



Introduction



On 2nd July 1940, the ship the Arandora Star was torpedoed off the north coast of Ireland by a German U-boat. It had departed from Liverpool with over 1500 German, Austrian and Italian Internees and some Prisoners of War who were being deported to Canada with British guards and crew. The Italians were, by far, the most significant proportion of lives lost. They had been interned as part of Churchill's order to 'collar the lot' in fear of the 'fifth column' after Italy had declared war upon Britain on 10th June 1940.

The sinking of the SS Arandora Star is the most tragic event in the history of the London Italian community.

75 years later, the *Arandora Star London Memorial Trust* has created this exhibition, in conjunction with a book, to commemorate, and to share with a wider audience, the significance of these tragic events.

The *Arandora Star London Memorial Trust* was founded in 2010, initially, to raise funds and coordinate the erection of a memorial to the 241 London Italians who perished.

This memorial can now be seen within St Peter's Italian Church, Clerkenwell, London.

Our Sponsors

This exhibition, the book, *The Arandora Star Tragedy: 75 Years On - London's Italian Community Remembers* and the new memorial erected in 2012 could not have been possible without most generous donations.

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And the many kind people that have attended the functions, sent donations, offered stories and research.

Thank You

This exhibition would not be possible without the original research by:-

Maria Serena Balestracci
 Alfio Bernabei
 David Cesarani and Toni Kushner
 Terri Colpi
 Alan Davis
 Peter Gillman and Leni Gillman
 François Lafitte
 Alastair McLean
 Lucio Sponza
 J Wynn

Many thanks to all who have worked and helped in producing this exhibition

All the team of the Arandora Star London Memorial Trust:-
 Osvaldo Antoniazzi, Sue Antoniazzi, Peter Bertocini,
 John Besagni, Peter Capella, Franco Di Principe, Ennio Fallabella,
 Nicola Gallani, Kay Lorenzato, Victor Menozzi, Domenic Pini (Chair),
 Nadia Ostacchini and Ruth Scrase

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The Arandora Star Tragedy - 75 Years On



2nd July 1940

Arandora Star London Memorial Trust

Exhibition designed by Peter Capella and Ruth Scrase

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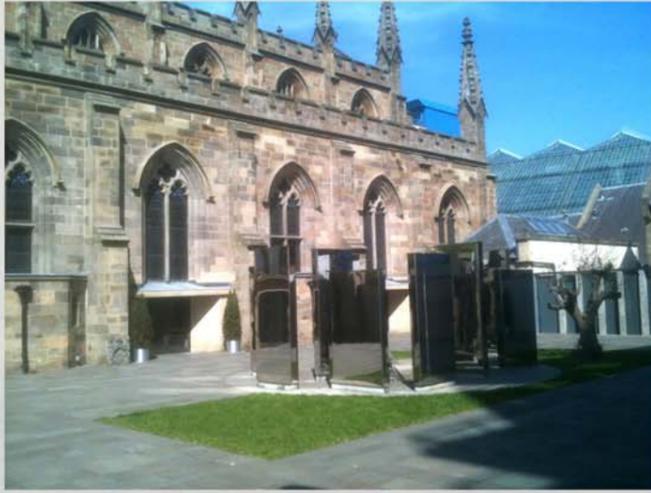
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The Italian Cloister Garden



St Andrew's Cathedral, Glasgow. designed by Giulia Chiarini



Rando Bertoia

The St Andrew's Cathedral Italian Cloister Garden was officially opened on Monday, 16 May 2011. This followed 18 months of work to create the dramatic new space next to the Cathedral.

The garden has as its focal point a monument commemorating the Arandora Star tragedy, designed by Roman architect Giulia Chiarini. Its monumental mirrored plinths with inscriptions from the Gospel and the Italian Poets, are set in a grass and slate landscape. The form attempts to recreate the traumatic experience of the ship sinking; a place to try to 'remember' the event itself. In a deliberate attempt to recreate the despair of the victims on the sinking ship, the positioning of the cuboids evoke claustrophobia as one walks amongst them and the 'river' and small fountain, allow the imagination of the sound of water rushing through the decks as the ship sunk. A 200 year old olive tree, gifted by the people of Tuscany as a sign of peace and reconciliation is planted at its centre and a fountain and stream traverse the central space, symbols of life and hope. Around the walls, marble plaques tell the story of the Cathedral, of the Catholic revival in Scotland and of the Arandora Star tragedy.

The names of every one of the Scots-Italians who drowned on the ship have been carved on the central plinth.

The splendid new facility is open from dawn to dusk and has already become a favourite tourist spot for visitors in Glasgow. It will also serve as a versatile and much-needed pastoral resource for the thousands of people who frequent St Andrew's Cathedral each week.

At the opening, Archbishop Mario Conti was joined by First Minister Alex Salmond, the Lady Provost of Glasgow and Mr Rando Bertoia, who at 91 was the last living survivor of the Arandora Star tragedy.

Giulia Chiarini, the architect from Rome who designed the garden and monument was also present together with representatives of the civic authorities in the towns from which most Scots Italians come – Barga and Pistoia in Tuscany and Picinisco and Filignano in the Lazio region south of Rome.

Musicians from Milan were flown in to provide musical accompaniment to the events.

The iconic silver mirrored central monument in the garden recalls all who died aboard the liner the Arandora Star, which was sunk while carrying mainly Italian civilians who had been rounded up from their homes, shops and cafes as "enemy aliens" in 1940. It is the largest monument to the disaster anywhere in the world.

This was made possible through the hard work of:-

Cav Ronnie Convery, Cav Leandro Franchi, Giancarlo Romano, Alex Mosson, Mgr Chris McElroy and Most Rev Mario Conti, Archbishop of Glasgow



Inscriptions on the Central Monument

...a noi prescisse il fato
illacrimata sepoltura. (Foscolo)

... for us fate has ordained a tomb
where no-one will weep. (Foscolo)

... Così tra questa immensità
s'annega il pensier mio, e il naufragar
m'è dolce in questo mare. (Leopardi)

... So engulfed am I in this
immensity, that shipwreck is a wel-
come thought. (Leopardi)

Tu sai ben che 'n altrui non ho sper-
anza. (Petrarca)

Lord, you know so well that my hope
lies in you alone. (Petrarch)

...la bontà infinita ha sì gran braccia
che prende ciò che si rivolge a lei. (Dante)

...infinite goodness has arms so wide
that it welcomes all who approach. (Dante)

L'amore è intrepido. (Manzoni)

Love casts out fear. (Manzoni)

En la sua volontade è nostra pace:
ell'è quel mare, al qual tutto si move. (Dante)

In His will is our peace: that sea to
which everything flows. (Dante)

Translations courtesy of
Professor Eileen Anne Millar,
Emeritus Professor of Italian,
University of Glasgow.



Granite plaque inscribed with the names of the Scots Italian Victims



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Arandora Star Memorials



Museo Paolo Cresci, Lucca, Italy (2004)
It replicates funnels of the Arandora Star



Pier Head, Liverpool, UK (2008)
Sited here because it was where the Arandora Star departed on 1st July 1940



Bratto, Italy (1975)

The first physical commemorations were the 14 graves created by the Scottish and Irish for bodies they could identify after they were washed up on the shores. Many regions across Italy and the UK have since created memorials to recognise their locals who died in the tragedy.



Metropolitan Cathedral of St David, Cardiff, UK (2010)
designed by Susanna Cicotti and Ieuan Rees
Cultural harmony is emphasised by the use of Italian Terracotta and Welsh slate.
Commissioned by the Arandora Star Memorial Fund in Wales.



Parco Montano, Picinisco, Italy (1998)



Colonsay, Outer Hebrides, UK (2004)
The inscription in Gaelic reads: 'I will hide myself under the shadow of thy wing'
Photo and inscription Alan Davis



Viffrido Sagramati headstone on Colonsay (16 August 1940)
Photo Alan Davis



Formerly Casa d'Italia, Glasgow, UK (1975)
Now in private collection



Arandora Star Chapel, Bardi, Italy (1969)
A memorial mass is held here each anniversary. It is the only place to name every Italian who died. Photo Victor Menozzi



Town Hall, Middlesbrough, UK (2009)



Via Vittime 'Arandora Star', Bardi, Italy (2004)



Locations of the known burials in relation to the position of the ship when it was sunk
Burial information provided by Alan Davis, author 'Colonsay's Fallen' 2004

1. Hadden Cemetery, Dalwhinnie, South Uist, Scotland
2. Eiligarry (St. Barri) Old Churchyard, Barra, Scotland
3. Burns (St. Brendan's) Roman Catholic Burial Ground, Barra, Scotland
4. Ardnamoan Old Churchyard, Isle of Colonsay, Scotland
5. The Chapel of Ormsay, Scotland
6. Bowmore New Parish Churchyard, Isle of Islay, Scotland
7. Port Ellen Churchyard, Isle of Islay, Scotland
8. Ruffin (St. Thomas) Church of Ireland Churchyard, Northern Ireland
9. Carrington Cemetery, County Donegal, Ireland
10. Tully Island, Ireland
11. Carrnaghy Cemetery, County Donegal, Ireland
12. Ganes Cemetery, County Sligo, Ireland
13. Tannaghmore Cemetery, County Mayo, Ireland



The remnants of the lifeboat from the Arandora Star at Knockvologan Beach on the Isle of Mull
Photo Pat Chas



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The London Memorials



The first ever memorial to victims of the Arandora Star was unveiled in the loggia of St. Peter's Italian Church, Clerkenwell, London on 4th November 1960. This location was obviously chosen due to its importance in the Italian community; as it was centre of old 'Little Italy'.



The Original London Memorial

dedicated to all on the ship - unveiled 4th November 1960



A mock-up of the arch in the loggia was recreated in the artist's studio. He creates the bas-relief in clay prior to casting, (top left)

The final casting is examined after cooling and cleaning (top centre)

The Consul General and committee at the unveiling of the memorial (top right)
The memorial today (left)

The Inscription reads:
In Memoria dei Periti nell' Affondamento dell' Arandora Star
.....il Ricordo che e Vivo nel Cuore dei Parenti, dei Superstiti e Colonia Italiana

In Memory of those who Perished in the Sinking of the Arandora Star
.....the Memory Lies in the Heart of the Relatives, the Survivors and the Italian Community

The New London Memorial

It was designed by Peter Capella naming the London Italian victims inside St Peter's Church. The new memorial was unveiled on 2nd July 2012 by The Consul General of Italy, Uberto Vanni D'Archirafi following a Mass attended by, among others, Frank Dobson MP The Mayor of Islington Jilani Chowdhury, Deputy Mayor of Camden Jonathon Simpson, Councillor Sue Vincent and Commander Alan James of the Canadian High Commission.

The desire was to have all the names of the London Italians to celebrate and remember their lives. It was impossible to incorporate all 446 UK Italian victims; with 241 London Italian victims, the memorial stands 2.3m high and 1.8m wide.

The design has the names in four columns, sandblasted through the back of Melalux glass, which has an acid etched face. This material was chosen as it has a luminescence, it seems to glow, it is a material that works well in the varied light conditions in the corner of the church to the side of the organ loft.

After various proposals, the third design was submitted to the Diocese of Westminster Historic Churches Committee. It was designed with Metalux glass and a rusted, torn corten steel frame, but it was decided unfitting to a Grade II* Listed Church by the planning authority. The corten steel frame was removed and a black gloss glass frame added, which after nearly 18 months of work, was approved.

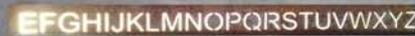


The mock up of the corten steel frame interaction with the glass. (left)

The finished Memorial. (far left)
It is fitting the names are between two black waves. The torn rusted steel symbolises the ship ripped apart by the torpedo, the glowing reflective glass with the names signifies the souls of the victims shining in the glory of God in heaven.



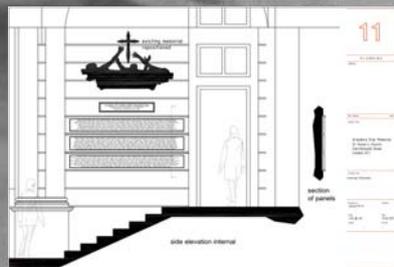
The unveiling Ceremony after the Mass Padre Carmelo with Padre Vico Blesses the Memorial



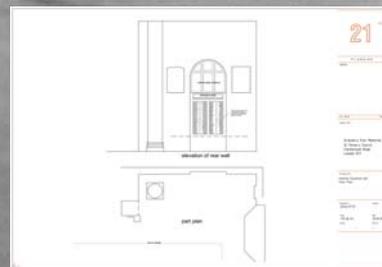
Test model - with LED edge lighting



Test model - with stainless steel backing



The first design was to relocate the bas-relief to the side wall of the loggia and replace the rusticated sbaco with marble panels with the names engraved. This was decided to be the wrong location and it was proposed to use the window reveal at the back of the Church.



The second design was to use Corten steel. Each name would be cut through the rusted steel and have highly polished stainless steel background. The experimental mock-ups showed that the names would not be legible in all lighting conditions; edge LED lighting was added - but, still not good enough.



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Newspaper Articles

From 1960 to Today



Extract from The Times 11 September 2004



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Internment in the UK



Huyton camp Liverpool

Warth Mills Internment Camp, Bury, UK.

Warth Mills in Bury, Lancashire was a derelict cotton mill, the only light came through a glass roof, that had broken and missing panes with rain coming through, the lavatories were filthy, there were only a few cold water taps for 500 men. The men slept on wooden boards covered only by two or three blankets, the place was running alive with rats.

Monsieur R.A. Haccins, delegate to Britain of the Geneva based International Committee of the Red Cross visited Warth Mills and reported the dilapidated conditions. He had before described, and also criticized the inadequate sick bay with only 30 beds for 230 internees who required special treatment.

The camps at Isle of Man and Huyton were luxury in comparison.

Letter sent from Pietro Bertoncini from Warth Mills Internment Camp, Bury



Transcript of letter

20 giugno 1940

Carissima Virginia

Sono sicuro ti sarai fatta dei cattivi pensieri tanto come i figli, ma sono certo che in questo posto ci sono delle restrizioni che non si possono mandare lettere.

Solo appena niente sono permesso mi sono messo il dovere di darti mie notizie. La vita qui è abbastanza buona e il comandante è tutti gli ufficiali che si prestano in modo paterno e ci rendono la vita meno dispiacevole.

Voglio sapere se sono permesso di tenere aperto i negozi e che non si trovano molestati dalla popolazione, che troppo presto prenderò il senso di purperazione e commenti anti molto spiacevoli.

Quando ti sarà possibile mi mandati i seguenti articoli pantaloni, cappotto, poncho, pullover, asciugamani e sapone ed una federa.

Augurandovi che state tutti bene.

Sue notizie

Pietro Bertoncini

Translation of letter

20 June 1940

Dearest Virginia

I am sure that you must have had some bad thoughts likewise the children, but you must understand very well that in this place there are certain restrictions that you cannot send letters.

I've only just been given permission and I've made it my duty to give you my news.

Life here is fairly good and the commandant and all the officials both care for our safety, present themselves in a paternal way and render us a life less sorrowful.

I would like to know if I'm allowed to keep the shops open and that you don't find yourselves molested by the population. It's so nice to have a sense of proportion and commit very unfavourable acts.

When it is possible send me the following articles trousers, coat, slippers, pullover, towel and soap also a pillowcase.

Wishing that you are all well.

Your husband

Pietro Bertoncini

Outside of letter showing censors stamp



Converted boarding houses formed the camps on the Isle of Man



Some internees on the Isle of Man gather for a group photo, presumably, just before being released

Women and Children

Approximately 4000 Italian, Austrian and German women were interned, mainly during the 'panic' period of May-June 1940. This compares to a figure of 23,000 men. 1500 of the women were from London. The police enlisted females to help with the arrests. Thus the task of interning women fell to policewomen or members of the Women's Voluntary Service.

Category 'A' women were sent to Holloway. Then the majority of women were sent to the Isle of Man: approximately 3000 to Fort Erin and 1000 to Fort St Mary. Women were, mostly, treated more leniently than the men. Male internees fell under the jurisdiction of the War Office, whilst female internees were organised by the Home Office. The women were therefore spared the pistols, bayonets and roll calls. Women were able to roam more freely. None were ever sent overseas.

For the men, the government had requisitioned the hotels that formulated the camps in the Isle of Man. Thus, there were no personnel left to help them with daily chores. In contrast, the proprietors of the hotels that housed the women were paid 3 shillings per person per day and many of the hotel staff stayed to help the women.

The majority of women internees were under 30 years and work in domestic service. Mothers were able to take any children under 16 years with them. If the child was severely ill, they were both exempt from internment. Amongst the women, were teachers who set up a school in the camp. Women were told that if their husbands went to Australia, they and their children could shortly follow.



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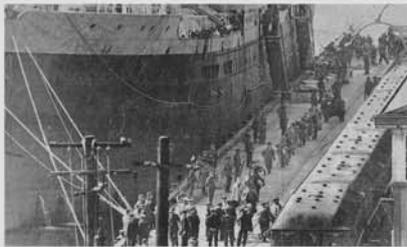
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Internment Abroad



The internees disembark the Dunera in Sydney

photo taken from The Guardian article by Kate Connolly

Internment in Canada

The first ship to transport internees was the Duchess of York, which arrived safely to Canada. The Etrick also arrived safely in Quebec after ten days and the 400 Italians were interned at St Helen Island Camp. Many of these internees stayed until 1943. Canada had been told to expect "The most dangerous characters". Expecting spies and saboteurs, the deportees were met with a heavy guard.

In total Canada had 6350 German and Austrians and 400 Italians.

Internment in Australia

The Dunera was a converted troopship that set sail at double its capacity on 10th July 1940. 3000 Germans and Austrians and 200 Italians, many of whom were survivors of the Arandora Star. For many the two month journey became a nightmare. Conditions aboard were bad and deteriorated as the journey continued. Deportees were subject to repeated beatings, threats, searches and robbery. Rando Bertonia confirms that the soldiers aboard the Dunera were much worse than those he had already experienced on the Arandora Star.

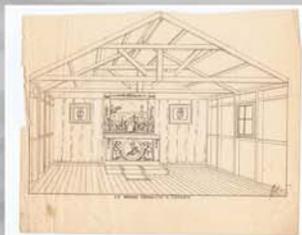
They arrived in Melbourne and were taken to the Tatura Camp in Victoria. Realising the internees were relatively harmless, many guards were on friendly terms with them. In the camp, internees were able to pursue classes and hobbies.

Despite being allowed release, the majority of internees stayed until after the end of World War Two. They feared the perilous journey and risk of torpedo attack. 900 stayed and built new lives in Australia.

In total 7350 men had been deported overseas and 19,000 had been interned in the UK.



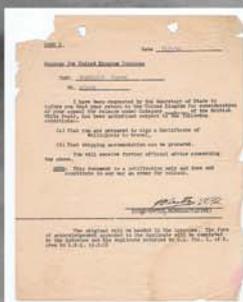
The internees in the camps in Australia were photographed in groups of 10 as a means of registration, this group - no.168



Drawing by Peter Beschizza of their Chapel in Tatura



Drawing by Peter Beschizza of the security measures in the camp



Possible release notice with attached indemnity



Internees being moved between Hay and Tatura camps

Transcript from the Diary of Peter Beschizza From 10 June 1940 to 17 August 1940 Written on Toilet Paper in Tatura Internment Camp

Page 1
June 10 1940
Massolini declared war on England at 6pm when he made a broadcast.
June 13
I was arrested at 12.15 pm and taken to Chelsea police station. Later, I was taken to Stewarts Grove and at about five, we departed by coach for Kempton Park Race course, arriving there at about 6.30 pm.
June 16
I left Kempton Park at 8 pm for Bury Lancashire.
June 17
Arrived at Bury station at 8 am where we walked to the internment camp further away. The food is pretty good and with a bit of work for our own benefit the time is passed away.
June 30
Left Bury at 8 pm for Liverpool docks where we embarked on the liner Arandora Star (15,500 tons). Bound for Canada.
July 1
The liner sets sail very early in the morning. The sea is pretty smooth until after lunch when the ship starts to roll making me feel very sick.
I slept most of the day and went to bed fully dressed except for my raincoat and jacket.

Page 2
July 2
I awoke at about 6 o'clock and lay awake in my bed, at about 6.20 am there was a crash which threw me in a sitting position. A torpedo from a German submarine had struck the engine room. Getting up, I put on my jacket and raincoat and over that I put my life jacket and then made my way to the top deck where there were a lot of people gathered. I here waiting for the boats to be lowered. I decided not to get among the crowd so I walked down to the next deck where I beheld the same scene. Climbing up to the top deck again I saw one of the life-boats being lowered. As the boat reached the water some started to climb down ropes and so into the boat. One rope only reached half way to the boat and one man was dangling at the end. Letting go of his hold he went smashing down on the

Page 3
crowded boat smashing his head on the side with a thud which I heard from the top deck. The deck was fairly clear, and looking over the side I saw the boat pulling away and the people struggling in the water. There were still persons sliding down the ropes and some after having reached the water were frightened to let go and I saw one still holding the rope. His head under the water, with foam and matter coming out of his mouth. Turning away from that sight which nearly made me sick, I went down to the next deck, and looking over the side again I saw the water entering the portholes, and I decided it was about time I left the ship. There was a rope ladder after, dangling over the side by which I climbed down into the water, swimming a little I grasped a piece of wood and started to swim again with the intention of getting

Page 4
as far from the ship as possible. Turning round and looking back, I saw the ship the water washing the decks at the back, there were two guns one above the other. Then the next moment the whole stern disappeared and then the whole ship started to slide down beneath the sea, with a sort of hissing noise. As the ship went down bows last I could see the decks still crowded with people. Being very near the ship I started to swim desperately in case there was any suction, but there must have been very little suction or else I would have felt it. I rested and looked back and saw a wave laden with wood, tin, oil drums and a lot of other stuff. I got hold of two square sacking affair, what was inside then I don't know but they floated and that was all that mattered. Some sort of raft

Page 5
floated along with three persons on it, it looked like the side of one of the sheds. I clambered onto it and lay down utterly exhausted. I was very sick having swallowed oil and sea water but after some time I felt much better. I sat up and looked around, there was rubbish floating about and in the distance I could see the boats overloaded with survivors. Somebody floated by and shouted that help would come in about four hours. I then looked at our raft and saw four more survivors had climbed on making eight in total. There were five Italians, two Germans and one British one of the crew. He was a fairly old man, and after some time he started to moan and mumble, then he rolled off the raft into the water. I grasped him and with the help of one of the Germans managed to drag him back. I had his head above water.

Page 6
as the raft was well below the water but it was no use as he died a few minutes later from what cause I do not know. Laying the body down I went back to my original position on the raft, and set there thinking. I wanted to close my eyes and sleep but one of the chaps told me not to sleep, and I decided to follow his example. And so we sat there sitting or straggling with the water nearly to our waist, waiting, and thinking how long it would be before help came. It must have gone midday when in the distance we sighted a speck, which as it got nearer and nearer we made it out to be a short Sunderland flying boat. This cheered us up and we started to wave to it. It flew over us very low, and started to circle round and round. Some say it dropped a message telling that help was very near, it dropped a bottle of some sort to us but got carried away as we were unable to manoeuvre

Page 7
our raft to get it. Anyway the plane kept on circling and as it circled round and round, we could see one of the crew waving from the side, the gun turrets and eight bombs slung on racks underneath the wings. Later on a destroyer came along H.M.C.S. ST. LAURENT which picked up all the survivors. Our turn came about half past four when a motor boat came along and picked us up. The dead man's helmet was cut from him and was left to drift or sink. They cut our belts from us and threw them in the sea. On the destroyer the sailors were very good they gave us all their spare clothes food and cigarettes and a drop of rum which was a welcome drink after being in the water nine hours. I tried to make myself comfortable in a gun turret.

Page 8
We waited on the destroyer until 9. The soldiers and the crew were taken off. Then came the Germans and last of all the Italians. In each case the soldiers, the crew of the Arandora, the Germans and the Italians gave a resounding cheer to the crew of the destroyer. But the Italians suffered the loss of four more men for they died on the destroyer. We were then taken to a building where we were given food. The people round about bought chocolate fruit and cigarettes which they slipped through the windows. Later a collection was made in which they gave clothes to clothe us.

July 4
In the morning we were clothed with soldiers clothes, some keeping on... (?)

Page 9
leading down to the lower deck and up to the top decks. The room contained 10 tables at which eight of the tables seated twenty persons. The other two seated 16 of fourteen men. We were fairly crowded but was not uncomfortable. The lower deck was filled with German sailors and refugees. An hour after coming on board we were again searched in which I got called a fifth columnist and lost an army jacket, fountain pen and some other stuff. Some of our chaps lost watches and other valuable stuff which were taken. As if this was not enough we were searched again some days and

Page 10
weeks later in which all the remaining valuables were taken including wedding rings, signet rings and anything which was valuable. One of the Germans had on a ring which he could not get off and was driven downstairs with blows by an enraged soldier in which the poor devil was prodded in the back with a bayonet. Anyway continuing our story after we had something to eat we prepared ourselves for a night's sleep. I slept under the tables with two of my friends. Others slept wherever they could.

Pietro Beschizza survived the sinking of the Arandora Star and was subsequently transferred to Australia aboard the SS Dunera. Pietro was interned in both Tatura and Loveday camps. He was released on 8 August 1944 and returned to England on Athlone Castle arriving in Liverpool on 29 March 1945.



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Daily Express
 Thursday, July 4, 1940
1,500 aliens panic as U-boat sinks Arandora Star
GERMANS TORPEDO GERMANS
These men left for Canada...
Only one enemy hero in mad rush for lifeboats

WITHOUT warning, in the middle of Monday morning, a U-boat torpedoed the British liner Arandora Star off the west coast of Ireland, it was revealed last night.

The torpedo killed more than 100 Germans and Italians, but the Arandora Star had about 1,500 on board, and was an important stage in the evacuation of British soldiers from France.

It was a German U-boat which sank the liner, and several officers were seen on the bridge and deck as the ship was hit.

There were about 100 enemy soldiers on board with the ship, and they were seen to be rushing for the lifeboats as the ship was hit.

AND THEN WE GOT SHOTS...

The ship was hit by a torpedo which exploded in the hold, and the ship was seen to be listing heavily.

There were about 100 enemy soldiers on board with the ship, and they were seen to be rushing for the lifeboats as the ship was hit.

COWARDS

As the ship was hit, the enemy soldiers were seen to be rushing for the lifeboats, and some were seen to be running away from the ship.

There were about 100 enemy soldiers on board with the ship, and they were seen to be rushing for the lifeboats as the ship was hit.

"SCREAMERS"

The ship was hit by a torpedo which exploded in the hold, and the ship was seen to be listing heavily.

There were about 100 enemy soldiers on board with the ship, and they were seen to be rushing for the lifeboats as the ship was hit.

Daily Express - 4 July 1940

As can be seen from this range of articles, reporting styles varied. Some gave more factual accounts of the sinking whilst others have traces of propaganda and xenophobia.

ARANDORA STAR SUNK BY U-BOAT
1,500 ENEMY ALIENS ON BOARD
GERMANS AND ITALIANS FIGHT FOR LIFEBOATS
SHIP'S OFFICERS ON BRIDGE TO THE END

The British liner Arandora Star, with about 1,500 Germans and Italian soldiers on board, has been torpedoed and sunk by a German U-boat in the Atlantic. The Germans and Italians on board were seen to be fighting for lifeboats as the ship was hit.

There was also a number of British troops on board, and it is feared that some have been killed.

Survivors from the ship were rapidly sinking three days after the attack, and it is feared that some have been lost.

SURVIVORS' STORIES

Survivors from the ship were rapidly sinking three days after the attack, and it is feared that some have been lost.

BITTER COMMENT ON ALIENS' CONDUCT

Survivors from the ship were rapidly sinking three days after the attack, and it is feared that some have been lost.

MANY OF CREW SAVED

Survivors from the ship were rapidly sinking three days after the attack, and it is feared that some have been lost.

GERMAN ADMISSION

Survivors from the ship were rapidly sinking three days after the attack, and it is feared that some have been lost.

SANK RAPIDLY

Survivors from the ship were rapidly sinking three days after the attack, and it is feared that some have been lost.

ARANDORA STAR'S LAST HOURS
CASUALTIES DUE TO PANIC
FIGHTS AMONG ALIENS

Further interviews with survivors of the liner Arandora Star, which was sunk by a German U-boat in the Atlantic, indicate that not for the first time the Germans and Italians on board made a mad dash for the lifeboats as the ship was hit.

When the Germans made a mad dash for the lifeboats, many were killed or injured.

The British liner Arandora Star, which was sunk by a German U-boat in the Atlantic, had about 1,500 on board. The Germans and Italians on board were seen to be fighting for lifeboats as the ship was hit.

There was also a number of British troops on board, and it is feared that some have been killed.

BOATS RUSHED

Survivors from the ship were rapidly sinking three days after the attack, and it is feared that some have been lost.

RETURNED LIFEBOAT

Survivors from the ship were rapidly sinking three days after the attack, and it is feared that some have been lost.

DESTROYER SAVED 850 INTERNEES

SURVIVORS of the Arandora Star were crowded in lifeboats or clinging to wreckage while a Sunderland flying boat guided the Canadian destroyer St. Laurent to the spot.

The full story of the rescue was told yesterday in a notice issued by the Admiralty.

There were 200 people aboard the Arandora Star, which was taking German and Italian internees to Canada. When the St. Laurent, commanded by St. G. de Wolf, R.N., was at sea off the west coast of Scotland, she received orders to proceed "with all dispatch" to rescue the destroyers.

The position in which the Arandora Star had been torpedoed was 100 miles from the St. Laurent.

But the Canadian destroyer arrived 100 miles in under three hours.

An hour before arriving at the position in which the Arandora Star had been torpedoed, the St. Laurent sighted a Sunderland flying boat, which the Admiralty said:

"The flying boat guided the destroyer to the survivors."

MANY SURVIVORS

When the St. Laurent arrived ten lifeboats were visible, all of them crowded.

"These boats were crowded and the sea to windward of them, but from on these sides we lifted 850 internees and other wreckage, to which were attached many survivors."

The St. Laurent stopped in the middle of the area of wreckage. All her boats were sent away at once with instructions to pick up internees and other wreckage and those who had no other support.

While the boats cruised and this task the destroyer manoeuvred round the wreckage and heavier wreckage, picking up groups of three or four survivors.

When more than 850 survivors had been picked up, the flying boat reported that no more were to be seen and returned to her base.

"The St. Laurent," adds the report, "then set course for a Scottish port, where she arrived on Wednesday, July 3."

But a destroyer for her own had more than 850 people in addition to her crew for a period of about 12 hours in itself a feat.

CROWDED BELOW DECK

As many survivors as possible were stowed below deck. They filled all the heavy decks and the officers' messes.

Some men, in number, were obliged to remain on deck, and these were made as comfortable as possible in the open air.

The great majority of the survivors were German and Italian internees.

They generally appeared grateful for the care they received, and many of them made every effort to assist the crew.

"The internees, particularly the German and Italian internees, were great assistance and worked through the night standing the internees and distressed."

It was a great coincidence that the internees being sent to Canada should be torpedoed by a German U-boat, and then saved from death by a destroyer of our "Royal Canadian Navy."

London Hoteliers on Torpedoed Liner
Well Known Italians Feared Lost on Arandora Star

Many well-known figures in the London hotel and restaurant world are among the 470 Italians who have been reported to be on the Arandora Star, the liner which was torpedoed in the Atlantic last week.

The list of names includes the names of the following:...

AMONG THE MISSING: (left to right) Signor, Signorina, Signor, Signorina.

AMONG THE SAVED: (left to right) Signor, Signorina, Signor, Signorina.

DAILY HERALD
U-BOAT SINKS LINER, KILLS 968 GERMANS & ITALIANS
Aliens Fight Each Other In Wild Panic
GERMAN AND ITALIAN INTERNEES FIGHT FOR PLACES IN LIFEBOATS AS U-BOAT TORPEDOES AND SINKS THE FORMER CRUISE LINER ARANDORA STAR WHICH WAS TAKING THEM FROM BRITAIN TO CAMPS IN CANADA.

The British liner Arandora Star, which was carrying 1,500 German and Italian internees to Canada, was torpedoed and sunk by a German U-boat in the Atlantic last night.

The ship was hit by a torpedo which exploded in the hold, and the ship was seen to be listing heavily.

There were about 100 enemy soldiers on board with the ship, and they were seen to be rushing for the lifeboats as the ship was hit.

ALIENS FIGHT EACH OTHER

As the ship was hit, the enemy soldiers were seen to be rushing for the lifeboats, and some were seen to be running away from the ship.

There were about 100 enemy soldiers on board with the ship, and they were seen to be rushing for the lifeboats as the ship was hit.

WILD PANIC

As the ship was hit, the enemy soldiers were seen to be rushing for the lifeboats, and some were seen to be running away from the ship.

There were about 100 enemy soldiers on board with the ship, and they were seen to be rushing for the lifeboats as the ship was hit.

The Rescue by HMCS St Laurent



The Canadian Destroyer, HMCS St Laurent eased itself into the centre of the survivors mindful of the men in the water. It sent out small boats to pick up more individuals. The men who survived by clinging to driftwood were covered in the heavy oil leached from the Arandora Star's tanks; onboard the survivors were hosed down by the sailors of the St Laurent with firemen's hoses.



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After the torpedo struck, the Arandora Star sent an SOS message which was picked up by the Wireless Telegraph Station at Malin Head, Co. Donegal, Ireland. A Sunderland Flying Boat was sent as the first response to guide the rescue ships to the disaster. The men were in the water clinging on to whatever would float. As the plane flew past, one Italian said to the crewman holding on to the same piece of driftwood **"they haven't seen us"**, the crewman replied **"yes they have - he's tipped his wings."** The plane stayed with the survivors and dropped supplies.



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The survivors at Greenock that did not need hospitalisation. Some just had a blanket to wrap around themselves, other are shoeless



The survivors crammed on the HMCS St Laurent

The HMCS St Laurent stayed in deadly waters, at risk of itself being torpedoed, to rescue the survivors and return them to Greenock in the Clyde Estuary, Scotland. The Canadian Commander, Harry DeWolf, and the crew were not to know that the U-Boat, U-47 had fired its last torpedo.



photo credit Ken Macpherson / Naval Museum
H83 - HMCS St Laurent

From Greenock via Liverpool, the able bodied survivors were then deported on the SS Dunera to Australia. The ones that needed hospitalisation were later interned on the Isle of Man.

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Small boats collected the individuals in the sea

The Arandora Star Tragedy - 75 Years On

2nd July 1940

Arandora Star London Memorial Trust

Exhibition designed by Peter Capella and Ruth Scrase

Thank you to our Sponsors - Mazzini Garibaldi Foundation, Associazione Parmigiani Valcano, Michael Polledri, Spaghetti House Group, Forte Family

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Timeline



3rd September 1939

Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain announced that Britain was at war with Germany. Italy's President, Benito Mussolini desperately tried to intervene with Führer Adolf Hitler to forestall the war.

10th June 1940

Italy entered the war on the side of Germany, the cabinet minutes at the time record the order from the new Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, "Collar The Lot". That evening there were anti-Italian riots. Hooligans and opportunists damaged and looted Italian businesses across the UK.

11th June 1940

By early morning many Italian men had been arrested. They were taken to a local police station and kept for a few days before being transferred to various camps around the UK. One camp was Warth Mills in Bury, Lancashire, which held most, if not all, at one time, the men to board the Arandora Star.

20th June 1940

The *Duchess of York* sailed with 2600 Germans and Austrians safely to Canada.

30th June 1940

A group of internees from various camps were sent to Liverpool docks and were boarded on to the Arandora Star. The Arandora Star had been a cruise liner of the Blue Star Line, and was designed to carry 500 passengers.

1st July 1940

The Arandora Star set sail from Liverpool bound for Canada, with an estimated 1678 men on board, internees, crew, and guards, 734 were Italians. The ship had been painted grey, did not have a Red Cross to signify it was carrying civilians, and the life boats had been secured behind heavy wire mesh. Alastair McLean in his book [The Lonely Star] claimed that obstructing access to the lifeboats was ordered in spite of the protest by the Master Captain Moulton, who claimed that it rendered the ship a death trap.

2nd July 1940

At approximately 7am the SS Arandora Star was torpedoed off the North West coast of Ireland. 800 men lost their lives, 446 being Italians, 241 being from the London community. The survivors remained in the water for several hours before being rescued by the Canadian Destroyer HMCS St Laurent and were taken to Greenock, Scotland.

3rd July 1940

In Greenock, the injured were taken to hospital; others were taken to a nearby warehouse, and stayed for the next two days before they were taken to Arrow Park army camp in Birkenhead.

10th July 1940

The able bodied were transferred to Liverpool, then onto the ship SS Dunera and bound for Australia.

July - August 1940

After some time, for about 2 months, bodies from the SS Arandora Star were being washed up along the north coast of Ireland and west coast of Scotland, a stretch of coast of about 400 miles from South Uist, The Outer Hebrides, Scotland to Termoncarragh, County Mayo, Ireland.

The bodies were collected and buried by local people in their cemeteries and churchyards. Of all the civilian bodies that were recovered only 14 could be identified as Italians.

3rd September 1940

The SS Dunera arrived in Australia; the journey was described by the internees as 55 days of hell.

Late Summer 1940

As awareness of internment and of the Arandora Star tragedy becomes more widespread, government policy was reviewed. First internees are released. These mostly include women, children and others in category 'C' who were in UK camps.

November 1940

The results of the Snell Report were made known to the House of Commons. After the Arandora Star tragedy, Lord Snell was commissioned in August to conduct an inquiry into the methods of selection for deportation. It was never published as Parliament feared it would revive public interest.

13th October 1941

Attilio Marioni, the first London Italian internee to be released from Australia.

8th May 1945

Victory in Europe Day. End of World War 2 in Europe.

22 August 1945

Ludovico Rosi, the last London Italian internee to be released from Australia.



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The Arandora Star

From Luxury Liner to Warship



The decks of the Arandora Star jammed with refugees
Taken from 'The Wartime Journey of Kazimierz Chomacki'
<http://mchpro.republika.pl/308SqN/Escapes.htm>



The Arandora Star in Southampton testing experimental anti-torpedo netting, which was abandoned



'Kazik' safely being transferred to Liverpool
Taken from 'The Wartime Journey of Kazimierz Chomacki'
<http://mchpro.republika.pl/308SqN/Escapes.htm>

In 1939 the Arandora Star was requisitioned by the British Government and converted to a troop carrier. It was painted grey and gun placements added. It was initially used to recover the retreating troops from the invading German army from Narvik, Norway. Its penultimate journey was to collect the fleeing Polish Army and refugees, who were trapped by the Germans, from St. Jean de Luz, South West France on 24th June 1940.

This was carried out under destroyer escort.

It arrived in Liverpool in the morning of 29th June 1940.

The ship was then prepared to take the Italian, German and Austrian internees by installing barbed wire to the decks.

It sailed from Liverpool on 1st July 1940 bound for Canada with the internees. On the 2nd the torpedo struck the Arandora Star on the starboard side, abaft of the funnel, in the after end of the engine room at 6.57 and sank at 8.02. One hour five minutes after the explosion, it sank.

The consequences of having a troop carrier transport civilians is clear:

Extract from Captain's Log of U-Boat U-47

The first officer reported sighting a liner by periscope to the captain who logged that no action was to be taken. Shortly after, a second log entry reported first officer having seen a gun emplacement on the ship; the captain went to the periscope and confirmed this. The gun emplacements made the Arandora Star a legitimate target, and proceeded to attack.

Captain F.J. Robertson (interpreter to the Italians on board) suggests, in his official account, that the ship was overloaded, there was no naval escort, insufficient lifeboats for the number on board, no boat drill had been given, the army escorts were not comfortable at sea and some of the escorts should have been from the navy.

"We learned that the Captain (Moulton) or Major Bethell (Officer Commanding Tank Corps), or both ... had flatly refused to take on board another 500 PoWs, that the crew were 80% newly signed on that morning and that we were sailing without escort."

"I put on a coat and lifebelt and went on deck, where members of the crew and escorts were throwing rafts overboard. This proved to be an error as the ship had considerable way on her and when she eventually stopped and sank the rafts were a considerable distance away."

Capt FJ Robertson

These actions clearly show the inexperience of the guards and escorts.

Lifeboat no.7 was destroyed in the explosion, no.5 was lost in lowering....

The whole of our 12 boats only had the capacity for 750, but with the rafts I think that there might have been enough room for everybody to hang on. It was impossible to have saved any more. There was no more room in the boats and the three big rafts were filled up and the small floats were practically useless.

(SGO) F Brown Chief Officer



Port Gangway (without the barbed wire barricade)

SGD. F. Brown, Chief Officer 'walked' over the side with Capt. Moulton and the other Senior Officers as the water rose to meet them and managed to swim clear. He was picked up by a boat some 20 minutes later.



International Red Cross Ship
This is the markings the SS Arandora Star should have had as it was transporting PoWs and civilians

Conclusion - a multitude of errors

- Unlike the Germans and Austrians, the Italians were not categorised and were not given the opportunity of appealing to a tribunal.
- Ship painted grey.
- Had gun placements.
- Used Zigzag (no.10) U-Boat avoidance manoeuvres.
- No International Red Cross Symbol to indicate civilians on board.
- No escort.
- Overloaded ship.
- Insufficient life boats.
- No boat drill.
- Barbed wire barricades.
- Army escorts on board instead of navy who would have been more efficient at sea.
- The accessible rafts were thrown into the water too early to be used.



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The Arandora Star

Luxury Liner



Enrico Lorenzato was a waiter on SS Arandora Star. These photographs were taken in 1929-30.

by kind permission of Kay Lorenzato



Enrico came to UK about 1920 and started his career on Cross-Atlantic Liners graduating from the kitchen as chef for Italians to becoming a head waiter. In the 1920s he did a round the world trip on the *Berengaria*, two or three trips on the *Arandora Star*, a spell in Trinidad as well as working at the Savoy Hotel in London. When the *Andes* was converted to a cruise liner he took up the post as Maitre d'Hotel. After another spell working at the Savoy he returned to Trinidad for a few years, once again returning to the Savoy. During World War II he was interned on the Isle of Man but released to essential war work in Accrington. He was not on the ship that fateful day but lost many friends from Fubine, Italy.



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The Arandora Star

Luxury Liner



She was launched initially as the 'S.S. Arandora' on 4th January 1927 as an ocean liner and refrigerated cargo ship. Owned by the Blue Star Line, she was built by Cammell Laird of Birkenhead. She was designed as one of five new liners for the London to Rio de Janeiro to Buenos Aires route. The Arandora, along with the Almeda, Andalucia, Avelona and Avila became known as the 'Luxury Five'.

When originally built she was 12,847 tons, 512.2 feet (156.1 m) long, had a beam of 68.3 feet (20.8 m) and accommodated 164 first class passengers. She had a speed of 16 knots (30 km/h). Due to her colour scheme of a white hull with scarlet ribbon, the Arandora Star was often referred to as 'The Wedding Cake' or the 'Chocolate Box'.

In 1929, it was decided she would undergo a major refit in order to reduce her cargo space and become a dedicated cruise ship.

She was sent to Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Company Limited of Glasgow for this refitting. In the refit, her gross tonnage was increased to 14,694 and first class accommodation was increased to 354 passengers. Renovations included private bathrooms, a tennis court, a children's playground, a gymnasium and a ballroom. She also became the first luxury liner to have an outdoor swimming pool installed.

Upon completion, she returned to service as a full-time luxury cruise ship, renamed Arandora Star. The 'Star' was added in order to stop confusion with Royal Mail Ships which typically bore names beginning and ending in 'A'.

As a cruise ship Arandora Star was based mainly in Southampton. She voyaged to many different destinations including Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Panama, Cuba and Florida. Her regular yearly itinerary was a Caribbean tour in winter, a tour of Scandinavia and the Baltic in the summer and a tour of the Mediterranean in the autumn or spring.



Model of the Arandora Star
Provided by Norma Di Giuseppe and Family
Daughter of Carlo Ravetto



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JANUARY 1934 FOR 45 GLORIOUS DAYS

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Find new health, new interests, new friends and new happiness on a Blue Star Cruise. Escape from grey days to brilliant sunshine. Cruise in the blue Mediterranean, to countries old as time, strange as a dream, beautiful as ever an artist conceived. Live in comfort and delight on the most delightful cruising liner in the world.

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