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ARTICLE



Chaff in the Winds of War? The Arandora Star, Not Forgetting and Commemoration at the 80th Anniversary

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the sinking of the SS Arandora Star on 2 July 1940 and the legacy of this wartime event in relation to the 'historic' Italian community in Britain. Selection of Italians for deportation and the significant loss of life are interrogated contextually and in terms of psychological consequences. The new concept 'pockets of affect' is introduced in considering unevenness of geographical impact and also energy in commemorative enterprise, for which post-generations are now responsible. Developments in British and Italian literature and narrative formation are examined, elucidating changing attitudes in both countries. In 2020, at the 80th anniversary of the 'tragedy', continued prominence of the Arandora Star in collective memory ensures a widening of the mnemonic community.

KEYWORDS

Italians; Arandora Star; narrative; commemoration; memorialisation; second world war

Introduction

Readers may know something of the Arandora Star (AS), the former cruise ship carrying Italian, German and Austrian Jewish refugees¹ to Canada, torpedoed in the Atlantic 100 miles northwest of Ireland on the 2 July 1940. Of the 1,673 on board over half drowned, with Italians who form the focus of this essay, suffering the highest proportionate and total loss, 446 of 712 men.² Since the 1990s, interest in the AS has been growing coincident with memorial activity within the 'historic' Italian community³ and increasing attention to internment and wartime commemoration generally. Despite this, as Richard Dove notes concerning internment, 'British historians have treated the subject – if at all – as a regrettable minor episode, a footnote to the main narrative of Britain at war'.⁴ AS specific historiography is thus relatively limited, but has nevertheless generated some debate around deportation and selection of Italians, controversies concerning the ship and also regarding its role and significance within Italian community history. While not discussing identity or what constitutes 'the "Italian" community', this article argues the foundational nature of the AS event to the historic community's wartime experience and memory. By reassessing the wartime issues and their interpretation, and by engaging with the literature, reviewing commemorative activity and particularly the formation of the AS narrative, this paper progresses the discourse and offers new perspective. A transnational approach is adopted for the first time, highlighting connectedness of

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¹German POWs and British military and crew were also aboard.

²Numbers of Italians aboard and lost vary depending on source. National Archives (NA): On board from 712 (FO 371 25210) to 717 (HO 213 1722) to 734 (FO 916 2581), and drowned from 446 (HO 215 429) to 486 (FO 916 2581, folio 499).

³'Historic' refers to pre First World War migrants and their descendants, distinguished from post Second World War Italian communities and from the 'new', large-scale influx of Italians from 2000.

⁴Richard Dove, 'Introduction' in *Totally Un-English? Britain's Internment of 'Enemy Aliens' in Two World Wars*, ed. by Richard Dove (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), pp. 11–16 (p. 11).

the Italian community with areas of origin in Italy and the inter-linked evolution of commemorative infrastructure. Changing attitudes to the AS especially in Italy are revealed through growing press, academic and political awareness.

Some thirty years ago, Des Hickey wrote ‘... it is the Italians, of all those concerned, who ensure that the world does not forget the voyage of the *Arandora Star*’.⁵ In 2019, Rachel Pistol reiterated the view that ‘the British-Italian community has never forgotten the devastation caused by the loss of their loved ones and without their dedication the memory of those who perished would be all but forgotten’.⁶ The AS has come to represent and embody a core essence of the British Italian war experience and evokes powerful emotion still. Although not all Italian families bore direct losses in 1940, there are what I define ‘pockets of affect’ in terms of geographies that have acted to succour, preserve and transmit the memory. An undeniably resonant voice of the third or ‘post’⁷ generation seeking recognition and acknowledgement is dedicated to maintaining the memory. On the 80th anniversary it is apt then to reassess the impact of the sinking, considering how and why this phenomenon of ‘remembering’ has come about and indeed grown.

War and Post-War

Mussolini’s declaration of war on 10 June 1940 led to immediate internment of Italian-born males between sixteen and seventy with less than twenty years residence in Britain. Those on MI5’s list of 1,500 ‘dangerous characters’ were to be deported, with no time for assessment of loyalties. Lack of governmental preparedness and clarity in both policy and procedure on how internment of Italian ‘enemy aliens’ was to be effected ensured a situation of variable national implementation.⁸ Local constabularies, tasked with the arrests, interpreted and executed instructions differently⁹ and, amidst chaos over several days, many individuals were wrongfully incarcerated, including men with longer residency, naturalised British subjects and ‘known’ anti-fascists, while others were overlooked. Disagreement between government ministries, flawed definitions and inadequate instruction led to more disastrous mismanagement in selection for the AS.¹⁰ Muddle and ‘injustice’ derived from reliance on MI5’s list, equating *fascio* membership with real threat to national security, and the fact that only around half of these men could be identified. Alfio Bernabei contends that the shortfall was a possible duplication of some 700 names on the Italian ambassador’s diplomatic list for repatriation and that the War Office filled the deficit mainly with the young, aged twenty to thirty.¹¹ Selections to make up the numbers were hurriedly and arbitrarily effected at Warth Mills detention centre and Liverpool docks. Lucio Sponza quotes Harold Farquhar of the Foreign Office, who suspected ‘the military authorities just filled up the number haphazardly by picking out any Italian between the age of sixteen and seventy, whether members of the *Fascio* or not’.¹² Rando Bertoia, the last AS survivor before his death in 2013, stated:

It will always remain a mystery to me how I was picked for the *Arandora Star*. We were just picked at random. Probably they took names if people were *fascisti*. I wasn’t in the *fascisti* or anything. I was nothing. I wasn’t registered anywhere and I hadn’t joined anything.¹³

⁵Des Hickey and Gus Smith, *Star of Shame. The Secret Voyage of the Arandora Star* (Dublin: Madison Publishing, 1989), p. 233.

⁶Rachel Pistol, ‘I Can’t Remember a More Depressing Time but I Don’t Blame Anyone for That: Remembering and Commemorating the Wartime Internment of Enemy Aliens in Britain’, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 53.1 (2019), 37–48 (p. 42).

⁷Marianne Hirsch, ‘The Generation of Postmemory’, *Poetics Today*, 29.1 (2008), 103–128 (pp. 103–108).

⁸Terri Colpi, *The Italian Factor. The Italian Community in Great Britain* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1991), p. 109 and Lucio Sponza, *Divided Loyalties. Italians in Britain during the Second World War* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2000), pp. 103–104.

⁹For example, in timing of arrest, decisions on exemptions, protocols on illness and modality of detention.

¹⁰Lucio Sponza, ‘The British Government and the Internment of Italians’ in *The Internment of Aliens in Twentieth Century Britain*, ed. by David Ceserani and Tony Kushner (London: Frank Cass, 1993), pp. 125–144 (pp. 129–131).

¹¹Alfio Bernabei, *Esuli ed Emigranti Italiani nel Regno Unito* (Milano: Mursia, 1997), pp. 203–208.

¹²Sponza, ‘The British Government’, p. 129.

¹³Rando Bertoia, ‘Appendix: Internment Testimonies’ in *Internment of Aliens*, ed. by Ceserani and Kushner, pp. 229–235 (p. 230).

When, after the sinking, debate opened up in parliament on deportation policy and the significance of *fascio* membership¹⁴ it became clear that many Italians on the AS were unlikely to have been 'dangerous' or a risk to national security.¹⁵ High levels of patriotism were undoubtedly pervasive during the Fascist era throughout the Italian diaspora¹⁶ and many Italians became associated with the *fasci*, which worked to envelop the community.¹⁷ Concerns grew from 1937 as Mussolini increased fascistisation of the emigrants with more politically orientated, and anti-British messages.¹⁸ While the vast majority had connections with Italy, and axiomatically *fascio* leaders were more likely to have been politically motivated than ordinary members, the extent of a menacing or militant 'hard core' Fascist element amongst British Italians remains to be established.¹⁹ A 1946 Security Services report does, however, state there was 'no evidence that the Italians had prepared any efficient underground network before the war'.²⁰

During the build-up to Italy declaring war, the press stoked growing anti-Italian feeling,²¹ tapping into arguably embedded xenophobia, and in Scotland, sectarianism.²² Lorenzo Colantoni argues that government policy served to magnify the general panic and, with reference to the anti-Italian rioting of the 10th June, that the immediateness of internment 'increased the nonsensical hostility towards the Italians'.²³ Tony Kushner identifies Minister for Information Duff Cooper's speech on 10th June accusing the Italians of cowardice in the First World War, alongside the wholesale internment of male Italians, as undoubtedly giving 'a sense of legitimacy and even respectability to the rioters'.²⁴ British Italians became the 'enemy within', as local people targeted them directly.²⁵ Aggression and unpleasantness often, although not always, accompanied arrest, which normally took place in the home, during the night or early morning.²⁶ Such intrusion into the domestic sanctum, rupturing family bonds was highly intimidating, shaping lasting traumatic memories of fathers 'taken away', some 'never seen again'. The ransacking of shops and property, alongside beatings and bullying at school, held less traumatic affect²⁷ than the sudden and 'extreme dispossession'²⁸ of a father or grandfather. For the younger generations these personal experiences fashioned memories that were acute and actual. Later, when 'received memory' of the sinking was merged with their intimate knowledge of first generation behaviours and memory, a complex fusion of their own memories with 'postmemory'²⁹ evolved and was, in turn, transmitted to subsequent generations.

¹⁴Sponza, *Divided Loyalties*, pp. 110–113.

¹⁵Lucio Sponza, 'The Internment of Italians in Britain' in *Enemies Within. Italian and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad*, ed. by Franca Iacovetta, Roberto Perin and Angelo Principe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), pp. 256–279 (p. 258).

¹⁶Matteo Petrelli, 'Mussolini's Mobilities. Transnational Movements between Fascist Italy and Italian Communities Abroad', *Journal of Migration History*, 1 (2015), 100–120.

¹⁷For discourse on Fascism, see Claudia Baldoli, *Exporting Fascism. Italian Fascists and Britain's Italians in the 1930s* (Oxford: Berg, 2003).

¹⁸Baldoli, pp. 89–90.

¹⁹Due to a 'culture of secrecy' and still restricted-access to government internment files with 'some material destroyed'. Dove, p. 11.

²⁰NA KV4/157, 'The Security Services, A Brief Outline', p. 18.

²¹Notably, John Boswell, 'Memo to the Home Office', *Daily Mirror*, 27 April 1940, p. 6.

²²Wendy Ugolini, *Experiencing War as the 'Enemy Other'. The Italian Scottish Experience in World War II* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011) pp. 27–40.

²³Lorenzo Colantoni, *Italians and the UK* (Roma: Peliti Associati, 2016), p. 76.

²⁴Tony Kushner, *We Europeans? Mass-Observation, Race and British Identity in Twentieth Century Britain* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 183–184.

²⁵Lucio Sponza, 'The Anti-Italian Riots, June 1940' in *Racial Violence in Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries*, ed. by Panikos Panayi (London: Leicester University Press, 1996), pp. 131–149.

²⁶Bruna Chezzi, *Italians in Wales and Their Cultural Representations* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), pp. 63–65.

²⁷Sponza, 'Anti-Italian Riots', p. 146.

²⁸Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), p. 24.

²⁹Hirsch, 'Generation of Postmemory'.

A Sinking Silence

As news filtered out, in newspapers and through radio, accurate information was exceedingly difficult to access, especially since the Foreign Office survivors' list published after the sinking was imprecise.³⁰ Until word arrived in September 1940 from survivors in Australia, uncertainty prevailed since the Home Office refused to release the names of re-deported survivors for security reasons. It was April 1941 before the Home Office missing list was finalised,³¹ and eventually some families received the infamous 'missing presumed drowned' notifications,³² but many never received any formal correspondence at all.³³ This uncommunicativeness by the authorities was perceived as indifference and lack of acknowledgement of the Italian community's relevance or even existence. In response to this official evasiveness and amidst feelings of being disregarded, a resolute silence descended, both within the familial dynamic and at the affiliational level. In Italy, the news took even longer to percolate through, especially to the more geographically isolated, not resident in 'pockets of affect'. Return of survivors from Australia in 1945 brought the first eyewitness accounts, often giving the bereaved some comfort (Figure 1). The survivors' stories of 'selection', sinking, rescue, subsequent journey to Australia and internment, in combination with the 'back story' of the 10th June and, most significantly, the experiences of the victims' families, often bearing extreme economic challenge due to loss of their businesses – either through destruction, inability to cope, physical displacement from protected areas or sequestration – all shaped formation of the AS narrative. Yet, telling the story was shared only sparingly, even within the family. Actor Tom Conti, for example, said that his godfather, Gaetano Cibelli, a survivor, 'spoke to me about it only once' and Mary Contini of Edinburgh that 'as a child I was only told that my grandfather had drowned'.³⁴ Several authors comment on this unwillingness to 'speak' and the pervasiveness of 'silence'.³⁵

Such reticence to communicate was due to several factors. In the context of trauma, this cannot be seen as unusual. Delayed response to trauma involves an element of emotional repression,³⁶ and sometimes the pain of repression can be as powerful, if not more harmful, than the pain itself. Since trauma can break out of historical or biographical time, it can pervade the psyche, present at all times, continuing to colour behaviours and attitudes long after the event.³⁷ Silence is often evidenced as a 'starting point' for trauma victims, who in later testimony 'recount a previous unwillingness to talk about their past even to their closest family members'.³⁸ The silence of first and later second generation Italians resonates with this psychological context. Yet, the trauma must also be understood in the context of external factors. As 'enemy aliens', the ability to articulate such loss outside the community was heavily curtailed with few pathways for expression. Another dynamic of the 'silence' should be recognised as ignorance, exacerbated by state prevarication mentioned above. The inability to answer questions further propagated muteness, adding another layer to the emptiness. In Glasgow, the ship became widely known as the 'Andora' Star – 'that mysterious

³⁰One reason for this was Italians swapping 'papers' to remain with family.

³¹Terri Colpi, 'The Impact of the Second World War on the British Italian Community' in *Internment of Aliens*, ed. by Ceserani and Kushner, pp. 167–187 (p. 179).

³²Stefano Paolini, *Missing Presumed Drowned. The True Story of the Internment of Italians Resident in Britain during the Second World War* (London: [n. pub.], 2015).

³³Chezzi, *Italians in Wales*, p. 71.

³⁴Mike Lockley, 'Birmingham pensioner wins memorial for ship of shame's forgotten victims', *BirminghamLive*, 10 June 2015, <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/birmingham-pensioner-wins-memorial-ship-9423606> [accessed 6 June 2020] and The Newsroom, 'Play sparks debate over whether Italians deserve apology for wartime internment', *Scotsman*, 11 March 2010, <https://www.scotsman.com/arts-and-culture/play-sparks-debate-over-whether-italians-deserve-apology-wartime-internment-1730439> [accessed 6 June 2020].

³⁵Chezzi, *Italians in Wales*, pp. 69–73; Ugolini, p. 10 and Maria Serena Balestracci, *Arandora Star. Dall'Oblío alla Memoria* (Parma: Monte Università Parma, 2008), p. 82.

³⁶Pamela Ballinger, 'The Culture of Survivors: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Memory', *History and Memory*, 10.1 (Spring 1998), 99–132 (p. 122).

³⁷Gil Eyal, 'Identity and Trauma: Two Forms of the Will to Memory', *History and Memory*, 16.1 (Spring 2004), 5–36 (p. 11).

³⁸Sara Jones, '"Simply a Little Piece of GDR History"?: The Role of Memorialisation in Post-Socialist Transitional Justice in Germany', *History and Memory*, 27.1 (Spring 2015), 154–181 (p. 165).

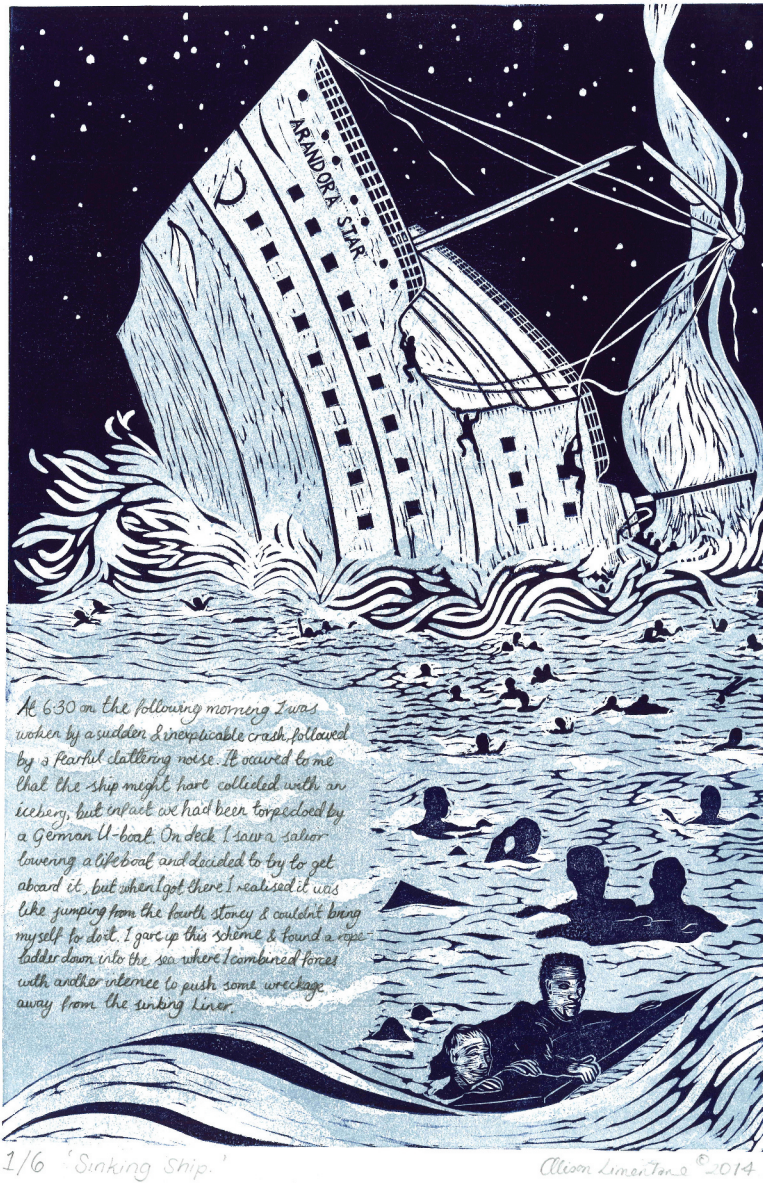


Figure 1. Sinking Ship by Alison Limentani 2014, granddaughter of AS survivor, Uberto Limentani. Copyright Alison Limentani.

ship of which you hardly knew the name'.³⁹ In most Italian communities, there was confusion over the ship's destination and location of sinking and few knew the nationwide extent of impact. It is very unlikely many Italians knew of or read the graphic 1960 rescue account of the St Laurent's captain, the Canadian destroyer that picked up survivors.⁴⁰ After the war there was an over-riding desire to rebuild lives and businesses, inducing silence. Colantoni confirms this

³⁹Balestracci, *Dall'Oblío*, p. 72.

⁴⁰Vice-Admiral Harry G. DeWolf, 'HMCS St. Laurent's race to rescue the enemy', *Maclean Magazine*, 19 November 1960, <https://archive.macleans.ca/article/1960/11/19/hmcs-st-laurents-race-to-rescue-the-enemy> [accessed 15 May 2020].

rationale⁴¹ while Chezzi goes further conceiving the muteness as a 'bonding factor, a mutual but unofficial silent agreement [to not mention the AS] that reconciled offenders and offended'.⁴² Yet the positive restorative aspiration to reintegrate into British society was accompanied by a sense of shame – of fascistic acquiescence, having been the enemy, having been mistrusted – again working to conceal the tragedy. To recover pre-war equilibrium as a well-established migrant community of long-standing was a driving motivation; it seemed necessary to affect forgetfulness and simulate collective amnesia.

The post-war period was one of displaced cultural identity as Italians sought to reintegrate. Scholars agree that masking or concealing outward signs of *italianità* aided in regaining a sense of belonging. Discrimination against Italians was recorded in London in the 1950s,⁴³ while in Hull anglicisation of surnames appears to have been common.⁴⁴ With 'anti-Italian feeling still in the air', uncertainty around not being accepted 'again' has been described as 'terrifying'.⁴⁵ Connected to challenges of reintegration, all generations were confused about their fractured Italian identity. Before Fascism, with its allure and indoctrination, there had been little 'national' identity, migrants were predominantly attached to their villages of origin with family and church forming the other two pillars.⁴⁶ For many emigrants, 'Italy' as a concept had only arisen with Fascism and consequently reformulation of positive 'Italian' identity would take a generation after the war, coinciding with Italy's own rehabilitation in Europe. Public performances of Italianness, including speaking Italian, were discouraged and the community retreated into a primarily familial form of Italian identity. This cultural dissonance and displacement further submerged AS memory. Thus, in combination, these factors of emotional repression, both self-imposed and externally-bounded, ignorance of the factual details, desire to reintegrate and cultural dislocation all acted to muffle and suppress the AS story.

Pockets of Affect

The concept of 'pockets of affect' recognises the uneven impact of the sinking – clusters where deaths were unusually high and other areas less affected than might be expected. Two variables intersected to create this phenomenon – chain migration and the pattern of arrests. The existence of 'pockets of affect' in both Britain and Italy has meant that particular places form nuclei emanating emotion and motivation to keep the memory alive. As indicated throughout the text below, these energies manifest in the form of remembrance initiatives and other AS related activity.

Firstly, in Italy and consequent upon chain migration to Britain, an alignment of impact can be detected with the provinces of Frosinone (64 deaths), Parma (63), Lucca (27), Torino (21), Piacenza and Massa Carrara (18 deaths each) particularly affected. Within these provinces, some small towns and villages sustained high casualty rates amongst their migrants, whose relatives were, in most cases, still living at these sources. The *comune* of Bardi (Pr), represented an epicentre of loss with the highest number at 48 men, one in ten of all Italian victims. The majority of these had settled in Wales thus forming two inter-linking 'pockets of affect', corresponding to both ends of the migratory chain, with two communities simultaneously impacted. Other small towns and villages that were nodes of migration to Britain and which represent 'pockets of affect' are Barga (Lu), Bollengo (To), Borgotaro (Pr), Picinisco (Fr) and Pontremoli (Ms).

⁴¹Colantoni, p. 82.

⁴²Chezzi, *Italians in Wales*, p. 70.

⁴³P. Garigue and Raymond Firth, 'Kinship Organisation of Italianates in London' in *Two Studies in Kinship*, ed. by Raymond Firth, LSE Monographs on Social Anthropology, 15 (1956), pp. 67–93.

⁴⁴Rachel Haworth and Laura Rorato, 'Memory, Identity and Migrant Generations: Articulating Italianità in Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Northern England through the Case of Kingston upon Hull', *California Italian Studies*, 9.1 (2019), 1–19 (p. 13).

⁴⁵Stephanie Woods, *From Atina to Ayr. The Incredible Journey of the Mancini Family* (Unpublished Manuscript), p. 49.

⁴⁶Sponza, 'The British Government', p. 140.

The second overlapping dynamic creating unevenness of impact was effectiveness and intensity of police detention, shaping less predictable results. Some small communities, for example, Ayr, witnessed the arrest of possibly all Italian men, almost all of whom, ten men, 'went down' with the AS, creating devastation. Distant from the *fascio* in Glasgow, this appears an unexpected and inexplicably severe outcome.⁴⁷ Antonio Mancini, a naturalised British subject and wrongfully arrested, was one of those who drowned.⁴⁸ Cross-referencing with a registration by the Italian authorities in 1933,⁴⁹ only one of the ten men is recorded, indicating limited consular reach beyond Glasgow. Similar to Ayr, Middlesbrough lost eleven men from a relatively small Italian community, nine originating from neighbouring villages in Frosinone, again creating inter-linked 'pockets of affect'. Edinburgh formed a 'pocket of affect' with losses high relative to the community's size, again mostly from Frosinone. In contrast to these communities, Manchester, the third largest Italian community after London and Glasgow, lost only twelve men, suggesting a less zealous arrest effort or, despite an active *fascio*, perhaps fewer entries on MI5's list. Paul Di Felice appears to corroborate this when he asserts that Fascism 'never reached the colony',⁵⁰ meaning Ancoats, and stating it was 'estimated that the police initially took 300 Italians, but only 200 were kept in custody'. Moreover, he assesses that only approximately twenty-five per cent of Manchester's Italians were interned.⁵¹ Other northern cities like Liverpool, Leeds and Sheffield, with well-established Italian communities, also suffered very few losses, suggesting low numbers on board. Again it appears, *ceteris paribus*, that, unlike Ayr, Middlesbrough, Edinburgh and the Welsh Valleys, or Glasgow and London which suffered losses more proportionate to the size of their Italian communities, the scale and coverage of arrests in the north of England appears to have been less comprehensive.

Finally, a conceptually differentiated 'pocket of affect' is characterised by the west coast cemeteries of Scotland and Ireland where bodies from the AS washed ashore and were buried by locals. The Hebridean island of Colonsay in particular, has become both a tangible and an intangible site of memory through the dedication of the islanders.⁵²

Literature and Narrative

Review of AS literature serves to signpost the evolving written narrative and changing attitudes. Apart from the seminal work on internment by François Lafitte in 1940,⁵³ no publications investigated treatment of 'enemy aliens' until the 1980s.⁵⁴ Academic research on Italian immigration began in the late 1970s, but gave scant mention to the war,⁵⁵ the first contribution being the complex 1987 documentary film *Dangerous Characters* written and directed by Alfio Bernabei, looking at anti-fascist activity and interviewing AS survivors.⁵⁶ Not until the 1990s did further research on the Italians during the war appear.⁵⁷ My own book, *The Italian Factor. The Italian Community in Great Britain* in 1991, was a broad sweep of twentieth century Italian communities, with just one chapter on the war. Nevertheless, I was able to include AS survivor testimonies and,

⁴⁷One explanation is that Home Office documents mention a Fascist 'section' in Ayr. See Ugolini, pp. 60, 84. However, this is not evidenced in the Fascist publications *La Guida Generale degli Italiani in Gran Bretagna*, (London: Ercole, 1936, 1939) and is therefore perhaps of questionable existence.

⁴⁸National Records Scotland AD 57/23 and NA T 161/1081.

⁴⁹Terri Colpi, *Italians' Count in Scotland. The 1933 Census. Recording History* (London: The St James Press, 2015).

⁵⁰Paul Di Felice, 'Manchester's Little Italy at War, 1940–1945: "Enemy Aliens or Reluctant Foe?"', *Northern History*, 39.1 (2002), 109–123 (p. 113).

⁵¹Di Felice, p. 114.

⁵²<https://colonsay.org.uk/history/arandora-star> [accessed 7 June 2020].

⁵³François Lafitte, *The Internment of Aliens* (London: Penguin Books, 1940). [Republished London: Libris, 1988].

⁵⁴Peter and Leni Gillman, *Collar the Lot! How Britain Interned and Expelled its Wartime Refugees* (London: Quartet Book, 1980) and Hickey and Smith, *Star of Shame*.

⁵⁵Russell King, 'Italian Migration to Great Britain', *Geography*, 62.3 (1977), 176–186 and Robin Palmer, 'The Italians: Patterns of Migration to London' in *Between Two Cultures: Migrants and Minorities in Britain*, ed. by James Watson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1977), pp. 242–68.

⁵⁶<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwB2zeKIR4LWEJPNzoAprg> [accessed 24 May 2020].

⁵⁷Colin Hughes, *Lime Lemon and Sarsaparilla* (Bridgend: Seren Books, 1991); Colpi, *Italian Factor* and Bernabei, *Esuli ed Emigranti*.

for the first time, the AS Missing List⁵⁸ which had become available, helping to open discussion and submerged memory within the community by supplying missing knowledge. Publication in 1993 of two chapters on Italian experience in the first book on internment,⁵⁹ marked a 'turning point in the historiography,' the two authors credited as having 'played the pioneering roles'.⁶⁰ Lucio Sponza in *Divided Loyalties*, 2000, then provided the first detailed study of internment and also Italian POWs brought to Britain. *Experiencing War as the 'Enemy Other'* by Wendy Ugolini in 2011, offers alternative interpretations and covers previously unresearched areas, such as second generation Italians serving in the British army and women on the home-front. Both Hugh Shankland's *Out of Italy*, in 2014, and Bruna Chezzi's *Italians in Wales*, in 2015, include insightful chapters on Italian wartime experience in the northeast and Wales respectively.⁶¹

In the first book to outline the history of Italian migration to Britain, published in 1975, we encounter the word '*tragedia*' regarding the AS, repeated three times on one page.⁶² The author, Padre Umberto Marin, as a missionary priest in London would certainly have known and worked with victims' families. He writes that the tragedy '*per lunghi anni rimarrà come una cicatrice perennemente dolorante e sanguinante nel corpo vivo della collettività italiana ...*'⁶³ – will remain for many years as a perpetually aching and bleeding scar in the living body of the Italian community. This almost Christological metaphor directs attention to suffering and indicates longevity of pain. Marin also mentions '*ingiusta prigionia*', unjust imprisonment, quoting members of both houses of parliament disquieted by deportation, particularly on the AS, as an ignoble moment in British history.⁶⁴ The concept of 'injustice' had already been introduced by Gaetano Rossi who, as a young priest, was interned on the Isle of Man. In his *Ricordi di 1940*, Memories of 1940, Rossi confides 'We felt that we were victims of injustice',⁶⁵ and later stresses that their attitudes towards Italy and internment were not understood by the British authorities.⁶⁶ In 1985, Pietro Zorza, a third Italian missionary, published the first book solely on the subject, *Arandora Star. Il Dovere di Ricordarli*⁶⁷ – The Need to Remember Them. With a parish encompassing all of Scotland, he too interacted with bereaved families and felt compelled to communicate the story within the community, like Rossi and Marin, writing in Italian. Collected photographic evidence of gravestones demonstrated how AS bodies had been washed ashore and buried by locals on Hebridean islands. This astonishing fact had been almost totally unknown to most Italians for forty-five years, even in Scotland. Also unknown then were the bodies buried along Ireland's northwest coast.⁶⁸ Even Zorza knew of only 59 of 94 victims from Scotland, highlighting the gaps in community knowledge mentioned previously. The subtitle – *Il Dovere di Ricordarli* – indicates aspiration to remember collectively, indeed it forms an explicit 'injunction to remember',⁶⁹ problematising memory into a duty. Zorza's emphasis on the '*sconosciuto italiano*' – unknown Italian – incised on the gravestone pictured on the book's cover, is interesting; very few recovered bodies were identifiable. Potentially, this provided a similar outlet for grief as the 'unknown soldier'. Introducing the metaphorical semiotics of the 'unknown Italian' offered a possible space for the whole community to collectively

⁵⁸NA HO 215 429 1942.

⁵⁹Sponza, 'The British Government' and Colpi, 'The Impact of the Second World War'.

⁶⁰Panikos Panayi, 'A Marginalized Subject? The Historiography of Enemy Alien Internment in Britain' in '*Totally Un-English?*', ed. by Dove, pp.17–26 (p. 22).

⁶¹Hugh Shankland, *Out of Italy. The Story of Italians in North East England* (Kibworth Beauchamp: Troubador Publishing, 2014).

⁶²Umberto Marin, *Gli Italiani in Gran Bretagna* (Roma: Centro Scalabrini, 1975), p. 86.

⁶³Marin, pp. 86–87.

⁶⁴Marin, p. 87. Viscount Cecil, for example, regarded management of internment policy as 'one of the most discreditable incidents in the whole history of this country'. Hansard, House of Lords, vol. 117, col. 132, 6 August 1940.

⁶⁵Gaetano Rossi, *Memories of 1940. Impressions of Life in an Internment Camp*. (Scoglio di Frisio Foundation: Roma, 1991), p. 40. (First published in 1950 in the community newspaper *La Voce degli Italiani in Gran Bretagna*, London, fortnightly, 1948–2011).

⁶⁶Rossi, p. 59.

⁶⁷Pietro Zorza, *Arandora Star. Il Dovere di Ricordarli* (Glasgow: [s.l.] *Italiani in Scozia*, 1985).

⁶⁸Michael Kennedy, 'Men that Came in with the Sea: The Coast-Watching Service and the Sinking of the *Arandora Star*', *History Ireland*, 16.3 (2008), 26–29.

⁶⁹Eyal, p. 9.

reside, or more crucially, identify. In discussing the delayed emergence of Welsh Italian narrative, Liz Wren-Owens⁷⁰ mentions lack of agency to write among first generation migrants. In the three priestly texts, we see the mediation of the educated clergy as the first public narrators of AS memory and possibly even elements of more significant 'identity projects' referenced by Anne-Marie Fortier.⁷¹ Arguably, they curated identity in the wake of the tragedy through memory of the lost, perhaps hoping to help the community come to terms with the past. Identity preservation has long been recognised as a purpose of memory⁷² and in responding to grief they emphasised the fatalities as valid mnemonic substance. Whether or not the padri were consciously aiming to forge a narrative and build community identity, their works can be seen as foundational nonetheless.

Maria Serena Balestracci's two books⁷³ exclusively on the AS in 2002 and 2008 further developed the empathetic narrative and have been influential in both countries. Combining extensive interviewing of victim and survivor families with published and unpublished sources, Balestracci emphasises the human consequences. Her 2002 subtitle – *Una Tragedia Dimenticata*, A Forgotten Tragedy, suggests that the sinking was still relatively hidden, while *Dall'Oblio alla Memoria* – From Oblivion to Memory, in 2008, encapsulates the idea of retrieval, implying the book itself is both mediator and amplifier. Balestracci cultivates the theme of 'speaking for the first time', although many individuals had already 'spoken' by 2002, for example, in Scotland where the AS narrative had emerged by 1990. Yet, it was not until 2010 and as the result of a dedicated AS memory recovery project that, according to Chezzi, Wales 'broke its silence'.⁷⁴ In Italy, we deduce from Balestracci that memory transmission had likewise been delayed, taking longer to emanate from individual families and 'pockets of affect', but that its emergence touched a wider public consciousness, and more rapidly. She describes a ripple effect of people who had 'not spoken before' contacting her to recount their stories.⁷⁵ National press and television coverage ensued, her books acting to stimulate conferences, plays and meetings in several 'pocket of affect' provinces.

A growing awareness of the AS in Italy,⁷⁶ in academia and particularly in the media reflects a tone and content more overtly pro-Italian, if not necessarily anti-British. The framing of the drowned Italians as *emigranti* rather than 'enemy aliens' is humanising, albeit depoliticising. Italian writers tend to focus on 'injustices' of policy and procedures, cataloguing errors, abusive treatment and possible contraventions of international concords. Words like *massacro* and *strage*, slaughter, appear alongside, or instead of, *tragedia*. For example, in a 2013 conference paper title, Pierangelo Campodonico, director of the *Musei del Mare e delle Migrazioni*, Genova, questioned whether the AS was a '*tragedia bellica o massacro di emigranti?*'⁷⁷ – tragedy of war or massacre of emigrants? He suggests the torpedoing actually masked a real retaliatory action against the long-standing Italian immigrants for Italy's war entry, accused by Churchill and the British government of being possible fifth column fascists. Reconstruction of the sinking, Campodonico asserts, reveals brutality of treatment.⁷⁸ Again, recent online articles⁷⁹ use *strage* in pieces questioning deprivations of civil and political rights, conditions in which the Italian civilians were held, enforced geographical displacement of families, property confiscation and irregularities regarding the ship. That the

⁷⁰Liz Wren-Owens, 'The Delayed Emergence of Italian Welsh Narratives, or Class and the Commodification of Ethnicity?', *Crossings: Journal of Migration & Culture*, 3.1 (2012), 119–134 (p. 122).

⁷¹Anne-Marie Fortier, *Migrant Belongings. Memory, Space, Identity* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), pp. 1, 150.

⁷²Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 43 and Eyal, pp. 11–19.

⁷³Balestracci, *Dall'Oblio* and *Arandora Star: Una Tragedia Dimenticata* (Pontremoli: I Quaderni del Corriere Apuano, 2002).

⁷⁴Bruna Chezzi, 'Wales Breaks its Silence: from Memory to Memorial and Beyond. The Italians in Wales during the Second World War', *Italian Studies*, 69.3 (2014), 376–93.

⁷⁵Balestracci, *Dall'Oblio*, p. 70.

⁷⁶Recent AS based novels include: Caterina Soffici, *Nessuno può fermarmi* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2017) and Maura Maffei, *Quel che Abisso Trace* (Piacenza: Parallelo45 Edizioni, 2019).

⁷⁷Pierangelo Campodonico, 'Arandora Star: Tragedia Bellica o Massacro degli Emigranti?', *No-Where-Next|War-Diaspora-Origin*, Cassino (4–6 May 2013). See https://www.altreitalie.it/la-finestra_di_altreitalie/news/no-where-next_war-diaspora-origin_convergenze_ed_esplorazioni_di_metodo_intorno_all'emigrazione_italiana.kl [accessed 12 June 2020].

⁷⁸Campodonico.

⁷⁹<https://www.vanillamagazine.it/?s=arandora+star> [accessed 12 June 2020].

newsworthiness of the AS is growing, particularly around the wartime anniversaries, has been evident recently. In June 2020, Milan based newspaper *Libero* devoted a page to ‘*La Strage Dimenticata*’,⁸⁰ the forgotten slaughter, and in a Mediaset televised war documentary series,⁸¹ an episode that featured the AS and Bardi, was broadcast on 10th June. National and especially regional newspapers corresponding to ‘pockets of affect’ carried the ‘story’ on 2 July 2020, several giving full-page coverage.⁸² Furthermore, President Sergio Mattarella issued a statement on 2nd July declaring the sinking in which ‘a German submarine had mistaken the AS for a battleship’ – a subtle reference to the ship’s guns and being unmarked as carrying civilians – as ‘*un episodio atroce*’, an atrocious episode, ‘not always adequately remembered’.⁸³ This contrasts with President Francesco Cossiga’s 50th anniversary message, focusing on friendship between Britain and Italy. Mattarella expresses his closeness to and solidarity with the descendants, articulating his wish to commemorate the 446 Italian immigrants, present in England for some time, but considered ‘undesirable after Italy entered the war’, and describing them as ‘*vittime innocenti*’,⁸⁴ innocent victims.

The issue of innocence or ‘non-innocence’, to use Lionel McPherson’s concept,⁸⁵ is at the heart of the AS debate and is ripe for re-evaluation in light of Mattarella’s statement. Wendy Ugolini⁸⁶ accuses Italian writers, especially Zorza,⁸⁷ of creating a narrative of victimhood and of misleadingly portraying *all* Italians aboard as ‘innocent’. While Zorza’s emotive writing can be seen as potentially partisan, by obfuscating the discourse surrounding the status of the Italians on board, Ugolini fails to fully engage. As we have seen, AS selection was intended to align with *fascio* membership, designating ‘dangerous characters’, but in reality included large numbers of non-*fascio* members. In referencing a report by Lord Snell⁸⁸ enquiring into ‘the method of selection’ with the extract ‘it would not be right to say that the orders issued ever laid down that only aliens who could be described as dangerous characters were to be sent overseas’, Ugolini acknowledges the potentiality of large numbers of non-*fascio* members aboard, yet does not explore this further. Their presence is crucial in any discussion of ‘innocence’. These countless ‘non-fascists’, in addition to some well-known anti-fascists, naturalised British subjects and others with more than twenty years residence,⁸⁹ emphasise the ethical and technical questions surrounding ‘innocence’. Taken together, non-fascists and anti-fascists, with the further addition of ‘nominal’ fascists, the latter considered conceivably ‘innocent’ even by Ugolini, would have comprised the vast majority of Italians on board. This generates the perhaps not unreasonable interpretation of general guiltlessness from the Italian viewpoint. Only ‘a very small number’, identified mainly as *fascio* ‘leaders’, are considered to have been in Snell’s ‘ardent fascist’ category, by implication potentially a danger to Britain, and hence conceivably therefore, only a very small number ‘non-innocent’.

Historical perspective changes through time, wartime panic and fear of Italian fascism ‘within’ now distant and perhaps under estimated. An underlying premise of Ugolini’s work is that the Italian community historically decontextualises the AS by employing imagery of innocence and

⁸⁰Gianluca Veneziani, ‘La Strage Dimenticata. Gli Ottocento Italiani Deportati da Churchill’, *Libero Quotidiano Milano*, 9 June 2020, https://www.uniecampus.it/fileadmin/public/rassegna_stampa/eventi/20200610/Libero_9_giugno_2020.pdf [accessed 15 June 2020].

⁸¹*Lili Marlene, Le Mille Guerre degli Italiani*, dir. by Pietro Suber (Mediaset Focus, Canale35, 10 June 2020).

⁸²For example <https://www.risvegliopopolare.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/26-Risveglio-2luglio2020.pdf> [accessed 26 July 2020].

⁸³Picked-up by Alison Campsie, ‘Scotland and Italy Remember “Atrocious” sinking of Arandora Star 80 years on’, *Scotsman*, 2 July 2020, <https://www.scotsman.com/heritage-and-retro/heritage/scotland-and-italy-remember-atrocious-sinking-arandora-star-80-years-2902334> [accessed 3 July 2019].

⁸⁴For President Mattarella’s full statement, see <https://www.quirinale.it/elementi/49634>. [Accessed 2 July 2020].

⁸⁵Lionel K. McPherson, ‘Innocence and Responsibility in War’, *Canadian Journal Of Philosophy*, 34.4 (2004), 485–506.

⁸⁶All further Ugolini references in this section, see Ugolini, pp. 224–235.

⁸⁷Zorza and through the community newspaper *Italiani in Scozia*, 1983–1990.

⁸⁸NA KV4/337, ‘Summary of the Arandora Star Inquiry’, p. 3.

⁸⁹For example, Silvestro D’Ambrosio, who had lived in Scotland for forty-two years, was the oldest Italian AS victim, aged sixty-eight.

victimhood to divert attention from pre-war involvement with Fascism. While there may have been reticence to engage critically in discussion about Fascism some twenty years ago when she conducted interviews, this does not necessarily indicate promotion of the AS narrative as a protective screen. Indeed, Ugolini states that less than half of her respondents voluntarily mentioned the AS. Moreover, members of three prominent Italian families in London, Edinburgh and Manchester, whose fathers or grandfathers were 'leaders' of these *fasci*, the presumed 'non-innocent', today openly, and in one case publicly, confirm this association.⁹⁰ It is therefore misleading to suggest the AS narrative is promoted to obscure involvement with Fascism and, as argued below, its pre-eminence arose for several different reasons. Furthermore, understanding and realisation of Italy's aggression towards Britain as the root cause of the wartime experience can be perceived. Zorza states that the community was hit by the '*pazzia della guerra voluta da Hitler coll'appoggio del fascismo di Mussolini*'⁹¹ – madness of a war desired by Hitler with support of Mussolini's fascism. The consistent view of Rando Bertoia was 'If Italy hadn't gone to war there wouldn't have been any Arandora Star, so blaming the British government for what happened is wrong'.⁹² His stance reveals a contextually nuanced perception, apportioning his resentment not to the British but rather to the Italian leader. This particular interpretation is one that, for example, the Italian perspective of today does not readily address when considering the AS. Nevertheless, recent Italian engagement highlights the potential future value that a transnational approach could bring to AS scholarship, taking account of 'both sides' in this historically complex and controversial subject.

Collective Memory and Narrative

Over the last four or so decades a highly cohesive narrative surrounding the AS has organically emerged, whose strength has led to the prevailing interpretation of the event's importance to the historic community's identity.⁹³ Some scholars have challenged this dominance by referencing potential counter narratives arguing that these have been marginalised.⁹⁴ However, such doubts should be repositioned against the backdrop of how and why collective AS memory formed and gained prominence. The intensely traumatic nature of AS losses, repression and contextual restriction of the narrative, solidarity and mutual-reinforcement of testimony and potential resonance across the community, interweave to explain the potency of the narrative surrounding the AS, which in turn helps clarify its prominence in collective memory.

Absence of any physicality in the sinking's aftermath ensured concomitant inability to grieve through the traditional rites of funeral, burial and final resting place. Within this material void, narration and memory became important tools through which those affected could try to reckon with the past. The narration mechanisms that developed, interbraided with broader external impacting factors, ultimately established a resilient and durable collective memory. One of its most distinctive features is its language. With almost unvarying and consistent repetition, particular themes, phrases and words pepper personal testimonies, recorded interviews,⁹⁵ autobiographical memoirs and artistic invention. Thematically, the starting point is always the 'silence' and repressed memory, embodying pain and possibly resentment. Restriction on communication, both self-imposed and due to external censorship, is perceivable

⁹⁰The Newsroom, 'Seventy Years After', *Scotsman*, 24 June 2010, <https://www.scotsman.com/whats-on/arts-and-entertainment/seventy-years-after-arandora-star-was-sunk-loss-713-enemy-aliens-last-scots-italian-survivor-able-forgive-not-forget-2442353> [accessed 16 June 2020].

⁹¹Zorza, p. 9.

⁹²https://www.irenebrination.com/irenebrination_notes_on_a/2010/05/arandora-star-memories.html [accessed 20 August 2020]

⁹³Fortier, p. 57 and Derek Duncan, 'Collaging Cultures: Curating Italian Studies', *Italian Culture*, 37.1 (2019), 3–25 (p. 19).

⁹⁴Ugolini, pp. 225, 241 and Elizabeth Wren-Owens, 'Remembering Fascism. Polyphony and its Absence in Contemporary Italian-Scottish and Italian-Welsh Narrative', *Journal of Romance Studies* 15.1 (2015), 73–90 (pp. 77–79).

⁹⁵For texts incorporating these words see Shankland, pp. 211–212; Chezzi, 'Wales Breaks its Silence', pp. 381, 385, 388 and Ugolini, pp. 121–122.

in the phrases 'never spoke of it' and 'spoke of it only once'. Other key phrases became constants; 'taken', 'taken away', 'never seen again', 'body never found', 'never told anything', 'missing presumed drowned' and 'never knew my grandfather'. These are situated within the larger contexts of 'enemy aliens', 'enemy within', 'collar the lot', 'ill-fated day', 'ill-fated ship', 'tragedy' and even the words 'Arandora Star' themselves. In so employing the same words, whether consciously or unconsciously, users contribute to spoken 'co-authorship'.⁹⁶ The words came to form a collective language. Any engagement with narrative is an inescapably social act containing elements of performativity,⁹⁷ thus in speaking this language users identified themselves and performed as one of the memory-narrative group. Over time this created a self-referential and self-reinforcing narrative cycle. Due to containment of remembering within the limited context of the Italian community, the narrative conformity that these repeated phrases construct ensured a powerful reverberation. Furthermore, this collective framework of language, concepts and associations can be understood as forming what Pierre Nora called intangible sites or realms of memory.⁹⁸ The fundamental dynamism of memory ensures that personal memories do not remain in isolation from collective discourses surrounding events.⁹⁹ Accounts from those who were children at the time are palimpsestic, taking direction from relatives, the collectivity or postmemory in their own 'remembering'. Employing the collective language, post-generations connect with the collective experiential aftermath of the tragedy; these words and associations having been imbibed act as mnemonic triggers, tools through which they 'remember'. Bearing in mind the material and evidentiary void, development of a unique language and the limited sphere of expression was foundational to the strength of the collective narrative that developed and later emerged.

While the AS 'tragedy' did not represent the totality of British Italian wartime experience, its cohesive bonding capability within the broader community was nonetheless stronger than potential competing narratives. Contesting memories are a natural part of narrative formation since individual voices 'both participate in and challenge the construction of group narratives'¹⁰⁰ acquiring 'different levels of legitimacy and appeal [...] depending on how compellingly such narratives present a contested past'.¹⁰¹ With so many civilian deaths (446) occurring so unexpectedly in one historical moment, and bearing in mind their concentration in 'pockets of affect', the collective impact of the AS was greater than that of other British Italian wartime deaths. Such deaths were mainly of second generation members serving in the British armed forces. These were fewer in number and,¹⁰² more importantly, they occurred diffusely throughout the war years and across the country. British army soldiers also lost fathers on the AS,¹⁰³ and many families lost members in both circumstances. The story and loss of second generation Italians serving with the British army arguably could have found some expression within national contemporary outlets of grieving and remembrance. However, as Wendy Webster has noted,¹⁰⁴ transnational allegiances fall outside national war memory and have largely been forgotten, apart from exceptional cases, like Dennis

⁹⁶Gabriela Spector-Mersel, 'Narrative Research: Time for a Paradigm', *Narrative Inquiry*, 20.1 (2010), 204–224 (p. 208).

⁹⁷Paul Atkinson and Sara Delamont, 'Rescuing Narrative from Qualitative Research', *Narrative Inquiry*, 16.1 (January 2006), 164–172 (p. 166, 167, 169).

⁹⁸Pierre Nora, 'Preface' in *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, 3 vols. ed. by Nora and Lawrence Kritzman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996–98), p. xvii.

⁹⁹Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980).

¹⁰⁰Ballinger, p. 121.

¹⁰¹Francesca Lessa, *Memory and Transitional Justice in Argentina and Uruguay: Against Impunity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013), pp. 19, 22.

¹⁰²Estimated at 331. Ugolini, p. 144.

¹⁰³Two further men of Italian origin, not internees, drowned: Rocco Sinacola, crewmember and Peter Tarchetti, 9th Battalion Cameronians.

¹⁰⁴Wendy Webster, 'Enemies, Allies and Transnational Histories: Germans, Irish and Italians in Second World War Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 25.1 (2014), 63–86 (p. 85).

Donnini VC.¹⁰⁵ By contrast, repression of the AS narrative both during and after the war, ensured an eventual powerful release when it emerged some fifty years later. This surge of memory-narrative, so homogenously constructed, led to engulfment of weaker and more fragmented voices.

Far from only having niche relevance, the AS saga is also fundamentally concerned with all those indirectly involved. It is not, for example, gendered only to masculine interpretation since its psychological impact resonated perhaps most strongly with bereaved women who were important transmitters of the story to the next generation. Significantly, symbolic figuration of the *italiano sconosciuto* perhaps provided a focus for all those who, although not directly bereaved by the AS, but still marginalised, distrusted and in some way abused by broader British wartime mentality, could direct their own alienation, longings and fears. The *italiano sconosciuto* became a metaphor for all suffering. Those who did not identify at some level with these experiences disassociated from the emergent AS memory and the mnemonic group, perhaps since different narratives were more compelling and made more sense to them. The result, over time, has been that their alternative stories dwindled from the community's collective memory or, to use Halbwachs' analogy,¹⁰⁶ their presence in the self-portrait faded.

Immaterial Remembrance

Intangibility surrounding the AS has also rendered immaterial contexts of memory of great potency in terms of remediation. Not only in verbal testimony and collective language, but also in theatre, music, art, and exhibitions the collective memory has viscerally and significantly, been enacted and fashioned. Such creative forums offer further intangible realms of memory.¹⁰⁷ Interaction through diverse media also allows the mnemonic community to grow by connecting with a wider consciousness; all who attend a play or exhibition or read an autobiography can become part of those who remember.¹⁰⁸ AS memory is particularly vigorous in Scotland, the combined 'pockets of affect' of Glasgow and Edinburgh driving the range of remediated transmission. The pioneering and influential play *Tally's Blood* by Ann Marie Di Mambro, now a school curriculum text, was first performed in 1990. While the AS is given prominence with a monologue, a minor character joins the British army indicating diversity of experience. At the Edinburgh Festival, the AS theme is recurrent and has been the dominant wartime representation; recent examples include Laura Passetti's *A Bench on the Road*, 2014, and Raymond Ross's *Arandora Star*, 2018. However, Hilda De Felice's *Loving the Enemy*, 2019, introduced the counter narrative of a British Italian soldier. Autobiographical texts and family memoirs mentioning the AS, for example, by Piero Tognini, Joe Pieri, Mary Contini and Anne Pia are widely known and cited in academic texts.¹⁰⁹ National exhibitions, such as *The Italian Scots* in 1991 at the National Library and at National Records Scotland, *The Scots Italians: A Family Portrait 1890–1940* in 2015, highlighted internment and the AS, while *An Open Secret: The SS Arandora Star* in 2010, had exclusive focus. These writings, performances and events have added to, and themselves been interwoven into, the memory-narrative, simultaneously extending the mnemonic community and further reinforcing the prominence of the AS narrative. In the Welsh 'pocket of affect', the 2010 AS memory recovery project

¹⁰⁵British Italian hero from the North East, remembered there and at Ayr through his regiment, The Royal Scots Fusiliers. For early commemoration by the Italian community, see Shankland, p. 240; awareness in Italy, *L'Italia Illustrata*, 1.13 (1945) [Front Cover] and recent interest, Robert Rossi, *Italian Blood British Heart* ([n.p.]: Amazon KDP, 2019).

¹⁰⁶Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, p. 86.

¹⁰⁷Gilly Carr, 'Heritage, Commemoration and Memory in Guernsey and Jersey', *History and Memory*, 24.1 (2012), 87–117 (p. 91).

¹⁰⁸Sara Jones, *The Media of Testimony: Remembering the East German Stasi in the Berlin Republic* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014), pp. 187–195.

¹⁰⁹Piero Tognini, *A Mind at War* (New York: Vantage Press, 1990), in Sponza, 'The Internment of the Italians', p. 257; Joe Pieri, *River of Memory. Memoirs of a Scots-Italian* (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 2006), in Wren-Owens, 'The Delayed Emergence', p. 121; Mary Contini, *Dear Olivia, An Italian Journey of Love and Courage* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2006), in Wren-Owens, 'Remembering Fascism', pp. 80–85 and Anne Pia, *Language of My Choosing* (Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2017), in Duncan, p. 23.

encompassed a website, booklet¹¹⁰ and touring exhibition, receiving much media coverage.¹¹¹ Although specific to AS commemorative activity, the booklet has been criticised for lack of polyphony and editorial selectivity in its representations.¹¹² The project nonetheless released the AS narrative from previous oblivion and promoted Italian belonging in Wales by transmitting the memory to wider audiences. An emergent literature, for example, Natalie Dye's *Arandora Star*,¹¹³ and the play *Arandora Star* by theatre company Theatr Na N'Og taking the story to schools,¹¹⁴ currently ensures ascendance of the AS in Wales over other, weaker wartime voices.

In London on the 75th anniversary, a new book recovered important mnemonic substance giving biographical detail with passport-sized photographs of 241 drowned men, and also including detail of survivors.¹¹⁵ Unlike the texts mentioned above, however, its target audience is more exclusively the Italian community, limiting external influence. Nevertheless, its publication indicates dedication to the memory and the need for materiality in remembrance. Two exhibitions, *The Arandora Star Tragedy* and *Dangerous Characters*, showed locally at Holborn Library, again reaching smaller audiences than similar creations in Scotland or Wales. Nevertheless, the latter travelled subsequently to Manchester, and the former, to Bardi. While London is well connected with the province of Parma, it is less so specifically with Bardi; significantly signalling connectedness between sites of memory and Bardi's influence and attraction as the foremost 'pocket of affect'.

The visual arts have also contributed to developing immaterial contexts of memory and growth in AS consciousness. Owen Logan's book¹¹⁶ and suggestive 1994 London photographic exhibition with its AS conceptual casing, preceded important historic photographic evidence and film footage of the AS rescue which materialised in 2010. Apart from pre-war cruising-days and a few wartime battleship-grey photographs, visualisations of events surrounding the AS were non-existent until this key compilation by Anna Chiappa reached Britain from archival research in Canada.¹¹⁷ For the first time, images of oil-covered wretches struggling to climb aboard the *St Laurent* and decks crowded with huddling rescuees, were 'seen' (Figure 2). These imagistic revelations were highly significant in the development of AS visual memory, providing a more tangible layer of transmitted memory. Hitherto only imagined scenes now had reality. As images can have a uniquely affective power,¹¹⁸ this film was ground-breaking, its release on DVD, a powerful disseminator. Overall, the process of AS narrative formation should be understood as developing gradually within the community. Through natural osmosis the story formed, emerging later when the time was right, in terms of internal and external variables. It grew in a multiplicity of creative expression, mediating to wider audiences and securing ever more firmly its status as defining in community autobiography and biography.

Commemoration and Not Forgetting

Foote and Azaryahu assert that 'memory might be conceived as a matrix in which time and space are used separately and in combination to embed shared historical experiences in the public life of a community'.¹¹⁹ In temporal terms, AS commemoration can be divided into two main phases – the fifty years from 1940 to 1990 and from 1990 to the present, the 50th anniversary forming a watershed.

¹¹⁰ *Arandora Star Memorial Fund in Wales Booklet*, ed. by Paulette Pelosi and David Evans (Llanelli: Mike Clarke Printing, 2010).

¹¹¹ See television videos at <https://www.cardiffcathedral.org.uk/remembering-the-arandora-star/> [accessed 13 July 2020].

¹¹² Wren-Owens, 'Remembering Fascism', p. 77–78.

¹¹³ Natalie Dye, *Arandora Star* (London: Peach Publishing, 2014). Set in Great Yarmouth and Bardi, inspired by the Tambini family of Newport and Giovanni Tambini in particular, AS victim.

¹¹⁴ Mediated through radio for 2020. See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/jul/01/welsh-schoolchildren-to-learn-about-arandora-star-sinking-via-radio> [accessed 14 July 2020].

¹¹⁵ *The Arandora Star Tragedy. 75 Years On – London's Italian Community Remembers*, ed. by Peter Capella (London: [n. pub.], 2015).

¹¹⁶ Owen Logan, *Bloodlines. Vite allo Specchio* (Manchester: Cornerhouse Publications, 1994).

¹¹⁷ *SOS Arandora Star*, dir. by Anna Chiappa (Keyhart Productions: Ottawa, 2010).

¹¹⁸ Hirsch, 'Generation of Postmemory', pp. 115–117.

¹¹⁹ Kenneth E. Foote and Maoz Azaryahu, 'Toward A Geography of Memory: Geographical Dimensions of Public Memory and Commemoration', *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, 35.1 (Summer 2007), 125–144 (p. 127).



Figure 2. Rescue by the Canadian Destroyer, St Laurent. Copyright Anna Chiappa.

Spatially, the ‘pockets of affect’ have played a leading role in commemorative enterprise. The chronology of physical memorialisation and surrounding activity enhances understanding of how

and when memories have been recovered and reproduced, and how and where symbolic encounter has been characterised. Similar to memory, memorials are fundamentally dynamic, they provide 'narrative tools' through interaction,¹²⁰ but are also impacted by societal or political variables. Potential memorial functions might include vindicating the dignity of victims, stimulating open debates about past injustices, strengthening resistance against a dominant narrative and providing space for private reflection and mourning.¹²¹ Encompassing all of these to some extent, AS memorials also resonate with Cécile Fabre's¹²² view that there are moral requirements to remember war and that the inherent value of remembrance resides in recognising the value of victims as human beings. It is necessary to publically acknowledge those who suffer through war and the wrongs perpetrated against them in order to pay respect and ensure they are not forgotten.¹²³

The period of internal narrative formation with its pervasive culture of 'silence' is articulated through absence of any 'tangible' sites of memory prior to 1960 when, an easy-to-read, bronze plaque depicting arms out-stretched from a lifeboat was mounted in the loggia at St Peter's Italian Church, London. This installation, although representing a symbolic journey from two decades of obscurity, was nevertheless confined to the marginalised community context and could not include names,¹²⁴ recognised as an important aspect of memorialisation, acknowledging each person's unique value¹²⁵ (Figure 3). By contrast in Italy, at Bardi in 1968, a purpose-built chapel housing large marble plaques with names and enamelled photographs, and the renaming of a street – Via Vittime Arandora Star – and memorial stones, again with names, sited at Borgotaro (1960s) and Bratto (hamlet of Pontremoli, 1970s), were public and civic initiatives. In Scotland, the first memorial materialised in 1970, a colourful mosaic relief depicting explosion, bearing the words 'Non Vi Scorderemmo Mai', we will never forget you. Installed at the Casa d'Italia in Glasgow, displayed until closure in 1989 and later gifted to the Italian Club in Greenock, a fitting location since the AS survivors were landed there,¹²⁶ like St Peter's plaque, the mosaic and its placements represent nameless remembrance within the community only.

Henry Rousso has identified a post-war European 'historical rhythm' of commemoration summarisable as, initial homage juxtaposed with desire to move on, a period of official silence, repression and 'forgetting' until the 1960s and finally a returning of 'ghosts from the past' in the 1970s.¹²⁷ While AS 'amnesia' until the 1960s arguably fits this pattern, assessing why commemorative chronology then deviates from Rousso's timeline with memorialisation in Britain emerging only after 2000, is worthwhile. Comparison with memorialisation of marginalised groups on the Channel Islands sheds light. Gilly Carr assesses public memory there as shaped by local political agenda and the British wartime master narrative.¹²⁸ The reigning paradigm of Britain as a nation of 'victors' rather than 'victims' led to freezing-out the experiences of Nazi victims – 'anti-heroes' (local resistance fighters), Jews and their protectors, islander deportees and 'slave workers' – from the wartime story. Concurring with Dove's analysis of internment as a counter-narrative outside the epic story of unity, courage, endurance and final victory,¹²⁹ collective amnesia of these 'victim' groups lasted until the 1990s.¹³⁰ The memorials then organised from 1995 were largely driven by active campaigning of members or their children,¹³¹

¹²⁰Jones, 'Simply', p. 174.

¹²¹Susanne Buckley-Zistel and Stefanie Schäfer, 'Memorials in Times of Transition', in *Memorials in Times of Transition*, ed. by Buckley-Zistel and Schäfer (Cambridge: Intersentia, 2014), pp. 1–26 (pp. 9–10).

¹²²Cécile Fabre, *Cosmopolitan Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

¹²³Fabre, p. 297.

¹²⁴All London Italian victims became known only with publication of the Home Office Missing List in 1990. See Colpi, *Italian Factor*, pp. 271–278. The plaque sits above a Great War memorial listing names. Mistakenly, these names are often assumed to be AS victims, for example, by Fortier, p. 67.

¹²⁵Zofia Stemplowska, 'Remembering War: Fabre on Remembrance', *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 36.3 (2019), 382–90 (p. 382).

¹²⁶Displayed at opening of the Glasgow AS memorial in 2011, the mosaic has since been missing.

¹²⁷Henry Rousso, 'History of Memory, Politics of the Past: What For?' in *Conflicted Memories: Europeanizing Contemporary Histories*, ed. by Konrad Jarausch and Thomas Lindenberger (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), pp. 23–35 (p. 29).

¹²⁸Carr, pp. 88–92, 111–113.

¹²⁹Dove, p. 11.

¹³⁰Carr, p. 110.



Figure 3. 1960 Arandora Star Bronze Plaque by Mancini, above Great War Memorial, St Peter's Italian Church, London.

corresponding to AS remembrance with all memorials, except one, arising from pressure within the Italian community. The fifty year shift in widening Channel Islands commemorative activity parallels the second, and main, wave of AS remembrance. Both the British Italian 'victims' and 'anti-hero' groups on Jersey and Guernsey have wartime experiences beyond the established narrative schemata. Broader socio-political context influencing memorialisation and tendency to overlook war victims can thus be understood as contributing to the sixty plus uncommemorated years around the AS.

The 50th anniversary marked the germination of the second commemorative phase, both British and Italian. Twenty-one British-resident survivors were awarded the prestigious title *Cavaliere della*

¹³¹ Carr, p. 108.

Repubblica Italiana by the Italian government and, indicating changing attitudes, several were invited to record their memories at the Imperial War Museum in London. Carr emphasises anniversaries as formative for younger generations receiving established collective memory.¹³² The 'living memory' still present in 1990 felt stronger need than ever to entrust the memory to the next generation, a motivation common in 'breaking silence'.¹³³ Coincident with Second World War commemorative obsession across Europe¹³⁴ and also perhaps perceiving shifting attitudes, a mounting energy within the Italian community for more public recognition, led by the third generation, ultimately created a nationwide AS commemorative infrastructure. Memorialisation became more public and civic, escaping peripheral community-bound milieux.

The 'pocket of affect' pivoting on Colonsay was first to realise new initiatives. In 2004, representing the first bilateral project, islanders received the freedom of Borgotaro, and in 2005 erected a new memorial. With its well-researched AS webpages, two-way traffic between the island and memorial sites in Italy, Colonsay has come to represent the essence of the story and offers tangibility as a site of mourning. Also in 2004, from Lucca, another important 'pocket of affect', in addition to considerable remembrance enactment, including siting a funnel-shaped memorial outside the *Fondazione Paolo Cresci per la Storia dell'Emigrazione Italiana* and realisation of a documentary film, we see further allogamous activity. Demonstrating Italian attitudes, provincial president, Andrea Tagliasacchi, wrote to Prime Minister Tony Blair asking for 'justice and reparations'.¹³⁵ Tagliasacchi sought admission of responsibility by the government which, under British law, may necessarily incur financial compensation. Although nothing came of this, it signalled support to 'apology campaigns' in Britain which appeared around this time. Perhaps also inspired by the Italo-Canadian community who received an official apology for internment from Premier Mulroney in 1990 and by devolution creating less remote parliaments in Scotland and Wales, campaigns were usually generated by victims' families. These never garnered official support from the Italian authorities or widespread backing within the community, reticent to enter a more obviously political arena. Significantly, memorialisation can play an important role in 'transitional justice', and has done in post-conflict countries globally.¹³⁶ It has even been equated to 'symbolic reparation'.¹³⁷ Successful AS memorialisation as representing symbolic reparation may explain why calls for apology had subsided by 2010.¹³⁸ Moreover, 'apologies' have been forthcoming at local level, at Lucca in 2004 by the British Consul and at Middlesbrough in 2009 by the town's mayor.¹³⁹

Threaded through the discourse of apology is the notion of responsibility for controversies surrounding the ship. This has worked to ensure longevity, but also restlessness of AS memory with its commitment to 'finding answers' as well as to remembering the victims. Several areas of historical investigation have not been addressed thoroughly and continue to cause unease.¹⁴⁰ While Italian writers more openly criticise the mistakes and irregularities regarding the ship and its short voyage – overloading, insufficient life boats, no safety drill, gun placements, barbed wire on decks, no escort, no red cross flag to indicate civilians – British historians have been seemingly reluctant to engage directly with the circumstances¹⁴¹ that partly contributed to the sinking¹⁴² and the high loss of life. Ugolini mentions these issues only as they are cited within the aims of a now defunct 'apology campaign' and in a footnote,¹⁴³ thereby assigning them a degree of questionability

¹³²Carr, p. 94.

¹³³Jones, 'Simply', pp. 165–166.

¹³⁴Nancy Wood, *Vectors of Memory: Legacies of Trauma in Post War Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 1999).

¹³⁵Richard Owen, 'Britain urged to pay for lives lost in U-boat attack', *The Times*, 11 September 2004, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/britain-urged-to-pay-for-lives-lost-in-u-boat-attack-z9k7svjc3wg> [accessed 9 June 2020].

¹³⁶Jones, 'Simply', p. 155.

¹³⁷Buckley-Zistel and Schäfer, p. 9.

¹³⁸The Newsroom, 'Seventy Years After'.

¹³⁹Balestracci, *Dall'Oblio*, p. 298 and Shankland, p. 217.

¹⁴⁰For full list of concerns, see Capella, p. 13.

¹⁴¹Largely unresearched since Gillman.

¹⁴²While Gunter Prien, captain of the German U-boat, was clearly 'responsible' for the sinking, *causa causans*, contributory negligence, *causa sine qua non*, undoubtedly played a part.

and even irrelevance. Although it is possible that answers may never be fully ascertained, in any event, not before restricted government documentation becomes available, wrongdoing in war nevertheless carries moral debt¹⁴⁴ and historians have a moral duty to discover and unravel the facts.

During 2008 as European City of Culture, Liverpool hosted a well-conceived AS commemoration programme. The Lord Mayor, the Italian Ambassador, members of bereaved families and the Italian community, representatives from Parma, Lucca and Piacenza and the Cwmbach male voice choir including Welsh Italians, all congregated at St Nicholas' Church for a remembrance Mass celebrated by Archbishop Mario Conti of Glasgow.¹⁴⁵ A symbolic ferry journey followed with throwing of wreaths far out on the waters of the Mersey. This was the first, and as yet the only, event to gather representatives from all 'pockets of affect' in this country and Italy, in a British-led commemoration. As the AS port of departure, Liverpool offers some tangibility as site of memory, to be augmented this year when a restored 3.5 m model of the ship, last exhibited just after the sinking and damaged in the 1941 blitz, is re-exhibited at the city's maritime museum. Liverpool's commemoration acted as a catalyst, galvanising Italians to enact ideas for civic recognition. Five new memorials followed in quick succession – Middlesbrough 2009, Cardiff 2010, Glasgow 2011, London 2012 and Birmingham in 2015. Others may yet emerge at unrepresented localities, especially in England where, unlike in Scotland or Wales, there is no 'national' memorial. In Italy, the main 'pockets of affect', through the addition of Picinisco and Fubine (AI) in the 1990s, Barga in 2008, Pontremoli in 2010, and Bollengo on 2 July 2020, are now represented on the memorial landscape. Many men are now listed on memorials in both countries highlighting the transnationality of the Italian community and its bi-national belonging. AS committees in Britain currently discuss creating a truly 'national' monument listing all 446 victims or some other initiative that unites the remembrance community. Only time will tell if a national monument materialises in Italy commemorating possibly the worst disaster in emigration history.

The most ambitious memorial is the 'Italian Cloister Garden' beside St Andrew's Cathedral in Glasgow (Figure 4). Created by Archbishop Conti, its spatiality provides the most public legacy, its monumental scale incorporating inscribed, sculptural installations with water features acting as symbolic and affective mnemonic devices. Conti sought to provide a place of 'peace and reconciliation' forming 'a focus for a forgotten tragedy which has never been appropriately marked'.¹⁴⁶ Significantly, however, he also envisioned a space that 'provided an opportunity for marking the contribution which the Italian Scots have made to Scottish society'¹⁴⁷ – the conception and relevance therefore reaching beyond the AS. In addition to marble plaques engraved with the names of 94 victims from Scotland, other, differentiated plaques display further individual and family names, who donated financially or who simply wished to be recorded. These additional people can be perceived as identifying not only with the Italian community and history of 'contribution' to Scotland but, significantly, with the AS. For those with no direct AS connection, their named presence demonstrates performance of collective identity in solidarity with AS memory. As Foote and Azaryahu assert 'commemorative measures also amount to a mechanism of identity formation'¹⁴⁸ and through this memorial we perceive participation in that construction. Memorials can also function as 'a locus of contestation and collaboration between different narratives about the past',¹⁴⁹ and indeed are subject to reassessment in light of contemporary contexts and dialogues. By

¹⁴³Ugolini, pp. 232, 246–247.

¹⁴⁴Stemplowska, p. 383.

¹⁴⁵Austrian Embassy representatives and surviving British servicemen were also present. A memorial stone was laid at the docks commemorating those who drowned.

¹⁴⁶<http://www.italiancloister.org.uk/why1.htm> [accessed 1 June 2020].

¹⁴⁷Mario Conti, 'Opening Address', 16 May 2011, <http://www.italiancloister.org.uk/message.htm> [accessed 1 June 2020].

¹⁴⁸Foote and Azaryahu, p. 130.

¹⁴⁹Jones, 'Simply', p. 174.



Figure 4. Italian Cloister Garden, Glasgow, designed by Roman architect Giulia Chiarini. Copyright Keith Hunter.

conceptually encompassing more than just the AS, the Garden allows for dialogue between competing and intersecting narratives, future reinterpretation or even additions. Given the memorial's overarching aim to mark Italian contribution to Scotland, flexibility exists within its original objective to commemorate other wartime representations, such as Italian lives lost in the British army; it is only for descendants to organise collectively. This however, raises questions of identity and association with the 'Italian community'.

The Glasgow memorial underscores the continued custodianship and leadership of the Church in supporting victims and disseminating the AS story. Perhaps not unsurprisingly, it was the first narrators, padri Zorza and Rossi who, in the 1980s initiated commemorative activity with Masses in Glasgow and Zorza who, through the community newspaper, *Italiani in Scozia*, helped campaign for survivor recognition from Italy. St Peter's London represents a spiritual and cultural locus for all the historic Italian communities. The site of the first physical memorial, it hosted one of the two watershed events of 1990 – conferment of *cavalieri* honours on the survivors, signalling first recognition by the Italian state. Mario Conti's intervention is also especially noteworthy since he achieved a sense of closure for victims' families and harnessed collective memory reinforcing identity and sense of belonging, the AS now fully acknowledged as part of Scottish history. The Garden had support from the Italian authorities and Scottish establishment, the First Minister, Alec Salmond, saying at the opening 'This oasis of peace and contemplation at St Andrew's Cathedral is a magnificent tribute to those who tragically lost their lives aboard the AS during the Second World War and to the part the Scots-Italian community plays in the rich tartan fabric of our nation'.¹⁵⁰ Delegations representing Italian 'pockets of affect' were also present at the inauguration and the locality acts as a unique '*punto di riferimento*' for government ministers, dignitaries and officials visiting from Italy, marking the Italian presence in Scotland and emphasising the connectedness of the two countries. A recent visit by the British ambassador to Italy, being an example. In this sense, acting as a national monument, the Cloister Garden works beyond merely commemorating the lost:

¹⁵⁰ 'Memorial Garden for Arandora Star Victims' *BBC News Scotland*, 16 May 2011, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-13400727> [accessed 1 June 2020].

it looks to the future, and crucially, as memorials have the power to do, offers a medium for discussion.

Scotland's willingness to afford recognition to the Italian community is also perceivable through a forum held at the Scottish Parliament in 2013 during which the main contributors referenced the AS.¹⁵¹ Marco Giudici¹⁵² mentions the devolved government in Wales as likewise keen to portray diversity and tolerance. The AS memorial inside St David's Cathedral, Cardiff also received First Minister level political backing. Yet, support by both devolved governments reflects their disconnect and nuanced disassociation from the wartime decisions of Whitehall, in which they played no part; their acknowledgement is of 'tragedy' only. In Wales political debate arose within the AS memorial committee, some members 'still' fearful of drawing attention to wartime schisms by including only Italian names.¹⁵³ The plaque lists the 53 Welsh Italian victims but is dedicated to *all* those lost, creating some controversy at the time.¹⁵⁴ Commemorative enterprise and associated cultural activity in the Scottish and Welsh 'pockets of affect', successfully touching wider consciousness, overshadows that in London. There, AS manifestations have not scaled the confines of the historic 'colony', centred on St Peter's. The 2012 memorial plaque listing 241 victims' names is situated inside, at the back of the church, planning permission having been refused to mount it on the exterior wall adjacent to the original 1960 installation. A further disappointment was removal of a 'permanent' AS display at the Italian Consulate General containing part of a salvaged 1940 lifeboat, by a less empathetic new Consul General. Nevertheless, support in 2012, and in 2015 on the 75th anniversary by local MP, Sir Keir Starmer, now Labour Party Leader, who attended both occasions, raises hope for some higher future recognition. At the same time, there is awareness of a more challenging journey within the political context of the Westminster government.

Conclusion

Emphasising the fragility of the migrant situation especially in times of conflict, the sinking of the *Arandora Star* presents a complex historical event of the Second World War: not all of the facts are known and controversies persist. The topography of impact in loss of life was uneven both in this country and Italy, producing 'pockets of affect'. Irregularity of affect was due to two overlapping influences – chain migration and pattern of arrest. The traumatic shock of the sinking with its high loss of civilian life produced a period of repressed 'silence,' due initially to 'enemy alien' status having few pathways for expression, later to a desire for re-integration to British society, all the while constrained by overarching narrative paradigms that had little room for minority narratives so deviant from the victors' story. Yet, this repression of the memory resulted in a cohesive, bonding narrative which, when it emerged some forty to fifty years later, overwhelmed other more fragmentary narratives of wartime experience, becoming dominant and identity giving. The strength of AS collective memory, today curated by post generations and a wider mnemonic community, has ensured that remembrance continues, now enshrined by a physical infrastructure of memorialisation, in both countries.

For the 80th anniversary in 2020, various commemorative programmes had been planned but were unavoidably cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Masses were, however, streamed live and conferences and discussion platforms sprang up on the Internet, connecting people who may not otherwise have inter-acted.¹⁵⁵ With Italy's emergence from 'lock-down' more advanced in July,

¹⁵¹*Made By Italo-Scots: The Italian Factor in Scotland Today*, Scottish Parliament, 16 April 2013. See <https://www.ed.ac.uk/literatures-languages-cultures/delc/italian/italo-scottish-research-cluster/media> [accessed 3 August 2020].

¹⁵²Marco Giudici, 'Discourses of Identity in Post-Devolution Wales: The Case of Welsh Italians', *Contemporary Wales*, 25.1 (2012), 228–247 (pp. 231, 242).

¹⁵³Chezzi, 'Wales Breaks its Silence', p. 391.

¹⁵⁴Alfio Bernabei expressed concern at commemorating 'all' victims since 'that may appear to extend sympathy to Nazi fascists'. See Chezzi, 'Wales Breaks its Silence', p. 391.

¹⁵⁵https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=3069121583137484&ref=watch_permalink [accessed 3 July 2020]

some events proceeded, such as a conference at Barga, involving the *Fondazione Paolo Cresci*, with remote contributions from Glaswegian Italians.

Yet, to the vast majority of Italians living in Britain today, primarily the ‘mass’ influx of ‘new’ Italians arriving from 2000, and to a lesser extent the post-war migrant communities, the *Arandora Star* has little relevance and they have little cognisance of its history and significance. The transnationalism and professionalism of these ‘new’ Italians underpins disinterest in and disassociation from historic ‘immigration’.¹⁵⁶ Nevertheless, through the AS the historic community is itself building a new transnational narrative, reactivating old and finding new networks. Increasingly, AS remembrance represents a bonding mechanism between the two countries, with Italy’s interest rapidly growing. When Hickey and Smith wrote the Italians ‘will never allow the name of the *Arandora Star* to become a footnote in the annals of wartime history’,¹⁵⁷ this was before mounting commemorative activity and wider British and transnational engagement; the story of those who suffered as ‘Chaff in the Winds of War’ is now set firmly on a trajectory out of the footnotes into the main text.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

¹⁵⁶Terri Colpi, ‘Benvenuti nel Regno Unito? British Perceptions and Realities of Italians in the UK’, *Studi Emigrazione Internazionale Journal of Migration Studies*, 207 (2017), 415–425 (pp. 420–421).

¹⁵⁷Hickey and Smith, *Star of Shame*, p. 233.