



NEWSLETTER
Winter 2022



VENICE IN
PERIL

DEAR FRIEND AND SUPPORTER

To approach the mosaic of the Virgin and Child over the high altar of the Basilica in Torcello is to enjoy one of Venice's greatest offerings. When a group of our Patrons visited in October we had the additional joy of seeing the remarkable Iconostasis, recently conserved in memory of our founding Chairman, John Julius Norwich. The visit coincided with the bicentenary of Canova's death, which was marked by the inauguration of our conservation of his Cenotaph in the Frari. It was wonderful to see many other Friends and supporters who joined us there. This project, such a luminous success, has been over ten years in gestation.

The Patron group also visited the Archivio di Stato, where the distinctive vellum-bound 'filze' are among the many series of volumes filling 50 miles of shelving documenting the Republic from foundation to collapse; then the Accademia, its conservation studio and the Naval Museum. In the last, students explained how they had conserved Canova's funerary monument to Admiral Emo and it was fascinating to hear about their work as dedicated restoration technicians. We hope to undertake further trips. I encourage those interested to join this new group of Patron members.

In London we marked Canova's bicentenary with an evening generously hosted at Apsley House by the Duke of Wellington, which was an opportunity to appreciate the sculptor's close ties with Britain and see the astonishing double

life-size statue of Napoleon as Mars and the beautiful Ideal Head given by Canova to the Duke of Wellington in 1818.

Some changes are under way in our team, although not in our strategy which is largely unchanged. Jonathan Keates, our former chairman, ceases to be a trustee but fortunately has agreed to be the inaugural member of an advisory council. This we intend should comprise former trustees and others who can advise on future plans. Also, Annabel Randall and Emma-Louise Bassett have both decided that after a decade at the helm, they wish to step down. They will leave a big gap but I am confident that we will find two dedicated Venetophiles to take on their roles.

We look forward to 2023, when we plan to start some new projects as well as completing those under way. The largest of these is the baroque wellhead by Cabianca in the Trinity courtyard of the Archivio. Of course none of this would be possible without the long-standing support of our Friends and Patrons. Meanwhile from all at Venice in Peril we send you our best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Guy Elliott
Chairman

Cover: Detail from the Torcello panels attributed to Zanino di Pietro 1420-30. Reproduced by kind permission of the Patriarchate of Venice-Torcello. Photo: Matteo de Fina



Venice in Peril Patrons at the Archivio di Stato, Artemis Cooper remembers John Julius Norwich and the conservation team at the Canova Monument.

BECOME A FRIEND OF VENICE IN PERIL

Benefits include:

- Opportunities to learn about Venice by supporting conservation projects
- A popular programme of expert but accessible talks on Venetian subjects
- Twice-yearly Venice in Peril printed Newsletter covering conservation stories
- Regular e-newsletters with conservation updates
- A membership network of those who share your love of Venice

	ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP	STANDING ORDER
FRIEND	£60	£50
JOINT	£100	£80

Patron benefits include all the above as well as opportunities to visit our project work in Venice. To become a Patron please contact us info@veniceinperil.org or 020 7736 6891.

PANEL PAINTINGS RETURN TO TORCELLO

Completed Project

This project, in two parts, saw the early 12th-century marble reliefs conserved in 2019 and the panel paintings, attributed to Zanino di Pietro and dated to the 1420s, reinstalled in Summer 2022. The complex treatment included new backing panels to protect the paintings from rapid atmospheric changes in the church. The 19th-century frame, which obscured the haloes, has been adjusted and the panel ordering reconsidered while cleaning has revealed the vibrant colours and definition of the paintings. The project was funded by Venice in Peril Fund and Save Venice Inc in memory of John Julius Norwich.

In October, completion of the project was marked with a tour of the Cathedral and a celebration which brought together the conservators, Save Venice, Don Caputo representing the Patriarchate, Mollie Norwich and members of the Venice in Peril Fund Patron group. Artemis Cooper spoke about her first revelatory visit to Torcello with her father John Julius Norwich.



Paolo Roma, Annamaria d'Ottavi and Martini Serafin of MAUVE conservation with Don Gianmatteo Caputo.

*Reproduced by kind permission of the Patriarchate of Venice-Torcello.
Photo: Matteo de Fina*



CONSERVATION OF 16TH TO 17TH-CENTURY POLYCHROME WOODEN STATUES, SAN NICOLÒ DEI

Current Project

Annamaria d'Ottavi of the MAUVE conservation studio in Cannaregio is the lead on the conservation of these three large figures of the evangelists, St Mark and St John from the high altar, and an Angel candle-bearer from the left-hand side chapel.

As work progresses the gold is beginning to look particularly resplendent and the flesh tones are coming up pink as the picture shows. St Mark's garment has been revealed as a rich burgundy and his slippers are recovering their scarlet colour, but the original green of St John's tunic has become irrevocably blackened. His replacement left arm and book probably date from an intervention in the 1920s.

The statues are constructed from a central vertical section, hollowed out at the back with added limbs and attributes which include St Mark's lion and St John's eagle and their gospel books.

The angel is from a later date and has suffered greater damage including woodworm. It has been agreed that the fingers of the right hand can be reconstructed.

A completion date of March 2023 is envisaged ahead of the Feast of St Mark on April 25.

The project has been funded by Frances Clarke and the Fondation Jean-Barthélemy.



SAN NICOLÒ DEI MENDICOLI FLOOD DEFENCES COMPLETED

Seven new higher lightweight modular door barriers have now been installed at San Nicolò – all of them funded by the 2019 Acqua Alta Appeal – two protect the presbytery which leads into the church, two are on the principal entrance to the church, two on the west end and one further on the south side of the church. They will protect the church against flooding up to 194cm if the MOSE barrier is not raised or does not function. The additional completed drainage works inside the church have been written up in earlier newsletters.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE CHURCHES OF VENICE

Most guidebooks treat Venetian churches as works of art and architecture, but in reality there are many different kinds of churches, each with a different religious and social function. A cathedral is not the same as a parish church; a friary is not the same as a monastery; a nunnery is not the same as a hospital; and a scuola piccolo is not the same as a scuola grande. The picture is complicated by the fact that in the Napoleonic period many churches in Venice were closed or given new functions – both religious and secular - or even demolished.

The project, Chiese di Venezia: Nuove prospettive di ricerca was founded in 2010 - www.chiesedivenezia.eu. The pioneering initiative, directed by Gianmario Guidarelli, aims to encourage a new way of looking at churches in their spatial and historical context – religious, social, economic, commemorative



and ceremonial. The project consists of a programme of interdisciplinary conferences, each focused on a particular Venetian church, followed by the publication of a book of essays.

So far the conferences have addressed the following churches: San Bartolomeo, parish church, 2011; Santa Maria di Nazareth (the Scalzi), friary church, 2012; San Lazzaro dei Mendicanti, one of the four state hospitals, 2013; San Zaccaria, Benedictine nunnery, 2014; San Pietro di Castello, cathedral, 2015; San Giacomo dall'Orto, parish church, 2017; San Polo, parish church, 2019; Santa Maria dei Servi, friary, partly demolished, 2020; San Rocco, church of the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, 2021.

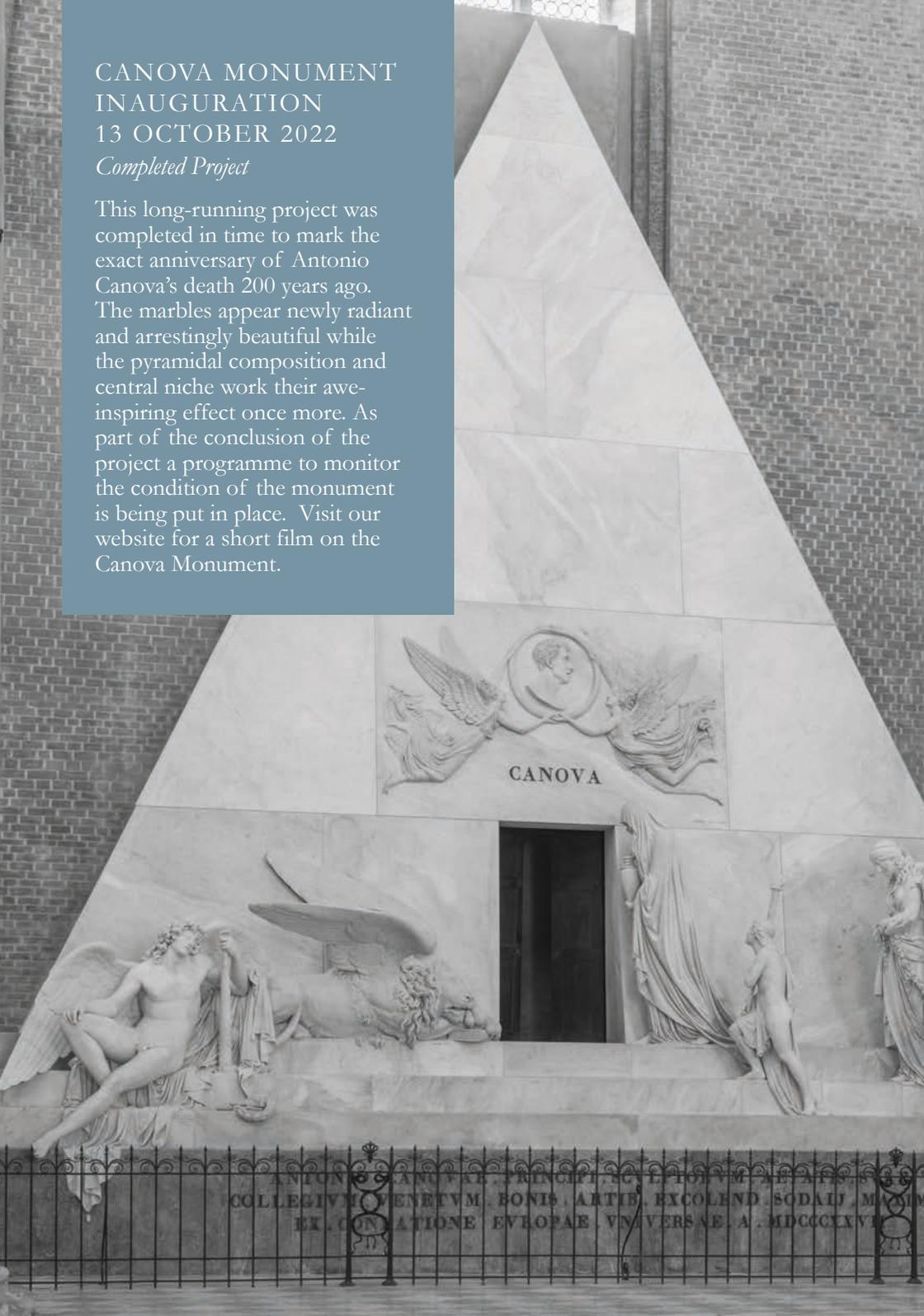
Each conference spotlights a different part of the city, focusing on an understudied church seen through new eyes - although of course many pieces in the jigsaw are yet to be filled in and this year it is the turn of San Nicolò dei Mendicoli.

Deborah Howard

CANOVA MONUMENT INAUGURATION 13 OCTOBER 2022

Completed Project

This long-running project was completed in time to mark the exact anniversary of Antonio Canova's death 200 years ago. The marbles appear newly radiant and arrestingly beautiful while the pyramidal composition and central niche work their awe-inspiring effect once more. As part of the conclusion of the project a programme to monitor the condition of the monument is being put in place. Visit our website for a short film on the Canova Monument.



CELEBRATING CANOVA IN THE VENETO

Current Exhibitions

The recently unveiled Canova monument in Santa Maria Gloriosa is reason enough to visit Venice, but there is also a revealing exhibition of the photographs of Fabio Zonta (born 1958) in the Correr Museum (until 5 February 2023). Zonta's ethereal images respond anew to Canova's celebrated ability to capture the sense of marble made flesh, caressing the Canova collection at the Correr with diaphanous shades of chiaroscuro.

Photos: Joan Porcel



Zonta, like Canova, was born in Bassano del Grappa in the Veneto, and this is where the visitor can see a remarkable exhibition (until 26 February 2023), the scale and energy of which defies any suggestion that the Veneto is a cultural backwater when compared to Venice. The Civic Museum has produced a major show, *I, Canova, European Genius*, for which the curatorial team are to be congratulated. This features an astonishing 140 sculptures (including the recently rediscovered *Recumbent Magdalene*, 1819-22 paintings, drawings, and books (some shown for the first time) – many from Canova's own collection. Three sections examine his artistic development, his relationship with and importance for Europe, and his place in history, notably his relationship with Napoleon and his court, and his restitution of objects back to their rightful homes after Napoleon's fall. Through his efforts a total of 258 works returned to Italy.

Equally rewarding is a visit to nearby Possagno, the place of Canova's birth with its Gypsotheca (rivalling that of Thorvaldsen in Copenhagen) housing the original plaster models of the marbles now dispersed around the great museums of the world. Located in the original basilica and the extension designed by Carlo Scarpa (1955-57), as well as the stable block, this too has an exhibition, *Canova and Pain, The Mellerio Stele, the renewal of sepulchral representation* (until 8 January 2023).

Andrew Moore

ANGELO EMO'S FUNERARY MONUMENT BY ANTONIO CANOVA

Completed Project

This project was carried out in September 2022 by four second year students on the IVBC Corso di Restauro Lapideo (Stonework Conservation Course). Laura Avitabile, Gabriela Mallamace, Federica Palmisano and Isabelle Peruzzetto worked under the direction of their tutor Jean-Pierre Zocca and Federica Restiani, Scientific Co-ordinator at the Istituto Veneto per I Beni Culturali, and the Soprintendenza, completing it in time for the bicentenary of Canova's death on October 13.

The monument was originally installed near the Corderie in the Arsenale, to the disappointment of Canova who had been led to believe that it would be placed in the Sala delle Quattro Porte in the Palazzo Ducale, and it has been moved four times since 1792, lastly to the Museo Navale in 1964.

The students presented their work to Venice in Peril Patrons in October, sharing the discoveries made about how the monument was constructed and subsequently dismantled and how they had found traces of iron-staining in drapery folds that may be part of the original surface treatment intended to enhance shadow effects.

A full report of the project captures the acclaim with which the monument was received, its peripatetic history and the location of the documentary sources relating to it, each element of which is mirrored in the detailed description of the treatment of damage suffered by the 3.5m high monument.

These pictures by Isabelle Peruzzetto and Tommy Secchiaroli tell the story of the work undertaken.

The project was funded by the Drapers' Company of the City of London.



TRINITY WELLHEAD, ARCHIVIO DI STATO

Current Project

Conservation firm LARES has carried out preliminary consolidation of the 50th Anniversary Appeal project, including the reattachment of an angel's wing at the top of the monument. Cleaning is now well underway and involves eradication of extensive mosses and lichens in and around the monument, and the treatment of *croste nere* (darkened incrustations).

The project is scheduled for completion shortly.

Photos: LARES Restauri



REVIVING CORONELLI'S CELESTIAL GLOBE

Current Project

Work continues on Coronelli's Celestial Globe from the Museo Correr. Having restored many historic globes, Lucia and Andrea Dori of L'Officina del Restauro in Florence are very familiar with the fragility of their materials and construction, the removal of later varnishes and torn gores, (the sections pasted onto the spheres). Their photos here show details of the constellation of Sagittarius, the largest in the southern hemisphere, one 'before' cleaning and the

other 'after'. You can still donate to this project which is costing £22,000.

The Terrestrial globe, which is its pair, was recently treated by the same conservators with superb results. Funded through Banca Intesa Sanpaolo's 'Restituzioni' programme (restituzioni.com), it will be displayed, together with the Celestial Globe in the Museo Correr.

For details of an online talk 'Coronelli's Globes' on 24 January 2023 see back page.



Photos: L'Officina del Restauro, Florence



PROJECT UPDATES

As well as the projects covered on other pages, work has been continuing, and is nearly finished, on the **Bellini Nativity Triptych**. The **15th century polychrome wooden crucifix** from the old church of San Zaccaria has been returned to the main church and installed next to the high altar at ground level. The Rotary Club project to provide braille totems as guides for the visually impaired continues, with the installation of one in the church of S. Maria Salute, supported by Venice in Peril. The Fund also made a small contribution to

On the Surface, a UK initiative that shared knowledge of traditional lime-plastering techniques through a workshop at the Squero di S. Isepo amongst a wider programme of community activities. **The City and Guilds of London Art School** was once again able to send two of its Conservation Graduates to S. Giorgio Maggiore for a ten-week internship undertaking conservation maintenance. This year, Alannah Hay and Milla Stafford-Deitsch were awarded the internship which comes with a bursary provided by Venice in Peril Fund.



CHRISTMAS BOOKS

Among new books published in the run up to Christmas is *La Serenissima 'The Story of Venice'*, by Jonathan Keates, our recently retired Chairman and Trustee (published by Head of Zeus, £40). A sumptuous volume *Gardens of the Veneto*, by Monty Don and Derry Moore is for those who enjoyed his recent BBC series. Gianmaria Donà dalle Rose is the author of *Seven Days in Venice*, published by Settecolori. Walk through Venice in the company of a knowledgeable Venetian to discover all sorts of references not found in English guidebooks. Peter Humfrey is the editor of *Vittore Carpaccio: Master Storyteller of Renaissance Venice* (from Yale) which came out in October on the heels of his *Giovanni Bellini: An Introduction*, (from Venetian publisher Marsilio) last year. For cooks, there is *Cinnamon and Salt - Cicchetti in Venice*, by Emiko Davies.

For a comprehensive selection of books on Venice head to John Sandoe Bookshop's online Venice in Peril Fund booklist. Order from this list and 10% goes to Venice in Peril Fund.

VENICE BY TRAIN

Are you trying to take fewer short haul flights? How about taking the train from the UK to Venice. David Holberton, who joined our first Patron Group trip in October lays out the routes and provides some resources.

London – Venice

It is possible to get from London to Venice in one day, leaving St Pancras at 8am and arriving in Venice shortly before midnight. The route is London - Paris Nord - Paris Est - Turin - Venice.

Venice – London

In the reverse direction, you can only do the trip in a single day on Sundays. Any other day will require a stopover either in Turin or in Paris.

Alternative routes

The options for more leisurely train travel to Venice are many and varied. My own route was quite circuitous, taking me from London to Arles, for the tail end of the annual contemporary photography festival (1 day), Arles to Nice (4 hours), and from Nice to Venice (1 day). I returned on the Austrian Railways afternoon service from Venice to Munich, a beautiful route that winds through Sud Tirol and over the Brenner Pass down to Innsbruck and then on to Munich, taking 7 hours. After overnighing in Munich you can continue to London via Frankfurt or Cologne and Brussels. On this trip I went via Frankfurt to Rotterdam, where I had some work to do before taking the overnight ferry to Harwich and on to London. All-in-all, it took about two and a half days travelling in both directions.

Where to buy the tickets

To book tickets I use The Trainline, www.thetrainline.com, or Rail Europe, www.raileurope.com. I was advised to use Rail Europe for routes that involve a combination of French and Italian trains, however, I believe The Trainline could do it equally well, and their charges are lower. There is also Deutsche Bahn, www.bahn.com, which can book almost any rail journey anywhere, although I have not put that to the test.

The Eurostar service is not inexpensive unless booked well in advance. Otherwise rail fares in Europe are cheap by comparison to the UK, and for the over 60s a discount is given automatically.

Other Resources

- *Europe by Rail: The Definitive Guide*, Gardner & Kries, 17th edition, 2022 and the website that goes with it: www.europebyrail.eu
- *A Travellers' Railway Map of Europe*, published by Benjaminse Uitgeverij, Alkmaar, The Netherlands
- Byway Travel www.byway.travel specialists in arranging 'slow travel' holidays
- The source of all knowledge when it comes to travelling across Europe by train is: The Man in Seat 61 www.seat61.com

David Holberton

See back page for Andrew Martin's lecture Trains to Venice on 13 March

SPRING 2023 EVENT SERIES

24 JANUARY

Vincenzo Coronelli And His Venetian Globes

*Marica Milanese in conversation with Susan Steer
Online event*

Venice in Peril has recently adopted a 1693 celestial globe designed by the Franciscan friar Vincenzo Coronelli who made his name building two huge globes for Louis XIV. Marica Milanese, professor of the history of geography at Pavia and author of an acclaimed monograph on Coronelli, will introduce us to the cosmographer and entrepreneur and explain how and why the globe is being restored in the Florentine studio of Lucia and Andrea Dori.

Tickets: £10 (Ticket & registration details are sent out via the VIP e-newsletter)

20 FEBRUARY

‘As It Was, Where It Was ...’ The Fall And Rise Of The Campanile Of San Marco

*A joint event with the British-Italian Society
Sarah Quill*

In July 1902 the famous bell-tower of St Mark, the city’s totemic symbol, collapsed into a pile of rubble, crushing Sansovino’s 16thC Loggetta beneath it, and narrowly missing the slender columns of the Basilica. News of the disaster flashed by telegram round the world, and the shock and distress felt by Venetians at the sudden loss of their landmark campanile was intense. After an immediate decision by the town council that the Campanile would be rebuilt exactly as it was and where it was, the work of recovery, planning and rebuilding took ten years. Sarah Quill is a Trustee of Venice in Peril.

13 MARCH

Trains to Venice

Andrew Martin

Andrew Martin discusses Venice as a magnet for some notable trains of the past and present, including the Simplon Express, the Simplon Orient Express, the Venice Simplon Orient Express and the Thello overnight service from Paris. His talk will draw on timetables, literature and his own experience of going by train to Venice. Andrew is an author, journalist and broadcaster. He has written many books with a railway theme, including *The Night Trains: the Rise and Fall of the European Sleeper*, and ten novels featuring the railway policeman, Jim Stringer. His book, *Metropolitain: An Ode to the Paris Metro*, is out in July 2023.

*20 February and 13 March talks are at the Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly W1 0BE
Tickets £20 Friends, £25 Others - Timings: Doors open 6.30 for 6.45pm*

To find out more about our projects and how you can donate: veniceinperil.org or contact us:
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