

# ON THEIR OWN

## BRITAIN'S CHILD MIGRANTS



### Education Resource

A collaboration between the  
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM  
and NATIONAL MUSEUMS LIVERPOOL, UK



NATIONAL MUSEUMS **LIVERPOOL**



Australian Government  
National Collecting Institutions  
Touring & Outreach Program

This exhibition is supported by the National Collecting Institutions Touring and Outreach Program, an Australian Government program aiming to improve access to the national collections for all Australians.

## INTRODUCTION

*On their own - Britain's child migrants* traces the history of child migration schemes from Britain to Canada and Australia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The exhibition explores philanthropic initiatives as well as government programs. The motivations for child migration from Britain are contrasted with the lived experiences of children and youth.

There are five subthemes:

*The departure* subtheme traces how children and youths were brought from across the United Kingdom to board ships at various British ports.

*Empire and Dominions* subtheme communicates information on the historical and social factors that led to the development of child migration schemes such as Fairbridge and Barnardo's.

*The voyage* subtheme illustrates the experiences of the children on the voyage. While children left from different places, under different schemes and at different times, they shared powerful experiences: separating from family and country, the excitement of boarding a ship, facing an uncertain future, meeting new friends on board and visiting foreign ports.

*New lands, new lives* subtheme presents the history of schemes to Canada and then Australia through case studies, featuring a range of artefacts which explore the lives of child migrants from different schemes at different times.

*Reflection, remembering and reunion* subtheme includes a space for reflection and remembering. It includes a comments book which invites visitors to engage with the legacy of the child migration schemes. They can record their memories or pick up a card with links to relevant sites.



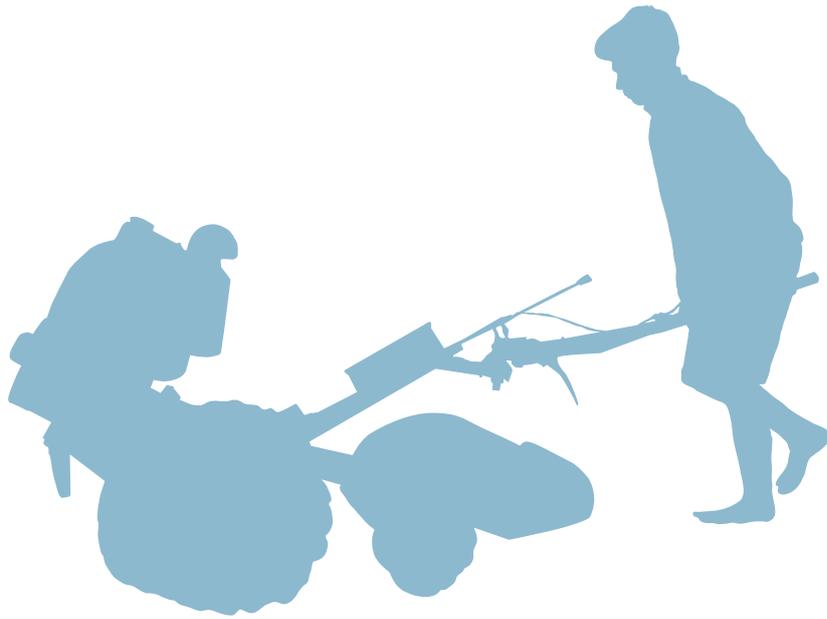
## BACKGROUND

From the 1860s, more than 100,000 children were sent from Britain to Canada, Australia and other Commonwealth countries through child migration schemes.

Few were orphans; many came from families who were unable to care for them. With the belief that the lives of these children would improve, charitable and religious organisations sent them overseas. They were supported by governments for which these schemes supplied much needed population and labour.

The lives of these children changed dramatically and fortunes varied. Some succeeded in creating new futures. Others suffered lonely, brutal childhoods. All experienced disruption and separation from family and homeland.

Child migration schemes received criticism from the outset yet continued until the 1960s. Formal apologies from the Australian Government in 2009 and British Government in 2010 were made but many former child migrants and their families are still coming to terms with their experiences.



## **ABOUT THE EDUCATION RESOURCES**

This kit contains activities for both primary and secondary aged students and is divided into three sections.

**SECTION ONE** contains activities suitable for secondary History and English students.

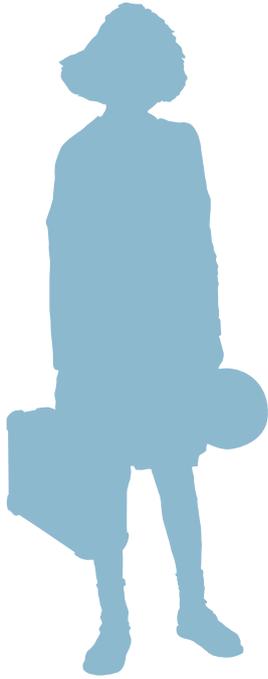
**SECTION TWO** contains activities suitable for primary aged students including Numeracy, Literacy and Creative Arts.

**SECTION THREE** contains numbered resources including photographs, graphics, newspaper articles, object images and oral history extracts.

The resource material and activities are designed to enable teachers to assist their students in developing investigation and analysis skills.



## Section One Secondary Student Activities



## SECTION ONE SECONDARY STUDENT ACTIVITIES

### SECONDARY HISTORY

#### WORKING HISTORICALLY

Examine the oral history extracts in the resources (pages 35-38). Discuss the questions as a class and keep a list of important points.

1. What do you think might be the advantages of oral histories and other quotes as primary sources?
2. Can you think of any problems that might arise when using these as sources?

Examine the photographs, Images A to G (pages 19-25) and discuss these questions as a class. Choose ONE photograph and create a report using the questions as a guide.

3. How reliable are photographs as a historical source?
4. What are their limitations?
5. What information can be gathered from these photographs about the time period in which they were taken?
6. Who would have taken the photographs and for what purpose?
7. What conclusions can you draw about the perspective represented by these photographs?
8. What conclusions can you draw about the usefulness of these particular photographs as sources of historical inquiry?



Examine the objects and documents, Images K to R (pages 29-34). Choose TWO images and complete the two questions below. Present your findings to the class.

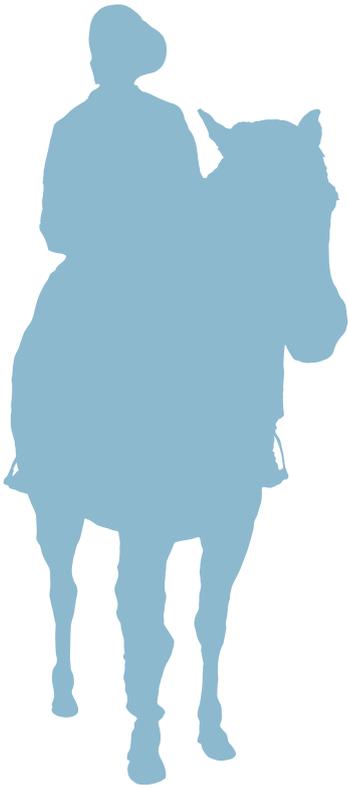
9. How do objects and documents help provide a context for the events of the period?
10. What information can be gathered from these sources?

Examine the posters and drawings, Images H to J (pages 26-28) and take a class vote on the questions below.

11. Are these primary or secondary sources?
12. Who is the intended audience for each of these sources?
13. What information can be gathered from these sources?
14. Are these sources reliable?

Examine the newspaper article reference (page 35). Annotate a copy using these questions as a guide.

15. Are newspapers primary or secondary sources?
16. What 'facts' can be gathered? Can they be relied on?
17. For what audience has the newspaper been written?
18. Is any bias evident?
19. What conclusions can you draw about the usefulness of newspapers as sources of historical inquiry?



## CREATE AN EXHIBITION

Putting an exhibition together involves a team of museum people including curators, conservators, designers, editors, registrars, exhibition managers, preparators, educators and marketing/publicity. Some of these people also collaborate or consult with other institutions or external stakeholders who have a particular interest in the exhibition.

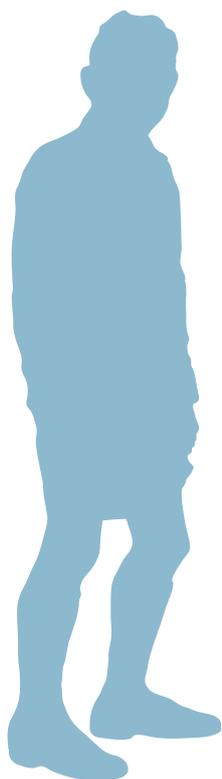
Here you will become a curator!

Curators have a major role in creating an exhibition. They use objects, text, audio-visual displays and interactives\* to contextualise the exhibition so that it communicates their chosen story. They also have input into the exhibition title and write text for the labels that provide information to visitors (someone else usually edits the labels before they are printed). Curators consult with members of the exhibition team and often negotiate with third parties on information, exhibition material and any issues that may need special attention or sensitivity.

Your role as a curator is to:

- Think about the child migration story you wish to tell
  - Which elements do you wish to emphasise?
  - What perspective do you wish to take?
- Select eight 'objects' from the resource pages or from your own research that you think best tell the story you have chosen. Consider their historical significance and how they relate to each other.
- Choose a title for your exhibition.
- Prepare a theme label (100 words), which sets the context for the exhibition, providing relevant background information. Try to grab the reader's attention and get them interested in your exhibition.
- Prepare labels (25-50 words) for each of your chosen objects. Include:
  - a title
  - a brief statement. Don't just describe the object (people can see the object themselves), but instead use the label to explain how the object helps to tell the story.
- Present your work as a digital or hard copy exhibition catalogue.
- Make sure that you keep a process diary. Submit this diary with your presentation.
- Research what these people do in museums: conservators, registrars, preparators

\* An interactive is an activity that visitors do which helps explain a particular point or concept



## SECONDARY ENGLISH

### BELONGING

The aim of the following activities is to see how the exhibition *On their own - Britain's child migrants* is used to create a narrative and examine how the story relates to the 2010 HSC English area of study - Belonging.

The following activities can also be applied to the previous area of study - Journeys - and studied in year 11.

Create a mind map of your current understanding of the concept of belonging. Insert examples from the exhibition that could show perspectives of belonging and not belonging.

Prepare a set of questions that you would use to interview a former child migrant about his/her experience of belonging or not belonging. Script a radio interview with your chosen subject then record the interview.

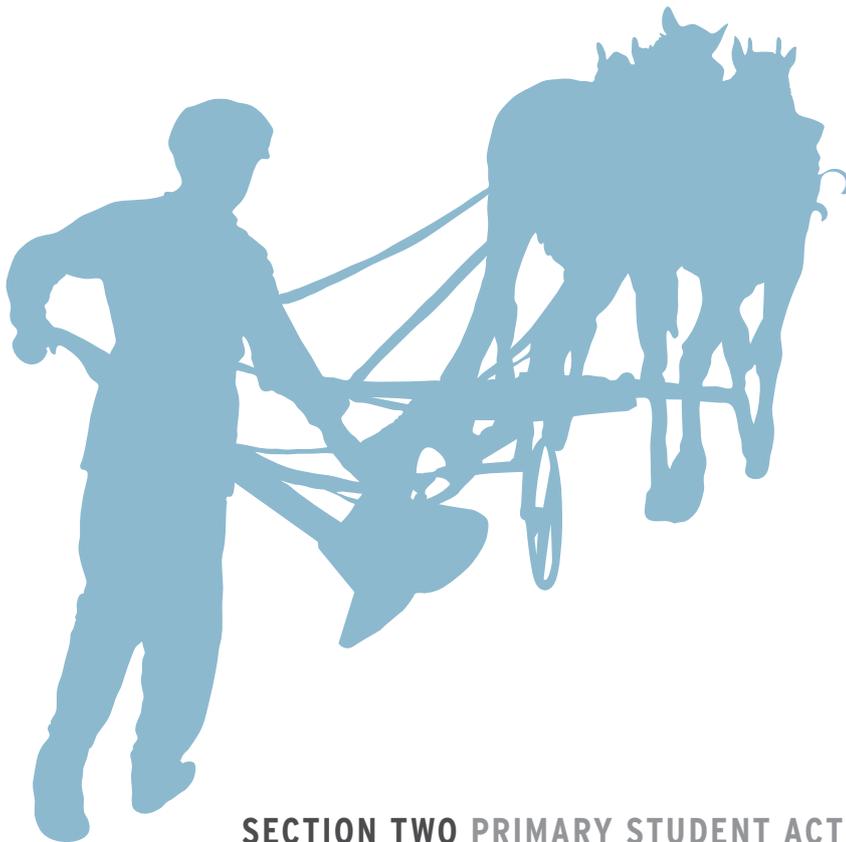
Read the newspaper article included in the resources (page 35). Identify the ways in which this article reflects a specific perception of belonging.

After visiting the exhibition write a poem, play or song lyrics that express the concept of belonging or not belonging as depicted in the exhibition.

Write EITHER a feature article or a series of journal entries based on how the concept of belonging is represented in the exhibition. Remember to use language that is suitable for your audience.



## Section Two Primary Student Activities



## SECTION TWO PRIMARY STUDENT ACTIVITIES

The aim of this set of activities is to develop students' inquiry, research and communication skills through questioning, recording, analysing and reporting.

The activities are themed around the concept of migration and are related to the ANMM exhibition *On their own - Britain's child migrants*.

Topics to be explored include migration and work. Students will have the opportunity to investigate how these have changed over time and their impact on people's sense of identity and belonging.

Australian curriculum connections:

- HSIE/SOSE
- Creative Arts
- Maths
- English

## MIGRATION MEMORIES

Students collect oral histories from people who have migrated to Australia and make a class book of their findings.

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

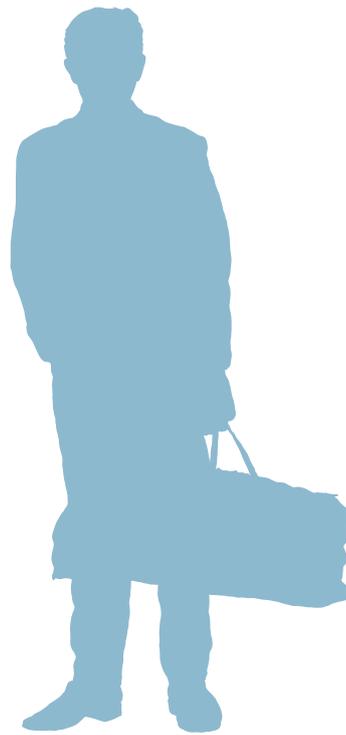
Students find someone who has migrated to Australia from another country.

This might be a classmate, a neighbour or a relative.

#### Select / Write Questions

The aim is to find out how this person's life has changed since moving to Australia. From the list below students either select 10 questions to ask OR may like to try writing some of their own.

1. Where did you live?
2. Did you live in a city or in a rural area?
3. What kind of building did you live in?
4. What was your favourite game?
5. What did you like to eat?
6. What did you wear to school?
7. How did you get to school?
8. Who did you live with?
9. Did you have a pet or any animals?
10. What was your school like?
11. Where did you play?
12. What did you play?
13. What did you do on the weekend?



#### Interview

The interview will be in two parts.

Firstly, students will need to use the questions to find out what the person's life was like before they moved to Australia.

Secondly, students need to use the same set of questions to find out what the migrant's life was like once they moved to Australia.

Students record their interview by either writing answers to the questions or filming it.

#### Communication

Students use the information they've gathered to create a poster or display or power point presentation, comparing life in the two different countries.

The interviewee may have photographs that could be used or students may have to research their own images.

Select students to share their presentation with the class and create a book of collected manuscripts.

## WHERE IN THE WORLD?

Students think about migration. They can consider the differences between their own community and the communities of others.

They can discuss how they would feel if they moved away from their community.

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

Students examine a map showing all the countries of the world.

Students randomly select a country from the map.

Students research their chosen country. They can find out about:

- climate
- landform
- people
- language
- currency
- schools and education
- transport

Students imagine having to move to this place.

Students examine the photographic resources Images A, B, C (pages 19-21) and oral history extracts 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 (pages 35-36).

Teacher led discussion of the British child migration story in conjunction with students' examining of the resources. (For more information about British child migration refer to the summary on the exhibition website [www.britainschildmigrants.com](http://www.britainschildmigrants.com)).

Students then examine the child's diary, Images L, M, N, O (pages 30-31).

Students write their own diary documenting and illustrating their imaginary migration to their chosen country.

Students can include a map that traces their journey.

Students conduct a survey of their class/school.

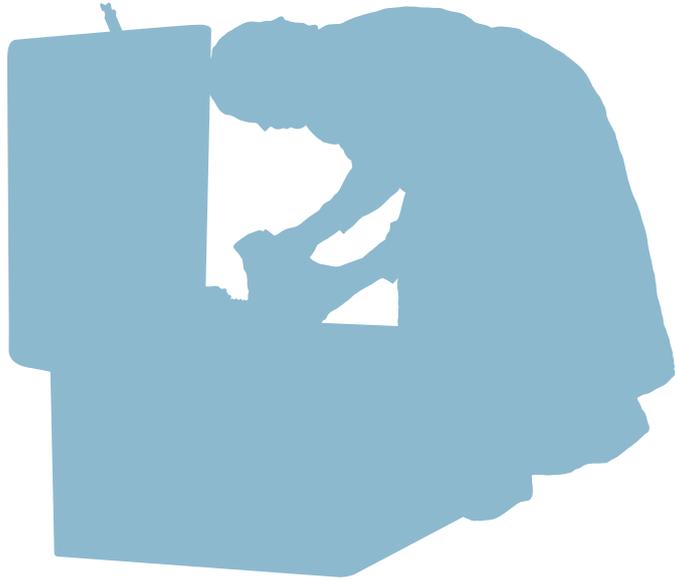
Students can then create a tally for each of the following questions:

- How many students have migrated to Australia?
- Did they migrate alone or with family?
- How old were they when they migrated?
- Which country did they come from?

Students then construct a table of the results.

Students experiment with different types of graphs to find the ones that best represent their survey results.





## PACKING PRECIOUS PIECES

Students face the dilemma of what to pack and what to leave behind when migrating to another country.

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

Teacher and students brainstorm the following: what would you take on a journey to the other side of the world?

Students examine Image A (page 19).

Students estimate the dimensions of one of the suitcases in the photograph.

Using these dimensions students then calculate the capacity (volume) of the suitcase.

Divide students into groups. Provide each group with materials necessary to make a box of similar dimensions to the suitcase.

Students are asked to bring in the objects they would take and talk to the class about why they have chosen them. The chosen objects must fit into the box. If all the objects don't fit students must choose which objects they would leave behind.

Students must be reminded that they'll need to have enough room for clothes and toiletries!



## JOURNEY

Students examine the mixed emotions associated with migration.

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

Students examine Images C, D (pages 21-22) as well as oral history extracts 3, 5, 6 (pages 35-36).

Students identify the different emotions expressed in these resources.

In small groups students are asked to role play saying goodbye to their best friends for the last time.

Students produce a postcard or write a letter to their best friend describing their experiences on the journey to their new home. Travel can be by air or sea.

## WORLD OF WORK

Students investigate how the nature of children's 'work' has changed over time.

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

Look at photograph resources Image E, F (pages 23-24) and read oral history extracts.

Students discuss the types of work the children are doing in the photographs. Do they think the children in these photographs are being paid?

Students ask themselves the following questions:

- What jobs do they do?
- Who for?
- Do they get paid?
- Do they get something else in return?

Students interview family members about their working experiences when they were children:

1. Did they work when they were children?
2. What kinds of jobs did they do?
3. Were they paid?

Students present their findings to the class.

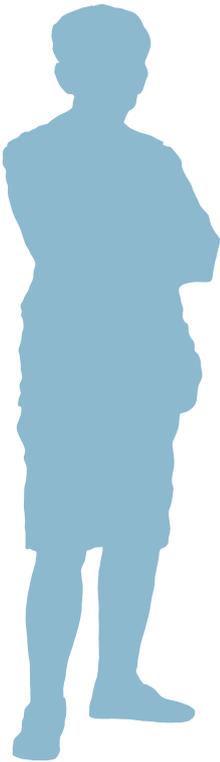
### CLASS ACTIVITY

Develop a timeline showing the variety of work done by children over the years. Colour code the activities according to whether it was paid or unpaid work.

Students examine Image I (page 27), 'Australia for the British Boy' then discuss the following questions:

1. How is it advertising Australia to young, potential immigrants?
2. What is it saying to them?
3. What kinds of emotions / feelings is it suggesting?
4. What would you say to children migrating today?

Students prepare their own poster to advertise Australia to children who might be migrating.





## Section Three Resources

## SECTION THREE RESOURCES

### PHOTOGRAPHS, OBJECTS AND DOCUMENTS

Image A	Barnardo's boys at Kingston Hill with luggage for their trip to Australia 1934 Reproduced courtesy Getty Images	Image J	Sketch of Scheyville Training Farm by B Wiltshire 1926 Reproduced courtesy State Records NSW
Image B	Four children bound for Fairbridge Farm School, Molong 1938 Reproduced courtesy Molong Historical Society	Image K	Birth certificate of Yvonne O'Donnell Reproduced courtesy Yvonne Radzevicius
Image C	First party for Fairbridge Molong 1938 Reproduced courtesy Molong Historical Society	Image L	Diary of Maureen Mullins' journey to Fairbridge Molong 1952 Lent by Maureen Murray
Image D	Fairbridge party on ship 1938 Reproduced courtesy Molong Historical Society	Image M	Diary of Maureen Mullins' journey to Fairbridge Molong 1952 Lent by Maureen Murray
Image E	Child migrants picking peas at Fairbridge Farm School, Molong Reproduced courtesy National Archives of Australia: A1200, L11583	Image N	Diary of Maureen Mullins' journey to Fairbridge Molong 1952 Lent by Maureen Murray
Image F	Milking in the Fairbridge dairy 1958 Reproduced courtesy National Archives of Australia: A12111, 1/1958/8/29	Image O	Diary of Maureen Mullins' journey to Fairbridge Molong 1952 Lent by Maureen Murray
Image G	Meal time at Scheyville Training Farm 1926 Reproduced courtesy State Records NSW	Image P	Tie from Fairbridge Farm School, Pinjarra Lent by Old Fairbridgians Association Museum
Image H	Advertising the advantages of emigration Reproduced courtesy The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford N.IIIc.3 p.25	Image Q	Holy Bible presented to Herbert Ernest as a memento of the old country 1929 Lent by Marion Brown
Image I	Development and Migration Commission, <i>Australia for the British boy</i> , Development and Migration Commission, London 1929 Reproduced courtesy La Trobe Rare Books Collection of the State Library of Victoria	Image R	Children's tea menu from SS <i>Strathnaver</i> 1956 ANMM Collection



Image A Barnardo's boys at Kingston Hill with luggage for their trip to Australia 1934

Reproduced courtesy Getty Images



Image B Four children bound for Fairbridge Farm School, Molong 1938

Reproduced courtesy Molong Historical Society



Image C First party for Fairbridge Molong 1938

Reproduced courtesy Molong Historical Society



Image D Fairbridge party on ship 1938

Reproduced courtesy Molong Historical Society



**Image E** Child migrants picking peas at Fairbridge Farm School, Molong

Reproduced courtesy National Archives of Australia: A1200, L11583



Image F Milking in the Fairbridge dairy 1958

Reproduced courtesy National Archives of Australia: A12111,  
1/1958/8/29



Image G Meal time at Scheyville Training Farm 1926

Reproduced courtesy State Records NSW



Mr. JONES is in constant communication with the Government Emigration Agents of Canada, also with a large number of Christians. He will be pleased to give advice gratis to intending Emigrants, also to secure them berths on the most advantageous terms; and should it be convenient for them to go with him on April 27th next, he will render them every assistance to obtain suitable employment, &c., when they land.

[259]

Image H Advertising the advantages of emigration

Reproduced courtesy The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford N.IIc.3 p.25



Image 1 Development and Migration Commission, *Australia for the British boy*, Development and Migration Commission, London 1929

Reproduced courtesy La Trobe Rare Books Collection of the State Library of Victoria



Image J Sketch of Scheyville Training Farm by B Wiltshire 1926

Reproduced courtesy State Records NSW



Extract of an entry in a REGISTER OF BIRTHS  
Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Scotland) Act 1965

1942. BIRTHS in the DISTRICT of SPRINGBURN in the BURGH of GLASGOW

No.	Name and Surname.	When and Where Born.	Sex.	Name, Surname, and Rank or Profession of Father. Name, and Maiden Surname of Mother. Date and Place of Marriage.	Signature and Qualification of Informant, and Residence, if not of the house in which the birth occurred.	When and Where Registered, and Signature of Registrar.
1687	Yvonne Yvonne O'Donnell	1942, October % Cervin 11 h. 16 m. A.M. 133 Salomackhead, Glasgow.	F.	James O'Donnell, Motor Lorry Driver. Wom's residence - Thorn Street Glasgow. Bridget O'Donnell, W.S. O'Donnell 1933, November 29 <sup>th</sup> Leardonagh Co. Down	Bridget O'Donnell, Mother	1942, October 31 <sup>st</sup> At Glasgow. W.S. O'Donnell, Registrar.

Given under the Seal of the General Register Office, New Register House, Edinburgh on 21st November 2007

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This extract is evidence of an event recorded in a register. It is NOT evidence of the identity of the person presenting it.

3252619 CE

Image K Birth certificate of Yvonne O'Donnell  
Reproduced courtesy Yvonne Radzevicius

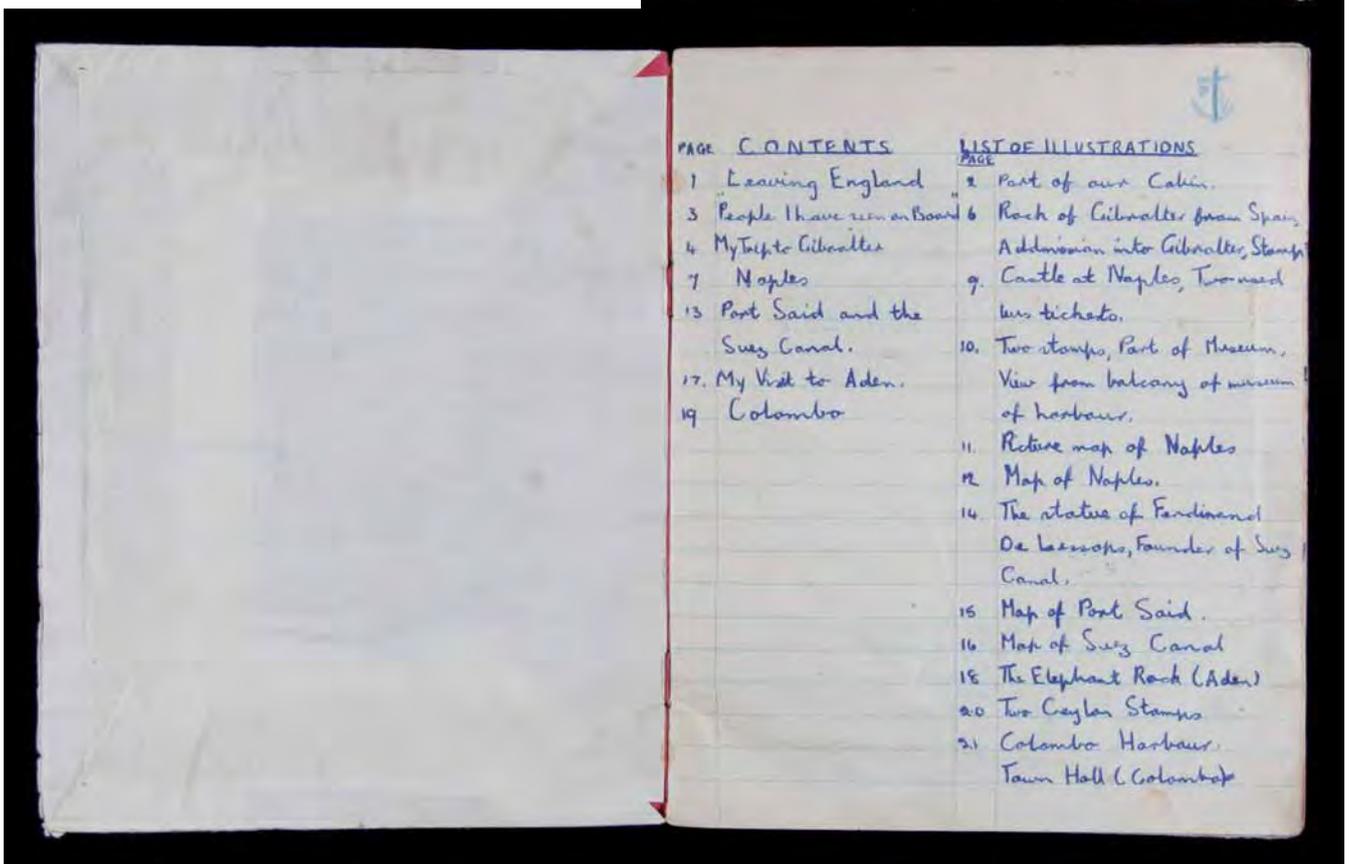


Image L Diary of Maureen Mullins' journey to Fairbridge Molong 1952

Image M Diary of Maureen Mullins' journey to Fairbridge Molong 1952

Lent by Maureen Murray



ORIENT LINE R.M.S. ORANIENTEN. 24,000 TONS

20,000 tons in weight  
 30 fms in width  
 625 fms in length  
 1/2 of a mile from funnel to keel.

MY  
 TRIP  
 TO  
 AUSTRALIA

VOLUME 1

We visited the Moorish Castle. This castle belonged to the Moors about six hundred years ago when they captured Spain. We got this information from a little Spanish-English boy who lived there. He had a wonderful view of the harbour and its surrounding from where we stood.

We had drinks and biscuits from a little shop when we came down from the castle which is a little way up the rock.

We then bought postcards and stamps, and at half-past seven we were on board "Mary Creigh" back to Oranien. By eight o'clock we had set sail again for Naples.



15 GIBRALTAR The Rock from Spain

**WATERPORT.**  
 Permit until closing of  
 Fortress Gates.  
 D. S. GOWING,  
 Commissioner of Police.



ADMISSION INTO  
 GIBRALTAR.

Image N Diary of Maureen Mullins' journey to Fairbridge Molong 1952

Image O Diary of Maureen Mullins' journey to Fairbridge Molong 1952

Lent by Maureen Murray



Image P Tie from Fairbridge Farm School, Pinjarra  
Lent by Old Fairbridgians Association Museum

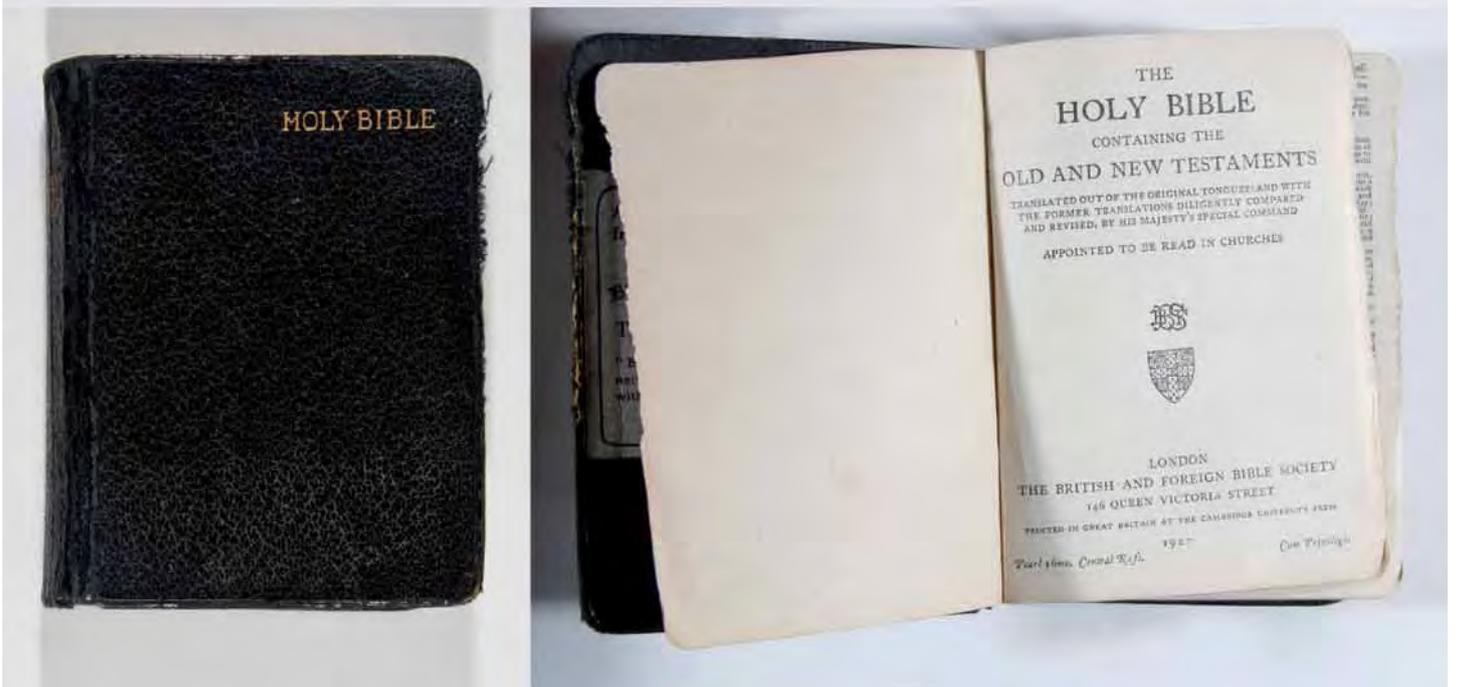
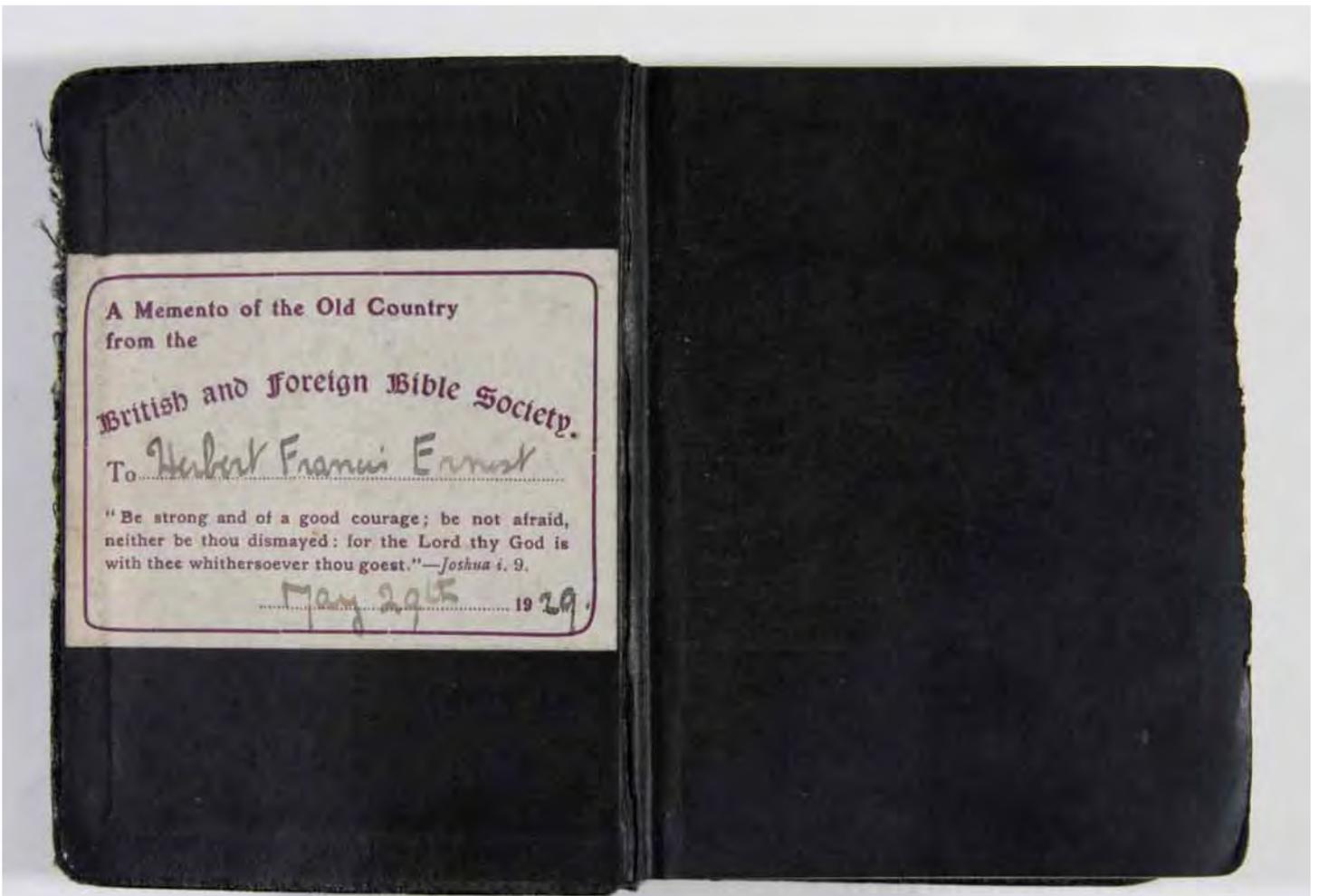


Image Q Holy Bible presented to Herbert Ernest as a memento of the old country 1929

Lent by Marion Brown



## NEWSPAPER EXTRACT

'Healing for hurt souls' - newspaper extract from *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 November 2009

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/healing-for-hurt-souls-20091116-iibj.html>

## ORAL HISTORY EXTRACTS

### Extract 1

I had been at the new home for less than a year when we heard on the British Home Service for Schools about migrants being wanted to help populate Australia - a place I hadn't heard of before. One day an official in the form of a Christian Brother talked to us of the wonders of Australia where there was plenty of food and sunshine. We could go horse riding and be taught new skills like shearing sheep and driving tractors, all being done after school and at weekends. He asked those of us who would like to go to Australia to put up our hands. I, with most of the class, put my hand up, not knowing why but it did seem like a good place and the thought of a trip on a big ocean liner, like the ones that frequently left Southampton, was not to be missed.

Laurie Humphreys, *A Chip Off What Block? A child migrant's tale*, Laurie Humphreys, Samson, 2007, 13.

### Extract 2

Acceptance to go to Australia was not automatic. We were required to pass various health and intelligence tests. In other words we were required to be sound in both body and mind. I recall several medical checks. This was a process of elimination, which took about 12 months. It was during this period that our interest and excitement grew. We who were selected started to read about Australia and hoped for all worth that we would not be eliminated.

Jim Stone, *Jim's Memoirs*, unpublished manuscript, 5-6.

### Extract 3

We were outfitted with clothing, and then we assembled, with a similar number of girls, to board a bus for the trip to Tilbury dock. There was much excitement and many photographs were taken of us all. We boarded a ship called *SS Ormonde* for the trip to Australia, which was to take about six weeks. The ship was farewelled by a brass band. All of us were very excited. This was the beginning of our adventure to the other side of the world. We were off to a destination of which we knew very little. Our cabins were 'first class' and on 'B' deck, four to a cabin. We had windows instead of portholes. These allowed us to jump out onto the deck at will.

Jim Stone, *Jim's Memoirs*, unpublished manuscript, 6.

#### Extract 4

The trip to the ship took ages with heavy traffic. I remember a train inside the departure shed with hundreds of people arriving and confusion everywhere. When we were finally aboard and ready to sail everyone standing on deck appeared to have someone to wave to. I looked but couldn't find anyone. I remember feeling sad and alone, even though there were huge crowds lining the deck and masses of people on the wharf.

Laurie Humphreys, *A Chip Off What Block? A child migrant's tale*, Laurie Humphreys, Samson, 2007, 14.

#### Extract 5

When the day came to say goodbye to 'Mother England,' it was impossible not to get excited. I don't remember how we met the rest of the party. All I know is that the five boys from Clapham joined seventeen other boys and twenty-five girls at the dockside at Tilbury ready to undertake the greatest adventure of our young lives. Very soon we would be on our way to the port of Fremantle in Western Australia.

Once away from Tilbury, any feeling of melancholy quickly disappeared; there was too much activity on board that begged attention. The ship was not only our new home, it was a complete self-contained town with all the amenities for a thousand people.

... Naturally, the dining room became our first priority, and when the travelling gong called us to the first sitting, it was music to the ears. And when we were shown to our tables where neatly dressed waiters served us food that we had rarely seen before, the fairy-tale seemed to be a little closer to reality.

John Lane, *Fairbridge Kid*, Fairbridge Western Australia, Pinjarra, 2000, 78.

#### Extract 6

On most afternoons we would sit in giant armchairs in the first-class lounge learning to play chess and being served by waiters who put ice and straws in our drinks, while a string quartet dressed in tails played Brahms and Tchaikovsky. It was the first time I had seen a violin or heard live classical music.

We began to spend more of our time in the swimming pool or playing deck sports with the young Germans, mainly single men who were going out to Australia to work on the Snowy Mountains hydro-electric scheme or other construction projects. We made friends with a number of them and were surprised how polite and friendly they were - we had been brought up in an environment where the memory of two bitterly fought wars in the past forty years was still strong. They were very patient with us and would play chess with us in the afternoons. I recall them being puzzled at the idea of a group of British children being sent to the other side of the world without any parents.

David Hill, *The Forgotten Children: Fairbridge Farm School and its betrayal of Australia's child migrants*, Random House, Sydney, 2007, 21-22.

### Extract 7

Before we left Southampton, they gave us a set of new clothes. It was the first time I'd ever had new things. I got trousers and shiny shoes. But when we arrived at Bindoon they took the clothes away. They left us without underwear. It was degrading.

I remember standing on the tray top of the truck, before jumping down. I looked up and for as far as I could see there were fields and trees and not a single other building. And I thought, How the hell is anyone going to find me here?

Graham quoted in Margaret Humphreys, *Empty Cradles*, Corgi Books, London, 1996, 109.

### Extract 8

For most children the arrival of the ship in harbour was as memorable as the voyage itself. Gordon Grant recalls, as if it were yesterday, the landing at Fremantle on 22 September 1947:

'The migrant passenger ship *Asturias* disembarked about 1200 people; 250 were child migrants in the five to 14 age group and were to be placed in nine orphanages in Western Australia.

'The first person to welcome us as we stepped from the gangplank was the Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell. A band was playing. We were assembled on the wharf in two groups - Roman Catholics and Protestants. Some of us weren't sure what we were. The Catholics formed a single file and were directed to move to a half-empty wool bulk store. As we entered we were instructed to approach a long, wooden counter next to three trestled tables. Six officials (policemen) took our fingerprints. We had butterflies in our tummies; I wondered what was in store.'

Alan Gill, *Orphans of the Empire: The shocking story of child migration to Australia*, Random House, Sydney, 1998, 110.

### Extract 9

On leaving Perth we were soon into the vast and sparsely populated bush land which got even more desolate with every mile. Eventually we arrived at a small railway siding called Tardun - just a small general store, no platform or shelter - to be met by three trucks. We clambered aboard and travelled a further 10 miles into the bush, to suddenly come upon what was to be our home for the next six to ten years!

Since departing England in July we were on a high - so much had happened. New sights and experiences, new friends made among the boys, we had been feted and fussed over on arrival at Fremantle and had a 300 mile train trip! Reality wasn't long in coming however.

Michael Hannigan, *The Australian Enigma* at [www.blaisdonbrotherhood.info](http://www.blaisdonbrotherhood.info)

### Extract 10

We got off the bus and were immediately herded into a big clothes room by one of the [Christian] Brothers and I knew by the way he spoke - here it was again! My heart sank. Our kitbags and the nice clothes we wore were taken from us. We were given numbers - mine was 42. It was then I realised that I had walked into a situation exactly like the one I had left and I started to cry. The others must have felt the same; we were all crying.

The Nuns in England had told me, 'You think we are hard. Wait till you meet the Christian Brothers. They are a lot harder than we are.'

At the time I did not believe them. Nobody could be harder than them, just nobody! But it turned out the Nuns were only amateurs.

The crying became louder as we realised that we had been lied to yet again. We had been moved from one gaol to one much worse. How could they do this? How could they tell us we were going to a dreamland then dump us in the middle of the bush in a strange country with flies, mosquitoes, ants, poisonous snakes - all sorts of strange creatures - and to make things worse, the sun beating down at least '500 degrees.' I was fair skinned with blonde hair and had just left a country where it snowed and water sometimes froze in the pipes. Now the skin was burning off the soles of my feet, the sun was slowly cooking the rest of me and my new clothes had all been taken from me. And here I was, dumped in the middle of nowhere with a harder mob of tyrants than those I had left behind. The sun and other things were bad enough. I would get used to them, but I would never get used to the lie that I had been told, another one of many. This is what was really hurting. Why did they teach us not to lie, yet they did so openly themselves?

L P Welsh, *Geordie: Orphan of the Empire*, P & B Press, Perth, 1990, 20-21.