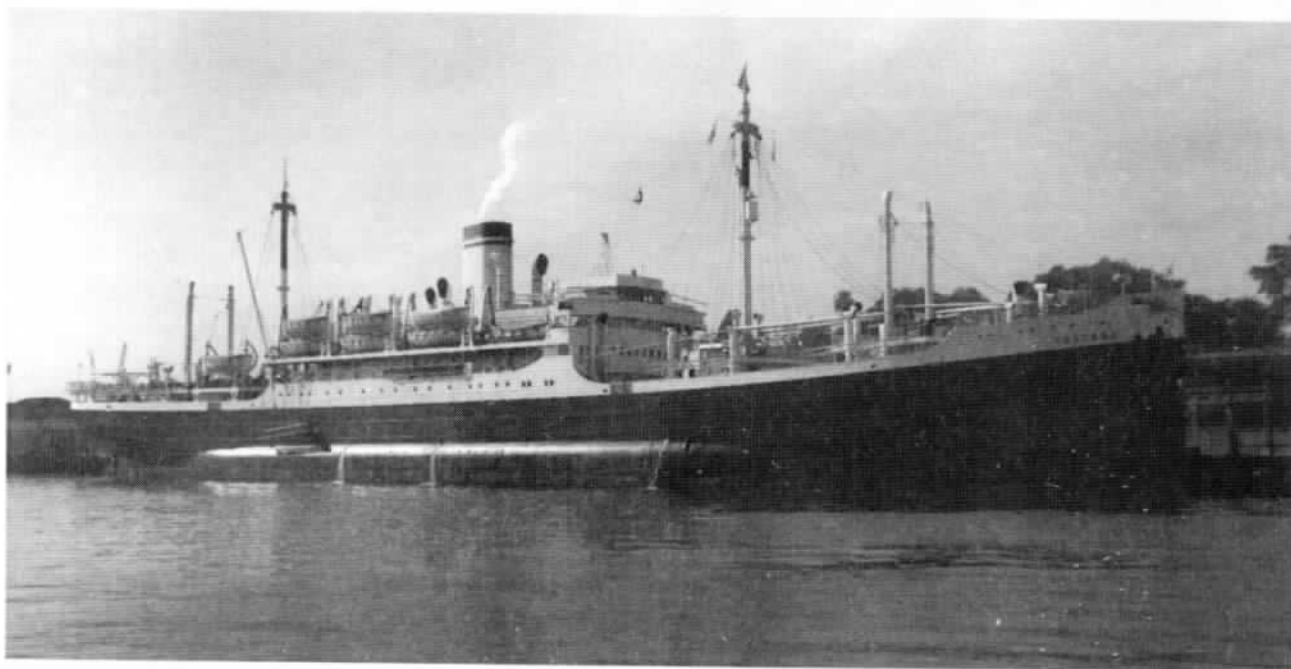


EMIGRANT SHIPS

by Maria Tence

The Society wishes to thank New South Wales University Press for permission to use extracts from Emigrant Ships to Luxury Liners by Peter Plowman. The book, published in 1992, is a valuable source of information on the history and voyages of numerous ships which brought hundreds of thousands of immigrants to Australia. Amongst them were many Italians. We will endeavour to profile some of the most well-known Italian ships, one in each issue of the IHS Journal, illustrating the article with either memories of the voyage or copies of documents and photographs in the Society's collection. In this issue we commence with the Toscana.



The Toscana as illustrated in Emigrant Ships to Luxury Liners.

The *Toscana* was built in 1923 by AG Weser, Bremen. She had a gross tonnage of 9584 and a service speed of 13 knots.

The vessel had been built for North German Lloyd as the *Saarbrücken*, accommodating 98 first and 142 second class passengers. The Italian government purchased the vessel in 1935 renaming her *Toscana*. She operated a South American service until 1937 when she was transferred to Lloyd Triestino. She was refitted to accommodate 2000 passengers and used on the service from Italy to East and South Africa for the following couple of years.

When Italy entered the Second World War in June 1940, *Toscana* was converted into a hospital ship. Taken over by the Allies during the war, she was returned to Lloyd Triestino in 1947. Once again she was refit-

ted, this time to accommodate 136 saloon class and 690 third class passengers. On 19 October 1948, *Toscana* undertook the first post-war voyage by a Lloyd Triestino ship to Australia, departing from Genoa and berthing in Melbourne on 30th November, followed by Sydney on 2nd December. In 1949, Lloyd Triestino added two more ships to the Australian service, *Sebastiano Caboto* and *Ugolino Vivaldi*.

To meet the transportation needs of the fast increasing number of Italians migrating to Australia, Lloyd Triestino introduced three new liners in 1951. The ageing *Toscana* was altered to carry 819 third class only. On 3rd June 1952, she lost both anchors in turbulent conditions off Portsea and in 1953 she was involved in a serious collision with a US Navy oiler in the Suez Canal, in which



Rosario Cicero (third from left) and other Italian fellow migrants on board the Toscana in 1949.

one passenger was killed. In May 1956, her lifesaving gear was found faulty during an inspection by Australian authorities and the owner was fined.

Toscana was removed from service in 1960 and sold to a Genoa shipbreaking firm.

The IHS is interested in hearing from people who have photographs and documents of their voyage (or their ancestors' voyage) to Australia for inclusion in future profiles.