

Basic Detail Report



00006134

Title

P&O Line teacup

Date

1930s - 1960s

Primary Maker

P&O

Medium

Ceramic

Dimensions

Overall: 61 x 110 x 87 mm, 100 g

Name

Cup

History

From the 1860s, more than 100,000 children were sent from Britain to Canada, Australia and other Commonwealth countries through child migration schemes. They were sent by charitable and religious organisations, with government support, in the belief that their lives would improve, and that they would provide much-needed labour and increase the population. Few were orphans; many came from families who were unable to care for them. 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. In 1869 the first party of child migrants boarded the Allan Line steamship HIBERNAIAN. The Liverpool shipping company would carry almost half of Canada's child migrants on its ships. At the height of the emigration trade, the Liverpool to Canada route was also serviced by the Cunard and White Star Lines. From Glasgow, the Anchor Line carried many of the children. Until the early 1960s most child migrants to Australia travelled by sea, sailing on vessels of the Aberdeen, Orient and Sitmar Lines. Names such as STRATHNAVER, ORMONDE, ORONSAY and FAIRSKY still evoke powerful memories for many former child migrants. Ronald Smith was born in England at the end of World War II and was placed in the Barnardo's Babies Castle in Hawkhurst, Kent in southeast England when he was six months old. Ronald was later placed in Howard House in Bedfordshire and then Meadows Memorial Home in Southborough, Kent where he stayed for about six years. In 1961 Ronald remembers a Barnardo's representative coming to the home and asking if any of the children wanted to go to Australia. The children were attracted by stories of adventure, sunshine and freedom in the outback - as well as a six week voyage on a big ship. Ronald, aged 16, was among those who eagerly put up their hands to migrate.

Barnardo's was one of the pioneers of British child migration to the colonies, migrating some 30,000 children to Canada from 1882-1939 and 2,784 children to Australia from 1921-1967. Children were sent to Canada and Australia to relieve the population pressure in overcrowded British cities, to populate the empire with 'good British stock' and to give them a new start in the dominions. There were about 17 children in Ronald's migration party, with two adult escorts, one male and one female. The children boarded the P&O liner SS STRATHEDEN at Tilbury on 7 November 1961. STRATHEDEN was launched on 10 June 1937, with accommodation for 448 first and 563 tourist class passengers. It embarked on its maiden voyage from England to Australia on 24 December 1937. STRATHEDEN was requisitioned as a troopship during World War II and was involved in North African landings. In 1946 STRATHEDEN was returned to commercial passenger service, and in 1947 was refitted to accommodate 527 first and 453 tourist class passengers. It was later converted into a one-class liner for 1,200 passengers. STRATHEDEN was sold to Greek ship owner John Latsis and renamed HENRIETTA LATSI, and eventually broken up in Italy in 1969. Ronald arrived in Sydney on 17 December 1961 and was taken to the Barnardo's Toowoomba Vale training farm at Scone in the NSW Hunter Valley, established to train migrant boys of post-school age in farming. After completing his farm training, Ronald stayed on at Toowoomba Vale for 12 months as an overseer. Ronald was then posted to a dairy farm in north Scone, where he remained for four years until gaining his truck driver's licence at the age of 21. He is still working as a truck driver today.