

# A Migrant's Story

Mementos











## FOREWORD



Randwick City is home to 104 different national or ethnic groups. With 38.3% of Randwick City residents born overseas, migrants enrich our community through integrating their unique culture with the Australian spirit.

I must congratulate all who have been involved in this amazing project; since the inauguration of the *A Migrant's Story* in 2003, 6 publications have been launched with over 145 migrants sharing their life experiences, highlighting the pain and joy of their migrant journey.

The stories and imagery contained in this book are testaments to the strength of character, regard for family and the importance of home.

I have so enjoyed leafing through this collection and have been deeply touched by the heartfelt, poignant words expressed by the migrants who have participated. I know that you will be as inspired as I have, as you discover the common humanity in these twenty, diverse stories of precious mementos and the powerful memories they evoke.

Cr Scott Nash  
The Mayor of Randwick

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, flowing 'S' followed by a smaller 'N' and a few trailing strokes.



Name: Adelheid Fait

## MEMENTO: PASSPORT



I treasure this memento (passport) of my previous life in Europe, since it is one of the few things to survive my journey to Australia.

I grew up in a small town near Belgrade in the former Yugoslavia, and my family were Donau Schwaben (Danube Germans), an ethnic group who maintained their German language and culture. Because of this, my family, like other Donau Schwaben, were interned by Yugoslavia during the war, my parents dying in the camp.

After the War, Germany offered asylum and resettlement to ethnic Germans such as Donau Schwaben, so I decided to move to make a fresh start by moving to Bonn where I met my future husband. He wanted to get as far as possible from Europe and the War and make a better life for us in Australia. He came out first in 1956 and I followed him on the M.S. Skaubryn in March 1958 from Bremerhaven for what turned out to be its last voyage.

Apart from seasickness, the voyage went well until a fire broke out and spread through the boat and all 1288 passengers had to evacuate. I just had time to get my handbag which had my passport before getting into the lifeboat.

The Skaubryn sank but we were all rescued, apart from one person who died of a heart attack. We were taken to Aden, the nearest port off the coast in Africa, arriving on Good Friday. The British army put us up in a newly finished hospital and the Red Cross provided us with some basic clothes and belongings to continue our journey to Australia.

I boarded the MS Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, a much larger passenger ship than Skaubryn, for my (thankfully) uneventful journey to Australia. My only possessions when I arrived in Australia were my handbag, passport and the few clothes provided by the Red Cross. The handbag and clothes are long gone, so my passport is a very special reminder of my dramatic journey to Australia.



Name: Barbara Todes

## MEMENTO : TWO AFRICAN DOLLS



I arrived in Australia from South Africa in 1991 a few weeks after getting married and settled in Randwick. I was fortunate to get a job immediately at Ultimo TAFE library, then a few months later at Manly Library as Manager. I had no intention of having children and my job took up a lot of my life, as did commuting between Randwick and Manly.

My biological clock must have suddenly started ticking three years after migrating, because at 37 I changed my mind and immediately fell pregnant with twin girls. I returned to South Africa when three months pregnant to visit friends and family before my life changed irrevocably. I bought these two African dolls as mementos of my country for the girls.

They are Ndabela matrons wearing beaded aprons and headpieces with traditional designs, metal bands around their necks and ankles and beaded blankets around their shoulders. They are each carrying a baby on their back.

I love the bright colours and geometric designs created by Ndabele women, which feature in their beading and decorate the outside of their houses.

Ndabele dolls come in different forms and are not meant to be played with, but are cultural symbols which represent the different stages of a girl's life.

I will keep these dolls until the girls claim them - maybe when they have their first child - until then I am happy for them to decorate my dress table, which I also brought from South Africa.





Name: Claudia Gamboa

## MEMENTO: GUITAR



My child's guitar was given to me by my Dad when I was around 6 years old. I was very excited to receive a brand new guitar, plus it was the cutest thing as it was a child size one.

It was given to me as a birthday present to encourage me to learn to play an instrument. Dad thought it would be a great idea since I spent most of my time singing away, oblivious to anyone around me. I was enrolled in guitar lessons and learnt quite a bit even though I must admit I was not very dedicated. I think I enjoyed singing more than playing the guitar,

this does not mean I could sing very well either, it just means for me singing was a great pastime where I could forget about things I did not like.

My parents divorced when I was around 6 and my Dad moved to Venezuela and then Albuquerque for the next 10 years, so I did not get to see him much before I came to Australia. I immigrated to Australia with my mum and siblings when I was 16 years old which meant seeing my Dad became even harder to achieve. I went twice back to Chile and visited my Dad in Albuquerque, my last visit was in 1994.

I chose to bring my guitar because it meant a lot to me and it was something that linked me with my dad. I have kept even though it has deteriorated with time because for me it is like having a bit of Dad with me. Every now and then I look at it and it makes me remember some good times we had together and also the times when I was trying to learn to play. I had a lot of fun with my guitar.

I guess it is hard for others to understand how an item can have so much meaning in your life. A memento can sometimes bring so many feelings out, either sad or happy, and when they bring feelings which are deeply buried in your heart, they are worth keeping.





Name: Fabian Fuste Torres

## MEMENTO: A SMALL STATUE OF CUBA'S PATRON SAINT: THE VIRGIN OF CHARITY DE COBRE

I brought the statue with me when I came to Australia in 2009. I knew that I would be living the rest of my life here and to me, the Virgin is an important part of being Cuban. I have prayed to her for many things and she has now provided me with a chance of freedom which I didn't have in Cuba.

The importance of the Virgin to Cuban history started over 400 years ago in about 1615. Two native Cubans and an African slave went out in their boat to collect salt in a bay east of Cuba. While out in the bay, a storm arose. The slave was wearing a medal with the image of the Virgin Mary. The three men prayed to the Virgin to protect them and suddenly, the storm was gone. They looked up and found a statue of the Virgin on top of a wooden table floating in the bay. On the wooden table was written the words "I am the Virgin of Charity". The clothes on the Virgin were dry even though a storm had just finished. The Cuban people believe that this was a miracle and was a message from the Virgin that she would look after all Cubans. Even if a Cuban is not Catholic, they have a statue of the Virgin Mary in their house.

In 1916 the Vatican declared The Virgin of Charity de Cobre the Official Patron Saint of Cuba and Cubans believe that she is the mother of all Cubans. She never abandons her children whatever their belief.

When I knew I was leaving Cuba to live in Australia, I bought my own statue of the Virgin to take with me, I will always be Cuban and this is part of being Cuban. It will remind me of my Cuban heritage and I pray to the statue to protect and watch over me in my new country.

The statue sits on a small table in the corner of the bedroom. It is surrounded by candles and shiny objects and offerings. I pray to the Virgin every day to keep me and my wife safe.

The Virgin of Charity de Cobre is a part of being Cuban and is a symbol of my birth country that will always be with me.



Name: Frank Morales-Martins

## MEMENTO: MY FATHER'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE

I came from Brazil to Australia in 1982. I travelled alone, leaving my mum, dad and my brother there. Since then, both my parents have passed away.

This is my father's birth certificate. He was in Brazil as a migrant from Spain.

When he was 20 years old and doing his military service, the Spanish Civil War broke out. He and his mates joined the forces fighting against Franco, who was aiming at establishing a military dictatorship. My father was a country man, who had never been to school. He believed in family, in God and in respecting one another. I can imagine those three years of civil war left marks that he carried for the rest of his life – neighbour fighting neighbour and the end of democracy in his lifetime.

After the war finished came a darker time of persecution of all those who fought against the dictatorship. So in 1950, my dad took a ship bound for Brazil. He went there alone, leaving all his family in Spain. He found work as a labourer, married and had two kids.

At ten years old I had already wanted to travel. I learnt English and started making pen friends around the world. My dad was always very supportive of me. When I was in my twenties, those currents led to my search of a place to migrate and experience a new culture and a new life, and my choice was Australia.

I used to tell people that I was a second generation migrant, as I experienced my dad being a migrant, a Spaniard in Brazil, and now here I was as a Brazilian in Australia. I was fortunate enough to take many trips back to Brazil and spend time with my family there.

This original birth certificate that my dad had prepared at his home town before leaving Spain is the most precious memento I have with me, something he did when he was still at home with his Mum and his brothers, but getting ready to face the unknown and start a new life. May he rest in peace.





Name: Gaëlle Juge - Salichon

## MEMENTO: TWO PAINTINGS BY F BLEGE

My mementos are two paintings, one of a Malagasy woman and one of a Malagasy man, painted by F. Blege, a French painter. These paintings were hung on the wall in my daddy's office. I have a picture in my mind; he was sited at his office, working with those two faces above him.

Malagasy is the description given to the majority of people living in Madagascar. The other main group is the French. Madagascar is located off the east coast of Africa.

I am regarded as French even though I was born in Madagascar. My Grandma on my father's side was born in France. She came to Madagascar when she was a child. She came to live with her aunty as her aunty had no children. She was an extraordinary woman and worked with her husband (my grandpa).

My father was born in 1915 in Toamasina, a coastal town in Madagascar. He lived a big part of his life in Madagascar except when he flew to France during the 2nd World War. My mother was born in Vietnam and came to Madagascar with her mother and father when she was young.

Madagascar is one of the poorest counties in the world. I love my country but because of different presidents, Malagasy life got worse every year. We couldn't do anything to change that, except working with our staff in our hotel and helping their children with schooling and health.

We wanted our kids to grow up in a different country, we wanted our kids to speak English, and we wanted a country not so far from Madagascar because we owned a hotel in Antananarivo. We wanted to be near the sea. Australia is amazing, my husband and our 3 kids enjoy Sydney as much as me.

When we decided to come to Australia with my family this year, I wanted to take the paintings because it reminds me of my migrant's story. I have the spirit of my grandma and of my father here with me. I also can see every day those two Malagasy people, like my father did several years before.





Name: Helene Grover

## MEMENTO: THE MIGRANT TABLECLOTH

My mother embroidered a simple white tablecloth with pink and blue flowers tumbling around the edges. It's about hundred years old and the starch can still be felt between the fingers. At times the tablecloth sat under my mother's delicious afternoon teas.

As a young woman in Germany, after her chores were done, she sat at night, back pressed against the tall Dutch oven for warmth listening to the old gramophone and embroidered. At the edge of the war, her older sister reunited with my mother taking her to live with her family in Paris. The tablecloth also made the journey.

My father had escaped from forced conscription in the Russian army, hiding in farmhouses, barns and in a coffin waiting burial. He made his way across Europe to England and ultimately France where he married my mother.

I was born in Paris during the war at a time of bombings and the hunt for Jews. We lost family in the Holocaust. The much travelled tablecloth made a harrowing journey by train through the centre of France to the free zone together with my parents, grandmother and me, the baby.

Feeling that Europe was no longer a safe place, my parents migrated to Australia in the early 50's. We arrived on a hot January summer finding upside down seasons, strange new foodstuffs such as black vegemite, fish and chips wrapped in newspapers eaten with fingers, milk-bars selling sweet frothy flavoured milk drinks, soap-like cheese wrapped in blue and yellow cartons. We had never seen exotic flowers like hibiscus and frangipanis.

Most of all we learnt to adjust to the language, the laconic friendly Australians. My father died of cancer that first year. Mother and I moved to a terrace in Erskineville. She went to work in a deaf and dumb school as a cleaner, slowly learning her fragmented English, adapting and developing an intense love of this country which was my greatest legacy along with the ageing, yellowing tablecloth.



Name: Irene Di Blasio

## MEMENTO: ROLLERBLADES (INLINE SKATES)



I purchased my rollerblades in 1993. Up to the age of 17 I used to be part of a professional figure skating group called “Alegria, Musica y Color” meaning “Happiness, Music and Colour” in Spanish, the dominant language of Argentina.

Every weekend we used to practise very hard and travel to different places to compete.

When I was 20 years old the rollerblades became more fashionable so I moved on to this very different kind of skates. I loved them straight away so every time I had the chance I would go with my best friend to Palermo (one of the biggest parks in Buenos Aires) and spend the day “rollerblading”.

They are very special to me because they bring back all the good memories of family and friends getting together for a picnic, enjoying good company, good food and riding our bikes or rollerblading.





Name: Judith Lindsay

## MEMENTO: THE SIDDUR (PRAYER BOOK)

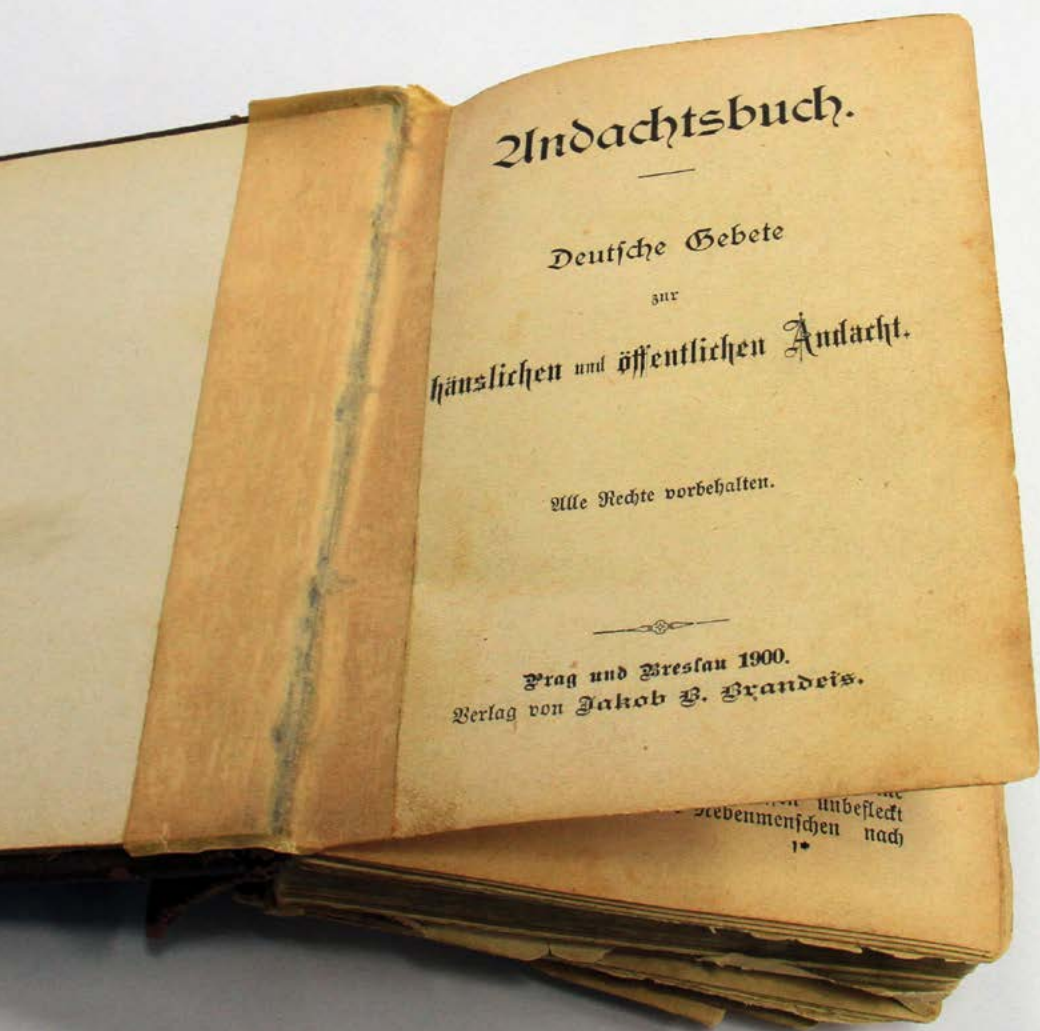
I was left this by my mother. She brought it with her from Czechoslovakia after surviving the holocaust. She always had this with her, both in her old country and in this new one. Her faith that life would go on and she would rebuild and live to see grandchildren was unwavering.

The siddur (prayer book) was used in a time of peace when she was a child living a carefree existence in Stará Ľubovňa (Slovak side of Czechoslovakia) with her brothers and sisters and family around her.

It followed her through times of darkness in the holocaust when she was held in a forced labour camp and when she had to hide me with a non-Jewish family out of town (I was only a toddler), through to reuniting with me and my father at the end of the war to finding that we were the only ones of her immediate family that survived the war.

It travelled with us on the long boat ride to Sydney Australia and to her new beginnings in Coogee and later Bondi. It was used during her many years in times of joy and saw her daughter married, grandchildren born and married and happy.

It now is with me and I hold it close as I thank God for being able to see the generations continue on through her great grandchildren.





Name: Kiong Lau

## MEMENTO: A VERY OLD WOODEN MOULD CALLED 'WHITE KUIH YING'

My memento is a very old wooden mould called 'white kuih ying'. It is used for making traditional Chinese steamed rice cakes (white kuih). In my home town Fookchow (a city in Fujian Province in southern China), white kuih is a traditional food made for Chinese festivals, such as Lunar New Year and Moon Festival.

My mum gave me the 'white kuih ying' a few years after I was married. She said to me 'Ah Kiong, I do not have anything precious for you, only this white kuih ying'. My mum was born in the early 1900s to a poor Chinese family, which was unable to afford a proper daily meal at that time. The family only used this 'white kuih ying' to make white kuihs as a treat during traditional festivals. It was made only from wood, but for me, it is the most precious gift from my mum.

The 'white kuih ying' was made more than 100 years ago. My mum received it from my grandma as a present too. She brought it with her from China when she migrated to Malaysia in 1925. She had used it to make white kuihs for our family for many years before giving it to me. Many times, we made them together as family meals.

Now that my mum has left me forever, I always think of her when looking at this 'white kuih ying'. I am very grateful that I have something that always brings back the memories of mum. It is full of scenes of the happy times I and my family had together.

I brought the 'white kuih ying' with me when migrating to Australia ten years ago. I am still using it to make white kuihs for my family. One day, I will pass it onto my daughter because I think it is important to inherit something from your parents, regardless of its value.

The 'white kuih ying' is the only thing I have from mum. For me, it is a very valuable memento from my dear mother.



Name: Lan Chau

## MEMENTO: AO DAI (A TRADITIONAL VIETNAMESE WEDDING DRESS)



My name is Lan Chau. My memento is my wedding dress called an Ao Dai, which is a traditional Vietnamese wedding dress. I got it in 2010 when I was getting married. It was made by a shop in Ho Chi Minh City which specialises in the making of Ao Dais.

An Ao Dai is a traditional dress in my culture in Vietnam. It can be seen on many people who wear them to work, go to church and go to wedding parties. All secondary school girls must wear this dress in white when they go to school. Ao Dais are very popular in Vietnam

and it is so important for all girls who are getting married to wear them for the ceremony, then they can change to different dress afterwards. These dresses have many different prices, depending on the fabric and the store you go to, but the good thing is that you can also hire them. A lot of people like to hire them so they do not have to pay too much money, but there are still a lot who want to own them like me. Normally they cost between \$60 up to \$5000 dollars.

I remember, when I was getting married, I decided to get one for myself for this very special occasion in my life. I was so excited when I got my Ao Dai, I tried it on so many times, even though it was perfect and really looked good on me.

When I was leaving Vietnam, the first thing I packed was my beautiful wedding dress. It was such a special memory and it meant a lot to me. It is so beautiful that today I just look at it and remember that special day I tried it on and bought it. I am so happy I brought it here and I will keep it forever because it is so special to me. I hope one day if I have a daughter that I can give it to her.





Name: Lily Tan

MEMENTO: 3 TEA CUP  
SETS, ONE TEA POT, A  
VERY OLD TRAY AND A  
COFFEE CUP

I was born in 1936 in Jakarta, Indonesia. I am an Indonesian Chinese and can speak a little bit Mandarin. My father was an architect and he had built a lot of houses. My mum attended a Dutch school and worked for a telecommunication company for a short time before she was married.

I migrated to Australia in January 1991 to join my daughter's family. Along with many things I brought with me, there were my most loved mementos: 3 tea cup sets, one tea pot, a very old tray and a coffee cup. In Indonesian, they are called cangkirteh, teko, nampan and cangkir copi. I received these items from my mum a long time ago. She chose me to keep them because I was the only daughter in the family.

When I received them, I was very happy as they were passed on from more than one generation. According to my mum, they were given to my grandmother as wedding presents. Now, they are nearly 150 years old, but are no longer complete sets since some have broken.

I love my tea cup sets, the tea pot, the tray and the coffee cup because they first belonged to my grand-parents and then my parents. I brought them to Australia with me and keep them as mementos in remembrance of my mother and grandma.





Name: Lorna Ah-Time Zappa

## MEMENTO: THE COCO DE MER



The Coco de mer means sea coconut and is the largest seed in the World. It grows on Praslin Island in the Seychelles. The seed was named by sailors who first found the seed floating in the sea. The sailors thought that the seed must have grown from a tree in the sea, hence the name Coco de mer translating to mean sea coconut. The seed is also known as Coco fesse as it looks like a female buttock.

It is a double coconut and is edible when young and green. It is clear like jelly inside and it tastes a bit like the young coconut you get in Australia. It grows in a husk and is covered in a shell. Our country also uses the nut when it dries and gets hard. We use it as a decorative item for arts and crafts and sell to tourists as souvenirs. A seed can weigh up to 30 kilos when mature and it grows on a tall palm tree similar to a coconut.

The Coco de mer is very precious to me for many reasons, firstly it reminds me of my country as there are very few places this nut grows. It has become very rare and is now World Heritage listed so that it is protected. My Coco de mer is on display in my house for all to see. It is displayed with great pride for its rarity and for the memories it gives me whenever I look at it.



Name: Lucila Flores

## MEMENTO: GOLD WATCH

“The Miracle of remembrance is a gift of being human. I have the option of using it wisely” (quote from Anne Wilson Scaef’s book Meditations for People Who (May) Worry Too Much).

I came to Australia from Venezuela in 1989 with my precious belongings and the most precious was my little watch. I appreciate the value of the old things like myself. I kept it because it represents wonderful memories of the past and my aunty Alejandrina who gave the watch to me.

This gold watch originally had a black leather strap. I loved it despite my aunty wanting to put on a gold strap to give it more value. It was given to me when I finished high school at the age of 17. I used to put it on for special occasions and always did until the day I put it in a special place in a drawer in my closet.

My aunty Alejandrina was my mother’s sister and they were very close. My aunty loved us so much, because she was widowed very young and didn’t have children. She gave that love to us as her own children and spoiled us.

My aunt used to dress me each morning and take me to school and afterwards to study in the High School. She gave me breakfast on her bed and loved me even when I was naughty as young children can be. Once I poured a cup of milk tea on her pink cover quilt on purpose. I don’t know why I did that. I was with her until she died.

I came to Australia in about 1989. I came to be united with the family, to live with my parents and my brother. Australia was the 4th country I lived in, in my efforts to find a home. I lived in Argentina, Ecuador, Venezuela and then Australia.

It was a long process of recognition of degrees and getting visas each time I moved and sadly my father passed away at 74 years old when we were leaving in Venezuela. Now I am in Australia, I am enjoying every moment of my life, living in this country and meeting interesting people. I still have the watch and each time I look at it, happy memories of my life overseas come back.





Name: Maggie Lo

# MEMENTO: STAMP COLLECTION ALBUM, A NOTE AND A NECKLACE



When I started school in Taiwan, my father gave me this stamp collection album, if I did well at school, he would reward me with new and 1st day issued stamps. He taught me how to wrap them in wax paper and use tweezers to handle the stamps. I still look at the stamps and treasure the album because they remind me of my childhood in Taiwan, and the happy and special times together with my father, learning the art of stamp collecting.

A note and necklace: these two items signify the two very special and empowering life changing events in my life in Australia. The note was the encouragement message given to me by my mum when I had a dip in life, and the necklace with a glow in the dark gem stone was given to me to ward off evil and keep me safe by my father after a serious illness. I look at them every day with gratitude knowing how lucky I am to have such wonderful and caring parents to help me through the ups and downs of life.







Name: Maria Carter

# MEMENTO : EMBROIDERED BAG AND COOKBOOK

From 1940-45, the Netherlands, my birth country, was occupied by Germany. My father was in the “Resistance”, saving Jewish people from being killed by the Germans. At home, my father was a dictator and after the war I only wanted to escape home and be free to deal with my own beliefs.

I spent two years in Indonesia, returning home to work at an aircraft company at Schiphol airport in Amsterdam. The Company developed the F27 and orders were placed by different countries, including Australia. When offered a job with the company in Australia, I was about 35 years old and single, without friends or family in Australia.

I flew on one of the ordered F27s to be delivered to Australia. There were 32 passengers, mostly from Australia; I was the only Dutch woman. The flight lasted eight days, stopping overnight only to refuel, in places like Pakistan, where I tasted my first beer, and Port Moresby in Dutch New Guinea. I eventually arrived in Sydney and settled into my accommodation in the YWCA in the centre of Sydney.

I have since travelled to many other countries, but I am glad I made Australia my home.

When you migrate, you look for things that are personal and sentimental to you to take with you. Two things I chose to take on the plane with me were a small embroidered evening bag and my very first cookbook. I had made the bag myself in the first year in high school. I was very proud of the bag and even our teacher thought the quality above average.

When I first left home, I got a place to myself in Amsterdam and had to learn to cook. The “Cooking Book for the Working Woman” was the first cookbook I ever bought and has been important and useful to me over the years. Before I left the Netherlands, I gave most of my books away or to libraries but this one had such sentimental value because it was my first cookbook that I could never part with it.



Name: Ngan Ling (Linda) Leung

## MEMENTO : CHEUNG SAM / QIPAO



My memento is an old Chinese dress called cheongsam in Cantonese or qipao in Mandarin.

I inherited this cheongsam from my mother when she passed away in 1995. It followed me to Australia about 7 years ago.

When she was younger, life was very difficult for mum. My father passed away when I was five years old. Having to raise five small children on her own, she was not able to afford a cheongsam as it was rather costly. My mother bought this cheongsam when she was in her 70s, by which time all five of us were grown-ups. She only wore it on special occasions, such as family gatherings, or meeting with friends, as a mark of respect.

My mother had lived with me for a long time before she passed away. She left many things that we had kept as mementos. This old Chinese cheongsam was special to Mum as it was a symbol that indicated her difficult time was in the past. I have kept it firstly as my remembrance of my mother. Secondly, it is of very fine quality, with every stitch sewn by a tailor's hands. This type of hand-made cloth is rarely available in China nowadays.

Australia is my home now. This cheongsam reminds me of my life in China, especially those times with my mother. When putting it on, I am filled with nostalgia.





Name: Petronella (Ellie) Zinsmeester

## MEMENTO: OAK BOX

This old oak box was made by my father, Willem, in Delft, the Netherlands, in 1929 when he was 15. He made it for his father, Johannes, which is why there is a “J” carved inside the lid.

Our family, consisting of my father, mother, brother, sister and myself, came to Australia on the M.S. Sibajak in 1953 – as did two, large wooden crates, packed with all our personal belongings and household goods, including the box.

Due to a severe housing shortage in Australia at that time, many immigrants ended up living in old army camps for long periods. Our first Australian home was at Scheyville Holding Centre, Windsor. After a few months we moved to Bunnerong Hostel at Matraville and then to the house our father was building at Malabar.

For many years, the box was mainly used to store snapshots (photographs) and postcards. When in his 80s, my father gave it to his grandson – also called Willem. Old Willem had made sure that we knew there was something inside the lid and, after he died aged 92, we were curious to see the contents. These turned out to be a handwritten record describing the components of the box and a photograph of himself holding his pet rabbit. It was a smaller version of the ledger in which he had recorded every item which went into building the house at Malabar.

The box once again holds memorabilia. Its main contents now are unusual objects given by the grandfather to the grandson. It is a reminder of a dear father, grandfather and great-grandfather. It represents the practical skills Dutch boys were taught, to stand them in good stead throughout their lives. It is also a reminder of what people brought with them when they travelled to distant countries, knowing that they might never see their relatives, friends or homeland again. It is symbolic of people who, like my parents, had a strong need to be surrounded by tangible objects from their Dutch past and heritage, and the memories associated with these objects.





Name: Rozita dei Leoni

## MEMENTO: THE 21ST KEY



In December 1975 I left the land of my birth, New Zealand, and came to Australia. I was 20 and thought I was very grownup. I had met an Australian couple in NZ and they invited me to stay at their place in Sydney.

Sydney was so hot and muggy, the sounds were so different. My ears were like antennas, everything was a symphony of confusion and I had never lived near a beach before. Sydney was a non stop exciting destination.

My mum is a widow with 5 children since 1968. As the oldest, I always kept in touch with her, so she wouldn't worry. I didn't know how long I would be here but a year later, I had a job and was living in Cammeray.

In September 1976 came a knock at the door and there stood a man with a bunch of flowers and a package which was a 21st key. Obviously for my mum this was a significant milestone and it would have been a large expense to have this delivered. At the time, I didn't value the item or what it represented. All I wondered was who to leave it with as I was intending to go on my great trip to Europe. I also had a silk shawl from my Grandmother and some mementos of my fathers.

Now it is 2014 and I still have the 21st key. A sister used part of the shawl for a cushion, and the mementos of my father along with many mementos of my family were stolen during a house robbery.

The 21st key endured. The greetings written on the back have faded and the chain to hang it has tarnished, yet now and again I unwrap my 21st key and it takes me back to the days of my youth, living in Australia. I have a little laugh at how naive I was then.

It only seems like yesterday and yet I am almost 60. My basket of knowledge has so much more in it now.



Name: Yuki Takano

## MEMENTO: AN OLD JAPANESE MIRROR AND SOME OLD COINS

My mementos are an old Japanese mirror and some 340 year old Mon Square Hole Kanei Tsuho coins (made in 1668). They were given to my husband by my father in 2011, when I went back to Japan to introduce him to my parents.

The mirror is made out of copper and was gathering dust. I can't see my face in this mirror. My father tried to polish it clean. He regretted this because he made scratches on the mirror.

My father grew up in a very old house in a small village in the country. My uncle has lived in this house for a long time. It is made out of wood. There is a traditional sunken hearth (irori) in the middle of a room for heating. The floor was made with tatami which is made of rice straw. I like the smell because it makes me feel calm. I haven't been there for more than 20 years and I have no idea how the house is now.

When the house was rebuilt, they found some old things and my father was given the mirror and the coins, he told me this mirror was given to my ancestors by a princess.

My father gave my husband these old things because my husband is a foreigner and my father has never talked to a foreigner. My father sometimes watches TV and he thought foreigners liked old Japanese things. My husband doesn't speak Japanese, so my father and he can't communicate.

Because my English is not good, it was hard to explain to my husband about this mirror and what my father wanted to say to him. I used a dictionary to explain myself but I still don't know how much my husband understood when he got the mirror. He was just smiling and kept saying "arigatou" which means "thank you".

I have a lot of memories but this is the best because it's my father's treasure. I thought we didn't deserve it when my father gave it to him. But this is our treasure too.







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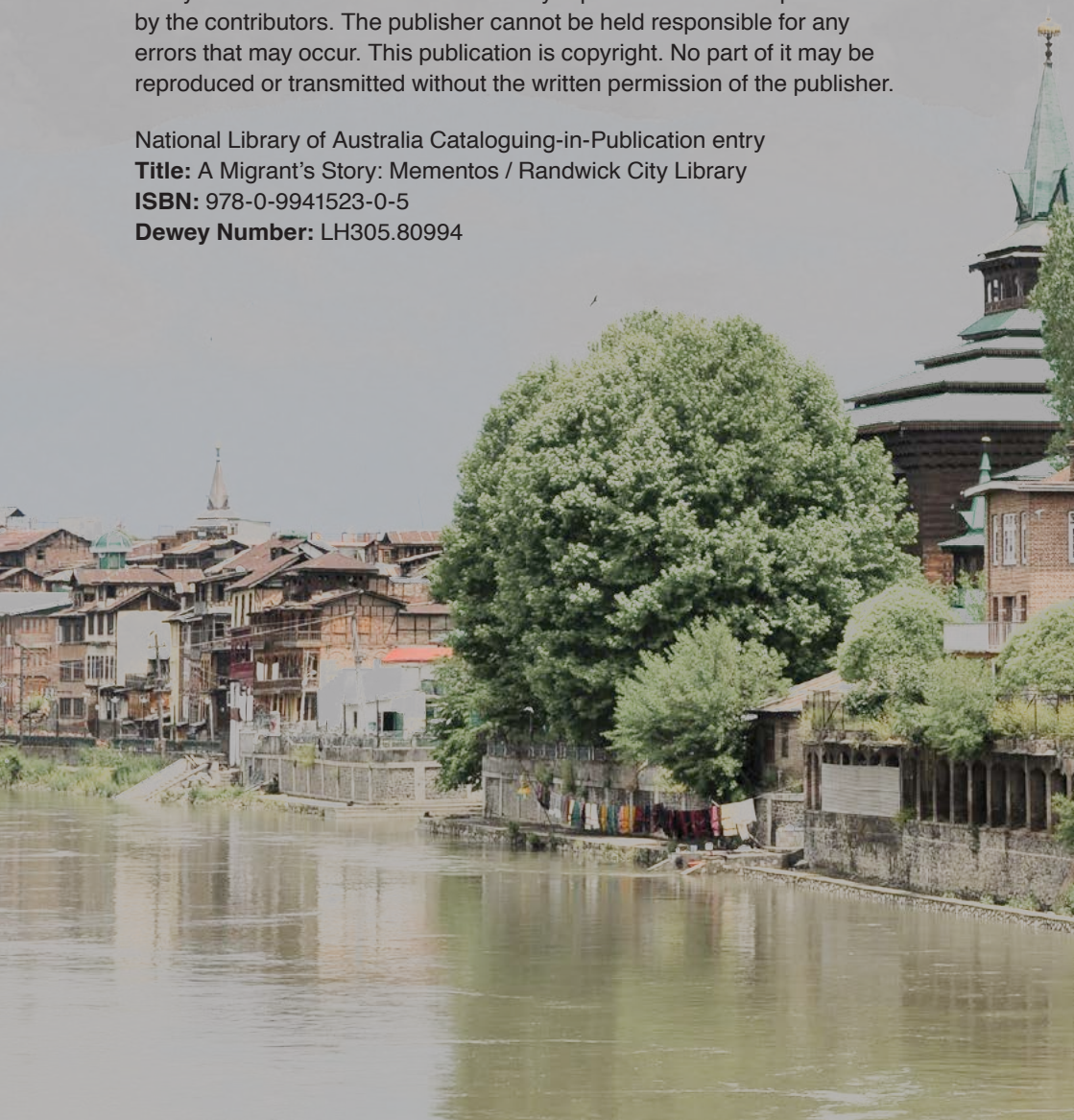
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Every memento has a story.

Twenty migrants who live, work or study in Randwick reveal their past through a treasured memento brought with them to Australia.







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