Fund's bursary was awarded to two conservators, Eliza Doherty and Ffion Howells, who arrived in Venice in October for the two month internship hosted by the Benedictine Abbey of San Giorgio Maggiore.

Their project has involved conservation cleaning of the marble sculpture groups in the south transept of San Giorgio Maggiore. Working at heights of up to eight metres, they had to undergo safety training and learn how to dismantle and reassemble the lightweight modular scaffolding tower that was jointly bought by City & Guilds of London Art School and the Abbey.

The south transept was chosen as a starting point by the Abbey because a recently conserved painting attributed to Jacopo Tintoretto – *The Coronation of the Virgin, with Saints Benedict, Placido, Gregory the Great, Mauro and patrons*, dating to 1594 – hangs here. It is planned that future interns will continue this work throughout the basilica.

Eliza and Ffion also continued with the work begun by last year's student Catarina Ramalho on the 14th-century marble effigy of Capitano Pietro Civran as well as the project designed to stop woodworm spreading in the 16th-century walnut choir stalls, carved by Albert van der Brulle and Gaspare Gatti.

The internship allows time to see other conservation projects, and in November the interns joined a group of Second Year Conservation students from the City & Guilds of London Art School to visit the Canova Monument in the Basilica of the Frari, where work is about to begin to conserve its marble sculptures and the pyramidal structure itself.



Eliza and Ffion examining the marble statues in the south transept, San Giorgio Maggiore

With their tutor Jennifer Dinsmore they met up with Dr Lucia Bassotto and Dr Grazia Fumo, two members of the Superintendency team directing the works. They heard about the lengthy investigations that have been undertaken to analyse the exact problems affecting different parts of the monument. Both the investigations and the project to conserve the monument have been funded through the generosity of supporters of Venice in Peril Fund.

# *Lessons from Venice and Berlin* by Sir David Chipperfield

## The Ashley Clarke Memorial lecture 2014: An edited version

Sir David Chipperfield gave this year's Ashley Clarke Memorial lecture at the Society of Antiquaries. In it he reflected on how Venice makes us think about our experience of cities and talked about the work his practice has carried out in Italy – the Law Courts in Salerno, the Duomo/temple of Pozzuoli, Castello Sforzesco, Milan and an ongoing project to extend the Venice cemetery on the island of San Michele.

THE IMPORTANCE of buildings, not as individual spectacles but as the manifestation of collective values and as a setting for daily life, can be most fully understood in Italy – a country that, against all odds, remains the spiritual home of architecture and urbanism.

As a practice what we have learnt from our Italian projects – apart from patience – is that in places with such vivid context and history, the situation gives us somewhere to begin, not just responding to constraints but actually engaging with both the physical and social reality of what is there. Our work has tried to build on this experience, most notably in Berlin at the Neues Museum.

Looking out every day at the view from my office window on London's Southbank the limitations and possibilities of architecture – not as single buildings, but as a contribution to the urban landscape – are apparent. Architects today can discharge their professional duties reasonably, even with the often unreasonable practical and commercial pressures to which we must submit, but our responsibilities are

less easily defined and society's expectations – as well as our own – are not easy to manage. The act of making architecture, far from being an isolated practice, is one of complex collaboration and directed creativity.

Two years ago as Curator of the 2012 Architecture Biennale, I attempted to address these concerns by choosing the theme 'Common Ground' to encourage thinking about collective contributions as opposed to singular and spectacular contributions that could be made by architecture – in response to the idea that architecture and specifically building developments – are making a poor contribution to society and have a diminishing physical presence, I was inspired to direct the Biennale towards concerns about continuity, context and memory. I wrote in my Introduction, of Venice 'reminding us of the real possibilities of architecture both as individual acts and as part of a greater vision'.

Despite the fact that throughout its history the city has been continuously and thoroughly 'manhandled' it is understood by us all for its completeness – a myth of completeness that has held off recent modern transformation. Like other historic cities, it faces the considerable challenges both of conservation and of rejuvenation to avoid falling into parody. However Venice, in a nearly metaphysical way, reminds us that although we might not be clear how to manage the development of our cities, how to regulate, how to balance the desire to protect with the momentum of development, we still have an idea of what the city should look like.

In its intensity, Venice provides an extreme, yet reassuring image, one that we can no longer achieve – nor yet forget. Nowhere else is the dialogue between architecture and nature, between the individual contribution of singular

buildings and the overall idea of the city so eloquent. In its unreality it seems to make us reflect on the normal.

This small city continuously articulates vision yet rarely escapes its physical limits and so remains a most human marvel, within our understanding, never out of reach. The streets full of water show how commuting can be social and convivial whereas in most cities we are alienated by the process of moving from one place to another. Even in its practical inconvenience it forces us to surrender ourselves to its own idea of time.

We come to Venice not only to see St Mark's or Palladio or Tintoretto but to see what man's imagination is capable of building in the face of the explicit physical constraints of the lagoon. We witness the struggle between practicality and imagination, between the individual and society, between the daily and the eternal, between artifice and nature.

Venice is the stage which allows us to rehearse our anxieties against its glorious backdrop. Global warming, demographic fluctuation, the effects of mass tourism, the protection of monuments, these are universal concerns but here they are immanent and visible as nowhere else.

In every other city these same forces are at work but in ways that seem so complicated, so far away from us, that we find it difficult to grasp them or know how to respond to them. We are distanced from the place that should feel familiar – that should give orientation to our daily lives.

In contrast we love being in Venice not just because of its treasures but because we can wander around it, enjoying the urban setting that in other cities has become so compromised as to be unrecognisable. Venice is a reminder of how a city's architecture and



Cemetery Garden at San Michele by David Chipperfield Architects. Photographs by Christian Richters ©

life can create a drama in which everyone can participate as engaged, opinionated and excited audience.

Until twenty years ago building in cities involved ideological choices between strategies and approaches to urbanism, infrastructure, zoning and building typology. Nowadays investment dictates what is built with profound consequences for us all. In this new environment protection is no longer a case of 'all or nothing'. We need to consider development and protection together as part of the same process. We cannot allow architecture to develop into an exotic hybrid whose novelty disguises the fact that it is contributing nothing to the idea of the city.

# SPRING EVENTS 2015

## 9 FEBRUARY

A joint event with the British-Italian Society

**In conversation with R.J.B. Bosworth, author of *Italian Venice: A History*.** A short lecture followed by a discussion led by Jonathan Keates. The Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly, W1J 0BE. Doors open 6.30 lecture begins at 7pm . £15 for members £18 for non-members.

## 23 FEBRUARY

**Premio Venezia piano recital and reception** by kind invitation of Bob and Elisabeth Boas at 22 Mansfield Street, London W1. Introducing Alexander Gadjiev, winner of La Fenice piano competition 2013. Drinks at 7, concert at 7.30 and reception from 8.30pm.  
Tickets £25 plus a voluntary suggested donation of £25 to the Venice in Peril Fund

## 16 MARCH

Lecture: Sarah Quill, photographer and Trustee of Venice in Peril Fund

**Vices and Virtues: the capitals of the Ducal Palace** at the Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly, W1J 0BE. Doors open 6.30 lecture begins at 7pm. £15 for members £18 for non-members.  
A new edition of her book *Ruskin's Venice: The Stones Revisited* will be published in Spring 2015.

## 12 MAY

\*\*\*\* **SAVE THE DATE** \*\*\*\*

10th Annual Kirker Lecture – Dame Helen Ghosh DBE, Director General of the National Trust  
**Venice in Trust – Venetian Stories from National Trust properties**  
Helen Ghosh will take you on a journey of discovery through National Trust properties hearing about the Venetian treasures in its care and the stories of the people who collected them.

At the Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR  
Tickets sold in aid of Venice in Peril Fund £20 (includes a glass of wine before the lecture)  
Doors open 6pm, lecture begins 7pm

TICKETS FOR ALL THESE EVENTS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE, BY POST AND BY TELEPHONE  
(SEE BELOW)

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

### THE VENICE IN PERIL FUND

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