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歷史協會

CHINESE AUSTRALIAN
HISTORICAL SOCIETY inc

NEWSLETTER

- June 2018 -

The latest news and updates from CAHS



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From the Editor



Compiling a newsletter is never easy and involves time, effort, ideas and experience. Having written for and edited a number newsletters and magazines over the years, I was hoping my days of doing this were over. Recent months have been busy and when the CAHS Committee met at the beginning of June, it appeared that there would be no June issue. However, on reflection, I did not like the idea of not publishing the planned quarterly editions, so made a decision that we should still proceed.

Thank you to those I reached out to for articles on a very short deadline, so here we have the June 2018 issue of the Chinese Australian Historical Society's Newsletter which contains a variety of articles and stories which we hope are of interest to our members and friends. I'm a dinosaur when it comes to technology so thanks to new committee member Jingyuan (Jeanette) Wang for her assistance in this area.

Please note the upcoming events and that membership renewals are due on 1 July. Because of time constraints, we are reproducing some articles of interest which appeared in other publications, such as the New York Times and the New Zealand Tung Jung Newsletter.

I am going to China at the end of the month to join some of my New Zealand Jung Seng (Zengcheng) county relatives on a visit to my ancestral county and villages. It is many decades since I was last there, so am expecting to see many changes. Jung Seng is known for its lychees and as it will lychee season, I will have my fill. Zengcheng, which was a separate district, has now been incorporated into Guangzhou.

In order to get the next issue out by the beginning of September, please get your articles in by the end of July.

Daphne Lowe Kelley
lowekelley@bigpond.com

CAHS Upcoming Events

July 5 (Thursday)

Dr Bing Chen, Assistant Professor, School of Foreign Languages, Peking University to speak on Australian-born China Correspondent G E Morrison's writings in *The Times* during the complicated political landscape of late imperial China (1897-1912). State Library of New South Wales, 6.00 pm - 8.00pm.

Please register on Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/dr-bing-chen-on-ge-morrison-an-australian-in-late-imperial-china-tickets-47048703940>

September 5 (Wednesday)

As part of History Week 2018, CAHS is collaborating with UTS ACRI in inviting Alison Choy Flanagan to discuss her book *Chinese Whispers - In Search of Ivy* (Black Quill Press 2018). Ivy is Alison's mother who died when Alison was six. The book's story covers her journey from Guangzhou and Hong Kong to Australia, including Cooktown and Thursday Island in Far North Queensland. After her presentation, fellow researcher, brother-in law Malcolm Oakes, will join Alison in a discussion moderated by ACRI Director Bob Carr. UTS Campus 6pm.

October 20/21 (Saturday/Sunday)

This is an exciting weekend tour lead by historian Dr Barry McGowan and several guest speakers, of Orange, Wellington and other historic areas in NSW's Central West region, to explore their fascinating history of Chinese settlement and heritage. Further details to come but please register your interest now with secretary, Ann Toy annngtoy@gmail.com so we have an idea of numbers.

November 17 (Saturday)

Annual General Meeting.

Other Upcoming Events:

June 29 - 12 August Exhibition: The Burrangong Affray: Jason Phu and John Young Zerunge



For more information, please check the website below:

<http://www.4a.com.au/burrangong-affray-jason-phu-john-young-zerunge/>

News from Sydney

Reproduced from NZ Tung Jung June Newsletter

May has been an exceptionally busy month organising and attending a number of events. These included providing information and introductions for a New York Times journalist, being part of a working committee producing a series of short films on Chinatown, attending and organising forums on the effect of the proposed Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Bill on the Chinese Australian community, a talk by Moya Dodd on her role in Women's football, a Gala Night in Commemoration of the 200th Anniversary of Chinese Migration to Australia, a book launch and the unveiling of a plaque in memory of William Lee, the first Chinese Australian barrister in New South Wales.



With Moya Dodd

The first record of a Chinese person to settle in Australia was Mak Sai Ying aka John Shying in 1818. Much has been written on his life and activities in the Parramatta area of western Sydney. A number of events and projects have arisen to celebrate these 200 years of Chinese settlement in Australia.

After spending some time with journalist Isabelle Kwai, it was a real surprise to see her story and photos published in the International Section of the May 8 edition of the *New York Times*. On line the story ran with the caption *200 Years On, Chinese-Australians are Still Proving they Belong* while the caption in the printed edition was *Two Centuries of Suspicion: Chinese Australians again having to defend their place Down Under*. The article was largely based on the Leanfore family from Dongguan (Chan is their actual Chinese surname).

A lot of planning goes into making documentaries, even a series of short ones as the working group for Sandra Pires from Why Documentaries discovered in her *Haymarket Films - Yesterday Stories* series. Haymarket is where Sydney's main Chinatown is located and we have now chosen the topics, subject matter and interviewees, script still needs to be finalised before any filming takes place.

Shortly after attending the Lowy Institute's *Australia, China and the fallout from the foreign influence debate*, the Chinese Community Council of Australia held a forum at the

NSW Parliament House, hosted by Jenny Leong MP, titled *Chinese Australians: Complexities and Challenges*. The main aim of this forum was to discuss how the unrelenting political and media spotlight regarding 'Chinese influence' places the Chinese Australian community in a difficult situation.



With speakers, moderator Geraldine Doogue and politicians (Jenny Leong MP in red dress) at the Chinese Australian Forum at Parliament House

The Chinese Australian Historical Society's talk by Moya Dodd, *Moya Dodd: My Passion, My Story* starts with her maternal grandparents who were Chinese market gardeners, to her nurse mother and fireman father's stories to her life in South Australia and passion for soccer. This led to her being one of Australia's foremost women soccer players and later as one of the first women to serve on the FIFA Board. A lawyer by profession she is a strong advocate for promoting women's football internationally and managed to get FIFA to change their ban to allow women with hijabs to play.

A Gala Night to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Chinese migration to Australia was recently held to a packed audience in the Sydney Town Hall. The organising committee were mainly new Chinese from the PRC but descendants of the early Cantonese Chinese were present including the descendants of Mak Sai Ying and Mei Quong Tart.

Dr Michael Williams book *Returning Home with Glory: Chinese Villagers around the Pacific, 1849 to 1949* was recently launched at Parliament House. The Chinese villagers studied and referred to were from Zhongshan County.

Phillip Lee Chun, from Zhongshan County, came to Australia in 1874 and with several partners established Kwong War Chong & Company in Campbell Street and then moved to 84 Dixon Street in 1910. Kwong War Chong was a classic example of an overseas Chinese general store and trading company. It closed in 1987 and 82 and 84 Dixon Street were sold for \$19.8m last year. One of Phillip Lee Chun's sons, William Jansing Lee became the first Chinese Australian to be admitted to the NSW Bar. A plaque to commemorate the 80th anniversary of his admittance was unveiled in Selbourne Chambers where he practised.



Plaque celebrating William Lee's 80th anniversary of his admittance to the Bar.



Unveiling of the William Jangsing Lee plaque by his son Roland Lee and CAHS President King Fong.

Looking forward to spending some time with the NZ group travelling to Jung Seng (Zengcheng) at the end of June.

Daphne Lowe Kelley

Crossing Seas series

Returning Home with Glory

Chinese Villagers around the Pacific, 1849 to 1949

(榮歸故里：太平洋地區的中國僑鄉 1849–1949)

Michael Williams

History / China / Migration

February 2018

264 pp., 6" x 9", 23 b&w illus.

HB 978-988-8390-53-3 HK\$450 | US\$60



Employing the classic Chinese saying “returning home with glory” (*man zai rong gui*) as the title, Michael Williams highlights the importance of return and home in the history of the connections established and maintained between villagers in the Pearl River Delta and various Pacific ports from the time of the Californian and Australian gold rushes to the founding of the People’s Republic of China.

Conventional scholarship on Chinese migration tends to privilege nation-state factors or concepts which are dependent on national boundaries. Such approaches are more concerned with the migrants’ settlement in the destination country, downplaying the awkward fact that the majority of the overseas Chinese (*huaqiao*) originally intended to (and eventually did) return to their home villages (*qiaoxiang*). Williams goes back to the basics by considering the strong influence exerted by the family and the home village on those who first set out in order to give a better appreciation of how and why many modest communities in southern China became more modern and affluent. He also gives a voice to those who never left their villages (women in particular). Designed as a single case study, this work presents detailed

research based on the more than eighty villages of the Long Du district (near Zhongshan City in Guangdong Province), as well as the three major destinations—Sydney, San Francisco, and Honolulu—of the *huaqiao* who came from this region. Out of this analysis of what truly mattered to the villagers, the choices they had and made, and what constituted success and failure in their lives, a sympathetic portrayal of the *huaqiao* emerges.

Returning Home with Glory inaugurates the Hong Kong University Press book series “Crossing Seas”.



Michael Williams grew up in Sydney, completed his PhD at the University of Hong Kong, and is currently an adjunct fellow at Western Sydney University. He is also a founding member of the Chinese Australian Historical Society.

You can purchase the book from the following website:

<https://www.hkupress.hku.hk/pro/1594.php>

200 Years On, Chinese-Australians Are Still Proving They Belong

Isabella Kwai

New York Times, May 7, 2018

SYDNEY, Australia — Out of a pile of papers on her dining table, Man-Yee Leanfore, 70, pulled out one: a copy of an old immigration document from 1907.

A young woman in a traditional Chinese dress stared out from the attached photos. Age: 29. Build: Thin. Hair: Dark. Nationality: Chinese.

The document permitted Mrs. Leanfore's great-grandmother, Yuck Land Hing, to come and go from Australia at a time when the White Australia Policy kept out most Asian immigrants. It was a limited reprieve — a three-year exemption to the dictation test commonly used to exclude nonwhite immigrants.

“We suffered,” Mrs. Leanfore said as she looked at the photo, recalling the first in a long line of her relatives who emigrated to Australia. “But we didn't do anything wrong.”

This year commemorates 200 years of Chinese migration to Australia. The anniversary comes at a time when Australia is once again conflicted about its relationship with the region's biggest, most powerful country, and many Chinese-Australians are digging into their families' archives to share their history with audiences from both China and Australia.



The Leanfores and their friend Daphne Lowe Kelley, at right in the back, are Chinese-Australians in Sydney. This year commemorates 200 years of Chinese migration to the country. Matthew Abbott for The New York Times

February's Lunar New Year celebrations in Sydney featured talks from local historians. Chinese-Australian history museums are planning new exhibitions that connect the story of Australia's earliest Chinese immigrants to its newest, and community organizations are hosting regular talks around Chinese figures in Australian history.

Even in smaller towns and cities like Bendigo, where the Golden Dragon Museum has successfully raised money to replace its historic ceremonial Qing dynasty dragon, Chinese-Australians are actively seeking ways to keep their culture alive.



A display, at the Golden Dragon Museum in Bendigo, Victoria, depicts a shop front from the gold rush era. Asanka Brendon Ratnayake for The New York Times

Those who are involved say these activities are an effort to define their community on its own terms, separate from debates over the influence of the Chinese Communist Party in Australia, and to ensure that the public understands that not everyone who looks Chinese in Australia is a new arrival.

“I think people, especially white people, lump us all as Chinese, as if everybody is the same,” said Teik Hock Lim, 67, an ethnic Chinese, retired social worker, who grew up in Malaysia under British rule. “It’s like if people would call all white people the same.”

Australia’s relationship to Chinese immigration has always zigzagged between rejection and acceptance.



Ken Leanfore holds a copy of the document that permitted his great-great-grandmother, Yuck Land Hing, to enter Australia at a time when most Asians were excluded. Matthew Abbott for NYT

In 1818, Mak Sai Ying, a young man from Guangdong, stepped off a ship in Port Jackson, becoming one of the first recorded Chinese immigrants to the continent. Given the Anglicized name John Shying, he became a well-known pub owner in Sydney's west. When gold was discovered in the 1850s, a wave of new migrants from around the world arrived to try their luck, including thousands of Chinese men from Canton.

Out on the goldfields, competition for riches meant tension simmered between European and Chinese miners. Riots broke out; in one instance, a mob of 3,000 European miners burned a Chinese camp.

To discourage immigration, Victorian ports levied a heavy tax on Chinese miners. But the most resolved disembarked at South Australian ports and made the 500 km (310 mile) trek to the goldfields on foot. Not all survived.

Australia's first federal parliament went on to pass legislation in 1901 that would require all immigrants to pass a 50-word dictation test to enter the country. Because the test was enacted to keep nonwhite immigrants out, there was an insidious twist: officials could test applicants in any European language.

After a while, "there was never a Chinese person who could pass it," said Daphne Lowe Kelley, a community leader and former President of the Chinese Heritage Association of Australia. Unable to enter Australia in the 1920s, Ms. Lowe Kelley's father sailed to New Zealand instead, paying a tax to settle there.



"We're about Australian history," said Mark Wang, deputy chairman of the Museum of Chinese Australian History in Melbourne. "We're not about Chinese history." Asanka Brendon Ratnayake for The New York Times

Those of Chinese descent who were already in the country, like Mrs. Leanfore's great-grandmother, could apply for an exemption from the test in order to travel. But many, with families still living in China, simply gave up and returned home, including Mrs. Leanfore's grandmother who returned to Guangzhou.

In the decades following 1901, the Chinese population declined.

Race-based policies remained in place until 1973, when the government heralded a policy of multiculturalism.

Now there are about 1.2 million people in Australia with Chinese ancestry.

For years, older Chinese-Australians have nursed the painful legacy of the White Australia Policy. Now, after 200 years, they see their community as a patchwork of experiences. It includes the descendants of Cantonese and Hakka migrants from the Gold Rush era, ethnic Chinese refugees who fled the Vietnam War, migrants from Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and mainland China who have arrived steadily since the 1980s, and most recently – an influx of Chinese international students.

Nick Shying, 22, is one of many Chinese-Australians whose roots reach back to the first Chinese settlers – despite his pale skin and blue eyes. He said people often laugh when he brings up his Chinese heritage. Australians still use appearance as a basis for ethnic assumptions, he said, “but here I am as an example of the potential flaws of taking that approach.”

Many community leaders say these nuanced identities are once again being overlooked and oversimplified as the public focuses on new waves of immigration.



A Chinese graveyard at the White Hills public cemetery in Bendigo. Asanka Brendon Ratnayake for NYT

Part of the reason may be that Australia still considers itself a white nation, said Kate Bagnall, a historian at the University of Wollongong. “That’s a really powerful image that’s really difficult to shift,” she said.

And with the Australian government fending off allegations of political interference from the Chinese government, some worry this ignorance of history will spur an anti-Chinese backlash.

“There are some of us in the community who feel this is shades of the White Australia Policy coming back again,” said Ms. Lowe Kelley, a former president of the Chinese Heritage Association.

She added that when she reads news singling out Chinese political donations and investment, she worries that it will filter down: “What happens is it tarts the whole of the Chinese community.”

Of the many Chinese-Australian historical organizations she has been involved with, none receive funding from the Chinese government, she said.

Others involved in the revival of Chinese-Australian history also said they steer clear of Chinese officialdom.

Mark Wang, the deputy chairman of the Museum of Chinese Australian History in Melbourne said the goal is to remain impartial, relying on state government funding, ticket sales and community donations.

“We don’t want to be distorted by a political undercurrent,” Mr. Wang said. “We’re about Australian history. We’re not about Chinese history.”

For families closest to that history, the past is a bittersweet mystery that should never stop being reinterpreted and retold.

Mrs. Leanfore’s son, Ken, 31 is a photographer. Tired of fielding questions about his unusual last name, he recently curated an exhibition using stories of Chinese-Australians with names that were Anglicized by immigration officers.

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On a recent afternoon, in the family home her ancestors bought in 1928, Mrs. Leanfore sipped tea with her husband and son, as a pack of grandchildren chased each other through the house.

“None of them are pure Chinese,” said Mrs. Leanfore, smiling. “But that’s what the future is going to be.”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/07/world/australia/china-australia-history.html>

Searching for Australian Heritage in China

Before I left Australia, whenever I talked about the purpose of my research project in Zhongshan, South China: *Searching for Australian heritage in China*, I got a few confused looks. Some people even questioned if there was any! Immediately they asked, “Were there congregated iron buildings in China too?” Hadn’t they forgotten that Australian architecture is more wide-ranging in form, materials and design than merely corrugated iron structures? The iconic Opera House and Queen Victorian building are two examples of non-corrugated iron Australian buildings. Likewise, Chinese buildings erected by the returning diaspora—*Australian-heritage in China*—varied a lot, dependent on the availability of source materials and, just as important, skilled labour.

To understand how migration changed the built landscape, I have been visiting and documenting as part of my PhD study the built fabric of emigrant villages in South China. On the Chinese end of the migration pole, I've also been getting strange looks from village folk who don't quite comprehend why a young lad wants to take photos of toppled structures and buildings they have long abandoned. Mind you, our “foreign eyes” are fascinated by the exotic “old world” of our ancestors. At the same time, the opposite applies to those “left behind” in the village who strive to be part of the more developed, modern, “new world”.



A row of grey brick terrace houses belonging to a Chinese-Australian family (Author in Long Mei village 龍尾 East District in Zhongshan, May 2018)

Here, the earliest types of houses were made of mud-brick or rammed earth. One may wonder how such structures survived in a region prone to seasonal typhoons and frequent rainfall. Fired red or grey brick was a later technology and employed by those that could afford it. Bricks were usually made with local clay; or if that was not possible, families scheduled the building of their houses so bricks and associated labour could be imported together to reduce overall costs—and this resulted in a series of houses being built at one time. Another common practice was the “hing-dai-uk” in Cantonese (兄弟屋) or the terraced row house often owned by brothers sharing the costs of a party wall. This was undoubtedly a financial consideration, not unlike most Chinese decisions, but also one that kept the family “under one roof.” Another feature of these houses were its ceramic roof tiles, not too different to those seen in Chinatown today.

If the family could afford them, windows, were framed with wood, until iron then aluminium was available. Fenestrations were expensive, so humbler dwellings were

generally dark with no or few openings, except the door. Both iron and wood did not fare well in the subtropical monsoon

climate of South China, wood warped, and iron rusted over time. Windows became more common with the introduction of concrete technology. Portland cement was imported by migrants returning from across the Pacific, mainly and originally from America.



An Australian-Chinese migrant house left in ruins (Author in Ma Shan 馬山, Dou Men, December 2017)

Migrant houses are noticeably different at first sight. They were usually taller, perhaps with an extra floor or two and had more decorative elements like murals or stucco moldings. Such was a display of improved wealth that signified an emerging “middle class” taste. But some of these structures have unfortunately long been left abandon to decay. Their timber roof beams have been infested by termites and nature has reclaimed the interiors. Their owners have moved on and are happily settled, some are even well-established overseas. During the damper months the stench of rotting timber is unbearable.

Another feature of migrant villages were its schools. These stood out as among the earliest forms of concrete construction. Due to such technology, new multi-storey classrooms rose to over-shadow nearby family temples that were only ever single-storey but for as long as anybody could remember stood at the pinnacle of traditional architectural merit. The rise of new school buildings signified a departure from a traditional way of life. It saw an increase in material consumption and new lived experiences (textbooks, world maps and basketballs), greater life prospects as well as connectively to a life beyond the village, a new phase emerged, which I have coined “rural modernity.”



A 5-storey school financed by the owners of The Sun Department Store 大新公司 in 1930 (Author in Wai Sha village 外沙, Tang Jia Wan 唐家灣, December 2017)

Overseas migration disrupted village life as much as it improved the living conditions of the many children it left behind. Rather than turning over topsoil or digging irrigation ditches for rice cultivation like their farming ancestors, beginning in the early Republican era (circa 1920s), children grew accustomed to a scheduled life of schooling. The new architecture enabled them to look out of their school windows and see far into the distance over their ancestors' rice fields and on a daily basis daydream about literally jumping over the village gate. Such was made possible due to the consequence of Chinese migration to Australia and other Pacific ports since the mid-19th century. The story of Cantonese migration to Australia, therefore, is one not only a simple legacy of replacing one type of building material with another, but also reconfiguring the social and material landscape that came with great anticipation at a desperate time in China's uneasy 20th century history.

Christopher Cheng

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Legendary Shanghai 1927 - 1937

A presentation was given by Peter Hack for the Australia-China Friendship Society on Wednesday 23 May 2018. *Legendary Shanghai* is based on selected archival images from three important photographic albums.

- *Shanghai of Today* is an album of 50 prints published in 1928. The collection includes striking views of Shanghai street scenes in the late 1920s showing local inhabitants going about their daily business against the backdrop of the grand architecture of old Shanghai. The album once belonged to Arthur Hacker, Hong Kong author, artist, historian and collector.
- *Photographs of the Hostilities in Shanghai in 1932* is an album of over 250 photographs that belonged to a young British family in Shanghai showing a life of yachting on the Huangpu, horse races at the Shanghai race club and the “annual hunt”, as well as rare glimpses of life in the rice paddies and villages on the outskirts of old Shanghai. Over half the photos deal with the Japanese attack on Shanghai in the Winter of 1932. They show the barricades and defences erected to protect the International Settlement from a Japanese attack that never eventuated and the destruction wrought outside the concessions.
- *Shanghai Snapshots* is an album of 22 photographs taken in 1937 just before Japan attacked again. The images include many scenes on the Huangpu River, the Bund and the famous department stores on Nanjing Road established by the Chinese-Australian merchants of Sydney’s Haymarket



Peter Hack

82-84 Dixon Street

This property in the heart of Sydney's Chinatown has been sold. For many years the Hingara Restaurant occupied 82 Dixon Street and next door at number 84 the Lee family established Kwong War Chong & Company, which operated as a classic example of an overseas Chinese general store and trading company from 1910 to 1987. Phillip Lee Chun, came to Australia, from Zhongshan County, in 1874 and the business catered mainly for people from that county. Two of his sons, Harry and Norman Lee, looked after this business.

Another son, William Jansing Lee was the first Chinese Australian to be admitted to the NSW Bar. A plaque to commemorate the 80th anniversary of his admittance was recently unveiled in Selbourne Chambers where he practised.

In an effort to record some of the history of 82-84 Dixon Street, we would love to hear from anyone who has memories, recollections and/or photos of visits, dealings, meetings or any information pertaining to these premises.

Daphne Lowe Kelley

CAHS Membership

Membership Renewals are due on 1 July 2018 - please use the following Membership Form. The same form can also be used for enrolling new members.

<https://cahsociety.files.wordpress.com/2018/06/cahs-membership-form-2019.pdf>

Your Contribution

We welcome contributions to our quarterly newsletters (next one to appear in September 2018). If you have any stories about your Chinese ancestry or family history that you want to share and is relevant to our members; or are you organizing an event that you want to have publicized, we would be grateful if your copy could reach us by July 31.

Chinese Australian Historical Society Inc. (E): lowekelley@bigpond.com