

## The Guselli Family

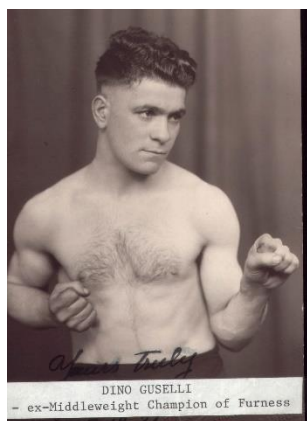
The Guselli's were one of a number of Italian families who established themselves in Barrow prior to WW1. Many set up ice cream & confectionery businesses, or later, coffee and milk bars. More can be read on this website by searching for Brucciani, and Italian businesses in Barrow.

Most of the personal detail, and many of the photographs, were kindly provided by Ray Guselli, of Barrow, Dino's son. He writes -



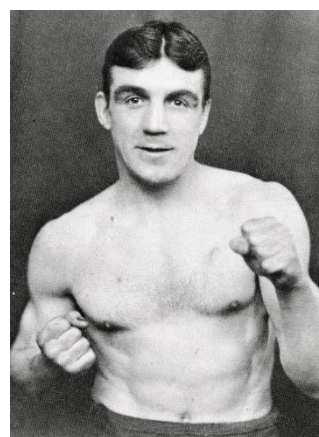
"Louis and Albina Guselli (my grandparents – pictured left) came to Barrow in 1894 from Piacenza, south-east of Milan in northern Italy, and typical of the time, opened a confectionery and ice cream shop.

My father Dino was born in 1906 (in Italy) and came to Barrow when he was about 15 and worked many long hours in the business which by now was expanding, reaching a maximum of 4 shops in Barrow.



The business expanded further when dad (Dino) got a horse and cart and took the ice cream and confectionery around the Furness peninsula. His horse was called Peter.

Dad took up boxing and his fights with "Butcher Moore" were apparently legendary, each boxer having their own following. Dad eventually became middleweight champion of Furness. I understand that when fighting, his followers would shout "hit him with Peter": meaning the kick from the horse.



Butcher Moore, from "Barrow in Furness in old postcards vol 1" Trescaheric & Barker 1982

Shortly after my return to Sunderland I was matched to fight Dino Guselli, of Italy, at Royston, and he proved to be the toughest opponent I had met up to that time.

We had a terrific slam, and it was in this fight that I realised that I could take the "heavy stuff" on the jaw.

Guselli had a terrific hit and I surprised myself when he landed fully on my jaw with every ounce of strength he had and I did not go down.

I got the verdict on points and after the fight the proprietor of the hall said to me:—

"Where did you get that cast-iron jaw, Casey?"

It has been said that I have a double jaw-bone, that doctors have examined me and made that discovery, but you can take it from me that my jaw is made exactly the same as your own is. It is just a wee bit harder, maybe—but

The only "double" I have is a double capacity for eating!

Jack Casey writing in "The Sunday Sun" 27 November 1932

Punchline Boxing magazine reported: Jack Casey acquired the nickname 'Cast Iron' after a bout with Dino Guselli (in 1928) when afterwards Guselli's promoter Joe Tolley asked Casey 'where he got his cast-iron jaw'. Guselli, the hard hitting former Olympic Champion (*I can find no record of him fighting at an Olympic Games – perhaps like Marlon Brando in "On the Waterfront" – "I coulda been a contender"*) had thrown everything at Casey but couldn't knock the Sunderland man down in a fight that Casey won on points.

Other members of the Guselli family came to Barrow and sadly one of dad's brothers called Livio passed away and is also buried in the cemetery." (Picture of the grave right)



The Barrow News 17 November 1951 reported:

### **The Gusellis' anniversary**

Old friends of many people in Barrow and shelterers of escaped British prisoners on the run in Italy during the war, Louis and Albina Guselli spent Sunday celebrating their 52<sup>nd</sup> wedding anniversary. It was in 1894 that Louis started a confectionery shop in Barrow. Later his business grew to four shops.

In 1935 they returned to Italy. Now Louis, aged 82, is bedridden with rheumatism and his wife, ten years younger, has fair health.

The Gusellis remembered their British ties during the war when they harboured escaped prisoners in a house in Piacenza.

Best known of their children still in Barrow is Deno , former middleweight boxing champion of Furness and an ex-Rugby player for Furness.

Ray Guselli writes "Dad married Ada in 1933 and his parents subsequently returned to Piacenza, Italy, to the family home.

The war saw dad become a member of the Pioneer Corps working for the British Army as interpreter but where he was interned for some time in the Isle of Man and later the Orkneys.

The Barrow shops eventually reduced to just one which was run for many years by Dino's brother and sister, Guido and Mary: this sadly became nothing more than the ginnel, joining Dalton Rd to Stephen Street/Portland Walk. Dad moved to London where he managed a chain of restaurants for many years before eventually returning to Barrow in 1965.

Both Mary and Guido passed away and are buried in the family vault in Piacenza.

Dino took over a corner shop in Suffolk Street which the family ran for a few years before he finally retired.

Sadly, his beloved wife, my mum passed away in 1982 and dad, never having got over her passing, died in May 2000. He did live long enough to see his only grandchild, Maria, born in 1999, whom he described as his little Princess."

Guselli's registered in Barrow (from Cumbria BMD):

1901 Hector Bernard D. (Mother's maiden name Schiari) (sic).

Moved to London e.g. in the **1959 Electoral Register** Hector was living at 78 St Margaret's Road, Edgware, Middx.

1904 Mary (Mother's maiden name Schiavi)

1909 Anna Giovanna E. (Mother's maiden name Schiavic) (sic)

1909 Giovanna Rosa (Mother's maiden name Malvicini) (died April 1910)

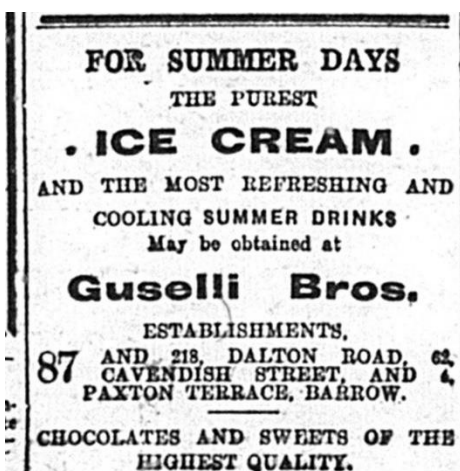
1912 Guido Pietro F. (Mother's maiden name Schiavi)

1919 Irene Anna T. (Mother's maiden name Schiavi)

1999 Maria Ann (Mother's maiden name Hadwen)

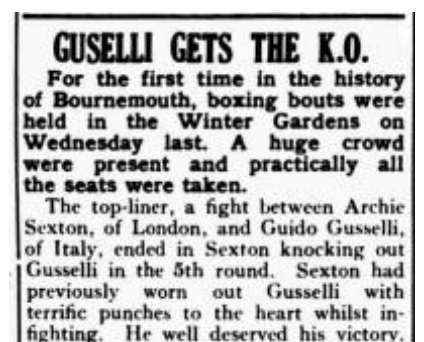
Dino Guselli (Italy) was a professional boxer who was active between 1928 and 1934 and took part in 33 professional contests.

Guido Guselli (Barrow) was a professional boxer who was active between 1929 and 1932 and took part in 11 professional contests.



Guido Guselli boxing report from the *Bournemouth & Southampton Graphic* 15 April 1932 (right)

Advert from the *Barrow News* 8 October 1914 (left), and from the *North-Western Daily Mail*, 4 May 1911 and 3 June 1911. Summer must have started in June!

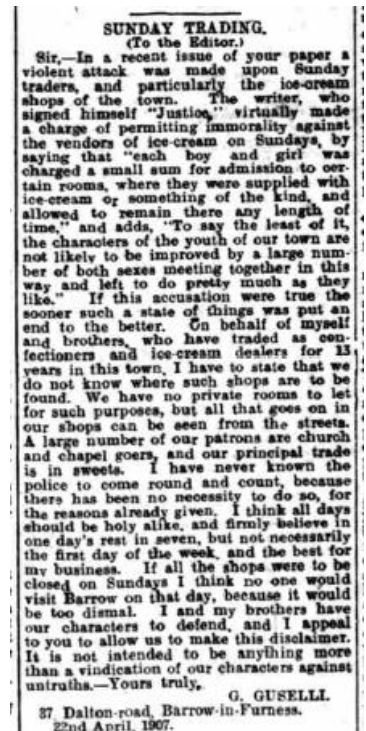
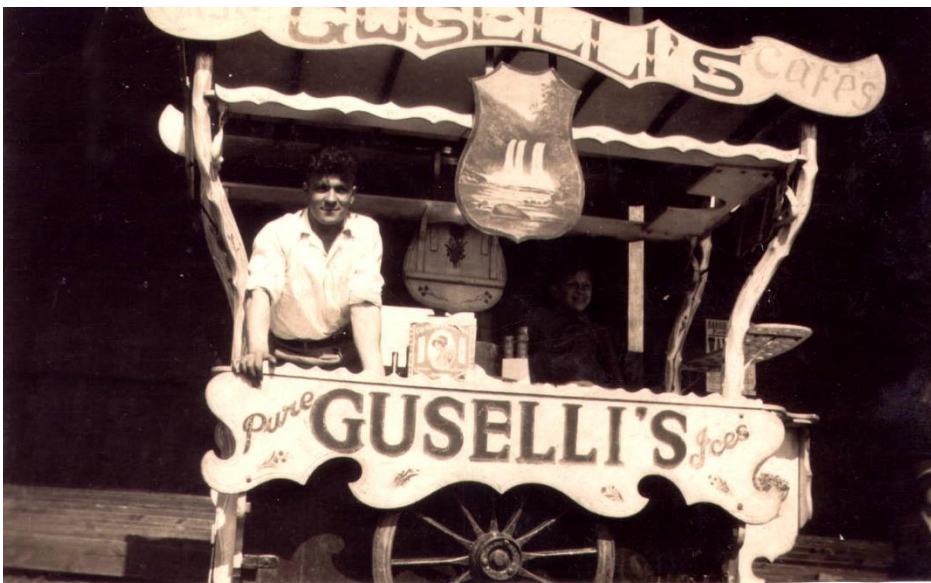






Guselli Bros shops: 218 Dalton Road (left); 87 Dalton Road (centre); 62 Cavendish Street (right).

Below, Dino with his ice cream cart.



*Soulby's Ulverston Advertiser and General Intelligencer 25 April 1907 (right)*

It is interesting to speculate how Dino kept his ice cream in a proper condition in his horse-drawn cart. An indication may be an article in the *Barrow Herald and Furness Advertiser* 18 November 1911. A partial summary reads:

#### **NEW INDUSTRY FOR BARROW MEETING OF INTERESTED TRADESMEN**

On Monday evening a meeting of local tradesmen interested in the formation of a company for the manufacture of ice for Barrow and district ... was held at the City Café, Barrow, there being a fairly large attendance, including the principal trades concerned in the project.

Mr. P. H. Fisher, one of the chief organisers, presided, and referred to the great difficulty which was experienced last summer in obtaining the smallest quantity of ice. With a view to doing away with that difficulty and being in a position to supply the town and district with a good class of ice, several members of his trade, who were great users of ice, had put their heads together and considered the proposal of forming a small company.

.....

Mr. Broadbent said one of the drawbacks to the production of ice in Barrow was the carriage. Another question was – how much was used in the town and what could they make it for.

Mr. Saxon thought that when the concern was going in Barrow, they would find, as in other places, that private residents would be some of their best customers.

The Chairman added that between 24 and 26 tons of ice were used in Barrow per week in summer time.

....

Mr. Broadbent proposed, and Mr. Kitchen seconded, that a committee of five be appointed out of that meeting to carry out a full investigation into the matter, and report at a future meeting. It was agreed that Messrs. Fisher, Guselli, Saxon, Broadbent, and Woodend form the committee, and after other formal business had been transacted, the meeting terminated.

A further report was provided in the *Barrow Herald and Furness Advertiser* 2 December 1911. Part of the account reads: "Mr. P. H. Fisher informed the small company present that the committee appointed at the previous meeting had thoroughly investigated the matter, and were satisfied that there was a splendid opening for an ice-making plant in Barrow. From actual statistics they found that the ice could be manufactured for considerably less than was stated at the previous meeting. The committee did not decide upon a site for the plant, but resolved to call an expert, and that gentleman visited Barrow on Monday. He inspected the various buildings which had been offered to the proposed company and, upon this inspection, promised to forward a detailed report along in the course of a few days (sic). This gentleman, it might be added, had fit up one of the most up-to-date ice factories in England at Fleetwood, which was producing about 140 tons of ice per day. Mr. Fisher further stated that the amount of support they had had offered to them warranted them proceeding with the project, and the committee were satisfied that the amount of ice they estimated to sell had been under rather than over estimated. They had had several provision dealers who were prepared to use any cold storage that they might erect, and also they had many brewers, who were ready to do business with the cold storage. ...."

A further account on 2 March 1912 stated "The ice industry in Barrow is now an accomplished fact, and the factory is where the Imperial Mews used to be in Hindpool Road. A very strong company has been formed, and my readers would be astonished if I could give the names of many of the shareholders. .... I am told the demand for ice has already exceeded all expectations. ..."

The Imperial Mews were across the road from the Devonshire Hotel (later Fatties, Healey's, and currently [2024] Traditions Apartments), so either on the site of Elegant Windows, or possibly the gym next to B & Q. (Source *Soulby's Ulverston Advertiser and General Intelligencer* 21 January 1904):

Ada & Dino's grave in Barrow Cemetery:



In Loving Memory Of  
**ADA GUSELLI**  
BORN 24 - 9 - 1913 DIED 19 - 7 - 1982  
BELOVED WIFE OF DINO  
AND MOTHER OF RAMON  
**DINO GUSELLI**  
BORN 12 - 12 - 1906  
DIED 22 - 5 - 2000  
LOVING FATHER OF RAMON  
AND A DEAR FATHER IN LAW  
OF ANN  
DEVOTED GRANDFATHER  
TO MARIA  
MY WONDERFUL PARENTS  
  
SADLY MISSED  
NOW TOGETHER FOREVER



From various sources in Ancestry we learn the following:

ITALIAN. Home Office Advisory Committee, Isle of Man, No. 1 Committee.  
MALE ENEMY ALIEN EXEMPTION FROM INTERMENT-REFUGEE

(1) Surname (block capitals) GUSELLI *Release refused 18/6/41.*  
Forenames Guido Pietro Francesco *in agreement*  
Alias King William IV Hotel  
(2) Date and place of birth 29-6-1912 at Barrow-in-Furness  
(3) Nationality Italian  
(4) Police Regn. Cert. No. 753880 Home Office reference, if known. G. 1939/2  
Special Procedure Card Number, if known.  
(5) Address King William IV Hotel, Kirksanton, Millom, Cumberland.  
(6) Normal occupation shop assistant.  
(7) Present Occupation as above.  
(8) Name and address of employer 87, Dalton Road, Barrow-in-Furness.  
(9) Decision of Tribunal Release Not Recommended Date 28-5-41.  
(10) Whether exempted from Articles 6 (a) and 9 (a) (Yes or No)  
(11) Whether desired to be repatriated (Yes or No)  
Form K20 (7815) 3430/565 50m 11/38 4975 G & S 704

ITALIAN. Home Office REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE Isle of Man, No. 1 Committee. REFUGEE-MALE

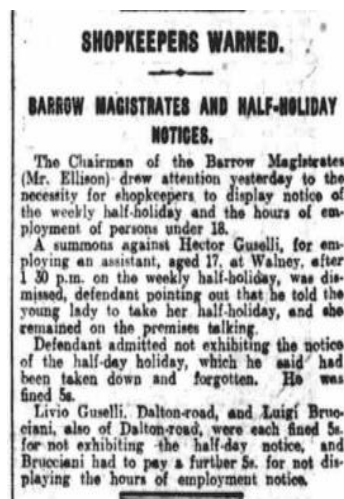
(1) Surname (block capitals) GUSELLI *Release 3/11/41*  
Forenames Livio John Joseph *in agreement*  
Alias  
(2) Date and place of birth 17-8-1902, at Gropparello, Italy.  
(3) Nationality Italian  
(4) Police Regn. Cert. No. 158105 Home Office reference, if known. G. 1939/2  
Special Procedure Card Number, if known.  
(5) Address 87, Dalton Road, Barrow-in-Furness.  
(6) Normal occupation Restaurateur.  
(7) Present Occupation as above. (Own business at above address)  
(8) Decision of Tribunal Release Not Recommended Date 6-8-41.  
(9) Decision of Advisory Committee Exempted from Art. 6(a) & 9(a) *Strike out which does not apply.*  
Form K20 (7815) 3430/565 50m 11/38 4975 G & S 704

Internment papers refusing release (18 June 1941) for Guido Pietro Francisco Guselli (DoB 29 June 1912 at Barrow in Furness) giving his address as King William IV Hotel, Kirksanton, Millom but his normal address as shop assistant, of 87 Dalton Road, Barrow. On the right is a similar document dated 3 November 1941 for Livio John Joseph Guselli (DoB 17 August 1902 at Gropparello, Italy), He is a restaurateur (own business) at 87 Dalton Road, Barrow.



In the **1901 Census** Louis Guselli (31) Baker, Confectioner and Shopkeeper is living at 62 Cavendish Street. He is an Italian citizen. He is living with his wife Albina Guselli (20), also an Italian citizen, and baby Hector Guselli (1 mo) born Barrow, Lancs. *Hector is pictured left.*

Meanwhile, at St Thomas the Apostle, City of London, on 23 December 1883, Angiolina Maria Guselli had been baptised, daughter of Antonio Guselli (an asphalter) and Luisa Guselli. She had been born on 29 November 1883. This family may/may not be related to the Barrow Gusellis.



**Bulmer's Directory for Furness & Cartmel 1911** has two entries for Guselli: Guselli G. S. & Co. 295 Duke Street; and Guselli Louis and Bros., 87 and 218 Dalton Road and 62 Cavendish Street.

*Lancashire Daily Post* 9 July 1932 (left), describing minor troubles for breaking the sales laws.

Dino Guselli married Ada L. McErlean in Barrow, Q4 1933.

In the **1939 Register**, Dino and Ada Guselli were living at 4 St Chad's Street, St. Pancras, London. Dino Guselli (DoB 12 December 1906) is an Asphalter Potman, while Ada L. Guselli (DoB 24 September 1913) is a Cinema Usherette.

Several of the rest of the family were living above the shop at 87 Dalton Road, Barrow in the **1939 Register**. They were Livio Guselli (DoB 17 August 1902) Shopkeeper, Café Proprietor; Hector Guselli (DoB 13 February 1901) Shopkeeper (Confectionery); Guido Guselli (DoB 19

June 1912) Shopkeeper (Confectionery); Mary Guselli (DoB 21 October 1904) Shopkeeper (Confectionery). All were single.

**National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations) 1970** had:

**GUSELLI** Mary otherwise Maria of 30 Hartington St **Barrow-in-Furness** died 23 March 1970 Probate **Liverpool** 8 December. £13455.

**National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations) 1982** had:

GUSELLI Ada Louisa of 4 West Av Barrow in Furness died 19 July 1982 Administration Liverpool 15 September £5405.

The next entry is

GUSELLI Guido Pietro Francesco of 8 Romney Park Dalton-in-Furness Cumbria died 19 August 1982 Probate Newcastle-upon-Tyne 25 October £48574.

*I am very grateful to Ray Guselli for being able to bring his family to life again, if only metaphorically, by the inclusion of personal family photographs. The photographs, and those of the shop, are © Ray Guselli.*