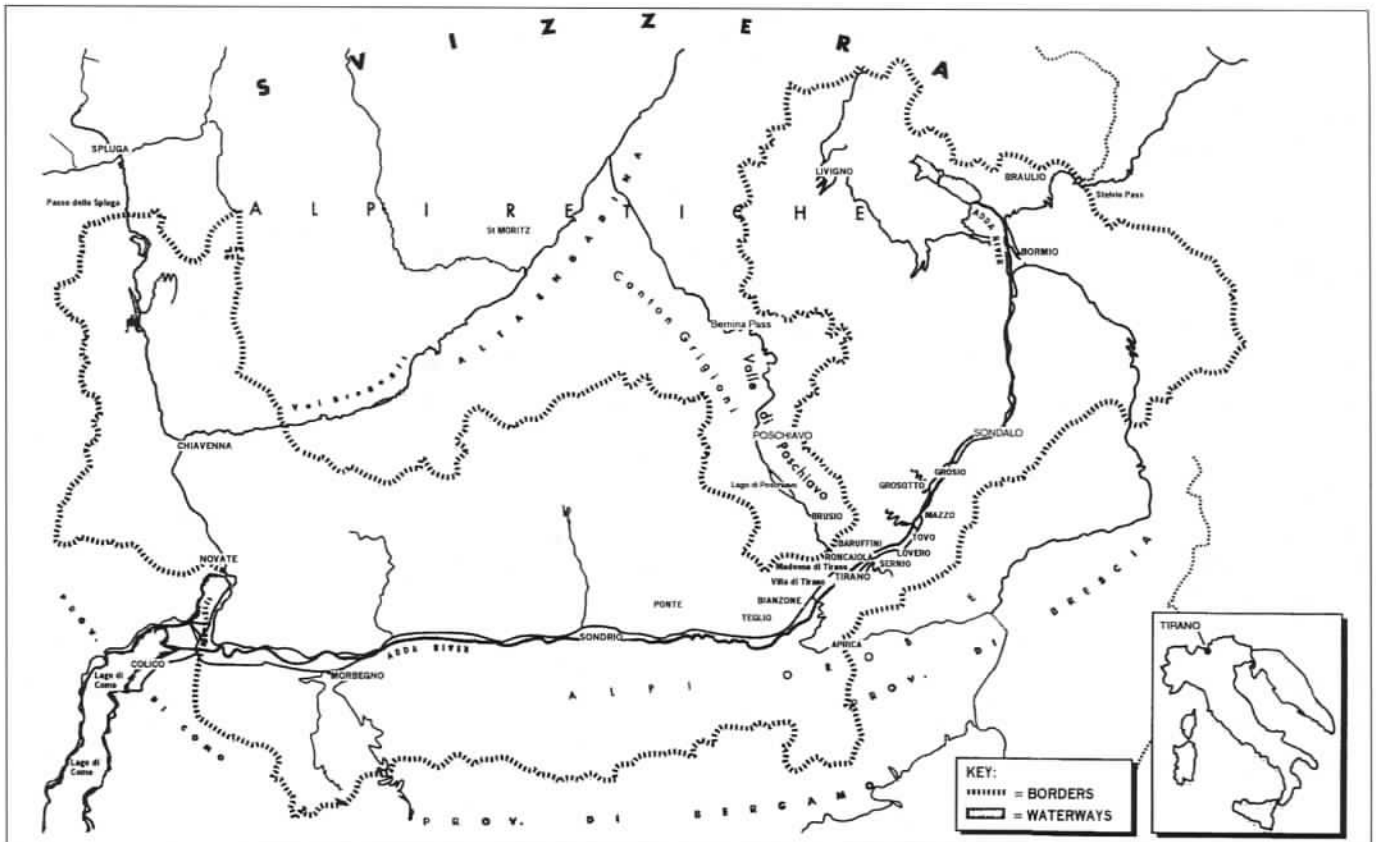


# LISTE DI LEVA — DRAFT LISTS

by Alan Poletti

*Alan Poletti is a retired Professor of Nuclear Physics from the University of Auckland. He has visited his ancestors place of birth in Valtellina on numerous occasions during which he has been very kindly treated by the people he has met during his research for records in the local archives. Alan is very interested to hear from anyone whose ancestors have migrated to New Zealand in 1800. He can be contacted by writing to him at 11 Tole Street, Ponsonby, Auckland, New Zealand or by e-mail a.poletti@xtra.co.nz*



Sondrio Province, Lombardy Region

## Introduction

The forebears of many Australians and New Zealanders of Italian descent can be traced to a small alpine valley (*Valtellina*) in the Province of Sondrio, Lombardy Region. Jacqueline Templeton<sup>1</sup> in her definitive paper has wonderfully sketched the history of Valtellina and the different pressures and opportunities that led to this very substantial migration from such a small region to Australia. The New Zealand connection has still to be addressed.<sup>2</sup> The map of Sondrio Province, based on that in Templeton's article, shows just how close the area centred on Tirano is to the Swiss border. From its entry into Lake Como, the valley of the Adda runs eastward until it reaches Tegelio, where it takes a north east course until Sondalo.

The terraced vineyards are a feature of the slopes on the northern side of the valley from Novate to above Tirano. The line of the Adda is confined by the Orobico Alps to its south and the higher Retic Alps to its north. Access to the Valtellina is either via one of the mountain passes leading into it, or else via Lake Como. Aprica (1176 m) is the lowest while Stelvio (2758 m) is the highest of the passes on the major roads giving access to the valley.

The migrants were mostly very poor, many were illiterate and of course, almost none knew any English before they landed in the Antipodes. Few of their descendants are now able to understand Italian. Consequently, it is often far from easy to find out much about antecedents from Valtellina

— either of their life before migration or of the first decade of their time in their adopted country. Italian church records can be an extremely valuable source of genealogical information, however access to them, although often readily granted, can be difficult or impossible. They are not public records and are in Latin, often idiosyncratic and at other times virtually indecipherable. Since a majority of the migrants were male, there is, however another source of information, that is the Draft Lists (*Liste di Leva*). These can provide similar information to that in the church records, but contain additional valuable material.

In the Archivio di Stato in Sondrio<sup>3</sup>, there are great bound volumes — the *Liste di Leva*. These contain a wealth of information about individual men who lived in the Province of Sondrio. The earliest surviving lists are for those born in about 1856. Why do they exist? How were they generated? What information do they contain?

### **The new Italian State and its search for military security**

The organisation of the army of the Kingdom of Sardinia and Piedmont, and in particular, its method of recruitment was similar to that of the Prussians, and carried with it an obligation for military service of ordinary citizens. The system was adopted by the newly independent and unified Italy in 1861.<sup>4</sup> This was just two years after the expulsion of the Austrians from Lombardy and their withdrawal from Valtellina in July 1859 following the battles of Magenta and Solferino in June of that year.<sup>5</sup> The system evolved over the next two decades.<sup>6</sup> However, the essential feature was the placement of recruits who had been classified as able-bodied (*abile*) in three classes:

Class I — these served full time for a period of between 2 and 3 years. At the end of this time, they were posted to the Reserve (*Congedo illimitato*)

Class II — these served for a few months only and were then posted to the reserve.

Class III — although able-bodied, these were exempted from military service for reasons such as, 'brother already serving', 'only son', 'eldest or only son of a widow'.

### **The mechanics of the leva**

At the end of January each year, the Mayor (*Sindaco*) of each *comune* was required to provide a list of all young men resident in the *comune*, who had turned 18 in the previous year. This list was sent to the headquarters of the local Military District. For the Comune of Villa di Tirano, this was

the Military District of Tirano which comprised the Comuni of Teglio, Bianzone, Villa di Tirano, Tirano, Sernio and Lovero (Aprica was until 1927, part of the Comune of Teglio). For instance, on 31 January 1883, Ninatti, the Mayor of the Comune of Villa di Tirano, submitted the list of those who had turned 18 in 1882. Of course, these men were born in 1864. They were the 'Class of 1864' and would be expected to appear before the Draft Board (*Consiglio di Leva*) in 1884. The young men were listed alphabetically. Full names were given, the year and place of birth, their occupation, their father's given name and mother's family and given name as well as the father's occupation. Following the submission of the list, it would also be displayed on the notice board of the *comune* for the next two weeks.

### **The organisation of local government in Italy**

In comparison with Australia or New Zealand, Italy has an extra level of local government. There are firstly the twenty Regions, ranging in size from Valle d'Aosta (3,264 km<sup>2</sup>, pop 119,000) to Sicily (25,707 km<sup>2</sup>, pop 5,100,000). Lombardy, the fourth largest Region, at 23,872 km<sup>2</sup>, is the most populous, with 8,900,000 inhabitants. Each region is divided into Provinces (*Province*). In addition to its capital of Milano, Lombardy has ten provinces. Among these are the three alpine provinces of Varese, Como and Sondrio and the three provinces of the Pre-Alps, Lecco, Bergamo and Brescia. The provinces in turn are further subdivided into *comuni*. There are 78 *comuni* in Sondrio Province. A single *comune* will generally contain several population centres, for instance the Comune of Villa di Tirano, has within its borders Villa di Tirano itself on the slopes on the right of the Adda River and on the opposite side of the river, the smaller villages of Stazzona and Motta, as well as even smaller centres. A further subdivision is used by the military authorities — the Military District (*Mandamento*). This consists of several contiguous *comuni*.

Each year, the central government would have decided how many men were required to undergo training from each Military District. Generally this number would be less than the total number who, upon examination, would be found fit to serve. To make the choice fair, before they appeared

before the Draft Board, the position of each man in the Draft List of a given Military District was determined randomly by the drawing of a numbered marble from an urn. This provided the *numero di estrazione*. The number was sometimes drawn by the man himself, sometimes by the Mayor of the *comune* or another official. With this important addition, the Draft List would be verified by the council of the *comune* in mid March and the list (amended if necessary) sent to the Prefect of the Province (in the above case, on 1 April 1883). This new list now included the actual date of birth as well as the number drawn.

The Military District then combined all of the lists from the different *comuni* and ordered it in one list according to the *numero di estrazione*. This became the master list for each Military District. The men would be called before the Draft Board the next year (in the case above, this was 1884) in the order determined by their *numero di estrazione*. Appearance before the Board was in two stages. The first involved a physical examination in which their height and chest circumference were measured and physical characteristics noted (such as hair colour and form, eye colour, skin coloration, state of teeth and any obvious physical defects). The next stage involved a medical examination, appearance before the Board and the final decision. The men were categorised into one of the four following selection categories:

*Abile* — Men in this category were placed in the three classes described above.

*Rivedibile* — Men considered as temporarily unfit — to be seen again by the Board the following year.

*Riformato* — Men who were declared unfit for service.

*Renitente* — Men who failed to report for the Draft Board interview.

### The Draft Lists for Villa di Tirano for the Classes of 1864 – 1869

Signor Fausto Schivardi at the *Casa Comunale* of Villa di Tirano very kindly found for me five of these lists as submitted by the Mayor at the end of January of the year following the 18<sup>th</sup> birthday of these men. The list for 1866 was not available. I was able to correlate the other lists with those held in the *Archivio di Stato* at Sondrio and reconstruct that for the class of 1866. I have not yet examined the list for 1869 and I have still to examine the entries for three men in the class of 1865. In this sense, the present paper must be considered as provisional. However, the sample

of around 164 names is complete enough to make reasonable statistical inferences.

The analysis of the recruits' heights and chest measurements showed that, on average, they were short and thin. Similar analysis of the notes on the medical examinations revealed a high incidence of goitre.

Of the 164 men for whom I have data, the average height was 161 cm (5 foot 3 inches). Two thirds (111 men) were between 155 and 170 cm. Any men less than 154 cm in height were instantly rejected as being too short. There were 33 in this category. Many in this category would have also been rejected because they were too thin. A chest measurement of 80 cm or less put a man into the *Rivedibile* class. I have data on the chest measurement of only 127 men. Often, these were not given for men who had already been considered to be too short and the hand written entries were often more difficult to decipher than those for height. The average chest measurement was 85 cm (33 ½ inches), while 82 (two thirds of the men) were from 80 cm (31 ½ inches) to 89 cm (35 inches).

### Decisions of the Draft Board

Decisions for 174 of the recruits were obtained, that is for essentially all of the classes of 1864 – 1868. This is 10 greater than the number of recorded heights, because heights for those who were *renitente* remained unrecorded since they had not appeared before the Draft Board! The decisions can be classified into the different categories as follows:

174 (100%, total N <sup>o</sup> )	49 (28%, <i>abile</i> )	25 (14%, 1st class – to military units) 2 (1%, 2nd class) 22 (13%, 3rd class)
	41 (24%, <i>rivedibile</i> )	26 (15%, goitre, thought to be curable) 13 (7%, short and/or thin) 2 (1%, unknown reasons)
	74 (43%, <i>riformato</i> )	25 (14%, goitre – bad or 'incurable') 33 (33%, too short) 4 (2%, too thin) 12 (7%, other reasons)
	10 (6%, <i>renitente</i> )	

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of this analysis is that only a little over one quarter of the recruits were considered to be fit to serve. By the time exemptions were given, only one half of these actually reported to any military units.

A similar picture emerges from an analysis of the decisions concerning all of the men in the class of

1868 for the Military District of Tirano. This revealed that out of 270 men, only 34 (13%) were finally posted to regiments, a very similar figure to that for the men from Villa di Tirano for the years 1864 – 1868. Of this 34, 10 went to the 5th Alpine Regiment, 14 were distributed among 4 Infantry Regiments, 5 to two artillery Regiments and 2 each to the Border Guards (*Guardia di Finanza*) and the *Carabinieri*. The distribution over nine different regiments, based in different parts of the country, was a direct reflection of the attempt by the new State to create a population whose allegiance was to the nation first, rather than to its component parts.<sup>7</sup> However the biggest contingent were posted to the 5th Alpine Regiment with its headquarters in Milano. Unlike the rest of the armed forces, the *Alpini* were regionally based and this Regiment drew its men from battalions based in Morbegno and Tirano in Sondrio Province and Edolo and Vestone in the neighbouring Province of Brescia. From 1887 until 1895 there were 7 Alpine Regiments.<sup>8</sup>

### The scourges of goitre and cretinism

Fifty-three of the recruits were diagnosed as suffering from goitre (two who were rejected as being too short were also diagnosed as suffering from the condition). At the time, it was thought of as a disease largely engendered by the very poor living standards of the valley. For example, here is a comment made in 1890 concerning Roncaiola.<sup>9</sup> This hamlet or *frazione* of Tirano is high above the city on the steep slopes at the foot of Monte Masucchio on the right bank of the Adda. It is perhaps 5 kilometres from Villa di Tirano.

Roncaiola is composed of an irregular and filthy heap of hovels, more adapted to housing animals than people. Despite the exceptional healthiness of its position and the strong fibre of the mountain people who live there, many suffer from goitre or cretinism because of the unhealthy ground.

That the incidence of cretinism observed in Valtellina (1 in 100 of the population) was not confined to the valley, but was similar to the incidence in other alpine valleys was noted in 1858<sup>10</sup> by an unknown author writing in the *Almanacco Valtellinese*, published in Milan. This same author also believed that cretinism and goitre had a common cause and even suggested that the experimental addition of iodine to salt should be tried in the valley. At about the same time, Splendiano Morselli<sup>11</sup> noted the prevalence of goitre and cretinism in the lower Valtellina,



Giovanni Poletti in 1890 in the uniform of the 32nd Infantry Regiment. The stars on the collar are the insignia of the Italian Infantry.

especially in the towns on the slopes of the Orobico Alps on the south side of the Adda. He also suggested that the cause could have been an iodine deficiency. No one took any notice of either author. In 1881-82, an enquiry by the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce confirmed the incidence of cretinism in the Province of Sondrio as 1% of the population compared to 0.02% for the Lombardy Region as a whole. The comparable figures for the incidence of Goitre were 9% and 3 % respectively. Patriarca<sup>12</sup> notes that for conscripts born between 1843 and 1856, 26% of the *riformati* had goitre, while for those born in the period 1876 to 1883, the figure was 11%. From the figures for the conscripts from Villa di Tirano (born 1864 – 1868), the comparable figure is  $25/74 = 34\%$ , or even higher.

The causal relationship between iodine deficiency and goitre and cretinism was finally demonstrated by studies in the United States of America in 1917. The first systematic attempt to overcome the problem in Valtellina was made by Giuseppe Muggia, Director of the Psychiatric Hospital in Sondrio in 1922-23. The success of this experiment led to the distribution of iodized salt in all of the Province from April 1925. There were, however, some who were opposed to this. Their complaint was that, if cured of goitre, their sons

## An example of an entry in a *Lista di Leva* — from the Class of 1868 for Giovanni Poletti

The figure, reproduced from the Draft List for the Class of 1868, illustrates the information recorded in the master list for Giovanni Poletti. Details concerning three, or sometimes four, men were recorded on each double opening in the Draft List.

1 <sup>a</sup> - Numero som- mato all' iscritto dal collocamento in capo di lista o toc- catali la serie alle estrazioni. 2 <sup>a</sup> - Indicazione della persona che ha e- stratto.	COGNOME E NOME DELL' INSCRITTO	PADRE E MADRE DELL' INSCRITTO Indicandone l' esistenza o la morte 1 <sup>a</sup> - Nome del padre. 2 <sup>a</sup> - Cognome e nome della madre.	COMUNE del DOMICILIO LEGALE dello INSCRITTO	NASCITA DELL' INSCRITTO		RESIDENZA PERSONALE dello iscritto	CONDIZIONE, PROFESSIONE, ARTE O MESTIERE, e grado d'istruzione dello INSCRITTO	INDICAZIONI PER GLI INSCRITTI delle classi anteriori 1 <sup>a</sup> - Della loro classe. 2 <sup>a</sup> - Del motivo del rinvio alla leva attuale. 3 <sup>a</sup> - Del motivo al collo- camento in capo di lista o dell' ammissione alla estrazione.	ESAME DECISIONE e motivo della medesima
				DATA 1 <sup>a</sup> - Giorno. 2 <sup>a</sup> - Mese. 3 <sup>a</sup> - Anni.	LUOGO				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
117	Poletti Giovanni	1 <sup>a</sup> fu Bortolo	Villa	1 <sup>a</sup> 17	1 <sup>a</sup> Villa	1 <sup>a</sup> Comuna.	Agricolt.	1 <sup>a</sup>	
		2 <sup>a</sup> fu Giovanna Bongioni		17	2 <sup>a</sup> Tirano	2 <sup>a</sup> Comuna.	Leggere, $\frac{1}{2}$ Scrittore, $\frac{1}{2}$	2 <sup>a</sup>	
				1868	3 <sup>a</sup> Sondrio	3 <sup>a</sup> Circondario.		3 <sup>a</sup>	

### Explanation

- Number drawn: 117, drawn personally.
- Name: Poletti, Giovanni  
Son of late Bortolo and the late Giovanna Bongioni [His father had died in 1868, his mother in 1872]
- Place of legal domicile: Villa [di Tirano] was often omitted]
- Date and place of birth: 17 February 1868, Villa [di] Tirano, Sondrio.
- Where living: Comune of Villa [di] Tirano; Military District of Tirano, Province of Sondrio.
- Occupation: 'farmer', able to read and write.
- Not filled in.

might be classed as *abile* and have to serve in the army.<sup>13</sup> Further analysis showed that the soils derived from the rock of the entire alpine arc were indeed deficient in iodine. This deficiency was even more marked for the Orobian Alps. By 1934, Muggia's successor<sup>14</sup> was able to affirm that 'goitre in Valtellina has become the exception and occurs only in the most poverty stricken or the very old'. However goitre has not disappeared in Italy or any of the industrialized countries.<sup>15</sup>

### Why were the recruits such small men?

The answer lies in the excessive dependence of the *Valtellinese* economy on one product — wine. For centuries visitors have marvelled at the extensive terraced vineyards on the south facing

slopes of the Valtellina. The labour involved in building and maintaining these is immense. The system, dating from feudal times, of leasing land in perpetuity to a family (*livello*) encouraged this development because the family leasing the land were able to gain directly from their toil. However, it meant that over time, leasehold parcels became more and more fragmented. With increasing population, the average size of these parcels became tiny. By 1850, their average size was about 200 square metres. Although families owned more than one parcel, the average landholding per family was only about 0.4 hectares<sup>16</sup> (about 1 acre, or 4000 square metres). At this time, the leaseholders, through their own hard work, may have just been able to compete

Commissario di leva	CONTRASSEGNI PERSONALI	OPERAZIONI DEL CONSIGLIO DI LEVA				SITUAZIONE DELLO INSCRITTO	SERIE
		Numero d'ordine delle decisioni del registro sommario	DECISIONI	ARRUOLAMENTO			
				DATA	ASCRIZIONE		
1° - Stanziali al Consiglio e loro motivi. 2° - Decisioni sottoposte alla sanzione del Consiglio in esecuzione dell'art. 56 della legge sul reclutamento.			di abilità od inabilità al servizio militare; di ammissione alla surrogazione di fratello; di dichiarazione di renitente; di rinvio ad altre sedute o ad altra leva. — Altre decisioni.	1° - CLASSE. 2° - ESSE. 3° - ARRE.	ASCRIZIONE alla 1° od alla 2° categoria  ASSEGNAZIONE alla 3° categoria	1° - Data della partenza per il distretto militare. 2° - Corpo cui la destinato e numero della matricola. 3° - Se riformato al distretto o al Corpo per infermità preesistenti all'arruolamento.	NUMERAZIONE per gli fascetti di tutto il Circondario
- 11	12	- 13	14	15	16	17	18

1° <i>Compj</i>	Statura metri 1, <i>61.70</i>	<i>1076</i>	<i>abile</i>	1° <i>19</i>	1° <i>1°</i>	1° <i>9 Nov. 1888</i>	
	Capelli } colore <i>cast.</i> } forma <i>ond.</i>				<i>Cast.</i>		
	Occhi <i>cast.</i>			2° <i>Signo</i>		2° <i>32° Reg. Inf. 4344</i>	
	Colorito <i>bruno</i>			3° <i>1888</i>		3°	
	Dentatura <i>guasta</i>						
2°	Segni particolari						
	Periferia toracica <i>0.84</i>						

- 11 *Consig[lio]* = recommended that he appears before the Draft Board.  
 12 Personal characteristics: height 1.61 m; hair chestnut and wavy; eyes chestnut; skin brown; teeth decaying; distinguishing features none; chest 0.84 m.  
 13 Reference No. for the Draft Board decision: 1076.  
 14 Decision of the Draft Board: able bodied (*abile*).  
 15 Enrolment date: 19 June 1888.  
 16 Assignment to class: 1st class.  
 17 Date of posting to regiment: 9 November 1888, 32nd Infantry Regiment No. 4344.

with wine that was more easily produced on the gentler land of the Lombardy plains or the Veneto when in 1851, they were struck down by powdery mildew, *Oidium Tuckeri*. In 1838, Sondrio Province had produced 10,600,000 litres of wine. In 1852, it was only 400,000 hectolitres. By 1857, production had dropped further to 330,000 hectolitres.<sup>17</sup> For '14 pitiless years' (1850 – 1863), production completely failed and the Valtellina was almost liquidated.<sup>18</sup> If this were not enough, a succession of unjust taxes were levied on the landholdings of Sondrio Province. These culminated in a new census of 1854, which resulted in a sudden doubling of taxes on land and property. In 1859, Luigi Torelli<sup>19</sup> led a commission to study the conditions in Sondrio Province. It found *inter alia*

that real income was less than the taxes imposed and wondered how the people had survived at all.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps the last comment on this sad chapter should come from a talk given by Diego Zoia in 1997<sup>21</sup>: 'The 1800s were pretty brutal years for the poor'. It is little wonder that the recruits were small men.

### Men in the lists for 1864 – 1869 who migrated to Australia or New Zealand.

A recruit who was declared to be *renitente* could clearly have already migrated. This is certainly the case for three of them: Pietro Bassi, Pietro Pasetti and Giovanni Andrea Poletti.

The first line of each entry gives information from the *liste di leva*, while the second comes

mostly from naturalisation records or indices. The date and place of arrival is given as well as the name of the ship.

**Bassi, Pietro**, b. 14/12/1868, *renitente*.

Bassi, Pietro, b. 14/12/1869, arr. Melbourne 22/4/1888 on the *Hohenzollern*

Note that he could remember the day and month of his birthday, but got the year wrong when he applied for naturalisation. This is not so uncommon. In the passenger list, the name was A. Bassi, age 22. The passport he used was probably that of his older brother Giacomo Antonio, b. 30/4/1864, who was classified as *riformato* and therefore not liable for military service.

**Pasetti, Pietro**, b. 1/1/1864, *renitente*.

From descendants: he arrived at the Atherton Tableland, North Queensland, in 1885, returned home to marry Anna Morelli and in 1888 they came back to Queensland.

**Poletti, Giovanni Andrea**, b. 28/9/1868, *renitente*.

Poletti, John, b. 1868/69, arr. Melbourne 16/3/1888 on the *Salier*.

He was recorded on the passenger list as Ant. Poletti. That is, under his older brother's name Giovanni Antonio Poletti! The next name in the passenger list was Poletti Pietro — unfortunately, passenger's ages were not given. I have so far been unable to place this second man.

Clearly, Pietro Bassi and Giovanni Andrea Poletti had already left Italy before they were due to be called before the Draft Board. Giovanni Andrea Poletti used his elder brother's name, Giovanni Antonio Poletti, who was born 25/1/1864 and had been classified as *riformato* because of goitre. Again, a passport in the name of his older brother was probably used. Photographs were not a feature of passports in 1888. In Australia, he subsequently used the name of John.

It is also likely that a further man did not travel on his own passport:

Poletti, Giacomo, b.25/10/ 1864, *abile*.

Poletti, Giacomo, b. 25/10/1864, arr. in Sydney 9/8/1887 on board the *Orient*, ex Naples.

The name and date of arrival of the ship are from his Naturalisation application, however, a thorough search of the passenger list failed to find him. Whose name did he travel under?

My own grandfather has presented me with a considerable problem:

Poletti, Giovanni, b. 17/2/1868, *abile*.

Poletti, John, (naturalised in New Zealand) arr. Auckland ex Melbourne 1/3/1893 on board the *Rotomahana*.

Less detail was required in naturalisation applications by the New Zealand authorities than was required by their Australian counterparts. I have so far been unable to find his name on any passenger list for a boat arriving in Melbourne, although it is highly likely that he travelled first to Melbourne and worked for perhaps two years at Bealiba, Victoria, before arriving in New Zealand. Family oral history also has it that he came out on his older brother's passport. We will probably never know. Although we have the date on which he was posted to the reserve (1 August 1891), this is not as useful as it might appear, since there is no guarantee that he was in Villa di Tirano at that time.

### **Public History — a conclusion.**

There is a growing interest in the history of ordinary people and it has even been given a name — public history. A public historian does not have an easy life. There are no erudite biographies, very few letters, the subjects scarcely figure in parliamentary debates or the reports of the metropolitan newspapers. The problem is compounded by migration from one country to another with a different language and different laws and traditions. The difficulties encountered by these migrants were immense. They tended to remain invisible in the records of their adopted country for a decade after their first arrival. The challenge presented to their descendants in their attempts to understand the pressures that lead to their migration are only a little less daunting. Language is a terrible barrier. Sometimes, however, the ordinary man's progress is registered. For instance, more or less happenstance, records have survived concerning goldminers' rights in the (West Coast Gold fields, New Zealand) Warden's Court Records from 1866 – 1876. One entry in that record concerns a certain J Varney Cossie. An understanding of the flux of migrants from the Valtellina to Australia in the 1850s and 1860s and subsequent further migration to the gold-fields of New Zealand allows us to identify this man with Giovanni Cossi born c1830 in Sondalo, Sondrio Province, Italy. Other information puts him in Daylesford, Victoria in 1866. He probably returned to Italy for a short time and returned to New Zealand via Melbourne, because Giovanni Cossi, age 46, was a passenger on the *Lusitania* to Melbourne in 1877. Another piece of information

is given by his brush with officialdom when he was naturalised in New Zealand in 1896. By piecing together these scraps of information, it becomes possible to understand the broader picture and to illuminate that incredible movement of the ordinary people from one side of the globe to the other — the great migrations from Europe to the New Worlds over 100 years ago.

The *Liste di Leva* will play a major role in this 'piecing together'. Because Italy felt threatened by its more powerful neighbours to its north and by internal disorder, a system was set up which produced a record of every man in the nation in the years immediately following their 18th birthday. As the present little paper shows, these lists allow a statistical analysis of their health and general well being. However, they also give very specific information concerning family connections and birth dates of individuals. Such information is the very basis of the process of 'piecing together the scraps' upon which a broader understanding can be built.

### Prospect

Of course, I would like to say that I propose to extend this work to cover the years from 1856 to, say 1900 but I cannot. I must be satisfied with a more modest aim: to extend the information that I have obtained to cover the years hopefully to include the classes of 1860 to 1870. At present, I have an incomplete data file ordered alphabetically of all the recruits from Villa for the classes of 1864 - 1869. I hope to at least complete this work in the near future. There is already evidence that a surprising fraction of these men migrated to Australia or New Zealand. It is harder to find information concerning the time they spent in these countries. As a group, did they tend to remain in Australasia as did their contemporary migrants from the British Isles or did they tend to return 'home'? There is still much to find out.

### Thanks

I know that my persistence eventually upset him, but above all others I owe a great debt to Don Remigio, the Archpriest of Villa di Tirano. One very hot July day three years ago, he kindly gave me and my wife Marcia Stenson (she is the real historian) access to the church archives. I was hooked. Fausto Schivardi at the Casa Comunale, Villa, has helped us a great deal. Francesco Palazzi Trevelli of the Archivio di Stato, Sondrio, has been extremely understanding and tolerant. Diego Zoia, Assessor of the Comune of Tirano provided me with some very useful

information and an amazing inventory of Archival Data for Sondrio Province. Bruno Ciapponi Landi of the Museo Etnografico Tiranese has been most helpful and introduced me to Giacomo Ganza. To both of them my thanks.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Jacqueline Templeton, 'The Swiss connection: the origins of the Valtellina-Australia migrations', in *Australian Historical Studies*, April 1995, p 393.
- <sup>2</sup> The presence of men from Valtellina in New Zealand as early as the early 1860s has so far been overlooked.
- <sup>3</sup> Largo Mallera Cadorna, Sondrio 23100, Italy.
- <sup>4</sup> See, for instance, the article: 'Reclutamento' in *Enciclopedia Italiana*, Treccani, 1929.
- <sup>5</sup> D. Benetti & M. Guidetti, *Storia di Valtellina e Valchiavenna*, 2nd ed, Jaca Book, Milano, 1999.
- <sup>6</sup> John Gooch, *Army, State and Society in Italy, 1870 - 1915*, Macmillan, 1989.
- <sup>7</sup> see Gooch, op cit. This system meant that in the event of war, mobilisation would be much slower. The Chief of Staff, Cosenz, facing a possible French attack was greatly concerned about this in 1888.
- <sup>8</sup> *Enciclopedia Italiana*, Treccani, 1929.
- <sup>9</sup> Quoted by Massimo Mandelli & Diego Zoia in *La Carga*, p. 83, L'officina del libro, Sondrio, 1998 officina@novanet.it
- <sup>10</sup> Pierluigi Patriarca, *Storia della medicina e della sanità in Valtellina*, Società Storia Valtellinese, 1998.
- <sup>11</sup> Splendiano Morselli, *Storia della Valtellina e del corso dell'Adda*, a facsimile reproduction (by Atesa Editrice, Bologna, 1998) from *Grande Illustrazione del Lombardo - Veneto*, ed. Cesare Cantù, originally published in Milano 1858 - 1862.
- <sup>12</sup> Mandelli & Zoia, op. cit., p. 160.
- <sup>13</sup> *ibid*, p. 163
- <sup>14</sup> *ibid*, p. 164.
- <sup>15</sup> *ibid*, p. 165, footnote
- <sup>16</sup> see Franco Catalano, *Condizioni economiche e struttura sociale dal 1800 al 1859, in Mezzo secolo di vita politica in Valtellina e Val Chiavenna (1859 - 1913)*, Libreria della Briotta, Bissoni, Sondrio, 1968.
- <sup>17</sup> Stefano Jacini, *Condizioni economiche Provincia di Sondrio*, Stab. Civelli, Milano e Verona, 1858, p. 23.
- <sup>18</sup> Bartolomeo Besta, quoted by Templeton, op. cit.
- <sup>19</sup> Luigi Torelli, born in Villa di Tirano in 1810, participated in the revolt against the Austrians in Milano in 1848 and in 1859 and upon independence, became governor of Valtellina. In that year he advocated the use of sulphur to combat powdery mildew, but had to battle those who considered the disease to be a divine punishment. See *Notiziario, Banca Popolare di Sondrio*, April 1997, p. 205. He died in 1887 and Villa di Tirano's main piazza is named for him.
- <sup>20</sup> I rely heavily on the treatment of this period by Templeton, op. cit.
- <sup>21</sup> Diego Zoia, *Cenni sulla storia politica, sociale ed economica di Villa di Tirano e del suo circondario*, Biblioteca Comunale, Villa di Tirano, 1997.