

Looking to the Future

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Australian Historical Society (CAHS). This is an opportune time to reflect on the achievement of the Society and to assess how well it has achieved the original aims and objectives of the Society's founder, Henry Chan and its original members.

To these ends, CAHS will be conducting a symposium, entitled:

Rethinking the Chinese Australian Historical Society

on Saturday 29th October (see below for details)

This symposium will hear from former Presidents, members and observers of the Society. The second half of the symposium will be devoted to discussions on future opportunities for the CAHS – the next twenty years. It will launch a strategic planning exercise that will involve all members of the Society, firstly in a survey to scope out future aspirations and opportunities, followed by two workshops to develop a member-led strategic plan for the CAHS over the next twenty years.

In my “Incoming President’s Remarks” at the 2021 AGM, I outlined my objectives as the President going forward as:

- i. Protecting our Chinese Australian history and heritage;
- ii. Encouraging a younger generation to become involved in Chinese Australian history and the Society;
- iii. Encourage and promote relevant research and dissemination of authentic Chinese Australian history and Chinese Australian Family Histories; and
- iv. Highlight the contributions that Chinese Australians have made to the development of Australian Society.

I would like to see these and other issues addressed in this strategic planning initiative. I encourage you all to consider other strategic issues that we should address and I urge you all to participate in this one in twenty-year activity to achieve a Society that can serve your needs and aspirations.

Darryl Low Choy

President CAHS

[Bew Chip's Register](#)

Report on the book launch 30 April 2022 by Malcolm Oakes

This was an exciting event in the long history of publications of works of Chinese Australian history. A rare instance of a 'Chinese voice' made accessible by a stunning translation and coupled with an excellent work of history. The two packaged in a book a stunning design marked another milestone in what we hope will be a continuing process of supported publications in this field.

The CAHS is proud to have resolved in February 2022 to sponsor the publication of *Bew Chip's Register*. To the sum of \$2,000, various members of the Society also provided sponsorships totalling \$1,250. The total contribution saw the CAHS designated "lead sponsor" and being invited to launch the book.

The book launch was held on Saturday 30 April at the Royal Hall in Hill End. The Royal Hall was built in 1900 as a dance hall associated with the adjacent Royal Hotel, itself established in 1872. Some 10 CAHS members attended the book launch: including Darryl Low Choy, Ella Hong, Doug Lam, Susan Leong, Daphne Lowe Kelley, Glenn Mar, Peter Mar, Malcolm Oakes, as well as the co-authors Dr Juanita Kwok and Ely Finch and designer Kira Brown. About 60 people attended the book launch in all, which was hosted by the [Hill End & Tambaroora Gathering Group Inc.](#)

Lorraine Purcell of HEATGG was MC, an organisation that assisted National Parks & Wildlife in indexing its documentary collection of Hill End materials. It was here that Bew Chip's Register came to their attention and as part of that process to the attention of Dr Michael Williams. Dr Williams in turn encouraged the writing of a new translation. Funding was secured by Dr Williams through King Fong from the Chung Shan Society of Australia for Ely Finch to translate the book. Bew Chip's Register is essentially a business record in Chinese of gold remittances in specie to China, setting out the date, the consignor, the consignee and the village of the consignee. It is thus a valuable resource of names in Chinese and the villages of the consignees, both holy grails for researchers. Dr Williams further encouraged the writing of an introductory essay and a publication. The essay was written by Dr Juanita Kwok.

The design work was done by Kira Brown of Sauce Design in Orange. Kira is another CAHS member and gave a presentation to CAHS on her Chinese Australian forebears in 2019. She has her own [Chinese Australian Family History](#) website.



A publication of the Chinese Australian Historical Society

Website: <https://chineseaustralianhistory.org>

Email: contact.cahs@gmail.com

Bew Chip's Register: Report on the book launch 30 April 2022 by Malcolm Oakes

CAHS President Darryl Low Choy in his launch speech, emphasised the good thing that has resulted by people acting in collaboration, HEATGG with Juanita Kwok, Juanita with Ely Finch, Juanita & Ely with Kira Brown of Sauce Design, and finally all of them with CAHS as co-sponsor and lead sponsor of the publication as part of its 20th anniversary activities.

After the book launch there was a walking tour of Hill End on the Saturday afternoon, and a tour of various Chinese Australian history sites on Sunday, including the site of a pig oven, stone water races and various earth dams considered to have been constructed by Chinese Australian diggers. This was primarily hosted by Warwick Taylor who maintains a [Tambaroora website](#).

The publication is a professional and well-presented work. A worthy contribution to our twentieth anniversary celebrations.

Chinese Australian Historical Society (CAHS) Management Committee (2022)

President	Darryl Low Choy
Vice President	Ann Toy
Secretary	Kevin Tang
Treasurer	Malcolm Oakes
Member	Jeff Fatt
Member	Kam Louie
Member	Chris Cheng
Member	Susan Leong
Member	Glenn Mar

Welcome to CAHS New Members for 2022

Gordon Grimwade
 Sophie Couchman
 Daniel Wong
 Nicholas Jose
 Jon Addison
 Sandra Pires
 Esmond Cheung

New Institutional Member:
 Society of Australian
 Genealogists (SAG)

[Museum of Chinese in Australia](#) (MOCA)

The Minister for Multiculturalism Mark Coure and Ben Franklin, Minister for the Arts recently announced that the New South Wales Government had awarded MOCA \$2.2 million to refurbish the former Haymarket Library building at 744 George Street, Sydney. Currently the pop-up exhibition *Stories of Home* is on display until 23rd September and MOCA intends to be open to the public in 2023.

Events to see out 2022 - October, November & December

2002-2022: A Symposium

Rethinking the

Chinese Australian Historical Society

A major event to celebrate the Society's 20th Anniversary is a symposium reviewing the evolution and legacies of the Chinese Australian Historical Society from its establishment in 2002 to 2022. Here is your chance to discuss issues and solutions to ensure the organisation's survival and growth for the next twenty years.

The review will in turn lead to the development of a new Strategic Plan for CAHS through the active participation of members in a series of workshops.

This event will be an in-person presentation combined with online streaming via Zoom, to allow our members from around Australia to participate.

Guest speakers will include: Dawn Wong, King Fong OAM and Daphne Lowe Kelley, (past CAHS Presidents), Dr Kate Bagnall (former CAHS Committee member), and Dr Carol Liston, AO (past President of the Royal Australian Historical Society) who will address the future role of Historical Societies in Australia. The symposium will be chaired by Darryl Low Choy (CAHS President).

Date: Saturday 29th October
2.00 pm- 4.30pm.

Venue: Carmichael Theatre,
Sydney Mechanic's School of Arts,
Pitt Street, Sydney.

Cost: Free

Henry Chan Annual Lecture

Join us in person or by Zoom for this year's Henry Chan lecture, *San Ren Xing 三人行 (Walking among Three People): Some Reflections on Chinese Australians in Diplomacy*, to be presented by distinguished speaker Dr Jocelyn Chey, AM.

Dr Chey AM is Visiting Professor at the University of Sydney and Adjunct Professor at Western Sydney University and UTS. Her career with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade spanned thirty years from the 1970s to 90s, including two postings in Beijing and as Consul General to Hong Kong and Macau, 1992-95. She was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2009.

Date: Monday 7th November,
6.00-8.30 pm

Venue: Dixson Room, State Library
Of New South Wales.

Cost: Free.

Bookings: contact.caahs@gmail.com

Please indicate if you wish to attend in person or via Zoom.

Further details will be sent upon registration.

Chinese Australian Historical Society Annual General Meeting

Date: Saturday 3rd December, 10 am - 12.00pm.

Venue: Carmichael Theatre, Sydney's Mechanic's School of Arts,
280 Pitt Street, Sydney.

This will be an in-person presentation with on-line streaming via Zoom.

Cost: Attendance at the AGM is free.

The AGM will be followed by a celebratory Chinese banquet lunch at 12.30 pm, to mark the occasion of the Society's 20th Anniversary. (Cost of lunch and restaurant venue TBA).

A publication of the Chinese Australian Historical Society

Website: <https://chineseaustralianhistory.org>

Email: contact.caahs@gmail.com

Australian Migrant Heritage in South China: The Legacy of Diaspora-Funded Schools in 20th Century Zhongshan

Christopher Cheng

People are more geographically mobile than ever. Not only are they not attending the same (local village) schools as their parents, but children also do not necessarily speak the same ancestral language. Undoubtedly, these changes have led to a fundamental change in the way we experience the world - disconnected even from our parents' past, not to mention our grandparents. Forecasts indicate that genealogy or roots tourism is on the rise, meaning that learning about our past has never been more important.

My family heritage and multi-lingual skills have led me to carry out a transnational research project between Australia and Chung Shan (Zhongshan), a well-known hometown of Overseas Chinese in Guangdong. Since the 19th century, many Chinese migrants Australia originated from that part of the Pearl River Delta region. In Australia and other destinations, they acquired wealth but remained connected to their ancestral homes, which some returned to and built modern, western-style schools. With materials imported from abroad, these schoolhouses were much more substantial than the average one room schools scattered in the rural landscapes around the world. With the rapid pace of development and new infrastructure popping up, transport and livelihoods have dramatically improved across China. But rising real estate prices could make old schools vulnerable to redevelopment. Between 2017 and 2021, I have been documenting the life histories of diaspora-funded schools

because they are a living museum of the Chinese migrant world that reflects a distinctive segment of modern cultural and material world history.

My doctoral research has demonstrated that, when these schools were new, they provided a focal point and source of hope for the future of the community. In other words, I argue that they epitomized a rural modernity in the Chinese countryside. But they also represented diasporic heritage, illustrating a grassroots-based cooperation between the hometown and diasporic community. Since some schools are close to a century old and some 'old boys' and 'old girls' are still alive, my doctoral project involved visiting these schools and conducting interviews with associated people in Australia and South China, before the opportunity passes. Doing so has remarkably raised my awareness of the spirit of these old schools and how the transferal of modern technology may have taken place and how it may have fused with traditional culture. Dissemination of such insights could fundamentally change the way we (and future children of the diaspora) think and experience our not-so-distant past. Beyond the diaspora, in a disturbing era of increasing intolerance, the world is thirsty for greater dialogue and acceptance. My research seeks to strengthen relationships and promote mutual understanding at this critical time.

Related publications:

Forthcoming. ___ and Philip Mar. "From ancestral halls to modern schools: A history of diaspora-funded education in Zhongshan." In: Denis Byrne, Ien Ang, and Philip Mar, eds., *Heritage and History in the China-Australia Migration Corridor*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

In press. "A century of Cantonese-Australian diasporic educational philanthropy in Zhongshan." *Philanthropy & Education*

2020. "[Beacons of modern learning: Diaspora-funded schools in the China-Australia corridor.](#)" *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 29 (2): 139-162.

2019. "[From banana plantations to schools: The role of remittances from Australia to South China](#)" 《從種植香蕉到僑捐學校：澳洲匯款與僑鄉發展》 *Issues* 1: 1-7.

ONE BRIGHT MOON

By Andrew Kwong (Harper Collins, 2020)

Reviewed by Lesley Heath

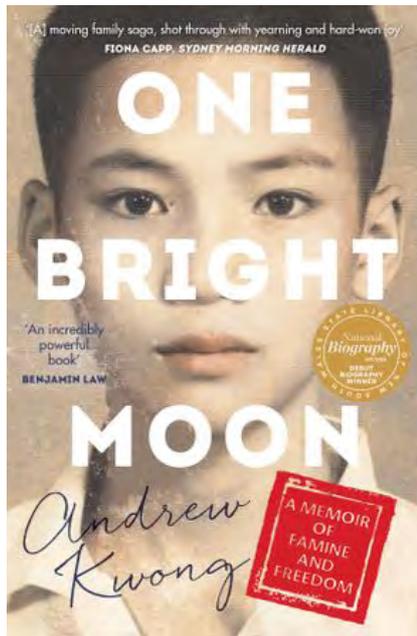
'We must share these bad times; a bright moon will shine again one day, after the clouds disperse.' (Mama to the family)

Andrew Kwong was born in late 1949 just months after the establishment of the People's Republic of China. It was a time of huge optimism for most of the nation, preceded as it had been by fifty years of political upheaval, invasion by and war with the Japanese, and civil war between the Nationalist and Communist forces. Kwong grew up in Shiqi, a thriving administrative town in the County of Zhongshan close to the South China Sea. His parents were university-educated teachers, who lived in the family's ten-room house along with Andrew and his three sisters. Although his parents were enthusiastic about the exciting possibilities of China's future and dedicated to working for a golden future, their education and their sizeable family home would do them no favours. Harrowing details of brutality, intimidation, famine, starvation, senseless edicts from the government and more, continue unchecked and make this book quite difficult to read at times, but I found it enormously interesting in the details of how day-to-day life proceeded and how deeply the family network was involved throughout.

As 'Chairman Mao's Children', Andrew and his fellow kindergarten classmates of 1954 were fired up by the nationalistic rhetoric, revolutionary songs and patriotic slogans taught at school, and enthusiastically endorsed by parents and neighbours. Posters of the Chairman adorned the school walls and the streets of the town. The children were carried along with the fervour, passionate about the Chairman, the Party, and above all the ambition to wear the red scarf of a Young Pioneer.

What seemed a bright and rosy situation changed pretty quickly as the District Head and his henchmen start to wield unrestricted power, meting out arbitrary, vindictive, humiliating and brutal punishments, including executions. Andrew details the forced, terrifying invasion of his home by these men and the subsequent uninvited arrival of five families to share their space. At the age of 7, Andrew witnessed the brutal and humiliating arrest of his father for no good reason, led away at gunpoint with a rope around his neck and his hands bound behind his back. From there he went to trial and was sentenced to fifteen years in a labour and re-education camp in Heilongjiang province bordering Russia. Three of the other men tried that day were executed. As it transpired, his father served only three years, released on the grounds of 'good behaviour and complete re-education', but the real reason was that famine and starvation were now common throughout China, and many prisoners were released simply because they could not be fed. His parents now continued to attend evening political classes because of their status as redundant intellectuals; they were still unemployed and still not offered any work, relying on family money arriving from Hong Kong.

Andrew's family included several sojourners, those who had moved abroad to work and send money back to their families. His grandfather had been in Hawaii for some decades, and an uncle was in New York



- from here they sent money to Andrew's grandmother in Hong Kong, and his aunt in Macau. After the establishment of the PRC, many western powers prevented the remittance of money to China but it could still be sent to relatives in the colonies of Hong Kong and Macau. For this reason, the Chinese government had encouraged family members of sojourners to relocate to these colonies to maintain the flow of desperately needed foreign currency, but just one exit visa per family was permitted which is why his grandmother and aunt were living separately and alone. (Andrew's mother applied annually from 1960-1980 to the District Head for an exit visa, denied each time because he didn't want to give up the cigarettes, condensed milk, and other 'gifts' that came from the Hong Kong and Macau families when they visited Mama. He knew when they arrived and made sure he received these things.)

Andrew did get an exit visa to Macau in 1962, studying at an English language school (paid for by the aunt) and then was people-smuggled to Hong Kong where he managed to commence Year 9 at the elite La Salle College, Kowloon. His father had joined him in Macau in 1962 after escaping without an exit visa and he, too, took the people-smuggling route to Hong Kong separately, but in an equally dangerous and agonising journey. Andrew's studies continued with financial help from the American connection - boarding school at Holy Cross College, Ryde, and then Medicine at the University of New South Wales. He found love with Sheree, whom he married and with whom he had three children. They moved to Sydney's Central Coast where he continues to practice medicine.

The 'bright moon' shone again when Mama's exit visa was finally approved in 1981 and she joined her husband in Hong Kong. She (and some other family members) had been offered family-reunion status to join her daughter and family in Washington DC and she set off immediately, with her husband joining her two years later. (Australia had rejected her application on the grounds she could not speak English.) A large family reunion took place there in June 1989 - thirty-two years since they had last been together.

The reunion was overshadowed by the events of Tiananmen Square...but that's another story.

An Invitation to become involved in CAHS Activities

We wish to encourage all Society members to become involved in the affairs and events of the Society. To these ends, we extend an invitation to you to join one of our portfolio sub-committee, such as:

No	Portfolio Subcommittee	Convenor/s
1	Cultural Heritage and Archaeology	Ann Toy
2	Family History Special Interest Group (joint initiative with the Society of Australian Genealogists)	Kam Louie
3	Strategic Planning	Darryl Low Choy
4	Events (talks, seminars, history week activities, walks etc)	Ann Toy, Kevin Tang & Jeff Fat
5	Grants	Kam Louie and Darryl Low Choy
6	Archives and CAHS history	Malcolm Oakes
7	Publications and CAHS Newsletter	Michael Williams and Darryl Low Choy
8	CAHS Facebook	Glen Mar
9	Web site management	Web master required

If you would like more information or wish to volunteer, please email me at: d.lowchoy@griffith.edu.au



Guess the view?

Where is this?

Email:

contact.cahs@gmail.com