

Tasmania's Chinese Heritage: An
Historical Record of Chinese
Sites in North East
Tasmania

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Australian Heritage Commission/
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TASMANIA'S CHINESE HERITAGE:
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ABSTRACT

The protection and preservation of Chinese sites in North East Tasmania is important for 3 major reasons.

- i) they are a source of culturally significant information which is unavailable from other sources;
- ii) they are rare examples of culturally significant fabric from an important era in Tasmanian and regional history;
- iii) they are currently under threat from fossicking, forestry, fire, weather and and small scale tin mining.

This survey of Chinese sites in North-East Tasmania has identified and recorded 41 sites of Chinese habitation, commerce and industry. The sites are mostly in a very poor condition with very few instances of structures remaining on the sites. A complete photographic, written and sketched record of sites is contained in this report.

In addition to the site record this study incorporated the collection of 15 oral history recordings to supplement the scanty written record of the history of the Chinese in Tasmania. The oral history tapes are held in the Archives of the Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston and those that have been transcribed are included as an Appendix to this report.

A brief history of the Tasmanian Chinese serves as an introductory context to the study and demonstrates the importance of the Chinese in Tasmania, economically, culturally and as pioneers and settlers of the North East.

THE HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF TASMANIA'S CHINESE

The main period of Chinese immigration to Tasmania was 1875-1890. They came as sojourners to work the alluvial tin fields of the North East, imported as cheap labour by mine managers. However they very quickly established themselves as miners in their own right and set up many small businesses to service the mining community, mainly market gardens and shops.

The Chinese business community in Launceston became quite wealthy and influential and had a significant impact on the development of the city, notably the opening of the Launceston Gorge as a major recreation area for the city. The Chinese community in Launceston and the surrounding Tamar region is not explored in this survey and is recommended for further study.

The number of Chinese in Tasmania was never great reaching a peak of approximately 1,000-1,500 in 1887-1888. However, they comprised the largest non-European ethnic community in 19th Century Tasmania and played a very important role in the settlement and economy of North East Tasmania.

Records of Tasmania's tin mining industry serve as important historical indicators of the number and social significance of the Chinese. Tin mining was the main industry in the region and accounted for one quarter of the colony's export earnings during the 1880's. By 1882 the Chinese were more numerous than Europeans in the alluvial tin mines, and remained in the majority until c.1897 (by which time alluvial tin mining had diminished in importance).

After the introduction of restrictive immigration laws in 1887 and a recession in tin mining in 1888 the number of Chinese gradually declined due to immigration, old age and death. Those that remained form the roots of the Tasmanian Chinese population of the 1980s.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Very little has been recorded of the history of the Chinese in Tasmania and this survey can only be regarded as a preliminary step towards understanding a period of history which has all but vanished. This survey has attempted to draw together all primary source material on each site but has relied more heavily on secondary sources for the historical background.

The recommendations of this study should be regarded as a guide and should be revised when and if more information (particularly of an archaeological nature) becomes available. It is of the highest priority that the survey findings are supplemented by more intensive study of some sites by archaeologists and historians. A list of sites which on current information, are the most significant and require protection concludes this report.

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1. INTRODUCTION TO THE SITE SURVEY AND METHODOLOGY

The Chinese played an important role in the early development and settlement of north east Tasmania. They comprise a significant ethnic group which has been largely overlooked by Tasmanian historians. This lack of documentation creates serious gaps in our knowledge of the region, gaps which are widening with the passage of time. Fortunately, there are still people in the area whose lives span the era when Chinese miners were the cornerstone of the north east Tasmanian economy, and when Chinese culture was a focal point of interest for the surrounding community. Memories, however, do not reach back so far, and the accounts of the living mainly refer to the period of the decline of the Chinese in Tasmania. Other sources of information are required, and this study has been directed towards an evaluation of the historical record left behind in the landscape of the region.

The prime objective of this study is to identify and record sites associated with Chinese miners c.1870-1900 with a view to their preservation and information potential. It is hoped that the sites will yield information on the lifestyle of the Chinese which is not available from other sources, and will lead to an appreciation of the value of the sites before they are completely destroyed by fossicking, forestry and fire.

An important aspect of the study was the collection of 15 oral history recordings from people of Chinese descent or who had extensive dealings with the Chinese. These recordings provide valuable information on the lifestyle and character of Chinese miners and their relationship with the European community. Although they are limited to the period (post 1900) when the Chinese population was declining, they contain some detailed descriptions of Chinese dwellings, Joss houses and Chinese New Year festivities. The Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston, is in the process of transcribing these tapes. This is very time consuming but I have been able to include transcriptions of four of the interviews in Appendix 3.

The Queen Victoria Museum has a particular interest in the Chinese as the Museum houses one of the finest collections of ceremonial Chinese artefacts in Australia. The contents of the Weldborough Joss house were donated to the Museum by the Chinese community in 1934. Thus rehoused, as a museum exhibit, the Joss house continued to function as a place of worship for the Launceston Chinese community.

In recent years (c.1980) it had come to the attention of the Museum and the Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service that Chinese sites, which had long been a playground for bottle collectors, were being destroyed by fossickers using bulldozers and ploughs in search of bottles and other relics. The need for a record of sites became more urgent as a result of this threat.

The first step towards preserving historic Chinese sites has been taken by surveying sites and compiling a list. The next stage would logically be to complete the listing by including market gardens, slate and gold mining sites in the Tamar region, (Golconda, Lisle, Back Creek, Beaconsfield), and commercial and domestic premises in the city of Launceston.

1.1 SURVEY METHOD:

The Chinese worked on alluvial mines throughout north east Tasmania which is an area of approximately 10,000km². The resources available for the site survey consisted of one person for a period of 6 months and a limited travelling budget. Clearly, it was impossible to attempt a complete survey with these resources.

This survey covered an area of approximately 2,000km² centred on the major tin mining areas of the North East (i.e. Branxholm, Derby, Moorina, Pioneer and Weldborough). This was the location of the largest Chinese population in Tasmania. Two gold mining sites, Mathinna and Lefroy, were included to extend the range of sites and to extend the survey into different regions of the North East. Both towns were centres of large Chinese populations.

The survey covered a wide area of the North East attempting to locate a number of sites in each region rather than an exhaustive record of any particular region. This approach was taken, as the usefulness of a preliminary survey is mainly to identify a broad range of sites over a large area so that future intensive surveys can be planned on a broad factual base.

As the survey proceeded decisions had to be made to exclude certain areas due to insufficient resources. The Tamar region, the City of Launceston, and the gold mining areas of Beaconsfield, Lefroy, Back Creek, Golconda and Lisle formed a discreet grouping of sites associated mainly with gold mining, market gardening and commerce. This area had a small but generally stable Chinese population with the usual fluctuation in the gold mining population. The area is sufficiently distinct from the tin mining regions to warrant separate attention, and, being within easy access of the City of Launceston, some of the logistical and practical problems of site recording should be lessened. The area was excluded with the view to a future study covering this region but one site (Lefroy) was surveyed to ensure that the area was not overlooked.

A similar approach was taken in the Mathinna, Mangana gold mining region. Several sites were located in order to represent the region but a far more intensive survey of the area could be productive.

Local knowledge was used extensively as a means for locating sites before going into the field. Older members of the community were interviewed, providing an oral history record which is stored on audio tapes in the archives of the Queen Victoria Museum. Whilst the oral history project was secondary to the aims of this survey, the opportunity to conduct some interviews was fortuitous and given the lack of written records the oral histories are a major source of information on the Chinese.

Sites were located by discussion with old residents, tin miners, foresters and bottle collectors, some of whom acted as guides in the field. This process produced a 100 per cent success rate in locating sites and allowed greater coverage than a sampling programme, given the limited human resources. Old mining maps were also used to locate sites. This is a much less precise method for locating mines or minerals.

dwellingings, as mineral leases shown on the maps usually cover an area of 20 acres and some leases were worked very lightly or not at all.

1.2 LIMITATIONS AND BIAS IN THE SITE SURVEY:

As previously discussed, limitations on resources necessitated some limits to the area surveyed. This survey concentrated on sites associated with Chinese tin miners, as these were the largest group, and other occupations such as gold mining, market gardening and commercial activities are poorly represented.

The reliance on local knowledge for locating sites may have introduced a bias towards sites in the vicinity of current human activity in the region and therefore towards sites which have been disturbed. This is certainly the case where information was supplied by foresters or bottle collectors. For example, forestry activities in the Cascades region uncovered several sites which probably would not have been located in undisturbed forest. Conversely, the Blue Tier is an area where very little current human activity takes place and it proved very difficult to locate sites on the Tier.

It is difficult to assess the extent of this bias as it is unlikely that many Chinese tin mining sites have escaped re-working by future generations of miners. Mining maps could be used effectively to pinpoint Chinese leases in areas less likely to have been disturbed by subsequent human activity.

Several sites became known after the fieldwork for this report had been completed. These include the Cornwall Coal Mine at Fingal, the Australian Slate Company, slate quarry at Bangor, Back Creek and Turquoise Bluff.

1.3 THE SITE RECORD:

Once located the sites were recorded by written description, photograph, survey diagram (in some cases) and measurement. Any additional information about a site was also recorded on the site record form. This included oral sources, early maps or diagrams, early photographs and newspaper references. The precise location of sites is given to the nearest 100m using the Tasmania 1:25,000 Tasmap series, edition 1, 1981; when this was available. When other maps were used the full map reference appears on the site record. Access is also described to facilitate the re-location of sites.

Sites were classified into nine site categories:- Chinese towns, Joss houses, pig ovens, mining camps, miner's dwellingings mines, market gardens, cemeteries and memorials, dwellingings and shops. Forty-one sites were located in all.

The site record is preceded by a detailed Chapter on the history of Chinese settlement in the North East, to provide a historical context for the sites. There are many gaps in this history which could be filled by thorough historical research. This was beyond the scope of this study, which has concentrated resources on the field documentation. There is also a wealth of information contained in the oral histories (Appendix 3). In addition to providing a

background to Chinese immigration, the history chapter establishes the importance of the Chinese as a colonising, developmental, economic and cultural force in the North East, and sketches an outline of the historical geography of Chinese settlement in the region.

A summary of the significance of Chinese sites and an argument for their preservation as sources of culturally significant information and, in some cases, as culturally significant fabric, is presented in the final chapter (page 108). It is difficult to establish priorities for preservation on the basis of the superficial examination provided by this survey. However, the final chapter includes recommendations for preservation of at least one site from each site category; and lists those sites considered the most urgent or worthy of preservation given current information.

The appendices to this report are very large as they contain original material which is not yet available from any other source. Only 4 out of 15 oral history recordings were transcribed in time for inclusion in this report. However, a further report is anticipated which will contain the full oral history record.

The full photographic record of sites and all oral history tapes are lodged in the archives of the Queen Victoria Museum.

2. HISTORY OF THE TASMANIAN CHINESE

2.1 BACKGROUND TO CHINESE IMMIGRATION

Chinese tin miners, who were amongst the pioneers of Tasmania's North East, have been largely overlooked by historians.¹ Although they were not numerous (numbering approximately 1,000 at their peak in 1891), they were very important in the history of the region. Their ability to work poor ground and persevere when tin prices were low provided the region with a continuity of population which would otherwise have been lacking in the rapidly shifting fortunes of the North East mining communities. Between 1886 and 1896 Chinese tin miners outnumbered their European counterparts throughout the region and in some areas by as much as 10:1.² The Chinese also constitute the largest group of non-European immigrants to early Tasmania.

The Chinese came to Tasmania largely as an off-shoot of immigration to the famed gold fields of Victoria and New South Wales. However, it was conditions in China at the time which determined the type of Chinese immigrant, their attitudes to their new 'home', and the patterns of settlement which occurred.

Officially, emigration from China was prohibited during the Ching dynasty. The policy was severe but it was difficult to enforce and during the 17th century large numbers of Chinese had privately migrated to South East Asia. Most of the early Chinese immigrants to Australia were Cantonese, from the Canton delta region of the southern province of Kwangtung. This is a coastal province close to the Pacific Ocean and exposed to Western impact during the 19th century. Kwangtung province is a fertile valley isolated from central China by mountain ranges. Life in the province in the 1880's was characterised by food shortages and social and political unrest.

The heavily cultivated Canton delta region was overpopulated (30 million people in the 1860's) and suffered severe floods and droughts. Shortages of food and land caused widespread social unrest and gave rise to the White Lotus Revolt of 1796-97, the Taiping Rebellion 1850-64 (and the Farmers Movement of the 1920's). Clan warfare was fierce, and widespread opium smoking contributed to the collapse of the economic foundations of Kwangtung society.³

To survive these problems clans relied on their fighting strength and wealth to gain and protect their lands. Women worked the land and the men were trained in combat or sent away to earn money for arms, land, and to provide for their families. Lineage solidarity discouraged the emigration of females and put the prosperity and strength of the lineage above individual comfort. It penetrated the organisations which facilitated migration; the money lenders, commercial firms and agents, and affected the organisation of Chinese labour in Australia.⁴

In 1842, the treaty of Nanking opened the five ports of Canton, Amoy, Fuchou, Ningpo and Shanghai to foreign trade, and although emigration remained illegal until the 1860 Peking Convention, shipping routes made emigration easier, in many cases, than internal migration.

Meanwhile a labour shortage of considerable proportions existed in Australia. In 1848 colonial pastoralists in Victoria and New South Wales voted to enlist Asian workmen and the Chinese 'coolie trade' started up in Australia.⁵

The coolie trade was already responsible for shipping large numbers of indentured Chinese labourers to Malaya, Hawaii, Peru, Cuba and the West Indies. It is difficult to determine the extent of slavery involved in this trade as the miserable conditions which prevailed in Southern China at the time were sufficient incentive for hundreds of thousands to seek to leave by any means possible. Certainly the Chinese who emigrated in this way were in the invidious position of owing their livelihood to their clan (who retained a proprietorial interest in the productivity of the emigré), and also being virtually owned by an unknown employer for the period of their contractual arrangement (usually about three years).

In her excellent book on the Victorian Chinese, Cronin states that the first shipment of 120 indentured Chinese labourers arrived in Australia in December, 1848 from Amoy, through the agency of James Tait, a coolie merchant.⁶ Whilst this may certainly have been the beginning of the main influx of Chinese to Australia, a want of skilled labour in Tasmania had prompted the importation of nine Chinese mechanics* decades earlier.

On the 15th July, 1830 nine Chinese mechanics arrived in Launceston aboard the NIMROD from China. They had been brought in by J. Flaherty in an effort to start up a trade in Chinese labour. There was a lot of interest but the venture did not succeed because of a dispute over the payment of passage money. His advertisement in the Launceston Advertiser read:

"CHINESE MECHANICS"

"The Undersignen, (sic.) intending to remain in this Colony, and expecting a vessel from China in the early part of the ensuing season, is induced (from the numerous applications he has had for the Chinese Mechanics lately arrived per "Nimrod"), to offer to import any number of men, within fifty, either Carpenters, Joiners, Blacksmiths, or House Servants, &c., that may be required by any Gentleman desirous of entering into arrangement for them. They will be indentured for three years from date of their arrival in the Colony.

All applications to be made before the 25th of August, at the Counting-house of Mr. Gavin Ralston when particulars of terms will be made known.

J. Flaherty."

* The term 'mechanic' at the time applied to anyone employed in manual occupations, a handicraftsman. It is assumed from the Chinese business in Tasmania in 1835 that these men were mainly carpenters.⁸

It is estimated that less than 3,000 Chinese emigrated to Australia in this way.⁹ However, when news of the discovery of gold reached China in 1852, Chinese began flocking to Australia by the credit ticket system.

Under the credit ticket system fares were borrowed from kinsmen at home and overseas. Chinese merchants in Australia played an important role in advancing money to their own kin. In return the emigr   was contracted to work under the merchant or headman for very low wages for several years.

During this period of indebtedness the Chinese labourer would often find himself working in conditions which were, to his neighbouring Australian workers at least, akin to slavery. This became the source of widespread racial tension, with the Chinese accused of undermining the wages and conditions of Australian workers.

Chinese immigration to Australia was thus strongly regulated by the structure of the lineage or kinship system in China. Lineage advancement and loyalty also affected the Chinese attitude to work and settlement in Australia, encouraging frugality, thrift and industry and the transfer of earnings back to China. The majority of Chinese labourers in Australia were supporting wives and families in China. They were seeking quick fortunes to enable their speedy return and thus they favoured labour intensive, short-term projects rather than long-term capital intensive work. They washed alluvial tin and gold in preference to working the more time consuming quartz deposits and set up import-export and other¹⁰ commercial enterprises from which quick profits could be won.

Once here some of the more successful Chinese found conditions in Australia to their liking. Having accumulated some capital from mining, many bought a small plot of land and made their fortunes from supplying the gold fields with fresh vegetables. This provided a very healthy livelihood for the experienced Cantonese market gardeners and by 1891 they outnumbered Chinese miners in New South Wales by 2:1¹¹. A similar pattern emerged in Victoria by 1901¹² and in Tasmania by 1921¹³. It was this group, along with merchants, which formed the core of the Chinese number who were to make Australia their home.

2.2 THE TASMANIAN CHINESE

The number of Chinese in Tasmania was never great, probably between 1,000-1,500 at their peak in the late 1880's. Most were sojourners and stayed only long enough to make their fortunes (5-20 years) never intending to make this country home. The main influx of Chinese began in the late 1870's to work the tin fields of the North East. The early history of the Tasmanian Chinese is closely tied to the fluctuating fortunes of this industry. Gold was also an important lure, particularly in the early days, but never employed large numbers of Chinese for very long.

Unlike the majority of Chinese immigrants arriving in the 1870's and 1880's, the first Chinese were mainly skilled labourers and small businessmen. Very little has been written about these men who arrived 3 decades ahead of most of their countrymen.

The exact number of Chinese resident in Tasmania prior to the

census of 1870 is not known. An exhaustive search of shipping and naturalisation records is required to identify the number of arrivals and departures of Chinese prior to 1870, and the rewards are likely to be small. Immigration records and newspapers provide the only accurate source of information for this early period.

The census of 1870 and 1881 almost certainly underestimate the number of Chinese and provide only snapshot pictures of the population which fluctuated dramatically from year to year in the mining districts (a census was held each decade after 1881). The difficulty of obtaining accurate census data in the remote North East, where miners worked in scattered small groups with only pack horse trails for communication, would have been doubled when dealing with the Chinese who were reticent in their dealings with officials and spoke little or no English. The Chinese also tended to work in isolation from European mining settlements.

Thus census data may be slightly misleading. For example, the census of 1870 counted only 13 Chinese resident in Tasmania. However, newspaper reports and shipping records show that, as well as the nine mechanics who arrived in 1830, there were at least nine more arrivals that decade, at least seven more by the early 1850's and ten more to 1870¹⁴. Most of these may have been sojourners coming to escape the harsh conditions in China only to return as soon as their fortunes were made. Certainly, like most fortune seekers, they would have been amongst the numbers flocking to the Victorian gold fields in the 1850's and this may explain the low count in 1870. However, in late 1870 nineteen Chinese miners arrived to work the gold fields at Mangana¹⁵ and a newspaper report of December, 1870 speaks of twelve Chinese miners arriving in November of that year to work the Back Creek gold mines.¹⁶

As early as 1835 Launceston had a number of Chinese businesses established in Elizabeth Street. There were at least two grocery shops, one run by John Aquie¹⁷ (arrived Launceston 6/6/1830) and another by a gentleman calling himself Joan Wife¹⁸ (the Chinese frequently Anglicised their names, particularly when they took European wives). There is also mention of a Chinamen's Cedar Yard¹⁹ in Elizabeth Street in 1835, adjoining Joan Wife's store.

The history of this early period remains uncovered and would provide fascinating study, as the Chinese community in Launceston although small (39 in 1891), produced some of the city's great early entrepreneurs and developers (Henry Tom Sing, James Ah Catt, Chin Ah Kaw, James Chung Gon).

2.3 THE FIRST INFLUX OF CHINESE TO TASMANIA (1870's)

The earliest Chinese miners to arrive in Tasmania were a group of 19 carefully selected men who were brought in, in October 1870, on the initiative of Mr. Robert Carter (a mine manager). They were to work the marginal alluvial gold fields around the Black Boy (renamed Mathinna in 1882). Gold had been discovered in the vicinity as early as 1855 but, although several attempts were made, there had been little success at winning payable gold.

The Chinese were welcomed as experienced, industrious and frugal workers who could be relied on to make the best profit available from the deposit.

Mr. James Peters (of Peters, Barnard & Co.) a Launceston businessman, arranged for the immigration of the Chinese using the services of Messrs. Lowe Kong Meng and Co. of Melbourne. The selected 19 men were mainly experienced diggers from Ararat, Bendigo and New Zealand. They were to test the ground and if they reported favourably on the prospects, there was speculation that they would be followed by one to two thousand of their countrymen.

The Examiner newspaper reports the event:

"Of the thirty-eight steerage passengers brought by the S.S. Tamar yesterday, nineteen were Chinamen, and their presence in the streets of the town during the day excited no little astonishment and curiosity." ... "The social aspect of the question respecting the importation of these Mongolians is an important one, and we do not propose to deal with it in this paper. But only one opinion can exist as to their adaptability to the purpose for which they are intended, and if alluvial digging is ever to become a permanent source of wealth in Tasmania these men will very soon prove it." ²⁰

Gold was certainly to be found at the Black Boy (Mathinna) and in the neighbouring Mangana fields (where, in 1852, payable gold was first discovered in Tasmania) but, like most mining communities, fortunes fluctuated as rapidly as the population. In 1871 Black Boy was little more than a post-office and in 1872 the population was about 550, declining again in the mid-1870's to revive in the late 1880's and become a thriving gold mining town. The population peaked at approximately 2,000 during the 1890's.

It would appear, however, that the 19 Chinese miners had limited success at Black Boy as within 3 months they had removed to newly discovered ground at Back Creek. The Examiner reports in February 1871 that the manager of the Back Creek Co. lease, Mr. Segerberg, arranged for them to work his company's ground. ²¹ Six worked on the Grand Junction mine and six on the Albion claim. ²² The latter group obtained 5 oz. of gold in their first week and the Examiner comments on their success:

"It is to be presumed that the directors will now take steps to make some permanent arrangement with the Celestials for working the claim on tribute." ²³

There was continued speculation that this was the beginning of an influx of Chinese miners to Tasmania's alluvial gold fields:

"The Chinese have already obtained a footing amongst us and judging by the present indications it will not be long before they form a permanent part of our population. The complete success of the Chinese diggers at Back Creek is certain to attract over many of their countrymen." ²⁴

This statement (and others like it) were born of an over optimistic view of the gold fields and perhaps a measure of alarm at the imagined influx of Chinese to Tasmania. Although another 30 Chinese were sent for, to sink for a deep lead on the Back Creek Co.'s lease, the success of the mine was short lived and by early May 1871 some mining parties had moved on to The Springs (later named Lefroy). By 1873 the gold commissioner, Mr. Bernard Shaw, wrote that the once active Back Creek had diminished to a population of ten, eight of whom were Chinese.²⁵ In September of the following year the mines were all but abandoned and the Examiner's North East correspondent writes:

"I have been informed by a Chinaman
that the reef found by the Chinamen
at Back Creek does not bear any gold." ²⁶

Newspaper reports also mention Chinese miners at Brandy Creek (renamed Beaconsfield in 1879 due to pressure from temperance advocates) in 1871 and 1872.²⁷ At least six of these arrived in Tasmania in June 1872.

..."A party of 6 Chinamen with well stocked baskets borne on their shoulders from bamboo yokes, and with tools and other appliances, left the hospitable stores of Messrs. Peters, Barnard & Co. (who gave many miners free lodging until they obtained their first gold) early yesterday morning to proceed on board the steamer Annie en route for the Brandy Creek diggings on the West Tamar. Ah You, a Chinese fisherman, arrived from Melbourne with this party last week and he proceeded to Ilfracombe with the intention of establishing a fishing station and fish-curing depot in that locality. Mr. Tom Sing, a very intelligent Chinaman, and a good interpreter, having visited Melbourne on matrimonial speculation returned in September. The Chinese held a grand festival at their Joss-house at the stores of Messrs. Peters, Barnard & Co. in Cameron Street." ²⁸

The stores of Messrs. Peters, Barnard and Co. housed a Chinese Joss house and was used as a lodging house and centre for Chinese miners. The Examiner describes another festive occasion held 3 months later when a party of miners returned from Brandy Creek bringing with them a parcel of gold valued at £26.00, included in which was a gold nugget worth about 35s. The Chinese described the expedition as not very good but after consulting the Joss they returned to the field. There were 20 Chinese present on this occasion which involved a feast and offerings to the Joss. The Chinese laughed and joked merrily until the ceremony commenced.²⁹

Again, at Brandy Creek, the Chinese appear to have been the last miners working marginal claims.³⁰

There was also a large party of Chinese working at the Hellyer gold fields in the North West in 1873, but their stay was short-lived and they may well have been from the original 50-60 Chinese working in the Back Creek and Lefroy mines.

It is interesting to note the comments of the Commissioner of Mines for the Hellyer field, Mr. H.B. Willis:

"In the beginning of the year 1873, the Chinese population, amounting to some thirty-seven, left the River Hellyer to proceed to Nine Mile Springs, where some of their countrymen are reported to have hit on good ground. None of the Chinese have since returned. It is an acknowledged fact in Victoria that the Chinese make very bad pioneers on any newly discovered gold fields, and this has been borne out in the present instance. Had the Chinese resorted to the gullies and terraces at some little distance from the river, where the Europeans have found all the largest and best gold, no doubt they would have been very successful, but they could not be induced to leave the rivers, giving as the reason the fear they had of being lost in the dense scrub which abounds on both its banks." ³¹

The pattern which emerges through this early period is of Chinese labour being used in the hope of proving alluvial claims which Europeans had been unable to work profitably. The miners moved constantly between gold fields but the returns from these ventures were apparently insufficient to attract large numbers of Chinese to the Tasmanian diggings.

It is perhaps surprising that more Chinese did not come to Tasmania during the early 1870's. Nine Mile Springs (later Lefroy) was prospering, gold had been discovered at Waterhouse in 1869, and a small rush occurred starting the township of Lyndhurst. Gold was also discovered at Beaconsfield (Brandy Creek) in 1870. In addition to these, and many other small finds, Tasmania offered open entry to the Chinese and therefore, the opportunity to become naturalised and obtain citizenship rights throughout Australia.

By this time conditions on the Victorian and New South Wales gold fields were very bad for the Chinese. Victoria enacted restrictive legislation in 1855 to reduce the influx of Chinese (who numbered 25,500 in that colony) at the time and South Australia followed suit. Neither attempt was successful. New South Wales introduced an Immigration Restriction Act in 1861, following the race riots at Lambing Flats from December 1860, which culminated in the terrible events of June 1861 when Chinese camps were plundered and burnt to the ground and the defenceless Chinese were robbed, beaten savagely and several Chinese scalps were taken. From 1862 departures of Chinese exceeded arrivals and numbers declined steadily until the late 1870's. ³²

By contrast the Tasmanian attitude towards the Chinese was welcoming, though certainly not without prejudiced elements. Letters to the editor of the Launceston Examiner express a range of views, but the general approval for the industrious, honest Chinese far outweighs racial distrust. Whilst a note of caution is sounded in some correspondence regarding the wisdom of mixing European and Asian peoples, the prevailing attitude was that the Chinese were needed to develop Tasmania's infant mining industry. ³³

The vested interest of mine managers no doubt accounts for much of this apparent tolerance, but Tasmania's resistance to the introduction of restrictive immigration laws in 1881 & 1887 against pressure from the other colonies, lends some weight to the notion of a more tolerant attitude prevailing throughout the Colony.³⁴

However, these inducements were insufficient to overcome the economic reality of life in Tasmania. The Colony was in the grip of a severe depression which continued into the mid-1870's. From 1870 to 1875 emigration to the mainland was higher than at any time since the Victorian gold rushes. Thus the 60-70 Chinese arrivals from 1870-1872 were probably the main group of Chinese to come to Tasmania until tin mining started up in 1875. Even this small number represented a significant proportion of the total number of miners employed on alluvial gold fields in the North East. In 1872 (after many small rushes had died down) there were only approximately 310 men employed in alluvial gold mining.³⁵ This total presumably includes the Chinese (see Table 1).

The numbers employed in alluvial gold mining between 1872-1881 have been compiled by B. Easteal.³⁶ Table 1 shows the decline from 1872 and the revival in 1878 following major gold discoveries at Beaconsfield, Lisle and Mathinna. The numbers mining from 1869-1871 would probably have been in the region of 1,000 at the peak on the Waterhouse, Lefroy and Hellyer gold fields.

TABLE 1: Average No. of Persons Employed on Alluvial Gold Fields, 1872-1881 (All Nationalities).

Source: Easteal, B.V., 1966; The Chinese in Tasmania 1870-1900; B.A. (Hons.) thesis, University of Tasmania; (unpublished).

<u>Year</u>	<u>Persons Employed</u>
1872	310
1873	130
1874	55
1875	26
1876	10
1877	91
1878	545
1879	1535
1880	794
1881	331

The revival in gold mining in 1878 may have been important in attracting a new influx of Chinese to Tasmania. However, the consensus of opinion is that it was tin, discovered in 1874 by George Renison Bell, that was the important attraction.³⁷ From 1876 to 1881 some 800 Chinese arrived and settled on the tin mining fields of the North East.³⁸

2.4 CHINESE TIN MINERS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTH EAST (1880'

The North East was a sparsely populated region with only approximately 7,000 people engaged mainly in agriculture, prior to the discovery of tin in 1874, 13 kilometres from the mouth of the Boobyalla River. There were few roads and farming settlements were linked by rough bridle tracks. Such roads as there were, were in a pitiful condition, being almost impassable in winter due to mud holes which would swallow

horses and bullocks to their shoulders.³⁹ Boobyalla was the main port for the tin mining districts of Branhholm, Weldborough, Mount Cameron, Moorina and the many mines along the Ringarooma River. Bridport, St. Georges Bay and Tomahawk were other ports serving the region.

The lack of adequate transportation systems was an important factor in the developmental struggles of the region. Tin ore had to be carted by pack horse to Boobyalla and shipped to Launceston for treatment. Machinery for the mines was dragged in by bullock and horse teams over bush roads which were little more than deep bog holes in many places. Agitation for roads and railways began in the early 1860's and continued for many decades. The first railway line was finally opened on 9 August, 1889, connecting Scottsdale to Launceston. This was extended to Branhholm on 12 July, 1911 and Herrick in 1919.

Moorina was the most important town in the area during the 80's as it was the main distributional centre. Situated on the junction of the Scottsdale-Weldborough Road and the main North road to Boobyalla Port, Moorina was linked with all the main mining centres. Only the Blue Tier mines remained isolated using the St. Georges Bay Port until the road from Lottah to Weldborough was opened in the late 1890's.

Between 1874-1877 all the major tin deposits were discovered in the North East. Most of the early mines were small co-operative ventures employing the pick, shovel, barrow and sluice box method used on the gold fields. This type of mining suited the Chinese as it required very little capital. The Chinese were able to compete well with Europeans particularly as there was a lack of capital to pioneer the new areas. The cost of transporting the tin through difficult terrain, cutting new roads and shipping the raw metal to Launceston for smelting, was high. Mine owners quickly adopted the tribute system which involved letting their claims to miners who were paid a fixed price for the tin raised (between 40/- to 45/- a cwt.). This was cheaper and surer than paying wages at 8/4 per day. The mines were let to the lowest bidder and the Chinese were willing to take a lower price than their European competitors.⁴⁰

By 1878 the Chinese were present in all the major tin mining centres of the North East, Weldborough (originally Thomas Plains), Branhholm, Gladstone (Mount Cameron), Pioneer (Bradshaw's Creek), Moorina (Krushka's Bridge), with the single exception of Derby (Brothers Home). Derby was the location of the richest tin mine in the region, 'The Briseis' (originally the Brothers Home Mine). The Chinese were probably excluded from Derby precisely because this was such a rich mine. By 1876 many of the first small mines at Derby had consolidated into a 220 acre lease named the Briseis. In 1883 the syndicate formed The Briseis Tin Mining Co. N.L. which was registered in Victoria. A large amount of capital was invested in heavy machinery and the construction of a tunnel, of dams and of water courses.

The Chinese presence on the tin fields was further consolidated in 1879 when many European miners left the diggings for the Lisle gold rush. Mark Ireland (a mine manager and later historian of the period) describes this as a crucial point

in the history of tin mining, as the Chinese remained on the tin fields taking up ground on tribute and buying tin leases from Europeans who wanted to get away.⁴¹ The price of tin had fallen in 1879 aiding this process as Europeans were squeezed out of mining. Exports of tin for this year however, were higher (4316 tons for the whole colony, including the Mt. Bischoff mine in the North West which probably accounted for almost half of the total) than for 1878 or any subsequent year to 1890. The total value of tin exports was £303,203.⁴²

The following year the price of tin increased allowing the Chinese good profits which enabled them to take up their own claims or work for Chinese contributors or leaseholders. Thus their position was no longer solely as cheap labour for the mines. In this year (1880) the value of tin exports was £341,736 which represented almost a quarter of the colony's total export product (£1,481,330).⁴³ By 1882 the Chinese were more numerous than European miners in all but two fields in the Ringarooma district.⁴⁴ Figures compiled by B. Easteal (Table 1) show that this position continued until 1897.

TABLE 2: Number of Miners employed in Alluvial and Quartz Mining on North East and East Coast from 1886-1900. Figures from Secretary of Mines Reports, probably only approximate.⁴⁵

Source: Easteal, B.V., 1966; The Chinese in Tasmania 1870-1900; B.A. (Hons.) thesis, University of Tasmania; (unpublished).

Year	<u>North East</u>			<u>East</u>		Total
	Chinese	Euro.	Sub-Total	Chinese	Euro.	
1882						1716
1886	520	450	970	227	114	1311
1887	648	414	1062	not stated		-
1888	605	385	990	"		-
1891	* 486	262	748	"		-
1892	375	250	625	"		-
1896	303	275	578	152	376	1106
1897	244	256	500	82	630	1212
1898	196	256	452	70	567	1089
1899	180	272	452	63	599	1114
1900	173	336	509	76	755	1340

* The census of 1891 shows 695 Chinese tin miners in the North East.

Accompanying this increase in numbers was growing hostility from European miners who were being displaced by the Chinese. By 1880 the Chinese were said to outnumber Europeans by 10:1 on the Branxholm fields.⁴⁶ Large Chinese communities also existed at Moorina, Weldborough, Emu Flat, Garibaldi and Gladstone. These were the major centres of tin mining in the North East in 1881 with populations of 763 in the Moorina, Weld River and Ringarooma River mines; 765 at Weldborough (then known as Thomas's Plains), 174 at Mount Cameron (Gladstone); and 40 at the Blue Tier.⁴⁷ The census of 1887⁴⁸ gives the Chinese population by electoral and registration districts and shows that 770 of the colony's 884 Chinese were living in the Portland and Ringarooma Registration Districts with 40 in Lefroy, 15 in Georgetown, 3 in Beaconsfield and 27 in Launceston. The total number of people employed in the North

East tin fields was 1,742 with another 1,845 employed in the gold fields. Assuming the Chinese living in the Lefroy, Launceston, Georgetown and Beaconsfield areas were working on the gold fields or as market gardeners and merchants (number = 85), Chinese tin miners made up almost half of the total tin mining population. This is likely to be a minimum estimate as the Government Statistician warns that the weakest link in census taking is the poorly educated householder who, being unable to read and write, or through lack of interest and carelessness, fails to comprehend what is required of them. ⁴⁹

Whilst a relatively benign attitude towards the Chinese had been expressed by town folk (who had little contact with the new immigrants) and mine managers, the importation of Chinese to the tin fields was not without incidence. There are several reports of Chinese being harrassed and ill-treated in the early days and the most vicious of these occurrences were bound to happen in the mining communities where the Chinese were most numerous and direct competition between Europeans and Chinese took place.

One such incident occurred at Branxholm in September 1877. A party of about 12 Chinese arrived on foot from Bridport to work a claim at Pearce's Ruby Flat. This claim was already producing a good quantity of tin but falling prices of tin encouraged the mine manager to seek a change from waged employees to the tribute system. On arriving at Branxholm, approximately 2 miles from the claim, they were stopped by a group of angry European miners who refused to let them pass. The party returned to Scottsdale and sought police protection to enable their safe passage to the mine. ⁵⁰

The main objection to the Chinese in the mining areas was on economic grounds.

The Examiner's Branxholm correspondent, who had been relatively accepting of the Chinese on their arrival in the district in 1877, spoke of them differently in May 1880:

"...if Chinese competition be not restricted very soon, there will be but few Europeans left in our mining districts. At present there is around the district ten Chinamen to one European, and more arriving every day. It is impossible for us to compete with a race of people who can live in a mining centre for 4 shillings or 5 shillings per week, provisions and clothing included, while Europeans cannot provide for themselves with less than 16-19 shillings per week and then live economically." ⁵¹

However, the Chinese were well established at Branxholm by this time, the majority working on Ruby Flats which was the location of one of the largest mines to be owned and operated by Chinese. The mine owner, W. Ah Hong Moy, was the leader of the Chinese in the area. In 1883 his mine on Ruby Flats employed approximately 50 men. ⁵² He had a store on Ruby Flats and later moved, with his Chinese wife and family, into Branxholm. The family occupied a large weatherboard home with a store and bootmakers shop attached (see site 12). The children attended the local school. The family integrated

well with the European community, adopting the Christian faith. Ah Moy also mined in partnership with a European, Mr. Tasman Kincade, in later years ⁵³ (see Appendix 3).

Most of the Chinese miners kept very much to themselves, living in isolated one room huts constructed from split pailings or bulls wool (stringy bark). Some lived in small encampments of 2-3 huts or larger 'long huts' built to house from 3-6 people. The huts were typically 10-12 feet by 6 feet with wooden or dirt floors and wooden chimneys. Some of the Chinese huts had no chimneys, using instead a split level roof construction which overlapped slightly to keep the rain out. The miners obtained their supplies from Ah Moy and rarely had contact with Europeans except on their festive days, particularly Chinese New Year.

There were also those who objected to the Chinese on racial and moral grounds. A letter to the editor of the Examiner in June 1880 expressed the most extreme of these views:

"The stamp of Chinamen who come to these colonies are not of the highest order, and on their arrival generally take on some European woman as a partner, and as no woman of any account will unite themselves to such degraded beings, they as a rule pick up with the very scum of the earth and settle down in some tin or gold mining district. The consequence is very easily foreseen. In years to come we shall have a little generation of vipers to deal with, whose amalgamation with the low Europeans will form the very essence of vice and crime, besides tarnishing the European blood with a tinge of orange, and importation of diseases, unknown in the colonies at present." ⁵⁴

Gambling (which was the major recreational past-time of the Chinese) and opium smoking also attracted much disparaging comment. A party of Chinese arriving in Launceston on board the Mangana in 1880 were greeted by a crowd of hostile Europeans shouting abuse. ⁵⁵ Whilst this brought forth a number of letters to the newspaper decrying the larrikinism and un-British behaviour of the crowd and defending the Chinese, it is apparent that the Chinese presence had aroused considerable resentment.

The argument in defence of the Chinese was expressed well by William Ritchie, an influential west coast mine manager, (the Chinese never established any footing on the west coast due to organised union resistance). His letter to the Examiner is worth quoting at length:

"Sir - Now that the question of how we are likely to be affected by Chinese immigration is being much discussed, it may not be amiss to look around us for evidence of the influence which the considerable number of Chinese now living among us has had upon our material and moral well-being. The Chinese are most numerous in the eastern mining district, where it is

probable that there are at least fifteen hundred. They are largely employed in working on tribute on poor tin claims which were not sufficiently remunerative to satisfy European miners, and there can be no doubt that they are doing well. The township of Moorina has, I am informed, far more Chinese than European inhabitants and it is a quiet, well conducted place, presenting a great contrast to its state of lawless rowdyism a few years since, when, before the advent of the Chinese, neither life nor limb was safe. I have spoken to several mining managers who have employed Chinese miners and their general testimony is highly favourable. They say that the Chinese are steady reliable workers; that they are intelligent and make good tin dressers, and although not as a rule of such powerful physique as European miners, quite make up for this by working longer hours. They are also described as being very respectful and obliging and grateful for any small favours. They give very little trouble to the police, and in this respect, it cannot be said that they contrast unfavourably with miners of other nationalities. I am not aware that any serious criminal charges have been brought home to any Chinese in the district, or that it has been proved that they are addicted to the immoralities vaguely alleged against them. I have not heard of anyone who has admitted that the purity of his morals has been impaired by his being brought into contact with the Chinese. So far as I can discover, after making many enquiries, the Chinese are doing us no harm, but, on the contrary, it seems clear that they are doing the colony a large amount of good. They are considerable taxpayers as consumers of dutiable articles and it is quite a fair assumption that each Chinaman is worth from £2.10 - to £3.00 per annum to the revenue. The average Chinaman is fond of good living and when he can afford it he denies himself no reasonable luxury. He is more economical and from his greater skill in cookery can turn his food to better account than the general run of European miners. It is often said that Chinamen live upon three or four shillings a week, but from what I can learn, their expenditure is not much below that of Europeans while they get much better value for it. The presence among us of some thousands of industrious quiet men, who cause no special expenditure on their account, is not only a great gain to the revenue, but to those who are engaged in agriculture and other industries. It is admitted that we want population, in other words, that we want a home market. We can scarcely think of competing with the neighbouring colonies in the production of cereals, and more particularly at the present low prices, but if our mining population instead of only numbering a few thousands at the present, equalled - as it well might - that employed in agriculture, those engaged in the latter industry would soon enjoy quite as great an amount of prosperity as those who are engaged in mining.

Those who have observed what mining has done for the agriculturalists within the influence of the Mt. Bischoff mines, must be convinced that it would be of immense benefit to the colony if we had ten thousand Chinese in steady remunerative employment upon our various mining fields." 56

No doubt Mr. Ritchie's balanced and practical defence of the Chinese was coloured by his own interests as a mine manager. But, this attitude was in fact the one which prevailed when, in 1881, an attempt was made to introduce an Act in the Tasmanian Parliament to restrict the entry of Chinese to the Colony. The interests of mine managers and the business community in the North East were closely tied up with the Chinese and the majority of Tasmanians were unaffected by them. Hence Tasmania withstood pressure to conform to the actions of the mainland states and rejected the Bill arguing that restrictions were unnecessary until some rational proof was presented that the Chinese were injuring the Tasmanian population. 57

The years 1883-85 saw a partial depression in the North East. The most accessible tin deposits had now been worked out and many gold mines were deserted. The European population had greatly diminished as a result. The Secretary of Mines, however felt that this was more due to a lack of spirit than a lack of mineral wealth. He opined that the initial expectations of the gold miners had been too high and in his report for 1884, spoke favourably of the tin mining industry:

"The tin mining industry appears to be carried on with vigour, the total quantity of ore produced during the six months ended 30th June (1883) being 746 tons, valued at £38,700. Many of the claims in the District are held by co-operative parties, who are steadily prosecuting their work, attracting little or no public attention. A considerable number of Chinese are employed as tributors." 58

This period of economic slump apparently affected European wage earners far more gravely than the Chinese, who were by now mainly employed on their own account. Thus, the arrival of 200 or more Chinese in 1885 sparked off a determined anti-Chinese immigration campaign championed by the Tasmanian Trades and Labour Council (T.T.L.C.). Protest meetings were organised against Chinese and other non-British immigrants and a number of resolutions calling for the adoption of a restrictionist policy were presented to the Tasmanian government. 59

Despite the strong anti-Chinese feeling in sectors of the mining community an attempt to start an anti-Chinese movement in the North East met with very little support. Mark Ireland, mine manager and historian, was one of the main agitators in this failed movement which is described here in his own words:

"All this time the Chinese population was increasing and the European population decreasing. In '86 or '87 a public

meeting was held in Derby to see what could be done to stay the Chinese invasion, as it was called, and, strange to say, Derby was the only place on the coast not affected by the Chinese. That being so, perhaps, was the main reason of the meeting there. Interests were not bound up with the Chinese, like the other centres. I was appointed to lecture with G. Badenach on the question of what to do. We lectured at Bransholme, Moorina, Pioneer and Gladstone. We sent posters ahead to storekeepers and hotelkeepers, but not one poster was put up. When we arrived at these townships we found out what was the matter. The shopkeepers were supplying a good deal of stores to the Chinese, the hotels were supplying grog, and half the people were so mixed up in some way with ground and interests that we got no help. Many businessmen and mine managers gave liberally towards the fund, but with the strict injunction not to mention their names. All were willing to banish the Chinese in one act if it were possible, but as their interests were so mixed up with the Chinese, it was just as well to let well alone. In places we could not get a chairman." 60

Accompanying this rather lack-lustre campaign against the Chinese by North East miners was the new threat of Chinese capital entering the state. Queensland introduced a £3.0.0 licence on Chinese gold miners in 1886 and this began a fear amongst the moneyed people in Tasmania that Chinese capitalists, financiers and merchants would look to Tasmania as a new area for their enterprise. 61

It was also at this time that interest began in Australian Federation. Tasmania's embrace of Federation worked to break down the strong isolationist tendencies within the colony. This became a most important reason for Tasmania's eventual introduction of legislation restricting Chinese immigration in 1887.

After fiercely opposing the 'un-British' racism of the Victorian and New South Wales Governments' treatment of the Chinese for many years, the Tasmanian Government, on 7 November 1887 passed its own immigration restriction Bill. 62 The Victorian Law of 1887 was used as a blue-print but was modified to permit the unrestricted entry of Chinese wives of naturalised citizens. The Tasmanian Act specified that only one Chinese was allowed passage on a vessel to every 100 tons of ship's tonnage and a poll-tax of £10.0.0 was levied on the master of the vessel for every Chinese carried, with the exception of Chinese crew or the Chinese wives of settlers.

This Act was introduced with some reluctance and only after considerable debate. Pressure from the T.T.L.C. and a desire to co-operate with other colonies were the major factors which determined this change of position from 1881. The Attorney-General explained the 1887 Legislation as a moral and political obligation to "...co-operate in this matter with the Legislatures of the other Australian colonies in which such a necessity to restrict Chinese immigration) had

arisen." ⁶³ This was to ensure that Tasmania was not used as a transit point for incoming Chinese to obtain naturalisation papers and thereby gain entry to the other colonies. The Tasmanian Premier, Mr. Phillip Oakley Fysh, pointed out that the Bill was purely 'a matter of social convenience' ⁶⁴ and stated that the Chinese must be regarded as a 'law-abiding, industrious class, whose presence would not only be tolerated, but courted were it not that they are regarded by our labouring classes as undesirable competitors in the struggle for existence.' ⁶⁵

This basically liberal attitude to the Chinese was confirmed by Tasmania's action at the Inter-Colonial Conference on the Chinese Question held in Sydney, June 1888. Tasmania was the only colony to dissent from the decision of the Conference 'That further restriction of Chinese immigration is essential to the welfare of the people of Australasia.' A detailed discussion of the debate and circumstances surrounding the calling of the Conference is presented in P. Sidebottom's B.A. (Hons.) thesis, "Racism of the Righteous". ⁶⁶ Premier Fysh's reasons for dissenting were presented in a memorandum despatched with the Conference Resolutions to the British Government on 14 June, 1888. ⁶⁷

His main argument was that existing immigration restriction was sufficient and had succeeded in limiting the number of Chinese immigrants arriving in Australia. The Premier also defended the Chinese moral conduct and disagreed with the proposal that they were an alien race incapable of assimilation. In the case of Tasmania, the Premier considered the Chinese presence as more beneficial than not to the colony, and the economic competition argument as exaggerated given that the Chinese were usually engaged in occupations which Europeans found unsavoury and unremunerative. Above all the Premier considered the Conference Draft Bill failed to respect the rights of such naturalised British subjects who were at the time absent from the colonies but had wives, children, businesses and property in Australia and made no exception for Chinese born under English rule in Hong Kong. ⁶⁸

Letters to the Tasmanian papers following Tasmania's dissent from the Conference show a range of reactions to the Premier's stand. Some applauded his action as a true statesman and humanitarian; others regarded him as a betrayer of the working classes. Overall, however, the Premier received support and even in the North East, the Mercury's correspondent wrote that most people in the coastal mining districts condemned the harsh restrictions proposed by the Conference and were willing to admit the benefits of a small number of Chinese labourers. The main objection to the Chinese was based on a fear of a 'Chinese invasion' in large numbers using illegal methods of entry by transferring naturalisation papers and evading the poll tax. ⁶⁹ Restriction, not prohibition, was the theme of Tasmanian opinion.

The numbers of Chinese in Tasmania grew during the 1880's and probably peaked around 1886-87 before the introduction of the immigration restriction Act. Unfortunately there is no information available on the numbers in the colony at this time.

The best indicator of population available is perhaps the state of the tin mining industry. The value of tin exports

Barbara Eastal points out a strange anomaly in the 1891 census which records the population of Weldborough as 165, with women making up half the population (81). Weldborough was thought to be almost entirely Chinese by this time. There were only 2 Chinese women at Weldborough (Maa Mon Chinn's wife and her maid). Whilst there were some European women living in the camp it is unlikely that there were very many of them as the number of half-Chinese children in the district was only 24. ⁷⁵

It is possible that the census counted only those Chinese resident in the main camp, i.e. the shop owners and vendors, and missed the Chinese miners who may have been working an area a little distant from the village at that time.

It is however, more likely, given the census figures, that Weldborough Chinese camp was no longer very populous, acting mainly as a service centre for a large floating population of miners working in the area from Emu Flat, the Weld River and its tributaries to the Cascades. It was common for miners to build a small hut (approximately 6ft X 10ft) at the mine site and also share a hut in the village which they returned to quite regularly on weekends for provisions and recreational activities such as gambling. ⁷⁶

Garibaldi was the largest Chinese camp in the Ringarooma electorate with other major centres at Gladstone, Bransholme and Moorina.

The mining population was constantly on the move with make-shift huts thrown up wherever the ground looked promising. Thus mining centres fluctuated rapidly, often experiencing several cycles of boom and decline. The centres which survived these changes most readily were those located strategically on major transport routes or within an accessible walking distance of mining areas. It is therefore very difficult to determine the exact size and relative importance of each township at any time.

The fact that Weldborough had declined as the main centre of Chinese population (at least temporarily) by 1891, giving way to Garibaldi, is confirmed to some extent by Valuation Rolls for the period. Valuation Rolls list the number of occupied dwellings, name of occupant and owner. Unoccupied buildings are not recorded (for example, the Joss houses).

The Valuation Roll for Portland municipality in 1889 lists 30 occupied Chinese buildings at Weldborough, all on Crown land. These comprise 6 houses (4 with shops), 8 cottages, 8 huts, 1 boarding house, 1 blacksmith and 1 eating house. In the same year Garibaldi had only 12 cottages, 4 shops and 1 smithy. ⁷⁷

Three years later, in 1891, the Valuation Roll lists 41 occupied buildings at Garibaldi; 35 cottages, 1 hut and 5 shops (including a barber's shop and a bootshop), all on Crown land. ⁷⁸ By 1893 this had diminished to 29 dwellings; 23 cottages (1 owned by Maa Mon Chinn and 1 by Fanny Sing Why), 1 hut and 5 shops. ⁷⁹

Weldborough, in 1893, had little more than half the number of dwellings occupied by Chinese ⁸⁰ (16 plus 1 room), but 3 of

from the colony continued to rise from 1885 to 1887, comprising over 25% of Tasmania's total export earnings.

The number of persons employed in tin mining reached a peak of 2,262 in 1887⁷⁰ (following record prices in 1886). During 1887 exceptionally high returns were made in the tin mining industry, until prices plummeted to almost half overnight. In the absence of better data, it would seem reasonable to deduce that 1887 was probably the peak of the Chinese population in Tasmania.

By 1890 the number of persons employed in the tin fields had fallen to 1,592.⁷¹ The Secretary of Mines Report for 1890-91 stated that:

"... a considerable number of Chinese miners have left for China and Victoria having succeeded very well in the mines here, and have taken with them considerable sums of money."⁷²

2.5 CHANGING EMPHASIS ON THE TIN FIELDS (1890's)

By the time the next census was carried out in 1891 the number of people working on the tin fields had fallen by 670 in three years.

The census of 1891⁷³ counted 931 Chinese males, 8 females, and 62 male and 55 female half Chinese. For the first time statistics on the Chinese are presented in detail, giving population distribution by electoral districts, occupation, education, age and conjugal condition (see Appendix 1).

The total increase in Chinese population over the previous decade was only 47 but the distribution of population had changed markedly. Most of the Chinese continued to live in the North Eastern division (845 males and 7 females) but the vast majority (580) now lived in Ringarooma electoral district with only 184 in Fingal. In 1881 474 Chinese lived in the district of Portland in the Fingal electorate and 296 lived in Ringarooma electorate.

Other major centres of Chinese population in 1891 were Hobart (37 in the south, and Emu Bay (19) and Mersey (15) in the North Western division. The total population of the North East was 43,889; although the Chinese were a small minority they accounted for almost 20% of the male population in the Ringarooma municipal district and over 10% in the Portland municipality.

The shift in population implies a change in the main Chinese population centres in the North East. The main Chinese was located at Weldborough (district of Portland, Fingal electorate) on the Western outskirts of the township. Weldborough was the home of the Maa Mon Chinn family, one of only 2 fully Chinese families in the area at the time (the other being the Ah Moy family at Branxholm). The Weldborough Joss House was the site of regular Chinese gatherings. At Chinese New Year and on other festive occasions, Chinese flocked to Weldborough from the surrounding districts. An unusual example of such an occasion occurred on 22 and 24 May, 1893 when a Chinese opera company performed in a large tent at the Chinese village.⁷⁴

these are listed as houses. They clearly are more substantial buildings than the small semi-detached cottages and huts which predominated in Garibaldi. The township comprised 2 houses with stores, 2 houses, 5 cottages, 4 huts, 1 eating house and 1 room.

Declining rates of occupancy continued throughout the 1890's. By 1902 Garibaldi had diminished to 11 cottages, 2 huts, 1 house and 4 shops (one with cottage attached)⁸², whilst Weldborough had also shrunk to 2 houses with stores, 3 cottages, and 4 huts (all on Crown land).⁸³

It would appear from this that Garibaldi was more populous than Weldborough during most of the 1890's and had nearly twice the population in 1891.

The fact that Weldborough was the ceremonial centre of the Chinese population and the home of Maa Mon Chinn (known as the head Chinaman) may have contributed to its continuing reputation as the largest Chinese settlement in the North East long after it had experienced a decline. Festivities were also held at Garibaldi during Chinese New Year complete with fireworks, music, dancing and feasting, as was also the custom at Branhholm and possibly other centres of Chinese population.⁸⁴

Oral sources tend to have far more concrete recall of the Garibaldi camp. One part-Chinese interviewee (aged 72) remembers at least 40 huts at Garibaldi in her early childhood.⁸⁵ She lived nearby Garibaldi, at the Argus mine, and remembers the camp very well. By the late 1910's the camp was becoming derelict with many huts standing empty and only occasionally used by passing miners seeking new ground. The Garibaldi Joss house was pulled down in c.1926 and some of its contents passed to her family.

Garibaldi is described by several oral sources as having two streets lined with small semi-detached huts, and a Joss house.⁸⁶ The site is relatively undisturbed and appears much larger than the Weldborough site. Three ceremonial Chinese pig ovens are located on the site, whereas only one is reported to have existed at Weldborough. The cramped style of building and the size of the site would indicate many more huts than at Weldborough where most buildings were larger and wholly detached (see site plan, page 32). Weldborough was undoubtedly a more permanent and prosperous settlement and was located on the major East-West road from St. Helens (Georges Bay) to Scottsdale. It is also close to the major tin mining centres at the Cascades, Emu Flat and on the Weld River (see site description, Site No. 1).

The next census was conducted in 1901⁸⁷ and by that time the Chinese population had diminished to 506, (463 males, 2 females and 41 dependants) with 103 half-Chinese (see Appendix 2). Ringarooma was still the most populous electorate with 190 Chinese of whom 154 were tin miners, and 12 were market gardeners. These miners would have been distributed over a large area including Gladstone, South Mt. Cameron, Garibaldi, Moorina, the Cascades and Branhholm. Fingal electorate had 112 Chinese most of whom would have been mining around Weldborough or at Emu Flat. There were more Chinese living in the cities (48 in Launceston and 22 in Hobart) and more than half the population (146) were now engaged in market gardening.

The population of major towns in the North East (including Europeans) is shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3: Population of Major Towns in Northeast Tasmania including main occupation and number of dwellings, 1901.

Town	Total Pop.	Males	Females	Main Occupation	No. of Occupied Dwellings
Weldborough	283	194*	89	tin mining	80
Branxholm	174	77	68	tin mining	27
Gladstone	163	93	70	tin mining	42
Lefroy	709	345	364	gold mining	158
Lisle	119	65	54	gold mining	29
Mangana	243	121	122	gold mining	50
Mathinna	815	435	380	gold mining	169

* The disproportion of males in Weldborough is a good indication that the Chinese were again quite numerous in Weldborough at this time.

2.6 1900-1921, THE END OF AN ERA

The number of Chinese in Tasmania almost halved between 1891 (n=939) and 1901 (n=505) for a number of reasons. The new immigration law discouraged immigrants but would not have been sufficient on their own to prevent it. Probably more significant was the decline on the tin fields.

The price of tin, which had risen to \$320.00 in 1886, plummeted overnight to half price and continued to fall, bottoming out at \$120.00 in 1893⁸⁸. Those who could afford to leave got out while the going was good, leaving behind the aged, infirm, the unsuccessful or newcomers who had little choice but to continue to struggle to eke out an existence from scratching tin. Many of them were now quite old. In the census of 1891, 342 of the total 931 Chinese were between 45 and 65 years of age.

Also remaining in the colony were a small number of successful miners who had taken up businesses such as market gardening and storekeeping, choosing to make Tasmania their home.

The majority of the 505 Chinese in Tasmania in 1901 appear to have become almost permanent residents as by 1911⁸⁹ there were still 427 Chinese (400 males and 27 females) and 102 half-Chinese living in Tasmania. Clearly there were some new arrivals in this period but it is difficult to determine how many from census data.

The 1911 census lists the occupations of the Chinese and for the first time market gardeners equal miners. One hundred and thirty-two males and two females were engaged in agricultural pursuits and 131 males and 1 female, in mining. The other major occupations of Chinese at this time were merchants and storekeepers - 45, domestic servants - 34, seamen - 22, and 51 dependants.

A decade later in 1921 there were still 261 Chinese in Tasmania, 235 of whom were born in China. The distribution of population had changed dramatically by this time with only 39 males in the Ringarooma district (where Garibaldi is located)

and 11 in Portland (Weldborough's municipality). The population is far more dispersed and has shifted to the cities with 37 in Launceston, 54 in Hobart, 15 in Glenorchy and 42 in Devonport and Emu Bay municipalities. This distribution reflects a predominance of market gardeners and merchants. Professions which allowed 61% of the Chinese to be employed on their own account with only 32% working for wages or salaries. Most (149) of these Chinese had been resident in Tasmania for over 20 years. However, 5 of the 7 Chinese born women had arrived between 1901 and 1921.⁹⁰

Life was very hard for the remaining small time tin miners. The easily won alluvial tin had long since been worked out and the rich deep leads at Derby (the Briseis mine), Branxholm (the Arba mine) and the Blue Tier (the Anchor mine) were worked by large capital intensive operations, from which the Chinese were excluded. The price of tin remained depressed throughout the 1890's, rising slowly from 1894 but not recovering until 1898 when the price leapt to \$230.⁹¹

The miners also struggled with erratic water supplies. Small mines (and sometimes large ones) had to virtually cease during summer. The larger companies began major operations to improve the water supply and small concerns often had to lease water rights from them.

A number of developments occurred during this time which improved mining conditions in the 1900's. The railway from Scottsdale to Launceston was completed in 1889 extended to Branxholm in 1911, with the final extension to Herrick in 1919. A road from Lottah (in the Blue Tier) to Derby was built. This passed through Weldborough and Moorina connecting all the mining towns to the rail head at Scottsdale.⁹² This made the transportation of tin a great deal easier and was also very timely, as the port of Boobyalla was no longer serviceable due to excessive siltation caused by the direct discharge of mine tailings into water courses.⁹³ Technological improvements, such as the steam powered centrifugal pump, enhanced mining productivity.

Several small mines survived the depressed 1890's to take advantage of these improvements. After the Ahcnor Mine ceased operations in the Blue Tier in 1913 the area continued to be worked until 1923 by small operations. The last two Chinese in the area are remembered by local residents. Ah Ling, a well dressed aloof man who lived in a small galvanised iron shed on the Tier until 1917 when he died in a mining accident. Billy Bow, (see photo p. 94) a well liked character who lived on the Tier, originally in a small 2 room pailing hut and later in an abandoned pailing house with an iron roof. Billy Bow worked alone on the Tier until he died in c.1942.⁹⁴

The Ruby Flats mine at Branxholm also continued to produce well, as did the Weld and Echo mines working the Weld/Frome Rivers near Moorina, and the Argus mine on the Wyniford River near Garibaldi.

The last Chinese at the Argus and Garibaldi are remembered well by older residents. Mr. Cecil Harper⁹⁵ (b.1905) delivered goods from his parents' shop in Pioneer to the Argus and Garibaldi camps, visiting them at least 100 times between c.1919-1925. He also carted tin for the Chinese from Garibaldi to the rail head at Herrick. He recalls

the Chinese as scrupulously honest people who earnt a meagre income from tin, going into debt in summer and getting in front in winter. As soon as the rains fell and tin was available the Chinese paid their debts to the Harper family.

Mr. Harper attended several New Year celebrations at Garibaldi. Chinese New Year was not only the main annual occasion for the Chinese in the district but also for the local Europeans. The fireworks display, which continued for 2 nights, was legendary (as was the display at Weldborough, Lefroy in the earlier days, and to a lesser extent, Branhholm). A large wooden box, 6 foot X 3 foot X 3 foot deep was raised by block and tackle on to the top of a gantry in front of the Joss house. Inside the box was an elaborate arrangement of fireworks with interconnecting fuses woven together on a large screen. Very elaborate Chinese dolls, about 2 foot long, were attached to the screen and would fall from the sky as the crackers went off. The display was started by lighting the screen in one corner and the fireworks would go off in a carefully determined sequence creating a marvellous spectacle. However, the Europeans began to disrupt these occasions by stealing the dolls and in the last year (1915-1917) a fence was placed around the fireworks display. Not to be deterred one European scaled the fence and was pursued by Chinese who knifed him in the arm. According to Mr. Harper, he ran for protection to the policeman on duty but received no sympathy.

These occasions were also marked by extravagant feasting, but this was limited to the Chinese and a few invited European guests. Large circular stone ovens (see plage 8, page 42) were used to cook whole pigs and poultry. Plenty of alcohol was consumed and gambling often continued all night.

Apart from these occasions the Chinese kept very much to themselves with very few exceptions. When they became too old to mine, many departed for Launceston in the hope of finding less strenuous work in the Chinese laundries, restaurants and shops. The last 3 Chinese at Garibaldi, Ah Woo, Ah Po and Ah Loy, were eventually awarded a charitable grant by the local council.⁹⁶

2.7 SUMMARY HISTORY OF CHINESE SITES:

The Chinese who came to Tasmania in the late 1870's to 1890, were mainly sojourners. They stayed only long enough to accumulate sufficient money to return to China relatively wealthy men. For this reason they did not seek to integrate with their new environs or put down roots in this country. Coming from a situation of dire poverty in China, they placed themselves in debt to their employers, in order to obtain a passage to Australia. On arrival, they worked for other Chinese, or on tribute, very few working for a wage. They generally undercut European labour and quickly began to dominate the small-scale alluvial tin mining industry in Tasmania. A fall in tin prices in 1880 and the Lisle gold rush in 1879 caused many Europeans to leave the tin fields, temporarily. When they returned the industrious Chinese had scooped the pool.⁹⁷

Censuses of the period indicate that there were never more than 1,000 Chinese in Tasmania. However, this is probably misleading as the peak of the alluvial tin mining industry in North East Tasmania was 1886/1887, which was between the census of 1881 and 1891. Although the population of Chinese only increased from 884 in 1881 to 939 in 1891 this does not necessarily reflect a stable and very gradual increase of 55 over a whole decade. Rather, the mining population was constantly mobile and Chinese were arriving and departing in large numbers during the intervening period. It is reasonable to assume that the peak of the Chinese population coincided with the peak of the tin mining industry in 1887. This is also the year that restrictive immigration laws were introduced in Tasmania. Between 1887 and 1890 the number of persons employed in the tin fields had fallen by 670. The census of the following year counted 939 Chinese in Tasmania

From 1887 the population gradually declined with departures to China now well in excess of arrivals. Old age was also having a marked affect, as many of the last Chinese in the North East were ageing miners, too old or infirm to turn their labour to sufficient profit to enable their return to China.

The Chinese who stayed in Tasmania established themselves as market gardeners or merchants. The population moved from the tin fields to the outskirts of townships and the rich agricultural areas. By 1921, Hobart had become the largest centre of the Chinese who set up market gardens in the rich Derwent River flats in Glenorchy and Moonah.

The nature of the archaeological record left by the Chinese is likely to reveal this impermanence. The obvious aspects are the temporary and vanishing nature of the dwellings and villages erected by Chinese miners. European miners were also inclined to be a shifting population. The difference between the structures built by Europeans and those built by Chinese may not be great when it comes to the isolated miner's hut. However, the nature of the townships that grew up to service the mining population is probably very different. Did the Chinese observe their rules and customs regarding the design and orientation of dwellings, streets and Joss houses; or were these simply temporary shelters thrown up in the style of the European buildings there about? Whether the Chinese villages really were 'a little bit of China transplanted'⁹⁸ remains to be seen.

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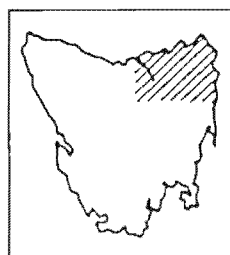
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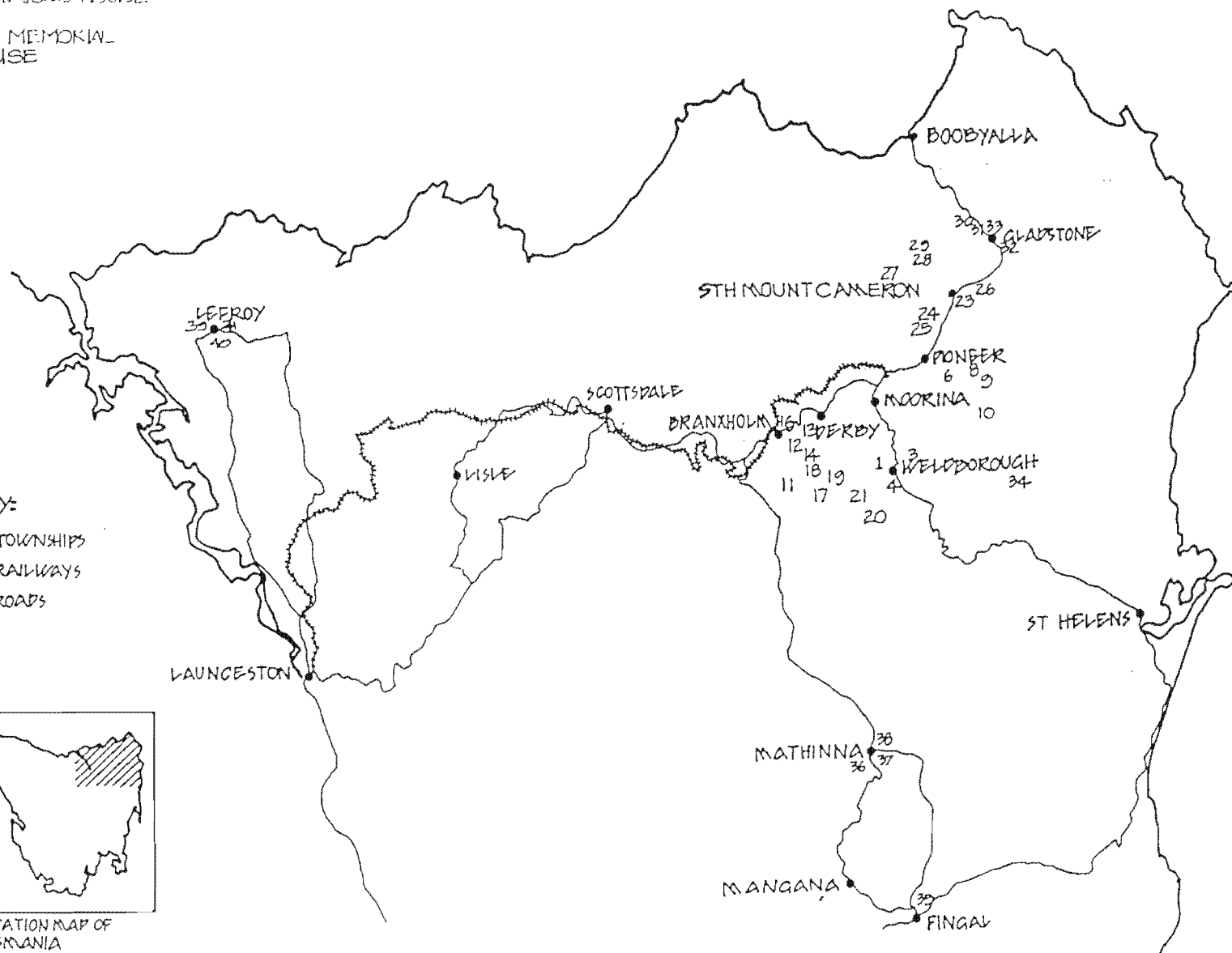
- 1&2 WELDBOROUGH CHINESE CAMP & JOSS HOUSE
- 3 EMU FLAT
- 4&5 WELDBOROUGH CEMETERY & MEMORIAL
- 6&7 GARIBALDI CAMP & JOSS HOUSE
- 8 AH GAR'S
- 9 THE ARGUS
- 10 THREE NOTCH TRACK
- 11 RUBY FLAT
- 12 AH MOY'S HOUSE
- 13 AH DOO'S HUT
- 14 BRANXHOLM JOSS HOUSE
- 15 AH YEW'S CAMP
- 16 FRANKHOLM CEMETERY
- 17 TIN POT CREEK
- 18 GOLD CREEK
- 19 CASCADE RIVER
- 20 GRASS PADDOCKS
- 21 AH CHOON'S STORE
- 22 MOORINA CEMETERY
- 23 SOUTH MOUNT CAMERON
- 24 RUBY CREEK CAMP 1
- 25 RUBY CREEK CAMP 2
- 26 LONG GEE'S CAMP
- 27 BLUE LAKE
- 28 CLIFTON CAMP 1
- 29 CLIFTON CAMP 2
- 30 AH COW'S OVEN
- 31 AH COW'S GARDEN
- 32 LEE FOOK'S HOUSE
- 33 GLADSTONE CEMETERY
- 34 BLUE TIER
- 35 AH FOO'S HOUSE FINGAL
- 36 AH FOO'S HOUSE MATHINNA
- 37 WONG HEE'S SHOP
- 38 CHINESE MARKET GARDEN
- 39 LEFROY CHINESE CAMP
- 40 LEFROY JOSS HOUSE
- 41 LEFROY CEMETERY

KEY:

- TOWNSHIPS
- RAILWAYS
- ROADS

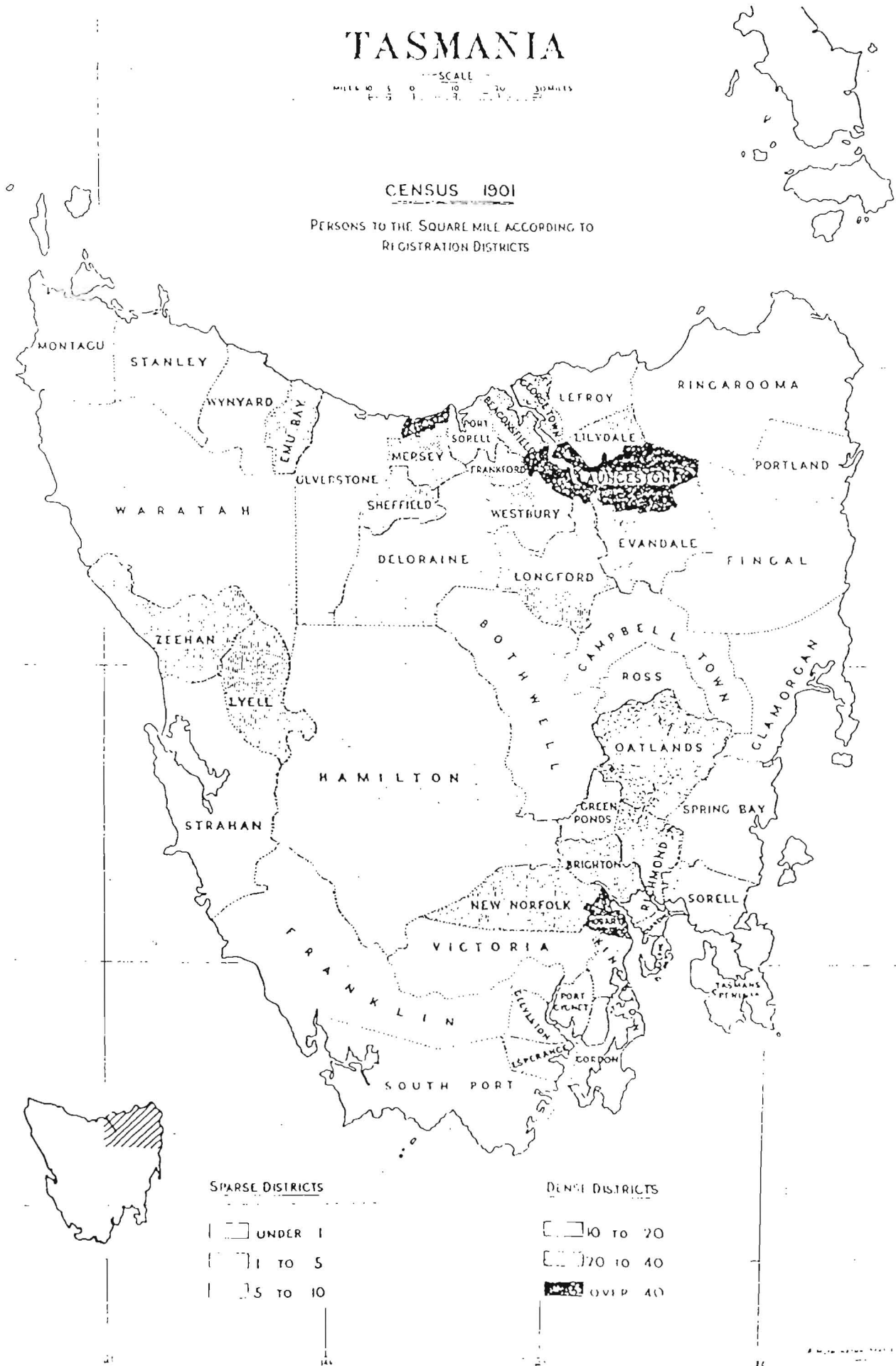


LOCATION MAP OF TASMANIA



MAP 2: Map of Study Area Showing Location of Sites. Site Numbers Correspond to The Site Record.

Source: 1901 Census of Tasmania.



SITE 1: WELDBOROUGH CHINESE CAMP

HISTORY: Chinese tin miners first came to Weldborough c.1875-1880 and the last Chinaman (Hee Jarm) left the Weldborough village c.1934. This was the largest and most stable Chinese town in the North East, acting as a centre for Chinese throughout the area. At Chinese New Year Weldborough attracted Chinese from all over the North East for days of feasting and fireworks, and in 1893 a Chinese opera company performed in the township. By 1907 land within the encampment was predominantly owned by Chinese (land holdings valued from £4.00 to £170.00) with Maa Mon Chin the major land owner. Maa Mon Chin and his Chinese wife were referred to as the unofficial heads of the Chinese community in the North East.

SIGNIFICANCE: This site is of the highest significance as it was the largest and most stable Chinese town, and was the religious and cultural centre of Chinese settlement in the North East. The site is well preserved and two houses remain from c.1900.

SUB SITES: See site 2, Weldborough Joss House.

LOCATION: Ringarooma 5643, G.R. 757396.

MUNICIPALITY: Portland 58, WARD: North.

ACCESS: On the Tasman Highway on the western outskirts of the township of Weldborough, 0.25km west of Gardners Creek in a field on the southern side of the highway in which the first house of the town is located.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 1 - Chinese camp/township. Domestic, commercial and religious site.

DIMENSIONS: 1.2-1.5ha.

LAND TENURE: Privately owned by R. Chintock, Tasman Highway, Weldborough.

ENVIRONMENT: Situated on the Western access route to the town in a fenced field bounded by Gardners Creek on the west and the Tasman Highway on the east. The field has a WNW aspect and is a developed pasture.

RELICS: Two buildings (wooden houses) are the only remaining structures on the site of the original Chinese settlement. These are at least 80 years old and belong to the Chintock family who are still resident on the site. The houses are built in the vernacular style of the time, small 4 room weather-boards with an iron roof, a narrow verandah on the front and some enclosed additions on the back. Depressions of the old roads and some buildings are still evident despite cultivation of the ground for pasture. Religious and ceremonial objects, originally housed in the Joss House which once stood on the site, are now housed in the Queen Victoria Museum in Launceston. Many bottles and earthenware jars have been collected from the site.

PRESERVATION: Despite cultivation of the site and mining of the site of 1 row of buildings most of the area is still intact. Two houses remain in good condition from c.1900 and the depressions of roads and buildings are clearly visible. The oldest house appears dry and sound although in a delapidated condition, the other is well maintained by its current occupants. Bottle collectors have retrieved the bulk of accessible pottery and glass relics. There is no threat to the preservation of the site other than the continued disintegration of the uninhabited house due to weathering. The land and the gully is stable.

SOURCES: Oral - R. Chintock, B. Butt, F. Chinn, F. Grose.

Documentary - Weldborough Town Plan No.2, W/13A. 1910; Lands Department Survey book H10, 1907, p28; Lands Department Survey book, G10, 1904, p28; Lands Department Survey book G7, 1904, p21; Lands Department Survey book L7, 1914, p23; Lands Department, Hobart.

RECORD: Planimetric sketch, photographs, oral histories.

Key to numbers

- 1 Existing weatherboard cottage and garden belonging to R. Chintock
- 2 Flat depression marking Joss House site
- 3 Telegraph pole
- 4 Flat depression marking Ah Lyn's shop and residence
- 5 Scatter of relics marking site of San Kit's shop
- 6 Existing wooden shed
- 7 Existing weatherboard house belonging to R. Chintock
- 8 Tank stand
- 9 Mined gully filled with blackberries, dug since Chinese occupation removing the site of a row of Chinese shops, including Maa Mon Chin's store
- 10 Site of Maa Mon Chin's house
- 11 Existing shed
- 12 Existing house
- 13 Existing house belonging to Mr W. Butt
- 14 Depression of two old roads

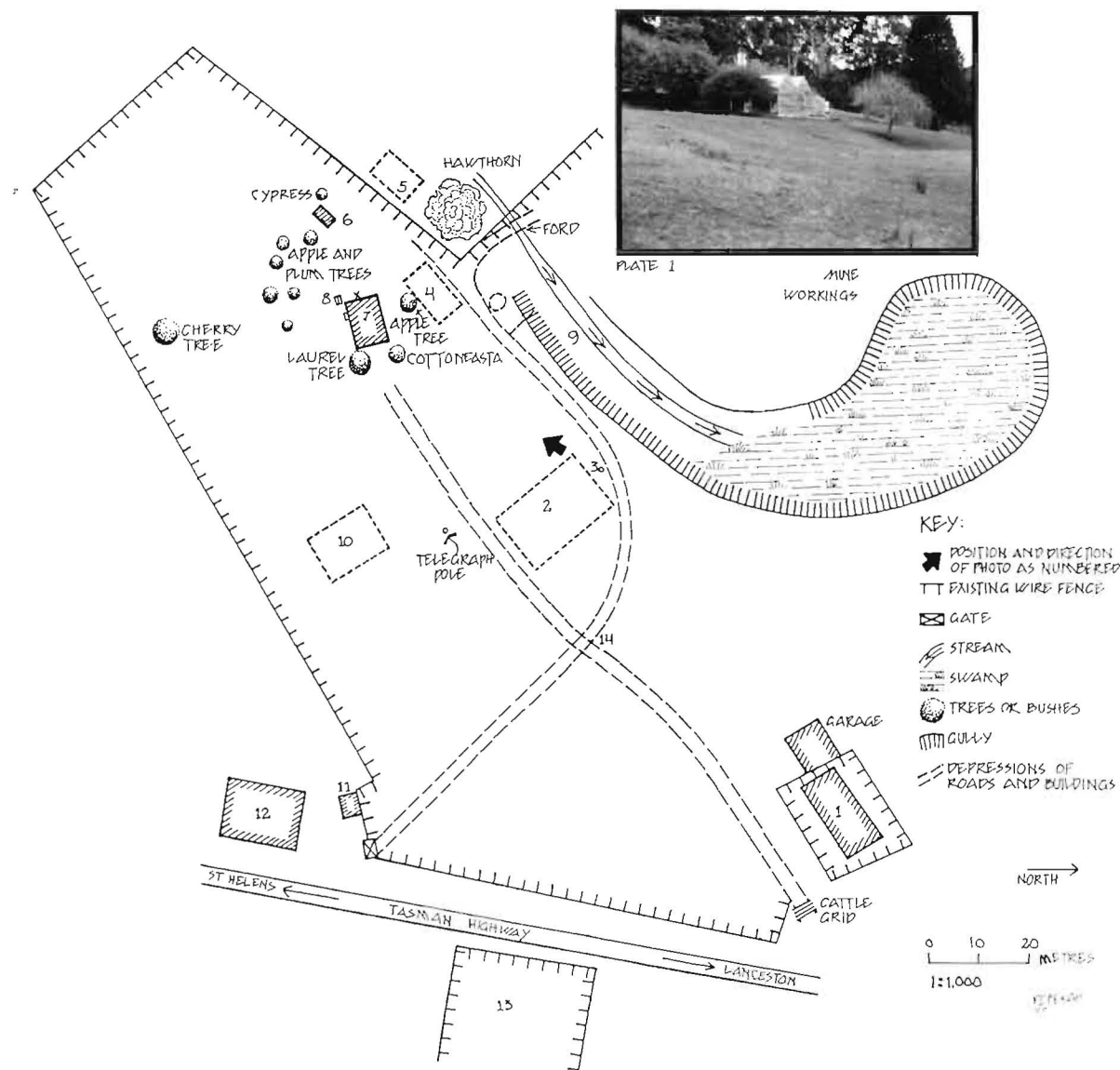


Figure 1: Planimetric sketch of Weldborough Chinese camp, 1983. (site 1) grid reference 757396

Plate 1: Photo of existing weatherboard house belonging to R. Chintock.

Key to buildings

- 1 Joss House
- 2 wooden building
- 3 wooden building
- 4 Old wooden building
- 5 Sun Han Kee store 1907
- 6 Old wooden buildings
- 7 Old wooden building
- 8 Maa Mon Chin's store
- 9 Old wooden building
- 10 Bootmaker shop
- 11 Wooden cottage (still stands on site today)
- 12 Old cottage
- 13 Cottage
- 14 Cottage
- 15 Hut
- 16 Maa Mon Chin's house

KEY:





-  BUILDINGS
-  PROPERTY BOUNDARY
-  FENCE
-  ORIGINAL STRUCTURE



Figure 2: Reconstruction of layout of Weldborough camp in c. 1904, drawn from Lands Department records. The buildingd noted as 'old' in the 1904 survey records may have been unoccupied, this would tally better with valuation rolls for this period. The row of buildings marked 6-9 is now the site of the mined gully filled with blackberreis, as shown in figure 1.

SITE 2: WELDBOROUGH JOSS HOUSE

HISTORY: Erected in c.1880 when Weldborough was the main regional centre serving a population of 500-1000 Chinese. The Chinese population diminished on the tinfields c.1910-1920 due to a decline in tin mining, restrictive immigration and old age and by c.1930 only one full Chinese, Hee Jarm, remained at Weldborough. He became the caretaker of the Joss House and fearing for its safety appealed to Mr J. Chung Gon of Launceston for assistance. Between them and with cooperation of the Launceston City Council in 1934 the contents of the Joss House were transported to the Launceston Museum where it continued to function as a place of worship as well as a museum exhibit.

SIGNIFICANCE: The Joss House is a place of worship which was integral to the Chinese way of life in Tasmania. There were at least five Joss Houses in the North East but the one at Weldborough was the longest lived. The contents of the Joss House are held in the Queen Victoria Museum but no record of the building survived. A sketch of the Joss House has been drawn from descriptions and dimensions given by first-hand oral sources. This site is significant as it was the most important Joss House in the North East and for its relationship with the collection in the Queen Victoria Museum.

SUB SITES: See site 1, Weldborough Chinese Camp.

LOCATION: Ringarooma 5643, G.R. 757396.

MUNICIPALITY: Portland 58, North.

ACCESS: Located at the entrance to the camp (see Fig. 1) between the 2 streets of the settlement. Access currently through private gate which runs direct to Joss House site on the southern sides of the intersection of 2 old roads.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 2 - Joss House, religious site.

DIMENSIONS: 15m x 18m, see diagram, (fig. 3).

LAND TENURE: Privately owned by R. Chintock, Weldborough. Contents in the Queen Victoria Museum in Launceston.

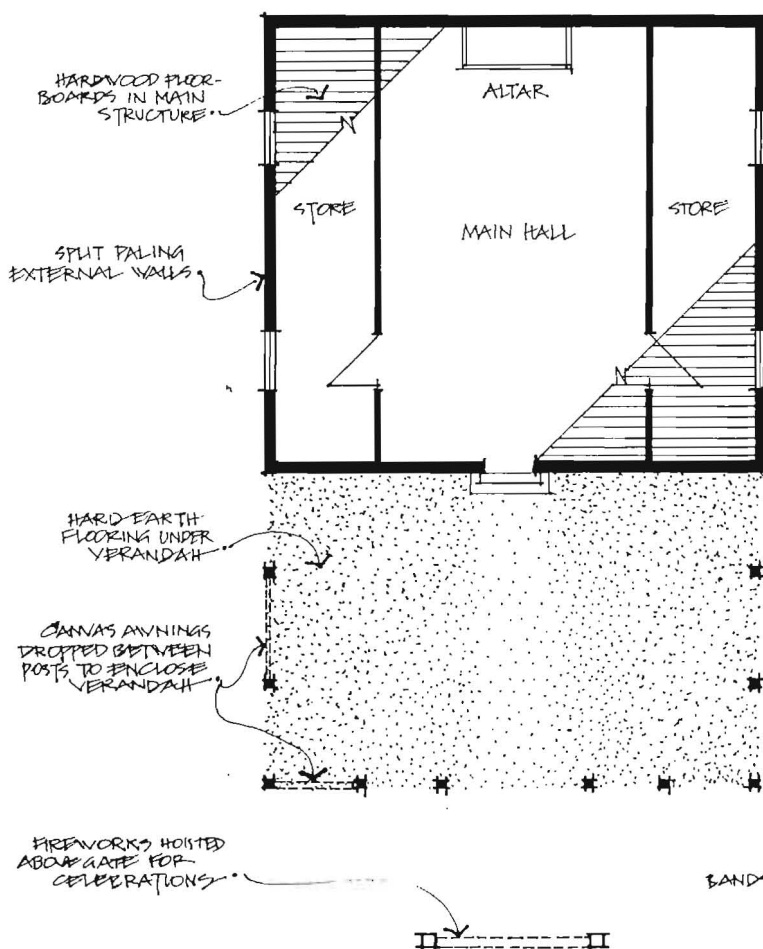
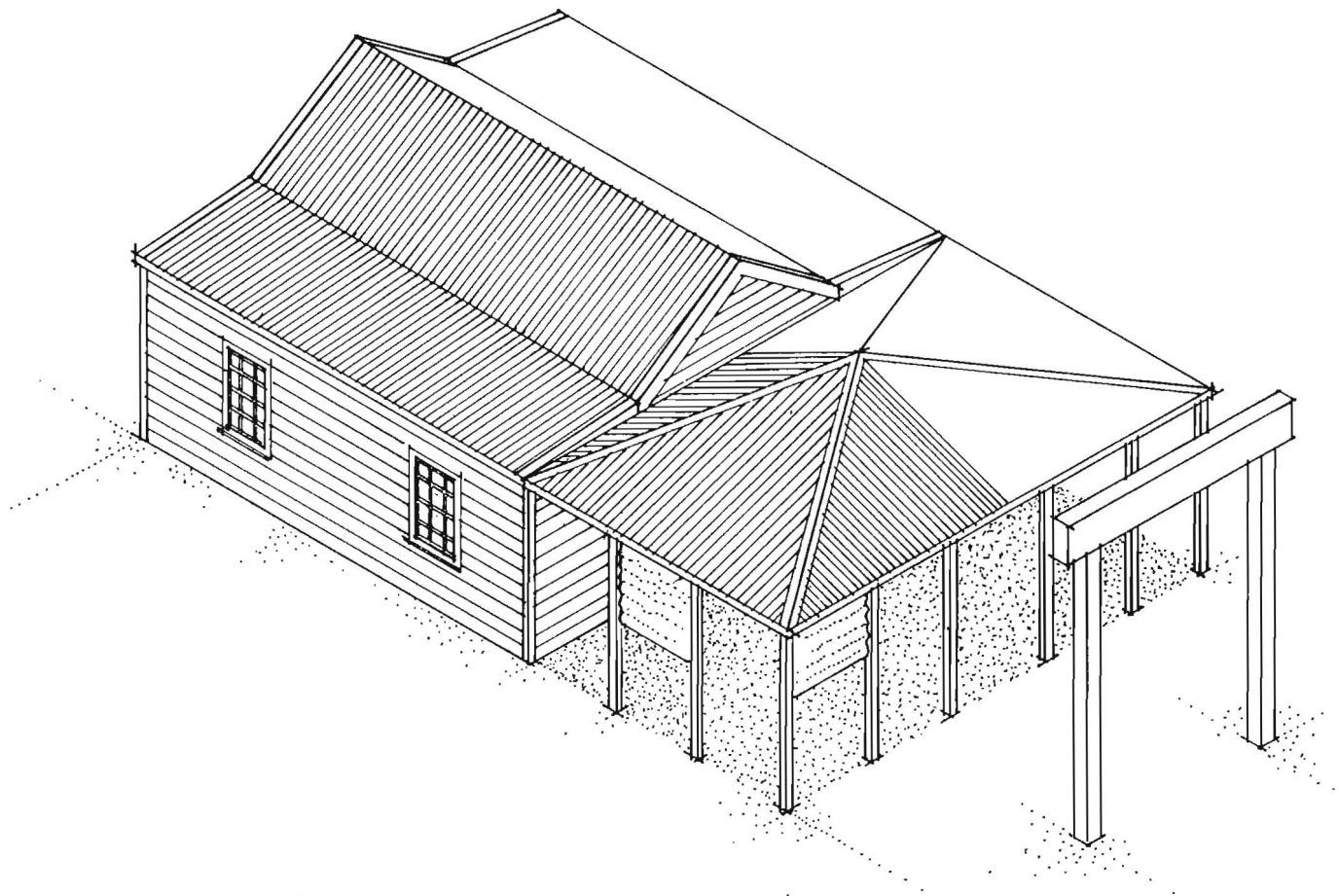
ENVIRONMENT: Located at the entrance to the Weldborough Chinese camp on the intersection of 2 streets, facing west. Although most of the camp was owned by Chinese by 1907, the Joss House was built on Crown Land.

RELICS: The building, which was weatherboard with a corrugated iron roof and a large open sided covered area in front of the entrance, was dismantled in c.1934. The contents reside in the Queen Victoria Museum in Launceston.

PRESERVATION: Contents preserved and restored by the Queen Victoria Museum in Launceston. Site of Joss House is marked by a large flat depression.

SOURCES: Oral - R. Chintock, F. Chinn, W. Butt.
Documentary - Lands Department Survey book No. H10, p28; and No. G7 p21, Lands Department, Hobart. Queen Victoria Museum (no date) The Joss House, (unpublished information pamphlet).

RECORD: Photographs, oral description, drawings.



DRAWING BASED ON
RECOLLECTIONS OF RON
CHINTOCK + BILL BUTT (1983)

WELDBOROUGH JOSS HOUSE

SCALE 1:200



SITE 3: EMU FLAT, WELDBOROUGH

HISTORY: Emu Flat was a major tin mining centre in the Weldborough area and was mined mainly by the Chinese in the early days c.1880. The Weldborough camp served as the centre for Chinese miners on Emu Flat.

SIGNIFICANCE: Unfortunately the dwelling sites located were very heavily disturbed by recent mining and it was not possible to clearly distinguish hut locations.

SUB SITE:

LOCATION: Derby 5644, G.R. 792411.

MUNICIPALITY: Portland 58, WARD: North.

ACCESS: Emu Road runs through the site but is four wheel drive only and is often blocked by large fallen trees. Easily located on a map, the site is 800-900m past the T junction of Emu Road and Frome Road (on Emu Flat) and 20m beyond the Frome River ford. On the left hand side of the road a grassed clearing indicates the site and another area is located on the right hand road-side 20m further along.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 5 - Miner's dwelling.

DIMENSIONS: No definable site but area of relics spread over 20m x 15m.

LAND TENURE: Crown Land, State Forest.

ENVIRONMENT: Situated approximately 5km by road from Weldborough. Emu Flat has been extensively mined several times between 1880 and 1980-1981. Moss harvesting has also occurred in recent years. The site is almost 1km from Emu Flat located near the Frome River amongst disturbed regrowth forest, mainly Eucalypt and tea tree. Recently mined areas surround the site and have partially destroyed the east and southeast area in which a solid stone chimney structure is located. This area has been bulldozed and is covered in small white river stones.

RELICS: Fragments of Chinese pottery and distinctive Dutch Gin bottles were found concentrated in two small areas approximately 20m apart. In one of these areas, to the east of Emu Road, a solid chimney base survives in a thin wedge of ground which has been bulldozed on both sides. The structure resembles a severed pig oven more closely than the usual scatter of hearth stones found at other hut sites. However, local knowledge refutes the possibility of a pig oven at the site (Chintock, R. personal communication).

PRESERVATION: The site has been heavily disturbed and partially destroyed. The area remains under threat as mining may recur.

SOURCES: Oral -> R. Chintock.

Documentary - Plan of Mineral Sections County of Dorset, Sheet No. 2, 210-a, 1889. Office of Mines, Hobart.

RECORD: Written observation.

SITE 4: WELDBOROUGH CEMETERY

HISTORY: Ancestor worship was an important feature of Chinese culture and Confucian religion, being a mechanism of clan ownership of land and permeating the social structure and ideology of ancient China. Most of the Chinese in northeast Tasmania carried on their customs and buried their dead in the traditional manner making only the adjustments required of them by the laws of the land. Whenever possible the bones of the deceased were exhumed and sent back to China to reside in the ancestral burial grounds. It was common practice for those who could afford the journey to return to China to die.

SIGNIFICANCE: The cemetery contains a memorial erected by the local Chinese community to their dead and a number of Chinese graves. Only one grave bears a headstone engraved with Chinese characters but it is very likely that there are many unmarked Chinese graves in the cemetery. The cemetery at Moorina contains a similar memorial but no marked Chinese graves. The site is significant as a cultural monument and as one of only two surviving memorials to the Chinese.

SUB SITE: Site 5, Chinese memorial.

LOCATION: Ringarooma 5643, G.R. 756386.

MUNICIPALITY: Portland 58, WARD: North.

ACCESS: The dirt road to the cemetery turns right off the Tasman Highway 300m east of the Weldborough Hotel (the last building of the township).

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 8 - Cemetery and memorial.

DIMENSIONS: The cemetery is approximately 75m x 75m.

LAND TENURE: Cemetery reserve.

ENVIRONMENT: The site has a northerly aspect and is situated amongst pastures near the top of a large hill overlooking the wooded valley of the Weld River. The township of Weldborough, lying less than half a kilometre to the west, is obscured from view by surrounding hills.

RELICS: The principle components of the site are the memorial (see site 5), the grave of Gee Kitt Tung and a group of graves belonging to the Chintock family, who were amongst the earliest Chinese settlers in the area and whose descendants still reside in Weldborough.

PRESERVATION: The memorial and grave of Kitt Tung are weathering quite badly but remain mostly intact. It is rumoured that Chinese gravestones have become collectors items and although it seems unlikely that the grave or memorial would be vandalised in such a way the possibility is disturbing.

SOURCES: Oral - F. Chinn, B. Butt, F. Grose (taped interviews).

RECORD: Photographs, written observation, oral history.

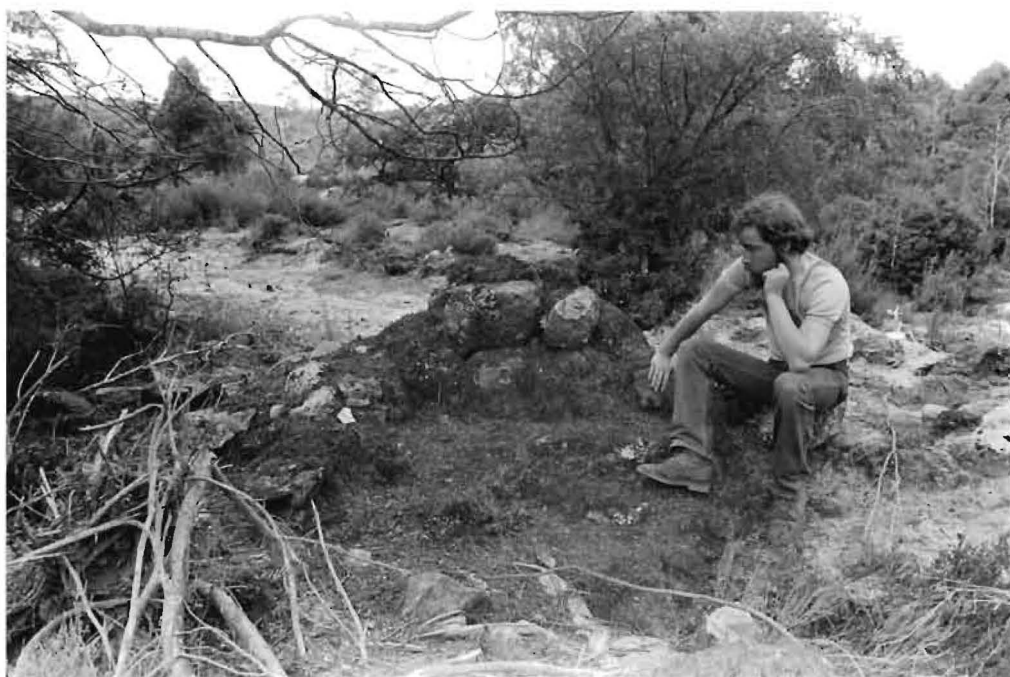


Plate 2: Remains of stone chimney or pig oven on Emu Flat with fragment of Chinese rice bowl on left shoulder. Front of structure destroyed by bulldozer.



Plate 3: Chinese memorial, Welborough Cemetery, viewed from the west showing entrance front of memorial stone and side of ceremonial oven used for burning papers.



Plate 4: Chinese memorial, Welborough Cemetery, viewed from the south showing side view of headstone and front of oven.

SITE 5: WELDBOROUGH CHINESE MEMORIAL

HISTORY: Erected as a place of worship of the Confucian religion by the Chinese community of Weldborough. The Tasmanian Chinese buried their dead in traditional manner leaving offerings of food and burning ceremonial papers on the grave. Each year a festival of the dead was held (Chung Yeung) to honour the departed Chinese. The role of the memorial in the burial and Chung Yeung rituals is not known but the oven is said to have been used for preparing food and burning papers, as the traditional ritual of burning papers on the graves was deemed to be a fire hazard by Tasmanian authorities.

SIGNIFICANCE: Only two monuments (and very few graves) to the departed Chinese survive in the North East. This site is highly significant as a rare structural artifact from the Chinese era.

SUB SITE: See sites 1, 2, and 4.

LOCATION: Ringarooma 5643, G.R. 756386.

MUNICIPALITY: Portland 58, WARD: North.

ACCESS: See site 4, located in the NW of the cemetery.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 8 - Religious, memorial.

DIMENSIONS: Total 2.6m x 2.6m, Headstone 59cm x 75cm x 5cm thick. Oven 90cm x 90cm x 120cm high. Block beneath headstone 1m x 1m high.

LAND TENURE: Cemetery reserve.

ENVIRONMENT: Located in NW quarter of cemetery well away from European graves. Gee Kitt Tung's grave is 8m behind the memorial, and surrounding area is empty. Memorial and grave face East-North-East 55°.

RELICS: Comprising an oven and memorial stone mounted on a concrete slab enclosed by a bent wire fence. The memorial headstone bears the following inscription in English "This stone has been erected by the Chinese as a place of worship of Confucius religion to the departed Chinese and those connected with the Chinese in the Weldborough Cemetery".

PRESERVATION: The iron fence is broken in places and bent and the gate is missing its latch. The cement floor is cracked and weeds are growing through. Cement render on the oven and memorial stand is flaking off and bricks beneath are crumbling. Several of the Chinese characters are cracked and partially missing.

SOURCES: Oral - F. Grose, B. Butt (taped interviews).

RECORD: Written observation, photographs.



Plate 5: Close-up of headstone on Chinese memorial in Weldborough Cemetery.

SITE 6: GARIBALDI

HISTORY: Valuation Rolls show that in 1888 there were 10 houses, 1 bootshop and 1 barber in Garibaldi. By 1891 there were 35 cottages, 1 hut and 5 shops, all on crown land, but by 1893 the population had declined to 22 cottages and 5 shops, two of which were privately owned (one by Maa Mon Chin of Weldborough, and one by Fanny Sing Why of Garibaldi).

SIGNIFICANCE: This site is of primary significance as it was one of the largest Chinese camps in the North East, with the constantly fluctuating numbers on the tin fields it may at times have rivalled Weldborough in population size but was less permanent. Despite extensive damage by fossickers there are many areas of the site which are well preserved. The site has as much potential for detailed archaeological study, or development as a historic site, as Weldborough.

SUB SITES:

LOCATION: Derby 5644, G.R. 798494.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Gladstone.

ACCESS: Car access on Garibaldi Road. From Gladstone Road/Tebrakunna Road to the Garibaldi Road turn off is 3.5km. Continue 1.8km to the site, marked by small layby and track.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 1 - Chinese camp. Domestic, commercial, industrial and religious site.

DIMENSIONS: Clearing approximately 100m x 125m total area including clearing approximately 1.8ha.

LAND TENURE: Crown land administered by the Department of Mines. In February 1984 the site was proposed for classification as a State Reserve.

ENVIRONMENT: The site comprises a large clearing on the north to northeast facing slope of a moderately steep hill. The clearing is very open with a thin layer of mosses and grasses over exposed quartz gravel. Occasional tea tree, Acacias, Casuarinas, and small Eucalypts are scattered mainly about the edges of the site. The eastern side of the site is a mined gully approximately 6-12m deep. The clearing is surrounded by frequently burnt, wet sclerophyll forest with the vegetation adjacent to the site dominated by thickets of Casuarina. Located on the former main route between Pioneer and Moorina and a track to the Blue Tier.

RELICS: No visible ruins or existing buildings. Three large cylindrical stone and earth ovens used for roasting whole pigs are the only remaining structures. Depressions are visible of a road, rows of buildings, the furrows of a garden and water courses. Shards of pottery, glass fragments, rusted water pipes and tools are scattered profusely around the site.

PRESERVATION: The site has been heavily fossicked for decades and recently a tractor and plough, and a bulldozer, have been used to unearth bottles. This activity is likely to continue and poses a serious threat to the preservation of the site.

SOURCES: Oral - B. Shean, D. Homan, C. Harper, C. Taylor.
Documentary - The Hobart Gazette (Valuation Rolls, Ringarooma), 1888 Vol 2, 1891 Vol 2, 1893 Vol 2, 1894 Vol 2. The Hobart Gazette, Vol 1, 1902, (Ringarooma Road Trust).

RECORD: Site plan, photographs, oral histories, old photos (two).



Plate 6: Garibaldi main street in 1983 viewed from approximately the same position as Plate 7.



Plate 7: The main street of Garibaldi c.1908 looking south-east. Photo supplied by Mr P.Burns, St Helens Local History Room.

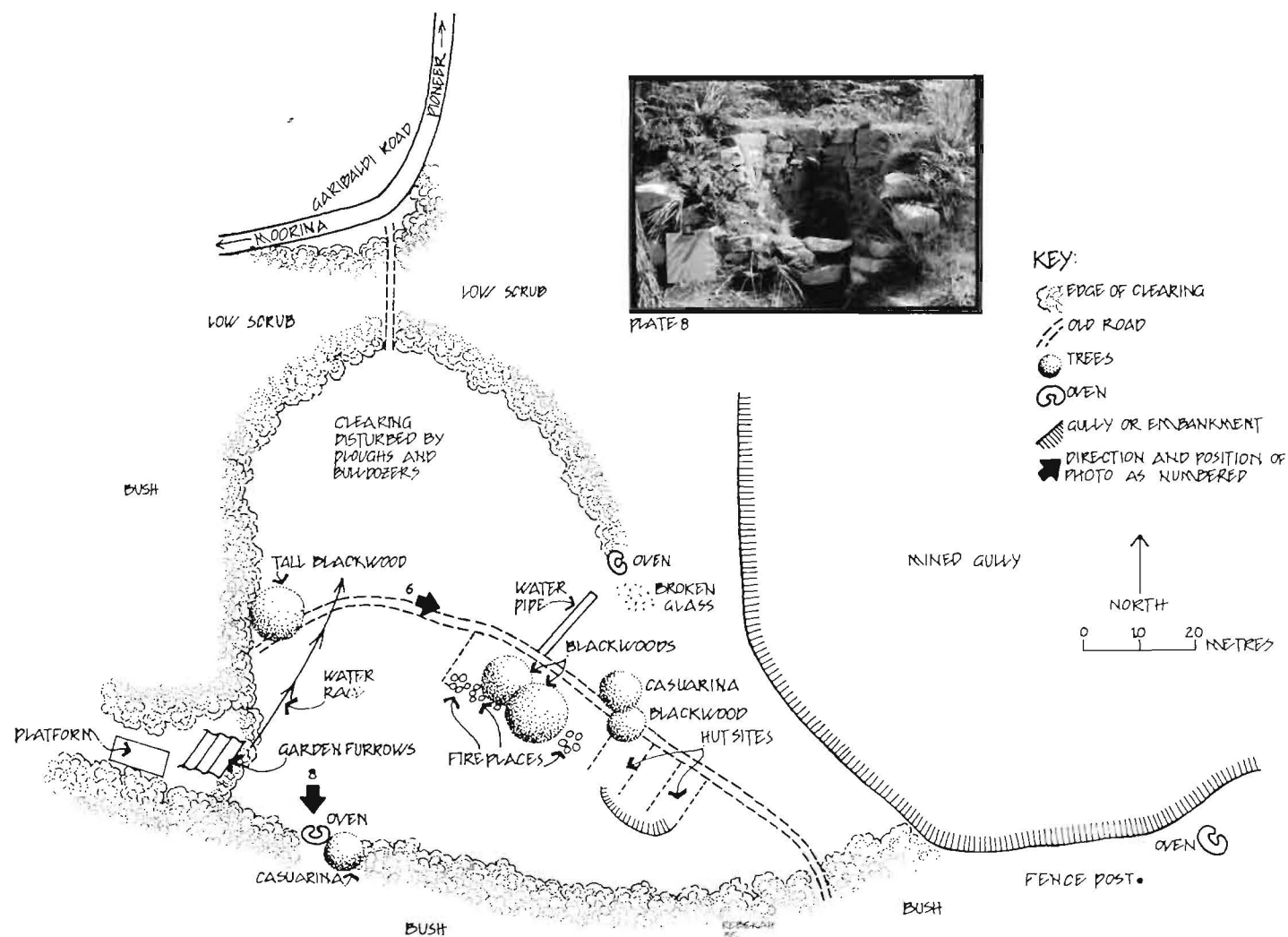


Figure 4: Planimetric sketch of Garibaldi with inset photo of upper oven. The site is strewn with broken glass and china and heavily scarred by bulldozer and tractor activity in the northern area of the clearing. (site 6)

Plate 8: Pig oven, garibaldi.

SITE 7: GARIBALDI JOSS HOUSE

HISTORY: Garibaldi was the second largest Chinese village in the North East, and with a constantly floating population following the tin, it may at times have been larger than Weldborough. The Chinese New Year celebration took place over a 2 week period with a week of celebrating at Weldborough followed by 2 days break and then 3-4 days of celebrations at Garibaldi. The date of erection of the building is not known but it was dismantled c.1926. The contents may have been taken to Weldborough and thence to the Launceston museum but some things, at least, were dispersed with the departing Chinese. It was believed to be a privately owned collection (D. Homan, personal communication).

SIGNIFICANCE: The Joss House was an important focus for the Chinese community. Apart from daily religious functions the Chinese New Year celebrations took place around the Joss House which served to guard the future prosperity of the miners against bad luck or evil spirits. Chinese and Europeans came from all over the North East to take part in the New Year celebrations. The site is relatively undisturbed.

SUB SITES: See site 5, Garibaldi.

LOCATION: Derby 5644, G.R. 798495.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Gladstone.

ACCESS: Car access on Garibaldi Road, 1.8km from Tebrakunna Road and 3.5km from Gladstone Road at Pioneer.

CLASIFICATION: Site type 2 - Joss House, religious site.

DIMENSIONS: Unknown. The main room was approximately 3.5m x 6m. A small room behind the main room was inhabited by the caretaker.

LAND TENURE: Crown land, administered by the Department of Mines.

ENVIRONMENT: Located at the entrance to the camp from the Moorina to Pioneer Road.

RELICS: No remains were located. One photo survives which is almost certainly Garibaldi Joss House but may be Weldborough. This shows a crude split paling hut with narrow verandah, and wooden floor (see plate 9).

PRESERVATION: The Joss House site appears to have escaped bulldozing by bottle collectors and closer study might determine its precise location.

SOURCES: Oral - B. Shean, D. Homan, C. Harper, B. Pitchford (taped interviews).
Documentary - two photographs obtained from P. Burns, the St. Helens Local History Room.

RECORD: Planimetric sketch, photographs, four oral histories.



Plate 9: Photo of Garibaldi Joss House c.1918? with three Chinese standing on the verandah. Photo supplied by Mr P. Burns, St Helens Local History Room.

SITE 8: AH GAR'S CAMP

HISTORY: This site was the home of a tin miner and gardener named Ah Gar. He is remembered as being an exceptionally tall man with a very long plait down his back. Although he lived within 1-2 hours walk of Garibaldi he did not mix with the other Chinese very much. In his later years he hawked vegetables from his garden which he carried in wicker baskets slung from a bamboo pole which rested on his shoulder (B. Pitchford, personal communication).

SIGNIFICANCE: It is surprising to find a pig oven associated with a single dwelling as these were usually used for ceremonial occasions. The site is relatively undisturbed and may be an interesting subject for further archaeological investigation.

SUB SITES:

LOCATION: Lanka 5845, G.R. 804504.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Gladstone.

ACCESS: From Tebrakunna Road, 0.5km along the Garibaldi road a rough vehicular track forks to the left leading to a large disused mine and through this mine on to the Wyniford River. The track is easily passable by car but could become difficult to follow particularly where it crosses the mine. The site is completely overgrown and can only be located by a deep water race which runs at right angles to the track and intersects the site approximately 7m from the small pig oven.

CLASSIFICATION: Site types 3 and 5 - Miner's dwelling and pig oven.

DIMENSIONS: Oven height 1.10m, width at base 3.4m.

LAND TENURE: Crown land, (Department of Mines).

ENVIRONMENT: Situated amongst mature eucalypt forest which becomes denser and more varied as it approaches the river and the site. Located 200m from the west bank of the Wyniford River and within 2km of Garibaldi by road or 1km as the crow flies. The surrounding area has been extensively mined particularly near the river and there is some indication that the site itself has been disturbed by construction of water races for mining since the period of Chinese occupation.

RELICS: The only visible evidence of Chinese occupation is a small stone and earth pig oven, the precise location of the hut and garden is not clear. Water races of varying ages crisscross throughout the area.

PRESERVATION: The oven is smaller than others seen at Garibaldi and Mt. Cameron and is very well preserved. Apart from some mining activities in the area which have cut a water race through the site and almost through the oven, the site seems to have been largely undisturbed since Chinese occupation. The main threat to preservation is weathering and disturbance of the oven by growth of vegetation on or in the structure.

SOURCES: Oral - B. Shean and D. Homan (taped interviews).

RECORD: Photographs and measurements of oven, oral histories.



Plate 10: Pig oven at Ah Gar's camp showing fuel hole, and exposed stone wall at the front (north facing). The oven is enclosed in a mound of stones and earth on all sides except the front. A water race divides foreground and oven.



Plate 11: Ah Gar's oven in close-up - dimensions: height 1.10m, width across base of mound 3.4m. Tape recorder for scale is approximately 15cm x 8cm.

SITE 9: THE ARGUS

HISTORY: The Argus was a successful mine on the Wyniford River and one of the last profitable mines in the area. The miners working this claim were the only known Chinese to make use of machinery. You Hen employed a steam engine to drive a gravel pump. One of the miners (Hee Sung) spoke good English and another (Hung Wee) was said to have been artistic (D. Homan, personal communication).

SIGNIFICANCE: A well preserved encampment with several aspects of the miners lives represented - a successful mine, blacksmith, pig oven, large garden, large communal hut, smaller huts. This site is unique in that the mine was mechanised and European labour, as well as Chinese, was employed in the later years.

SUB SITES:

LOCATION: Spurrs Rivulet 5844, G.R. 810499.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Gladstone.

ACCESS: On Three Notch Track (an all weather forestry road) 1km south of Tebrakunna Road. From Tebrakunna Road, the second vehicular track to the right off Three Notch Track passes 50m to the north of the site which is situated between Three Notch Track and the Wyniford River, at a distance of 113m west of Three Notch Track.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 4 - Domestic, industrial.

DIMENSIONS: Surveyed area of site is approximately 0.2ha. Garden 12.6m x 16m.

LAND TENURE: Crown land under the administration of the Department of Mines. Some current mineral leases adjacent to the site.

ENVIRONMENT: Located 1.1km east of Garibaldi as the crow flies, the site consists of an overgrown clearing amongst mature wet sclerophyll forest, demarked from its surroundings by a thick mossy ground cover which inhibits colonisation by the native grasses of the adjacent bush. Situated approximately 100m from the east bank of the Wyniford River. Regrowth Eucalyptus sp. and Acacia sp. are establishing within the clearing except for a large furrowed area on the northeast corner of the site which appears to have been a garden, this area is free from vegetation other than mosses and grasses.

RELICS: A large cylindrical stone and earth oven used for roasting pigs is the only remaining structure. This is located on the southwest edge of the clearing near some large boulders and amongst trees. Large quantities of broken pottery and glass and rusty tools are scattered over the whole site. Water courses, prospecting holes and the furrows of a garden are clearly distinguishable. A large pile of rocks on the northeast corner of the site appears to have been a chimney or possibly a blacksmiths forge as it is larger than most domestic chimney clusters encountered and there is no evidence of a hut.

PRESERVATION: The site has been heavily fossicked by bottle collectors but minimal damage has been done and most of the site is well preserved. The major threats are the use of bulldozers or tractors for unearthing bottles and the potential for disturbance by mining.

SOURCES: Oral - B. Shean, D. Homan, C. Taylor.

RECORD: Photographs, written observation, planimetric sketch, 2 oral histories.

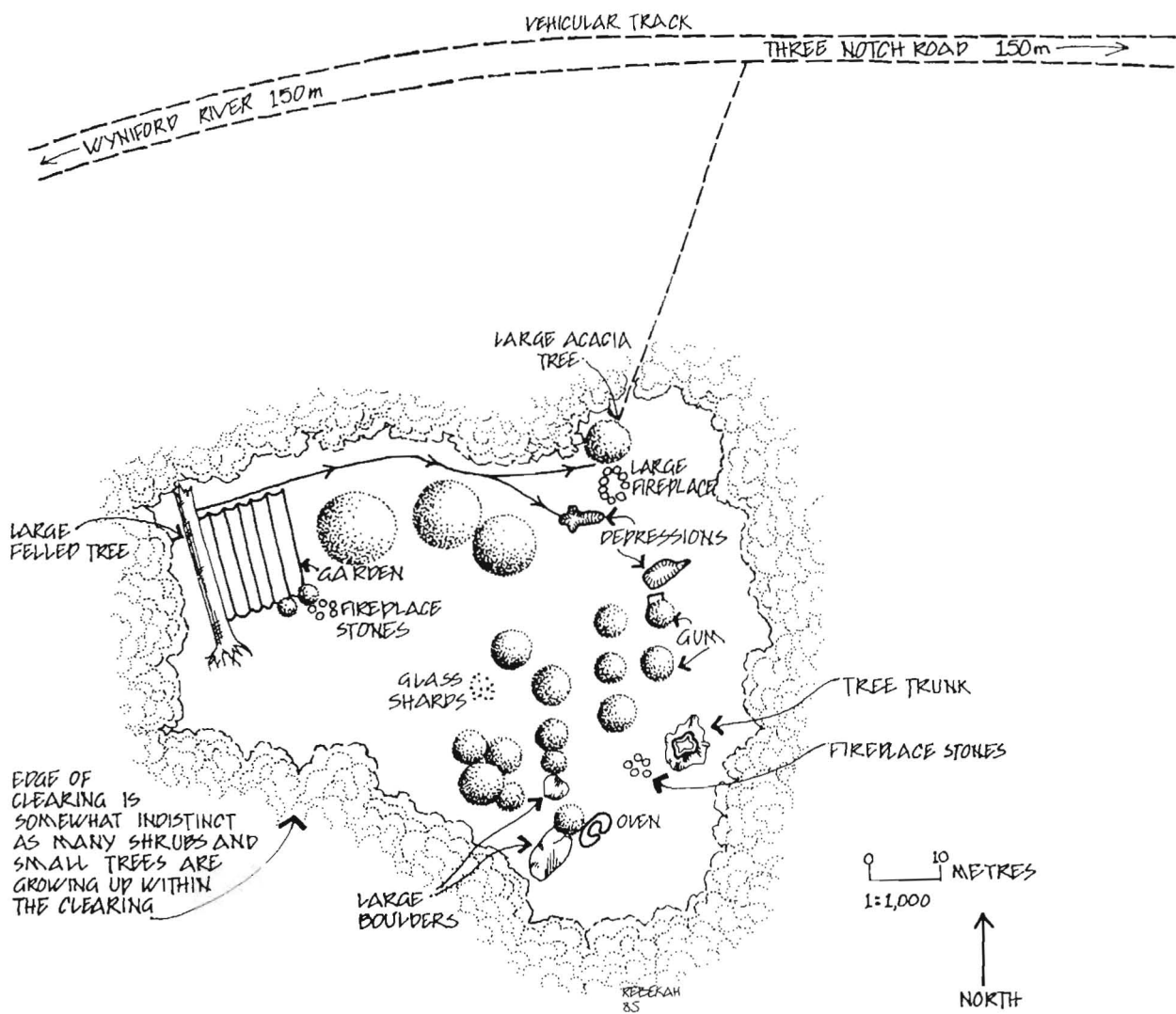


Figure 5: Planimetric sketch of the Argus camp, December 1983.
(site 9)

SITE 10: THREE NOTCH ROAD

HISTORY: The Wyniford River and its tributaries was a rich alluvial tin mining area. In c.1880-1912 many Chinese held leases in the vicinity of this site but by c.1912 almost all mining had stopped except for Hen Kee on Southern Cross Creek, You Hen on the Wyniford River and Peter Shean at the Argus and Garibaldi. The lessees of this site may have been Ah Tan (lease no 588.87, 1886-1892), Yee Gee and Sam How (lease no. 3999/93m) or H. Wood (lease no. 1251m, 1902-1912).

SIGNIFICANCE: This site has been destroyed by forestry and very little remains. A Chinese pig oven is said to have been located on the site which suggests that this may have been a central gathering place for neighbouring Chinese.

SUB SITE:

LOCATION: Spurs Rivulet 5844, G.R. 803464.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Gladstone.

ACCESS: On Three Notch Road, 4.75km from Tebrakuna Road the Wyniford makes a right angle turn to the east and crosses beneath Three Notch Road approximately 60m before a small wooden bridge which spans a tributary of the Wyniford. The site is located 35m to the east of Three Notch Road and 35m north of the Wyniford River in thick forest. Access is via log-landing on the eastern side of Three Notch Road.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 5 or 4 - Probably a single miner's dwelling.

DIMENSIONS: Not discernable. Scatters of pottery and glass localised within an area of 3m x 4m.

LAND TENURE: State forest.

ENVIRONMENT: Located in dense mixed forest on a prominent "L" shaped bend in the Wyniford River, 300m east of the river and 25m north of the bend. An active mine, The Wildcat mine, operates on the Wyniford extending to within 30-40m southwest of the site. The site is situated on the south-southeast slope of a steep hill in a heavily disturbed forest which has been recently logged. A log landing adjacent to the site on Three Notch Road contributes to the disturbance. A matrix of fallen trees obscures the site.

RELICS: Some pottery and glass fragments visible. A Chinese stone oven was located in the Wyniford River gully just 25m south of the site but no sign of this remains.

PRESERVATION: Completely destroyed in recent years by forestry.

SOURCES: Oral - A. Denis (guide).

Documentary - (Mineral Chart) Moorina 169-d, 1912; Plan of Mineral Sections County of Dorset 169-a, 1886; and 169-b, 1892; Mines Department, Hobart.

RECORD: Written observation, photographs.



Plate 12: Three Notch Road site. This is one of many sites which have been destroyed by recent forestry operations.

SITE 11: AH MOY'S STORE, RUBY FLAT

HISTORY: Prior to 1889, when the northeast railway was extended to Scottsdale, goods came by boat to Bridport from Launceston merchants (principally Chin Ah Kaw) and were transported by bullock team to Branxholm. Ah Moy travelled to Garibaldi and Weldborough with a team of horses to supply these communities with groceries and to buy pigs. He was highly successful and became something of a benefactor in the Chinese community.

SIGNIFICANCE: Established in 1882 the store and dwelling were located on one of the main Chinese mining areas in the North East until approximately 1910 when the family moved to Branxholm. Unfortunately, continued mining in the area has stripped the ground on which the store was located, to a depth of several feet destroying all trace of the structure although some shards of pottery and glass remain.

SUB SITE: See site 12.

LOCATION: Ringarooma 5643, G.R. 629393.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Alberton.

ACCESS: From Branxholm 3.5km along the Ruby Flat road a signposted trail bike track leads into the bush west of Ruby Flat road. The store is located approximately 250m along this track and 33m south.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 10 - Store and dwelling.

DIMENSIONS: The dimensions of the site are ill-defined as no wall or floor depressions were located.

LAND TENURE: Crown land, State Forest.

ENVIRONMENT: A large flat low lying area of several square kilometres, between the Ringarooma River on the west and the Branxholm Creek on the east, which was once the scene of extensive alluvial tin mining. The store is located in a central position on the Flat and close to the Ruby Flat Road. The area is now overgrown with regrowth mixed forest, predominantly Acacias, Eucalypts, bracken, coral fern and cutting grass.

RELICS: Very little remains to indicate the former presence of the store other than broken pottery and glass.

PRESERVATION: The Chinese were amongst the first miners on Ruby Flat and the area has been re-worked several times since to successively deeper levels destroying most signs of early Chinese occupation. The alluvial mining process strips the surface layer of earth (wash dirt) down to the bed rock or "bottom" (sometimes several metres deep).

SOURCES: Oral - B. Moy, T. Kincade, C. Walsh, E. Holmes.
Documentary - Naturalisation records, 1883, S.C. 415-2 State Archives, Hobart.
Lands Department Survey book J10, 1910, p7, Lands Department, Hobart.

RECORD: Written observation, 4 oral history recordings.

SITE 12: W. AH MOY'S HOME AND SHOP, BRANXHOLM

HISTORY: William Ah Hong Moy was born in Canton on 5 April 1846 and arrived in Launceston on the Mangana on 14 October 1879. He was naturalised at the age of 36 on the 18 January 1883, giving his occupation as storekeeper at Ruby Flat and signing his name with an X. He was one of only three Chinese men in the North East to bring a wife from China and in c.1910 the family moved from Ruby Flat into this house on the outskirts of Branxholm. A bootshop and store were run from the new premises and the men continued to work as miners. The family prospered and became respected members of the Branxholm community as well as benefactors to the Chinese community in the surrounding area.

SIGNIFICANCE: This is one of three Chinese homes to survive to 1984 as such is a rarity. Unfortunately the house has been severely damaged by a fallen tree, crushing the roof and part of the front wall.

SUB SITES: See site 11 (Ah Moy's Store) and site 16 (Branxholm Cemetery).

LOCATION: Derby 5644; Donald Street, Branxholm.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Derby.

ACCESS: Donald Street runs off the Tasman Highway near the Branxholm school

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 9 and 10 - Family dwelling, bootshop and garden.

DIMENSIONS: The block is approximately 35m x 15m and the original dwelling was 8.5m x 4m. The shoe shop added later, is 2m x 3m.

LAND TENURE: Privately owned by Mrs I. Jones of Legerwood.

ENVIRONMENT: The house is the last on Donald Street on the southern edge of the town. Donald Street becomes Ruby Flat Road on leaving the town leading to the main Chinese mining area in the locality. The Branxholm Joss House is located less than 1km from the house. Mining has taken place to the edges of the built up area of the town and a small creek 100m behind the house was mined by Chinese.

RELICS: The house is weatherboard with an iron roof. Although occupied by the previous owner, Mrs. H. Kincade, until approximately 1973, the house is now disintegrating, the roof having been seriously damaged by a falling tree during a severe storm. The garden behind the house contains several fruit trees, some of which were planted by the Ah Moy family. Many fragments of glass and pottery and tools can be found near the house.

PRESERVATION: The building is in very bad repair and is in danger of total collapse. Plans for the property are not known but demolition is likely.

SOURCES: Oral - B. Moy, T. Kincade, E. Holmes.

Documentary - Lands Department Survey Book J10, 1910, p7. Naturalisation records, 1883, S.C. 415-2; Hobart.

RECORD: Photographs, written observation, 3 oral histories.



Plate 13: Ah Moy's house and shop from Ruby Flat Road. Front view with shoe shop on the right in amongst bushes.



Plate 14: Close-up of shoemakers shop on southern wall of Ah Moy's house.



Plate 15: Back view of Ah Moy's house with shoe shop in left of frame.

SITE 13: AH DOO'S HUT

HISTORY: Ah Doo mined alluvial tin in the Branhholm Creek and lived alone in a one room wooden hut beside his mine. Built of split palings with a 7ft shingle roof (supported by split spars) and a gravel floor, the hut was typical of the miners dwellings of the time. A wooden chimney built up with stones at the base was used for cooking and heating. Entered by a door located near the fireplace on the adjoining wall and with one small window for additional light, the hut was dark and sparsely furnished with improvised, handmade furniture. The bed had 4 corner posts (8-10cm diameter) with hessian sacks slung from cross bars about 1m above the ground to form the base for the straw mattress. The only lining on the walls was around the bed (T. Kincade, personal communication).

SIGNIFICANCE: The site is typical of the lifestyle of the lone miner, and represents the main mode of habitation of Chinese miners at this time. Good oral information has provided a precise description of the hut and its inhabitant which could make this site a useful base in an archaeological investigation as very little information exists for other similar sites to indicate number of inhabitants, period of occupation and other details which may be illuminated by a comparative study. The site has been fossicked and superficially disturbed by forestry but is relatively well preserved.

SUB SITE:

LOCATION: Derby 5644, G.R. 624419.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Derby.

ACCESS: From Donald St, Branhholm directly behind Ah Moy's house.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 5 - Miner's dwelling.

DIMENSIONS: Hut dimensions established from depressions in the earth, approximately 3.6m by 4.4m.

LAND TENURE: Crown land.

ENVIRONMENT: Situated in disturbed eucalypt forest between Ah Moy's house and the west bank of Branhholm Creek. The ground around the site has been heavily disturbed by clearing and bulldozing but the hut site is still relatively intact.

RELICS: The chimney stones of the hut and depressions of the walls are still clearly visible. A very large earthenware pot, approximately 0.75m high and 0.35m diameter at the widest point, was found at the site by Mr T. Kincade.. These jars are said to have been used for transporting the bones of the dead back to China. The skeleton was placed in the jar in the foetal position. Interestingly, the same jars are described in Chinese literature as fulfilling this purpose when ancestral burial grounds were distrubed or clans had to flee to new areas. Broken pottery, earthenware and glass is scattered about the site.

PRESERVATION: Fossickers have collected most unbroken, earthenware jar and glass bottles, and clearing operations have destroyed the environs but the site is only superficially disturbed. Being close to the township of Branhholm and easily accessible the site is likely to be subject to continued disturbance by bottle collectors.

SOURCES: Oral - T. Kincade, C. Walsh, E. Holmes.
Documentary - Han Suyin, "The Crippled Tree".

RECORD: Written observation, 3 oral history recordings.

SITE 14: BRANXHOLM JOSS HOUSE

HISTORY: Erected in 1906, the building, which was weatherboard with corrugated iron roof, wooden floor and lined with lap jointed baltic pine, was dismantled in 1928-1929 by Mr G. Watt and incorporated into his house at Branhholm (Kincade, T., personal communication). Prior to the building of the Joss House ceremonies were held in a house in the vicinity. A group of Chinese, led by Ah Moy, pooled resources and built the Joss House in a few days. Mostly local materials were used but some were ordered from Scottsdale. The location was chosen because it was close to a number of nearby mining huts and was on route from Branhholm to Ruby Flat (B. Moy, personal communication).

SIGNIFICANCE: This site is of primary significance as a religious and cultural focus for the surrounding Chinese community. It is one of four identified Joss houses in the north east and appears to have been relatively long lived.

SUB SITE: See also site 14.

LOCATION: Derby 5644, G.R. 629412.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Derby.

ACCESS: From Branhholm, 1km along Ruby Flat Road at the Branhholm tip a dirt road to the left leads to the Joss House. At the Branhholm Creek crossing a locked farm gate blocks the road. Proceeding on foot from this point the road forks at a large log landing and the left fork continues up a steep hill and the Joss House is situated near the top of this on the south southwest facing slope.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 2 - Religious site.

DIMENSIONS: The dimensions of the building could not be determined from the site but it is said to have been approximately 3m by 4m.

LAND TENURE: Private property owned by C. & D. Beswick, currently used for logging but may be cleared for stock.

ENVIRONMENT: Located on the route of an old road between the Arba mine at Branhholm (where many Chinese miners worked) and Ruby Flat. The site is situated on top of a steep hill and has a south to southeast aspect. It presents as an island of regrowth mixed forest surrounded by a largely clear-felled area. Vegetation cover is predominantly Acacias, Eucalypts, bracken fern, cutting grass and moss.

RELICS: There is nothing to suggest the existence of the former building other than scatters of pottery, earthenware and glass fragments.

PRESERVATION: According to local sources timber from the Joss House may have been mainly used in the construction of Mr George Watt's garage (Bygone Branx). The site has narrowly missed recent forestry developments by the present owner and may be subject to clearing or development at any stage. Fossickers have removed most relics from the site.

SOURCES: Oral - B. Moy, T. Kincade, C. Walsh, E. Holmes.

RECORD: Written observation, black and white photographs, 4 taped oral history interviews.

SITE 15: AH YEW'S CAMP, BRANXHOLM

HISTORY: Ah Yew was a tin miner and in his later years became the caretaker of the Joss House until he died in 1926.

SIGNIFICANCE: The single dwelling offers an opportunity to study the predominant lifestyle of most Chinese and this dwelling is unusual as it was located to provide a caretaker for the Joss House (Kincade, T.). The occupant was also engaged in mining and it is likely that his dual role will be reflected in some lifestyle differences.

SUB SITE: See also site 14.

LOCATION: Derby 5644, G.R. 629412.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Derby.

ACCESS: As for site no. 10, Branxholm Joss House. The dwelling is located approximately 24m south of the Joss House.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 5 - Dwelling site.

DIMENSIONS: The area of pottery and glass fragments is approximately 9m by 9m.

LAND TENURE: Private property owned by C. and D. Beswick, currently used for logging but may be cleared for stock in the near future.

ENVIRONMENT: Located within 25m of the Branxholm Joss House. The site is located on top of a large hill and presents as a small (approximately 9m by 9m) flat, partial clearing on the edge of a steep slope to the south and southeast.

RELICS: Considerable quantities of earthenware, china and glass shards, lie on the surface of the site and a pile of large stones may be a chimney butt from the hut. No depressions of the hut walls were discernable.

PRESERVATION: The site is more intact than the Joss House despite fossicking, and disturbance due to forestry and land clearance. Future development of the site, or fossicking, could cause further deterioration.

SOURCES: Oral - T. Kincade, C. Walsh, E. Holmes.

RECORD: Photographs, planimetric sketch, written observation, and 3 oral history interviews.

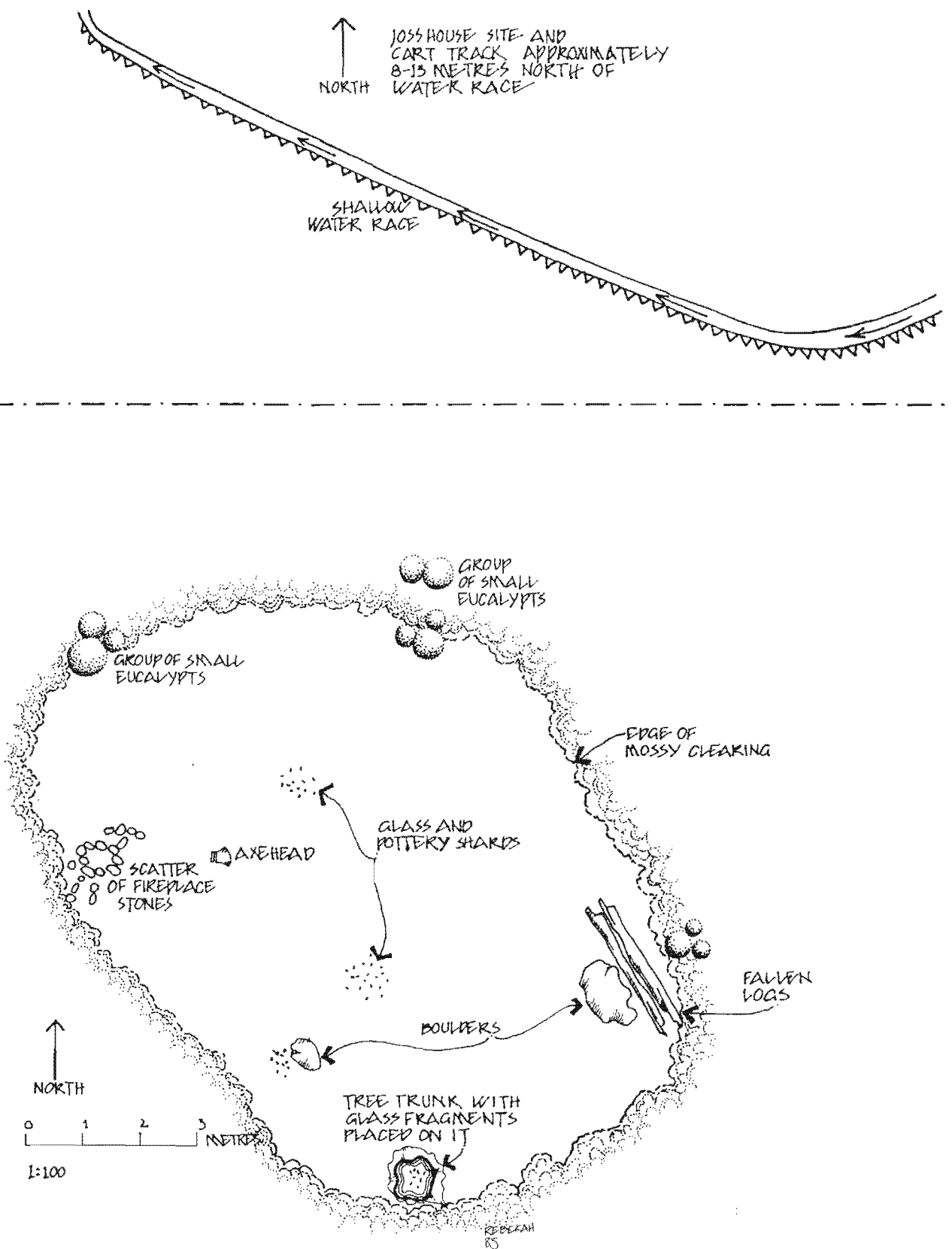


Figure 6 : Planimetric map of Ah Yew's camp near the Branhholm Joss House.
(site 12) grid reference 629 412

SITE 16: BRANXHOLM CEMETERY

HISTORY: Most of the Chinese in the Branhholm area worked on the Ormuz mine and at Ruby Flat. Branhholm remained a European mining town and apart from the Ah Moy family the Chinese, with a few notable exceptions, kept to themselves coming into the town only for supplies. During the peak alluvial tin mining period (c.1880-1890) there were approximately 100-200 Chinese in the area but numbers gradually diminished as areas were worked out and as tin prices fell, and the price slump during WWI was the final blow to most small scale tin mining.

SIGNIFICANCE: The cemetery contains the graves of Mr W. Ah Moy and his daughter Mrs. E. Eager, one of only three, pure Chinese families in the northeast. Unlike most other Chinese graves in the northeast these are oriented in the same direction as the surrounding European graves and occupy a central position in the cemetery.

SUB SITE: See site 10, Ah Moy's store.

LOCATION: Derby 5644, G.R. 634424.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Derby.

ACCESS: On the Tasman Highway 1km east of Branhholm.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 8 - Cemetery.

DIMENSIONS: 150m x 125m.

LAND TENURE: Cemetery reserve.

ENVIRONMENT: Located 1km east of Branhholm township near the Arba and the Ormuz mines on a gentle east facing slope. The two graves are side by side in a central position in the cemetery and are surrounded by unmarked graves. Some of these unmarked graves are concave hollows rather than the usual mound. It is possible that they may be Chinese graves and the bones may have been exhumed and sent back to China, as was apparently the custom for most Chinese who had the facility to make such provisions. This custom may also explain the large number of unmarked graves, as the eventual aim was to return the body to the ancestral burial grounds in China.

RELICS: The grave of Mr W. Ah Moy bearing the inscription "In Loving Memory of AH MOY Died 5th August 1908" (in English) and three columns of Chinese characters. The grave of his daughter Mrs Emily Eager, bearing the inscription "In loving memory of Emilley Eager who died 1940 age 50" (in English) inscription by J. Dunn.

PRESERVATION: The graves are very well preserved but the headstone of Mr Ah Moy's grave is tilting forward slightly.

SOURCES: Oral - Mr B. Moy (son of W. Ah Moy), taped interview.

RECORD: Written observation, photographs, oral history tape.



Plate 16: Ah Moy's headstone in the Branhholm Cemetery.



Plate 17: Emily Eager's headstone in the Branhholm Cemetery.



Plate 18: Ah Moy's and Emily Eager's graves in the Branhholm Cemetery showing unmarked graves behind.

SITE 17: TIN POT CREEK, CASCADES

HISTORY: This site is located in the region known as the Cascades which was once a major Chinese tin mining centre with small alluvial mines scattered from Bells Hill to Weldborough and Branhholm. In the period c.1885-1891 12 out of 20 mineral leases on Tin Pot Creek and its tributaries were held by Chinese. This site (lease no. 143A) was leased by Robert Gardner and a neighbouring site (1429M) by Ah Hete between 1885-1891. The lease was probably worked by Chinese miners on tribute or may have been worked by the Chinese at a later date.

SIGNIFICANCE: Tin Pot Creek is probably representative of most of the mining sites in the area but it has been heavily disturbed by forestry in recent years. According to local sources three hut sites were found on the site prior to clearing in 1978, but only two hut sites were located by this survey in November 1983.

LOCATION: Ringarooma 5643, G.R. 690377.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Alberton.

ACCESS: A forestry road connecting Mt Paris Dam Road to Carnac Road runs within 30m of the southern boundary of the site which is located 40m before the third crossing of Tin Pot Creek.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 4 - Mining site with cluster of three (or more) dwellings.

DIMENSIONS: The clearing is approximately 50m x 60m.

LAND TENURE: State Forest.

ENVIRONMENT: Located on a north to northeast facing slope near the top of a hill, the site presents as a clearing surrounded by regrowth wet sclerophyll forest approximately 2m - 4m high. The clearing is covered by a thick growth of foxgloves (*Digitalis*). Bracken fern, mosses and grasses are the only other common vegetation types. The entire area of the clearing has been dug up, perhaps originally by the miners, but recently a bulldozer has turned some ground in search of bottles. The site is bounded by Tin Pot Creek on the east and a forestry road on the south. It is not known whether this road was in existence during the period when this site was occupied.

RELICS: Very few bottles were found but fragments of Chinese ceramics, mainly glazed, earthenware, rice wine jars and china bowls were thinly dispersed about the site. Three hearths were found at the site prior to logging in 1978 and subsequent burning in 1980 only two of these were located by this survey in 1983. One chimney and hut was clearly defined and an adjacent area appears to have been a very small garden.

PRESERVATION: The site has been heavily disturbed and most of it is completely destroyed. All forestry has finished in the area so no further disturbance is anticipated.

SOURCES: Oral - R. Smith (guide).

Documentary - Plan of Mineral Sections County of Dorset, Sheet No 1, 149-b, 1885; Office of Mines, Hobart.

RECORD: Written observation, photographs, planimetric sketch.

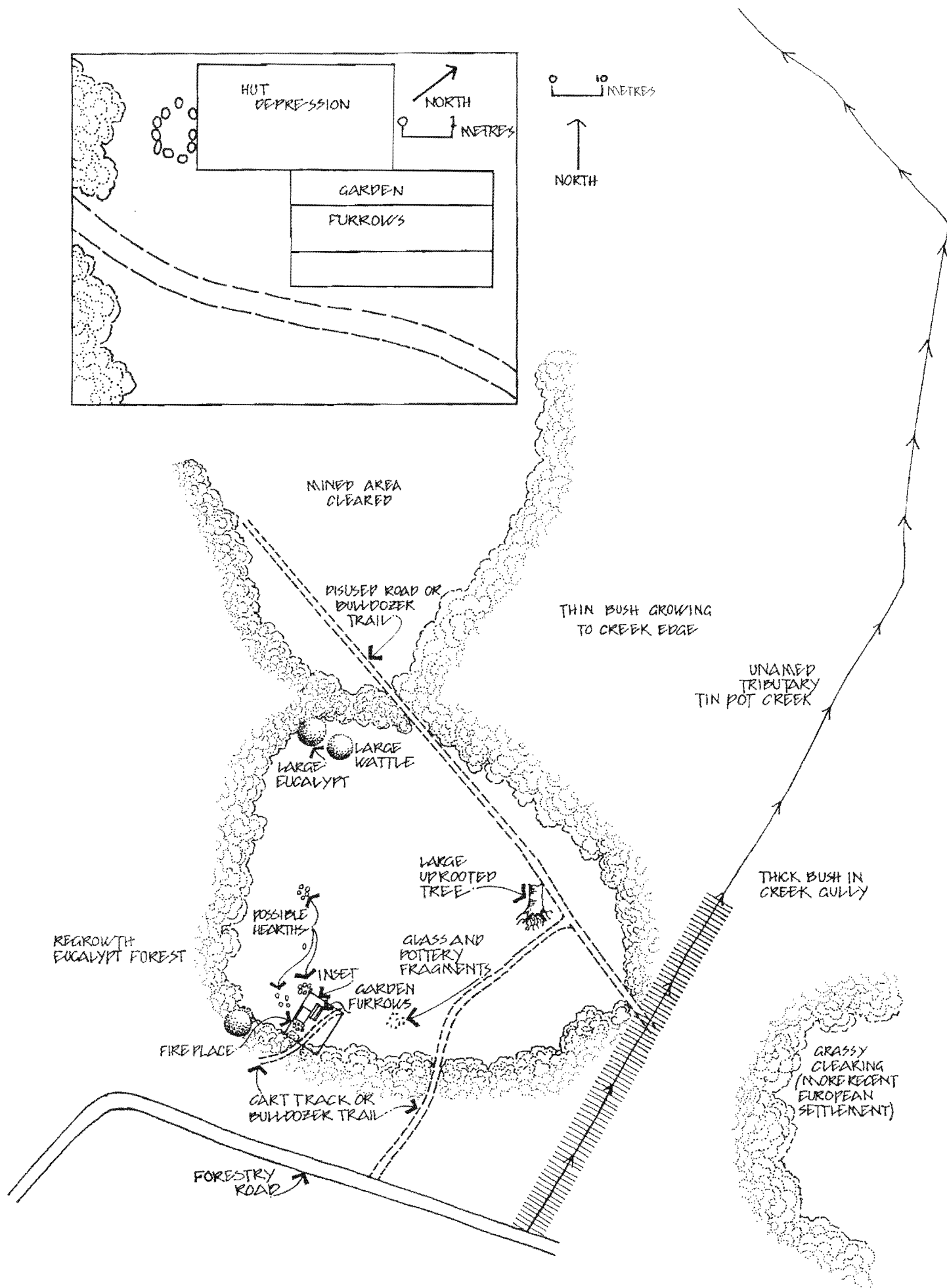


Figure 7: Planimetric sketch of Tin Pot Creek, the Cascades.

SITE 18: GOLD CREEK/CASCADES

HISTORY: Gold Creek is not named but is drawn on an 1885 Mineral Chart which shows that the area was leased exclusively by Chinese. There are 3 leases held on the creek, the lessees being Hee Sing (Lease No. 2018/87M), Ah Sing (Lease No.274/87M), and Wah Lee (1273M).

SIGNIFICANCE: Despite considerable disturbance, this site is a classic example of the miner's dwelling and demonstrates very well the relationship between the dwelling and the mine. In this case two hut sites are located side by side on a small island created by mining on all sides which has dug away the ground to about 3m depth within 2m of the huts. In many cases hut sites could have been mined away completely if a rich tin face was found to extend under the hut.

SUB SITE: Neighbouring hut site totally destroyed - no record made.

LOCATION: Ringarooma 5643, G.R. 685396.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Alberton.

ACCESS: A forestry road leads to within 100m of the site stopping at a log landing.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 5 and 6 - Miner's dwelling site and mine workings.

DIMENSIONS: The island upon which the hut sites are located is 10m x 20m.

LAND TENURE: State Forest.

ENVIRONMENT: The site is situated 20m south of Gold Creek and is surrounded on the east, west and south by mine workings which extend to the Creek. The mined strip along the Creek is vegetated with Myrtles, Acacias and tall manferns but the surrounding area is a devastated woodchipped hillside which was hot fired in 1982 prior to regeneration with selected, aerially sown Eucalypt species. The ground cover consists of sparse growths of lichen, reeds, bracken, manferns and young Eucalypts growing on churned up soil between the debris of the fire. A bulldozed fire trail passes through the site destroying the location of one of the huts.

RELICS: Fragments of Chinese pottery are abundantly distributed in concentrations mainly on the southern side of the site. Several undamaged, glazed, earthenware, rice wine bottles (also known as Tiger Whisky bottles) and an opium pipe were retrieved from this site by collectors as well as a copper tin with brass soldered edges, 7cm high x 5cm wide x 2cm deep. Two piles of chimney stones remain as evidence of the location of dwellings.

PRESERVATION: Surface fossicking has occurred and the site has been heavily disturbed in areas by recent clearfelling operations, but one hut location appears only superficially damaged.

SOURCES: Oral - R. Smith (guide).

Documentary - Plan of Mineral Sections County of Dorset, Sheet No. 1, 149-b, 1885-1891; Department of Mines, Hobart.

RECORD: Written observation, photographs, planimetric sketch.



PLATE 19

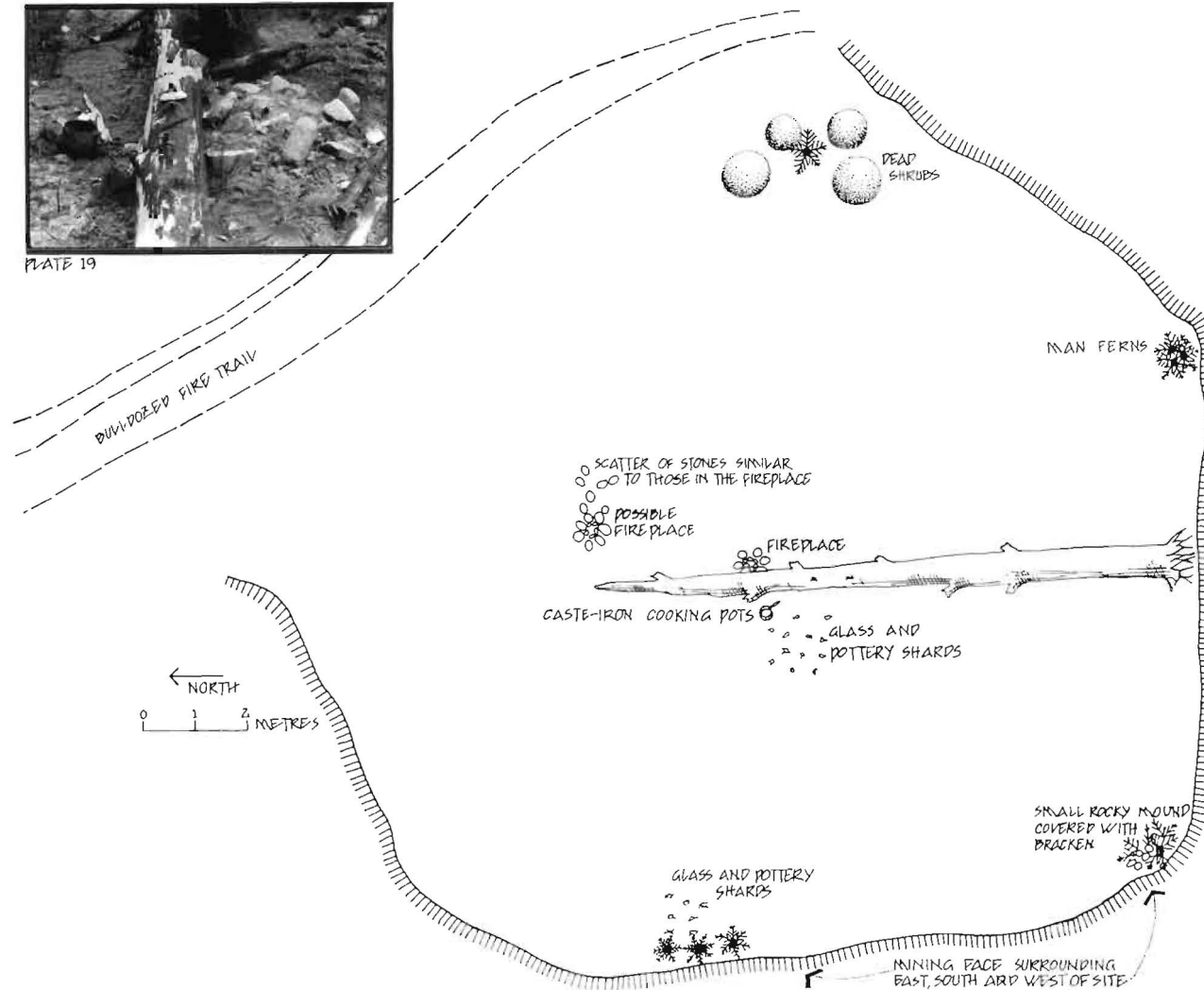


Figure 8: Planimetric sketch of Gold Creek site showing the surrounding mine workings. Inset photo shows the condition of the site. (site 18)

Plate 19: Fireplace, pottery, pots and glass in the middle of a clear felled area at Gold Creek, Cascades.

SITE 19: OLD CASCADE ROAD, CASCADES

HISTORY: Situated on a water course on which 10 out of 13 mineral leases were held by Chinese in 1885. This site was leased by Gun Hang c.1885 (lease no. 1063M).

SIGNIFICANCE: This site is very similar to site 20 in appearance resembling a large well kept lawn in a bush clearing. It seems relatively undisturbed and is an example of a third type of dwelling site, which is not clearly classifiable, i.e. a large grassy environ as opposed to the tiny bush hut or small settlement. This suggests a greater permanency and higher standard of living which allowed the development of a grassed area around the dwelling, probably for horses or other stock. Very few relics remain to explain the size of the site (approximately the same as the Garibaldi clearing) but chimney stones and the depressions of the walls and floor of a hut are clearly visible, as is the patch of an old cart track and the furrows of a vegetable garden.

SUB SITE:

LOCATION: Ringarooma 5643, G.R. 699387.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Derby.

ACCESS: Easy access on Old Cascade Road.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type uncertain, possibly 4 or 5 - Dwelling and garden.

DIMENSIONS: Clearing approximately 175m x 75m or 1.3ha.

LAND TENURE: State Forest.

ENVIRONMENT: A low lying flat site at the junction of East Creek, Cascade River and an unnamed tributary of the Cascade. Bounded by the Old Cascade Road on the south, the Cascade River on the north and an unnamed tributary or large water race on the west. Covered by a short lawn with occasional clumps of tea tree and some loan Acacias and Eucalyptus situated mainly nearly the edges of the site. Foxgloves grown in patches near the edges of the clearing.

RELICS: The depression of a hut with a pile of chimney stones located at one end is situated in the north east corner of the site near the access from Old Cascade Road. An old cart track crosses the centre of the clearing from north to south and near the centre of the site is a slightly terraced furrowed area which appears to have been a garden and may have been the site of a second dwelling. Very few bottles or ceramic jars have been found on this site by collectors but fragments of Chinese earthenware, rice wine and soy sauce jars and green china bowls can be found in the vicinity of the hut and garden sites.

PRESERVATION: Most of the site appears almost totally undisturbed apart from surface fossicking. However, the entrance to the site from Old Cascade Road has recently been used as a log landing, destroying the southern portion of the site adjacent to the road. Road frontages are often chosen for hut sites, so it is quite possible that the disturbed area, although only a small proportion of the total site, may have been the location of one or more dwellings.

SOURCES: Oral - R. Smith (guide).

Documentary - Plan of Mineral Sections County of Dorset, Sheet No. 1, 149-b, 1885-1891.

RECORD: Written observation, photographs.

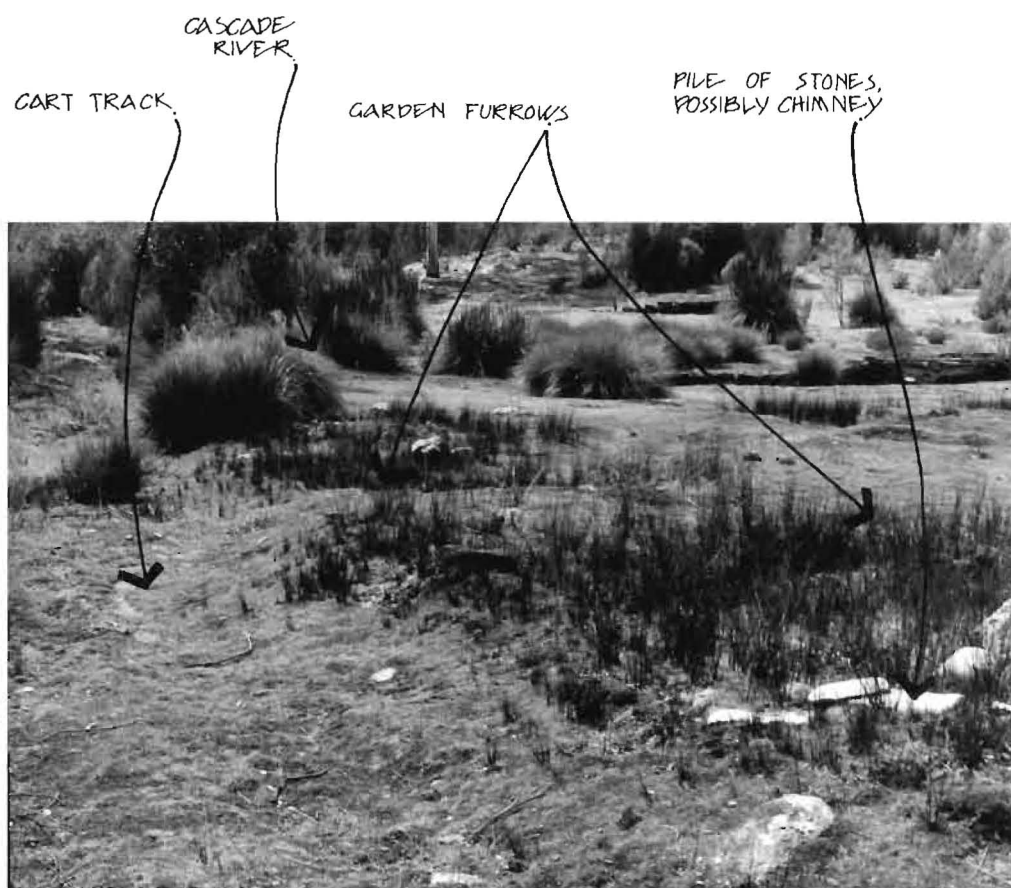


Plate 20: Photo taken from cart track at the centre of the site facing N.N.E., with track, garden furrows and possible chimney stones.

SITE 20: GRASS PADDOCKS, THE CASCADES

HISTORY: In the 1880s the area known as "The Cascades" was dominated by Chinese miners and in 1885 Britannia Creek (which flows into the Cascade River opposite this site) was leased entirely by Chinese. The site is shown on mineral maps in the late 1880s as being leased by Mr Robert Gardner and later Mr J. Murdoch (149-b, 1885-1891; and 210-a, 1889-1902). It is highly likely that the Chinese worked the leases on tribute as the former, Mr Robert Gardner, also held the lease on another Chinese site in the area (site 17). The precise occupancy of the site is unknown and some conflict exists between local sources. Some regard this site and not site 21 as the site of Ah Choon's store. I have based the classification of site 21 on 3 oral reports.

SIGNIFICANCE: The site seems relatively undisturbed and is an example of a third "type" of dwelling site (which has not been classifiable on current information) the open grassy paddock, as opposed to the tiny bush hut or the settlement. This environment may have been created by miners cultivating grass for horses or other stock (once established grass inhibits revegetation by native plant species) which suggests greater permanency and a higher living standard than the majority of Chinese miners enjoyed. The main area of this site appears totally undisturbed with only small pits dug by fossickers to retrieve bottles. As little is known of the exact nature of the site and it is fairly extensive further investigation may be productive.

SUB SITE:

LOCATION: Ringarooma 5643, G.R. 711379.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Alberton.

ACCESS: Road access but can be difficult to locate. Turn left off Mt Paris Dam Road on to Carnac Road 1km east of the Mt Paris Dam. Carnac road crosses the East Cascade River and follows it for 2km to a sharp hairpin turn off to the right which almost immediately crosses an unnamed creek. The site is located 1km along this road.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type uncertain, possibly 4, 5 or 10 - Dwelling and/or a store.

DIMENSIONS: Cleared area of approximately 50m x 30m.

LAND TENURE: State Forest.

ENVIRONMENT: Situated at the northern edge of a pine location near the junction of an unnamed creek and the Cascade River and opposite the confluence of the Britannia Creek and the Cascade River. The site is a large, low lying, grassy flat, surrounded on the west and south west by an expanse of swampy ground extending to the Cascade River. The swamp may have been created by mining. To the north and east the site is surrounded by steep hills which are covered with pine plantations. In the late 1800's and early 1900's these hills and the tributaries of the Cascade River were peppered with small alluvial tin mines. The roadside bordering the eastern edge of the site is lined with approximately 6 rows of pines which cease at the open grassed area of the site.

RELICS: Two piles of heaped stones indicate chimney butts and, in addition to the usual scatters of glass earthenware and china fragments, a set of rusty scales and several shovel heads were found. A large flat terraced area on the western edge of the site is supported by wooden, sleeper like, edges. A large number of Chinese bottles and earthenware jars were retrieved from this site by Mr T. Kincade.

SOURCES: Oral (taped interviews) - T. Kincade.

Documentary - Plan of Mineral Sections County of Dorset, 210-a, 1889.
Plan of Mineral Sections County of Dorset, Sheet No 1, 149-b, 1885, Department of Mines, Hobart.

RECORD: Planimetric sketch, photographs, written observations, one taped oral history.

Plate 21: Entrance to site taken from northern edge of clearing looking towards forestry road (unnamed), showing old scales and tin sluicing tray.





Plate 22: Pile of rocks with central semi-circular arrangement, possibly chimney or pig oven.

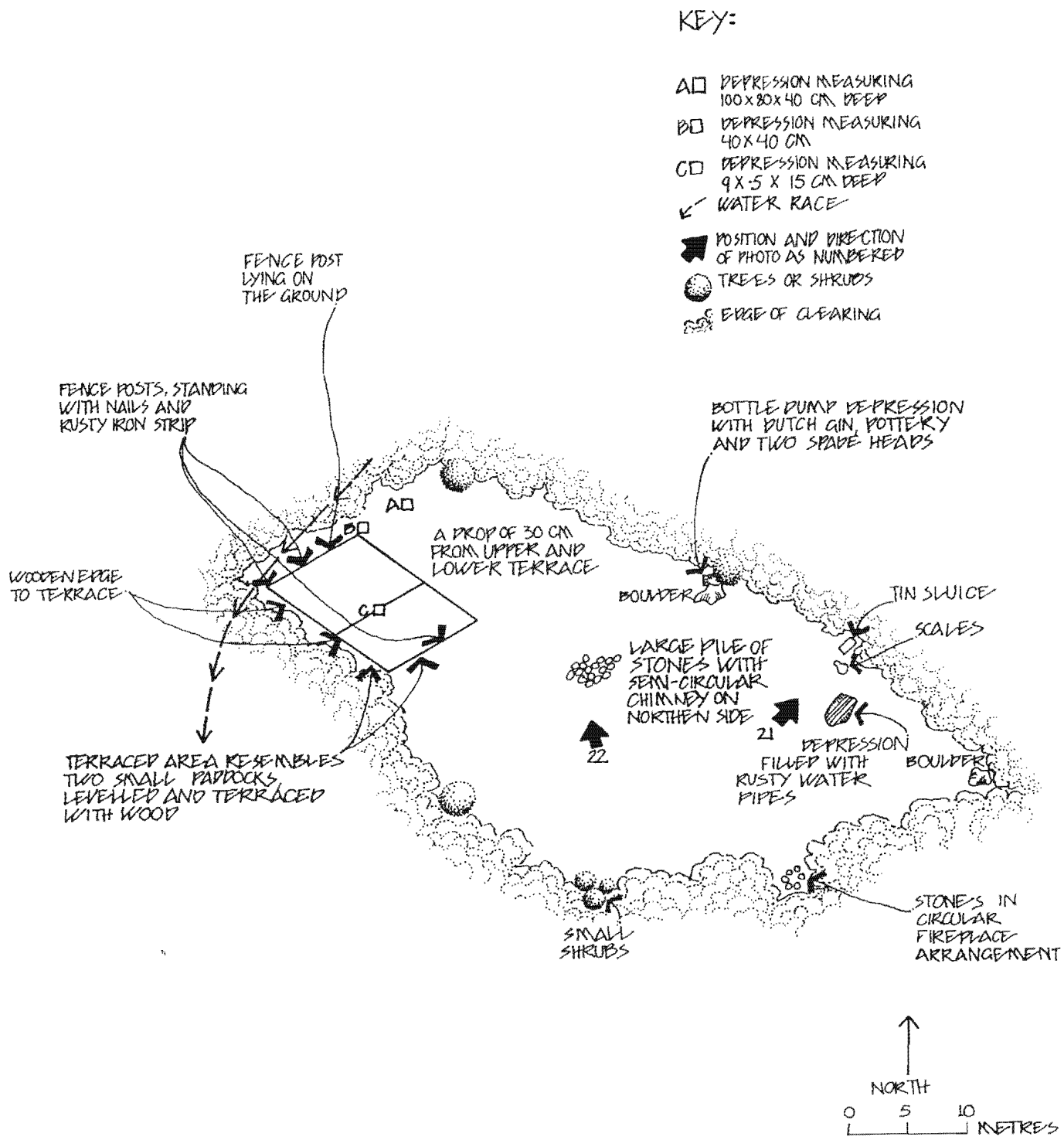


Figure 9: Planimetric sketch of Grass Paddocks site. (site 20)

SITE 21: AH CHOON'S STORE, CASCADES

HISTORY: Ah Choon was a miner, shop owner and butcher and was a very well known figure in the mining communities from Weldborough to Branhholm. His store supplied miner's with all their provisions including pork which, according to oral sources, he raised in a concrete floored piggery as early as 1917. He hawked his wares with horse and cart to miners dispersed throughout the Cascades. He is remembered by the children of Derby (now old men and women) for his generosity, and the story is told of his parting gift to them, which was free admission to the cinema for all the children of the town. Ah Choon was born in China in 1861, arrived in Australia in 1836 and was naturalised in 1893, giving his residence as Moorina and his occupation as miner (S.C. 415/5, 1/3/1893).

SIGNIFICANCE: The site has been virtually destroyed by fossickers as a bulldozer has been used to unearth bottles. The enormous amount of bottles strewn about this site and predominance of liquor bottles would suggest that this was also a meeting place/drinking house, and possibly a gambling house, since these two activities so often take place together and gambling was one of the major recreational pastimes of the Chinese. This is the only store which has been located in the Cascades (and the only one which has been mentioned in oral and documentary sources). It is thus important as a unique site, a centre for the major mining district known as the Cascades, and its association with a well remembered personality amongst the Chinese.

SUB SITE:

LOCATION: Ringarooma 5643, G.R. 709388.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Derby.

ACCESS: The store is difficult to locate as it is not on any defined route. Access is via a fire trail created in 1981, which leads south from a log landing at the terminus of a forestry road, crosses East Creek twice and breaks into a small clearing just before the third crossing. The trail is then abandoned. Six Acacias, approximately 50ft tall, mark the point on the northern edge of the clearing where the forest is entered (compass bearing of 22 from a central point in the clearing. A tributary of East Creek is encountered 20m into the forest. This is crossed and followed keeping it 10-20m to the left. In less than 5 minutes walking the forest opens and Ah Choon's lies immediately ahead in a small uneven clearing.

CLASSIFICATION: Classification uncertain, probably site type 10 - Shop/gambling house, piggery and dwelling.

DIMENSIONS: The clearing is approximately 10m x 10m.

LAND TENURE: State forest.

ENVIRONMENT: Clearing in patch of myrtle forest. See "ACCESS".

RELICS: Bottles seem to span a long period, with the Dutch gin and Chinese pottery bottles and more recent crown seal beer bottles found in large numbers.

PRESERVATION: Virtually destroyed by a bulldozer.

SOURCES: Oral - R. Smith, B. Moy, B. Pitchford.
Documentary - Plan Mineral County of Dorset, K.No. 4, 1946 (3 buildings are shown).

RECORD: Written observation, photographs, oral histories.



WATER
RACE

Plate 23: Site of Ah Choon's store showing the large quantities of broken glass and pottery and the disturbed ground. A water race runs parallel to the right border of the photo. Direction of photo $<50^{\circ}$ taken from 8m past emergence into clearing from the bush.

SITE 22: MOORINA CEMETERY AND CHINESE MEMORIAL

HISTORY: In the late 1800s Moorina was a distribution and transport centre as important as Boobyalla, as well as a mining town. Linked by road to the railhead at Scottsdale, and the Port of Boobyalla, it was conveniently central to the townships of Garibaldi, Weldborough, the Blue Tier, Derby and Branhholm. Many Chinese lived in the vicinity claims on the Frome and Weld Rivers and in the Cascades, and in 1900 a Chinese camp, consisting of a large number of small buildings, lined a street in the town. A Chinese Christian Missionary, Bartholomew Wong Poo, lived at Moorina from 1885-1893, using it as his base for mission work to the Chinese of the surrounding area.

SIGNIFICANCE: The entrance to Moorina Cemetery carries a sign, erected by the Lands Department, saying "Chinese Cemetery". Like the Weldborough Cemetery, Moorina has a memorial erected by local Chinese to their dead. The memorials are very similar in design, construction and location within the cemetery but the memorial at Moorina has been recently restored. There are apparently many Chinese graves in the Moorina Cemetery but none of them are marked.

SUB SITE:

LOCATION: Derby 5644, G.R. 729463.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Moorina.

ACCESS: On the Tasman Highway 375m east of the Moorina Bridge over the Ringarooma River.

CLASSIFICATION: Cemetery and memorial.

DIMENSIONS: The cemetery is 50m x 125m and the memorial 3.34m x 3.9m. The block supporting the memorial stone is 1.24m wide, 70cm high and 0.86m deep, with the stone itself 59cm wide 5cm thick, 1.1m high. The oven has a cubic base (90cm³) and a conical Flue measuring 1.26m high, 80cm in diameter at the base and 14cm diameter at the apex. Total height of structure is 2.16m.

LAND TENURE: Cemetery reserve.

ENVIRONMENT: Located on the east facing slope of a hill overlooking the Weld and Frome Rivers on the main route between the Weldborough/Cascades mining centres and Garibaldi. The monument is located in the south east quarter of the cemetery.

RELICS: The memorial comprises a concrete slab enclosed by a wrought iron fence with an entrance gate in the centre of the East side. Within the enclosure a ceremonial oven and memorial headstone stand on a concrete slab. The oven has a cubic base with a conical flue, iron door with lifting latch mechanism (on the South side) and air vents at ground level on the East, North and West sides. The marble headstone is engraved with English and Chinese characters. The English inscription reads "This stone has been erected by the Chinese of Garibaldi, Argus and Moorina as a place of worship of Confucius religion to the departed Chinese in the Moorina Cemetery", D. Morgan. The date is given in Chinese characters meaning "32nd year of Kuang Hsu" namely 1906.

PRESERVATION: The monument has recently been renovated and is in good condition.

SOURCES: Documentary - Ex., 4 Aug, 1888. Naturalisation records, file No 1563, CSD 16/Vol. 49., Tasmanian State Archives, Hobart.

RECORD: Written observation and photographs.



Plate 24: Chinese memorial headstone at Moorina Cemetery.
Photo taken from the west, headstone facing east.

Plate 25: Chinese memorial at Moorina Cemetery showing the front view of the oven and side view of the memorial headstone. Photo taken from south facing north.



SITE 23: SOUTH MOUNT CAMERON CHINESE CAMP

HISTORY: This seems to have been a small camp, township, which served the Chinese of the surrounding area. It may have also provided a convenient resting place for travellers from the mining centres of Garibaldi, Weldborough, Moorina and the Cascades on their way to Boobyalla Port. Many Chinese worked small alluvial mines in the vicinity of the camp, from the slopes of Mount Cameron to the many creeks and tributaries of the Ringarooma River. The area was leased, under three separate leases, by Quong Sing, Quong Lee and Ah Him between 1902 and 1911.

SIGNIFICANCE: A small settlement site located near some very rich alluvial tin deposits and on the main route to the Port of Boobyalla from the mining centres of Garibaldi and Moorina. Very little is known about the Chinese in this area and an archaeological excavation may provide information which is missing from both written and oral sources.

SUB SITE:

LOCATION: Lanka 5845, G.R. 807583.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Gladstone.

ACCESS: From Gladstone, the site is on Gladstone Road approximately 800m south of South Mount Cameron township. An oiled weatherboard house with red roof now stands on the site which is on the corner of Gladstone Road and an unnamed dirt road which is the first turn off to the left after Ruby Creek bridge (travelling South).

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 1 - Chinese camp.

DIMENSIONS: The area defined by the garden of the present house is approximately 25m x 53m.

LAND TENURE: Privately owned by R. Barker, Launceston.

ENVIRONMENT: Situated on the eastern side of Gladstone Road on the southern outskirts of South Mount Cameron township, the site is bordered on the west and north by roads. Its location is approximately halfway between Gladstone and Pioneer on the main route between the port of Boobyalla and the township of Moorina. The surrounding area for many kilometres in all directions has been mined for tin and is now mostly bare ground. Ruby Creek passes 100m to the north of the site which is now the location of a small old house and garden and most of the area is covered by lawn with a surrounding border of thin, low scrub (predominantly tea tree, bracken fern and blackberries).

RELICS: The area has been heavily fossicked by bottle collectors and bulldozers have been used in the search, which has yielded many Chinese earthenware jars. The depressions of three or four huts are discernable on the front lawn.

PRESERVATION: Fossickers have caused considerable damage to the edges of the site but the area which is part of the house and garden is relatively untouched. The site is likely to remain in its present state of preservation while the house (which is unoccupied) remains standing.

SOURCES: Oral - A. Denis (guide).

Documentary - Mineral Chart South Mount Cameron, 197-c, 1902-1911, Lands Department, Hobart.

RECORD: Photographs and written observation.



Plate 26: Photo of South Mount Cameron Chinese camp site.

SITE 24: RUBY CREEK (2,0) CAMP 1

HISTORY: The leases covering this area were held by John Simpson and Ah Nun between 1892-1896 and by Hop Wah between 1902-1911. John Simpson held the first mineral leases in the area and employed Chinese miners on tribute to work the ground. Local sources tell of a belief that the Chinese were the first to discover the tin in the area and their claim was jumped by John Simpson. Many Chinese miners began by working on tribute until they had sufficient money to take out their own lease, alone, or in partnership with other Chinese.

SIGNIFICANCE: As most of the Chinese chose to live at their mine sites the miners hut was probably the most common form of habitation at the time. The small scale style of mining meant that individual labourers were not uncommon but often mining took place with troupes of 2-5 working a lease. This hut was located 250m from a neighbouring hut and within 1km of the small settlement of South Mount Cameron. It is likely that the two huts were occupied by miners who were working the same leases in partnership and there may have been more than one occupant per hut. Aspects of the lifestyle of the Chinese miner may be deduced from this site and the neighbouring site 25. Due to its relationship to the Chinese camp and the mine managers house at South Mt Cameron, and the neighbouring hut sites this is a more interesting site than it would otherwise be, given its disturbed condition.

SUB SITE: (See also site 25).

LOCATION: Lanka 5845, G.R. 801582.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, Gladstone.

ACCESS: From the south of first left turn off Gladstone Road before Ruby Creek leads to a couple of houses and a turning circle. Proceed on foot down the track to the right which crosses Ruby Creek. The site is located in dry sclerophyll forest approximately 100m over the creek and 250m West of the track.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 5 - Miner's dwelling site.

DIMENSIONS: The site is completely overgrown and consequently it is ill-defined, but the dimensions of the hut appear to have been approximately 2.3m x 4m.

LAND TENURE: Crown land.

ENVIRONMENT: Located between Ruby Creek and a tributary, within 500m of Gladstone Road. Years of small-scale mining has left the area criss-crossed with water races and small mine faces about 1m - 2m deep. The vegetation cover is well established and is predominantly Banksia, Acacia, Eucalypt and some tea tree and cutting grass.

RELICS: Cast iron cooking pots and pottery fragments mark the location of the hut but depressions of the walls were not discernable and no definite pile of chimney stones was found.

PRESERVATION: Fossickers have removed the best preserved bottles and earthenware soy sauce and rice wine containers but scattered fragments are abundant. The ground does not appear to have been disturbed for a long time. Mining on a very small scale is still continuing in the area but is unlikely to affect the site.

SOURCES: Oral - A. Denis (guide).

Documentary - Plan of Mineral Sections South Mount Cameron, Sheet No 7, 197-a, 1892-1896 and 197-c, 1902-1911, Department of Mines, Hobart.

RECORD: Written observation, photographs.

SITE 25: RUBY CREEK (20) CAMP 2

HISTORY: See site 24.

SIGNIFICANCE: This miner's hut is located within 250m of a neighbouring hut and 750m from a small Chinese settlement. This distribution of dwellings seems typical of the tin fields, with miner's choosing to live on their mines and small settlements growing up at convenient central locations on the major transport routes. The site is representative and its relationship to neighbouring sites gives it added interest but it is in poor condition.

SUB SITE: See site 24.

LOCATION: Lanka 5845, G.R. 800582.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Gladstone.

ACCESS: As for site 15, the site is located on foot, 100m past Ruby Creek and 500m west of the road, walking parallel to the creek.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 5 - Miner's dwelling site.

DIMENSIONS: Hut size approximately 2.3m X 4m.

LAND TENURE: Crown land.

ENVIRONMENT: Situated near the north bank of Ruby Creek between the creek and one of its tributaries in an area which has been mined extensively and is criss-crossed with small mine faces approximately 1m - 2m deep, and dry shallow water races, approximately 20cm - 30cm deep and 30cm - 50cm wide. The surrounding area, from Mount Cameron to the Ringarooma River, was peppered with small alluvial tin mines in the 1880s. The site is located within 20 minutes walk of the main route between Boobyalla Port and the mining centres of Pioneer, Garibaldi, Moorina and Weldborough, and equally close to the small Chinese camp at South Mount Cameron. The locality of the hut and adjacent mine workings is now revegetated predominantly by Banksias and Acacias with some Eucalypts and tea tree and an understorey of cutting grass and bracken fern.

RELICS: A cluster of large, moss covered stones arranged in a semi-circular manner, is probably the remains of the chimney butt. No depressions of the hut walls were located. In 1974-75 Chinese ceramic rice wine jars and assorted glass bottles were recovered by A.Denis.

PRESERVATION: Fossickers have removed many ceramic and glass vessels, however (apart from fossickers) the area appears to have been undisturbed since Chinese occupation. Although there is some mining in the vicinity it is not likely to present a threat.

SOURCES: Oral - A. Denis (guide).

RECORD: Written observation.

SITE 26: LONG GEE'S CAMP, SOUTH MOUNT CAMERON

HISTORY: Long Gee was the last Chinese miner in this area. He lived to 97 years of age, dying 11 December 1939 a pauper (Gladstone Burial Book). His grave in the Gladstone cemetery is one of the many unmarked Chinese graves. A stone oven stood on this site until 1974 or 1975 but along with Long Gee's dwelling it has completely disappeared as a result of large scale tin mining in the area.

SIGNIFICANCE: This site has been completely destroyed by mining and is included as an example of the inevitable fate of many, perhaps most, of the Chinese tin mining sites in the Gladstone and Mount Cameron area.

SUB SITE:

LOCATION: Lanka 5845, G.R. 814595.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Gladstone.

ACCESS: On eastern side of Gladstone Road in the Allied Mine workings. The exact site was not located.

CLASSIFICATION: Miner's dwelling and pig oven.

DIMENSIONS:

LAND TENURE: Crown land controlled by the Department of Mines.

ENVIRONMENT: The site is located next to the Gladstone Road in the Allied Mine workings which cover several kilometres of the surrounding area. The Ringarooma River passes approximately 700m east of the site. The Allied Mine was active in the 1970s and is now a vast area of barren, eroding ground. Very little revegetation is occurring except on the edges of the mine near the roadside and the river.

RELICS: A Chinese stone and earth oven remained at the site in 1974-75 but has since been destroyed by mining. No other relics were located.

PRESERVATION: The site is completely destroyed.

SOURCES: Oral - A. Denis (guide).
Documentary - Gladstone Burial Book, Gladstone Council.

RECORD: Written description, photographs.

SITE 27: BLUE LAKE CAMP, MOUNT CAMERON

HISTORY: The area was first leased by J. Simpson and W. Stevens prior to 1885 but was soon taken up by Chinese and by 1890 the Clifton area was leased solely by Ah Wong, Chin Mon Tang and Wah Hong. This site (as far as can be established from mineral charts) was leased by Ah Wong from 1890-1903, the first and major Chinese lease holder in the area. The mineral charts of the period are difficult to match with modern maps as they do not include contours, roads, or full details of water courses and mining has changed the course of many creeks in the past century.

SIGNIFICANCE: This is a relatively well preserved example of a miner's dwelling site and of surrounding mine workings. Two other hut sites were located nearby and these are also in good condition (see sites 28 and 29). The location of this site, at a distance from major routes or settlements, is probably the reason for its preservation.

SUB SITE: See site 28 and 29.

LOCATION: Pioneer 5645, G.R. 786599.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Gladstone.

ACCESS: By car to the northern shore of Blue Lake stopping at the old power house. Walk 400m-500m due north to the site which is on the southern slopes of Mount Cameron.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 5 and 6 - Miner's dwelling and extensive mine workings.

DIMENSIONS: Hut size 2m X 3m.

LAND TENURE: Crown land.

ENVIRONMENT: Very open forest which receives regular burning, the main vegetation cover is Eucalyptus, Casuarinas, Banksias and a thin, low growth of bracken fern. The site has a gently sloping southerly aspect, being located on the slopes of Mount Cameron, overlooking Blue Lake. The area surrounding the site is covered by a network of water races, mine faces (1m - 3m deep), and tailing dumps. The Clifton Creek flows down the mountain less than 1km to the east of the site.

RELICS: Depressions of the wall of the hut and the chimney stones are visible. Scatters of pottery and glass shards were found within the surrounding area of about 5m X 7m. A shallow water race passed within 10m of the hut.

PRESERVATION: The site is in a relatively well preserved state with only surface fossicking apparent. Fire has probably been the main agent of destruction. No threats to the continued preservation of the site are foreseen other than the use of ploughs or bulldozers in the search for bottles, and this is unlikely given the remoteness of the site.

SOURCES: Oral - A. Denis (guide)

Documentary - Maps - Plan of Mineral Sections Mount Cameron, County of Dorset, 171-C, ?-1885; 171-d, 1885-1890; 171-e, 1890-1903.

RECORD: Written record (as above).



Plate 27: A fireplace at Blue Lake.

SITE 28: CLIFTON CAMP 1

HISTORY: Towards the end of the last century (c.1885-1905) the Clifton Creek was mainly leased by Chinese tin miners. Ah Wong held several leases along the creek (lease numbers 1018m, 337/87m, 336/87m, 340/87m) and Wah Hong (lease no. 204/93m) and Chin Mon Tang (1550/91m) held leases in the near vicinity. Mining leases, however, can only provide an indication of population distribution, as unrewarding areas were soon abandoned. Most miners worked in groups and (as in this case) where multiple leases were held by one miner, each lease was probably worked by miners on tribute to Ah Wong or in partnership with him.

SIGNIFICANCE: This dwelling site (one of three located on the slopes of Mount Cameron is representative of the life style of the majority of Chinese tin miners and due to its isolated setting, away from transport routes or human settlement, it has remained relatively undisturbed. The surrounding area is honeycombed with mine workings and water races and presents an excellent example of the Chinese method of alluvial tin mining.

SUB SITE: (see also site 27 and site 29).

LOCATION: Monarch 5646, G.R. 784607.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Gladstone.

ACCESS: From Blue Lake the site is accessed on foot by following the west bank of the Clifton Creek about 1km, to approximately 150m-200m south of the first fork in the creek. The site is about 100m-150m west of the creek on the steep east face of the large hill above Blue Lake and on the southern approach to Mount Camron.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 5 and 6 - Miner's dwelling site and mine workings.

DIMENSIONS: Hut size 2m X 4m. Area of scattered relics approximately 20m X 20m.

LAND TENURE: Crown land.

ENVIRONMENT: Situated on the east face of a steep hill on the southern approach to Mt Cameron, 100m west of the Clifton Creek the area is remote from centres of human settlement. Much of the surrounding area, on the southern foothills of Mt. Cameron near the Clifton Creek, was held under mineral leases by Chinese in the late 1800s and two other hut sites were located in the vicinity. The nearest Chinese settlement and transport routes are at South Mount Cameron, approximately 4km away. A network of small water races and mine faces cover the lower slopes of the hill increasing in density beside the creek. The hut site is located 10m below a small water race which parallels the creek and between 2 water races which run at right angles down to the creek. The area has received frequent burning and is very open forest, predominantly Casuarina, Banksia and Eucalypt with a thicket of burnt tea tree growing in a dry creek bed 150m north of the site.

RELICS: The chimney stones and depressions of three walls of the hut are clearly visible. Shards of glass and Chinese pottery and earthenware are scattered over an area of 20m X 20m. The square Dutch gin bottles and Chinese earthenware, rice wine and soy sauce jars predominate.

PRESERVATION: The site is relatively well preserved. Fossickers have retrieved surface relics with a small amount of digging concentrated in a small area (1m square) away from the hut. The main threats to the continued preservation of the site are further damage by fire and the use of bulldozers or ploughs by bottle collectors.

SOURCES: Oral - A. Denis (guide).

Documentary - Plan of Mineral Sections Mount Cameron County of Dorset, 171-d, 1885-1890 and 171-e, 1890-1903.

RECORD: Written observation, photographs.



Plate 28: Hut site at the Clifton.

SITE 29: CLIFTON CAMP 2, MOUNT CAMERON

HISTORY: See site 28.

SIGNIFICANCE: Similar to site 28 but the hut site is not clearly visible.

It is possible that the hut on this site was less solidly constructed, perhaps being a bark hut or a paling hut without a floor. The proximity and relationship between the miner's huts is of historical interest. Large quantities of cast-iron cooking pots found at the site would indicate more than one occupant, but this may be due to the site being occupied successively over several decades. Some of the relics may even have belonged to a more recent occupation by European miners but the quantities of Chinese earthenware and china fragments would suggest predominant, if not sole, Chinese occupation. This site appears to have been more heavily disturbed by bottle collectors than the neighbouring site 28.

SUB SITE: See site 27 and 28.

LOCATION: Monarch 5646, G.R. 784605.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Gladstone.

ACCESS: As for site 28 but this site located approximately 150m-200m further south and the same distance above the Clifton Creek.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 5 and 6 - Miner's dwelling site and mine workings.

DIMENSIONS: Pottery and glass shards distributed over an area of approximately 10m x 30m.

LAND TENURE: Crown land.

ENVIRONMENT: See site 28.

RELICS: The ground is littered with shards of glazed earthenware and fine green china (Chinese bowls) and glass (particularly the square bottomed Dutch gin bottles). A large collection of cast-iron pots remains at the site and approximately 50 bottles (intact beer, gin and medicine bottles) and 4 Chinese, glazed, earthenware, rice wine jars have been removed from the site by Mr A. Denis.

PRESERVATION: The site has been disturbed by fossickers and no clear impression of the hut was located. The area is currently disused and further threats are not likely other than damage by fire and use of bulldozers for unearthing bottles.

SOURCES: Oral - A. Denis (guide).

Documentary - Plan of Mineral Section Mt Cameron County of Dorset, 171-d, 1885-1890 and 171-e, 1890-1903.

RECORD: Written observation and photographs.



Plate 29: Collection of cast iron cooking pots and Chinese earthenware fragments found at the Clifton Creek, Mt. Cameron.

SITE 30: AH COW'S OVEN, GLADSTONE

HISTORY: Ah Cow died at the age of 96 and was buried in Gladstone Cemetery on the 22/3/1921. The Gladstone Burial Book records his last place of abode as South Mt. Cameron. The oven is located approximately 1km from Ah Cow's garden (site 31). Chinese stone ovens were usually used for ceremonial purposes for the roasting of a whole pig.

SIGNIFICANCE: This is the only oven located in the Gladstone area. It is reasonable to assume that the site may have been a centre for the local Chinese and that buildings may have been located nearby which were not discovered by this survey. The Chinese population in the Gladstone area was probably sufficient to support a Joss House and gambling house and part of the population was stable, there being at least two market gardens in the area and one Chinese family who remained in the area for several generations (the Le Fook's). Further investigation may be fruitful as very little is known of the Gladstone Chinese.

SUB SITE: See also site 31, Ah Cow's Garden.

LOCATION: Gladstone 5846, G.R. 830639.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Gladstone.

ACCESS: A vehicular track (which is marked on the map) turns left off Waterhouse Road 1.6km from Gladstone. The track is no longer visible from the road as it leads across a paddock which has been ploughed and planted with turnips. Access is through a wire and post farm gate. Crossing the paddock in a south to south-easterly direction the track becomes more visible as it enters the bush at the edge. One km into the bush the track forks around a felled tree and rejoins. The oven is located 40m west of the point where the track rejoins, beside two large boulders (4m high).

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 3 - Chinese oven, ceremonial site.

DIMENSIONS: The oven is 135cm high x 3.3m wide. The diameter of the inner cylindrical chamber at the top of the oven is 1m and at the base 1.3m. The walls are 25cm thick at the top (single stone thickness) and 1m thick at the base.

LAND TENURE: Crown land, access via private property. Owner Mr T. Hazelwood, Springfield.

ENVIRONMENT: In forest, near the top of a steep, west facing slope which descends into Alhambra Creek. The predominant vegetation is peppermint gum, Banksia and Casuarina with a sparse ground cover of grass. A 5m-7m high Acacia grows out of the base of the oven and its lush green foliage is visible from the road.

RELICS: The stone and earth oven and some shallow water races are the only relics.

PRESERVATION: The oven is crumbling slightly at the top but is otherwise solid. The main threat to the structure is disturbance by an Acacia growing from its base.

SOURCES: Oral - T. Green (guide).

Documentary - Gladstone Burial Book, Gladstone Council.

RECORD: Written observation, measurements and photographs.



Plate 30: Photo of Ah Cow's oven $<252^{\circ}$, December 9, 1983.

SITE 31: AH COW'S GARDEN, GLADSTONE

HISTORY: There were two Chinese market gardens in Gladstone, each employing several people. The proximity of Ah Cow's garden and Ah Kaw's Creek and the similar sound of the names suggests that Ah Kaw and Ah Cow may have been the same person. The latter spelling was used in the Gladstone Burial Book and is the pronunciation used by local people and the former is the name of a well known Chinese entrepreneur (Chin Ah Kaw) of Launceston. It is therefore possible that the creek and garden were indeed named after different people, but as very few Chinese could write English their names were spelt phonetically and different interpretation of names must often have resulted.

SIGNIFICANCE: When mining died out the Chinese market gardeners were amongst the few of their nation to remain in Tasmania and make it their home. Most of Tasmania's Chinese are descended from these early miners and market gardeners. According to local sources Ah Cow's garden was still visible until 1981-1982, as a series of lush, green, flat plots on the side of a hill above Ah Kaw's Creek. These have since been destroyed by the cultivation of the paddock for turnips.

SUB SITE: See also site 30, Ah Cow's Oven.

LOCATION: Gladstone 5846, G.R. 837645.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Gladstone.

ACCESS: As for site 30. The site is accessed from Waterhouse Road, located on the east to southeast face of the paddock below a large gum tree which stands alone in the centre of the turnip field.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 7 - Market garden.

DIMENSIONS:

LAND TENURE: Privately owned by Mr T. Hazelwood, Springfield.

ENVIRONMENT: Situated on a terraced hillside with an easterly aspect, above a creek, within a coastal frost free area. The soil is a grey sandy loam of poor quality. The area of the garden has been roughly ploughed and planted with turnips which have now gone to seed. Surrounding the paddock, dry fire affected forest covers the southern hillsides and hugs the creek valleys. Located 1.5km from the western outskirts of Gladstone on the main route between Gladstone and Boobyalla Port.

RELICS: The garden terraces were clearly visible until 1981-82 but no trace remains since cultivation of the field.

PRESERVATION: Completely destroyed.

SOURCES: Oral - Mr T. and Mr G. Green.

Documentary - The Gladstone Burial Book, Gladstone Council.

RECORD: Written record, photographs.



Plate 31: Photo of site of Ah Cow's garden which survived until 1981-82 before being re-cultivated for turnips. December 10, 1983.

SITE 32: LEE AH FOOK'S HOUSE, GLADSTONE

HISTORY: The Lee Fook family was one of three Chinese families living in the north east and remained there for several generations. Lee Ah Fook was born in Canton in 1860 and arrived in Tasmania in 1878, on board the Mangana, he was naturalised five years later. Mrs Lee Fook came to Tasmania as Mrs Maa Mon Chinn's travelling companion and maid. She lived in Weldborough with the Chin Family for some time, later marrying Lee Fook and moving to Gladstone. The family were engaged in market gardening and hawking vegetables and groceries to miners in the surrounding area.

SIGNIFICANCE: This is one of three houses belonging to early Chinese which have survived to 1984. The house, which is over 100 years old, is well preserved and is still occupied. Built in the vernacular style of the times from weatherboard and corrugated iron with corrugated iron roof and a verandah along the length of the front. Part of the verandah has been enclosed and extended into a small room.

SUB SITE:

LOCATION: Gladstone 5846; G.R. 849648.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Gladstone.

ACCESS: Gladstone Road.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 9 - Dwelling.

DIMENSIONS: The house is approximately 8.5m X 5m and it stands on an 0.202ha block (half an acre).

LAND TENURE: Privately owned by R. Moore, Gladstone.

ENVIRONMENT: Located in the township on a half acre block with houses on either side.

RELICS: Small weatherboard house.

PRESERVATION: The original structure is intact with superficial changes such as enclosure of part of the verandah. The house is still occupied and appears to be under no immediate threat.

SOURCES: Oral - R. Moore (owner/occupier).

RECORD: Written observation, photographs.



Plate 32: Photo of front of Lee Fook's house taken from Gladstone Road, December 21, 1983.

SITE 33: GLADSTONE CEMETERY

HISTORY: Burial records for the cemetery record 23 Chinese burials between 1892 and 1915. Of these 4 were unnamed with only grave numbers assigned to them. Seven more were buried between 1917 and 1939, the last being Long Gee (see site 26) of South Mount Caeron died 11/2/1939, aged 97, who is described in the book as a pauper.

SIGNIFICANCE: This cemetery contains more marked Chinese graves (5) than any other in the North East. Two of the graves carry large and ornate tombstones. The site of an oven, described by a local source as being used by the Chinese for burning ceremonial papers during their funerals, (N. Petrie, personal communication) is marked by some crumbling bricks and alongside this a grave stone lies broken on the ground. This may have been part of a Chinese memorial similar to Weldborough and Moorina.

SUB SITE:

LOCATION: Gladstone 5846, G.R. 850659.

MUNICIPALITY: Ringarooma 59, WARD: Gladstone.

ACCESS: The Cape Portland Road from Gladstone, turn left to Gladstone tip 1km past the township, cemetery located on the left.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 8 - Cemetery.

DIMENSIONS: Approximately 72m X 72m.

LAND TENURE: Cemetery reserve.

ENVIRONMENT: On the northern outskirts of Gladstone township on gently sloping land. Three Chinese graves are situated in the back row, in a central position, facing west. European graves face east so that the Chinese graves are back to back with the European graves. The memorial is located in the next row (further west) in front of the graves. Two other Chinese graves are located approximately parallel but hard against the north fence, right away from all other graves. One of these Lee Tie's, has a large and ornate headstone and is surrounded by a bent iron fence.

RELICS: Five graves with headstones facing WSW and the site of a ceremonial oven and possibly a memorial stone.

1. Gee Tung, died May 22 1905, aged 78.
2. Lee Tie, died September 9 1909, aged 52.
3. Toy You, died May 13 1908, aged 75.
4. Chin Ah Hen, died June 26 1917, aged 82.
5. Sam Goon, died March 3 1918, aged 85.
6. A gravestone, resembling by inscription and style the memorial stones at Weldborough and Moorina, lies on the ground broken into 3 pieces. It is very worn and only the bold Chinese characters in the central column can be read. This lies in a flattened gravelly area 2.5m X 4m with the crumbled base of the oven in one corner.

PRESERVATION: Gee Tung's sandstone gravestone is broken in two across the centre and lies on the ground. Lee Tie's, Toy You's and Chin Ah Hen's stones are of a quartzite granite and are well preserved with most of the Chinese characters readable. These stones were engraved by J. Dunn. Sam Goon's gravestone still stands in place but is made from sandstone and is very worn, some of the writing being illegible. Destruction of the memorial and some graves may have occurred in c.1950 when an employee of the council "cleaned up" the cemetery with a tractor and rotary hoe destroying 2 rows of mostly Chinese graves.

SITE 33: GLADSTONE CEMETERY (cont.)

SOURCES: Oral - Mr N. Petrie.

Documentary - The Gladstone Burial Book, Gladstone Council.

RECORD: Written observation and photographs.



Plate 33: Toy You's headstone in the Gladstone Cemetery.

Plate 34: Toy You's grave with broken Chinese gravestone in foreground, cemetery in background.



Plate 35: Three Chinese graves in back row of Gladstone Cemetery with oven site and broken gravestone in right foreground. Note Chin Ah Hen's and Sam Goon's gravestones are placed at the foot of the grave and all face in the opposite direction to European graves.

SITE 34: BLUE TIER

HISTORY: The Blue Tier was a major tin mining centre with several thriving townships at Poimena, Lottah and Goulds Country c.1870-1880. Many Chinese mined in the area but most of the history of the Chinese is confined to some sketchy memories of the two last miners on the Tier, Billy Bow and Ah Ling. However G. G. Bakhap of Lottah, stepfather of Thomas Jerome Bakhap a famous Tasmanian parliamentarian and diplomat, is a well remembered figure. He was a storekeeper and herbalist and his sons T. J. K. and S. P. Bakhap controlled several mineral leases on the Groom River near Lottah.

SIGNIFICANCE: This site is a poor example of the miner's dwelling as very little remains to indicate the size or style of the structure. An excavated bottle dump, which yielded a Chinese ceramic ginger jar and other fragments of Chinese pottery is the only evidence of a former habitation. This is unfortunate as the Blue Tier was inhabited earlier than the other mining centres surveyed in this study; also, the severe climate on top of the Tier, where winter snow falls and harsh winds were common, may have necessitated a variation of the humble paling hut and some differences in the lifestyle of these miners.

SUB SITE:

LOCATION: Blue Tier 5843, G.R. 835392.

MUNICIPALITY: Portland 58, WARD: North.

ACCESS: The road from Lottah to the Blue Tier is Four wheel drive only most of the year. The site is located 4.25km along this road from Lottah, 10m on the right, under a myrtle tree and within 3m of Crowther Creek.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 5 - Miner's dwelling.

DIMENSIONS: Undefinable, bottle dump approximately 1m X 1m.

LAND TENURE: State forest.

ENVIRONMENT: An open clearing on top of the Blue Tier covered with alpine mosses and sedges and surrounded by mixed forest. Some lone myrtles grow in the clearing remnants of the rainforest which once covered the Tier. The area is extensively gullied by mining, and small tailing dumps are disappearing under a cover of moss. Located beside the Poimena Road and near Crowther Creek.

RELICS: A bottle dump which has yielded a Chinese ceramic ginger jar, fragments of Chinese glazed earthenware and a V.C. Whisky bottle with side seam and hand applied neck.

PRESERVATION: The area has suffered clearing and severe fires and is now revegetated with a thick carpet of moss and sedges which obscures any depressions or relics left by previous habitation.

SOURCES: Oral - C. White and G. Mundy (taped interview); J. Stewart (guide).

RECORD: Written observation and photographs.



Plate 36: Billy Bow standing outside his hut on the Blue Tier. Photo supplied by Mr P. Burns, St Helens Local History Room.



Plate 37: Bottle dump on the Blue Tier.

SITE 35: JIMMY AH FOO'S, FINGAL

HISTORY: Jimmy Ah Foo was born in Canton on the 4 August 1867. He arrived in Launceston onboard the Flinders on 15th April 1887. Naturalised on 8 August 1892 he gave his occupation as a gardener (File No. 1563, CSD 16/Vol. 49). He was a successful market gardener and herbalist who appears to have maintained two homes and two gardens, one in Fingal and another in Mathinna. He travelled in a horse drawn, covered spring dray selling his vegetables and medicines throughout the district. Ravens were apparently highly sought after by the Chinaman who paid the equivalent to the price of a chicken for one of these birds which he used in the preparation of treatments for a variety of maladies, from lack of appetite to swollen limbs and conjunctivitis (Cox, C.; Lee, L. and Johns, C. personal communication).

SIGNIFICANCE: His home in Fingal is very well preserved and although it has been altered by the addition of several rooms the original cottage remains intact. This is the best preserved example of a Chinese residence and was occupied by "Jimmy the Chinaman" until at least 1925.

SUB SITE: See also site 31, Jimmy Ah Foo's, Mathinna.

LOCATION: On the 1: 250 000 Northeast Tas Map, first edition 1980, G. R. 581390.

MUNICIPALITY: Fingal, within Fingal town boundaries.

ACCESS: On Fingal Valley Road, the last house on the eastern outskirts of the town.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 7 and 9 - Dwelling and market garden.

DIMENSIONS:

LAND TENURE: Privately owned and occupied by Mr C. Johns.

ENVIRONMENT: On the eastern outskirts of Fingal township fronting onto the Highway with the back garden extending to the Fingal Rivulet.

RELICS: A small weatherboard cottage with verandah on the front and corrugated iron roof. Extensions have been built on the eastern side of the cottage and on the back and some internal walls removed. The garden has been landscaped and no sign of the market garden remains.

PRESERVATION: The weatherboard cottage is in very good condition. The present occupants have built some extensions onto the cottage but the original structure survives and is not likely to be altered.

SOURCES: Oral - C. Johns (owner and occupier).
Documentary - Naturalisation file No. 1563, CSD 16/Vol. 49.

RECORD: Written observation and photographs.



Plate 38: Jimmy Ah Foo's house at Fingal taken from highway.

SITE 36: JIMMY AH FOO'S HOUSE, MATHINNA

HISTORY: Jimmy Ah Foo had a residence and market garden in Fingal and Mathinna and he apparently divided his time equally between each place. (See site 35). The site of his residence in Mathinna is somewhat uncertain as several local sources place it on the corner of Dunn Street and George Street but an old town plan, dated 1926, and a property survey of 1896 show James Ah Foo as the owner of a house block on the corner of Dunn Street and High Street. Local sources were questioned separately on this point but had no doubt as to the location of "Jimmy the Chinaman" (Ah Foo) dwelling (Cox, C.; Lee, L. and Lee, A.). As these local sources had visited Ah Foo at his home in their late teens and early twenties, and one has since purchased the property, it is unlikely that they would be mistaken on this point. It is therefore assumed that Ah Foo lived in Dunn Street and not at his property in High Street. The house in Dunn Street was demolished in 1970-72 and nothing now remains.

SIGNIFICANCE: Jimmy Ah Foo appears to have been a highly successful gardener, herbalist and businessman. Remaining in the area after the mining boom had abated he traded largely with Europeans and acted as a doctor to many. This site is one of only two Chinese sites located in Mathinna township, which once had a large population of Chinese miners.

SUB SITE: See site 35.

LOCATION: On 1:100 000 Tasmanian Topographic Map, Forester 8415, Edition 2, 1979, G.R. 740074.

MUNICIPALITY: Fingal, WARD: Tower Hill.

ACCESS: Corner of Dunn and George Street (or Dunn and High Street), Mathinna.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 9 - Dwelling or dwellings.

DIMENSIONS: George Street property - 13.8m X 34.6m (1926). High Street property - 9.5m X 34.6, buildings 7.9m X 3.9m and 3m X 6.7m).

LAND TENURE: George Street property is privately owned by L. Lee, Mathinna.

ENVIRONMENT: Located within one block of the post office between the High Street and the alluvial plain of the South Esk River, which was the scene of the Mathinna gold rush.

RELICS: The house, which was weatherboard, lined with scrim and paper and had a corrugated iron roof, was pulled down in 1970-1972. All that remains are some bricks from the Chimney.

PRESERVATION: Demolished in 1970-1972.

SOURCES: Oral - AL. Lee, L. Lee, C. Cox.
Documentary - Mathinna Town Plan M7, 1926; Lands Department Survey Book E4, 1896, page 6. Lands Department, Hobart.

RECORD: Written observation, photographs.



Plate 39: Site of Jimmy Ah Foo's house showing chimney built in the foreground and Mathinna township in the background. $< 90^{\circ}$ taken from George Street, October 29, 1983.

SITE 37: WONG HEE'S SHOP, MATHINNA

HISTORY: The Mathinna gold fields were discovered in 1855 but were shortly abandoned, going through minor fluctuations until interest revived in 1877. In the late 1880s and early 1900s Mathinna had three pubs and three football teams, it is now a near ghost town which has survived due to agriculture and forestry. Built beside the gold rich, alluvial flats of the South Esk River, the town commanded a full panorama of "White City", the name given to the flat when it was white with the canvas tents of hopeful miners among them hundreds of Chinese. Unlike the European miners the Chinese preferred huts to tents and built one room, split paling shelters, approximately 2m X 3.2m, which were known as "Chinese dungeons". Many Chinese flocked to the area during the early gold rush days. Chinese miners mainly worked shallow alluvial diggings and were gradually deposed from the area as mining was taken over by large, mechanical companies. Some Chinese worked on the larger mines such as the City of Hobart. Mines were gradually worked out and most of the miners had left the flat by 1910 but Wong Hee and his Chinese partner continued to run their general store until the mid 1920s supplying groceries and draperies to the remaining townsfolk. The store remained open for decades after their departure, changing hands several times, but the signboard above the shop was never repainted and proclaimed the premises as "Wong Hee's" until 1983 when the building was repainted by its current owners.

SIGNIFICANCE: This is the only Chinese shop in the North East which has survived to 1984. The building is in excellent condition and extensions to the original structure have not altered the shop. As such it is a unique and well preserved reminder of an era when Chinese and European miners opened up the North East in their search for gold and tin.

SUB SITE:

LOCATION: 1:100 000 Tasmanian Topographic, Forester 8415, 2nd Edition 1979; G.R. 741074.

MUNICIPALITY: Fingal. WARD: Tower Hill.

ACCESS: On the left of High Street, Mathinna (from Fingal). The third property before Butler Street.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 10 - Shop and dwelling.

DIMENSIONS: A survey of the property made in 1901 has the dimensions 13.8m X 34.6m, the store is 7.7m X 4.7m and a stable on the back of the block is 2.7m X 9.5m.

LAND TENURE: Private property, owned and occupied by Mr J. Shean, High Street, Mathinna.

ENVIRONMENT: Located in a central position on the east side of the main street of the township of Mathinna, once a thriving gold rush town.

RELICS: Shop building with dwelling built on to the back.

PRESERVATION: The building is no longer a shop but is still occupied and is in very good condition. Extensions built by more recent proprietors have not altered the original shop structure.

SOURCES: Oral - Mr C. Cox, Mr A. Lee.

Documentary - Anon, No date, Mathinna, Queen Victoria Museum archive file.

RECORD: Written observation and photographs.

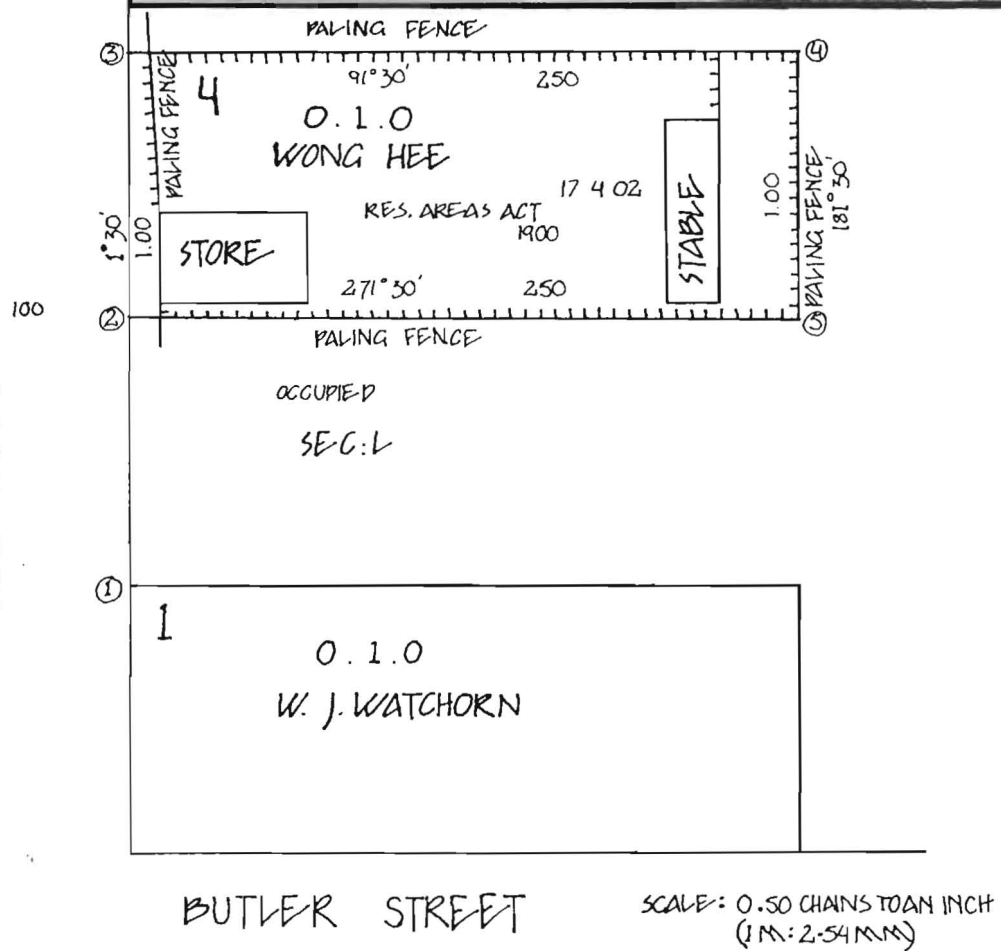


Figure 10: Drawing taken from survey diagram of Wong Hee's property, Mathinna, made December 21, 1901, taken from Lands Department Survey Book F8/19.

Plate 40: Wong Hee's shop, Mathinna. Photo taken from point A on survey.

SITE 38: CHINESE MARKET GARDEN, MATHINNA

HISTORY: Market gardening was the second most common occupation of the Chinese in Tasmania (after mining). It seems to have been the province of the wealthier Chinese, usually those who did well enough from mining to raise the capital to buy land. With a large population of miners and expensive and inefficient transportation they had a guaranteed market and this together with their great skill as gardeners and long hours of work brought them much success. Chinese gardens were set out in small raised beds of irregular shapes, perhaps determined by the contours of the land, but always small enough to be worked from the edges and kept meticulously free of weeds.

SIGNIFICANCE: When mining ceased to be profitable and the Chinese population dwindled through migration and death the ones who remained and made this country their home were mainly engaged in gardening. This garden is situated on prime river flat and employed about 12 people, including several Europeans. The site has been developed for pasture in recent years and no sign of the garden was found.

SUB SITE:

LOCATION: 1:100 000 Topographic, Forester 8415, 2nd edition 1979: G.R. 740095

MUNICIPALITY: Fingal. WARD: Tower Hill.

ACCESS: Located 1km from Mathinna on the confluence of Dans Rivulet and the South Esk River, opposite Chinaman's Hill. Accessed by Eton Road.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 7 - Market garden.

DIMENSIONS: The size of the garden is not known precisely but the dimensions of the flat between Chinaman's Hill and Dans Rivulet, where the garden was located, are approximately 100m X 250m.

LAND TENURE: Privately owned.

ENVIRONMENT: Situated on a narrow river flat at the confluence of Dans Rivulet and the South Esk River. Chinaman's Hill rises sharply on the Western edge of the flat which is bordered by Eton Road on the West and Dans Rivulet on the east and south. The area is now a developed pasture used for grazing sheep.

RELICS: Flat paddock identified as garden site by 2 local, first hand sources (Mr A. Lee and Mr C. Cox).

PRESERVATION: The paddock was walked but no sign of the garden was found.

SOURCES: Oral - A. Lee, C. Cox.

RECORD: Written observation and photograph.



Plate 41: Site of Chinese market garden. $< 90^{\circ}$ taken October 29, 1983.

SITE 39: LEFROY CHINESE CAMP

HISTORY: Lefroy was one of the earliest centres of Chinese mining in Tasmania. Gold was discovered in 1869 and Lefroy was already a thriving township by 1870 with 3 hotels, several shops and a Post Office. Lefroy's fortunes fluctuated dramatically, as did its population, with high points occurring in 1870, early 1874, late 1876-1877 and 1891. Chinese miners were quick to arrive and were reported as having moderate success in the Examiner 3/10/1872. In 1873 during a slump Chinese dominated the mining numbering 65 out of the town's 100 miners and in September of 1874 a Joss House was erected. By November 1876, after a period of decline, the town's population was 350, with 40 Chinese who had their own Joss House and gambling salon. A mining boom in 1877 brought an influx of population and new businesses to Lefroy and the Chinese community built a larger and more elaborate Joss House. The Chinese built a cluster of 15 small huts on crown land in an encampment near the centre of Lefroy. European cottages occupied neighbouring lots in Powell Street.

SIGNIFICANCE: This was one of the first Chinese camps established in the northeast and the site remains in a relatively undisturbed condition. It is interesting to note Chinese and European dwellings in the same street, as in other camps (Weldborough, Garibaldi) the Chinese and Europeans isolated themselves to varying degrees.

SUB SITE: Site 40, Lefroy Joss House.

LOCATION: Tasmania 1:250 000, North East, First ed. 1980, Lands Department, Hobart: G.R. 499450.

MUNICIPALITY: George Town. WARD: Lefroy.

ACCESS: Corner of Shaw Street and Powell Street, Lefroy.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 1 - Chinese camp, religious site.

DIMENSIONS: Total area 90 square metres.

LAND TENURE: Privately owned by D. W. Crawford, Powell Street, Lefroy.

ENVIRONMENT: Situated near the town centre between Powell Street and an old tramline which follows the fenceline of the property. Some houses still survive in Powell Street but the site of the Chinese camp is a disused paddock bordered by Powell Street on the east, Shaw Street on the south, a tramline on the west and occupied house and garden on the north. The ground is disturbed and hummocky with some flat areas which may have been hut sites. A small thicket of tea tree and a hawthorn bush are the only shrubs most of the area being covered by grass and blackberries.

RELICS: The area shows signs of human habitation in the form of disturbed, hummocky ground and shallow water races, 10-15cm deep, and some flattened areas but no definite hut sites were located.

PRESERVATION: A group of 3 Chinese hut sites situated on the south west corner may have been destroyed by construction of a roadside drain. This area was covered by a thick growth of blackberries which excluded access. The site does not appear to have been disturbed except by burning but future cultivation is possible and is the most serious threat.

SOURCES: Oral - Mr F. Maclean, Mr B. Gibbons
Documentary - Field Book No. 1154, 11/4/1993, Lands Department, Hobart. Town Plan, Lefroy 14, No date, Lands Department, Hobart. Examiner 18/11/1877, 21/7/1877, 3/10/1872.

RECORD: Written observation, photographs, oral history.

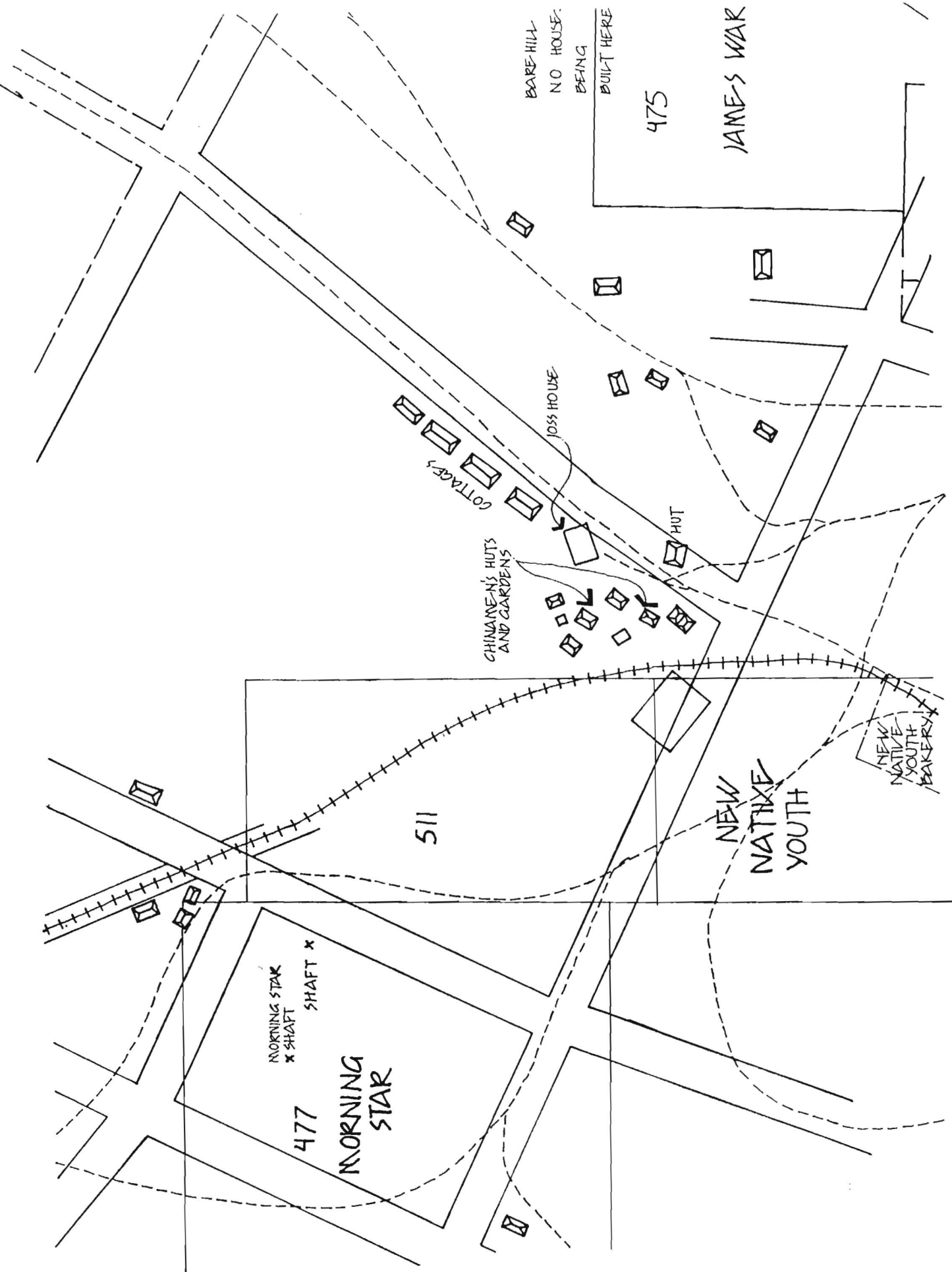


Figure 11: Drawing taken from survey diagram of Lefroy c.1884, showing Chinese camp.

SITE 40: LEFROY JOSS HOUSE

HISTORY: This may have been the first Joss House to be built in the North East. Erected in 1874 by a population of approximately 65 Chinese gold miners who had been resident in the area from 2-4 years. Three years later as the population increased and during a period of prosperity a larger and more elaborate Joss House was built and this was opened with a 24 hour celebration of feasting, fireworks and gambling. The building is described as weatherboard with iron roof. It faced away from the street and was surrounded by fruit trees. The entrance was guarded by 2 stone lions and inside the wood lined walls were painted bright pink. The Joss House was in use for at least 30 years with the remaining half dozen Chinese, mainly market gardeners, continuing their ceremonies into the early 1900s (B. Gibbons, personal communication). At some stage c.1904 the Joss House was dismantled and its contents removed to an unknown destination.

SIGNIFICANCE: As the first known Joss House erected in the North East this site is important as its existence may have influenced the erection of other Joss Houses at Garibaldi, Weldborough or Bransholme. Some or all of the contents from this Joss House may have been donated to other later Joss Houses, eventually becoming part of the collection now held by the Queen Victoria Museum in Launceston.

SUB SITE: See site 39, Lefroy Chinese Camp.

LOCATION: See site 39.

MUNICIPALITY: George Town. WARD: Lefroy.

ACCESS: Powell Street, Lefroy, in northeastern quarter of paddock near to house.

CLASSIFICATION: Site type 2 - Joss House, religious site.

DIMENSIONS: From local information regarding location the Joss House has been placed on an 1883 town plan. If this information is correct the Joss House is the largest building in the camp being approximately 18.7m X 12m, including a verandah 2m wide along the front. Buildings on the plan are sketchily drawn and may not be precisely to scale.

LAND TENURE: Privately owned by D. W. Crawford, Powell Street, Lefroy.

ENVIRONMENT: See site 38. The Joss House was positioned 2m from Powell Street facing west-southwest (away from the street). Fruit trees grew in its grounds.

RELICS: Nothing remains on the surface, but some of the contents of the Joss House may have been taken by departing Chinese to other camps such as Weldborough or Garibaldi.

PRESERVATION: No structures or relics remain on the surface.

SOURCES: Oral - B. Gibbons, (taped interview) and F. Maclean.
Documentary - Examiner 1/9/1874, 18/11/1876, 21/7/1877, Lands Department Field Book 1154, Town Plan Lefroy L/14 (1883), Lands Department, Hobart.

RECORD: Written observation, photographs, oral history.

SITE 41: LEFROY CEMETERY

HSITORY: Many Chinese were buried at Lefroy but only one marked grave remains. Standing alone in the north east corner of the cemetery, away from the European graves, the grave of Ke Mon is a simple earth mound with a sandstone headstone placed at the head of the grave facing west. The gravestone bears an inscription in English stating "Ke Mon, Died January 11 1881, Aged 31" and three rows of Chinese characters.

SIGNIFICANCE: This is the only structural relic of the Chinese gold miners at Lefroy, who outnumbered the European miners in 1873.

SUB SITE: See site 39 and 40.

LOCATION: See site 39.

MUNICIPALITY: George Town. WARD: Lefroy.

ACCESS: Via Percy Street, Lefroy.

CLASSIFICATION: Cemetery.

DIMENSIONS:

LAND TENURE: Cemetery reserve.

ENVIRONMENT: Situated on the north eastern edge of the town on the brow of a small hill.

RELICS: One marked grave with sandstone headstone bearing an English inscription and Chinese characters. There are many unmarked graves.

PRESERVATION: The cemetery is well maintained and the grave kept fairly free of weeds. The headstone is planted in the soft earth mound of the grave and is not very secure. The stone has weathered considerably and some of the Chinese characters are becoming faint but all are still readable.

SOURCES: Oral - Mr F. Maclean (caretaker).

RECORD: Written observation, photographs.



Plate 42: Ke Mon's headstone close-up.



Plate 43: Ke Mon's grave in the Lefroy Cemetery.

4. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHINESE SITES IN THE NORTH EAST TO TASMANIA'S CULTURAL HERITAGE

4.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CHINESE IN NORTH EAST TASMANIA

The significance of the sites recorded by this survey is inextricably tied to the importance of the Chinese in the region. In considering this question the lack of recorded historical information on the Chinese becomes immediately apparent.

It is the very lack of information which becomes a major reason for preservation of the sites as a clue to the history of the Chinese. In the words of the eminent British historian, W. Hoskins "the (human) landscape itself, to those who know how to read it aright, is the richest historical record we possess".¹

Most Tasmanians could be easily forgiven for denying any presence of Chinese in 19th century Tasmania. Tasmanian history is presented as a highly homogenised European history with little reference to the Tasmanian Aborigines and virtually none to the Chinese contained in historical texts. As a result of this omission researching the history of the Chinese in Tasmania is a lengthy task requiring searches through early newspapers and mines reports to glean mainly anecdotal accounts of the Chinese.

However, it is clear from an examination of the mining records, that the Chinese played a very major role in the development of the North East region and contributed a great deal to the Tasmanian economy as a whole.

The history of the Tasmanian Chinese is closely linked with the history of the North East tin mines. Alluvial tin mining was the main industry in the North East during the 1880's, accounting for approximately one eighth of Tasmania's total export earnings (a further eighth was produced by the Mt. Bischoff tin mine in the North West). The development of this industry relied greatly on Chinese labour and for over a decade the Chinese outnumbered Europeans on the tinfields of the North East.

Tasmanian Chinese did not experience the horrors of racial violence which erupted in Victoria and New South Wales in the 1860's, but their presence on the tinfields was not without incidence. Most of the antagonism was based on economic competition.

Many letters to the editor during the early 1880's express the discontent of European miners who complained of the Chinese reducing their standard of living by undercutting Europeans and working for lower wages.² However, strictly speaking, wages were not usually paid to the Chinese. Most alluvial mines during this period were worked on the tribute system, that is, the miners kept a percentage of their production or received a wage in proportion to the amount mined, the remainder going to the lessee who was usually absent. There was competition for each lease with the contract going to the lowest bidder, i.e. the group willing to work for the smallest percentage.³

How the Chinese were able to survive on incomes below those

significance as those places being components of the cultural environment that have aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present or future generations.⁸

The selection of criteria for evaluating significance has been a topic of much discussion amongst archaeologists throughout Australia in the past decade. Unfortunately, little progress has been made and the statement of significance remains a matter for individual interpretation as no explicit historical themes have been developed in Australia to aid this process and priorities for recording programmes (well established overseas) have not been set.⁹

It is important to draw a distinction between evaluation for conservation of significant cultural information and the evaluation for conservation of significant cultural fabric, as the criteria for significance are different. In considering conservation of significant cultural information it is not 'the completeness or visual quality of the visible remains as exemplars for community enlightenment or enjoyment which is at issue but rather the quality of the contribution which the surviving evidence can make to historical or technical knowledge'.¹⁰

Judy Birmingham stresses the need for clarification of objectives and development of historical themes in her paper on Analysis of Cultural Significance for Industrial Sites;

"the specific areas of historical and/or technical knowledge to be advanced need to be rigorously and explicitly defined in advance, first in order that the site can be assessed to see whether it can yield significant information, secondly in order that the collecting or recording procedures on individual sites can be designed specifically to achieve them... broadly-based historical research objectives... are still notably absent, although historical archaeologists have made a start. Physical evidence, for example, can contribute considerably to such major areas as labour relations, ethnic traditions, environmental challenge and human social behaviour. The formulation of state industrial historical research plans based on a compilation of the technical interest areas of each specific discipline, together with broader historical and behavioural topics, is critical to assessing priorities in the collection of significant cultural information".¹¹

In the absence of defined State objectives guidelines for the evaluation of significance have been applied in this report, using criteria outlined by Isabel McBryde¹² which have received general agreement. It is useful to list these in summary here:

- a) The importance of the site in illuminating or illustrating the past; i.e. its value in providing material evidence for the reconstruction of the past (including aspects of social, economic and technological history not recorded in historical literature), or its value in terms of material documentation of the recorded past.
- b) The educational value of the site and the role it could play in school, university or public education.

2. They illustrate the presence of the early Chinese pioneer miners serving as almost sole reminders of that era of Tasmanian history.
3. The educational value of the sites is diminished by the lack of remaining structures. This means careful observation is required to illustrate the social, technological and economic aspects of their lifestyle. However, with close examination and some interpretation aspects of the relationship of the domicile to the work environment, the method of mining, and Chinese social organisation and inter-relationship with Europeans became apparent. That the sites are of interest to school groups (even without any interpretation) is demonstrable by the occurrence of regular visits by a group from Scottsdale High School to the Garibaldi site in recent years.¹³ The sites are also of indisputable value to historians, archaeologists and history students, interested in recording the currently unwritten history of the Chinese in Tasmania.¹⁴

The sites are also highly significant in terms of criteria (e) and (f), i.e. the ability to illuminate the past and their educational value, in that:

4. The sites are not precisely datable in all cases but are mostly between 80-100 years old. The age of a site is a non-qualitative criteria which in many places is sufficient to rate a site as historically significant. For example, in Sweden¹⁵ and New Zealand¹⁶ all archaeological sites (defined as any place associated with human activity over 100 years old) are protected as part of the country's heritage. In Western Australia under the Maritime Archaeology Act¹⁷ all shipwrecks predating 1900 are considered significant.
5. The scarcity of the sites and their value as exemplars is difficult to determine on the basis of a preliminary survey alone, as the proportion of total sites covered by the survey is not known. However, if qualitative criteria, such as the condition of sites and their environs, are considered, it is likely that good examples of each type of site (miner's dwelling, mine site, shop, mining encampment, dwelling, memorial, township, cemetery, Joss house, garden, pig oven) would be very rare, and in terms of those identified by this study this is certainly the case.

The emotive and associational value of a site (point d, page) is probably the most obscure of the criteria for evaluating cultural significance, but for the descendants of the Chinese (whether they reside in Tasmania or elsewhere) the cemeteries and graves of their ancestors are traditionally of great significance. Whilst ancestor worship may no longer be actively practiced, respect for the ancestors is traditionally tied to the place of burial. In China in the early 1800s the ancestral burial ground was a mechanism for obtaining property rights or maintaining ownership of land. This was so important to the Chinese of this period that all who were able; returned to China to die or arranged for relatives to send their bones to China for burial in the ancestral grounds. Each year a festival of the dead is held in the Launceston cemetery to honour the ancestors.

3. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Chinese played an important role in the early development and settlement of the North East. They comprise a significant ethnic group which has been largely overlooked by Tasmanian historians. The sites are likely, through archaeological investigation, to provide evidence which would not be otherwise available as to the exploration of the North East, development of tin mining, integration with the European communities, social organisation of the Chinese, trade with Launceston, Melbourne and China, cultural traditions and transmission (including technological), cultural adaptation, and transport and communication systems.

The sites can serve an educational function at secondary and tertiary level. All site types (with the exception of mining sites and possibly miners dwellings) are scarce and are in danger of damage. Structural relics such as the monuments, graves and pig ovens are very rare and in danger of destruction through weathering and neglect.

4. PRIORITIES FOR PRESERVATION

With the information available some sites appear particularly worthy of preservation either purely on their own merits or because of imminent danger of destruction. A strong argument could be made for at least short term preservation of all sites to permit further investigation and evaluation. However, as no mechanism currently exists in Tasmania to expedite such measures selective preservation may be more workable.

It is not possible to rate sites accurately based on the scant information and superficial examination provided by this survey. Ratings should be regarded as a guide only and should be revised as new information becomes available.

The first priority would be to preserve at least one example of each site type and in some cases more than one.

SITE TYPE 1 - Chinese Townships:

Three definite townships have been identified, Weldborough Garibaldi, Lefroy and two much smaller and less definite townships at South Mount Cameron (the existence of a shop has not been definitely established at this site), and Ruby Flat (a shop was present on the Flat but the distribution of dwellings around the shop is not known).

of the components of the site, pig oven, garden, hut site (or sites), blacksmith forge (suspected but not definite), and the mine, which was the only Chinese mine to use machines and was a highly successful mine employing European and Chinese labour.

SITE TYPE 5 - Miner's Dwelling:

Thirteen of these sites were located and there are likely to be many more, which due to their isolated and dispersed locations have not been recorded. The best examples are possibly site 18 (Gold Creek, Cascades) and sites 27, 28 and 29 (South Mount Cameron) which are located beside extensive mine workings. Sites 18 and 28 are probably the best preserved, but all have suffered the effects of fossicking).

SITE TYPE 6 - Mining Sites:

Chinese mine workings are scattered throughout the North East but many have been reworked by Europeans at later dates destroying the original workings. There can also be a problem with authentication as Europeans and Chinese often worked alongside each other. The best authenticated sites are site 18 (located in an area which was leased solely by Chinese and where only Chinese pottery fragments were found) but the environs of this site have been heavily disturbed by forestry; and sites 27, 28 and 29 (located in predominantly Chinese leased areas where only Chinese pottery fragments were found) which are interconnected by extensive mine workings which appear totally undisturbed and the environs are also undisturbed.

SITE TYPE 7 - Market Gardens:

Many Chinese miners had their own gardens for private use and some also supplemented their income by selling surplus vegetables, particularly as they became too old to mine. Only two market garden sites as such (i.e. gardens established as the sole primary income source) were recorded by this survey (Mathinna and Gladstone) and both have been destroyed by ploughing and recultivation. However, there is no doubt that other gardens existed and better examples may be found amongst them. Well preserved garden sites of the secondary type remain at the Argus and Garibaldi sites and these would be worthy of preservation as part of the total site.

SITE TYPE 8 - Cemeteries and Materials:

Chinese were buried in many cemeteries in the North East where no trace now remains on the surface other than perhaps an unidentified grave (e.g. Union Church Graveyard, Goulds Country and Mathinna Cemetery). The market graves and two memorials which have survived at Weldborough, Moorina, Gladstone, Lefroy and Braxholm cemeteries are in varying condition but many are suffering advanced decay. These sites should be preserved for their value as culturally significant fabric, as sources of information and for their traditional importance to the Chinese.

SITE TYPE 9 - Dwelling:

Three dwellings and 1 dwelling site were located which were not miners dwellings, these are Jimmy Ah Foo's at Fingal, Le Fooks at Gladstone and Ah Moy's at Braxholm and the site of Jimmy Ah Foo's at Mathinna. All three surviving buildings have been altered from the original with Le Fook's having the last alteration. Le Fooks and Ah Foo's are well preserved and still occupied but Ah Moy's has suffered severe damage in a recent storm (1970s) and is in a dilapidated and

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 - ii) Hunt, R. 1981; Social Life on the Tinfields of North East Tasmania.

5. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 WHY PRESERVE CHINESE SITES:

The Chinese played an important role in the early development and settlement of the North East. They comprise a significant ethnic group which has been largely overlooked by Tasmanian historians. The sites are likely, through archaeological investigation, to provide evidence which would not be otherwise available as to the exploration of the North East, development of tin mining, integration of the Chinese with the European communities, social organisation of the Chinese, trade with Launceston, Melbourne and China, cultural traditions and transmission (including technological), cultural adaptation, and development of transport and communication systems.

The sites can serve an educational function at secondary and tertiary level. All site types are scarce with the exception of mining sites and miners dwellings, and all are in danger of damage. Structural relics such as the monuments, graves and pig ovens are very rare and in danger of destruction through weathering and neglect.

Forestry activities are operating on a very large scale in North East Tasmania and present a new threat to historic sites. Clear felling, followed by hot firing can obliterate all trace of former habitation. Mining has also had a major impact on the landscape of the region, and many Chinese sites have long since disappeared under subsequent mining. Although mining is no longer an important industry, small scale mining still continues. Sites which have survived 100 years of human activity, wild fire and neglect are rapidly deteriorating due to three main threats; forestry, fossicking and fire.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS:

The first step towards preserving historic Chinese sites has been taken by surveying sites and compiling a list. The next stage would logically be to complete the listing by including market gardens, slate and gold mining sites in the Tamar region (Golconda, Lisle, Back Creek, Beaconsfield), and commercial and domestic premises in the city of Launceston. The usefulness of such a list would be greatly enhanced by more detailed investigation of a selection of sites by a multi-disciplinary team (comprising industrial archaeologists, historians, landscape archaeologists and historical geographers) to assess their information potential. Such an investigation need not involve extensive excavation.

However, investigation without preservation may prove counter-productive, accelerating the destruction of sites by drawing them to the attention of fossickers. Immediate steps should be taken to ensure the preservation of sites including, listing on the Register of the National Estate, classification by the National Trust, and reservation as conservation areas by the Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service.

It is difficult to rate sites on the basis of a preliminary survey alone, but a list has been compiled to assist in the process of preservation. Sites have been identified as having a priority for preservation for their own merits,

relationship between them.

- SITE 19 - Old Cascade Road, Cascades, an excellent example of a hut site in well preserved, extensive, grassy environs which contain a garden and a cart track.
- SITE 20 - Grass Paddocks, Cascades, similar environs to site 19, but no defined hut site located. Two piles of chimney stones and a small terraced area are located on the site said to have been the location of a Chinese store.
- SITE 21 - Ah Choon's Store site, although very badly disturbed by fossickers this site may prove interesting. Enormous quantities of glass found on the site.
- SITE 22 - Moorina Cemetery, contains a renovated Chinese memorial in very good condition and should continue to be maintained.
- SITE 23 - South Mount Cameron, one of four Chinese towns in the North East, important for its location en route to Boobyalla Port. Surface relics are indistinct but wall depressions of 3 huts are visible.
- SITES 27, 28 and 29 - Blue Lake and the Clifton Camps, Mount Cameron, are a group of miner's dwelling sites which complement each other and are interconnected by extensive mine workings. One well defined hut platform and 2 piles of chimney stones plus large quantities of cast iron cooking pots and Chinese pottery cover the area.
- SITE 30 - Ah Cow's Oven, Gladstone, the only oven in the Gladstone area and one of only three Chinese sites in the area worthy of preservation.
- SITE 32 - Le Fook's House, Gladstone, a weatherboard cottage built in the vernacular style, one of six Chinese buildings remaining in the entire North East.
- SITE 23 - Gladstone Cemetery, contains six Chinese gravestones and the site of an oven. This cemetery has more marked Chinese graves than any other in the North East.
- SITE 35 - Jimmy Ah Foo's, Fingal, a very well preserved weatherboard cottage and one of only four sites located in the region. The cottage belonged to a notable and successful Chinese gardener and businessman.
- SITE 37 - Lefroy Chinese Camp site, the first Chinese town in the North East and the site of the first Joss house (site 40). Very few surface relics identified.
- SITE 40 - Lefroy Joss house, complements site 39.
- SITE 41 - Lefroy cemetery, one Chinese gravestone stands in this cemetery. The number of unmarked graves is not known.

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Tasmania's Chinese Heritage:
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Appendices

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APPENDICES

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APPENDIX 1

Occupation	Total	Education				Periods of Age			Grade			Electoral Districts										
		Read and Write	Read Only	Cannot Read	Read and Write (Foreign)	-20	-45	-65	Employer	Engaged on own account	Wage-earner	Hobart	Launceston	Wellington	East Devon	Cressy	Westbury	George Town	Ringarooma	Selby	Fingal	Other Areas
Blacksmiths	1				1			1		1									1			
Bootmakers	5				5		3	2		4	1			1					3		1	
Butchers	1				1		1			1									1			
Cabinetmakers	7			1	6		6	1	1	2	4	6	1									
Carpenters	1				1			1		1											1	
Clerks (Merchant)	1	1					1			1			1						2			
Commission Agents	2				2		1	1		2									1			
Cooks	6	2		1	3		5	1			4	1		2					1		1	1
Faillmongers	1		1					1		1		1										
Fishermen	1				1		1			1									1			
Fishcurers	2				2						1											
Fruiterers	3				3		2	2	1	2	1		2						1			2
Gardeners, Market	122	31	1	14	74	4	88	24	12	61	46	20	21	15	9			7	4	26		11
Hawkers	9			2	7		4	5	1	6	2	2	5	1					1			
Jewellers	2				2					2									1		1	
Joss-house Keeper	1				1						1								1			
Labourers, Flour-mill	1				1						1											
Saw-mill	1			1				1			1	1										
Lodging-house Keepers	8	1		2	5			2	1	6	1		1						3		4	
Lottery Keepers	7				7			7		6	1								7			
Medical Practitioners (Irregular)	2				2			1		1	1								2			
Merchants, General	4	3			1				2	2	1	1	3									
Minister of Religion (Missionary)	1				1						1								1			
Mine Owners	2				2				2												2	
Miners, Tin, Alluvial	695	3	7	108	573	7	410	270	8	386	295		1						529		165	
Occupation not stated	1			1								1										
Packers	2			1	1		1	1			2								1		1	
Servants, Domestic	2		1		1					2		1	1									
Storekeepers, General	34	1		4	29	2	18	14	12	7	14	1	3						23		7	
Stationers	1			1			1		1			1										
Tailors	1				1			1		1											1	
Tobacconists	1			1			1			1		1										
Wood-cutters	3				3		2	1		3									3			
TOTAL	931	42	10	137	736	13	547	342	41	495	382	37	39	19	9			7	80	26	184	14

Census of Tasmania 1891: Showing the number of Chinese (Males) in the Colony and in each Electoral District, their Occupations, Education and Periods of Age.

NB: This is reproduced in part from the Census of 1891, Appendix on the Chinese. Column totals donot always add up as some columns, of less relevance to this study, have been deleted.

APPENDIX 2

Occupation	Total	Education				Periods of Age					Grade			Electoral District												
		Read and Write	Read Only	Cannot Read	Read and Write (Foreign)	-20	-25	-45	-65	65 and over	Employer	Engaged on own account	Wage-earner	Hobart	Launceston	West Devon	Devonport	Selby	George Town	Ringarooma	Fingal	Lyell	Waratah	Queenborough	Glenorchy	Other Areas
Breadwinners Males.																										
Bootmaker	1	1							1			1									1					
Cabinetmaker	1			1						1		1		1												
Carpenter	1			1						1		1									1					
Cooks	4	2			2			3	1				4	1						2		1				
Farmers	2			1	1			1	1				1					1		1						
Farm Labourers	19	3		2	14		1	18			1		19					3		1			15			
Gardeners (Market)	146	23	13	43	65	1	15	96	30	3	28	50	68	6	33	10	14	25	8	12	6	5	4	7	7	9
Greengrocers	5	3			2			5				5										3	1			
Hawkers	1	1																								
House-keepers	2				2				1	1			1	1												
Merchants (General)	7	4	1	1	1			5	2	1	2	5	2		3						2					
Miners (Tin)	238			31	207	1		93	119	25	42	06	28	4	3					154	84					
Servants (General)	3	2		1		1		2					3	1	2											
Store-assistants	17	3			10	2	1	12	2				17	2	4		3			2	5	1				
Storekeepers	15	7		1	7	1		7	6	1	6	9				1	1			6	2	4	1			
Tobacconist	1	1							1				1	1												
Total Males	463	50	14	82	311	6	17	242	165	32	41	278	144	17	42	11	18	29	8	179	102	14	21	7	7	13
Females																										
Domestic Servants	2	1			1	2							2							1					1	
Total Breadwinners	465	51	14	82	312	8	17	242	165	32	41	278	146	17	42	11	18	29	8	179	102	14	21	7	8	13
Dependants Males																										
Hospital Patients	2			2					1	1																2
Scholars	7	6	1			7								2	1					1	3					
Sons	10	1		9		10												2		4	4					
Total Males	19	7	1	11		17			1	1				2	1			2		5	7					2
Females																										
Daughters	7	1		6		7								1	2				2	2						
Scholars	8	6		2		8									2					2	2	2				
Wives	6	2		1	3			6						1	1				2	2	1					
Patient, House of Mercy	1			1		1								1					1							
Total Females	22	9		10	3	16		6						3	5				5	6	3					
TOTAL DEPENDANTS	41	16	1	21	3	33		6	1	1				5	6			2	5	11	10					10
TOTAL CHINESE	506	67	15	103	315	41	17	248	166	33	41	278	146	22	48	11	18	31	13	190	112	14	21	7	8	15

Census of Tasmania, 1901: Showing the number of Chinese, Electoral Districts, their Occupations, Education and Age.
 NB: Columns do not always add-up as some columns, of less relevance to this study, have been deleted.

CHINESE SETTLEMENT - ORAL HISTORIES

Miss Helen Vivian interviewing Mr Charles Henry White 10-10-1983.

Mr Charles Henry White

Born: 17th January, 1892 (92 years old) at Lottah.

Present address: 46 Blainey Road
Punchbowl, Launceston

HV: It's an interview with Mr Charles White of 46 Blainey Road, Launceston.
When were you born Mr White?

CW: 17th January, 1892.

HV: Where were you born?

CW: At Lottah. Our homestead was right on the junction it was. Lottah used to be called the Blue Tier Junction at one time and then it was changed to Lottah, which means gum tree in Aborigine.

HV: When did your parents come to Lottah?

CW: I'm not sure when they came there, but they came in the very early days of the tin mining. It was a very rich area up there and Weldborough was exceptionally rich. There was tin lying on the surface. The specific gravity of tin is 7 and of course the earth that it is mixed with that varies in this specific gravity. But of course wolframs specific gravity is $7\frac{1}{2}$ and they can't separate it by gravity and tin is non-magnetic and wolfram is magnetic. They can separate wolfram from the tin by magnetism you see and that's how they separated it you see, but you can't separate it from gravity it's too close.

HV: How long did you live at Lottah?

CW: I lived there... I was about 18 when I first left Lottah to go and work at the South Garibaldi River.

HV: How long were you at Garibaldi?

CW: I was at the South Garibaldi Mine. I was working and I went through the Three Notch Track to the Blue Tier. I walked through there to Garibaldi.

HV: How long did it take?

CW: As a matter of fact I don't know but it's [speech hard to hear] up to the Three Notch Track they walk through there to Pioneer and a coach goes around by road to the other side. The Three Notch Track, it was a track and they cut Three Notches into trees from one to the other so they could see their way. That's how it was called the Three Notch Track.

HV: So you walked through from Lottah to...?

CW: Yes to Garibaldi.

HV: How long did you stay at Garibaldi?

CW: I forget now, nearly 12 months I think. Then I went to the Briseis Mine. I worked there for some time then I went to Victoria. I worked on the [speech hard to hear] water scheme.

HV: So your major memories of the Lottah and Blue Tier areas go back how far?

CW: Well it was before I was 6 years old that I remember the Blue Tier. They had a [speech hard to hear] road there. And they had a bump bump over it with horses and carts and the myrtle trees were nearly meeting over the top of the road and it was dense bush. Myrtle country. The Myrtle trees had no tap route and when they became exposed the wind blew them over quicker than those with a big tap route like a gum tree and the [speech hard to hear]. Cowens they cleared the Blue Tier up to make it good enough to pass. Each year or a couple of years a fire would go through and the trees fell and dried.

This process would go on for years and years and they used to sell grass and the ashes because there would be a lot of pot ash you see. They had about 400 sheep there on the Blue Tier and they fenced it and so on. They had a gate across the road, and it was just known as the Blue Tier gate. That was so their stock wouldn't get out and come down to the lower ground. They gradually fenced it off but of course it was too expensive to fence it all off at once. They gradually fenced it off and the Blue Tier, there is about 700 acres when you get on to the top of the Blue Tier you can notice the glorified air when you get there. I don't know the exact altitude. It's in the vicinity of 3000 feet above sea level and Lottah was built on the side of the Blue Tier and Poimena is the proper name of that. There is a township survey there and one of the streets is called Backup Street and I don't remember the other streets, but it struck me as, you know this Backup family he was... Other Chinese were not accepted as readily as people like Mr Backup at Lottah and Maa Mon Chin at Weldborough. Maa Mon Chin was a store keeper and he was always well dressed and he had 2 or 3 lovely daughters according to Chinese standard and they were pretty wealthy people. But Backup was a very wonderful citizen and his mother was Irish and her first husband was a man named Kingston and she told me that he was a Spanish Prince and when he passed on... She had one son to him Thomas Jerome was his name and when she married Backup she had one son to Backup. Simon Backup and he didn't look like the ordinary half cast, but you could tell he had foreign blood. But he was delicate, I think he had T.B. Backup gave them a wonderful education in Ballarat.

HV: Do you remember the name of Mr Backup?

CW: They used to call him George Backup, but G. G. Backup was in there, but we used to call him Mr Backup that's all. But he was a splendid man and this herbalist business, he used to have a canvas bag with a strap over the shoulder and he'd go out to the bush and collect herbs and bring them back and treat them then pound them up in [speech hard to hear] and water and the men on the Anchor - if a handle wasn't put in correctly into a [speech hard to hear] hammer, that was a hammer - they varied from 12 to 16 and 18 pounds the hammers for [speech hard to hear] big stones. They'd jar if they hit a foul blow and it would jar the flesh onto the bone and that would cause an abscess. They use to call that a jarred hand. Well Backup use to make poultice's, one to put on the front and one on the back. I remember someone asking why and he said "one pushing and one pulling". That one was to drive it and the other one was to draw it. He didn't charge people for that at all. He treated hundred's and he never charged for it at all. He gave that free and he started a store (there's a picture of it in there). He started a grocer's store and all the Chinese used to make it their headquarters but there was no other Chinese that used to live at Lottah like Backup and the others used to live in the surrounds of Lottah. A mine called the Liberator that Thomas Backup discovered and floated into a company, I think. It's as near as I can remember. They also lived down at the Anchor in a hut called the Long Hut. I was told they camped in that, but I didn't see it myself.

HV: That was at the Anchor?

CW: Yes, at the Anchor and then Terrivale was about 14 miles from Lottah on the St. Helens side about a mile from the highway and there was a Chinamen there Ah Jack and I don't know what his mate was, another one and they were tin mining there and they had the first I ever saw of this automatic washing machine. The power at Rivulet(?) was a place where it was run faster than others according to the width of it and they use to tie their garments to a twig - a flexible twig and they would tie a garment to each one of them and the water would get the motion that boiling does and it used to wash them very clean and they used to wear shirts. You know those shirts with red and black squares in them now?

HV: Yes.

CW: Well they used to wear shirts that colour. I remember them quite well. I was 6 years old then.

HV: Red and black check?

CW: Yes, red and black shirt Ah Jack use to wear. There was on the Tier a Chinaman there Ah Ling. He was spotlessly clean and always well dressed. I think he would be the last Chinaman, but there was a man there later Bill Bow. They use to refer to him as a Chinaman but he was a Mongolian.

HV: How did you know that?

CW: I was living there at the time. Of course Ah Ling was there before I ever left Lottah. He camped on the Blue Tier. The Blue Tier was a plateau of about 700 acres and it was a township and it had a school and my two eldest sisters and my eldest brother use to walk from Lottah to the Blue Tier to school. There was no school at Lottah those days. What was known then as the Blue Tier Junction and they used to walk to school and the school master was a man named MacGregor and he was very fond of using a cane and it made it very hard on the children. You saw a lot of that in the early days.

HV: How far was it from Lottah?

CW: About 2½ miles. It was steep and very often snowing there. I saw snow there one Christmas afternoon, only a very light fall but in the winter time I played football in snow storms. I have got a photograph of the teams of those days but whether you are interested or not I don't know. When I was about 18 my eldest brother and I used to play football. My eldest brother and I played and Jack Charlesworth. He use to be captain/coach. He use to play with us. He was the best centre man in Australia they reckoned at the time.

HV: What did the Chinese do for recreation?

CW: They use to have a Chinese New Year at Weldborough and also Garibaldi and there was one Chinese at Garibaldi who gave a demonstration. I don't know whether it would be defense or offense. There was a canvas and he had a long pole and he gave one hit like that and sort of [speech hard to hear] and he cut 6 holes in the canvas. I saw that. He cut 6 holes in the canvas.

HV: You were talking about Ah Ling and Bill Bow.

CW: Ah Ling towards the end he wasn't very well and any how they found him dead in his camp. He camped with Bow and Bow fell very ill and the doctor attended him but I think he died of old age. Bow was a Mongolian.

HV: Did you ever have any conversation with either of those two?

CW: Oh yes I knew them well. They were quite well and in the early days when the Chinese first started coming into the district they were more or less unduly looked down on, but some of the miners had the view you see, that those Chinese were coming to mine the tin that they would otherwise mine. They were foreigners and that caused a bit of prejudice and of course the children, they were influenced by the adults. But the Chinese they were very honest. My people had the butchers and bakers and general store there and there was only one Chinese who tried to be dishonest and he soon found he was in the wrong. But my parents - there was that much [speech hard to hear] on the books they closed their business and it would amount to a terrific amount today. It was all white people who owned it. It wasn't Chinamen

that owned it. They were very honest people and very industrious. They couldn't put as much work behind them in 8 hours as an Australian could, because in that time Australia was noted to put more work behind them in 8 hours as any other people in the world. It wasn't far removed from slavery because as a matter of fact if the bosses didn't like the men they lost their own job and they use to walk up and down the bank telling them [speech hard to hear] all these sorts of things. One contractor said he would sooner see a man get killed on a horse because if a man got killed there would be another one waiting on the bank. You had to buy a horse. I knew the contractor to. The same contractor, a stump fell down on a man in the quarry one day and killed him and he said "I wouldn't have that happen for ten bob", he put some adjectives into it. He said he was a good worker to. That's the attitude they had, some contractors but others were quite different, it was just the odd one that was uncouth. I always got on well with them but some of the bosses were unreasonably hard on the men. Because you see some people had families depending on them and they had heart trouble or some other trouble and they had to keep on going. They had to take these insults they wouldn't give it to someone that wouldn't take it. They knew too much for that. But it wasn't far removed from slavery in those days and that was forced [speech hard to hear].

HV: How did the Chinese work, did they work on the same mines and same areas as the Europeans?

CW: Yes the same areas. In the first place they use to use a sluice box. It was about 12 inches. They varied from 12 to 18 inches wide [speech hard to hear] and when they came to the real sluicing and nozzles and that it was quite a different process. In the very first days they use to shovel all this tin bearing material into sluice boxes and they use to fork the stones out, which they called [speech hard to hear] and the tin would remain behind. The box would have been 20 to 12 feet long most of them and they would have about 3 to 4 inches fall in it. The outlet end would have been 3 or 4 inches lower than the intake and they used to stream it in there. After that they got to the crown sluicing where they sluiced it into a [speech hard to hear] 4 to 5 foot wide for the average run. On the Briseis Mine they had a race there much wider. I never measured it but it was well over the average because the Briseis Mine was a very big mine. I worked on the Overburden. Their mine. There had been two distinct volcanic [speech hard to hear] there. They formed part of the Overburden and then there was a big volume of quartz sand. It would cut your fingers. It use to wear our fingers through handling the stone. We use to have to work three shifts - night, afternoon and day.

HV: At the Briseis?

CW: At the Briseis Mine. I was about 18 years old then. The spray of these nozzles, had 300 foot of pressure. The intake was 300 feet above the outlet and a 7 inch tip. They started 3 feet deep - diameter of the pipes were at the top and they gradually got smaller and smaller and they had giant nozzles and they'd screw a tip on that, that poured into the available supply of water. They would usually use a 7 inch tip and that would spray 72 heads of water. We would work under that and that would bring stones down, maybe 2 yards long, they would be 6 feet long and quite a lot into a [speech hard to hear]. There were men there with sort of rakes - long rods with rakes on them. They [speech hard to hear] of water. They use to rake them out and put them into dumps. Going into Derby you'd see these [speech hard to hear]. Have you been to Lottah?

HV: No I haven't been to Lottah.

- CW: That's about 24 miles from Derby. That's on the St Helens side.
- HV: I'm going there this trip.
- CW: The road that comes from Weldborough, if you keep going it goes into where our back yard used to be and you have to cross the main road to go in. The place we lived in was built by my grandfather as a Temperance Hotel and it was not two storey's, but it wasn't built like the present day two storey's. It was just built like a one storey place with an upstairs. There were three rooms up stairs and then there was an attic.
- HV: How many of you lived in it?
- CW: There was nine in our family that was reared. The eldest son died. He was christened the same name as me. There were two sisters and then the eldest brother and then there was another sister, then me, then there was my sister Kathleen. I think her photograph is still in the Royal Hobart Hospital. She was on the Board for a few years. She got by every year. She was very prominent there in different works and different charities and so on. She started the Northern Auxillary here. Then she lived in Glenorchy. They had a store there but how on earth she had time to do all the other things I don't know. Kathleen Wicks was her married name. [speech hard to hear]. One of her grandchildren lives in Sydney. My niece is a nursing sister. Two of her daughters (she's got 3 daughters) two of them - one a nursing sister and the other is a nurse and the youngest one is studying for Hotel Management.
- HV: You have quite a history of nursing there. You were describing the way the Chinese mined the tin. Did they actually work alongside the Europeans or did they work on their own?
- CW: They worked on their own. There was some of the half cast Chinese, they were some of the best citizens around. They were accepted into the Community and one of them sort of had an inferiority complex but we get that amongst our own people to don't we? They were really good citizens. Some of the best citizens they had - some of the half casts. You get other nations where there is good, bad and indifferent. But some of them were very fine people. I knew them very well. The Backups I knew them well and Thomas Backup treated him so well and educated him. I've heard it said that he could speak seven languages fluently. I knew he could speak two because when he entered State Parliament here, they reckon his opening speech was something terrific and then he said of course you always get the knockers in those places in a mining town. You got all sorts there. Thomas got into State Parliament and he said it was only a stepping stone. Of course in Federal Parliament the knockers laughed about him but he got into Federal Parliament and he had a knowledge of China so they used to send him there. He could speak Chinese fluently.
- HV: His father wasn't Chinese?
- CW: No, but he took the name of Thomas Jerome Kingston Backup afterwards, and he always remained. Backup was so good to him and did so much for him he was always loyal to the Chinese. Jill James told me, that one of his worst features in Parliament was, he was very much against women. His wife told me that he was a model husband. I knew her and her two daughters. They had one son that died at birth. I always thought it a pity because he had a wonderful brain, but still, I didn't agree with him on all his views. John Earl, the first Premier (Labour Premier of Tasmania) worked on the Blue Tier and Tommy Backup he said would have been a Labour man only he thought that Earl wasn't sincere and he became a conservative as they were known in those days and it turned

out Earl wasn't sincere either because while he was Premier he turned [speech hard to hear]. I don't think that should be allowed myself. They put him in as Labour, Liberal or any other that ran for politics. They should remain that until they have finished their term, that's my opinion. I don't think they should be allowed to but John Earl did. So Backup was right. While we were away fighting he tried to get in Parliament that we only get a shilling a day, the same as the English. Of course we were very much against that. He lost a lot of political popularity.

HV: Who moved that?

CW: Backup did. We didn't like that. That was when I first got to know that Political antagonism is only false. After I came back from the war, (I knew Jim Guy, he was a hard and fast Labour man) I was walking down Cameron Street (the base hospital was in Cameron Street) and I saw these two walking ahead of me and I recognised them as Tommy Backup and Jim Guy and I walked along and caught up to them and we were walking down and talking to them, they were talking just like real good coppers. But on the political scene they would say all sorts of things against them so I knew then that this was all hog wash this. The things they say about one another during election time.

HV: Just the way they had to play the game.

CW: Yes, like the war the things they said about our enemies during the war [speech hard to hear]. When there is a war on you can say anything about your enemies. You don't know where you are because they never gave any of the men who fought in the war the same privileges the same as our former enemies. They said some awful things about them. The man who used to sink their so called merchant ships, they brought him out here [speech hard to hear] I think it was. They brought him out here after the war and gave him big banquets here and the men who fought against him and the relatives that lost their dear ones were outside looking in and he was inside looking out you see and that Japanese man that buys the wool. He makes a fortune out of him. He gives donations around and they gave him the freedom of the city. They didn't do that for the men that lay their lives down. [speech hard to hear] I lost two careers going there. Because when I came back I lost concentration. I was studying anatomy and physiology and I lost that and then I was singing and I lost that. I got a bullet. It tore my lung open in my chest. It used to catch me with my breathing. You have to have a lot of breath control when you are singing. I was in the choir. It use to catch me singing [speech hard to hear] I lost concentration for anatomy after I got back.

HV: It doesn't seem just does it?

CW: The first ten days we were there, we fought day and night. We would go to sleep on our feet. We went from the Sunday night till late on Tuesday night. There were 14 of us cut off and only 14 of us left Tuesday night and we could not get any food or water. My tongue was cracked and my throat swelled for the lack of water. [speech hard to hear] I went to the extreme left. [speech hard to hear]. When I got there I was amongst all the New Zealanders.

HV: I'm very interested in the way the Chinese managed their mines. How many of them would work on a mine together?

CW: It varied in numbers. Sometimes there would be one on his own. Sometimes there would be more. They use to work and as the white man improved the methods of mining they also improved their methods. I suppose they got

to know how to do it. You couldn't prospect after them, they cleared every speck. They never wasted any. They use to live principally on rice. They use to come to Backups place to get it. You see he had the store there and all the Chinese used to deal off him. They used to come from around the surrounding parts. That's the Blue Tier (Poimena as it was) and the Liberator and various and the [speech hard to hear] Anchor. Backups were the only people I knew who lived in Lottah. They had the store. As a matter of fact Mr Backup's funeral was the largest funeral ever seen at Lottah. But they seemed an exception. They looked down on the Chinese unduly I think because when I grew up to be able to think for myself I knew there was a lot of good in them. They were very honest. Very industrious and so on. Until you grow up you are influenced by [speech hard to hear] the adults.

HV: How many Chinese would have been in the area?

CW: That's something I couldn't say because they were in so many different places. There was more in the Lottah area before I can remember than there was afterwards. I remember [speech hard to hear] coming from St Helens. There was a man named Wilson I think. A lot of the miners met them on the way. Wilson cut one of their pigtails off. They use to have hair plaited down their back and they called them pig tails. He cut one of them off and poked it through a stick. There was that sort of hostility towards them.

HV: You remember this as a story?

CW: Yes, only as a story. I can't vouch for it. It's only as I heard it. The other things that I told you is what I can remember. I remember about the one when I was six years old at Terrivale. That was on the farm of relatives of us. They had the farm there.

HV: How many Chinese were there at Terrivale?

CW: Only two at Terrivale. Only two Chinese. That's as far as I knew. I don't remember any being in [speech hard to hear] country. There was always quite a few about the Anchor and the Blue Tier and the Liberator and the surrounds of Lottah. Backups were the only family living there.

HV: Were there any Chinese working on the Anchor Mine?

CW: No. They didn't work on mines like the white man did. The Anchor Mine was a Company. A man named Dicky Mitchell, he went to England and floated it and it was bought by an English Company and they worked it for years. I can remember quite a number of managers there. Lindsay Clark was a manager. Jamie Lewis was one of the last managers there. I knew quite a number of managers.

HV: Why did they prefer to work by themselves?

CW: It seems there was a sort of a definite line drawn somehow between them and the white man. The half cast's worked amongst the white people. They worked with the Chinese and all. They were accepted. There was some very fine citizens amongst them. Some of them were not so fine. I knew some very good ones.

HV: So most of the Chinese who worked in the area didn't come into Lottah much at all?

CW: He use to be in the St. Helens area and I can't quite remember when he came. I was farming on the North-West Coast and after I was married I shifted back to Lottah and I worked on the Mount Michael Tin Mining Company. It was somewhere about that time, I think 1925 that I came back. I don't know whether he was there yet or not. It was 1925 when I came back to Lottah for the North-West Coast. I went farming.

HV: Did he manage to make a reasonable living?

CW: Just tin mining. Tin scratching they called it. That's the term they used for people just going about with a miners right. They called that tin scratching.

HV: Did he make a good living out of it?

CW: I think he just made a living and that was all.

HV: What about Ah Ling?

CW: He used to live well I think. Always dressed well and spotlessly clean.

HV: Did you ever see where he lived?

CW: Yes.

HV: What sort of house?

CW: A hut he had.

HV: One room?

CW: Yes, one room.

HV: How big would it be?

CW: About 10 by 12. That's the usual hut. Some were smaller, some were a bit bigger.

HV: What were they made of?

CW: Wood. Split wood.

HV: What about the chimney?

CW: Remarkably the white men and the Chinamen also made their chimney's out of wood. They use to stand a bucket of water inside the house in case the chimney caught alight after they went to bed and they would have to jump out and put it out and it wasn't years after that they made their chimney's out of iron. Galvenised iron. In our house the roof had two brick chimney's and a baker's oven.

HV: Did the Chinese have a stone hearth?

CW: They just use to live in huts. They had a bellows. A Chinese bellows made of four small pieces of wood about 6 inches wide, with a small plunger in it. When they would push it down, the air would go out of the bottom and when they pull it up there was a valve that would let the air in and when they went to push it down the valve would close down again and that provided them with air to blow the forge to sharpen the tool's with.

HV: They had a blacksmith's forge?

CW: Yes. They used that for a bellow's.

HV: Whereabouts was this?

CW: On the Blue Tier at Poimena. There was quite a lot of people who lived there.

CW: No they just came for their provisions. They would stop at Backup's place. I think Tommy Backup use to (Thomas Kingston really, but we use to call him Tommy Backup) do all their clerical work for them.

HV: So he acted as a banker for them and things?

CW: He would do all that for them I think. He'd help them. He was a very fine citizen Backup. He had two very nice daughters. In fact I have got their photograph's somewhere.

HV: Who's this old George Backup?

CW: They use to call him George Backup. They put in some places G. G. Backup. G. Backup would be probably his Chinese name. They used to have the names Ah Jack and Him Sheen and all these things.

HV: Do you remember Him Sheen?

CW: They were at Pioneer. They use to call them Shean's. They were very fine people to. I knew some of them very well. In fact they were half cast's the Shean's. Peter and Billy. I used to play football against Billy. A good little footballer to.

HV: Did you ever meet Him Sheen their father?

CW: No I never met their father.

HV: What about their mother?

CW: No I never met their mother. There was a lady, (her husband was a Chinese, a Chinese interpreter) and she was a half cast and she married a man that I knew and he had a brother. They were a very fine family. She was an organist at one of the churches for years. I knew her well and she was a very lovely person.

HV: What was her name?

CW: Cunningham. There were two Cunningham's there and they were no relation. This was Albert Cunningham she married. She had a very fine family.

HV: She was half Chinese and he was European?

CW: No her husband was European. She was a very lucky person, I knew her exceptionally well. I use to visit her when she was ill. In hospital here before she died.

HV: Did she ever talk about growing up as a half Chinese?

CW: No she never had an inferiority complex in any shape or form. She was a lovely person and she had a good family to. The family were fine people and very prominent. One was a very good footballer. He was one of the best. They were very fine people. Some of the Chinese descendants were very fine people.

HV: Do you remember how many half Chinese children there were at school, when you went to school?

CW: There was none at our school.

HV: That was at Lottah?

CW: Yes. Simon Backup was a good shorthand writer. He was a very well educated man. He could write splendid letters, but he couldn't make a speech. On the other hand Thomas was one of the best writers in Australia. It's rather peculiar. Thomas was a very fine writer. When the elections were on there was a lot of mud slinging.

HV: When did Billy Bow come to the Blue Tier?

HV: On the Blue Tier?

CW: Yes. There is a man still living in Launceston here that is a very delicate sort of person and he is the eldest person that is still living that was born on the Blue Tier. I'm the eldest person still living in Lottah.

HV: What's his name?

CW: Fred Keldhart(?). He was born at Poimena at the Blue Tier.

HV: Where does he live?

CW: In Launceston. I forget his address. He got hip disease when he was quite little. He has been crippled ever since. He is nearly blind now. He came out to see me one day. He was always a very religious person. His sister became religious and she was a missionary. Some of his children are missionaries to. But he always was religious right from a little child. He has grown up that way.

HV: Were there very many Chinese in the Blue Tier?

CW: Yes, there was quite a few up there. I couldn't give you an estimate of the number.

HV: Did they have a store?

CW: No. I don't know whether there was a store before I could remember. But they had a school there. The school was built by Mr Frank Cole(?) and someone else. Mr Frank Cole(?) was a German and he was a cabinet maker. He made a lovely job of building the school. The education department shifted it instead of leaving it there. They shifted it from the Blue Tier.

HV: What a shame.

CW: Yes, it is a shame because quite a lot of people lived in it. Darcy Griffen(?) was a very well known citizen out there. He originally came from Hobart but he kept the hotel there. Cook's before Darcy Griffen(?) and I think there was someone else. They shifted it to Heritage then to Jubilee. That was there for quite a number of years. Herrick was named after Jerry Herrick(?) who use to be head [speech hard to hear] on the Anchor Mine and he was appointed travelling [speech hard to hear] on the railway from Branxholm to Herrick. When I was only a kid, the railway ran from Launceston to Scottsdale. They use to drag their boilers from the Blue Tier through mud covered roads and bogs and everything with timber horses. It was cruel the way they treated some of the poor wretched animals. [speech hard to hear] I'm a great horse lover myself.

HV: Was there any horse racing?

CW: Yes. There was quite a few race horse's at Lottah. Mr Alf Wooley the chap who had Wooley's Hotel (I forget the proper name of it, I always remember it as Wooley's Hotel) he had several racehorse's. He only had two or three at a time.

HV: Was there a race track at Lottah?

CW: No, there was a recreation ground. I can remember when it was a heap of logs. Big logs, 8 to 10 foot through them. The working men (before the turn of the century) use to go down there of a night and saw them up, burn them and they got it cleared. It was the only [speech hard to hear] level place they could find on the [speech hard to hear] perched on the side of the Blue Tier Range. The Munday's at Piongana, he came through

from Piongana there and cleared up part of it. It grew up with scrub and he cleared part of it for the "Back to Lottah Celebrations." Jill James took me up and took my daughter [speech hard to hear] with me. I stayed with George Munday. The doctor wouldn't like me to go up and back in a day. It would have been too much. At that time I was much worse than I am now. Jill took me up and we stayed with George Munday (he's her stepfather). She told me she never knew anything except kindness from George. It would be out of character if she did. He's a wonderful citizen.

HV: Did you ever attend any Chinese celebrations?

CW: Yes, Chinese New Year. When we were older we'd get on our bikes and go through to Weldborough.

HV: They didn't have a celebration at Lottah?

CW: No, they never had Chinese Year there. The Chinese used to come through and buy up pigs and they used to go to different places. They would buy these pigs and drive them all to Weldborough. They used to roast the pig and have a feast in the Joss House. There is a man in Hobart, George Gardener, he is about, a good bit younger than me. He may have something that has been passed on to him from the olden days that would be of interest.

HV: You actually attended some of these?

CW: Yes at Garibaldi and Weldborough. Both.

HV: How did they differ? Was Garibaldi as big as Weldborough?

CW: No. It was much smaller. A more concentrated camp. The road from the South Garibaldi Mine passed through the Chinese camp. I knew one half cast and at Weldborough the Maa Mon Chinns. They were highly respected and of course Backup he was...

HV: You knew Maa Mon Chin did you?

CW: No I didn't know him, I only knew him by sight. I didn't know him personally. I didn't know his daughters either. They were much older than me. He was very much older and they were quite a bit older than me.

HV: How many buildings do you remember on Weldborough. Chinese camps I mean?

CW: Chinese camps. I don't know how many were camped around the vicinity of the camp. Some were camped out at what they called the [speech hard to hear] the Emu, what they called the Emu Road. Some were out there. They were scattered all... Some out in the other direction towards a track that went to Ringarooma. It was called Bell's Hill's or Bell's Plain's. That's all mining land. There's Renison Bell. You've heard of Renison Bell. He was a man who found tin in a number of places.

HV: Did the Chinese have a Joss House anywhere in the Lottah, Blue Tier area?

CW: No, they didn't. They had one at Weldborough. I'm a bit puzzled about the one at Garibaldi. Some people say they took the one from Garibaldi to Weldborough. George Gardener used to take Chinese from Weldborough to Garibaldi for the Chinese New Year. That's after the Joss House was shifted. My father brought it into town. He had a 100 weight truck and Allen Hollingsworth was Mayor of Launceston and he was also the Federal Member of Parliament. He was a senior in our battoon. I knew Allen well. He was a Conservative but he loved Ben Chifley. That was when Ben Chifley was Prime Minister.

HV: Were you around when they were moving the Joss House?

CW: Yes, I was at Lottah. I use to live at Lottah. I went back to Lottah and I lived in a house on the [speech hard to hear] country side of Lottah. My father was still living in our old home. I lived there from 1925 till 1935. Then I shifted into town.

HV: Do you remember what the Joss House looked like when it was in Weldborough?

CW: It looked something like it looks now. It's down in the Museum here. But of course they have altered it a bit. The Joss horse that Joss is supposed to get on and ride, well George Gardener got on and had a ride and if the Chinese had caught him they would have killed him. He was only a kid. You know what kid's are. The horse is still there.

HV: What about the building itself?

CW: It was built out of timber.

HV: What was the shape of it?

CW: Fairly long, but not very big. I was only young then and I didn't take much notice of dimensions. You don't when you're young.

HV: Did it have a verandah on the front?

CW: I'm not sure. I can't remember. We always used to make Chinese New Year. They use to have a display of fire works. Fantastic it was. To us anyhow.

HV: Would the display at Garibaldi been as impressive as the display at Weldborough?

CW: Yes it was very impressive. Very nice. What astounded me was this man cutting six holes in the canvas with one hit.

HV: Were you invited to eat some of the food as well?

CW: No. I never ate any of the food. I think they just had that amongst themselves. They may have had friends that they invited along to it but I don't remember.

HV: How did Billy Bow get on with the other Chinese?

CW: There was none there when he came. I'm not sure whether Ah Ling was still on the tier or not. I didn't know how he got on with them at all. Ah Ling was the last Chinese on the tier. He was very respected to. He was a very clean man and everybody treated him with respect. He was always well dressed.

HV: What sort of clothes did he wear?

CW: He use to wear a very light slipper and it was about that thick the sole. A very light material and white.

HV: About an inch thick on the sole?

CW: Yes it had no heels on it. [speech hard to hear]. He'd just slide along. The Chinese use to carry vegetables [speech hard to hear] from Garibaldi through to Lottah and come through the Three Notch Track and they carried them through on a bamboo pole and a basket on each end and they'd sort of [speech hard to hear] and the pole would swing. It was very wonderful what they could carry. They could carry tin like that to [speech hard to hear].

HV: Goodness me!

CW: It was marvelous what they could carry.

HV: Do you remember who that was?

CW: No I can't remember the man's name. I did know it but I can't remember his name. He use to stop over night with Mr Backup.

HV: Did he grow vegetables?

CW: Yes he grew them at Garibaldi and brought them through to Lottah?

HV: What was the setup at Garibaldi. Was there a large community garden or did he have his own little garden?

CW: He only had his own garden I think. He grew his own vegetables there. There was one old chap at Garibaldi with whiskers. I knew him to look at but there was...

HV: White whiskers?

CW: Yes.

HV: Sharkee?

CW: Yes, that's the name. I remember him. He was a very prominent man there.

HV: What did he do?

CW: I don't know what he did. I don't know much about him. A chap named Fred Higg (he use to work on the South Garibaldi) was a half cast. He married a half cast girl named [speech hard to hear]. She was very pretty.

HV: I wonder why Ah Ling and Billy Bow didn't go back to China or at least back to Launceston or somewhere that life would have been easier for them?

CW: No, they stayed on the Tiers until they bacame ill and Dr [speech hard to hear], that's the gentleman up there, he was a lovely old fellow Dr [speech hard to hear]. He was just like a father to them. He called everbody by their christian name. He would be going in and pick a flower and stick in his coat. He would make himslef at home. He would have a cup of tea with everybody. He was just like a father to them up there.

HV: Why do you think they stayed mining. Why didn't they leave when they got old?

CW: I don't know. There was one man, the last Chinese on Weldborough was a man they called Cha Lee Hee Jarm. He had a store there and his horse, he meant it to be called Colin but he use to call him Cullen. He had to line him up with a stump to see which way he was going. He was slow but he did about 3000 miles a year. He use to bring the vegetables and the fruit to Lottah and take them all around different places. He left and went back to China. He had a wife and family in China. He had been out here for years and years. It was remarkable because a lot of them had their wives and family back in China. He must have made enough money to go back. When some of them did go back, as soon as they got on the boat to go back they'd take so much back - money back they had to pay a pole(?) tax of about £100 to get there. It was an enormous lot for a Chinaman at the time. When they'd make enough money to go back they'd pay that money into the Chinese government and they'd live for the rest of their lives there. That was a tale I heard. I don't know if any of it was true. The people who saw them on the boat going back to China, they'd let their hair down. They were very happy that they were on their way home again. Of course you could understand that to.

CHINESE SETTLEMENT - ORAL HISTORIES

Miss Helen Vivian interviewing Mr Tasman Kincade 19-8-1983.

Mr Tasman Kincade

Born: 9th September, 1912 (72 years old) at Branhholm.

Present address: Binalong Bay

HV: To start off with, can you tell me when and where you were born?

TK: Born 1912, September 9th, at Branhholm.

HV: Did you live there most of your life?

TK: Most of it, except the odd times I was away working on the West Coast over in Victoria and Western Australia. It wouldn't amount to much more than four years.

HV: And your father, did he live in the Branhholm area most of his life?

TK: No. He was about 23 when he came to Branhholm. He was about 23. I think that's how old he was when he was married. He was married within 12 months of coming to Branhholm. The rest of the time he lived there right up to 1942, when he died.

HV: What sort of contact did you have with the Chinese in Branhholm?

TK: Well, growing up as a kid everybody sort of had the Chinamen. They were a bait for everybody's jokes. I suppose being like the other kids I looked at them. We used to "Ching-Chong-Chinaman", you would sing at him going down the street. Things like this. They baited them pretty badly I think. In my book they were very innocent and peace loving people. My first real contact with them was when dad started to work. After the mine shut down, the Arba mine shut down at Branhholm, dad had a little bit of plant of his own and he went in with Billy Ah Moy and his brother to take a tribute off part of the Arba Mine. Well, this was his first contact. Well they took two other Chinamen in with them. Do you want their names?

HV: Yes.

TK: Billy Ah Moy (Willy or Billy), Charlie (or Gemg) and then they had Ah Woo(?), Ah Wee(?) and another old chap who used to look after the water-race for them, Ah Yew(?). They worked on this tribute and shared it. According to their equity in it. Dad had his equity in it because he had so much plant. Bill Ah Moy had the most plant, so he had the biggest share. The two Chinamen, they took their share accordingly. Back in those days the money they got was pretty good because I saw slips where they sent money to China. There would be £30 and £40 at a time. Each time they would clean up and pay at about once a month. There would be £30 and £40 would go home to China. Back in those days £3 a week would be a lot of money. It was sent home to China to their families.

HV: How often?

TK: About once a month. They would mainly work in the winter months because there wasn't enough water in the summer. They used to dodge along and do all their dead work ready for next year. They would cut their own wood. Bill used to help dad cut the wood and dad used to help him cut wood. They would fill their own houses up with wood and the old Chinamen themselves, they didn't worry. They always carried enough home each night out of the mine to do them. They used to take old stink'n wet wood soaking from underneath the ground. They'd take this home and split it up into small sticks and they always had a great big fire place. They would put them up the chimney. They kept on putting the green stuff up and pulling the other from underneath. This is how they kept themselves. They were a

most enterprising people the Chinamen. They were. The knowledge that they had on various things and how they would approach things was really fascinating. They were really a very ingenious type of people. If a Chinaman was sick or something happened to him, he never rushed to the chemist, he went into the bush and gathered himself some of our local fauna and he made his own medicines.

HV: They made them themselves. Did they ever have a herbalist or a doctor?

TK: I believe they did get some of their own stuff in. They could mostly live off the land. Another thing about them they weren't like us. We get a nice job 300 bucks a week right'o. Well next week the boss says: "Oh well, I'll have to cut you back to 150 bucks a week". But the Union says: "No you can't have that". But they didn't have any Union. If they were making 300 bucks a week they lived fairly well. If they were making only 50 they lived accordingly. They got back to their bag of rice. They lived according to their means all the time, which is a big advantage over us I reckon. A lot of these things brought them in. To my way of thinking they were a pretty terrific sort of people. Dad thought a lot of them and they thought a lot of him. They even called him Ah Tassie because they thought so much of him. I reckon if anyone tried to interfere with dad in their presence they would not have survived. Christmas time there was about... Geoff had seven or eight kids, but there would have been about five of us kids then at home. My brother and myself and three girls. These Chinamen on Christmas morning had a heap of presents for us. Lollies and peanuts. Everything. Fruit. They would be real happy. They just adored kids. A lot of them had their families back in China. I don't know about the two fellows. I never got to their real history. But I do know they sent money back to their families. As I said, I saw this little pink slip. About that size, with the amount of money that they sent away.

HV: How did they send their money?

TK: I don't know, but I reckon it would be sent by some sort of draft because of this slip they got. It would be some sort of bank draft I would imagine.

HV: Was there a bank in Branhholm that would have dealt with it?

TK: It probably went through the Commonwealth Bank or the Post Office.

HV: They didn't have a head Chinaman or anyone who inspected it?

TK: They did up to a sense. They had their leaders who they looked to all the time. The fellow's in Branhholm didn't really have any real head, but there was always a fellow up around Weldonborough area.

HV: Maa Mon Chin?

TK: I think he was one of their big fellows, Maa Mon Chin. There was also Charlie Hee Jarm, who was a pretty big fellow. I think Charlie was the fellow who ran the gambling school to. Rodney Chintock might be able to tell you this better than me. Dad of course, due to the fact that he worked with the Chinamen, used to be sort of half looked down upon by the community. They said: "Working with those yellow bellies. Who'd work with them". In no uncertain manner he told them he could trust them fellows but I doubt if I could trust you Australians. This way his way, but when the Tribute finally cut out, Billy Ah Moy and his brother went to Western Australia. They were pretty well off. They also had a brother-in-law in WA who had a pretty big business, in Geraldton, Sydney Fom. They went over there and invested their money in this business with Sydney Fom. Well to the best of my knowledge Bill Ah Moy is still there.

HV: He's still alive? When did he leave?

TK: 1926 I think.

HV: About the time of the flood?

TK: No before the flood. He was well gone before the Derby flood.

HV: That was 1929?

TK: Yes around about 1926. I was still going to High School anyway. Could have been 1927. Don't tie me to specific dates because I just can't remember them. 26 or 27 around about that year. Well he and his brother went over there. They still had a sister living in Branhholm. She was married to a white fellow, Eager.

HV: What was her name? That was Ah Moy's daughter?

TK: No Ah Moy's sister. There were six in that family. There were three boys and three girls. One boy died when he wasn't very old, 18 or 19 perhaps. But there were six in the family.

HV: They all came here?

TK: No. They were born here, all of them. Billy Ah Moy was born on Ruby Flats. That's the eldest.

HV: He was only half Chinese?

TK: No he was full Chinese. Their mother and father were full Chinese. This is interesting because old Ah Moy came out here possibly to the Gold Fields in Victoria in the first place. Then he headed to Tasmania and back in China (they still might do it) you were sold a wife when she was born virtually. They were sold to them and it probably cost him two pigs and a couple of goats, something like that. I don't know what changed hands, but they were sold to them. Well, this Mrs Ah Moy was brought over when she became old enough to be tied to him. She came here and she came to Scottsdale. The train line only came as far as Scottsdale then. She came to Scottsdale on the train. Well I believe the story goes that this old Ah Moy was about the ugliest man you could ever see in a days march. Well she was a very petite little thing and a nice little woman. I can remember her when she was still alive, but I don't remember the old man, but I remember Mrs Ah Moy. She was a neat little Chinawoman, with bound feet and all. She had little feet. She saw this fellow and I believe she cried for a week because she had seen this ugly old Chinaman but because it was a contract she still adhered to it. Can you imagine Australians adhering to a contract like that?

HV: When did she come out, do you know?

TK: I couldn't tell you that year. It was back before the turn of the century. Well Bill was born at Ruby Flat in 1893, so she had to be out well before that. Around about 1890 she came here. He was then working on Ruby Flat (the old Armoury(?)), where there was a lot of Chinamen working. They were either working their own little lease or they were working on Tribute. Well, he then took her to Ruby Flat and he built a bit of a store and he had a Chinese store.

HV: This was Ah Moy?

TK: Yes. He had this store supplying the Chinamen with their own needs, because they bought their own type of food from China. It was sent out here and packed up in pine boxes. The old man died and Billy Ah Moy himself shifted that store to Branhholm. He built a new house at Branhholm and when he built it, he put a great big room on it and that was used as a store for the few Chinamen that were left there. He had this great big room. Well that was the place that dad bought. When he went to Geraldton, dad bought the house from him and all his plant that he had on the mine. Dad bought that. Imagine that, bought a house and all this plant. Dad had two thousand odd feet of pipes. He had blowers, nozzles, blacksmithing gear, everything and he bought the whole lot for a £175.

HV: Do you remember when Billy Ah Moy shifted the shop to Branhholm from Ruby Flat?

TK: No I can't really tell you, but Ned Holmes might be able to tell you that. Get onto Ned if you can contact him, because Ned worked with him at once stage.

HV: For the Ah Moys?

TK: Yes. They had a horse and cart and Ned worked with the horse and cart. Ned would probably be able to tell you the year. I can't.

HV: Not to worry. That's very interesting. There weren't all that many Chinese left at Branhholm at that stage?

TK: When I was a boy, say 1924 or 25, I would be eight or nine then. I wouldn't be many more. There was old Ah Wee and his mates, Ah Yew, Lee Too, Ah Woo and Ah Wee and another fellow that came from Gladstone was there with them for a while Lee Yew and then there were two Ah Moy boys and two Ah Moy girls. There was a young girl Rosie. She was the youngest of them.

HV: Can you remember the names of the Ah Moy kids?

TK: There was Bill and Charles (or Gemg) and I think the other one was Harry (the one that died), they used to call him Bo. He was Harry or Bo. I am pretty certain his name was Harry. There was Mrs Eager.

HV: What was her maiden name?

TK: Gee, I have forgotten it. Emily. Then there was Nelly. She was on the mainland anyway. I think she was the one with Sydney Fom. She got married into the Sydney Fom clan. And then there was Rosie who was the youngest. Rosie would now be 77 or 78 now. I think she still lives in Melbourne. Mrs Eager has been dead for quite a few years now. Charlie Ah Moy had been dead for quite a few years. He died when he was about 18, 19 or 20. I don't know about the other one. I haven't heard of her in years. There could have been an extra one, but I'm not real sure on that because you see, these got away from the family and were on the mainland. So there could have been an extra one. There might have been seven in the family but six of them I knew.

HV: And you think Bill is still alive in Western Australia?

TK: Perhaps you would like to read this little note.

HV: [Reading the note aloud] '...in regard to Bill Ah Moy, I can tell you that in 1980 he was living in Geraldton in WA and his youngest daughter Janice, was living in Perth WA. I have sent a copy of the above article to Miss Moy and perhaps you may hear from here. Her father will be 90 years of age if still alive. He was born at Ruby Flat in 1893". Well that's from Jim Smith.

TK: I don't know who Jim Smith is.

HV: He's got an address here on top of the letter.

TK: Maybe you can contact him. As the mining gradually cut out, the Chinamen gradually disappeared. One Chinaman, while I was there, Ah Yew, died while I was there. Now this is an interesting ceremony when they are buried at the funeral.

HV: Have you been to a funeral?

TK: I have been to a Chinese funeral. This old Ah Yew, well when he died they laid him out in an old empty house, and they got the doctor and he considered him dead. They got a coffin and put him in and they got Jack Smith who had a horse and cart. They put the coffin in this and away they headed towards the cemetery. Immediately behind the dray was a Chinaman. They used to have long, great pieces of paper you know. They tore it off something.

HV: Was it coloured?

TK: Not necessarily. Mostly it was a rice type of paper. He would walk behind pulling off pieces as he went dropping them on the ground as he went. The other Chinamen would walk behind. "What's this for", said dad. "That keeps the spirits away, because by the time they pick all that paper up, he will be down in the grave and gone". That stopped the spirits from catching up to him. The bad spirits. They didn't mind the good ones. They got to the graveside. He was put down without a great deal of ceremony. They put him down and covered the grave in pretty quick. A couple of fellows shovelled in and covered him pretty quick. And then they laid out a great heap of candles and these sort of paper candles that burnt like an incense type of thing. This was on top of the grave. Then they put food along with rice. But previous to this, there was always money put in the coffin with him. That was to buy his way through the gates when he got there. I suppose you could call it toll money. That's why some Chinese graves in around Bendigo in later years were raided you see looking for the money. Originally it was always gold. Anyway this money was put in. They covered it in, they put all this on top and there was a great heap of food right along the top. They never ate it. It was left there and on top of the grave. The hobo's used to come along afterwards and raid it because some of it was pretty good stuff. There would be the Chinese fish and their rice. There would be all the best of stuff put on there. I don't know when they gathered up the bowls. This was always left there. Once that was off that was the end of it. It became virtually an unmarked grave. You would hardly see where it had been. I could take you to Braxholm now and you can hardly see where a Chinese grave has been. They took no more interest, once the body was gone that was it. It seems to me, that was the story. Some of them did put an iron fence around a couple of them, I suppose to keep them. Years ago I suppose, back in the early 1920s they did dig three or four skeletons up from the Braxholm cemetery and they boxed their bones up and sent them back. They wrapped them up and sent them back to China. Well that was a Chinese funeral. It was really very interesting. As a kid, as I say, you don't take this in. The more I think of it now, you know, well I think crikey that's something a lot of people wouldn't see, not here. But when you get down to the good and bad Chinamen they had the chap I told Geoff Wilson about, old Bo Wing. He was virtually a sort of a godfather. He tried to stand over the rest of them you see. All the Chinamen hated him but as a godfather, you know they still hold some power don't they? Like in Italy and all. They might be hated and they've got to watch themselves on every street corner. But this old Bo was like this. Well he was a bad old coot, no matter what way you looked at him he had no time for the Australian population whatsoever, but of course due to the fact his attitude towards them they tormented hell out of him. He used to chase the kids in the street you know and they would pelt him. And on top of that he was a bludger. He bludged on his own Chinese mates. He had an old fellow called Ah Soo. He camped with him. They had a log cabin over the creek from Braxholm towards the big hill it was.

HV: Do you know where that was today?

TK: I could take you with a chain or two of it. I'm not real sure where it was. It was burnt down in about 1924 or 1925. Well this old Bo used to sort of stand over all these other Chinamen if he could you see, but he couldn't stand over the Ah Moy's because they were a bit too knowledgable for him, because they were English speaking. The Chinamen that were with the Ah Moy's, they could speak a few words of English. The Ah Moy's were English speaking, they spoke clearly just as well as you and I. There was no accent at all. This old Bo, he was a thieving old cow too, you see. He would pinch anything going. There were two or three Chinamen working their own bit of ground or fossicking in the Ruby heaps, all this sort of thing. This old cow if he could get it, would

pinch the bit of stuff they got you see. Well he went down to the station once and there was a load of stuff for Bill Ah Moy for the store. A few boxes of stuff. Well some way he conned the station master in, that some of the stuff was his that was in this. He conned him and got hold of his stuff and he unloaded all of it out and carried it home to his old camp. Well next thing Bill Ah Moy goes down and there was a fellow by the name of Chatters(?), was in the station then, and he said Bo came and got some of it. He said it was his. Well they take a policeman. Well they got most of the tin stuff down but anything that was perishable, the old cow had eaten it, but they used to get a lot of tin stuff. Rice and that sort of thing. Tin fish, sweet meats and a bit of their rice. But they got a lot of the stuff back. It didn't do him much good because at some later date after that he was heading home across the Branhholm Creek. In those days they would split a big sappling and just level the top of that and put it over the top of the creek. Well that was the bridge to walk over. Well there might be two of them side by side. Anyway he was going home with a sugar bag. Everybody carried stuff in a sugar bag then, even Australians. They'd always carry stuff in a sugar bag. He was going across the creek and some of the hobo's got in front of him and they got a handsaw and sawed up underneath it, and almost cut through it. He was going across this creek and it was in flood because there would be a lot of water going down, because of the mines working up above. Next thing poor old Bo's going down chasing his stuff down the creek. In he went and he's chasing his stuff down the creek. Well Geoff was really amused when I told him. He said that was...

HV: Poetic justice?

TK: I suppose it would be. Poetic justice would be the best word.

HV: You reckon the bridge had actually been sawn through?

TK: Oh yes they did. They could see it after. There was a piece lying there and it had been sawn. Two or three cuts up in it. They let the old coote down.

HV: It was just as well someone else didn't come over it.

TK: That's right. Well they knew he escaped of course. Well as I say nobody had much time for old Bo because he didn't co-operate much with the local people. Well there was another old fellow, old Ah Yew as I mentioned earlier. He used to grow a bit of vegetable. He would take this stuff around the town and sell it, his bit of vegetable. They had two baskets. He was only a little fellow he wouldn't be as tall as Stella, a little fellow. He wouldn't weigh 9½ stone. He was only a little fellow. He used to carry two baskets. Two great wicker baskets that I would nearly defy anyman to pick up. They were strong as ants you know. He'd get it up on his shoulders and he would bounce along. Half the time he had it and half the time he didn't. Nothing suited the hobo's better. He'd take this down to the town and they would sneak up behind him. One would get on one basket and one would get on another. They would give him a spin and the poor old fellow would be going around and around. You imagine that weight, because he couldn't stop himself. He would spin around and around with this. Around he would go and there would be vegetables around the place. This is the way they were treated. But as I say they were very inoffensive, they were law abiding, they didn't interfere with anybody who didn't interfere with them. All of them led a big long life and I'm not too sure...

[end of side one]

HV: Bill Ah Moy getting married to...?

TK: I don't know who the girl was but they were married, according to Backup in Bendigo.

HV: This is old Mr Moy?

TK: That's not the real old man, that's the son. That's the chap that dad worked with.

HV: He married a full Chinese girl?

TK: Yes a full blooded Chinese.

HV: Do you know who the...?

TK: No I don't know who the other's are. I think that one...

HV: So he would have gone to...? That says the 26/7/27, William and Ethel. That was his wife's name?

TK: Yes. No I don't even think that was his brother, because that's his brother there. No, I don't think that was his brother. That's his brother's wedding. I don't know who the people are in it because the wedding being away you see.

HV: She's pretty.

TK: She was. She was one of the prettiest girls I've ever seen. She had that real Chinese look, but she was still pretty. The strange thing about Chinese, a lot of them when they are young, you know it's only when they get old they get ugly looking. They're like Italians, they get ugly don't they. But you see Italian girls and some Chinese girls are terrific. But she was a really pretty girl. When they got old they got very haggard looking and they sort of walked with a slouch. When they would walk they would slouch along.

HV: This other photo, this is Bill's brother?

TK: That's Charles or Gemg. That's Bill.

HV: Do you know who the other people are?

TK: No I don't know any of those because he was married away. I'm not too sure but I think he married a girl from Melbourne. They were married in Launceston I think, or is this the one married in Bendigo?

HV: No this one says Bendigo, Bill's does.

TK: I don't know but this fellow could have been married in Launceston.

HV: Yes. The photograph is done in Melbourne. The Burlington, Melbourne.

TK: Is it, they must have been married in Melbourne then.

HV: It says: "With best wishes from Mr and Mrs C Moy, 1931". You met her did you? She came back to live in Branhholm?

TK: Yes.

HV: How many Chinese women were living in Branhholm then?

TK: She didn't live there. That was the time they went away. After they married they never came back. The same as Bill. He never came back. This was Bartlet Brothers, Bendigo. Well they must have been married over there somewhere as there were a lot of Chinese in Bendigo in those days. The same as Melbourne. There was a lot of Chinese, as I can remember being over there in 1934 and there was a lot of Chinamen around Melbourne then. But she never ever lived at Branhholm, nor Bill's wife. They were gone then over there. Due to the fact with the contact with dad, they kept him up with this. They kept in contact and even about five or six years ago Bill Ah Moy came back to Branhholm looking for

Mum and he came up and he found us and he came and had a cup of tea and he had one of the Chung Gon girls from Launceston and he came up and he had a cup of tea with us and a good old natter. He still kept contact with Mum all over those years. He always used to send a card and this is what I say about them. They were people that anybody who thought something of them, they really had a friend for life. So that nobody can ever say anything to me about the Chinks. Nobody.

HV: That was just six years ago?

TK: Yes about 5 or six years ago. Before we came down here. Not a great while before we came down here. He was a little tottery old Chinaman. But you got a job to tell a Chinaman's age you know. They still got their skin all full and everything. They never get that tattered old skin. There was an old fellow who used to live down the road from us at Branhholm, old Ah Doo and he had a hut on dad's property, but it was there in the first place when dad bought it, and old Ah Doo carried on there and that old fellow could have been well over 80 but he still had that yellow Chinese skin. Just like a bit of leather, but it wasn't shrivelled or anything like that.

HV: I wonder if I could get a copy of those, maybe take a photograph of them?

TK: Yes. But I wouldn't like to let them go away because they are too valuable. It's like the photos I gave my daughter. I said: "Well look, you can do what you like with them, but don't let them out of your sight, because people would make a grab for them you see". I wouldn't like to lose them because they are of great sentimental value. But you can take copies of them. Have you got a flash? Anyway you can take them tomorrow.

HV: I was going to ask you earlier, you were talking about your father working in with Ah Moy and these other four Chinese. You mentioned that they were working on a tribute system. What was the tribute?

TK: Well the company owned the lease. The Arba Company owned the lease. Well you took a tribute off him and you paid them a percentage. I think they were paying 15% of their gross to the company for the right to work on their leases. Well, if you had plant off them or you had used the Company's plant or used the company's water you paid 17½%. But they had their own water scheme, their own water race. It was all Alluvial you see. They had their own water race so they paid 15% of their gross. That was before expenses were taken out. They called it the tribute, but where the work came from I don't know. It goes way back in English history. You paid tribute for so much. There's another point you may want to catch to, while it's on. They used to have the old motion pictures. Silent films used to come into Branhholm then. An old fellow by the name of Berto used to bring these picture and he used to sit up and he wound the handle by hand to put the pictures through. These old comedies like earlie Charlie Chaplin's and Fatty-Ah-Buckle and so on. These old Chinamen used to line along the back seat. They always got along the back seat. They always went to the pictures. They'd line up along the back seat. There might be eight or ten or a dozen of them. They'd be nattering away and they'd laugh and cackle. They'd be nattering away amongst themselves because that end Chinaman would be talking to this end Chinaman and everybody seemed to understand one another. They'd be the same when they'd be walking through the bush. If there was eight of them they'd be in line one behind the other. They never walked side by side, always one behind the other. The back fellow would be talking to the front fellow and so on. They had tracks all about up through there. It's a shame now that a lot of these tracks are grown up. Up around Branhholm area and you go from Branhholm, walk through the Chinese track right across to the Cascade and through to Weldborough. All these old tracks they had.

HV: A separate track, it wasn't on the road?

TK: Oh no it wasn't a road. A bush track going through. Dad used to go across with the Ah Moy's over to Ah Chung who had the store on the Cascade River and they used to walk from Branhholm over there, about seven miles. They would walk through to there. These pictures - they used to get there and really enjoy that. If there was a concert or anything like that on, the Chinese would always be there. They participated in our ceremonies the same as their own. Their own ceremonies of course were always important to them. Everybody turned up to them if possible. But they still participated in Australian ceremonies too. They would come along concerts or fairs. They would buy at the fairs. They were as I say very good living people.

HV: Community minded?

TK: That's right. They said, this where we belong so we will take part in it.

HV: This period with the silent films you were talking about. When was that?

TK: I guess it would be 1917, 18, 19, round about that time. During the war time right up to 1925.

HV: It wasn't a very big population at that time?

TK: It could have been up to a dozen of them. I think there was one or two, that up and disappeared. There might have been a dozen or more, up to 15. There was an English fellow by the name of Bonser who learnt to speak Chinese. He used to go sit at the back and talk away with these Chinamen all night. He'd sit at the back along with them. I can't think of his other name. I think it was Kelly.

HV: Kelly Bonser?

TK: Yes. I believe that was his name, but I'm not too sure. He used to sit down and natter with these Chinamen all night. I started to learn. They tried to teach me words when I was a kid. I started to learn a few of them. Quite a few words. Only thing about the Chinese language, there is no swear words in the Chinese language.

HV: Aren't there?

TK: No.

HV: Can you be sure of that?

TK: Well I think so. Why does somebody say there is?

HV: No.

TK: Well I 'm pretty certain there is no swear words. No real swear words. They have got their means of twisting words around. Marloo(?) was their worst word. I mean that meant you were really very bad. Marloo was the worst word that they'd say to you. But they had words for other things which could be like our Australian words that have been twisted around. They had all those. But I learnt. I used to get down there and sit and pick up something. I would say: "What's that, what's that"? They used to tell me. I never went on with it. I should have done, I know. I would have learnt quite a few. The only thing I did know, I could speak the Chinese one to ten.

HV: You can still remember it?

TK: Yes.

HV: I'm trying to find here, there was a Chinese opera, but it was before the time that you could remember. It was 1893 when it came to Weldborough. It performed in a tent.

TK: Also they had a small Joss House at Branhholm. Only a small one. The main Joss House was at Weldborough. They had a small Joss House at Branhholm. The building was pulled down. A chap bought the building and pulled it down and built it into a house which still stands. And they took all the interior fittings and the gods and everything out of it. They went to the

one in Weldborough which is now in the Museum in Launceston.

HV: Do you remember when the Joss House was pulled down?

TK: George Watt pulled them down and he came there in 1929 or 30. George Watt shifted it from Gladstone and he bought the place there at Branxholm and he pulled this down and built part of a room onto it. It was a room about 10 x 12. Something like that. Bo Wing got his old camp burnt at Branxholm. Well a fellow there, a miner bloke Rolly(?) Bonner got a little note book and he put a pound in it. He wrote on it that this fellow had been burnt out and he had no place to live in and he put a pound in it. He started off with a pound (20 shillings). That old cow went all around Branxholm. He went around Scottsdale, and he even went into Launceston and I believe at once stage that he was in Queenstown, because the cops shut him up and stopped him from collecting. He collected more than £100. When he got away from Branxholm, he told the people that he had a wife and 5 kids and they were up there starving and no place to live in. They were giving him money and he got more than £100 in this book. That was old Bo the godfather.

HV: That was a hell of a lot of money in those days!

TK: By gee I'll say it was! You take it as £3.00 a week. I don't even know what finally happened to him, I lost track of him. After that episode he never came back to Branxholm. From there he could have mucked around Launceston and probably he finished up in Melbourne and so on. He wasn't a real old Chinaman in those times. The old fellow that was with him, old Ah Soo, I think he died in Launceston.

HV: Just going back to this Joss House. Do you remember seeing this Joss House?

TK: I was in it.

HV: How often?

TK: I'd be about 8 or 9. Ten perhaps. I went up there once and they had a New Year festivity at this Joss House and I went up and ate some of the food. They had terrific cooks you know the Chinamen.

HV: Can you describe the Joss House?

TK: Well it was just a building. In the back of it were a whole lot of festoons. There were gods and coloured papers. A lot of hangings and little pictures. Always on the alter part of it. It has a double door opening like that in it. Narrow doors. As you went in there was a light which they kept continually burning on this alter. That I can remember pretty well. They had crackers there and all this sort of thing was in it. It would be in the Museum one now. Also we used to go as kids. Billy Ah Moy would take us up to their place for their Christmas festivities, which was a New Year. They had no god as we know it but they had their own form of worship, but not the gods as we know. Not our form of worship. They took us up and we used to have some terrific feeds that they would put on. Down at the back at the place we lived in at Branxholm, was an old Chinese cooking oven where they would roast a full pig. I wonder if it is still there?

HV: Right at the back of your place?

TK: Yes. It was built up with stone and clay.

HV: It would probably still be there unless someone has knocked it down.

TK: Well I don't know. It could have been knocked over. I wish it was still there. They have got one in the Moorina cemetery. You've seen it I suppose?

HV: Have you looked for it?

TK: No not in recent years.

HV: The Joss House, do you remember where it stood?

TK: Yes. I can take you within a little more in the area of this house. There was a Chinese camp just over from a water race. Dad and Bill Ah Moy used it on the mine they were working. That's why this old fellow looked after the race you see. This old Ah Yew he looked after it because he was right on it. He used to walk around it and look after it and clean sticks and rubbish out of it. He made sure the water kept coming. He had bits of China and stuff that's there. It's a bit of a walk but I can take you near enough. The Joss House was built upon pegs. They didn't dig a foundation out. It was built up on pegs. Just on stumps. They didn't build anything really permanent, although a lot of them were there for a long time.

HV: Did it have a wooden floor?

TK: All wooden. Weatherboardsides. Iron roof.

HV: Not split palings?

TK: No. There was iron on the roof.

HV: Would there have been very much stuff inside, or just a few things?

TK: It was literally filled. You would walk in and it was all around you.

HV: Do you remember the door way as you walked in, were there Chinese characters down the side?

TK: As it opened up?

HV: Yes.

TK: I wish I had a picture of it. I know there was a lot of Chinese characters about. I would say they were on the door. I don't think there was any on the outside. As I can remember, I don't think there was a verandah on it. The one at Weldborough had a verandah on it and the Chinese characters were in that. On the door as it opened, they'd be down each side of the verandah. I can remember they had a lot of it about. They were always displaying their signs and everything pretty well.

HV: That Joss House was there until about 1929?

TK: Well say about 1929 or 30.

HV: That's fantastic. That's why the people really haven't heard about that one.

TK: It was only a small one. It was only a subsidiary of the big Joss House. They always gathered at Weldborough for the big celebrations.

HV: Oh yes you mentioned the Chinese New Year at the Joss House.

TK: Yes.

HV: You were there one New Year?

TK: It was either a New Year or some special celebration. I wouldn't say for certain that it was a New Year but some special celebration. I can remember as a boy about 8, going up there with Dad. Eight or nine I'd be I suppose at that time. We had this and they handed around all the little sweet meats and stuff. It was terrific, Chinese cooking. As kids, coming from school we used to pass the chaps that dad was working with. They'd camp one each side of the creek in their little huts and we used to come past and we would always call in and see them because especially if it was getting towards tea time, they'd have this toasted bread on top of rice and by gee it was terrific. It used to be done on top of the rice, and we'd go in as kids. You know how we'd want something, something. That was when I would see the old fellow smoking opium. He used to lay back on the bunk and smoke this opium. I watched him. He didn't take any notice of me watching him because me being dad's son, he wouldn't take any notice. They idolised kids you know. They thought the world of us kids. They used

to reckon we were bad boys sometimes. We used to even then we used to torment them a bit you know. They reckoned we were bad boys. You'd do something to him and he would make a run at you. He'd go to kick you. Even though we were friendly with them you see. They always looked on us kids as you know, as really family.

HV: Can you tell me a little about the opium smoking?

TK: Just exactly what do you want to know? The process?

HV: Anything you can remember about it.

TK: They had the opium. It looked like a real thick tree. It was in little fields made of horn. It was perhaps an inch and a half long by seven eighths of an inch across them. The top was fitted as neat as you could fit any medicine bottle now. It was all carved out of this horn. Well they used to get this and they'd have this little light burning with a bit of wax and a wick on it burning in a glass dome and the light would burn up through the glass dome and that kept the light nice and steady. They would get this opium and they'd get something like a fine knitting needle. It would be a 20 gage knitting kneedle. They'd get this. A big hat pin was a great thing they used to love. Those big old women's hat pins. They'd get this and poke this into it and twirl it around a bit and there was like a little knob on the end of it, about as nearly as big as a pea I suppose. They would hold it over this flame and they'd twist it around and around until they got it nice and suitable. But it just wouldn't quite run, to run off the needle. They'd get it nice and juicy, well not juicy but candly like. They'd get it to that stage. Well they would get a pipe. They'd get it on top of the pipe and they'd roll it around like this, put it over the flame and roll it around until they got a nice shape and they'd push it into the hole like that and try and withdraw the needle. If the thing came away they would try again. Sometimes it would take up to four or five minutes to do. Perhaps more. Eventually they would get it to stick there and they they would pull it out. It had a hole through the middle and it stuck there. Then they would lay all this light in the mouth and they they would start to draw and let the flame go fair into that hole and they would draw. I don't think skin divers could take nearly as long as these fellows could. They'd just hang on and hang on, till they sucked all that in. The whole lot would be sucked in and he'd lay back and he'd let this plume of smoke go. Well it would half fill their cabin and it was a peculiar smell. I can still smell it you know. He would lay back and he'd [speech hard to hear]. My brother and I used to go and have a look at him and watch him. He never took any notice of us because we were part of the gang you see. But he was the only one I knew there. I think old Ah Doo, that was down below mums, I think he might have smoked a bit. I never ever saw him smoke it. But that's where I got the opium pipe from, old Ah Doo's. I got the complete opium pipe.

HV: What did it look like, was it like this smooth clay?

TK: Yes. It's really good clay isn't it? You look at that, it's finer than any China you can get.

HV: It's beautiful. It wasn't engraved in any way or decorated.

TK: No there didn't seem to be any markings on them. Even on the pipe itself. The stem was made out of a black type of bamboo. It was only about half an inch or five eighths on the outside, but they had a little silver sort of cup fitted on that and then fitted into the stem of the pipe. All their stuff was done with some method in it. They never did anything just for fun. The same as their water pipe. I used to call them tobacco wasters, their water pipe. They would suck on this. They would put a little bit of tobacco on it and they used to have quills of paper made up out of their Hang-mee(?) tea packets. They tell me that paper was infiltrated with opium. I've heard this but I couldn't prove this.

That paper would burn. They always had the little light. Always a wax candle with a wick burning in a heap of wax. That paper would burn. They'd light the old pipe and suck on her and suck until they got a great belly full of smoke then they'd let it go. As it would go the water would bubble and push the tobacco off. Partly burnt and partly unburnt tobacco. As they took that off they'd go like that and blow that flame out, but the jigger was still blowing. Well when they got another lot they would go, with a different blow and it would come into flame again. They had this, that would take the flame off but leave the flame blowing. It would be a blow like the end of a cigarette. Like that. That stuff would burn away and I believe it was infiltrated with opium or soaked in opium. But I can't prove that because an analyst would have to do something.

HV: You say it was the paper from a tea packet?

TK: From a tea packet. A Chinaman never threw anything away. They used to pee in a bowl, take it away and they'd break it down to 10 to 1 and pour it around their cabbages and vegetables. It would be broken right down. They didn't use their other. They always went away; they had their place. I believe in China they do. I believe all their excrement is all taken in paddy wagons and taken down. But they always saved their pee. They always had their little can under the bed and saved their pee in that. I've seen them do it. Now don't talk about the Chinaman being a dirty fellow. A Chinaman was a very clean bloke. He had an old can that didn't look very much, but they had a dirt floor. They never worried about putting in a board floor because that let the snakes get in underneath it. They always had a dirt floor and it was done up with the best gravel they could get around to keep. They swept it out everyday. They would have their tea and scour their pots. They always had the old cast iron pots. I've got two or three of them out here, they came from an old Chinese camp. They would turn them upside down on shelves. They had rows of shelves. Their plates always stood up on a shelf. When they went to cook their next meal they didn't take that pot down like we do and shove the stuff into it. That pot was scoured out again. They used to make those little round sags. They used to make brushes out of them. That was scoured out properly before they put any food in.

HV: What's a sag?

TK: Those little rush sags you see out in a paddock. Those little round things, that grow up so high. They are like little pins.

HV: Rushes?

TK: Yes little rushes or they would get a cutting rush, but they used to like them little round ones the best. They would get them and bind them tightly on a piece of wood and had it like a little scour brush about so long. Now before they put any food into that, that was always scoured out and washed out properly again. I'd eat a Chinaman's food off them any time because they were clean.

CHINESE SETTLEMENT - ORAL HISTORIES

Miss Helen Vivian interviewing Mr Bill Gibbons 22-1-1984.

Mr Bill Gibbons

Born: 7th October, 1899 (85 years old) at Lefroy.

Present address: 125 Invermay Road
Launceston

HV: Could you tell me a bit about your own background. When you were born, where and about your mother and father?

BG: I was born in Lefroy.

HV: When were you born?

BG: 7th October, 1899.

HV: When would your earliest memories be of Lefroy. How old were you then?

BG: I can go back on different things. Back when I was quite small, different things that happened, I can go back.

HV: You lived in Powell Street in Lefroy?

BG: Yes. We lived in Powell Street and a year after or a couple of years after we lived on top of the Grammar School Hill. We lived there for a while. Then we came back to Powell Street again. We bought a place there.

HV: The Chinese or a lot of Chinese also lived in Powell Street?

BG: The Chinese lived at the back of us, then between our place and the Sand Creek.

HV: That was sort of on the corner of Shaw Street and Powell?

BG: No, right at the back of us, between our place, there was the Sand Creek, that ran from the dam, from the Battery dam, ran down to the back of our place ran right out and into the sea. Between Powell and the street that ran down past McLeans right down into the Currie Road.

HV: Was that George Street?

BG: I forget the names of the streets.

HV: How many Chinese lived in there?

BG: I can remember a lot of Chinese but I have forgotten their names. Chung Gons lived down the Back Creek Road. They use to call it Douglas Town. Down there where they lived. Ah Hungs had a big Chinese garden and fruit garden.

HV: How far from Lefroy was that?

BG: It was down the Back Creek Road. No distance you looked down from the Cemetery and then there was another Chinese, Kwok Sing. They lived lower down in the bush. They had a market garden then they went over on to the George Town Road.

HV: Whereabouts was there a market garden in Lefroy?

BG: On George Town Road, that was a part of Lefroy, a part of the township. There was another Chinaman lived just over the tram lines. What we call the tram line and the Currie Road.

HV: The tram lines went down behind the Battery and just before...

BG: Just down from Powell Street. It ran the back of Powell Street and the next street at the back it ran. That's where it ran down. The horses use to pull the trucks up and down on the line with the Quartz from the Pinnacle Mine to the Battery for crushing.

HV: And there was a Chinaman who lived right near the tram line?

BG: Yes, there was a Chinaman who lived and died there. I think he is buried up there at the cemetery in the corner.

HV: There is one Chinaman buried there called Kee Mon and that's the only Chinaman.

BG: Buried right in the corner?

HV: That's right. Right in the corner. Does that name ring any bell?

BG: Yes that's him. Isn't there another one at the side of him but no stone?

HV: No stone that's right.

BG: It use to have a little fence around it I remember in the corner unless the little fence has fallen down with age. The Joss House was up three house's up from us.

HV: Those house's aren't there any more.

BG: No. I know where they were, I can tell you what they were like.

HV: What was the Joss House like? What sort of building was it?

BG: It was a weatherboard building. In those days they were all weatherboard.

HV: Built out of split paling was it?

BG: Weatherboards not palings. All the inside I remember was painted pink. In it was an alter thing, bench whatever you call it. They had a Buddha, a big one in brass on the centre of it. Then they had all these images and animals a lot of brass ones. It was full of it. Then all around the walls was all their coloured streamers, balloons, Chinese lanterns, there were their bowls and their chopsticks standing up in the bowls. Chopsticks. I can see it now. All these things they had and the Chinaman was telling us one day and we were only kids and was telling us all these animals represented something to them. Lions and all those things.

HV: How big were the statues?

BG: Some were fairly big. The Buddha was fairly big, they call them a Buddha, he was fairly big.

HV: How big?

BG: About 18 inches. I suppose he'd be about that. He was round.

HV: Heavy brass figure?

BG: All brass. They had a couple of stone lions. Two big ones, dead solid in the garden. They use to have roasted pig there.

HV: When did they have that?

BG: They use to have a feast and the Chinamen use to gather and they had this feast on a wooden tray, with wooden handles each end of it. They use to carry it up on their shoulder. They use to beat the drums in there. That's all I can remember of the Joss House.

HV: How many drums did they have?

BG: One or two, only small ones and they use to beat it when they had the pig, they'd beat these drums.

HV: Where did they cook the pig?

BG: I forget where they cooked the pig. It was all nice and brown. There was a big oven just below it. It was a bake house at the time they cooked it in that.

HV: It wasn't a Chinese bake house?

BG: It could have been, before I could remember. That is all I can remember. They use to bake bread in it.

HV: What did it look like the oven?

BG: It was a big brick oven, it ran right back, it was all covered over, it was built in a building and it had a door, I suppose about this width.

HV: Was it a metal door?

BG: All brick, all brick across.

HV: Was it round or square?

BG: It was flat at the bottom like that and it was oval and that shape.

HV: Sort of like a bee hive?

BG: Yes, like a bee hive shape the oven was.

HV: Was it cylinder in the middle?

BG: It ran back a long way, it ran a good way because they use to bake bread. The people who had the bake house at the corner use to bake bread in it. They use to put it in a big tray, the bread and the dough on it and they shoved it in on big slides. [speech hard to hear] when I started to get bigger I can remember when men use to sleep in it. People of the name Partridges use to sleep in it.

HV: They had no where else to sleep?

BG: Yes, there was a family after the closing of the baker shop. Partridges went there to live. They had two bedrooms down in the fruit garden, they had bedrooms there, and the boys use to sleep in the other one after it closed down. They slept in there. That was after I started to grow up a bit. We use to go there as kids and play with them.

HV: And the fruit garden you were talking about, was that a Chinese one?

BG: No it wasn't a Chinese. What I can remember of it at first it was a fruit garden and there were like two rooms built half way down the garden, and they, the Partridges, that was the family who lived in it and they had this fruit garden but whether the Chinese had it before that I don't know. Those Chinese would be dead. The Chinese moved in and out [speech hard to hear]. They went down in the gold rush days whether that was right or not I don't know. There was a lot of Chinese. They use to go around and sell tea.

HV: Did they?

BG: They sold vegetables and that. They use to go around with basket on a yoke on their shoulder.

HV: Across or along that way?

BG: Sometimes they had them across their shoulder, sometimes one at the front and one on the back you know. I suppose what ever mood they were in, to carry them. They use to sell them.

HV: Did your parents buy tea and fruit off them?

BG: My grandparents use to buy tea.

HV: What about fruit and vegetables, did they sell their fruit and vegetables?

BG: Yes we use to go over to Kwok Sings and I use to buy them off Kwok Sings. They use to grow beautiful vegetables. We use to go there and the one further down before they went to George Town. I use to go there for the vegetables and things at Lefroy. I use to go down with a sugar bag.

HV: That was the one on Back Creek road?

BG: No that was the one over at George Town.

HV: How many Chinese were there in the town when you were young?

BG: I suppose four or five.

HV: And they were all market gardeners at that time?

BG: All market gardeners.

HV: So all the miners had gone?

BG: The miners were still there working. The Chinese had moved and then there were springs(?) way down all way down, that's where they use to go for water when the summer time was on. They use to call that the Chinese spring.

HV: Did they?

BG: Chinese spring. People use to go there for water.

HV: Why did they call it that?

BG: I don't know they always use to call it the Chinese springs.

HV: Where were they?

BG: That was down the side of the Sand Creek.

HV: I'll show you an old map of Lefroy would you like to see one, it's a very old map. 1910 it was drawn up and it's not a very good reproduction. [speech hard to hear]. That's Talings(?) down there and another one there. That's the Native Youth Battery in here.

BG: That was near the Battery the Native Youth.

HV: That's a tramline running down front here, that's Powell Street.

BG: Yes.

HV: That's Shaw Street.

BG: I was talking to my sister. Shaw Street was the main street that ran up past Grey's and I'm not sure of that. Richard Street ran up past the school and the church and if its the other way Richard Street ran up what was Shaw Street.

HV: That's Richard Street, there's the school as you said [speech hard to hear]. And there was a garden here it says, Richards Garden and Shaw Street there, that's the main street now that's where the shop is now, that's the main road goes through the Pipers River.

BG: Goes on to the Piper?

HV: That's the slaughter house, I don't know if you remember that.

BG: It goes down onto the George Town Road, was it?

HV: No, that's Shaw Street, the main street, that goes down onto the Pipers River that way and I can't quite work this one out.

BG: They've built this since I lived there, we lived there, this slaughter house I don't remember that.

HV: It's a very old one this is 1910, I think and it might have been pulled down or it might be 1904 and that is Powell Street, so where was your house?

BG: Where's Shaw Street, this is Shaw Street, we'd be down there.

HV: On this side?

BG: Yes it was on that side.

HV: So you'd be one of these four cottages probably?

BG: Yes, when I first can remember, way down here this is... What street is this one?

HV: Myrtle.

BG: Way down here were people by the name of Markings(?) lived away down there and then you come up and there were people by the name of Richardsons. After they shifted the house was pulled down. We always called it Markings [speech hard to hear] and then we come up to Richardson's there was another house there, and then there was my grandmothers and then there was the place I was born in and then there was our place, before we went to the Grammar School then there was a chap who lived in a hut next to us and his mother, sisters and father and the rest of the family lived in the house next door. Then there was the Joss House.

HV: The Joss House was there?

BG: Yes the Joss House was there.

HV: Right on the edge of the street?

BG: Back in the garden, in the yard there was a fruit garden there and the Joss House was in the fruit garden. And then there was a big blacksmiths shop, the bakers shop right on the corner. Corner of Shaw Street and you went into the shop corner ways and then when you came over to this corner there was a corn store. This was a yard down there with a big gate that went into the shop on the main street. Then there was another shop there which was a carpenters shop, Mr Aitkens(?). Then there was a big grocery shop then there was a bakers shop. The bakers shop use to have a garden. Then there was a roadway that went down into the yard [speech hard to hear]. Then there was a butchers shop.

HV: Does this have a cemetery on it?

BG: Yes.

HV: So you lived about there?

BG: Yes.

HV: And the Joss House was about there?

BG: Yes.

HV: And there was a Chinaman living on this tram line?

BG: Between there and down this next street there was a tramline and he lived down below the tramline on the next street down.

HV: That's the street there, that little dotted line?

BG: Yes.

HV: They had a fruit garden?

BG: Yes the Joss House stood in the fruit garden.

HV: How far off the road was the Joss House?

BG: No distance, about as far from our front gate to the front door.

HV: So there has been a house built over the site - a cottage?

BG: Yes, a Mr Triptree built a house. Our house was pulled down after we left there and he built a cement place if I'm not mistaken. I'm not sure but I think they built one on my grandmothers place.

HV: Do you remember the Joss House being pulled down?

BG: Yes, I remember it being pulled down. I think somebody just bought it and put timber or something on it. There were a lot of houses pulled down and taken away. They use to get Warren Phillips and they use to put them on the big lorry thing and take them away. A lot of people (the farmers) bought a lot of places and took them out onto their farms on to their paddocks.

HV: How old were you when the Joss House was pulled down?

BG: I'd be going to school.

HV: Nine or ten?

BG: I went to school when I was seven. Yes I suppose I would be ten. I was going to school, but I don't remember exactly how old I'd be [speech hard to hear]. I remember so many houses being pulled down and taken away in my school days. They closed down the big shop right on the corner, the baker shop, that was taken out onto the Piper Road. It was put out on a farm out there. Then there was another big place down the Currie Road, before you got to the Methodist Church, that was taken to where you go down to Tamoshanter Bay and it's still there. [speech hard to hear] I was grown up when the Catholic Church was taken down and taken away. That's years after we were living in Launceston that they were taken away the Church of England Church and the Roman Catholic Church, they were pulled down and taken away and also the Methodist Church was pulled down and taken away and the big Sunday School was taken away.

HV: There is hardly anything left there now.

BG: Oh Lefroy was a big place. I can remember, I go all through Lefroy and tell you what place after place, all the way along the street and I can tell you what they are and all were and what I can remember of them. There were a lot of people there when I was a kid. The mines were working you see, when I was a boy there, the mines were working.

HV: But there weren't any Chinese working on the mines at that time?

BG: No I don't remember Chinese working there, they had the gardens, the fruit gardens and vegetable gardens.

HV: You described to me the time when they had the roast pork and there was a ceremony and you saw the pork. How did you get to see that ceremony, was it open for everyone?

BG: We were sticky beaks. You know what kids are. That's how we saw that because we use to go up there for dinner to the Chinamen, to talk to them.

HV: Did they speak English?

BG: Oh yes they could speak English, but they would yabber in their way you know the Chinamen.

HV: So you use to go up there and chat with them and talk with them?

BG: Oh yes we use to love to go up there and have a look in the Joss House. They use to let us have a look in the Joss House. They didn't shut it up from us.

HV: Did they ever have a rocking horse, do you remember that? You probably wouldn't remember that?

BG: No they could have had it and I didn't see it you know. I can't remember the rocking horse.

HV: What about dolls, Chinese dolls?

BG: Chinese dolls?

HV: Yes.

BG: Chinesedolls. There were all kinds of images you could think of you know that they had, not only animals they had all kinds of things there and they were all clustered up close together not separated out like we would separate out things, they use to cluster them all up close together.

HV: Did they have a verandah on the front of the building?

BG: Yes, along the front of it just like the building along there and then they had this verandah thing over the front of it.

HV: Facing the street?

BG: No facing in the garden, the end of the building was towards the street.

HV: It was facing away from the street?

BG: Yes facing away from the street. It was facing more into the garden.

HV: How big was it?

BG: It wasn't a big place, it was long. It wouldn't be that wide either what I can remember of it. I suppose it would be the length of our hall there, it would be the length of that.

HV: A fair length isn't it. That's what, about 40ft?

BG: It would be I suppose the width from that wall over to this one, would be about the width of it.

HV: What would you say 40 x 30?

BG: 25ft I reckon. 25 to 30. It was in a fruit garden, there was a fruit garden all around it.

HV: What sort of trees did they have?

BG: Apple trees, plum trees.

HV: Did they have many?

BG: Pear trees. Yes it was full. Rows of them.

HV: So they must have been there quite a while to have the trees there?

BG: Oh yes they were there a good while. I suppose they were there before ever I was born. I don't know how old Lefroy even really was.

HV: I think the first people started going there to mine in the 1860's.

BG: Yes it would be pretty old. Lefroy would be an old place. I used to go up to the Battery, when the Battery was working and I used to go and watch them. I've seen the gold laid on like flannel when they would be delivered the water would run down over it, it was just like flannel all laid out and the water used to go over the top of it because all the gold and sand used to catch on it somehow. It used to go over it and out and down out towards the Native Youth Mine. I used to watch it I used to catch on it bits of gold.

HV: When you went and watched that ceremony where they had that roast pig, how many Chinese would have been there?

BG: I suppose seven or eight of them I suppose there would be. It would only be a small roast not a big roast, that they had between themselves.

HV: You don't remember what time of year it was?

BG: No, I don't.

HV: Do you ever remember them having any fire crackers?

BG: Well there was always fire crackers on for everything at Lefroy. Everybody used to go in for crackers. There was all those whirly wheels and all like that, that they used to put on them poke things. Lefroy was always a place for crackers, fire works and all kinds of rockets and all those things. They use to have kites and Chinese lanterns [speech hard to hear]

light with a candle in them and all those things.

HV: A candle inside a kite?

BG: A candle inside a thing just a light you know, just send it up, because if it caught fire it made no difference to it.

HV: And how often did they do that?

BG: Chinese didn't do it. It was the people who used to do it because they would always have their tails on the kites you know and they'd have a Chinese lantern on the end of it to add a bit of colour when the wind blew it up. They had big long balls of string, and if they lost the kite they'd make another one. We use to make many kites when I was a kid.

HV: The market gardeners, did any of them have a horse and cart for selling their...?

BG: No I don't remember. Nearly everyone had one at Lefroy. There was one Chinese, Mr Kwok Sing. He used to have a horse and cart, and he used to go fishing and he used to sell the fish.

HV: Did he sell it fresh or salted?

BG: Fresh fish.

HV: Where did he go to do his fishing?

BG: Around the streets selling. People used to buy it off him.

HV: Where did he catch the fish?

BG: I don't know where he use to go for them, to the river somewhere but where I don't know. Down the Tamar River I suppose. He use to sell fresh fish so I suppose he'd go down to the Pipers River for the fresh water creeks. He could go to the Curry River, the Pipers River, [speech hard to hear] everywhere because there's fresh fish. I think he used to go to the mouth of the Piper. What we call the mouth of the Piper they call the Piper, Heath(?) now, down there.

HV: What happened to him, did he leave Lefroy?

BG: He came to Launceston, they had a market garden out towards Carr Villa Cemetery. He died out there.

HV: Can you remember where that market garden was, did you ever see it?

BG: Out Carr Villa?

HV: Yes.

BG: It was up off the Hobart Road out Kingsmeadows. It's all built over now, just past the hotel.

HV: Which hotel was that?

BG: The Kingsmeadows hotel up on the bank, it was out there and then there was one this side of the hotel. He was living in that one or the one over the other side, but I know he was out there for years because we used to see him.

HV: When did you last see him?

BG: He was still there when I went to Melbourne to live for 33 years. He must have died while I was away.

HV: How old were you when you went over to live in Melbourne?

BG: Twenty five.

HV: This other chap, Ah Hung on Back Creek Road. Do you remember what happened to him?

BG: He died. I think he's down in the Lefroy cemetery I think.
Yes he is.

HV: Do you remember his funeral?

BG: No I don't remember the funeral. But I remember Mrs Ah Hungs.

HV: Do you. When was that?

BG: She was a white woman Mrs Ah Hung and she had two sons and a daughter.

HV: Were they about your age?

BG: No they were older. One was Henry. Henry came to Launceston years after they left Lefroy and he was the gardener at the Launceston General Hospital. I don't know what became of Syd.

HV: Syd was her other son?

BG: Mary went over the other side (Mary Ah Hung) and she married a Chinese and they lived on the other side.

HV: You don't remember who she married?

BG: I think I could find Mr Ah Hungs grave at Lefroy if I was down in the cemetery. It's got a little stone in it, an iron fence around it and a stone. A flat stone, a marble stone. I think I could find it I tell you. All I remember is Mrs Ah Hung going there and putting flowers on his grave. I think I could find it if I was down there.

HV: When did he die?

BG: He died years, when he died. I just can't remember when he died. They had a beautiful garden. Fruit garden and vegetable garden. It was a big place.

HV: Did they have water on the property?

BG: Black Creek runs through.

HV: Black Creek?

BG: Black Creek.

HV: So they did quite well for themselves did they?

BG: Yes they had all their own water and everything.

HV: Did he sell his vegetables?

BG: Yes everybody use to go there and buy them. Buy the fruit and vegetables. You could go there and get it or they would hawk it around.

HV: You don't remember who his daughter Mary married?

BG: No I don't know who she married.

HV: There was a chap called Jack Ah Quor. Do you remember him?

BG: Yes Jack Quor. Well that Jack Quor they changed their name from Kwok Sing to Quor. Their real name was Kwok Sing. I first remember them as Kwok Sing. Why they changed it to Quor I don't know. Jack's dead. He worked at the Council.

HV: Which Council?

BG: The City Council.

HV: Launceston?

BG: Yes Launceston. A lot of people would not remember them as Kwok Sing, but I remember them as Kwok Sing. Some people use to call them Sings. Their real name was Kwok Sing.

HV: What was his job on the Council?

BG: He worked on the roads I think.

HV: Was he married?

BG: Yes.

HV: To a European?

BG: He was married and his wife died I think he had a couple of children.

HV: What was his wife's name?

BG: I don't know. I know where his wife is buried at Carr Villa. But I don't know nothing of the children.

HV: He was there longer than the Ah Hungs was he?

BG: No the Quors were. He wouldn't remember the Quors. He's years younger than me.

HV: The Quors?

BG: Yes he's years younger than me. Jack Kwok Sing, I remember Jack and Mrs Kwok Sing or Mrs Quor as you might like to call her. I remember them and some of the children being born. I use to go to school, Mrs Quor had a daughter before she married the Chinaman, she had a daughter. She was very pretty.

HV: The daughter?

BG: Yes she was very pretty and I went to school with her. Well I went to school with some of their elder ones. I went to school with them.

HV: How did they get on at school the half Chinese?

BG: They didn't show that much. The didn't show Chinese at all much.

HV: They looked European?

BG: They looked more like us than Chinese.

HV: Did people pick on them at all?

BG: No.

HV: Didn't tease them?

BG: No never. Nobody knew better than us. It was too strict. You couldn't do that. No we never picked on any one, they went to school the same as us. Never ever thought of it to tell you the truth.

HV: What about Jack Quor and Mr Ah Hung. How did they get on with the Europeans?

BG: They were just like us. No one bothered, they were all respected and looked up to. No one picked on them or nothing like that. They got on with everybody. Everybody was friendly and sociable. No there was none of this business like we are today. You go picking on one and the other. Your this and I'm that. There was none of that. We were all a friendly lot together, everybody.

HV: Do you remember any of the other Chinese?

BG: No I wouldn't remember. I'd forget about them. I can't remember the one that lived at the back of our place. I can't remember their names. I can remember the garden.

HV: How many lived there?

BG: How many were there? Gee there was a family of them. They moved out to. I was so young when there was so many Chinamen there. I was so young.

HV: About how many Chinese lived behind your place?

BG: Only the one family right at the back of us. There was only one.

HV: Did he have a European wife as well, or a Chinese wife?

BG: European wife and two children. A lot of Chinamen, what I can remember they were single. They just came there to work. They were single.

HV: At this ceremony that they had, did their wives go when they had the roast pork?

BG: No only the Chinamen. I can only remember the Chinamen going. I can only remember the Chinamen themselves at the Joss House. We were just school kids.

HV: How did they treat you when you came?

BG: We used to go get away you know. We never stopped and watched them what was going on. That was the only time I saw the pig. The once, I never saw it again. But I never seen what they did inside. I never seen at all. Where it was baked I couldn't tell you. Whether it was baked in that oven next door I couldn't tell you. I just imagine it would be because I wouldn't know where else they'd do it.

HV: Was it a big pig? A whole pig?

BG: Head and all was on it and they had it on a long rod thing. What they went on with, their nonsense and all that I didn't understand. That was the only ceremony I saw there. I saw all their images and animals.

HV: Because you went in it at other times did you?

BG: Many a time I'd been in. What they did with all their things after I don't know. When the Chinamen moved away there was no more to it. They just seemed to vanish away.

HV: Once there was quite a few there.

BG: They said, before I could remember that Lefroy was full of them. They all went there. They always use to say that the Chinamen followed the gold rushes.

HV: Do you remember your parents telling you any stories about the Chinese?

BG: No.

HV: Had they been at Lefroy long before you were born?

BG: No. Mum was really a Launceston born. She was really born in Hobart and lived in Launceston all her life. My father, he was back at [speech hard to hear] Pipers River, born in George Town and father and mother had the farm at Pipers River.

HV: Did the Chinese have long pig tails down their back?

BG: No, I don't think they had pig tails.

HV: Did they wear hats?

BG: Yes.

HV: Always?

BG: Yes they wore hats. You never saw a Chinamen without a hat on. They always had a hat, a big hat. They'd be out in the garden working and they always had a jacket on.

HV: A straw hat?

BG: No, felt hats. Old slash hats what we used to call them.

HV: Wide brims?

BG: No just ordinary felt hats or any old hat that they'd wear out in the garden. Sometimes they'd have their coat out in the garden. Sometimes it would depend on the weather. Mostly they would wear Tasmanian flannell stuff, the Blues.

HV: What sort of jackets did they have?

BG: Just ordinary, straight down. Just an ordinary jacket. Straight round the bottom, not much shape in them.

HV: Not a suit jacket?

BG: No.

HV: Cotton?

BG: Cotton stuff.

HV: Chinese probably.

BG: Just to knock about. Blues is what they called the trousers. Dungarees or moleskins. What they call moleskins. Moleskins are different now to what the moleskins were years ago. Still materials are different now to what they were when I was a kid. Moleskins now, they wear trousers now different moleskins to what we had when we were kids.

HV: What were they like when you were...?

BG: They were a different material. They were more of a softer material. They weren't that stiff material more a softer material moleskin. The same with the dungarees. They call them jeans now. They were dungarees when we were kids. The jackets use to be galatere(?). You wouldn't know what galatere(?) was?

HV: No.

BG: Striped material we use to wear them. We use to have trousers and coats made the same. We use to wear them to school, a real tough material. Galatere(?). They were spotted with all different lines and stripes on them. You don't hear of it now.

HV: No I've never hear of it.

BG: They were awful, galatere coats. They use to make seats out of them and all. You could wash it and iron it and wear them back to school or anything. When we were kids we never wore long trousers like they wear now. We always wore socks up to here and turned down at the tops. And trousers only came to there or else you'd wear them down and button them there. They'd call them apple catchers. They have none of that now. Things were different when I was a kid. Different altogether

HV: Getting back to the Joss House, it was weatherboard on the outside.

BG: Iron roof.

HV: Did it have a chimney?

BG: No.

HV: Did it have windows?

BG: Yes in the front of it. Windows in the front under the verandah. None at the back and none at the end. Just at the front of it.

HV: On either side of the door?

BG: On both sides of the door

HV: Did it have a wooden floor?

BG: Yes.

HV: Were the walls lined on the inside?

BG: They were lined. It was pine lined. It was tongue and groove pine.

HV: It was really quite a smart building?

BG: Yes it was a nice building. I can always remember the pink paint inside.

HV: So it was pine lined with pink paint?

BG: Pine lined , painted pink.

HV: Was the ceiling pine as well?

BG: Yes the whole lot was pine all over.

HV: Did it have any support columns?

BG: No, none at all.

HV: The roof was just a normal...?

BG: That shape the roof was, it went down, it was that shape. A big hall, whatever you like to call it with a verandah in front of it, it was all in one. One roof did the lot.

HV: Do you remember what sort of vegetables they used to grow?

[TRANSCRIPTION ENDS HERE]

CHINESE SETTLEMENT - ORAL HISTORIES

Miss Helen Vivian interviewing Mr Brian Shean 12-10-1983.

Mr Brian Shean

Born: 1921 (63 years old) at Garibaldi.

Present address: 21 Ringarooma Road
Scottsdale

HV: An interview with Brian Shean at his house in Scottsdale on the 12-10-1983. When were you born Brian?

BS: 1921.

HV: Where?

BS: In Launceston. The family weren't living in Garibaldi then [speech hard to hear].

HV: But your family was living in Garibaldi at the time?

BS: Yes. Well if you want to be particular it was the Argus where we lived.

HV: And your parents, what was your fathers name?

BS: Peter Shean.

HV: And your mother?

BS: Iris.

HV: Do you remember her maiden name?

BS: Seen. She was at Beaconsfield first.

HV: Where was your father from originally?

BS: He was born at Lefroy in the goldmining days. Born in 1882.

HV: Do you remember your grandfathers name?

BS: No only what I've been told about him. He died in the late 1890s. About 25 years before I was born. They shifted to Beaconsfield soon after he died. About 12 months or so after he died.

HV: His name was Him Shean?

BS: Well as far as I know he was Him Shean. Sometimes the Chinese family, like the part Chinese family took the father's full name as their surname. Such as Chintocks would be full. Our people were familiarly known as Him Shean. It was always spelt Him Shean but somehow or other the Him got dropped [speech hard to hear].

HV: And your grandmother, what was her name?

BS: She was Glover.

HV: Where was she from?

BS: Well I don't know. She must have been living at Holwell somewhere just out of Beaconsfield.

HV: So your grandfather was full Chinese?

BS: Yes.

HV: Your father was born in Lefroy?

BS: Yes.

HV: How long did he live there?

BS: Not long, he was still in the cradle when they came out to the North East area. They went to Boobyalla on the coastal steamer.

HV: From Lefroy?

BS: Yes from Lefroy.

HV: Where did they go from Boobyalla?

BS: To Moorina. They lived in Moorina for about seven years. There was a lot of Chinese in Moorina then.

HV: And your father was not the only child in the family at that time?

BS: Oh no there were six boys.

HV: Six boys?

BS: Yes.

HV: No girls?

BS: Yes four or five girls.

HV: Was he the eldest?

BS: No there was a girl and a boy older than him. I have a photo somewhere. This is Aunty Powell.

HV: Aunty Beck who became Mrs Powell and Uncle Bill...

BS: She was the eldest.

HV: She was the eldest right. What became of Uncle Bill?

BS: Well his wife is still living next door, but they never had any children. The helped us out when we lost our mother.

HV: Did they? Do you think his wife would remember very much about the Chinese?

BG: Not a lot I don't think. She might. She might remember some of the names, that's about all.

HV: Would she have any other photos which you haven't seen?

BS: No. We have photos of dad and his brothers around here. Next to the three of them are him. That's about 100 years old.

HV: How old would your father be there. Four or three?

BG: No. I'd say that was taken soon after they went to Moorina. I showed that to the dentist up here. He's Chinese. Well he's racial Chinese but he comes from Indonesia. As soon as he saw this he saw this dragon motif we never noticed it.

HV: It's beautiful isn't it?

BS: Yes. That's the old chap. As you can see he's got the European clothes there.

HV: Quite young at the time there to.

BS: Actually he was a fair bit older than them. He was 56 when he died in the middle 1890s. My old grandmother had just had a child, so she wouldn't be more than 40 odd.

HV: No.

BS: He was fairly big for a Chinese they say. He was 5' 10".

HV: Are these the only photo's you have of them?

BS: Yes. Well we have some grown up photos with some uncle's and aunties with them.

HV: They would be interesting to see to. These are terrific. I would like to get copies of these made for the Museum.

BS: Well, what we are hoping to do, as you can see my grandmothers face has gone. We are hoping to get that transferred. The photographer had a look at it. He says he can see enough of the chin and the mouth to locate... She died in 1940. She was just 80 or 82.

HV: That was a good innings.

BG: Yes, it was a good innings. Dad reached 89.

HV: Have you still got the originals of these photos?

BS: My sister in Launceston has got them.

HV: Right. Which sister is that.

BS: Delma Homan. She lives in 37 Foster Street.

HV: She is older than you.

BS: Yes 10 years older than me.

HV: Where did your father meet your mother?

BS: In Beaconsfield.

HV: When did they get married?

BS: 1899. Well perhaps I had better explain. What I tell you was only given to me by word of mouth. No doubt we could find the marriage licence.

HV: They were married in Beaconsfield?

BS: Yes.

HV: Was your father working in the Mines there. The gold mines?

BS: Yes he worked in the stoke hole mastering the big boilers.

HV: Did he?

BS: A stoke hole. I don't think he ever worked under ground much. My other uncles did.

HV: Did they? Was that on Brandy Creek as it was known then? It would have been Beaconsfield by then.

BS: Tasmanian Gold Mines. Dad got out of work early this century and he pushed a bike up around this area looking for work.

HV: That was after he was married?

BS: No.

HV: Before?

BS: He basked up here for a while and then went back to Beaconsfield and got married.

HV: How long was he pushing around here looking for work?

BS: He rode the bike from Beaconsfield through Avoca and Fingal...

HV: All on gold mines then?

BS: Yes. He set off from Mathinna and came over here to Ringarooma back home.

HV: Did he ever do any searching for gold himself?

BS: Not on his own I don't think. There was a bit of gold in the tins. A bit of gold there.

HV: They made it themselves?

BS: No they got it made.

HV: So after he was married did they stay in Beaconsfield?

BS: No. They came back here.

HV: To where?

BS: Garibaldi, or the Argus what ever you like to call it.

HV: How long did they live there?

BS: All the time. Mum died in 1924.

HV: Until they died?

BS: Yes. Dad came down here for his last few years that was all. He spent his last eight or ten years here.

HV: They weren't married long then.

BG: No 15 odd years.

HV: You were born soon after they moved to Garibaldi?

BS: No, my elder sister was born after we moved to Garibaldi. She was born in Beaconsfield. Mum went back to the old home. But actually the home was at Garibaldi. She really never moved away from Garibaldi.

HV: Would she have been only one of the European women living at Garibaldi at the time?

BS: No not in those days. A lot earlier there might have been. There was dad's mother and there were other European women who married Chinese. They lived out there.

HV: How many?

BS: I've often tried to gather all the names up. They're sort of coming and going. There was Lee Wongs(?), they lived there. Their mother was European. You probably know Chintock?

HV: Yes, well I didn't know him but I know of him.

BS: Well she married Arthur Chintock. One of the Lee Wong girls married Arthur Chintock. There was Chee Wong(?). His family was half-cast. There were only two boys [speech hard to hear] and George. George lived in the Derby Mine. Up there at the football ground.

HV: Did he? He mined there did he?

BS: He was a master blacksmith. That's where Ah Moy lived, up there.

HV: In Derby?

BS: Yes. He didn't live at Garibaldi much although he use to come around here in a horse and cart.

HV: Who was that Ah Moy?

BS: Yes.

HV: Why did he come around in his horse and cart.

BS: Well he was selling vegetables. [speech hard to hear] he was half-cast. I don't know if his mother lived there or not. His father had been living there, but I don't think he was born there, I think he was born at the mainland. His father brought him over here. There was Sing Why(?).

There was Mrs Sing Why. I'm not sure if she was Chinese or not. I don't think so. I've never heard of any Sing Why children. There is written records of them where they took up mining leases.

HV: I have.

BS: One old chap there was Ah Pack(?). You will find him in the mining leases as Ah Park.

HV: I'm sure the names must get mis-spelt terribly.

BS: The last three at Garibaldi. They got an old aged pension. The local council did give them [speech hard to hear]. There is records of that in there.

HV: Who were the last three Chinese?

BS: There was Ah Loo, Ol Will(?), Ah Poo(?) and Ah Moy.

HV: What about the character known as Sharky...?

BS: He lived at the far end of Pioneer. Just where you turn off to go up there. That's where Pioneer started.

HV: He's the one with the white beard wasn't he?

BS: I just can't remember him.

HV: You don't remember him having a beard?

BS: No, I think he use to sell fruit. How he came to be called Sharky I don't know. Whether his name was Shar Kee I don't know. I just remember him as Sharky. Sometimes that Kee is a company name. You often see shops and businesses with Kee. At Garibaldi there was a shop keeper referred to as Sun Dan Kee. But dad told me it was just Sun Dan. Kee was the company name.

HV: People misunderstood it?

BS: Yes. There was a family of half-casts. There were two. Old Charlie died a couple of weeks after we got up there. He died in Queensland.

HV: I heard about him.

BS: Back in 1933 or something. He never had any boys, he had all girls. So his name went with him. They lived mostly at Gladstone and this Moy that they brought back from Branhholm he was born in Gladstone the same. And the Lee Fooks, their home was always in Gladstone. I'm sure someone esle is till alive. As far as I know Charlie is still alive.

HV: Do they live in Tasmania?

BS: Yes, I think so. Mrs Albert Lord lives in Launceston. She's one of them. [speech hard to hear].

HV: He has recently come to Tasmania?

BS: No he was born here. As far as I know he was. There were some lots of half-casts that didn't actually belong there. The Lee's family never belonged to Garibaldi. He came over from the mainland somehow. I don't think he stayed here long. As far as we know he finished up in Ballaratt.

HV: So these last three Ah Poo, Ah Loo and Ah Moy, you actually remember them?

BS: Yes I remember them.

HV: Are they the only Chinese that you remember meeting?

BS: No I can remember each one and [speech hard to hear] I can remember Sharky. I can just remember when [speech hard to hear] died. He was [speech hard to hear] in Garibaldi. I can remember a lot of other names of course.

HV: So let's start with Ah Loo. What do you remember about him. How did he live?

BS: He lived at Garibaldi. He came back to Garibaldi during the depression. I don't think he was originally a Garibaldi person. When things got really tight during the depression they came back. Ah Moy was the same. He did live at Garibaldi originally, then he went away and came back during the depression. They were both tin miners.

HV: I wonder why they came back to Garibaldi rather than...?

BS: There was just no where else. They were hard up.

HV: And in Garibaldi they weren't troubled by anyone they were left alone?

BS: I tormented them. A little bit of that went on. Pity we don't have my sister because she would remember a lot more than I would. When she was a toddler she went everywhere with Uncle Bill. Her and Uncle Bill when she was little. There was Ah Chung(?). He was the one they called Maker Meg(?).

HV: And he lived actually down near the Argus did he?

BS: About half way between. Of course there were houses and homes all the way across. Temporary homes like [speech hard to hear]. Europeans lived there as well in that area.

HV: When you say they were temporary homes all the way through...

BS: Temporary by today's standard. But they were all [speech hard to hear].

HV: And did people have more than one home like one at the mine and one back in Gari?

BS: Old Laa Gaa did. Do remember that pig oven we saw back at the bottom of Lebrinna. He had a camp there, but he also had a house at Garibaldi.

HV: He had two?

BS: Yes so they say [speech hard to hear]. He was one of the head sharangs, he employed a lot of Europeans once stage.

HV: Where did he work?

BS: At Garibaldi. He bought a fair size. What we called a barge. The tin mining in those days was like a big open quarry I suppose you would call it. They had machinery and pumps. It was mounted onto a floating [speech hard to hear]. It didn't float when it was working. When you wanted to shift you would let the mine fill up with water and float it into position. [speech hard to hear] once stage. Then there was old [speech hard to hear]. Dad bought his last [speech hard to hear] off him. He must have been in a fairly good way to.

HV: What was the steam engine used for?

BS: [speech hard to hear] you see when [speech hard to hear] washed the bank away [speech hard to hear] because you had to lift the mixture of water and gravel to find [speech hard to hear] in the rock. If you didn't have to, it was all the better working on the side of a hill. Mostly you had to lift them. Because the engine was used to drive the - what we call a gravel pump. They were [speech hard to hear] pump. They pumped the mixture of sand and water [speech hard to hear]. A lot of mining was done that way. Sometimes they were used to drive a pressure pump with natural pressure. That's what the conservationists don't like.

HV: Why's that?

BS: Tin mining did a lot of damage to the country and you [speech hard to hear].

HV: That's true. So the miners had to cut forest at that stage to feed their steam engines and keep [speech hard to hear].

BS: If they had to use a steam engine [speech hard to hear] wood fire. They used natural pressure [speech hard to hear].

HV: I suppose most of the Chinese didn't have steam engines. They didn't have to be foresters as well?

BS: No they weren't in that big a way. [speech hard to hear] he worked for a long time but I never knew him to use machinery he must have used natural pressure. A matter of fact, I think he use to employ Europeans.

HV: He did as well?

BS: Yes. He was the one [speech hard to hear] who assaulted when they moved to Launceston.

HV: Did you know him?

BS: Yes I knew him.

HV: What sort of a man was he?

BS: He was sort of a social type of man. He use to like to socialise a lot. Like if we went to a football match or a sports meeting he use to like to buy ice creams for the children. He would get up on the stage and sing a song.

HV: Really, where did he do that?

BS: Pioneer. We use to have [speech hard to hear] in them days. Concerts and that.

HV: Did he sing any Chinese songs?

BS: Yes.

HV: Did he speak any English?

BS: Oh yes we could understand him. Perhaps he wasn't that clear but we could understand him.

HV: You never spoke Chinese that stage?

BS: No, it was bit of a taboo subject.

HV: Was it?

BS: Not that they considered any stigma to it, but sometimes the people thought there was a disadvantage. Personally it never affected me though. [speech hard to hear] he was very young and he retained the ability all the way through. His brother Bill could speak when he was young but got out of practice as he got older. He could still understand it but he couldn't speak it. Well he could but it was an embarrassment to him. He'd hear and old chap talking to him in Chinese and he'd answer in English. But apparently my grandfather could speak fairly good English, what I've heard of him. And that Mrs Moore when she dug up records where he signed the marriage register. Apparently he [speech hard to hear] she did give me a copy of the document where he took up a house(?) licence at Garibaldi.

HV: Was that in his own writing?

BS: Apparently he signed his own name in European writing. I don't know about that.

HV: That was fairly an unusual talent from what we can gather.

BS: Well as I say he was probably 15 or 16 years older than my grandmother. He could have been over 30 before he came out here. Which was a bit old to start settling down. Dad, he could speak fairly fluently. He did a lot of interpreting for him. He told me a lot of things about him. They used dried orange peel to flavour foul soup. Well we still do and they also had a certain amount of poison stone fish.

HV: What for?

BS: According to what I can make out about it, they reckon it helped to get them to sleep of a night. The sting of the cold frosty nights; they didn't feel the cold so much. It must have had the same effect as our sleeping pill I think.

HV: They had some special way of preparing it?

BS: Well they just used to cook it I think. Dad was asking how they could eat it, he said is it deadly poisonous and they said yes. Well it must be because it was preserved. They said it use to come out from China preserved. And the bloke said they would have it fresh if they could get it here. One of these old blokes was chopping one of these fish up one day and a bit fell on the floor and the cat grabbed it before he could stop it and it killed the cat [speech hard to hear].

HV: Is this something your father told you?

BS: Yes.

HV: Did your father live nearby to your grandparents at Garibaldi or did they [speech hard to hear].

BS: No my grandfather was dead long before dad went there. No he lived at where I showed you [speech hard to hear]. My earliest memories of my grandmother was she kept family for the youngest daughter. Dad's younger sister died fairly young. And they lived half way between the Argus and Garibaldi over the back there. My first memories of her she was housekeeping for her daughters family. She had glaucoma very bad and lost one eye. She had a real peaches and cream English complexion. And quite a good singing voice.

HV: Casting your mind back to Garibaldi, do you remember how many houses - do you remember there?

BS: About six I think.

HV: When was that?

BS: 1936. I don't know if they were all occupied. Some were. The place sort of fluctuated, everyone sort of left and then some came back because the first mining was all done with a big shovel and a wheel barrow which [speech hard to hear] later on some one developed the big sluice box and the nozzle.

[end of interview because speech is not clear]

CHINESE SETTLEMENT - ORAL HISTORIES

Miss Helen Vivian interviewing Mr Basil Pitchford (Mrs Thelma Pitchford is interviewed at end of tape) 28-10-1983.

Mr Basil Pitchford

Born: 4th October, 1906 (77 years old) at Pioneer.

Mrs Thelma Pitchford

Born: 1906.

Present address: Avoca.

HV: You were born 1906 in Launceston. Your family were living at Pioneer?

BP: Yes.

HV: What sort of contact did you have with the Chinese in the district?

BP: Every New Year my father, he was great cobblers with the Chinamen, he was a tin miner.

HV: What was his name?

BP: Edward or [speech hard to hear]. And he used to go up to the Chinese New Year every year and of course they used to have a drop of gin and they got most of those things from China, sent out direct. Chinese ginger and all that, he used to bring some home to us kids but...

HV: Did you ever go?

BP: Not the gin.

HV: No I mean to the New Year.

BP: Oh yes I'd always go. I was going to tell you. You never heard of such a din in all your life. And I said to dad after, you know I was only about seven or eight the first time I went and we used to walk in those days; there were no motor cars. And I said to dad what the hell; they had tin cans and all that sort of thing making a hell of a noise. And he said: "They're frightening the devil away". And these fire works, the rockets and things, they were something beautiful. You see there was a Joss House up at Garibaldi and I they transferred it to Weldborough and I think it finished up in the Museum you were talking about.

HV: Yes that's right.

BP: I've been in it.

HV: Have you been in the Garibaldi Joss House?

BP: Yes when it was at Garibaldi.

HV: Can you remember the building at all?

BP: I can remember the building in the Joss House. But I can't remember now what was in it. You know what I mean. They had Gods the same as we do, the Chinamen. And they were a very good honest crowd. But they gambled. They used to gamble a lot. We all called the [speech hard to hear] in those days. They were a good honest mob. Never knew them to do anything wrong. I remember one bloke, Ah Chung was his name and he used to have a drop of beer now and again. I can remember this quite well. I was old enough to go in the pub myself. But he used to drink a bit and he was in the pub and he got a bit full and Arthur Jacobson ran the Hotel at Pioneer then and a Miss Smith was living with him. The next morning Arthur Jacobson said: "I think I'll go up and see how old Ah Chung is". The Chinamen always had an old umbrella. You would never see a Chinaman without an umbrella. So when Arthur up there, here is Ah Chung laying back in bed with his umbrella up. He said: "What's wrong Ah Chung"? "A roof leak, my bed is all wet". You see he pissed the bed. I never ever forgot that.

HV: He stayed the night in the pub?

BP: Yes. And there were only a few of them. There was one Chinaman there Ah Gah. He was a very big man and he plaited his hair like you see some of these women plait them. Hanging right down his back. He used to carry a basket of vegetables and sell them around Pioneer and that. Mongolian I think he was but he wouldn't mix with the other Chinamen.

HV: He looked different apart from his...?

BP: Oh yes you could tell he was a Chinaman but he was a big man and this plait in his hair. Us kiddies were always frightened of him. I don't know why, we shouldn't have been I know. I know now but I didn't know then why, but I think it must of been the size of him that frightened me.

HV: Did he wear Chinese clothes?

BP: Overall the same clothes as we wear, the Chinamen around here. There was one wealthy Chinaman that came up there, Hee Gee(?), and he must have had a student somewhere. We're talking about students. He sent for him, he was a wealthy bloke this Hee Gee and he had a good mine up the Wyniford River. A good mine up there. This Chinaman came out and he was a flash sort of fellow but he was dressed in the same sort of clothes as we were and he wouldn't go to a students I don't reckon in China in those days. I don't reckon they did.

HV: I don't know.

BP: Well what I mean is we are back 70 or 80 years. But he came out and he stayed there and I can remember him now with those riding leggings and all that sort of thing on him

HV: Was that Hee Gee's son?

BP: That was his son. He sent for him and brought him out.

HV: Was he there while his father was there?

BP: Oh yes. And they worked the mine out and I suppose they just disappeared, because the Chinaman started disappearing before I came around here in 1929. There weren't that many there then. Only old Ah Cow, I can't understand Ah Cow, he had a thumb nail about that long.

HV: An inch and a half long.

BP: Oh yes it would be. From there to there. It would be that long. This thumb nail, what he had it for I don't know. He used to cart vegetables on bamboo. You know what I mean.

HV: And he was still in Garibaldi when you left?

BP: Well yes he would be when I left. But I know he finished up in Launceston in Hospital or a Home or something. Somebody got him in there. You couldn't miss him.

HV: Hee Gee's son helped him work the mine did he?

BP: Well I reckoned he helped him spend his money. He never worked.

HV: Didn't he?

BP: Oh no he was a real toff.

HV: He was a dandy?

BP: Yes. This Ah Chung, he was the fellow I was telling you about who had the umbrella up. I remember him, we used to go to their huts. I'd been sitting up there watching the Chinamen smoke opium. Now opium today would be an awful thing wouldn't it? Well they had a pipe from here to the mantlepiece and it had a bow in it.

HV: About 5 feet long?

BP: I reckon it would easily be 4 feet long. And you could hear the water gurgling.

HV: They had water in it?

BP: Yes I suppose to take something out of it. It must of been.

HV: What did it look like?

BP: Well it was piping in there, a stem that went up like that.

HV: A kink in it. What was the stem made out of?

BP: Same as they make pipes out of now I suppose. That's what they looked like. And I sat there and watched this old fellow. One old Chinaman I know and you'd sit there and watch im and watch him [speech hard to hear] go off to sleep with this opium.

HV: How did they burn the opium. What was the bowl like?

BP: It was in a pipe like another tobacco pipe.

HV: Was it. It wasn't a special bowl?

BP: No. They lit it and smoked it, the same as we smoke our pipe. But there wasn't a lot of them I saw, but I remember this old fellow we used to go in. Us kids would poke about anywhere in those days.

HV: Do you remember his name?

BP: Oh God look, it would be Ah Lee or something like that, I wouldn't know now.

HV: When was that, how old would you have been then?

BP: Eight, nine or ten. Because we used to go and pinch the fruit off this Ah Gow (Pow?) and them.

HV: Pinch the fruit?

BP: He'd sell the fruit and that sort of thing and another chap and I went there. I'd give him two bob in those days. I don't know what it was and while he had to get you some change, while he was out of the room this Ronnie (Roddy?) McLaughlin used to pinch the...

HV: He had a shop?

BP: No he had them all in his hut.

HV: Oh right.

BP: He'd cart them around the town.

HV: Did he grow his fruit?

BP: No. Well he wouldn't grow oranges and that sort of thing.

HV: What about plums?

BP: No they used to grow a lot of vegetables, the Chinamen.

HV: Did they?

BP: Yes.

HV: Did he grow vegetables?

BP: Oh yes. Ah Gah used to.

HV: Did Ah Gah live on the Garibaldi site?

BP: No he didn't, he lived away on his own.

HV: How far away?

BP: Half a mile. No further, he lived about half a mile away.

HV: Were there many Chinese living about Garibaldi that didn't live exactly on the camp?

BP: Well there were a few at Gladstone. Lee Fook's at Gladstone and there was an odd one or two everywhere. Kit Kit.

HV: Where did he live?

BP: He lived in between South Mount and Pioneer. Because my father was a tin miner and he used to let old Kit Kit have the water. Because my father did a lot for the Chinese.

HV: Did he?

BP: Yes well if they wanted only ground taken up in those days they'd always come to dad to get the ground taken.

HV: To get the leases?

BP: To get the lease and that sort of thing. He used to do it and my God every week if there was a Chinaman on the town us kids would get a big bag of lollies. Common lollies.

HV: Is that right. Would they just give you a bag? How much would that cost?

BP: Well now you'd have to pay \$12.00.

HV: Yes.

BP: They would give them for sixpence or something like that. And every year this Kit Kit, I was talking about, he'd give dad a silk handkerchief that came from China. It was beautiful silk with a sovereign tied up in the corner of it.

HV: Why did he give him that, for helping him...?

BP: Yes for getting his ground and all that sort of business for him.

HV: Was that because they couldn't write?

BP: Oh no.

HV: Could they speak English?

BP: Well some of them started to if you know what I mean. They learnt a bit off us. But us kids used to torment the [speech hard to hear]. I've thought of it after.

HV: What sort of things did you do to them?

BP: Anything just to torment them.

HV: Did many of them have the long pig tail down their back?

BP: Very, very few. Ah Gah was the one in particular because I think he was a Mongolian. I think that was a part of China that Russia had. Your a better scholar than me you'd know. But I think that is right.

HV: What did Ah Chung do for a living?

BP: Tin mining. They were all tin miners.

HV: Did any of them keep livestock or fowls?

BP: I was going to tell you about that. Ah Chung got some fowls and of course he only had one of those old bark huts in those days and he put a lean to at the end of the hut. And after a few years he got awfully lousy.

HV: I bet he did.

BP: And it was fowl lice, dad found out. So he got him and cut his hair and gave him a good bath and gave him disinfectants and all that sort of thin and fixed him up.

HV: I bet he was grateful for that.

BP: My word.

HV: Did he sell his chickens or were they for his own use.

BP: I reckon he was just after eggs and that sort of thing. You know what I mean. He only had a few but he had them next to his hut and his hut was next to his bedroom. You had your kitchen and you had your hut and your bed and that, where you sleep in the other room.

HV: How big would it have been, the hut?

BP: Oh blimey no longer than this room here I don't think. Cut it in half.

HV: About 15 feet?

BP: Yes.

HV: Ten feet the other way or the same?

BP: About the same.

HV: The whole hut was about that size?

BP: That's all their hut was.

HV: And he had a petition in the middle for his bedroom?

BP: Yes a petition there.

HV: What sort of furniture did he have there?

BP: Oh crikey you never saw furniture in those days. What's furniture - hey? No they never had furniture.

HV: What did they sit on?

BP: They would sit on a box or probably knock up an old chair.

HV: What was the bed like?

BP: I don't think they had any.

HV: You didn't see any, fair enough.

BP: Well I suppose he would put enough on to keep him warm.

HV: How did they cook?

BP: Well I couldn't tell you that, I never had dinner with them. But they lived, but it was mainly on rice and that sort of thing they lived on the Chinamen. Oh God yes. No they lived on rice and very slow workers the Chinamen.

HV: Were they?

BP: Yes very slow.

HV: This old chap who smoked the opium, did he work?

BP: Yes.

HV: So it didn't effect him?

BP: Oh no, but he would have a good sleep because it was mainly of a weekend when we would go up. But they never had many weekends if you know what I mena. But I can see the old Chinaman now. We would sit there and watch him. He'd start nodding and go off to sleep.

HV: Did he look healthy enough?

BP: Oh yes.

HV: He didn't look thin?

BP: No, but I reckon it was sucking it through this water. And it took the opium, what ever is in opium out of it. Oh no. They were gamblers. I was going to tell you they would go to the racers and they all had umbrella's the Chinamen did. Thy would go to these races and they wouldn't walk across the road like we do. There would be one in front of the other and the front one would be talking to the back one. I have seen ten or eleven or a dozen of them going up the road to the race course.

HV: Where were the race's held?

BP: At Pioneer. On the race course.

HV: How often would they be held?

BP: Only every Boxing Day.

HV: Once a year?

BP: Yes.

HV: And they would come down and mix with all the Europeans on Boxing Day?

BP: Oh yes.

HV: How many Chinamen were there in those days?

BP: Well there were supposed to be a thousand in Garibaldi or in that area. You say uou've been there, but you wouldn't see [speech hard to hear].

HV: No there are no buildings or anything.

BP: But they had tin mines all over that area.

HV: Did you ever see a thousand Chinese do you think?

BP: Well I wouldn't know but by hell there used to be a lot at those fireworks.

HV: Were there?

BP: But whether they came from Weldborough I couldn't tell you, but there were a lot there. But they would make a noise.

HV: So how many would you estimate there were on fireworks night?

BP: Well there were a lot of lights but I couldn't tell you. Only tin cans and anything that would rattle and that was to frighten the devil away.

HV: And what else did they do, did they have any dancers or music?

BP: Oh no you wouldn't get a Chinaman dancing. I've never seen one.

HV: Did they have food?

BP: Food?

HV: Yes.

BP: Oh yes you can't work without food.

HV: No I mean for the celebrations. Did they have a feast?

BP: Oh well I don't know. They used to get a lot of stuff from China in those days. But how they got if I don't know and how they got if there for the festivals I don't know. But it came there. I remember as I've told you. Chinese ginger, and they had some sort of spirits. I think it was a gin. It was white I know. Dad used to get a bottle and bring it home.

HV: What sort of bottle was it in?

BP: A glass bottle, but what the shape was in those days I wouldn't know.

HV: Did you ever see them cook a pig in their big pig ovens?

BP: Well most of the Chinamen went home to China to die.

HV: Did they?

BP: Well if you go to Moorina, have you been there?

HV: Yes I have.

BP: Is that still there?

HV: Yes.

BP: They would cook him on a long stove, you saw it there.

HV: Yes.

BP: I think it was Chinese New Year. As I tell you that was in the middle of January. They would go there and have this big festival and all their spirits and the Chinamen that were left, they of course I don't know. My mother, father and brother are buried there but haven't been there for a long time. I don't know whether it's still there or not but if you have been there and seen it. It is there?

HV: Yes a big sort of oven with a pointy conical sort of top on it.

BP: Yes. You've seen it. [Mrs P: We went there once, but I can't remember anything about it.]

HV: How many hut's were there at Garibaldi when you first went there?

BP: They were stacked together like matches.

HV: On either side of the main road?

BP: Yes. It wasn't a main road, it was just a track in. There were no roads out there in those days. There were hundreds anyhow.

HV: Hundreds?

BP: Oh yes. Oh God yes. Wherever they were working on their mines and that they had these; they might have had their huts there. You know what I mean. They were only paling huts or bark huts.

HV: Bark huts?

BP: Yes and paling.

HV: What were the bark huts like?

BP: Alright.

HV: How were they built?

BP: Like any other.

HV: Did they have bark roof's?

BP: You had to put wood or something to hold the bark there of course. A piece of the curly bark would be put along the ridge to stop the water from coming in.

HV: I see. It would have a wooden frame?

BP: Yes. I built one myself once way out in the bush out there when we were kids.

HV: Did they have windows in their huts?

BP: I suppose they would have to. They'd have to. I would say yes, because you could see when you got in to them.

HV: Do you remember whether there were huts in the area. You know there was a street in Garibaldi, the main street or whatever, were there huts around that of was it just the one street.

BP: You see in those day is you had a 5 acre mining right, well you built a hut on it. Well the Garibaldi mine was nearly all that ground, you wouldn't know it now it would be all bush. They all built their own hut, like Ah Gah I tell you he was the bloke that was living away from the others and he was living alongside a creek where he could water his plants and he'd carry it in a bucket and water them. There were no pipes, nothing like that in those days. They were a good crowd the Chinamen. I liked them.

HV: How was it towards the end when there were a few Chinamen left?

BP: That was after I came around here.

HV: So how many Chinese were there when you left?

BP: It wouldn't be a lot. In 1929 there wouldn't be a lot. No. You see as I told you, they disappeared when they got a certain age. I don't know whether they got a pension in China or not, but they would go home to die. Those that couldn't afford the are, I don't know what it was, but they would die there and they were buried at Moorina. I don't know whether there is a funeral place at the Weldborough Cemetery.

HV: Yes there is. In Garibaldi itself the township, was the Joss House amongst all the other huts?

BP: No. You know as you go in going up, it was on your right, away from all the huts.

HV: Separate. Was it a big building?

BP: Yes it was a fairly big building.

HV: About what size would it have been?

BP: I couldn't tell you that, but it was bigger than the huts or anything like that because I think more or less a church, well we would call it. Well they would go there to the Joss because he was sort of a stone God or something like that. You've seen it in the Museum I suppose?

HV: I have seen bits of it but it's not the way it was, it's just things out of it. Was the Joss building the same shape as all the other huts?

BP: I don't think it was. You see all the other huts were nearly joined together like matches.

HV: What shape was it?

BP: What?

HV: The Joss House?

BP: Well it wasn't much. It was bigger than the huts. It was more or less like a hall or something. And these Chinamen, they would run around this Joss House and rattle these cans and fire these crackers. You've never heard such a racket.

HV: Did it have a verandah?

BP: I have got an idea it did. Yes I think it did.

HV: And what about a floor?

BP: Well it had a floor.

HV: A wooden floor. Did many of the huts have floors?

BP: Most of them. They used to use split palings in those days. They would make them out of that in those days. They were comfortable in their huts.

HV: When the Chinese were smoking opium, was it just the one who would smoke or would several?

BP: Well we used to go and watch this one. We were there with a lot of them so I wouldn't know.

HV: What about them gambling, did you ever see them?

BP: No, they played a game called Fan Tan and it must have been; a Fan Tan coin was nearly as big as a pen and it had a square hole in it. Dad used to bring us home some. Whether dad played Fan Tan I wouldn't know. But they used to gamble, well I don't know how to gamble. They would go to the races and gamble.

HV: Do you remember whether they had a big garden at all at Garibaldi, or did they have separate gardens?

BP: They all had separate.

HV: Did they. That's interesting. Were there any shops up there?

BP: No.

HV: How did they get on as a rule. How did they get on with the people in Pioneer?

BP: They never interfered with anyone the Chinamen. Not that I know of.

HV: Did they keep to themselves or did they have friends?

BP: They would respect you if they knew you.

HV: It must have got fairly lonely for the last few.

BP: It must have done. I reckon you could find out though, Ah Gow and Billy Woll Son(?) he was another fellow who was a fairly big Chinaman. And he could talk fairly good English. Because he never worked on tin mines very, very little. He used to work on Harrison's up on their farm and he would go up and somebody said to him one day: "How's your father Billy"? "I don't know", he said, "he has been in bed a fortnight and he is starting to pong", so somebody went, he was dead and Billy was sleeping in the same bed with him. Bill Woll Son(?). Now he was a big Chinaman. But they always walked anywhere and of course there weren't any motor cars in those days. Oh no there wasn't. [speech hard to hear]. We had to walk to [speech hard to hear].

HV: How often do you think you went up there?

BP: I couldn't tell you, it would be hundred's of times. It would be nearly every Sunday.

HV: What did you go up for?

BP: Well I was mixed up with the Chinamen and if they got a mile they would chase you but they couldn't catch me. I was a bit toey. By God we used to torment them. Well you know what kids are like.

HV: Oh yes. So you just went up there for entertainment?

BP: That's all. We had nothing else to do around home in those days. Things are different now, you wouldn't get anyone to walk 50 yards now, they get in their car and go. You'd be the same.

HV: I do a bit of walking. There wouldn't be any Chin Tock people in there?

BP: They would be at Weldborough. [Mrs P: You know that Merle Oberon, she was Lotties daughter.]

HV: Oh yes. I've heard that story.

BP: Well we always thought she was a Thompson. They had the pub. One of his sons. I knew Lottie well. She wasn't a bad looking sheila. [Mrs P: She was rather nice.] But there was an odd Chinaman that married an English woman. Like there is a family out there. One appeared the other day. [speech hard to hear]. When she married the Chinaman (Him Shean was the Chinaman's name) and she went under the name of Shean's. She was a real white woman. Him Shean was a chow, well the kids were only half-casts.

HV: Right. Who did they marry?

BP: Well she married Sammy Edmunds. One of them.

HV: Was he Chinese?

BP: No he wasn't.

HV: How did they get connected to the Chinese?

BP: Well he just liked the Chinese girl and married her.

HV: It was a Chinese girl?

BP: She was a Him Shean. As far as I know they are nearly all dead. Alf's dead and he was one of the last men to die. But they were a pretty clever sort of a mob those the halfcasts. I went to school with Roy Edmunds and Sam Edmunds. Well Sam Edmunds was well up in the schools as a school teacher and all that. You might hear of him. Well he'd be dead now I suppose. The last I struck of Roy Edmunds was on King Island.

HV: Is that right, what was he doing over there?

BP: He was an insurance agent.

HV: That's where my people live.

BP: Your people?

HV: Yes my family.

BP: What did you say your name was?

HV: Vivian. They have only just moved there.

BP: Oh.

HV: About three years ago.

BP: I went over there for years to King Island.

HV: It's a lovely spot isn't it? So this Joss House it was all by itself?

BP: Yes it wasn't mixed up in all the camps, it was away on its own. By gee they used to make a noise, frightening the devil away. There was no music(?) in the Chinamen I don't think. They would be rattling cans and anything that made a noise.

HV: These Chinese that hawked fruit and vegetables around to make a living, were they older Chinese. Were they too old to mine or...?

BP: The mining had finished. They had worked the Garibaldi out.

HV: Just nothing left there for them?

BP: Nothing left, no.

HV: So they turned to that as another way of making a bit of...?

BP: Yes. They would come around with their baskets and they walked from here to Pioneer. Have you seen them carry; you've seen photo's?

HV: Yes I've seen photo's. How long would it take to walk from Garibaldi?

BP: Well to carry a bamboo properly and the basket you had to be trotting. You just couldn't walk like this, all the bags would be jumping up and down. You had to have a sort of rythm. A sort of trot. Well there was old Ah Gah and this Ah Cow and he'd come down once or twice a week and in the finish they would be bringing apples and oranges, but they would get them from Launceston. Who'd get them from I wouldn't know. They could understand English but of course old Ah Cow, he could talk fairly good English.

HV: Could he?

BP: Yes.

TP: [speech hard to hear]
HV: Is that where you are from?
TP: No here.
HV: Oh are you? You were born here? Was there any Chinese here? When were you born?
TP: 1906.
HV: No Chinese then?
TP: [speech hard to hear]. When I used to go down to a cousin of mine, she used to live at Cleveland, she was a gret pianist she used to have to go to Conara, they used to hold dances there and she used to play in the wool shed hall. I was only in the hall once, after she shifted. We used to walk often. Many a time we would walk home from the dance. Sometimes we would have a boy to walk with that lived at Cleveland and then they would say: "Look out", I forget what the Chinaman's names was, "here comes so and so" and by gosh I used to get frightened.
BP: You said you've been to Gladstone didn't you. And you met somebody who knew all about the Lee Fook's?
HV: Yes I think but I would be interested in anything you could tell me about them.
BP: What I know about them is bad.
HV: Why is that?
BP: Lee Fook used to cart vegetables around and there was a Mrs Moffett at South Mt. Cameron and he asked her would she give him that nice stuff that she used to give Mr Moffett. That was her husband. That's about the worst thing I've heard a Chinaman to do.

CHINESE SETTLEMENT - ORAL HISTORIES

Miss Helen Vivian interviewing Mr Ned Holmes 14-10-1983.

Mr Ned Holmes

Born: 1905 (79 years old) at Ruby Flat.

Present address: Fry Street
Ringarooma

HV: An interview with Mr Ned Holmes. He took me around and showed me quite a few sites around Ruby Flat and so on.

NH: Did he?

HV: There is one thing that he showed me, which doesn't agree with this map that appears in by-gone Branhholm, of where the Joss House is. In here it says that the Joss House is just right near the recreation ground. That's the Joss House according to...

NH: Well now, there is quite a few changes. I'd say close to half mile away.

HV: Right, so you don't think that is quite right?

NH: No.

HV: No, because the spot where Tas Kincade took me to, there's the recreation ground there and that's the Ruby Flat Road. It was down a little side road onto somebodies property here, where they are doing a little bit of forestry, and we stopped the car here by a gate just near that little creek and we walked where there is a big log landing here and up the hill a bit and that is where the Joss House was on the hill.

NH: Yes, quite a distance.

HV: A couple of miles.

NH: It might be further than that.

HV: That's right. That's getting close to a kilometre there. So you reckon that would be about right?

NH: Yes I do, really.

HV: Do you remember the Joss House yourself?

NH: Oh yes I've been in it.

HV: You've been in it?

NH: Yes.

HV: When were you in it?

NH: I was in it as a lad. You see apart from the road that led to Ruby Flat, there used to be a track that came down on the Joss House side and when it came to the Chinese New Year, and they had their fireworks and so forth well our people would bring us children down this track to it you see. It was off the main Ruby Flat Road.

HV: The track used to come down sort of through Branhholm this way?

NH: It was on the other side of the Branhholm Creek.

HV: It didn't cross Branhholm Creek?

NH: No.

HV: It came down that way?

NH: Yes down to the Joss House.

HV: You used to go down there just on New Year?

NH: Yes.

HV: How often did you go there?

NH: I don't know, I suppose we might have gone there two or three times. But I always remember one thing that happened. We went down this night and they had two posts in the ground, I can't think how far apart, a few yards apart and this string from one post to the other and they had all these fancy Chinese dolls. They were really fire works of dolls. That was the final of their fire works. They put on Sham(?) fights in between.

HV: Sham fights?

NH: Sham fights. They would have paper suits and bamboo sticks and you know. They were into fighting and all these sort of things would go on.

HV: How many Chinese would be involved in the fighting?

NH: Only two. There would be two at a time. Some of the radicals, the teenagers, while the fight was on, they got up and set fire to the fire works. Well that spoilt the night really, because it was lit too early. If the Chinamen had caught them they would have killed them. Terrible thing it was. I can always remember that even though I was only a boy.

HV: Can you describe the fights, what would they do? Were they dressed up or...?

NH: Some kind of Chinese paper suits they had on. They had these bamboos and they would make out they were going to hit one another.

HV: Bamboo sticks?

NH: Yes.

HV: Long ones?

NH: Fairly long. I couldn't tell you now but they might have been four or five feet long, something like that. They would make out they would hit one another and show their skill. That was part of their show and of course as I say the final of it was all these beautiful fire works. This night they ruined the show.

HV: So what did the Chinese do when the fire works...?

NH: I just can't remember now, it more-or-less broke the thing up altogether. As far as I know we all left for home.

HV: How many Chinese would have been there on that occasion?

NH: I couldn't tell you now. I can't tell you really off hand how many Chinese there were around the Branhholm and Ruby Flat area at that time. You see Billy Moy, I don't know what he employed. I think Tas could have told you more. He might have employed six or eight or something like that.

HV: Chinese?

NH: Yes. You see Tas's father worked for him too, but just how many he employed and then there were others there were around about. They would get a bit of tin out of the Branhholm Creek or an old tail race or something. If it were only a matter of a half dozen pounds they'd take it up to Billy Moy's shop and get their bit of rice or whatever it was. He had a shop there to supply them all the time. While he was at work and some of the others fossicked about for tin and wanted something, the women folk, Ah Moy's women folk, they served in the shop.

HV: Just to get a bit of background, when were you born?

NH: I was born at Ruby Flat in 1905.

HV: How long did you live on Ruby Flat?

NH: Well there were two of us, we were twins my brother and I, and our people shifted to Launceston when we were eighteen and my brother and I shifted into a camp. We had a little bit of a tin mine there and we spent about another twelve months there. I left Ruby Flat when I was nearly twenty years of age.

HV: So that covers a good period.

NH: Yes. Then I went from there out to Bells Plains and I worked for a chap named Charlie Beswick. I had my twentieth birthday while I worked for him. I worked for Ah Moy's when I was fifteen. I wasn't there a great while. I worked there as a rouse-about at the house. I'd feed the pigs, cut up a bit of wood and run messages for the women folk while Billy and them were at work. I was sort of messenger boy down the town and back and looked after the old horse and so forth.

HV: So you worked around their house?

NH: Yes.

HV: Why do you think they employed you rather than a Chinese?

NH: Well I don't think there was another Chinese family. All these men folk were Chinese. There were some married with their wives in China, some probably were never married. There was no other family there of the Chinese. None at all. And of course they were at Ruby Flat for a time you see. I'd be roughly four or five years old when they left and went to Braxholm to live. There was after that only one Chinaman left up there, he was up a bit further on a place they called the 'Guiding Star' where he was camped. It would only be a mile or so above us. Wong Kee (or Hee?), he was about the only one that was left up there. The others were all down at Braxholm because they had their work there you see with Billy.

HV: At that time there were only nine or ten Chinese?

NH: Yes, one old chap old Ah Soo, he had a garden (a vegetable garden) near the Joss House and he had his two big cane basket's on the bamboo stick across his shoulder and he came down around Braxholm town with his little bunch of carrots, turnips and so forth. They grew a..., well we called it a flax bush, it was a big broad leaf thing. Leaves that broad, it would be five or six feet high. They would break those off and let them dry out and then they would strip them down into threads about the size of a boot lace. That's what they tied their vegetables up with.

HV: So he had a market garden did he?

NH: Yes and I think there was one other if I remember rightly. This old Ah Soo, we got to know him well with these vegetables. He used to get his few shillings that way. One of Billy's sister's explained to us that there were three kinds of Chinese. There were the brown and the black and the yellow. Well we only had the one yellow there and of course he was an outcast to the others; old Bo Wing. They wouldn't have anything to do with him. He was a rogue and yet he was a wonderful billiard player and he used to go [speech hard to hear]. He was a wonderful shot with a gun and he was a bit of a rogue at the same time. He would get a long firm stick, he'd have a pin in the end of it and when he'd go down the street he'd look for cigarette butts. He'd pick them up, break them all up and roll them into cigarettes and put them in a packet for himself.

HV: Can you describe to me, what an average day at work for the Ah Moy's... What you would do, when you would arrive and what you would do for the day?

NH: Me? I lived there with them and for a fare while I lived with them. I got eight shillings a week for my keep and one of my first jobs; you go out there and there was a little patch of artichokes there. I'd dig them and boil them for the pigs and put [speech hard to hear] and mix up. Then I would split all this fine wood. There was a hut just on the end of the verandah, from the main house there where Billy used to do a lot of boot repairing and so forth and well I'd split this wood up very fine and put bundles of it across these things. He had it high enough so it wouldn't catch fire. That was part of the job. Well they had a block of land, rough land, they used to run the horse on. Well I'd pull some of the boughs and burn them and as you might know on the stump of a bough these suckers would come up off the sides. Well I used to spend a lot of time going around with this axe trimming off these suckers off these stumps. A lot of time I would run messages. The blooming folk wanted something, mail posted or something from the shop. I'd be just kind of a rouse-about messenger boy. That was it. I never knew when they were going to send me for a message or go down to the station and see if a parcel had come on the train, or something like that. Just a messenger boy.

HV: How many people were in the Ah Moy house-hold at that time?

NH: When I first went there, the old lady old Mrs Ah Moy she was there.

HV: What was her name?

NH: I can't think of her name, but the elder daughter that was there, Emily, her Chinese name was Ah Lam(?). She was married to a European, Bill Eager and she was there and Rosie, the youngest daughter and Charlie, the youngest boy. The middle son Bo (Henry as they called him), he went to Western Australia as a young man, but he didn't live too long. To my idea he only lived for about eighteen months after he went over there. [Mrs Holmes: What was Rosies Chinese name?] I don't know or if I did I have forgot. You see I knew Emily's was Ah Lam, Henry was Bo Fong(?) and Charlie was Gemg. But the other one, Lizzie, I don't know what her name was. She married a bloke by the name of Lee Mon. And of course there was Nellie and Trixie. I don't know what their other names were. They eventually went over to the other side, the whole lot of them.

HV: To Melbourne?

NH: Yes and to Western Australia [Mrs Holmes: Did you see Mr Ah Moy when he was here?]

HV: No.

NH: You didn't?

HV: I had it all arranged that I could interview him a couple of days after the ceremony. I thought he would be a bit tired from the ceremony and everything, but he went back early because of the plane strike. So that was very disappointing.

NH: Yes well I would liked to have more time with him but there were too many other people.

HV: Well I thought that would be the case, so I didn't bother coming up on the Saturday.

NH: While we were on the Recreation Ground I saw him and his nephew there and I went straight over to them. I wasn't there long and then others came along. Then of course we were invited over to Merv Walsh's for lunch over there. Well, I never had a chance to say good-day to him there.

All the different ones at close quarters and of course they had the camera's on him and the reporters and so forth. I never got a chance to talk to him there. But when we came out of the church service on the Saturday, I went over to talk to both of them and no sooner got started and one of them came along and we want to take you along to meet the Governor. That was that. I never had the talk. I was under the wrong impression too. When we went over to Walsh's and they said some of the oldies are asked to meet and have a bit of a talk, well I thought it would get onto more-or-less the whole day. We knew Billy and so forth, but that wasn't it, they asked that many over there that there wasn't seating for everybody, a lot had to stand and when it came for lunch time for the Moy's themselves, they had to put a table outside in the yard and have their lunch out there you see. It wasn't the day I thought it was going to be. So I didn't see near as much of the man as I was... [Mrs Holmes: There was a verandah and two rooms you see, you sort of couldn't get near them you see, because there was that many just coming in around this track]. They were all after the notes and so forth you see so I never spoke one word there. Tas was there with them and speaking about when his father worked with them and went over the different Chinamen's names that used to work there and camped round about. But I never got one word in.

HV: What a shame. So you actually lived in the house, you had your own room?

NH: No in with the youngest boy Charlie.

HV: Can you describe the house and the bedroom and what you had for breakfast and things like that?

NH: Yes well, I will tell you something about the meal part of it. That was another part of my job. In the afternoon, I would peel enough vegetables for two meals and that was for tea and breakfast. They had a hot meal for breakfast. Well the men folk were away in the mine at work with their lunches or sometimes I would take their cut lunch across to them. Well the two women folk were at home then. They were a great one for steamed bread and cherry jam. That's all you need for dinner you see. But you had this hot tea and a hot breakfast. There was the shop and the kitchen. I think that there were three bedrooms in the house, but I'm not too certain about that. There might have been four, but I'm not too sure on that. Part of one of the rooms, the sitting room part of it, this Emily she was a dress-maker. She used part of that for her work as a dress-maker. There was a front bedroom and I just can't picture now the lay of the shop. Whether that was as you went into the place and the front door - that first room on the right was the shop, but I don't think so, I think that was another bedroom. There could have been five rooms and a shop. But he could have told you that because he lived there for so long, was Tas. He could have told you exactly. His mother lived there.

HV: Oh yes. After the Ah Moys left.

NH: Oh crikey yes you see. It's not that many years since she was too old to live there herself. But off the end of the verandah there was this hut. You see Billy was a great boot repairer and at night time after he had finished his days work and he had his tea, well he would set to and repair boots and shoes for everybody about the place, particularly the working men with their heavy hobnailed boots and he would put leather soles on gum boots and all that. He was very good at that. But when it came to meal time when they were home, they had their Chinese food and I had my own food and I could not learn to eat with chopsticks.

HV: You used to cook your own?

NH: Oh no they cooked whatever I fancied. I had my knife and fork.

HV: You didn't ever eat the Chinese food then?

HV: No but very often they would have most of the stuff that we would have you see. They would have cabbage and potatoes and carrots and all that type of thing. But where I had a plate, they would have this round bowl so big. They would have a big bowl of potatoes there and cabbage there and so on and they would get the chopsticks and take what they want. Put a bit of everything into their bowl. Then there was this black Chinese sauce, that was too powerful for me to put some of that on. But they drank tea the same way as we did, but it was mostly that Chinese tea, that Hangmee tea as they call it.

HV: It wasn't ordinary tea though?

NH: No.

HV: Did you drink that?

NH: Oh yes I could drink that, providing I had it weak enough. They had their garden and I had to look after their garden.

HV: What grew in the garden?

NH: Lots of different things. You'd weed them of course. That was the main part, to get the weeds out.

HV: What sort of vegetables did they grow?

NH: Carrots and potatoes and practically all that we would grow. They were great ones for fish. If ever there was a fisherman that came up from Bridport... Garfish; they would buy them by the dozen you know. They would put them up in this chimney in this hut and every time you lit a fire they would get smoked and dry. And every so often you'd take them down and rub salt in them and the dam things were salty enough I thought. They'd rub this salt into them you know. Great ones for their smoked fish. There is one thing and by crikey I kept a long way from that too. You see the butcher's shop was half a mile way down the town there and one of these Chinamen called old Ah Soo, he would go down to the slaughter yard and he would bring this uncleaned tripe up onto this back verandah and sit there and clean it. By crikey. I can smell it yet.

HV: They ate that fairly often did they?

NH: Oh yes, they were lovers of tripe. That's something I never could eat, at anytime in my life.

HV: Did they have any fruit trees in the garden?

NH: Yes there were fruit trees there. There were plumb trees in particular. After the Kincades went there they let them grow till they almost covered the house. Well it covered one window. There was one room out on the other end of the verandah. I don't know what that was used for in the first place, but Charlie, he took to developing photos. That was when you had to have the dark room there, you know and put these films in this water or whatever it was. If you wanted to see him, and sometimes I would forget and he'd go: "Don't let a stream of light in here" everything was in complete darkness while he developed these films. But they, the boys and I suppose the girls were too, a clever race you see and this second eldest, this Bo, well he got beyond the teacher there at Braxholm. He couldn't teach him anymore. You see his mind was too far advanced. I only said here the other night he painted me, it was just a little [speech hard to hear] it was on a piece of stuff about that long and that wide. This was full of all these reeds and coloured butterflies and that. You would think they were all going to fly off the paper and he would use his little brush and put his name on it. Well I had that up a few years ago but I shifted about that much that I lost it.

HV: How sad.

NH: Yes I would have liked to shown it to Billy, by crikey I would, but I lost it completely.

HV: Did he do many paintings?

NH: Not a great deal, no.

HV: What about his photo's did he ever give you any?

NH: No. I had no photo's of any of them.

HV: Presumably he has some or Bill might have some?

NH: I'll tell you what, while I was there having a talk to him there on Saturday on the Recreation Ground, a chap that used to live just out of Branhholm on Warrentinna, one of the Davis', he came up and made himself known to him and he had a photo of Billy's father with a pig, when they used to take these pigs from one place to another and he gave Billy this photo of his father.

HV: Well!

NH: Les Davis.

HV: Where does he live?

NH: Well I'm not sure now. He's down the north west somewhere, I don't know whether it's Burnie or where it is, but these people they lived out there at what they call the Mara(?) there, Warrentinna or something. They had the Post Office there at one time, their mother did and he's 84 years of age himself. By crikey he only looks about 60, Les does. And when we knew him you see, he was only about that wide. We always called him spider. But oh crikey now he's filled out, and a round face you know. Perfect man. [Mrs Holmes: Les Davis's father is it?] I'm speaking of Les. No Rachel [Mrs Holmes: Bert?] Yes him. Old Bert was a policeman. He married Rachel this Les Davis. He said Billy there and I said yes. [speech hard to hear] a photo of your father with that pig.

HV: That's not the photo that appears in here? There is a photo of...

NH: By crikey that might be so.

HV: I think that is Mr Ah Moy.

NH: It would probably be the same thing.

HV: He probably lent them one to get a copy made at some stage. Do you know anyone else who has photo's of the Chinese or the Joss House or anything like that?

NH: No. If anyone did it would be the Kincade family. Yes if anyone did that's who it would be. [Mrs Holmes: Essie would know a lot about it.] Well she might remember things. Perhaps she's got a better memory than mine. My memory is not as good as it used to be of course but she might remember things that I've forgotten. You see there's a lot of mistakes made in this book but you can't say anything about that because they did a marvellous job to get the information into all print you see. But that man there they have got as my uncle, that's my grandfather. That's my father and that's my grandfather. He came out from England and so did my father when he was born.

HV: It is terribly difficult when you write things down. Wasn't there a Chinese man who coached the football team?

NH: Teddy Chinn. But he had nothing to do with it. I don't know where he came from.

HV: Would that be the photo?

NH: Well the photo that he had wasn't as quite as big as that. It looks quite like it but I can't remember the building on the photo he gave Bill. But it is something like that. You see the Chinamen from Weldborough, they came through either by Ringarooma and buy pigs and then take them back through the back road here right through to Weldborough because it was known as Tom's Plains then.

HV: That road that came from Weldborough to here, that would have crossed the Old Cascade Road at some point, would it?

NH: The Cascade. You crossed to Cascade Creek, not too far from Weldborough [speech hard to hear].

HV: There must have been a road because there was quite a collection of Chinese around Bells Hill on the Old Cascade Road as well.

NH: Oh yes there was one Chinaman there, at the foot of Bells Hill, at a place called the Waverley and there was one Chinaman there Ah Cow, he had a mine there and he had a half dozen or so worked for him and this Ah Chung (Choon?) he had pack-horses. He'd take that tin into Derby and take it back. Well any of us that were camped up there or before many people were camped up at our mine [speech hard to hear] well if you wanted anything he'd bring it up for you.

HV: That's Ah Chung? He had a store somewhere up in that area didn't he?

NH: Yes. That was what they called the Waverley.

HV: Would that have been down near the Cascade River?

NH: Yes.

HV: Would it have been on the East Creek? I don't know if it was called the East Creek in those days.

NH: Well now East Creek. I'm not sure now just where that is, but this particular spot wasn't far from the Cascade River itself.

HV: The Old Cascade Road would have been there then?

NH: Yes.

HV: But Ah Chung's store, was that on the Old Cascade Road?

NH: Well I don't think it would be too far away from it.

HV: I've got it marked over here, which is about a kilometre off the Old Cascade Road.

NH: Oh well yes that could be...

HV: Well I was thinking that perhaps that was a track because I know they used to pack supplies from Weldborough through to Ah Chung. There probably was a track that went through the back here somewhere.

NH: They might have had another one, apart from this main one they might have had a branch off it. There would have to be a bit of a branch off it because the main track... [speech hard to hear]. We were on part of the road last Sunday, we came from Weldborough through there.

HV: On the Mt. Forest Dam Road?

NH: Yes.

HV: In the old days it would have gone from Bells Hill across to Dead Horse Hill Road I suppose?

NH: Yes. This Dead Horse Hill Road it turns off in the town here. That's still the same road, but I heard the other day you can't get right through it now.

HV: That's the Dead Horse Hill Road there. No that's right you can't get all the way through, but in the old days would that have gone over towards Bells Hill?

NH: Yes.

HV: And then around below Mt. Paris Dam?

NH: It would be. I'm not too sure it it went directly below it, or up above it a bit. I just forget now. It could have been below it, I remember when they built the dam, but I'm not too sure about that part of the road.

HV: Then it went over here to Weldborough?

NH: Yes. It carried onto Weldborough.

HV: So perhaps it wouldn't have been all that likely that there was another road coming through here from Weldborough?

NH: There might have been a branch off it but I couldn't tell you anything about that now. But you see it's only somewhere about 6 miles from Weldborough up to Bells Hills or something like that.

HV: Did you ever see Ah Chung's (Choon's store)?

NH: No not the store itself. No I used to see him on the track with his pack horses.

HV: He was there till quite late wasn't he?

NH: Yes it was around the time when they used to bring the picture shows around to Derby and Branhholm and those places because when he decided to go back to China he put on a free picture show for all the kiddies in Derby.

HV: Did he?

NH: Well then, after all those years that that man spent in Tasmania, he decided he'd go back to China. He had plenty of money to go back to his wife, but when he got there she had someone else. He came back to Melbourne from what I heard and joined up with another Chinaman in a laundry there.

HV: How did you hear that story?

NH: Well that I couldn't tell you now. Different ones that knew them so well I suppose. He was another one, a very respected man. He was always dressed up in suits and that. A gentleman Chinaman.

HV: Did he speak English?

NH: They could all speak reasonably well. You could understand them. There was none of them that wouldn't try to hold a conversation with you. Even old Bo Wing the outcast, you could always understand what Bo had to say. They could make themselves understood quite easily. Well they had to, otherwise they would never got on at the place at all.

HV: Could any of them write English?

NH: Apart from the Moy's I don't know about the others, I would take it that they would be able to. Especially Ah Chung with his business and dealing with the tin and all this business. I reckon he would. Of course the Moy's were educated at the Branhholm School [Mrs H: Did you see the graves at the Branhholm Cemetery Helen?]

HV: Well there is only 2 isn't there?

NH: Yes Mrs Eager and Old Ah Moy.

HV: That's Mr Ah Moy's grave is it? What happened to Mrs Ah Moy?

NH: Well she went a bit strange and they took her down to Lachlan Park, New Norfolk and that's where she ended her days.

HV: Were you around in those days?

NH: Yes I was working for them when they took her away.

HV: What happened to her?

NH: Don't know, she just went strange, she got all sorts of things into her head. She reckoned at once stage that one member of the family, I think it was the one that went away first, that he was locked in a tunnel under the house and that she could hear him bawling and her cousin, a girl cousin younger than me, she used to get her to help her dig this. She would have dug the house down if they had let her go because she reckoned she could hear this boy locked in this tunnel.

HV: He wasn't living there at that stage?

NH: Ah Moy?

HV: No the younger one, the one that she thought was locked under.

NH: No he had run away. Yes she went real strange. That's where she finished up.

HV: So did that make life in the house-hold a bit uncomfortable or a bit unhappy that she...?

NH: Yes in a sense, but you know they sort of accepted it.

HV: What is their family life like, what sort of family structure did they have?

NH: Oh very good, you see they lived up to European standard in every way. Only they would always get me out of the road I noticed; the women folk never liked you to hear them speak Chinese. And while Billy and the others were at work on the mine and I was rousing about in the garden, one of the Chinamen came up to get his groceries they'd always find - you go and split up some wood, or would you go and get me something else. They never liked me to hear them speak in Chinese and I don't know why. Which is funny. I never ever did. Even old Mrs Ah Moy, she never learnt to speak very good English. It was very broken but you could understand her.

HV: She wouldn't speak Chinese in front of you?

NH: No.

HV: So the family all spoke English while you were there.

NH: Oh yes. [Mrs H: What was their cooking like?] Very good. By crikey you wouldn't get cleaner people than Chinese people, anywhere. And the preparation, when they went to cook fish for instance they'd have this pan spotlessly clean and then they'd put this oil (some kind of oil in it) and they'd wait till that came to more or less a blue flame before they put the fish in it and all that type of thing. Oh they were a clean race, there's no doubt about them. They were very clean.

HV: Who was the head of the family?

NH: Oh well Bill really, as far as I was concerned Bill was the head of the family. He was the man of the house type of thing. You see the old chap died when they were all reasonably too young.

HV: So people didn't go to old Mrs Ah Moy?

NH: No.

HV: They would go to Bill?

NH: Oh yes because you see he could speak good English. They always went to Bill if there was any dealings or anything, you would go to Bill.

HV: What about in the family, if there were any family decisions to be made. Were they always made by Bill?

NH: To the best of my belief they were, yes.

HV: What sort of clothes did the girls wear?

NH: Just the same as our people did.

HV: They didn't have Chinese clothes?

NH: No fear, they all dressed the same as us.

HV: They became Christian didn't they the Ah Moy's?

NH: Yes.

HV: Do you know when?

NH: No I wouldn't have a clue.

HV: So they were by the time you were living with them?

NH: Yes.

HV: I was just wondering, which church did they go to?

NH: As far as I know it was the English Church.

HV: Which one would that have been, there were a couple of churches in Branhholm?

NH: There were 3. There was one up on top of the hill.

HV: The Uniting Church?

NH: Yes it is now.

HV: Do you remember who the preacher was there?

NH: No I don't, but I fancy it probably would be at that time the Reverend France but that's only a wild guess. A very wild guess.

HV: Did you ever hear of a Chinese minister at the Church?

NH: No I never did.

HV: There was one at once stage.

NH: I was going to say, it's not to say there wasn't one.

HV: He might not have lived at that particular church but I should think he used to...

NH: No I don't know. But as I say, I was only young then, a lot of those things were in and out of my mind.

HV: Well that was actually before your time, but I thought maybe you might have heard of a bit of a story about him at some stage. His name was Wong Kee(?).

NH: Before my time, you see when old Sam Hawks took all those Chinamen, when they had that row there when he brought them to Branhholm he took them up to Ruby Flat. Something like a hundred of them, well that was all before my time. But when I was old enough to remember the place up there, there was a place some old workmen used to go, well it was a big long hut that 15 Chinamen lived in and they had these bunks one above the other you know.

HV: How many a flight, 2 up or 3?

NH: Three. But ah...

HV: You went to that place when the Chinese were living in it?

NH: Well that wasn't far from where we lived you see and we would be playing away there and where have you been, oh across to 15 men hut. But we were only kids you see and they'd camped there and gone before I could remember anything about it of course.

HV: Can you cast your mind back to that hut. What sort of design was it, how was it built?

NH: Well just to the best of my ability just a long hut with a gable roof and of course naturally all built out of palings and shingles.

HV: Shingled roof?

NH: Yes.

HV: Did it have a floor?

NH: Well now, I don't think so because very few of the huts did have a floor. I don't think that one did, but I couldn't tell you that.

HV: Did they have a verandah?

NH: I don't think it did.

[end of side one]

HV: Were they all arranged along one wall?

NH: No to the best of my belief they weren't. There might be 3 along that wall and there might have been perhaps 2, one above the other there and the same here. Something like that. It's not clear. But that's what we always used to know it by as the 15...

HV: How wide was the hut and how long?

NH: You've got me there too. It could have been 24 or 25 feet in length. It could have been a bit more. I couldn't give you the exact figures on that.

HV: How wide roughly?

NH: Well I'd say, probably as wide as this room or a bit wider, I fancy.

HV: Well what's that 10 foot.

NH: Yes 10 to 12 feet. Something like that, but my memory is very vague now.

HV: Did it just have the one door?

NH: As far as I know it did. The door in the centre as far as I can remember.

HV: Did it have a fireplace?

NH: Yes they always had their fireplaces and of course in those days it was all built out of stone and clay. I knew there was something I had to ask you, when Tas took you about, down the back of where Ah Moys lived there, did he take you down and show you, what we call the big pig oven?

HV: Yes.

NH: Still there is it?

HV: I saw the old hut and we couldn't find the oven. We looked for it but we couldn't find it.

NH: It's probably been destroyed because it was there out in the open and over just a way from the Joss House, but I suppose those wood chippers have ruined that, there was a small one up here that the Chinese that lived up around the Joss House had there. It was built on the same principle but only smaller. I don't know how many years ago I was up through there and a gum tree had grown straight up through the middle of it. But that was rather a large one down there at the back of the house.

HV: Did they ever use it to your memory?

NH: Oh crikey yes. You see as well as their Chinese New Year business, for for some reason or other ever so long there would be, I would call it a Chinese spread at Ah Moy's and the Chinamen would come from Weldborough and Derby out to it and there would alway be a roast pig there amongst their food and what this spread was in aid of, whether it was just a get together, but it seemed to me it would happen just about every month. There would be different Chinamen, there was the Too Wongs(?) from Derby, they used to come out there and Mrs Eager, she used to make dresses for old Mrs Too Wong the old lady.

HV: Mrs Too Wong, she was a Chinese lady or...?

NH: Oh yes, I don't think she could speak English.

HV: I've haven't heard about her.

NH: They lived at Derby. George Too Wong, he was a blacksmith and wood carver and so forth at Derby.

HV: He was a blacksmith. Did you ever meet Mrs Too Wong?

NH: The old lady?

HV: Yes.

NH: I've seen her, when she used to come out there. She was a very big woman. Of course they tell a story like they do about other people you see. She came out this day to Ah Moy's and Emily was in her sewing room and George Too Wong and Billy Ah Moy, they were in the other room and Emily called out "George", she said "would you and Bill just run the tape around your mother and call out the measurements to me, I'm busy just for the moment". Right'o, they run the tape around this big lady and Bill said "It's the full length of the tape and a bit over". What the bit was we never knew.

HV: And she was pure Chinese?

NH: Yes. There was another. George had a brother there, he was a bit mental. What was his name, Ernie I think. Well he couldn't speak English. He just roused about, they had a bit of a farm out there at [speech hard to hear]. George in the last few years before he retired, oh quite a number of years he had a truck and he used to cart wood all around Derby, George did and another one that used to come out from Weldborough.

HV: Maa Mon Chin?

NH: No I knew of those. It wasn't a Chintock, oh blimey and one day there was a gathering came there and the men folk they went into this little place where Billy did the boot work and this chap he could speak good English as well as Chinese. Well they were yap-yap-yap and I came in with an arm full of wood for the fire and I just stood there for a minute and this bloke turned around and he said "That was a dam bit of good ground that was you know". Well I hadn't understood one word that they'd talked about. They talked about this tin(?) ground in Chinese and I suppose he thought I understood it. Well I didn't understand what they were talking about. They had a phonograph there and they put on all these Chinese records. Well they looked very solemn you know. Well I suppose it was a sad song or something. And another time I suppose it was a comic in Chinese because they would clap and laugh.

HV: How many people used to come to these...?

NH: Well probably ten or a dozen or something like that. I couldn't tell you off hand now.

HV: Was Mrs Too Wong the only Chinese woman?

NH: She was the only Chinese woman I knew that ever visited them.

HV: They never got visited by Mrs Lee Fook from Gladstone?

NH: Well look I don't know. I don't ever remember it. Old Mrs Too Wong, she was the only one.

HV: Did the Ah Moy's have anything to do with the Maa Mon Chin's?

NH: I don't know. You see I don't know much about their life with the other Chinamen, but probably they did, you see they might have come from the same parts of the country as others. Look out around Pioneer and these places, hundreds of them. Moorinna [Mrs H: There's a lot down there at Ravenswood. They had a big market garden at Ravenswood.] That would be the Chung Gons that have got the shop. They had a market garden. The Ah Moy's, they were friends or they might have been relatives, I don't know. Chung Gons you see, Billy would go into town and perhaps for a day or two and he'd stop at Chung Gon and I just wondered when they were up this time, you see they'd travel backwards and forwards every day. We reckon it's an ordeal to go into Launceston for a day. They'd travel each day backwards and forwards every day while the celebrations were on, but whether they stopped with the Chung Gons or not, I don't know.

HV: Launceston; I think there's quite a few Chinese.

NH: But whether they were related to Chung Gon's or really good friends I don't know. I know they were friendly and Bill would go in and stay a night or two with them.

HV: Were there any market garden's in this area?

NH: Not that I can remember. There could have been. You see earlier than my time when there were so many no doubt there was, but I never knew where there was one. Even afterwards. No I don't know about that part of it. You see they got a lot of stuff through on the train. A lot of stuff came through all the way from China on the train. If there was a Chinese market garden anywhere in the Ringarooma Municipality well I knew nothing about it.

HV: The huts on Ruby Flat and in Branhholm area, but particularly on Ruby Flat, were they built right on the mine workings or were they built in a sort of little cluster?

NH: Oh no they weren't in a cluster, you see the few that were up there they were scattered about not like some places where they are reasonably close together. Well there at Branhholm itself you see I don't think they were too much close together. They were split about.

HV: How many huts would there have been in the Ruby Flat area?

NH: I couldn't tell you that because they were nearly all gone. [speech hard to hear]. You see apart from the Ah Moy's family I only knew one other Chinaman up there.

HV: Who was that?

NH: Wong Kee(?) we called him. I suppose that was his name and to my mind he was a bigger built Chinaman than others. Sort of tall broad boned type of man. There was one other this Ah Sooh(?) who used to bring the vegetables around from up the Joss House area. To me he was a bigger built man. You see most of them were only short. Small people, but the old lady, Mrs Ah Moy she was no height and only so high with these littly tiny feet.

HV: Mrs Ah Moy?

NH: Yes.

HV: What about the girls did they have tiny feet or did they...?

NH: Oh no they never went through that process of bandaging their feet like she did. Oh no they were average. Of course when he went back to China to get his bride, old Ah Moy, and brought her back to Ruby Flat and built this 7' slab fence around so sticky beek women couldn't see her and her little bound up feet.

HV: Could she walk around alright?

NH: Oh yes she could get about. I think she only took 2 in her shoes.

HV: Was that fence still up when you lived there.

NH: No she got over that business. She'd become friends with our people like mum when they lived up there. Oh no they got away from that. They had a shop up there too.

HV: Your parents?

NH: No the Ah Moys. They had a shop up there when they were up there. As a matter of fact we lived for a while in this shop. It was a house type of thing. But when the Ah Moy's left and went to Branhholm to live my people shifted into their house and that's where we lived until I was about 18, in that house.

HV: It had been the Ah Moy's before?

NH: Yes.

HV: What sort of a house was that?

NH: Rather a nice house considering it was back in the bush like that. Nice front verandah, nice garden and a flower garden and all.

HV: Did many of the Chinese grow flowers around their hut's?

NH: I don't think the men folk ever did as far as I can remember.

HV: Did many of them grow vegetables around?

NH: What I can remember, nearly everyone grew a few for their own use. They liked their vegetables. They liked birds, any sort of bird. I often think when I worked with them at Branhholm, just on the side of the Ruby Flat road there was a bit of a paddock, it's still there now. Well they used to put oats in it. They used to grow oats. They would grow oats for the old horses they had. Well there would be all these Starlings, come there into the oat paddock so Charlie (or Gemg as we called him) he'd get [speech hard to hear] gun and he'd fill it up with everything, shot and tacks and everything and he said to me you go up the road and throw something over them and disturb them, so I would throw a stone over and they'd come up in a great big black cloud and he'd bang and they would fall in all directions. We would gather them up take them down, there was a Chinaman lived in the camp, not a great way past this pig oven down there. Old Black Dooie we called him. Ah Doo I think was his name but we called him Black Dooie [speech hard to hear]. He'd have a pot of water boiling there while you were watching him and those birds plucked ready to put in the pot. Those blooming Starlings. When you took the feathers off them they were only little like that. These blooming porcupines. You know they would go away and look for a porcupine and they would have this red string, Chinese string as we would call it. This here red nylon string they use now it put my mind onto that and it was strong too I reckon. Well they would take a ball of that and they would go away and find a porcupine and they put a loop around his leg, and back they would come dragging this thing. Well I can always remember one incident when I was a boy living at Ruby Flat, coming along the back of our place (we had our own fence there) and mum happened to be out in the yard and were up having a yarn to him, well of course [speech hard to hear].

HV: So they used to eat the porcupine?

NH: Oh yes, it would have some flavour wouldn't it, after being filled up with ants. [Mrs H: It's something like pig meat though isn't it?] They tell me it is. I've never had it to try.

HV: You were saying that old Mrs Ah Moy used to go and visit your mother?

NH: Oh yes. She could speak well enough for you to understand.

HV: The women of the house, they'd pop out and roundabout and they would have friends around the town.

NH: Oh yes.

HV: So they would socialise?

NH: All different women would come there to Mrs Eager when they were making the frocks. But you see the others, as soon as they grew up, well now of course the Chinese style was when it came for them to get married their husband's were picked for them. Well this eldest one, Lizzie, you see they picked her husband for her from the other side. A bloke by the name of Lee Mon and when she saw him she cried her eyes out. She had to marry him. Well that was their son that was with Bill Moy at Branhholm last week.

HV: I see.

NH: I can remember when he came over with his mother to Ah Moy's to stay there with the mother and other sisters when he was about 6 or 7 years of age. Mervin Lee Mon was his name. I can always remember that.

HV: He was only 6 or 7 years old when he got picked?

NH: When he came over with his mother. He was the son of Lizzie. I said to him on the Sunday: "Your name is Mervin" and he said "Yes", "And you came over with your mother here to Branhholm"? "Yes" he said "I'd be about 6 or 7 years old when I was over here" and I said "I can remember you". I can remember his name, Mervin Lee Mon only too well.

HV: So how old would she have been when she married him?

NH: Oh well I don't know, in her twenties I suppose. They had no say in that matter at all from what I can understand. But you see the others, this Trixie and Nellie that got away before they married and whether their husbands were picked for them over in Melbourne or not I don't know. Rosie, I don't know.

HV: What about Mrs Eager; she married an Australian.

NH: Yes, well you see that was done on the quiet amongst the family, but she couldn't go and live with him. She lived there with the mother and other members of the family and he was on the other side of the road back in the bush a bit. She would go over and clean up and have tea cooked for him when he would come home from tin mining from the bush. She just couldn't go and live with him you see. It seemed a queer idea.

HV: She wasn't allowed to?

NH: No, wasn't allowed to live with him.

HV: Was that because they wanted her to marry a Chinaman?

NH: Oh yes. So she went on and she lived in the place just opposite. There was an old place opposite where Tas Kincade lived there, where the Ah Moy's lived opposite, well she lived there. Bill lived in a hut, in the bush but of course after the family had all moved away, of course, naturally, they lived together. He went on with his bit of tin mining and she went on with her dressmaking. Poor old her, she had a fall in the bath and it turned to gangrene and she finished up with her leg taken off.

HV: Oh dear.

NH: But by crikey they were nice people.

HV: Did she ever have any children?

NH: I think they had one daughter. I think someone adopted that daughter I think, if I remember rightly.

HV: So the whole marriage was frowned upon by the family?

NH: Oh yes.

HV: Did that happen while you were living there?

NH: That was before I went there to live with them. When I went there to live with them Billy was in this camp over the bush further over.

HV: So Emily was actually married at that time?

NH: She was married then.

HV: Why do you think they frowned on the marriage?

NH: I don't know what their idea was. Why they had her set on marrying a European. Well I suppose in a way it's a bit like our people. You hear of a girl marrying an Italian and it's frowned on. Well not so much now but it used to be. Well I suppose that had a bit to do with it. But I never asked Mervin when he was over whether there was anymore in his family. He was the only one I knew of. The girl, the young woman that was over here, that was Charlie's daughter. But I never had the pleasure of meeting her. She's not married.

HV: How would they integrate. You said the Ah Moy's were well integrated into the community, they sort of were part of the community. They went to school and such.

NH: They went to school and church.

HV: What about the other Chinese were they as well integrated as the Ah Moy's?

NH: Well most of them. It was only just by meeting them on the track or the bush or the ones that sold a few vegetables, but you'd meet them some where in your travels and have a talk. Oh yes they were all respected but at the same time you know you'd go and have a talk with old Bo. He didn't interfere with us in any way. He was camped up near the Joss House and there was a bloke by the name of Rolly Bonner who had a bit of a tin mine there and he was burning the scrub away from it and the fire got away and it burned old Bo's camp. Well he thought, I'll have to do something about it, Rolly Bonner thought, so he wrote out a petition and headed it that he was burnt out and lost everything. He had nothing to lose really. So he said to Bo would you take this, and Rolly signed his name to it and put down 5 shillings. Bo took it all around Braxholm and he reckoned this was good. He only had to show it to people and they would give him money, a couple of bob. He went all around the coast and finished up in Launceston. They had to put a stop to him. He reckoned it was a great thing showing this bit of paper and getting some money.

HV: So he made a bit of a quid out of it.

NH: He did. As strange as it may seem I can't remember Bo dying or just what became of him.

HV: What about the other Chinese?

NH: But a lot that died here, some did manage to save enough to get back to China, but others buried down in the Braxholm cemetery after a certain number of years, their people came over and dug them up and took the remains back. We were over there on Sunday looking around. We were showing Mrs Bennett up here to see if [speech hard to hear] in the Braxholm Cemetery.

They were filled in properly. The took the remains back to China.

HV: Where did they come over from?

NH: Different parts of China.

HV: They came all the way over just to...?

NH: Yes. But you see I suppose the reason why Ah Moy's remains weren't taken, because his people were here you see and that's where it was.

HV: Did any of the other Chinese go to Church in the district?

NH: That's more than I could tell you. No I couldn't tell you. Too young to remember that part of it.

HV: Were you ever around when some Chinese came to take the bones of their ancestors?

NH: I do remember once and it was probably some of the last one's. I can remember some well educated, well dressed young people came over and went down there to the cemetery, yes.

HV: How long ago would that have been?

NH: Well crikey now, 60 years ago I suppose.

HV: Was there any ceremony associated with it?

NH: No that I know of. When they buried the Chinese here they used to march along and drop these bits of paper to keep the devil away or whatever it was they used to say. They would get there and put their little roast's up and pick them a bottle of what they called Chinese wine. Some of the young people in Branhholm would wait till it was all over and collect the pig and take the wine and then have a little spread of their own.

HV: Did you ever see a Chinese funeral?

NH: No not that I can remember.

HV: Did they ever burn anything on the graves?

NH: I think they used to burn bits of paper. I think they did burn bits of paper. This good roast pig and their good wine [speech hard to hear].

HV: Did the Chinese ever go to the European celebrations on the town. Christmas or annual sports days or anything like that?

NH: Well I think the young one's like Ah Moy but I don't know about the older ones. You see, well there's photo's there and other photo's in a different book with the Branhholm band. You see Charlie Ah Moy was in the Branhholm band and he was also in the school choir. And Rosie of course, but one thing I just happened to mention or several things I mentioned I don't think they put that in the book. One school teacher we had. Right'o he came in and he caught 2 or 3 of us talking. Here you go and sit with that girl. Well that was Rosie Ah Moy. Well he reckoned that was punishment for you to sit with a Chinese girl. It was a terrible thing you know when you come to think of it.

HV: Poor little girl.

NH: Oh yes, oh crikey what she must have thought. It was just a slur on the Chinese. Terrible thing to do.

HV: How did the kids who were told to sit with her feel?

NH: Well I'd be one and they didn't know that we were practically rared together. Old Rosie and I could have a bit of a talk. Some didn't go much on her. But most of the girls, if one of the girls was caught talking or misbehaving somehow and they were sent, well they were all good friends of Rosie's. He just had this idea that it was a punishment to have to sit with this Chinese girl and yet of course it's alright for people who don't belong to the town just to come there like that I suppose and show their authority.

We didn't mind, I didn't mind sitting with Rosie. I lived with them for a time.

HV: Were there any half cast part Chinese children in the school?

NH: Half cast?

HV: Yes.

NH: Well there was a family of Chings. Teddy Ching he was the captain of the football team. Well some of their kiddies went to the school. And there was a family of Brooks'. Old Frank Brooks, of course he was a white man and he married, I don't know whether she was half cast or quarter cast Chinese, but the Chinese showed in her quite a bit. She was a well educated woman. Well her family went to school with us. There was a boy and 2 girls and they went to school with us these Brooks'. Yes. I have photo's of the boys, Frankie. He was a pretty cluey boy, you know in those days we were only school age and we very seldom heard anything about aeroplanes or anything and he got the bug to start making small aeroplanes and by crikey he could make a good job of it and he only had a photo. His mother was a dress maker too and they shifted into Launceston up there in Wellington Street and he put one of these aeroplanes in the shop window for people to see. He was a very clever boy. I reckon his mother would only be a quarter cast because they showed so much of the Chinese in them. [Mrs H: There's a photo of that boy in the book.] I don't think so. I thought I was the only one that ever had those photo's.

HV: Do you ever remember any of the Chinese talking about the Chinese opera that visited Welda Borough?

NH: No I don't. You see...

HV: That was 1893.

NH: You see there were a mob of Chinese and they had a pretty big Joss House out at Welda Borough. I knew very little of Welda Borough in my young days. Very little. It's the same out there at Garibaldi at Pioneer. You see they have a little township there the Chinese, there's no doubt about it and they had out there fireworks and that was a big night there at Garibaldi. But as I say it was only heresay because I never saw Garibaldi till I was grown up and went out that way to work.

HV: Do you have any idea how long the Chinese usually stayed in Australia?

NH: Well years. They came out as young men and the majority of them were at Branhholm till they died. There wasn't many that got enough money to go back and then of course the areas like Welda Borough or even Launceston they just lived on there till they died. Those that had the [speech hard to hear] and the Chintock's and all those [speech hard to hear].

HV: You say this character Chee Mon lived in Derby. I didn't think there were any Chinese in Derby. What part of Derby did he live?

NH: Well you go through Derby over the bridge and after you get up there a bit there's a road that turns the right that goes to the Mutual and there's a big brick house on the corner [speech hard to hear]. Well it was along a bit further than that on a bank, well I suppose the house is still there I don't know. Someone might have pulled it down. I don't know whether if it was there that a daughter or a son of there's went over to Flinder's Island to live and when they got old they went over there and that's where they died and it's not that many years ago since old Gerald died. He was a big age.

HV: Right. Do you remember when they left that area?

NH: No [speech hard to hear] you see she had been married before, this woman that Gerald married. She was Mrs Tagget(?) I think from the valley, out there on the Derby Road, that George married. I don't know how many they had in the family. A girl, I think she was fairly musical and George I don't know what he did the young fellow. Whether they just couldn't look after themselves any longer [speech hard to hear] went over there.

HV: Were there any other Chinese at Derby to your knowledge?

NH: Ah well, no, they were the only one's that I knew of. Merv Chintock of course he came from Ulverstone(?). He died here a few months back. George was the only one I knew of but only by looks you would think he was a Chinese. By crikey he could talk; a wonderful man. A first class blacksmith.

HV: Was he?

NH: Yes.

HV: In the Bells Hill area, you didn't go there until you were about 19 or so.

NH: I was 20 when I was up there.

HV: Were there many Chinese there then?

NH: No there was none.

HV: None?

NH: Only the odd one further down at Waverley as they call it. You were going down in the Derby direction; there was one or 2 there. But no they were practically gone altogether. All the Chinamen that were left were out in the Weldborough area.

HV: But Ah Ching still ran his pack business?

NH: That had finished then.

HV: So when you knew of Ah Chung and his business you were actually living in Bransholm. So he used to pack all the way over to Bransholm?

NH: No. I don't know whether he packed all the way to Bransholm but Derby was his main run and Weldborough. We knew of people up at Tin Pot not far away and Bells Hill you'd go to visit them and you'd meet up with Ah Chung. Yes.

HV: There were Chinese at Tin Pot were there?

NH: No. They gradually died out. The only one's up at Weldborough would be Rodney and Freda Chintock. I think they are the only one's left.

HV: So Ah Chung was really packing mainly for the European's at that stage?

NH: Yes for anyone. He would pack for anyone. A nice chap.

HV: Did he supply liquor at all?

NH: That's more than I can tell you [speech hard to hear] no doubt if someone wanted it I think he would. I'd think he would oblige to any of them that would want anything brought up their camp.

HV: Did you know Sam Hawks?

NH: No I didn't. [starts a private conversation with Mrs Holmes.] I knew 2, there was Charlie and another one that went to Africa and back; Fred, he lived at Bridport with his wife. I didn't know the old fellow Sam and then there was a Miss Hawks or Mrs Hawks, who lived at Scottsdale for years, but no I didn't know Sam Hawks. He was before my time.

HV: Do you know if the Ah Moy's had much contact with China?

NH: No I don't know whether they did or not although some of the stuff they used to get you know these great jars of ginger and tea it came from China. Whether that was direct or not I don't know.

HV: They didn't get letters or parcels?

NH: I don't know. They could have done; probably they did because you see the old chap he came from there and went over and got his wife there, so there's no doubt they did have people to write too.

HV: You don't remember any letters arriving from China or anything?

NH: No. I don't remember any part of that. Probably the [speech hard to hear].

HV: Did any of them ride horses?

NH: Never ever seen one on horseback. They had this old pack horse Darkie at Ah Moy's. I know later on after I left there my brother and I, we used to hire it from them. We used to cut a [speech hard to hear] load of wood and deliver it to someone in the town and we would get 5 shillings for our load of wood, but we would only get half that 2 and 6.

HV: So it was a good business?

NH: Oh my word, there is no doubt about that. [Mrs H: It would be in those day I suppose.] To give us a bit of pocket money at Ruby Flat my brother went in for ducks and I went in for fowls. Kill a few fowls, gut them, clean them, take them down to Branhholm - 4 shillings a pair for a pair of dressed fowls. It was pocket money to go to the pictures. [speech hard to hear].

HV: That's how much it costs to go to the pictures, \$4.00.

NH: Two shillings to go to the pictures and I'd go twice a week.

HV: The pictures are still equal to the price of a chook.

NH: Yes [speech hard to hear].

HV: Did they have pictures regularly in Branhholm?

NH: In those days they did. You see they used to come through from Scottsdale. Tas Newman built the theatre in Scottsdale. Him and his off sider, Charlie [speech hard to hear]. Well they came through and opened up at Branhholm and opened up at Derby and so on and of course it was a draw for us young ones because they would run these serials at the pictures you see. It would finish up at a very exciting part and you had to come back again a couple of nights later to see what took place. It was during that time that Ah Chung decided to leave and go back to China and he put on a free picture show. (I forget what it cost) for all the kids at Derby.

HV: Quite a gift he must have been very popular with the children.

NH: He was a popular man like most them were. They were a great crowd of people the Chinese. The Ah Moy's were just the same. Then there was one old chap. I don't know what he used to do. He used to live half way between Branhholm and the Joss House, he lived over there. Lee Too. Well when he was going down to the town for anything he would be dressed in a dark suit and felt hat. We would always call him the gentleman Chinaman. Well the others would go down to the town in the clothes I didn't know much about... they worked in. They were respected in every way all the Chinese that we knew. They were the only family the Moy's. They were Ah Moy's right up to when the old man died then they dropped the Ah. Some said that Ah stood for Mister but that would be wrong because you call Bill, Mr Moy so where the Ah fit in I don't know.

HV: A lot of them had Ah before them, but not all of them.

Miss Helen Vivian interviewing Mr Cecil Harper 15-08-1983.

Mr Cecil Harper (Stump)

Born: 14 May, 1905 (78 years old), at Pioneer

Present address: Post Office
Pioneer, Tasmania

HV: Why are you nicknamed Stump Harper?

CH: My grandfather nicknamed me that when I was about that old, so it has stuck ever since.

HV: Where were you born?

CH: Pioneer.

HV: Born in Pioneer, when?

CH: Fourteenth May.

HV: What year?

CH: 1905.

HV: Have you lived here all your life?

CH: I was away seven or eight miles out for quite a few years.

HV: Seven or eight miles from here?

CH: Yes.

HV: Where was that?

CH: On a farm at Winnaleah.

HV: But the rest of the time you have been here?

CH: Yes.

HV: Have you been mining?

CH: I was farming for a few years and then we shifted down here for the kiddies to go to school and I went mining then.

HV: But you started off here with your father with a shop?

CH: Yes and out on the farm. The shop and farm, and we were both [speech hard to hear].

HV: So your father had a business here in Pioneer?

CH: Yes my mother and father.

HV: What was he selling?

CH: Groceries and of course drapery and boots and he sold a lot because you see no one had means of going away.

HV: No transport?

CH: No transport.

HV: What were the roads like?

CH: Just gravel.

HV: Where did they go to?

CH: [speech hard to hear].

HV: So there was a road through to Moorina? Would there have been the road through to Boobyalla?

CH: Yes. That's where there used to be... Supplies came to Boobyalla in those days like '84 back. I came in just about the change over to the railway came through.

HV: When did the railway come through?

CH: Well it came from Launceston to Scottsdale and then on to Branhholm and eventually onto Herrick.

HV: That's right. So you were getting a lot of your supplies through Herrick?

CH: That's where they all came from.

HV: When you worked for your father you used to carry things through to the Chinese in Garibladi.

CH: Yes, with a horse and cart.

HV: How often did you go up there?

CH: Twice a week.

HV: What sort of things did you take?

CH: Groceries. You know food.

HV: Any tools?

CH: Occasionally. Some of them might want a shovel or a hack-saw.

HV: How many Chinese were there at Garibaldi at the time?

CH: I couldn't tell you. There were evidently a lot more before my time, but there were quite a few there then.

HV: Could you estimate roughly?

CH: No not to be anywhere near that.

HV: For how many years?

CH: A good few years. My brother and I, we used to work on the farm. One out there on the farm and another would do the work here you see and swap around.

HV: So about which years were you going up there? How old would you have been?

CH: 1905 when I was born and I started doing that when I was about fourteen I suppose, because we left school at fourteen in those days.

HV: Can you describe to me what Garibaldi looked like in those days? What can you remember of Garibaldi coming in from the road?

CH: It was just the street and a line of houses on either side.

HV: Do you remember how many houses roughly?

CH: Well I suppose I was over there hundreds of times, but you see I suppose there would be seventy-five, a hundred yards long, but you see houses... There was a fellow, Charlie Taylor, another chap here the other day and we were talking and there were only two houses up there. Charlie was ready to flog out.

HV: Only two houses?

CH: Yes. You see the Chinese when they built that, they built one on to the other, you got a house here, well I build one here, well I use your wall. To get into them you had to go through the front door. They were all joined together. Right along, well most of them anyhow. When I started, there would be more people living, some of them weren't being lived in. One or two of them.

HV: But if you cast your mind back you can't recall how many separate...? So who were you delivering to?

CH: The Chinamen?

HV: You don't remember their names?

CH: I can remember their names.

HV: Who were they?

CH: There was Ah Cow(?), Ah Chung, Hee Jarm, Hen Pan(?), Hee Sun(?), Woll Sun(?) and dozens more but they just won't come out.

HV: So you remember at least a dozen or maybe more Chinese there?

CH: A lot more than that.

HV: When you were there?

CH: Oh yes.

HV: Two dozen, three dozen?

CH: There would be three dozen anyhow, because they all didn't live at the camp. Oh no they were scattered about in huts here or there or out in the bush.

HV: They would use Garibaldi as their little township to come back to every now and then I suppose?

CH: Yes, most of them would come down every weekend because most of them went in there for the weekend, but whether they went home again or not. They didn't live a long way away but they used to gamble of a Saturday night.

HV: Did you ever go to any of their gambling houses?

CH: I was in their gambling house hundreds of times.

HV: Were you?

CH: But you see we would go up there Tuesdays and Saturdays. Well Saturday evening, just depending on which way I travelled because there were Europeans scattered about you see.

HV: Did Europeans live on the camp as well?

CH: No Europeans there, they lived further away. There were little townships everywhere around, with two or three houses together with Europeans and I'd been in their gambling place like every time I went up there. But I often used to see them if I was late on Saturday night, well they would be

coming from their gambling. Dominoes they used to play. Never understood it.

HV: So you never had a game?

CH: No.

HV: How did they play? How many people would be on the one game?

CH: There seemed a lot of them. I suppose the table would be from here to the wall there. That long and so wide, there would be a lot right around the table.

HV: So how big was the gambling house?

CH: It was just part of one chap's shack and they used to, so they told me, in their gambling there was a percentage taken out each time and that went into buying fireworks for the New Year.

HV: Did you ever go to one of the New Year celebrations?

CH: Oh yes.

HV: Can you tell me about it?

CH: It was a big turn-out of tin miners, and people used to drive their horse and carts from Gladstone, from Weldborough, from Branhholm, from Derby up there. But there was one thing that was really spectacular. They had a big [speech hard to hear] and they had a block and tackle up there. It would be heading towards the size of a telegraph pole and the box would be something like that. It would be as big as the sideboard there, so high.

HV: So it would be nine feet high. No sorry six foot high.

CH: Six foot high, three feet deep and this box was put under the [speech hard to hear], lid off and then they hooked a rope into that, through the block and tackle and pulled it up. [speech hard to hear] and then it was [speech hard to hear] at the bottom. It would creep up through the power lines and all the different coloured lights going out you know and on this [speech hard to hear] were Chinese dolls about that long.

HV: Two feet long.

CH: Yes these dolls weren't very big and they would burn off. And the Chinamen that got them, that was good luck. Superstitious things. Well perhaps then he'd give it away to a European friend or someone. How I remember these dolls so

well, people lived straight across the road. He was the accountant at the mine and they had one that hung in their place. I've seen it hundred's of times.

HV: What was his name?

CH: Mr Leech(?). The Europeans used to get on these dolls [speech hard to hear] and it may have been the last year that they put a fence around it. And one European scaled the fence and he came out and he got knifed in the arm and he rushed up to the policeman and he got no sympathy.

HV: What did the policeman say to him?

CH: I couldn't tell you that but I know he got no sympathy. He had no right to be there.

HV: When was the last year that they put this on?

CH: I wouldn't have a clue. I wasn't very old anyhow.

HV: Roughly how old would you have been?

CH: I suppose I would be ten or twelve roughly.

HV: So it was before you started delivering?

CH: Oh yes. The fire works display and that business, us kiddies; what do they call those things that go around and around?

HV: Katherine Wheels I think.

CH: Well they had these dishes there and they gave us kiddies a heap of these to set off; skyrockets and all of that.

HV: They used to invite all the European children to these?

CH: Anybody could go.

HV: Was there a New Year celebration?

CH: It was a New Year celebration and anybody could go.

HV: Did they have a feast as well?

CH: Oh yes there was food but it wasn't more or less laid on... I went to two big feasts.

HV: Did you?

CH: Chinamen that had done alright and were going back to China; like a farewell party. My people having a business and supplying them and that, well my father and brother-in-law were all invited you see and a lot more like the people from around the town.

HV: Whose farewell was it?

CH: One of the Chinamen's. I couldn't tell you his name. My word they had a way of cooking the pork and the poultry. What they did was, they had it built up, all stone and hollow in the middle you see.

HV: An oven?

CH: An oven and when they killed the pig they didn't cut it up, they tied the four legs and it hung on its back. Back down in the oven you see. There was no flame, it was all done with the heat. They had a trap door in the bottom of it. When it was time to put the poultry in, they just uncovered it. You see it was covered over. Well they put the poultry in it. That was tasty. The juices ran back down. When we went to these parties, all we took was a glass to drink out of and a knife and fork. You took your own because they used the chopsticks.

HV: You weren't very good at using them?

CH: No I never tried. The Chinese didn't drink out of a glass or a cup.

HV: Didn't they?

CH: A little round basin. About that big.

HV: A little porcelain bowl?

CH: Bowl, yes.

HV: So you went to two of those?

CH: I went to two of them.

HV: When was the last one?

CH: Well they weren't far apart.

HV: They were both held at...? I've been to Garibaldi and there is a couple of those big ovens. There's one at the top of the hill, in the middle of the site. Do you remember where the oven was that the pig was cooked in?

CH: The one that I was telling you about?

HV: Yes.

CH: It wasn't there at all.

HV: Wasn't it?

CH: No it was back over the river or further around. There was another little community there. That's where it was.

HV: Now do you mean as you walk through the Garibaldi camp and keep going?

CH: No, of course you could, but you would have to come back because there is another road that turns off and goes... When you went up to the Garibaldi camp, well you follow that road and keep on going to the left.

HV: To Moorina.

CH: No Moorina's back to the right. No you went around and went to the left and up that way to where the other mines. But there was a road.

HV: Is that what they call the Argus?

CH: Yes the Argus.

HV: Three Notch Road?

CH: Three Notch. Well that's where it was out over on the Argus.

HV: You don't remember the name of the Chinese there?

CH: Hee Son (Sung?). There was generally one that could talk good English or you know what I mean and he was like the spokesman.

HV: Could he write and read?

CH: I just couldn't say. There was one I mentioned in those names Hen Pan(?). He and another mate came out together and if he was talking, well you would notice a bit of a twang or whatever you might want to call it and he could write well, but once you got the gist you could work it out, you could understand it.

HV: So he was pretty good?

CH: Yes he was good and his mate that he came out with, you'd say "Good-day" to him and he would say "Good-day".

HV: He couldn't say anything else?

HV: He couldn't say anything else?

CH: No he couldn't say another word. And yet the one was really good.

HV: Just pick it up. Most of these Chinese at the camps were miners were they?

CH: Yes.

HV: Were there any Chinese market gardeners in the area?

CH: Well there was one old fellow, he used to carry vegetables around the town here and on the bamboo pole with the two baskets.

HV: In opposition to you?

CH: We never had vegetables.

HV: Oh didn't you?

CH: Just potatoes and that. And he used to carry stuff around. There was one thing about the Chinamen, they always had a garden. One scattered around and huts on their own and all that. They had a good garden.

HV: What did they grow in the garden?

CH: Carrots, potatoes and whatever. Oh yes they did wonders for their vegetables.

HV: Did they grow any fruit?

CH: There were fruit trees up at the camp, up the bank there. One Chinaman, he had a bit of a stall up there, drapery and trousers.

HV: Did he?

CH: Yes.

HV: Did he sell any Chinese cloth?

CH: I couldn't tell you that. He had a big mine up there. He employed others you see and he wanted to go home to China, but to keep his set open his son came out here and the father went home so when the father came back the son went home.

HV: Do you remember the name of this Chinaman?

CH: Yee Gee.

HV: So his son did come out there?

CH: Yes. He spent all dad's money I think.

HV: Yee Gee came back?

CH: No I don't think he did come back. He must of died or didn't want to come back. The son went home anyhow, because the father was getting an old man.

HV: Do you know if the son is dead?

CH: Well all I know we used to call him Jackie Yee Gee.

HV: Jackie Yee Gee? So you've been up there a couple hundred times.

CH: Well I say a couple of hundred times. It was that many times I went up there.

HV: Do you remember what the houses looked like?

CH: They were only just. They weren't very big, the Chinamen never had big places.

HV: What were they made of?

CH: Just palings and bush timber.

HV: Would they have built themselves?

CH: I suppose they did.

HV: Did they split their own timber?

CH: Well I don't know that to be truthful. They were all there when I can first remember.

HV: Did they have wooden floors or mud floors?

CH: A lot of them had wooden floors. But most of them, they would have been rough and all that.

HV: How big were they? How many rooms?

CH: Some of them one room and some were two rooms.

HV: And those rooms would they be this size?

CH: Yes this would be it.

HV: Fifteen feet by twelve?

CH: Something like that. Some of them would be ten by ten sort of thing you know.

HV: Yes and how did they cook?

CH: They just had their fire.

HV: Just an open fire and they would cook over that?

CH: Evidently. I had a few things in the Chinese camp up there.

HV: Did they ever feed you when you went up?

CH: Yes, if you wanted anything. One chap in particular, he would be getting his tea ready when perhaps I'd be getting there and in the winter time and that. "Hungry boy, hungry boy"? "Oh yeah". He'd shove the pan on, a couple of eggs and a slice of bacon.

HV: So they were very hospitable people?

CH: Oh my word.

HV: And how were they thought of in the district by the white people?

CH: Well no one complained about them.

HV: Never any complaints?

CH: Never heard a word and I don't see how anyone could because they stopped up there; they didn't cause any trouble down here or anything. That was that.

HV: They had their own community?

CH: Yes. No doubt about them if you did one a good turn he wouldn't be happy until he did you a good turn. And very, very honest. They would put us to shame. Really they would.

HV: What with your grocery business?

CH: Yes.

HV: I suppose you'd have a lot of accounts around?

CH: You see most of them worked for themselves and they just relied on the water. Boil this in the winter time. Very few had a permanent water supply. If you got a summer like we had last summer that had no water well then...

[end of side one]

HV: Did they?

CH: Yes if they weren't doing well they never spent anything you know. They were very good like that. Well when they got there as soon as they got a bag of tin they would give it to us you see and we'd cart it down, send it away and the money would come back and we'd perhaps take some to pay somebody else and leave us the bigger share. They would go on till they were squared up and then they might lash out with a bit more food. Very honest. Very, very honest.

HV: Do you remember how much? If you were dealing and checking out their things supplying them with groceries you must have got a fair idea of how they were doing up there at the time?

CH: None of them really made, I don't think, a lot of money, because you see in the summer time they got behind and in the winter they would catch up and that was just the way they went. And of course they had no where else to go you see. Quite a few of them, when they got too old to mine, they went to Launceston and Hobart working in the market gardens and I met one down in Hobart one day [speech hard to hear] he worked in a restaurant and his job was peeling potatoes.

HV: Who is it?

CH: I just couldn't tell you his name now.

HV: Do you remember the restaurant?

CH: No. He took me in and showed me around and that was his job. He peeled all these potatoes.

HV: How old would he have been?

CH: Well with a Chinaman you wouldn't know how old he was.

HV: Didn't you?

CH: No well they looked the same.

HV: Too old to mine at any rate?

CH: Oh yes.

HV: And you used to go out with a horse and cart with the groceries? How many bags of tin would you bring back with you?

CH: Three or four or half a dozen you know, whatever any of them had.

HV: What did you do with the tin?

CH: We used to take it to the railway.

HV: At Herrick?

CH: Yes and send it to Launceston.

HV: When did that [speech hard to hear] 1919?

CH: 1919.

HV: So that was when you were starting?

CH: Yes, we used to go out to Herrick, my brother and I and cart the groceries from Herrick to home, to the shelf.

HV: Do you remember any particular stories about the Chinese in this community?

CH: No not really. I remember when they had a funeral.

HV: Oh yes what happend then?

CH: Have you been into the Moorina cemetry?

HV: Yes.

CH: You have seen the monument?

HV: Was that built there then that monument?

CH: Oh yes.

HV: 1919.

CH: I wouldn't know how long it's been there. It's been there a long time. Of course there was only a horse and cart in those days and we used to sell papers with Chinese writing on it and the story was, because I am only going on what people tell you [speech hard to hear].

HV: Did they put gravestones on the graves?

CH: I just couldn't tell you that.

HV: They say that whenever they could, they used to send their bodies or their bones back to China to be buried.

CH: Yes, but I never ever heard of it. I think they went to China to die that was their main ambition.

CH: Oh yes. That's all it was. They just couldn't afford to go back.

HV: How was the rest of the mining. What was Pioneer at that time?

CH: Pioneer at that time, well one hundred of us kids went to school.

HV: One hundred and thirty?

CH: There was one big shop the other side where Charlie Taylor lives. There was another one half way along the town here and then there was this one here my people had and another big shop further down along the street and there were two butcher's shops and then another one. There had been three bake houses, but two had gone by the road and there was a tailor who made suits, and there was a boot maker who made boots.

HV: So it was a thriving little town?

CH: Oh yes.

HV: In 1919 would it have been building up or coming down?

CH: It would be perhaps fairly stable I should think. Well of course 1929 was when the big flood was. It flooded the mine and that sort of...

HV: That really put an end to the mining around here that flood didn't it?

CH: Yes. Well what made Pioneer so cheap [speech hard to hear] was there were no [speech hard to hear]. Derby was the next place. Well it's about eleven miles from here to Derby, five or six miles for people coming this way and the other half would go to Derby. Well it made it a pretty big centre you see.

HV: Well there was a lot of mining all around.

CH: Oh yes. Up past the Garibaldi camp, there were mines all up there and all over the place.

HV: All along the Wyniford River.

CH: Oh yes. You see over the other side of the river, when I was going to school, there were thirty children [speech hard to hear]. There were about thirty children who walked from up there to school.

HV: Did any of the Chinese send their children to school there?

CH: Well the Chinese never had any children.

HV: Didn't they?

CH: No you see there were no Chinese women up there.

HV: Wasn't there a little bit of inter-marriage?

CH: Yes there were the half-castes. There was one boy a bit younger than me, he went to school up here until he was fourteen and then he worked on the mine as an office boy. He would bring the mail over. The manager was a hard hearted man. He took a like to that boy and he got correspondence for him for accountancy and then he got him a job in the office down at Queenstown at Mt. Lyle. He got him a job there and he stopped there for quite a while. Anyhow he finished up that there wasn't an accountancy exam in Australia that he hadn't passed and he was head accountant for Mt. Lyle Company. That was how he finished up.

HV: What was his name?

CH: Shean.

HV: You don't remember his first name?

CH: Alan.

HV: Alan Shean. There are quite a few Shean's in this area.

CH: Well his brother [speech hard to hear].

HV: His brother still lives here?

CH: Yes his brother lives here. Bill Shean.

HV: How old would he be? Would he be a bit younger than you?

CH: Oh yes younger than me. Alan was the eldest of the family.

HV: So his father was Chinese and his mother was...?

CH: His father yes, was part Chinese. His father was a half-caste. There was a Chinese woman at Weldborough or there were two or three. One was supposed to be a rich Chinaman came out and he brought his wife with him and a couple of servants and then there was another Chinese family at Gladstone. There was a Chinese woman there.

Chinaman came out and he brought his wife with him and a couple of servants and then there was another Chinese family at Gladstone. There was a Chinese woman there.

HV: Do you know how many European women were living on the camp?

CH: No not really. There was one who lived down this way a bit. Not to my knowledge in my time.

HV: Did they have their own doctors?

CH: I think there was one or two who could do a bit, but that was all. And don't know they never seemed to have anything wrong with them. They used to get Chinese medicine and they were great ones on the herbs. They used to get stuff out from China.

HV: How did it come in? Did it come into Boobyalla?

CH: It would in the early days before my time.

HV: So you wouldn't remember which boats brought it in?

CH: No but I can remember talking about it at the time when the boat came in there. One of the last boats, if not the last, was the "Heather Bell"(?).

HV: That didn't necessarily come all the way from China did it?

CH: Oh no they used to trade from Launceston.

HV: Do you remember who used to officiate at the funerals?

CH: No I don't know anything about them.

HV: You didn't go to any of them?

CH: No.

HV: Did the Europeans in the district trade with the Chinese at all for vegetables?

CH: There were a couple of them who had horse and carts and they would drive around the farms and buy vegetables and poultry and a pig and take them home.

HV: They had their own pig stys didn't they?

CH: Yes.

HV: Did they have some at Garibaldi?

CH: Yes.

HV: They must have had their own chickens as well?

CH: Yes most of them had their own fowls or poultry. They had rice, pork and poultry. That was their... Very seldom they bought beef or mutton. It was either pork or poultry.

HV: I believe they used to give quite a lot to charities?

CH: They were very charitable.

HV: Do you remember any major charities that they contributed to?

CH: Oh no. In those days there wasn't much for that sort of thing but they used to have a big picnic here [speech hard to hear]. They had this big picnic on New Year's Day on the Recreation Ground and there were kiddies races and the Chinese would come to the party.

HV: Did they come to many of the European things like the New Year's Day?

CH: Oh yes some of them. Not all of them or anything like that but there would be a few.

HV: And they were accepted?

CH: Yes.

HV: About how many half-caste or quarter-caste Chinese children were at the school when you were at school?

CH: There were the [speech hard to hear], the Sheans, the Edmunds and there were the [speech hard to hear]. I suppose most of the time there would be four from each family. They were all big families, I mean there were four going on at one time.

HV: So there would have been about sixteen?

CH: Yes sixteen. Some leaving and some starting.

HV: Do you remember any of the other Chinese camps in the area apart from Garibaldi and the Argus you mentioned?

CH: They were at Weldborough and Branhholm.

HV: Did you ever see the camp at Branhholm?

CH: No that was up the Ruby Flat. Did you see that article?

HV: No I haven't read it yet, I have been told about it.

CH: That was up the Ruby Flat. The Joss House they had up here when this camp finished they took it up to Weldborough.

HV: When did this camp finish?

CH: I just couldn't tell you.

HV: You reckon there were still about three dozen Chinese there around 1919-1920?

CH: Yes well I don't know because you see afterwards I was married and lived out on the farm and things went on here that I didn't know.

HV: So you wouldn't know whether the camp kept going for another five or ten years?

CH: No.

HV: They moved just the inside of the Joss House didn't they?

CH: Yes.

HV: Do you remember what the Joss House looked like?

CH: Well I was in the door many a time, but there was always a light burning.

HV: Was it just a building like all the other buildings?

CH: Yes.

HV: It wasn't a special building at all?

CH: No I don't think so, it was just a hut, what I remember of it. It would be from here to the wall.

HV: It would only be about twelve feet deep?

CH: It had a verandah on it.

HV: How big was the verandah?

CH: Just the length of the room about five foot wide I suppose.

HV: It would have been about twelve foot wide?

CH: I should say it would be.

HV: You didn't notice very much?

CH: No didn't take notice.

HV: Do you remember if it had Chinese characters down the side of the doors?

CH: They shifted it from here into Launceston didn't they?

HV: Did it go from here to Weldborough?

CH: Here to Weldborough.

HV: And then to Launceston?

CH: Weldborough had a Joss House and they took the stuff out of this one and took it up there and they took the lot out of it to Launceston.

HV: Did you ever see the Weldborough Joss House?

CH: No.

HV: So that's just about all you can remember of the Chinese. If they didn't speak English how did they manage to order their...?

CH: Well they picked their... They could all talk a bit of pigeon language or whatever you like to call it. They could tell you and you got used to it. You could tell what they wanted.

HV: Was there a newspaper there in those days?

CH: Yes.

HV: What was it called?

CH: Examiner and the Daily Telegraph used to come through. I think it was the Daily Telegraph. Oh yes they could make themselves understood when we got used to them. My brother, he worked for the people who had the shop before my people. When he left school at fourteen he used to go around and, heavens above, when he finished he could nearly talk Chinese you know.

HV: Your brother?

CH: Yes. He got that used to it.

HV: Is he still alive?

CH: No.

HV: Do you know of any other characters in the district who are Chinese descendants or who would know a little bit about the Chinese or about Garibaldi?

CH: There was the old chap that lived next door, he was raised up there.

HV: Who was that?

CH: Les Woods.

HV: He lives right next door.

CH: Yes he's eighty-seven and a bit too wandering. I don't reckon he could tell you more about them than what I have told you but of course he might know a fair bit. He's not in the best condition.

HV: Not in the best of health. In fact I think I rang his wife and she said he wasn't very well. He's the only one you can think of? How does it feel walking along the street of Pioneer seeing the town and remembering what it used to be like?

CH: That's a mining town for you. I can still count to ten in Chinese.

HV: Go on then.

CH: [Mr Harper proceeds to count to ten in Chinese] One of the old Chinamen taught me. You will find that all the old people, well I'm not that old I'm only seventy-eight, there are things that happen. When we are kiddies, when we are young, that will stick in your mind but you forget what happened four or five years ago.

HV: So you must feel a bit sad when you see Pioneer so small?

CH: You just grow with it.

HV: I suppose it happened gradually did it?

CH: Oh yes one house was pulled down and taken away and a bit afterwards another would go.

HV: Do you remember when the last Chinaman left Garibaldi?

CH: No he'd probably be gone while I wouldn't know about it. You have been at Charlie's have you? Charlie Taylor's?

HV: Yes.

CH: No he'd probably be gone while I wouldn't know about it. You have been at Charlie's have you? Charlie Taylor's?

HV: Yes.

CH: Did he show you a photograph of the old Pioneer School?

HV: No he didn't.

CH: The first thing, I'll go and get it. There you are.

HV: There it is the old Primary State School. Gee it was a rough building wasn't it?

CH: See the props up against the wall?

HV: Yes to stop it from falling down. When was that?

CH: Well that's [speech hard to hear] and two of them are still alive.

HV: Two of the kids?

CH: Yes two of the kids [speech hard to hear] he's one of those three but which I don't know. His sister is older than me and she's in there somewhere. That's the school master and I believe that was his first school. He finished up Prime Minister of Australia.

HV: That's...?

CH: Joey Lyons.

HV: Yes. My word he did a pretty good job didn't he.

CH: That's a team of bullocks.

HV: Gosh. There's about thrity six bullocks in that team.

CH: Yes I think it is, I counted them.

HV: Is that Pioneer?

CH: Yes that was taken out over the sand there, down the other side of Charlie Taylor's. This is on the road to Gladstone.

HV: Right.

CH: That is the old hotel.

HV: Right, up on the hill behind Charlie Taylor's.

CH: That was a big shop up there. That was Charlie's place.

HV: Apparently there used to be a Chinese living opposite Charlie's place.

CH: Yes he did afterwards. That school house there that's where the old Chinaman lived afterwards.

HV: Where was the school house?

CH: The school is up there. Up on the bank. It's still there but it's a work shop now.

HV: And the Chinaman lived there afterwards?

CH: In this hut afterwards.

HV: You don't remember who he was?

CH: Everybody called him Sharkee but what his name was I don't know.

HV: What did he do for a living?

CH: He used to cook a few vegetables and that. That place there that was a hall.

HV: What did people do for entertainment in those days?

CH: They used to, a few years back... Well there would be a dance at Branhholm this Saturday night and one at Pioneer the next Saturday night and the picture shows came around every few weeks.

HV: Were they silent pictures?

CH: Oh yes.

HV: So you had Charlie Chaplin?

CH: Yes and wild west ones.

Miss Helen Vivian interviewing Mr George Mundy 18-08-1983.

Mr George Mundy

Born: 7 November, 1908 (76 years old), at Lottah

Present address: 2 Tully Street
St Helens, Tasmania

HV: We are sitting in his lounge room at 2 Tully Street, St Helens. Can we just start off by you telling me where you were born, when and who your mother and father were and what they did?

GM: I was born the 7th of November 1908 at Lottah. My mother before she was married was a Cathaway and my father [speech hard to hear] and my mother was born in Victoria and my father was born at Green Creek down Hobart. My father was a Boer War veteran and did tin mining, that is all he knew. He died in 1961 aged 93. My mother died in 1965, she was about 80.

HV: How long did you live at Lottah?

GM: I lived at Lottah up until 1939. I left there and went to work in New Guinea at a place called [speech hard to hear] on the goldfields. I came home in 1942 and I enlisted in the army. I was in the army for four years. I got married in the meantime. I came back to St Helens and settled in St Helens and started off in the mines. Did a bit of work in the forestry and finished up on the saw mills for twenty-two years. That is when I retired, about ten years ago.

HV: It was when you were living at Lottah that you knew a couple of the last Chinese?

GM: Billy Bow I knew for as long as I can remember up until 1939. He died in 1943. He was a loner, he never mixed with the other Chinamen. He was a tin miner all his life - what you call a tin scratcher. He had no money. They just existed that is all they did. Apart from that I can't tell you anymore about him.

HV: Did you ever see where he lived?

GM: Oh yes. He mixed more with the Australians than he did with the Chinese. He was well respected, well liked, very honest. I can't tell you anymore about him.

HV: I'll just try to jog your memory a bit. If you think back, can you describe what the house he lived in was like?

GM: Oh yes the first house he lived in was a two room hut. He was quite comfortable and he moved from the place to an old house. It was just weatherboard; paling on the outside with a tin roof. That is where he lived until he died.

HV: Was that at Lottah?

GM: Up on the Blue Tier. He lived on the Blue Tier, he never lived at Lottah. Lottah is about three miles away. That is all I can tell you about Billy Bow.

HV: What sort of clothing did he wear?

GM: It was very cold in the winter time. A lot of them used to wear what they called the grey flannel. They used it in long underpants and a grey flannel shirt in the winter time and work on the mining and naturally up in those places they had a long bluey coat, a very heavy wool. Apart from that ordinary clothing. When he went out he dressed up. He was a poorer class Chinaman. Ah Ling he was... You could tell by the way he used to dress.

HV: Ah Ling lived at Blue Tier as well?

GM: He lived there as long as I can remember. He died in 1917, he got killed in a mining accident.

HV: Killed in a mining accident?

GM: He was cutting into a race and this day he must have been on the edge and he fell over. He had been dead a few days when they found him. That would have been 1917.

HV: When you say he was a high class Chinese, what sort? You could tell by his clothes?

GM: By his dress. Everybody said he was a different class. He was a higher class but he never mixed with other Chinamen.

HV: Did he mix with Billy Bow?

GM: No they saw very little of each other. They were just on speaking terms that was all. I don't know the reason why.

HV: Where were the other Chinese that they would have mixed with?

GM: Weldborough.

HV: So they never went down there?

GM: No they never went to Weldborough.

HV: Did they come down to St Helens at all?

GM: No, nobody came down in those days to St Helens much. They had nothing to come down to St Helens for. Everything was taken up to them.

HV: Lottah was the main centre?

GM: Yes the main centre. There were two hotels and a general store and a butcher and baker shop. Later it was carted up from St Helens.

HV: Can you describe Lottah to me as early as you can remember?

GM: Just excuse me and I'll show you something. That's taken over a hundred years ago.

HV: A hundred years ago.

GM: There was the Coudoroy Track through Lottah here. See the track going up through here.

HV: Where's that track going to?

GM: That's taken in 1907. I'll get my glasses. That house there would be around about there and that's the road going up.

HV: And this road where would it go?

GM: This goes up to the Blue Tier. This is another hotel.

HV: What is it called?

GM: The Jubilee. And that was Woolley's Hotel. There's the school. One hundred and seventeen kiddies went to school there at one time.

HV: Did you go to school there?

GM: Yes I went to school at Lottah.

HV: Were there any half or part Chinese children there?

GM: No half-castes at Lottah. There's Lottah, that was taken earlier. There is no date on that. And that is looking at the Jubilee Hotel from the other direction. That was taken from up here looking back and that is what is called the Blue Tier. That's the road going up to the Blue Tier. That's the boarding house and that's the stables where they used to change their horses.

HV: Where does this road go to?

GM: That goes down to the slaughter house. The other road goes up to the Blue Tier Mining Company.

HV: They're terrific, they're old postcards are they?

GM: Yes old photos. This is some of the men going to the war. That's Charlie White.

HV: He's ninety four. Are you in that?

GM: That's a bit before my time.

HV: This is the First World War?

GM: Yes the First World War. Taken over at Flinders Island. That's another one.

HV: They're beautiful photos. That's terrific isn't it?

GM: Peter Burns has a lot of photos.

HV: He's got this.

GM: Yes he would have some of them down there. That's the Jubilee Hotel.

HV: It shows the buildings well.

GM: I'm not sure but I think that is where Tommy Backup lived.

HV: I think you would be right too, because I have seen a plan of Lottah with his house marked on it and that is the one I am after.

GM: That's it there.

HV: It could be anyway couldn't it. Very simple palings, iron roof and two chimneys and a nice little picket fence and a garden beside it by the look of things.

GM: There's the school there.

HV: Thanks very much. That's how Lottah was when you lived there wasn't it, as a boy?

GM: The butcher shop and the baker shop that was down this part of it. There would be a lot of families living down the Anchor Mine that was only a bit over a mile away.

HV: Towards St Helens?

GM: No towards Pyengana. They used to walk from the Blue Tier down to the school to Lottah. My mother went to school at the Blue Tier. She was a nine year old. Mum would be nearly a hundred if she was still...

HV: There used to be a school actually at the Blue Tier?

GM: At the Blue Tier. My grandparents on my mother's side... My grandfather he was a [speech hard to hear]. My grandmother came out from Ireland with her mother. Her mother was a strict Roman Catholic yet her father was a [speech hard to hear] that's unusual. Of course my grandmother had to be opposite to her mother, being Irish of course she had to be. Her father died when she was seven years old and she came out and married my grandfather in South Australia. My grandfather worked on the bridges and building the railway lines in Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania. He worked for one for eighteen years. He worked for the one boss. He finished up working for the boss at the Conara at Fingal and his boss got killed the day they opened the line. My grandfather drifted up then and drifted up to the Blue Tier on the mine and worked it out.

HV: So your family had a long history of tin mining?

GM: Oh yes. This mining business is a funny game. You had nothing else to do in those days.

HV: Do you remember if either Billy Bow or Ah Ling used to take part in the European celebrations?

GM: No they never did. Billy Bow used to go to Hotels and have a drink. I can't remember Ah Ling going to Hotels - he never mixed at all. I used to call to my grandmother's place. My grandmother lived half a mile up the Lottah and he called there and they would write a letter for him if he wanted some information and they would give him a cup of tea. Billy Bow mixed more with the Europeans than he did with the Chinamen.

HV: And were there ever any races or...?

GM: In the early days of Lottah they used to have sports like chopping more or less.

HV: The Chinese didn't get into that at all?

GM: No. Chopping was the most common and of course football. They played at Lottah, but Lottah was up in the hills and there was nowhere to have horse racing. They used to have it at Pyengana but not Lottah. They had football and chopping. They were the two main sports.

HV: Did either Ah Ling or Billy Bow have their own garden?

GM: Billy Bow had a garden but Ah Ling never had a garden. Billy lived a normal life, nothing happened if you understand.

HV: A quite life. Do you know when he came to the Blue Tier?

GM: He was there as long as I can remember. He came from Victoria. He worked at the Goldfields in Victoria.

HV: I heard a story that some of the children were frightened of him. Would you know why?

GM: I was never frightened of Billy. He was very friendly but the look of him nearly frightened you if you weren't used to him.

HV: Why would the look of him frighten you?

GM: Well he wasn't very handsome if you put it that way.

HV: Did you ever see Ah Ling's house?

GM: Yes he had an old house. The first one he had, had a bit of an old shed that was a bit rough but he built another one and that was quite good. It was galvanised iron and had a floor. It was quite tidy, he lived well.

HV: Did Bill Bow's house have a floor?

GM: Oh yes.

HV: Did Bill Bow keep chickens or pigs at all?

GM: No they never kept any animals. They just had the garden.

HV: Do you know how he used to cook?

GM: I never went in his house, the smell of the sort of... Another thing with me, I'm a racist, I've got to be honest. I have nothing against them, but there always seems to be a gap. Up at Lottah there is a full blooded Indian that lives up there. He works on an orchard down the Tamar. He lives in a two storey house up there where the school used to be and he travels back and forth every week. My brother has a shack up there too and they are great friends, but this Indian is very well educated. He has a University degree. There's always a gap - it's the same as the Chinamen, I never mixed with them.

HV: Did any of the other children?

GM: My brother Bob, he left school... He's dead now, he worked with Bill. He was very popular old Bow you know. Old Bob gave him a job and paid him.

HV: Your brother, is he still alive?

GM: No my brother died about five or six years ago. He was working on the highway at George Town and he got 22,000 volts through him, but it didn't kill him. It burnt all his clothes and he had to have 100 stitches in him. He never touched the line directly. It got within six inches of him and it jumped but it virtually caused his death but it didn't kill him then, it was a couple of years after. He should have been killed then, he should have been dead. In those days the people were very close. If anybody got into trouble, everybody rushed to help. There wasn't the vandalism that you get today. We were taught to respect people and all that sort of thing but now the young people have no respect at all. I don't know what it is.

HV: Times have changed.

GM: My word they have changed. Honest too up at the mines. Wherever a man lay his tools down nobody touched it, it was his place. In later years people took your ground if you didn't have miner's rights. In those days you didn't have to have a miner's right. It was good to be alive in that respect. The conditions were hard and tough. In the summer time hardly anyone ever wore boots. I knew one girl who used to walk three miles without any boots.

HV: Where from?

GM: Up at Lottah. How we survived I don't know. We never had a doctor. The nearest doctor was at St Helens. If anybody got sick you'd have to get on the phone and he'd come up. I remember when I went to school out way back. A farm... About five or six miles from Lottah, there was a big log and the mother had a big copper up against this log where she had the clothes boiling and a little girl was running along this log and slipped into this boiling water. Well the husband was working late up in the bush. The mother had to go and get him. He had a real old draught horse. He had to go and catch that and ride into Lottah and then ring the doctor and by the time this happened it would be five or six hours before the doctor got there. That was a condition in those days.

HV: So she died?

GM: Yes she died. A lot of people cry me down but I am a great believer in women's liberation.

HV: Good on you.

GM: They cry me down but I'm a great believer because my mother was a slave and not only my mother but everybody else's mother up there. Nobody knows what those women went through for the husbands. My father and a lot of other fathers were the same too. They reckon they want to have a shave, they used what they call a cut throat blade. The wife would have to get the shaving mug, then get the mirror and bring the whole thing out. And then they would have to get the whole thing out [speech hard to hear] and the husband would come down and shave himself. When he finished shaving he wiped his razor and put it down [speech hard to hear]. The wife came along and cleared the table down. I would have poured the water over the top of him if I had my way. The husbands would go down and drink at the hotel and the wife would cut wood and carry water. No water laid on in those times. Women's liberation I feel very strong for it. You get the raw end of the deal even now you do. I'm telling you, nothing is equal.

HV: It's very interesting researching the history because you look in the old photos and you hardly ever see a woman. Occasionally you will see one.

GM: That's true, that's quite true, my word it is. You can say that again. I was very close to my mother but I wasn't too close to my father. No way. I had to suffer through his drinking one way or another. I had to go without boots through his drinking. I was very close to my mother, I knew what she went through.

HV: I wonder if there is anything else about the Chinamen?

GM: There was Ah Ling and Billy Bow. That is the only two I can remember. I can remember Simon Backup. He was a half-caste Chinese. I can't remember Simon's father.

HV: What did Simon Backup do?

gm: He did a little bit of tin mining.

HV: How old was he? Was he older than you?

GM: Who Simon? Yes he was a lot older than me. He died about 1917. He was a man in his forties. He had a little shop there in Lottah. Tommy Backup was his half brother.

HV: That was Senator Backup?

GM: Yes. Old Mrs Backup was an Irish woman. Tommy Backup wasn't a half-caste. He had no Chinese blood in him at all. They were all very well respected.

HV; What did Simon Backup's father do?

GM: I don't know what he did. He was a bit of a herbalist but I don't know whether he worked on the mine. I can't remember him, it was a long time ago. Go and see Mr Charlie White. He's a gentleman, a fine man. I don't know how his memory is just now. Its been six months since I've seen him. His memory might be a bit dull now. He could give you a bit more detail.

Miss Helen Vivian interviewing Mr Tasman Kincade 19-08-1983.
Part II

Mr Tasman Kincade

Born: 9 September, 1912 (72 years old), at Branhholm

Present address: Binalong Bay, Tasmania

HV: They would eat anything they could get their hands on?

TK: They would eat all game. They would eat bandicoot and possum (they loved the possum). Their favourite food was pig. Pig was their favourite food and a big chook. If you had a big rooster, you would have to watch him, otherwise if you didn't sell it to him, he'd get him somehow. They loved the big chook and especially those big old roosters. I mean they have been running around the fowl yard for two or three years, I mean they would be tough as all hell wouldn't they, but they would have him. I can always remember them coming to Dad once. Dad had a great big fancy coloured chook with all the plumey feathers. An old fellow gave Dad a half crown for him, but as I say, they were doing pretty well, and they lived well. They didn't stint themselves, and they always had plenty of food. If they were going bad or they were working a mine of their own and they were going a bit bad, or had a lot of dead work to do, they would live on a bag of rice, that's all they would have and a bit of vegetable. They would grow themselves a bit of Chinese cabbage, odds and ends like that.

HV: Did they grow many things themselves?

TK: Some of them did. One fellow that was working with Dad... The other fellow didn't bother, he was a great big Chinaman, he was nearly six foot tall.

HV: Who was this?

TK: That was Ah Woo, he was about six foot tall and as strong as an ox, and the other fellow was only a little chap. The opium smoking probably stunted his growth.

HV: Do you know his name?

TK: Ah Wee. They were very strong, they'd work all day you know and it didn't seem to worry many. They could get a lot of work done too because if there was something too big for one, they would get two more Chinamen and so they would go on. I could take you to places up at Branhholm where they cut a head race in. That would come around the side of a hill, so you could pressure the sluice. You know what nozzles are don't you I suppose? There is one place on this

headrace and if we can get to see the Joss House, I will look for that too. It's about that wide and I reckon it's eight to nine feet deep, how they got the dirt out of that... They must of stood side ways on to get it. There's another place up on Bells Plains, where they put a water race under a hill like this. They went down about fifteen or sixteen feet and they went along the line of this race and they sunk a shaft down and they went from the shaft and they dug this way that far, and they dug that way that far and they fetched that dirt out and they got that tunnel through under there and that carried the water through. That one would be a bit rough to find, but I could find it.

HV: The mine was in fact a foot wide?

TK: The water race, which was bringing the water into their mine, was only about that wide so they must have stood side on to shuttle it out. It was cut vertical, straight down as you like. That is still there. I worked for an old chap back in the forties up at Ruby Flat and we sluiced over the top of where the Chinaman had cut a race through and it was that real hard native cement. It's a white quartz cement. They had driven goods (that was a sharp pointed piece of steel) and they had driven that in and busted that out to get about that much of it out to cut that water race through. Nothing seemed to worry them. It would do some of these louts good to be back in their camps.

HV: Talking about the water race, did they have a different way of mining to the Europeans?

TK: No, the Chinaman was instrumental in introducing the cradle into Australia. They brought that over from Malaysia and those places where they had mining. They had the method of handling mining where we don't know anything about it. You see we had our old crude way, but they used to... Now at Moorina, I was about to tell you about that before, but we cut that one off. At Moorina they worked about fifteen feet deep and there was about two feet of wash in the bottom of it, but they took thirteen feet of stripping off the top (what they call stripping, the no-pay-dirt). They took that off the top and shovelled that back and when they cleaned that paddock out (the paddock would be ten by ten). They split those spars of timber or whatever they could get or round poles and they built what they called a paddock. They chopped and logged it. They would build these spars up and they would just axe a little hole in there and they would put that spar that way and the next one came on top of that and the next one came again and they would have what you call "paddock off". The stripping for the next area was behind that and that held it so it didn't fall back behind it. Well next they would strip the next lot of waste off and then they took the next paddock and that was all done on the flat at

Moorina. It was all done like that because we opened it up and there were hundreds and hundreds of tons of timber in there in that flat, and it was all underground about fourteen or fifteen deep. Some of it may have been twenty feet. When they put it back it was virtually the same height as from where they started from but they only took a bit of washout from the bottom like this, but it was terribly rich as I say. You could wash a decent part of prospect out where they worked themselves over the soft granite and trod the tin into it. You can imagine it was pretty rich.

HV: This paddocking system, I'm not quite sure if I have got it. They would paddock off an area?

TK: Yes.

HV: Was that on the river. Was there water?

TK: They would have what you call a spear pump. You have a lump of felt on the end of a rod and a big lump of pipe and they had this spear pipe and this would be one fellow's job all day on this spear pump pulling it up and down keeping the drainage water. Then again they would have also had a bucket system, a belt with a heap of buckets around them and the water going past used to drive a little water wheel, and that in turn drove this belt with these buckets and these buckets would come up and tip into a flue and take it away. Can you understand that. I'll have to draw some little pictures. Well say that would be the depth of their ground, well that would be their race, well in the end of it... That would be the race which is paddocked off and they were working on this one and they had this drainage race which was going on the bottom of this and they kept this going right through if they were going to work the water wheel. They had this water wheel going through to the creek which had... You know how a water wheel works?

HV: Yes.

TK: The same as they have got at Trevallyn. That would be working at the creek, with the creek flowing past it here with water turning it. That in turn would have a shaft going out and it would be a row of buckets with a belt going down and going around a pulley at the bottom. There would be buckets on it up here and down there. As it came around it would pick that up and that it in turn flowed into a flue here, which in turn took it up to the creek. Up at Branhholm Creek, they had a channel going up the middle of the creek and it was cut through solid stone. They shot some of it out and busted some of it out somehow and it was about that wide and they covered that with split slabs and kept this water running and they would bail out into it. I don't think there were any water wheels that worked at Branhholm, but believe

they did at Lebrina because there was a good stream of water going past. It was pretty good and they mostly went for the stuff that was easily accessible, because they were pretty cunning you know. Well that went right through and that in turn was covered with Man-fern fronds and then they threw black mud on top of that and they threw all this stripping over the top of that, but that water way was still going right through. That went through the complete length of the Branhholm Creek from down at the [speech hard to hear] against the Branhholm estate, right away through to Ruby Flat. In some places the creek fell away down like this, and when it fell they started off again and went on with it. We opened that up in 1932-33. Dad and I opened up one piece of it. It hadn't been worked since the Chinamen worked it in the first place and we opened it. As we sluiced the black dirt off the top, those Man-fern fronds were still green and the timber was still green but after it had been out in the air for a few hours it fell to pieces and the Man-fern fronds went black. That was still green after it had been down, since I reckon, from about forty years or fifty but forty at least.

HV: When did you go there to...?

TK: About 1932-33 we worked in that. There were still some good patches of ground there then. We ran into bits they had left behind. We had a little pot hole in the rocks, a little solid pot hole like that. It wasn't much bigger than the size of a bag of tin. We got three quarters of a bag of tin out of it.

HV: So you reckon the whole area was rich like that?

TK: I don't remember it in real detail, but I do remember going to the Joss House and there were quite a few gatherings around it. There were a few Australians besides the Chinese gathered around the Joss House the night I went, but we had a pretty good feast and we let off a heap of crackers and they were in at the Joss praying allegiance to him. I didn't go in because I thought you can't serve two Gods. They wouldn't allow us kids in anyway you see. I don't think dad even went into it, but it was quite an evening and there was all the food in the world poking around. All their little sweet meats and the little delicacies that they had and they had some pretty good stuff too the chinks. When they were doing alright they fed well. Each one of those chinks was all there, it didn't matter if he was a rich chink or a poor chink he was still there. They had their fire-works display for the benefit of all us kids I suppose. There were about three or four kids and I think some other people had their kids there as well. Some of the people were partial to the Chinese and a hell of a lot weren't. It was really a celebration and I don't think we saw the best and the most of

them. Probably up at Weldborough they had the best of them that I didn't see. They would have their biggest celebration that I didn't see. These fellows would have what they called a "matinee" set up at their own little Joss House.

HV: Did they ever go up to Weldborough, the Chinese from Branhholm?

TK: Oh yes, they would walk through and back track right through below Bells Hill. That used to go through below the Tin Pot and as a matter of fact it went through there and came out at the grass paddock at Ah Chung's and from there they walked over the hill to Weldborough. Old Chung used to have the store.

HV: How often would they go?

TK: Not too often, depending on the circumstances. They seemed to stick around, they never moved around much you know. Sometimes one of them might go to Launceston, but not too often. The Ah Moy's of course would go because they used to go in there on business with the mining. I reckon Ah Doo who was down below us wouldn't move more than three hundred yards from his camp. A little old fellow he was. He just lived there on his own and fossicked about. He used to get and shake the tin out of it. They had a little mass of their own, something like the Aborigines in the Northern Territory, the way they yandied the tin out of the dirt. They had a way they would shake this away from the tin. This old fellow was very adept at it. The tin used to dance back like that in the prospecting dish. You've seen a prospecting dish?

HV: Like a gold pan?

TK: Yes like the gold pan only it was a big one. About twenty two inches or something like that. They were very adept at this, one or two of them and this old Ah Doo particularly, he could shake this. Well they would dig around Ruby where the fellows had thrown them out and couldn't rake any more out of them and he would get his little bit of tin. There was an old fellow who used to have a store, old Jimmy Mack's and Jimmy would buy a bit of tin off the Chinamen or anybody that came along of course they would flog a bit of rubbish in it too. They would flog him iron and pyrites and stuff like this they used to flog in, but he brought a lot of stuff off them. This old Bo Wing, he used to get down and play billiards because all the pubs had billiard tables and he used to love to play billiards. They would get in front of him because they would be playing Hundred Up and he would get in front. There might be six, eight or ten in front of him. Well he would throw his cue down. "I had five down a while ago I didn't take" and back

he would come and he would argue till they would let him play that five otherwise he wouldn't play anymore. This is what the old criminal was like.

HV: Did they go to the pub very much?

TK: Not a lot but old Bo used used to because he was always on the look for the scroungers. Not very many of them went to the pub, they always had their little bottle of gin at home. Gin and schnapps and of course they would get their own too. They loved their gin and the schnapps, they drank a lot of that. I think they drank schnapps because I think a lot of them might have had water trouble so they drank that to keep their bladder clean. A lot of old fellows in the early days drank schnapps to keep their bladder clean. I think the old chow was a bit like that because some of the old fellows lived till eighty and better. The Armistice celebrations in 1919 in Branhholm... Charlie Ah Moy did all the cracker firing for the big celebration. They lit a big bon fire on the recreation ground at Branhholm and the Arba Company supplied the wood. They used to have five foot wood to steam their boilers. Well they stacked this two layers high this five foot wood and they poured a drum of tar and a drum of kerosene over it and it burnt for three days. Charlie had a big high stand that he put up and he fired all these crackers off for the celebration. They tried their best to participate as much as they could, but they weren't always accepted.

HV: Did the brothers work together?

TK: Yes.

HV: Did they employ many men?

TK: No there were only the five of them like dad, and the other two Chinamen and them. That was all that was on. They used to work two shifts, they would work through the day time and up till midnight and through the night. They had gas lights and I don't know what they did before dad was with them, but when dad was with them there were only the five of them. A lot of times there were only four of them but dad was only a little short fellow about as tall as Stella. He worked with old Ah Wooh, who was a great big fellow like this. He used to get hold of dad and just pick him up like this. Dad being a little fellow would only weigh nine to nine and a half stone. Dad used to shape up to him you see. They had a sense of humour. Him and dad used to work together and Bill and the other fellow used to work together. Well the other fellows used to work on day shift then you see, helping to clean up all the rubbish because of a night they would only sluice and make as much mess as possible and the other fellows would clean up the wood and rubbish in the

daytime. Well the little old fellow, Ah You, used to look after the head race. They had the sand trap up the top and the Ruby Flat Mine was working above them and they were using the water after them and they were sluicing and there was sand and all coming down the creek. They had this big lump of a dam and the water used to go into this and the sand, and it would gradually fill it up. They had a big sluice gate and they would open it up and let the sand run down the creek and then send the water around again. It's a pretty intriguing sort of set up when you really get to see the inside of it, and it is a fascinating game too, it really got you in. I have been a miner a long time and about sixteen other things too and being a miner is still in my blood. I even went back not long after we shifted out here to see if I could make a fortune out of the game but all I did was to take a heap of money out of my bank account. I couldn't make enough to keep going.

HV: Where was their mine?

TK: From about three to four hundred yards away from the Branhholm bridge, up behind the recreation ground at Branhholm. Then they had one side track on it to, what they called the Red Face. They worked along there. After the Ah Moys left him, dad and another fellow worked a piece up on the side, up behind the recreation ground at Branhholm. Have you been up to Branhholm?

HV: I have just driven through it.

TK: Well you know where the little creek is as you come out of Branhholm coming towards Derby?

HV: The Branhholm Creek?

TK: Yes the Branhholm Creek, it's marked anyway, well that is where they worked up above that. They worked right through there, but this was only second hand ground we were working, the Chinese worked it all before. They used to leave patches of maiden wash about that wide to keep the drainage... Alongside the drainage race was a nice little patch of wash. It would be maiden wash, the original maiden wash. Dad and Bill used to clean up a ton, up to two tons from a month's run and they got about sixty odd tons of tin from this creek. They worked it over six to seven years.

HV: How did the local people treat your father working with the Chinamen?

TK: Well they used to poke muck at us kids going to school. We were sort of a bit out because we lived down towards the Arba Mine, we were about half a mile out of town and due to the fact that we were not associating with the town kids did

not do us a great sort of good. I should have been as good as Joe Lewie because I had to fight every night I came home from school, because someone would be waiting for me and I had to fight every night, but dad was... Dad didn't take any notice of them because he was one fellow that could laugh at himself, he didn't worry. I often think back you know, a fellow said to me not long ago, we were talking about my school days and the way they roughed me up and this fellow said to me: "The way we used to treat you, it's a wonder you bother speaking to a bloke now", and I said "Listen mate, I'm going to tell you something. Do you know you are the greatest education I have ever had. You set me on the wall to know how to pick out the mongrels from the good people. You were my greatest education". It also developed your sense of humour because I might not have once been able to laugh at myself, but I can now. Anyway I said: "You never did me any harm", I used to think sometimes that I wish I had a four by two in my hands to flatten the side of their head, but when you think back on this I went a lot further than this fellow ever did.

TK: I have a lot more and have done a lot more than ever he did. That was Ellis Bennett and when you think about what a ding dong he is. I have been amongst the roughest places in the country and I have been amongst some of the better places, so you learn how to understand people as I do fairly well. I can be still taken for a ride I know, but then again they would be working on it. It's a good story to go back over you know and see these things. I like to talk about it now because when I was a young fellow I used to listen to them. Well when I went out first to work with dad at the camp for [speech hard to hear] and a camp of our own, well they got the wind up about this camp because it was under [speech hard to hear] of a hill and they thought that there was going to be a slip because a crack started in the side of the hill, because it was a very wet winter so Malcolm Douglas said to dad: "I think you had better come up and come with me". We were camped about six or seven miles outside of Branhholm and we used to carry our swag of tucker out Monday morning and come home Saturday night. I was only a boy of sixteen and just after I left school, I used to sit intrigued throughout the night because old Malcolm... He was a mine of information. He was a well educated man, his father was a church of England Parson and Malcolm had been educated to be a school teacher. Instead of that he opted to go into the bushland he could write a letter equal to any lawyer. He used to put together a bit of poetry or anything you like. I used to sit there intrigued listening to this old fellow telling stories all night and the things he would tell about the early days and when he worked on the Brisies Mine back in the very early part of it, back when the Krushka's had it, all of these sorts of things and I just sat there intrigued. Well I think that started me off to a good start and a lot of

knowledge and I've taken these things back and adapted them to something else. You learn through just sitting there listening to them. On the Cascade a few years ago, there was a skeleton in the wall, built into the wall. Whether it was English or Chinese, I don't know. There were that many wild things that went on, there were three pubs in Derby and they reckon that somebody was killed and they just carted them away and put them in there to disguise the whole set up. Whether it was Chinese or European I wouldn't know. This is just a heresay. There were two or three strange disappearances around the Derby area. But then again they could have been fly-by-nighters and gone away somewhere else. They went away without being heard of.

HV: Is that Chinese or European?

TK: Europeans mostly. I don't know of any murders amongst the Chinamen, because the Chinamen lived with themselves and I don't think they would have killed one another.

HV: There is a story about a band of Chinese coming in and being turned back to Branhholm Bridge by...

TK: Tom Adams. Old Tom told me this once, he used to get a bit drunk and he was talking about this story and of course me being all ears listened. He said they did try to deter the Chinese from coming in. It appears that Sam Hawkes had gone to Scottsdale to pick up thirty to fifty Chinese, I'm not quite sure of the figure. He picked these up and was walking them through because they only had the coach then and he was walking them through from Scottsdale to the end of the railway line to Branhholm. They said Branhholm is the place to stop. Everbody lined up, they were all muscle. Sam Hawkes came along leading the Chinese (they always walked single file) and he got there and he had probably got wind of it. He pulled a six shooter revolver. Poor old Tom Adams was left on his own on the bridge, the rest of them just went like butterflies, they flitted away and he was left on his own. He looked around and there was no one there to help him so he just had to go, so that was the end of the Chinese war. He took them through to Ruby Flat. From then on he really fleeced and robbed those Chinamen. There were Europeans working on Ruby Flat as well and he took the Chinamen and he said: "There's your section, you work that". He would give them some water to work it with and as soon as the Chinamen got going, he would give the Europeans a section and he would take it off the Chinamen. Well this started fights amongst them because they wanted their fair go. He ripped them off over their tribute for their leases, anything he could do. I knew Sam Hawkes, he was still alive when I was a boy. I think I was about seventeen or eighteen when Sam Hawkes died. I knew him because he was poking around Scottsdale when I was going to school. I went to High School in Scottsdale. Sam

Hawkes was a mean robber of the Chinks that he brought in. That was all he brought them in for - to exploit them. There is a story told about Mick Walsh an old Irishman, who was working on Ruby Rlat and he had a row with the Chinamen. Mick was a big lump of a fellow, probably about sixteen or seventeen stone. They had a row over the leases/water rights, I'm not real sure. Mick said: "Sure, sure" and I hit him fair in the face with a round mouthed shovel and it dented the shovel and the Chinamen never stopped. They chased Mick nearly to Branhholm, that's nearly one and a half miles. This is the sort of thing that went on and how they got at them. They were fleeced right and left. The businessmen always appreciated the Chinamen because he always paid on time and never bought anything he couldn't afford. If he said he wanted to pay, he paid. If the English fellow came along he would say: "I'll give it to you next week" and in the meantime he would probably disappear. This is why the business people...

HV: Protected?

TK: More than that, they were the main mothers of the Chinamen, keeping them in there. What is a word to explain that. They sort of mothered them into the community because they wanted them there. They sort of looked after them. They weren't big buyers, but they were regular buyers and good payers. At one stage back in the early days of the Arba Mine, it worked for a while and then it shut down but there were also two mines there, the Arba and the Ormuz, they were side by side. The Chinese worked one or the other, I'm not sure which but they worked either the Arba or the Ormuz on tribute. That went on for a time and then they got out of it, due to the fact of being taken down and ripped off they gave it up and then the real Arba Company started about 1907-08. I'm not real sure about that, but you could find that out from the Mines Department. That year the Arba started up again as it is now or as it was then I mean. Find out from the Mines Department, they should have the statistics I think.

HV: The Chinese worked on the New Chinese Arba Mine, did they?

TK: There were the two mines side by side, the Ormuz and the Arba. The Ormuz was on the Northern side of the line and the Arba was on the southern side of the line and I believe when the place was opened right up, all they had was a wire stretcher between them, which showed the line. One had a big water wheel, something like the Anchor water wheel, that is what they put the race in for, in part of it, it could have been when the Chinese were working it. Well this big water wheel was working a big draw lift pump and they used to truck it down. Then they had a type of dredge, it was like a

bucket dredge, but it was a fixed thing, it didn't work its way along like the one at Gladstone, it sat there and they either trucked or worked the stuff down and this thing in the buckets dragged it up to the top of the surface and then it was treated. They had big long links, they were great big lumps of metal about that long with two big holes in them where they were linked together to couple the buckets together. I don't know a lot about that, only the stories I've been told. I do know the two mines worked side by side. There is still evidence of the old steam engine that they had to drive the dredge. I believe the water wheel drove the draw lift pump, that kept the water pumped out of the hole so they could work on the drifts because they were a long way below water level, they were about fifty feet below the Branhholm Creek.

HV: Ruby Flat - why was it called Ruby Flat?

TK: Because of the amount of Rubies on it. There were literally tons and tons of them. They are Zircons really. It was originally Pearce's Ruby Flat because of a fellow named Pearce who found it. There is still a creek up there called Pearce Creek.

HV: That was where the Chinese were their thickest around Branhholm wasn't it?

TK: Between there and up along Branhholm Creek, that was where they were all congregated because there are quite a few placed around where I can show you where there have been huts. There was one place behind the Recreation Ground that they called the Red Place. It was a little mountain at one stage I believe. They sluiced it all away and it is now level. They took the whole lot away. Dad and his mates worked in that. After the Chinamen took the top off, they went down and there was a lot of granite boulders in it and the Chinese never bothered taking the tough stuff because there was plenty more up the gully anyway. Dad and his clobber took the bottom stuff and they got thirteen tons of tin underneath this area which was only about ten times the size of this room.

HV: That's fantastic.

TK: That was after they had been over. They sluiced underneath and they sluiced on one side and let it roll over, then they sluiced the other side. They were ingenious. Over behind that there was a lead of tin that didn't belong to the creek. An old fellow that knew it, said that in there, there was six inches of tin in the wash and they took a few tons out of that. Up along the Branhholm Creek itself, which was pretty rich, must have been in the early days because the Wallace Brothers worked it right at the bottom and where it

Miss Helen Vivian interviewing Mr Frank Chinn 05-09-1983.

Mr Frank Chinn

Born: 1897 (86 years old) at Weldborough

Present address: 62 Chaucer Street
St Kilda, Victoria

HV: An interview with Mr Frank Chinn of Chaucer Street, St Kilda, in his lounge room. How old are you Mr Chinn?

FC: I had a birthday last April.

HV: Which makes you...?

FC: Eighty six. I was born in 1897.

HV: Were you born in Weldborough?

FC: Yes.

HV: How long did you live in Weldborough?

FC: Until about ten or eleven straight off and then my eldest sister was married and she lived in Mathinna, a town on the North-East Coast of Tasmania. My second eldest sister and myself went up there for about four or five months, and later on we went back to Weldborough.

HV: So when did you leave Weldborough finally?

FC: When my eldest sister was married, they sold out their business in Mathinna and came down to Launceston. I came down to Launceston when I was about ten or eleven and I stayed with them for several years and went to school in Launceston.

HV: Which school?

FC: Charles Street State School.

HV: Your parents, meanwhile, were still in Weldborough?

FC: Yes.

HV: When did your father come to Weldborough?

FC: I think around about the 1850s or 60s. He came with his father (that was my grandfather) and his older brother. My grandfather died in Weldborough and was buried there and the usual custom amongst the Chinese people after many years was anybody that went back to China took up the bones and went

back to China. My uncle went back and took the bones up and took the bones back to China.

HV: What was your uncle's name?

FC: Mah Pahn (that was the Chinese clan name).

HV: Mah Ah Pahn?

FC: Yes.

HV: What was grandfather's name?

FC: I can't really recollect that. That's going back over one hundred years ago.

HV: Did your father and grandfather come directly to Weldborough, or did they come to Australia?

FC: No they never came to New South Wales first. When the gold boom started in Southern New South Wales and then gold was discovered in Bendigo and Ballarat and then they went through New South Wales to Ballarat and Bendigo and then that petered out and then the gold and tin booms started in Tasmania. Well it was discovered over there and of course all the people on the mainland tracked across to Tasmania.

HV: So they were amongst the first Chinese people to arrive in Tasmania?

FC: Yes they were amongst the first Chinese to arrive.

HV: How many would have come in those early days - 1850s-1860s?

FC: I think there must of been several... You see when gold was discovered in Australia, there was an influx of Chinese because there was no immigration embargoes at that time and thousands came out to do the mining.

HV: I meant to Tasmania. Do you know how many other Chinese would have been in Tasmania?

FC: I suppose there would have been a couple of thousand.

HV: At what stage?

FC: Well I know when we lived there, there was about two hundred and fifty to three hundred or four hundred.

HV: And were they actually in the Chinese camp, or did they live around about?

FC: No they were all in the Chinese camp. It was just like a part of China transplanted.

HV: Was it?

FC: Oh yes, we had the Joss House and adjacent to the Joss House, was the bandstand where we had a Chinese band and where the temple was, we had a big entrance to it and that was covered, and during Chinese New Year that was enclosed with candles right around. That would have been twice or three times the area of this room in the front of the Joss House.

HV: That was the open area?

FC: Yes that was the open area, but it had a roof over it. It was like a room in front with no walls.

HV: About thirty by sixty I think it would be.

FC: Of course it would have been two or three times the size of this room.

HV: The temple at the back?

FC: Yes and at the front of the temple. And at New Year time they used to bring all the Chinese dolls representing Chinese history and all the different royal families and all that sort of thing. Well they used to bring them around the walls of the front part of the Joss House and that was open to everybody to come visit.

HV: Where did all the ornaments and dolls come from for the Joss House?

FC: They were imported from China.

HV: Who would have paid for them?

FC: It was really a small fortune. A lot of them disintegrated with age, because this is going back about one hundred and fifty years and what remained was sent down to Launceston, in the Launceston Museum.

HV: Who paid for all the ornaments in the Joss House?

FC: That was all the Chinese, they all contributed. They all took up subscriptions and sent home to China and got all those things out.

HV: Whereabouts did your father come from and your grandfather in China?

FC: The Canton province in Southern China. Most of the Chinese that came out early, were from the South. Very, very few from the North came out.

HV: Did he speak English when he left China?

FC: No they didn't know any English, they just came out here and picked it up.

HV: He could read and write English very well couldn't he?

FC: No he couldn't read or write English but he could sign his own name. A little bit here and there he could, but not very much.

HV: What about your mother, when did she come to Weldborough?

FC: My mother came out in the 1860s or something like that.

HV: How old would she have been?

FC: Between fifteen and sixteen. She didn't come by herself, she came with a companion. Of course in the early days none of the young women ever travelled alone. They always had someone their own age or slightly older as a chaperon.

HV: Who was her companion, a relative?

FC: No I think she was a year older than mother. Of course in the early days when their parents came out they got a little bit high hat you know, and of course every Chinese woman that came out always had a companion and actually it was law of the day. Of course a lot of the children of the Chinese mothers, when they grew up, they got ideas in their head and they used to refer to their mother as something special and their mother's companions as their mother's maid or something like that. Mother never would allow us to call her companion anything but sister. Mother said she was like a sister to her, although she was one year older than mother was and we all referred to her as aunty.

HV: Did she live with the family?

FC: She got married and went up to Gladstone to live. That was about thirty miles away from Weldborough. Do you know the area of Tasmania?

HV: Yes I do.

FC: Do you know where Gladstone is?

HV: Yes I do.

FC: Well they lived up in Gladstone and she married a chap by the name of Lee Fook.

HV: Was he a miner?

FC: Well I think he did mining first, then he became a gardener and grew all the vegetables in that area.

HV: He supplied the whole Gladstone area?

FC: Yes.

HV: Were there any market gardens in Weldborough?

FC: No market gardens in our township.

HV: I wonder why?

FC: We had two gardens of our own. We grew heavier vegetables in one area and then there was one away from there about fifty to hundred yards away where we grew small vegetables.

HV: And that supplied the community of Weldborough?

FC: We only supplied for our own use.

HV: Why did your father and grandfather come to Tasmania?

FC: Well they heard there was gold being discovered in Australia and my father and his older brother and my grandfather came out together.

HV: When they came to Tasmania were they looking for gold or tin?

FC: Gold and tin.

HV: What about the other Chinese miners who came a little bit later, say in the 1870s and 80s would your father have played any part in bringing people to Tasmania?

FC: Well there might have been the odd one, but most of the other people who came out heard the gold rushes and mining rushes in Australia and they came out. The embargo on Oceanics never came in until the turn of the century.

HV: So he would never have assisted very many people in coming to Tasmania?

FC: Not early, but later on relatives and friends that wanted to come out, father helped them to come out.

HV: Any idea how many he would have helped?

FC: I couldn't say. I suppose on his own back there would be up to twenty people he helped to bring out.

HV: What happened when they got here, did they work for him or...?

FC: No they just got jobs at tin mining just the same as father did.

HV: Your father was a fairly successful miner wasn't he?

FC: Yes he was sort of the king pin of the Chinese community in Weldborough.

HV: Was that because of his success as a miner or was that because of the sort of person he was or his status?

FC: I think it was mainly his status. I remember when we were kids and that, there wasn't a Governor and his Lady in Tasmania who never did not call on mother and father in Weldborough.

HV: They used to come all the way to Weldborough to see them?

FC: They used to do tours of Tasmania and when they heard of the numbers of Chinese on the North-East Coast on tours, they just came around and were introduced.

HV: Approximately how long did your mother and father live in Weldborough altogether?

FC: They came over here to live afterwards and of course father was in his seventies then. They lived in Tasmania for about sixty years.

HV: Your father was only a boy when he came out?

FC: He was only about fifteen or sixteen when he came out.

HV: That's when you left China? How long was he on the mainland before he went to Tasmania?

FC: I don't think he was on the mainland. He had to land in either Sydney or... I think it was Sydney then and then from Sydney across to Tasmania by boat.

HV: Directly?

FC: They heard of the gold and tin rushes and that was their ambition to come out and partake in that.

HV: I thought he had worked for a while on the mainland before he came to Tasmania.

FC: In Weldborough there was a hundred Chinese there at the time, from what I can remember. It seemed more actually. We used to think there would be hundreds but there might have been two hundred or three hundred.

HV: When was that?

FC: As far back as I can remember.

HV: How old would you have been?

FC: I was born there you see. Mother came out and was married. She came out with her companion. There were eleven children in our family. I am the only surviving one. It's a strange thing you know, there were eleven in the family. We had four girls and seven boys and a strange thing, I'm the middle pin. I had two sisters and three brothers older and two sisters and three brothers younger. It seems strange that I am the only one left.

HV: Did both your parents live to a reasonable old age?

FC: Oh yes father was in his early eighties and mother was eighty seven I think.

HV: What was your father's part in the Chinese community?

FC: Well he was sort of a leader in the community.

HV: What did they do more, did people come to him for advice?

FC: Yes and not only did he do mining, he started a Chinese and English store. We used to have Chinese and European goods. They had the store there and he used to supply lots of people with Chinese goods.

HV: Did he ever act as a banker for the Chinese finance?

FC: No. They had no bank in Weldborough. The bank was in Derby and that was about thirteen miles away.

HV: All the Chinese banked there did they?

FC: Yes all those that banked, banked there. Father had a store and there was another Chinese store there. And of course the different clans kept together. Father had the

bigger number of people there going to his store and they used to deposit money there with father, who for the time being, used to hold money for them because Derby was so far away. It was about twelve or thirteen miles away, so he used to hold the money for them.

HV: How would he get to Derby from Weldborough?

FC: Father used to ride a horse. He used to have a team of horses of his own, about four or five beautiful horses. He was a commanding presence too in his young days. Everybody used to remark on the great figure he used to cut riding these horses from Weldborough to... Moorina was the next township and then Derby. He used to ride to Derby.

HV: How long would it take him?

FC: Half a day or something like that.

HV: And that was the only way of travelling between those two...?

FC: No they had the coach services. The coach used to run through in the morning from St Helens down the East Coast. Do you know Tasmania very well?

HV: Very well.

FC: Well Thompson's had the coaches. He must of been nearly about ninety or a hundred when he died and he had a very large family. His first wife died and he had a family by his first wife and he had children by his second wife. The sons used to drive the coaches from St Helens through to Weldborough and Derby and Branxholm.

HV: Was that a full days journey?

FC: Yes. They used to leave St Helen's at about six or six-thirty in the morning and they would get up to Weldborough at about 11 o'clock and travel right through to Derby and Branxholm to the railhead at Branxholm. They used to have relays of horses on the way, they never had the same horses straight through because they could never stand big journeys like that. The roads were very good around Tasmania because they were all convict built.

HV: So you remember that coach going through when you were still a child?

FC: Oh yes I used to travel on the coaches. There was no other means of transport except on horse back and he had bikes and all those sorts of things.

HV: How old were you then?

FC: I can remember right back to when I was a bit of a tot about six or seven years old.

HV: So it was operating in the eighties?

FC: I went to school when I was six.

HV: Where did you start school?

FC: In the Weldborough State School.

HV: Were there many other Chinese or part Chinese children in the school?

FC: There was our own family and there were no other full blooded Chinese, there were a lot of half Chinese. Chinese fathers and Australian mothers, quite a number of them.

HV: How did the Chinese community view the European wives of the Chinese, were they accepted fully by the community?

FC: Oh yes, so much so that during holiday time, Chinese holdiay time and New Year time and different feast days during the year and particularly my father's birthday, they had around about forty or fifty to a hundred people having meals over the New Year holiday.

HV: Including Europeans?

FC: Yes, it would be nothing to have ten to twenty of them. We used to have the private house and the shop and at the shop we used to do all the cooking and there would be twenty or thirty at holiday time or any feast days or New Years Day or anything like that. All the young and middle aged Europeans used to come and have meals with the Chinese. It would be nothing to have four or five tables go in and there would be twenty or thirty or sometimes more of the local Europeans there. They just loved Chinese food and they had plenty of grog for them. Big feast days open for everybody. Nobody was ever knocked back.

HV: Do you think the European women in the Chinese community had the same standing as Chinese women?

FC: Well there weren't very many European women in Weldborough. I think there were Mrs Chintock, Mr Ah Yoo, Mrs Chinn Fung and I think there might have been half a dozen Australian women married to Chinese and some who only lived with them.

HV: Were there any ways that living in Tasmania altered the normal daily life of the Chinese? You were saying that the community in Weldborough was like a small China created in Tasmania, well how would the aspects of being in Tasmania alter your daily life in terms of buildings and clothing?

FC: Well as young children we all dressed in Chinese clothes. We never ever went to school in Chinese clothes, but on weekends we dressed in Chinese clothes, otherwise we went to school at 9 o'clock and school would be out by 3 o'clock so there was no sense in changing into Chinese clothes after you came home from school. It was only on Saturdays and Sundays and holiday time we would dress up in Chinese clothes.

HV: What about the other Chinese in the community?

FC: It was likewise with them too. Very, very few of them were dressed in Chinese clothes all the time. They might have a Chinese jumper on but then that would be all they knocked about in.

HV: What about the buildings, were they similar to the ones lived in, in China?

FC: No they were just like the ordinary buildings. The only real Chinese building was the Joss House.

HV: The others were...?

FC: Just ordinary.

HV: The religious rituals; things like births, deaths and marriages, were they conducted in a traditional fashion?

FC: Well as far as marriage was concerned, there were very few if any marriages, because most of the women folk were married in China. Some of them were married in the Chinese custom but later on they went through the Church marriages to make everything legal according to local laws.

HV: What about funerals?

FC: Well funerals were just the same, you would have Chinese as well as having the minister there too... Nobody would think of having a funeral without forming to convention.

HV: How was a Chinese funeral conducted? Do you remember seeing one?

FC: Very hazily. Nothing very much different. I know when they got to the cemetery they burnt a lot of prayer papers and incense sticks.

HV: I have seen a photo of your father with a group of European businessmen, in Tasmania or at some official function, what part did your father play in the European community in Weldborough?

FC: He was the most important Chinese in the area and there was no discrimination or anything, everybody just treated everyone as an equal.

HV: Was he involved in any business associations?

FC: He was connected with all the community businesses.

HV: What about your mother, did she play much of a role in the community?

FC: To put it mildly, she was the most beautiful Chinese woman ever to come out of China and all the Australian people thought she was something special, which she was and they were all very friendly towards her. They made a great fuss of her.

HV: Did she play much part of the social organisations?

FC: Yes she mixed with all the European women in the township. They all thought she was one of the leaders of the community. They would never think of having anything unless they had Mrs Chinn with them. She brought prestige and weight to whatever was going on. From the time she was in Tasmania, to the time she left, there wasn't a Governor's Lady that didn't pay a visit to meet mother. They heard so much about her that they made it their business to visit Weldborough, not specially but on the tours of the country and that.

HV: She must have been a remarkable woman.

FC: She was.

HV: Was she a major focus in things like the Chinese New Year and Chinese rituals?

FC: She was only about fifteen when she came out you know and she used to make a variety of Chinese cakes. There would be fifteen or twenty different varieties. It was all in the head. She used to watch her parents and her favourite aunt. She used to watch and memorise everything. She couldn't read or write Chinese and she couldn't read or write English, because there was nobody to teach her. She remembered all those things. When we were children she used to make all these Chinese cakes, all different varieties and all out of her head and we had all the ingredients because father had the store there and we had Chinese goods as well as European

goods and she had everything to hand and she was an absolute marvel to remember all those things you know. She wouldn't make a few you know, she used to make all those sorts of things by the hundred and distribute them to everybody. Her companion who came out with her, Mrs Lee Fook (her name was Len Hem), she married Lee Fook and went to Gladstone to live. We all referred to her as Len Hem, we never referred to her as Mrs Lee Fook. She always sent two boxes of cakes by the cake maker in Gladstone and I think there may be descendants of that cake maker there now, I'm not quite sure. The only time I was at Gladstone I knew them but strangely enough I remember the name of the chap who made cakes. A chap by the name of Galloway. He used to make beautiful cakes and Len Hem always used to send two big boxes of cakes down on father's birthday. Mother always made all the Chinese cakes and when her birthday, or Len Hem's birthday, or her husband's birthday, or Lee Fook's, she used to make hundreds of Chinese cakes and send over to them for their birthdays and one thing and another. You don't see any of that now.

HV: An unusual quality. Did your parents have very much to do with other Chinese leaders in Tasmania?

FC: No not particularly, because you see the only other Chinese community was at Garibaldi. Well that was called Bradshaw's Creek and that was about fourteen miles away from Weldborough and there was a colony of Chinese there, but there were no Chinese women there.

HV: Were there any leaders of that community at Garibaldi?

FC: Oh yes there were several, because we had Chinese New Year according to the Chinese calendar. And of course Garibaldi used to have a good population of Chinese there and they used to have Chinese New Year, but Weldborough always had Chinese New Year first and then a fortnight afterwards or three weeks, Garibaldi would have the Chinese New Year there and we would all go over to Garibaldi for about a week.

HV: Everybody stayed at the Garibaldi camp?

FC: Oh yes. Of course they had a Chinese community there and all the boys slept in the men's quarters and that, but I don't think any of the women folk went over to Garibaldi, and if they did they only went over for the day.

HV: Was the Garibaldi community as big as the Weldborough one?

FC: No not quite as big.

HV: Nearly?

FC: Nearly. They used to hold the feast days and ever so much more. At South Mt Cameron, that was between Garibaldi and Gladstone. I think you know that don't you? Garibaldi was just outside Pioneer.

HV: And there was a community just outside South Mt Cameron as well?

FC: I think only half a dozen mines.

HV: Would they come to Garibaldi for the celebration?

FC: Yes they would come to Garibaldi.

HV: What about Moorina and Cascades?

FC: I don't think there was more than a couple or three Chinese in Moorina, but there was one chap named Ping, he was half Chinese and he married an Australian woman and they had a big family of about eleven or twelve girls. They never had any boys. They were all girls and at Chinese New Year, the mother and all those used to come up and stay with us for the New Year period in Weldborough.

HV: Their name was Ping?

FC: Yes.

HV: Was it a European wife?

FC: A European wife and the father was half Chinese. They had this big family of girls, no boys.

HV: Who were the Chinese leaders at Garibaldi?

FC: The Chief one there was named Yin Yee, he was the most important one there.

HV: When would he have lived in Garibaldi?

FC: He was about the same age as father.

HV: How old would you have been when he was there?

FC: We only went over to Garibaldi at New Year time that was all. We would go over there for two or three days. You see they had their New Year after Weldborough. Weldborough would have their New Year and Garibaldi would have their New Year about ten days or a fortnight afterwards and we would go across there for two or three days and go back to Weldborough.

HV: When did Yin Yee live in Garibaldi - what period? Do you remember how old you were when you met him?

FC: We used to travel to Garibaldi when we were about seven or eight years old. Of course the elder brothers would go too. I had three brothers older than myself.

HV: Did the Chinese in the North-East have very much to do with the community in Launceston?

FC: No not very much at all. There wasn't a very big community in Launceston - very few.

HV: So it was a very self contained...?

FC: Yes.

HV: What about the Chinese community in Melbourne, was there much interaction there?

FC: Here in Melbourne?

HV: Yes between Melbourne and Weldborough.

FC: Only if anyone had been in Melbourne and had gone across to Tasmania or vice versa, I think that was the only contact you would have.

HV: So when you father imported goods for his store, did he get them directly from China or from Melbourne?

FC: No he got them from China.

HV: So there were boats coming direct from China to Tasmania?

FC: From Hong Kong.

HV: Would many of the Chinese miners come directly from Hong Kong to Tasmania do you think?

FC: Oh yes from the mainland but they would come through Hong Kong, because Hong Kong was where all the boats left.

HV: So quite a few might have come straight through to Tasmania?

FC: Yes.

HV: How many do you think of the miners would previously have been mining elsewhere in Australia before they came down to Tasmania?

FC: When they knew about the gold rushes in Northern New South Wales and in Victoria, they came out here first. When the supplies of gold petered out they heard about the tin mines and gold mines in Tasmania they went across to Tasmania.

HV: So quite a few would have come down from the gold fields to Tasmania?

FC: A lot came direct and of course a lot of them came from the mainland to here. They came to New South Wales, Bendigo, Ballarat and parts of New South Wales where they found gold. When they heard about the gold and tin in Tasmania they went across.

[end of side one]

HV: Down from the mainland to Tasmania?

FC: I was only young then, and of course all I know there were a number over from Tasmania and a number came over from the mainland.

HV: You spoke of the Joss House earlier, it was quite a large building and very well decorated?

FC: Oh yes I suppose the material in the Joss House would be worth a fortune. In our days it would be worth a fortune. Whatever is left is in the Museum in Launceston.

HV: How did the Joss House play a role in your life?

FC: It didn't play that much. It was mostly on recognised days for the Joss and Chinese New Year or if any one had anything special they wanted, they went to the Joss House to worship.

HV: So it wasn't something you did regularly?

FC: Oh no. You see it was always there and they had a caretaker at the Joss House. Any person who wanted to have a look at the Joss House were always welcome. Nobody was ever turned back because there was a caretaker there who always conducted over the Joss House and I don't think there was any vandalism or anything like that. People don't take anything sacred, if they fancy it they take it. Most of the people around about then never bothered about those sorts of things. If they saw little bits they fancied, they might cut a tassel off or something like that. But never any damage to spoil anything.

HV: How did the Chinese worship the Joss? What sort of a ceremony did the people follow?

FC: It is very hard to describe to anyone, but if you saw it there was nothing strange about it. You always used to have the prayer mats and of course when you went into Joss, you took your slippers off when you came to the prayer mat and you went down on your knees and Jossed three times. You would go down with your hands crossed like that and when you got down on your knees you would put your hands down on the prayer mat and bow three times and then get up and then in between that there would be some sort of ritual like speaking to the God or whatever it was or whatever you were requesting or anything like that or what favour you wanted or something like that you'd just pray to him. Just the same as if you go to Church. Almost the same ritual.

HV: Wasn't there a change with the Joss at Weldborough. The first Joss was changed at some stage I believe up to here.

FC: The Joss was almighty and he had just the same as the disciples. There were always three together and of course everybody used to annoy me by saying the Chinese are heathens and that sort of thing, but if they knew anything and had any brains, they would know it's just the same as when you go to Church, you bow down and worship at the altar don't you. You have figures of Christ and all that sort of thing, well they had pictures, and if they didn't have pictures they would have something to represent Joss and he was all superior person, just the same as God, but in Chinese. It's no different as to the Christian religion. You go to any Church particularly the Catholic Church - what do they have? They have hundreds of effigies there.

HV: Did the Chinese often get discriminated against for their religious beliefs?

FC: Oh no. The Chinese belief is just the same, that there is a supreme being who is invisible to everybody, but they know someone is there otherwise how did the world come in and how do people know anything. It's a parallel with the Christian religion. People say you're biased and you only say that because you're excusing them. I said I'm not, I used to go to Sunday School and when you go to Sunday School they get down and they have effigies of Christ on the altar and you get down and bow and worship and it's just the same with the Chinese. Their God is through Confucius.

HV: Were misunderstandings like that when the Europeans misunderstood the Chinese customs? Were they very common and did they create any ill feeling through the Chinese community?

FC: On no they just put it down to ignorance that's all.

HV: So people didn't get too angry?

FC: Well Chinese were civilised thousands of years before the whites, who were running around barbarians. We were civilised thousands of years before they were, so what have they got to crow about? Everything that has been handed down to us has been handed down through countless thousands of years. The Christian religion is a mere two thousand.

HV: You probably don't remember (getting onto a slightly different subject) very much about the mining system, but do you remember the Tribute system of mining and how that worked?

FC: No I really don't remember much about that at all, because I left home when I was only young, when I was about eight or nine years old. I never ever delved into anything like that.

HV: Why did you leave home so young?

FC: Well my eldest sister was married and she wanted somebody to come and live with her if anyone wanted to come and of course my mother said: "Would you like to go"? and my father said: "Do you want to go and stay with your sister"?. "Oh yes" I said, "I'll go to school. I want to go to school, I don't want to work". Without crowing about it, when I was at school there wasn't another kid in the class that came up to me. I don't know why, but I was head of the class in every class I was in. Even when I went to Launceston to school, a complete stranger to the school in Charles Street, they had classes from anything to thirty to forty up to eighty or ninety. I remember that first day I went up there all these kids up to five hundred to six hundred children and in the country you would have twenty, thirty or forty. Hundreds in Launceston. Anyway I over-came the difficulties and I finished up being head of every class that I was in.

HV: What about your brothers and sisters did they go to school too?

FC: Oh yes they all went to school, but they never went to school in the city. I was the only one. They went to school in Weldborough. I was only ten or eleven when I went to school in Launceston and after a year or so I was in the upper classes with boys and girls of fourteen, fifteen and sixteen. The only thing I ever regret, I went for a scholarship under twelve - a state scholarship in Tasmania it was under twelve. Well I think I was only about ten and a half or eleven and I failed. I failed by a few points and I think the next year I went up again and I almost got there but didn't and my mother and father came over here to Melbourne. Matchmakers were on the job and my second eldest sister, they tried to make a match with a family in Bendigo. I don't know whether you know the Yo Hoy family up there,

well that was a very, very well known family - the main family in Bendigo. Matchmakers got to work and said: "What about the second girl", because my eldest sister was already married and they said: "What about the second girl getting married". Anyway they got their heads together and tried to make this match between my sister and their second son of the Yo Hoy family because the mother and father came over here, and the sister and we went up to Bendigo and my sister was horrified when she got there. When she saw her prospective bridge-groom, she was around about seventeen and he was a man in his later forties or around about fifty and he already had a wife in China. Anyway when she found out... Because we had other friends that lived in Tasmania and the whole family shifted over here to Melbourne, two or three different families and of course when she came across she got in touch with them and told them she was coming over to Victoria and was to be married and of course they were all children together in Tasmania. So anyway when she found out that it was this old chappie that she was supposed to marry, she just vanished and went to stay with one of our old Tasmanian friends and there was a hell of a hullabaloo. All over Melbourne they had detectives and police and everybody looking for her because they thought she had been kidnapped and anyway she was safe and sound with our friends.

HV: What did your mother and father think?

FC: Well what could they do, everything ended, there was no wedding or anything. She was just horrified. Fancy a girl of seventeen marrying a chap in his forties or fifties.

HV: How old would your father have been when he married your mother?

FC: Father must have been a man in his late thirties or possibly forty, because mother was only fifteen or sixteen when she came out.

HV: In the Weldborough Chinese community was there very much gambling or drinking?

FC: Oh yes we had three or four gambling shops there.

HV: Three or four shops just for gambling?

FC: Yes.

HV: What were the names of the shop owners?

FC: Well I can't remember any of them, but mostly they were sub-let. You see father had a store and then there was another store about twenty yards away on the opposite side of the street and they had their own gambling. Two or three

shops belonged to the other people but father never had any gambling shops. If anyone ever wanted to gamble they used to gamble in his store but the other place had a store and a gambling shop.

HV: So it was just a part of daily life?

FC: Oh yes.

HV: What about opium smoking?

FC: Well nearly everybody smoked in those days. My father never smoked opium.

HV: But a lot of the others did?

FC: Nearly everybody smoked in those days.

HV: But a lot of the others did?

FC: I suppose about eighty per cent of them smoked opium.

HV: Did they ever try and grow their own opium in Tasmania? I wondered about the departure of the Chinese from Tasmania, perhaps we could start with your family, when did they leave?

FC: I couldn't give you an exact date but it would be...

HV: How old were you?

FC: I suppose it would be forty or fifty years ago since they came over.

HV: To Melbourne?

FC: Yes, because there was nothing left in Weldborough then. All the Chinese community had died out and practically there was no one left there perhaps some half Chinese families. The fathers would be Chinese and the mothers were European and there is still a family over there. The grandchildren are there and as a matter of fact I was only thinking about them the other day. You know one of the grand-daughters was... Remember Merle Oberon the actress?

HV: Yes.

FC: Well she was Lottie Chintock's daughter. She was half Chinese and she was... They had six daughters. Now let me see who there were. There was Mrs Buckley, Mrs Turner, Ada, Lottie was the fourth and then there was Eva and Violet. Six girls in that family and they had four boys. There was Wally, Bill, George and Arthur and there were five boys and

six girls. Well I think nearly all of them are all gone. They were all older than I am.

HV: Was Ronnie Chintock?

FC: Ronnie Chintock was Merle Oberon's half brother.

HV: Was he Lottie's son?

FC: Yes. That's something you didn't know isn't it?

HV: Actually I had heard the story in Weldborough because I went to Weldborough and I was talking to a few people, so I did the hear the story, but it is good to hear it from a reputable source because...

FC: That is absolutely true. Merle Oberon is Lottie's daughter and the father was... Ronnie's father was somebody else. She is dead now isn't she?

HV: Yes.

FC: Well Ronnie was still alive when I saw him last and that was when I was in Tasmania last and that was about four or five years ago.

HV: Yes he is still very well.

FC: Have you seen him?

HV: Yes I have.

FC: Did you interview him?

HV: Well I spoke to him, he wasn't very keen to be interviewed but perhaps next time I go he might.

FC: He would be in his late sixties or around about seventy wouldn't he?

HV: Yes.

FC: He must be.

HV: So why did all the Chinese drift away from Tasmania?

FC: Well there was nothing there for them. Most of them were miners and of course when the miners pinned out they just left and that was the end of that.

HV: Where did they go?

FC: They must have come over here to the mainland.

HV: Would many of them have gone back to China?

FC: Oh yes a lot of the older ones went back to China. Of course it doesn't matter where Chinese go overseas or anywhere, when they think their time is up they all want to go back and die in their home land or be buried in their home land. A lot of the old people say if I die here they ask their children or their descendants not to fail to send their bones back to China for reinternment. Wherever Chinese are all over the world, it is the same isn't it? All the old Chinese that were born in China all want to be buried there.

HV: What about your mother and father were they buried here?

FC: Oh yes they're buried here.

HV: And they haven't been reinterned?

FC: No. Well there is nobody we know over there because all my brothers and sisters have all gone. I'm the only one left and I just couldn't be bothered. My mother and father are buried in the Melbourne general cemetery. My eldest sister is buried at Coburg and my second eldest sister... She often used to say that funerals are so solemn and sad for everybody, that she said to me one day: "Don't worry too much about me, do whatever you like", so I had her cremated. Of course all my other brothers are gone. That's my eldest brother there. He's buried in Sydney. He died over there and all my other brothers died here in Melbourne.

HV: Quite a number of Chinese miners in Tasmania were naturalised, I wonder why they bothered if they were eventually going to go back to China?

FC: Well I really don't know. There weren't that many that were naturalised. I know father was naturalised because I have his naturalisation papers.

HV: Was that because he intended to live here for the rest of his life?

FC: He had his family here and I don't think he had any wish to go back to China. He came out here when he was only fourteen or fifteen.

HV: So did he keep up any relationship with China, did he write to any relatives?

FC: He used to write to one of his nephews, one of his younger brother's sons. I knew it used to be a contentious point with mother because he used to send money home to his brother and to his brother's family. Mother said: "Look you have a big family here of your own and you came out here to

better yourself and they're all comfortable over there and I don't see any sense in you sending money over to them, when you have your own family here". They didn't always have fights or rows over it, but she was always reminding him that his duty here was to his own family and not to his brother's family. But it never ever did any good, because he continued to send money, only small lots but mother said even those small lots we could do with it.

HV: Was your mother naturalised?

FC: No she wasn't naturalised.

HV: She wouldn't need to be.?

FC: Well I think she was automatically naturalised when father was naturalised.

HV: How did the anti-Chinese legislation in the early 1880s effect immigration into Tasmania?

FC: It just stopped. The only concessions they made, were that any Chinese that were out here whether they were naturalised or not, if they had any grandchildren coming out here to be educated they were permitted to come out.

HV: You mentioned there were a few Chinese or part Chinese descendants still living in Tasmania. Do you remember any of their names?

FC: In Weldborough there are the Chintocks. You have met them have you? They are the only ones left in Weldborough now, because...

HV: What about other parts of Tasmania?

FC: I think there are some in other parts of Tasmania, but I don't know them at all. I did know a few families in Hobart and Launceston. There weren't that many half Chinese families. I never came in contact with that many of them except when I was at school that was when I met most of them.

HV: Were many of the Chinese living in the North-East able to read or write English?

FC: Read or write English?

HV: Yes.

FC: Some but not very many.

HV: Do you remember their names?

FC: No I just couldn't.

HV: Were many of them able to read and write Chinese?

FC: Not too many of them. The Chinese language is known as a very difficult and intricate language.

HV: Did your father read and write Chinese?

FC: Oh yes but the spoken Chinese and the written Chinese are two different languages. The written Chinese is more of a beautiful poetry and it is all broken down. For speech it is different entirely. If you wrote a letter as we speak, you would be the laughing stock of the world. It has been handed down. It's all in a beautiful language altogether. It's just like a foreign language translated into ordinary language. I did go to Chinese school for a while but not very long, only about a year or so. You just couldn't concentrate on the two together and unless you started very, very young to learn Chinese you just absolutely can't do it. As I say it is two languages in one. You have the written language and the spoken language, it is entirely different.

HV: Did your entire family, your brothers and sisters etc., eventually move to Melbourne to join your parents?

FC: Oh yes, well most of them had already left home and the only ones left in the finish in Weldborough were father and mother and I think a couple of the younger boys.

HV: How did your parents adjust to living in the city after a tiny place like Weldborough?

FC: They got used to it quite alright. It was never any trouble for mother because she used to go into Launceston twice a year to do shopping and she was a great favourite with all the big firms and she was actually called the best dressed woman in Tasmania and that title was given to her by all the firms travellers that came around and they said that nobody had a sense of dress as she had.

HV: Did she dress in European clothes or Chinese?

FC: Well she used to dress in Chinese clothes but she dressed in European clothes all the time. She was supposed to be... According to the travellers of the big firms in Launceston and Hobart, she was the most beautifully dressed woman in the whole of Tasmania barring nobody. Nobody had the sense of dress that she had.

HV: Do you remember from your childhood any characters like Chinn Ah Caw or Ah Moy?

FC: Well Chinn Ah Caw was in Launceston and he had a family of four girls: Edie, Elsie, Effie and Ruby and then there was Alec, Leslie, Victor and let me see... Of course Edie the eldest girl had a high notion of herself and she was dux of the ladies college in Launceston and I think she had the reputation of being the best shorthand writer in Tasmania and she was very, very clever but it went to her head. She had particular ideas in her own head. When she met people and they asked her about her Chinese ancestry she said: "I'm not Chinese, my mother was an Egyptian princess".

HV: Is this...?

FC: That is absolute fact.

HV: Is it very common for the Chinese to reject their Chinese heritage?

FC: No not very many. She had ideas of her own. She was very, very clever in school, nobody could come near her, she was absolutely, fabulously clever but she got the idea in her head that she was something special. She got angry with her mother one day and she turned around and said: "You're not my mother, my mother was a princess".

HV: Was her mother Chinese?

FC: Yes her mother and father were both Chinese. This was the eldest daughter of the Caws - Edith Caw. She changed her name after, she wouldn't answer anybody if they called her Edith. She called herself Margot. She told everybody that she was the daughter of an Egyptian princess.

HV: I wonder if any of those children are still alive?

FC: They had four girls but I think all the girls are dead. I remember their names because the three of them all started with E. Edie, Elsie, Effie and Ruby was the youngest. They said Ruby didn't belong to the family because she was common. She mixed with everybody and she didn't put on airs and graces like the other three sisters did because they all went to the top ladies school in Launceston. I forget the name of the place now but it was a very exclusive girls school. The two eldest girls went there and as I say Effie was the third one and Ruby... They went to Charles Street State School for one quarter and they were in the fourth class, I was in the sixth class then. Their knowledge of school was so bad that they left after a few months. They couldn't cope with the State School, it was too much for them, so they went back to the private school again. Then they got ideas into their head that they were superior to everybody else. I know Edie, the eldest one, she got angry that day with her mother and turned around to her and said: "You're not my mother - my

mother was an Egyptian Princess". And she used to introduce herself to people as Marjorie Cavaloff. If I told that to anyone you know they would say you're only making all this up. But it is absolute fact. She would call herself Marjorie Cavaloff - she was an Egyptian Princess".

HV: What about her father Chinn Ah Caw?

FC: He was a little short man and he was very arrogant and she took after her father.

HV: Was he a fairly important man in the Chinese community.

FC: In his own estimation he was number one, but to everybody else he was just Chinn Ah Caw.

HV: Was he involved in bringing Chinese labourers to Tasmania?

FC: Not as far as I know. He might have brought some out at a price. He had a younger brother who was in Weldborough and his name was... His name has slipped my memory for the moment. His brother was in Weldborough and he had the store next to fathers. But Ah Caw was an impossible person.

HV: The store next to your fathers, so it would be Ah Ling?

FC: Chinn Ling that's right he had the other store.

HV: He wasn't like his brother?

FC: No he was entirely different. He had no time for his brother he knew what he was.

HV: Did Ah Ling read and write Chinese?

FC: Oh yes he read and wrote Chinese.

HV: What about English?

FC: No he never had much English at all. He could speak broken English, but he could never ever write English.

HV: Was he a Chinese doctor?

FC: No he was only a store keeper. In Melbourne there was a chap named Chinn Ling and he put himself up as a herbalist. He worked for the herbalist that I worked for in Fitzroy. When I first came over to Melbourne, father and mother were over here and as I told you there was a marriage arrangement between my second eldest sister and this chap in Bendigo. There was a very, very clever Chinese herbalist. He was a first class herbalist and he was a real herbalist. He was

going home to China. I think he was in his late seventies or nearly eighty. The chap that took over from him was a chap named Wong Hee and he couldn't speak much English. He took over from him and apart from mother being over here and a mutual friend from Tasmania was over here and he heard this herbalist wanted somebody who could read and write English and speak Chinese and read and write Chinese if possible but of course he said to father: "What about getting the boy over here from Launceston", and that's how I came over to Melbourne. They recommended me to go to this herbalist and I used to do all his correspondence and all his telephones and all that sort of thing and helped to interview all his patients and that. He had patients coming from all over Australia. He was a very, very clever man. I suppose if I sat down I could write a story or a novel that happened all those years.

HV: It's quite a remarkable story. In the Weldborough area there seemed to be a very good relationship between the European people and the Chinese people but that wasn't the case all over Tasmania?

FC: I think in the course of time it did, because when the Europeans got to know the Chinese better, they found out that there was nothing much different, that they were just the same sort of people as themselves and they fraternised very, very well with one another. So much so that I know when we were kids that all the Europeans in the township, especially the younger ones and the middle aged ones, whenever there were Chinese New Year holidays and any feast days and fathers' birthdays and anything like that they would come in their dozens and not exactly hang around but they would be waiting to be asked to join in the Chinese food because everybody was just absolutely mad about Chinese food.

HV: What sort of food was prepared for the feasting?

FC: There were so many different sorts of things in Chinese that you couldn't describe them. It was more like a banquet.

HV: Did they have the whole roast pig?

FC: Yes cold roast pig and poultry.

HV: Did they have the whole pig?

FC: Yes we used to have the big cement oven to do that. It was a big cement oven.

HV: It was cement?

FC: Stone and cement. It was round and about six feet deep.

HV: That stood fairly close to your father's store didn't it?

FC: Yes close to the store and that would be stacked with wood and they would light that up and get the oven absolutely red hot and they would prepare the pig and clean it and put all the different sauces and one thing and the other, whatever it was and put it all in and lower it into the... They would take all the burning embers out and the oven was red hot and they would put that in and the oven was red hot and they would put that in on cross bars, the whole pig and of course everything was cleaned out with the sauces and they would put that in the big circular oven and cover it all over with sheets of galvanised iron and then get wet bags to cover it over the whole top to keep the heat in and they would put the pig in and roast it for about two or three hours and then they would take that out and have a beautiful roast pig.

HV: Where was the preparation of the pig done?

[TRANSCRIPTION ENDS HERE]

Miss Helen Vivian interviewing Mr Chris Walsh (Mrs Walsh is interviewed throughout this tape also) 14.10.1983.

Mr Chris Walsh

Born: 1896 (87 years old) at Derby

Present address: Ledgerwood, Tasmania

CW: You see when we were boys up there, my dad had horses and he used to clear a track and cart a lot of wood further up the mine and there were a lot of Chinamen up there. We were amongst the Chinamen you see. We used to have a yarn to the Chinamen up through there and they used to do a lot of tin scratching about the place. They had their little home (their little huts as they used to call them). They had no chimneys in them, they had their fire in the middle of their yard. Their hut was just a little place with no chimney in it and they had a little bit of an outlet up the top for smoke to get out and then they had what they call their bunk at the end of their shed. They used to sleep there and do all their cooking. We went there of a day time to have a bit of a yarn to the old Chinamen and he had his long pipe about that long with a long stem on it and a little knob on the end of it, and he used to smoke this here opium.

HV: And you've seen them do it?

CW: Yes I've seen them do it, when I was a young fellow. As far as the Chinamen go, well to work amongst them I don't think you would get a better race than the Chinamen, but if you had a row, if one Chinaman didn't like you then the whole darn lot didn't like you. They all had you set, but apart from that if you had your horse, if you got him down in the bush, perhaps you had capsised a load of wood and you would be on your own and the Chinamen came along, he'd come along and see what was wrong, but he wouldn't help you. He'd say: "No, me too frightened, me go way and get your country man".

HV: Really.

CW: Yes and away he would go and he'd fetch one of your own countrymen to you.

HV: And that was because he didn't know how to handle horses or...?

CW: No he didn't know anything about horses. Well that's my experience with the Chinamen. They used to all have their little tin bits and they'd get their tin and they'd interfere with no-one.

HV: Well could you tell me, in a little bit more detail about your trips up to their huts? Now this was in the Snapper(?) Mine you used to go and visit them?

CW: Yes.

HV: When was it you were going there?

CW: When was it?

HV: What year? Do you remember vaguely how old you were?

CW: Oh dear I'd be a lad about seventeen I suppose then.

HV: When were you born?

CW: I was born in 1896. Do you believe me?

HV: Well I didn't think you were that old.

CW: Didn't you?

HV: No I didn't think you were anywhere near that age.

CW: You didn't think I was as old as Ned Holmes did you?

HV: No.

MRS W: Ned Holmes is younger than you.

CW: He's about seventy four I think or something like that.

HV: 1905 - so yes.

CW: Is he?

HV: 1905 he was born.

MRS W: That would make him seventy eight.

HV: Yes that's right.

CW: You see when we were lads we could go... Well perhaps the Chinamen would be in their hut but we'd go and have a yarn to them. It would be no special trip or anything like that.

MRS W: They didn't have much furniture did they?

CW: Oh well... No there wouldn't be a bit of a couch or anything like that, perhaps a box to sit on up there. If a Chinaman got into trouble... See they all had their long pigtails in those days.

HV: Did they?

CW: Oh yes the big long pigtails that twisted up around and around the top of their head, it would hang right down to their hips.

HV: Do you remember them too?

MRS W: Yes I do.

CW: Well if a Chinaman got into trouble and he had that pigtail cut off in those days, he couldn't go back to China.

HV: So what did you go up there for to the mine, to see the Chinese?

MRS W: He was cutting wood.

HV: So you were cutting wood were you?

CW: Yes, we had the woodcutters on you see. There were men cutting wood and we had the horse teams and we had to cart all that wood from out of the Snapper and we used to come down past where the Chinamen were you see, the cart passed them.

HV: And you'd just drop in?

CW: Oh well they might be out and have a bit of a yarn to you. See that wood was all carted to Arba Mine.

HV: And did they ever invite you in for a cup of tea or...?

CW: Oh no, well we never had a cup of tea with them. See we were working, it wasn't just a visit. Like if we had a bit of a smoke or anything like that, then we'd sit down and have a smoke with the old Chinamen or he'd come along and have a yarn or something like that to us.

HV: Ever give you a smoke of their opium?

CW: No [speech hard to hear].

HV: And how many of them used to smoke opium?

CW: Oh well that'd be hard to say. I wouldn't know. I know there used to be a few of them that smoked opium. I wouldn't know the number.

HV: And that was during the day?

CW: Yes.

HV: And would they be working?

CW: Well they wouldn't be working then.

HV: No.

CW: No they'd be in their camps those days.

HV: Right.

CW: They'd go out to the tin. They'd go into these creeks. You see they had a sluice box, what they call a sluice box about twelve foot long and they'd shovel that tin out of the bottom of the tailings or sand or whatever in this creek and then they'd wash the tin out. In the sluice box they'd bag that up, put it in a bag then they'd carry that home to their camp for the night.

HV: Presumably they didn't work every day of the week or you would have...

CW: Well I wouldn't say that. You know they'd go out and work it. They'd be working when us boys weren't about you see or something like that.

HV: How many Chinese huts were up there?

CW: Well they had the Joss House.

HV: They had a Joss House there too?

CW: Yes, they had a Joss House up there and they used to have fire-works every twelve months.

HV: How many times did you see the fire works there?

CW: How many times? Well I saw it while it lasted. We were going to school at the time. We used to go up there, all the school kids, or after we finished school we used to go talk to them.

HV: Was this the...?

CW: This was up the Snapper(?), at the Joss House.

HV: So it wasn't the Branhholm Joss House out behind the Recreation Ground area?

CW: Yes that's where it is.

HV: Right.

CW: Straight across over there in the bush and that's what they call the Snapper(?) .

HV: That's where it is.

CW: What did they call it to you?

HV: Well they didn't give that area a name, they just said it was just beside Branhholm, so that's actually the Snapper(?) Creek that runs through there isn't it?

CW: I don't know is it?

HV: Think so, it's a tributary of the Branhholm Creek.

CW: Snapper(?) Creek?

HV: I think that's what it's called. Yes there it is.

CW: Well I didn't know it was called the Snapper(?) Creek.

HV: It just runs into the Branhholm Creek.

CW: It might be just a tributary of the creek. That's the Muddy Creek we were talking about. That's the only main creek that comes...

Mrs W: The one at the foot of the Arthur is the Branhholm Creek.

CW: Yes Black Creek is over the other way, but that was always the Muddy Creek we called it.

HV: Did you?

CW: What have you got there?

HV: Well that just shows you. The Joss House I've been told by Tas Kincade is about there. He took me in. The Branhholm tip is about here and we went down this road which goes into somebody's private property. There's a little creek that runs across the road with a gate on it and we went through there and it's all been wood chipped, and there's a big log laying in there. We went just up the hill a bit and on the hill there's a little spot that hasn't been chipped and it's in there that he says that the Joss House was. Is that where you remember? It's just sort of about a kilometre from the...

CW: No that's different to me. That's this later he's got here. Now when you went in there, did you discover where the Briseis Race was?

HV: Yes.

CW: Well that's below the Briseis Race. What they call the Recreation Ground at Branhholm and the Walmers Race(?).

HV: Between the Recreation Ground and the Walmers Race.

CW: Not the Walmers(?), the Briseis.

HV: The Briseis, right. Yes that'd be right. Yes there's the Briseis Race there you see, it's marked in their Briseis Race. Runs through there and there's the recreation ground up there and that spot is about half way about there.

CW: Yes that would be somewhere about the area. Now which way did you go into where you call the Joss House?

HV: There is a little road off from the...

CW: Off the Ruby Flat Road?

HV: Off the Ruby Flat Road, that's it, runs up from the tip, opposite the tip.

CW: The tip?

HV: Yes.

CW: That's probably been there since my time. We used to go to that Joss House. We used to go to the foot of the Arba Hill, that's down the other side of Branhholm then there was a road turn in there to the right, then you'd go up there and there used to be the old Arba Tram Line up through there and that used to run straight up there towards where the old Joss House was.

HV: From the Arba Hill which is north of Branhholm down to the Joss House which is South of Branhholm?

CW: Arba Hill would be South wouldn't it?

HV: No North East according to this. Things have changed a bit since then. So you used to go through there. Did you have any Chinese working for you on the timber cutting crews?

CW: No they never worked for the Europeans.

HV: Didn't they?

CW: Not that I know of. The only chap that used to work when we first started on Ruby Flat was a chap... Ned would tell you all about that. Old Sammy Hawks.

HV: No he said Sammy Hawks was a bit before his time.

CW: Before his time?

HV: So you knew Sam Hawks did you?

CW: Well, I did and I didn't. I just sought of remember him. He was really the first chappy that brought the Chinamen here I think.

HV: According to the stories?

CW: We brought them in and I don't think they got on too well, old Sammy Hawks and the Chinamen.

HV: Oh well they didn't work out?

CW: Not as well as they should have done I don't think.

HV: So what did he do?

CW: I think he went his way and the Chinamen went their way.

HV: They took up their own leases?

CW: Yes they had their own leases. The Chinamen had to have a lease you see to work their bit of tin mine.

HV: And how did they manage that sort of thing? Did they have someone who could speak English, who used to organise things like getting leases?

CW: No I don't know. I don't think so, they could all understand you a bit.

HV: Could they?

CW: Yes one way or the other they'd make you understand.

HV: How many huts do you remember in that area around the Joss House and the Snapper?

CW: Well in all, there were four for certain up around there. There could have been more. They always used to camp in a bit of a mob you know.

HV: Did they?

CW: You see there'd be more than the one Chinaman in a hut.

HV: How many would be in a hut?

CW: Well it all depends what was on the gang, there could be three there could be four, perhaps half a dozen of them.

HV: Really? That many? They were only smallish places weren't they?

CW: Their huts weren't very big but they didn't need a very big one to get in.

HV: About what size were they?

CW: Well that's hard to say. They'd be bigger than this room here what they'd have up the Snapper(?). They'd be bigger than this. Do you remember anything about them up there at all?

MRS W: Before my time.

HV: Before your time, so you were never amongst the Chinamen?

MRS W: No way, they used to come and sell some vegetables to us from Scottsdale.

HV: All the way from Scottsdale?

MRS W: You know where the Caravan Park is out there? That was a Chinese settlement.

HV: Was it?

CW: That was Long John wasn't it?

MRS W: Yes he used to come up with his vegetables on the train, come up and sell them, bring his bike.

HV: He had a bicycle.

MRS W: Yes he'd come up on the train.

HV: How long did that train trip take?

MRS W: What would it take from Scottsdale to here?

CW: Oh about half an hour I suppose. Forty-five minutes wouldn't it?

MRS W: Not long. Someone waited for the poor begger one night, took his money and everything off him so he went after that [speech hard to hear].

HV: Did they beat him up or...?

MRS W: No.

HV: But he was okay?

CW: Oh well he was knocked about a bit.

MRS W: Poor old thing he left after that, one of those things.

HV: They waited for him in...?

MRS W: On his way home on the bike.

CW: That happened at [speech hard to hear] didn't it?

MRS W: Yes think that's right.

HV: And you used to call him Long John?

MRS W: Mother used to call him Charlie.

CW: Charlie. You know before that train came through he had his horse and cart didn't he and he used to walk them all around Branhholm just before that railway came through.

HV: So how often would he come around?

CW: Once a week.

HV: And what sort of things, only vegetables?

CW: Oh yes.

HV: And you remember where the garden was exactly?

MRS W: Yes.

HV: It's exactly where the...?

MRS W: Where the caravans are.

HV: How big was it?

MRS W: About the size of where the caravans are.

HV: The bit in between the road and the creek.

MRS W: Yes.

HV: Did he grow potatoes?

MRS W: All vegetables, cabbages, cauliflowers, carrots, parsnips, potatoes. All that sort of thing.

HV: All those?

MRS W: I'll have to show you. There used to be another Chinese garden in Launceston, up on the side of the hill from Newstead.

HV: Yes.

MRS W: The Chung Gong's were the first ones in that lot.

HV: Yes that's right. I haven't investigated the Launceston area yet, I'm saving that for later. I think there are probably more Chinese around here.

MRS W: They were a bit later than the Branhholm ones.

HV: Were they?

CW: What in town?

MRS W: Yes.

CW: Well what about the chappies out at Weldborough and Garibaldi. You see that's where they used to have the big fireworks.

MRS W: Oh yes. I never saw them, but I know mum and dad used to go every year. They used to ride the horses from here to Weldborough.

HV: Did they. Every year?

MRS W: Every year.

HV: What go by car?

MRS W: There weren't any cars those days.

HV: Horse and cart I meant.

MRS W: No, horse ride.

HV: Oh just ride.

MRS W: It was to coincide with the Chinese New Year.

HV: Yes.

MRS W: That was just after... Something to do with the moon, I think it was. After Christmas... That was to keep the devil away for the next twelve months wasn't it?

HV: Frighten him off!

CW: You're supposed to kill a pig and have him hanging up in the Joss House.

HV: You remember seeing that do you?

CW: Yes.

MRS W: I've been in the Joss House at Weldborough before we shifted here and there's three little bowls of rice and the chopsticks from just before they moved to Launceston.

CW: I've been up in the Joss House at Garibaldi and up at Garibaldi...

HV: You've been into that one too?

CW: Yes.

HV: And how did the Garibaldi Joss House compare to the Weldborough Joss House?

CW: Oh it wasn't as big. Weldborough was the biggest turn out of the lot.

HV: Oh I see.

CW: Yes that was the king of the lot of them.

HV: Was it? And what about the Branhholm Joss House, was that as big as Garibaldi?

CW: No, Branhholm was the smallest one of the lot. They used to get these big sticks like that and the kids that were sweet with the school teacher... They used to take them home and they used to cane us kids with them the next day for punishment.

HV: What, three foot long sticks?

CW: Yes. These rockets you see, they used to send them into the night and they used to [describing the noise] and lay there. You ought to have seen the big stick that came out of them.

MRS W: They had the big square boxes didn't they?

CW: Yes.

MRS W: And have the scaffold and poke them up and then they'd all come up with a [describing the noise]. They say they were beautiful but I never saw them.

CW: You know they had the same at Garibaldi?

MRS W: The same, yes.

HV: But they didn't have that here?

CW: No, not at all. Not like that. They just had the big rockets. They used to let them off. I suppose it'd be ten minutes or more before they'd finish blowing out, wouldn't it?

MRS W: I think so.

CW: Yes more than that. Well, I don't know much more about the old Chinamen.

HV: This Joss House, what did it look like? That's the Branhholm one.

CW: Just a building you know. A nice little building with a little school affair wouldn't it?

MRS W: Just slightly.

CW: Something to that effect.

MRS W: Bit small [speech hard to hear].

HV: A wooden table?

MRS W: Yes.

HV: And what was it made out of?

CW: What's that?

HV: The Joss House.

CW: Wood.

HV: Split palings?

CW: Split? Yes, I suppose it would be. There were very few sawmills around those days weren't there? It'd be all split stuff, all wooden buildings.

HV: And were they like a weather board?

CW: Yes.

HV: And what was the roof made out of?

CW: Shingles.

HV: Shingles?

CW: Shingles on the roof.

HV: And did it have a floor?

CW: Yes.

HV: Wooden?

CW: Yes wooden floor.

HV: How did the boards fit together?

CW: They'd fit together.

HV: They just butted up together?

CW: Yes butted up together.

HV: And did they have a verandah?

CW: I don't think they did have a verandah. No there was just an ordinary little building. There's no verandah on them.

HV: And it wouldn't have had a chimney?

CW: No chimney in them and the Chinamen never had any chimneys in their huts.

HV: No? Well this is a very interesting point actually because the other places I've been around to they did have chimneys.

CW: They had chimneys?

HV: So if they didn't have any in this area that's a very interesting point.

CW: Up the Snapper this was.

HV: The huts on the Snapper were just built out of split paling were they and shingle roofs - any floor?

CW: Yes.

HV: They had a floor?

CW: Yes they had a floor.

HV: Verandah?

CW: No verandah. Had their bunks to sleep on.

HV: So they would have been about twelve by fifteen feet or...?

CW: I suppose they would be, some would be bigger perhaps, some would be smaller.

HV: Right, and how many bunks would they have in a hut?

CW: All depends how many children they had.

HV: Did you ever go inside one?

CW: Oh yes.

HV: You did?

CW: Oh yes I've been inside them.

HV: So they usually had more than one bunk?

CW: Oh yes [speech hard to hear]... see it was only made of wood, you see they had those bags of wool(?) you see, they had no spring mattresses not like what we have today you know. It was just they had a spar(?). In later years they used to have these big chaff bags you see, then they'd run a couple of poles through it. They'd put it on a couple of blocks and perhaps fill another chaff bag with a bit of straw or something like that and have that under it to sleep on. Therefore there were beds.

HV: And they had blankets?

CW: Yes they had blankets.

HV: And what sort of clothes did they wear when they were mining?

CW: The same as the European fellow. A pair of trousers and a shirt and...

HV: Just European clothes?

CW: They'd clear the trees. Now look, they dressed tidier in those days than what they do today.

MRS W: Well in the "olden days" it was mostly woollen stuff wasn't it?

CW: Yes mostly old blueys. Matter of fact I have a bluey here I could show you.

HV: Yes they wore well didn't they those things.

MRS W: Oh yes. You've been on it for a while then?

HV: Well a little while, about five weeks or so, but you see the things that Chris has told me and you've told me, so far I haven't heard before.

MRS W: You haven't?

HV: No, everybody has a slightly different memory and just recalls things differently you know.

MRS W: I just thought they'd just tell you the same as what...

HV: No.

MRS W: It's different?

HV: Yes it's different. You know you just remember things a bit differently and so...

MRS W: And his family, they just lived in Branxholm up doing the farm and you see them working amongst them and...

HV: And you lived in Branxholm all your life then did you?

CW: Up until I married and I've lived in Ledgerwood ever since.

HV: Right.

CW: There's the old bluey you see.

HV: Fairly sturdy piece of clothing.

MRS W: [speech hard to hear]... Now you've had that for years.

CW: Oh dear I've had that bluey for years and years, but when it gets wet it takes. That's what they used to wear in the wet weather. Their long blueys.

HV: Well you certainly wouldn't feel the cold would you?

CW: And there's the sort of boots.

HV: And you'd wear thigh length boots?

CW: See, that comes right up here, got a belt down to there. You poke it through there and that keeps him up you see, then you can work in water up to there and not get wet.

HV: Except for your coat.

CW: No we didn't have the rubber. No none of these. They used to be oil and things, not like these.

HV: Must have been a bit uncomfortable to work in all that heavy clothing with pick and wheel barrow?

CW: Oh no, you get used to it. I wear them now you know, when I go fishing in the water.

HV: Oh yes.

CW: Yes, that coat will give you just an idea. I though I'd just show you [speech hard to hear] I'll leave that there.

HV: They tell me that Bill Ah Moy used to put leather soles on gumboots. Do you recall that Ned Holmes was telling me that Bill Ah Moy used to put leather soles on gumboots? Do you remember that?

CW: Yes, leather soles on gumboots.

HV: Do you know why he'd do that?

CW: No I don't remember that.

HV: Perhaps just to stop them wearing out.

CW: They could have done, like [speech hard to hear]. You'd have a job to put them on wouldn't you.

HV: Yes tricky.

CW: Don't know.

HV: Back to these huts. So they had a couple of bunks at one end of the hut, would it be, or...?

CW: They would be on the top of one another.

HV: One on top of the other.

CW: Yes there'd be a gap underneath where he could sleep. They would get into it and they could build them around the hut. It all depends what size their [speech hard to hear] is you see. The bunks were there to sleep in.

HV: How high would the bunks go? How many layers?

CW: Well it all depends.

HV: How many were the most you saw?

CW: Oh about two up. You see one above the other.

HV: And the fire was just in the middle?

CW: In the middle of the floor. In the middle of the hut.
In the middle of the humpy.

HV: With a few stones around it to warm?

CW: Oh yes, they'd have it built in the stone. That way it
wouldn't burn out the floor. Well not only the Chinamen.
There was an old chappy out at Branhholm, old Mr Bob
Montgomery. He had the snob shop half way up through
Branhholm. Well he had his hut. Do you know what a snob is?

HV: A snob?

CW: Yes.

HV: Well yes, someone...

CW: What does he do?

HV: I'm not sure you tell me.

CW: No you tell me.

HV: I thought a snob was someone who was just a bit uppity.

CW: Well he is too isn't he. We used to call him a snob.
He's a fellow down on your shoes. You want a pair of soles
put on your shoes or on your boots, well you take them to
him, he's the old snob. Well he used to do that work. Well
he had his little shop up through Branhholm about half way up
that hill, a bit on the bank there, well he had no chimney in
it he just had his... Do you remember that?

MRS W: No.

CW: You don't remember that? Well he had his little
building there.

MRS W: I have only ever seen one and that was Chung Gong's
in Launceston when I was a little kid.

HV: And you've seen theirs? It wouldn't have been a Chinese
hut that he moved into?

CW: No.

HV: It was his own?

CW: Yes, it wasn't Chinese.

HV: No?

CW: It was old Mr Montgomery.

HV: And did the Chinese all build their own huts?

CW: I think they must have. I wouldn't know for sure. They could have done.

HV: Did they all look sort of identical?

CW: Seen one Chinaman, seen the lot. Have you seen Billy Ah Moy?

HV: I meant the huts, did all the huts look the same?

CW: Some would be built a lot more better than the other fellow would have.

HV: What sort of doors did they have?

CW: The same doors with a couple of old hinges on it. Cut a piece out of a boot and have a leather hinge on it.

HV: Did they have locks on their doors?

CW: I don't think so. They were all honest people in those days.

HV: Did they have windows?

CW: You have got me beat. I couldn't say whether they did or not. I know they had a door to get in and out.

HV: And furniture, getting back to furniture?

CW: Their furniture was just something to sit on. They might have had an old wooden chair and a kerosene box or something like that.

HV: Where would they keep their kitchen things, their cooking pots?

CW: They had a cupboard, a big box with a door standing up to put their stuff in.

HV: Did they have shelves?

CW: I couldn't tell you. I suppose they'd have to have shelves for the cupboard. We used to live at Branhholm. There at the start, I remember I was a bit of a bully. When Chinamen walked up they didn't walk all together. There would be one behind the other.

HV: In a line?

CW: Yes one behind the other. It was a funny thing, because the fellow up the front, if he was talking, the bloke up the back knew. It went back from one to the other. There were a lot of Chinamen up there in those days.

HV: How many would there have been up there in Branhholm when you were a young boy?

CW: I wouldn't have a clue?

HV: A couple of dozen, three dozen?

CW: There would be dozens of them.

HV: Four or five dozen, that many?

CW: Yes.

HV: Did he bring the very first?

CW: That is more than I can tell you. I don't know if he was the first but he was amongst the first of them. My old dad worked up amongst them. He worked with Sammy Hawks.

HV: What was your father's name?

CW: Walsh.

HV: His first name?

CW: Michael.

HV: And he worked for Sam Hawks on the Ruby Flat?

CW: I had better not tell you what happened for the rest of it, I might say too much anyhow.

HV: Why not?

CW: No. [speech hard head].

HV: Who went to protect him, the Chinese or your father?

CW: My father and two or three other old chappies. They had a shovel battle.

HV: Oh dear. Who won?

CW: They belted the Chinamen off?

HV: The Chinese had a row with Sam Hawks and turned on him did they?

CW: Did Ned tell you about that at all?

HV: No but Sam Hawks was a bit before his time I think.

CW: His dad was amongst the Chinamen. His father was old Fred Holmes. There were two brothers and (Fred, a brother to Mrs Doyle) they were twins. The old teacher was Mrs Triffitt then and they had this school that used to be the old Court House. Not the new school they have there now. Teachers live there. Oh no, they have a new home. The old school was on the main road as you go up there.

HV: I know where it is because they have got...

CW: Anyhow when they buried old Mr Ah Moy, she let all the kids out and my word he had a big funeral.

HV: Did he. Everybody from Branhholm went or...?

CW: The whole cemetery was full. You see the Ah Moys used to go to school there. There was Lizzie, Emily, Billy and Nelly, Trixie, Harry, Charlie and Rosie.

HV: Quite a family.

CW: That was the family.

HV: Did you go to school with any of them?

CW: Yes.

HV: Which ones were you at school with?

CW: Billy left when I was going and then there was Nelly and Trixie and they could run like greyhounds. They could run those girls.

HV: How did they get on in the school? They weren't shy?

CW: No. Well Harry ended up at the Post Office at Branhholm driving the mail van. They were a smart family.

HV: Everybody treated them just the same?

CW: Oh yes.

HV: They were completely accepted?

CW: Billy used to come down and we used to go down and put the horses on what they used to call the old spring carts and drive about fifteen or sixteen miles away and we would take Billy with us and go down fishing.

HV: Were they different from the other Chinese in the community? Were they treated a bit differently?

CW: No, I don't think so [speech hard to hear]. I have nothing against Chinamen. You treated a Chinaman alright and he'd do anything for you, but if you didn't treat him, if he had a set on you well the whole lot had you set.

HV: And this funeral of old Ah Moy, how did it go? Was his coffin on all the [speech hard to hear]?

CW: Well this old Mr Montgomery who had the snob shop he was the undertaker and he had a buggy and he would take the back seat out of that and put the coffin in there.

HV: Did that have flowers and wreaths and things?

CW: Oh yes.

HV: Was it an ordinary Christian burial or was it a Chinese burial?

CW: Anyone could go.

HV: I mean in the terms of the way they conducted the ceremony.

CW: It was an English ceremony.

HV: They didn't put a pig on the grave or anything like that?

CW: I think they did.

HV: They did?

CW: Oh yes.

HV: So they sort of mixed it a bit. They had a sort of Christian ceremony and they also had a bit of a Chinese...?

CW: They took him straight from his house to the grave and that's where they had the ceremony at the graveside. That is where they buried him. He didn't go to a church first, from what I remember.

HV: The minister gave a bit of a sermon at the grave?

CW: Yes.

HV: Who put the pig on the grave?

CW: I don't know.

HV: Did that happen at the same time?

CW: That happened at the same time after the funeral.

HV: What else did they put on the grave apart from a pig?

CW: I don't think anything else.

HV: Just that?

CW: But whether they would come up to eat it I don't know.

HV: They didn't put rice...?

CW: No I don't think so. Did he tell you about the toffee Chinaman at Ruby Flat? A chap by the name of [speech hard to hear]?

HV: He didn't mention him.

CW: I don't know whether he was married or not. He had the saw mill up there. He was sort of the head of the Chinese up there.

HV: Did you know him very well?

CW: No I didn't know him myself.

HV: Did he look the same as all the other Chinese?

CW: I imagine he would, there wasn't much difference in any of them.

HV: Was he married?

CW: I couldn't say for sure.

HV: Do you know if there were any Chinese women in the district apart from Mrs Ah Moy?

CW: There were a good few of them about but it is hard to think of their names now.

HV: There were others?

CW: Oh yes.

HV: Were there?

CW: There were a lot of Chinamen up Ruby Flat.

HV: No Chinese women I mean?

CW: Women? No I think there was only Mrs Ah Moy up there. Did your mum say anything about them?

MRS W: No mum never said anything.

HV: What about Derby or surrounding areas?

MRS W: Mum used to go to Mrs Ah Moy's.

HV: Did she, just for afternoon tea or...?

MRS W: They were friendly. Mrs Ah Moy used to come over here.

HV: You used to live here then?

MRS W: I have lived here all my life. My people have lived here nearly a hundred years and mum said when he would come here he would say: "spoil six eggs".

HV: Spoil six eggs.

MRS W: That was cook him six eggs.

HV: Oh right.

CW: Billy remembered you didn't he?

MRS W: Yes he remembered me. I sort of didn't know him but we were out at the service at Branhholm on the Sunday and Chris introduced me to him [speech hard to hear].

CW: Yes he went before we were married and we have been married sixty-three years. Isn't it?

MRS W: Sixty-three years yesterday.

HV: Not long really is it [laughter].

MRS W: We went to Western Australia about eighteen or nineteen years ago and Chris and his brother went and saw him over at Geraldton.

HV: Do you know what his address is?

MRS W: I should think Geraldton would find him.

HV: Do you think so?

MRS W: Yes because they had a shop there.

HV: I might try dropping him a letter. Was there any other prominent Chinese in the area apart from [name hard to hear].

Do you think [name hard to hear] was a sort of a more prominent Chinese than the old Ah Moy?

[TRANSCRIPTION ENDS HERE]

Miss Helen Vivian interviewing Mr Ken Davey 28-10-1983.

Mr Ken Davey

Born: 1914 at Derby

Present address: 48 The Esplanade
Bicheno, Tasmania

KD: I don't remember too many Chinese. They used to all sell their tin and they used to all take it into Derby on the same day. Bill Ah Moy always came with them.

HV: To interpret for them?

KD: Yes.

HV: How many Chinese used to bring their tin into Derby?

KD: Well twelve or fifteen.

HV: At what stage was that?

KD: That's in the early twenties. By 1930 there were hardly any Chinese, they had gone back to China. Ah Choon went back to China, came back to Tasmania and finished up in Victoria where he died. There was an article written about him in the Examiner.

HV: So you lived in Derby...?

KD: I was born in Derby.

HV: When?

KD: 1914.

HV: So your earliest memories would be the early twenties. When you say you visited Ah Choon's camp and they had a store there, can you describe the store?

KD: It was just a series of bush slab huts.

HV: More than one hut?

KD: Yes there was the store and there was a two or three room hut where the store was.

HV: What sort of things did he sell?

KD: Nearly all Chinese food. Some Chinamen lived further down the Cascade at what they called the Grass Paddock.

HV: Who lived there?

KD: Lee Minn his name was, he couldn't speak a word of English. This tea they used to sell, it was very strong and black. If we walked past we used to call in for a cup of tea. They used to come out and rapp a lot.

HV: How did you communicate?

KD: By nodding and expressions.

HV: What sort of a set up did he have on the grass paddock?

KD: One hut. There were the remains of another one, there were two there earlier. He was a horse doctor. If they had anything wrong with the horse they took it to him. He was on the north ridge. He had herbs and things.

HV: He took the white people as well?

KD: Yes.

HV: At the Grass Paddock did he have a garden?

KD: Yes.

HV: Did he have pigs?

KD: Yes.

HV: Did you ever try the Chinese food?

KD: I didn't fancy it.

HV: What was the situation in Derby? Were there any Chinese living in Derby?

KD: Only a half-caste.

HV: He wasn't a full Chinese?

KD: No.

HV: I have been to the Grass Paddock and it is a very large open area and I'm just wondering why is it like that?

KD: Well as I understand it was always like that. It was one of those places in the bush that was level.

HV: Did they graze animals on it?

KD: Yes.

HV: Which were...?

KD: Horses and cattle.

HV: Did they belong to the Chinese?

KD: Some of the horses did but not the cattle.

HV: Up at the East Creek, where that store was that Ah Choon had something to do with, was that a grog shop as well as a food shop?

KD: It might have been in the early days.

HV: When did you leave Derby?

KD: The late twenties. I don't think there was a Chinaman left there by thirty-three or thirty-four. There was no store left.

HV: What would have happened to it?

KD: It burnt down.

HV: What was the hut like on the Grass Paddock? What was it built out of?

KD: Vertical split slabs, about two and a half inches thick.

HV: The roof?

KD: That was shingle.

HV: What about the chimney?

KD: Stone.

HV: Very high?

KD: Standard.

HV: Any windows?

KD: Big windows.

HV: How big were the Chinese huts?

KD: About standard. As long as this room.

HV: How long is this room?

KD: Thirteen by twenty-four. Everything in the one room. Fireplace up one end and a bench and a bed on one side of the fire place. I stopped with them, slept there.

HV: When was that?

KD: I was still going to school.

HV: What were the beds made out of?

KD: Potato bags.

HV: Did they have a mattress?

KD: Like a hammock and blankets.

HV: The one near the fireplace was the best place.

KD: Yes.

HV: Did the same people live in the huts all the time?

KD: Yes.

HV: They were twelve by twenty feet?

KD: Round about. They worked from daylight to dark.

HV: Did they build their huts where the mines were?

KD: Yes.

HV: Would they use the method that is described as paddocking?

KD: To some extent.

HV: Would they have used sapplings or wood to build up...?

KD: Yes.

HV: So when they were finished what did it look like?

KD: [speech hard to hear]. They never moved much bush it was just a waste of time.

HV: Going back to Ah Choon's store, you said there were a cluster of little huts and there was the store itself which has two little huts adjoined to it.

KD: The store was more or less a two roomed place.

HV: Why did you shop there in preference to Derby?

KD: We didn't really.

HV: Where were the roads going to from Derby?

KD: Nowhere.

HV: Just back tracks?

KD: Yes.

HV: Was the Old Cascade Road a back track or a...?

KD: [speech hard to hear].

HV: What area would you call the Cascade?

KD: [speech hard to hear].

HV: Did you ever go to Ah Choon's hut?

KD: Yes.

HV: Can you describe that? Did it have glass windows?

KD: I can't remember how many had glass windows.

HV: Would the Chinese have built their own?

KD: Well they used to have special splitters [speech hard to hear].

HV: When Ah Choon left the district, why was it that he threw a free picture show?

KD: Three hundred went to the picture show.

HV: He must have been a very popular man at that time.

KD: My first recollection of the Chinese [speech hard to hear].

HV: Was there anything else the Chinese did for a living other than tin scratching? You mentioned George Chunn on this cartage business.

KD: He wasn't really considered a Chinese.

HV: Wasn't he? Was he considered a European?

KD: Yes.

HV: You went to stay with him?

KD: Yes. They always had sweets when they came into town.

HV: I'm trying to document the sites to see if it is worth trying to do an archaeological excavation - photographing and recording what is left which isn't very much.

KD: No.

HV: Some person has been trying to search for bottles with a bulldozer.

KD: It's a pity.

HV: Did the Chinese have a different method of mining to the Europeans?

KD: You very seldom saw a Chinese sluicing with a nozzle.

HV: How would you tell a Chinese water race from a European one?

KD: There wasn't much difference. It was generally on a much smaller scale.

HV: Not as deep or not as long?

KD: Narrower.

HV: How did they dig such a narrow depth?

KD: [speech hard to hear].

HV: What sort of ground did they cut through?

KD: Swamp country. It was very rich.

HV: The area over the Endurance Mine at South Mt Cameron, is that mining over the top of some of the old Chinese?

KD: [speech hard to hear].

HV: Have you dug up many Chinese relics where you have been mining?

KD: We have dug up a few, like bottles - those sorts of things.

HV: I don't suppose there was a craze on collecting them at that stage.

KD: None.

Miss Helen Vivian interviewing Mr Fred Grose 29-10-1983.

Mr Fred Grose

Born: 1912 (71 years old) at Weldborough

Present address: 28 Tulley Street
St Helens, Tasmania

FG: All the Chinese living in the district were never estimated as far as we were concerned, having in mind the number of three hundred, but it would be hard to estimate. As the Chinese came they started with the Maa Mon Chinn family, who were known as the leaders. At a later date, about 1920, there was only one Chinese left at Weldborough, Charlie Hee Jarm who had a shop on the front of the Chinese camp. At a later date about 1928 a brother of mine who lived near Weldborough told me he knew two daughters of the Chinn family [speech hard to hear] and they were living in Melbourne and he met them occasionally.

HV: Did he?

FG: Yes Christmas and New Year was celebrated much the same as today except everything centred around the Hotel and Hall. The town had churches and regular services and also Sunday School. Very few people left the district till they no longer could make a living and it wasn't till the Second World War in 1939 that there was an exodus from the town. Crime was rare and it was a peaceful community, and as for the Chinese integrating, in short all were treated as equals. There could be a reason for that, if foreign people come to a country and they outnumber the locals, well it could be a different situation. They were in the minority and there were no women brought out so they could not increase, only through marriage to whites and of course they eventually died out. I liked the Chinese. I lived with them and went to school with them. They were very gentle people, they were not a vicious race at all. They were a cut above us education wise.

HV: Were they? You had some part Chinese children at school with you?

FG: There could have been about twelve or fifteen of them.

HV: I suppose the Chinns were all Chinese?

FG: They were pure Chinese. They were the only family that were. There was a good family of them. My brother and I knew the girls very well. They were lovely girls, pure Chinese, beautiful girls. They were well educated and well brought up and they never married to my knowledge because

this is where I don't believe in integration too much because having seen it, those two girls didn't marry because they wanted to marry a white person. They were brought up with white people but they were real Chinese and it was a bit difficult you see to take to a real Chinese. A lot of the half and quarter-caste Chinese that I was brought up with were cleverer than us at school than us on the average, but once they left school they got this inferiority complex sort of thing and didn't want to go out and mix with other Chinese other than the people they were brought up with. They stayed put, although living in the district and knowing us we treated them as equals.

HV: You don't think that the reason was if there was a job going that perhaps the Chinaman wouldn't get the job say if a European was going for it?

FG: I don't think it was like that. I think it was in themselves. But what would happen if they went to another district I wouldn't know. I did know of one or two that broke out and they got jobs at the railways and they never had any trouble whatsoever. I always liked the Chinese. I never had a fight with them. There was never any need to fear the Chinese. I never had a fight with them. There was never any need to fear the Chinese.

HV: It looks like you are going to be proved right doesn't it?

FG: The Chinese at Weldborough all had their own garden, they lived very well and they all liked to grow vegetables and they even sold vegetables. They had one of those yokes that you put on your shoulders that they used to carry the vegetables around with.

HV: One with a cane basket?

FG: Yes.

HV: That's worn over the back of the neck.

FG: Yes.

HV: I know the one you mean. A very good idea. How many actual huts were there in the China Town itself in Weldborough that you can remember?

FG: Ronny Chintock would have a better idea of that. I suppose fifty or so. Their huts wouldn't be as big as this room you see. That would only be a rough guess.

HV: Would there be more than one Chinaman to a hut or...?

FG: They used to group up a lot. If they had a hut out in the bush, to my recollection there would probably be two or three in it. They used to work in groups.

HV: In small groups of two or three?

FG: Yes because of the type of mining, they didn't work anything in a big way. I can't recall any Chinese working with machinery, but there were some later on, the half-caste and quarter-caste Chinese out Garibaldi way and Pioneer but that was much later on.

HV: How old are you?

FG: Seventy one.

HV: And you were born at Weldborough?

FG: Yes in 1912.

HV: How long did you live there?

FG: I lived there till I was about twenty.

HV: It is hard to imagine these forty to fifty huts in that little area opposite Bill Butt's place where Ronny Chintock's house is. It is only a small area - just one paddock.

FG: Well I'm amazed at that myself. If you can imagine the Chinese, they don't need much room.

HV: How were the huts positioned, were they in a line along the street or were they just dotted around?

FG: Well they were in a line along the main road.

HV: Were they all facing different directions?

FG: Yes. Some going towards the creek. Apart from the Chinn's place there were only dirt tracks.

HV: When you say Chinn's place you mean the Chinn's store?

FG: No I don't think the Chinn's had a store. The others were little stores. When I was there the last store was Charlie Hee Jarm. He had the last store which was on the left hand side of the road going down.

HV: You could buy anything that was Chinese, but how did they get it there?

FG: They had all sorts of things from China. All these fireworks, crackers and all these things that burnt, incense and all Chinese foods.

HV: It's remarkable.

FG: How they transported all those things over from China... However they did it. Looking back they were peaceful people. No crime as we know of today. The problem is today [speech hard to hear] we didn't know what was happening in the next town until a week after, that was when we found out, we were a close community. It was a pity actually. Today we are worried about events on the other side of the world. It's not good is it? No wonder people are going bush. It is a bit too much isn't it?

HV: Yes it certainly is. Did you ever go into the Joss House?

FG: Yes I certainly did.

HV: How many times?

FG: Two or three before it closed up.

HV: When did it close up?

FG: A rough guess... I must have been between nine and twelve years old and that was when it closed up and it would have closed up in about 1920-24 I suppose. It was beautiful inside, all these lamps, they lit them up and they had these dolls inside them. They have probably still got them in Launceston I suppose.

HV: Yes they probably do.

FG: The dolls went around and around. The big dolls stood along the wall they weren't locked away. We never knew what fire works were like. They must have spent hundreds of pounds on fireworks at that time. It would be lit up for miles around. A lot of people came for fireworks night. There were fire rockets. It was a wonderful show. It meant a lot to them. It was terrific.

HV: Did they have feasting?

FG: They did but I'm not aware what went on with that. They had mostly pork, that was the main thing they ate. It was very private to them. As far as the rituals, like burials, we didn't go. It was something to do with their religion. It was very Chinese. You were never invited as far as I know.

HV: What about music and dancing, did they ever do anything like that?

FG: I can't give you much on that. To my knowledge any dances that were on, the Chinese always took part in them. I don't remember any Chinese being very musically inclined and if they were they had their own instruments. That was more or less private to them too.

HV: They have got a very old culture.

FG: Well this is right. Looking back, I probably thought we were all bushwackers but we were very cluey. We were never short of any talent. We used to have race meetings and athletics. Cricket and football were the main things at school. I would have liked to have had a better education but I caught up. I learnt to become a fitter on aircrafts and diesels. I did all that but I wasn't allowed to do it after the war because the union wouldn't allow it so I threw in the lot and started working for myself.

HV: What about the gambling house?

FG: The Chinese loved gambling. It was the main recreation. ~~they~~ gambled everything, they didn't have very much to gamble. As far as the whites were concerned you didn't have very much to gamble for, you didn't have access to the trots and races.

They

HV: There was a race course at Woldborough wasn't there? Did the Chinese get involved with the races there much?

FG: Yes they came a bit late for that, there were only the half-castes left. Actually I was on the committee. I sold tickets after school when there was a race meeting. No there weren't many full blooded Chinese or half-castes either. They were not involved in any way with the racing. They probably went to it. We used to have the trots and a few side shows. I used to walk two and a half miles to milk cows before school. We didn't have fridges. We used to have icecream made from blocks of ice.

HV: So that was your icecream?

FG: Yes but mainly ice, not much cream.

HV: Did you ever hear of a character called Ah Choon? I think he came from the Derby area?

FG: No.

HV: Did you ever see any of the Chinese up at Emu Flat?

FG: No.

HV: I have not been up to Emu Flat, but I believe a few Chinese were up there.

FG: Oh yes.

HV: What happened to all these Chinese?

FG: They died.

HV: So they were all fairly old when you knew them?

FG: Yes and they were all shipped back to China.

HV: After they died?

FG: Yes.

HV: Did you ever see a Chinese funeral?

FG: No I don't think I would either. Annually they would feed the dead up in the cemetery. They would put a pig in with the remains. As far as I know they had their own ritual - their own burial ceremony.

HV: Do you know who the Minister would have been?

FG: Maa Mon Chinn as far as I know.

HV: Did any of the Chinese convert to Christianity?

FG: No they did not integrate. My father was a strict Methodist - too strict. You more or less went to the same church that was available.

Miss Helen Vivian interviewing Mrs Delma Homan 19-01-1984.

Mrs Delma Homan

Born: 1912 (72 years old)

Present address: 37 Forster Street
Invermay, Tasmania

HV: You knew Ah Pahn very well then?

DH: He used to come around with his horse and cart and sell vegetables and fruit and that sort of thing. In those days the shops didn't have the fruit and that. We used to get it from A. H. Blundell and they used to send it out direct.

HV: How did they send it?

DH: By train. They carted it to Pioneer and we used to go and pick it up with horse and cart. The horse never trotted in his life I don't think. He used to squat in that position. Dad told me this - when they died and they buried them, they would pack the bones in the jar and take it home to China. During their life they would practice in that sitting position. Straight down and legs under here and that's how this fellow would sit, hunched up like this on the horse and cart.

HV: He would be sitting on the seat?

DH: No not on the seat, on the floor of the cart.

HV: He would hold the reins.

DH: Yes, he always left room for himself when he loaded up.

HV: It was his own horse and cart.

DH: Yes.

HV: Was he the only one in the area that supplied fresh fruit and vegetables?

DH: Hee Jarm used to for a while. We used to be able to get our Chinese supplies from Hee Jarm.

HV: So all the Chinese supplies had to come from Weldborough?

DH: No not necessarily, sometimes from Garibaldi. At Christmas time there used to be... I don't know what it was called, it was like a pudding and it would come out and it was wrapped in leaves and it had a sour sweet taste and there

was a Chinese seed cake we used to get at Christmas time and that was beautiful and I have not seen them since. I have been hoping to go to Melbourne and pick some up - they were sent out. This leaf it was wrapped in was green and as you unwrapped it, it was green and red. It was something like a swiss roll but more flat. I never talked to anyone to see what it was called.

HV: Ah Pahn brought those or Hee Jarm?

DH: No every Christmas Ah Pahn or Jack Shingla (he had the shop) and you could get it from there. He had a store. Ah Pahn lived at that little section.

HV: How long ago was that? How old were you?

DH: I wasn't very old, I would have been twelve I reckon. That's nearly sixty years ago.

HV: Your earliest memories of Garibaldi, what did the township look like?

DH: About three hundred Chinese I think. Dad's eldest brother had no children of his own and I was dad's eldest and dad was disappointed that I was not a boy. Dad treated me like a boy. I can remember going out there to a fire works night at the Joss House and I was only a toddler and I was holding on to my uncle's hand. I wasn't very old, I may have been five. That's my earliest memory.

HV: So that's the very first thing - the fire works display?

DH: Yes, that is around about that, but I do remember... That's my earliest recollection.

HV: That's fairly unforgettable really the fireworks.

DH: It was fantastic. They had the fireworks and there were dolls swinging on two poles and the fireworks were suspended from that and as they burnt they swung around and around on this trestle up on the top.

HV: It must of been a fantastic thing. How many fireworks displays did they have at Garibaldi?

DH: I don't know.

HV: Would that have been the last?

DH: No it wouldn't have been the last but uncle didn't take me over. It wasn't so long after that they shifted away from there.

HV: Where did it go to?

DH: It came in here.

HV: The Joss House you mean?

DH: Yes. I would easily say there were three hundred. They weren't all Chinese, there were some English men up there. There wasn't much mingling with the Chinese really. I can remember five English women that were married to them.

HV: Can you remember their names?

DH: Yes there was a Mrs Lee [speech hard to hear], and my grandmother Mrs Him Shean. The wife doesn't take the husband's name. That name was exclusive to the husband. There was Mrs Fred Him. Fred Him was killed in the First World War. Mrs Les Wood, she lived... She was living with a Chinese at the time. Then there was Mrs Arthur Chintock.

HV: How long did he live at Garibaldi?

DH: I couldn't say. They shifted to Weldborough and we used to ride our bikes up there to keep in touch.

HV: You didn't actually live at Garibaldi?

DH: No on the Argus.

HV: So you didn't really go to Garibaldi all that often?

DH: Yes we did, we used to go over there to pick apples and buy Chinese... Ah Pahn had a house and there were other Chinese there with him. They used to garden and grow vegetables and whenever we wanted vegetables we'd go across and get what we wanted. There was none of this hankie pankie business such as showing themselves and exposing themselves and all that sort of thing. There was never ever anything like that. We thought that Ah Pahn was just it. He used to have Christmas dinner with us and he loved the food.

HV: They were quite generous.

DH: They would never ever see anybody hungry. There was an apple tree in Ah Pahn's and a little oven so those cakes must of been made there.

HV: I have seen the small oven at Garibaldi, I don't know whether it was the one you were talking about. As you come into Garibaldi from Pioneer the Joss House used to be on the right, and around on the left there was a little oven sunk into the ground, it's not built up like the other ones and it is not very big. Is that the one you think?

DH: Did Brian show you that one?

HV: I think he did.

DH: I don't remember seeing it. This little one gradually disappeared with the erosion. The one I'm talking about was destroyed when dad put the pipe line through.

HV: So you think the small one was used for cakes but you are not sure?

DH: I did hear it was for cakes. Every Chinese New Year dad put a dinner on for the Chinese. That was the only time that dad ever had liquor in the house... He used to get a case of it and cigarettes. He used to have a brandy for medicinal purposes because mum had a bad heart. Uncle Bill had a Chinese fellow by the name of Ah Chung. He used to come over and cook a meal and make soup. They would get pork and they would chop it finer than mince meat and drop it in the soup. We make the same soup here using pork flap. They made these meat balls by binding them with egg white.

HV: What was your uncle Bill's name?

DH: Shean, the same as dad. One of dad's sisters was called Kin. One was King Hung and the other was Kin Too. The other one had a name and she was sent on a message to do some shopping and she had to get some Char Quar(?) (that was a fine fish paste) (?) and she asked for charcoal and so ever after that her name was Charcoal.

HV: How would they cook chicken?

DH: They would boil it in the soup. Sometimes if they got hold of a nice big young rooster they would roast him. Chinese are very good hearted people and if they came to your place for a meal they would feel as if they would have to repay you. Dad wouldn't take anything, but if the kiddies were around they would hand them a couple of bob - perhaps a shilling. We always kept away because of this. My auntie would come down and help serve. Everything was always cooked over an open fire.

HV: It was cooked by the men?

DH: Yes.

HV: Served by the women?

DH: The women would keep away. Women would not play a big part in their life. They were there just to raise children and do their duty as a wife.

HV: Being the eldest daughter there was a disappointment that you weren't a boy. I suppose you were aware from a young age that they would have preferred a boy. A boy has more position.

DH: There were an equal amount of sexes as far as our family were concerned. I went everywhere with them. I was four years older than the next girl.

HV: Did many Chinese employ Europeans?

DH: Yes if they were mining and they needed help they would employ them. I remember seeing pigs roasted, they used to be suspended by their legs.

HV: How long would it take to cook a pig?

DH: Some of those pigs would be as long as the kitchen table. Ah Chung was a master at cooking pigs.

HV: I wonder how he got to be so good at that? I wonder if he did much of it in China?

DH: I don't know, I don't think those people were very old when they came out from China. Ah Pahn had a wife in China.

HV: Did he ever talk about her?

DH: Dad talked about her and said he had a wife in China. They used to send money over. When Dad's father came out here, they lived in Lefroy.

HV: That was Him Shean?

DH: Yes. Both my grandmothers married Chinese. The other grandmother had a divided family. She had four children that went to the Chinese and then she had four after and they went to the English.

HV: When your grandmother had her first white child what was his reaction?

DH: I don't think he took any notice. She had a child first and she was born out at Newstead and she married this Chinese in the meantime and she had four and her husband was still alive when she was having this other lot. Mum's supposed father, the Chinese one, he was still alive in 1909 and he was still alive... Then she married a fellow after that by the name of Bob Jeffrey. I can remember seeing Bob Jeffrey but I didn't see the other fellow. I don't think their principles were too strong.

HV: Well they were mining towns, and I suppose there were very few women. Times were different in all sorts of ways.

DH: Before my brother married he was working in the Beaconsfield Mine and his brother did too.

HV: In Garibaldi there were three hundred Chinese and at the New Year celebration...

DH: You know where the Joss House was?

HV: Yes.

DH: Well there were houses on both sides. Turn around and start to go back down Pioneer again and down to the Joss House, continue down the road and on to the left-hand side it was lined with houses. There was a Joss House down towards Pioneer.

HV: Down the road that is there now. There is another over towards the top of the clearing. Are there houses there now?

DH: Yes.

HV: Where your father lived down near the edge of the gully, that gully wouldn't be there now?

DH: No.

HV: There were a row of houses where your father had his house?

DH: It didn't matter where you went, you often came across a little hut. If he was working there he would build a hut there. Those people were pretty versatile. They would have their own paling splitter with them and they would fall a tree and split their own palings and they would have their own hut in no time. They would have an axe and sometimes a saw - there weren't that many tools about.

HV: They did an incredible job in opening that country up and mining it with the conditions they had. That is one of the things that has always interested me. They would have their Chinese food and all their Chinese things which had to come all the way from China on the sailing boats. It's quite fantastic really.

DH: When mum and dad first married and I was born... Brian showed you where we lived?

HV: Yes.

DH: Well another six miles further on, going up towards where the larger mine finished, there was a place up there that was called the Maude(?). Why it was called the Maude I don't know, but that is where mum took me when I was born. There were no trams and she used to take me down to Pioneer on two wheels and a box. She would have to go to Pioneer to post a letter. She couldn't read or write - dad could. They didn't have a horse and cart it was all walking. She would pull me along in a billy-cart.

HV: She would pull you?

DH: Yes. It was a Kerosene box with two wheels on it and two handles on it. She wasn't a very strong woman either.

HV: Did she carry her shopping along in that as well?

DH: Yes that was her place that she would get her supplies.

HV: Pioneer?

DH: Yes.

HV: So you could only get a few supplies from Garibaldi?

DH: Well by the time you walked from where dad and those were, over to Garibaldi, you might as well walk to Pioneer - it was no further.

HV: So you usually went to Pioneer?

DH: That is where she used to go.

HV: She was European?

DH: Yes. It wasn't until later that Ah Pahn had his horse and cart business.

HV: I can imagine having a delivery business would be quite a good thing to have in those days.

DH: The baker used to come up to Pioneer in a horse and cart.

HV: Can you estimate how many horses there were in the Garibaldi area at that particular time?

DH: Even when I can remember things - buildings were starting to be pulled down. Did Brian show you the Mill?

HV: Yes.

DH: There were huts all along there.

HV: They were all Chinese huts.

DH: Not necessarily. Other people would move up there closer to their work. People from Pioneer were going up there to work. That was the main street and I would think there would be forty or fifty houses in there I would say, I wouldn't be exaggerating too much.

HV: Did you ever go to Weldborough?

DH: Yes.

HV: Was it bigger than Garibaldi?

DH: Bigger. You would get an idea from that by going to the cemetery. My next door neighbour's (he died recently) uncle lived at Weldborough.

HV: I'm just talking about the Chinese part of Weldborough not the whole township. You reckon the Chinese part was bigger?

DH: I wouldn't say that because I didn't know much about that, the only family I really knew much about were the Chintocks you see. There were Chinese scattered right through. Wherever there was mining they followed. Even at Branhholm and Derby. There was a hill going up into Gladstone but of course it is not a hill now because it has been deviated. You would go past a place and you would see it empty and then you could go past in a fortnight's time and there would be Chinamen living in there or Englishmen or anyone. A lot of people would camp in a hut and that's how it was. Wherever they could get work they just stayed then moved on. Halfway up this hill there was this drinking place for horses. It was a fairly steep hill and a hut over in the bush and one day the horses stopped and there was a young fellow sitting in the coach and he said: "You watch me, I'll smash one of those windows in the hut", so he fired the rifle and there was a Chinaman looking out the window and it just took his eye, it never killed him. You would think the bullet taking his eye would have killed him wouldn't you? My father told me about that. Our school was always moving.

HV: Where was that?

DH: The primary school.

HV: How long did you go there?

DH: I started when I was eight and left when I was fourteen. There were over a hundred at school.

HV: Were there many Chinese or part Chinese children?

DH: Yes, there were the Tews and then there were us, then dad's sister and mum's brother's children. There were other Chinese children that got intermingled and mixed up. When I was a kid going to school you never thought any different from the other kid - you'd take no notice. Some kids would give you a hard time, but we are the best of friends now going up there to the bowling club. During this time, the war was on and we were very much against the Germans and this kid was (speech hard to hear). Someone said (speech hard to hear) and she said: "I'm a Chinaman but you are a German" and she never said anything about the Chinamen again.

HV: As a rule the European kids did tease the Chinese kids?

DH: Yes.

HV: You all played together anyway?

DH: We were all going to school and we had a good teacher. They didn't like it because we were more cleverer. We wouldn't have more brains just grasp things more easily. A lot of mixed bloods were cleverer. There were a lot of dunces amongst the European children and some of them just couldn't learn. Most of them married and had good husbands and wives. Dad employed a lot of his nephews.

HV: What about the Chinese that lived in Garibaldi, the miners, how did they get on with the European community at Garibaldi?

DH: I think they looked after their jobs better. You will always get that bloke that will loaf and is frightened of a good day of hard work. The Chinese kept more or less to themselves. Rice was their staple diet. They had their gardens and fresh vegetables.

HV: Is that a ginger jar?

DH: No it's the pottery of a Chinaman.

HV: It's earthenware. It's very coarse and rough. There are a lot of colours in it, reds, browns and blacks. Where did that come from?

DH: Garibaldi.

HV: What was in them?

DH: I don't know. Charqua(?) was in that one.

HV: What was Charqua?

DH: It was very similar to a little cucumber, you know those tiny...

HV: Yes. Do you remember a Chinese named Sharkee?

DH: Yes.

HV: What did he look like?

DH: I don't know. The other day I was trying to think of him because I was talking to a girl from Pioneer and she told me that they called her brother Sharkee because Sharkee always held his hands behind his back and this boy evidently got into the habit because wherever he went he always had his hands behind his back and they called him Sharkee. Usually the Chinese did not have a very big mouth and Sharkee did. You never saw too much because he had his hat on and he was nearly blind.

HV: Did he have a beard?

DH: No, he was clean shaven as far as I know.

HV: Do you remember a Chinaman with a big white beard?

DH: No.

HV: There wasn't one at Weldborough?

DH: There could have been. A lot of them like old Mr Mah Loo and those sort of people had died by the time I was going up there.

HV: Mah Loo was one of the earlier ones?

DH: Yes he married a Chintock girl.

HV: The reason I ask is because there is a photo of a Joss House...

DH: There was one at Weldborough.

HV: Yes and at Garabaldi. Do you remember what the one at Garabaldi looked like?

DH: No it was only a single room and a room at the back. We were always brought up not to touch anything because it was just the same as being brought up in the Church of England. You didn't touch anything. It was the same with the Joss house. Joss was only a symbol just the same way as our God. There was a terrible lot of fancy stuff about. There were hangings and beads arranged. There was a terrific lot. There was a caretaker living at the back but I don't know who

he was. They had to have somebody to watch everything and protect things. Paintings and drawings resembled everything that was to do with the Joss. Everything had meanings.

HV: How big was it?

DH: It was equally as wide as this room - this is eighteen by twelve.

HV: Did it go back as far as it was wide?

DH: It may have done. There was a door leading through there like that.

HV: The main room was eighteen by twelve roughly?

DH: Yes.

HV: On the front of the building was there a verandah or any decoration?

DH: No just like a hut. In front of it was an erection that they lit their fireworks from. They always had something on their door with Chinese writing on it and we asked what was that and they said: "Good Chinamen, plenty of money". Money was everything in those days.

HV: Did they have any Chinese writing down the sides of the door?

DH: No never noticed. In the Museum isn't there a picture of the Weldborough one?

HV: Yes. People don't know for sure if it is the Weldborough Joss house or the Garibaldi Joss House.

DH: I think it is the Weldborough Joss House. As for the Pioneer one, I think it was privately owned.

HV: How old were you when they moved the Joss House from Garibaldi?

DH: Fourteen, because Weldborough's was still there. Ours could have ended up in Melbourne or anywhere since it was privately owned. It is hard to say where it finished up.

HV: Did you ever say who owned it?

DH: No. It was sort of a mystery to us. It was there one time and the next time it was gone.

flattened out down towards the Ringarooma River and they were producing from anything up to ten to twelve tons a month there in that. That was the second time they had been over it, the Chinks had been over it, and this is what they were working the second time. There were about six or seven men working on that and they were still working on tribute from the Arba Mine because it was part of the Arba lease. There was plenty of ground on the Ruby Flat which would reward two men a ton of tin a day. That's worth about \$90,000.00 now. Well it wasn't worth that then.

HV: Did the Chinese collect the Rubies at all or the Zircons?

TK: Not that I know of, but they did collect Crystal. They shipped that home to China, but what they did with it I don't know. They got a lot and I saw a box full. Billy Ah Moy had a kerosene case full of that. They tell me they used it for optical purposes.

HV: Is that a Smoky Quartz?

TK: Yes. That would cut glass.

HV: They used it for optical purposes did they?

TK: Yes.

HV: So the gems weren't really considered...?

TK: The Chinese never bothered with that sort of thing. Rubies won't cut.

Miss Janice Moy interviewing Mr William Moy 29-01-1984.

Mr William Moy

Born: 28th January, 1893 (91 years old) at Branhholm

Present address: Geraldton, Western Australia

JM: This is an interview by my father William Moy and it is as accurate as he can recall of his childhood years. It has been recorded on the 29th January, 1984. Yesterday on the 28th, he celebrated his ninety first birthday. We hope you will get some value out of this tape. Can you tell us a bit about your family?

WM: My father was in Victoria, Ballaratt, and what was the name of the other place - Beechworth in the goldfields and from there back to China and then from there he came back again to Victoria with mother and then he came across to Tasmania to the North-East Coast to the tin fields. That was in the late seventies early eighties approximately, as far as I can remember him telling me.

JM: Somebody knew your father in 1980?

WM: There was a man who came on to the tin fields and this man was a manager of one of the tin fields when father settled and that man came in May, 1980.

JM: What was his name?

WM: David Baker I think. I went to school with some of his younger children.

JM: What were the names of your mother and father and where were they born?

WM: Dad was born in the province of Canton, that's the Southern part of China.

JM: What was your father's name?

WM: Lon Kee Ah Moy.

JM: Your mother?

WM: Hong Ah Moy.

JM: Just a slight correction in the birth place of my father. Canton was the name of the city. Quan Ton is the actual name of the province. Can you tell us a bit about what your father did in Branhholm?

WM: At first when there were a lot of Chinese he started a small store to supply the men in the Chinese community around there. At that time everything came by boat to Bridport then from there transported by road by a horse team or a bullock team for a number of years, which went up to Branhholm. The rail terminal came to Scottsdale in the years following, then it was transported from the Scottsdale Rail Terminal to Branhholm. They got supplies that the Chinese used to use from Chinese merchants in Launceston. There was a merchant named Chinn Quor. The address was 127 St John Street. The firm was called Sun Maa and Company and they were the general importers selling direct from Hong Kong.

JM: How did your father take the goods to Scottsdale and Garibaldi?

WM: By horse team. Most of the supplies were carted to Weldborough and Garibaldi. There was a large community in both centres.

JM: You used to help your father a bit didn't you?

WM: Yes. At Weldborough Maa Mon Chinn had a store there and he had a family as well. I think they had a Joss House at Weldborough also another one at Garibaldi. There was a large population of Chinese, at least a few hundred between the two centres and the whole district.

JM: Can you tell us a bit more about your father? How you were able to help him in his work?

WM: When I was little my father and I used to go and buy different things to help the Chinese like taking a cart around and we used to purchase pigs for the Chinese New Year. We used to go around the farms and buy them.

JM: You used to help him catch them did you?

WM: That was in the years following in the turn of the century because I was born in 1893.

JM: Did you have to help your father at all to speak English?

WM: I learnt at school at Branhholm. We lived at Ruby Flat and I went to school at Branhholm. There were a lot of bush tracks - very rough and a lot of rain and we used to lose a lot of time from school. At the time the regulations were you attend three days a week. In those days the school used to pay a small fee for each person. I can't remember what the fees were for two or three days. Unfortunately I never had much time to attend school and during that time it made it very difficult for me.

JM: When did you leave school?

WM: I think I was about eleven or twelve.

JM: Then you helped your father all the time?

WM: Yes I would go around with him all the time in the cart and eventually he passed away in 1908.

JM: How many older brothers and sisters did you have?

WM: There were eight of us. Two older sisters, myself and two sisters, two brothers and the youngest of the family.

JM: Dad has already mentioned Chinn Quor the suppliers of Chinese goods and the Maa Mon Chinn and Chung Gon families and the large communities at Weldborough and Garibaldi. Can you tell us about the other supplier of Chinese goods, Tom Sing?

WM: Tom Sing was in Launceston - 127 St John Street. He was connected in helping the Chinese interpreting and also handling their business and any official things. He was well known in the different offices in Launceston. I can just remember.

JM: There was another man called Ba Haa who used to do some interpreting wasn't there?

WM: Up on the North-East Coast there was a man called Harry Peadon, he was from Victoria as far as I can understand and another man named Tom Backup who used to tour around all the areas doing the interpreting for the men for different business and so on. Mr Thomas Backup sat up for Parliament before the war years. It was the Liberal party.

JM: What about the other Chinese in Launceston besides the people who supplied goods?

WM: There were the Chinese stores. They used to import goods from Hong Kong and also they imported the fireworks for the Chinese New Year celebration up there. They were the general importers. During the festival they would have different partying by different ones.

JM: What about other jobs for the Chinese in Launceston?

WM: Part of the Chinese community... The price of tin fell and some other interruption and the men started to drift away and some went to Launceston and some went over to Victoria to look for work. There were a lot of them setting up market gardens and also some started laundry work and some took on cabinet making and so forth. There were quite a number of

them that got work on farms. Some were cooks and general work. They spread out all over.

JM: Can you remember if your family had any contact with any Chinese in Melbourne or other parts of Australia besides Tasmania or can't you remember, you were very young?

WM: No.

JM: What about contact with China, did they keep in contact with their families back in China?

WM: Most of the Chinese used to correspond with their families in China. In those days most of the mail was sent through the Chinese merchants.

JM: You used to help some of them didn't you with the addressing?

WM: Well some of them, some didn't have addresses for the firms in Hong Kong, there was no post into China and they used to send their mail to certain stores. They would address their letters on the left hand corner in Chinese and on the right hand side where the stamp would go, there would be the English.

JM: You used to help with that part?

WM: Yes different ones I used to help. They used to send money back to their families through certain stores - merchants in Melbourne, certain firms used to act as agents. The men would send whatever they wanted to these certain firms and these firms would send it by ship to Hong Kong to one of the main merchants. Different ones would handle the money. In those days post would go through with the sailing boats and they would take from four to five weeks or more. In the very early days when the gold digging was on, some of the men had a way of sending some of the gold dust through merchants like in Melbourne and so forth they used to send so much in weight home.

JM: Can you talk a bit about the Chinese community around Branhholm and Ruby Flat and how many there were?

WM: In the very early days there were a hundred to two hundred or probably more, of course the districts were a few miles apart you know. The price of tin slumped and different ones drifted away. Mr Chung Gon in the early part was up at Ruby Flat for a space of one to two years I believe and he didn't like the climate because it was cold, so he left there and went to Launceston and from there he went back to China and afterwards he got married, came back and he settled down in the garden and orchard. I think you have been in contact

with the youngest, Miss Dolly Chung and there were quite a large family of them. Anne Fong is up at Geraldton, she is in her eighties.

JM: How many Chinese families were up there?

WM: At Branhholm there was only ours.

JM: You were the only one?

WM: There was one at Weldborough and I think there was one at Gladstone and there were a few in Launceston.

JM: Most of the Chinese community were up at Ruby Flat, is that right?

WM: Yes Branhholm was the official place.

JM: What sort of houses did the Chinese community live in?

WM: Common palings and weatherboard houses, just ordinary.

JM: The same as the European community?

WM: They would construct it themselves. Bush timber and so forth and shingle roof and so on.

JM: Were there any differences at all between the way the Chinese and Europeans built their houses?

WM: Actually there was no special design. The men used to live with one another. In one party there were fifteen men and they had a fairly large place and there was another with thirteen men.

JM: And they all lived together in the one house?

WM: In the weekends they visited one another, spending the weekends playing dominoes and so forth.

JM: Getting back to the European houses, you said the Europeans had a different roof pitch.

WM: There was no special design and construction, of course they used a fair amount of pitch on their roof on the account the water would run off.

JM: Most of the Chinese were men working for the mining company and living together in homes, that meant they were living a different kind of life to what they would in China?

WM: I wouldn't know. They were mostly like the European mines here.

JM: In China, they would live in a family life wouldn't they?

WM: I wouldn't know much about that. At home in China they would probably have to live with their families and so forth but out here they would live like the people around here. Some of the companies had machinery, but where most of the Chinese worked was in the shallow alluvial places.

JM: What sort of machinery did the large companies use?

WM: Steam.

JM: Steam engines?

WM: At one place they had it driven by steam pump. To deep mine they would use a gravel pump as they used to call them. In one mine they would haul it up to the surface.

JM: How did they used to do their digging? Did they use machinery for that?

WM: They had gravel pumps driven by steam and they used to pump it up to the surface where it ran out you see. One mine, the Briseis out at Derby, had a water race cut I think from the river about twelve miles or so and they used the water power. At first they used a lot of hydraulic blowers and afterwards they used the pelting and that drives the pump.

JM: What about the Chinese, they didn't have the machinery, what did they use?

WM: They did it mostly by hand. In the early days they used a wheel barrow because they only worked the shallower not the deep lines. They had a way of shifting the overburden and they used to get the washes as they called it - the sluice races to extract the tin from the wash and the over burden was wheeled aside in a wheel barrow. It was all pick and shovel work.

JM: That would separate the tin and so on?

WM: Through a sluice race and wash the sand away and extract the tin from that.

JM: I've seen some photos of your mine and you had water coming out at pressure. What did you use to get the water?

WM: The water race would be on a higher level and they would use pipes you see. On some mines they used a larger pipe, but we used a small pipe.

JM: Was there ever any other mining in the area apart from tin? Was tin the only thing mined?

WM: There was gold mining but very little, it wasn't sufficient. Eventually they had to work the tin.

JM: The tin eventually worked out and that is why a lot of people left.?

WM: Yes. The Arbar Mine closed in 1920 or around about.

JM: When you get the tin out, where was it sent to?

WM: In the very early days it was shipped to Lefroy. There used to be a ship that transported it to Bridport.

JM: By road?

WM: Yes then by boat.

JM: Where to?

WM: Launceston. The railroad came from Launceston to Scottsdale and that was pretty close to the field and that was sixteen miles to Branhholm.

JM: Who bought the mine from you?

WM: Mt. Bischoff on the west coast had a small smouldering works in Launceston.

JM: And they were the buyers were they?

WM: Yes there were two or three agents, but Mt. Bischoff was the main one. Different companies all went to the one works.

JM: Can you remember some of the prices you were paid for the tin?

WM: One stage it used to be worth about three or four pounds a bag. Different prices at different times. During the First World War the prices slumped and the Government made certain prices for certain times. Some of the miners at that time would only work three days a week; that was just sufficient enough to keep them going. The prices would go up and down - fluctuate a lot. I can't remember a lot.

JM: Three or four pounds a bag, that is a good indication. What did the tin mining do to the country? Did it make the country pretty barren around there?

WM: A lot of the population depended on it for work and gradually they did farming. Families would have small

holdings and they would gradually clear the farm and a number of them would have a mine as well. I can remember quite a lot of them getting their farm cleared.

JM: As the price of tin went down did you do other work as well?

WM: Some of the men worked around the farms and did odd jobs.

JM: You didn't do much mining in the summer as you had a water shortage.

WM: Most of the small holdings were depending on the sea and even the large companies had a large supply even then. Most of the miners in the summer time would do contract wood cutting. They used to stack the wood as well for the winter months. The Arbar Mine used to use a tremendous amount of timber.

JM: That was for their steam engines. Was that when you used to do your timber cutting in the summer? You used to make railway sleepers and...

WM: Mr Kincade and I do paling splitting and make posts and railings for a farmer and that sort of thing. Eventually we went tin mining. When the Arbar Mine closed down he took on a tribute of a certain section and I think that was in 1921. A lot of the Chinese were old and went back to China and I left and Tas Kincade took over the plant. My brother-in-law offered me a place in Western Australia and I came over here.

JM: Did Tas Kincade keep going on the mine after you left?

WM: I think so.

JM: Are there any of the old workings still there. Can you still see any of the workings still there?

WM: Most of the places were grown up when I went back there. I didn't have much time to have a look around.

JM: What sort of Chinese custom would the men do in their spare time?

WM: They used to play dominoes and fan-tan (a sort of gambling) and that sort of thing. They would opium smoke and get together to pass the time away.

JM: Did they have any clubs to go to?

WM: There was a club formed called the See Ipp Club. It was actually in a store in a room for that purpose where the men

used to gather to pass the time away and play dominoes and that sort of thing.

JM: With the gambling, did they gamble for much money?

WH: I wouldn't know. I wouldn't know what money would pass. Up at the Coast they would have a lottery drawn and there were quite a number who used to fill in the slip of paper. There were eighty characters and they were all different on the tickets. They would cost sixpence and you could draw three or four and up to eight. That would be very popular amongst the men, particularly on the weekend.

JM: How often did they have the lottery, was it every week?

WM: I don't know, probably.

JM: Did they make the lotteries up themselves or did they come from Melbourne?

WM: The cards were printed in China.

JM: What about births and funerals - the Chinese would do a bit of celebrating wouldn't they, but you said there weren't any other families besides yourselves around Branhholm, so what happened at times of funerals and births?

WM: They had an old custom, they would light papers and after the burial they would light papers, sticks and things and put them on the grave.

JM: Can you tell us about the Chinese New Year?

WM: They would have great celebrations, particularly in Weldborough and Garibaldi where there were a large number of Chinese and the Joss House. They would have different displays, Chinese lanterns and all sorts of different things. They would have a drum and a sort of a band of their own. On the fourth and fifth day of the New Year they would have a celebration in Weldboroguh and they would have the fireworks for two nights. The fireworks were in large cases imported direct from China. It was really marvellous to see. They had to hoist them on a stand on a scaffold. The height would be forty to fifty feet or more and they would light it. It would burn fast through. There were Chinese dolls and lanterns and all sorts of things. That would go on for two nights - the second night would be in Weldborough. The fireworks display would last for a couple of hours. Then they would go down to the clubs and gamble right through to night. Some would come on horse back, some would come in a buggy into these places. They always looked forward to the Chinese New Year. The English people would come around of a night and we would have a great time.

JM: So the European people would celebrate with you?

WM: A lot of them would want to see the dolls, you would have to keep them from rushing.

JM: Did your family go to celebrations at Weldborough and Garibaldi too?

WM: Yes some of them. Some of the places might be seven or eight miles and some of them would be closer. We used to have friends and we would camp together. Each centre got together for the New Year, even the men who worked outback would come in and relax. We used to have a great time, always looked forward to it.

JM: Can you remember when the Branhholm Joss House was built?

WM: I think 1906. Previous to that everything in the Joss House was in a house and the house was deteriorating and some decided to shift it and build a small house for it.

JM: Why did they choose the present site?

WM: Actually it wasn't a special site, a lot of parties were camped around there and it was close.

JM: So it was a convenient place?

WM: Yes.

JM: Your father was involved in helping to build it wasn't he?

WM: Actually when the men were talking about it, he made arrangements to get the material and different things about because a fair amount of material was local and they had to get things from Scottsdale and that sort of thing.

JM: Can you remember how long it took to build it?

WM: They had one man and a couple of others volunteered to help. It didn't take that long only a few days or so, it was only a small place compared to Weldborough and Garibaldi.

JM: How did the men use the Joss House?

WM: They had different ways, they had special lighting and different ways to perform and that was something I didn't understand.

JM: Did they use it each day or just on certain days or each week?

WM: No they had the daily routine and of course certain days like the New Year and they celebrated in June the Pudding Day and in September the Moon Cake Day.

JM: And there were Joss Houses at other places too weren't there?

WM: The nearest was at Garibaldi. The population of the men were dying out and they shifted the one at Garibaldi to Weldborough and two or three years later the population dwindled away. The Weldborough people started to worry and Joseph Chung Gon and his father took the original display and shifted it down to Launceston into the Victoria Museum, which is housed in a special section of the Museum and Joe made all the arrangements and had the display set out to his idea as to what it should be, because he had spent a number of years in a College in Canton, China, because he understood it and he made a wonderful job and display and it is there now and there is a tape recording for visitors to play and get their instructions and so on and I reckon he did a very, very good job. Joe and I knew each other well. We kept in touch with one another and even now there is one of the daughters who lives up in Western Australia and that is Anne. She is married and her last birthday she celebrated was her eightieth and she seems to be strong and hearty.

JM: Do you know where most of the Chinese around Branhholm came from?

WM: Well most of them came from around where my father came from. Some came from other places but most of them came from Southern China. There was such a large area.

JM: Now going onto the goods from the store that your father had, where did most of the stores come from?

WM: Most of the Chinese goods were imported from Hong Kong into Launceston. The larger importers were in Melbourne. The stores in Launceston sometimes got their supplies from there, probably one or two shipments direct. There were quite a number of large merchants in Victoria, New South Wales and that sort of thing.

JM: Your fathers goods, he mainly supplied the Chinese community?

WM: That was in the early days when they used to draw their supplies from Launceston. Mostly from the Sun Maa Company mentioned sometime ago.

JM: Do you know when the Chinese left Branhholm and why?

WM: Well from the years past they left gradually, some went interstate over to Victoria, some went back to China and then there wasn't many left. The last, when I had working partners, only three - that was when I had Mr Kincade working with me. I decided I would go over to Western Australia because the other two men - there were three men there, one was very old and we got permission for him to go to Hobart to the men's home and the other two went back to China when I left. That was the remaining Chinese from Branhholm. I left in 1926.

JM: So that was the last of the Chinese in that area?

WM: Yes. Most of the Chinese in the other districts around Weldborough, Garibaldi and the other districts, I think they all practically left the place and the past years they gradually dwindled away. I think there were only two or three in each place when I left and they eventually left the area and some passed on. There were a couple in Launceston and I met them when I went back eight years after I left. They were very old people, one was working in the gardens and one was in one of the laundries living there.