

# The ITALIAN JOB

**It's been 40 years since the first viewing of the classic movie 'The Italian Job'. Pete Connolly brings us up to date with his IPA version. His story may not involve the theft of gold bars, 3 Mini Coopers and a bus, but it does have a helicopter and a Lambourgini patrol car.**

Back in March The IPA – Puglia Region, Section Italy took a display at the "3rd Annual Euro-Mediterranean Security & Public Defence Expo". Nico Colucci, the Section President extended an invite to the Section UK IPA to send two delegate visitors to attend the Expo. Pete Connolly and Andy Gregory, who had previously met at a Gimborn course and had become good friends, were chosen to be the representatives. Their Section President, Steve Connor, felt that this would provide a good opportunity for IPA members with a Crime Prevention background, who would benefit from the Conference.

**Pete takes up the story of their eventful trip.**

On hearing that the invite was being circulated around the Regions I immediately wrote a "Me, Me, Me, Look at Me, Sir" style e-mail to Fox Road, extolling my virtues and CPO credentials. It seems to have worked for me; I was delighted when I was advised that I had been chosen as one of the lucky attendees. I was thrilled when I found out later that Andy was the other lucky applicant.

I met up with Andy at the airport. We passed through Passport Control and then baggage reclaim, then out into the foyer of the airport. We were to be met by a Italian IPA representative. We did not know what he looked like and didn't even know his name. We scanned the faces of the crowd in front of us, trying to spot our host. Then, there he was, bold as brass, obvious as the nose on your face. Giuseppe Albanese was standing waiting for us, IPA welcome badge proudly worn from his breast pocket.



Pete Connolly, Insp Joe Gallucci (NYPD) and Andy Gregory

It's a fantastic thing to experience – walk out into an unknown place abroad, far from home, to meet a stranger and for them to behave as if they were an old friend. When you're with a friend you're safe as houses. That IPA badge is better than a fireworks display! Giuseppe was waiting with a wide and genuine smile. Giuseppe doesn't speak English; Andy and I do not speak Italian. Thankfully along with his great smile, Giuseppe was also waiting with Francesco, his 13-year-old son, who does speak English quite well. Better still, Francesco bought an Italian-English dictionary: top lad!

For those of you who have attended any of the bigger security expo's here at home, such as IFSEC at NEC Birmingham, then this was a very similar event. Lots of great toys on display. Slightly different feel to the show, in that it was aimed at the public and creating public confidence in the ability of the Police, Civil Defence and Military organisations to protect the public against terrorism. Andy and I were not the only IPA guests attending the Expo. Others included Dione Bugeja, a retired Inspector and presently President of Section Malta IPA, Sgt Alfio Borg of the Maltese Police and Deputy Inspector Joseph Gallucci of the NYPD.

Joe Gallucci delivered a lecture on the events of September 11th and the aftermath on his home city, including long-term responses and



I want one of these!

initiatives, which have evolved since then for NYPD. Dione Bugeja made a presentation based on his role as security manager of a major Hotel chain that hosted a visit by Her Majesty the Queen, to Malta. He spoke of the lessons learned during his police career and how he used those skills in his new career as security advisor.

Andy gave a presentation on Crime Reduction and Neighbourhood Policing UK style and I was interviewed by a local TV reporter for their evening news show. Attending the Expo involved 4 long days for Andy and I. We were constantly on our feet, promoting the IPA to all Police Visitors to the IPA display at the Expo, or visiting the stands of other exhibitors.

**"I chose the title "The Italian Job" for this article, but I was so tempted to call it "cibo e l'amicizia" - food and friendship"**

Each day, at the close of the Expo, Andy and I went with our IPA hosts for dinner. Now, my table manners often leave a lot to be desired – I wolf my food. The Italian eating experience is a celebration of food. The Italians describe it as 'sitting over the table'. A series of smaller courses, bursting with flavour, with lots of time taken during and between courses to enjoy the company of the fellow diners. Dione and Alfio spoke excellent English and Italian, as well as their native Maltese. Nico Colucci had a good command of English. This was so useful as they constantly translated for Giuseppe, Andy and I cannot begin to describe the friendship and fun that we enjoyed over that series of evening meals. Our hosts were, wonderful, genuinely welcoming and so attentive to our enquiries. On one particular evening, after dinner, we retired, as is the usual local practice to a coffee bar. After coffees, with our translators retiring to their lodgings, Giuseppe, Andy and I decided to have a nightcap. We had such fun, well you couldn't help it – there was an Irish man, an English man and an Italian! Let's not go there!

It's amazing with simply good will, a couple of whiskies, a small phrase book and lots of hand gestures how well you can actually communicate with someone with whom you do not share a spoken language. For anyone watching we must have looked for all the world like three, rather aged, mischievous, schoolboys. We laughed so much that night!

Work and eating filled our days to saturation; Andy and I were busy boys! In what little time our schedule allowed our hosts shared with us information about local history and matters of interest. The city of Lecce is quite ancient and steeped in history. The local sand stone is visible everywhere with beautiful landmark buildings. Indeed, right in the square where we were lodging is an open-air amphitheatre of some antiquity.

More importantly, to our hosts and to us, they introduced us to their families. We had the opportunity to spend time with these delightful people at the Expo and over our evening dinners. Friendship,



Nico, Andy, Dione, Pete, Alfio



Meeting Giuseppe's family

friendship, friendship. That will be my indelible memory of "The Italian Job." We met wonderful, decent people. They welcomed us into their lives and extended invites into their homes. I have maintained contact with Nico and Giuseppe since I have returned home. Andy pointed me towards a translation website [www.reverso.net](http://www.reverso.net). I have used it to torture the Italian language and communicate with my Italian friends. Giuseppe has been in touch insisting that I bring my family to stay with his family in the summer. I have invited young Francesco to visit my family and learn to speak English properly, the way we speak it in Northern Ireland!

Nico Colucci and his wife have already visited London since our trip. Andy Gregory and Steve Connor along with their partners met Nico and Janey in London, where they spent a day together. My recent visit to Italy through the IPA and more recent attendance at the National Meeting in Hinckley has reinforced my belief in the statement "There are no strangers in the IPA, just friends you haven't met yet."

Pete Connolly, Belfast Branch.