



The Trollope Society
Visit to Florence

1st - 5th April 2020

Draft Programme

The information in this programme is correct as of 19th February. For the latest version of the programme visit www.trollopesociety.org/event/trip-florence/

Wednesday 1st April		
From 5pm	Registration and pick up pack	Reception, Hotel Ricasoli, Via Delle Mantellate 2, Firenze
6pm – 8pm	Welcome to Florence by Dominic Edwardes, Chair of the Trollope Society Drinks Reception with canapes to include the launch of newly reprinted Fanny Trollope's <i>The Life and Adventures of Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw (1836)</i>	Hotel Ricasoli, Via Delle Mantellate 2, Firenze
Thursday 2nd April		
10am to 1pm	Walking tour of City Centre	Meet at the carousel in Piazza della Repubblica, 50123 Firenze
3pm-4pm	Talk by Mark Roberts, Consultant to the British Institute on <i>Some 19th-Century Literary Visitors to Florence</i>	Acton Room, Harold Acton Library, British Institute, Lungarno Guicciardini, 9, 50125 Firenze <i>See More Information</i>
4.30pm – 6.30pm	Visit to the British Institute with afternoon tea and cake	The Ferragamo Room, Harold Acton Library, British Institute, Lungarno Guicciardini, 9, 50125 Firenze
Friday 3rd April		
9.30am	Walk to Trollope Villa	Trollope Villa, 21 Piazza della Indipendenza
10.15am to 12 noon	Talk by Dominic Edwardes on <i>The Life of Fanny Trollope</i> . Talk by Julia Bolton Holloway, librarian, archivist and custodian of the English Cemetery, on <i>Frances Trollope's political and social activism</i>	Hotel Ricasoli, Via Delle Mantellate 2, Firenze

2.00pm 2.30pm	Walk to English Cemetery OR Meet at English Cemetery Followed by refreshments at nearby café	English Cemetery, Piazzale Donatello, 38, 50132 Firenze
7.00pm	Dinner at Gran Caffè San Marco Included for those who have pre- booked and pre-paid	Gran Caffè San Marco, Piazza San Marco, 11/R, 50121 Firenze
Saturday 4th April		
10am - 12 noon	Free time or optional visit to the Stibbert Museum. You can walk in the gardens (free) or visit the museum, entry €8 per person. Entry fee not included in package	The Stibbert Museum, Via Federico Stibbert, 26, 50134 Firenze <i>See More Information</i>
12.30pm to 2.30pm	Optional lunch at Trattoria Da Nasone Not included in package	Trattoria Da Nasone, Via Santa Caterina D'Alessandria, 27, 50131 Firenze
3pm – 5pm	Seminar group – Led by Lucia Costanzo on <i>He Knew He Was Right</i>	St Mark's Anglican Church, Via Maggio, 16, 50125 Firenze
Sunday 5th April		
	Free time – perhaps visit the Uffizi or the Cathedral or St Mark's Anglican Church (<i>See More Information</i>) in Florence.	

Notes

- All of the activities listed on the attached programme are included in the trip EXCEPT:
 - Friday, 3rd April - Dinner at Gran Caffè San Marco – you must pre-book and pre-pay (£60) for this dinner – includes set menu and wine/soft drinks.
 - Saturday, 4th April - optional visit to the Stibbert Museum (*See More Information*) – you can walk in the gardens (free) or visit the museum (€8 per person) - the entry fee is not included – you will need to pay this at the museum
 - Saturday, 4th April - optional lunch at Trattoria Da Nasone
- Florence city centre is fairly small and all of the places we will be visiting will be within walking distance of each other. If anyone does not want to walk, there are plenty of taxis available and these will be at your own cost.

3. A walking tour of the city centre is included in the itinerary on Thursday, 2nd April – this is a 3 hour tour – if anyone doesn't want to do this walk, please let us know as soon as possible as we need to confirm numbers in advance. You can always leave the tour part way through if it is too long.
4. The walking tour will not include visits to the Duomo, Uffizi etc and anyone wanting to visit specific sites need to make their own arrangements. Queues in Florence can be long so we would recommend that you book in advance.
5. The walking tour will proceed regardless of the weather so be prepared with an umbrella, coat, comfortable shoes etc.
6. There is a dress code for visiting churches, shoulders must be covered and shorts or skirts should be knee length.
7. On Saturday afternoon (4th April), there will be a seminar on *He Knew He Was Right*, which in part has an Italian setting. The text is available free of charge from Project Gutenberg at <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/5140> or is widely available at good booksellers and Amazon.
8. Meals are not included in the itinerary – we will have lunches/dinners at local restaurants and, if anyone wants to join us for any meal, please feel free to do so.

More Information

Suggestions for what to do in Florence

The Duomo

Entrance to the Duomo is free, but tickets can be purchased which offer faster access and priority entrance to save time and money. While entrance to the cathedral itself is free, you need a combined ticket (currently €19) to visit the dome, the crypt, the baptistery and the campanile.

The Duomo is closed on Sunday mornings for mass.

Casa Guidi

Anyone in Florence on Wednesday afternoon might want to visit Casa Guidi, the home of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

A Brief History of The Florentine Home of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Casa Guidi is open to visitors Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 1 April through 30 November.

Casa Guidi is a suite of eight rooms situated on the piano nobile of Palazzo Guidi, located opposite the south wing of the Pitti Palace, at Piazza San Felice 8, Florence, Italy.

Palazzo Guidi was originally two 15th-century structures. The corner house was built by the Ridolfi family, who wanted a residence near the Pitti. In 1618, Count Camillo Guidi, Secretary of State for the Medici, bought this building from Lorenzo Ridolfi. In 1650, the adjoining house was given to Admiral Camillo Guidi, nephew of Count Guidi, by the Commenda of the Military Order of St. Stephen. The two houses were combined and refurbished in the late 18th century. In the early 1840's, the Guidi family sub-divided the grand state rooms on the piano nobile into two apartments.

Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning leased one of these apartments in 1847, less than a year after their marriage. It became their home for the remaining 14 years of their married life. Soon after the birth of their son, Pen, Elizabeth started calling the apartment Casa Guidi, thereby changing "a mere palace into a home."

During these years, the poets wrote some of their best-known works, including Elizabeth's *Casa Guidi Windows* and *Aurora Leigh*. Here, too, Robert wrote *Men and Women* and conceived *The Ring and the Book*.

As authors of some of the most famous poetical works of the 19th century, the Brownings attracted noted visitors, including Margaret Fuller, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Frederick Tennyson, William Wetmore Story, and the Trollopes.

Pen Browning, who acquired the palazzo in 1893, initiated efforts to establish Casa Guidi as a fitting memorial to his parents. He died in 1912, having failed to carry out his plans. In 1916, through the efforts of Laura Ellen Centaro, an American admirer of the Brownings who had purchased the palazzo, the Browning Foundation was formed to preserve Casa Guidi. But world events and Signora Centaro's premature death led to the organization's disbandment in 1931.

In 1970, Casa Guidi faced the danger of being converted into commercial offices. Through a fundraising campaign mounted by the New York Browning Society, a hairbreadth rescue of seven rooms (of the original suite of eight) was accomplished. When it became apparent that the campaign to save Casa Guidi would be successful, the Browning Institute was formed to take title to the property.

For more than 20 years the Browning Institute was the guardian of Casa Guidi, establishing a library and museum, as well as promoting cultural events to encourage the study of the lives and works of the poets. However, in the early 1990's, it became evident that efforts to attract the funds necessary to fulfil the Institute's stated goals for Casa Guidi were proving difficult. Directors of the Institute were advised to seek the aid of a larger institution that would be sympathetic to the Institute's goals and as devoted to their achievement.

Following these suggestions, various institutions were approached and discussions ensued. Finally, at a special members' meeting in October 1991, a formal recommendation was overwhelmingly approved to transfer ownership of Casa Guidi to Eton College. After obtaining the necessary legal approvals in the United States, Great Britain, and Italy, official ownership of Casa Guidi was transferred to Eton in January 1993.

To ensure the prompt completion of the restoration of Casa Guidi, Eton College engaged the Landmark Trust as its agent to assist in the task of renovation and refurbishment. Working together for the next few years, Eton College, the Landmark Trust, and the Browning Institute (with the Friends of Casa Guidi), completed the work of restoring the rooms. A

formal opening was held in July 1995 to mark the successful fulfilment of this century-old desire to create a lasting memorial to Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Harold Acton Library, British Institute

From the foundation in 1917, the Library has always been the core of the British Institute of Florence. Over the years it has built up, largely thanks to generous donations from the Anglo-Florentine community, into one of the largest English language lending libraries in Europe. It is a humanities library, with strong holdings in English and Italian literature, history, and history of art. There are also significant collections of travel writing and other memoirs from the long engagement of the British with Florence, including an important Archive containing the papers and books of key figures from the resident English Colony of the early 20th Century.

The Library also carries newspapers and periodicals, and a collection of DVDs. Members benefit from access to the collections, as well as free use of our wifi and other facilities.

The Harold Acton Library is a timeless oasis of peace in the beautiful heritage rooms of Palazzo Lanfredini overlooking the Arno – a place for study and contemplation just a step away from the hurly-burly of Florence.

The Library was named after Harold Acton in 1989. Harold was for many years associated with the British Institute; he joined the governing board in 1950 and made available his apartments in the Palazzo Lanfredini for the Library of the British Institute in 1966.

Harold's father, Arthur Acton, was from the Italian branch of the English Acton family, originally from Shropshire. His mother, Hortense Lenore Mitchell (1871-1962), was a rich heiress from Chicago, whose father was the founder of the Illinois Trust and Savings bank. When Hortense married Arthur in 1903 they moved into the Villa La Pietra, on the via Bolognese in Florence and shortly afterwards she bought it for him.

Harold was born in the Villa La Pietra in 1904, and grew up in the cultured and cosmopolitan Anglo-Florentine society before the First World War. He was sent to Eton and then to Christ Church, Oxford, where he was the most celebrated undergraduate of his generation. His contemporaries included Evelyn Waugh, Graham Greene, Cyril Connolly, Brian Howard.

A book of poems, *Aquarium* (1923), was published to national acclaim when Harold was only eighteen. Later volumes of poetry were less successful, and after a failed novel, unfortunately entitled *Humdrum* (1928), he found his true métier as a writer of historical narrative. The *Last Medici*, a study of the Grand Dukes Cosimo III and Giangastone, came out in 1932. In that year Harold set out for the Far East, and having toured South-East Asia he settled in Peking (Beijing), where he taught English at the University for seven years. In this period he learned the language and studied the classical Chinese theatre. He made a number of translations from the Chinese and collected works of art, but the political situation both in China and in Europe was rapidly deteriorating, and in 1939 he returned to Europe to fight against Hitler. After a quixotic lecture tour of Italy, hoping to persuade Mussolini's Fascist



Who was Harold Acton?

government not to declare war on Britain, he joined the Royal Air Force and served in India and Ceylon (Sri Lanka). His parents escaped to Switzerland, and the Villa was sequestered. Harold was in Paris after the Liberation as an intelligence officer, and saw many old friends such as Gertrude Stein, George Orwell and Jean Cocteau. A few years after the war he published *Memoirs of an Aesthete* (1948), expounding his personal creed of artistic and natural beauty. In the 1950s he spent much time in Naples, where his archival researches eventually bore fruit in the form of two massive historical studies, *The Bourbons of Naples* (1956) and *The Last Bourbons of Naples* (1961). After the deaths of his parents he became owner of Villa La Pietra, where he spent the rest of his life. A second volume of autobiography, *More Memoirs of an Aesthete*, came out in 1970. An attractive coffee-table book called *Tuscan villas*, illustrated with photographs by Alexander Zielcke, appeared in 1973, and two years later Harold published his biography of an old friend, *Nancy Mitford: a Memoir*. Another old friend, Anne Rosse, was the mother-in-law of Princess Margaret and because of this connection many members of the royal family came to stay as Harold's guests at La Pietra. He was always generous in allowing visitors to Florence to look round his house and garden.

In February 1994 Harold died in his bed at La Pietra, in the house where he had been born ninety years previously. He is buried beside his parents and younger brother, who died during the Second World War, in the Allori cemetery on the via Senese. He left his portion of the Palazzo Lanfredini, which already housed our library, to the British Institute and the Villa and its surrounding properties to New York University, which now uses La Pietra as its principal European campus.

Frederick Stibbert Museum

The Stibbert family came from Norfolk, United Kingdom. Thomas Stibbert, Frederick's father, came to Italy after having fought against Napoleon in Spain. He went to Rome and later to Florence where he met Giulia Cafaggi (who he married in Malta). They had three children, the elder being Frederick, born in 1838.

The Anglo-Italian origin influenced greatly the growth and the culture of the young Frederick. He was sent to Harrow-on-the-hill for his education but he did not accept the hard rules imposed by the school, and later to Cambridge. He was much attached to his family house in Montughi, Florence, bought by his mother when the father died.



In 1859 Frederick became of age and started to administer his inherited great wealth from his house in Montughi. He was very good at taking advantage of the many changes caused by the birth of the Italian State.

In 1866 Frederick took part in the war for Italian Independence and was awarded a silver medal for his valour during the battle of the Trentino.

All his life he travelled to the principal capitals of Europe making contacts with the most important antique dealers of his time. For about fifty years he worked hard at his dream of transforming his house in Montughi in an historical museum. In his last will he left the museum to the Municipality. After Frederick's death in 1906 the museum was opened to the public (1909).

St Mark's Anglican Church in Florence

St Mark's 'English' Church is an Anglican church in Florence, Italy. It is a chaplaincy of the Church of England in the Diocese in Europe and serves all English-speakers who find themselves in Tuscany or Emilia Romagna.

Visitors are usually surprised and enchanted by the church's jewel-like interior, with William Morris stencilling and richly-coloured decoration.

The church has regular services of worship, the main one being Sung High Mass every Sunday at 10:30.

The church is also a unique venue for weddings; opera; concerts; music and a wide range of artistic, literary and cultural events for visitors and locals alike.

Many people are surprised to learn that St Mark's receives no financial support from the Church of England, or from local or national Governments. The central Florence location is wonderful, but it's a big building to maintain and the church pays the same taxes as designer fashion stores! Therefore St Mark's relies entirely on the generosity of those who use the premises or benefit from the ministry.

St. Mark's English Church on via Maggio opened its doors for worship in 1881. From the outset, its purpose was to offer a subscription-free welcome to tourist visitors to Florence. Designed by its founder Reverend Charles Tooth to glorify God and to offer a deeply spiritual liturgical experience with a great emphasis on the Sacrament of the Mass, preaching and mission, it also quickly attracted a core congregation of residential English speaking expats who recognised and appreciated its Anglo-Catholic tradition and the Renaissance atmosphere of its interior decoration. Inside a fifteenth-century palazzo, the church glows with a rich dark vitality created a century ago by English and local artists whose work reflects the influential Pre-Raphaelite movement, although the stencilling on the interior walls, like so many Florentine treasures, was extensively damaged by the floods of 1966.

Today, the Church of England in Florence is an integral part of this post-modern city. St. Mark's, like every church in the city, reflects the cultural diversity of an international, highly mobile, workforce and welcomes travellers from all over the world. Our ministers and members participate in the ecumenical and interfaith networks of which Florence is rightly proud. St Mark's is an integral part of the local community and increasingly, local people as well as tourists visit the church and join in the many events, concerts and opera performances that take place here throughout the year.

St. Mark's was not the first Church of England congregation in Florence. The chaplaincy had its origins in the British delegation to the Court of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. In the 1820s the British residents of Florence began to look for a place of their own in which to worship. By 1840 Holy Trinity Church had opened, quietly, discreetly and for non-Italian members of the Church of England only. Making converts from among the local population was strictly prohibited no matter how much the individuals themselves might have desired it. After the unification of Italy, and the right to freedom of worship, the congregation subscribed to pay for the erection of the present Holy Trinity building in via Lamarmora. In 1965 that building was sold to the Protestant Waldesian Church who own it today and St. Mark's assumed the sole Church of England chaplaincy to Florence, with Siena. Today St Mark's chaplaincy also includes a congregation at Holy Cross, Bologna.