

A publication of the Chinese Australian Historical Society

Website: <https://chineseaustralianhistory.org>

Email: [contact.cahs@gmail.com](mailto:contact.cahs@gmail.com)

## In this Newsletter

- President's Message
- 'Unlocking your Amoy ancestry - Is DNA the key?' with presenters Michael Williams & Allison Leathart, Chinese Australian Research Interest Group meeting, 28 June 2025, 3:00-5:00pm AEST, via Zoom
- Members' Corner - 'Leaving a Legacy' by Mandy Gwan
- 'The Lambing Flat Riots Reconsidered' by Juanita Kwok
- 'The Chinese Community in Launceston: Inclusion and Difference' by Jon Addison
- Chinese Australian History Podcasts: 'Two Centuries of Chinese Heritage in Western Australia' & 'Chinese Australian Whispers'
- 'Lest We Forget: Chinese Australians during the First World War'
- 'Revisiting the Past: Researching Chinese History in Western Australia': 2025 Wilson History Oration with Lucy Hair, 5 June 2025, 7:00pm AEST, via Zoom
- 'Our Story: Aboriginal Chinese People in Australia' Project - Exhibition & Book
- 'Gladys Sym Choon (1905-1991)' by Corinne Ball, online in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*
- CAHS - Website Volunteers, Membership & Newsletter Suggestions

## President's Message

At the successful biennial Australasian Congress on Genealogy and Heraldry, '[Connections: Past, Present and Future](#)', held in Brisbane in late March 2025, five of the forty-five invited presentations were related to Chinese Australian history. The presentations were:

- Jan Richardson, 'Amoy or Canton? Shepherd or goldminer? Researching Chinese ancestors in Queensland'.
- Linda Coonan, 'Revealing a Chinese Enigma - Who, What, Where, When, Why, How & Serendipity'.
- Eve Terry, 'Documents of control: The long arm of the White Australia Policy'.
- Janis Hanley, 'The Faces of Croydon: Chinese-Aboriginal genealogy on a sign'.
- Darryl Low Choy, 'They Were There: Situating your family history within its broader historical context'.

The presentations represented our field of interest well, and the conference participants showed great interest. It demonstrates that well-researched presentations on Chinese Australian history are very much alive and welcomed.

Please enjoy the newsletter.

*Emeritus Professor (Major General ret'd)  
 Darryl Low Choy, AM, MBE, RFD, KCSJ, PhD  
 CAHS President*

## 'Unlocking your Amoy ancestry - Is DNA the key?'

Michael Williams & Allison Leathart  
 Group Lead: Hilda Maclean

[Chinese Australian Research Interest  
 Group meeting  
 28 June 2025  
 3:00-5:00pm AEST via Zoom](#)

'Unlocking your Amoy ancestry - Is DNA the key?' will discuss how Australians of Amoy (Xiamen) descent can connect with their roots in Fujian province, China. Historian Michael Williams will provide a general overview of the Amoy men's legacy in Australia, followed by a look at his and Allison Leathart's recent research in Amoy itself.

Allison then takes the story personally, sharing her own Amoy heritage and the journey she has undertaken to research her great-great grandfather's story. Allison will also explain the exciting possibilities of the role of DNA testing and how this tool can potentially unlock new pathways for those seeking to discover more about their ancestral connections.

## 'Unlocking your Amoy ancestry - Is DNA the key?', 28 June 2025, 3:00-5:00pm AEST

**Registration:** follow this [link](#)  
**Cost:** CAHS member \$5.00  
 Non-member \$20.00

To become a CAHS member, please email [contact.cahs@gmail.com](mailto:contact.cahs@gmail.com)

Next CAHS/SAG meeting date  
[27 September 2025 3-5pm AEST](#)

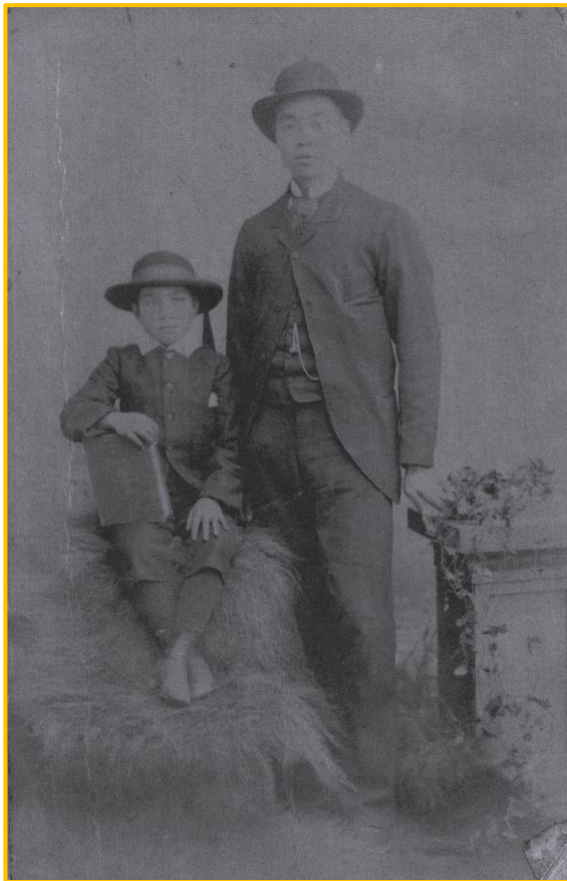
## Members' Corner

### 'Leaving a Legacy'

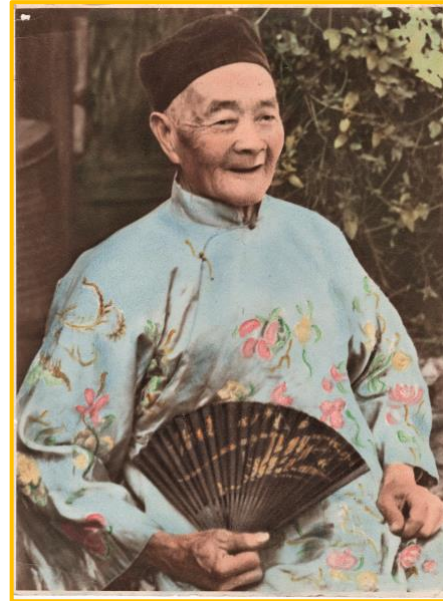
**Mandy Gwan**

Email: [mandygwan@bigpond.com](mailto:mandygwan@bigpond.com)

I suspect I will never know the reason my great-grandfather, Wong Yee Gwan, decided to leave China in the early 1870s and make his way to New South Wales. His incoming passenger record and application for naturalization (if they exist) have been elusive. But is pinning down exactly *when* he came or chasing a reason *why*, really that important? At this point in my research, discovering *who* he was and *what* legacy he left, has become a more meaningful pursuit.



Wong Yee Gwan and his son Wong Yee Hing, c. 1901.  
Source: Mandy Gwan



Wong Yee Gwan, 1937. Source: Mandy Gwan

Thankfully, George Gwan, as he was known in Australia, left a trail of other records in the archives; enough for me to know he was a man of integrity who cared for the welfare of others, and worked hard as a cabinet maker, a boarding house and storekeeper, and a market gardener, to build a future for his only child. Later, that child would become my grandfather and a well-known and highly respected government court interpreter.

Both George and his son (Wong Yee Hing, aka Charles George Gwan) had a strong work ethic and put others' needs before their own. They were altruistic to a fault. Their lives were a careful balance of Chinese culture and the Australian spirit, and both the Chinese and Europeans called them friends.

Since his death in 1942, those same charitable principles Wong Yee Gwan brought with him from China have been carried on in one form or another by each new generation of the Wong/Gwan family. And that, I think, is his legacy.

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## 'The Lambing Flat Riots Reconsidered'

Juanita Kwok

The Lambing Flat riots were a series of riots between 1860 and 1861 in which Europeans violently drove Chinese miners and storekeepers from the Burrangong gold field. Lambing Flat, renamed Young in May 1861, was a part of the Burrangong goldfield, as were Sawpit Gully and Back Creek. An infamous episode in Australian history, and unfortunately probably the most well-known part of Chinese Australian history, Lambing Flat is popularly remembered as riots in which nameless Chinese were driven off the goldfields by European miners, never to return.

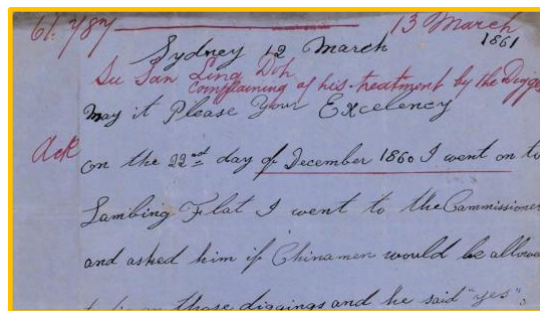
In the twenty-first century, there have been challenges to this perception. Robyn Atherton, a member of the Harden-Murrumburrah Historical Society, investigating Chinese people buried at the Murrumburrah Cemetery, wondered 'who were these Chinese people?' Her question resulted in her 2010 book: *They were more than just gold diggers: The Chinese of Murrumburrah and surrounding districts 1860s to 1960s*. The book tells the stories of Chinese people who settled in the Young/Murrumburrah area.

Over the years, Dr Karen Schamberger, Exhibition Curator at the National Library of Australia, has devoted countless hours to working with the committee of the Young Historical Society to assist with the conservation and interpretation of the Young Historical Museum collection. Karen's interest in Young began with her PhD thesis, which considered in part, the commemoration of the Lambing Flat riots in popular memory and museums. Now President of the Young Historical Society, Karen has an active interest in Chinese people who settled in Young. Her research findings, incorporated into new interpretive signage in the Young Historical Museum (with graphic design by Kira Brown), show that Chinese people were among the residents of Young who developed its agricultural economy. Ah Young and Ah Sing selected land along Spring Creek. With other Chinese market gardeners, they supplied the Burrangong Hospital, Murrumburrah and Binalong with turnips, cabbages, and other vegetables.

My interest in the Lambing Flat riots came about when I encountered references to the riots while researching my PhD thesis on Chinese people in the Bathurst district. Bathurst newspapers reported that Chinese people arrived destitute after walking from the Lambing Flat. Chinese storekeepers assisted them in Bathurst in establishing themselves on the Turon goldfields and petitioning for justice.<sup>1</sup> A reference to petitions made by Kok Hu Jin took me to the Museums of History NSW-State Archives at Kingswood, where there are documents in two files that relate to a commission investigating the events at Lambing Flat and the payment of compensation. One file contains a petition, hand-written in English by Su San Ling Doh, dated 12 March 1861, which is a first-hand account of one of the early riots. It reads in part:

'On the 27 [January 1861] I was drove off with the rest of my countrymen I asked a policeman to look after my goods. Early on the 28 I went onto the diggings again I found about 20 or 30 Europeans and one woman by my tent my goods all gone and my tent burning.'

Su San Ling Doh also wrote that his brother, interpreter Simon San Ling, and Simon's wife and children remained on the diggings, where they were 'totally unprovided for'.<sup>2</sup>



Source: Museums of History New South Wales – State Archives Collection, Part of Su San Ling Doh's letter, Department of Lands, NRS-7933-1-[5/3671], Lands Department Letters received – Letter No. 61/787, 1861.

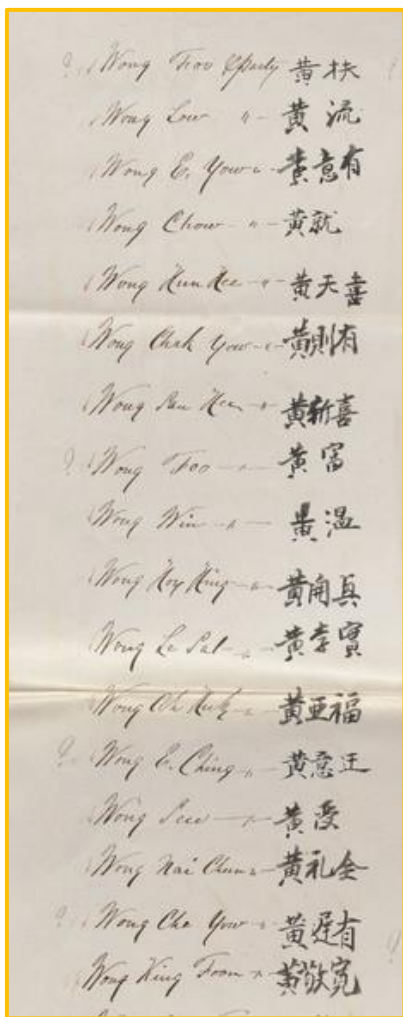
Another file contains a petition submitted to the Governor of NSW in 1864 by 94 persons representing parties of Chinese miners driven from Back Creek on 30 June 1861. The petitioners travelled to Tuena (on the Abercrombie River, between Bathurst and Goulburn) from places far and wide in NSW, such as Kiandra, Nerrigundah (on the south coast), the Rocky River (goldfields, Uralla), and the Macquarie River (near Bathurst), to write a petition stating that they were at Back Creek on 30 June 1861, and their possessions destroyed in the riots.

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The Chinese were awarded compensation but arrived too late in Young in 1863 to receive payment.<sup>3</sup> This petition is a valuable primary source containing the names of people at Lambing Flat at the time of the riots, written in English and Chinese.



Part of the Lambing Flat petition, 1864, showing the names of petitioners with the surname Wong  
Source: Museums of History New South Wales - State Archives Collection, [Lambing Flat riots petition](#), 1864.

It took a long time to piece together the sequence of events. Years after first encountering the petitions, I wrote a journal article 'The Lambing Flat Riots and the Chinese Quest for Compensation' published in the *Journal of Australasian Mining History* in 2022. For this article, I was awarded the History Council of NSW's Max Kelly Award in 2022. I requested that the Museums of History NSW-State Archives digitise the relevant files to make them available online, which they have kindly done.

If you are thinking of a weekend away in country NSW, consider going to Young and checking out the new interpretations of the history at the Museum. After visiting the Museum, cross the road and walk to the library at the top of Carrington Park. The new combined Hilltops Council and Young High School Library is built on 'Camp Hill', once the headquarters for the Police and Gold Commissioner for the Burrangong Goldfield. Before the library's construction, GML and Lantern Heritage conducted archaeological research on the site. I worked with Lantern Heritage's Rebecca Parkes to develop the content for an interpretive walk at Camp Hill, which provides a walking timeline of the events at Lambing Flat and Camp Hill. Interpretive signage in the new Hilltops Library on Camp Hill includes the stories of Chinese stores in Young.

Recently, I completed a series of posts on the Lambing Flat petitions on the [Our Chinese Past](#) website. Our Chinese Past Inc., which I established with Kira Brown, Gill Oxley and Paul Macgregor, conducts projects to identify, document, preserve, research and promote the rich diversity of Chinese Australian history and heritage. It is our hope that sharing the story of and links to the petitions will shed more light on who was at Lambing Flat. I've written further posts speculating that Jenny Wright's great-great-grandfather Ah Chin, Dawn Wong's great-great-grandfather Wong Sat, and Graham Lupp's great-great-grandfather Wong E. were at Lambing Flat and signed the 1864 petition.

To learn more, visit the [Our Chinese Past](#) website, click on the little magnifying glass on the right and search for Lambing Flat riots. If you have a family story that your ancestor was at the Lambing Flat riots, or if you find your ancestor's name in the petition, we would love to hear about it.

#### References

- <sup>1</sup> ['Justice to the Chinese'](#), *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 September 1861, p. 8.
- <sup>2</sup> Museums of History New South Wales - State Archives Collection: NRS 7933, Letters received [Department of Lands and Public Works/Department of Lands I]. NRS-7933 [5/3671]. NRS-7933-1-[5/3671]-5/3671-64/1666 is the Lambing Flat portion of this file. NSW State Archives - [NRS-7933-1-\[5/3671\]-5/3671-64/1666](#)
- <sup>3</sup> Museums of History New South Wales - State Archives Collection: Department of Lands; NRS 7933, Letters received [Department of Lands and Public Works/Department of Lands I], Lambing Flat riots petition, 1864, NRS-7933-1-[5/3673]-64/2663

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## ‘The Chinese Community in Launceston: Inclusion and Difference’

**Jon Addison**

Senior Curator of Public History,  
Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery,  
Launceston, Tasmania

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As the major centre of northern Tasmania, Launceston has been home to Chinese immigrants and their descendants since the 1870s. Although most Chinese activity initially centred around the tin-mining settlements in the northeast, Launceston’s position as the regional hub steadily increased the city’s Chinese population. As a smaller city, separated from the main centres of Chinese migrants and so-called ‘sojourners’, the way that Chinese people embedded themselves in this place differed somewhat from some other Australian centres.

Tasmania has a very different physical environment from most of mainland Australia. These geographical differences have greatly affected the immigration, settlement, and activity of all those who have made the island their home, whether temporary or permanent.

The first substantial influx of Chinese immigration consisted of miners. In the early years, most of these did not come directly to Tasmania but moved from other locations in Australia. Most had migrated in search of gold to make money to support their families and communities back in China. Most gravitated towards major gold rush centres such as Ballarat and Bendigo. From here, a far smaller number moved to Tasmania, where, despite initial excitement at the discovery of gold at Lefroy, the main event was tin. Luckily, the techniques for mining tin and gold are almost identical and could be similarly low-tech.

Once established on the tinfields of Tasmania’s northeast, the use of the so-called ‘credit-ticket’ system meant that influential Chinese businessmen would fund their countrymen to come directly to Tasmania, where they would work to pay back their debt.



Group portrait of the Chung Gon family, c1905.

Source: Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, Launceston, QVM:1995:P:0379

Family members, from left to right: Back row: Joseph, Daisy, Rose, Violet, Lily; Middle row: Mrs Mary Chung Gon holding baby Edward (Teddy), Esther, Mr James Chung Gon, Albert; Front row: Samuel, Ann.

Rather than creating new organisations to support their community, Chinese people in Launceston often became active and influential in existing organisations and events. This activity ranged from participation in the 1891-92 Tasmanian Exhibition, fundraising for public works, such as the new wards for the Launceston General Hospital and the construction of a path to Launceston’s Cataract Gorge, involvement in sporting clubs and the Chamber of Commerce, to unusually influential participation in other groups such as the City and Suburbs Improvement Association.

While societies such as the Hong Men and various Surname Lodges existed in the northeast, the Chinese Masonic Society operated in Launceston without a permanent building.

There are several possible causes for this difference. One may be the different political convictions of influential Chinese leaders such as Chin Kaw and James Chung Gon. Where the Chung Gon family aligned with the political aims of the Chinese Masonic Society, which traditionally supported a particular model of the revolutionary cause in China, the Kaw family were supporters of the ideas of Liang Qichao, one of the leaders of the Hundred Days Reform Movement, for many years an exile in Japan and an advocate of ‘modernisation’.

In addition, during the peak of Chinese residency in Tasmania, most of the population resided and worked outside Launceston, where temples and cultural hubs were also situated. Racism appeared less prevalent than it was on the larger goldfields in Victoria. The poll tax levied on Chinese migrants was unpopular in Tasmania, as due to their work in a remote and challenging country, they were seen as hard workers rather than as people who were taking others’ jobs.

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These differences meant that the Chinese of Launceston became an integral part of the local community, to a degree that may not have been as common in other parts of Australia, while still maintaining their own cultural identities.

The discussion also highlights the enduring legacy of these gardens, their role in shaping WA's food culture, and the significance of recording these stories through digital storytelling and community engagement.

## Chinese Australian History Podcasts

### 'Two Centuries of Chinese Heritage in Western Australia, 1830s - 2020s'

#### 'Liang Qichao's 1900 Visit to Western Australia'

Podcast [Episode 4](#), 23 Minutes

In Episode 4 in the 'Two Centuries of Chinese Heritage in Western Australia' podcast series, A/Prof Yu Tao gives an account of the 12-day visit to Western Australia of reformer Liang Qichao, whose writings influenced reform movements in China. Liang Qichao arrived in Fremantle in Western Australia on 21 October 1900 and later travelled to Perth and Geraldton. He met with key members of the Chinese community, including Chan Harr, the senior partner of C.H. Warley & Company of Fremantle, Paul Soong Quang, later a President of the Chung Wah Association, and Fong Lang, who ran Wing On Woo in Geraldton, the store later belonging to Sydney Fong.

As Yu Tao commented, the visit was a revealing moment in the history of the local Chinese community of Western Australia on the eve of Australia's Federation, the celebration of which Liang Qichao closely observed.

#### 'Chinese Market Gardens: The Roots of Asian Vegetables in Western Australia'

Podcast [Episode 5](#): 34 Minutes

This episode features A/Prof Yu Tao in conversation with Lucy Hair and Prof Benjamin Smith, delving into the rich history of Chinese market gardens in Western Australia. They reflect on the limited occupational opportunities for Chinese migrants in the early twentieth century and how market gardening became both a livelihood and a lasting cultural contribution.



Source: <https://www.chinesewa.net/podcast>

### 'Chinese Australian Whispers'

#### Sophie Couchman & Chinese Australia Family Historians of Victoria (CAFHOV)

The '[Chinese Australian Whispers](#)' podcast series was launched on 4 March 2025 at the Chinese Museum in Melbourne. It is about oral histories and researching Chinese Australian family. Each podcast episode weaves together the family history of members of the Chinese Australia Family Historians of Victoria (CAFHOV). The episodes are listed below:

- 1: Terry and Alex on market gardens (25.18 mins)
- 2: Marie and Wally on general stores (40.29 mins)
- 3: Paula and Fay on Ballarat (33.25 mins)
- 4: Peter and William on bananas (26.10 mins)
- 5: Wang Zheng Ting on music (25.21 mins)
- 6: Sophie and Nik on Chinese Australian Whispers (40.48 mins)

You can learn about all episodes [here](#) or via your favourite podcasting app.



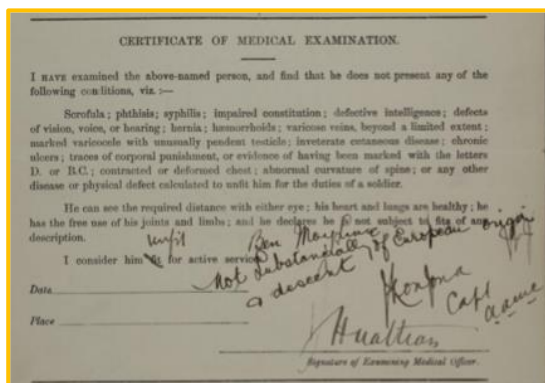
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## ‘Lest We Forget: Chinese Australians during the First World War’

ANZAC ceremonies in late April commemorated Australians serving in Australia’s defence forces, particularly the Gallipoli Campaign in 1915. However, from 1909, Australia’s [Defence Act](#) required those enlisting in combatant roles to be substantially of European descent. When [Benjamin ‘Ben’ Moy Ling](#), born in Castlemaine, Victoria, applied to join the Australian Imperial Force in 1915, the Medical Officer determined he was ‘unfit’ and annotated the reason on the Certificate of Medical Examination (below) as ‘not substantially of European origin & descent’. Eventually accepted, Ben Moy Ling served from 1917 to 1919 with the 60<sup>th</sup> Battalion and later the 4<sup>th</sup> Divisional Signals Company.



Source: National Archives of Australia, NAA: MT1486/1, Moy-Ling/Benjamin

However, determining unfitness for active service based on race was subjective and arbitrary. Kate Bagnall, in [‘That famous fighting family’](#) (*Inside Story*, March-April 1991, pp. 37-40) found that while the army accepted all five Sam brothers from West Wyalong in 1914-1915, she also noted the rejection of George Kong Meng from Longwood in Victoria on racial grounds, despite the recruiting office accepting his brother Herbert. In a letter to the Melbourne *Argus*, George described the decision as [‘recruiting stupidity’](#).

Notwithstanding the discriminatory clause in the *Defence Act* and medical officers’ arbitrariness in determining European descent, more than 250 Chinese Australians served during the First World War. Many served with distinction. (See [Chinese Anzacs Fast Facts](#) published by the Museum of Chinese Australian History.)



James, Norman, Henry, George & Tom Sam, West Wyalong, 1915. Source: [‘A Military Family’](#), *Daily Telegraph*, 19 October 1915, p. 9.

[Billy Sing](#) (William Edward Sing) enlisted in October 1914, served from 1914 to 1918 as a sniper in the 5<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment, and fought in the Battle of Gallipoli in April 1915. He also served in France. Sing was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) and the Croix de Guerre for his bravery.



Billy Sing. Source: [Australian War Memorial](#)

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[Caleb Shang](#), who lived in Cairns most of his life, became one of the most distinguished soldiers in the Australian Imperial Force. He won a rare combination of military decorations: the DCM for gallantry while serving with the 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion at Messines Ridge, Belgium, in 1917; the Bar to the DCM and the Military Medal for actions on the Somme battlefield, France, in 1918. [William Brown](#), descended from Chinese-born James Cooley, also received the DCM and Bar.



Caleb Shang.

Source: [Australian War Memorial](#), original photograph held by the Cairns Historical Society

Sophie Couchman argued in '[Not Substantially of European Origin or Descent](#)' that the exemption clause in the *Defence Act* created a category of Australian-born residents of Australia of Asian descent, who were British subjects in law, but because of their race, were not given equal rights to fight for their country.

The Chinese Australians who fought in the First World War are highly significant to Australian history. However, the fact that regulations continued to close off voluntary enlistment of non-Europeans in the military forces after the war is a subject that requires further examination.

Further reading: [Chinese ANZACs: Education Resource](#), Museum of Chinese Australian History in collaboration with the History Teachers Association of Victoria, 2015; Sophie Couchman, "Not Substantially of European Origin or Descent": How Race Came to Shape Australian Enlistment during World War I, in Kate Bagnall & Peter Prince, [Subjects and Aliens](#), ANU, 2023, pp. 19-42; Morag Loh, *Dinky-Di: The Contributions of Chinese Immigrants and Australians of Chinese Descent to Australia's Defence Forces and War Efforts, 1899-1988*, AGPS Press, 1989; Pauline O'Keeffe, 'Reluctant Heroes: The Story of Two Chinese-Ancestry Queensland World War I Soldiers', *Queensland History Journal*, vol. 25, no. 4, 2023, pp. 352-358.

## 'Revisiting the Past: Researching Chinese History in Western Australia' 2025 Wilson History Oration with Lucy Hair Zoom, 5 June 2025

The Professional Historians Australia (Vic/Tas) will host the 2025 Wilson History Oration via Zoom on 5 June 2025. The oration will be given by Lucy Hair, the Project Officer for 'Two Centuries of Chinese Heritage in Western Australia' at the University of Western Australia, and a member of Professional Historians and Researchers Association of WA (now PHA (WA)).

The oration, entitled 'Revisiting the Past: Researching Chinese History in Western Australia', draws on Dr Anne Atkinson's archives, digitised by the '[Two Centuries of Chinese Heritage in Western Australia](#)' project. The archives comprise some 10,000 pages of research notes on the history of Chinese people in Western Australia collected by Dr Atkinson during the 1880s and 1990s.

Join professional historian Lucy Hair as she uses this ambitious digital history project to explore the joys and challenges of sharing the work of a fellow historian three decades later and re-examining the histories of the past from the perspective of the present.

**WHEN:** Thursday, 5 June, 5:00pm WST (7:00pm AEST)

**LOCATION:** Zoom (register to receive link)

**REGISTRATION:** [PHA VIC & TAS](#)

**HOSTED BY:** Professional Historians Australia

**COST:** Free and open to the public



Source: [PHA VIC & TAS](#)

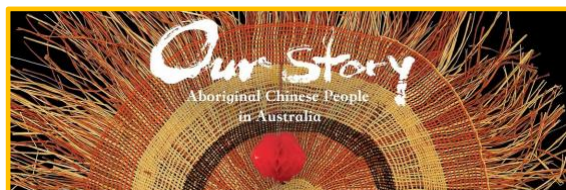
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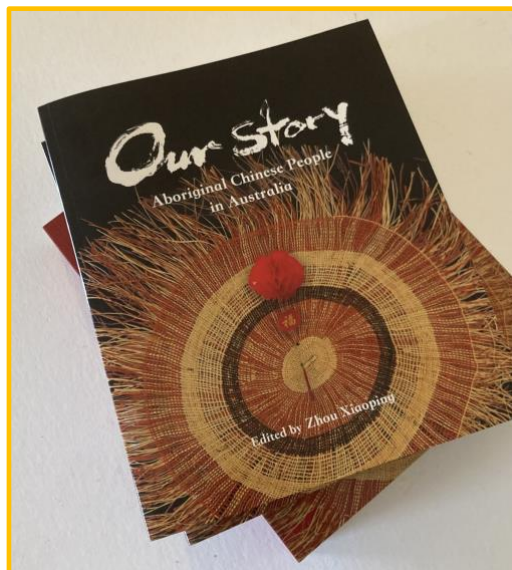
Email: [contact.cahs@gmail.com](mailto:contact.cahs@gmail.com)

## 'Our Story: Aboriginal Chinese People in Australia' Project Exhibition & Book

The '[Our Story: Aboriginal Chinese People of Australia](#)' project, coordinated by Zhou Xiaoping, a Melbourne-based artist and researcher, along with a team of [advisers and researchers](#), culminated in an exciting new exhibition and a beautifully crafted publication.



Source: National Museum of Australia



Source: National Museum of Australia

### 'Our Story: Aboriginal-Chinese People in Australia'

Exhibition curated by Zhou Xiaoping  
 National Museum of Australia  
 Until 27 January 2026  
 Free admission

The '[Our Story: Aboriginal Chinese People in Australia](#)' exhibition, developed by Zhou Xiaoping with the support of the National Museum of Australia and the Museum of Chinese Australian History, explores identity, survival, resilience, and cultural connection in the history of Aboriginal and Chinese relations in colonial Australia. Among the artists in the exhibition are Vernon Ah Kee, Gordon Hookey, Lloyd Gawura Hornsby, Jenna Lee, Damien Shen, Christian Thompson, Jason Wing, and Zhou Xiaoping.



Source: National Museum of Australia

***Our Story: Aboriginal Chinese People in Australia***  
 edited by Zhou Xiaoping, Museum of Chinese Australian History, 2025,  
 251 p., \$49.90  
[Museum Shop, National Museum of Australia](#)

Editions: English and Chinese

*Our Story: Aboriginal Chinese People in Australia* is a valuable resource for investigating Aboriginal Chinese history across Australia, comprising well-researched articles, a range of family histories, and the visual narratives of artists. While too numerous to list here, select lists of research articles and family stories appear below:

- Sandi Robb, 'Big Country: Dragons Dreaming: Queensland's historical Aboriginal-Chinese family relations', pp. 19-40.
- Peta Stephenson, 'Stories of Indigenous and Chinese Engagement in the Northern Territory', pp. 41-45.
- Christine Choo, 'Recognising the Legacy of Aboriginal-Chinese Heritage in Western Australia', pp. 46-56.
- Tom Gara, Skye Krichauff, & Rachel Bleeze, 'Chinese Migration to Colonial South Australia: Tracing the history of three Chinese-Aboriginal families', pp. 59-70.
- Mark Finnane, 'Discovering Chinese and Aboriginal Stories in the Courts', pp. 85-88.

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- Alexis Wright, 'My Great Grandfather, Sam Ah Bow (QLD)', pp. 94-95.
- Paul Ah Chee, 'Founder of a strong Aboriginal Family: The story of Chery Ah Chee (NT)', pp. 118-121.
- Stephen Loo, 'Curiosity leads to discovery: The story of Ah Loo (WA)', pp. 136-137.
- Michael Laing, 'Tracing the Family Roots in China: The Laing family (SA)', pp. 138-140.
- David Walker, 'River Crossing: Mellow's Barkindje story (VIC)', pp. 144-149.
- Kim Whitely, 'Garden of Caring and Sharing: The Lousick family (NSW)', pp. 150-152.



Gladys Sym Choon, 1921.

Source: National Archives of Australia, Sym Choon family - CEDT, NAA: D400, SA1956/9039

## 'Gladys Sym Choon (1905-1991)'

Corinne Ball

Online article in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

Initially published in hardcopy in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 19, (ANU Press), 2021, this article is now available online. Gladys Sym Choon was born on 14 December 1905 in Unley, Adelaide, to Chinese-born parents 'John' Sym Choon, market gardener and storekeeper, and So Yung Moon. During the 1920s, Gladys and her older sister Dorothy opened the China Gift Store 235A Rundle Street, which sold embroidery, fine textiles, and ornaments. In 1930, after her sister's marriage, Gladys took over as sole management and expanded the business. After her marriage to Edward Chung Gon in 1939 and moving to Tasmania, Gladys appointed managers to her Adelaide shops, which she regularly visited. The original China Gift Store continued until 1985. Read [Corinne Ball's article in the Australian Dictionary of Biography](#) to learn more about the remarkable business-woman Gladys Sym Choon.

### CAHS Website Volunteers

CAHS relies on volunteers to advance the study of Chinese Australian history, and the [CAHS website](#) is crucial to this work. We would like to hear from you if you have website editing experience and want to volunteer. Please send your expression of interest to CAHS to the Society's [email](#).

### CAHS Values Your Membership

Members strengthen the Society's work in advancing the study of Chinese Australian history. To become a member, please download and complete the membership form on the [CAHS website](#). The account details for the direct bank transfer are on the form. Alternatively, you can [email](#) CAHS to request the forms.

### CAHS Newsletter Suggestions

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