

澳洲華人  
歷史協會

CHINESE AUSTRALIAN  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY inc

# NEWSLETTER

- September 2018 -

The latest news and updates from CAHS



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## From the Editor



The last three months have been full on with many events and activities. A number of these have involved CAHS collaborating with other organisations, including the NSW State Library, the Art Gallery of NSW, Asian Australian Lawyers Association and Why Documentaries. This has resulted in a greater reach for all concerned.

We were all saddened to learn of the passing of one of our members, Dr Barry McGowan OAM, on the 1<sup>st</sup> September. Barry was a prolific researcher, a great historian and a wonderful friend. Dr Michael Williams has written a tribute to Barry, who is sorely missed. At the end of June, Susan Leong and I joined a group on a visit to my ancestral county of Jung Seng (Zengcheng) in Guangdong Province. My first visit there was 60 years ago and how things have changed from a rural peasant landscape to one of increasing urbanisation. This district is well known for lychees and the timing coincided with lychee harvest time. Having departed for China the day before the launch of the *Burrangong Affray*, an exhibition based on the Lambing Flat riots, by artists Jason Phu and John Young Zerunge, I caught up with this at the 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art on my return.

Dr Bing Chen's talk at the State Library, on Australian-born China correspondent G E Morrison's life and writings, during the complicated political landscape of late imperial China, was well received and sets up a relationship between CAHS and the State Library of New South Wales.

A painting *Rainy Day* by Charles Conder, of the La Perouse Chinese market gardens in 1888, resulted in my giving a presentation to the volunteer guides at the Art Gallery of NSW on the significance of market gardens in the history of Chinese settlement in Australia.

Malcolm Oakes History Week talk on Otto Kong Sing, possibly Australia's first Chinese lawyer, was in association with the Asian Australian Lawyers Association and generously hosted by Clayton Utz in a magnificent large boardroom.

A number of CAHS members have been involved with Sandra Pires of Why Documentaries, Haymarket Chinese stories project. This project consists of ten stories - filming of interviews took place recently.

Look forward to seeing you at our next event on evening of Tuesday 18 September, *Chinese Whispers: In Search of Ivy*, at the UTS Australia China Relations Institute.

Daphne Lowe Kelley  
[lowekelley@bigpond.com](mailto:lowekelley@bigpond.com)

## CAHS Upcoming Events

### 18 September (Tuesday)

CAHS is collaborating with UTS ACRI Chinese History Series 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. ACRI Conference Room, Level 18, UTS Tower Building, Broadway, 6.00pm to 7.30pm.

Please register on ACRI website:

<http://www.australiachinarelations.org/content/acri-chinese-history-series-chinese-whispers-search-ivy>

### October 20/21 (Saturday/ Sunday)

This weekend tour to NSW's Central West Region has been **cancelled** due to the sad passing of the tour leader, Dr Barry McGowan OAM.

### November 17 (Saturday)

Annual General Meeting. Our apologies but Dr Barry McGowan was to have been the guest speaker. Members will be advised of venue and other details later, after the committee next meets on 20 September.

### Other Upcoming Events

#### October 25-26 (Thursday/Friday) ISSCO Melbourne 2018

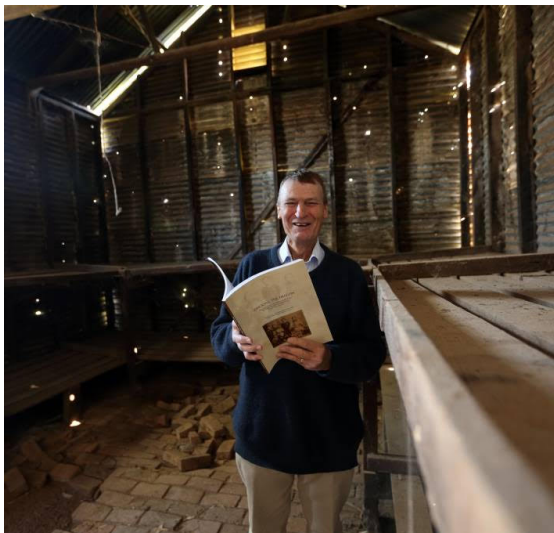
International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas 2018 - Oceania Regional Conference, *Chinese diasporas in the contemporary era of China's rise: Migration, settlement and transnational linkages* University of Melbourne. Registration at <https://arts.unimelb.edu.au/asiainstitute/research/issco-2018-oceania-regional-conference>

The rapid rise of China as a major global economic and political power in recent decades has been associated with the changing patterns of Chinese international migration, settlement and diaspora linkages. Such developments are felt closely in immigration countries of the Pacific Rim, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States.

The 2018 ISSCO regional conference offers an opportunity for scholars of Chinese international migration and Chinese diasporas to assess and discuss the causes, processes and consequences of Chinese migration from Mainland China and other sources, including re-migration from Southeast Asia and other parts of the world.

## Vale Dr Barry McGowan OAM

Historian, Researcher, Father, Teacher and Friend - Dr Barry McGowan OAM passed away in the early hours of September 1st after a long battle with cancer.



Always cheerful (nearly)

Barry was a tireless and insightful historian of immense generosity. He was also a good friend and a fund of amusing anecdotes from his adventurous and not always trouble free life. I was fortunate to have been able to have a last dinner with Barry not long ago at which, despite his obvious frailty and having endured many painful procedures, he was full of plans for his next research trip. This would have taken him to Dubbo and further exploration of Chinese-Australian history in the Central West of NSW, a history that he had already done so much to uncover.

Barry was a man of many talents. Only last year he visited Beijing and gave a guest lecture on Chinese-Australian history to a class of eager students at the Beijing Overseas Chinese Museum. Having impressed all with his knowledge he also serenaded the group on his ukulele. A memorial lecture not soon forgotten.

Many notable things can be said about this wonderful historian. But here let his own words remind us of his many contribution to the field of Chinese-Australian history. (Remembering also that this is just one of many fields where Barry made great contributions.)



Always explaining

Historian Dr Barry McGowan noted:

*"Much of the heritage of the Chinese in the Riverina has been lost or at best marginalised... Regional studies allow for a more detailed analysis and description of people's daily lives, in particular the linkages between different families and places, and the European community. They also emphasise the merit in looking beyond the well worn paths of the gold mining communities, and in so doing helping to further illustrate the rich diversity in the lives of the Chinese people in regional Australia and add to the body of work that is so*

*successfully addressing the many stereotypes and generalisations that still litter the historic landscape."*

Dr Barry McGowan was a Canberra-based historian and heritage consultant specialising in mining history and heritage, and the history and heritage of the Chinese people in Australia. He was a Research Associate at the College of Asia and the Pacific at the Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra. Barry was awarded an OAM in 2018 for his services to community history.



Always researching

(Orange City, Blayney and Cabonne Shire Councils, August 2017).

Barry's output was phenomenal and involved field surveys, conservation management plans, and report and history writing for Commonwealth and State Governments and local authorities. Barry's publications include "Australian Ghost Towns" (Lothian Books 2002, reprinted and revised 2004 and 2006), "Fool's Gold. Myths and Legends of Gold Seeking in Australia" (Lothian Books, 2006), "Dust and Dreams, Mining Communities in South-east New South Wales", (UNSW Press, 2010), and "Tracking the Dragon. A History of the Chinese in the Riverina" (Museum of the Riverina, Wagga Wagga and the New South Wales Migration Heritage Centre, 2010). Most recently (with Genevieve Mott) "True Australians and Pioneers: Chinese Migration to the Orange Region of NSW"

Always to be remembered. Bye Barry.



Always inquisitive



Always generous

*Dr Michael Williams*

## State Library of NSW Chinese-Australian History Collection

This year marks 200 years since the first recorded Chinese migrant Mak Sai Ying arrived in Australia from Guangdong in 1818, and thus at least two centuries of Chinese Australian history.

Following Dr Bing Chen's talk at the State Library of New South Wales on 5 July, it was fitting that the State Library of NSW and the Chinese Australian Historical Society announced our agreement to further the joint goal of collecting new Chinese-Australian related material.



Mitchell Librarian Richard Neville (back row 3<sup>rd</sup> left), Dr Michael Williams (back row centre), CAHS Committee and friends with Dr Bing Chen (front row 3<sup>rd</sup> right) at her talk on G E Morrison at the State Library of NSW.

As Dr Michael Williams notes: 'Sydney's, NSW's and Australia's Chinese related history goes back to its First Fleet and the China Trade ships of the East India Company that carried the first convicts.'

Chinese people in their thousands looked after sheep, dug gold, traded with China, and raised Australian families all before the White Australia policy attempt to eliminate them from the nation. With the gradual

demise of the White Australia Policy, the Chinese in Australia have flourished and developed into a major contributor to modern multicultural Australia.'

Despite this long history there is still no major Australian institution which recognises or celebrates this contribution and so correspondingly there is no dedicated repository for the diverse records of this significant contribution.

The preservation of historical material - letters, photos, reports and records of all kinds, the list is endless - is essential to the learning and exploration of who we are and where we have come from as a community and a nation. '

Too often material in the Chinese-Australian community has been lost as the next generation clears away the remains of the previous one or fails to realise the significance of what they have. For many families acknowledging Chinese ancestry was akin to the

taint of having convict blood in the family - a shameful secret, best kept hidden and with all incriminating evidence destroyed.

How times have changed, and the past thirty years has seen an extraordinary growth in academic scholarship, community and family history research, publications, exhibitions, the establishment of Chinese Australian historical and heritage societies and a host of related websites dedicated to the subject.

Importantly this work has also revealed a wealth of material which has been preserved and treasured by generations of families, in Australia and more remarkably in China. This transnational link was nurtured by families travelling back and forth between the two countries, sustained by correspondence, the exchange of goods and family mementos and a rich tradition of oral history.

The Chinese Australian Historical Society, with the valuable cooperation of other Chinese Australian community- based organisations, and the State Library of NSW will 'endeavour to build on its already fascinating and valuable collection of Chinese-Australian related material to ensure that future generations of all Australians will be able to learn and explore the contribution of Chinese-Australians to our history and heritage.'

This initiative led by CAHS's Honorary Historical Advisor Dr Michael Williams and Honorary Secretary Ann Toy was developed in consultation with the Mitchell Librarian, Richard Neville, Sally Hone, Collection Development Coordinator and curator Jennifer O'Callaghan.

In order to achieve these goals, the State Library of New South Wales has 'agreed to set up a **dedicated web portal** through which those interested in accessing Chinese Australian related material can explore what is already held by the NSW State Library as well as one avenue through which any potential donations can be proposed.

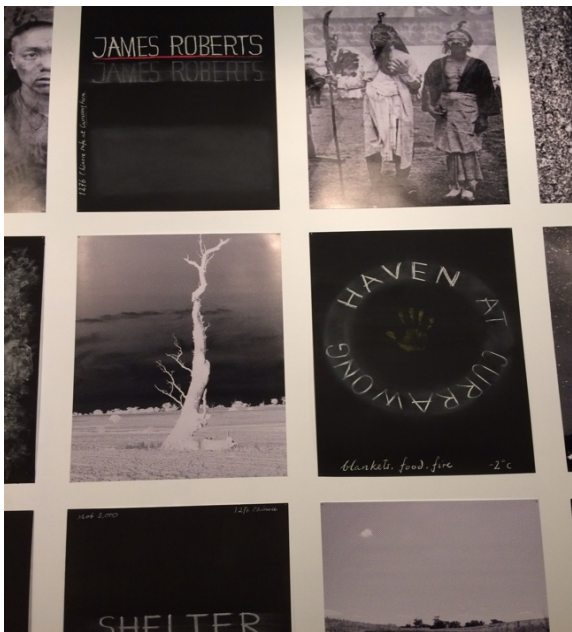
**Language** is an important aspect of any community and the translation of material in an accurate and accessible manner is one area where we hope to be able to use the resources of the State Library of NSW and its fellowship program to ensure that material in Chinese languages or characters will be made accessible to all.

People's own memories are perhaps the most significant of all records and to this end an **oral history** project devoted to Chinese-Australians will also be set up to ensure that this precious resource is made available to future generations.'

Our Society will be developing a Strategic Plan to identify relevant Chinese- Australian related resources, pictures, material culture collections, and potential interviewees for the oral history project. We would be delighted to hear from any Members and other interested people who have any relevant information to share, please contact us via email: [contact.cahs@gmail.com](mailto:contact.cahs@gmail.com) or Chinese Australian Historical Society Inc. PO Box K556. Haymarket NSW.1240. Sydney.

*Ann Toy*

## The Burrangong Affray



## Rainy Day 1888 Charles Conder

When Angeline Oyang, an Art Gallery of NSW volunteer guide, told me about a recent Art Gallery purchase, of a painting *Rainy Day*, painted in 1888 by Charles Conder, and the subject matter was the Chinese market gardens at La Perouse, I was immediately interested.

Not only was market gardening an important occupation for many of the early Chinese in Australia but for the last 10 years I and others have been involved in a battle to save these Chinese market gardens from being subsumed by the neighbouring Botany (Eastern Suburbs) Cemetery.



**Rainy Day 1888 Charles Conder**

Chinese market gardens have played a very important role in providing fresh vegetables for Australia's population. They used to be a common sight in a number of Sydney's suburbs: Willoughby, Terry Hills, Marsfield, North Sydney, Alexandra, Randwick, Botany and La Perouse just to name a few.

However, in the post WWII period, with the growth of the urban population, they gradually disappeared as land was needed for residential and other urban land uses.

From the early 19<sup>th</sup> century there were many market gardens in the Botany area using water from the Botany ponds. This land was first owned and cultivated by Europeans but after the gold rushes of the 1850s the Chinese gradually took over most of these gardens and they have been Chinese market gardens for about 160 years.

In this area of sandy alluvial soil the area under market gardens use to be much more extensive. Today the remaining Chinese market gardens at Phillip Bay - La Perouse consists of 7 hectares of Crown land, that was heritage listed in 1999.



**Chinese Market Gardens at La Perouse**

About ten years ago, the neighbouring Cemetery Trust wanted to expand and takeover the market garden land. After many battles, between the Cemetery Trust and the 'Save the Chinese Market Gardens' group, it appears that the cemetery may have given up the fight to subsume this land. The heading of a recent article in the Daily Telegraph, 29 June 2018, reads, *City farm is top of the crops - Market garden hopes cemetery growth dead and buried*

So the Chinese garden that Charles Conder painted in *Rainy Day* 1888, that is 130 years ago, is still operating as a Chinese market garden today.

Daphne Lowe Kelley

# City farm is top of the crops



Farmer Robert Tang surveys his crops, (below) with wife Zheng Jin, and the cemetery's proximity to the market gardens. Picture: Dylan Robinson

## Market garden hopes cemetery growth dead & buried

EXCLUSIVE  
RENATA GORTAN

FARMERS at one of the last inner-city market gardens have killed off a bid for a huge expansion from an adjoining cemetery but for Robert Tang the future remains clouded.

The Chinese-born farmer, who supplies produce to many Sydney restaurants, has worked two of three sandy plots of Crown land, making up a total of 5ha, near Botany Bay on a rolling 12-month licence for the past 42 years.

But the third plot of land on Bunnerong Rd, owned by the state government, has been a battleground for expansion, with both the Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park cemetery and market gardeners desperate to grow.

And while the farmers appear to have won that battle for now, the uncertainty



has made it impossible for Mr Tang, 66, to ensure his business has deep roots.

Speaking to The Daily Telegraph through an interpreter at the Phillip Bay property, he said the nature of his licence made it hard to expand. "At the moment, I'm on a year-to-year licence which makes it difficult to invest in infrastructure," Mr Tang said.

He grows root vegetables and harvests about 1000 dozen bunches of continental parsley, 70 dozen bunches of shallots and 300 dozen bunches of radishes a week. "It's really great soil, I maintain it really well and I'm getting good crops," he said.

Mr Tang said his business needed more land to survive, and hoped to one day obtain a long-term licence for all



three plots, which are managed by the NSW Department of Industry.

A spokesman for the department said a 2010 report "concluded that with significant earthworks and hydrology changes, the area could be used as a cemetery".

But Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust chief executive Graham Boyd said after extensive studies, it had

concluded that the land was not suitable for cemetery use. However, it still holds the licence for the third plot, despite attempting to relinquish it in 2016.

Randwick City Council in 2012 rezoned the land to protect the market garden but a 2015 proposal put to them by the cemetery that it could expand into Bumborah Pt is yet to be finalised.

Daily Telegraph 29 June 2018

## Otto Kong Sing: First Chinese Australian Lawyer?

This year's Chinese Australian Historical Society's History Week presentation on 5 September, was in collaboration with the Asian Australian Lawyers Association and generously hosted by Clayton Utz. This was an opportunity for CAHS to address a wider audience, with the possibility of gaining some new members.



Welcome by Edmond Park on behalf of Clayton Utz and Asian Australian Lawyers Association

Lawyer Edmond Park welcomed those present, on behalf of Clayton Utz and AALA. CAHS Vice-president Daphne Lowe Kelley spoke about the overall objectives of CAHS, before introducing CAHS member, barrister Malcolm Oakes SC, and his topic, *Otto Kong Sing: First Chinese Australian Lawyer?*. Malcolm gave a well-researched account on the life, times and death of Otto Kong Sing, the first known Chinese Australian to be admitted as a lawyer in Australia.

Otto Kong Sing was born in 1871, the third child of Lee Kong Sing and Ellen Mann, who had nine children. He was educated at Sydney's Newington College where, besides his studies, he played a number of sports, including being the captain of the first 15 rugby team. After matriculating in 1889, he did his articles with George Wallace and was admitted as a solicitor on 9 March 1895.



The Presenter Malcom Oakes SC

For whatever reason, and I can only surmise that it might have been the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act (White Australia Policy), he decided to practise in Hong Kong. In order to do this he had to be first admitted in England before being admitted in Hong Kong on 14 January 1904.

Chinese descent. It appears that Otto enjoyed life and he entertained his friends on his yacht the *Tomtit*. Otto Kong Sing died in 1917 from throat surgery complications - his grave is in Happy Valley Cemetery in Hong Kong.

In 1908 Hong Kong, there was only one other lawyer of

After some questions from the enthusiastic audience, Edmond Park proposed the vote of thanks to Malcolm. CAHS wishes to thank AALA and Clayton Utz for the wonderful venue and hospitality.

*Daphne Lowe Kelley*

## Visiting my ancestral home

Both of my parents are from Jung Seng (Zengcheng) County, in Guangdong province. My father is a Lowe from Shak-ha (Shixia) village and my mother is a Chung from Bi Toa (Pitua) village. I first visited Jung Seng sixty years ago in 1958 when life was difficult and the rural agricultural villages were being formed into communes. For some time I had wanted to revisit Jung Seng and when I heard that a group from New Zealand was going, I decided to join them and Susan Leong came with me.



Shak-ha (under the rock) Village

At the time of the first visit, my closest relatives in China were my paternal grandmother who lived in Shak-ha village and a great aunt, a Chung from Bi Toa village, who lived in Guangzhou. Both of these elderly relatives were in their late 70s and I was so pleased to meet them before they passed - they were the last of my immediate family in China. Great aunt's brother, Chung Wong Ying, my maternal grandfather, had been a market gardener in Australia, who returned to China in 1946 and died there shortly after.

Jung Seng is known for its lychees and this New Zealand Tung Jung Lychee Tour was scheduled to coincide with harvest time. Prior to leaving, I had just finished reading Paul Wah's *A Thin Slice of Heaven* which gave a good account not only of life in his village of Tiansum but also of life in Jung Seng and environs in the 1920s. This was the China that my father left when he went to New Zealand, as the White Australia Policy prohibited him from entering Australia.



Old and new

Much has changed since those times and my first visit. Knowing what Jung Seng use to be like and what it is like now, the rate of development and change can only be described as phenomenal. Jung Seng is no longer just rural villages set in an agricultural landscape but is now a mixture of rural and urban landscapes, a combination of old and new, with first class shopping malls, international hotels and modern industrial plants. Jung Seng is now home to a Honda car factory, manufacturing plant for Apple computers and phones and a large facility for the Alibaba Group.

However, one of my reasons for visiting was to check out my family links to the past and I was so pleased that I was able to see the family homes of my paternal grandmother in Shak-ha and my maternal grandfather's home in Bi Toa, plus locate and pay respects at my

grandmother's grave. Regrettably, both these homes have not been lived in for decades and are in a state of serious disrepair. There is talk of redevelopment and the building of new apartments so I was glad to see these homes where my parents lived before they no longer exist.



Lychees galore

I remember eating fresh lychees and picking them off the tree and was able to do this again. With a bumper harvest of lychees this year, we were in lychee heaven.

*Daphne Lowe Kelley*

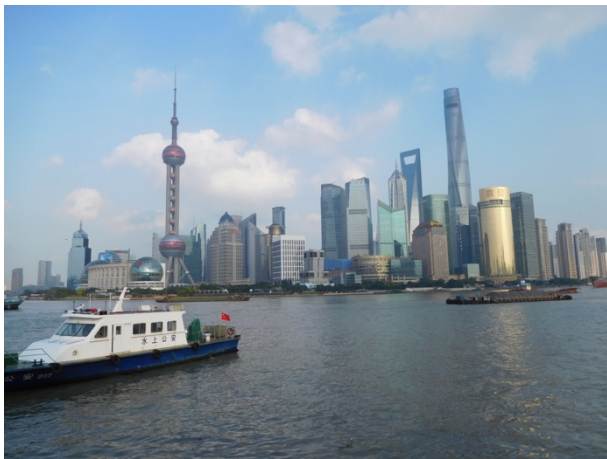
## Shanghai Tour April 2019

Planning is underway for an Australia-China Friendship Society tour of Shanghai to be led by Peter Hack in April next year, returning to Sydney in time for Easter. If you are interested in the history, architecture and art of this legendary city, then this tour is a must. We will take in more than the Bund and Nanjing Road!



See the mansions of Ferguson Lane in Frenchtown and visit the home of Soong Ching-ling; discover The Joint Trust Ware House on Soochow Creek, the Alamo of the Orient during the battle for Shanghai in 1937; wander the model art deco city built by the Nationalists in the 1930s; explore the department stores established by Chinese-Australian merchants from the Haymarket and have dinner in the former ballroom of Wing On entertained by Chinese opera; or sip a cocktail at the Jazz Bar in the celebrated Cathay Hotel where Noel Coward wrote *Private Lives*.

More detailed information will be available soon. In the meantime, to register your interest, send a short email to [peter.hack6@bigpond.com](mailto:peter.hack6@bigpond.com).



The Huangpu River and Pudong.



Nanjing Road at night with Wing On on the left and Sincere on the right.



The China Art Museum, Shanghai.



An exhibit in the China Art Museum

**Peter Hack**

## CAHS Membership

**New Members:** Welcome to the following new members: Taryn Young (Life), (Hillary) Xiao Lei Lai (Life), Brett Stone, Jeff Yu, Belinda Coombes, Barry Li, Phillip Buckle, Richard Horsburgh, Osmond Chiu and Ann Fieldhouse. We look forward to seeing you at our events and for your full and active participation.

**Membership Renewals:** The membership year is the same as our financial year, 1 July to 30 June. Membership renewals for 2018-2019 fell due on 1 July 2018.

The following membership form can be used for membership renewals and also for enrolling new members.

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

It can also be downloaded from the CAHS website <http://chineseaustralianhistory.org>

## Your Contribution

We welcome contributions to our quarterly newsletters (next one to be published December 2018). If you have any stories about your research, Chinese ancestry or family history that you would like to share, or if you are organizing an event that you want to have publicized, we would be grateful if your copy could reach us by November 1.

We are particularly interested in Chinese Australians telling their stories - if you need any help with writing your stories, we have people who can assist.

In addition to the newsletter CAHS also has a website and a Facebook page.

Please email material to Daphne Lowe Kelley [lowekelley@bigpond.com](mailto:lowekelley@bigpond.com)

My thanks to this issue's contributors: Dr Michael Williams, Ann Toy and Peter Hack, plus my appreciation to Jingyuan (Jeanette) Wang.