

# LEAVING ENGLAND FOR AUSTRALIA

## Diaries of Joyce Taylor and *Ron Taylor*

*(Ron Taylor's entries are in italics)*

**Saturday, 21 February 1948**

*The place was thick with snow. Went to Falmer with Pat to take some photos.*

**Sunday, 22 February 1948**

*Took some photos of the girls over the Race Hill in the snow.*

**Sunday, 29 February 1948**

*Cycled to Ditchling with Tom, ran into quite a lot of snowdrifts.*

**Sunday, 7 March 1948**

*Cycled to Ditchling with Tom.*

**Sunday, 14 March 1948**

*Walked to Rottingdean – had a couple in Queen Victoria.*

**Friday, 26 March 1948 (Good Friday)**

*Went with Tom to Arundel – took some photos, a most beautify little town.*

**Friday, 9 April 1948**

We left work today, and whrat a day. Mr Jones said goodbye and wished me all the best of luck. At 11 o'clock we went around and said goodbye to all the girls – we left them all in tears. They gave me a pair of French stockings and they were very nice. Winnie and I walked along the promenade to West Street, then caught a bus home.

*Left work today.*

**Saturday, 10 April 1948**

Betty and I went to Burgess hill for the weekend. We caught the 8.30pm train. We met Mrs Smithers and Dot at the station and went to their home. Mr Smithers came home at about 9.30pm and we sat up talking about Australia till midnight then we went to bed.

### **Sunday, 11 April 1948**

Mr Smithers took Betty and I over to hassocks to see Dick Sullings' new house. We met Mrs Sullings and she took us all over her house. It is a lovely place too – all very modern. In the evening we took some snaps.

*Went over to the Downs Hotel.*

### **Monday, 12 April 1948**

We came back from Burgess Hill at 10.30am. The deck chairs arrived today.

### **Tuesday, 13 April 1948**

Grandad came up today to see us for the last time. In the afternoon I went up St James' Street and brought myself a bathing costume.

### **Wednesday, 14 April 1948**

I went out to the factory to see Mr Langridge and to say goodbye. He also wished me all the best of luck. I went up to tea with Daphne and Bob and stayed there for the evening. I left about 8.30pm and said goodbye to them. I then went out to Florrie's to sleep.

### **Thursday, 15 April 1948**

We were very busy clearing up all the odds and ends. In the evening we went up to Florrie's to sleep. We sat up talking until 11.30pm, all about the coming voyage.

### **Friday, 16 April 1948**

We said goodbye to Florrie, Freda and Ron and the kiddies. We left home by taxi and Freda waved goodbye from her window. We caught the 11.30am train from Brighton and arrived at Waterloo at 1.15pm. We had lunch at the Waterloo Station and at 3.47pm we caught the boat train to Southampton. We had tea on the train and arrived at Southampton at 5.45pm. We embarked at 6.30pm.

*The day I have hated most of all, saying goodbye to Freda, Ron, children and friends. Sailing for Australia.*

### **Saturday, 17 April 1948**

Today we sailed at 10.30am from Southampton. The shops opened at 4.30pm on the boat and for the first time in 7 years we were able to buy sweets off the ration.

*We sailed for Australia at 10.30am. Today, up to now we don't know we are at sea. Everyone seems very friendly. At time of writing we are in the English Channel.*

### **Sunday, 18 April 1948**

Today I was seasick and spent most of my time in my cabin. They held a church service on board and I sent. I felt very giddy during the service. I met a girl who is going over to get married.

*Sent a wire to Freda, there is a bit of swell. At the moment we are in the Bay of Biscay. Lat 46° 33N, Long. 6° 59N Miles R 369.*

### **Monday, 19 April 1948**

Today we are passing the coast of Spain and can see it very clearly. We have met a trio today. One fellow that came down on the train with us and two fellows he has paled up with, they are Allan, Bill and Ray. I borrowed Ray's opera glasses to get a close up of the coast of Spain. I could see a little village there. We went to the pictures in the evening to see "Humoresque", terrible film.

*Today is quite windy, up to now quite a number of people have been sick. At present we are off the coast of Portugal. Long 90° 37N Lat 40° 53N MR 367.*

### **Tuesday, 20 April 1948**

All the morning we have seen nothing but sea. This afternoon we sighted land and at 3 o/c we passed the Rock of Gibraltar. Ray took a photo of me with the Mediterranean (in the background). The weather is very bad for the time of the year, it is quite cold and we are all walking about with coats on.

*3.25 this afternoon we passed the Rock of Gibraltar. The sea is quite calm, the weather is warming up. Lat 36° 9N Long 27° W MR 369.*

### **Wednesday, 21 April 1948**

We are passing through the Mediterranean still. Weather is terrible today. It is raining hard and we are passing the coast of Africa. We are quite close to it and we can see part of the desert. This afternoon the weather has cleared up a bit, it has stopped raining but is still very cold and miserable (What Mediterranean weather?)

*We passed Algiers 5 o'clock this afternoon. The day is cloudy but warm. We can see the African coast very clear MR 388 Lat 36° 39W Long 6° 31E.*

**Thursday, 22 April 1948**

Passed the North African coast today. And we saw the part of Africa where the Germans made their last landing. Still the weather is cold and miserable.

*The day is very dull and it is raining. It is very depressing. We passed Cape Con at 7 o'clock in the evening MR 363.*

**Friday, 23 April 1948**

We landed at Malta at 6.30am this morning. All the Maltese rowing boats came out with different souvenirs for people to buy. People were buying headscarves and handkerchiefs. There was a Maltese fellow in a small boat diving in for silver etc. A man threw a penny in the water but the artful fellow said he could not see coppers. There was 100 emigrants (Maltese) came on board. We left Malta at 11.30am. We went to the pictures this afternoon to see "The Egg and I". It was quite a good film.

*Arrived at Malta 8 o'clock this morning. Took on some more passengers, left at 11.15am MR 294.*

**Saturday, 24 April 1948**

Today we are well out in the Mediterranean again and the weather has made a break. It is lovely and warm and we are sitting on the top deck.

*Today our first week at sea finds us cruising through the Mediterranean between Malta and Port Said. (the day is very sunny but breezy) MR 396.*

**Sunday, 25 April 1948**

Betty, Winnie and Ronnie came to church service with me. We docked at Port Said tonight. Dozens of little Arab boats came along side the boat. Some with passengers, others with handbags, wallets etc to sell. When we came into port Said the bright lights looked really beautiful and I found the Arabs in their small boats very amusing at first, but really they are a very dirty looking crowd.

*We went to church today - Anzac Day. We arrived at Port Said at 7 o'clock this evening. Weather is the same as yesterday. Pat's birthday. MR 400.*

**Monday, 26 April 1948**

We really had a wonderful day today. We really had some jolly good laughs. The "wogs" as everyone calls them came alongside the boat selling handbags, wallets, baskets, make-up boxes and other various things and it was really great fun trying to bring the prices of their goods down. Ray can speak the Arabic

language and you should have heard some of them. They sent up a make-up box and it was really tripe. The powder was just like flour and the perfume was sickly. I brought a handbag for 30/-. It was really nice, also a wallet for 2/6. We are still at Port Said.

*Today we are in Port Said. Our boat is surrounded by natives selling anything – they ask fantastic prices but one can get it for next to nothing. Our propellers were damaged while getting in last night. MR 136.*

### **Tuesday, 27 April 1948**

This morning at about 10o/c we sailed from Port Said and we are now going through the Canal. The sand is not the colour I expected it to be. Instead of being golden sand it was a dirty gold. It is really beautiful now it is evening. The sky is full of stars and not very far away are the bright lights of Port Suez.

*Today we started going through the Suez Canal, we shall be through about 9pm. The day has been hot. MR 25.*

### **Wednesday, 28 April 1948**

This morning when I woke up we were out of the canal. The weather is really beautiful and I am getting quite tanned with the sun. We have brought a blanket up on the deck and are sitting in the shade as it is very hot. We are in the Red Sea now and have just seen some flying fishes. Tonight they had a boxing match and we went to see it.

*We left the Suez Canal at 9.15pm last night. Today we are sailing down the Red Sea – it is getting hot. MR 313.*

### **Thursday, 29 April 1948**

Today we are still in the Red Sea and boy, is the weather hot! They have a shower going on the upper deck for the kiddies. They are having the time of their lives.

*Today is very hot. We saw some flying fish, also dolphins. The air temp is 88°, sea 82°. We are still in the Red Sea. MR 377.*

### **Friday, 30 April 1948**

Today we are still in the Red Sea and still the weather is stifling hot. It seems to take all the energy from your body. This evening we saw the island called Devil's Island, that is where they send the French convicts.

*It is still very hot – air temp 92°, sea temp 86°. Today is much the same as 29<sup>th</sup> – we came out of the (jaws?) of the Red Sea about 5pm. MR 405.*

### **Saturday, 1 May 1948**

At 6 o/c this morning we tied up and refuelled at Aden, and what a day. It was so hot that our clothes were wet through as soon as we put them on. We were allowed to go ashore at Aden. Betty, Ron and Ray went but I didn't fancy going. The little nigger boys came alongside the boat and they were diving for money. At about 8 o/c pm we pulled out of Aden. It was really a beautiful sight, as it was dark and the bright lights of Aden lit up everywhere. The temperature was 105 degrees today.

*This morning finds us in Aden – temp 105°. We arrived at 7am, a very hot and barren place. We went ashore for 3 hours – glad to get back. MR 282.*

### **Sunday, 2 May 1948**

Winnie and I went to church service this morning and we both enjoyed it very much. It is still very hot today. It is about 92 degrees today, all we seem to be doing is washing ourselves to keep cool, not that it makes much difference.

*Today we are in the Gulf of Aden. We left Aden at 8pm yesterday. It is still very warm temp in cabin yesterday 95°, today 87°.*

### **Monday, 3 May 1948**

The weather is still very hot and everybody is trying to get into the shade. The temperature is 89 degrees today. Everybody has been having iced drinks. No end of people have been taken bad with stomach upsets, Mum was taken bad this evening with it. Betty went to the doctor to get her some medicine.

*We are in the Arabian Sea, steaming to Colombo. MR 389, temp 86°, sea temp 82°. Nothing much has happened – nothing but miles of sea.*

### **Tuesday, 4 May 1948**

Today is still very hot. The temperature is 90 degrees. Mum is a lot better today but is not really well yet.

*Today is the same as yesterday mr 410, temp 90°, sea temp 82°. It is a sticky heat.*

### **Wednesday, 5 May 1948**

Today is a lot cooler. By afternoon it has clouded over and has started to rain, and above all the sailors choose this time to scrub the decks down. They are showing the picture on board "Music for Millions". I have already seen it so I am not going. Betty and Winner have gone to the cinema.

*There is quite a change in the weather today. It is raining hard. Temp is down to 80°, sea temp 86° MR 384.*

### **Thursday, 6 May 1948**

Today is another miserable day. It is very warm but is cloudy. This evening we watched the children's singsong. Mum was taken bad again this evening.

*Today is very cloudy but a sultry heat. Temp 89°, sea temp 86° MR 384.*

### **Friday, 7 May 1948**

This morning we got up at 6 o/c and watched the boat going into harbour at Colombo. At 9.45am we caught the motor launch to go ashore. There were all kinds of black men running around asking to take us around. It is quite a nice place compared to some of these countries. We had exactly two hours ashore and in that time we were busy looking around for a few things to buy. The native people were standing on street corners selling coconuts, bananas, pineapples and all kinds of different fruit. One of the natives followed me nearly everywhere trying to sell me a necklace. He kept on about them being moonstones and that it was very lucky, it was really funny. We walked through their bazaar and they were selling all kinds of material and various other articles. Further on we saw a temple and tried to get a snap of it, but couldn't. We went into one of their large stores and Roy brought some elephant bookends, they were very nice too. We also brought coconuts, pineapples, bananas and tea. We then came back to the boat by a small rowing boat.

*We arrived at Colombo at 6.30am. We went ashore for 3 hours. Had a good time. Sailed 2.30pm for the last stop, Fremantle. MR 289.*

### **Saturday, 8 May 1948**

*Today we are in the Indian Ocean. We cross the line at 11pm tonight. Tonight there is a heavy swell. Air temp 86°, sea temp 82°, MR 382.*

**Sunday, 9 May 1948**

*There is a slight swell today. It's much warmer MR 423.*

**Monday, 10 May 1948**

*Today is much the same as yesterday. The swell is increasing. Temp 89° MR 407.*

**Tuesday, 11 May 1948**

*There is still a heavy swell with heavy showers of rain. Everyone seems fed up – it has gone on too long. Temp 83°, MR 379.*

**Wednesday, 12 May 1948**

*Everyone is getting keyed up with the hope that it's not much longer now. The weather is the same as yesterday. Temp 79° MR 386.*

**Thursday, 13 May 1948**

*Our mileage is 382, air temp 75°, sea temp 75°. There is still a heavy swell. We are in the Indian Ocean still.*

**Friday, 14 May 1948**

*Today is the day we were expecting to arrive but we will not be there until tomorrow afternoon. Everyone is on edge, waiting. MR 342, air temp 75°.*

**Saturday, 15 May 1948**

*Today is our last day at sea. We arrive Fremantle 3.00pm MR till noon is 378. MT 51. AT 69°, ST 72°.*

**Sunday, 16 May 1948**

*Today another day of goodbyes, but the day we have been waiting for.*