



No. 14

FRIENDS of the Non-Catholic Cemetery in Rome

Spring 2011

“Five years of the Friends, May 2006 - May 2011”

NEWSLETTER

Riccione honours its benefactors: the Ceccarini tomb restored

At the furthest point of the Cemetery from its entrance, adjacent to the Aurelian Wall, lies the imposing Ceccarini tomb, one of the largest monuments in the Cemetery. The sculptor of the portrait-bust in it was Tito Tadolini (1828-1910), one of the renowned Tadolini family whose studio is preserved as a museum in Via del Babuino in Rome. The Ceccarini couple were generous benefactors of Riccione, just south of Rimini on the Adriatic coast, at the time a poor village but, since the 1930s, a popular destination for tourism. The President of the Rotary Club of Riccione, Mr Riccardo Angelini, has been instrumental in raising the funds needed to restore the Ceccarini tomb; we are indebted to him and to the Rotary Club and the Istituzioni pubbliche di Assistenza e Beneficenza (IPAB) of Riccione. Here we include accounts of the Ceccarinis and of the restoration of their tomb that was entrusted to Gianfranco Malorgio and Sara Toscan, working under contract to the Cemetery in co-operation with its own restorer Rita Galluccio. On 8 May the Cemetery will host a public ceremony celebrating the tomb's restoration.



Photo: N. Stanley-Price

Restoration of the Ceccarini tomb

The funeral monument dedicated to Giovanni Ceccarini, at the time of its restoration, was in a poor state of conservation. All its surfaces were covered in a thick layer of dirt, calcareous incrustations and various deposits (earth, vegetation, etc.). Biological attack (fungus, algae),

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WHO THEY WERE...

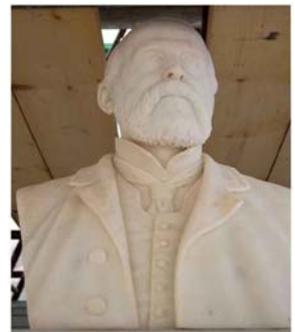
Giovanni Ceccarini (1823-1888)

Maria Boorman Wheeler Ceccarini (1839-1903)

Giovanni Ceccarini was born in Torrice (now in the province of Frosinone) on 17 October 1823. He studied medicine and in 1841 worked at the hospital of Pesaro, practising surgery and earning the praise of his superiors, and also at Rimini hospital. While commuting between Pesaro and Rimini, he loved the green hills and the natural beauty of the area around the village of Riccione.



Photo: G. Malorgio



Bust of G. Ceccarini before and after cleaning

In July 1844 he graduated in surgery in Rome and was assigned to teach Anatomy in the Academia di Belle Arti of Rome. In August 1848 he was appointed municipal surgeon of Rome. In February 1849 during the brief period of the Roman Republic that was inexorably cut short by the French army, he fought at the side of Garibaldi and – following the defeat – was condemned to exile. He first spent time in the Orient and then in Paris, working at the Necker Hospital and in the Faculty of Medicine.

He left Paris in 1854 for the United States where he founded an ophthalmic hospital and was subsequently appointed Health Commissioner for New York. There he came to know Maria Boorman Wheeler who became his wife on 15 October 1863. Their marriage was celebrated according to the Protestant rite as that was their religion. In November 1875 the Ceccarinis obtained passports and the following month they settled in Rome, but divided their time between Rome and Scacciano, a hamlet of Misano Adriatico, located on the hills immediately inland from Riccione. There Giovanni and his wife Maria undertook various generous initiatives in aid of the local population, most of whom were poor people, peasants and fishermen.

In 1880 he was elected municipal councillor of Misano Adriatico but could not take up the post because of holding American citizenship. Giovanni and Maria travelled regularly between Rome and the villa of Torre Rossa which they had built on the boundary between Riccione and Misano. After her husband died on 3 December 1888, Maria Boorman Wheeler Ceccarini became a member in 1889 of the Società Operaia di Mutuo Soccorso di Riccione; founded the Popular Circulating Library; created in November 1891 the nursery school of Riccione; and in April broke ground to build the Hospital that was completed in October 1893, assigning to it the ownership of numerous farms. In 1894 she donated a large sum to the Comune of Rimini to construct the port. Then she had built, on the line of the ancient Viola track, the road to the port from Riccione, situated on the Roman Via Flaminia. This benefactor of Riccione died on 31 August 1903.

Contributed by Giovanni Olivieri, from the book *I Ceccarini per Riccione: il giardino d'infanzia e l'ospedale*, by Patrizia Bebi and Oreste Delucca, IPAB Giardino d'Infanzia Maria Ceccarini, Riccione 1990

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Photo: G Malorgio

together with the black crust that was extensive on the monument, had changed completely the appearance of the tomb. As a result, the marble of Trani, of which the monument is built, exhibited in many places (especially on the columns) the loss of stone material in core elements and in decorative areas.

The bust of Giovanni Ceccarini was in a terrible condition because of thick deposits of black crust that covered the entire surface. One of the factors contributing to its deterioration was the abundant vegetation of hedges, trees and foliage that almost completely surrounded the monument. This inhibited natural air circulation and thus contributed to depositing dust, cyanobacteria, incrustations, etc. and the consequent formation of black crust.

Our first task, before building the scaffolding, was to remove some branches of adjacent trees and the hedge along the back of the tomb, so as to improve ventilation around the whole monument. Removing the hedge led to the discovery of inscriptions carved on the base of the monument as follows:

Left side of the base: D.VENTURI & FIGLIO BOLOGNA 1890. Surely the craftsman who built the monument.

Right side of the base: LUIGI BAZZANI ARCHITETTO. The designer of the monument.

The restoration aims to rescue and conserve the monument. We recommend that, once the work is complete, the monument be left free of surrounding vegetation and that the hedge at the rear of the tomb not be replaced as it was originally.

Gianfranco Malorgio, restorer



THE CEMETERY IN THE NEWS

Exhibition on Johann Christian Reinhart (1761-1847)

A couple of years ago a German schoolgirl, followed by her parents, came into the Visitors' Centre to ask where she could find the grave of the man after whom her school was named. He proved to be the landscape painter Johann Christian Reinhart (1761-1847), originally from Hof in Bavaria. On the 250th anniversary of his birth, the Casa di Goethe in Rome organised a small exhibition (February to May 2011) devoted to his work. Reinhart was one of those who, once they had arrived in Rome, never returned to their country. He married a local girl and, in his 58 years there, became the leading

figure of the German artist colony and renowned for his good company. In 1813 he was elected to the Accademia di San Luca and in 1839 became painter to the Bavarian court. The Casa di Goethe asked visitors to the exhibition to contribute to the costs of restoring Reinhart's tomb (Zona Vecchia. 7.5), a project that was already underway. We received funding for this from the German Embassy and also, appropriately, from the mayor of the city of Hof, Mr. Eberhard Siller, and a collection made by the pupils of the "J.C. Reinhart Gymnasium" in Hof named after the painter...



Jose Madrazo y Agudo (1781-1859), *Portrait of Johann Christian Reinhart*, Accademia di San Luca, Roma

Restoration of the tomb of R.M. Ballantyne (1825-1894)

...not that this is the first time that schoolchildren have created a fund for a tomb in the Cemetery. Thanks to a donation from one of our volunteers, we recently cleaned the tomb of R.M. Ballantyne (Zona 2.15.8), the prolific Scottish writer famous for his stories for boys. *The Coral Island* (1858) is known to have inspired Robert Louis Stevenson in his own exotic stories, J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* and William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. It has never been out of print since first publication. Suffering from a mysterious ailment (now diagnosed as Ménière's disease), Ballantyne came to Rome in 1893 but lived for only four months. News of his death shocked his young readers back in Britain who, led by the boys of Harrow School, contributed their shillings and pennies to a fund (which eventually reached £600) that would pay for a suitable monument to him. On the wise advice of R.L. Stevenson, only £40 was devoted to purchasing the simple tombstone that we see today, the balance being given to Ballantyne's widow and family.

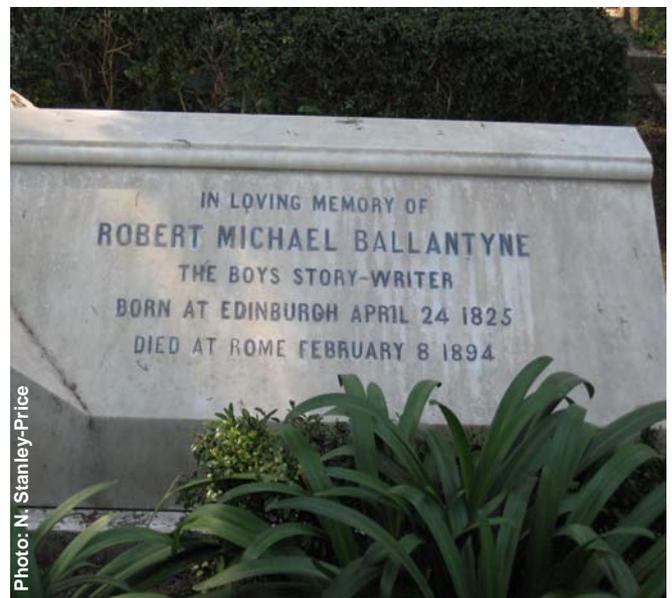


Photo: N. Stanley-Price

Views of the Cemetery in Pre-Raphaelite exhibition

The widely praised exhibition on the Pre-Raphaelites and Italy (held last year in Ravenna and then in Oxford) brought together a number of little known works from private collections. Among those of Roman interest were Burne-Jones' designs for the mosaics in the church of St. Paul's within the Walls, and five depictions of the graves of Keats and Shelley. In 1872-73 both William Bell Scott (in oil) and Walter Crane (in watercolour) painted the two graves, and their works now belong to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. But the exhibition included a little known watercolour of Keats' grave by George Howard, 9th Earl of Carlisle (1843-1911), which is now in a private collection. Howard had commissioned the two watercolours from Crane but subsequently made his own. Unusually, he depicted Keats' grave from the side, rather than frontally, so as to show the dense pines and cypresses of the main Cemetery in the background. These paintings are all beautifully reproduced in the catalogue: *The Pre-Raphaelites and Italy*, by Colin Harrison and Christopher Newall, Ashmolean 2010, £25 (Italian version also available).

The open air museum of Testaccio

The Cemetery is one of the 20 points of interest in a new visitors' route around the "Open air museum of Testaccio". Taking its name from Monte Testaccio, that extraordinary artificial hill of accumulated Roman amphora fragments, the *rione* has many historical attractions that range from the Roman Pyramid and Aurelian town walls to modern architecture such as Adalberto Libera's striking Post Office in Via Marmorata (1932). The museum is a joint initiative of the Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Roma and the Municipio Roma Centro Storico.



Each of the 20 points of interest on the route boasts a bilingual (Italian-English) information sign equipped with QR code for reading with camera phones.

Meanwhile the Cemetery is the exclusive subject of Alessandro Rubinetti's *Cimitero Acattolico: guida romanzata del cimitero settecentesco di Roma* (Iacobelli, Roma 2011, €15). Rubinetti, trained in the theatre, brings to his guidebook the same enthusiasm that inspires his tours of the Cemetery and of archaeological sites around Rome. This popular guide will certainly help make the Cemetery better known and appreciated.

On this fifth anniversary of the founding of the Friends, some readers may recall that in the first issue of the *Newsletter* (2006), Chris Huemer wrote a profile of Alfred Strohl-Fern (1847-1927). (You can find all previous Newsletters at www.cemeteryrome.it). Strohl-Fern was a sculptor, painter, writer and musician who provided studios for numerous artists in his spacious Villa in Rome. The intellectual and cultural legacy of this fascinating figure, buried



in the Cemetery, is explored in: *Alfred Wilhelm Strohl-Fern*, edited by Giovanna Caterina de Feo (Davide Ghaleb Editore 2010, €15). In this volume Flavia Matitti comments briefly on the bronze portrait-medallion of Strohl-Fern on his tomb (Zona 1.13.17) that was designed by the French sculptor Denys Puech, the then Director of the French Academy in Rome.



HOW OTHERS SEE THE CEMETERY

In the original Swedish edition (1956) of the *Guidebook to the Cemetery*, Johan Beck-Friis included a number of passages of poetry and prose that referred to the Cemetery. The prose pieces in Swedish are now translated here for the first time. We are indebted to Ann-Charlotte Welin-Bignami for translating them into Italian and for adding some notes about their authors. The English versions have been produced by the Editor.

Vilhelm Lundström (1869-1940), Swedish, famous professor of classical philology, Member of Parliament. The house where he was born at Sigtuna is now a museum.

It is the first of November, All Saints Day, All Souls Day.
I run to Campo de' Fiori, I buy for a few pence an enormous bunch of roses and dahlias, I catch a carriage and shout to the driver: Protestant Cemetery!

It is thither that my ride takes me. Faster! Faster! I cry to the driver. In that far place there are so many forgotten tombs of so many forgotten compatriots, on All Souls Day they expect a floral tribute from the country of Gustavus Adolphus.

I walk from grave to grave. All Swedes and Finns, all Norwegians and Danes must have a flower on their tombs on All Souls Day. Silence reigns, it is so silent in that place. But suddenly from the dome of St. Peter's there ring out solemn bells; for the heretics too the bells of St. Peter's must ring the Ave Maria...

I stop for a moment near the tomb of a Finnish girl. The inscription

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on the stone says she had seen twenty-one summers when death overcame her. What dreams were shattered, what hopes in life were vanquished? I take the reddest rose from my bunch and lay it on her forgotten tomb.

Finally I stop last and longest near the tomb for which I have saved my palest, my saddest flowers. Abandoned and forgotten, with a simple stone and a painted inscription, half obliterated, it lies there in one of the lowest rows. It contains the remains of a man who was perhaps destined to become the greatest philologist in his country, a man endowed by mother nature with great talent, a man whom the powers-that-be and the fatherland have left as usual without encouragement, without support and without stimulus to reinforce a weak character. How I recall when, with flashing eyes and voice trembling with enthusiasm, he recited the finest choruses of Euripides; how I recall the moment in which with that recital he had determined my choice of life. And how I recall the way in which he shared the destiny of so many others, that of passing away without becoming what he should have become! Ancient Sweden, you allow to perish your most industrious and dedicated sons!

And so in the end he obtained some pence from the powers-that-be and the fatherland to – die in Rome. (All Saints Day, 1899)

Paul Elis Holmberg (1850 – 1899), *Swedish writer*

And in this small place they have made their appointments, brothers and sisters from the most different countries on earth: youths arrived from the north to enjoy the sunny life of the south, finding instead a grave, sons and daughters from the white islands of Albion, or from the Far West the other side of the Atlantic, from the Ultima Thule and from the sunny valleys of Provence...now they sleep all together here in the "Eternal City". (From *Från en Romresa*, Göteborg, 1878)

Carl Rupert Nyblom (1832-1907), *Swedish, art historian, man of letters and composer, member of the Swedish Academy*

The only conciliatory aspect of the solemn ceremony, but which to me seemed desolate, was the thought of the happiness in a certain sense implied in the ability to recall the treasure of one's heart hidden in such earth, in such a place, in a tomb situated in a site such as this one. Because one cannot imagine a more marvellous place than the Protestant Cemetery in Rome, situated as it is with its cypresses and marble tombs along the slope against the ancient city walls between the Pyramid of Cestius and Monte Testaccio, peaceful and kind like a recollection from infancy, attractive and inviting like a hope full of presentiment. It seems a part of the homeland in the midst of a foreign country; there one feels on one's own ground, and all those unknown who lie under the green mounds seem all to be friends from long ago. One perceives a marvellous sense of domestic peace in that sacred place. (From *Bilder från Italien*, Uppsala, 1864)

Emil Zilliacus (1878-1961), *Finnish, professor of classical literature and poet, wrote in Swedish*

Near the Pyramid, in the open, wind-swept part of the Cemetery



Tomb of the Swedish sculptor J.N.Byström (1783-1848)

where Keats was interred, there sparkle the red anemones in the large meadow around the sarcophagi and at the columns of the funerary monuments under the tall, airy pines. English and Germans and Nordics, in this small, tranquil oasis they sleep that sleep which in the Greek epigrams is defined as so difficult and so bitter: the sleep in a foreign land. But I do not know if they are to be pitied. Probably many of them saw, at the moment of passing over, the distant homeland, its deep forests and misty heaths, its lakes or mountains or seas. But a pilgrimage was the last journey for them, consecrated and holy ground was for them that millennial land in which they were put to rest. Far from their countries which saw them born they have entered into rest, but they sleep in the house of their poetic and artistic dreams. (From *Romerska vandringar*, 1924).



"The first woman artist": or not?

In her profile of Caroline Carson (1820-1892) in *Newsletter 12*, Sharri Whiting referred to her as "the first woman artist to be buried in the Non-Catholic Cemetery". (Sharri was using 'artist' in the colloquial English sense to refer to visual artists, e.g. painters.) Some Danish readers of the Newsletter have challenged her claim and proposed instead Fanny Hünerwadel, the Swiss singer, pianist and composer, who died of typhus and was buried in the Cemetery in 1854 (her grave lies near the Visitors' Centre in Zona Vecchia.3.11). So were Carson the earliest woman painter and Hünerwadel the earliest woman artist to be buried here? Can you propose other candidates?

With special thanks for their help to Rita Stivali and Serena Cavallari

HOW TO BECOME A FRIEND

This Newsletter is made possible by the contributions of the Friends of the Cemetery.

The Friends also help fund the care of the trees in the cemetery and the restoration of tombs. Please can you help us by becoming a Friend? You can find a membership form at:

www.cemeteryrome.it

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