

Kogarah Historical Society Inc

Carss Cottage Museum - Carss Park
Postal Address PO Box 367, Kogarah 1485
www.kogarah.historicalsociety.com.au

Patron: The Mayor of Kogarah

President: Beverley Earnshaw (9546 1091)

Newsletter

January/February 2014

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Harrow Villa, the original premises of St. George Girls High School, see story p.6

Meetings and Speakers

Thursday February 13, 2014

Mark St. Leon,

Circus Historian,

Circus in Australia 1833-2013

Thursday March 13, 2014

Annual General Meeting and

Show and Tell. Bring an interesting

item and speak about it for a

maximum of five minutes.

Meetings are held at the School of Arts, Bowns Road Kogarah at 2 pm. Enjoy the speaker then the opportunity to chat over afternoon tea. A short business meeting follows.

Apologies for non-attendance at meetings should go to the Secretary, Gill Whan (9546 4623)

Visitors welcome.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO EVERYONE!

The Committee and all the members of Kogarah Historical Society wish our readers a happy, healthy and exciting year in 2014.

This year, being 100 years since the outbreak of World War I, we will be joining with the local libraries to commemorate that catastrophic event and to salute some of the local heroes who took part in the conflict.

Our speakers, of course, will cover a wide variety of subjects (not just wartime history), which we hope will suit the interests of all our members.

Museum Roster

January 2014

5th Carole Tier & Ken Grieve
12th Mavis Ward & Mary Williams
19th Trudy Johns
26th Australia Day, Volunteers

February 2014

2nd Gill Whan & Deirdre Schroeder
9th Adele Ryan & Lawrie Corry
16th Trudy Johns
23rd Betty Goodger & Janette Hollebhone

Hours **1 pm - 5 pm**. Problems, contact Gill Whan, 9546 4623

NB: This list is of regular roster days and volunteers and does not reflect any changes or swaps made privately. We need more members to volunteer for either a regular spot at the Museum or to go on the emergency list. Training given. Contact one of the Committee if you can help.

Committee 2014 (* denotes Executive)

President:*	Beverley Earnshaw	Ph: 9546 1091
Vice President (1): *	Janette Hollebhone	Ph: 9529 7117
Vice President (2): *	Mavis Ward	Ph: 9546 5704
Secretary:*	Gill Whan	Ph: 9546 4623
Treasurer:*	Cath Sullivan	Ph: 9579 6149

Committee Members: Beryl Butters, Lawrie Corry, Trudy Johns,
David Martin, Adele Ryan, Carole Tier.

Committee Meeting Venues

January: No meeting
3rd Feb 7 pm Trudy Johns, 2/900 Forest Road, Peakhurst (9534 7737)

Welcome to New Member

John Michelsen

We hope you have a long and happy association with the Society

One Photo, Two Stories

Kerry Choy 2013 copyright



This is a photo with two stories. Both are historically significant, speaking of the Chinese migrant experience in Australia but viewed from different perspectives. There is also an intensely personal significance as the photo is of my family and includes the first image I have ever seen of my grandmother.

The two stories identify the subjects of the photo differently and researching the stories reveals the two-sided coin that is the migration experience of Chinese Australians. One of these stories is of Chinese immigrants themselves. The other is the perceptions of Chinese by post-colonial Australians.

The most recent history of the photo is its inclusion in *The Land between two Rivers: the St. George District in Federation Times* and its reproduction in an exhibition in the Kogarah library in 2011. The note on the reverse of the photo mentions “Sun Ty Sing”. This was correlated with other exhibition material referring to “Sun Tiy Sang” and “Tiy Sing”. Allowing for vagaries of spelling, it seemed reasonable to assume this was the same person, a Chinese market gardener in the Kogarah Bay area until the land was resumed in the 1930s.

Kogarah Council correspondence archives indicate that Tom Liddle wrote to council on behalf of Sun Tiy Sing. Copies of notes of Dr Joan Hatton in the Kogarah Library show she received the photo from a Tom Liddle, probably in 1995. As the correspondent, Tom Liddle, died in 1963, it is possible that Tom Liddle (Snr) knew the market gardeners while Tom Liddle (Jnr) actually donated the photo to the society. Council maps identify the farm on Burgess Street and rate books record that the rates were paid by “Sun Ti Sang”. Tom Liddle lived nearby in Carroll Street.

A relative who lives in the area saw the exhibition in 2011. He recognised that the photo was not of Sun Tiy Sing but his father, known in Australia as Ah Young. The family surrounding Ah Young includes my great uncle as an infant.

Several family members have examined the photo and concur on the identities of each of the subjects, some of whom are still alive. The central subject is my great grandfather, Ah Young. This was his nick name, use of which was common practice. Use of his full family name would have been impolite if used conversationally by someone of the wrong station such as a younger family member, hence the widespread use of these courtesy names. This ended up as being his “paper name” and appears on all Australian legal correspondence referring to him. His family name was Choy Mun Seui. (蔡文粹).

To reconcile these differing accounts it’s important to realise that Sun Tiy Sing is not a personal name but the name of the farm itself. A rough translation might be “New Mountain Life” which was a lucky or auspicious name for a farm. The NSW Firms Index at State Records lists a business named “Sun Tiy Sang” at Burgess St, Kogarah. Of the four persons listed as operating the business, none is named Sun Tiy Sang. A close reading of the council correspondence suggests that Tom Liddle Snr knew the individuals and was aware of this distinction. Unfortunately, this distinction wasn’t made in the hand written note on the back of the photo which has led to the attribution.

Of more use in identifying the photo is a Chinese logo printed on its backing card that was cropped from the images that were published previously. It identifies the photo studio to an address in Zhaoqing City. This is the administrative city of the prefecture where our ancestral village is located. Ah Young had bought a house in the city around the early 1930s with the profits of his farming in Kogarah. Family recollections date the photo to 1932 when Ah Young would have made a trip home from Australia for the wedding of his eldest son - my grandfather, standing in the photo on the right. My grandmother stands at the left.



Family recollections are that Ah Young first arrived in Australia around 1900. He was married at the time but his wife stayed in China. His early years are not well documented but it is known that he made a good living in Australia. He sent funds home for his family to live and periodically went home for visits. The ages of his children suggest the frequency of his trips. The shareholders in a farm would take turns to go home for a year while the rest worked the farm.

Ah Young had returned to Kogarah by 1937 as he was noted as being in the country in the council’s resumption correspondence. It is presumed the photo would have come with him from China at the time. After the Kogarah Bay farm was resumed, he worked farms at Rockdale, Sans Souci, Milperra and Kellyville. He died in 1968. He did not bring family to live with him in Australia until the late 1940s. None of the family can remember having seen this photo before, suggesting it had become lost before any of them arrived here. How the photo ended up with Liddle is an open question for now.

The story of Ah Young’s photo starts in China. The region where he and many other Chinese immigrant workers came from was a poor rural area. Banditry was a problem in the area all the way up to and through the Civil War. Even as recently as the 1930s my father can recall our village as having a large defensive hedge of bamboo and two large gates to keep out bandits. At least one of his uncles is thought to have died in Australia in a similar journey. But we believe that Ah Young’s father successfully made the journey to Australia in the mid 1800s and returned to China. Perhaps

