The story of Italian Sisters: Dora and Margherita Mackin - with references to Velia Campbell, (all nee Ricciardo).

Dora -

I was born on the 22 August, 1929, in a village called Avezzano about one and a half miles from Sessa Aurunca. The village is under a mountain, called Massico, and near the sea, about 40 miles from Naples. There are 36 small villages around Sessa Aurunca in the Campania region.

My father had been the only person in our village (and many of the other villages) who had never worked for someone else. He worked over a wide area visiting other villages and assessing the value of their olive and grape crops.

He also owned fields that grew olives and grapes and with the people he employed to farm these crops he followed the system

Sessa Aurunca is a town and *comune* of Campania, Italy, in the province of Caserta. It located on the south west slope of the extinct volcano of Roccamonfina, 40 km by rail west north west of Caserta and 30 km east of Formia. It is situated on the site of the ancient town, Suessa Aurunca, near the river Garigliano. The hill on which Sessa lies is a mass of volcanic tuff.

My dad, Guiseppe, aged 21 years, in 1920.

The olive tree, is an evergreen tree or shrub native to the Mediterranean, Asia and Africa. It is short and squat, and rarely exceeds 8–15 m in height. However, a unique variety comprising 40,000 trees found only in a small area of the **Campania region** of southern Italy often exceeds this, with correspondingly large trunk diameters. The silvery green leaves are oblong, the trunk is typically gnarled and twisted. Its fruit, also called the olive, is of major agricultural importance in the Mediterranean region as the source of olive oil. Olives are harvested in the green to purple stage.

known as Mezzadria (half and half) where the profits from the crops were shared between the land owner and those planting and harvesting the crops. In my dad's case he only took one third of the profits. My dad had purchased an electric machine to grind the olives before pressing these. I remember that it was 1935 when my village got electricity. In those days only the black olives were used and pressed for the production of virgin olive oil. We had to wait until the ripe fruit had fallen to the ground.

Dad's business also used the harvested grasses or stramma that grew in abundance on the mountain side. The smaller bushes and narrow stalks were used for basket and rope making and the larger bushes, with wide stalks, were used for mattress filling.

The stramma for basket making was beaten with a tool like a large rolling pin, a mazzuco, to soften it

A 1920 English account of the Mezzadria System in Italy staes - on almost every estate is established the system of mezzadria, a division of labour and capital which arouses in the contadini, as part-proprietor, a genuine interest in crops and cattle. Every estate worked upon the mezzadria plan is divided into various farms or poderes. Upon each podere stands a house, stables, and outbuildings, all provided by the padrone, and for the use of these and the land the contadino gives his work, so that a farm is often handed down from father to son, from one generation to another, and the peasant learns to love the land he cultivates as something of his own.

Traditional Olive Pressing.

The fruit of the olive tree, also called the olive, is the source of olive oil.

An early electric press of the kind used by Guiseppe.

and this stramma was also pulled into twine and plaited for rope making. My dad was able to use the electric olive press to process the larger stramma stalks. These larger stalks were combed first in a machine, twisted and then dried in the sun. After drying they were pressed electrically to soften them and form the filling for mattresses. We made a box to feed these ropes into the press and they came out as bales. The roof top of our house was used to dry the rope. A large wagon came to our house every fortnight to collect the processed bales.

All my family worked inside to help with this part of dad's business. We were the only family that did not work for other people. My dad was affectionately known as Don Peppino by the local people.

Sadly, another man who had been dad's competitor for some time, eventually talked him into going

The Stramma Plant.

The Stramma, or Ampelodesmus plant, is usually found in dry areas near the coast and is common on the arid terraces of Italy. It requires dry or moist soil and cannot grow in the shade. It has strong leaves up to 1 metre long and 7mm wide, these leaves are coarse and sharp. The Stramma can be collected at any time during the year. During the collection the fibres are bound up (they are called *fasce de stramma)* and then they need to be dried before the manufacturing process. When the fibres are dried the *stramma* is beaten to be softened.

Stramma Leaves were also considered **a good mattress-filler,** while reeds, bracken or seaweed were suitable choices in some regions. The Roman writer Pliny reported that *spartum* or esparto grass was used in Spain 2000 years ago, and this continued into the 19th century.

A simple sack, called a tick, is all that most mattress covers have ever been. Canvas woven from hemp, also called 'hurden' or tow, was a likely choice for the tick before machine-woven cottons took over.

Dora recalls that these mattresses had a life of only 3 or 4 months before losing their softness.

into partnership, but this man later cheated my dad. My dad had agreed to his new partner keeping the books for the business and, unknown to dad, he had bought a shop and a house in his wife's name. As a result, at the end of a bad season for crops, there was no money in the business to pay bills or debts.

My dad had to sell fields to pay bills for all the farmers and to help pay some of the overdrafts. Also the use of stramma for mattress filling was dying out rapidly as new materials began to be produced for this purpose. It broke my dad's heart when his children then sought work overseas to support the family.

I was one of 9 children, one of whom died in 1939. I had little memory of the Second World War, other than a memory of the celebrations when the armistice was agreed in 1943. In those days,

Italy's involvement in World War II as a member of the Axis powers required the establishment of a war economy. This put severe strain on the corporatist economic model applied by Mussolini, since the war quickly started going badly for Italy and it became difficult for the government to persuade business leaders to finance what they saw as a military disaster. The Allied invasion of Italy in 1943 caused the Italian political structure - and the economy - to rapidly collapse. The Allies, on the one hand, and the Germans on the other, took over the administration of the areas of Italy under their control**. By the end of the war, the Italian economy had been all but destroyed**; per capita income in 1944 was at its lowest point since the beginning of the 20th century.

The Italian economy had very variable growth in the 1950s and early 1960s. **In Italy**, state economic intervention was delayed. It began during the 1950s and was not fully achieved until the 1960s under the centre left governments. There is a question as to whether or not a mixed economy in a Western European country like Italy was connected to the goal of establishing a consensus policy by the political elites. What is clear is that **unemployment was high in this period – especially in southern Italy.**

Dora's limited recollection of the war shows both that children are often less affected by world events than is expected by adults and that her parents had been able to retain normality in the lives of their children.

no –one bought ready-made clothes. Everyone bought material and all clothes were hand-made. We had a lovely childhood in many ways. Every July and August, until 1943, the family rented an apartment in Scauria, where we also had a cabin on the beach to get changed in. Our cabin was numbered five – the same number as our house – so that we children would easily recognise this number.

All the family worked for my dad and we employed other people but after my dad went bankrupt in 1956 we all needed to think of ways to help the family finances.

My brother, who was attending University in a nearby town called Caserta had heard from a man from our village, Pietro Tuozzi (who worked in the labour office in Caserta and travelled on the same train with him daily) that some English textile companies were

Scauria Beach, Italy

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After World War II, the Italian economy had very variable growth. In the 1950s and early 1960s, the Italian economy was recovering, with significant recorded growth rates by 1959. After 1959 there was a rapid and sustained growth due to the ambitions of several Italian business people, the opening of new industries (helped by the discovery of hydrocarbons, made for iron and steel) , the reconstruction and modernisation of most Italian cities, such as Milan, Rome and Turin, and the aid given to the country after the end of the war.

seeking girls to work in their mills and he had told him that for the girls selected the fares and costs would all be paid for by the firm who was recruiting Italian girls.

Velia and I were able to weave grasses and also to make ropes so we had experience in pulling and twisting twine with electric machinery.

We checked this out in the labour exchange in Caserta and my sister Velia and I were allowed to travel to Naples to be interviewed by two people from England. 200 girls from around the area attended these interviews that were conducted over two days. We all stayed in a camp just outside Naples – it was like a holiday camp in some ways. We had to undergo x ray examinations, blood tests, eye tests and other medical examinations and answer many questions about our families.

The European Voluntary Workers Scheme (EVW) in the 1950's:

This became the collective name given to schemes for continental Europeans to 'be invited' by the British government to work in the UK in the immediate Post-World War II period. Schemes inviting workers include Balt Cygnet and later Westward Ho! In spite its name, Balt Cygnet also accepted applicants from the Ukraine, Poland and other non-Baltic eastern European countries.

The relatively high level of economic growth in the UK during the post-war period led an acute labour shortage within key sectors. EVWs were first and foremost invited in order to cover the need for low-paid and unskilled work. The majority of EVWs originated in Eastern European countries such as the Ukraine, Poland and Latvia. Since many of these people were displaced because of World War II, also a humanitarian element has been attributed to some of the EVW schemes.

In total some 91.000 people came to the UK between 1946 and 1949 under the various EVW schemes. EVWs were initially referred to as 'Displaced Persons', since many of the arrivals had been displaced by World War II. This term was however replaced by 'EVW' due to its derogatory connotations. In 1953 the term 'EVW' was replaced with simply 'Foreign Workers recruited under the Westward Ho scheme'.

Around seven doctors examined us and it was a bit degrading.

When this process was completed we had to return home and wait for a telegram to inform us as to whether we had been accepted. In this case, only 16 girls were chosen. The telegram for myself and my sister Velia arrived on a Wednesday and we had to leave home on the following Sunday so we had to go to Caserta immediately to get our passports. The passport office opened especially for this on the Saturday and my cousin took us there. I was 27 years of age and Velia was 25 years old.

Velia and I went to Milan by train and had to be medically examined again to check we weren't pregnant. We met two girls from our village, Elisa and Jose, in Caserta and we all travelled by bus to Rome. From Rome we travelled to Milan to catch a train that took

The Italian Workers:
In the decade following the end of the Second World War, a mass migration of Italian workers came to the United Kingdom to be employed in Britain's factories and mines. Amongst these, **many were single women aged between 21 and 30 years.**

Thanks to official recruitment schemes drafted by the British and Italian governments of the time, young women left Italy in their thousands, to be employed as domestic workers or in factories, **especially in the textile districts of Lancashire and Yorkshire.** Here, they joined other migrants recruited through the EVW scheme, a government-led operation aimed at sourcing manpower from mainland Europe. The official Italian Scheme was one of such recruitments, but one of the least investigated.
Gasperetti, F, 2012

With the recruitment of young Italian women for British industries, around 2,000 Italian women came to be employed by the textile manufactures of Lancashire and Yorkshire just in the years 1949-51, and continued throughout the 1950's.

Map of Italy

us to Calais in France, we got on the ferry to Dover – we didn't get to England until the Wednesday, arriving at our hostel on Otley Road, Shipley, at 10pm that night. We arrived in March 1957.

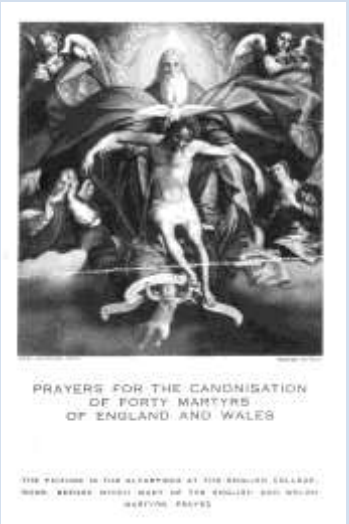
When we arrived in Dover there were two men and two Italian women (Maria and Yola) waiting to meeting us on behalf of the mill. They took all 16 of us to a coffee shop. They had a post card of the mill, ready stamped for us to send to our families to say that we had arrived safely.

The mill we had been recruited to work at was Henry Mason's mill in Shipley (it was situated on the site adjacent to the Inland Revenue Office)

Although my sister Velia and I came together, another sister Margherita had also wanted to come to work in England but she was too young being only 19 years of age. Once I, Dora had got a

In Italy, the period from 1922 to 1939 was one of important construction and modernisation programmes for the **Italian railways**, which incorporated also a 400 km stretch from the *Ferrovie Reali Sarde* of Sardinia. The most important development programme was that of the **Rome-Naples** and Bologna–Florence direct rail lines.
The war, however, left railways in Italy **in a disrupted state.** Entire lines were out of work and much of the rolling stock destroyed. Thanks to the Marshall Plan, in the following years they would be rebuilt. The fundamental line, the 'Battipaglia-Reggio Calabria' was doubled, while a program of updating of infrastructures, superstructures, services, colour-light signalling and cars were updated or extended. Nevertheless, **the rail journeys taken by the Ricciardo sisters would have been lengthy and tiring.**

The religious card, below, retained by Dora, was provided to the Italian recruits as part of their welcome pack, alongside the postcards showing Mason's mill to be sent home.



contract from the mill however, it was possible for Margherita to come as Velia and I could take responsibility for her.

Margherita recalls - 'I had to go through the full range of demeaning medical examinations in England, before going through customs, and had to travel to England alone. I recall that, as a teenager, the whole journey was very exciting – an adventure. I missed the train I was due to catch in London and asked a policeman for help as best I could. The policeman was very helpful and found an Italian speaking person who found out where I could stop for the night and catch a train the next day. All I had was a £5 note but I got very good help. After Arriving in Shipley, (in March 1958) I went to work the next day'.

'I remember that, whilst travelling on the train through England I thought that the houses all looked

In 1873, Henry Mason built 'Victoria Works' to manufacture worsted coatings and dress goods. One of four significant mills in Bradford, (Salts, Lister's, Drummonds and Victoria Works), initially it was a fully integrated (or vertical) mill – the wool arriving on the top floor and all the processes took place on site from wool to finished cloth. The weaving shed was almost two acres in size. The produce was exported worldwide.

According to Cudworth, by 1876 the big four worsted firms in Shipley, namely, Hargreaves, Salt's, Mason's and Denby's were in total employing 6,900 workers.

In 1888, Mason's 'New' Mill was built. This was a sign that business was booming! At the same time Old Mill was enlarged by carefully adding another floor and changing the roof style from pitched to "Northern Lights". **In 1930, Henry Mason** was living at Bankfield House (now the Mercure Hotel) near Cottingley. He arrived daily in a carriage drawn by four white horses and personally greeted his workers who held him in high regard

Solomon Jerome, who had commenced trading as a cloth merchant in 1930 which laid the foundations for the Jerome Group. It was during 1959 that Jerome's acquired the Mills still producing high quality worsted cloth.

In this period, post WW2, record production helped offset rising costs. The wool textile industry earned £800 million more that the aircraft industry between 1950 and 1959. **Keighley, M, 2007**

the same but the further North the train got, the blacker the houses became'.

Henry Mason's mill was a weaving mill and this mill didn't wash or scour raw wool. The wool arrived in a ball of yarn and gill boxes took the woollen yarn and drew it out until it was transformed into finer thread. Dora was employed as a 'gill minder', which involved looking after two large boxes to make sure that the weight was always balanced. 'When pieces of yarn were broken I had to mend/tie these and then load them on to the bobbins. Where yarn was broken, I had to put a cross onto the bobbins'. I stayed working for Mason's for four years.

When Margherita started work, it was in the winding process room. Her overlooker was married to an Italian and could speak Italian which was very helpful. 'I learnt cap spinning in two or 3 days and I

Drawing the wool was a Gill Box Function.

Dora and some colleagues standing near to a Gill Box (Beavers Mill Bingley, 1962)

The machines, known as (Gill) boxes, in the drawing section reduce the combed tops from thick slivers to thinner roving ready for spinning. This is done by drafting them between slow back rollers to faster front rollers, and controlling the fibres between these rollers.

The first boxes where the ends are thickest are the double head can gill box (where the wool ends up in a can) and the 2-spindle gill box (where the wool ends up twisted and on spindles).

On these machines the rollers are heavily fluted to control the sliver, and the front rollers padded with leather to cushion the wool. Between the front and back rollers are fallers or bars which control the roving by holding it with fine pins. The roving is now called slubbing which needs twist for strength, and is dealt with by a second set of boxes: a 2-spindle draw-box, 4-spindle weigh box, 8-spindle finisher/reducer and 8-8-spindle rover.

In these boxes the principle of two sets of rollers with controlled fibre in between is the same, but the yarn is now twisted onto a bobbin via a flyer.

also had an Italian buddy to work alongside. The work was very noisy and very fast.'

The sisters earned £4 a week, though Margherita was on piece work and she could at times earn a little more. They recall how cold England felt. Dora only had a thick cardigan with her and the sisters had to go to a local market for material to make her a coat.

They had only seen snow once in Italy and during the first snow experienced in England Margherita's little boots wore out – they were not made for English weather!

The sisters also experienced some prejudice from the English people they met and worked with – only a few but it did hurt their feelings. Some people said 'you don't belong here' or 'if you don't like it go back to your own country'

Nevertheless, initially Dora and Velia had been able to send £20 a

Key Worsted Textile Processes –

Sorting - the wool fleece and skin wool manually into defined qualities. Blending Wools - of similar qualities but different types to obtain some desired effect and produce a bulk lot for combing. Scouring - or washing the wool to remove dirt, natural grease and any other impurities. Carding - where wool fibres are disentangled, and made into a twistless rope-like form called a sliver. Backwashing - a light washing of the slivers to remove dirt picked up in carding. Combing - to straighten the wool fibres and separate the short wool from the long. **Drawing** - the combed tops until they are reduced from thick slivers of wool to Roving - from which the yarn is finally spun. **Spinning** - the wool, drawing it out to its final thickness and twist added for strength. Twisting - two or more single spun yarns to produce a yarn of greater strength, for use as warp threads in the weaving process. Reeling- spun yarns are formed into hanks for dyeing. Winding – placing spun yarns onto packages. Warping - a large number of ends are wound, side by side, in predetermined order, density and width, onto a beam for the loom.
Warp Preparation -individual warp threads are drawn through shafts according to a pattern. Weaving - where a loom is used to produce a piece of cloth by interlacing the warp threads (running the length of the fabric) with the weft threads (passing from side to side). The warp threads from the warping beam and the weft by the shuttle. Perching - the woven fabric is inspected for faults and these are marked. Burling & Mending - any minor faults are rectified by hand. Dyeing - a wet process in which raw materials, yarns and fabrics have colour applied. Finishing - the fabric is treated by various processes to produce the required effect, feel and handling quality.

The manufactured cloth is then ready for tailoring and the above gives a flavour of the complexity involved in manufacturing worsted cloth.

month home and, when Margherita arrived in England to work, they were able to send £30 a month home to their father and mother – each contributing £10.

The sisters lived in a hostel built to house the Italian mill girls that was situated on Otley Road, near the Baildon traffic Lights. There were 8 girls already living there and we 16 newcomers increased the number to 24 in the hostel. The sisters recall that living in the hostel was great fun except for the need to share a kitchen with very limited facilities. Eventually this hostel was extended to become home to 40 young Italian women.

The Matron and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Stebbins looked after all the girls – they had a daughter of their own, Mavis – now Taylor. They took the Italian girls shopping, helped with any necessary paperwork and making phone calls, and they ensured each

Mark Keighley, Wool City, 2007, comments that, the textile industry was suffering from a shortage of staff, especially female labour and this presented the industry with serious production problems in the late 1950s and throughout the 60s. **Keighley, M, 2007.**

Below, is a copy from the record book kept by Dora of the amounts of money the sisters were able to send home.

The pages record the monthly amounts sent home.

Flavia Gasperetti, studied the experiences of Italian women who were recruited to work in the Lancashire and Yorkshire textile industries between 1949 and 1961. Her study (for a PhD award in 2012) is a rare example of work that documents their experiences and utilised interviews with Italian women in Manchester, and the use of previously audio taped records of Italian Women in Bradford and Shipley. She has kindly given permission for some short extracts from the study to be used.
In her study, she notes - **the problem that hindered integration within the workplace between native and new foreign workers**, of course, was the perception that the newcomers were a contributing factor in keeping wages down and (that the foreign workers) were willing to accept working conditions which were unfair.

girl had a doctor and a dentist. The girls paid 15 shillings each for rent, gas and electricity and eventually for an extra 6 pence per week had a television. The girls tended to take it in turns to clean the kitchen but cooked their own meals.

The girls were aware of a much bigger hostel, situated at the turn from Otley road into Coach Road, where many more girls and women were accommodated. This hostel was for C. F. Taylor's Mill. They also remember that Salts Mill had at least one similar hostel.

They attended Belle Vue upper school on Wednesday and Thursday evenings to learn English, though these lessons were not compulsory. At work they got by with sign language at first and did make many English friends but the language barrier was very hard at times. 'It was always nice to get back to the hostel were we could all understand one another'.

Happy times in the Hostel

Gasperetti's detailed work on the hostels provided for migrant works utilises earlier studies, for example - Gapseretiti states 'As Elisabeth Stadulis summarised in her survey in 1952, 118 workers' hostels still accommodated the majority of the foreign workers employed in Britain at the time. Of which a number were in disused army barracks and many were sub-standard'.

This survey was completed some 5 years before the **Ricciardo sisters** arrived in the UK to work in the Textile Industry and Gasperetti records that – 'In due course, textile firms began to establish their own hostels, thus relieving the National Service Hostels Corporation (NSHC) of the burden, and these smaller privately run dwellings were usually "more luxurious" even though they lacked the amenities and provisions for social entertainment that some of the larger NSHC hostels had'.

She provides an example of how such smaller, private dwellings were photographed, information sheets about the accommodation and its facilities were written in Italian and the pictures and text were provided for the Italian women candidates for work in the company that had established the hostel – usually through the conversion of a large dwelling.

The English classes did help but Dora and Margherita found their husbands to be the most helpful and they recall that their conversational English improved after two years or so. Dora found reading the Daily Mirror helpful also.

Their contract with the mill was for 1 year initially and the company paid the fare home after this year for girls who did not want to stay any longer. Later, in 1960, their two younger sisters, Gina and Maria, also came to work in textiles but they didn't settle and returned home after 6 months.

Other memories of these early days included their first experience of 'bonfire night', which seemed strange because in Italy fireworks are used on Christmas Eve. The mill also arranged a trip to Blackpool for its workers every year which was also memorable.

From bottom to top, Velia, Dora and Margherita, have their first photograph taken in the grounds of the Baildon hostel.

Gasperetti records 'the agony of Italian workers coming to grips with a new diet of milky tea and gravy, this might seem surprising, almost amusing to us now, but we ought to remember that these hostel meals were not a form of charitable subsidy, and that the workers themselves were paying for their bed and board by means of pay-deductions that could well amount to a third of their weekly wage. So when Italian women went out shopping in order to cook food that they could enjoy, they were effectively paying for each meal twice over'.

She also notes – 'Some British workers understandably resented how much work the EVWs were willing, or too scared not to, put in. (..) on the other hand, others saw the new-comers' inexperience and the language barrier as problems that made their own work-life harder'. **Gasperetti, F, 2012**

Dora, Velia and Margherita continued to work in England and all eventually married there. Margherita was the first to marry, meeting her husband Alan in 1959 and marrying in March1960. Dora was to find her future husband in Alan's brother, Peter, who was in the army when Margherita met Alan. Dora and Peter married in October 1961 and Velia married an Irish man, Hughie Campbell, in February 1961 who worked as a builder, in Shipley. Hughie had lodged at the same place as Alan and Margherita, after they were married, and that is how Velia met him.

The first time the sisters went home was after three and a half years in England and they saved up to go for 6 weeks in August 1960, to have an Italian ceremony for Margarita and Alan's wedding. The mill paid for 2 weeks of that period but the remaining four had had to be saved for. Alan was amazed at

Belle Vue Girls School: The school was founded in 1877 as The Girls' Higher Grade School, on Manningham Lane. In 1904, the name was changed to Belle Vue Girls' Secondary School. During the First World War, the school offered additional evening classes for women who worked during the day in the factories. During the Second World War, the army briefly occupied the building, and the students were sent elsewhere. The school web site does not record its language classes in the evening after WW2. The school was moved to its present site in 1971 and has since specialised as a language, science and maths academy school.

Gasperetti's 2012 study notes that Italian women arrived in the mill towns of Lancashire, Manchester and Yorkshire in what would soon be recognised to be a critical and transformative time for the British textile industry. The mills which had shaped the landscape of these areas and given employment to generations of local people were ill-equipped to face the challenges of international competition and were about to enter three decades of steady decline.

She notes that -As employment prospects in this industry underwent such significant changes, the presence of Italian workers within the textile mills greatly reduced over the years. In time, the recruitment of European women by cotton (and woollen) manufacturers gave way to the increased recruitment of Asian and West Indian men. **Gasperetti, F, 2012**

the way Italian men were treated 'like kings' and didn't have to fetch and carry water, make coffee, wash up and so on.

Dora, Velia and Margherita had their children in the years between 1962 and 1968 – see appendix three for the family tree.

The sisters didn't register for British Citizenship until 1967 and initially, they lost their Italian citizenship, though this was conferred back to them in 1994, enabling them to have dual citizenship.

All three sisters were married in St. Aidan's Church in Baildon, by Father Villani (from the Italian Mission in Bradford) and all their children went to catholic schools, initially St. Walburga's primary school in Shipley

They wrote home to their family in Italy every week – using the telephone was too expensive – and

Gasperetti significantly notes that -

'The decline of the textile trade had other consequences for the migrant workers employed within it. The foreign migrants who settled in these areas found themselves living in communities over which the damaging effects of industrial decline, on the one hand, and, on the other, the challenges of rapid multi-culturalisation had transformative repercussions. There was no overseas Eldorado to be found in the declining textile districts of northern England and for most Italians, motivated as they were chiefly by financial need and lack of opportunities in their home country, this particular migration adventure was not likely to end with tales of fabulous riches and major social improvement'. **Gasperetti, F, 2012**

For the three Ricciardo sisters who did settle in the Bradford District, their ability to do so was aided by marrying outside their own culture and for two of them, outside their religious faith. **Marriage** is one of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church. As such, it is a supernatural institution, as well as a natural one. The Church, therefore, restricts sacramental marriage to men and women who meet certain requirements. Both partners do not have to be a Catholic in order to be sacrament ally married in the Catholic Church, but both must be baptized Christians (and at least one must be a Catholic). Non-Christians cannot receive the sacraments. Both Margherita and Dora's husbands were willing to undergo specific religious instruction.

kept this up until their mother, Elena died in 1995.

Elena wrote frequently to the sisters keeping them up to date with local news and any births, deaths or marriages in the village.

Dora and Margherita state that they now think and dream in English and have lost their past fluency in the Italian language – having to think carefully about how they say things when speaking to other members of their family.

They both are clear however that they have had a happy life and that they would not change how life has been for them in England.

Postscript:

Elena had always written poetry whilst alive and Dora's grandson Liam has kept up this tradition. Liam has Alstrom Syndrome, which has led to him becoming blind. His poetry is remarkable and he has had two books of poetry published.

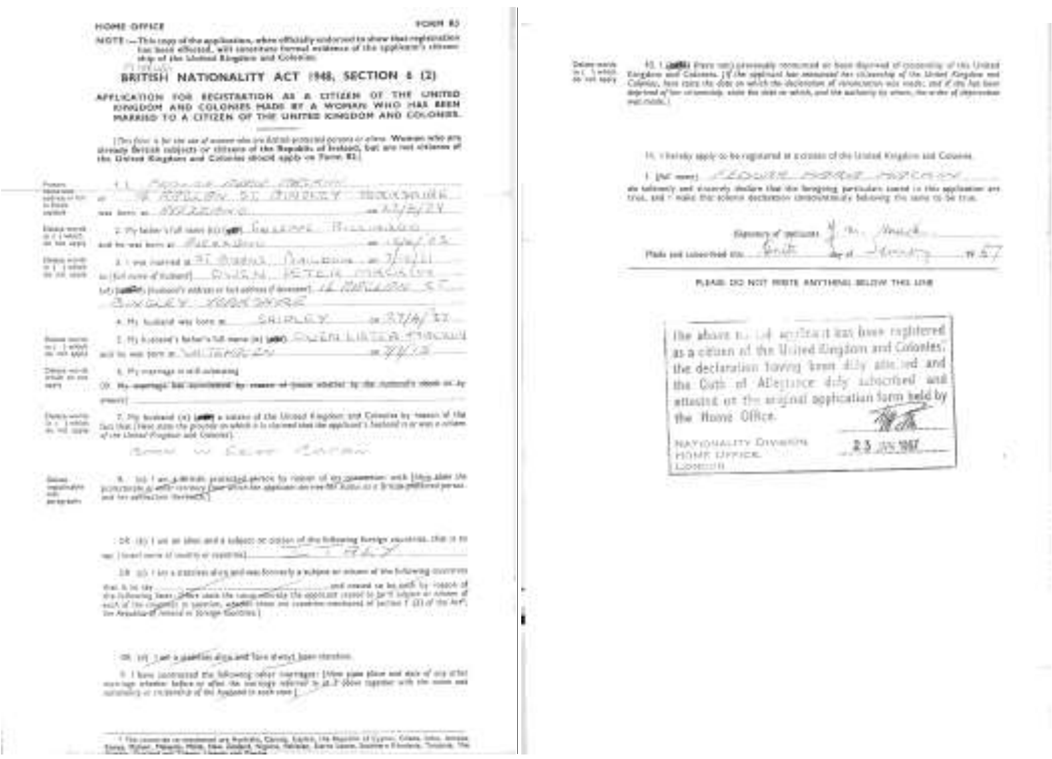
Marriages between Catholic and Non Catholic people (cont.) both husbands also agreed to the requirement to raise any children of the marriages within the Catholic Church and to ensure that their education was in Catholic schools. Margherita's husband, Alan, eventually converted to Catholicism.

Whilst their mother was alive, the sisters visited Italy every year with their children. On the advice of their mother's in law, they did not raise their children to speak the Italian language, as all were concerned that this may 'hold back' their children's education in English speaking schools

Gasperetti notes that all the respondents interviewed or used for her research are women who have settled in England permanently, put down roots. They became part of their local community, an increasingly multi-racial, cosmopolitan, population of factory workers and labourers. She queried to **what extent the Italian background** of these women was still important, still a defining factor of their personal experience, and notes as part of her response that 'Maintaining that sense of familial and cultural belonging was, in many ways, a task of ever increasing complexity. Their native towns and villages back in Italy did not remain frozen in time, they began to change beyond all recognition as the nation underwent its own post-war economic boom. The native families of the respondents changed too as parents aged and died, siblings moved to big cities, migrated abroad, scattered'. **Gasperetti, F, 2012**

The Ricciardo Family at home in Italy, working with Stramma: Circa 1956

Dora's Application for British Citizenship in 1967



HOME OFFICE FORM B3

BRITISH NATIONALITY ACT 1948, SECTION 6 (2)

APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION AS A CITIZEN OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND COLONIES MADE BY A WOMAN WHO HAS BEEN MARRIED TO A CITIZEN OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND COLONIES.

14. I hereby apply to be registered as a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies.

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE ANYTHING BELOW THIS LINE

The above named applicant has been registered as a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies, the declaration having been duly attested and the Oath of Allegiance duly subscribed and attested on the original application form held by the Home Office.

NATIONALITY DIVISION
HOME OFFICE
LONDON

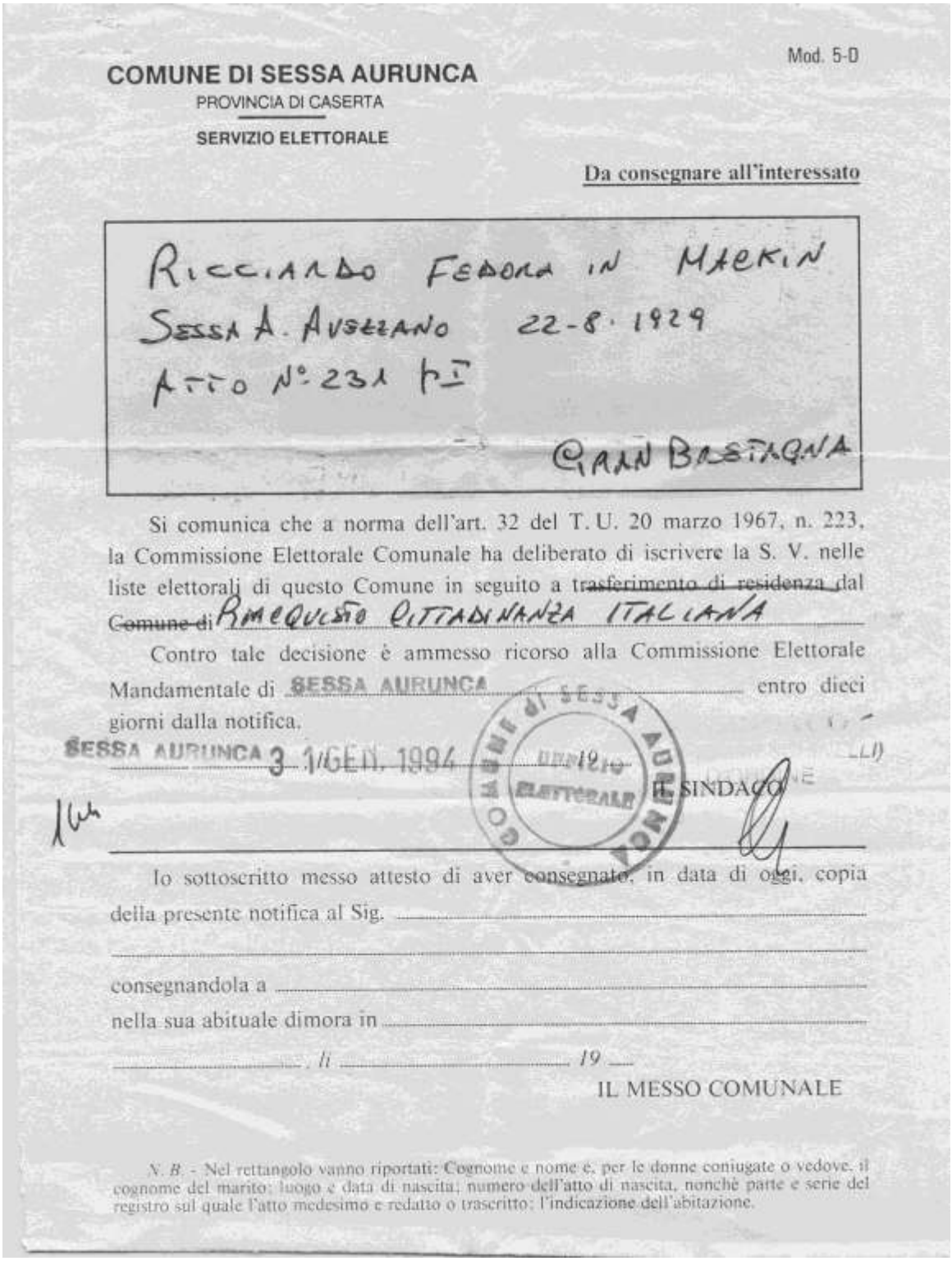
Dora, Velia and Margherita at the Hostel with Jack (Margherita's overlooker) and Yola (who met Dora and Margherita at Dover)

Dora is standing, first left, Margherita is seated with her arm around the little girl and Velia is seated next to her. Jack is standing, third from the left.

The Italian Girls in work overalls, in the grounds of the hostel.

Back, from left, not recalled, Pina, Nina, Dora, Emilia, Josefina, no recall and Elisa
Middle row from left, Velia, Maria , Santa, no recall.
Front row from left, no recall, Pina, Mrs. Stebbins, Neta and Titina

The Document Conferring the restoration of Italian Citizenship, 1967.



Mod. 5-D

COMUNE DI SESSA AURUNCA
PROVINCIA DI CASERTA
SERVIZIO ELETTORALE

Da consegnare all'interessato

RICCIARDO FEDORA IN MAKIN
SESSA A. AVSELLANO 22-8-1929
ATTO N° 231 P I
GRAN BRETAGNA

Si comunica che a norma dell'art. 32 del T. U. 20 marzo 1967, n. 223, la Commissione Elettorale Comunale ha deliberato di iscrivere la S. V. nelle liste elettorali di questo Comune in seguito a ~~trasferimento di residenza~~ dal ~~Comune di~~ RICEVUTO CITTADINANZA ITALIANA

Contro tale decisione è ammesso ricorso alla Commissione Elettorale Mandamentale di SESSA AURUNCA entro dieci giorni dalla notifica.

SESSA AURUNCA 3 1 GEN. 1994 19

COMUNE DI SESSA AURUNCA UFFICIO ELETTORALE

IL SINDACO

Io sottoscritto messo attesto di aver consegnato, in data di oggi, copia della presente notifica al Sig. .....

.....

consegnandola a .....

nella sua abituale dimora in .....

....., li ..... 19 ...

IL MESSO COMUNALE

N. B. - Nel rettangolo vanno riportati: Cognome e nome e, per le donne coniugate o vedove, il cognome del marito; luogo e data di nascita; numero dell'atto di nascita, nonchè parte e serie del registro sul quale l'atto medesimo è redatto o trascritto; l'indicazione dell'abitazione.

Mr and Mrs Stebbins (English Mama and Papa) with Dora and Velia at the Hostel, 1957

Dora is standing, first left and Velia is seated on the right. Mr and Mrs Stebbins are in the centre, standing. The other two women are Elisa and Josephina who they met in Caserta at the start of their journey to England

The First Visit back Home for Margherita's Italian Wedding Celebrations

Standing, left to right – Italo, Vanda, Antonio, Roger (English friend), Gina, Italia, Alan, Margherita, Maria and Dora.
Seated, left to right – Velia, Elena, Guiseppe, Vanda's son – Antonio.

Appendix One: A Selection of Poems written by Liam ( ) Mackin

Grandad

My Grandad is a funny man
He causes trouble whereever he can
If somethings wrong he will play pop
No matter what the type of shop

He has an attic and a cellar
He really is a splendid fella
He makes brilliant corned beef sandwiches
And speaks 3 different langauges

In his cupboard is Tia Maria
Which is saved just for Christmas cheer
Brandy, Martini, bottles of wine
He polishes the surfaces till they shine

He has a walking stick with badges on
From places like Portmeirion
He has a badge of Caernarfon too
And even one of the north Wales zoo

My granddad is really fine
And I'm glad that he is mine
He needs to know what I want him to
And the message is 'I love you'

Nona's Dinners

The Wind

Untitled, 6 November 2011

That bonfire night
It was three in the morning that bonfire night
The sky was so dark yet lit up so bright
You lay there with your eyes shut tight
And died.
The Roman Candles flashed red then blue
The rockets exploded every second or two
As a paramedic from the ambulence crew
Pronounced you dead.
It was in the morning that I heard that you'd died
I wished that I had been beside your side
And I knew as in sullen silence I cried
That you'd gone.
Every firework night that came after that day
I thought not of the bonfires burning away
But of you and the way that I knew you would say
Enjoy it.
But how can I when from my high window sill
I admire not the firework lighters skill
Instead I gaze at the void you used to fill
But fill no more.
I knew when the day of the funeral came,
I wore red and black, you requested the same,
That when anybody mentioned your name
I would smile.
So when rockets fly high in the November sky,
When a Catherine wheel spins as it flashes by,
When yet one more tear comes to my eye,
Its for you.
My memories fade but they do still exist,
If I'm sure of one thing, then it is this,
That some year in the future on November the fifth
I will join you.

Appendix Two.

Note: Knowledge that Salts Mill and other Mills in the Bradford and Shipley districts are known to have utlised significant numbers of women from European countries after World War Two. Salts (Saltaire) Ltd. were known to have establishe at least one hostel – believed to be at the side of the prior Salts Hospital site – and that this hostel was for Italian women workers. C F Taylors Shipley Mill also employed Italian and other European workers and their hostel had been at the junction of Coach road with Otley road in Shipley. This hostel was known to be very large. Salts also employed Austrian women and significant numbers of Polish and Ukrainian men post WW2 many of these men were 'displaced' by the war and their entry into textile emplyment in the area is better understood.

For readers who are curious as to why Italian (or Austrain and German) women came to be employed in these textile companies, it will be important to pay some attention to a rare study of why and how such women were recruited from 1949 to 1961. Flavia Gasperetti undertook research into the migration of Italian women for he Doctoral thesis, submitted to Brmingham University in 2012. It covers the 'why' this occurred, the 'how' such migration was administered and examines in some depth the actual experiences of the Italian women who arrived in the UK to be housed in hostels and their experiences of working in the cotton mills on Lancashire and Manchester and the woollen/worsted mills of Shipley and Bradford.

Gasperetti also provides a fascinating exposition of the role of the Catholic church in supporting these female migrants but also trying to ensure that they retained their catholic faith and high moral standards. For a brief explanation of the study, see below

Flavia Gasperetti's 2012 Study-

Italian Women Migrants in Post War Britain
The Case of Textile Workers 1949 - 1961

Gasperetti's thesis focuses initially on the processes of recruitment of young Italian women during the specified time period, within the context of Italy's post war emigration policies and its diplomatic relationship with Great Britain. In particular she notes the roles of the Italian Labour Offices in recruitment, the template contracts drawn up, the focus on single women and the gender inequlity within the schemes – with women having no rights to entitlements given to men in respect of any dependant members of their family. The study notes that the levels of unemplyment were most acute in the Southern provinces of Italy, Avellino, Casserta, Agrigento, Benevento and Naples.

Her examination of other research and literature notes the lack of attention paid to female migration in prior studies despite the fact that the Official Italian Scheme and successive private company recruitments overturned the prior superior numbers for male emigrations. She records the intense attention paid to medical screening for these women and how the authorities screened out any applicants for work with mental illness, low intelligence,

alcoholism, tuberculosis, venereal diseases, vision and hearing impairments, pregnancy and a range of medical conditions.

Gasperetti's study goes on to consider whether this effort to recruit white European workers was regarded as being more acceptable to the indigenous British population and notes that by 1961 there were 13, 910 Italian women employed in Britain. She notes some of the most important literature and academic studies that consider the range of recruitment schemes, for example that of J A Tannahill's 1958 study, *European Voluntary Workers in Britain*, Manchester University Press.

Gasperetti's sources of evidence for the experience of these women, propelled into a different culture, with no or little command of the language and housed in hostels that had little connection with prior, established Italian communities are 10 Italian women who had worked in the Lancashire Cotton Mills. These women were interview using a standard set of questions and of the 10 five were chosen for inclusion in the study. She could not find Italian women, recruited to work in the Yorkshire Woollen Mills, to interview, so used 6 recorded audio tapes – collected in 1984 – and retained by the Bradford Heritage Recording Unit.

From these two sources of personal accounts, Gasperetti is able to look in detail at life in 'The Hostels' where some of her sources had far more negative experiences that those of the Ricciardo sisters. One of Gasperetti's audio sources (Subject A in the study) recalling –

' Well, I presume…… maybe after the war freedom meant a lot. Here we didn't have a big wage, we wasn't free. In the hostel we was 400 women. I was in the attic with 3 women, no furniture, nothing …….. again the food wasn't our type of food. It was overcrowded, the canteen was overcrowded …… there was every day a fight there. It was terrible, we fight for the bathroom, we fight for everything'

This experience was of a hostel in Shipley but is not identified and is in stark contrast to Dora, Velia and Margherita's fond memories of the 40 Italian women they lived with and the care they received from their English Mama and Papa (Mr and Mrs Stebbins)

A key part of Gasperetti's research is of the experience of work in textile companies and here she looks in some depth about the barriers to integration, the role of the trade unions and the health and safety issues for these women. She records how the jobs for the Italian Women were frequently at the start of the textile processes where diseases caused by the dust were most commonly to be indicated. It is clear that aspects of combing and spinning were areas that could lead to such diseases. There is a brief but interesting analysis of the state of the textile industries at the time – a period of expansion and good productivity followed by a rapid decline. She details how marriage to fellow migrants or British men was the main route to integration within the local communities.

Gasperetti's examination of the role of the Catholic Church, who established missions in these areas, was to be both 'social worker' and gaurdian of morals. This chapter of the study gives very interesting insights as to the concerns and mores of the church. The whole study is worthy of some in depth consideration.

Appendix Three. The Ricciardo Family Tree:

KEY REFERENCES: