



Life on the
goldfields

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In the 1850's, each person on the goldfields was required to hold a licence, which was issued monthly for a fee of 30 shillings, to be paid in cash or gold dust.



Off to the diggings, 1850's.

A glimpse of life on the 19th Century goldfields

Some idea of life on the 19th Century goldfields of New South Wales is given in a Department of Primary Industry publication - FEBRUARY 2007 PRIMEFACT 575.

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au

Some extracts are given below.

“Early in the gold rush days the gold diggings at first resembled tent camps. Even the Gold Commissioner began his career at Ophir in a large tent, as did his small police force. Commissioner Hardy measured out small claim areas for the diggers, issued licences at 30 shillings per month, arbitrated disputes and in general kept very good order.

The dwellings, whether tents or bark humpies had to be set up far enough above the banks of the creek or river to avoid being flooded when it rained heavily and the water rushed down the gullies. At first, it was not unusual to see tents and tarpaulin structures with additions of bark, galvanised iron, hessian bags and calico.

Later, when the diggings became established and miners brought their families with them with the intention of staying for some time, slab huts were erected with either bark or galvanised iron roofs. “



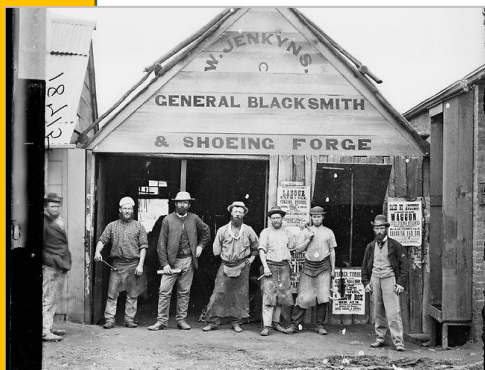
Holtermann Collection of photographs

Thanks to the efforts of the photographer Beaufoy Merlin and his assistant Charles Bayliss, many photographs were taken on the diggings during the early 1870s. These photographs are now known as the Holtermann Collection, as Bernard Holtermann, a very successful miner, provided the finance for this work. Many of these photographs are now accessible through the State Library of NSW web site.

http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/discover_collections/society_art/photography/holtermann

Most of the photographs were taken in the 1870's around Mudgee, Hill End and Gulgong in central New South Wales. However, the living and working conditions in and around Batemans Bay were probable similar to those in other parts of the colony.

A selection of photographs from the Holtermann Collection are reproduced here.



Photographs from the Holtermann Collection.

Geology of the Batemans Bay region

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Photographs from the Holtermann Collection.



Doug Finlayson
Canberra, 2016

The Old Courthouse Museum
Batemans Bay NSW

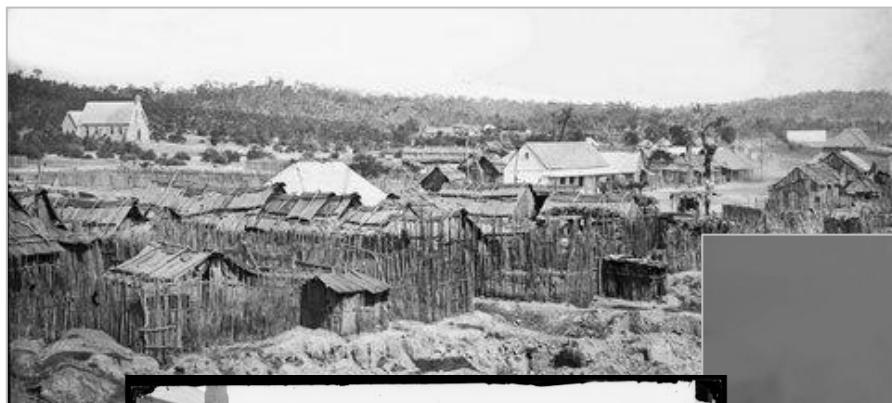


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The Old Courthouse Museum
Batemans Bay NSW



Bernard Otto Holtermann.



Photographs from the Holtermann Collection.

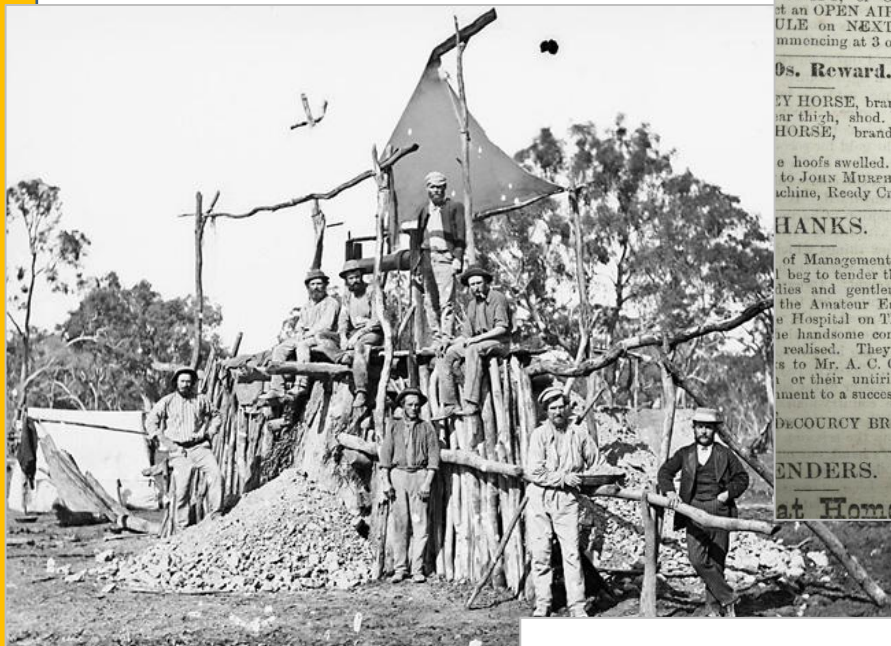


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The Old Courthouse Museum Batemans Bay NSW



STOCK, and by an Experienced Manager.
OPPOSITE QUEENSLAND HOTEL.
CHAS. BIRD,
Gulgong and Home Rule.

SWIFT, of Gulgong, will
at an OPEN AIR SERVICE
ULE on NEXT SUNDAY
mmencing at 3 o'clock.

Os. Reward.

Y HORSE, branded SC near
ear thigh, shod. Also, ONE
HORSE, branded C near
C

e hoofs swelled. Ebe above
to JOHN MURRAY, near Ned
achine, Ready Creek.

HANKS.

of Management of the Gul-
beg to tender their grateful
dies and gentlemen who so
the Amateur Entertainment
e Hospital on Thursday, 4th
he handsome contribution
realised. They also tender
s to Mr. A. C. Cameron and
or their untiring efforts to
nment to a successful issue.

DeCOURCY BROWNE,
Hon. Sec.

ENDERS.

at Home Rule

THE
**American & Australian
PHOTOGRAPH Co.**
MR. BAYLISS

WILL visit the HOME RULE, on MON-
DAY, and the CANADIAN on TUES-
DAY next, when (weather permitting) he will
Photograph all the Claims, Shops, Houses, &c.,
on the Leads.

Parties requiring pictures larger than the
card, should signify to that effect when the
smaller ones are taken.

TARRANT'S HOTEL,
Gulgong.

to announce that they
Alterations and Improv
Theatre, both Before a
Curtain, and that it sh
deavour to Merit the
Patrons of the Drama
constant production of

NOVELTY

with due regard to prop
and effects,

Doors open at Half-past 8
at Eight.

Admission—Three Shillin
and One Shilling.

REMOV.

W. H. WA
FAMILY BUT

BEGS to inform his custom
generally that he has
old shop near Adam's Lead.
premises in HERBERT-ST
pied as the "GREATEST W
WORLD." (opposite Sun T
where he will be prepared to
may favour him with orders,
the best

BEER VEAL MUTT
PORK &

AMATEUR ENTERTAINMENT.
In Aid of the Gulgong Hospital.
ON THURSDAY, 4th JULY.
BALANCE SHEET.



The Holtermann Collection of 3500 glass plate negatives is now being digitised. Thanks to many generous benefactors, and the latest technology, we will soon be able to share this magnificent collection online.

How was this collection created?

When Bernard Otto Holtermann struck the largest-ever nugget of reef gold in 1872 he sent photographers Charles Bayliss and Beaufoy Merlin (with a horse-drawn darkroom) to record every detail of a new way of life: sunburnt prospectors and their vast makeshift towns.

Photographs from the Holtermann Collection.



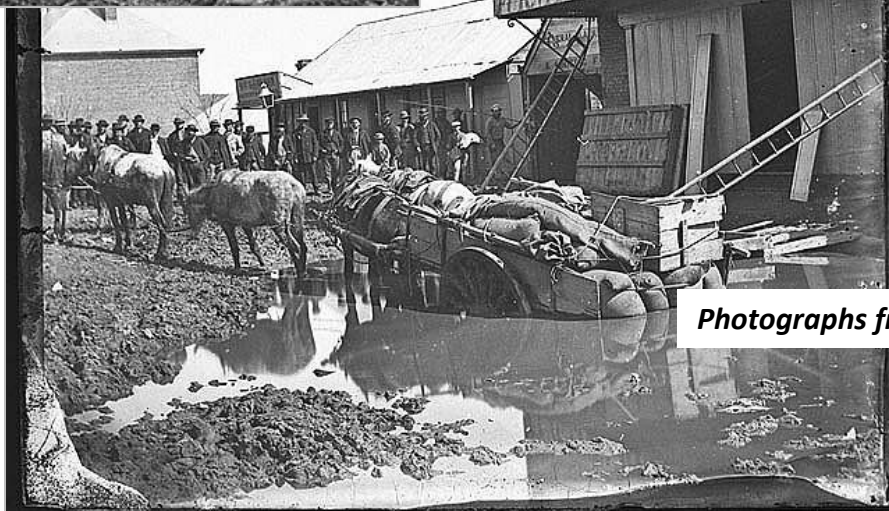
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The Old Courthouse Museum
Batemans Bay NSW



Photographs from the Holtermann Collection.



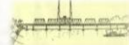
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Canberra, 2016

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The Old Courthouse Museum
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Photographs from the Holtermann Collection.



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About 111 Chinese Joss Houses or Temples were known in Australia in the period 1845 – 1930. In the Batemans Bay region there were temples at Araluen, Jembaicumbene, Mogo and Mongarlowe.

The Old Courthouse Museum
Batemans Bay NSW



The Chinese camps were usually set apart from the other 'new chums' on the goldfields, a fact which contributed to the resentment the European, American and 'native Australian' diggers built up against the Chinese. The Chinese also continued to wear their own traditional clothing, with loose blue shirts and trousers, and the distinctive cone-shaped straw hats.

The Chinese workers did not bring women with them from China. Most of them intended to collect whatever gold they could and then return home, often not just to provide for their families, but also for 'masters' to whom they were contracted one way or another. Nevertheless, there was enough interaction among the diverse ethnic groups for some of the Chinese to find wives and settle in Australia for good.

(Information - Original Gold Rush Colony, Mogo, <http://www.goldrushcolony.com.au/>)



*Joss House, Emerald Hill, Vic. 1855
State Library of Victoria.*



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Batemans Bay NSW



During the Mogo gold rush days on the NSW South Coast, many Chinese lived at Chinaman's Point on the Clyde River (Batemans Bay) for mutual protection, and travelled by boat across the Clyde River to "Latta's Point" and the Mogo Goldfields.

The Chinese were sometimes the target of prejudiced and racist attitudes and outright persecution by both European gold miners and the Australian Government of the time. However, around Batemans Bay there was little conflict with Europeans and Government officials.

It is believed there were about 7,000 Chinese people living and working on the NSW Araluen goldfields in the 1800's Australian gold rush days.

(Information - Original Gold Rush Colony, Mogo, <http://www.goldrushcolony.com.au/>)



**Chinamans Point on the Clyde
River near Nelligen.**



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Traditional Chinese religion, especially ancestor worship, was important in the lives of Chinese immigrants. Chinese temples or joss-houses were established in many goldfield towns and in cities. These joss-houses were dedicated to, and contained, the effigies of various Chinese gods and goddesses, including: Cai Shen (the God of Wealth), Guan Yin (the Goddess of Mercy), Guan Di (the God of Loyalty and protection from injustice) and Tian Hou (Goddess of the Sea). Worshippers prayed and made sacrifices to their ancestors and these gods for health, prosperity, safety and good fortune.

(Information and paintings – National Museum of Australia)



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When gold was discovered in Australia, the volume of Chinese immigration significantly increased. The highest number of arrivals in any one year was 12,396 in 1856. In 1861, 38,258 people, or 3.3 per cent of the Australian population, had been born in China. This number was not to be equalled until the late 1980s. The majority of Chinese immigrants to Australia during the gold rush were indentured or contract labourers. However, many made the voyage under the credit-ticket system managed by brokers and emigration agents. Only a small minority of Chinese people were able to pay for their own voyage and migrate to Australia free of debt.

(Information and painting – National Museum of Australia)

The Old Courthouse Museum
Batemans Bay NSW

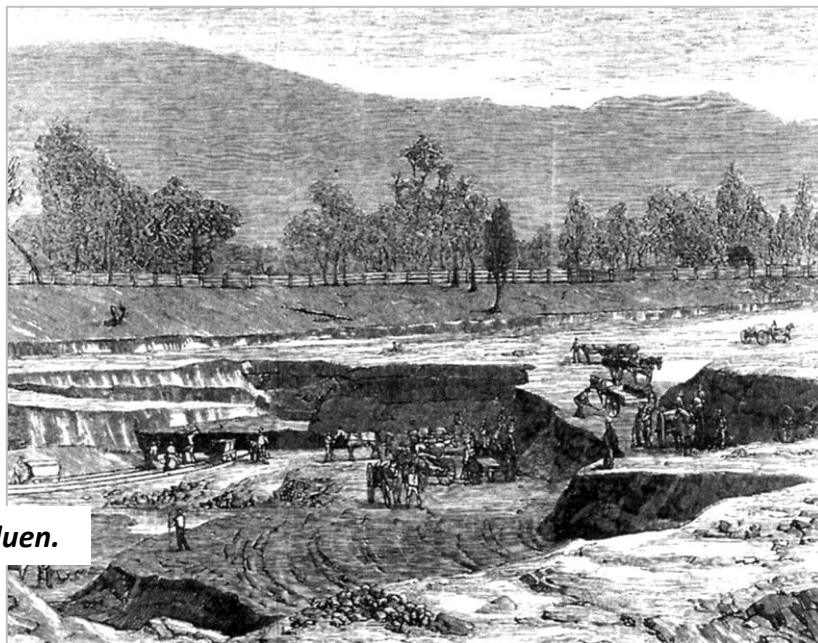


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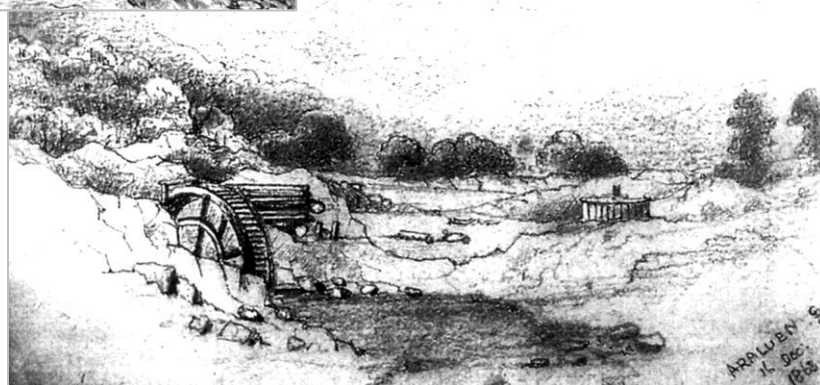
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Strip mining at Araluen.



*Chinese waterwheel at
Araluen, 1868.*

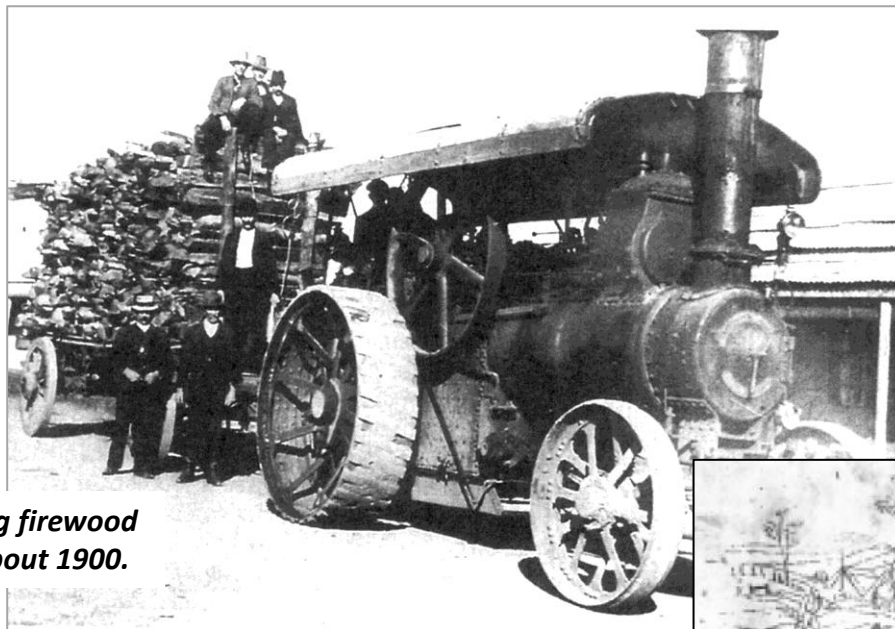


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Batemans Bay NSW



***Traction engine carting firewood
for Araluen dredge, about 1900.***

http://www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/109324/children-on-the-goldfields.pdf



***Family working on the goldfields,
1850's. Engraving - Samuel T. Gill.***



Doug Finlayson
Canberra, 2016

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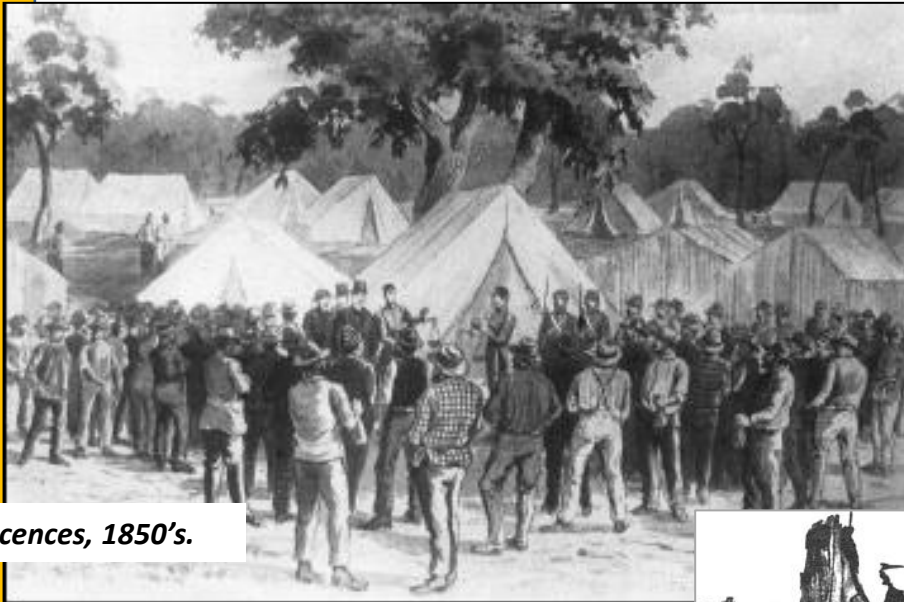
The Old Courthouse Museum
Batemans Bay NSW



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Issuing mining licences, 1850's.



Mining family at home, 1870's.



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Hill End, central NSW, 1872



Photographs from the Holtermann Collection.



Bernard Holtermann (2nd from left) and
partners with 114 kg of gold nuggets.

The Old Courthouse Museum
Batemans Bay NSW



Doug Finlayson
Canberra, 2016

*There's much more information on web sites.
Some of these are listed below.*

Web sites

- **The Forgotten Gold Mines of Nelligen**
<http://www.southcoast.com.au/batemansbay/nelligengold/>
- **The Original Gold Rush, Mogo**
<http://www.goldrushcolony.com.au/>
- **Argyle County, Southern Tablelands of NSW**
<http://www.argylecounty.com.au/towns/araluen.html>
- **Majors Creek history**
<http://www.majorscreek.org.au/content/history>
- **Majors Creek mining history, Dept. of Primary Industries, NSW**
http://www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/109754/majors-creek-gold-deposits.pdf
- **Nerriga Gold Deposits, Dept. of Primary Industry, NSW**
http://www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/109775/nerriga-gold-deposits.pdf
- **Life on the Goldfields, Dept. Primary Industries, NSW**
http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/109898/life-on-the-goldfields-getting-there.pdf
- **Children on the Goldfields, Dept. Primary Industries, NSW**
http://www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/109324/children-on-the-goldfields.pdf