

Mazzini-Garibaldi Club



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'Arandora Star Remembered'

Conference to Mark the 80th Anniversary, The Italian Cultural Institute, 30th November 2021, 9.30am – 5.00pm

Presented by The Italian Cultural Institute London, The Mazzini Garibaldi Club Ltd and The Arandora Star London Memorial Trust

WELCOME SESSION

9.30am - 10.00am

9.30am – 10.00am Chair – Domenic Pini

Domenic Pini, Arandora Star London Memorial Trust

Dr Katia Pizzi, Director, The Italian Cultural Institute

H.E. The Italian Ambassador, Raffaele Trombetta

The Mayor of Camden, Councillor Sabrina Francis



The
Forte Family

POLITICAL SESSION

10.00am - 10.15am

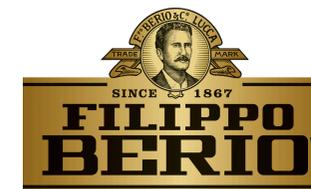
10.00am – 10.30am Chair - Domenic Pini

Marco Longhi MP (Conservative) Dudley North

10.15am - 10.30am

On. Massimo Ungaro, (Italia Viva) Italiani Estero, Europa
Camera dei Deputati

MICHAEL POLLEDRI MBE



10.30am – 10.45am

Short Break



VALVONA & CROLLA.

ACADEMIC SESSION **10.45am – 12.30pm** Chair – Terri Colpi

10.45am - 10.50am Introduction

10.50am – 11.20am **Dr Rachel Pistol, Kings College, London**

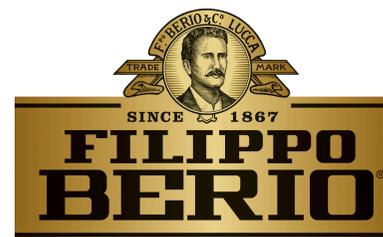
Early Internment Camps and Deportation Policy, June-July 1940

When Italy declared war on Great Britain on June 10th, 1940, all Italian citizens living within the British Isles automatically became ‘enemy aliens’. Britain had attempted to avoid a policy of mass internment up until May 1940, including setting up tribunals to hear the cases of Germans of Austrians to classify them according to their perceived threat to national security. Until May 1940, when the threat of invasion was imminent, only a small number of men and a handful of women had been interned. By the time Italy joined the war, the population of Britain’s internment camps had swelled to around 13,000 with still many more to be interned after the general calls for internment that came throughout June. This paper will talk about the early internment camps and the deportation policy that led to many Italians tragically being embarked onto the *Arandora Star*.

11.20am – 11.50am **Robert Rumble, The Imperial War Museum**

Hunters & Hunted: The Sinking of the SS Arandora Star within the wider Context of the Battle of the Atlantic

On the 2nd July 1940 the ocean liner SS Arandora Star was torpedoed and sunk, with the loss of 805 lives; the majority of these were British-Italian internees. It was the worst British civilian maritime disaster to that point in the Second World War. Despite the absolute tragedy of the loss of the Arandora Star, she was sadly one of many large passenger ships sunk during the Battle of the Atlantic. Why was she sailing alone and unescorted? Why was she chosen as a target and attacked by the German Navy? I intend to explore what happened on that terrible day and more importantly, why. What were the strategic decisions by the British Royal Navy and the Germans that led to this disaster?



VALVONA & CROLLA.

11.50am - 12.20pm

Dr. Cav. Terri Colpi

Arandora Star: Memory and Remembering in Britain and Italy

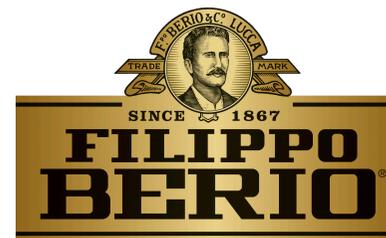
The presentation discusses how Arandora Star memory, remembering and memorialisation have evolved over the past 80 years paying attention to internal and external community aspects. The post-war 'silence' in both Britain and Italy was coincident, but for different reasons, and early memorialisation also diverged. By the 1990s in Britain, some 50 years after the sinking, memory recovery took an upturn but it was not until 2008 that a new phase of memorialisation began. In Italy, during the early 2000s, memory choreographers began to actively retrieve, connect and curate the memory and there too new memorials emerged, the latest in 2020. A message from President Mattarella in 2020 to the British Italian community indicated increased interest and support from Italy as the community of interest in the Arandora star and the mnemonic community continue to grow.

12.20pm – 12.30pm

Round Table/Panel, Q & A

12.30pm – 1.30pm

Lunch Break



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MEMORIALS and MINORITIES SESSION

1.30pm – 2.55pm Chair - Terri Colpi

1.30pm – 2.00pm Dr. Bruna Chezzi

From Memories to Memorial and Beyond: Insights into the Creation and Legacy in Wales of the First National Arandora Memorial

Dating to the post-war period, there were Arandora Star Memorials in Scotland and England, but none in Wales. Inspired by the significant commemorative event in Liverpool in 2008 to mark the 68th anniversary of the tragedy, a group of volunteers, including myself, formed the Arandora Star Memorial Fund in Wales. The committee was backed by a number of prominent patrons and many people contributed to our work by making generous donations. The main aims were to create a permanent memorial in time for the 70th anniversary in 2010 and to continue raising public awareness about the tragedy by organising further initiatives celebrating the people of Italian descent who had made Wales their home. Over ten years after its creation, this presentation considers backstage dynamics and discusses the memorial's legacy.

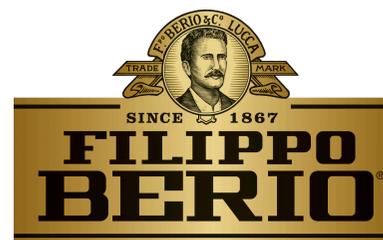
2.00pm – 2.30pm Cav. Ronnie Convery

'These Things Happen in War...' The Story of Glasgow's Italian Cloister Garden and Arandora Star Monument

The presentation will focus on the growth of knowledge and understanding of the Arandora Star disaster through careful detailing of the event and through the establishment of a remarkable monument beside St Andrew's Catholic Cathedral in Glasgow. The Italian Garden, as it is known, was born of a desire to 'heal memories' in the words of Archbishop Mario Conti who commissioned Roman architect, Giulia Chiarini to create a worthy memorial. The breath-taking use of colossal, mirrored plinths bearing inscriptions from the great Italian poets; the running water of a fountain and stream which criss-cross the viewer's path; and the presence of engraved marble wall plaques commemorating the dead, work to create a powerful visitor experience. The most significant Arandora Star monument, it opened 11 years ago in the presence of Scotland's First Minister, The UK Ambassador to the Holy See, the Consul General of Italy and the last survivor of the tragedy.

2.30pm – 2.40pm Rt. Hon. David Lammy MP (Labour), Tottenham, Shadow Secretary of State for Justice

2.40pm – 2.55pm Round Table/Panel, Q & A



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2.55pm – 3.10pm

Short Break

CULTURAL SESSION

3.10pm – 4.40pm Chair - Nicola Gallani, British Film Institute

3.10pm – 3.15pm

Part One: Celebrity Guest Speakers
Introduction of Guest Speakers

3.15pm – 3.30pm

Tom Conti – *A Personal Story*

3.30pm – 3.45pm

Dominic Minghella – *A Personal View*

3.45pm – 3.50pm

Part Two: Film
Nicola Gallani, British Film Institute
Archive or Absence?

3.50pm – 3.55pm

Peter Capella, Arandora Star London Memorial Trust
Introduction to SOS Arandora Star, directed by Anna Chiappa

3.55pm – 4.40pm

Screening of Film

PLENARY SESSION

4.40pm – 5.00pm Chair – Pini, Colpi, Gallani

4.40pm – 5.00pm

Contributions/Comments/Q & A
Summation Today's Meeting and The Way Forward



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BIOGRAPHY

Peter Capella has been dedicated to works within the London Italian community, and especially to Arandora Star memory, for many years. He is a founding trustee of the Arandora Star London Memorial Trust, trustee of the Italian Medical Charity and Mazzini-Garibaldi Foundation, of which he is also Vice Chair. In 2012, he designed the new Arandora Star memorial plaque inside St Peter's Italian church commemorating 241 London victims. At the 75th anniversary in 2015, Peter curated the exhibition '*The Arandora Star Tragedy 75 Years On*', which showed at Holburn Library, later touring to Bardi (Parma) and also edited a book with the eponymous title. For a second exhibition, at the Italian Consulate General, he acquired remnants of an Arandora lifeboat. Peter's maternal grandfather, Diamante Costa, was lost on the Arandora Star.

Bruna Chezzi came to Wales in 2001 to teach Italian at Cardiff University. Living and working in Wales, she became involved with the Welsh Italian community organising and participating in many cultural events. In 2008 she was a founding member of the Arandora Star Memorial Fund, dedicated to raising awareness of the wartime tragedy in Wales and helping with the creation of the first national memorial in the UK. She was also collaborated in the presentation of the exhibition '*Wales Breaks its Silence: From Memories to Memorial*'. Brunna has given lectures on Italians in Wales, published in *Italian Studies* and her doctorate on the cultural representations of Welsh Italians was published in a book in 2015. In 2020 she was appointed Honorary Vice Consul of Italy in Cardiff.

Terri Colpi is of Italian Scots origin and lives in Hampshire. She gained her doctorate at Oxford University researching the Italian community of Bedford and afterwards worked at the Italian Consulate General in London. Currently an honorary Research Fellow at the University of St Andrews, she has written three books on the British Italian community and in 2020 published in *Italian Studies* on the Arandora Star. A new book on internment to be published next year includes a chapter by her on Arandora Star heritage and legacy. A '*cavaliere*' of the Italian Republic, Terri has presented in Britain, Italy and Canada on Italian migration to the UK and spoken about the Arandora Star on television and radio, recently advising CNN's '*Searching for Italy*' with Stanley Tucci on its forthcoming London episode.

Tom Conti is an actor of Scots Italian origin with a long and distinguished career in both theatre and film in the UK and US. Born in Paisley, Renfrewshire, he studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. He then gained acclaim in London winning many prestigious awards including a Tony Award on Broadway and a best actor Oscar nomination. Tom also directs and writes. His first novel, '*The Doctor*' was published a few years ago. In 2013, he recorded the BBC Radio 4 programme '*Collar the Lot*' about internment on the Isle of Man where his father was imprisoned.



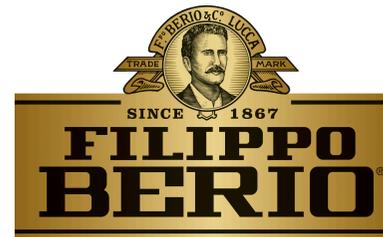
Ronnie Convery graduated with a first class honours degree in Italian and French from University of Glasgow with later studies at La Sapienza in Rome and l'Institut Touraine in Tours. From 1989-1995 he was a journalist with Scotland's leading newspapers, subsequently branching into television journalism. Since 1999 he has been Director of Communications for the Archdiocese of Glasgow. Ronnie has collaborated with numerous initiatives to promote Italian language and culture over the past 20 years and was a founding member of the 'Italian Scotland' charity, of which he remains a trustee. From 2008, he has been Chair of the committee that created and curates the Italian Cloister Garden containing the Arandora Star monument. Ronnie is a Knight of the Order of the Star of Italian Solidarity, and in 2016, he was appointed Honorary Consul of Italy in Glasgow.

Sabrina Francis became Mayor of Camden, where she has lived all her life, in May 2021. She studied at Birmingham University and became a Labour councillor in 2014. Sabrina has a particular interest in education policy and helping disadvantaged children, especially those from single parent families, into higher education. In 2017, she was recognised in the New Year's Honours List for services to the University of London.

Nicola Gallani is currently Head of International Programmes at the British Film Institute, and works closely with the BFI National Archive. She has worked variously in programming and distribution for film and cultural organisations such as BAFTA, British Council and the ICA. She directed a short film on the history of the Italian community in London, '*Arrivaderci Clerkenwell*', and has produced features and shorts, including Sandhya Suri's '*Around India*' with a Movie Camera and archive commissions with filmmakers Penny Woolcock, John Akomfrah and Mark Cousins. Nicola is Chair of the Mazzini-Garibaldi Club. Her great-grandfather moved from Bardi to Wales in the early 1900s and she still has family in Parma.

David Lammy has been Labour MP for Tottenham from 2000, when he entered parliament, aged 27, as the 'baby of the House'. Since 2020 he has served as Secretary of State for Justice and Shadow Lord Chancellor in Keir Starmer's Shadow cabinet. He studied law at SOAS, University of London before going on to be the first black Briton to attend Harvard Law School, graduating in 1997. David consistently defends ethnic minorities in the House. In 2020 he published '*Tribes*', a book exploring social division and the need for belonging. His appearance in the Channel Four documentary '*The Unremembered: Britain's Forgotten War Heroes*' (2019) was influential in generating the report which acknowledged failure to properly commemorate black and Asian service personnel from WW1, bringing forth an unreserved apology from the PM in April 2021.

Marco Longhi entered parliament in 2019, having been Mayor of Walsall before becoming MP for Dudley North. He grew up in Rome and trained as a pilot and an engineer, later working in the oil and gas industry in South America. Marco combines a strong local depth, having been a councillor for 20 years, with international breadth. He recently took over as Trade Envoy with responsibility for Brazil.



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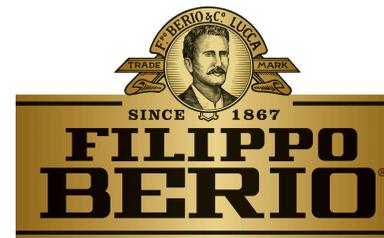
Dominic Minghella is a well-known television producer and screenwriter, from one of Britain's best-known Italian families whose name is synonymous with the arts. The family originate from Frosinone in Lazio, with Minghella growing up on the Isle of Wight before reading PPE at Oxford University. His most long-standing television creation is the popular ITV series '*Doc Martin*', which began in 2004. Minghella has worked on several productions with the BBC over the years, as well as others in America. More recently, he founded the *#TakeBackBritain* political campaign, and is also a trustee for the UK's national Covid-19 charity, *Covid:Aid*. Dominic has recently become associated with the Arandora Star, and is considering a television dramatisation of the story.

Domenic Pini is Chair and a founding trustee of the London Arandora Star Memorial Trust. Son of Arandora Star survivor, Serafino Pini, Domenic has long been dedicated to preserving and promoting the memory. Former Chair of the Mazzini-Garibaldi Club, he is also a trustee of '*La Scuola Italiana a Londra*'. After a law degree at Cambridge University he was Barrister at Law, Inner Temple and now specialises in business support and advice at Pini Franco LLP. Domenic is a Freeman of the City of London. He was awarded *Ordine della Stella d'Italia Ufficiale* by the President of Italy in 2015.

Rachel Pistol is a historian and researcher at King's College London, where she is part of the management team of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI). She has spoken and published widely on Second World War internment, including '*Internment during the Second World War: A comparative study of Great Britain and the USA*' (Bloomsbury, 2017). Rachel has discussed Second World War internment on BBC TV and Radio, Sky News and has written articles comparing internment with modern day issues that have appeared in *Newsweek*, *The Independent* and *Huffington Post*.
www.rachelpistol.com.

Katia Pizzi has been Director of the Italian Cultural Institute in London since January 2020. She studied the Universities of Bologna and Kent, and gained her doctorate at Cambridge University in Modern Languages. An Italian diplomat, speaking several languages, she is also an academic in her own right and has published several books on a wide range of subjects including Italian Futurism, technology in modernity, Pinocchio, the literary identity of Trieste and the Foibe. Between 2009 and 2019 she was director of the Centre for the Study of Cultural Memory at the School of Advanced Study, University of London.

Robert Rumble is the Lead Curator for HMS Belfast at the Imperial War Museums. A postgraduate of Museum Studies at the University of East Anglia, his recent projects include the reinterpretation of HMS Belfast in 2021, as well as the ten-year Master plan for the ship. Robert's specialisms at IWM include Second World War and Cold War naval history, in addition to irregular warfare, spies and intelligence, and RAF photography. A regular contributor to IWM's media content, he has worked with leading historians, and has collaborated with other museums as far afield as France and Russia.



Raffaele Trombetta has been Italian Ambassador to the Court of St James since 2018. A graduate of both Naples University and London School of Economics, in the early 1990s he was appointed Consul at the Italian Consulate General in London. Later postings included Brussels, where he served as Counsellor to the Permanent Mission of Italy to the European Union and later as First Counsellor at the Embassy. In Beijing, from 2002-2006, he was '*Vice Capo Missione*' and in 2013 he became Italian ambassador in Brazil, before returning to London once more as Head of Mission.

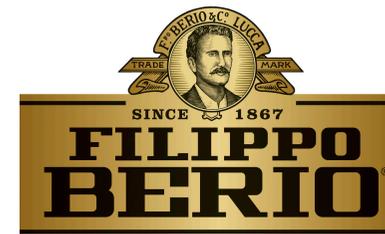
Massimo Ungaro has been a member of the *Camera dei Deputati* (Italian parliament Chamber of Deputies) since 2018 representing the constituency 'Italians Abroad, Europe'. Born in Rome, he has lived in London since 2005, studying at London School of Economics. Later he studied in Paris and New York, at Columbia University as a Fulbright scholar. His political activity focuses on opportunities for the young, Italians in the UK and Brexit. A co-founder in 2007 of *PD Londra* (UK branch of the Italian Democratic Party), in 2019 he joined the newly established, *Italia Viva* party, founded by former Italian prime minister, Matteo Renzi.



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Arandora Star Life Ring, 2014, by Alison Limentani, Granddaughter of the late Uberto Limentani, Arandora Star Survivor

For more information see: <https://alisonlimentani.wixsite.com/alisonlimentani/arandora-star-project>



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