Britishness, Identity and Citizenship: the view from abroad

The English in Australia: a non-nation in search of an ethnicity?

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Abstract

Whilst much attention has been devoted to the consequences of immigration into England, less has been paid to what happens to the English when they migrate themselves. This paper will argue that English migrants in Australia do not see themselves as a distinct ethnic group. This is because, firstly, since the end of the War, English migrants have been trapped between an official discourse of racial and cultural commonality between Britons and Australians (disputed by many Australians who feared English migrants would take their jobs) and the subsequent official Australian policy of multiculturalism (disputed by English migrants who did not and do not see themselves as a distinct ethnic group). Secondly, and on a deeper level, the English have been historically conditioned not to think of themselves in terms of a distinct nationality, since this would destabilize both the United Kingdom and the Empire. While some English migrants have recently begun to organize themselves as "the English in Australia", the hyphenated sense of belonging common among other migrant groups remains rare in the case of "English-Australians". The paper concludes that the English in Australia have been trapped between a racialised British notion of nationhood on the one hand and a multicultural understanding of Australian nationality on the other, neither of which they fit into particularly comfortably.

Introduction

Australia boasts many impressive tourist attractions. Sydney Harbour, Uluru and the Great Barrier Reef are must-see destinations for any tourist venturing Down Under. Less well known, though no less important for the purposes of this essay, is Cockington Green. Located in the north of the Australian Capital Territory, Cockington Green opened its doors to the public in 1979 and has been one of Canberra's most popular tourist attractions ever since. Inside the grounds, the visitor will find a miniature English village, complete with miniature church, miniature pub and miniature football ground. A miniature train trundles past a miniature Stonehenge and this entire simulation of English country life is situated within an impressive life-size English garden.

The idea for Cockington Green came to its founders, Doug and Brenda Sarah, after a visit to England in 1972, when they visited a similar model village in Torquay, Devon. In this sense, Cockington Green is emblematic of the links that exist between England and Australia and the important legacy of English migration to Oz. Although Australia is often portrayed as the most "Catholic" or "Irish" of all the former British Dominions, the impact of migration from England is statistically greater, although less explicitly stated and organized in public life. In 1901 English-born residents of Australia totaled 393 321 people, over ten per cent of the Australian population of 3 773 801. Although as a percentage, the English-born declined as the century drew on, representing 4.3 per cent of the total population, at 856 940 they were still the largest overseas-born nationality in Australia at the time of the 2006 census.[i] Despite this numerical preponderance, James Jupp has noted that 'the outstanding characteristic of the mass, mainly working class, migration of the 1950s and 1960s is that it has not created a viable English community', noting that 'English organisations are few

and far between'.[ii] This has led other experts to characterize the English as 'Australia's invisible migrants' (Hammerton and Thompson, 2005). However, there is an extra dimension to understanding the English in Australia and that is the self-awareness of the English themselves as a distinct national, cultural or even ethnic group. This paper will argue that the English in Australia occupy a strange sort of no-man's land in multicultural Australia.   During the largest, sustained period of immigration from the British Isles to Australia, from 1947 to 1983, the English were told by their old and new governments that they were British and hence that they and the Australians were essentially the same. This message contrasted starkly with the reception, both material and personal, that some migrants received when they arrived in their new land. Furthermore, when the policy of assimilation shifted to one of official multiculturalism in the 1970s, the English were not well equipped as a collectivity to adopt the new language of ethnicity or to consider themselves a minority in anything other than a defensive sense of a group having been denied rights and a "fair go". By examining official records and looking at the activities of organizations established to help new arrivals from the United Kingdom, this paper hopes to illustrate why many English people in Australia felt neither Australian nor merely as if they were "just another ethnic group".

Ambiguous Immigrants

There is, of course, a word for all of this: "pommy"[1]. An examination of the etymology and usage of this word sheds light on two main issues. The first of these is the ambiguous nature of the word itself and hence Australian attitudes towards English people in general and the second is the close relationship between the development of a nativist Australian

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[1] It is interesting to note that the header entry "pommy" is followed by "poofter" in the Oxford Australian Dictionary. The entry for 1985 hints at the relationship of these two concepts in the Australian idiom: Sydney Morning Herald 20 June 11/6 '[Joseph] Banks was a pooftah.' 'Have you got any proof of that?' 'He was a botanist and a pommy – what more proof do you want?'

nationalism, particularly from the later nineteenth century and an English or British "other". The *Oxford Australian Dictionary* defines POMMY as:

A. *n.* An equivocal term for an immigrant from the British Isles; applied also, more recently, to an inhabitant of the British Isles (esp. of England)… See also POM and WHINGEING POM.
B. *attrib.* or as *adj.*
  1. Of or pertaining to a 'pommy'; British, English. Esp. (often as a term of affectionate abuse) as **pommy bastard**.

However, the Oxford English Dictionary Online is less enamoured with the term:

Pom, n.^{2} (and *adj.*)
Austral. and *N.Z. colloq.* (usu. *derogatory*).

Differing interpretations of the intent behind the word were brought to public attention in the summer of 2006-07 by an advertising campaign for an Australian beer ahead of the England cricket team's Ashes tour of that summer. The advert in question was for Tooheys New Supercold, described by the beer's brewer, Lion Nathan, as 'product innovation' which meant that Tooheys New could now be bought and consumed as sub-zero temperatures. The advert featured a glass of Toohey's New Supercold alongside various slogans such as "Let the whingeing begin. It's a Pom's worst nightmare" and "Sends shivers down a Pom's spine" (Advertising Standards Bureau, 488/06, 12 December 2006). A complaint was brought against Lion Nathan under section 2.1 of the Advertising Standards Code (Discrimination or Vilification of Nationality) by a group named British People Against Racial Discrimination (BPARD)

from Western Australia and Victoria whose members stated that 'the racial terminology POM is offensive to us personally and to a significant number of English people generally' (Advertising Standards Bureau, 488/06, 12 December 2006). The complaint was picked up by the press on both sides of the Australian continent and was sympathetically viewed by Western Australia's Ethnic Community Council (ECC). The ECC president, Ramdas Sankaran, was quoted as saying that ' The word Pom is no better than other racial slurs used to describe ethnic groups or indigenous people and it has no place in Australia' (quoted in *perthnow*, 18 December 2006). However the Advertising Standards Bureau (ASB) dismissed the case, concluding that 'the term is used largely with non-hostile, playful and often affectionate intentions' (Advertising Standards Bureau, 488/06, 12 December 2006). The ASB's director, Mr Mark Jeannes argued that "Pom" could not be compared to harsher monikers like wog or coon and is probably closer to calling someone a Kiwi or Aussie, especially when more often than not in Australia it is used in an affectionate manner' (quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 January 2007). But when Lion Nathan rolled out a radio advert which featured men singing "Land of Hope and Glory" but with revised lyrics such as "whinge, whine, bang-on, gripe, grumble", the ASB upheld BPARD's second claim under Section 2.1. Stating that 'racial terminology should not be used to advertise products', BPARD's director, Mr Dave Thomason argued that 'contrary to the belief of many Australians, the word "Pom" was, has and still is being used as a racist slur. It is not and never will be a term of endearment' (quoted in *The Australian*, 27 January 2007).[2]

According to the *Oxford Australian Dictionary*, the first recorded use of the word "Pom" was in November 1912, when it appeared in two Sydney

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[2] As of January 2007, BPARD was preparing a submission to the United Nations to have the word "Pom" ruled as racial discrimination. At the same time in Australia, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) had dismissed complaints that the word was derogatory on two occasions (*Australian*, 27 January 2007).

newspapers, *The Truth* and *The Bulletin* (*Oxford Australian Dictionary*, 1988). The latter, known colloquially as "the Bushman's Bible", had been at the mouthpiece of a nativist, republican nationalism during the early 1890s (McKenna, 1996). The date 1912 is significant since it locates the development of "Pom" at an interesting juncture in the development of nationalism in Australia. The word itself is an abbreviation of "pomegranate" which was itself a play on the word "immigrant" which was used to refer to the reddish complexion of new, sun-burnt arrivals. During the nineteenth century the tern "New Chum" was more common, but "pom" made its appearance just as the movement for Federation had achieved its major goal. The six Australian colonies federated in 1901 around the issues of trade and defence, bound to each other and the British Empire through ties of race, as well as notions that becoming a nation would eradicate the "convict stain" which some believed blighted the character of the descendents of those people transported to the Antipodes. November 1912 was also barely two years before the outbreak of the Great War. It was this war which reinforced the equivocal relationship to England and Britain within Australian nationalism. The landings in the Dardanelles of 25 April 1915 provided subsequent Australian nationalists such as the official war correspondent CEW Bean or the film maker Peter Weir with ample material by which to contrast Australians and Britons. In a nationalist twist on the "lions led by donkeys" interpretation of the First World War, narratives such as Bean's and Weir's put forward a case for *British* military incompetence resulting in the death of *Australians*. However, unlike national founding moments in the United States, India or Ireland, here was a war of national birth fought *with* an imperial power rather than against it. No less important than these national narratives were the experience of diggers on leave in England itself. Kosmas Tsokhas has argued that 'for many Australian troops during World War I, the more they were exposed to the British class system, to the sharp inequalities

and layers of poverty in British Industrial cities, the more they came to realize that Britain was not home' (Tsokhas, 2001: 151). Nevertheless, the experience of fighting a common enemy in Europe and the Middle East did engender fellow feeling in some Australians, so that by the War's end, resentment and affection existed side-by-side.

The second major war of the twentieth century not only generated equivocal feelings about Britain and Britons in Australia, but generated equivocal feelings in Britain about the Empire and Australians too. Commissioned during the height of the Singapore crisis, a report from Mass Observation enquired into popular attitudes towards Australians. The report concluded 'Most people think that Australians are a fine, virile people, particularly good fighters. But as a race a considerable portion think of them as less developed than the British, and as individuals some consider then rather "crude"' (Mass Observation Archive, FR1094, February 1942). But this overall feeling of goodwill was curtailed in certain regards. One commentator wrote that Australians were 'full of too hearty, back-slapping democracy which turns easily to truculence' whilst another asked rhetorically 'Why is it that when an English colony is given Dominion status it seems to lose all the best of the culture of the Mother Country?' The greatest scorn was reserved for the Australo-British retreat in the Malayan Peninsular:

> I'm a bit ashamed of the Australians, one always thought them so brave and their troops so valiant and tough, yet they seem to have got into a thorough panic about the possibility of a Jap invasion. Good gracious, surely they have seen it coming for months, had they made no preparations, that they had to come pleading for help in such a hurry to all and sundry, and making such a fuss that they weren't receiving enough care and attention? We didn't make half as much fuss about the imminent and deadly peril of

invasion that we were subject to the last eighteen months - I don't remember that we appealed to help from anybody (Mass Observation Archive, FR1094, February 1942).

Other observers were, however, more sensitive to the situation in the Far East. One noted that the Australians' 'present grumbles are very well founded since the AIF has suffered heavy losses in tragic and badly conducted campaigns such as Greece, Crete and now Malaya. In addition the sense of false security concerning Singapore which the British government disseminated has had - and looks like having - particularly disastrous results for Australia' (Mass Observation Archive, FR1094, February 1942). Another commentator felt that Australian attitudes to Britain were to be explained by origins as much as the current military-political situation:

I have always felt that they remained in the British Empire for convenience only, not because they have any special ties or affection for us. This is hardly to be wondered at because the Commonwealth was colonised by people who were transported to Australia for penal offences in England. It is not a good basis on which loyalty and affection for the mother country are likely to flourish (Mass Observation Archive, FR1094, February 1942).

Added to this specific set of attitudes towards Australians, the Second World War also generated a keen sense of nationality amongst the people of the British Isles, although the results of another Mass Observation survey conducted in September and October 1941 revealed a surprising lack of "Britishness" amongst respondents. The survey found that the top five images people reached for when asked to think about Britain were the land and countryside; government, politics and administration; the people; home; and history and traditions. The Royal Family and the

Union Jack came tenth and sport and religion were placed thirteenth and fourteenth respectively (Mass Observation Archive, FR904, October 1941). The dominant vision of England rested heavily on an idealised version of the countryside: One engineer aged thirty-five wrote: 'I mainly think of certain views and villages, of Poole harbour from the Purbecks, of the Duddon from about half way up. Of villages such as Dent, Coxwold etc. Little towns such as Tewkesbury, Marlborough, Henly. Then sometimes of horrible roads plastered with advertisements each side of places like Sheffield on a wet and gloomy day' (Mass Observation Archive, FR904, October 1941). In an article for *World Review* based on Mass Observation panel replies, Bob Wilcox concluded that

> Britain is felt to be somewhat symbolic and rather impersonal, whereas England (or whichever other country the person lives in) is more personal, intimate. The English regard England as something which belongs to them and which they care for in the same sort of way as they care for personal property. Britain is a wider unit and an astonishing number of people, irrespective of education or politics, talk about Britain as if it were a unit of four countries, the one in which they live and three others, all foreigners (Mass Observation Archive, FR904, October 1941).

Added to this deepening of an English, as opposed to a British, sense of nationality, research published in the *Daily Graphic* on 2 and 3 November 1948, seemed to reveal an astonishing lack of knowledge about the Empire. Although 84% of people questioned felt that Britain would be worse off without the Empire, fully 17% could in fact name no part of the Empire and 56% could not name an event that had taken place in the Empire recently (India and Pakistan had become independent the year before). However, those who could name part of the Empire most frequently named Australia (76%), followed by Canada

(66%) and then New Zealand (52%) (Mass Observation Archive, FR306a, November 1948).

It was into this apathetic or willfully-ignorant attitude towards the Empire that the Assisted Migration Scheme began operation in 1947. If the above figures are correct, then we can perhaps establish that the Australian government's messages about the racial commonality between Britons and Australians and the ease of settling in Australia to the prospective migrants in Britain may have had a disproportionate impact. Writing in the first edition of *Tomorrow's Australians* in a column entitled 'Settling In', Larry Boys painted a picture of Australia as a refuge from post-War Europe, one particularly suited to migrants from Britain:

> The urge to emigrate after a war is an almost racial instinct in Europeans. Britishers are no exception. They sell up their house and furniture, relinquish their little grocer's shop or their safe job on the Town Council, and join a queue for a migrant ship... Quietly, unostentatiously, they are settling down happily to become good Australian citizens (Boys, 1948).

The theme of Australia as a land almost reserved for migrants from the British Isles was underlined by the Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell. However, this special status for migrants from Britain had to be underlined whilst at the same time admitting that there were simply not enough potential migrants in Britain alone and that the Australian government would need to look elsewhere in Europe in its bid to populate Australia's wide spaces with twenty million people by the end of the twentieth century. This dilemma was particularly acute in the first years of the migration scheme when the demand for labour in Australia was high, but the available shipping on the UK-Australia run was low. In the first edition of *Tomorrow's Australians* Minister Calwell was quoted as

saying, 'I give this assurance to the people of Britain and their kinfolk who are awaiting them here, that no British subject wishing to migrate to Australia will be denied a berth by the sailing of a non-British migrant' (*Tomorrow's Australians*, 12 April 1948). In contrast to 2006, when the terminology of race was deployed by BPARD as a means of distinguishing Britons and Australians, race was used in the post-War period as a means of overcoming divisions or suspicions between established settlers and new arrivals. In a letter written for the London *Daily Graphic* and re-printed in *Tomorrow's Australians* in August 1948, Calwell argued that 'Every individual Briton has a stake in Australia whether he is aware of it or not', adding 'I, and all Australians, believe that if anyone should share in our national destiny it is our kinsmen from the little islands of our forefathers' (*Tomorrow's Australians*, 9 August 1948). But these assertions of kinship between Australia and Britain existed alongside articles designed to allay fears and thus contributed to the communication of mixed messages in the pages of promotional literature such as *Tomorrow's Australians*. The attentive reader could discern straws in the wind regarding the attitude of some Australians towards new arrivals. 'We Australians are prone to frown upon the advent of "the foreigner"', wrote Mr P Wilkins, Federal Secretary of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of Australia and member of the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Committee. 'Because of our geographic isolation we are possibly more insular than our British kinsfolk, whose proximity to the Continent makes them far more tolerant of the foreigner than Australians' (*Tomorrow's Australians*, 10 May 1948). The prospective migrant from the British Isles might have been forgiven for asking if he or she was indeed a "foreigner" or not. Certainly, the advent of Australian citizenship in 1948 did not affect the status of Australians as British subjects and technically the "alien-born" were not those born in the United Kingdom. So the prospective migrant would have had to look at

more popular responses to discern the nature and extent of their inclusion and exclusion in the Australian community. Larry Boys brought up this subject on the pages of Tomorrow's Australians in June 1948. 'A correspondent has asked me what we are to do about ironing out expressions like Reffo, Dago, Eyetie, Yid and Pommy', concurring with the letter writer that 'tagging offensive names onto newcomers is one sure way of retarding their assimilation into the Australian community (Boys, 1948b). However, Boys elides the disturbing implication that pommies can be lumped in with precisely the type of foreigner that English people themselves may have looked down upon in their homeland. Presaging future debates, Boys concluded that 'it will only be a matter of time until the "Dago" nicknames atrophy and die, or become innocuous colloquial diminutives like Aussie, Mick, Taff, Jock and Kiwi' (Boys, 1948b). This is not to say that all migrants from England experienced negative attitudes on their arrival in Australia. Hammerton and Thomson's research shows that for many English and British migrants, emigration to Australia was a liberating experience. However, their research has also shown that a high number of "ten pound poms", up to twenty-five per cent of all assisted migrants, returned to England for a variety of reasons, some disappointed with their time in Australia (Hammerton and Thomson, 2005: 264). An understanding of the construction of English nationality will help us understand this migrant experience.

It will be useful at this stage to introduce some discussion of the ways in which Englishness has been analysed in recent years in order to help explain the English in Australia. In his *The Making of English National Identity*, Kumar argues that the English, to some extent consciously and systematically, played down their own sense of nationality, at times paying up the nationality and ethnicities of other groups, because to emphasise their own nationality would have been a threat to running of

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the multi-national state and empire of which they were the "core nation" (Kumar, 2003). Thus for Kumar, nation and empire are broadly incompatible and we see the emergence of a truly and explicitly English nationalism only at times when the empire is in crisis - especially the 1890s - and when the British state itself is under threat of dissolution – the 1990s.

Kumar's argument has been extensively and robustly critiqued (see for example Hutchinson, Reynolds, Smith, Colls and Kumar, 2007). What is of value to this discussion of the English in Australia is Kumar's concept of the 'imperial nation', albeit with some modifications. 'Empires', writes Kumar, 'though in principle opposed to claims of nationality, may be the carriers of a certain kind of national identity which gives to the dominant groups a special sense of themselves and their destiny' (Kumar, 2003: 33). Kumar cites several examples of this type of imperial nation in support of his argument: the Turks; the Austrians; the Russians and, of course, the English. We should, however, nuance this concept in two ways. Firstly, the idea of "core" and "peripheral" nations needs to be treated carefully. We should not always see the English as dominant, particularly when compared to powerful groups within the British state and Empire such as Scots politicians, of whom their have been many in the higher echelons of the British government since the Treaty of Union in 1707. Nor should we see places such as Australia as necessarily peripheral when it comes to the construction of Britishness. Paul Pickering has shown that where the Chartists failed in Great Britain, they succeeded in Australia, establishing the payment of MPs, the secret ballot, three-year (if not annual) parliaments and other aspects of the Chartist programme by the end of the nineteenth century (Pickering, 2001: xx). All this, amongst developments in other parts of the Empire, helped contributed to the notion of the British Empire as a democratic association of free peoples well into the twentieth century, an assessment

of the Empire still debated by historians today (Fergusson, xxxx: xx). And whist it would be churlish to add a critique from one's own field to such a wide-ranging thesis such as Kumar's, it is interesting to note that the experience of empire gets comparatively little attention in Kumar's analysis. In other words, we should be aware that the experience of empire did help generate a sense of national feeling in England beyond providing interesting lithographs in the *London Illustrated News*.

Elsewhere, I have tried to argue that empire and nation and Britishness and Englishness were not incompatible or uneasy bedfellows, but were in fact merged (Wellings 2002; Wellings 2007). The evidence cited above would seem to support this, in as much as English people were encouraged – when they thought about it at all – to think of themselves as part of a wider category of belonging that just the "merely" national. It was membership of this wider community of Britons that allowed English people benefits such as subsidized migration to lands where meat was plentiful, housing was supposedly affordable and the sun made a regular appearance in the sky. In this way, "the Empire" as an abstract notion, helped contribute to a general sense that England was a 'top nation', even if most English people were largely ignorant of what the Empire was for, how it operated or even where it was.

For the English in Australia, this conception of Englishness and its relationship to other nationalities in the Empire or Commonwealth had two important consequences. The first was that some people did indeed fit in very quickly and unostentatiously. The other stemmed from a sense of betrayal that the reception of English migrants was not was expected from "kinsmen" such as Australians and that the English should not be considered as another minority group. This position is underlined by looking at the United Kingdom Settlers' Association (UKSA) from its establishment in 1967 to the present day. UKSA was created as

'a non-political and non-denominational organization to represent the interests of all settlers from the United Kingdom' (*United Kingdom Settlers' Association Newsletter,* July 1969). Here again was a capacious understanding of nationality. Unlike the Caledonian Society or other national societies, UKSA was 'non-denominational' and was designed to assists people from all over the British Isles. Some of its initial aims were practical, such as campaigning for the acceptance of UK degrees, diplomas and technical qualifications in Australia. Other aims were more open-ended such as 'cooperating with Federal and State Governments and Australians in general, with a view to overcoming prejudice and misunderstanding between settlers and existing residents' (*United Kingdom Settlers' Association Newsletter,* July 1969). It was this latter concern that would dominate UKSA by the turn of the century.

One recurring theme of the first three years of UKSA's existence is that of the difficulty of mobilizing settlers from the UK into the organization. The Association struggled for support – literally at times. The 'Soccer Club News' from May 1970 bemoaned that 'the very few members who took the time and trouble to support their team saw a good game of soccer and thoroughly enjoyed themselves at the Supper Dance provided by the Yallourn Branch of U.K.S.A' (*United Kingdom Settlers' Association Newsletter,* May 1970). Cartoons and commentary in other Newsletters worried at the lack of people acting as welcoming committees for new arrivals and a survey conducted by UKSA found that although recent arrivals on the piers at Melbourne's docks were pleased to see the UKSA Welcoming Group, 'the meeting on the pier did not register an lasting thought of the U.K.S.A.' and that 'not many people in the hostels join' the Association (*United Kingdom Settlers' Association Newsletter,* May 1970). The reason given for the latter observation was the not many people in the Commonwealth Hostels had access to a car and were therefore

unable to get to UKSA social and administrative functions. Changing modes of transport may also have affected UKSA's ability to recruit lasting members. UKSA was established at the time when jet airliners started to replace sea liners as the main means of reaching Australia. Cheaper fares and shorter times to return "home" may have weakened the cohesiveness of any incipient English or British group in Australia. One of UKSA's main roles in its early years was the arranging of charter flights back to the United Kingdom. Writing after a return to the UK for Christmas in 1968, the Association President Mr G. A. Howard, wrote that

> It was with deep pride that my wife and I greeted the Christmas Charter Flight when it arrived in London, I am sure that with the excitement of arriving and the frantic looking for relations we were not much noticed, but we did get some good films of the Members coming through the Customs Hall and with faces beaming, greeting their loved ones and friends (*United Kingdom Settlers' Association Newsletter,* February 1969).

Such an oversight of the UKSA representatives might be understandable after a long flight on a Boeing 707, but the problem seemed to haunt UKSA. In July 1970, Howard wrote in the 'President's Message' that 'I am disappointed, however, with so few replies on the subject of "Headquarters" for the Association... and it surprises me that over 7000 members must feel indifferent to such a significant issue that concerns them. I am positive that ALL our members' interest are not solely on concession flights...' (*United Kingdom Settlers' Association Newsletter,* July 1970). This seeming difficulty for the Association to attract and interest membership beyond returning home does suggest a lack of cohesion amongst the target audience in Australia and one which can be explained beyond structural changes such as improving transport links

between the England and Australia, and one which the concept of England as an 'imperial nation' helps shed light on.

However, the England was only one of the donor countries for migration into Australia in the decades after World War Two. Significant migration also came from countries such as Italy and Greece as well as regions such as the Baltic states and Balkans. Initially, the policy of successive Australian governments was that of "assimilation", whereby the migrants would ultimately speak English and abandon their own cultures in favour of an Anglo-Australian one (Davidson, 1997: 122). As late as 1972, Liberal Prime Minister William McMahon re-stated the aims of Australia's immigration policies in the following terms:

> …the aim of immigration policy remains the preservation in Australia of an essentially homogenous society. That means a society that does not have permanent minorities of people with extremely different backgrounds that will resist integration in the long-term. We want one Australian people, one Australian nation' (National Archives of Australia, A1838/399).

However, this official policy of assimilation changed after the election of December 1972 with the election of the reforming Labor government under the leadership of Gough Whitlam. Although the Whitlam government was ousted in 1975, the policy of "multiculturalism" that replaced assimilation received bi-partisan support until the mid-1990s with the election of the Liberal-National Coalition in 1996. During this period, multiculturalism became an important feature of Australian society and politics, and one which conservatives feared would rob Australia of a strong sense of national community. In order to allay such concerns the National Agenda for Multicultural Australia of 1989 re-stated the fundamental position of the Australian government as such:

Our British heritage is extremely important to us. It helps us define an Australian. It has created a society that is remarkable for the freedom it can give to its individual citizens. It is a large part of what makes Australia attractive to migrants and visitors (cited in Davidson, 1997: 167).

The report also emphasized that the purpose of policies of multiculturalism were not to dilute or undermine Australian national identity, but government and the state's capacities to 'respond flexibly to the needs of an ethnically mixed population' (cited in Davidson, 1997: 167).

This passage illustrates some of the difficulty that the English in Australia confronted when multiculturalism became established policy. Australia's British heritage meant that people from the Britain were already part Australian, a message that remained constant since the beginning of the assisted migration scheme in 1947. But their experience of migration often suggested otherwise. Furthermore, now that government policy was oriented towards the provision of services through organizations based on ethnic affiliation, the English, who never seemed to have considered themselves as an ethnic group – the antithesis of an imperial nation, were ill-equipped to operate in such an environment. In a society where ethnicity and identity were important social categories, resentment emerged on behalf of groups who could not conceive of them selves easily in such terms. In late 1990s **[check exact date]** the UKSA changed its name to the British-Australian Community and shifted its activities from the 'non-political and non-denominational' organization of 1967 to now promoting 'the past and present culture of the British Isles… with a view to overcoming prejudice and misunderstanding regarding British people and their descendents'

(British Australian Community, 'Constitutional Objectives, 2005). The UKSA had drifted into a defensive posture, aimed at countering perceived Australia prejudice and an organization which, like BPARD in 2006, understood this discrimination in racial terms.

It is interesting to enquire as to how this reversal of race, from an ideology which bound Britons and Australians to one which divided them, came about. As the 1990s progressed, the English conception of themselves shifted back in the "home country" too. The issue of mass immigration *into* England, also from 1947, had started to play an important part in British and especially English self identification. Enoch Powell is perhaps the figure best associated with this development from about the end of the second War to the late 1990s. The English now began to see themselves, somewhat reluctantly and resentfully, in more ethnic terms as the society around them became more culturally diverse and a society of net immigration rather than net emigration [although only just – **see UK Statistics on population flows**]. One respondent to a Mass Observation Archive survey on immigration in 2000 noted that 'I suffer from the most severe misfortune of current times; I am an Englishman born and thus have never been able to take advantage of British generosity of a foreigner' (Mass Observation Archive, Summer 2000: R470). Another respondent to the same survey linked this new wave of immigration to England to older rights assumed under the Empire and Commonwealth: 'I have come to the conclusion that it would be easier for someone from, say, a Balkan country, to gain permission to live here, than it would for me, a fully paid-up member of the British tax payers' club and financially self-sufficient, to gain residential rights in, say, Australia' (Mass Observation Archive, 2000: S2246). In this way, post-War immigration, particularly in the 1950s and at the turn of the twentieth century led to the expressions of views which did see the

English or British in terms of a (resentful) minority, mirroring the language used by UKSA in Australia:

> I had always held very left-wing views and even as a boy assumed the world's races would eventually become intermingled and approved of the prospect. Different matter now that it's started to happen… We British are now an ethnic minority in our own country (Mass Observation Archive, Summer 2000: W1382).

However, most of these respondents were in their 60s and 70s and, as we have seen above, the issue of race played a large role in conflating the idea of being English and British. In the 1990s newer sense of being English emerged and one which was, in large measure, a response to constitutional change within the United Kingdom and the success of home rule and nationalist movements in Wales, Northern Ireland and in particular, Scotland during this decade. On a cultural level, much of this Englishness found expression in a carnival-esque support for the England football team, although some authors dispute that this support is anything more than ephemeral and is actually subordinate to stronger sources of identification with nationally-diverse football clubs providing a local loyalty or brand allegiance (See Conder et al 2006 and xx 2007). Unlike racially-derived notions of Englishness, this newer form of identification did make the distinction between being English and British. It was also during the 1990s that the English in Australia did begin to organize themselves as The English in Australia (TEA). TEA was formed in **199x** forming around the concrete issue of non-transferable pension rights from the United Kingdom to Australia. Although the Royal Society of St George was established in Melbourne in 1848 (as the Society of St George), this was an empire-loyalty organization. TEA, by contrast is post-imperial. **[More on TEA Canberra and FECCA to follow]**.

Conclusion

The conflated sense of being English and British became doubly important for the English in Australia. Encouraged in the post- War years to consider themselves as British in order to ease their transition from England to Australia, English migrants were not in the habit of thinking of themselves as an "ethnic group". Rather, they were the 'imperial nation' and hence the shock of some migrants at the reception they received on arrival. Once the official immigration policy and its attendant notion of social cohesion shifted from "assimilation" to "multiculturalism" in the 1970s, the English were ill-placed to fit into this new accommodation of difference in Australia.

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