Migration

Although the FWWCP began in London, England, the network has included writing/publishing groups from across the globe for multiple decades. Some groups were located throughout the North American, African, and Australian continents. However, FWWCP groups in England often published texts about coming to England as migrants from other places in the world. For instance, within the FWWCP Collection, there are bilingual stories detailing the journey from Poland, Bangladesh, Ireland, Iran, Jamaica, Greece, and more.

Each of the texts in this reading guide is concerned with migration, immigration, and emigration in the twentieth century. The publications appear as books, booklets, short stories, poetry, and anthologies.

Often written as a memoir or life history, writers offer reflections on their lives in their home countries, as well as obstacles to meaningful lives in England. Sometimes, writers describe differences between their hometowns and Britain in regard to housing, culture, food, identity, labour, and stereotypes, while others reflect more on politics and activism.
A Visit to my Aunt’s House
Fay Cattini, 1982

Fay Cattini wrote and illustrated a book about her childhood for her two preschool-aged daughters. Cattini describes the people, locations, food, and games from her early years in India. The story is set in Cattini’s childhood home and her aunt’s house. Recurring themes of childhood memories, imagination, and culture are complemented with illustrations, which make it easy for a young child to follow.

Keywords: childhood | culture | family | short story | travel

Across Seven Seas and Thirteen Rivers: Life Stories of Pioneer Sylheti Settlers in Britain
Catherine Adams, editor, 1987

Across Seven Seas and Thirteen Rivers: Life Stories of Pioneer Sylheti Settlers in Britain was compiled and edited by Catherine Adams and published in 1987 by THAP Books. The book is a historical account of the relationship between Britain and the Bengal region of India in the 19th and 20th centuries. The first part of the book focuses on Bengali men who left home to work at foreign shipping companies (Calcutta Crews, Lascar Seamen) and who settled in London after their contracts expired. The second part of the book describes how those men learned how to live life in England.

Keywords: Bangladesh | employment | family | government | labour | laws | migration | World War II

‘Across the Irish Sea’: An Age Exchange Publication Based on Memories of London Irish Pensioners
Pam Schweitzer, editor, 1989

Booknews No. 3, Women Writers is an educational magazine focused solely on women’s writing groups within the FWWCP. It was primarily for “teachers who want to know about writing and publishing outside the mainstream and like to encourage active involvement by their students in the writing process.” By encouraging a range of works across the FWWCP, they hoped to showcase the rich tradition of women’s writing through a variety of forms and genres.

Keywords: family | labour | marriage | nostalgia | theatre
Asian Voices: Life stories from the Indian Subcontinent
Hammersmith and Fulham Community History Series, 1993
FWWCP/ RM 01

Asian Voices is a joint project between the Hammersmith & Fulham association, the Bangladesh Association for Culture and Education, and the Ethnic Communities Oral History Project in 1993. The book is a collection of memoirs and autobiographies from people from different regions of India. Many authors remark on the blissful simplicity of their childhood and their experience of immigration to England. Many also comment on the hardships that emerge from immigration. Stories are written in English, Bengali, and Urdu.

Keywords: childhood | family | housing | labor | memory | sports

Bill Eburn, 1985
FWWCP/08 L 12

Eburn's autobiography begins with his early childhood being raised by his aunt and uncle. He then focuses on his time in World War II, writing about his feelings surrounding the draft, following his time on the HMS Collingwood, being assigned to submarines, his capture and coming home. Perhaps most poignantly, he also details the contrast between the glory that comes from wearing a military uniform and the realities of war. This publication is written like a diary, with poetry included.

Keywords: childhood | poetry | war

Home to Home: Reminiscences of Bangladeshi Women in Sheffield
Safuran Ara and Debjani Chatterjee, 1995
FWWCP/03 Y 12

Home to Home is a collection of stories from Bangladeshi women compiled and edited by Safuran Are and Debjani Chatterjee. Writers discuss cultural differences related to gender roles, language, appearance, and the maintenance of their gendered identity. Some writers reminisce on the difficulties of cooking in England, where the tools needed for their way of cooking are unavailable. Many of these writers discuss the loneliness that they feel in England. Home to Home is a bilingual text, in English and Bengali, with some images.

Keywords: education | family | gender | language | marriage
Our Experience: Women from Somalia, Tanzania, Bangladesh and Pakistan Write About Their Lives

Gatehouse, 1996

Our Experience is a collection of stories written by women from Somalia, Tanzania, Bangladesh, and Pakistan about their lives. These women talk about the differences in cultural expectations, including food, money, religion, school, and gender roles. Many focus on their first night in England and how they eventually came to consider England home. Our Experience represents some of the authors' first writings in English. Some stories are translated into Somali, Ki Swahili, Bengali, or Urdu, and have illustrations.

Keywords: childhood | education | gender | language | patriotism | religion | war

Migration, Work and Identity: Gujaratis in Wellingborough

Uma Kothari and Emma Crewe, 1997

Migration, Work and Identity: Gujaratis in Wellingborough recounts the journey of the Gujarati people coming to Britain beginning in 1833 and ending in 1950. The narrative traces the move from India to East Africa before settling in Wellingborough where the first Gujarati, Nagarbhai Patel, settled. The authors discuss feelings of acceptance in Britain, learning about British culture, maintaining their cultural identity, and eventually becoming active in British society by supporting Indian social and political initiatives.

Keywords: autobiography | education | Gujaratis | housing | racism | West Asia | work

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Keywords: childhood | education | gender | language | patriotism | religion | war

Passport to Exile: the Polish Way to London

Hammersmith and Fulham Community History Series, Sav Kyriacou and the Polish Reminiscence Group, 1988

Passport to Exile: the Polish Way to London is the second publication in the Hammersmith & Fulham Community History series. This bilingual publication was transcribed, translated, and edited by Sav Kyriacou and the Polish Reminiscence group. The publication includes five autobiographies, which describe Poles coming to London in the 1940s, their lives in their new homes, and the reasons they chose to stay. Cultural expectations dominate discussion of bias and stereotypes. This publication continues into another called, Travelling Light: Poles on Foreign Soil.

Keywords: activism | art | childhood | family | labour | Poland | war
So This is England
Multiple authors, 1984
FWWCP/ RM 01

The memoirs in So This is England are mainly from people of African-Caribbean descent, while some Vietnamese, Italian, and Irish descendant stories are also included. Stories are divided and presented in five sections: coming to England, housing, work, schooldays, and memories. Many of the stories describe processes of migration, acclimation to daily life in England, and cultural assimilation.

**Keywords:** childhood | factory | family | labour | work

The Irish in Exile: Stories of Emigration
Hammersmith and Fulham Community History Series, no date
FWWCP/08 L 12

The Irish in Exile contains memoirs of Irish immigrants that came to Britain in the first half of the 20th century. Those who emigrated as children describe feeling very secure in Ireland, yet, once in England, recall great economic, social, and educational disadvantages. Others who came to London for work describe the impact of labour shortages in Ireland as drivers of immigration. Authors focus on the struggles of changing labour conditions and the daily impact of poverty.

**Keywords:** activism | childhood | emigration | housing | Irish | labour | short story
Further Reading in the FWWCP Collection:

A Bowl of Wisdom
FWWCP/08 L 12
Digital Collection: http://fwwcp.gn.apc.org/node/6816

Brick Lane 1978: The Events and their Significance
FWWCP/ RM Part 4

Home from Home British Pakistanis in Mirpur
FWWCP/03 Y 13

Just for Five Years? Reminiscences of Pakistani Senior Citizens of Sheffield
FWWCP/03 Y 12

Sailing on Two Boats: Second Generation Perspectives
FWWCP/08 L 12

The Motherland Calls: African/Caribbean Experiences
FWWCP/08 L 12

Travelling Light: Poles on Foreign Soil
FWWCP/08 L 12
Digital Collection: http://fwwcp.gn.apc.org/node/6864

Xeni: Greek-Cypriots in London
FWWCP/08 L 12
Digital Collection: http://fwwcp.gn.apc.org/node/6863