

## Canada and Australia, Shared History

Though a world apart, Canada and Australia have much in common. As countries they share not only an important heritage through the British connection, but also strong historical links including the many personalities and events that have shaped them.

One of the oldest connections is Captain James Cook, whose navigational experience in the Gulf of St Lawrence on Canada's east coast led not only to his survey of Australia's east coast, in 1770, but also the Pacific Coast of Canada in 1778.

## Transportation of Canadian Convicts 1840

One of the most interesting historical links that led ultimately to the establishment of responsible government in both countries was the ill-fated Rebellions of 1837-1838 and the transportation of two groups of Canadian convicts.

The rebels, one group from Upper Canada (English speaking) and the others from Lower Canada (French speaking) agitated for representative government against the domination of the unelected British Legislative Councils. Both rebellions were quashed and many of the participants transported to Australia as convicts. Ninety-two followers of William Lyon Mackenzie, in Upper Canada, were sent to the harsh penal colony in Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania).

Today, two monuments in Hobart commemorate the landing of the Canadian exiles in Van Diemen's Land.

The first monument was unveiled in 1970, and the text on it reads:

### Canadian Exiles of 1840

Near this spot in Sandy Bay ninety-two English speaking exiles from the uprising of 1837-1838 in Upper Canada were incarcerated in 1840 before being removed to labour on the Hobart to Launceston Road. Subsequently they were released on ticket-of-leave and eventually pardoned to return to Canada.

Fifty-eight French speaking prisoners from the uprising in Lower Canada were similarly exiled to the Parramatta River area of New South Wales.

Measures taken as a result of the uprisings in Upper and Lower Canada represented significant steps in the evolution of responsible government and parliamentary democracy in Canada and Australia.

This plaque was unveiled on September 30, 1970, by The Honourable Douglas Harkness, P.C., M.P., former Minister of National Defence of Canada, to mark the 130th anniversary of the landing of the Canadian exiles in Van Diemen's Land and to commemorate the sacrifices made by many Canadians and Australians in the evolution of self-governing, equal and free nations within the Commonwealth of Nations.

The second monument, which was unveiled in 1995, was designed by Bob Jennings of the University of Tasmania Centre for the Arts.

The text on the monument in Prince's Park, Battery Point, reads:

This monument honours the memory of 92 exiles transported from Canada to Van Diemen's Land in 1840. Their struggle was a significant factor in the evolution of responsible government in Canada and Australia.

