



The Worst Country in the World

Ms Patsy Trench

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Reviews 'Set against the backdrop of the Australian migrant experience, *The Worst Country in the World* is not only a great read but a thought-provoking one too, especially for those with links to Australia, which reinvented itself from a convict colony to one of the 'luckiest' countries in the world.' Karen Clare, Family Tree magazine. 'The book relates the author's family over five generations, using a variety of techniques, each of which alone would pay rich dividends for students to emulate ... It provides a rich scenario for Patsy's imagination, building on meticulous research in archives, to present us with a sensitive novel about Australia's beginnings interspersed with reflections relating to the present day.' Brian Schollar, Dorset Family History Society. Product Description In 1801 Mary Pitt, a 53-year-old widow and mother of five, left her home in Fiddleford in Dorset to sail across the world to live in a penal colony in a country that was then considered by its recent arrivals as the worst country in the world. Colonial New South Wales was then barely fourteen years old, an experiment that looked as if it was going to fail. What on earth made her go there? This is what the author Patsy Trench, Mary's great great great great granddaughter, set out to find out. She discovered that her ancestress' migration had been arranged by Mary's cousin George, who fortuitously happened to be Horatio Nelson's brother-in-law. George thought he was offering her a better future, and it turned out in the long run he was right, though at some cost. Nelson's name and recommendation played a vital part in Mary's migration, and her reinvention from penniless yeoman's widow to a woman of some standing. But in the course of it she, along with other early settlers, lived lives of hardship and great uncertainty in a country where the climate was wild and unpredictable and daily life was a matter of improvisation and experimentation. *The Worst Country in the World* is a story about the early days of colonial Australia as seen through the eyes of a family of free settlers. It tells how the country that was originally considered not fit to be lived in struggled to become the 'lucky' country it is now. It is a personal story told by an Englishwoman who once lived in Australia and has a deep affection for it, whose own Australian mother reversed the wheel and migrated back to England to reinvent herself as the archetypal Englishwoman. It is about struggle and snobbery, reinvention and revaluation. In the minds of Australia's indigenous population the notion of a worst country transforming itself into a lucky one might well be reversed. The Europeans' gains were the aboriginal people's losses, and the author is well aware that her ancestors were a party to what is now considered the 'invasion' of a country over which the colonists had no rights whatsoever. 'The lives of those who came before, indeed the process of researching family history, comes under the spotlight here, as the author tries to identify what makes a person who they are.' Family Tree. 'The Worst Country in the World ... is a well-meant and honest attempt by the author to tell the story of her ancestors and the events regarding their move to the colony of NSW, both before and after their arrival in the early 1800s. The book is very much the personal view of the author, seeking to make the story of Mary Pitt 'an entertaining read'.' Geoff Bovard, Descent magazine, The Society of Australian Genealogists.

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