

Swallow Down Under: A Tour of Ransome's Australasia



Figure 1 A woman sailor wins a race on Sydney Harbour 1898¹



Figure 2 Bergen-op-Zoom Sheep Station in drought (2019)*

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Figure 3 EBB’s ‘Port Jackson ... view from North Shore’ⁱⁱ

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Acknowledgements

This guide has been prepared by Catherine Lamont of Armidale, NSW, who discovered that she was the closest Tar to the sheep station owned by Ransome's grandfather, Edward Baker Boulton (EBB) when Geraint Lewis of The Arthur Ransome Trust introduced himself. 'Bergen-op-Zoom' (BoZ) is only 60km away.

The 'real' Australian stories that made their way into Mary Walker's childhood tales were filled in by Ted Alexander and John Edwards, who had visited Bergen-op-Zoom in 2000 to research *Edward Baker Boulton: Australia's Forgotten Artist*ⁱⁱⁱ. The 'Australian/Mary Walker' story has intrigued many, so Catherine designed a tour of the main locations and 'real stories' that made their way into Ransome's writing. She tested the 'Mary Walker' tour in early 2020. However, the tour doesn't make much sense without the background, provided here^{iv}.

Unless otherwise indicated, the Boulton story comes from John's book on EBB. Photographs marked '*' are by the author or in the public domain (in Wiki commons). **Places** or **people** mentioned by AR or his grandparents are in bold.

This research has been supported by a grant from the TARS Red Slipper Fund and many helpers along the way. Special thanks to John Edwards (for advice and access to his files) and John Ryrie, EBB's great-grandson, who agreed to an interview at his home and showed me some of EBB's beautiful paintings while I visited.

I also acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which these stories took place, and pay my respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

'That romantic shadowy Australia': A love Affair

'That Queen Elizabeth was not brought up close to Sydney Harbour,' said Mother. (*Swallows and Amazons*, Chapter 2)

'Mother said ... she had seen much bigger [trout] in Australia and New Zealand.' (*Swallowdale*, Chapter 15)

Many have been puzzled by the references to Australia and New Zealand in Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons* 'holiday adventure' books. (See Appendix 1 for a list of the 18+ references and quotes.) Dora Collingwood, on whom the character of Mary Walker is believed to be based, was reported by her husband as being 'a little plaintive about her knowledge of kangaroos'.^v But neither she nor AR had ever visited these countries.

Ransome acknowledges in his *Autobiography* that the stories of his grandfather, Edward Baker Boulton (EBB), who did indeed have 'enormous areas of sheep-lands', fuelled his fascination with 'that romantic shadowy Australia'. Curiously, AR's history is rarely offered as explanation in discussion forums (e.g. Facebook, Tarboard), although general Australasian influences listed in Appendix 2 sometimes are (not always accurately).

What were those 'real' stories and places that captured Ransome's imagination, influencing the *Swallows*' story as surely as Nansen's (more accessible) history informed *Winter Holiday*? Might there even be some women in the story whose biographies might align closely with Mary Walker's? Although they were both older than Mary Walker, EBB's first wife (Mary) and daughters both travelled between England and Australia, lived in Sydney and on sheep stations. To distinguish between the two Mary

Boultons (Mary Boulton, née Atkinson and her youngest daughter, Mary Ryrie née Boulton), maiden names are used.

An Australian Story – Ransome’s Grandfather’s

A Younger Son Emigrates

According to *Inventing Australia*^{vi}, Australia was a common destination for younger sons keen on making their fortunes. Many failed. Edward, Thomas, George and Philip Baker Boulton (all younger sons of a Shropshire draper) did not. Edward arrived first in 1836 in the *Ellen*. His cousin, William Palmer, arrived the same year (ship unknown). *Ellen* arrived in **Hobart** at the same time as **HMS Beagle** (the ship carrying Darwin, mentioned in *Great Northern?*). EBB produced a book of 16 sketches of Tasmania and Sydney Harbour which proved popular. He soon made a name for himself in Sydney business, as well as artistic, circles while acquiring land (some with his brothers). This included three blocks totalling **228,400 acres** in the Wellington Valley, close to the ranges where **bushranger Captain Morgan** operated^{vii}.



*Figure 4 Mona House**

EBB married the Australian-born Mary Atkinson in a chapel housed in the coach house at Mona House in 1850 (see Figure 4), shortly after selling most of his assets to buy the sheep run **Bergen-op-Zoom** (BoZ) near **Walcha**. The Boultons soon left for England for their honeymoon (and to see the Great Exhibition) in the company of Mary's entire family; her Irish mother was home-sick. Millie was born in 1851 on Australia Day (also known as Invasion Day by Aboriginal peoples; it celebrates the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788). [Edward] Oswald was born in England at the same time that gold was discovered in Australia, but the family returned to Sydney in 1852 where the next four children were born. In 1853, EBB's brother Philip migrated to **New Zealand**. The family lived in various residences on what is now Darling Point. Lindesay still stands (see Figure 5). There is no record of the family visiting the sheep station at this time.



*Figure 5 View of Clark Island from the Lindesay Garden**

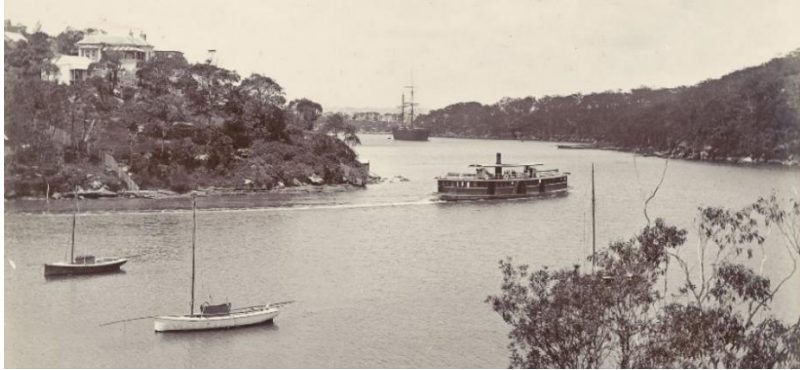


Figure 6 Ferry and Sailing Boats at Mosman Bay 1880-1900^{viii}

EBB had shares in the original Sydney Ferry Company (see Figure 6). **Sailing on Sydney Harbour** was a well-established pastime for all classes by 1862, and nearly all of EBB's paintings include a sailboat of some kind (even inland). He had a cousin in Australia. Did either learn to sail? Women were more likely to be interested in cruising^{ix}, and Figure 1 shows Irene Pritchard winning a race in 1898 (fitting in with the Mary Walker timeline). For Mrs Mary Boulton and her teenage friend, Blanche, rowing seemed more common, as Blanche recorded in various diary entries for 1858.

Went with Mrs Boulton ... down to the Circular Wharf ... rowed to the Waterview Dry Dock ... Fished off Point Piper in a boat with six children inside, two nurses and five grown up people. A pretty crush, but we caught a great number of fish ... at the pier, Manly Beach ... we amused ourselves by riding about on donkeys. ^x

The Boultons returned to the UK (when Millie was 8) in 1859, just after holding a ball at their rented home, Lindesay. Blanche reports Edward was playing the piano, and 'Oh! It was such fun, we danced every dance'. Their departure was quite different.

When the vessel sailed she [Mrs Boulton] was in great distress, disliking the vessel, captain, mate and men. And well she might for the vessel was an old leaky thing all down on one side, her cabin small and low, the cuddy uncomfortable, with the steward's pantry just under the poop stairs, so dangerous for the children! The captain, an old fogey walking about, the men all laughing at him wearing slippers. He was arrested for debt and had been confined in prison for some days... The mate a little conceited puppy, laughing and flirting with all the girls on board and the crew a set of young boys who looked inclined to mutiny when once outside. Rumours, too, were afloat that the pumps would not work ... Poor Mrs. B. we left crying on the bed.

Mary was pregnant with her 7th child, who would also be a Mary. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, she was dead by the end of the year.

An Anglo-Australian Family

EBB found the 'Australian' family a stepmother in a family friend and neighbour. He married **Rachel Gwynn, AR's grandmother**, the following year. **Edith (AR's mother)** was the first of their ten children (see

Appendix 3 for a Family Tree). Mary and Edith were just over 2 years apart in age; both inherited their father's love of art, although only Edith appears to have inherited his talent.

EBB returned to Australia in 1874 when Edith was 12 (with his 2nd son, Nithsdale (20)) to buy out his partner on BoZ. They travelled via India to see the Ellora Caves. EBB collected 16-year-old George in 1875; the youngest three sisters followed in 1878 (putting up their ages) and Millie in 1879. They would all have passed through **Melbourne** (Figure 7). Oswald, whose mental health appeared to be unstable, lists BOZ as his home on the 1876/77 census, but probably spent most of his life in Sydney.



Figure 7 Melbourne in the 1880s^{xi}

From Sydney to the Sheep Station

The Hawkesbury River could not be crossed by rail until 1889. In 1878, travel was by horse or steamer to Newcastle, train to Scone, stage coach to Bendemeer (where notorious **bushranger**, Thunderbolt, had held up the Mail in 1864)^{xii} and the last 50km

by horse and/or cart. A letter from Mary's daughter suggests that Mary was first to travel to BoZ with her father after staying in **Redleaf House** on Sydney Harbour, visiting **Martindale**, the home of James White, in the Hunter Valley on the way.^{xiii}

After returning Mary's children to Australia, EBB remained there until 1883. His surviving letters home (1882-1894)^{xiv}, filled with stories of Australia, suggest a long correspondence with Edith that may have given her plenty of tales to tell her own children, particularly when letters arrived. He writes in 1883, shortly before returning to England (in time for Arthur's birth), 'you can hardly tell how much I have missed your sympathy in our beloved art or how much this [time apart] ... has cost me'.



Figure 8 Sketch of Bergen-op-Zoom, by Edward Baker Boultonⁱⁱ

[BoZ, 1882] It gives me very great pleasure to find that you are enjoying yourself so much and to learn that your future goodman has so many tastes congenial to your own ... the truth is this property is too small for the family ... I fancy I shall have to go out again either with the family or alone - for the property must be increased or an additional one bought as soon as offer presents itself. ... I am busy painting .., touching on older pictures instead of getting on with new ones for which I have several orders .

The family never did emigrate, although Cyril and Edith considered it^{xv}, and some visited. Mary may have accompanied EBB on some business or painting trips and visited the **Monaro region** (near Canberra) where her future husband, Stewart Ryrie, lived. By 1890, the year Mary was married from **BoZ**, the railway was running all the way through from Sydney to Walcha Rd, only 25km from 'BoZ'^{xvi}. Both EBB and Rachel attended.

There again and back again



Figure 9 Steam Train leaving Walcha Rd Station in the 1920s^{xvii}

EBB returned to England twice (1883, 1888) before the wedding.

[EBB to Edith, from *SS Corromandel, Feb 1890*] ... tell Arthur that we have seen no whale because they do not grow in the Mediterranean but we have seen a good many sea pigs otherwise called porpoises.

[From Boz, May 1890]... [the wedding] all passed off very cheerily and Niz drove them off amid a shower of rice to Walcha Road Station for Sydney where they have arrived having taken up their quarters at the Hotel Metropole & where they stay for a week & then proceed to Coolringdon the residence of her old friends the Ryries ...

Yesterday Mille gave a skating party on the rink at Walcha which is a very good & roomy one & were it not for the noise on the wooden floor it would be very pleasant fun. They all seemed to enjoy it & the visitors must have numbered about sixty. We all got home about sundown & today Bessie & R D Ryrie left us for Sydney.

... here we have a very mild winter & I am writing near an open window with a brilliant sunshine

A small quantity of gold was, indeed, found at Bergen-op-Zoom. Yet within a year of the wedding, the depression of the wool market, followed by drought, was beginning to take its toll. Mary's stepmother (Rachel, Ransome's grandmother) reports home to 'My very dear Children' on March 13, 1891^{xiii}:

I drove with Millie to a small selector's living four miles the other side of Walcha to inquire about a servant but unfortunately without success. However I enjoyed the drive (altogether 14 miles) ... tho' as far as the eye could reach there was no sign of human habitation... On Tuesday, I sewed most industriously till at 5, when I sallied forth alone (Father busy painting) for a walk. After going about a mile I sat on a dead tree to rest and anything more dismal you can scarcely imagine. Nothing to be seen but dead, dying or scrubby trees, the grass long & brown, a mountain mist passing over, the wind howling

among the trees & to add to the dreary effect, **the carcasses of the poor sheep who had 'lain them down & died' lying close by!**

However the rain soon cleared & tho' there was no sun, it became brighter & the walk home was pleasant & tell the children Grannie saw a **dear little brown-grey bear** climbing a dead tree till it easily reached the top where it seated itself between the branches and looked just like a piece of the tree itself. I also saw scores of lovely parrots. ... Today is a glorious day, bright & sunny & not too hot. The Summer heat is over & the sharp frost at nights, if they continue, will soon destroy the beauty of the garden, but the weather is very enjoyable. ... The Dahlias here have been, & are very beautiful & a very great variety. The Chrysanthemums are not yet out.

No end of love to each from your affectionate

old mother

R.E.B.

On his return, EBB was to spend only two more years in England, where AR would have had plenty of opportunities to spend time with this grandfather who meant so much to him, as he reports in his *Autobiography* (see Appendix 1).

When he arrived back in Australia with Edith's (full) brother, Herbert, EBB would learn that Nithsdale had taken his own life. EBB remained at BoZ to provide the 'good generalship' mentioned in his 1894 letter to Edith before succumbing to 'senile decay' in 1895, aged 83. His last painting is believed to be of **King George's Sound**, WA (back cover).

Postscript – And Back Again

Mary Ryrie's child, Dorothy, established a brief connection with her cousin (Mary Walker's creator, AR), towards the end of their lives (1962). The letter has not been found, but AR's reply states:

That Grandfather counted for a lot in my childhood and indeed much later and long after he had gone back to Australia for the last time and was dead. I wonder if any of his pictures are still remembered in Australia.^{xviii}

George and his surviving sisters remained at Bergen-op-zoom after their father's death in 1895. Herbert, was one of the executors of the Will and remained to help sort out affairs, including the £5000 pension (+ bonuses) that an astute husband had taken out for Rachel in 1860. Age and declining health led the family to sell the property to a syndicate of neighbours for £89,000. While this allowed them to travel home via Europe and resettle happily in Devonshire in 1907, BoZ was re-sold for £125,000 six months later, much to Dorothy's disgust, expressed in a letter to the Walcha District Historical Society in 1976.

There is no record of EBB's Australian and English families re-establishing contact in England, although AR writes in 1962:

I met as a boy some members of the first family who afterwards had a house in Devon. Were they George Boulton and two sisters? I do not know (and should much like to know) whether they went back to Australia or what became of them.

I think you are right in supposing that there was at some time a coolness between the first and second families ...

The Australian children who had worked so hard to keep the English family comfortable probably got the raw end of the deal: they had to mortgage the property in 1903, while Rachel's pension was more stable. Dorothy's entire family was invited to stay with Millie, Bertie and George in England, but only her brothers visited their new home during WWI.

Given the following passages from a letter home from Rachel in May 1890 (and that AR clearly knew of their return), I'd like to think that they did visit or write, and the evidence is simply lost.

Father and I were having our quiet games of Reversi in the drawing-room last evg when we heard shrieks of laughter from the dining room, whither the young ones had retired for refreshments. Granville was amusing them with various tricks and performances and then they tried holding their breath and lifting with such success that they came back and said I must be elevated, which they did with such effect that I so myself well in the glass over the mantle piece! They then lifted Father who much enjoyed the fun.

Perhaps, just as with the Great Aunt in *Picts and Martyrs*, there was another side to this 'formidable' grandmother as well.

A Mary Walker Tour

Living on Sydney Harbour

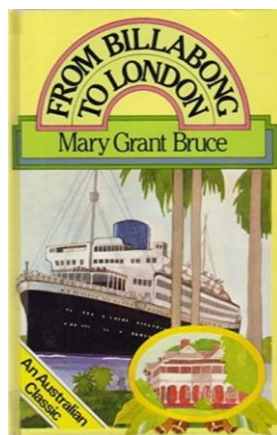
While some of the buildings known to EBB have now been demolished, many of them still stand. A map showing the main locations related to AR's writing is provided in Appendix 4, along with addresses of places that may still be seen or visited.

Growing up on an Australian Sheep Station

Mary Boulton's story diverges from Mary Walker's in that EBB's daughter married an Australian *farmer*, not someone in the British navy, and may not have arrived in Australia until she was 18 – hardly 'growing up' on a sheep station. The question 'What was it like to grow up on an Australian sheep station around the turn of the 20th century?' must be answered from other sources.

Figure 10 Cover of *From Billabong to London*^{xix}

Mary Grant Bruce's 1910 *A Little Bush Maid*^{xx} was the first in the Billabong series about Nora, a girl growing up on a cattle and sheep station in Victoria at the same time as Mary Walker may have been living on hers. Billabong books were published once every two years through to 1942. The similarities in the stories of both Nora and her creator and Mary Walker and *her* creator (both journalists, visiting similar places in the UK and Europe) were uncanny. Sadly, there was no evidence in the state archives (that my grant funded me to visit) that they knew each other existed.



However, there is plenty of material in and around Walcha to help answer that question, and while BoZ has been rebuilt twice since EBB's day, tales and photos of the area are available for the asking. Why not retrace Mary's steps and take the train? If you are short on time, nearby Armidale (where EBB seems to have done his banking) has regular flights to Sydney and Brisbane. The flight usually takes an hour, and you can read one of the books suggested in Appendix 5 while you travel.

On Indigenous Culture and Animals

Most of the phrases and claims that prompt readers to question Ransome's accuracy are, actually, accurate (for the time), many of them (indicated in bold in this booklet) coming directly from his relatives' experiences (see letters). While modern readers may know that there are no bears native to Australia, and Australian **possums** are not spelt with an 'o', these distinctions are relatively recent. The terms '**o**possum' and '**koala bear**' (also 'kaola bear' and 'monkey bear') appear in a 1928 book *The Australian Bush*^{xxi} encouraging emigration to Australia. This was edited by Ransome's old friend (and best man at his first wedding) Ashley Gibson^{xxii}. There is evidence that some Australian Aborigines **cannibalised** parts of their enemies to give them strength^{xxiii}. There was a Bora Ground for ceremonies near BoZ, and **trout** were released into NZ and Australian streams in the mid-19th century^{xxiv}. Nora Linton **rides home on horseback from a dance** in the 1911 novel *Mates at Billabong*.

However, the porpoise Pelorus Jack (not a fish!) did not escort ships in **Sydney Harbour** (as claimed in *Peter Duck*), but through the treacherous French's Pass in Cook Strait, **New Zealand**,

although a law *was* passed to protect it as Peter Duck claims^{xxiv}; similarly, rubbing noses is more customary for NZ Maori, than Australian Aborigines. And while the **koala** and **wombat** both look like bears, **neither of these fussy eaters are likely to lick honey**. Orphaned lambs might have licked milky fingers instead.



Koala (native)
(eats specific leaves)

Bear (escaped from zoo?)
(eats honey)

Wombat (native)
(eats roots)

*Figure 11 Contenders for honey-licking brown bears**

Otherwise, the references nearly all seem to be rooted in Ransome's childhood, not just general knowledge. 'Australia-*philia*' continued his whole life. For those who knew him well, Mary Walker's Australia childhood may have been inevitable.

Epilogue

In doing this research I discovered that I had actually been following in Mary Walker's footsteps a lot longer than I had realised. EBB writing of being 'caught between two stools' (i.e. England and Australia) reminded me that I, too, was an English-born Australian. Creating this tour was a kind of 'coming home' to both national identities. I hope you enjoy this AR-related tour of our sunburnt country as much as I have enjoyed developing it. Visiting Tars are welcome to get in touch for more ideas.

Appendix 1 List of Australian References in Ransome's Work

SA	Ch 2 – Mrs Walker growing up on Sydney Harbour Ch 16 – Rubbing noses like ‘natives’ in Australia Ch 18 – Drought, little brown bears licking honey Ch 28 – ‘Melbourne’ label on Captain Flint’s Trunk
SD	Ch 2 – Quotes a saying of old nanny in Australia Ch 8 – Capsizing cousin’s dinghy in Sydney Harbour Ch 15 – Trout, fishing, camping, snakes worse than adders Ch 36 – ... smell from the sailing ships in Australian harbours
PD	Ch 1 – Australia mentioned on the first page Ch 17 – Pelorus Jack helping ships in Sydney Harbour
PP	Ch 4 – She’d tell us about gold-mining in Australia Ch 16 – Sheep dying in great drought Ch 25 – Children call ‘Cooee’
WD	Ch 2 – Falling asleep on horseback riding home after dance Ch 24 – Reference to ships coming from Australia
SW	Ch 28 – Corroboree (and other references to the same) ^{xxv}
GN	Ch 12 – Roger mentions cockatoos [Ch 21 – Discussion of Captain Cook’s death] – see ‘Note’
Various	Repeated references to corroborees, cannibalism
<i>Auto-biography</i>	Ch 1 - Stories of grandfather, uncles, grandmother Ch 4 – Mentions EBB’s proximity to bushrangers <i>Extended quotes provided on the next page</i>
<i>Bohemia</i>	He mentions visiting wombats at the zoo.
Letter	Letter from/to cousin in Australia
Diaries	Mentions getting fan mail from Australia

Note. Cook died in Hawaii, but as the first European known to map the East Coast of Australia and circumnavigate NZ, a mention of Cook seems like an Australian/NZ reference to me. A biography of Cook was in AR’s library.

Here is what Ransome himself wrote in his *Autobiography*:

My maternal grandfather Edward Baker Bolton was just as incapable of self-help¹, and as interesting to small boys. He had owned enormous areas of sheep-lands in New South Wales until the break-up of the big estates brought about by legislation. However, though he had spent most of his life in Australia his heart had never been in his sheep-farming. He was a good watercolour painter and cared for nothing else¹. He settled my grandmother in Tilly House at Wem in Shropshire while he went off to Australia for years at a time. My mother was the eldest of his second family and inherited his gift for water-colour painting. Sometimes, leaving the second family in the care of the not much older daughters of his first wife, he and my grandmother used to go to Australia together². ... He and my grandmother had endless stories of black fellows, bushrangers, kangaroos, laughing jackasses and such, and used to bring back with them emus' eggs of vast size, the skins of snakes they had met and killed in their Australian garden ... I can see my grandfather now, skipping nimbly out of the way of a boomerang flung by himself when it came spinning back to him with greater speed and accuracy than he had

¹ This assessment (from whom?) seems a little harsh, although understandable for a boy who only knew his grandfather in the Australian depression. EBB discusses economies (and some of his successes) sensibly with Edith in letters home. He was engaged in colonial politics (particularly in the early years), clearly cared for his family, and retained sufficient interest in the farm to return there as required. He also seems to have enjoyed boating and travelling. Perhaps a small boy (Arthur) was never told the full story.

² There is no evidence that Rachel went to Australia before 1890. EBB correctly anticipates 'I do not suppose that your mother would like to adopt this as her permanent residence' in a letter of 1887; however, she may have accompanied him on painting trips to Europe, leaving the children in the care of the older girls and the servants (just as Molly Blackett would leave her girls in *Picts and Martyrs*). Perhaps she travelled with him and 'Niz' as far as India in 1874, when EBB and Niz were on the way to Australia, when the oldest girl (Emily/Millie) was, indeed, only 23.

expected. ... he had made for himself a private Bohemia of his own where he drew and planned pictures ... From Clifton I was taken to the Bristol docks, and saw sailing ships alongside the quays ... and to the Zoological Gardens where I was allowed to hold in my arms a lion-cub then only a little smaller than myself ... the famous Hannibal.

That grandfather died when I was very young³ and the aunts were ruled by my formidable grandmother. ... My grandmother taught me the moves of chess when I was little more than a baby, so that I owed to her what has been a pleasure all my life. ...

Both my grandfathers married twice ... so that I began life with a vast number of uncles and aunts... and for me, enhanced by that romantic shadowy Australia, from which they appeared now and then bringing strange gifts, and into which, after farewell visits, equally exciting, from time to time they vanished. A young Bolton uncle, revolting from the sheep station of Bergen-op-Zoom (not far from Sydney⁴), went for a visit to British Columbia and remained there ... (*Auto*^{xxvi} pp. 19-21.)

The only book that I read for pleasure in term-time was Rolf Boldrewood's *Robbery under Arms* ... of particular interest to me because my maternal grandfather, though, unfortunately, not a bush-ranger, had spent much of his life on the very ranges where Starlight and the Morgans did their desperate deeds and I, alone in the school, had seen a blackfellow's boomerang and even thrown one. (*Auto* p.43.)

The fuller references in the novels are provided here.

Swallows and Amazons. [rubbing noses] ... like the natives you told us about in the Sydney bush' (Ch.16). ... Then Mother talked about the great drought on the sheep stations, when there was no rain and no water

³ When he was 11, although EBB was not in England after AR was 9

⁴ Actually 500km is relatively far, even by Australian standards; the Wellington Valley properties were much closer (<200km).

in the wells, and the flocks had to be driven miles and miles to get a drink, and thousands and thousands of them died. Then she talked of the pony she had had when she was a little girl, and then of the little brown bears that her father caught in the bush, and that used to lick her fingers for her when she dipped them in honey. (Ch. 18) ... once in the bush ... I was in a tent like that and it ripped to ribbons, and was blown clean away' (Ch.31).

Swallowdale. 'Sleep like old trees and get up like young horses', as my old nanny in Australia used to say (Ch. 2). When I capsized my cousin's dinghy in Sydney Harbour' (Ch. 8). ... she had seen bigger trout in Australia and NZ ... talked about fishing and about caves and about camping in the Australian bush, where there were much worse snakes than adders [Ch. 15]. She sniffed and remembered that same smell ... from the sailing ships in Australian harbours long ago [Ch. 36].

Peter Duck. He had sailed in the wool ships from Australia [Ch. 1]. Pelorus Jack, the fish that used to pilot vessels into Sydney harbour, and had a law made in his protection [Ch.17].

Pigeon Post. 'What was that story the friendliest of all natives used to tell about the blackfellows in the Australian bush who found water by magic in the year of the great drought when the sheep were dying by the thousands on the sheep stations?' [Ch.16].

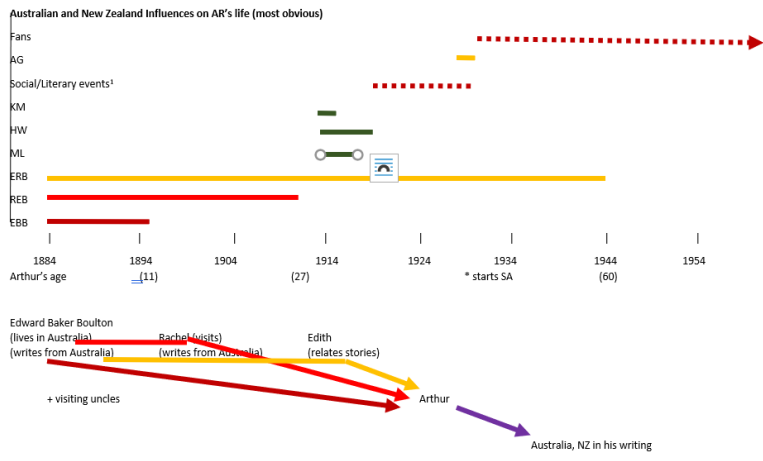
We Didn't Mean to go to Sea. 'Why, when I was a girl in Australia I've often fallen asleep on horseback, riding home after a dance' (Ch. 2).

Great Northern? 'Roger'll remember Captain Cook, he'll keep on the right side of the natives.' [said Titty]/ 'Captain Cook got on the wrong side of them,' said Dorothea ... /'The inside,' said Peggy [Ch. 21].

Appendix 2 Australasian Influences throughout AR's life

Australia was very much in the consciousness of the English in the 1920s, with many novelists writing about Australia as a possible 'new life' (e.g. D.H. Lawrence (whose *Stories, Essays and Poems* were in Ransome's library) had written *Kangaroo* while staying in Australia in 1922). Yet it is fairly clear from his personal history that for Ransome, the connections with the Antipodes were more personal ... and lasted throughout his life. In addition to having a direct connection with relatives who had lived in or visited Australia until 1911, when his grandmother died, he was friendly with at least two New Zealanders (Katherine Mansfield and Harold Williams) during the early years of his first marriage. His best man for the 1909 wedding, Ashley Gibson, also had an Australian connection. He would edit a long (60+ page) brochure on the Australian bush in 1928, and send Ransome a copy of his own autobiography, *Postscript to Adventure* in 1929. While I have found no evidence for the suggestion that Arthur and Evgenia considered emigrating to Australia, a letter from Cyril indicates that his parents did. Ransome even made particular note in his diaries whenever he received fan mail from 'Down Under'^{xxvii}. Clearly Australia meant something special.

I have attempted to represent the known Australasian influences visually on the following page.



¹ Australia touted as a destination in press and in literature

Figure 12 Australian and NZ Influences

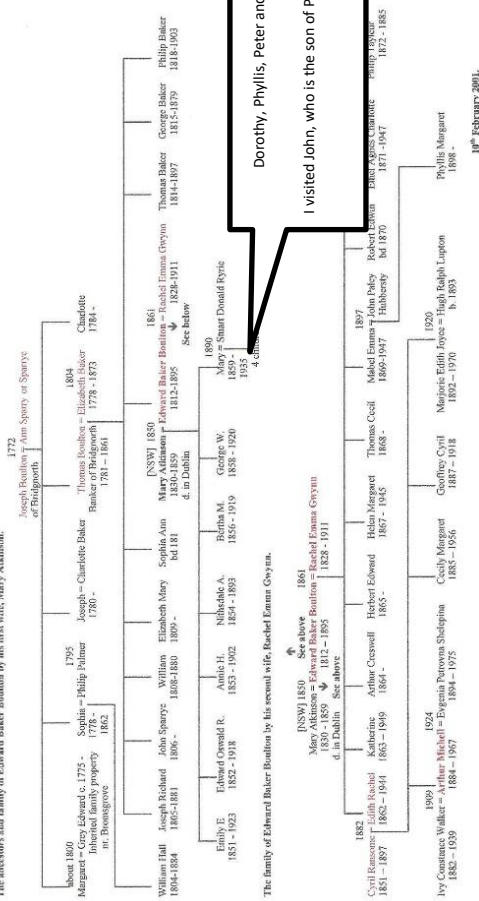
Key. EBB = Edward, REB = Rachel Boulton, EB = Edith; KM = Katherine Mansfield, AG = Ashley Gibson, HW = Harold Williams. *Darker colour = stronger link*

Appendix 3 Family Tree of Boulton Family

BOULTON

The family of Edward Baker Boulton who was a wealthy man and an important amateur artist who emigrated to New South Wales, Australia in 1836, and who was described in official British documents as a "Squire", "N.S.W.". This meant that he was a sheep farmer who obtained enormous areas of territory, and employed retained "squire" in Britain at least four times. He met and married his first wife, Mary Atkinson, in Australia, but it was in Ireland in 1829 that she died, leaving Edward with seven children, the last one very young indeed. Presumably to provide them with a mother he remarried the next year, and his second wife, Rachel Emma Croyan, lived in Wexham, Shropshire, and bore him another ten children. His eldest child by his second marriage, was the mother of John Baker Boulton, author of the Synodary and numerous books. In some official documents like D India Records in others Rachel Edith, but was always called Edith.

The ancestors and family of Edward Baker Boulton by his first wife, Mary Atkinson.



The family of Edward Baker Boulton by his second wife, Rachel Emma Croyan.

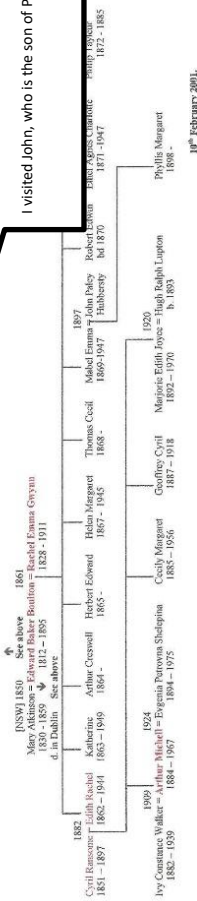


Figure 13 Boulton Family Tree

Appendix 4 Map and List of Locations for the Tour

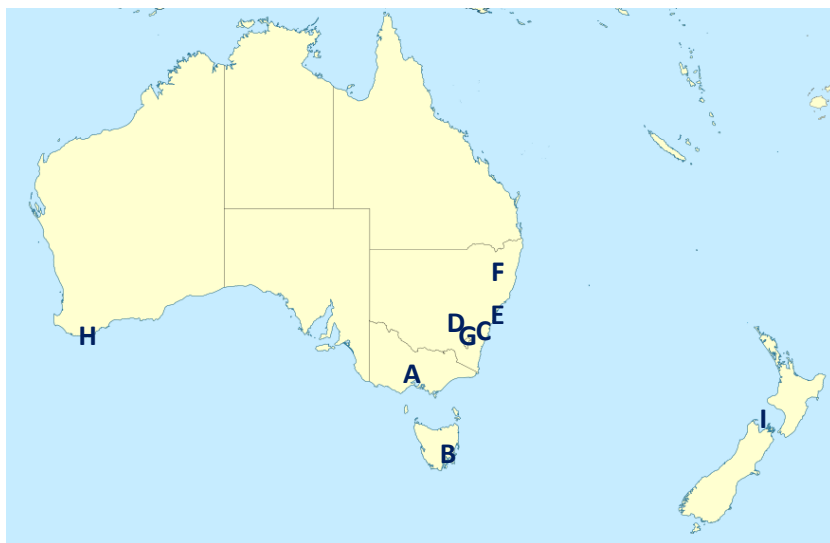


Figure 14 Annotated Map of Australia and New Zealand

Points of Interest List for Map

Key: **Open to Public**, **Has Open Days**, **Easily Seen from street**

- A. **Melbourne.** Captain Flint visited here (there's a label on his trunk), the first port of call for most ships travelling from England. EBB may have taken the children to see koalas (not bears!), possums, snakes, kangaroos at Australia's **oldest zoo**.
- B. **Hobart.** Here EBB arrived at the same time as *HMS Beagle*.
- C. **Sydney.** Mary Walker learned to sail on **Sydney Harbour**. Sites mentioned in the Boulton family story (still standing) include:
 - a. **Circular Quay.** Visit The Rocks for atmosphere, or catch a **Sydney Ferry** to some of these places.
 - b. **Elizabeth Bay House** (where EBB partied in the 1840s)

- c. **Darling Point Walk** (2 hours). **St Marks, Mona House** 38 Mona Rd; **Greenoaks** (now **Bishop's Court**) 11A Greenoaks Ave; **The Swifts** 68 Darling Point Rd; EBB's homes at **Lindesay** - 1a Carthona Ave; **Carthona 5** Carthona Ave
 - d. Nearby - **Cranbrook House** 6 Kent Rd, now part of Cranbrook School from which Rose Bay painted; **Point Piper** (fishing trip); **Redleaf** 536 New South Head Rd; **Vaucluse House** (sketched)
 - e. Eastern Suburbs - **Bronte House** at 470 Bronte Rd, **Waverley Cemetery** painted by EBB; Oswald buried
 - f. **Mosman** – Figure 3 was painted from The Rangers (demolished), nr Spofforth & Brierly st, Rangers Av
 - g. **Manly** where Mary Atkinson and Blanche rode donkeys
 - h. **Balmain** (visited by Mary A; progressive sailing club)
 - i. Consider visiting the various **yacht** clubs, a cruise on a **tall ship** or the ferry to **Parramatta** (see below)
 - j. **City** - EBB Paintings at **Mitchell Library** and **State Gallery** (book to see). **Sydney Museum** nearby
 - k. To get a 'feel' for colonial life at the time, wander through **The Rocks**, visit 'Sydney Museums' **Elizabeth Farm** at **Parramatta** or **Rouse Hill House and Farm**
- D. Central Ranges.** Where 'Captain Starlight and the Morgans did their dreadful deeds' (from *Robbery under Arms*) and where the brothers 'squatted' at **Cardington**, near Bathurst.
- E. Newcastle.** EBB's first wife was born here. The steamer from Sydney also arrived here. **Martindale**, near Denman.
- F. New England Area.** **Bergen-op-Zoom** is next to **Walcha cemetery**, where three Boultons are buried. **Ohio Homestead** was visited by the Boulton girls. EBB did his banking in **Armidale**, where there is an excellent Folk Museum and many buildings remain. **Take the train journey from Sydney to**

Armidale (as Mary Walker would have); see the **Train Museum at Werris Creek** and pass through **Walcha Rd station**.

G. The **Monaro District** became Mary Ryrie's home.

H. **King George Sound, WA**. EBB's last known painting.

I. **New Zealand**. Titty recalls mother mentioning trout in NZ. Peloros Jack actually came from here, not Sydney harbour. EBB's brother Philip settled there, and EBB's son, George, travelled home via Auckland in 1890.



Figure 15 Redleaf House, Mary's first stop in Australia^{xxviii}



Figure 16 Martindale House on the way to BoZ^{xxix}

And so, farewell ... Do you notice a similarity?



Figure 17 EBB's Last known painting - King George's Sound, WAⁱⁱ



Figure 18 AR's last drawing for 'the twelve', from Great Northern?



Figure 19 The Graves of Two Captain Flints



The photos are taken looking towards the country and homes that grandfather and grandson loved. The trees in the top photo (taken in 2020) are on the border of BoZ; the photo of the Ransomes' grave (taken by Magnus Smith in 2022) is looking South in the direction of 'Hill Top' (and some sheep).

Appendix 5 References

Australian novels of the times (bold = read by AR)

1872 Marcus Clarke	<i>For the Term of his Natural Life</i>
1889 Robert Boldrewood*	<i>Robbery under Arms</i>
1894 Ethel Turner	<i>Seven Little Australians</i>
1901 Miles Franklin*	<i>My Brilliant Career</i>
1903 J. Furphy/Tom Collins*	<i>Such is Life</i>
1908 Mrs Aeneas Gunn	<i>We of the Never-Never</i>
1910 Mary Grant Bruce	<i>A Little Bushmaid + series</i>
1910 Henry Handel Richardson*	<i>The Getting of Wisdom</i>

New Zealand

1910 Edith Howes	Many, incl. <i>Silver Island</i> (1928)
1917 Esther Glenn	<i>Six Little New Zealanders</i>

Other

1923/4 D.H. Lawrence	<i>Kangaroo; The Boy in the Bush</i>
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* Pseudonym

References

ⁱ www.flickr.com/photos/anmm_thecommons/9087367469

ⁱⁱ EBB painting reproduced from *Edward Baker Boulton: Australia's Forgotten Artist*

ⁱⁱⁱ *Edward Baker Boulton: Australia's Forgotten Artist*, John Edwards

^{iv} Catherine's 'Swallow Down Under' (*Mixed Moss*, 2022) also draws together other research and suggestions for the Walkers' 'Back Stories'

^v Letter from Ernest Altounyan, *Best of Childhood*, p.31

^{vi} *Inventing Australia: Images and identity 1688-1980*, Richard White

^{vii} *Robbery Under Arms*, Robert Boldrewood

^{viii} Photo <https://collection.maas.museum/object/461023>

References

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- ix *Dictionary of Sydney*, <https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/sailing>
- x *Edward Baker Boulton: Australia's Forgotten Artist*, John Edwards
- xi [Melbourne's past - David Doughty - Australian Stories - Tribute To ANZACs](#)
- xii <https://www.aussietowns.com.au/town/bendemeer-nsw>
- xiii Dorothy's letter to Walcha & District Historic Society states that Mary travelled out with her father first, although other researchers suggest that she was last. Perhaps the older girls were enjoying Sydney too much and waited for the trainline to reach Tamworth in October!
- xiv All 11 letters of the Boulton grandparents are reproduced in the *Mixed Moss Online Supplement* with the permission of Special Collections & Galleries, Leeds University Library (Archive File BC MS 20C RANSOME/5/1).
- xv *Genetic Building Blocks*, an Amazon Publication by Margaret Ratcliffe
- xvi en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rail_transport_in_New_South_Wales
- xvii Photo taken from Bob Walsh's article in *Northern Daily Leader* 2017
- xviii AR's 1962 letter.
- xix Cover of *From Billabong to London* from www.goodreads.com
- xx *A Little Bush Maid* and the Billabong Series by Mary Grant Bruce
- xxi *The Australian Bush* by Mary Fullerton, edited by Ashley Gibson
- xxii For more information on Gibson, see 'Ashley Gibson: From Bohemia to Outward Bound' by Cheryl Paget, *Mixed Moss*, 2020.
- xxiii 'Some notes on cannibalism among Queensland Aborigines, 1824-1900', E.G. Heap in *Queensland Heritage*
- xxiv Wikipaedia
- xxv Janice Lingley suggests that the eel password may be derived from Corroboree (*Secret Water: The Eel password deciphered*, MM 2007)
- xxvi Ransome's posthumously edited *Autobiography* is available from both the Arthur Ransome Trust and The Arthur Ransome Society.
- xxvii *The Twilight Years*, both volumes (I think)
- xxviii https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Double_Bay_Council_Chambers.JPG
- xxix <https://www.facebook.com/martindalehomestead/photos/a.117092833422599/336474478151099> with kind permission of the current owners, noting that the 2nd storey was added after the Boultons visited. Pictures from 1900 are on Facebook.