

# Immigration Stories

## STEPHEN ANSTEY (STEE-VEN AN-STEE)

Stephen Anstey was born in England in 1958. His childhood in England was exciting, exploring ancient castles, reading tales of *King Arthur* and listening to records. One of his favourite albums was by *The Kinks*.

With a poor economy in England, Stephen's parents wanted a better future for their children. In 1968, when Stephen was ten years old, the family could get tickets to Australia for just ten pounds. Stephen packed his prized possessions, including toy soldiers and his favourite magazines.

The ship that brought Stephen's family to Fremantle was called the *Fairstar* – a comfortable and exciting cruise ship with theatres, pools and shops. Stephen recalls buying the game *Cluedo* on board.

When Stephen started school at North Cottesloe Primary School, he was teased for his accent and his English uniform. His long socks, cap and tie stood out against the 'Aussie kids' white t-shirts and bare feet. It did not take long for Stephen to fit in and he loved his new life, discovering the wonders of the Australian bush.

With a good education behind him, Stephen grew up to become a History Curator (and Head of the History Department) at the Western Australian Museum. He has worked on many important Museum exhibitions, such as the *Howzat!* Cricket Exhibition.

### Stephen's Object List:

Album: *Something Else* by *The Kinks*

Recording: *Waterloo Sunset*. Creators: Ray Davies, composer and producer, 1967; *The Kinks*, performers, 1967; Source: *Something Else* by the Kinks, studio album

Book: *The Story of King Arthur and his Knights*. Author: Howard Pyle

Migration poster. Courtesy of Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences

*Look and Learn* magazine, 1968

Toy soldiers

*Cluedo* game, 1960s

Felt school cap, 1960s

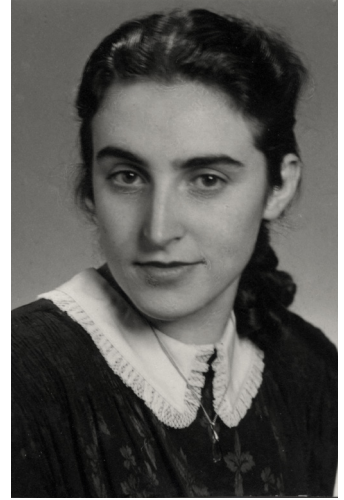
Leather school satchel

White gloves

Exhibition brochure: *Howzat!* Courtesy of the Western Australian Museum



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## ILONA HRUBOS (E-LONA ROO-BOS)

Ilona Hrubos escaped Czechoslovakia in 1946 when she was 19 years old. Her home town was not safe after World War II. Ilona and her mother snuck over the border in a crowded wagon to a German immigration camp. She had to leave her boyfriend Frank, which was very hard. After two years, Frank finally escaped to join Ilona. They got married on Christmas Eve in 1948.

Seeking a better life, Ilona and Frank migrated to Fremantle in 1951 after their first son turned one. The journey to Fremantle on a crowded ship took a whole month. Ilona was pregnant, sea-sick and looking after a toddler. One highlight was the fun 'Crossing the Equator' celebration.

Frank got work building the railways. Ilona and Frank's first home was made up of two tents, with straw-filled sacks for bedding. There was no running water or electricity, no shower or toilet, and many creatures such as spiders, scorpions and noisy frogs to get used to.

Ilona learned English by listening to a small radio, which was their first major purchase. By the light of a hurricane lamp, Ilona also saved money by sewing clothes out of cheap remnants of material, and eventually saved up enough to buy a sewing machine. After seven years, Ilona and her family finally moved into a house that they built with their own hands.

Much of Ilona's life has been dedicated to raising and supporting her five children. She sewed to make extra money - buying, mending and selling second-hand clothes. She also worked as a tea lady in a seniors' hospital. Ilona wrote a book about her life for her family and crocheted a special blanket for each of her 15 grandchildren.

### Ilona's Object List:

Fur stole

Photo: Ilona and Frank Hrubos wedding. Courtesy of the Hrubos family

Equator Crossing Certificate (copy). Courtesy of the Hrubos family

Photos: *Anna Salen* ship and Ilona and Frank Hrubos. Courtesy of the Hrubos family

Hessian sack

Hurricane lamp

Radio

Sewing box

Tea cup

Crocheted blanket

Family story: *Looking Back on My Life*. Author: Ilona Hrubos. Courtesy of the Hrubos family

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## **YASUKICHI MURAKAMI** (YA-SU-KI-CHI MU-RA-MA-MI)

Yasukichi Murakami left Japan at the age of 16 in 1897. Around 1900, many young Japanese men travelled to Australia to work in pearling. Pearls were valuable and the shell was used to make many objects such as buttons and cutlery. Yasukichi arrived in North Western Australia and found work with a Japanese storekeeper in Broome.

When the storekeeper passed away, Yasukichi took over and expanded the business. He created a photography studio and a bank for Japanese pearlers. He also helped to run the Dampier Hotel and became a well-respected leader in his community. Yasukichi and his business partner, A. C. Gregory, tried to set up Australia's first cultured pearl farm. This was closed down by authorities to protect the natural pearling industry.

In 1926, Yasukichi designed and patented a safer pearl-diving suit. He applied to be an Australian citizen but was rejected due to the 'White Australia Policy'. When World War II broke out, Yasukichi was interned in a prison camp. His diving suit patent was not renewed and others got the credit for similar designs.

In most photos you will see Yasukichi wearing western-style clothing. This photo of him in 1919 shows him wearing a Japanese kimono/yukata, sent to him by his first wife's sister. On the back of this photograph, Yasukichi writes that he has not worn Japanese attire for 15 years and 'didn't feel comfortable at all in it', but he hopes that the photo will bring 'a smile' to those back in Japan.

Yasukichi Murakami was an important pearling pioneer, inventor and businessman. His photographs, uncovered many years after his passing, are valuable sources of Broome's history. In 2015, a stage play was created about his life. In 2016, a photographic exhibition of his life was held in Japan, near his home town. In Broome, *Murakami Road* is named after Yasukichi.

### **Yasukichi's Object List:**

Pearl shell, Pearl shell buttons and spoon

Passport: Yasukichi Murakami. Courtesy of the National Archives of Australia MAA:PP9/4, YASUKICHI, MURAKAMI

Banking box

Photo: Dampier Hotel. Courtesy State Library Western Australia BSA2754/19

Diving suit design and patent. Courtesy of United States Patent and Trademark Office <http://www.uspto.gov> US 1689079

Photo: Yasukichi Murakami and diving equipment. Courtesy State Library Western Australia BA2754/17

Naturalisation application certificate. Courtesy of the National Archives of Australia NAA:A659,1939/1/1289

Yukata (male kimono) set. Donated by Kaori Irobe, great-granddaughter of Yasukichi Murakami

Photo: Yasukichi Murakami wearing Japanese attire. Courtesy of Murakami family

Box brownie camera, 1900s

Photographs from the Yasukichi Murakami collection. Courtesy of State Library or Western Australia BA2754, 1-35

Photo exhibition brochure (copy). Courtesy of Julie Murakami, great-granddaughter of Yasukichi Murakami

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## C.Y. O'CONNOR (CHARLES YEL-VER-TON O'CONNOR)

Charles Yelverton (often called C.Y.) O'Connor was born in Ireland in 1843. At this time, many families lived in poverty because of the Irish Potato Famine, but he grew up in a wealthy family and had a good education.

C.Y. left Ireland in 1865 and migrated to New Zealand where he was a successful engineer. After 26 years, Western Australian Premier, John Forrest, offered him the job of Engineer-in-Chief. He was to be in charge of railways, jetties, lighthouses, bridges and some other very important projects.

C.Y. set off from New Zealand with some, but not all of his children (his family was separated for a while). On May 21, 1891, Australian newspapers announced that he was on his way from New Zealand. The ship docked in Albany and he spent a 20-hour train trip to Perth, arriving during Foundation Day celebrations on June 1.

C.Y. O'Connor's work was very demanding but he still made time to enjoy his hobby of horse-riding with his children. He was always well groomed and well dressed, as you can see from this photograph.

In Western Australia, C.Y. O'Connor worked on planning and modernising the state's railways and their buildings. His best-known projects, which many thought impossible, were the design of Fremantle Harbour at the mouth of the Swan River to allow large ships to moor safely and a 540km pipeline that delivered fresh water to the Goldfields from Mundaring Weir.

### C.Y.'s Object List:

Photo: Gravelmount House, where C.Y. O'Connor was born

Drawing: Irish Potato Famine. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Office stationery

Photo: C.Y. O'Connor and Family. Courtesy of State Library Western Australia 009044D

Newspaper article announcing C.Y. O'Connor arrival. Courtesy of National Library of Australia The Daily News (Perth, WA: 1882-1950) Tues 5 May 1891 pg3 <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/76464102>

Hat, fob watch

Horseshoe

Photo: C.Y. O'Connor. Courtesy of State Library Western Australia SLWA\_b2103153\_1

Image: Fremantle Harbour. Courtesy of National Library Australia Western Australia. Public Works Department. & O'Connor, C. Y. (1904). Western Australia, Fremantle Harbour works <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-229849610>

Book: *C.Y. O'Connor, his Life and Legacy*. Author: A.G. Evans

Railway spike

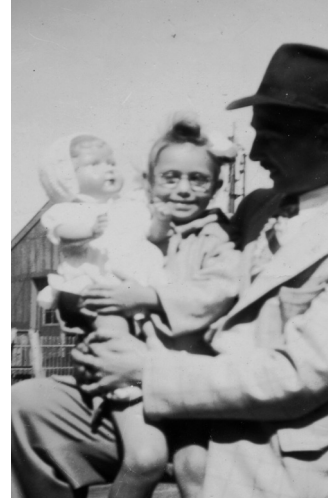
Lead weight, used on a line to measure harbour depth

Steel Locking Bar and Pipe Sections (genuine) 1900s

Joined two sections of pipeline together (painted gold more recently). Donated by Robert Mitchell, Australian Museums and Galleries Association Western Australia

Book: *The Pipeline C.Y. O'Connor Built*. Authors: Joy Lefroy and Diana Frylinck; Illustrator: Marion Duke. Donated by Joy Lefroy

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## NONJA PETERS (NON-YA PETERS)

Nonja came from the Netherlands (Holland) in 1949 when she was five years old. After World War II, many people lost their homes and felt unsafe.

Nonja's parents decided that they should emigrate to Australia as they hoped for a better life there. They read books to learn all about Australia, but her parents also made sure that she was still learning her Dutch letters and words.

Nonja's mother packed their most important possessions and some household items (like silver spoons). There was no room for the children's toys. They got sick a lot on the crowded, dirty ship. Nonja missed her Oma (grandmother) and her best friend Elsje. When they arrived in Fremantle, Nonja's father cheered her up with a new doll.

The doll gifted by Nonja's father continued to bring her joy in those early months. She missed Dutch treats like chocolate sprinkles but she wanted to fit in so she begged her mother to make Vegemite sandwiches. Nonja learned English quickly by playing games at school. She made friends with other migrant children and the 'Aussie kids' too.

As an adult, Nonja wanted to share stories of other people who had also migrated. She now works at Curtin University, writing books and research papers about migration. In 2006, Dutch Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands awarded Dr Nonja Peters a knighthood 'For outstanding service in preserving the migrant heritage of Dutch and other post-war migrants' and for supporting relationships between Australia and the Netherlands.

### Nonja's Object List:

Miniature Dutch clogs

Childhood photo. Courtesy of Nonja Peters

*All About Australia* (copy of portion of original book). Authors: Dr H.G Maar and J.D Rempt

Dutch phonics board (copy). Courtesy of Nonja Peters and Maritime History Department

Silver spoons

Photo: Nonja Peters and her father. Courtesy of Nonja Peters

Drawings for Oma and Elsje (recreation)

Photo: Nonja Peters and her brother. Courtesy of Nonja Peters

1950s Princess Elizabeth doll

1950s Vegemite jar

Recording: Happy Little Vegemites radio jingle; Creators: Alan Weekes, composer, 1949, The Happy Little Vegemites Trio, vocalists, 1949; Source: National Film and Sound Archive catalogue number 537271

*De Ruijter* chocolate hagelslag (sprinkles)

Photo: Dr Nonja Peters on the day she received her knighthood. Courtesy of Nonja Peters

Replica medal: Dutch Order of Orange-Nassau, Knight Grade

Books by Nonja Peters:

*Milk and Honey, But no Gold*

*We came by sea: Celebrating Western Australia's Migrant Welcome Walls*

*A touch of Dutch: maritime, military, migration and mercantile connections on the Western Third 1616-2016*