
INTRODUCTION

The cultural centre of the British Institute of Florence is situated on the south bank of the Arno at Palazzo Lanfredini on Lungarno Guicciardini. Founded in 1917 the British Institute is testimony to the far longer cordial relationship that has existed between Italy and Britain. Its Library and Archive bear witness to this with holdings that extend beyond the date of its foundation into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTE AND ITS PREMISES

The British Institute was founded largely as the result of private initiatives during the autumn of 1917. The idea for an institute for mutual exchange between Italian and British scholars and for a supporting library had existed before the war and the war itself highlighted the need for such an institute. Lina Waterfield (1874-1964) obtained a lease of the Loggia Rucellai in via della Vigna Nuova and there installed the Institute's first reading room and classrooms.

Among the contributors to the foundation and early years of the Institute were Guido Biagi, Guido Ferrando, Giuseppe Saverino Gargano, Angiolo Orvieto, Gaetano Salvemini, Aldo Sorani, Carlo Placci, Edward Hutton, Arthur Acton, Walter Ashburner, William Hulton, Herbert Trench and Lina Waterfield. Each contributed with his or her own expertise. The writer John Buchan, then Director of Information in London, was enthusiastic about the project and government support was ensured through the Foreign Office.

Sir James Rennell Rodd, the British Ambassador in Rome, came to Florence for the formal opening of the Institute in June 1918. By then the first Director, Arthur



A postcard showing the first premises of the British Institute, the Loggia Rucellai in Via della Vigna Nuova, and visiting sailors from H.M.S. Hope, May 1918. (Waterfield Collection)

Francis Spender had been appointed and the Institute had moved to more spacious premises at via dei Conti, 3. With Rodd's assistance, a constitution for the Institute was drawn up and an application made for the Royal Charter which was eventually granted by King George V in May 1923. Janet Trevelyan the author and daughter of the novelist Mrs. Humphry Ward and wife of the historian G.M. Trevelyan, did much of the administrative work involved in obtaining the Charter. She and her husband were part of an extended group of academics and politicians in England who supported the Italian cause during and after the war and who were essential to the survival of the Institute between the wars following the British government's withdrawal of its financial support.

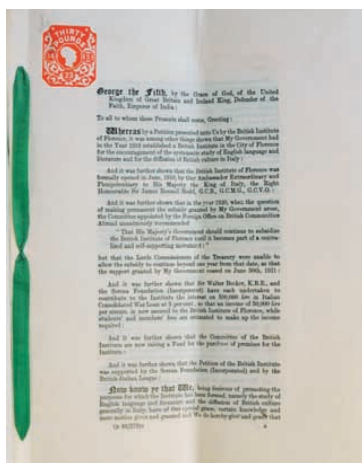
The initial subsidy from the Foreign Office was continued only until 1921. At this stage the Institute almost foundered, but was rescued by the private generosity of three benefactors: Sir Daniel Stevenson, a Glasgow ship-builder, Sir Walter Becker, an industrialist who had financed G.M. Trevelyan's ambulance unit in northern Italy during the war, and Renée Courtauld, sister of the collector. For a period of almost 20 years the Institute managed to survive on these donations and its own earnings until its temporary closure in 1940.

In May 1923, by now under the Directorship of the Italianist Harold Goad, the Institute moved into Palazzo Antinori where it was to remain for over forty years. From its inception the Institute was very much an Anglo-Italian institution with both countries contributing to its teaching programme and to its government and administration. Its first publication, “La Vita Britannica” containing articles and book reviews, was published in Italian. During the twenties and thirties the Institute established itself as an indispensable part of the cultural life of Florence. Alongside the library services and lecture programme the school functioned largely for the teaching of English to Italians who would be teaching English in Italian schools. During the crisis of 1935-36 the Institute did not close, owing perhaps to the Director’s known sympathy with Fascism, a sympathy which caused concern at the Foreign Office and among his colleagues.

The Charter of the British Institute, granted by King George V in 1923. (Institute Archives)

During the years of the Second World War the Institute remained closed and its property was made the responsibility of the Swiss Consulate. Books and furniture survived the war intact thanks to the devotion of the then

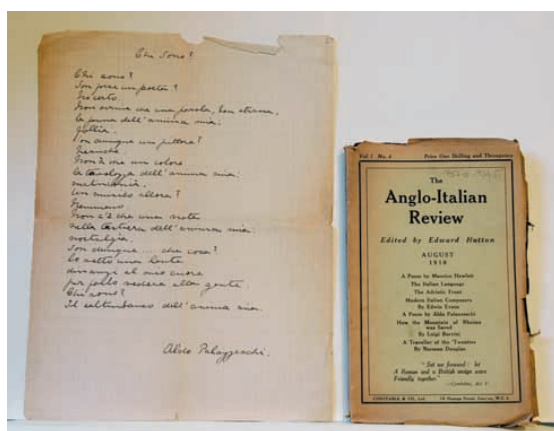
Librarian, Giulia Fermi. Francis Toye, the biographer of Verdi and Rossini and music critic of “The Morning Post”, was appointed to succeed Harold Goad in 1939 and he returned after the war to begin a programme of consolidation and expansion, a process that continued when Ian Greenlees succeeded him as Director in 1958. Greenlees had headed the operations in Italy of the new British Council and during the war itself he singlehandedly established Radio Bari for the broadcasting of



anti-Fascist propaganda. Greenlees developed the teaching of Italian, began a programme of Renaissance studies and promoted conferences emphasising Anglo-Italian relations.

When the lease on the Palazzo Antinori expired in 1965, Sir Harold Acton placed at the disposal of the Institute the first floor and part of the ground floor of the Palazzo Lanfredini where the Library and Archive are now housed. At the same time the Institute secured the lease of the third floor of the Palazzo Feroni for the school where it remained until its move to the Palazzo Strozzi in the 1990s.

The Palazzo Lanfredini is attributed by Vasari to Baccio d'Agnolo and it was constructed in the early sixteenth century for the banker Lanfredino Lanfredini. The palazzo underwent major renovation and alterations in 1904 and 1938 and the British Institute occupies part of the ground floor with its vaulted rooms and part of the piano nobile with its arcaded *verone* loggia. The move into the Palazzo Lanfredini was barely completed when, on 4th November 1966, the Institute suffered a small share of the damage caused by the catastrophic flood.



The manuscript of *Chi Sono?* by Aldo Palazzeschi, written in 1918 for Edward Hutton's "Anglo-Italian Review" and published in August 1918. (Hutton Collection)

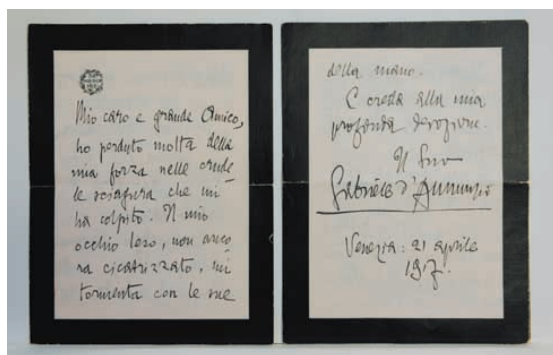


Photograph taken in London c. 1923, from left to right are:

Miss de Castelveccchio, Professor of Italian at the University of Birmingham, Harold Goad, Director of the British Institute of Florence, Janet Trevelyan, Hon. Sec., British Italian League and British Institute, Signorina Boschetti, Italian Sec., British Italian League, Lady Rodd (wife to the ex-Ambassador to Rome), Miss Carey (Institute Archives)

Ian Greenlees retired from his post as Director in 1981 and subsequent directors have continued to develop the role of the British Institute, always in keeping with its original intentions, outlined in the Royal Charter, of promoting the study in Italy of English language and literature, of maintaining a library of books illustrating English and Italian culture and “the promotion of a good understanding between Italians and English-speaking people by providing opportunities for intellectual and social intercourse”. Greenlees was succeeded by David Rundle who had worked for the British Council, he in turn was succeeded by Frank Woodhouse, an Italian specialist from Cambridge University, in 1989. Improvements begun by him in the Palazzo Lanfredini were continued by his successor Christine Wilding, lecturer in French and Italian, and by the current Director the lawyer Vanessa Hall-Smith. The Lanfredini rooms have been restored and a new reading room created on the ground floor.

The British Institute's library, the largest English language lending library on mainland Europe with approximately 48,000 volumes, is the fruit of both purchase and donation over the past century. It made its first substantial holdings through the purchase of the library of the scholar and poet Herbert Trench in 1922 and subsequent donors have ranged from British government agencies and British publishers to private individuals, many of them British residents in Tuscany. Dorothy Nevile Lees built up the Edward Gordon Craig collection, the heirs of Vernon Lee donated a substantial part of that writer's personal library and the widow of Henry Furst gave her husband's library to the Institute. In the early 1960s the Institute purchased the Holy Trinity Church lending library which had been established in the nineteenth century, and the majority of these volumes are nineteenth century publications and include long runs of the periodicals "The Quarterly Review" and "The Edinburgh Review". Francis Toye left his collection of music and the library boasts of a substantial collection of music scores. The library's major areas of concentration are in English Literature, British History, Art History, Florence and Tuscany and the Grand Tour. It also has a substantial collection of both



A letter from Gabriele D'Annunzio to 'Mio Caro Grande Amico,' probably Rennell Rodd when the British Ambassador to Rome, 21 April 1917. (Institute Archives)



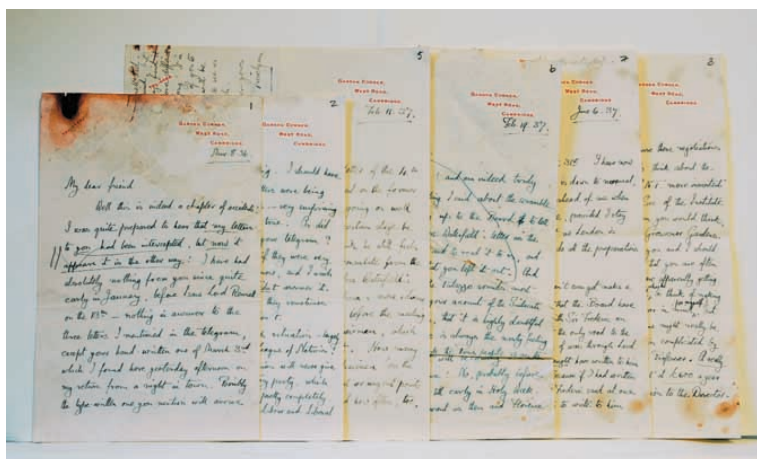
A section of the Archive.

nineteenth and twentieth century periodicals.

The Archive can be divided into two distinct areas, the archives of the institution itself and the special collections, all of which have been donated to the Institute because of their connection with the Institute or with the city of Florence. The British Institute has become a repository that is considered ideal for British people with a strong connection to Florence and Tuscany. A project to process and catalogue the collections was begun in 2001 and a substantial part of that project has been completed. The col-

lections were declared of great historical interest by the Soprintendenza Archivistica, and the Soprintendenza followed the project from its inception.

The **archives relating to the history of the institution** run from 1917 to the present. Processing of this material for the first period of the Institute's history, from 1917 to 1940, has been completed. Given the number of moves that the Institute has made more documentation exists for the inter-war period than was expected. Of particular interest is the correspondence between the Harold Goad and the Secretary to the Institute's governing Council in London, Janet Trevelyan. Until the 1950s the Institute not only had a Governing Body based in Florence but also a Council in London lobbying for support and funding and not the least of the Director's problems was satisfying the demands of both groups. The correspondence that exists between Goad and Janet Trevelyan illustrates the way in which Goad had to be castigated for making his support of Fascism too public. At the same time, without Goad's support (and his publications on



Fascism) it is possible the Institute would not have survived the crisis of 1935. The School had as its first Headmaster the young Aldo Ricci and as part of the collection the Institute holds the theses written by students in the 1920s and 1930s. The collection as a whole is invaluable in its record of the functioning of a British cultural institution in a foreign country, illustrating as it does its relationship with its host country and with its own government and institutions.

The **Horner collection** consists of three diaries donated by Susan Zileri in the early 1960s. Susan Zileri was the younger daughter of two companion-servants to the Horner family and she was adopted by Susan and Joanna Horner after the deaths of her parents. Susan Horner was a writer on Italian subjects and is most well remembered for the guide book to Florence she produced with her sister Joanna, *Walks in Florence and its Environs* (London 1884).

The first journal was written by Susan Horner's aunt, a Mrs Power. The journal covers a period of time spent in Italy in the 1820s by A.W. Power with her husband, Major Power. It was written after the time spent in the coun-

Letters from Janet Trevelyan, Hon. Sec. to the Council of the British Institute in London, to Harold Goad, Director of the British Institute. (Institute Archives)

try and is a collection of recalled conversations and observations. From the text it appears the Powers spent three years in Italy with at least one year in Naples and a minimum of two months in Venice.

The remaining two journals were kept by Susan Horner and record two periods of travel and residence in Italy. The first of these covers the years 1847 and 1848 and concentrates on recording visits to various sites in France and Italy, including Paris, Florence, Genoa, Pisa and Rome and the objects seen on those visits. The journal is occasionally enlivened by accounts of visits to local soirées, observations on political events or by incidents such as the shipwreck she is involved in off the Italian coast.

The period covered by the second journal, 1861-1862, was spent in Florence with her parents and sister, Joanna. The Horner sisters were well-connected in intellectual and politically liberal circles and made the acquaintance of many of the prominent Florentines of the time, including Filippo Parlatore of the Natural History Museum, the historian and statesman Pasquale Villari, the Egyptologist Migliarini, the Marchesi Capponi, Feroni, Sauli and Carlo Torrigiani, and Baron Gaetano Ricasoli. Some of their introductions to these people came through their friend the scientist and astronomer Mary Somerville who was by

Pages from Susan Horner's Journal for 1861-2, this shows photographs of Filippo Parlatore, the Marchese Sauli, Cavaliere Bonaini, the interior courtyard of Palazzo Vecchio and a print of Piazza dell Signoria. (Horner Collection)



then living in Italy. Susan's own work (she had published a translation of Pietro Colletta's *History of the Kingdom of Naples* in 1858 and her own *A Century of Despotism in Naples and Sicily* in 1860) also served as an introduction.

Susan herself spent much time at the Uffizi where she encountered local academics and intellectuals and when not researching for a book on gems was in conversation with Migliarini. The journal includes an account of the progress of the illness of the poet Arthur Hugh Clough (1819-1861), his death, and his burial in the English Cemetery. It is also lavishly illustrated with Susan's own sketches and very fine contemporary photographs.

The **Hutton collection** was donated by the writers' son, Peter Hutton over a period of more than twenty years between 1970 and 1998. Edward Hutton is known for his writing on Italian subjects and as the author of travel-books covering nearly the whole of the peninsula as well as Sicily. He also wrote about Greece and Spain, and produced three of the volumes in the *Highways and Byways* series (Somerset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire). In 1917 the Italian government made him a Cavaliere dell'Ordine della Corona d'Italia in recognition of his wartime services to Anglo-Italian co-operation and in 1959 a Commendatore dell'Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana. In 1924 the British Academy gave him its gold medal for his work in the field of Italian studies.

Born in 1875, Edward Hutton first went to Italy when he was twenty-one. In the spring of 1901 Hutton and his wife rented the Casa di Boccaccio at Ponte a Mensola, east of Florence, not far from I Tatti into which the Berensons had moved at around the same time, and from Janet Ross at Poggio Gherardo. Here Hutton began to write the travel books that were to become famous, e.g. *The Cities of Umbria* (London, 1905), *Florence and Northern Tuscany* (London, 1907), *Siena and Southern Tuscany* (London, 1910), *Venice and Venetia* (London, 1911) *Rome* (London,



Hard board, covered in silk and cotton with a chinoiserie pattern, used to secure the manuscript of Edward Hutton's *Highways and Byways in Somerset*. (Hutton Collection)

1912), *Naples and Southern Italy* (London, 1915). Hutton also wrote an outstanding critical biography of Boccaccio (London, 1910).

During the First World War, Hutton was sent to Italy on a special mission by the then permanent under-secretary for Foreign Affairs. He was kept there for nearly two years, at the end of which time he was lent to the Italian authorities to work for the Italian Foreign Action Bureau in London. His activities in Florence contributed to the founding of the British Institute. In 1918

he founded the "Anglo-Italian Review" and two articles written by Hutton in the "Review" inspired Arthur Serena, a shipbroker and son of the Venetian patriot Leone, to provide the funds necessary to found Chairs of Italian at Oxford and Cambridge. Serena provided half the cost of the new chairs and the Universities found the rest.

The collection consists of over 500 letters, more than sixty hand-written and typed manuscripts, cuttings, working notebooks, scrapbooks and published work.

The **Maquay collection** was deposited with the British Institute by Lord Caccia in January 1983. The Maquays were an Anglo-Irish family and their connection with Florence is through John Leland Maquay junior (1791-1868) who married Elena Gigli in 1828 and lived in Florence for the following thirty years. He was a founder of the Pakenham & Maquay bank and his four sons grew up in Florence, two of them following their father into the bank.

The collection consists of private journals, public and private letters and documents relating to three generations of the family. The journals and letters cover the private life, and sometimes public, of the different authors. John Leland Maquay senior's journals begin in 1799 and

end with his death in 1829. The earlier journals concentrate on financial accounts and provide material on the costs and modes of travel, road conditions, the costs of daily living. His 1814-1816 journals cover the journey he took with his wife in France and Italy, with extended stays in Nice, Genoa, Florence, Rome, Salerno and Venice.

The journals of Elizabeth Maquay, mother to John Leland junior, cover the period 1821 to 1845, with a few years missing. After her husband George Maquay's death in Paris in 1820 and her son John's marriage in 1828, Elizabeth spent much of her time travelling and a considerable amount of time in Florence where she died in 1845. Her daughter Elizabeth provides a journal for 1815 during which year the family was in Italy; Elizabeth died in 1817 and is buried in the cemetery in Livorno.

John Leland Maquay junior's journals cover the period 1810 to 1862. The early years involve travel and work in Canada and the United States. From the 1820s onwards when he settled in Florence the journals are devoted to domestic, family and business issues. There is little mention of national or international affairs but much on the English community and its relationship with the Italian. The journals indicate that he was a trusted man and T.A. Trollope wrote in *What I Remember* (1888) that when presentations were made at Court, 'Mr Maquay, the banker, always did that office for Americans, the United States having no representative at the grand ducal court.' Maquay was heavily involved in the founding of the English Church of Holy Trinity and its Lending Library. He returned to Ireland with his wife in 1858 and bought an estate, Ashfield, where he died in 1868.

John Leland Maquay junior's wife Elena wrote journals from 1853 to 1894, these are devoted to domestic affairs and, in particular, to her sons. Of the four sons of John and Elena, the collection holds the journals, letter-

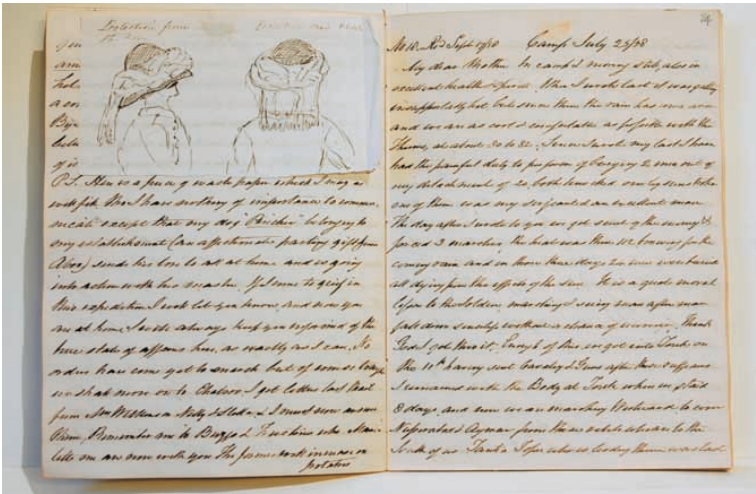
books and memoir of John Popham Maquay (1837-1894) who was in the Royal Engineers and served in the Crimea and India, and Thomas Moore Maquay (1838-1881) who was in the Royal Navy.

The remainder of the collection consists largely of letters and family documents; the majority are private letters involving John Maquay junior, his wife Elena and her mother.

The **Waterfield collection** was given to the British Institute by the Beevor family between 2001 and 2005. Kinta Beevor, author of *A Tuscan Childhood* (1993), was the daughter of one of the founders of the Institute, Lina Waterfield.

Letter-book containing letters from John Popham Maquay to his parents. The letters were sent from India in 1858 and the illustration shows a sketch for hot weather head-gear. (Maquay Collection)

Lina Waterfield was born Lina Duff Gordon in 1874 and on the death of her mother in 1889 she became the ward of her aunt, Janet Ross, née Duff Gordon (1842-1927) who lived at Poggio Gherardo, near Settignano, and was a well-known writer and figure in the Anglo-American community of Florence. Her own account of her life and her friendships can be found in her book, *The Fourth Generation* (London 1912).



Janet Ross was the daughter of Lucie Duff Gordon (1821-1869), author of the magnificent *Letters from Egypt*. She in turn was the daughter of the gifted translator Sarah Austin (1793-1867).

Lina Waterfield maintained an active interest in the British Institute the whole of her life. She and her husband Aubrey Waterfield, a painter, restored and lived in the Fortezza della Brunella at Aulla in the Lunigiana, and managed a school at Poggio Gherardo in the 1930s, only leaving Italy in 1940. Lina Waterfield was Italian correspondent for the newspaper, "The Observer", from 1921 until 1939, and foreign correspondent for Kelmsley Press.



Her husband wrote for "The Manchester Guardian" in the 1920s.

The collection contains over 700 letters. These include letters from Sarah Austin and John Austin, Caroline Norton, Mary and Agnes Berry and letters from Lucie Duff Gordon, including three letter books and her last letters from Egypt to her husband. The major-

Janet Ross drawn by Carlo Orsi, probably in the 1870s. (Waterfield Collection)

Sketches for the garden design at Villa I Tatti made by Aubrey Waterfield in a letter to his wife Lina, 20 November 1909. (Waterfield Collection)



ity of the letters are from Janet Ross and Lina Waterfield to various correspondents and of particular interest are letters to Mary Berenson and Madge Symonds Vaughan.

In the collection there are unpublished memoirs by Madge Symonds Vaughan and Caroline Duff Gordon and the manuscript and research files for Gordon Waterfield's unpublished biography of his great-aunt Janet Ross.

Among Janet Ross's papers are her photograph albums, cuttings books, and a receipt for the Luca Signorelli painting *The School of Pan*, bought by Janet Ross and her husband in 1869.

The **Edward Gordon Craig collection** consists largely of printed books and journals. The collection was donated by Dorothy Nevile Lees in honour of the English stage designer, producer, and actor. In Florence, Craig edited his magazine, "The Mask" (1908-1929) with the assistance of Dorothy Nevile Lees. The collection contains books by or about Craig and books relating to the theatre.

The **Vernon Lee collection** is also a printed book collection, over 400 volumes from Vernon Lee's personal library. Many of these volumes were heavily annotated by Lee herself.

ARRANGEMENT AND CONSULTATION*

Each collection has been processed and catalogued as entirely distinct from each other with series and sub-series appropriate to each individual collection. Most of the collections did not have an existing arrangement on reception. Where there was any coherent order this has been maintained.

The Maquay collection came with a short report on its content compiled by the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts. The Waterfield collection had been used by various family members. Some of the correspondence in the Hutton collection had been extracted and isolated as significant in relation to the writer Norman Douglas. The historical archives of the Institute had been used frequently by the institution and only part of the collection maintained a coherent internal order.

Each collection now has an accompanying catalogue and some have supplementary catalogues with exemplar material from the collection. There is a transcript for Susan Horner's 1861-1862 Diary as the original is fragile.

The Library is open to the public on payment of a membership fee and both the Library and Archive participate in the SDIAF scheme.

* Papers in the archive are subject to the laws on privacy and to copyright law and anyone consulting the archive is asked to respect this.

The British Institute is grateful to the following individuals and organisations whose support has made and continues to make the organization of the archive and special collections possible.

In Italy: the Ente Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze, the Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali/Soprintendenza Archivistica per la Toscana, the Comune di Firenze and SDIAF

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