

## British Institute Events / November - December 2007

*Wednesday 7 November at 18.00*

**Kirsten Aschengreen Piacenti**

***Frederick Stibbert: Anglo-Florentine and cosmopolitan***

Frederick Stibbert was born in 1838, son of an English father and a Florentine mother. The family fortune had been made by his grandfather in India. Frederick was educated at Harrow, after which he devoted his life to collecting. He transformed his mother's house on the hill of Montughi just outside Florence into a remarkable museum, including 12,000 pieces of European, Islamic and Japanese arms and armour. Kirsten Aschengreen Piacenti is the director of the Museo Stibbert, having formerly been director of the Museo degli Argenti at Palazzo Pitti.

*Tuesday 13 November*

**Reception at The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, London**

**A tutti gli ospiti (circa 350) verrà consegnata una copia dello Special Issue all'uscita della Galleria**

*Thursday 15 November at 18.00*

**Valdo Spini**

***Gaetano Salvemini***

Valdo Spini will assess the life and legacy of Gaetano Salvemini, the anti fascist politician, writer and historian who died 50 years ago. Gaetano Salvemini was one of the group of intellectuals who helped to establish The British Institute of Florence in 1917. Onorevole Valdo Spini has had a lifelong career in politics as a member of the Socialist party and is a serving member of the Italian parliament.

*Wednesday 21 November at 18.00*

**Dorothea Barrett**

***Sex, religion, and politics in the novels of Graham Greene***

In this talk Dorothea Barrett will look at Greene's treatment of sex, religion, and politics, with a view to arriving at some conclusions about his place in the literary canon. She will end the talk with a consideration of Greene's relation to Italy and his friendship with Harold Acton. Dorothea Barrett lectures in English literature at Syracuse University in Florence and New York University at La Pietra. She has written extensively on George Eliot, the English novel, and issues of gender and imperialism in literature. This talk is based on an essay she is writing for *The Cambridge Companion to English Novelists* due to be published early next year.

*Wednesday 28 November at 18.00*

**Warwick Lister**

***Viotti in London***

Giovanni Battista Viotti (1755-1824), arguably the most influential violinist who ever lived, was born in Piedmont, and his musical training took place in Turin. After ten years in Paris, he fled to England in 1792, where, except for two sojourns abroad, he lived and worked until his death. His relationship, on the musical, social, financial and political level, with England and with the English (he was on friendly terms with a wide range of English society, and some of the pre-eminent artistic, literary and professional men and women of the time), was affectionate, intense, and often fraught with difficulties, sometimes with tragedy. In the context of the great diaspora of Italian musicians to England in the eighteenth century, Viotti's case may be seen as a particularly revealing example, not least because he was an acute and candid observer of English society.

*Wednesday 5 December at 18.00*

**Paul Ginsborg**

***Romanticism and Risorgimento: "L'io, l'amore e la patria"***

Paul Ginsborg is Professor of Contemporary History at the University of Florence. Best known for his studies of post-war Italian politics (including *A history of contemporary Italy, 1943-1988* and *Italy and its discontents: family, civil society, state, 1980-2007*), he also has an interest in 19th-century Italy, having published *Daniele Manin and the Venetian Revolution of 1848-49* with Cambridge University Press and co-edited the innovative recent volume on the *Risorgimento*, published by Einaudi as vol. 23 of the *Annali della Storia d'Italia*.

*Wednesday 12 December at 18.00*

**Candida Cave**

***Christmas greetings***

Candida Cave, well known to British Institute audiences as the author of half a dozen plays that have been produced here in recent years, takes a look at the custom of sending each other cards at Christmas - a custom introduced by the Victorians, widespread over the entire English-speaking world, and now (perhaps) on its way out.