

*British Migration and the Rotary Club of Fortitude Valley*

They prepared a pamphlet outlining the sponsorship of the Cokers and set it with a circular to all other Australian Rotary Clubs.

The circular appealed to the Clubs to co-operate in a Rotary scheme to sponsor British Migrants by guaranteeing accommodation for a British family. Almost at the same time the Australian Government launched their "Bring Out a Briton" scheme. As the two schemes were basically identical, it was decided to support the Government scheme, thereby giving Rotary the opportunity to lead the nation in support of the "Bring Out a Briton" campaign.

This accommodation guarantee is all that anyone in Australia has to produce to nominate a British migrant for an assisted (A12-10) pounds passage.

While Rotarians all over Australia were searching for accommodation and jobs for British families, the "Rotary Ship" committee negotiated with the Australian Commonwealth Department of Immigration.

The department, through its office in London, controls the movement of British migrants to Australia.

The Department agreed to co-operate in the "Rotary Ship" scheme by arranging for as many Rotary-sponsored families as possible to sail in one vessel - called the "Rotary Ship".

Australia has an acute shortage of houses and flats, so it was understandable that Rotary Club nominations did not pour in immediately. The Fortitude Valley Migration Committee met regularly to co-ordinate the scheme and to cope with the colossal amount of correspondence. John Morgan applied himself to his job with tireless energy and although each Club agreed to the worthiness of the project, many could not see how they could overcome the hurdle of accommodation.

However, response to the Valley Club's appeal was steady and after some months the target of 100 families was clearly in sight.

Early in 1958, it was decided that as many families as possible would sail in "Orsova", leaving on March 26, under the command of Captain S.S. Burnand.

The "Rotary Ship" scheme was a true international project.

British Rotarians had an important part in it.

As Australian Immigration officials selected likely families to take up the nominations from Australia, British Rotarians interviewed the people to ensure that they would be acceptable to their Rotarian sponsors. These British Clubs then found that through correspondence with the Australian Clubs, there were many common bonds.

With all other arrangements complete, Rotarians in Australia then began to organise a nation-wide welcome for the "Rotary Ship".

Tom Bryce arranged to fly 3,000 miles from his home in Brisbane to meet "Orsova" at Fremantle, Western Australia and travel in the ship to Sydney.

During the voyage he met each Rotary-sponsored migrant informally, telling them about Australia and the help they would get from their sponsors.

Happily, another Rotarian boarded the ship as Anglican Chaplain to all the migrants, and he was able to give Tom Bryce much valuable help. He is Rev. Ron Lloyd, whose home is in Adelaide, South Australia. (Ron is a member of the Glenelg Club).

After Fremantle, "Orsova" called at the ports of Adelaide and Melbourne before reaching Sydney.

At all ports, Rotarians gave the migrants a magnificent welcome.

Those disembarking were met by their sponsors, assisted with formalities, then taken off to their new homes.