

Significance Assessment

Castlemaine Art Museum

Historical Collection

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Cover image: Committee of the Castlemaine Progress Association, who organised the Castlemaine Past and Present exhibition in 1911. Members of the group later helped establish the Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum. Source: Castlemaine Art Museum

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Acknowledgement of Country

In writing this report I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this land and pay my respect to their Elders, past and present. This report was written on the land of the Yaluk-ut Weelam of the Boon Wurrung peoples and the Castlemaine Art Museum is located on the land of the Jaara people of the Dja Dja Wurrung and contains material culture related to many First Nations peoples. I acknowledge and uphold their continuing relationship to this land.

Executive summary

Located on Dja Dja Wurrung country in the central goldfields region of Victoria, the Castlemaine Art Museum (CAM) was established in 1913 as the Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum by community subscription. Its home is a building that was purpose-built for the organisation in 1930 by the Melbourne-based architect Percy Meldrum in an Art Deco, neo-classical style and opened in 1931. The building has subsequently been extended, repaired and its facilities modernised.

CAM's refreshed vision articulated in 2019 calls for the organisation to be 'Connecting People through Art, History, Place and Ideas'. Through this vision it aims to become 'Australia's leading regional art museum in the sphere of bold curation that brings art and objects from the past and present into multi-layered conversations; creating a dynamic platform for new voices, community connections, reflections and ideas'.¹ If used creatively CAM's Historical Collection is well placed to help the organisation meet this new vision.

As a rare surviving Edwardian-era local museum collection, the Historical Collection of the Castlemaine Art Museum is of high *historical* significance. The Collection pre-dates those of most local historical societies and museums by about half a century. Its eclectic mix of First Nations, natural history, decorative arts and historical photographs, documents and artefacts largely reflects Victorian collecting practices but what was collected and by whom provides insights into how local history, place and material culture was understood in the Edwardian period. The organisation is currently working through the issues associated with its problematically acquired First Nations collection. Thanks to the foresight and efforts of Anna Mary Winifred Brotherton (1874-1956), who documented the early collection, the provenance of the collection in the early years of CAM is strong which greatly enhances its *historical* significance.

While not a large collection, the Collection contains many *representative* items that capture the history of the Mount Alexander area. It has high *historical* significance for the insights it provides into the early British and European settlement of the Mount Alexander region, particularly during goldrush era. The goldrushes of the nineteenth century fundamentally changed the face of Australia, and the Mount Alexander goldfields had a key place in that history. The Collection also helps us to understand the area's settlement/colonisation and its civic and industrial development during the nineteenth century, particularly the activities of its middle-class residents. The population of the Mount Alexander region is relatively small and the social elite who established and donated to CAM even smaller. The collection and the social and familial networks of donors and people associated with CAM therefore provide an rich insight into this class.

CAM is also the primary collecting institution of three-dimensional historical objects in the Castlemaine area. The Mount Alexander region's history is revealed through *rare* copies of early ambrotype and daguerreotype photographs of the area and its people; *rare* maps and plans of the area, and *well-provenanced* collections of documents, ephemera, dress and decorative arts of former residents. In addition, there are diverse collections of items related to work, leisure and community building in the area, sometimes just a few items and sometimes larger collections. The lives and activities of women are particularly well represented and expressed through the collection and as a whole are of high *historical* significance. There are also *rare* documentary items related to the government administration of the area including a Gold Escort Register, documentation related to Miner's Rights and the papers of Richard Colles, Sheriff of Castlemaine and Sandhurst Circuit

¹ Castlemaine Art Museum, *Connecting People Through Art, History, Place and Ideas: Strategic Plan for Castlemaine Art Museum 2019-2023*, published 5 December 2019.

(1850s-1880s). The plaques and roof ornaments from the Ten Foot Hill Chinese joss house have *spiritual* significance for Chinese Australians and *historical* significance as the only surviving remnants of the three Chinese joss houses that once operated in Castlemaine. They are *rare* as very little material culture from the large Chinese population that once lived in the region has survived.

As the people who managed the Historical Collection also managed the Art Collection, it is not surprising that the collection has high artistic or *aesthetic* significance. First Nations culture and natural history material was often collected for display as decorative arts in homes in the nineteenth and early twentieth century and so these reflect turn of the century aesthetic values in addition to having other significance. The decorative arts, clothing worn, and textiles were, at least in part, valued by their previous owners for their aesthetics.

The Collection is in good condition and is generally well-documented, but this documentation needs to be linked so that its provenance, research significance and interpretive capacity can be fully realised. The Collection is a valuable resource for learning more about the lives of middle-class Australians living in rural centres, particularly women's lives and the Victorian practice of collecting. There are also exciting opportunities CAM could explore about how the values and ethics that have shaped their collection have changed over time. Reconnecting and possibly repatriating First Nations cultural items in the collection with the descendants of their original owners is vital. If undertaken in a way which builds First Nation's cultural authority and trust, and recentres First Nation voices in historical narratives, this creates opportunities for the Museum to revitalise itself and its collections and be part of national reconciliation processes. The Historical Collection has great potential to engage with CAM's recent refreshed vision to bring 'art and objects from the past and present into multi-layered conversations; creating a dynamic platform for new voices, community connections, reflections and ideas'.

That a place with a population of Castlemaine's size can support a library, an historical society, a pioneer and old residents' association, a house museum (Buda) and an arts festival (the Castlemaine State Festival) is impressive. CAM and its Art and Historical Collections are an integral part of this surviving ecosystem of historical and artistic collecting institutions and is an important repository of three-dimensional material culture that documents the region's history. Together all these organisations provide a vital insight into today's artistic and intellectual community and how it came to be. This gives the organisation and its collection a strong ongoing *social significance*.

Key recommendations cover the follow areas:

- Review and update current Collection Policy
- Reframe collecting areas
- Archive some collection areas
- Reparation of First Nations items
- Establish a Research Archive
- Improve links between the Library and collection management
- Continue work on collection audit
- Cataloguing priorities
- Statements of significance for collection items
- More clearly document the names of individuals
- Identify and document early donations
- Undertake a Preservation Needs Assessment
- Reorganise and remove some items from current displays
- Considerations for new displays
- Deaccessioning advice

1. Methodology

This significance assessment was commissioned by Naomi Cass, Director of the Castlemaine Art Museum and was funded by a grant from the National Library of Australia's Community Heritage Grants Program. It is designed to be read in conjunction with Kirsty Grant's *Castlemaine Art Museum Art Collection Significance Assessment* (October 2020).²

The following assessment draws on the methodology outlined in *Significance 2.0: A Guide to Assessing the Significance of Collections* published by the Collections Council of Australia in 2009,³ also guidelines provided by the National Library of Australia Community Heritage Grant program for Significance Assessments⁴ with reference to the work of Bill Storer.⁵

A statement of significance is a reasoned, readable summary of the values, meaning and importance of an item or collection. It incorporates all of the elements that contribute to their meaning including appearance, fabric, design, context, environment, history, provenance, uses, function, social values and intangible associations.

A statement of significance is an effective way of communicating and sharing knowledge about why an item or collection is important, and why it has a place in a public collection. Significance is not set in stone and may change over time. Assessments should be reviewed as circumstances change and knowledge develops.

Significance 2.0 recommends assessing collections according to four primary criteria which are modified by five comparative criteria.

Primary Criteria:

- Historic
- Artistic or aesthetic
- Scientific or research potential
- Social or spiritual

Comparative Criteria which modify the Primary Criteria

- Provenance
- Rarity
- Representativeness
- Condition or completeness
- Interpretive capacity

In writing this assessment I have tried to centre the historic nature of the collection and demonstrate its significance beyond gold rush histories, drawing out some of the more complex narratives contained within it for possible interpretation.

² Kirsty Grant, "Castlemaine Art Museum Art Collection Significance Assessment" (Castlemaine Art Museum, October 2020).

³ 'Significance 2.0', <https://www.arts.gov.au/what-we-do/museums-libraries-and-galleries/significance-20>

⁴ 'Significance Assessments', National Library of Australia website, <https://www.nla.gov.au/chg/significance-assessments>

⁵ Bill Storer, "Assessing Significance and Snaring Contradictions: Some Issues for Community-Based Collections," *Museum Australia Magazine*, February 2011.

I am a Professional Historian and Curator with expertise in the history of Chinese in Australia (<https://sophiecouchman.com>). I have researched, published and worked in this field in varying capacities for over twenty years. I was curator of the Museum of Chinese Australian History in Melbourne for seven years and worked with the Museum to achieve accreditation at this time. These skills and experiences shape this assessment.

Research for this assessment included two site visits and analysis of primary and secondary sources about the history of Castlemaine and the establishment of CAM.

I also spoke with or reached out via email to current and former Trustees (George Milford), Board Members (Chris McAuliffe), staff and volunteers of CAM (Naomi Cass, Sarina Meuleman, Deborah Peart, Jenny Long, Diane Linton, Emma Busowsky, Laretta Zilles). I also contacted historians with an interest in Castlemaine's history or the history of CAM (Heather Holst, Lorinda Cramer, Robyn Annear, Marjorie Theobald, Ian McShane, Graeme Davison, Keir Reeves). I would like to thank everyone for their time, particularly Deb Peart and Laretta Zilles, and acknowledge these discussions informed my evaluation their contribution is my own.

Information on comparable museums and collections was obtained through experience, discussions and reading, information available on organisational websites.

2. Overview of the Museum and Historical Collection

The Castlemaine Art Museum (CAM)⁶ is located at 14 Lyttleton Street, in central Castlemaine. The building it is housed in was purpose-built for the Museum in 1931 and has undergone a number of renovations and extension since then. The building and collection are currently owned by a Trust represented by two Trustees and is managed by a Board supported by a CEO. Currently CAM employs a Director (Naomi Cass), a General Manager (Sarina Meuleman), a Front of House staff member (Anna Schwann and Sarah Frazer). Two honorary positions also support the organisation: Consultant and Curator (Jennifer Long) and Conservator (Deb Peart).

CAM divides its collection into an 'Art Collection' and a 'Historical Collection'. The Historical Collection contains around 4,000 items (with natural history collections catalogued in bulk) and 1,200 nineteenth and twentieth century photographs. Within this collection are a diverse collection of material including furniture, costumes, textiles, ceramics, metalwork, natural history specimens, documents and publications, municipal and community documents, architectural ornaments, and material culture of people of local significance, including First Nations peoples.

The most recent collection policy for the Historical Collection divides the collection into:

- Three-dimensional articles of historical interest pertaining to Castlemaine and District
- Two-dimensional works, especially photographic material, relative to Castlemaine and District
- Decorative Arts of the highest order (especially Australia) - as deemed fit by the Collections Committee.⁷

I would argue the Historical Collection is perhaps better conceived as comprising of the following categories. There is at times overlap across these categories which I will discuss in more detail later in the report.

- First Nations
- Natural History
- Decorative Arts
- Mount Alexander History
- History of Castlemaine Art Museum

In addition, there is material both within the Historical Collection and also outside it which is best understood as a Research Archive. Material in the Research Archive should support the understanding of collection items but is not of sufficient significance to be deemed a collection item.

2.1 First Nations

The First Nations things in CAM's collection are part of unresolved issues that sit at the heart of modern Australia. Australia is still in the process of reconciling its painful history in which the lands of First Nations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) people were violently invaded, many people killed and assaulted as a result and First Nations culture, spiritual beliefs and ways of life changed

⁶ The Castlemaine Art Museum was previously known as the Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum. I will refer to the organisation as the Castlemaine Art Museum or CAM throughout this document.

⁷ Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum, *Collection Policy - Historical Museum*, undated published brochure.

forever. The repercussions of this damage are ongoing as new generations are impacted by the trauma of earlier generations.

CAM's First Nations collection is one of the products of the British colonisation of First Nations country and as part of Australia's reconciliation with First Nations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) peoples CAM has an ethical responsibility to engage with descendants of their former owners to discuss what should happen to their material culture beyond its responsibilities within the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.

First Nations items in CAM's collection were obtained by white Australians by largely unknown means and primarily donated during the early years of CAM's operation. There are some items related to the Dja Dja Wurrung peoples (Aboriginal objects) but most are from further afield. This includes a small number of First Nations items related to peoples in other countries: Fiji, Indonesia, Pacific Islands, Papua New Guinea, Polynesia, Samoa, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, Africa, South Africa, United States of America. Due to the specialist skills required, the assessment of the significance of these items, as defined in this report, is beyond the scope of this significance assessment.

2.2 Natural History

This collection is relatively small and has come from a large number of single or very small donations and were largely donated during the early decades of CAM's operations. It includes collections of taxidermized animals and birds, eggs, dried plants and seeds, rocks and minerals and fossils. Some but not all items relate to the Mount Alexander region.

2.3 Decorative Arts

This is a diverse collection of furniture, glassware, porcelain, metalware and silverware that largely dates from the nineteenth century with some items that are much older. Most were collected in Australia but were created from places all over the world, particularly Europe. Some, but not all items and donors have a connection with the Mount Alexander region. Large collections identified:

- Higgins Bequest
- Anne Cassidy
- J. & E. Learmonth Bequest (Portland)
- Eleanor Stobie Bequest
- Jan Lancaster.

2.4 Mount Alexander history

The largest component of the Historical Collection relates to the history of the Mount Alexander region, with a particular focus on Castlemaine in the nineteen and early twentieth century and the lives and activities of its middle classes. Large collections identified:

- Beth Sinclair Bequest
- Brotherton/Cherry Estate
- Percy Gladstone Chaster
- Stanley Ellis
- J. Griffiths
- Castlemaine Town Council

- Bateman family
- Mrs Betty Gibbs.

2.5 History of the Castlemaine Art Museum

This material is not currently documented as part of the collection. It includes CAM's building and historical museum furniture, as well as historical museum labels, corporate records related to it operations, documentation about the collection and imagery.

CAM's earliest acquisitions reflect how its founders imagined the museum and its role and so could also be viewed as a subcollection of this collection. This is particularly the case for the First Nations and Natural History collections but also items within the Decorative Arts and Mount Alexander History collections too.

3. Factors that have shaped the Historical Collection

CAM's Historical Collection has been shaped by the timing of its establishment and the history of how local history has been funded and the nature of Castlemaine's history, how it has been told and who has told it. The colonial origins of the Museum in particular still reverberate through the collection today.

3.1 CAM's history

3.1.1 Timing of founding

CAM's Historical Collection is a significant early example of a local history museum collection. Most local historical societies and museums in Australia, like the Castlemaine Historical Society founded in 1965, were established in the post-war period, many in the 1970s and 1980s. CAM's Historical Collection, however, was formally established in 1913 with some items acquired as early as 1910.⁸ By comparison the Royal Historical Society of Victoria was only established a few years earlier in 1909. At this time, the divisions between the collections of art galleries, museums and libraries were much less defined than today.

The idea to establish a museum in Castlemaine was raised as early as 1873 after the Castlemaine Mechanics Institute hosted a 'Conversazione and Exhibition' which included a display of 'arts and industries'. The focus appears to have been on 'art treasures' but the committee also approached local residents to solicit 'local manufacturers, cabinet work, curiosities, and whatever may be worthy of a place'.⁹ The final exhibition also included natural history and First Nations collections. Also included in the display were items from a Chinese joss house including an 'altar screen' described as a 'beautiful specimen of needlework' and a processional umbrella.¹⁰ A newspaper report after the event called for the establishment of a museum 'illustrative of the fauna, flora, and geology of the district', perhaps linked to the Mechanics Institute and their Free Reading Room.¹¹

⁸ Claire Baddeley, "A History of the Castlemaine Art Gallery: Its Establishment, Growth, Character and Collections with a Brief Summary of the History and Development of Its Historical Museum" (Postgraduate Diploma of Art History, Melbourne, University of Melbourne, 1990).

⁹ Unidentified, "Items of News," *Mount Alexander Mail*, June 12, 1873, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article197104267>; "Conversazione and Exhibition," *Mount Alexander Mail*, July 26, 1873, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article197104709>.

¹⁰ "Conversazione and Exhibition," *Mount Alexander Mail*, August 19, 1873, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article197101463>.

¹¹ "Conversazione and Exhibition."

The 'Castlemaine Past and Present' exhibition hosted, in 1911, was 'a pictorial exhibition of Castlemaine past and present', created by the Castlemaine Progress Association. It included a similar diverse array of artifacts: 'Pictures, sketches, photographs, prints, etchings etc', 'Historical curios', 'natural resources', 'local native ferns and plants in cultivation', 'applied arts, the design of which is based on local scenery of native fauna and flora'.¹² Rather than the broadly educative function of the earlier exhibition, this display more strongly sought to promote and showcase the town and its progress and potential. It was a local version of the grand International Exhibitions of the nineteenth century, but created at a time after Australia's Federation when Australians were self-consciously exploring their national identity and exploring links between themselves and the Australian environment.¹³



*Figure 1: Castlemaine Past and Present exhibition, 1911.
Display cases in the middle of the room appear to be the same as those in CAM's storeroom.*

Following an exhibition of Elsie Barlow's paintings at the Mechanics Institute in October 1912, there was sufficient momentum to begin planning a permanent gallery and museum in July 1913. A committee drawn from the Castlemaine Progress Association was formed. The aim was to educate the general public and more broadly cultivate culture within Australia and the Castlemaine area in particular.¹⁴

These earlier displays and the founding of CAM were brought into being by Castlemaine's respectable middle class. Its foundational collection was drawn from their personal collections on display in their private homes. In the nineteenth century collecting was a national amusement and

¹² Unidentified, "Castlemaine Pictorial Exhibition," *Mount Alexander Mail*, July 8, 1910. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article200258322>.

¹³ Graeme Davison, "Festivals of Nationhood: The International Exhibitions," in *Australian Cultural History*, ed. S.L. Goldberg and F.B. Smith (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 158–75; Richard White, *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980*, The Australian Experience (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1981).

¹⁴ David Golightly et al., *Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum: History and Collections* (Castlemaine Art Gallery & Historical Museum, 2013).

considered a healthy recreation that represented spiritual enlightenment and respectability. 'Gathering and possessing, classifying and cataloguing were appropriate middle-class pastimes'.¹⁵ CAM's collection drew on these Victorian collecting practices but was shaped by Edwardian attitudes and sensibilities.

These collections are difficult to summarise and understand to the modern eye because of their lack of narrative. They were often, but not always, local; had particular significance to the collector; and were often highly eclectic.¹⁶ They were one of the ways in which 'people made sense of their own time in places that were still new to them'.¹⁷ They encompassed natural history, technological innovation, 'ethnological' collections and fine art, and to a lesser degree, history. They included curiosities as well as serious scholarly endeavour.

Historical objects of the past were the preserve of private antiquarians who were interested in objects as relics of the past with little concern for interpretative analysis.¹⁸ The antiquarian imagination had its heyday in the early twentieth century, just when CAM was founded, and its influence persisted well into the middle of the twentieth century.¹⁹ It was both 'preceded and paralleled by the rise of professional archaeology and history'.²⁰ At the time of CAM's founding Australia's history was told within an imperial history of the British Empire. It was not until the post-war era that Australian historical studies proliferated within university systems.²¹

The notion of Australian and local history was still emerging and so CAM's early Historical Collection reflects this. The material culture of history in nineteenth and early twentieth century museum collections was more often paper-based in the form of documents and maps than objects. Historical writing about Australia at the time was characterised by what historian Graeme Davison describes as 'patriarchal histories'. These were histories written by the children of Australia's 'pioneers' and 'first settlers', but more often by their daughters.²² They sought to record, commemorate and chronicle the lives of the previous generation.

Over time, the eclectic, fluid, antiquarian, 'cabinet of curiosity' collections held in public collecting institutions were reclassified and divided into museums, libraries and galleries. Libraries became the home of much historical material, until the 1970s when social history collections began to be built in museums such as Museums Victoria and the newly established local history museums.²³ Over time CAM has similarly become better known and funded as a fine art gallery. Over time the original museum collection has been awkwardly reclassified as a collection related to the history of the Mount Alexander region.

¹⁵ Tom Griffiths, *Hunters and Collectors: The Antiquarian Imagination in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

¹⁶ Chris Healy, *From the Ruins of Colonialism: History as Social Memory*, Studies in Australian History (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1997).

¹⁷ Healy.

¹⁸ Healy; Helen Doyle, "Antiquarianism," in *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, ed. Graeme Davison, John Hirst, and Stuart Macintyre (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2001).

¹⁹ Griffiths, *Hunters and Collectors*.

²⁰ Griffiths.

²¹ Stuart Macintyre, "Imperial History," in *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, ed. Graeme Davison, John Hirst, and Stuart Macintyre (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2001).

²² Graeme Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2003).

²³ Carolyn Rasmussen, *A Museum for the People: A History of Museum Victoria and Its Predecessors, 1854-2000* (Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 2001).

3.1.2 Implications of colonial character

A museum can be viewed as ‘an archaeological entity in which the stratified layers of its own past persist in the present’.²⁴ CAM’s colonial origins are still visible and continue to shape the overall character of its collection. They make CAM’s Historical Collection, like many others, reflective of and deeply implicated in Australia’s colonisation. This is a collection that has been largely created by white immigrants, predominantly British or European, and their descendants. Items related to the peoples from China, Chile, India, New Zealand, Polynesia, Belgium, France, Italy and the United States of America who joined those from Britain on the Mount Alexander diggings, are not well represented. The voices of the local Jaara and other First Nations people telling uncomfortable stories are silent as are those of the poorer classes and less desired colonists, such as Chinese arrivals.²⁵

Collecting First Nations material culture was a keen passion for white colonists. A significant proportion of the material displayed in the ‘Castlemaine Past and Present’ exhibition in 1910 that became the foundation of CAM’s Historical Collection formerly belonged to First Nations people.²⁶ A driving motivation for many of these collectors was the perceived ‘ethnographic’ or semi-scientific value these items had. This included, in the ‘Castlemaine Past and Present’ exhibition, human remains.²⁷ These items were also acquired as a salvage activity in what we now see as the damaging belief that Aboriginal peoples were ‘dying out’.

Whether First Nations items in the Historical Collection were gifted, purchased, exchanged or stolen, this collecting displaced and removed the physical culture of First Nations peoples from the places where it was created and had meaning within an unequal power relationship. But care also needs to be taken to avoid hasty attempts to ‘clean up’ these collections, as this process can also destroy the traces of ‘violence, pain and sadness, reciprocity, misunderstanding and communication that were part of their making’.²⁸ If we destroy the story of colonisation we also erase the struggles of First Nations people within that process.

The Collection also contains a number of significant items related to the area’s Chinese history, but they are meagre, given it is estimated that at the height of the Mount Alexander goldrushes one quarter of the male population was Chinese. These represent what white Australians valued about the Chinese presence in the area not material culture Chinese settlers and their descendants may have wanted preserved. It is a pity that the two Chinese fans used in the first Chinese procession in Castlemaine that were loaned to the ‘Castlemaine Past and Present’ exhibition by G. Le Suey did not make it into CAM’s collection. Nor does it appear that any other donations from Chinese settlers or their descendants have been received since.

In being separated from the people who gave them their social and cultural significance these items risk becoming curiosities. In many ways these collections of First Nations and Chinese material culture tell us more about the collecting practices of colonial Australia than the people they originally had meaning for. They are nevertheless important remnants of those cultures and with care

²⁴ Healy, *From the Ruins of Colonialism*.

²⁵ Keir Reeves, ‘A Hidden History: The Chinese on the Mount Alexander Diggings, Central Victoria, 1851-1901’ (PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, 2006).

²⁶ Brotherton, A.M.W, ‘Alphabetical list of exhibitors at the Past & Present Exhibition 1910 with brief description of exhibits being a reference kept for the use of the possible museum to be formed later’, unpublished manuscript, 20 September 1910.

²⁷ Brotherton, ‘Alphabetical list of exhibitors at the Past & Present Exhibition 1910’, 1910.

²⁸ REFERENCE

and consultation, can be reinterpreted and reclaimed by these peoples potentially giving them high social and emotional value.

3.1.3 The role of funding

Although CAM has had a ‘historical museum’ since its establishment and the Historical Collection has been maintained throughout its operations, it has always been viewed as secondary to its Art Collection. This has been reinforced by government funding which for many years has supported regional art galleries rather than historical collections.²⁹ Work on the Historical Collection has therefore had to be funded by government and other grants for specific projects. For example it seems that it was only when Peter Perry was engaged as director of CAM in 1975 that the organisation regularly published and reported on donations to the Historical Collection.³⁰ Temporary exhibitions have also predominately had a fine art focus.³¹ This has limited the ability of the organisation to refresh displays, better understand its collection, attract diverse donors to the collection and also draw the interest and expertise of potential researchers.

The financial and staffing difficulties facing the organisation more recently have also constrained the organisation’s ability to attract and process donations to the Historical Collection. The Vernon catalogue reveals almost no donations after 2014. Between January 2016 and 2017 CAM was forced to temporarily close and it has recently reluctantly made the decision to temporarily halt the acceptance of donations until the organisation’s future is more secure.

3.2 Castlemaine’s history and collecting opportunities

The kinds of histories told about Castlemaine and its districts have also shaped the nature of CAM’s Historical Collection. The Mount Alexander goldrushes and their impact on the founding and settlement of the Mount Alexander goldfields region has understandably dominated history-telling about the area. The Australian goldrushes were sparked by the discovery of gold in the Mount Alexander region, in Bendigo and Ballarat, and spread elsewhere in Victoria, in New South Wales, Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia. The Mount Alexander diggings goldrush story a significant part of Australia’s national goldrush history.

Castlemaine is the urban and administrative centre of the former Mount Alexander diggings. During the goldrushes, one estimate placed the area’s population peaking at 35,000 people. Gold discoveries elsewhere soon surpassed those in the Mount Alexander region but enough wealth was found for Castlemaine to be incorporated as a municipal district in 1855 and as a borough in 1863. Considerable civic, industrial, and social development followed. In 1852 a double-track railway passed through the town and there was soon a hospital (1853), a theatre (1854), a mechanics institute and library (1855), courthouse (1858), football club (1859), the Castlemaine Benevolent Asylum (1860) and botanical gardens (1866). Castlemaine is still visually dominated by its nineteenth-century architecture built from the prosperity of the 1850s and 1860s goldrushes. After an initial rush on alluvial gold there was a later boom in deep lead gold mining with new discoveries in the Chewton area as late as the 1930s.³²

²⁹ Des Griffin and Leon Paroissien, *Understanding Museums: Australian Museums and Museology* (Canberra, ACT: National Museum of Australia, 2011); Baddeley, “A History of the Castlemaine Art Gallery.”

³⁰ See early documentation related to CAM held by the State Library of Victoria. ‘Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum: Australian Gallery File’, File 1 (up to 1959).

³¹ Exceptions have included photographic displays created to mark Heritage Week.

³² Unidentified, “Castlemaine—Centre of the State,” *Age*, February 24, 1940, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article204009774>.

Despite persistent hopes to the contrary this early prosperity was not to last.³³ A period of 130 years of population stagnation followed in which the population never grew beyond around 7,000 people.³⁴ Castlemaine is Victoria's thirty-fourth largest rural urban centre while the nearby goldrush centres of Ballarat and Bendigo are now Victoria's third and fourth largest. Like many other former goldrush cities and towns, the goldrushes have become the area's historical heyday and goldrushes history the focus of historical interest.

This poses a challenge for local communities wanting to preserve and tell histories that celebrate and mark their progress. As a consequence, CAM's Historical Collection is dominated by material from the 1850s and 1860s. The history of the stagnation of regional towns and cities is represented in an absence rather than creation of material culture and so is not well represented in the Historical Collection. But other kinds of histories can still be told. Material related to the goldrushes can also be used to discuss other historical themes around gender, class, and creative making, collecting, mobility and lifestyle. The mobility that is a part of the area's history can be explored through how the lives of those born and raised in the area influenced other parts of Australia are part of the area's history. CAM can also play a role in initiating and leading the kinds of histories created about the area.

Goldrush era material culture in the Historical Collection is supported with material from the latter nineteenth century as the city grew and Castlemaine reinvented itself as a centre of manufacturing and industry. Thompsons of Castlemaine (still operating as Flowserve) was founded, as was Castlemaine's Woollen Mill (closed in 2013), Castlemaine Bacon Company (established 1905 and now operating as KR Castlemaine) as well as factories for bricks and tiles and plaster board and two granite quarries. After World War I, however, rural manufacturing struggled and rural towns saw their populations, and particularly their youth, moving to the Melbourne and larger urban centres. By the end of the 1930s the populations of two-thirds of country towns in Australia were declining or staying still.³⁵

Farming also continued in the region with Harcourt becoming the centre of apple and pear orchards and the area also hosted mixed farming and produced sheep and dairy cows. Mining continues to be important to the area. Individuals still fossick for gold and there are companies using new technologies to prospect for gold.³⁶ Public utilities, such as Castlemaine Health and Loddon Prison, have origins that date back to the nineteenth century and still service the community today.

In the last fifty years, Castlemaine has reinvented itself as a lifestyle and tourist destination and has been growing over the last decade, albeit very slowly, with a population at the last Census of 9,225.³⁷ While its population is still predominantly of British ancestry, 1.3 percent identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, slightly more than the Victorian population as a whole. Most of the population not born in Australia were born in England, New Zealand, the Netherlands, and Scotland. Around 4.1 percent (156 people) speak a non-English language at home, the most common being Greek, Dutch, German, French and Italian. This invites opportunities for proactive contemporary collecting.

³³ Heather Holst, *Making a Home: A History of Castlemaine* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2014).

³⁴ Reeves, "A Hidden History."

³⁵ Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History*.

³⁶ "Castlemaine Gold," Kalamazoo Resources, accessed March 21, 2023, <https://kzr.com.au/castlemaine-gold/>.

³⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Quickstats', <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/202021028>.

Residents and tourists alike are drawn by the cafe culture, arts community and goldrush heritage. The area is still host to some of its earlier industrial enterprises such as KR Castlemaine and Flowshare which remain highly important employers. It has also become a centre of ‘street rodding’ gatherings and Castlemaine Rod Shop (CRS), a company known for their aftermarket components for vehicles, that support this activity. The Castlemaine State Festival, regional Australia’s longest running arts festival, also offers an opportunity to reflect on the area’s history in shaping Victoria’s arts culture. CAM as an organisation, located in a heritage-listed custom-built gallery and museum constructed in 1931, has become an integral part of Castlemaine’s history and art culture. Castlemaine and its surrounds are believed to have the largest concentration of practicing artists and makers in Victoria. This more recent history opens the way for the Museum to engage with its communities in new ways.

CAM’s Historical Collection contains material that covers or touches on much of these aspects of Castlemaine’s early twentieth century history, although the focus does tend to be on the activities of the middle classes.

4. Community comments

My conversations with present and former trustees, board members, staff and volunteers and also historians show that there is considerable support for CAM’s Historical Collection and that it is highly valued by those familiar with it. There is also a good understanding within CAM itself of many of the shortcomings related to the Historical Collection discussed in this report and an enthusiasm to work towards improvements within the resources available.

Many commented on the fact that the Historical Collection has been long overlooked in comparison to CAM’s Art Collection. Anecdotally this appears to have also influenced general public and researcher perceptions of the collection who either do not know of the Historical Collection or know little about it.

The lack of knowledge about the historical material held by CAM and its potential value for research was striking. Scholarly engagement with the collection helps to improve knowledge about it and helps to build connections between the collection and the local community. In contrast, many people commented on the strong collection of historical information held by the Castlemaine Historical Society and the organisation and availability of that material.

Some people also spoke of the challenges of accessing the Historical Collection. CAM’s museum catalogue contains descriptive information about the physical appearance objects but is weak on describing the provenance and significance of these objects to the region’s history. For example, the current online collection does not list donors of items. This is common to many small museums but makes accessing and using the Collection by researchers difficult without the support of people who understand the collection well. This puts pressure on staff to provide access to material that is not on display. Providing access to objects can be time-consuming, and access to storage areas by the public require staff supervision. Improving catalogue information and access to that information will have many flow on benefits.

5. Collections and themes

Depending on their context and interpretation there is considerable overlap between the collections described below. For example, some items with strong associations with the history of Castlemaine and its surrounds might also have the aesthetic values or material construction that might also make

them valuable as examples of Decorative Arts. First Nations culture, in some contexts might also be considered part of Decorative Arts as they can be appreciated for both their utility and aesthetics.

5.1 First Nations

This collection contains material culture and photographs related to First Nations people in Dja Dja Wurrung Country but also First Nations peoples in other parts of what we now know of as Australia. There is also material culture from First Nations peoples in Fiji, Indonesia, Pacific Islands, Papua New Guinea, Polynesia, Samoa, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, Africa, South Africa, United States of America. The collection consists of a range of three-dimensional weapons and tools in addition to documents, illustrations and photographs.

More work needs to be done with the communities who previously owned these items to determine whether CAM is the appropriate home for them and, if it is, how to more meaningfully interpret the utilitarian, social and spiritual function and value of them. First Nations stories need to be treated with care but also told as an integral part of the area's history.

The lack of detailed *provenance* and the *social* and *spiritual* history associated with these items limits their significance and makes them difficult to interpret and research beyond their *aesthetic* value and craftsmanship. Reconnecting them and bringing them into conversation with the descendants of the First Nations people who made and owned them would help to reactivate them as meaningful items beyond the white gaze.

Themes that could be explored in discussion with descendants of the original First Nations owners:

- White colonial collecting of First Nations material culture
- First Nations and white tourism
- First Nations making (materials, function, skill, design, trade, social significance)
- Weaving
- Hunting and gathering
- Ornamentation and decoration
- Similarities and differences in First Nations material culture across space

The geographic space that is the Mount Alexander region is a colonial concept with no meaning within Jaara understandings of Country and so it would perhaps be more appropriate for the Museum to work with local First Nations communities to adopt a more appropriate geographic space such as Dja Dja Wurrung Country.

There are two ways in which the First Nations collection could be used as part of the history of the region:

- Material culture made or used by people on Dja Dja Wurrung Country
- Residents of the Mount Alexander region and their role in the collecting of First Nations material culture

5.1.1 Material culture made or used by people on Dja Dja Wurrung Country

Even taking the larger geographic space of Dja Dja Wurrung Country there are still very few related collection items. I have identified:

- Three grinding stones and axe heads from the Loddon area (M1550.2, M1548, M1549) donated by **T.C. Stewart**
- A grinding mill (base section) found in Burnett Road, Castlemaine (M1539) donated by Alan Frederickson (Castlemaine), two stone axes attributed to the Dja Dja Wurrung donated by **Mrs Beth Sinclair (Castlemaine)**
- Twenty-three stone tools, axes, grinding mill from the Mt Franklin area donated by **William Franklin Dougall**
- Photographic portrait (cabinet card) of the children of James Swallow and J.B. Derham [sp], undated, Yeoman & Co (Pahran) (P578)
- Black and white photograph of Mr E. Morrison, Rev. A. Elimore and Cr A. Glass in front of Aboriginal School Site, Franklford, April 1965
- Photographic portrait of ‘Ellen’ from Mt Franklin, c1865 (P1248).

Most items relate to the Mt Franklin area where the Loddon Aboriginal Reserve (1841-1849) was located which have strong *historic*, *research* and *social* significance for what they can tell us about the lives of Aboriginal peoples on the Reserve and living in the area.³⁸ Maps, documents, newspaper articles and notes related to the Loddon Aboriginal Protectorate and the Mt Franklin area and correspondence and documentation related to E.S. (Edward Stone) Parker, assistant protector of Aboriginals and Methodist preacher (M3632.19, M446, M479.8) and about William Franklin Dougall, owner of the Mt Franklin Estate, including plans and mining leases related to the area (W.F. Dougall Estate 1949, William Dougall donation 1950, Mr Franklin Dougall donation 1951) have high historical, research and social significance for what they reveal about the establishment and failure of the Loddon Aboriginal Protectorate and cross-cultural relationships between the local Jaara peoples and landowning colonists.³⁹ This material has largely come from the **W.F. Dougall Estate** but also others such as **Miss Jean Perry** (M2670), **David Wishart** (M3605.11), **E. Morrison** and other unidentified donors. It includes a particularly poignant letter (photocopy) from an Aboriginal woman called Ellen to E.S. Parker after she had moved from the station at Franklford to Coranderrk (M479.8) and photocopies of journals with periodical reports and letters (M446) donated by **E. Morrison** in 1965.

Interpretation of this material could occur in discussion with the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation who are the custodians of the former Loddon Aboriginal Reserve transferred to them as part of an agreement with the State of Victoria under the provisions of the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010*. Further research and closer analysis of other items might reveal what sort of stone they were made of where it originated and what materials were ground using the grinding stones. Understanding how they were made and used and the value they have now as surviving possessions to current descendants would also assist in their interpretation.

³⁸ Cate Elkner, “The Loddon Protectorate - Concept -,” in *Electronic Encyclopedia of Gold in Australia* (Melbourne: University of Melbourne), accessed March 8, 2023, <https://www.egold.net.au/biogs/EG00042b.htm>; Heather Holst, “‘Save the People’: ES Parker at the Loddon Aboriginal Station,” *Aboriginal History* 32 (2008): 109–27; “Loddon Station,” Deadly Story, accessed March 8, 2023, https://www.deadlystory.com/page/aboriginal-country-map/Community_Places/Loddon_Station/.

³⁹ H. N. Nelson, “Parker, Edward Stone (1802–1865),” in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 18 vols. (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University), accessed March 19, 2023, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/parker-edward-stone-4363>.

5.1.2 Residents of the Mount Alexander region and their role in the collecting of First Nations material culture

A more challenging and confronting approach, but arguably more rewarding, might be to explore the white colonial gaze that created the First Nations collection. The following are former residents of the area who have collected or donated substantial First Nations collections.

- **Morton Van Heurick** was a mining investor and mayor and had a street named after him in Castlemaine. (M715.3, M717.2, M716, M718.2, M714: woven bangles, woven necklace, ornamental children's shoes, wooden headrest).
- **W. F. Dougall** owner of the Mount Franklin Estate and councillor. The Loddon Aboriginal Protectorate was located at Franklinford on the northern side of Mount Franklin. (Various: stone tools, axes, flints, grinding mill)
- **Mrs Cora McDougall (Castlemaine)** was the granddaughter of Danish immigrant Claus Gronn and translated and published a book written by Claus based on his diary, *Gold, Gold! Diary of Claus Gronn, A Dane on the Diggings*. (Various: tools, boomerang, grinding stone)

Research and interpretation could explore their motivations for collecting, the opportunities they had for collecting and how this relates to colonialism and the creation of the CAM's First Nations collection. In addition the collections could be interrogated for what was and was not collected and how the process of collection created opportunities for cross-cultural engagement and shaped how people understood each other. Cora McDougall, for example, spoke out in a letter to the *Age* newspaper about Aboriginal welfare issues.⁴⁰ The photographic portrait of the Swallow and Derham [spelling?] families' children (P578) demonstrates the complexity of cross cultural relationships in the area. First Nations peoples also took advantage of white collecting, tourism and interest in their culture. The ornamental children's shoes decorated with seashells obtained by Van Heurick are unusual and an example of the early commercialisation of First Nations arts.



Figure 2: Ornamental children's shoes decorated with shells (M718.2) from the estate of Mr Van Heurick, donated pre 1975.

⁴⁰ Cora McDougall, "Plea for the Aborigines," *Age*, March 1, 1952, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article206210647>.



Figure 3: Photographic portrait (cabinet card) of the children of James Swallow and J.B. Derham [sp], undated, Yeoman & Co (Pahran) (P578)

5.2 Natural History

The Natural History collection was largely donated in the early decades of CAM's operations and is relatively small. It includes shells and coral, pressed fern samples, fossils, taxidermized and preserved animals and birds, rock, mineral and clay specimens, animal skeletons and other remains (eg. teeth, skin, shell), eggs, butterflies, seeds and seed pods. At the time this Natural History material was collected, racialized attitudes about First Nations people meant that their material culture might well have been classified within this collection. Unless CAM is deliberately and carefully discussing this very issue it is vital these associations are not replicated or hinted at today.

These items mostly come from Australia, and some are local to the Castlemaine area, but there are also items from New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Scotland, and Yemen. Not all items are clearly identified. Further research is needed to understand whether any of these specimens have any scientific or educational significance which would add to their *interpretive* and *research* potential. Collectors and collections with links to the Mount Alexander region have a greater *social/spiritual* significance and relevance to the current Museum's collecting policy than those that do not.



Figure 4: Mr J.W. Marshall (Chewton) egg collection (approximately 68 specimens) donated prior to 1929 appears to be still in an original display case with original labels (some damaged) (M91).

This is a representative example of practice of amateur egg collecting (oology) that was a popular hobby and science into the twentieth century. It is now illegal to collect or interfere with eggs and native birds. It has historical significance as it speaks to these changing social attitudes and also the early history of CAM as a science museum. One of the most impressive oological collections in Victoria is Henry Luke White's collection at Museums Victoria of over 13,000 eggs in custom cabinet.⁴¹ There are also smaller collections like those of naturalist and Victoria's Government Plant Pathologist, Charles Brittlebank at Warrnambool Historical Society, the Charles A. Scott egg collection used for educational purposes held by Federation University and a very small 1900 collection with less provenance at the City of Moorabbin Historical Society.⁴² Despite its damaged labels, the Marshall collection is well presented and in good condition. A better understanding of who J.W. Marshall was and his connections to Chewton and oology would enhance the significance of this collection.

The collection has *historic significance* as an example of nineteenth and twentieth century private collecting practices of animals, plants and minerals, the evolution of these amateur practices into today's scientific methods and their use in people's homes as decorative art. This significance is increased by their *provenance* that links some of them to the founding of CAM and its original aims as a museum, not only of art and historical 'relics', but also science. The animal collections illustrate how *social* and ethical attitudes to animal wellbeing have changed over time. There are now laws against cruelty to animals, many native animals are protected and there is an increasingly strong vegan movement.⁴³ These collections could also be used to explore these kinds of issues and how they relate to the concerns of Castlemaine residents today.

⁴¹ "Cabinet - H. L. White Oological Collection, Queensland Maple, Taxon Not Applicable," Museums Victoria Collections Online, accessed March 9, 2023, <https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/specimens/2198160>.

⁴² "Artefact, Egg Specimens, Early 20th Century," Victorian Collections, accessed March 9, 2023, <https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/58b29c06d0cdd40f2c8c9ad7>; "Images, Charles A. Scott Egg Collection," Victorian Collections, accessed March 9, 2023, <https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/5b28845b21ea6912bc1e716d>; "Education, Nests, Eggs in a Glass Case, C1900," Victorian Collections, accessed March 9, 2023, <https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/5e774f9321ea670c88659a1e>.

⁴³ "Australia," World Animal Protection, accessed March 8, 2023, <https://api.worldanimalprotection.org/country/australia>.



Figure 5: One of Mrs Saligari's two taxidermy display cases of birds and animals (M349, M350) donated in 1949.

The Saligari family, appear to have had connections with Castlemaine and the surname suggests they also have Italian ancestry.⁴⁴ The animals in these cases are displayed for aesthetic or artistic, rather than scientific or research purposes. They have historical significance as part of nineteenth and early twentieth century collecting and decorative arts practices. These cases offer an opportunity to ask visitors to reflect on how attitudes Australian wildlife and taxidermy have changed. There is a photograph of a similar taxidermy display created by John Langdon Sargent in the Stawell Historical Society collection.⁴⁵

The Burke Museum in Beechworth, one of the oldest museums in Australia, has a larger and older collection of natural history items of a similar nature, including taxidermied birds and animals (over 200 items) and also a mineral and fossil collection. Their collection dates from the 1860-1880s.⁴⁶ This collection offers interesting *research* potential as a comparison collection for CAM's slightly later collection.

Themes that could be explored through the collection:

- Colonial collecting and the relationship between art and science
- The art of taxidermy and preservation
- Geological history of Mount Alexander region

⁴⁴ Unidentified, "Castlemaine," *Bendigo Advertiser*, August 4, 1883, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article88518938>.

⁴⁵ "Photograph, J L Sargent Family," Victorian Collections, accessed March 9, 2023, <https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/6086626d4108af46c5ccc0fd>.

⁴⁶ "The Beechworth Burke Museum," Victorian Collections, accessed March 9, 2023, <https://victoriancollections.net.au/organisations/burke-memorial-museum>.



Figure 6: Display of David Thompson's (1866-1916) mineral collection (M25) donated by Mrs David Thompson in 1921.

These ore specimens highlight the important economic implications of Castlemaine's geology as Thompson's interest in these minerals and fossils likely stemmed from his involvement in Thompsons of Castlemaine, an historically significant ironworks and engineering firm.⁴⁷ David was the eldest son of the founder and at the time of his early death due to an accident at the ironworks, the Thompson's was the largest privately owned ironworks in Australia. This collection also highlights the historical significance of the mining and minerals industry to Castlemaine's and more broadly Australia's development. It would be worth researching what sort of links these samples may have had to operations of Thompsons of Castlemaine, why they were collected and how David Thompson used them.

⁴⁷ "Nomination Engineering Heritage Australia Heritage Recognition Program for Thompsons of Castlemaine," Heritage Nomination (Engineers Australia and Engineering Heritage Australia, March 2015), <https://portal.engineersaustralia.org.au/system/files/engineering-heritage-australia/nomination-title/Thompsons%20of%20Castlemaine.Nomination.V9.August%202015.pdf>.

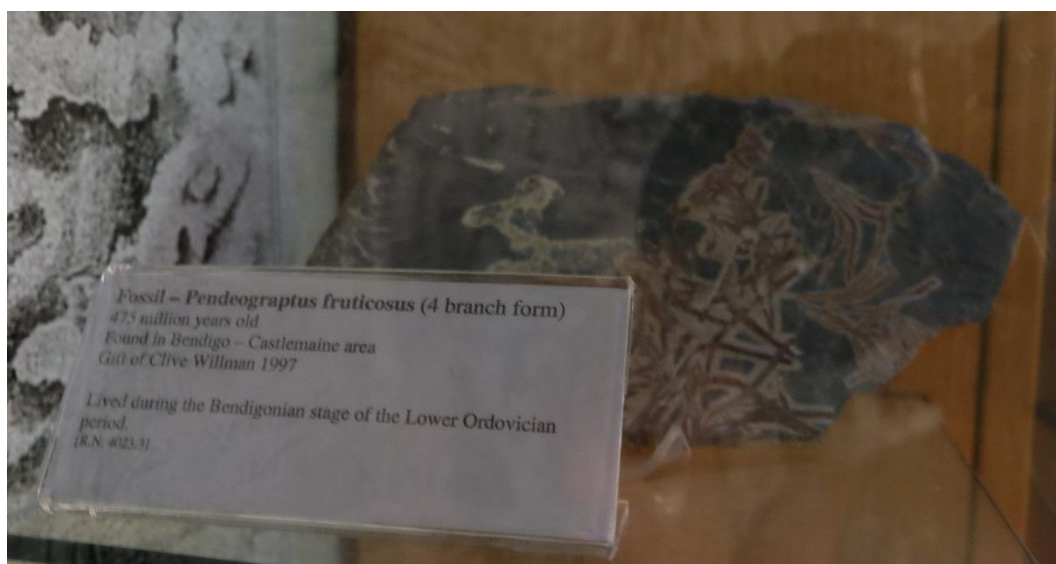


Figure 7: One of three samples of *Pendeograptus Fruitulosus* (M4.23.3) donated by Clive Willman along with a selection of other fossil samples in 1997.

The Mount Alexander region was an important part of the early surveying of Victoria's geology, first surveyed in 1853. These have historical and scientific significance as examples of the importance of the geological significance of the Mount Alexander region.

Several geological time intervals in the Ordovician geological period have been named after towns in the area – Castlemainian, Chewtonian and Yapeenian – thanks to the pioneering work of Thomas Sergeant Hall. Clive Willman returned to the field of geology, where he has made a 'long and continuing contribution to Victorian geology' following an interesting career as a sound engineer for 'perhaps the earliest, large, full time, Australian 'folk revival' band', Mulga Bill's Bicycle Band, in the 1970s and a youth worker.⁴⁸ In the 1980s, during his work with the Geological Survey of Victoria creating geological maps of goldfields in the Mount Alexander area, he was part of the reintroduction of detailed mapping of key goldfield areas. These were the last maps produced using pre-digital cartographic methods.⁴⁹ He determined the relative age of layers from information conveyed by graptolite fossils.⁵⁰ These samples are historically significant for the history they show about the geological mapping of Victoria, Willman's contribution to it and Willman's life story.

5.3 Decorative Arts

CAM's current collection policy for its Historical Collection includes the acquisition of 'Decorative Arts of the highest order (especially Australian) – as deemed fit by Collections Committee'.⁵¹ It is unclear why this is not viewed as part of the Art Collection as its inclusion appears to be, and seems should be, based more on *artistic* rather than *historical* significance. Collectors and collections with links to the Mount Alexander region have a greater *social/spiritual* significance and relevance to the current Museum's collecting policy than those that do not. Further research is needed to draw out these connections and significance. Most decorative arts items in the Historical Collection have limited connections to the area and a considerable amount of it has been made overseas.

⁴⁸ "Mulga Bill's Bicycle Band," *Barry Golding* (blog), April 1, 2016, <https://barrygoanna.com/mulga-bills-bicycle-band/>; "Willman," GSA VICTORIA, accessed March 8, 2023, <https://www.gsavic.org/willman.html>.

⁴⁹ Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, "Changing Ideas," Exhibition: 150 years of the GSV, May 6, 2019, <https://earthresources.vic.gov.au/geology-exploration/geological-survey-victoria/150-years/changing-ideas>.

⁵⁰ Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.

⁵¹ Baddeley, "A History of the Castlemaine Art Gallery."



Figure 8: Vase with handle, mug and vase, hand painted by Anne E Schmitt (nee Brabson) The mug and vase on the right are 'J & C' Bavarian porcelain created in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in southern Germany. Gift of Miss A.E. Schmitt, Eleanor Scobie Bequest.

Two collections of painted porcelain were donated to CAM by the Brabson sisters - Eleanor Stobie (nee Brabson) of Kyneton and Anne Elizabeth Schmitt (nee Brabson) of Camberwell. The sisters were born in England and immigrated to Melbourne. Eleanor moved to Kyneton when she married and bequeathed her collection of porcelain to CAM in 1939. At the time it was reported as 'The most valuable collection of its kind bequeathed to the institution'.⁵² The pieces were painted by Anne who studied at the Working Men's College (now RMIT University) and won some acclaim for her freehand drawing skills.⁵³ She later worked on Ladies Home Industries' Association committee and displayed her work as part of an exhibition organised by them.⁵⁴ It is possible there are additional examples of her work in the former collection of the Kyneton Mechanics Institute.⁵⁵ This collection is artistically significant as an example of the artform of hand-painted porcelain and for the Bavarian porcelain that has been painted. Anne training at the Working Men's College and involvement in the Ladies Home Industries Association demonstrates a professional commitment to the artform. They have historical significance as examples of an artform often practiced by middle-class women, for what they tells us about how their homes were decorated but their links to the Mount Alexander region are tenuous

⁵² 'Collection of Chinaware', *The Argus*, 26 May 1939, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article12132362>.

⁵³ 'The Working Men's College', *The Age*, 25 March 1891, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article201455696>. 'The Working Men's College', *Weekly Times*, 26 March 1892, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article220476928>.

⁵⁴ 'Ladies Home Industries' Association Second Exhibition', *Reporter*, 3 May 1907, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article92815447>.

⁵⁵ Several pieces of painted porcelain, two paintings and £20 to purchase a cabinet to display them were bequeathed to the Kyneton Mechanics Institute by Anne Schmitt in 1941. 'Gifts to institute Kyneton', *The Argus*, 5 July 1941, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article8190279>.



Figure 9: One of a pair of Regency mahogany hall chairs with painted insignia, 1840s. Sir John Higgins Bequest.

The Higgins bequest is of historical significance to CAM's history as the sheer size of the donation eventually resulted in an expansion of the Museum. The bequest includes 82 items including: furniture (chairs, table, pedestal, music box), porcelain (cups and saucers, plates and plate stands), glassware (decanter, jugs, glasses). On its donation the museum was not large enough to display it and so Sir John Michael Higgins' sister, Catherine, who lived in Melbourne bequeathed £5,000 to the gallery to support the construction of an extension to house her brother's collection. Sir John Michael Higgins (1862-1937) was born at Eureka Reef on the Castlemaine diggings but moved to Bendigo when he was 14.⁵⁶ He was granted his knighthood for his work as chairman and government nominee in the establishment of the Central Wool Committee. The collection has artistic and research significance as a mixed collection of decorative arts which could be explored. Its historic significance to the Castlemaine area is weak. Sir John Higgins' early years at Eureka Reef no doubt inspired his interest in chemistry and metallurgy and his donations suggest he retained an affection for the area, but his life story mostly reflects the high mobility of the area's population, as youth left to seek better opportunities elsewhere. His story is one of a 'local boy' who has 'made good' but his decorative arts collection tells us more about his status as a member of Melbourne's elite classes than about the Castlemaine area.

A number of items in the First Nations collection could also be classified as Decorative Arts, but I have classified it separately because it needs to be managed differently and also because the reasons why it was collected are different (quasi-scientific rather than primarily because of an appreciation of their aesthetics). In doing so, however, this classification reinforces antiquated value-judgements about who creates art, whose art is a curiosity and whose is of aesthetic value. There is an opportunity for CAM to reflect on the meanings and values associated with art, decorative arts and craft in its exhibitions and activities.

Themes:

- Collectors and collecting of decorative arts
- Symbolism of design and decorations
- Making (materials, function, skill, design, trade, social significance)
- Glassware

⁵⁶ Helga M. Griffin, "Higgins, Sir John Michael (1862–1937)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 18 vols. (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University), accessed February 17, 2023, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/higgins-sir-john-michael-6663>.

- Silverware
- Furniture
- Ceramics and painted porcelain
- Enamelware

In 1975, **Stanley J. Ellis** (1899-1985) donated 66 pieces of his finest metalwork and enamelling and a number of sets of sample pieces which were likely used by him for teaching purposes. This includes Ellis' beautiful handwritten labels. In addition to its *artistic significance*, the collection also has high *social* and *historic significance* as it helps tell the history of education in Castlemaine and the area's development as a centre of metal and enamelwork and the Arts and Crafts movement.



Figure 10: One of Ellis' sample sets with his original handwritten labels on display at CAM.

Ellis was an influential Castlemaine artisan and teacher of decorative metalwork and enamelling in the style of the Arts and Craft movement of early 20th century Australia. He attended Castlemaine Technical College (formerly the Castlemaine School of Mines established in 1889 and now Castlemaine Secondary College) where he also taught till 1964. He studied enamelling in the 1930s under Ernest H. Duncan (Head of the Art Department at the School of Mines and Industries Bendigo) but had been working in art metal work as early as 1925. He began teaching enamelware classes at Castlemaine Technical School in the early 1940s and also took adult classes.

The Castlemaine School of Mines was established in 1889 at a time when interest in applied science was high and its establishment also reflected the strong tradition of Mechanics Institutes and mining schools brought to Victoria by British migrants. The Arts and Craft movement came to Australia in the 1910s and reflected popular Art Nouveau and Art Deco styles. It was also characterised by a guild tradition where pupils gathered around particular teachers, such as Stanley J. Ellis in Castlemaine. As Robyn A Walton observes, 'Castlemaine's relatively small scale and its location outside the city made it a suitable environment for Ellis and his students to make objects in a style that, from its inception, had been nostalgic for old handwork techniques, rural customs and country living, but also valued rail and road access to bigger centres for the purposes of display and sale'.



Figure 11: Plique-a-jour copper pedestal style lamp made by Stanley J. Ellis, c1930-1960. Gift of Stanley J. Ellis, c1975.

We also see the impact of Ellis' enamelwork and teaching on Castlemaine through other aspects of the collection. He made and designed the plaque commemorating the opening of the **CAM building**. We also know that one of his students in the mid-1920s was Dorothy Leviny, some of whose metalware is held by the National Gallery of Victoria.⁵⁷ CAM also holds a copper and enamel lamp (M3055) and an enamel decorated metal plaque (M3053) made by **Elsie M. Clark (nee Naples)**, who taught with Ellis and previously studied at Ballarat School of Mines before moving to Castlemaine. Metal and enamelwork of other Castlemaine residents includes: **Janet Hicks (nee Harris)** (M3056.5, M3057.5), **Pearl Holland** (M2933), and **Alan Brisbane** (M3501). This demonstrates the influence of the artform in the district.



Figure 12: Copper and enamelware lamp made by Elsie M. Clark (nee Nables) (1890-1987), c1920. Gift of Clark Family.

⁵⁷ National Gallery of Victoria, Collection Online, <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/artist/2771/>.

The *artistically* significant collections of **William Howard Tozer** (1929-2009) and **Jan Lancaster** do not, however, sit comfortably within this history, despite being a significant part of Australia's history of enamelware. Tozer spent his early years in Hopetoun and some time at Ballarat School of Mines but appears to have no links to Mount Alexander and while Lancaster is currently a Castlemaine resident her enamels were created in the 1970s and 80s while she was living in Sydney, well before her move to Castlemaine.

5.4 Mount Alexander History

The collection related to Mount Alexander's history is the largest part of the Historical Collection. There are also items within all the collections discussed above and within the Art Collection which could also be interpreted to tell histories of the Mount Alexander region. First Nations material culture and stories, for example, should be an integral part of that story from pre-colonisation all the way through to the present day, not something that sits outside the evolution of modern, everyday society.

The Mount Alexander history collection contains items related to many key historical individuals, businesses and associations and historical events that have shaped the Mount Alexander region particularly in the nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth centuries. There are items in the collection that could speak to any one of this list of themes related to the historical lives of men, women and children of the Mount Alexander region in some capacity:

- Land use and ownership
- Built heritage
- Industry and employment
- Leisure and entertainment (art, music, theatre, cinema)
- Homes and homelife
- Families
- Law and order (governments, police, courts)
- Mobility (arrival, settlement, relocation)
- Religion and spiritual beliefs
- Communication (letters, postcards, newspapers, radios, advertising etc)
- Dress and fashion
- Class and status
- Disasters (natural, economic, political, personal etc)
- Celebrations and community building
- Education and learning
- Medicine and health
- Transportation
- Civic organisations and activities
- People of Castlemaine
- Castlemaine collectors.

The collection is, however, also relatively small and shaped by the lives and values of the white middle-class donors who offered donations to the collection and those who accepted them into the collection. Because of this, there are gaps in the kinds of the histories that it can tell. Its ability to tell histories about all the places and communities in the Mount Alexander region, particularly from the 1950s onwards, and from different class perspectives is limited.

These limitations are common to many regional collections and can easily be overcome through active contemporary collecting or through linking historical material to contemporary stories and themes. Creating displays around focussed themes or key objects, rather than attempting to use the collection to tell full chronological histories, would make these gaps less obvious and make it possible to link these focussed themes to contemporary issues, to its Art Collection and to more imaginative discussions about the collection.

CAM's Mount Alexander history is a solid *representative* collection containing many items of high *historical* and *social* significance that have strong *research* and *interpretative* potential. This significance could be enhanced and more effectively realised with additional research and a clearer understanding of the *provenance* of items. Below is a discussion of some of the collection's thematic highlights.

5.4.1 Lives and contributions of women

The lives of the women of the Mount Alexander region (and beyond) run strongly throughout the collection. Many of the donors have been women and they have donated items that they see as significant which in turn reflects their attitudes (see for example: Beth Sinclair, Brotherton/Cherry Estate, Mrs Betty Gibbs (Niddre), Mrs Del Tyzack (Yapeen)). Women were often responsible for raising children and decorating and shaping homes, so the donation of decorative arts, homewares and children's items are also a reflection of their lives. The running of CAM has, over time, attracted the involvement and participation of a selection of influential women who lead interesting lives (Beth Sinclair, A.M.W. Brotherton, Alice King (1869-1959), Leveny women, A.M.E. Bale, Annita McEwan). There are also collections of women's clothing and fashion (including dressmaking patterns, clothing catalogues and clothing features in photographs of women), examples of women and girls needlework and early and multigenerational family wedding dresses. Letters, cards, menus and invitations provide an insight into women's activities, concerns and social networks. There are also items associated with the paid and voluntary work undertaken by women and the organisations they participated in such as the Castlemaine Country Women's Association, Castlemaine Girl Guides, Benevolent Asylum and Ladies Committee and Mrs Bladen Neill's sericulture farm (1874-77) at Mt Alexander near Harcourt.



Figure 13: Detail of cream tulle Indian scarf showing pineapple fibre embroidery (M361). Donated by Mrs E. Williams in 1940.



Figure 14: Details of women's clothing and textiles from the Mount Alexander History collection.

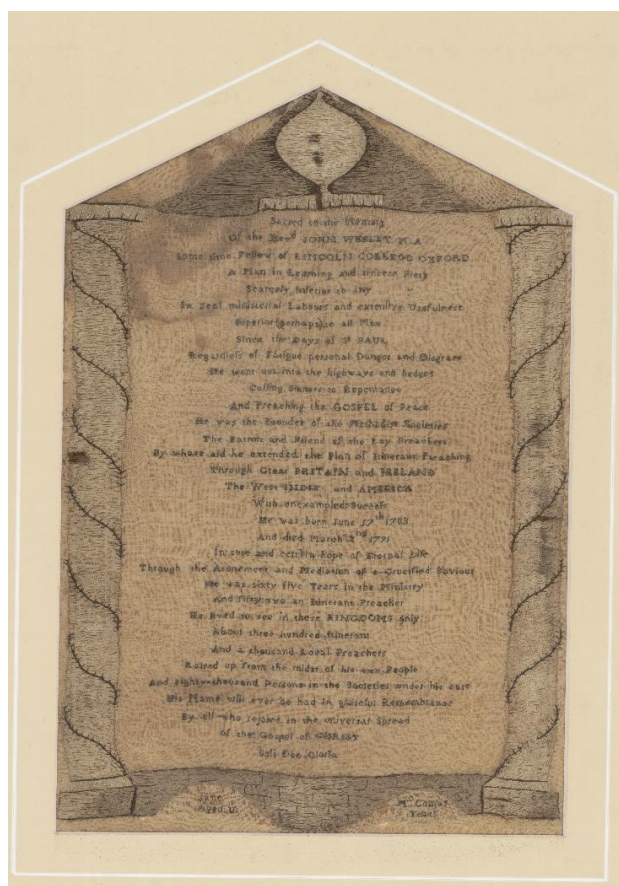


Figure 15: Sampler (M5012?) embroidered by Jane McAuslan in Chewton 1860s

Some highlights in the collection include (in no particular order):

- Jo McEwan (Castlemaine) donation of clothing formerly worn by Annita McEwan wife of the Mayor.
- Beth Sinclair's donation of three generations of women's clothing
- Mrs Del Tyzack (Yapeen) donation of women's underwear and other clothing.
- Olive Rymer's lace doily collection.
- Assorted collection of nineteenth-century samplers made by girls.
- A.M.E. Bale photograph albums and particularly her photographs and photographs of her
- Silk samples believed to have been produced at Mrs Bladen Neill's sericulture family near Harcourt, 1874-77.
- Miner's Rights of Abigail Fox (c1900) and Jessie Grace Arthur (c1944) both of Campbell's Creek and other women whose names appear in the books registering Miner's Rights (and perhaps also Gold Licenses). These might relate to mining activities or to the running of retail businesses on the goldfields
- Rules booklets (1870s-1880s), ration tickets and slips, annual reports and balance sheets, invoices and receipts, records, minute books (1889-1892, 1916-1933), bank books (1916-1955), lists of donations and subscriptions (1895-1944) associated with the activities of the Benevolent Asylum and Ladies Committee (operational between 1862-1955).
- Photographs, papers, certificates, songsheets, correspondence and belt related to the operations of the Castlemaine Girl Guides.
- Banner and framed 'The CWA Collect prayer' associated with the operations of the Castlemaine Country Women's Association.
- Large collection of clothing, correspondence, historical notes, decorative arts, homewares, invitations, concert programs from the Brotherton/Cherry Estate.
- Disallowed Council voting card (1856) signed by Fanny Finch.
- Supper cloth embroidered by the members of the Methodist Ladies' Guild of Fryerstown as a fundraiser during WWII.

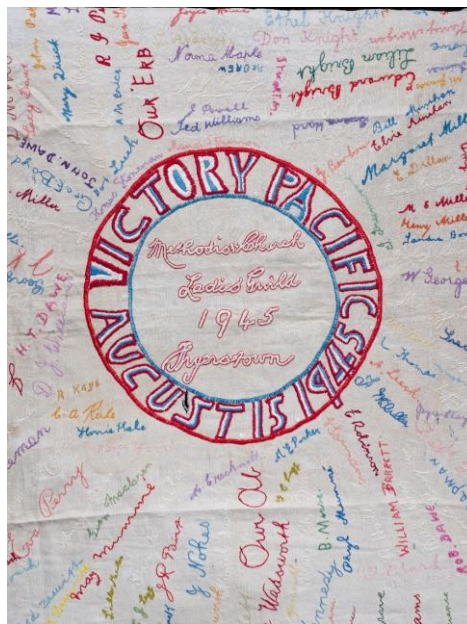


Figure 16: Cream linen embroidered supper cloth with signatures in stranded cotton (M3011). Edged with wide border of scalloped ecru crochet lace. Created by members of Methodist Ladies' Guild of Fryerstown (active Circa 1945)



Figure 17: Elizabeth [unclear] in Girl Guide leader uniform, undated, Yvonne Studio (Kyneton) (P1224)



Figure 18: Framed Country Women's Association 'prayer' (M4020), donated in 2014 via Present of the Castlemaine Country Women's Association.

Items in the collection related to women's lives have high *historic* and *research* significance. The lives of women and their contribution to history was long overlooked as of secondary importance to the activities of men. This has changed and there is very interesting and exciting work being undertaken by historians that help us to better understand contributions of women by drawing on the kind of material held by CAM.⁵⁸ The *provenance* of items in the collection is generally strong and material is in good condition. Some of the early items, such as late nineteenth century underwear, are *rare* within public collections the *comprehensiveness* of the Benevolent Asylum and Ladies Committee and Brotherton-Cherry Estate donations greatly enhances their significance.

5.4.2 Land use and ownership

CAM's Mount Alexander History provides an interesting opportunity to explore the process of colonisation, from the removal of the traditional custodians of the land into Aboriginal protectorates, through the establishment of the Loddon Aboriginal Reserve (1841-1849) through to the sales of Crown Land, their subdivision and leasing. The collection includes maps, building plans, water supply plans, town maps, mining maps, land allotments and leases that date from the 1850s through to the mid-twentieth century. Some of these are quite rare. Miner's Rights registers show how land was used for water and retail purposes in addition to mining. There are also plans related to individual buildings, both civic and private and these are supplemented by photographs and artworks in the collection that show these buildings and places over time. Some of the early photographs are very *rare*. Documentation, photographs, ephemera and plans related to the Castlemaine Market Building are of *historical*, *research* and *social* significance for the way they show the planning and changing uses of the building over time and the public fight to save the building and give it heritage protection. Objects donated to CAM from exhibitions displayed in the Market Building are part of the history of this building.

Other collections of maps and land records can be found in the holdings of the State Library of Victoria, University of Melbourne map collection, Royal Historical Society of Victoria, Public Records Office of Victoria and the Castlemaine Historical Society. CAM's collection enhances these other collections and it would be valuable to identify which items CAM holds that are *unique* to its collection. Digitisation and publication of this material on CAM's website would greatly improve its use for *research*. Individual items such as the Notice of Sale of Crown Land (15 April 1858) donated by Miss Martin (M381) and the mining lease (23 August 1864) donated by William Dougall (M355) have a very specific and narrow focus and so making them easily available for research maximises their chance of being discovered and valued.

Early land records do not always survive and can be difficult to research within the government archives where they are generally held. Thus, the surviving documentation within CAM's collection has high *research* significance and potential in addition to *historical* significance for what it reveals about the progression of settlement and development of the Mount Alexander and Castlemaine area. The diverse and overlapping range of documents, maps, photographs and art works offer interesting historical perspectives from which to explore this issue.

⁵⁸ Patricia Grimshaw, "Writing the History of Australian Women," in *Writing Women's History*, ed. Karen Offen, Ruth Roach Pierson, and Jane Rendall (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1991), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-21512-6>. See for example: Holst, *Making a Home*; Lorinda Cramer, *Needlework and Women's Identity in Colonial Australia* (London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2020); Clare Wright, *The Forgotten Rebels of Eureka*, Democracy Trilogy (Melbourne, VIC: Text Publishing, 2013); "The Invisible Farmer Project," Museums Victoria Collections Online, accessed March 16, 2023, <https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/articles/14480>.



Figure 19: Page 53 of A.M.E. Bale album. Left to right, top to bottom: 'Bean's showing old type of roofing iron 1917', 'Froome St. Bright 1914', 'Right of way by Theatre Royal 1906', 'Old Town Hall 1940'. This album of photographs of Castlemaine and region created by A.M.E. (Alice Marion Ellen) Bale drawing on photographs taken by her father W.M. (William Mountier) Bale and herself between c1904 and c1950 has artistic significance as it provides an insight into the broader visual imagination of Bale as an artist and how changes in technology facilitated the growth of amateur photography in the early twentieth century. Its high historical and research value as a collection of images capturing the landscape and built heritage of the Castlemaine area is greatly enhanced by its strong provenance and the additional information provided in notes about the photographs by Miss Brotherton in 1950. The album provides views of the Castlemaine area over time, including the same place at different times. The images reveal an artistic eye for the picturesque and its use of 'ruins' and offers a different view to the standard genre of commercial landscape photography

5.4.3 Goldmining

The history of goldmining remains a significant part of the history of the Mount Alexander region. That there are still gold fossickers and companies investing in gold prospecting today makes this of ongoing social relevance. CAM's collection includes tools used for mining (picks, puddling shovel, auger and brace, miners cradle, candle holders and lanterns). These tools demonstrate the labour-intensive nature of alluvial and deep lead mining, the way technology was adapted and innovated to improve the mining process and some of the weight of material culture that people brought to the goldfields and even, using local resources, made on the goldfields. There is not a large number of examples of these tools, but they do provide a *representative* sample of the tools used during the goldrushes and beyond.



Figure 20: Gold cradle - sat on wooden frame on 2 rockers, cloth on shelf coir matting and extended metal on floor for gold saving, an adaption of ancient sluice box by the addition of rockers and shelves (M1067), donated prior to 1975.



Figure 21: Mining items featured in display, right to left, top to bottom. Iron Dolly Pot, Model of miner's safety cage, amalgam bucket, short pick, paddler shovel (centre), two miner's candles with spikes to insert into rock, gold panning dish. Various ages and donors.

Most of the tools in the collection relate to alluvial mining which tended to be undertaken by individuals or a collective of individuals. Deep lead quartz mining operations were more substantial and involved the establishment and running of companies. CAM's collection includes business records related to quartz mining:

- Parkins Reef Quartz Mining Association, Maldon Transfer registers, expense book and receipt book from early 1860s (M954, M952, M953, M954), unknown donor pre-1975
- South Welshman's Reef Quartz Mining Co, minute book, 1875-78 (M956), unknown donation details
- Wattle Gully Mine, Chewton, wages sheet, 1934 (M1389) donated by **Jackson Thompsons-Byronin** 1979

These are significant for what they reveal about the *history* of quartz mining in the Mount Alexander region and how it operated. Similar kinds of records in other collections provide a valuable source of comparative information which enhances the *research* significance of these collections. Material related to alluvial and quartz mining in the collection is enhanced by CAM's photographs and artworks which show mining activities and landscapes, some of which are very *rare*.

Also in the collection are a small but interesting selection of objects that are *historically* significant for the story they tell of what happened to gold once it has been discovered including clay crucibles for gold smelting, an iron dollypot for crushing quartz for analysis of gold content, tables dated 1857 related to standardising gold, a plaque used by the Australia and New Zealand Bank advertising that they were a licensed gold buyer, and a strong box from the Bank of Victoria (Fryerstown) used to dispatch gold to Melbourne.

CAM's collection of original Miner's Rights and earlier original Gold License is an excellent *representative* collection. The Miner's Rights span the period from 1860 to 1966 and the Gold License is dated 1854. Missing are some early examples of Miner's Rights before 1857 when regulations related to them changed. There are many examples of Miner's Rights held in other collections and, given the smaller numbers issued, less examples of Gold License. The largest Victorian collection is held by the Sovereign Hill Museums Association (over 500 examples Miner's Rights covering a wide range of dates and six original Gold Licenses).

CAM's collection of Miner's Rights are *historically* significant for their ability to tell the history of the introduction of government licensing during the goldrushes, the resistance to it (including Monster Meeting at Chewton) and the evolution of the different rights granted by a Miner's Right over time which eventually included the right to operate a business (such as a shop or hotel, often by women), fell timber and building races and dams.⁵⁹ Miner's Rights are still issued in Victoria to regulate recreational fossicking.⁶⁰ While CAM's collection is much small it has strong *interpretive* and *research* capacity.

⁵⁹ "Miner's Right - Issued to Mrs Mary Fry, Ten Mile, Beechworth Mining District, Victoria, 13 Dec 1898," Museums Victoria Collections Online, accessed March 16, 2023, <https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/items/1697053>.

⁶⁰ Precincts and Regions Department of Jobs, "Recreational Prospecting," Earth Resources, February 16, 2023, <https://earthresources.vic.gov.au/licensing-approvals/fossicking>.



Figure 22: Miner's Right issued to Francis Mudd Sept. 1860 Beechworth (M957)

In addition to the Licenses and Rights issued to individuals, CAM also holds *rare* collection of registers, ledgers, cash books and receipt books related to the operations of Gold Licenses and Miner's Rights in the Mount Alexander region from the 1850s through to the 1890s. These have high *historic* and *research* significance as they provide snapshots of all the individuals purchasing these documents at any given time, as well as demonstrating the administrative operation of these registration systems. Although incomplete and badly water-damaged, the 1861 ledger book listing water rights in dams and races held by Miner's Rights (M3983), demonstrates the use of these Rights to regulate the building of dams and water races at this time. This collection of material survives largely due to the historical foresight of **John Griffiths** who when instructed by the Water Commission to dispose of early historical records in their possession in 1941 instead offered them to CAM. They therefore also speak to the important role CAM played as an early collecting institution of historical material.

5.4.4 Industry and work

The work (paid and unpaid) of women and work associated with mining gold have already been discussed but in addition to this CAM's collection holds a representative collection of items related to a diverse range of industry and work undertaken in the Mount Alexander region including the key major businesses of Thompsons of Castlemaine, Castlemaine Bacon Factory, Castlemaine Woollen Mills, Castlemaine Brewery, the Gasworks, the Castlemaine Hospital and Benevolent Asylum and documents related to the operations of local councils. The collection is small and might sometimes comprise of only one or two items for any given business. But supported with historical research, and viewed together, they offer a rich account the history of industry and work in the area, particularly in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Objects and documents in the collection are supported by photographs and artworks that visually capture the work people did, the businesses and the people who ran them. Some of this material will be *rare* and have high *research* significance.



Figure 23: Black and white photograph of Thompsons of Castlemaine foundry (P1788)

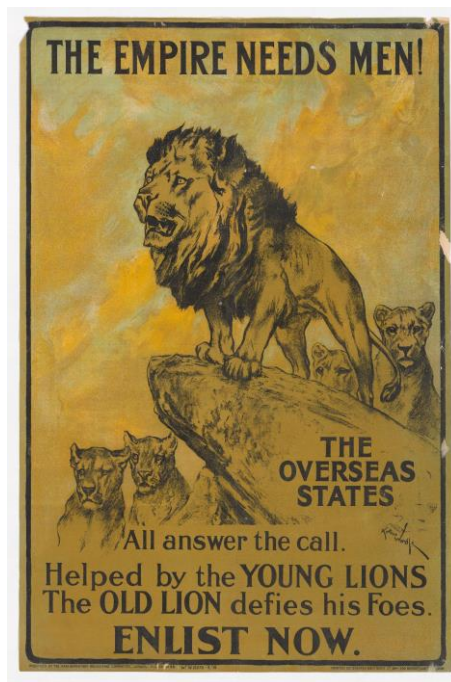


Figure 24: One of a collection of WWI recruiting posters that were part of a collection on display in a Castlemaine store. They donated to CAM very early in its operations by Horace Roberts in 1915.

Of interest in the collection are several dozen examples of unofficial coins called ‘trade tokens’. These have been acquired from many sources linked to local businesses and also businesses in Melbourne and elsewhere. There are many examples of ‘trade tokens’ in other collections such as Museums Victoria, Clunes Museum, Sovereign Hill Museums Association, and the Warrnambool and District Historical Society, including some examples from Castlemaine. CAM’s trade tokens are *historically* significant as an illustration of how pressures on monetary systems during the gold rushes with the arrival of so many people led to shortages in currency and the use of tokens instead

and also of the nature of range of businesses using these tokens.⁶¹ This history recently inspired an artistic project that reintroduced a ‘clay currency’ of ‘Silver Wattles’ that could be spent locally which contributes to the *artistic* and *social* significance of CAM’s trade tokens.⁶²

Another collection of interest are the papers of Richard Colles which include official and personal correspondence and documentation relating to his personal life, career and appointment and duties as Sheriff of Castlemaine and Sandhurst Circuit, 1850s-1880s). This includes lists of executions and some very early execution warrants (some on velum) as well as material that references Robert O’Hara Burke’s death. Included with the collection is information about the Colles family history and his mother’s riding hat (c1875-1900) and three-piece riding habit. The riding hat still has its box with details indicating it was made in England and purchased at Henry Buck Pty Ltd in Melbourne. This collection is highly *historically* significant in what it reveals about the history of capital punishment in Australia and our changing attitudes to this and the men charged with officiating these duties. It has high *research* potential for what it might reveal about those who were executed while Colles was Sheriff. Those executed include three Chinese men. The collection is linked to the former Castlemaine Gaol which operated between 1861 and 1908 and is considered of state significance.⁶³ This also links the collection to the Loddon Prison which still operates today giving the collection some additional *social* significance. Similar to the Colles collection is the papers of Mark Amos, the surveyor of Fryerstown which were donated as part of the **Mark Amos Jnr Estate**.

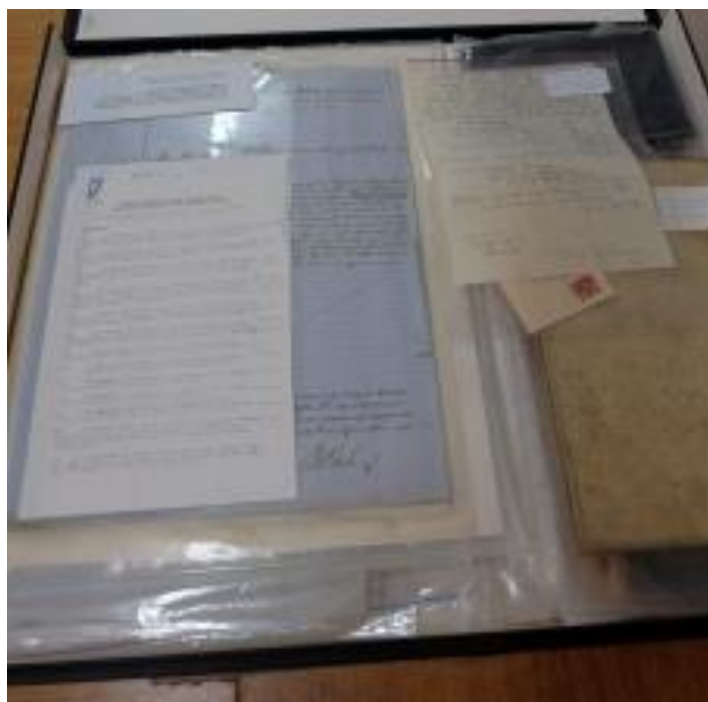


Figure 25: Richard Colles papers donated by the Brooke family (Daylesford) in 1994-5.

⁶¹ “Trade Token, Melbourne, 1862,” Museums Victoria Collections Online, accessed March 16, 2023, <https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/articles/15110>.

⁶² Sarah Lawrence, “Town Trades Cash for Dirt in Creative Currency Experiment,” *ABC News*, May 8, 2022, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-05-09/clay-coins-currency-launch-castlemaine/101047700>; Cox and Jodi Newcombe, “Castlemaine Currency: Towards a Grounded Economy,” *Garland Magazine*, December 1, 2021, <https://garlandmag.com/article/castlemaine-currency-towards-a-grounded-economy/>, <https://garlandmag.com/article/castlemaine-currency-towards-a-grounded-economy/>.

⁶³ Heritage Council Victoria, “Former Castlemaine Gaol,” Victorian Heritage Database, accessed March 24, 2023, <https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/256>.

In addition to being a source of historical visual representations of Mount Alexander and its people, CAM's photograph collection is also of *historical* and *artistic* significance for what it reveals about the identity and work of local commercial photographers who operated in the nineteenth and early twentieth century and are part of the history of studio photography which reached its height in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.⁶⁴ The collection includes work by the Verey photograph studios (f.1882-1948) and also of the studios of photographers such as C. Wilkinson, C. Wherritt, Allan Studios, E.J. Bayley, G.P. Morrison, J. Nicholas, Lorraine Photographers Pty Ltd, and Joseph Wheeler. They have *research* significance as surviving photographs that capture the work, skill and artistry of these photographic studios. The *research* significance of the Verey studio photographs is enhanced through their relationship with Ashley Tracey's large collection of Verey studio negatives and examples in other collections.⁶⁵



Figure 26: Castlemaine from Jail Hill (P451) and Castlemaine from Bakers Hill (P450). Two of a series of views taken by Verey of Castlemaine.

⁶⁴ Anne-Marie Willis, *Picturing Australia: A History of Photography* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson Publishers, 1988).

⁶⁵ Ashley Tracey, "Online Collection," Adolphus Verey Photographic Collection, accessed March 19, 2023, <https://www.verey.com.au/>.

A set of twentieth century negatives, ordered alphabetically, which look to have belonged to a local commercial photographer perhaps operating out of a chemist are also of interest. The boxes are labelled as 'wedding negatives' but actually include a range of other portraiture labelled with people's names, including passport photographs. The collection is currently undocumented and uncatalogued. *Complete* sets of photographic studio collections are *rare*, particularly mid to late-twentieth century collections. This collection has high *historic* and *social* significance for the slice of the Castlemaine community it documents and what it reveals about when and why they chose to be photographed by a professional photographer at that time.



Figure 27: Unidentified professional photographer's collection, uncatalogued

5.4.5 Community organisation

Evidence of the diverse organisations that were formed and the ways in which people built community are expressed in the collection through a wide range of objects and collections. The photograph collection, for example, captures community organisations and gatherings, sporting teams and events and other recreational activities. The collection also includes objects associated with organisations as disparate as the Castlemaine and District Agricultural Society, the Independent Order of Rechabite, the Castlemaine Girl Guides and the students and teacher of the Walmer Primary School. There is also information about concerts, dinners in the form of menus and invitations to other activities. The collection is small and so there may only be one or two examples of any given activity or group, but taken as a whole, these items are *historically* and *socially* significant in how they show the ways people came together to form an array of interconnected and exclusive communities and the networks. These were formed locally but also spread outward to others in Melbourne and elsewhere, including overseas.



Figure 28: Foundry Club, c1886. Photography by Verey Studio, Castlemaine (P513)

5.4.6 Representations of Mount Alexander and its people

A final theme of interest concerns how Mount Alexander as place and its people have been represented over time. The photograph collection is significant for the diversity of landscapes, cityscapes, built heritage, individuals, businesses, organisations and activities that it covers in the nineteenth and twentieth century, particularly of Castlemaine, and some very *rare*. It includes hand-tinted ambrotypes in cases, albumen prints in carte-de-visite, cabinet card and paris panel format, gelatin silver prints in and postcard, lantern slide formats. These images tend to favour the buildings and places considered at the time to display qualities of artistic beauty or to demonstrate the progress and development of the town (or in the case of private collections, the family). They show those who could afford to have a photographic portrait taken, particularly those taken in the mid-nineteenth century. These images have *historical*, *research* and *social* significance as they show us, through the eye of the photographer and shaped by technological limitations and aesthetic trends, what Mount Alexander and its people looked like and some of their activities over time. Photographs in which the subjects and subject matter can be identified have heightened significance because of this added *provenance*. These photographs also have *social* significance for family historians seeking to understand their ancestors and the places that they inhabited.



Figure 29: Daguerreotype in case (top of case not attached) of Charles Glass and Arthur Reid



Figure 30: Castlemaine Public Hospital, Gingell Street (P435). Castlemaine Hospital opened in May 1853. This building, situated in Gingell Street between Edward and Thomas streets, was erected before 1862 and was used until the 1950s.



Figure 31: Demolition of the Castlemaine Distillery Co (P662).

The people, places and activities of the Mount Alexander have also been represented in a range of artforms – paintings, watercolours, lithographs and cartoons. Some of these items sit within the Art Collection and some within the Historical Collection. In addition to any *artistic* significance many early works of art have *historical* significance for the insight they offer into what people and places looked like. They also have *artistic* significance related to the subject matter the artist has chosen or been commissioned to create which reflects the nature of people’s engagement with the Mount Alexander region. A collection of cartoons created in the 1850s and 1860s by George Thomas and donated to CAM by the **Castlemaine Pioneers and Old Residents Association** prior to 1975 and **Mr A Hargrave (Toorak)** in 1952 are of particular note for their *rarity* and the insight offered into mid-nineteenth century humour and local personalities.



Figure 32: Pencil drawing, cartoon of local identities 'Return of the Artist' and 'Here we are again', drawn by George Thomas, c1860 (M388) donated by Mr A. Hargrave (Toorak) in 1952.

A third interesting form of representation of Mount Alexander's history is through the use of scale models. CAM's collection contains a number of models, some such as the Cowling models which date back to the late nineteenth century and were donated into the collection in 1938. The Cowling model of a miner's safety cage and the Thompson models of an air compressor and a beam engine suggest a sales or commercial function, some such as Cowling's cottage and garden suggest they were created as part of a hobby and the models made (and purchased by CAM) by Ron Titchener appear to have been made for exhibition display. Ron Titchener began making model railways and was subsequently commissioned by Museums Victoria to create some replica scale models.⁶⁶ Models take skill and a fine attention to detail to create giving them *artistic* significance. They also take time to create and so what the model maker, or those commissioning the work, choose to create is something they consider to be important for some reason. The scale models in CAM's collection have *historical* significance for what they can tell us about the changing nature and function of models and model making as a hobby and also for the professional purposes to which they were put. They are also one of the ways in which people chose to understand the Mount Alexander region and its past. Their significance would be strengthened with a greater understanding of their *provenance*, why they were created. How they have been used by CAM over time would improve their *historic* significance.

⁶⁶ "Ron Titchener - Railway Modelmaker (1915-2000)," Museums Victoria Collections Online, accessed March 19, 2023, <https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/articles/2409>.



Figure 33: Wooden model of Forest Creek Gold Mine (M1455) and wooden model of a Cobb & Co coach 1850s-1920s. Both made by Ron Titchener (M1428) purchased with Higgins Bequest Fund.



Figure 34: Model of miner's safety cage (1887) and model typical middle-class cottage and garden (1865-1866) both made by Mr James Cowling (M195, M317) donated by W. Cowling in 1938 and Mr James Cowling (Castlemaine) in 1942.

5.5 History of the Castlemaine Art Museum

The history of CAM as a regional centre of art and historical story-telling is also a vital part of the history of the Mount Alexander region. Its building, former exhibition display cases and historic labels, and archived operational documents all help to tell that history.

Themes:

- Role in the development of Castlemaine's art culture.
- Role in the history of local history collecting.
- The significant role of women in CAM's founding, its operations and also as donors to its collections.
- Connections between CAM, significant Castlemaine residents and other cultural institutions such as Buda, former Market Museum, Castlemaine Historical Society, Castlemaine Pioneers and Old Residents Association.
- CAM as an example of Castlemaine's aspirations as a regional centre.
- How the history of the area has been told and collected since 1911.

6. Documenting and managing the collection

6.1 Storage and display

The CAM building contains seven display spaces of varying sizes on the first floor and basement. The Art Collection is mostly displayed in five galleries on the first floor (Sinclair Gallery, Whitchell Gallery, Higgins Gallery, Benefactors Gallery, Stoneman Gallery) and the 'Historical Museum' covers two rooms in the basement (M1 and M2). It has been located in the basement of the building since it was opened. Its location in the basement physically separates it from the Art Collection but also emphasises its secondary status to the Art Collection. There are three storerooms (SR1, SR2 and SR3), an artwork store and on the second floor a research library. There is a studio space for undertaking conservation work.



Figure 35: CAM's library which primarily focuses on the arts and is maintained by a group of volunteers.

The Historical Collection is primarily located in the Historical Museum (M1 and M2) and in the Museum storeroom (SR3). There are a few small cabinets containing items from the Historical Collection in the Galleries on the first floor. Some artwork and furniture from the Historical Collection is also stored in the Artwork Store and some items waiting for deaccession are located in SR1.



Figure 36: Museum storeroom SR3 which houses most of the Historical Collection.

The collections storerooms are largely well organised and clean. Collection items are primarily stored by material type and a new storage space has been assigned for First Nations collections which are undergoing a process of rehousing. Storage units are well-labelled and lists are included describing their contents. Items are generally stored using quality museum-grade materials. And while there can always be room for improvement the collection on the whole is safely stored.



Figure 37: Ceramics stored together in Museum storeroom SR3.

The 'Historical Museum' comprises two rooms. 'Camp to City: Castlemaine and the Mount Alexander District' occupies the back room and was officially opened on 7 November 1997. It was created two years after the City of Castlemaine was merged with the Shires of Maldon, Metcalfe and Newstead to form the Shire of Mount Alexander it tells a history of the Mount Alexander region that emphasises ideas of civic progress, development and modernisation of Castlemaine and its surrounds. The histories of First Nations and Chinese people are told separately to the main narrative about the city's development, which is problematic in this context as it excludes them from being an integral part of the development of the area.

The exhibition starts with an explanation of the area's geological and fossil record and European discoveries about this, and is followed by information about the Jaara people, their languages and culture, the impact of colonisation and their cultural resilience. There are then displays about the discovery of gold, including the presence of large numbers of Chinese prospectors and then displays about the development of industry and business. There are text panels providing biographies of significant individuals associated with the area and histories of nearby towns, Federation and the more recent civic history of Castlemaine. Some items have been removed from display, particularly material related to the story of the Jaara peoples.

The first room visitors enter in the 'Historical Museum' contains a wide variety of thematic displays containing items from CAM's Natural History, Decorative Arts, History of Mount Alexander collections and also a small display about Miss A.M.E. Brotherton and CAM's history. On the walls hang historic art works depicting the Mount Alexander region during the goldrushes. The room is lined with furniture, largely from the Higgins Bequest, and some taxidermy displays. There are displays related to glassware, childhood, weddings and funerals, Miss Brotherton and themed displays of historical material culture related to Castlemaine. These eclectic displays mirror the Victorian and Edwardian collecting practices that are the basis of the collection.

The displays in both rooms are well maintained with consistent labelling but dated in their interpretation. Many collection items in both exhibition spaces appear to have been on display for at least fifteen years, and First Nations displays, where items have been taken off display, have not been refreshed. While there is a narrative and thematic flow to the 'Camp to City' exhibition, the first exhibition space that visitors encounter contains a confusing mix of themed displays.

In early 2020, during the Covid pandemic when museums and galleries were closed, CAM introduced a 'Reflections' series. Artists, historians, visitors, volunteers, staff and the like were invited to select an object or display and write a 500-word reflection on it. These were published on CAM's website and have since been printed and incorporated in displays. They are a lovely, creative and effective way of encouraging engagement with the collection and work very well on the website, but their length makes them a little intrusive in the display space where they do not quite integrate with the existing exhibition design.

Visitors are also able to search CAM's Art and Historical Collection on the organisation website. Select fields from the catalogue are searchable with 612 digital images attached to the 4,748 catalogued items.⁶⁷ This is a great way to promote the existence and nature of the collection but more content about the provenance and significance of items in the Historical Collection is needed before it will become useful as a research tool for those interested in the Historical Collection. One hundred items (mostly art works with a few historical photographs) have also been published via the Victoria Collections website.⁶⁸

6.2 Collection management

6.2.1 Collection policies and management

CAM successfully received accreditation under the Museums Accreditation Program managed by AMaGA (Victoria) around 1994 but with changing staffing documentation created as part of that process appears to have fallen out of use. The primary aim of the 'Historical Collection' since its

⁶⁷ 'Collection', Castlemaine Art Museum, <https://castlemaineartmuseum.org.au/our-collection>

⁶⁸ 'Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum', Victorian Collections, <https://victoriancollections.net.au/organisations/castlemaine-art-gallery-historical-museum>

founding has been the acquisition of material of ‘historic interest’ but this has been refined and articulated slightly differently over time.

The *Rules and Constitution* that guided collecting at CAM between 1913 until 1975 states the aim of the Historical Collection as: ‘the collection and exhibition of articles of local historical interest’.⁶⁹ An undated colour brochure produced when CAM owned and managed the Buda site (pre-1986) broke down the collection focus into five categories:

- ‘Three dimensional items such as furniture, tools, machinery, crockery, etc.
- Documents, books and photographs.
- Textiles such as clothing and uniforms.
- Scale models depicting historical articles or buildings which it is not possible to display in full size due to space limitations.
- Artefacts which have a clearly established connection with the Leviny family and their family house “Buda”, which is the property of the Gallery and Museum’.⁷⁰

Sometime after 1986 (perhaps around 1994 when CAM acquired MAP accreditation) the policy was consolidated into ‘three-dimensional’ and ‘two-dimensional’ items, especially photographic material, related to Castlemaine and District and a new collection category was also added: ‘Decorative Arts of the highest order (especially Australian) – as deemed fit by Collections Committee’.⁷¹ This appears to be the current acquisition policy for the Historical Collection.

CAM uses Vernon to catalogue its collection. This replaced a Mosaic catalogue which has now been deleted. Supporting this catalogue is a paper-based system of object worksheets with some family histories and other supporting information filed with them, a series of paper-based correspondence with CAM (likely dating back to CAM’s establishment and annotated with object numbers where known), a number of subject card indexes for the photograph collection, object collection and donors. There is also a fascinating surviving archive of documents related to CAM’s Historical Collection some of which also contain information about its provenance and significance (see further discussion below).

Miss A.M.W. (Anna Mary Winnifred) Brotherton (1874-1956) who was involved in the establishment of CAM, was key to the management of the Historical Collection until her passing in 1956.⁷² Beth Sinclair, who eventually became the first Director of CAM and the first female public gallery director in Australia in 1969, voluntarily took on the cataloguing and organising of office systems in the 1950s. She created the first comprehensive catalogue of the collection in 1959 and retired in 1975. A Mrs G. Harrison was appointed curator at this time. Lauretta Zilles, was curator between 1986 and 1995, and she had a keen interest in historical photography and was part of an early photographic copying project at CAM (late 1985 to early 1986) to reduce the need to display and handle original photographic prints. She also developed the ‘Photofile’ system to assist in searching the photographic collection. Kirsten McKay was CAM’s curator into the 2010s. Diane Linton worked for many years as an Honorary Curator of the Historical Collection and now assists as a volunteer with cataloguing.

⁶⁹ Baddeley, “A History of the Castlemaine Art Gallery.”

⁷⁰ Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum, ‘Acquisition Policy’, undated full-colour brochure, CAM Collection.

⁷¹ Baddeley, “A History of the Castlemaine Art Gallery.”

⁷² Baddeley; Golightly et al., *History and Collections*.

6.2.2 Audit

Deborah Peart (Honorary Conservator) and Jenny Long (Honorary Curator, Art) are currently undertaking a full audit of the Historical Collection which is being documented in Excel spreadsheets and will be reconciled against the Vernon catalogue in due course. They are seeking to match some of the historic documentation related to the earlier management of the collection to better understand the provenance and donation history of older donations to the collection. A recent digitisation project also funded the digitisation of some of CAM's historic photographic collection.

6.2.3 First Nations

CAM is aware of the problematic nature of the First Nations material in its Historical Collection and has been taking action to address this. In 2015, Rick Iasiello, Heritage Officer at the Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, prepared the report 'Aboriginal Artefact Collection' so that Aboriginal cultural heritage in the collection could be included on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (VAHR).⁷³ In 2020 Tiriki Onus, a Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung man and Associate Dean of Indigenous Development and Head of the Wilin Centre for Indigenous Arts and Cultural Development, University of Melbourne, was appointed to CAM's Board. CAM is also in discussions with the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (Registered Aboriginal Party) to collaborate on the mutually acceptable design of exhibition space and other matters. These conversations offer important opportunities for truth-telling, repatriation and the building of new and deeper connections and relationships with First Nations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) groups around Australia. These have the potential to revitalise and reinvigorate both the Museum and its collections as well as build cultural authority in First Nations communities and recentre their voices in historical narratives.

6.2.4 Research Archive

CAM has a Library that contains a small history section. There are also historical publications in the compactus storage in Storage Room 3 that have been catalogued, and family trees and supplementary material related to donations have also been filed with Object Worksheets. A Study Photograph collection has also been created to avoid damage to original prints and negatives.



Figure 38: Reference books related to history stored in the Library and Compactus

Distinguishing between items that should be in a Research Archive and those that are part of the catalogued collection can be difficult and with the passage of time items in the Research Archive might gain significance and be catalogued into the collection. Some books for example are rare or old enough to be primary historical sources. Photocopies of material can sometimes be the only copy

⁷³ Rick Iasiello, "Aboriginal Artefact Collection" (Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum, October 2015).

of something which has now been destroyed. The same applies to photographic copies of photographs. The Research Archive should sit outside the formal collection, and inclusion into the catalogue should be based on an assessment of an item's significance, with reference to its rarity and the care required of it.

7. Comparative collections

7.1 Mt Alexander region

The Mount Alexander region, including Castlemaine, is rich in history and heritage organisations. Some have very focussed collections (Buda, Maldon Vintage and Machinery Museum, Castlemaine Foundry Band, Mt Alexander Hospital History Rooms, Old Castlemaine Schoolboys Association, Australian Hot Rod Heritage Interpretation Centre), others collect and showcase the history of particular regions and are sometimes located in buildings of heritage significance (Chewton Domain Society in the former Chewton Town Hall, Harcourt Valley Heritage and Tourist Centre Inc, Maldon Museum and Archives Association in the former Shire Offices and Hall, Newstead and District Historical Society in the old Court House, Taradale historical Group in the Taradale Mechanics Institute) and Friends of the Mount Alexander Diggings (FOMAD) focusses on the preservation of cultural heritage sites and artefacts.⁷⁴ Aspects of CAM's Historical Collection overlap and are enhanced by all these other collections, many of which are paper and record-based collections rather than collections with three-dimensional objects.

Within Castlemaine, CAM is an important part of a surviving ecosystem of local history-collecting that has its origins in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1855 the Castlemaine Mechanics Institute and Library was founded, only four years after the area's goldrushes (remnants of this organisation survive as a branch of the Goldfields Library Corporation). They organised a display that included 'historic relics' as early as 1873. CAM holds a little material related to the history of the Mechanics Institute and its activities.

Shortly afterwards, in 1880 the Castlemaine Pioneers and Old Pioneers Association (now the Castlemaine Pioneers and Old Residents Association) was established with the two-fold aim of financially supporting the area's long-term residents and also documenting and preserving their remembered history of the area.⁷⁵ As one newspaper remarked 'The name of the town and many of the streets had [already] been forgotten by many residents'.⁷⁶ This marks an important moment in the writing of local histories as these 'pioneers and colonists' of the goldrushes and before, largely men, were 'prompted to record their memories and achievements for posterity'.⁷⁷ The Castlemaine Pioneers and Old Residents Association has transferred a few of its illustrations and books into CAM's collection and also holds a notebook related to the meeting that discussed its founding. CPORA has recently obtained a significance assessment of its collection prepared by Kirsten McKay.⁷⁸

The Castlemaine Progress Association (established 1906 and now defunct) was a residents' association established to 'improve the attractiveness of the town and district', to promote accommodation for visitors, 'to advertise the natural beauty of the district, to develop the resources

⁷⁴ Friends of Mount Alexander Diggings website, <https://www.fomad.org.au>.

⁷⁵ Castlemaine Association of Pioneers and Old Residents, "Records of the Castlemaine Pioneers.," 2nd ed. (Castlemaine, Vic: Graffiti, 1996).

⁷⁶ Unidentified, "Items of News," *Mount Alexander Mail*, April 24, 1880, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article200267007>.

⁷⁷ Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History*.

⁷⁸ 'Telegraph station connects to NBN', *Midland Express*, 26 January 2023.

of the district, picnic places, etc., and to bring Castlemaine before the public as a health and pleasure resort and generally to advance the welfare of the town'.⁷⁹ As discussed above, after the organisation of the 'Castlemaine Past and Present' exhibition their vision extended to the desire to establish a gallery and museum. CAM was founded by many of those involved in the Progress Association.

The 1960s to 1990s saw the emergence of an interest in social history and built heritage. The founding of local historical societies, local museums and 'house' museums, particularly in former goldrush towns, followed.⁸⁰ Castlemaine Historical Society, established in 1965, was the first to be established in the area in this period followed by Maldon Museum and Archives Association (est. 1966), Buda historic home and garden (est. 1969), Newstead and District Historical Society (est. 1986), Harcourt Valley Heritage and Tourist Centre Inc (est. 1989), Chewton Domain Society (est. 1996) and Taradale Historical Society (est. early 1990s). The National Trust also acquired Dow's Pharmacy and the Federal Standard Printing Works in Chilton in the late 1960s.

There is an informal arrangement between CAM and the Castlemaine Historical Society that historical documents will be donated to the Castlemaine Historical Society and in turn the donation of three-dimensional objects will be directed to CAM. CAM also copies and loans material to and from the Castlemaine Historical Society and other smaller historical societies and local history museums.

7.1.1 Special relationship with Buda Home and Garden

The histories of Buda Home and Garden and CAM are deeply entwined. In 1969 CAM purchased Buda and then in 1986 a separate body was established to own and run the house. The Leviny family who made Buda their home for 118 years, were also some of the original founders of CAM. Ernest Leviny, the patriarch of the family, was an Hungarian-born goldsmith and jeweller, and a pioneer on the Castlemaine goldfields and was involved in the Castlemaine Mechanics Institute. After the death of his first wife, Mary Isaacs, Ernest married Bertha Hudson and the couple had ten children.

Ernest's daughters, Hilda, Dorothy and Gertrude contributed in the 'Past and Present' exhibition, another daughter, Judy Leviny, was present at the public meeting that established CAM. Mrs Bertha Leviny provided CAM with a rent-free room soon after its founding (1913-1915) and her eldest daughter, Mary, was involved in CAM's first committee. Mary's sisters Kate, Gertrude, Dorothy and Hilda also served on the committee or in support roles, as did their brother, Ernest Junior. Ilma Leviny's husband, Dr James L. Thompson, served as President from 1927–1941.⁸¹ The Leviny family also donated items to CAM's Historical and Art Collections and left a bequest that allowed the purchase of art works. Three items were purchased as tributes to family members.⁸² Buda also have textiles on permanent loan from CAM.

7.2 Other goldrush regions

The Mount Alexander region shares a similar goldrush history with other cities and towns in Victoria, New South Wales and arguably other goldrush areas in Australia. The history of each is shaped by its own unique circumstances and timing but share the experience of a sudden influx of

⁷⁹ Unidentified, "Castlemaine Progress Association," *Mount Alexander Mail*, May 10, 1906, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article199558692>.

⁸⁰ Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History*.

⁸¹ Zilles Lauretta, 'Insights into the Leviny's of Buda and the Castlemaine Art Museum Connections: Early visions for a strong cultural future in Castlemaine', Buda Historic Home and Garden website, September 2020,

<https://budacastlemaine.org/explore-buda/the-collection/insights/>.

⁸² Zilles, 'Insights into the Leviny's of Buda and the Castlemaine Art Museum Connections'.

people and wealth, civic development as a consequence of this and social tensions related to the regulation of mining activities and population (including significant Chinese populations). There are many small museum and historical society collections in these former goldrush areas. There are similarities in collection objects across these collections, but each also captures the unique circumstances and story of their district.

The largest and most substantial of these collections is that of the Gold Museum in Ballarat. Its collection contains over 150,000 items including gold samples, items related to Ballarat's local history and goldrushes (including its Chinese population), a collection of Australia's colonial furniture, historic postcards, rare books, and costumes and textiles.⁸³ This includes about 100 items related to Castlemaine. Aside from some trade tokens, a four-wheeled dog cart made in Castlemaine, a silver trophy awarded at the Castlemaine show and two pieces of machinery made by Thompsons of Castlemaine, the rest of their Castlemaine collection is paper-based: postcards, Miner's Rights, lithographs and some documents, maps and a few photographs.

A browse of the Victorian Collections website which brings together collection material from a wide range of small (and large) Victorian collecting institutions also indicates very little three-dimensional items related to the Castlemaine area held in other collections. Museums Victoria's online catalogue indicates that they hold historic photographs, coins and tokens and some material related to Thompsons of Castlemaine.

⁸³ Sovereign Hill website, <https://sovereignhill.com.au/collections-research>.

8. Discussion of Chinese collections and items

8.5 White Australian Chinese decorative arts and crafts

There are a number of examples of Asian decorative arts in the Historic Collection (for example: **A. Lawrence, Brotherton-Cherry Estate, H.S. Leister Bequest, Mrs Beth Sinclair, Higgins Bequest, Anne Cassidy**). This demonstrates a curiosity and appreciation in Asian cultures and in the chinoiserie and japonaiserie aesthetic but it also contrasts with a general lack of engagement and curiosity in the material culture of the local southern Chinese communities that the previous owners were living alongside. Items related to the collection of Chinese decorative arts that are not associated with Chinese communities in the Mount Alexander or Victorian context should be clearly identified as such in the catalogue.



Figure 39: A.C.B. Cherry (Alice Brotherton nee Cherry) in Chinese woman's silk embroidered top and pleated skirt in A.M.E. Bale's photographs of Castlemaine. Miss A.M.W. Brotherton notes that this photograph was taken in Kew by Mr Bale. The dress was lent to Cherry by Miss Edith Downing and worn at an artist's ball.

8.1.1 Chinese doll

A Chinese doll donated by **Mr Rupert Steele (Toorak)** is described in the catalogue as made by Isabella Duckett (1838-1905). This is highly unlikely and the provenance of the doll needs further research. If it was Isabella Duckett's childhood toy, then it was an item she brought with her from Yorkshire and dates from the 1840s. This early date also seems unlikely. It was most likely made in either China or Hong Kong for export or sale to expatriates.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Marguerite Fawdry, *Chinese Childhood* (London: Pollocks Toy Theatres Ltd, 1977).



Figure 40: Chinese paper-mache doll with side-buttoned top, trousers, shoes and cap with tassels and a coin attached by a string (M3078) donated by Rupert Steele (Toorak).

Dolls do not appear to have been a common toy for Chinese children, unlike puppets, and are more closely connected to missionary activities and sales to westerners.⁸⁵ This style of doll is relatively common and from the appearance of surviving dolls they appear to have been made over several decades, dating from the early twentieth century.⁸⁶ There are also dolls like the one in CAM's collection at the Museum of Chinese Australian History, the Golden Dragon Museum and Museums Victoria and private collections. These dolls are all associated with white Australian donors except for one donated by Fay Anderson who was the Australian-born daughter of a Chinese herbalist, Frank Shum Goon of Ballarat and his Australian-born Chinese wife Ada (nee Mahlook).⁸⁷

The provenance of the dolls in these other collections is also relatively weak, the exception being a collection of three dolls given in the 1920s to the Murdoch children (Nancy born 1918, Elizabeth born 1922 and David born 1926) by their aunt Dora (nee Murdoch) Long (born in 1874).⁸⁸ Dora lived in Eaglehawk near Bendigo at the time she gave the dolls to her nieces and nephew who were living in Camberwell at the time. Museums Victoria speculates that the three dolls may have been purchased in Bendigo, as there were several Chinese-owned shops importing goods from China in town by the 1920s.

⁸⁵ Fawdry, "Two Chinese Dolls," Textile Research Centre blog, February 9, 2019, <https://www.trc-leiden.nl/trc/index.php/en/blog/791-two-chinese-dolls>.

⁸⁶ See similar examples of different ages on eBay: <https://www.ebay.com/itm/255892986357>, <https://www.ebay.com/itm/266040034021>, <https://www.ebay.com/itm/125618988733>, <https://www.ebay.com/itm/275536318397>, and <https://www.ebay.com/itm/275642933370>.

⁸⁷ 'Goon, Frank Shum', CHIA website, <https://www.chia.chinesemuseum.com.au/biogs/CH00610b.htm>.

⁸⁸ Museums Victoria, Collections, <https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/items/717919>, <https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/items/717918>, <https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/items/717921>.



Figure 41: Doll (far left) donated by Fay Anderson in 1988 and two dolls donated by Eileen Dillon-Smith in 2009 to Museum of Chinese Australian History.



Figure 42: Three dolls (1987.09) donated by Friends of Melbourne Grammar c/o The President to the Museum of Chinese Australian History in 1987.



Figure 43: Chinese doll (GDM0320) on display at the Golden Dragon Museum, donated by Dorothy Davey (1926-2003) before the museum was established in 1991.



Figure 44: The doll on the top left was donated by Mrs J. McFarland in 1990 (<https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/items/258088>) and the three other dolls were donated by Trish Redman in 2004

(<https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/items/717919>, <https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/items/717918>,
<https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/items/717921>)

CAM's Chinese doll is in excellent *condition* compared to other surviving examples in other collections. It is complete and still has its hat, tassels on the hat, shoes and attached coin. It is a very good *representative* example of this style of doll. It has *historic* significance as an example of Chinese culture embraced by white Australians. These dolls were purchased as *aesthetically* attractive toys for white Australian children or, on occasion, Australian-born children with Chinese ancestry. It has *research* potential as part of the history of children and play and also an example of children's engagement with other cultures. A close comparison of the different dolls and analysis of their fabric and construction might help to better date its manufacture. The doll is currently inappropriately displayed in the Chinese section of the 'Camp to City' exhibition. It would be better placed and interpreted within the display of children's clothes and toys.

8.1.2 'Children's' shoes

Similarly, a pair of 'Children's shoes' (M665.2) donated by **Miss D. Bond** in 1974 are also inappropriately displayed in the Chinese section of the 'Camp to City'. While there were Chinese women who bound their feet who lived in Australia, these shoes are highly unlikely to be associated with Chinese communities in Australia and appear to have never been worn. Chinese women's feet could be bound very small but, as is the case with western-style corsetry, the foot-binding ideal of three inches, was rarely achieved by most women. These shoes are more likely to have been purchased as a souvenir.



Figure 45: Chinese shoes for bound feet in the Chinese section of 'Camp to City'.

The practice of Chinese foot-binding has been a subject of horrified fascination by outsiders since the sixteenth century and as a consequence there has been a long practice of collecting such shoes by westerners.⁸⁹ They are widely found in museum collections. According to historian Antonia Finnane this fascination was intimately connected with an emerging trope in European society that the status of women in a society was a criterion for the status of that civilisation'.⁹⁰ Care needs to be taken in

⁸⁹ Kaz Ross, "'(Hand)Made in China': The Curious Return of the Footbinding Shoe," *Postcolonial Studies* 4, no. 3 (November 2001): 311–34.

⁹⁰ Antonia Finnane, *Changing Clothes in China: Fashion, History, Nation* (Sydney: University of New South Wales, 2007).

the interpretation of Chinese foot-binding practices.⁹¹ Without more provenance about how these shoes came into the possession of Miss D. Bond I strongly recommend they be removed from display.

8.1.3 Chinese silk iron

A Chinese silk iron (M638) is attributed as donated by **Miss D. Bond** in the ‘Camp to city’ exhibition but perhaps was donated by **Mrs Jane Semler** in 1970 (see M553 catalogue record). It is not catalogued as part of her collection but was likely donated in the mid-1970s. This item is also inappropriately displayed in the Chinese section of the ‘Camp to City’. Unless it has strong provenance suggesting otherwise it is unlikely to have been used by Chinese people in Australia. Silk irons like this one have become souvenirs and collectable items and many look to be replicas rather than made in the Ming or Qing-era. It is possible Miss D. Bond’s iron is also a replica.



Figure 46: Chinese silk iron on display in the Chinese section of 'Camp to City'.

8.1.4 ‘Ginger jar’

This curious vessel (a ginger jar without a lid), originally owned by a Miss Stewart, was donated to CAM in 1928 by well-known Castlemaine resident **Mrs W. Halford**. William Halford (1826-1895) had thirteen children and Mrs W. Halford is perhaps Lucy Elizabeth (nee Robertson) (1855-1955), the wife of his second son, William Charles (1857-1833).⁹² The vessel is glazed in turquoise and decorated with a yellow and pink floral design and double happiness characters (囍) (M87). The crudeness of the manufacture suggests it is a copy of a ginger jar decorated with a popular longevity design and unlikely of Chinese manufacture.⁹³ Given the strong interest in the Arts and Crafts movement in the Castlemaine area it would be worth researching whether this was created locally in the style of Chinese artwork as part of this movement.

⁹¹ Dorothy Ko, “Footbinding in the Museum,” *Interventions* 5, no. 3 (July 2003): 426–39; Beverley Jackson, *Splendid Slippers: A Thousand Years of an Erotic Tradition* (Berkeley, California: Ten Speed Press, 1998).

⁹² “William Halford,” Ancestry.com Family Tree, accessed March 10, 2023, <https://www.ancestry.com.au/family-tree/person/tree/7909011/person/-198333803/facts>.

⁹³ Unidentified, “Some Notes on Wan Shou Wu Jiang (万寿无疆) Porcelains since the Late Qing Period,” *Watersilkdragon: Chinese Ceramics in the 20th Century* (blog), March 12, 2013, <https://watersilkdragon.wordpress.com/2013/03/12/some-notes-on-wan-shou-wu-jiang-%e4%b8%87%e5%af%bf%e6%97%a0%e7%96%86-porcelains-since-the-late-qing-period/>.



Figure 47: Vessel with Chinese decorations formerly owned by Miss Stewart and donated to CAM in 1928 by well-known Castlemaine resident Mrs W. Halford.



Figure 48: Typical Chinese ginger jar with turquoise 'longevity' design.

8.6 Chinese Australian material culture

8.6.1 Historical background (Chinese Australian material culture)

After the first early furtive discoveries of gold became public at the end of 1851 it did not take long for prospective gold seekers to rush to the Mount Alexander region in search of gold.⁹⁴ As early as February 1852, newspapers mention the presence of Chinese at the Fryers Creek diggings.⁹⁵ It is estimated that at the height of the rush one quarter of the adult male population was Chinese.⁹⁶ Semi-permanent and permanent Chinese settlements (or camps) were established throughout the diggings. Chinese prospectors were both an integral part of the diggings and also separate from it. In 1868, Chinese interpreter James Ah Coy, provided a report to Rev. William Young that estimated that there were over 80 Chinese people living in the Castlemaine township and that it had a 'Chinese street' and an additional 100 Chinese miners in the vicinity of Castlemaine township.⁹⁷ A Castlemaine Chinese Mission was established as early as 1855 and was host to several Hong Kong-trained Chinese missionaries. In his report Ah Coy estimated there were additional Chinese mining communities at Mopoke, Barker's Creek, Golden Point and Diamond Gully.

⁹⁴ Reeves, "A Hidden History."

⁹⁵ Unidentified, "Forest Creek," *Mount Alexander Mail*, September 23, 1859, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article199052653>.

⁹⁶ Reeves, "A Hidden History."

⁹⁷ W. Young, *Report on the Condition of the Chinese Population in Victoria*, Parliamentary Paper / Victoria. Parliament, no. 56 of 1868 (Melbourne: John Ferres, Government Printer, 1868).

Complex communities evolved. They built homes, stores and places of worship. They imported goods from Hong Kong and southern China and used items available in Australia. Some brought family members to join them from southern China, others formed relationships and families with local women. In addition to mining, Chinese were involved in market gardening, running general stores, eating houses, gambling and opium-smoking establishments and worked as butchers, herbalists, carpenters, hawkers and fishmongers. They donated to local charitable causes such as hospital fundraising and greeted and met with local dignitaries and officials.

In response to fears about the social, economic and sovereign implications that the arrival of such large numbers of Chinese prospectors might have, in 1858, in addition to the mining license fee that all miners paid, the government passed racially discriminatory legislation that introduced restrictions on the number of Chinese arrivals and an increasingly heavy poll tax. This legislation was largely repealed by the 1870s. Chinese migration continued as the goldrushes waned, but arrivals were smaller in number. Like other prospectors, many Chinese prospectors moved into cities and towns and established themselves in new occupations, as market gardeners, labourers, storekeepers. New legislation which restricted Chinese immigration was reintroduced in 1881. This legislation was in place until the passing of the Immigration Restriction Act 1901. This legislation effectively cut off all but a very small number of immigrants from China until the 1950s when restrictions were loosened.

The numbers of Chinese immigrants living in the Mount Alexander region rapidly declined over this period as restrictions took effect. There were nevertheless still Chinese people travelling between Australia and China from the Mount Alexander region in the 1930s.⁹⁸ Historian Keir Reeves notes Chinese were present in the area for much longer than generally credited:

The Chinese or Chinese-European market gardens scattered along the fertile flood plains of the Loddon River continued as thriving social and economic concerns until the early twentieth century. Sang Vick, the market gardener from Campbell's Creek until the 1930s, is still remembered in local oral histories in nearby Guildford and Yapeen. Closer to Castlemaine, at Moonlight Flat, Chinese market gardening continued until as late as the 1940s

and a Chinese herbalist was also remembered as being forcibly removed by immigration authorities in the 1930s.⁹⁹ Descendants of Chinese arrivals from the goldrushes onwards are also known to still live in the area.

Despite the significant role Chinese immigrants have had in the area's history our understanding of much of their history and culture is limited. Very few examples of material culture, built heritage and intangible culture related to these communities survive. What does have survived has important *research* potential for more broadly understanding Chinese spiritual and social practices in the Mount Alexander district and Australia more broadly and also great *social* value for descendants of these early communities.

⁹⁸ Victorian CEDT Index, <https://www.cafhgov.com/vic-cedt-index> (original data taken from 'Register of Certificates Exempting from the Dictation Test, 1904–1914', National Archives of Australia: B6003, 3).

⁹⁹ Reeves, "A Hidden History."

8.6.2 Chinese joss house collection

8.6.2.1 Historical background

During the goldrush era, and beyond, Chinese temples or joss houses were dotted throughout the Mount Alexander diggings. Every major Chinese camp in the Mt Alexander diggings area would likely have had some form of place of worship. The exact number of joss houses or temples in the area is unknown. Local historian Raymond Bradfield identified five in Castlemaine and Paul Macgregor states that two of these were 'known' to be made of brick.¹⁰⁰ This is complicated by the fact that shrines for worship were often part of buildings that also had other purposes such as providing meeting rooms and temporary accommodation. They were not necessarily visually ornate.



Figure 49: 'Old joss house' in Urquhart Street, Castlemaine, 1914 (P1.12). A.M.E. Bale's album of photographs of Castlemaine. Miss A.M.W. Brotherton notes that this was the '2nd or 3rd' joss house in the area and was in use around 1860-1865.

¹⁰⁰ Raymond A. Bradfield, *Castlemaine: A Golden Harvest.*, Historical Briefs Series ; No. 3 (Kilmore, Victoria: Lowden, 1972); Paul Macgregor, "Joss Houses of Colonial Bendigo and Victoria," in *An Angel by the Water : Essays in Honour of Dennis Reginald O'Hoy*, ed. Mike Butcher (Kennington: Victoria Holland House, 2015), 102–22.

The five different Chinese joss houses identified in Castlemaine:

- Clinker’s Hill built in May 1859.¹⁰¹
- Ten Foot Hill (near Greenhill Avenue) built in September 1859.¹⁰²
- Urquhart Street, operating as early as 1860-65 and standing but apparently not operational in 1914.¹⁰³
- Ten Foot Hill (near Vincent Street) built in May 1873.¹⁰⁴
- Joss house ‘off McGrath Street, in the gully, between the street and the railway line’, undated¹⁰⁵

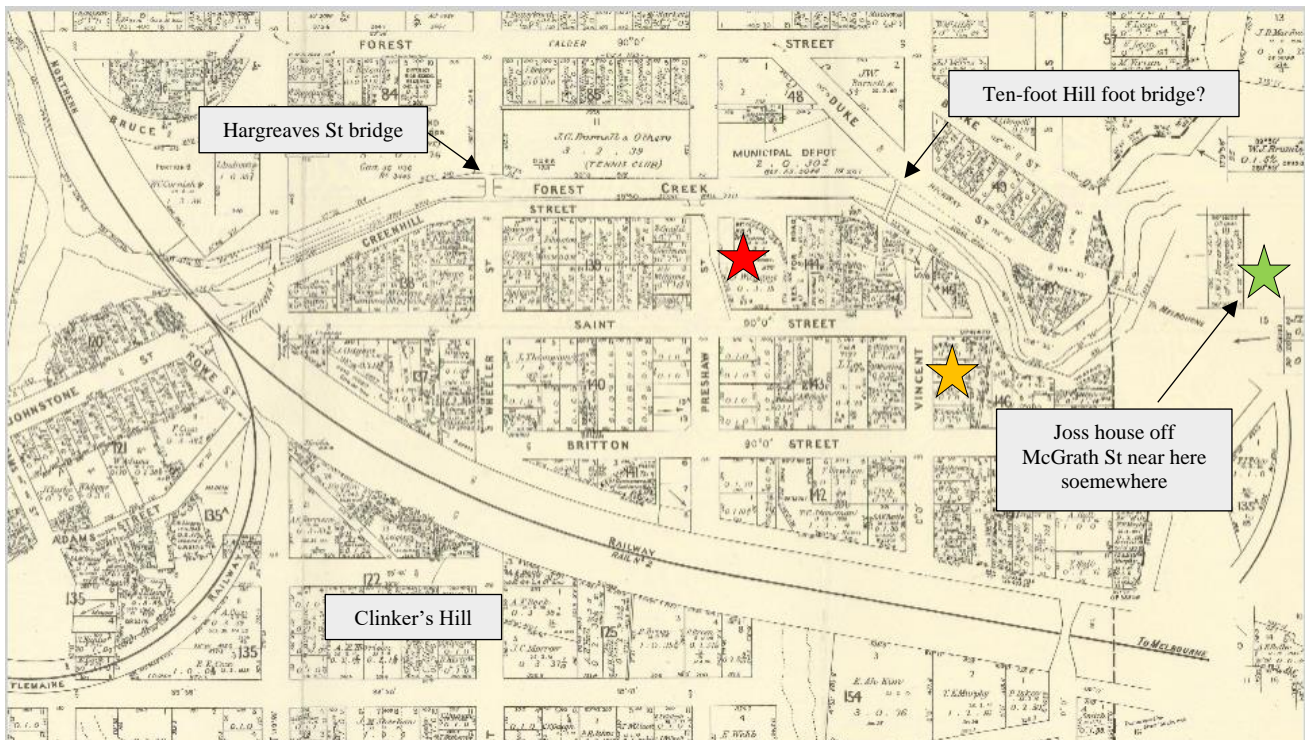


Figure 50: Approximate locations of Ten Foot Hill joss houses. Red star marks approximate location of site of 1859 Joss House on Mr J. Williams property and orange start marks approximate location of site of 1873 Joss House on Mr Stoneman or Mr J. Cox's property on Vincent Street. Cropped section of: “[Castlemaine] [cartographic Material] / Drawn and Reproduced at the Department of Lands and Survey, 1957.” Melbourne: W. M. Houston, Govt. Printer, 1957.

Further research is needed into the location and character of these joss houses. The above list is a summary of my assessment of sometimes vague descriptive evidence. The 1859 Ten Foot Hill joss house was described as ‘not quite so large as the one on Clinker’s Hill’ but ‘perhaps decorated with a greater profusion of gilding, mirrors, colored paper, &c’ but no more detailed location was provided

¹⁰¹ Unidentified, “Chinese Temple at Castlemaine,” *Bendigo Advertiser*, May 17, 1859, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article87989155>; “CAMPBELL’S CREEK.,” *Mount Alexander Mail*, May 18, 1859, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article199048736>.

¹⁰² Unidentified, “Forest Creek.”

¹⁰³ A.M.E. Bales album of photographs of Castlemaine, Brotherton/Cherry Estate, donated in 1972.

¹⁰⁴ Unidentified, “Items of News,” *Mount Alexander Mail*, May 12, 1873, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article197104060>; Hu Jin Kok, *Chinese Temples in Australia*, vol. 1 (Bendigo, Vic: Golden Dragon Museum, 2005). Note that there appears to have been an earlier less formal opening the previous year. Unidentified, “North Specimen Hill Company,” *Bendigo Advertiser*, April 24, 1872, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article87973139>.

¹⁰⁵ Bradfield, *Castlemaine*. The other two joss houses Bradfield describes correspond to the two Ten Foot Hill joss houses. He does not mention the Clinker’s Hill joss house.

for either joss house.¹⁰⁶ A court case between E.D. (Edward David) Williams and the See Yup Society of Castlemaine represented by Ten Youey, Ah Gooley, Ah Cheong, Ah Chin and Wah Chin in 1908 indicates that Williams built a fence around the temple and that he erected a gate near the corner of Greenhill and Preshaw streets on Ten Foot Hill. Williams had purchased the land in 1905 in his wife's name.¹⁰⁷ By 1957 the land in this area was owned by two other members of the Williams family, H.D. Williams and J. Williams.¹⁰⁸ Evidence suggests this is the joss house built in 1859 but the link is tentative as in comparing the Clinker's Hill and first Ten Foot Hill joss houses no mention was made that the 1859 Ten Foot joss house was made of brick.

According to the *Mount Alexander Mail* the joss house built in 1973 could be approached either over the 'Hargreave [sic]-street bridge, and past the last new temple, or over the Ten-foot Hill foot-bridge, below the gasworks'.¹⁰⁹ We do not know what they meant by the 'last new temple' but I am assuming they meant the Greenhill joss house built in 1859. Kok Hu Jin, who examined a land title for a property owned by Stoneman and then Cox, states that the 1873 temple was located on a block of land in Vincent Street jointly purchased by Laong Yit, a herbalist, and Kah Che, a gold miner, in September 1872.¹¹⁰ Stoneman is recorded as purchasing a one-acre block of Crown Land occupied by a Chinese temple in 1916.¹¹¹ A Department of Lands and Survey map dated 1957, much later, shows two blocks of land owned by Stoneman and Cox adjacent to each other on Vincent Street.

Newspapers report that the Clinkers Hill temple was dedicated to 'Kwan-ti' (*Gwaan Dai* in Cantonese, *Guan Ti* in Mandarin 關帝) and the 1873 Ten Foot Hill temple and earlier Ten Foot Hill temple to 'Kuon Kun' (*Gwaan Gung* in Cantonese *Guan Gong* in Mandarin 關公). These are different names for Guan Yu (*Gwaan Yu* in Cantonese 關羽), a real historical figure who became deified and was commonly worshipped by overseas Chinese communities.¹¹²

While the people who visited these shrines may have worshipped the same deity these temples did mark social and cultural divisions within overseas Chinese communities in the area. The 1908 court case mentioned above suggests that the 1859 Greenhill Avenue Ten Foot Hill temple belonged to the See Yup Society (a district association for people from 四邑, the 'Four counties' area of the Pearl River delta area called *Siyi* in Mandarin pinyin) and as we shall see below there is evidence that the 1873 Vincent Street joss house was associated with the Sam Yup Society (a district association for people from 三邑 or 南番順 the 'Three counties' area of the Pearl River delta area called *Sanyi or Nanhai Panyu Shunde* in mandarin pinyin). The Chinese joss houses in the Castlemaine area are evidence, not only of the size and complexity of the Chinese community in the area, but also their endurance over time. The Melbourne branch of the See Yup Society still operates in Melbourne and manages a large nineteenth century temple in South Melbourne. The original Melbourne branch of the Num Pon Soon Society (for Sam Yup people) no longer exists but their club rooms and shrine room do and there is a more contemporary Num Pon Soon Society.

¹⁰⁶ Unidentified, "Forest Creek."

¹⁰⁷ Unidentified, "Country News," *Bendigo Independent*, December 1, 1905, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article223525078>.

¹⁰⁸ "[Castlemaine] [cartographic Material] / Drawn and Reproduced [at the Department of Lands and Survey, 1957]." Melbourne: W. M. Houston, Govt. Printer, 1957. State Library of Victoria map collection

¹⁰⁹ Unidentified, "Items of News," June 12, 1873.

¹¹⁰ Hu Jin Kok, *Chinese Temples in Australia Vol.1* (Bendigo, Vic: Golden Dragon Museum, 2005).

¹¹¹ Unidentified, "Our Country Service," *Bendigo Advertiser*, June 21, 1916, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article89982052>.

¹¹² "Guan Yu," in *Wikipedia*, March 7, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Guan_Yu&oldid=1143330533.

Most Chinese joss houses in Victoria have not survived. CAM's collection is significant as its *provenance* also speaks a little about what happened to them over time, how they came to be lost and what was valued about them. It was not uncommon in former goldrush communities that had been home to large Chinese communities at this time to develop a nostalgia for these communities once they were no longer visibly present.¹¹³ This was also tied to historical nostalgia about the heyday of the goldrushes. This nostalgia overlooked the ongoing presence of their descendants still living in the area and the role of racially discriminatory legislation that prevented new Chinese immigration. The collection and preservation of material from this 'last' surviving joss house can in part be linked to this nostalgia and an aesthetic appreciation of Chinese design.

8.6.2.2 Overview of CAM's collection

CAM's collection related to Castlemaine's Chinese joss houses contains carved wooden painted plaques, decorative panels and ceramic roof ornaments. There is also artwork and photographs of the joss houses in Castlemaine. The temple items have primarily come from three sources: **Mrs J.L. Thompson** prior to 1950, **Mrs E.H. Williams** in 1966 and a **Parks Victoria** transfer of items from the Market Museum in 2004.

Many of the plaques with writing on them include the date they were made and presented to the joss house (mostly likely its opening). The main text on the plaques is a message expressing good wishes. It is possible to link the plaques to particular temples based on the dates on them.

Kok Hu Jin has transcribed and translated the text on many of the temple plaques and I have used his translations.¹¹⁴ His translations also name the lodge who donated the item and their clan association as well as the date. Kok has a particular interest in understanding the role of Chinese secret societies (also called Hungmen or Gee Hing) in Australia. We know Chinese secret societies or brotherhoods were widely active from the goldrushes onwards and they still operate today under the name, Chinese Masonic Society. Kok often reads the presence and involvement of Chinese secret societies in the material that he translates which might be valid but translating of plaques such as these is not straightforward and is open to some interpretation. It would be valuable for CAM to get a second opinion on these translations.¹¹⁵

8.6.2.3 Greenhill Avenue Ten Foot Hill Joss House (September 1859)

According to annotations written by Miss A.M.W. Brotherton in February 1950 about photographs taken by Miss A.M.E. Bale and her father W.M. (William Mountier) Bale the joss house photographed below was on property later purchased by E.D. Williams and the last joss house in the area. This makes it the Greenhill Avenue Ten Foot Hill joss house believed to have been constructed in 1859. Miss Brotherton's notes also describe how parts of it were purchased and acquired by various Castlemaine residents (E.D. Williams, Col. J.W.B. Field, Mr Borland and Mrs J.L. Thompson) providing a special insight into how temple items were valued for their aesthetics and collected and repurposed with little regard for their history or spiritual purpose.

¹¹³ Sophie Couchman, "Making the 'Last Chinaman': Photography and Chinese as a 'Vanishing' People in Australia's Rural Local Histories," *Australian Historical Studies* 42, no. 1 (March 2011): 78–91, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1031461X.2010.542764>.

¹¹⁴ Kok, *Chinese Temples in Australia*.

¹¹⁵ Worth considering is Ely Finch, <https://www.elyfinch.com>.



Figure 51: Photographs in W.M. and A.M.E. Bale's album of the Ten Foot Hill Joss house. According to Miss A.M.W. Brotherton's annotations these were taken by A.M.E. Bale in 1906 (geese with joss house in background and decorative window) and c1914 (view of joss house with rocky outcrop in foreground). They depict 'No. 3' joss house.

The 3rd (& last to go) Josshouse stood on the S. bank of Forest Creek. see No 4 Page 8. opp. It was conspicuous from Mt Alexander road. (I was never there) stood on a bare sort of promontory on land afterwards Mr E.D. Williams' when it was necessary to dismantle it some of the stonework went to Mr Williams' garden & is still there. Inside carvings to Col J. W. B. Field. Wood altar was bought by Mr Borland builder, some panels were bought by Mrs J.L. Thompson. Through her 2 gilt (real gold) panels 1' x 10' were given to the Museum. Inscribed with dark blue words of sacred exhortation.

Figure 52: Photograph description written by Miss A.M.W. Brotherton of a photograph in W.M. and A.M.E. Bale's album reads: 'The 3rd (& last to go) Josshouse stood on the S. bank of Forest Creek. see No 4 page 8. opp. It was conspicuous from Mt Alexander road. (I was never there) stood on a bare [unclear, 'sort'] of promontory on land afterwards Mr E.D. Williams'. When it was necessary to dismantle it some of the stonework went to Mr Williams' garden & is still there. Inside carving to Col J.W.B. Field. Wood altar [?] was bought by Mr Borland builder, some panels were bought by Mrs J.L. Thompson, through her 2 gilt (real gold) panels 1' x 10' were given to the Museum. Inscribed with dark blue words of sacred exhortation'.

It might be possible to trace other surviving items or validate the provenance of other temple items through these named individuals. E.D. (Edward David) Williams owned the property the temple was on and it seems that some of the temple material he acquired was donated to CAM via his daughter-in-law, **Mrs E.H. Williams** (see discussion below). Col J.W.B. Field was the founding president of the Returned Soldiers Club of Castlemaine (later known as the Castlemaine Sub-Branch R.S.S.A.I.L.A.) in November 1917. Mr Borland was likely David Miller Boyd Borland who married Ethel Maud (nee Scaddan) and was the building contractor responsible for the construction of the shire building in Newstead in 1907. Mrs J.L. Thompson is probably Ilma Edith (nee Leviny), the wife of James Livingston Thompson (1869–1942) of Thompsons of Castlemaine.¹¹⁶ The Thompson family also owned land in the Ten Foot Hill area and donated some temple items to CAM and there is also an plaque held at Buda Historic House and Garden (see discussion below).¹¹⁷

A.M.E. Bale’s photographs of the Greenhill Ave Ten Foot Hill joss house are of the same joss house shown in a photograph held in the collection of the Castlemaine Pioneers and Old Residents Association (a copyprint is also held in CAM’s collection) and a watercolour by Arthur Lindsay (1912-1990).



Figure 53: Copy of undated photograph of Ten Foot Hill Joss House. Original in the collection of the Castlemaine Pioneers and Old Residents Association.

¹¹⁶ “James Livingstone Thompson,” Ancestry.com Family Tree, accessed March 11, 2023, <https://www.ancestry.com.au/family-tree/person/tree/15696360/person/28006403438/facts>.

¹¹⁷ “[Castlemaine] [cartographic Material] / Drawn and Reproduced at the Department of Lands and Survey, 1957.” Melbourne: W. M. Houston, Govt. Printer, 1957. State Library of Victoria map collection. The 1957 map above shows that an ‘L. Thompson’ owned a large block of land opposite the site of the 1859 Ten Foot Hill temple and near the 1873 Ten Foot Hill temple.



Figure 54: Arthur Lindsay, watercolour, 'Joss Houses, Ten Foot Hill, Castlemaine' (G1407). Given the strong similarities in visual perspective this may have been painted from the photograph above or the photograph taken at the time of the painting.

These two images help to link two glazed ceramic roof ornaments to this temple. The roof ornament in the photograph matches the shape of the surviving fragments and the green and ochre colouring of the ornament in Arthur Lindsay's watercolour match their colouring.



Figure 55: Roof ornaments (M3208, M3209) donated by Parks Victoria 2004 (possibly from former Market Museum collection). Top image presented upside to show appropriate orientation. Detail of roof ornamentation from Castlemaine Pioneers and Old Residents Association photograph showing original shape of ornament and Arthur Lindsay watercolour providing an indication of original colour.

Four of the joss house plaques in the collection can be dated at between 28 August 1859 and 25 September 1859 suggesting they relate to the Greenhill Avenue Ten Foot Hill joss house built in September 1859. These were donated by **Mrs E.H. Williams** with a note linking them to the demolition of the ‘Ten Foot Hill Joss House’ in 1966. Marguerite Ernard Gladys (nee Thompson) (1885-1974), was the wife of Edward Howell Williams (1883-1950)¹¹⁸ and daughter-in-law of Edward David Williams (1842-1909)¹¹⁹ who owned the Greenhill Avenue Ten Foot Hill joss house site. His estate, including property, was inherited by his sons on his death in 1909.



Figure 56: 運廣德帝 Lodge of Happiness and Peace (Cheung) plaque (gold text on red, M1069 likely donated by Mrs E.H. Williams in 1966 when Ten Foot Hill Joss House demolished), lunar date between 28 August 1859 and 25 September 1859.



Figure 57: 生羣被恩 Lodge of [???] (possibly Choi?) plaque (gold text on dark blue, M1094.2 likely donated by Mrs E.H. Williams in 1966 when Ten Foot Hill Joss House demolished), lunar date between 28 August 1859 and 25 September 1859. This plaque was not examined by Kok Hu Jin and so has not been fully translated.



Figure 58: 澤恩沾同 Lodge of Stately Abundance (Chu) plaque (gold text on dark blue, M1094.1 likely donated by Mrs E.H. Williams in 1966 when Ten Foot Hill Joss House demolished), lunar date between 28 August 1859 and 25 September 1859.

¹¹⁸ “Edward Howell Williams,” Ancestry.com Family Tree, accessed March 19, 2023, <https://www.ancestry.com.au/family-tree/person/tree/102151752/person/200036278931/facts>.

¹¹⁹ Graeme Cope, “Williams, Edward David (1842–1909),” in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 18 vols. (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University), accessed February 27, 2023, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/williams-edward-david-9108>.<https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/williams-edward-david-9108>.



Figure 59: 月日如恩 Scroll plaque (red, gold and green, M1070 likely donated by Mrs E.H. Williams in 1966 when Ten Foot Hill Joss House demolished) lunar date likely between 28 August 1859 and 25 September 1860, higher resolution image needed to confirm date.

8.6.2.4 Vincent Street Ten Foot Hill Joss House (1873)

More difficult to explain are a pair of pillar plaques (M1068.1 & 2) and a name board (M1076) dated 27 April to 25 May 1873. Their dates correlate with when the joss house at Vincent Street on Ten Foot Hill opened but the pillar plaques match the description provided of pillar plaques acquired by **Mrs L. Thompson** in Miss Brotherton's notes about the 1859 Greenhill Avenue joss house and the name board is tentatively attributed as being donated by **Mrs E.H. Williams** who donated the other plaques from the Greenhill Ave joss house.

There are two possible explanations for these apparent discrepancies. One is a simple mix up or error documenting provenance information. The other is that as the Castlemaine joss houses became disused their contents were moved to surviving joss houses. This is what happened to the Chinese joss houses in North East Tasmania.¹²⁰ We also know that there was some links between the two older Ten Foot Hill joss houses as it was reported that an image of 'Kuon Kun' was moved from its original location in the 'former' Ten Foot Hill joss house (presumably the Greenhill Avenue joss house) to the Vincent Street joss house in a special ceremony in 1873.

These pillar plaques were likely located at the front of the joss house. The top characters on each of the pillar plaques often provide the organisation that manages the temple.¹²¹ In this case they read '三邑', Sam Yup or 'Three counties'.¹²²

The name plaque is also of particular interest because it lists the name of individuals and businesses who funded the construction of the joss house. This adds to the *research* significance of this plaque as these names can potentially be traced through other historic sources. A full list of these names can be found in Kok Hu Jin's book.¹²³

¹²⁰ See for example Tasmanian's joss house collection at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery.

¹²¹ Kok, *Chinese Temples in Australia Vol.1*.

¹²² Research Officer for the Golden Dragon Museum, Leigh McKinnon, and independent researcher Paul Macgregor both argue this joss house was a Sam Yup Society temple on this basis.

<https://www.facebook.com/goldendragonmuseum.org/posts/pfbid035Mi6gn7W2rsA2fqMA2C449QYiwv3fcmCLbnnbvomjt7rpp8ePdjkDnfit3QGTPI>

¹²³ Kok, *Chinese Temples in Australia Vol.1*.



Figure 60: Pillar plaques (blue text on gold, M1068.1 and M1068.2 donated 'Pre-1975') by an unidentified donor, dated 27 April to 25 May 1873. These pillar plaques were not examined by Kok Hu Jin.¹²⁴



Figure 61: 外海覃恩 Name board (black with some red text on gold, M1076 likely donated by Mrs E.H. Williams in 1966 when Ten Foot Hill Joss House demolished) indicating temple established between 27 April 1873 and 25 May 1873.

¹²⁴ Ely Finch and Paul Macgregor translated the date of these pillar plaques on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/goldendragonmuseum.org/posts/pfbid035Mi6gn7W2rsA2fqMA2C449QYiwv3fcmCLbnnbvomjt7rgp8ePdjkDnfit3QGTP1>

8.6.2.5 Unassigned joss house items

The following decorative panels do not have dates on them. Additional information about their provenance might make it possible to link them to a particular temple.



Figure 62: Decorative joss house panel. Reproduced in Kok Hu Jin's Chinese Temples in Australia, volume 1 and attributed to the CAM collection.



Figure 63: Two carved decorative panels (M3233, M3234) donated by Parks Victoria in 2004 from the former Market Museum. From Worksheet Photograph.

Given its links with the Market Museum donation this red banner (M3231) may also be associated with a joss house collection. It is not, however, as ornate as other banners used in temples and processions in other goldrush era collections and the lion decorations do not link it to a temple or religious purpose either way.



Figure 64: Red banner embroidered with lions (M3231) donated by Parks Victoria in 2004 from the former Market Museum.



Figure 65: 方雷源堂 (Fong, Lui, Kwong) plaque (gold text on dark blue). Held by Buda Historic House and Garden collection. Reproduced in Kok Hu Jin's Chinese Temples in Australia, volume 1.

Although undated, the blue colour of this plaque in the Buda Historical House and Garden collection is remarkably similar to the colouring of the pillar plaques linked to the 1873 Vincent Street Ten Foot Hill temple and its location as part of the former property of the Leviny's, links it to Ilma Edith Leviny, **Mrs J.L. Thompson**, who donated these pillar plaques to CAM.

8.6.2.6 Comparative collections

At least 52 Chinese temples have been identified that were built across Victoria, but Bendigo's joss house is the only surviving structure in rural Victoria. Material from nine other temples has been identified that survives in public and private collections.¹²⁵ CAM's collection is highly significant as one of these collections. The Sovereign Hill Museum Association collection holds similar plaques and panels in its collection and a lion statue and altar cloth but varying dates of the items suggest they have come from different joss house collections (an altar board from the Hepburn joss house destroyed in 1987, carved panels from the Golden Point joss house built in 1860 and moved to Main Road in 1920). Some items have strikingly similar designs suggesting they may have been made by the same craft person.¹²⁶ There is also a collection of surviving temple items held by the Bright Historical Society Museum and the Harrierville Historical Society Museum, although not as many items their collection does include a spectacular scroll plaque.

8.6.3 Brownware vessel collection

There are five examples of Chinese brown-glazed stoneware known as brownware in the collection – three globular jars and two liquor bottles. These are an excellent *representative* collection and are in very good *condition*, particularly the larger items. Examples, like those held at CAM, are relatively *common* in Chinese diaspora collections as they are robust and were widely used and reused for storage purposes.¹²⁷ Castlemaine resident **Mrs W. Halford** (who also donated the 'Ginger jar' discussed above) was one donor in 1928 and **Dorothy Scholten** in 2013 another.¹²⁸ The globular jar with painted label and hoops is less common but there is a similar example in the collection of the University of Idaho.¹²⁹ These also have *research* potential as part of archaeological research into Chinese ceramics and brownware and its distribution and use.¹³⁰ Their significance would be strengthened by a *provenance* that linked them to a place or particular Chinese community. If the use of these items can be linked to the Mount Alexander region, they have strong *historical* and *social* significance as rare examples of surviving material culture related to the activities of the Chinese residents of the area.

¹²⁵ Macgregor, "Joss Houses of Colonial Bendigo and Victoria"; Paul Macgregor, "Chinese Temples of Colonial Victoria" (Culture, Climate, Change: Archaeology in the Tropics, joint conference of the Australian Archaeological Association and the Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology, Cairns, Queensland: Unpublished, 2014).

¹²⁶ See for example: "Chinese Temple Carving, 'Thy Benevolence Be Extended to All Mankind'; 1869; 2018... on eHive," eHive, accessed March 12, 2023, <https://ehive.com/collections/4819/objects/1014636/chinese-temple-carving-thy-benevolence-be-extended-to-all-mankind>.

¹²⁷ Anne-Louise Muir, "Ceramics in the Collection of the Museum of Chinese Australian History, Melbourne," *Australasian Historical Archaeology* 21 (2003): 42–49.

¹²⁸ This information is drawn from the Vernon catalogue, I did not note the donors of the items on display in 'Camp to City'.

¹²⁹ "Artifact Identification," Asian American Comparative Collection, accessed March 10, 2023, <https://www.uidaho.edu/class/anthrolab/collections/aacc/id>.

¹³⁰ See for example: Anne-Louise Muir, "Kitchen Ch'ing: Chinese Archaeological Ceramics in Victoria" (Thesis M.A. -- La Trobe University., 2008).



Figure 66: Various brownware ceramics

8.6.4 'Chinese' yoke

The yoke (M146) donated by **Robert McEthimney** in 1931 and on display in the Chinese section of the 'Camp to City' exhibition is of European design and also called a 'milkmaid yoke'.¹³¹ Chinese yokes are generally made from a length of bamboo split in half and shaped like a flattened pole.¹³² Unless the provenance of the item provides evidence it was used by Chinese workers it should be removed from display or moved and reinterpreted.¹³³ If there is evidence of use by Chinese workers then a fuller explanation of the object's design is required.



Figure 67: Shoulder yoke

There are similar yokes in other collections, some linked to Chinese use, others not. There is a well-provenanced example that was made in Silesia and brought to Australia by a Polish family in the Dunkeld Museum.¹³⁴ The example in the City of Moorabbin Historical Society has watering cans attached which links it to the work of Chinese market gardening, although its Chinese provenance

¹³¹ See for example: 'Shoulder yoke, Victorian', Object Lessons, <https://www.objectlessons.org/work-and-innovation-victorians/shoulder-yoke-victorian-original/s64/a1014/>.

¹³² See for example pole used in this Northern Territory photograph: 'Chinese', 1910, <https://hdl.handle.net/10070/735268>. 8.

¹³³ 'Shoulder yoke', NZ Museums, Cromwell Museum collection, <https://www.nzmuseums.co.nz/collections/5984/objects/837363/shoulder-yoke>.

¹³⁴ "Yoke, Late 19th Century," Victorian Collections, accessed March 10, 2023, <https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/4f72ac1097f83e0308603836>.

appears circumstantial.¹³⁵ Similarly the Chinese provenance of the yoke held at the Museum of Chinese Australian History is also highly circumstantial.¹³⁶

This is a good *representative* example of one of these yokes and has *historic* significance as an example of the manual labour undertaken to operate rural properties. If it was used by Chinese person, it also has *historical* and *social* significance as an example of how Chinese arrivals adapted and incorporated the tools available to them to undertake their work.

8.6.5 Other items (not examined)

There are three sets of weighing scales held in the collection (M3006, **National Trust of Australia**, c2001), two in their original guitar-shaped box (M1135, **unknown donor**, pre-1975, M477.2, **Gordon Chapman** (Castlemaine), 1965). The Chapman set have a bone or ivory stick. These were typically used for measuring opium and can be found in many collections (including: Golden Dragon Museum, Museum of Chinese Australian History, Museums Victoria, Sovereign Hill Museum Association). Taking opium was a popular (and until the early twentieth century legal), form of recreational drug. These opium scales and the opium box that was donated by Parks Victoria from the Market Museum in 1996 have good *interpretative capacity* as *representative* examples of Chinese opium smoking.

In 1991 **Frank and Val Langdon** donated a Chinese wooden plane with horizontal handle slotted through its rear base with a metal blade with wooden 'frog' (M2096.2). The catalogue record suggests that the plane was made by a 'Lun Lee' using an A. Mathieson & Son (Glasgow) blade. After the gold rushes one of the occupations Chinese immigrants moved into was cabinet making, particularly in Melbourne but also in regional areas.¹³⁷ Examples of wooden planes of Chinese Australian manufacture and use can be found in private collections and also those of the Museum of Chinese Australian History and the Golden Dragon Museum. Kevin Chamberlain, who researches and collects Chinese wooden planes, has identified two Chinese manufacturers of planes, Lim Toon and Louey Woon. This plane has good *interpretative capacity* as a *representative* example of Chinese cabinet making but only if it can be established that the Mount Alexander region was home to Chinese cabinet making. Further research is needed to determine its *provenance*. It also has *research* potential as a third example of a woodworking plane of Chinese Australian manufacture.

The sole copy of *The Chinese Times* dated 16 February 1946 held by CAM was also donated by **Frank and Val Langdon (Castlemaine)** in 1991 at the same time they donated the wooden planes above. It is a *rare* extant issue not held at the National Library of Australia and digitised within Trove Newspapers.¹³⁸ This issue was published by the newspaper after it moved its operations to Sydney. Research should be undertaken to translate the newspaper to determine whether there is a

¹³⁵ "Tool - Chinese Market-Gardener's Watering-Cans," Victorian Collections, accessed March 10, 2023, <https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/4f72ad9697f83e0308603b54>.

¹³⁶ "Traditional Chinese Practices Collection," Museum of Chinese Australian History, May 10, 2020, <https://www.chinesemuseum.com.au/traditional-chinese-practices>.

¹³⁷ Kevin Chamberlain, "Chinese Cabinetmakers in Australia," *The Tool Chest: Journal of the Hand Tool Preservation Association of Australia* 11/1, no. 51 (1999): 1–8; Kevin Chamberlain, "Historical: Chinese-Australian Furniture Makers and Their Tools," *Australian Wood Review*, February 12, 2021, <https://www.woodreview.com.au/tools-and-equipment/historical-chinese-australian-furniture-makers-and-their-tools>; John Anthony Leckey, "Low Degraded Broots? : Industry and Entrepreneurialism in Melbourne's Little Lon, 1860-1950" (Doctor of Philosophy, Melbourne, Victoria, University of Melbourne, 2003); Peter Charles Gibson, *Made in Chinatown: Chinese Australian Furniture Factories, 1880-1930*, China and the West in the Modern World (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2022).

¹³⁸ Kate Bagnall, "Early Chinese Newspapers in Australia: Trove Presents a New Perspective on Australian History," *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies* 7 (May 2014).

link between this particular issue and the wooden planes that were also donated with it. The newspaper's date perhaps provides a clue to the era of the wooden planes.

8.6.6 Statement of significance (Chinese Australian material culture)

Chinese prospectors, as the second largest immigrant group, after the British during the goldrushes, were a significant part of the history of the Mount Alexander region. Their contribution to that history has not really been valued until recently. It was not until the 1960s and 1970s when ideas of multiculturalism began to replace those of white Australia, and as descendants have sought to understand the lives of their ancestors that more nuanced histories of the Chinese in Australia were written. This gives the small collection of Chinese Australian material culture held by CAM a high *historical* and *social* significance. The temple or joss house items also have a *spiritual* significance. While the *provenance* of the temple items is fractured it is possible, as this report demonstrates, to pull together a strong narrative that links them to particular temple sites on Ten Foot Hill in Castlemaine which strengthens their significance.

The collection also has strong *research* potential. Further work could be undertaken on the provenance of the temple items and their translations double checked. Research on the histories of the temples in the area and the people associated with them will also reveal the affiliations and clusters of Chinese communities in the area. This report, for example, has not drawn on historical material held at the Castlemaine Historical Society, or the Castlemaine Pioneers and Old Residents Association, or within the local community. It would also be valuable to compare this collection with surviving temple material from other Australian collections.

Additional research on the *provenance* of the other Chinese Australian items, the brownware, 'Chinese' yoke, weighing scales and wooden plane would greatly improve their *interpretive capacity*. While these kinds of items are not rare they are *representative* of some of the very *rare* surviving material culture used by former Chinese residents in the Mount Alexander area.

The Chinese Australian material culture in the collection is not strong or diverse enough to be able to tell a complete history of Chinese in the Mount Alexander area well, although a display about the Ten Foot Hill temples would be possible. These items could however be drawn upon to explore broader universal historical themes related to the area, such as religious and spiritual practices (temple items), food and food preparation and storage (brownware vessels, opium scales), work ('Chinese' yoke), recreation (opium scales). Items could also be used to tell the histories of some of the more well-known Castlemaine residents associated with them such as the Thompson/Levin family, Williams family, A.M.E. Bale and her father and the history of the Market Museum and its collection.

8.7 History of the Castlemaine Art Museum

8.7.1 Historical context

CAM was established at an interesting moment in time – after the establishment of regional galleries such as Bendigo and Ballarat, and the founding of early Mechanics Institutes and old pioneer associations, but pre-dating the establishment of local historical societies and museums. It has been shaped by nineteenth century collecting practices but also influenced by a newly awakened sense of Australian nationalism where Australians were discovering the appeal of things Australian and were starting to explore their connections with Australia and its past.

Castlemaine had its hey-day during the goldrushes and their immediate aftermath, but Castlemaine's middle-class leading residents, its elite, continued to aspire for a bigger future for Castlemaine.

These were the people who founded CAM and CAM was one of the important ways in which they strove to improve and strengthen Castlemaine and its district – by bringing knowledge and culture to its populace and their visitors. They were part of major businesses and industries in the area and were able to draw on their connections with those in Melbourne’s society for support too. This energy and persistence to make the Museum work has persisted and is demonstrated by the fact that CAM were able to successfully raise funds for their own building during the 1930s depression¹³⁹ and was also narrowly saved from permanent closure in 2016 through community support and a generous anonymous donor.

That something a bit different was happening at CAM compared with other museums and galleries is evidenced by the 1933 Carnegie-funded inquiry into Australian museums. The authors complained about the ‘over-crowded, badly selected and curated collections that fortunately do not attract the public’, but praised CAM and noted that ‘this small town has probably a better art gallery than any comparable town in the British Empire’.¹⁴⁰ As Ian McShane also noted in his research on the 1933 Carnegie report, CAM’s ‘modern design broke with neo-Classicism that many Australian gallery and museum buildings adopted to establish their cultural authority’.¹⁴¹

8.7.2 Description of related collection

CAM’s building is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR H0572) as *historically* important as one of the earliest examples of the ‘modern movement’ in provincial Victoria.¹⁴² When the new Museum building opened in 1931, it was of sufficient importance that *The Herald* newspaper in Melbourne sent their well-known cartoonist Sam Wells (1885-1967) to cover the event.¹⁴³ John E. Leckie, who also features in the cartoon, donated a copy of the cartoon (perhaps the original?) to the Museum that year. It was also published in the newspaper to accompany a report about the opening.

¹³⁹ Golightly et al., *History and Collections*.

¹⁴⁰ Ian McShane, “On the Castlemaine Art Gallery and the ‘Museum Movement,’” Castlemaine art Museum, c2023, <https://castlemaineartmuseum.org.au/reflections/on-the-castlemaine-art-gallery-and-the-museum-movement>; S.F. Markham and H.C. Richards, *Report on the Museums & Art Galleries of Australia*, 1933.

¹⁴¹ McShane, “On the Castlemaine Art Gallery and the ‘Museum Movement’”; Ian McShane, “Transnational Cultural Ties in a Settler Colonial World: Carnegie Cultural Philanthropy and the 1933 Australian Museums Inquiry,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 4, no. 3 (July 3, 2014): 291–304, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2014.899550>.

¹⁴² Heritage Council Victoria, “Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historic Museum,” Victorian Heritage Database, accessed March 14, 2023, <https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/264>.

¹⁴³ Unidentified, “Castlemaine Stalwarts Sketched by Wells,” *Herald*, April 20, 1931, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article242783481>; Unidentified, “Art Has a Big Day at Castlemaine,” *Herald*, April 20, 1931, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article242783503>.



Figure 68: Reproduction of pen and ink drawing 'Castlemaine Stalwarts, 1931', donated by John E. Leckie in 1931 at the opening of the Museum (G169).



Figure 69: Wells cartoon, 'CASTLEMAINE STALWARTS SKETCHED BY WELLS', as reproduced in The Herald newspaper 20 April 1931. The full caption reads: 'Prominent citizens and officials of the Castlemaine Art Gallery which was opened by the Governor (Lord Somers) on Saturday. Lord Somers also opened the new Scouts Hall. Wells paid a special visit to Castlemaine for the purpose of making this series of sketches'.

In addition to the building, the exhibition furniture associated with the Museum also has *historic* significance to CAM's history. Ian McShane noted that the seating shown in photographs of the galleries in the Carnegie report are still in use.¹⁴⁴ Some of the exhibition display cases in Storeroom 3 also appear to be the same as those that are shown in a photograph of the 'Castlemaine Past and Present' exhibition display in 1911. CAM has also kept historic labels from displays and some of the archived displays in storage appear to be quite old.



Figure 70: Unidentified egg collection possibly displayed in case used in 'Castlemaine Past and Present' exhibition in 1910 (top). Display, perhaps early, with hand-written labels about David Thompson and his mineral collection in an early display case (bottom).

¹⁴⁴ McShane, "On the Castlemaine Art Gallery and the 'Museum Movement.'"

Early donations to the CAM Historical Collection, particularly in the First Nations and Natural History collections but also more generally, have additional *historical* significance for what they tell us about the nature of the Museum its founding, what its founders and donors were seeking to create, and the networks they drew on across Australia to build that collection.

Many of the people involved in the founding and operation of the Museum have been donors to both its Arts and Historical Collections. I have identified the following: **Colonel F.S. and Alice Newell, Winnie Brotherton, Arthur and Elsie Barlow, the Leviny family, H.S.W. (Harry Sutherland Wightman) Lawson MLA, Dr James Thompson** and the **Thompson family, A.M.E. (Alice Marian Ellen) Bale, Beth Sinclair and Peter Perry**. This includes items that relate to their lifestyles and work. Many of these individuals are *historically* significant for their wider work and some for their role at CAM. Information about them and their influence on CAM is significant for the understanding it provides about the culture that founded and maintained the organisation. Castlemaine has a small population and smaller elite community and so being able to link and trace the social and class connections of those associated with CAM over time is manageable.

Key to the establishment and operations of the Museum have been a group of dynamic women. **A.M.W. (Anna Mary Winnifred) Brotherton** took a keen interest in the collection, particularly the historic or museum collection, as did **Beth Sinclair**. Miss A.M.W. Brotherton had a keen eye for the importance of cataloguing and documenting the stories and provenance associated with items in the Historical Collection. Her documentation on the collection gives the Historical Collection strong *research* potential for the insights it provides into the history of collecting in Australia.

Significant documents identified:

- Miss A.M.W. Brotherton's 1910 list of exhibits from the 'Past and Present' exhibition.
- Miss A.M.W. Brotherton's unnumbered catalogue of the collection as at 3 February 1933.
- Committee minutes and correspondence including the Committee's first Annual Report in 1913
- 'Inventory and Valuation of Higgins Bequest, 18 October 1937'.
- 'Key to Miss Bale's books of Castlemaine photographs', 23 February 1950.
- 'Castlemaine Art Gallery and Museum: Some information relevant to the founding, early history and donors', c1952.
- 'Museum inventory' (lists items on display at this time), 1971.
- 'Information about photographs' (also includes information about objects), undated.
- Museum Registers created and maintained c1970s-1981 by Jean Perry.

In addition to the collection held at CAM, the 'Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum: Australian Gallery file' held at the State Library of Victoria contains CAM ephemera from 1914 (earliest item appears to be 1924) to the present (c1990s). One folder in this series unfortunately appears to have been misplaced. The Prahran Mechanics Institute also holds some material related to CAM's history.

The Burke Museum in Beechworth is another early regional museum established in the Victorian goldfields area. It was established as a museum in 1861 making it perhaps the oldest museum in Australia. The Burke Museum's history and collection offer a valuable opportunity to undertake research comparing how CAM's history and collection differed by being established just over fifty years later.

8.7.3 Statement of significance

CAM, its building, its collection and the documentation associated with its operations are *historically* significant for its place in historical collecting by museums and other collecting institutions, for its capacity to tell the history of CAM and its role in the promotion of art in the Castlemaine area. In addition to being a collector of historical material CAM helped to lay the foundations for the artistic culture which has evolved in the Castlemaine region today. The people who founded and ran CAM were for many years members of Castlemaine's social elite and their lives and social networks help us to understand the operation of this class in Castlemaine. The *social* significance of CAM to Castlemaine and beyond been demonstrated by the public support it has received over time and its central place in Castlemaine's tourism and the Castlemaine State Festival.

9. Statement of significance

As a rare surviving Edwardian-era local museum collection, the Historical Collection of the Castlemaine Art Museum is of high *historical* significance. The Collection pre-dates those of most local historical societies and museums by about half a century. Its eclectic mix of First Nations, natural history, decorative arts and historical photographs, documents and artefacts largely reflects Victorian collecting practices but what was collected and by whom provides insights into how local history, place and material culture was understood in the Edwardian period. The organisation is currently working through the issues associated with its problematically acquired First Nations collection. Thanks to the foresight and efforts of Anna Mary Winifred Brotherton (1874-1956), who documented the early collection, the provenance of the collection in the early years of CAM is strong which greatly enhances its *historical* significance.

While not a large collection, the Collection contains many *representative* items that capture the history of the Mount Alexander area. It has high *historical* significance for the insights it provides into the early British and European settlement of the Mount Alexander region, particularly during goldrush era. The goldrushes of the nineteenth century fundamentally changed the face of Australia, and the Mount Alexander goldfields had a key place in that history. The Collection also helps us to understand the area's settlement/colonisation and its civic and industrial development during the nineteenth century, particularly the activities of its middle-class residents. The population of the Mount Alexander region is relatively small and the social elite who established and donated to CAM even smaller. The collection and the social and familial networks of donors and people associated with CAM therefore provide an rich insight into this class.

CAM is also the primary collecting institution of three-dimensional historical objects in the Castlemaine area. The Mount Alexander region's history is revealed through *rare* copies of early ambrotype and daguerreotype photographs of the area and its people; *rare* maps and plans of the area, and well-provenanced collections of documents, ephemera, dress and decorative arts of former residents. In addition, there are diverse collections of items related to work, leisure and community building in the area, sometimes just a few items and sometimes larger collections. The lives and activities of women are particularly well represented and expressed through the collection and as a whole are of high *historical* significance. There are also *rare* documentary items related to the government administration of the area including a Gold Escort Register, documentation related to Miner's Rights and the papers of Richard Colles, Sheriff of Castlemaine and Sandhurst Circuit (1850s-1880s). The plaques and roof ornaments from the Ten Foot Hill Chinese joss house have *spiritual* significance for Chinese Australians and *historical* significance as the only surviving remnants of the three Chinese joss houses that once operated in Castlemaine. They are *rare* as very little material culture from the large Chinese population that once lived in the region has survived.

As the people who managed the Historical Collection also managed the Art Collection, it is not surprising that the collection has high artistic or *aesthetic* significance. First Nations culture and natural history material was often collected for display as decorative arts in homes in the nineteenth and early twentieth century and so these reflect turn of the century aesthetic values in addition to having other significance. The decorative arts, clothing worn, and textiles were, at least in part, valued by their previous owners for their aesthetics.

The Collection is in good condition and is generally well-documented, but this documentation needs to be linked so that its provenance, research significance and interpretive capacity can be fully realised. The Collection is a valuable resource for learning more about the lives of middle-class

Australians living in rural centres, particularly women's lives and the Victorian practice of collecting. There are also exciting opportunities CAM could explore about how the values and ethics that have shaped their collection have changed over time. Reconnecting and possibly repatriating First Nations cultural items in the collection with the descendants of their original owners is vital. If undertaken in a way which builds First Nation's cultural authority and trust, and recentres First Nation voices in historical narratives, this creates opportunities for the Museum to revitalise itself and its collections and be part of national reconciliation processes. The Historical Collection has great potential to engage with CAM's recent refreshed vision to bring 'art and objects from the past and present into multi-layered conversations; creating a dynamic platform for new voices, community connections, reflections and ideas'.

That a place with a population of Castlemaine's size can support a library, an historical society, a pioneer and old residents' association, a house museum (Buda) and an arts festival (the Castlemaine State Festival) is impressive. CAM and its Art and Historical Collections are an integral part of this surviving ecosystem of historical and artistic collecting institutions and is an important repository of three-dimensional material culture that documents the region's history. Together all these organisations provide a vital insight into today's artistic and intellectual community and how it came to be. This gives the organisation and its collection a strong ongoing *social significance*.

10. Key recommendations

The challenge for CAM is to collect and grow its Historical Collection in ways that allow it to tell the history of Castlemaine and its district in ways that speak with its Art Collection and draw its community into conversation with its collections.

If CAM is to keep its collection focus on the history of the Mount Alexander region, then it may need to take more proactive role acquiring items for its collection and inspiring new perspectives on the area's history that engage and connect with locals and visitors alike.

10.1 Collection management

10.1.1 Review and update current Collection Policy

The current Collection Policy is outdated. Identify collecting priorities that can be promoted, reviewed and highlighted in exhibitions and public programs. In doing so CAM might consider:

- More deeply embracing the strengths of its collection or actively collecting to strengthen weaknesses in the collection.
- Identifying and drawing on contemporary activities and issues important to the area: industry and work, tourism, residential mobility, hot-rod and motoring scene, the arts scene, prominent residents, women's contributions.
- Clearly defining the geographic scope of the collection with consideration of First Nations understandings of the geographic area.

10.1.2 Reframe collecting areas

Consider dividing the main collection as follows:

- Art
- Decorative Art
- Mount Alexander History
 - CAM History
 - First Nations
 - Natural History
 - Other priority sub-collections related to the history of the Mount Alexander region

Items should be documented as belonging to particular collections. There are items in the collection which might belong to more than one collection. In which case they could be assigned according to the strength of their significance to a particular collection and their relationship to others documented or they could be assigned to multiple collections.



Figure 71: Platypus reported to have been shot by George Cunnack at Coliban River, taxidermised and displayed in a glass case and donated by Colonel J. Field in 1931. This display is historically significant as a reflection of a time when Australian native wildlife was shot for sport, and taxidermy was part of decorating nineteenth and early twentieth century homes. It also has artistic significance as an example of how the skills required to create 'lifelike' taxidermy works are as much an art as a science.¹⁴⁵ Unlike more scientific examples at Museums Victoria and at the Burke Museum, CAM's example is presented in a 'natural' (albeit land) setting within a display case suggesting a more decorative art rather than scientific function.¹⁴⁶ This display could also be used to discuss the life of George Cunnack and his family and the history of the Coliban River. Platypus are still an important part of the ecology of the Coliban River system with research currently being undertaken to monitor and understand them.¹⁴⁷

For example, the taxidermized platypus is believed to have been shot by George Cunnack at Coliban River, part of the Murray-Darling Basin donated by Colonel J. Field in 1931 might be part of a number of these collections:

- Decorative Art collection as its function was decorative,
- Mt Alexander History collection because of the associated story of George Cunnack shooting it, changes in attitudes to harming native Australian animals and taxidermy and its links to George Cunnack and Colonel J. Field.
- Natural History collection because it was likely donated as an example of a platypus and ongoing efforts to research platypus in the Coliban River,
- CAM History collection because its donation was part of the early vision for CAM.

¹⁴⁵ Zoe Kean, "Museums Stocked with 'platysausages' as Taxidermists Get It Wrong on Australian Animals," *ABC News*, January 4, 2023, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-01-05/poor-taxidermy-making-fattypuses-out-of-australian-animals/101827332>; "Museums, Specimens and Taxidermy," Museums Victoria Collections Online, accessed March 8, 2023, <https://museumsvictoria.com.au/article/museums-specimens-and-taxidermy/>; "Inside the World of Museum Taxidermy," *Australian Geographic*, October 20, 2017, <https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/topics/history-culture/2017/10/inside-the-world-of-museum-taxidermy/>.

¹⁴⁶ "Ornithorhynchus Anatinus," Museums Victoria Collections Online, accessed March 9, 2023, <https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/specimens/128497>; "Animal Specimen - Platypus, Trustees of the Australian Museum, 1860-1880," Victorian Collections, accessed March 9, 2023, <https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/5fc83cb8c290d202c8599a90>.

¹⁴⁷ "An Insight into Platypus in the Upper Campaspe and Coliban River Catchments!," Upper Campaspe Landcare website, accessed March 9, 2023, <https://www.uppercampaspelandcare.org.au/an-insight-into-platypus-in-the-upper-campaspe-and-coliban-river-catchments/>.

It is most strongly significant to the Mt Alexander History collection but also has significance to other collections that need to be documented too.

10.1.3 Archive some collection areas

Consider closing the First Nations and Natural History collections to further acquisitions noting that these collections remain significant for what they reveal about CAM's early history.

First Nations material should still be collected but new donations would be acquired according to their significance to primary collecting areas and in consultation with its First Nations stakeholders.

10.1.4 Reparation of First Nation items

Continue discussions about reparation, repatriation, interpretation and identification of collection material associated with First Nations groups. Proactively reach out and engage with appropriate groups and extend these conversations to other First Nations peoples whose material culture is held, such as in Papua New Guinea. This can be treated as an opportunity for CAM to be part of national reconciliation processes and to be part of meaningfully empowering First Nations communities in their efforts to strengthen their communities and cultures.

10.1.5 Establish a Research Archive

Consider removing photocopies, reproductions and publications that are not rare, in need of specialist care or of significance from the catalogued collection and managing it as part of a separate Research Archive. This Archive would need to be searchable and could be cross linked with the collection. It might include subject card indexes, photographic copyprints, books and articles, family histories, biographies.

As part of this process consider ways to improve links between worksheets, associated material (family trees, biographies etc) in object files and the catalogue. For example, worksheets and associated material could perhaps be digitally scanned and attached to the catalogue record.

10.1.6 Improve links between the Library management and collection management

Books in the history section of the Library are currently managed by a separate volunteer library group. Ensure that any deaccessioning of books from this collection by this group occurs in consultation with those managing the collections. The Library should be providing supporting material for the management and interpretation of CAMs collections.

10.2 Cataloguing and documentation

10.2.1 Continue work on audit

Continue auditing project that involves documenting and rehousing of collection. This should include material stored in the compactus.

10.2.2 Cataloguing priorities

By improving the quality of content published via Vernon on CAM's website CAM will improve its collection's discoverability and value to the general public, including researchers. There is now established research showing that visibility of collections online improves in-person visitation.

- Check or remove subject tags as many that have been applied are wrong.
- Prioritise attaching digital photographs to records.
- Make explicit whether the item has a connection to the Mount Alexander region and how.
- List the donor of item and when it was donated.

10.2.3 Statements of significance for collection items

Consider incorporating brief statements of significance into cataloguing and documenting processes as part of the assessment of objects offered for donation into the collection and also for existing items. This will deepen your understanding of the collection and open up possibilities for how it might be used in the future.

10.2.4 More clearly document the names of individuals

Individuals in the collection are often referred to by their initials or married names. Where possible include the full name of the individual, their birth and death years, and for women, their maiden name. This should be applied to donors and others associated with collection items. This will improve the ability of those using the collection to positively identify individuals and understand their connections with others. Given the significance of CAM and its collection to the history of collecting institutions, it is very important that this is done prior to deaccessioning any objects.

10.2.5 Identify and document early donations

CAM is fortunate to have descriptive lists of items that were displayed as part of the 'Castlemaine Past and Present' exhibition and also in the collection in 1931 when the Museum moved to its present location. Matching items in these lists with items still in the collection today and documenting this will provide valuable information about their provenance and their relationship to the history of CAM.

10.3 Collection care and storage

10.3.1 Undertake a Preservation Needs Assessment

CAM is fortunate to have two qualified conservators volunteering at present who taking excellent care of the collection within current constraints. A Preservation Needs Assessment would support their work and assist them set priorities to ensure the collection is as safe as it can be. The age of the building, and differing levels of temperature and environmental control throughout the building, place the collection at risk. There are light sensitive textiles and paper items that have been on long term display that also urgently require rotation. Taxidermised items, mineral samples and any plastic items in the collection might also need to be assessed for toxicity.

10.4. Collection interpretation

10.4.1 Reorganise and remove some items from current displays

It will be some time before CAM will be in a position to refresh its exhibitions spaces. It would be worth investigating whether it would be possible to better highlight the differences, spatially or visually, between the Decorative Arts collection and the Mount Alexander History collection. This might also include removing or rephrasing labels that make Decorative Arts collection items appear to relate to the history of the Mount Alexander region.

Remove inappropriately identified and displayed Chinese items from display as has been done with inappropriately displayed First Nations items.

Assess whether fragile or light-sensitive textiles and paper items should be removed from display.

10.4.2 Considerations for new displays

A few things to consider when reimagining displays of the Historical Collection

- Material related to the history of the Mount Alexander region is not extensive. Rather than trying to use it to tell a complete history with limited materials as has been attempted in the

‘Camp to City’ exhibition, consider smaller focused displays that tell deeper more nuanced histories that link to bigger themes and current concerns.

- Indigenous and Chinese histories should be presented as an integral part of the history of the region and care should be taken that items are correctly identified and appropriately displayed.
- Actively explore opportunities to link present-day issues and the activities of local communities to historical material and themes in the collection.
- Highlight the cultural diversity within the current collection or incorporate these perspectives in the ways in which the collection is interpreted.
- Consider bringing in experts in very niche historical areas to help draw out unexpected aspects of the collection in interpretation.

10.4.3 Deaccessioning advice

Items for which neither donors nor object have links with the Mount Alexander region should be prioritised for deaccessioning. Any items considered for deaccessioning should have their provenance and history well-researched and documented and a significance assessment written so that CAM has a record that it was held in its collection (although there may be some First Nations items where this is not appropriate). Note that early donations to the Museum’s collection might have significance as part of CAM’s early history.

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