



PODCAST

TRANSCRIPT

Episode 155:

Title: "The Ten Pound Poms"

Duration: 31:08

How to use this transcript:

1. Print this transcript:

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2. Write on it and take notes:

Circle, highlight and note anything that you want. We have even provided space for you to do so!

3. Listen first **without** the transcript:

Don't worry about understanding every single word. Just focus on training your ears to the sound of English.

4. Listen again **with** the transcript:

Listen a second time with the transcript, pausing whenever you want to

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| 00:00 | <p>Welcome to the Déclic Anglais Podcast, THE podcast for intermediate, French-speaking learners of English. This podcast is like a steppingstone (<i>un tremplin</i>) to help you understand more advanced materials in English. There is a transcript (<i>une transcription</i>) available for this and every episode of this podcast. You can download the transcript for free from the link in the description of this episode. Or go to www.declicanglais.com/podcast.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 01:05 | <p>Hello there, dear listeners! Welcome back to <i>The Déclic Anglais Podcast</i>. I'm very happy to have you back with me today, for another Australia-themed episode. My name is Tom, I'm your English teacher and your host on this podcast.</p> <p>In our last episode, we had an introduction to Australia. We explored the geography, the human history, the wildlife (that is, the plants and animals), as well as Australian culture.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 01:57 | <p>In today's episode, we are exploring the story of the Ten Pound Poms – an important part of Australian (and also British) history. The story of the Ten Pound Poms is one of adventure, of hope... But it's also a story of disappointment for many, of homesickness (<i>le mal du pays</i>).</p> <p>So, let's begin!</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |

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| 02:39 | <p>“Ten Pound Pom”... <i>Tom, qu’est-ce ça veut dire ?</i></p> <p>In Australian English, the word “Pom” is a slang term for a British person. (<i>En anglais australien, le mot « Pom » est un terme argotique désignant une personne britannique</i>). Pom isn’t necessarily offensive, but it’s not very polite, either.</p> <p>So, translated literally to French, “Ten Pound Pom” means “<i>les Britanniques à 10 livres</i>”.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 03:34 | <p>Let me explain, dear listeners. In 1945, the Second World War had just ended. Australia had a big problem: they had a vast country, filled with natural resources and booming industries (<i>ils avaient des industries florissantes</i>). But no people! As you can imagine, dear listeners, this was a big problem for the Australian economy.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 04:20 | <p>The Australian government was a bit worried (<i>ils était un peu inquiets</i>), they adopted a “Populate or Perish” policy (<i>une politique de “Remplir ou périr”</i>). That sounds a little bit dramatic, doesn’t it? But the Australian government really believed that if they didn’t increase the population dramatically, Australia would become weak, vulnerable, and that it would not advance.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |

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| 05:10 | <p>So, what did they do? They initiated the Assisted Passage Migration Scheme (<i>le système de migration passage assisté</i>).</p> <p>The idea was to encourage British and Irish people to move to Australia with the promise of abundant opportunities for work, cheap housing (<i>des logements bon marché</i>), and a life in beautiful sunny Australia.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 05:56 | <p>And the cherry on cake, dear listeners, (<i>la cerise sur le gâteau</i>), the price of the ticket to travel to Australia: only £10. Travel to Australia usually cost hundreds of pounds, but the Australian government subsidised (<i>le gouvernement australien a subventionné</i>) most of the cost of the ticket.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 06:46 | <p>Now, one thing that I should say is that this price (£10) is a little bit misleading (<i>c'est un peu trompeur</i>). In 2026, £10 is nothing – it's around €11,50. In 1945 however, £10 was worth a lot more (<i>£10 valaient beaucoup plus en 1945</i>) – it was equivalent to about €600 today. In today's money, it was like having a ticket subsidised from €4,000 to €600. Even in 1945 that was VERY affordable for most British people, especially when you consider that children very often travelled for free.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |

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| 08:04 | <p>Many British and Irish people saw this as a good deal (<i>une bonne affaire</i>). After the Second World War, life in the United Kingdom was very difficult. There were not enough houses, and food was still rationed (<i>la nourriture était encore rationnée</i>). Finding a good job was not easy, and many families struggled (<i>they had a lot of difficulty</i>).</p> <p>(<i>Ecrivez vos notes ici</i>).</p> |
| 08:50 | <p>Australia was presented as the opposite of this situation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Britain is a small, crowded country (<i>la Grande-Bretagne est un petit pays densément peuplé</i>). Australia is a vast country with lots of space - plenty of room to grow! • Are you fed up with the rainy British weather? Go to Australia, where it's blue skies and sunshine. • Are you unemployed? No problem, Australia is an upcoming economy (<i>l'Australie est une économie émergente</i>), we have jobs for everyone! • What better place to raise your children than in Australia? A young country with endless potential. <p>(<i>Ecrivez vos notes ici</i>).</p> |
| 10:05 | <p>The Australian government used posters, films, and brochures to promote this dream. People saw images of modern houses, happy families, and beautiful beaches. Australia looked like a land of opportunity. Many people believed this message and decided to leave Britain, sometimes forever.</p> <p>(<i>Ecrivez vos notes ici</i>).</p> |

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| 10:38 | <p><i>Alors Tom, pourquoi l'Australie a-t-elle principalement ciblé les Britanniques ? Pourquoi n'a-t-elle pas offert cette opportunité à des personnes du monde entier ?</i></p> <p>Well, first and foremost, the Australians targeted British and Irish people because they also felt a little bit British themselves. In 1945, Australia had only recently become an independent country, and many Australians still felt that their country was a kind of extension of Great Britain (<i>En 1945, l'Australie venait tout juste d'accéder à l'indépendance, et de nombreux Australiens considéraient encore leur pays comme une sorte d'extension de la Grande-Bretagne</i>).</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 11:47 | <p>The British monarch was also the monarch of Australia. Most Australians spoke English at home and had many of the same customs and traditions as their British cousins thousands of miles away. They felt that British people would integrate easily into Australian society.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 12:16 | <p>In fact, the migration scheme was open to many places across the British Empire. As I mentioned earlier, Irish people could also migrate. People from some colonies like Malta and Cyprus were eligible, too. A few years later, Australia also opened the scheme to other European countries, like the Netherlands, Italy, and West Germany. After one year living in Australia, the migrants could apply to become full Australian citizens.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |

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| 13:05 | <p><i>Eh bien, ça avait l'air génial ! Alors, tout le monde pouvait profiter de cette initiative ?</i></p> <p>Ah, dear listeners, here's the thing... This scheme was not without controversy. You see, when you applied for the migration scheme, you needed to go for an interview. Why?</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 13:34 | <p>Well, because the Australian authorities did not want to accept just anyone. Australia only wanted young, healthy people, who could work and who importantly – could produce children!</p> <p>If you had a disability (<i>un handicap</i>) – <i>No thank you!</i></p> <p>If you were too old – <i>No thank you!</i></p> <p>If you had a serious illness – <i>No thank you!</i></p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 14:21 | <p>And, very sadly... If you weren't white... <i>No thank you.</i> In those times, dear listeners, the system was also VERY racist. Beginning in the early 20th century, Australia had a "White Australia policy". This meant that the Australian authorities ideally wanted people of white, European heritage only. People of different ethnicities from countries in Africa and Asia were not welcome on the scheme.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |

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| 15:09 | <p>The “White Australia policy” was gradually relaxed, and ended in the 1960s, as more and more ethnicities were permitted to enter Australia. Fortunately, Australia has changed A LOT since the 1940s and 1950s. Modern Australia is very progressive and forward-thinking. Today, it’s a very cosmopolitan country, a true melting pot of many cultures.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 15:48 | <p>Alright then... So, let’s imagine that you have been accepted onto the Assisted Passage Migration Scheme (<i>le système de migration passage assisté</i>). Let’s imagine that you have successfully completed the interview, you have all of the right paperwork, and you have paid your £10. What’s next?</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 16:19 | <p>Well, dear listeners, until the 1970s, air travel (<i>that is, travelling by aeroplanes</i>) was not really an option for the everyday person travelling to Australia - it was only for the super-rich! So, the vast majority of people travelled to big port cities like Southampton and Liverpool, and got on ships filled with migrants.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |

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| 16:55 | <p>The voyage from Southampton (on the south coast of England) to Sydney (on the east coast of Australia) was about twenty-three thousand (23,000) kilometres long. And it wasn't direct, either, dear listeners. The ship often stopped in other ports along the way to refuel (<i>pour se ravitailler</i>), or to pick up more migrants. So, whereas a flight from Europe to Australia might take about 24 hours today in an aeroplane, the sea journey in the 1950s might have taken anywhere from six to eight weeks.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 17:55 | <p>Can you imagine, dear listeners – eight weeks on a ship?! For many migrants, it was also their first time leaving their native countries. Life on these ships wasn't necessarily bad, and people were very excited about their new lives in distant Australia. But as you can imagine, six weeks is a long time to be stuck on a ship - the voyage could certainly be boring, quite monotonous at times.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 18:36 | <p>Ok, so let's fast forward (<i>passons à la suite</i>). You have completed your six weeks on the ship, and finally you arrive in Australia. Ah, paradise on Earth! Right?</p> <p>Err... Not really. When the migrants arrived in Australia, the reality was often very different from what they expected.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |

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| 19:14 | <p>Instead of going directly to a new house, many families were sent to migrant reception centres. These centres were often old army camps or hostels with very basic conditions. Rooms were small, bathrooms were shared between many families. The toilets were sometimes an outdoor latrine.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 19:46 | <p>The migration programme sold people a vision of comfortable, modern homes with big gardens. It was a bit of a shock for the new arrivals, who had just spent 6 weeks on a ship to suddenly find themselves in such bad accommodation.</p> <p>Fortunately, migrants didn't stay in these reception centres for too long. They could move to more suitable accommodation when it became available.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 20:22 | <p>Now, what about the job situation?</p> <p>Most migrants did find work quite quickly; there was work in abundance! (<i>Il y avait du travail en abondance!</i>) But the jobs were often hard and physical. Many people worked in factories, on construction sites, or in agriculture.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |

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| 20:55 | <p>Some migrants were highly educated, but their qualifications were not recognised in Australia. As a result, teachers, engineers, and nurses often had to accept manual jobs. This caused frustration and disappointment, especially for people who felt they had been promised a better life. It was a shock for someone who had studied at university and worked as a teacher in Britain, to suddenly find themselves building a road in the hot Australian sun.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 21:40 | <p>And talking of the sun, the heat (<i>la chaleur</i>) was difficult to handle... But no surprises there, dear listeners - Britain and Ireland don't have a good reputation when it comes to the weather! Australian summers were extremely hot compared to Britain, and many migrants found this very difficult.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 22:12 | <p>The new arrivals in Australia were often teased or even ostracised by the locals. (<i>Les nouveaux arrivants en Australie étaient souvent victimes de moqueries, voire d'ostracisme de la part des habitants locaux</i>).</p> <p>Some Australians called them "whinging Poms" (<i>un peu "des rosbifs pleurnichards"</i>) because they complained about the weather, the food, or the conditions. This made many migrants feel unwelcome and misunderstood.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |

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| 22:58 | <p>Homesickness (<i>le mal du pays</i>) was very common. Some migrants felt very homesick, they missed their families and friends in Britain tremendously. And remember, dear listeners, that in those days communication with Europe was slow. Letters could take weeks to arrive in Britain, and phone calls were expensive and rare.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 23:30 | <p>Many Ten Pound Poms decided to return to Britain. In fact, about one quarter of them (about 250,000) eventually went back. These returnees were sometimes called “boomerang Poms”. And it wasn’t easy to return back to Europe, dear listeners, oh no! Normally you had to stay a minimum of two years in Australia to reimburse the price of your travel ticket. (<i>Normalement, vous deviez rester au moins deux ans en Australie pour rembourser le prix de votre billet de voyage</i>).</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 24:30 | <p>If you wanted to return to Britain sooner, then you needed to pay the full amount of the ticket – many thousands of Euros in today’s money. This meant that returning immediately was not an option for many migrants – they had to stay and adapt. Children often adapted more easily than adults. As we all know, children are like sponges (<i>les enfants sont comme des éponges</i>) – they absorb things and adapt very quickly.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |

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| 25:22 | <p>The kids learned the Australian accent quickly and made friends at school. However, some children still struggled with their identity. At home, they were British, but at school, they were expected to be Australian. Some felt that they belonged to two cultures, while others felt that they did not fully belong anywhere. They were too British to be properly Australian, and too Australian to be properly British.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 26:00 | <p>But despite all these challenges (<i>malgré tous ces obstacles</i>), the majority of Ten Pound Poms stayed in Australia and built successful lives. About a million British and Irish people took advantage of the scheme, and about three quarters of them stayed in Australia permanently. They started families, created businesses, and helped build modern Australian society. Over time, they had a strong influence on Australian culture, especially in areas such as sport, food, music, and everyday life. Their children and grandchildren are now fully Australian.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 27:00 | <p>Many famous and influential Australians alive today are either Ten Pound Poms themselves, or the children (or grandchildren!) of these migrants. Perhaps the best example is Julia Gillard...</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |

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| 27:22 | <p>Julia Gillard was born in a town called Barry, not very far from Cardiff, in South Wales. When she was a little child, Gillard suffered from bronchopneumonia (an inflammation of the lungs (<i>les poumons</i>) that can be fatal). The doctors advised Gillard's parents that it would be much better for their daughter if they lived in a warmer climate. And so, in 1966, Julia Gillard's family moved to Adelaide in South Australia.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 28:14 | <p>Julia Gillard pursued a career in politics, eventually becoming the 27th Prime Minister of Australia in 2010 – the leader of the country's government. Not bad for a Welsh girl! (<i>Pas mal pour une Galloise !</i>)</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 28:42 | <p>The Assisted Passage Migration Scheme (that is the "Ten Pound Pom scheme") officially ended in 1972. By that time, Australia had begun to change its migration policies. The country slowly became more multicultural and started welcoming migrants from many different parts of the world, such as Asia.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |

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| 29:19 | <p>Today, the story of the Ten Pound Poms is remembered with mixed feelings. For some, it is seen as a story of courage and hope, but for others, it's remembered as a story of broken promises and some very difficult experiences.</p> <p>Books, documentaries, and television series have told their stories, and many families still remember that journey as a moment that changed their lives forever.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 29:57 | <p>You might be interested in a TV series from the BBC about this subject. "Ten Pound Poms" follows the story of the Roberts family, who in 1956 leave post-war Britain for Australia, with the hope of finding a better life. They soon realise that Australia isn't exactly what was promised to them, and the series follows their adaptation to the new country.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 30:31 | <p>Well, there we are then, dear listeners. I hope you have enjoyed learning the interesting story of the Ten Pound Poms. If you enjoy this podcast, don't forget to give us a "like", and to share us with your friends. This helps us reach as many people as possible.</p> <p>Until the next time, dear listeners, take care of yourselves, and have a lovely week. Bye for now!</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |

How did it go?

Take a moment to revisit the notes that you took.

List here 3 words or expressions (minimum) that you would like to remember from this podcast. We recommend that you consult a free, online dictionary like

www.wordreference.com to ensure that you have the correct definition and context.

WORDS/EXPRESSIONS THAT I WANT TO REMEMBER:

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