

REPORT ON THE ACCORDION VISIT TO CASTELFIDARDO 17-21 MAY 2016

Our 5 day visit to Castelfidardo in May this year consisted of 56 people from all corners of the UK and also some from the USA. Most were accordionists with some partners who came along for the ride and who thoroughly enjoyed it all.

We met up at Heathrow on Tuesday 17th May and took the British Airways flight to Bologna where we were met by Leonardo our coach driver who was brilliant and did a great job for us. Some of our group arrived in Bologna the night before and met us at the airport. We travelled down the Adriatic coast towards Ancona through the countryside of Le Marche stopping along the way for lunch and arriving at the hilltop town of Castelfidardo and our hotel 'home' for the next 5 days. After we all checked-in to our rooms and got settled we visited the town centre and the Accordion Museum who had been alerted beforehand that 56 people were turning up! We were greeted by the museum staff and there was a surprise appearance of Antonino De Luca who was booked to play for us on the last night of our visit. Antonino who was a student of the late great Frank Marocco entertained our group for 15 minutes with some wonderful accordion playing. The museum has many interesting exhibits and was a good place for us to start. After dinner most opted for an early night as it had been a long day. There were a few however who had other ideas and stayed late in the bar to play some of the fine accordions kindly loaned to us by some of the factories to keep with us during our stay. We are very grateful to Alessandrini, Dino Baffetti, Beltuna and Bugari/Zero Sette for their wonderful co-operation which was fully appreciated by the group. The local music shop in Castelfidardo also loaned a pre-owned instrument to us and offered discounts to our group on any purchases.

there was time at leisure and after lunch we visited the factories of Pignini & Beltuna to see how their instruments are constructed and to try some the finished instruments in their showrooms. The group found it fascinating to watch the skill and precision of these artisans and to see the finished product in the factory showroom and then to try them out!



Accordion Museum



The Two Grand Accordions

The next day we visited the Victoria Accordion showroom where the group had the opportunity to try the largest working piano accordion in the world which is also listed in the Guinness Book of Records. It even spent some months on display in the Tate Gallery London. The man who constructed it, Giancarlo Francenelli, who is probably now approaching 80yrs of age has recently completed a smaller chromatic button accordion to sit alongside it and a few also tried their hand at playing this. Afterwards



George Bennett tries the giant keyboard



Roberto from Bugari explains the switch mechanism

The evening was spent at a seaside restaurant in the resort of Sirolo where the chef is great fun and was caught on camera dancing to the music with a huge fish he was filleting! Some of the group entertained with some accordion playing and songs as we had a few good singers in the mix. Mary from West Sussex AC bravely took to the floor with some Celtic dancing and was joined by an Irish lady from a large group dining next to us who seemed to appreciate the entertainment. We were fortunate to have professional accordionist Gary Blair on our trip and Gary dazzled everyone with his keyboard skills and led some of the impromptu jam sessions.

Thursday was a free day with optional visits to Binci Reeds and Gallassi Bellows to see how these component parts of the accordion are produced. Some also visited the new Carini Accessory Shop and others the smaller factories. A few visited Italcinte to see accordion straps and bellow protector pads being made.

In the evening we visited a seaside hotel in the resort of Numana where we had a private area booked for our group to have dinner and to play afterwards. Just as we arrived at the hotel the heavens opened but it did not dampen spirits and the evening ended up with a ceilidh session!

Friday morning we visited the Bugari/Zero Sette factory which included a presentation of the new Bugari Evo digital accordion which is a collaboration between the factory and Roland who chose Bugari/ZS to build the accordion to a new specification with a wood casing giving better tonal qualities and also improved keyboard. We had the pleasure of the talented accordionist Sergio Scappini demonstrate its capabilities. We toured the factory once again watching dedicated skilled workers assembling the various parts of the accordions produced at this factory which apart from Bugari and Zero Sette include Petosa and Giullietti. In the showroom there were a number of high quality instruments which included a Petosa Artista Pro 96 bass which had just been finished that morning! This model had a solid maple wood body and had a wonderful tone and comfortable feel to it and a number expressed interest in this model including a certain well known Scottish member of the group!



Gallassi Bellows factory



Claudio Binci shows how he makes a hand made reed



The famous Mille Miglia Italian car race took place



Antonino De Luca performed for the group



Sergio Scappini demonstrates the Evo

We moved on afterwards to the attractive town of Loreto famous for religious pilgrimages to the Basilica and Holy House. We stayed here for lunch and were treated to a bonus as the famous

Italian road race the Mille Miglia which features 500 classic cars was passing through as Loreto was a check point. There was a great atmosphere with cars coming one after the other. People could just sit having lunch and watch the wonderful parade of these great cars. It was brilliant.

For dinner we travelled to a private villa in the countryside for drinks followed by a wonderful buffet meal. Members of the group entertained and our guest accordionist Antonino De Luca returned to entertain us with some impressive playing.

It was over too quickly but the party continued at our hotel and some of us did not get to their rooms until 3am!



Gary Blair & Bob Liddle duet during dinner



Sammie Peckover entertains on her birthday



Lise Rossi tries the Petosa Maple Wood accordion

Saturday we left after breakfast to make our way back to Bologna via the principality of San Marino which offers spectacular views over the region of Emilia Romagna. Fortunately it was a lovely sunny day and there was free time to explore and have lunch. We also spent some time in the huge San Marino music shop where they gave us a demonstration of the other current Roland accordions and answered any

questions people had. Apart from a few accordions there were pianos and guitars galore and as some of the group were piano players and guitar players there was some jam sessions taking place in various corners of the shop much to the amusement of the staff and customers.

We arrived back at Bologna with some of the USA people leaving us to continue their travels in Italy and some staying on in Bologna for a night or two. At Heathrow we said our goodbyes with a number of new friendships made within the group and people promising to keep in touch.



Time was spent in San Marino

The trip was another example of how the passion and interest in the accordion can bring people together despite most of the group not knowing each other everyone gelled together and had a thoroughly good time. I did too! They were a great bunch of people. I said to everyone at the beginning it was about having fun and that we did!

Peter Le Geyt – Guildford Accordion Club



Castelfidardo Group 2016

Castelfidardo visit in May 2017

I have been asked by those who could not attend this year and also by previous participants if another trip was planned for next year so we are currently gathering names to see if it will be feasible around mid to end of May. To register interest email plg@plgmarketing.com or phone 020 8977 6680