



Margaret Humphreys CBE OAM 1944

Social Worker, writer Founder of Child Migrants Trust

Born in Nottingham Margaret trained and practiced as a social worker in the Radford and Hyson Green area in child protection and adoption. In 1986 she received a letter from a woman in Australia asking for help to trace her parents. She claimed she had been put on a boat aged about 4 and sent to Australia by the British Government. Margaret felt that she must be wrong but was intrigued and began to investigate and found that this woman's story was the tip of an enormous iceberg – 150,000 poor children had been shipped off to Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Zimbabwe -the former Rhodesia right up to 1967; often without their parents' knowledge. Children were often told their parents had died, and parents were told their children had been placed for adoption elsewhere in the UK. Saving money was one of the key motive behind this policy; the children were allegedly deported because it was cheaper to care for them overseas. However, many of the children were used as slave labour and some were sexually abused by the institutions they were sent to.

She set up the Child Migrants Trust and attempted to find birth certificates and relatives of the children involved helping thousands of former child migrants to reclaim their identities and reunite with their UK families. Margaret's pioneering work led to public inquiries and national apologies from British and Australian governments.

She wrote 'Empty Cradles' about this which was dramatised in 2011 feature film 'Oranges and Sunshine'. In 2011 she was awarded an honorary degree from Nottingham university. In 2020 July she was honoured by the International Federation of Social Workers receiving the Andrew Mouravieff-Apostol medal having been nominated in UK, Australia and Canada.

