



Arriving at Lucca from La Spezia

Greeting them at Castelveccchio Pascoli station were Barga's brass band and students handing out a special newspaper, *La New Corsonna*, for this commemoration. The band launched into the "Hymn to Mameli", then some lively march tunes that put a smile on everyone's face. This could have been a scene from *Pollyanna* or *The Music Man* – except for the omnipresent cell phones. A bus had been sent to meet the train, but most were happy to stretch their legs, walking the 20 minutes to Pascoli's home.



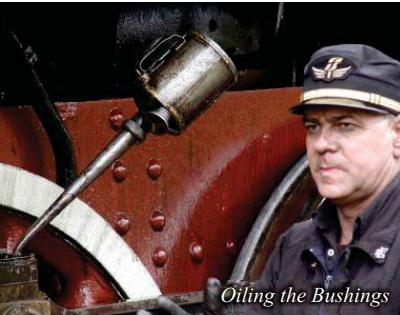
All Aboard!



www.museonazionaletrasporti.it/
www.arianna2002.it
www.giardinoazalea.it
www.bandamusicale.it/bande/italia/toscana/lucca/barga/barga.php



Stoking Coal



Oiling the Bushings

Steam Locomotive to Casa Pascoli

Once a year on April 15, the old steam locomotive N. 740/244 is brought out of storage by the La Spezia train museum. Volunteers grease and polish it for the trip from S. Stefano Magra to Fornaci di Barga. Families make a day of it, so their children will know how life once was, before we all began moving in a constant hurry. This year, the 100th anniversary of poet Giovanni Pascoli's death, was an extra special trip.

The train pulled out of Lucca an hour late, then rumbled along, reaching maximum speed of about 65kpm, until it arrived at Borgo a Mozzano. Here the furnace was stoked and the bushings oiled. All opened their umbrellas as they climbed off the train to enjoy the 30-minute pause. They strolled through the mountain town, where an otherwise rainy grey day was brightened by long rows of azaleas on display for the annual flower show and market.

Beckoned by the train's sharp whistle, the children were especially eager to continue the creaking trip along the Serchio River, past the Devil's Bridge, through cloudy landscapes up towards Barga aboard this giant smoky toy.



Gathering Steam, Borgo a Mozzano



Banda G. Luporini from Barga



Italo, New Fast Train

Italo is the new fast train using Alstom technology, dashing between Milan and Naples. Luca Cordero di Montezemolo's NTV (*Nuovo Treno Veloce*) has 3 fare categories (as little as €20 for Rome to Naples or Bologna to Milan) and 3 comfort levels. A distributed locomotion system eliminates vibrations and noise, optimizes safety and aerodynamics. Without front and back locomotives, passenger capacity is +20%. 70 tons lighter than competition, it consumes less energy. With floors 10cm lower, it's easier to board. The new line will create 2000 new jobs, and 8-9 million passengers within 2 years. Milan-Rome 3½ hours, Florence-Rome 1½ hours, Milan-Bologna 56 minutes. **How fast? 350 km per hour.**



Azalea Festival, Borgo a Mozzano



Caprona, Pascoli's village



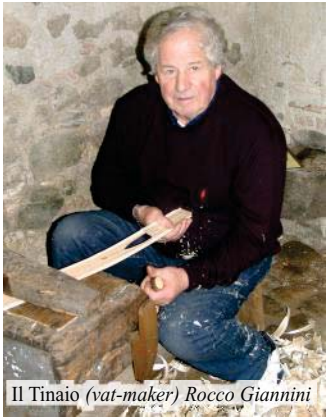
Caprona's Accordionist



En route to Pascoli's home



The Water Bearer



Il Tinaio (vat-maker) Rocco Giannini

www.fondazionepascoli.it
www.slowfoodgarfagnana.it
www.museodelcastagno.it
www.coroalpiapuane.com

*A year ago I was looking for a private and solitary place where I could do some of my humble labours and once more swallow some of my poor tears in peace. I came to Barga. I saw that "there was beauty", and I stayed.... Where there is beauty and bounty, the artist's heart can desire no more. (Giovanni Pascoli, translated from *La New Capronna*, b. 31 Dec 1855, d. 6 Apr 1912)*

Commemorating the poet's days at Caprona (the little hamlet at Castelveccchio Pascoli), hundreds arrived from near and far on April 15. They remembered him with the *giornalino* *La New Capronna*, with folkloric dancing by the group La Muffrina, with poetry readings, accordianists, handicrafts, traditional choral music, and the *Convivio Pascoliano* menu: Lucchese wines, *torte* made with *farro* (spelt) and vegetables, *bruschetta*, *polenta* (a rustic version known as *incagiata*), sausages and salamis, cheeses with honey – all *genuino*, locally made, by Slow Food Garfagnana and the villagers themselves. The meal was served in stages, as the guests wandered through the hamlet, ending up in the sunny garden where they relaxed and waited to visit the house where Pascoli had lived with his sister, Maria. Pascoli was a melancholy poet, but he found beauty and value in everyday life, as in these lines (tr. by Grapevine) from his song for a broom, *La Canzone della Granata* from *Canti di Castelveccchio*:

Ricordi quando eri saggina,
coi penduli grani che in vento
scoteva, come una manina
di bimbo il sonaglio d' argento?

Sei l' umile ancella; ma reggi
la casa: tu sgridi a buon' ora,
mentre impaziente passeggi,
gl' ignavi che dormono ancora

Sei l' umile ancella, ma regni
su l' umile casa pulita.
Minacci, rimproveri; insegni
ch' è bella, se pura, la vita

*Remember when you were sorghum, with hanging grains that shook
in the wind, like a child's hand shaking a silver rattle?
You are the humble handmaiden; but support the home: you scold in early morn,
while you impatiently sweep past those sluggards who still sleep.
You are the humble handmaiden; but reign over the clean and humble home.
You threaten, you scold; you teach that life, if it's pure, is beautiful.*



(Note: If you go to the Grapevine website and click on the indicated photographs, you can hear some of the sounds and songs of this special day.)

Coro delle Alpi Apuane, Pieve Fosciana (Maestro Luca Bacci)



The Return